

Winnersh Enclosure

In his fantastic book 'Adventures on the High Teas', Stuart Maconie reveals, amongst many other things, his great affection for the British railway system. We have to agree. Maybe it's that, like Stuart, we are fortunate enough to be able to avoid the drudgery of commuter journeys into London, and instead use our railways to head into previously unexplored towns and cities, heading through unknown villages and across new parts of the country to us.

As Mr Maconie explains, there is something still quite romantic and exciting about these journeys and, as long as the network behaves, a train journey gives you a chance to sit back and think, to relax, to work – to do so many things that car travel prohibits you from attempting.

We're heading into another new part of the country for us; Wokingham, IQ Winnersh, formally Winnersh Triangle. Thanks to Google Maps and Streetmap, we are not, as we once were, completely in the unknown here. We're aware that our final destination – the new European headquarters of Microchip Technology Incorporated – is just a quick stroll from the railway station, and that this is a sizable business area.





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Microchip in the UK has progressed from. 'We had an office some 400 yards up the road,' Nawaz reveals. 'The purpose of this office is to house most of the corporate functions for Europe – we have the Finance Group, the HR Group, we've got the Vice-President for Sales based here as well, we've got a Tactical Marketing Group, we've got a Marketing Communications Group, key Training Managers, along with Traffic, IS and the UK sales teams. We have a warehouse here, which doesn't look impressive from the outside – intentionally – but \$300 million + of product will flow through that warehouse this year, and will then be shipped out to our European customer base. That is approaching 25% of our total revenue.

'That's why we have this physical building – to house these corporate functions and to get the products into Europe and beyond.

'We picked this area about 13 years ago. The good thing about the South East of England is that a lot of our key customers and large distributors are located here and the good thing about this area in particular is that it is a very nice business park; it's very accessible for our staff and also very accessible for customers coming in. We are just 30 miles from Heathrow, so dealing with products coming in and out becomes very easy – and we really like the area.'

Nawaz and Diane tell us that the new facility doubles the previous amount of office space for Microchip staff (which has grown from 20 to over 60) to some 20,000 sq ft, whilst also accommodating a much-needed training suite – as well as the warehouse, of course. 'Moving here wasn't any hardship for anyone,' Nawaz says. 'We obviously considered our employee base and then equally this offers us significant benefit on the physical distribution of the product – and it's just a great location. They have some really good plans for this park.

'We also negotiated a really good deal with the landlord – helped by Lambert Smith Hampton. We did that deal towards the bottom end of the market.'

'The timing was perfect,' Diane agrees. 'We saw the opportunity. There used to be a big Parcel Force centre on this site and the landlord decided to knock that down. The building was built specifically for us.'

'We were able to give input – through Ian and Lambert Smith Hampton in particular,' Nawaz continues. 'We knew what we wanted and Ian scoped out how that would manifest itself and worked with the landlord to negotiate a happy medium'▶▶▶▶▶

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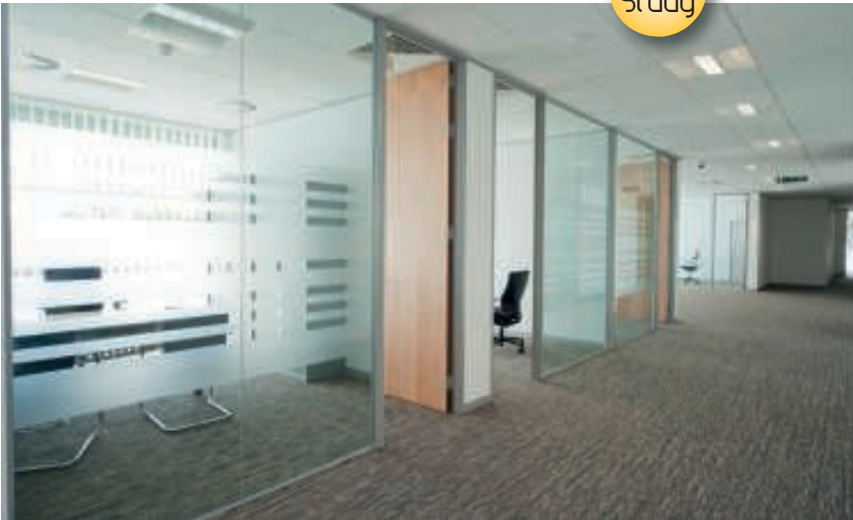
Microchip Technology Inc. is a leading provider of microcontroller and analogue semiconductors, providing low-risk product development, lower total system cost and faster time to market for thousands of diverse customer applications worldwide. In layman terms, this is a \$1 billion + turnover company that provides, amongst other products, the intelligent microchips that we find within our kettles, washing machines, cars etc. Globally headquartered in Chandler, Arizona, USA, the new Microchip European HQ says a great deal about the continued success and expansion of the business.

