



REAL ESTATE CASE STUDY

11 & 12 Wellington Place, Leeds: A bridge between two revolutions



Our Q2 real estate case study looks at how the site of a low-grade retail park in Leeds has been transformed into a thriving regeneration scheme that now boasts some of the most sustainable buildings in the UK.

In its time, Leeds' Victorian-era railway station was an icon of the industrial revolution, a movement fuelled by whale oil and coal. It is apt, therefore, that the site is now home to Wellington Place, a network of nine buildings that embody the best of a new revolution in sustainability.

The site has had many lives. After the central railway station was relocated to another part of the city in 1967, the area became a low-grade retail park with a footfall that had steadily declined over time. When work began on developing the six-hectare site from a place on the edge of dereliction to the vibrant public space it is today, developers MEPC and Federated Hermes – which owns the site – were determined to return it to the bustling hub of activity and commerce that it was a century and a half ago.

The redevelopment process began in the mid-2000s and since then, the people of Leeds have witnessed, and benefited from, what, to all accounts, has been a stunning transformation.



Dominique Murray, Head of Consumer Experience at MEPC, describes the journey: "The retail warehouses that used to occupy this site were unremarkable. It wasn't a place that many people visited and the surrounding area had fallen into disuse. But over the last few years, the area has come to life. There are now nine buildings, all of the highest spec. Along with offices, there are several bars and restaurants, a supermarket, cycling facilities, and landscaped gardens.

"The thing I love most about Wellington Place is still quintessentially Leeds: we've worked hard to create a real sense of community and many of the people who work here are local. People work and socialise here. In a few short years, it's become a big part of the life of the city."

The pandemic pause

Wellington place is the largest urban regeneration project ever undertaken in Leeds, and one of the most successful city centre regeneration schemes in the UK. Once fully occupied, the site will have a working population of 18,000 people.

11 & 12 Wellington Place are developed and managed by MEPC – which is owned by Federated Hermes Limited – and are funded through a joint venture between CPP Investments and BTPS.





The newest buildings, 11 & 12 Wellington Place, opened this year and are already almost fully let. Their development, however, got off to a challenging start. Work was mooted to begin on the buildings in 2020 – but then lockdown came along.

The Covid pandemic paused the development, but it also gave MEPC an opportunity to pause for thought. Inspired by the site’s heritage as an epitome of progress in its own time, the developers wanted these two new buildings to stand as an example of progress in our time. As a result, the team emerged from lockdown with an expanded vision for the future of Wellington Place.

Paul Pavia, Head of Development at MEPC, explains: “We believed that to be genuinely sustainable the buildings had to go beyond the pre-Covid-19 definition of sustainable, not just in how we constructed the buildings, but in how the buildings operate day to day.

“We sourced the best-performing façade, roof and glazing to limit how hard the mechanical, engineering and plumbing systems had to work. We eliminated the use of fossil fuels on site, and reviewed the specifications for each material used in terms of its embodied carbon, sourcing low or zero-carbon alternatives where feasible.



“The buildings have 7,500 sq ft of roof mounted solar panels – equivalent to 11 squash courts. These are set to save a forecasted 407 tons of CO₂ annually and will generate the equivalent annual electricity of more than 42 homes. The buildings are targeting 41% less energy consumption than the average building.”

The implementation of this vision resulted in 11 & 12 Wellington Place becoming a project pioneer for the NABERS¹ UK scheme, the gold standard for rating operational energy efficiency in commercial property. The buildings are the first outside London, and only the fourth in the country, to achieve a NABERS target rating of five stars or more, setting a new benchmark for sustainable development in the north of England.



Looking to the future

These buildings have brought the site full circle. 11 & 12 Wellington Place are among the most sustainable buildings in the UK and, as a testament to how far the area has come, the developers chose to make a feature of the last remnant of the railway station that occupied the site at a time when the environment was an afterthought.

Murray describes the structure’s significance: “The wagon hoist is due to be renovated into a mini museum and heritage centre during 2023. The Wellington Place project has also returned access to the adjoining historic Monk Bridge viaduct for the first time in 40 years.”

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¹ Run by the Building Research Establishment, NABERS UK is a well-established system for rating the energy efficiency of office buildings across England, Wales, Scotland and Northern Ireland

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