

Mace transforms Norfolk County Council's HQ into inclusive workplace

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Mace, the international consultancy and construction company has completed the second phase of the design and refurbishment of Norfolk's award-winning County Hall, on behalf of client Norfolk County Council who are committed to supporting a diverse and inclusive workforce.

Mace's Interiors team modernised 98,000 sq ft of workspace at Norfolk County Hall over 18 months. Phase 2 of the programme of works included the refurbishment of the north wing, the main tower basement and lower ground floor, improving underutilised areas with generous, open-plan spaces to accommodate 995 staff.

The scheme was designed by Purcell architects and has achieved the Leonard Cheshire Award for 'Most inclusive building/organisation' in the Blue Badge Access Awards in 2022 and was also shortlisted for 'The British Council for Offices' awards and 'The Royal Institution of Chartered Surveyors (RICS) Awards 2022'.

Recognising a breadth of needs, Mace created flexible spaces with accessible design features, placing ramped entry routes and automated solid timber doors throughout the building, as well as sit-stand desks, integrated meeting rooms and fully inclusive washrooms and shower areas.

The Council Chamber Members' seating area now offers increased wheelchair and motorised chair spaces, with improved general access to all seats through a hinged cinema-style seat cushion, and demountable chairs. A raised central platform for the Council Chairperson now accommodates wheelchair users through adaption to rise and fall.

The new design of the Norfolk County Hall allows members of the public to observe council proceedings within the chamber area via two accessible raised platforms. Integrated digital solutions mean that all

council related business can be conducted using digital devices with support functions, such as enhanced audio.

Originally constructed in the 1960's, the County Hall's concrete frame had degraded due to water ingress that had caused concrete carbonation. Mace led a complex programme of refurbishment, minimising the risk of corrosion to internal reinforced concrete so that no future treatment would be required.

Mace's Interiors team has a track record in transforming workplaces and offices for clients across the public and private sector. Recent fit-out projects include Peel Hunt, HMRC Nottingham and design and refurbishment of the Grade II listed Old Admiralty Building for the Department for Education.

Stewart Ward, MD for Mace Interiors: "We are delighted to have delivered a major part of Norfolk County Hall's refurbishment, breathing new life into the building to transform it into a contemporary, sustainable and inclusive workplace for all. Both design and physical upgrades have meant that the underutilised County Hall has achieved carbon savings and is now able to welcome more people and departments."