We are joined in the compact and clean reception area by Microchip Vice President, European Finance Nawaz Sharif, Senior European HR Manager Diane Carpenter

and Lambert Smith Hampton Director Ian Simmonds. Moving through to the sleek executive meeting suite, we take a seat, (another) coffee from our kind hosts, and begin by asking a little more about the business itself. 'We ship to over 66,000 customers – over two thirds of our business goes through Distributors, and the remainder through very large manufacturers such as Bosch or Siemens Nawaz explains. 'We've got a huge number of customers who are designing with our products and making a myriad of diverse applications. In the 8-bit microcontroller market we are the global number one leader, based on Dataquest numbers. There is a lot of competition, but there is also a lot of opportunity for us as well.'

So, how do you stay ahead of the competition and take full advantage of these opportunities? Well, that's exactly why we're here in Winnersh today – to see how a workspace can help do just this. First though, we need to understand where

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project team here was keen that the staff didn't feel left behind, with care and attention paid to those areas really requiring just that. For example, some perfectly good systems furniture has been recycled from the old space, whilst new task seating has been provided. The interior design – by Bulb Interiors – the functional with the sleek and modern quite brilliantly.

Clearly, a great deal of expertise was provided by both Bulb and Lambert Smith Hampton. We ask Ian about the origins of the partnership. 'We were brought in at an early stage to work out what size building was needed,' he explains. 'We did an exercise to establish parameters – how many staff, how many teams were needed. We first worked out that they should possibly take a slightly smaller building than this, but then we factored in possible expansion. What you will see as you walk around is that there are some open spaces currently because expansion has been factored in.'

'It was very important to Microchip that they were based in the one building – the amount of interaction and communication that they get here just couldn't be achieved even if they were just across the road from one another. Two staff breakout areas which are brilliant examples of this – the staff sit and chat and have lunch.'

Now the company can boast the smart training facilities, sleek meeting and conference suites, fantastic bright, open office floorplates and an interior scheme that reflects the brand.

The space here is cleverly delineated through the flooring scheme, which subtly changes from client-facing through to main office and on to warehouse space. The former two provide a brilliant touch of colour – thanks to a variety of carpet designs from Desso – to the subtle, otherwise monochrome scheme. Further colour is provided in the brilliant themes of the large breakout areas which, as Ian earlier explained to us, are full of Microchip people enjoying lunch together.

And with that as a hint, together with rumbling stomachs, we say our goodbyes and head off back to the station. As we climb the stairs to the platform we can hear the London train approaching. Mr Maconie would be waxing lyrical ●

▶▶▶▶so that they got a building which would work for them and we got a space which would work for us. It's been fitted out in a way that minimises the cost of any secondary fit-out.'

'The functionality of the building was critical,' Diane explains. 'We had to integrate the warehouse facility into an office location – and making that work was very important. We did have to make some compromises – such as working the warehouse into two layers rather than one.'

It was also important that the building looked right – after all this is a headquarters building that would represent Microchip's

European corporate function. 'The image we portray to customers coming in is important, but we also wanted to consider the staff here,' Diane recalls. 'They spend a lot of time here and so it was important to consider how we would function as a team in this building, so we spent a lot of time scoping out – with Ian's help – how we would get this right.'

The facility looks and feels clean, modern and professional – although certainly not ostentatious. A great deal of thought has clearly been put into balancing this; the client-facing suites are smart (both aesthetically and technologically), whilst the

essential ingredients

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Main Contractor • **Bulb Interiors** 0118 9889 200

Carpets • **Desso** 01235 554848