



land ahoy



How spooky is this? Having spent an hour or so talking about walls, got into the car, turned on the radio and...guess what was on? Only Floyd's 'Another Brick in the Wall', that's what. To be fair, 'Careful With That Axe, Eugene' is a better track, but not in the slightest bit spooky, nor indeed relevant to this piece.

The wall in question (not David Gilmour's wall) is the striking central feature of Land Securities' impressive marketing suite in Leeds. Designed by ESA Architects, the third floor space at City Exchange is a critical element of Landsec's major Trinity Quarter retail redevelopment in the heart of the city. In fact, to merely describe the Trinity Quarter as 'major' is doing the project something of a disservice. This is not only a very large redevelopment of Leeds' most important retail area (complete with the giants of Britain's High Street), but it's a hugely complex project too. For Landsec, the Trinity Quarter is crucial, with serious investment. This isn't just any marketing suite.





▶▶▶▶▶ Intrigued by the wall, we asked about its construction and methodology. ‘From the beginning we said that the wall would have a high quality lacquered finish, and budgeted accordingly in early cost plans,’ explains Sam. ‘The challenge was that we had a tight budget and timeframe. It was crucial that Landsec move into the new offices at the end of August 2008 as this coincided with a number of other factors such as branding and IT systems. By the time we submitted the tender it was May 2008, so we only had three months to design and build the scheme. We explored options with a number of specialists for building the wall to see if we could minimise the design burden and cut the timeframe. Ultimately we developed the wall with SIS, the contractors. The result is a simple system – which uses a lot less timber than we anticipated. What we have is a modular system that was assembled easily and quickly due to time and cost constraints. We developed a system which is made up of MDF boards formed into modular blocks, and finished in high gloss lacquer. The blocks literally ‘plug’ into each other, and need no internal structure. What’s more, the system is robust enough to run at high level, and have minimal ceiling support – the result is a pleasing ‘floating’ effect, enhanced by LED lighting from below. We

also standardised the system as much as possible, using the same angled corners, the same straight runs and so on, to ensure rapid and simple assembly on site.’

The wall isn’t merely a cosmetic feature. Apart from binding the theme of the scheme, there are a number of important functional aspects. Key among these are the enclosure of structural columns and the integration of the DDA compliant reception desk in a strong statement of first impression. At the far end of the space the wall works as a backdrop to the bar/server area (an important element of the hospitality aspect of the marketing suite) and incorporates openable counter height panels. This is an integrated and multi-functional design that works on every level.

The Trinity Quarter marketing suite also includes a flexible workspace. This area is clearly defined as a separate zone, while simultaneously being open and accessible – thus supporting and reinforcing Landsec’s culture and tone. This is not a sterile ‘showroom’ style environment, but one that clearly shows business being done in a relaxed and productive setting. The vibrant contemporary design of the space projects strong brand messages – presenting a positive and forward looking company. The overriding impression is of a successful integrated design scheme that economically

and imaginatively (not to mention swiftly) unequivocally solves a number of challenges.

Successful design? During our visit we were told by Gerald Jennings that the design of the Leeds facility has made a significant contribution to the marketing of The Trinity Quarter against a backdrop of tough economic conditions. You can’t say fairer than that ●

essential ingredients

Client:	• Land Securities
Architecture & Design:	• ESA Architects 020 7580 5886
Main Contractor:	• SIS Workspace 0114 244 7070
QS:	• Monaghans 0114 226 0209
M&E Engineer:	• FHP Partnership 0113 235 0860
Furniture Consultant:	• Directive 020 7536 0777
Timber Formwork:	• Cutting Edge 0114 244 5186