





Live Aedas

A picture tells a thousand words? Not in this case. We originally intended to do a bit of a write-up about the launch party of Aedas' new Birmingham home. Then we saw the pictures and thought 'There's something more behind this story'. So, in this case, a picture makes us write an extra thousand words! Not that we mind a jot.

International architect Aedas recently relocated its Birmingham offices to one of the city's highest profile office schemes.

Colmore Plaza, originally designed by the Aedas team in 2005, has become the new Midlands headquarters and also acts as a central meeting hub for the company's regional offices.

The leading international practice provides consultancy services in architecture, interior design, masterplanning, landscape, urban design and building consultancy through their 39 offices in Asia, the Middle East, Europe and the Americas. The firm has a strong commitment to the cities and communities in which it lives and works, delivering innovative sustainable solutions through a talented team▶▶▶▶▶



of designers, who provide a comprehensive range of architectural expertise and design services.

Aedas is committed to its core value of design excellence and is dedicated to research and development and sustainability. The firm's global offices allow it to apply international expertise with local knowledge and delivery – thus supporting the communities in which it works.

A quick sweep of the Aedas website reveals the true global nature – and scale and prestige of the practice, with project work such as the National September 11 Memorial Museum in New York, the Dubai Metro, the Abu Dhabi Investment Council Headquarters, the STAR Performance Venue in Singapore and North Star, Beijing all currently 'on the boards'. And that's just for starters.

Not that the practice has been quiet and subdued here in the UK, with particularly impressive projects currently underway in Manchester, Leeds – and, of course, there is also Birmingham. Back at Colmore Plaza, we wanted to see how the team has applied the same expertise to its own new working home.

Luckily for us, Joe Huddleston, Interior Designer at Aedas, was happy to highlight the key elements of this eye-catching development for us. We begin by asking Joe about the major challenges here.

'One of the challenges faced was overcoming the height in terms of build-ability,' he tells us. 'A clear 3,400mm from floor to ceiling, originally proposed for retail, meant that, in order to achieve a crisp open space, careful planning was required of the interior components. We were keen to celebrate the height as much as possible, implementing elements such as solid full height walnut pocketing meeting room doors and powder coated metal sliding storage screens. A small bulkhead feature allowed crisp junction from wall to ceiling and enabled us to use maximum material sizes in fabrication. Success was achieved as spaces remained fluid and simple in their build up and the enjoyment of detailing components that didn't get scaled down'



Case Study



reconfigurable space for functions such as evening events, CPD's, staff socials and Aedas Presents.'

Arts Council funding was awarded to Aedas, allowing it to extend the future of its region-wide arts initiative, 'Aedas Presents'

This is an innovative long term programme created by the practice in partnership with Kate Eagle, Aedas Marketing Co-ordinator, and locally based independent curator Charlie Levine. Its aim is to showcase the work of emerging artists, students and graduates from local universities and colleges.

'Aedas Birmingham's interior at Colmore Plaza provides what we see as everything we currently need and perceive to need to run a successful business, now and into the future,' Joe continues. 'It lifts the spirits by positioning staff in the centre of Birmingham, close to local amenities for business and leisure. Internally it provides effective work space solutions; integrated technologies and flexible meeting zones, making for professional business development and long term clients.

'Events offered within the space attract new business, form strong relationships and generate confidence for staff and guests. Finally, the selection of furniture, colour and materials make for a gimmick free, functional interior, comfortable for staff and guests to use, through work, rest and play, lifting the spirits for all who visit.'

The 4,650 sq ft space has already been well and truly christened. The new Colmore Plaza home was the location of a recent Aedas launch party, hosted by UK Chairman Brian Johnson, and attended by more than 200 industry clients, partners, service providers and friends.

The event also served to introduce newly appointed Divisional Director, Marcus Wilkins, who will serve as a national design champion for the Midlands. This was a strategic selection for the practice as it continues to promote the highest design standards for clients within the Midlands region and beyond, ensuring design quality and consistency within Aedas' growing portfolio ●

▶▶▶ during the build, making for an almost regal and oversized sense of proportions that complements the base shell and core fit-out.

'Key to the innovation of the concept was its flexibility – it was always intended that we design an office environment that could be manipulated in use over time. Generally speaking, the layout consists of open plan desking located to the back of the office, doing away with dividing screens and making for a community studio feel

with a hot desk approach to work where required. Two small meeting rooms and breakout space enable more intimate and group working as required.

'To the front of the office is Aedas' flexible meet and greet space, with four more fully equipped meeting rooms – two of which employ a movable central partition for larger board meetings and evening dining. Sitting within the middle of these is our flexible central zone, an easily

essential ingredients

Client • **Aedas Midlands** | Interior Design • **Aedas**

Fit-Out • **CPL Interiors** | Project Managers • **Marcus Wilkins/Joe Huddleston**

Furniture • **HB Furniture** 0121559 9111 /
Orangebox 020 7837 9922 / **Vitra** 020 7608 6200

Resin Screen • **3Form** + 31 (0) 883 367 600

Carpet • **InterfaceFLOR** 08705 304030

Lighting • **DeltaLight** 0870 757 7087

Fabrics • **Camira** 01924 490591

Ceramics • **Domus** 020 8481 9500

Grass Rug • **Turnberry Carpet** 01655 332183