

New Council Offices Coed Pella

NEWSLETTER



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With Spring upon us, the Coed Pella office development is progressing well and Muse Development's lead contractor, Bowmer & Kirkland are less than six months away from handing the completed offices to Conwy County Borough Council.



Above: Coed Pella as seen in April 2018

There is a sense of excitement from staff and councillors about the move, and there are signs that even before completion of the building (late September 2018) that the local business community is looking to invest and capitalise on the opportunities of several hundred staff based there. For those Council employees and members of the public who are still unsure of the project's objectives and reasoning, or have concerns or questions, there continues to be an opportunity to ask questions through their Line Manager, through the Conwy website or direct with the Council's Project Manager.

Soon enough, occupying obsolete property such as the offices at Dinerth Road in Rhos on Sea will be a thing of the past, and it's important to remember that with the lease at Dinerth Road ending this December, doing nothing was not an option!

THE RIGHT ENVIRONMENT TO MODERNISE

The new Coed Pella offices will be leased for a 40 year term with an option to purchase at the end, and will solve a significant risk due to the lease expiry at Dinerth Road, as well as other significant physical and financial liabilities at other sites. The new offices will play a key role in the wider programme as Conwy looks to continue to modernise and to provide the right environment for staff to offer the best possible services. Coed Pella office cannot be seen as a building project in isolation, but part of a process of modernisation - building resilience in the way the Council provides services.



Above: Council Leader, Cllr Gareth Jones at a recent site visit (photograph provided by David Powell, Daily Post).

Whilst Colwyn Bay town centre may benefit greatly from the presence of Council staff, Coed Pella offices will be serving the whole of Conwy. In addition to providing significant floor space for office working for a number of front line services, Coed Pella will also provide specialist functions delivered to the residents of Conwy and beyond. CCTV and Galw Gofal will be brought onto the site at Coed Pella, within a purpose built modern Alarm Response Centre; when completed and accredited, this will be the only public hosted facility in North Wales. This puts Conwy in a position of

providing additional services to the people of Conwy and North Wales region and offers potential for income generation.

“To have several Services, with several hundred staff based on one site will provide an environment where there can be greater cross-departmental innovation and collaboration, as well as a greater sense of Team Conwy. This will then benefit residents across the County. Coed Pella will provide an environment where there can be improved networking opportunities and sharing of ideas between staff, something which is currently restricted by the disparate estate and lack of co-working space. The health and wellbeing of staff is key, as is the ability to attract and retain staff and Coed Pella will be key component in this” said Cllr Gareth Jones, Leader of Conwy County Borough Council.

SITE PROGRESS

A number of passers-by have commented how impressed they have been with the pace of change at Coed Pella, as the glazing and cladding work continue to give the building an iconic, modern and innovative feel. The design is not a typical Council administrative building, nor an off-the-shelf design reflecting a countless number of other office buildings throughout the UK.

“We are close to finishing the glazing to the main elevations, and the atrium has been completed which has given the internal space a whole new dimension with the amount of natural daylight coming in. The raised floors, as well as the suspended ceilings are taking shape; the space is transforming from a building site into an office. The amount of deliveries from Conway Road and amount of movement on a busy road has been challenging, and we appreciate the patience which has been shown by the community” said Mark Hooson, Project Manager for B&K.

A significant number of staff have already walked the floors of Coed Pella and have seen at first hand the progress being made. *“We have hosted a number of site visits over the last few months with the Council’s Senior Management Team, Middle Managers as well as a number of staff involved with the wider Modernisation Programme. What they have seen in terms of the amount and quality of space is so far removed from what they currently occupy. The space will aid interaction within Services, between Services, and with*

the Customers. As each week passes by, the internal configuration is taking shape of the forward thinking office which we were looking for” said Bleddyn Evans, Project Manager for Conwy Council.



Above: Raised floors being laid on the upper levels.

The Council have worked closely with Bowmer & Kirkland to arrange the site visits, and see this as an opportunity for staff to have an early understanding and feeling of their new working environment, months in advance of moving in. It also provides another opportunity for them to ask questions about the progress of their new place of work, or about the process of moving in and then operating in the new working environment.

The site visits will continue over the coming months as more staff will have an opportunity to walk the floors and as the fitting out progresses, staff will have a greater sense of what awaits them when they move in this Autumn.

“Staff engagement and consultation has been and is a key part of the project. We provided staff with the opportunity to consider the draft designs back in 2016, where they had an opportunity to comment and challenge some of the proposals. These site visits, two years on, are part of that on-going conversation and a key part of informing and preparing staff for their new working environment. The positivity, enthusiasm and excitement at moving in has been refreshing from those who have had an opportunity to get on site. The aim is that by the summer all staff moving to Coed Pella would have had an opportunity to walk the floors” added Bleddyn Evans.

A number of Heads of Services and Service Champions have already walked the floors at Coed Pella, and have

then shared with their staff and colleagues the progress being made on site and their reactions and thoughts about the new workplace.

