

The Spine, Liverpool, UK

PPG coatings help to create 'one of the healthiest workplaces in the world'

Case Study



The Client

Royal College of Physicians

The Architect

AHR

The Location

Knowledge Quarter, Liverpool, UK

The Project

The Spine, located in the heart of Knowledge Quarter Liverpool – a central hub for higher education and research in the city – includes the new northern home of the Royal College of Physicians (RCP). Designed by renowned architecture and building consultancy practice AHR, the building has been hailed as one of the healthiest workplaces in the world, thanks to the pioneering research in biophilia, health and wellbeing that has been drawn on for its creation.

One of the most exciting new developments in the north, The Spine reflects the RCP's global stance as a leader in healthcare, using the latest innovations in wellbeing-focused design, while being a striking new addition to the Liverpool skyline.

Creating a Healthy Workspace

The Spine has been designed according to the scientific and medical research principles established in the WELL Standard to achieve WELL Platinum. Through the integration of architecture and interior design The Spine embeds wellness and biophilia into the building environment emphasising strong connections to nature throughout the building, along with the highest standards for provision of fresh air, light and water.

The distinctive façade takes influence from the human skin, with the striking Voronoi pattern including 23 million individual polygons applied to the glazing of the building. Inside the building The Spine's series of double height spaces known as vertical villages supports the provision of light to aid productivity and stimulating the mind.

Interior design solutions were selected with occupant wellbeing at the forefront, from natural materials, textures and finishes wherever possible to support biophilic principles and ensure air quality is kept to a high standard throughout the building.



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Cleaner Air with Air Pure

Working closely with PPG, AHR specified a range of sustainable paints including JOHNSTONE'S® Trade Air Pure – a bio-based wall and ceiling paint proven to purify indoor air.

“When it came to choosing paints for The Spine, we knew we had to find options that were water-based and would have the least possible negative impact on occupants. So we were delighted to find a paint that would actually improve indoor air quality. By using Johnstone’s Trade Air Pure, we’re optimising the air quality within the building and helping to enhance the general wellbeing of occupants, all while limiting the impact on the environment.”

Robert Hopkins, AHR regional director

Once applied, the revolutionary Air Purifying technology in Johnstone’s Trade Air Pure neutralises up to 70 per cent of formaldehyde from indoor spaces. What’s more, the formula is 45 per cent bio-based and comes in 100 per cent recycled packaging.

To complement Air Pure a range of low-VOC water based solutions were used to give the building long term protection including Johnstone’s Trade Aqua Water Based Gloss and Water Based Satin, Covaplus Vinyl Matt, Acrylic Durable Matt and Acrylic Durable Eggshell.

Natural Colour Palettes

The use of biophilic design extends into the colour palette chosen to represent the growth of a tree. Natural earthy colours flow throughout the lower floors, merging into greener, leafier colours and patterns and blues on the upper floors as you travel up the building. The colour palettes work harmoniously with the timber curtain wall and timber floor.

The Result

The landmark development is not only BREEAM Excellent rated for its sustainable approach; it is also one of the first buildings in the UK designed to the WELL Platinum Building Standard®, certified for mental health and physical wellbeing.

“The Spine is one of our most exciting and revolutionary projects to date. We’ve had the opportunity to place unprecedented focus upon what really makes a positive, healthy and happy workplace. Working with the RCP, we’ve achieved a design that sets the bar for the incorporation of biophilia and its possibilities in a modern workplace. With wellness being such a core part of our ambitious design, we needed to make sure that every single element positively contributed to our objectives, and the paints used were no exception.”

Robert Hopkins, AHR regional director

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