“The building is impressive. I, along with a number of staff from my Service have had the opportunity to visit Coed Pella and ask questions of the Project Team. The potential for internal collaboration, as well as with other partners is very exciting, and can all help in improving the delivery of sustainable public services to the people of Conwy. Community Development Service staff are excited about being one of the first services to move to Coed Pella this Autumn” said Marianne Jackson, Head of Community Development Services.



Above: Members of Bay of Colwyn Town Council

It's not only staff who have donned hard hats and high visibility jackets of late. The Bay of Colwyn Town Council visited the site, on a cold and windy February afternoon, and had the opportunity to see the progress on what has to be the biggest development in their town for a long, long time. The County Council has been updating the Town Council on a regular basis by attending an annual Council meeting to provide Town Councillors with key progress.

“We are really happy to have been given an opportunity to see inside the building and see the progress. There has been good communication between the Project Team and the Town Council, and we have been kept abreast of progress, so we can answer any of our residents' concerns. A number of us are looking forward to having another look round when it's finished”

commented Jeff Pearson, Mayor of Bay of Colwyn Town Council.

Darren Millar, Assembly Member for Clwyd West, visited site, as did Lord Dafydd Elis-Thomas AM, Minister for Culture, Tourism and Sport, and were impressed with the Council's vision in modernising the way it works, but also the opportunities given to local companies to undertake work on site.

“I'm delighted to see the progress that's being made in Colwyn Bay and the way in which the developer has been engaging local firms as part of its supply chain. Kinmel Bay firm Evadx are a great example. They fabricated and erected the building's steel frame and, as a result, they are now exploring further mutually beneficial business opportunities with Bowmer & Kirkland. The local economy benefits from relationships like this as North Wales based contractors and staff then spend money within their local communities.” commented Darren Millar, AM.

ROOMS WITH A VIEW

Most of those who have visited Coed Pella have been amazed by the views across Colwyn Bay Town Centre and Liverpool Bay, and to the west towards Rhos on Sea, Penrhyn Bay and Llandudno, and then to the East towards Rhyl and beyond along the North Wales Coast.

A number have commented on the Town's unique architecture that can be seen from above, which isn't as apparent from ground level. The views towards Pwllcrochan woods from the rear of the building is also something which will add some interest.



Above: view west; the Little Orme in the background.



Above: view east; Mynydd Marian in the background.

“Colwyn Bay has a rich history, and has been subject to a number of phases of development, some good, some not so good over the years. There are a number of buildings which reflect town’s history as a centre for commerce, public administration, education and tourism. It is a town which over the last 200 years has embraced change. The artwork on the site hoardings that local school children produced reflects this. Coed Pella is a key milestone in the town’s evolution, and I think Colwyn Bay will play a key role in the County and the region’s development” explains Bleddyn Evans.

LOCAL CONTRACTOR SECURES CONTRACT

E Poppleton & Son Ltd, established in Colwyn Bay in 1924 and specialising in ventilation sheet metal ductwork are pleased to have secured the Coed Pella Council Offices project with mechanical services contractor A&B Engineering Ltd. Poppletons undertakes contracts throughout the UK, and Tim Hopkinson, Director said *“It is a privilege to carry out work locally, particularly on such an important and prominent building in Colwyn Bay”*.

Bowmer & Kirkland has worked closely with the local business community which has provided an opportunity for local companies like Poppleton to work

on the project. Mechanical services play a major role in any modern building project and the new council offices are no exception, the ventilation ductwork element being a significant part of the construction.

The company was established in 1924, and was originally based in Greenfield Road, Colwyn Bay, before it relocated in 1957 to Mochdre. In 2004, it relocated within Mochdre to a new production facility. Poppleton employs approximately 50 people within the local area which include CAD/Contract engineers, sheet metal engineers, site installation teams and many other roles within the company. The ventilation ductwork for projects such as Coed Pella is manufactured at their Mochdre facility, which is less than 1.5 miles away, using up-to-date computer aided manufacturing production methods which include plasma cutting and automated sheet metal forming machines. Around 12 installers have been on site over the last few months and Directors Nigel Edwards-Hughes and Tim Hopkinson recognize the importance of the project at Coed Pella. Mr Edwards-Hughes said *“Together with other major projects which we have recently secured, it provides the Company with a sound base to build for the future, and we have been looking to expand our team of office and site based staff”*.

The Social Value Plan agreed between the Council and Muse Developments has delivered a number of employment, economic, education and community initiatives during the last 18 months, and the involvement of Poppletons is another local based firm being involved with the project which has far reaching benefits on a number of levels.

PRINCE’S TRUST

The Prince’s Trust are arranging a second ‘Get Into Construction’ event at Coed Pella, which is a collaboration between Muse Developments, Bowmer & Kirkland, Conwy County Borough Council and the Prince’s Trust. It will be for those aged between 18 and 30 and not in work, and will give an opportunity to experience working on a construction site. The initiative is part of the Social Value Plan agreed between Muse, B&K and the Council. Further information can be found at: outreachwales@princes-trust.org.uk