

GRAHAM refurbishes 'best practice' office, which hosts inaugural BCO event

2 years ago



The leading industry forum for best practice office spaces is coming to Belfast to host its first event here for those in the construction and office design sector.

The British Council for Offices (BCO), will be supported by [GRAHAM](#), when it holds the 'BCO Northern Ireland Talk and Tour of BT HQ and Talk on new BCO Specification Guidance' at BT's Riverside House building in the city.

GRAHAM is one of the sponsors enabling the event, which aims to educate and share best practices in the office space industry.

BCO, which is part of the Property Industry Alliance, will host the event tomorrow, Thursday 20 April 2023 (2.30-5.30pm).

Its decision to choose BT's Riverside House as the venue for its inaugural event is an endorsement of how forward-thinking the office space is. It will use the site as the benchmark for offices of the future.

GRAHAM completed BT's Riverside House in January, in what was its fourth contract with the communications giant, BT, and its largest to date.

Completed within 54 weeks and on schedule, GRAHAM stripped out and refurbished 13 floors in an upgrade that created 160,000 sq ft of new office space to accommodate more than 2000 BT employees.

One hundred and thirty construction specialists were hired during the live project while nine apprentices were brought on board.

Ninety per cent of all materials were sourced locally with a total of 48 key deadlines achieved on time, including sectional completion, beneficial use dates and handover.

BCO's event will include a presentation and tour of the building, showcasing its latest technology, flexible working, and collaboration areas for BT's 2,000-strong team.

The talk on BCO's new Specification Guidance, which focuses on responses to challenges emerging from the pandemic and recommendations in respect of greener and healthier offices, will be given by two of its contributory authors, Claire Danahay of Be Inspired Design and Peter Stocks of Cundall.

Among the guests will be BCO members which include organisations involved in creating, acquiring or occupying office space, including architects, lawyers, surveyors, financial institutions or public agencies.

Commenting on the event, Peter Minnis, chair of the BCO NI sub group, said:

"It's superb to see the BCO hold its first event here in Northern Ireland and at such a fitting location. The BCO's fundamental aim is to research, develop and communicate best practice in all aspects of the office sector; the new Specification Guidance we have recently launch is a significant piece of work that will help to inform the real estate sector on how we can best create sustainable workplaces which are fit for purpose both now and in the future.

"We would like to thank everyone involved in helping to arrange this event and we hope that it is the first of many more to come."

Speaking about BCO's decision to hold its first event at BT's Riverside House, Mark Gibson, Managing Director of GRAHAM's Interior Fit-Out division, said:

"We are very proud of our project for BT which has given way to a fantastic workplace fit for the future, transforming the way BT works and how it serves its ever-growing customer base. BCO's move to host its first NI event there is testament to this project which speaks volumes about how office spaces should look and how they should be constructed, and really endorses the fact this is a prime example of future-fit office space.

"We look forward to sponsoring the event alongside TODD Architects, GRAHAM's partnering delivery architects and interior designers, Faithful Gould and Cundall — firms that were also instrumental in the execution of this project.

"Riverside House is GRAHAM's highest value fit-out contract to date in Belfast and being able to showcase it to decision-makers in office space construction can only help to change the face of the office for the better and in line with BCO's mission."

BCO has recently released an early update to its Guide to Specification, in what is its most recognised publication, providing expert advice on how to specify office space.

The update responds to challenges emerging from the pandemic and the accelerating need for the built environment to respond to climate change. Among its recommendations are the adoption of 10m² space-per-person, increased levels of outdoor air supply, more efficient lighting installations and more flexibility in the range of structural spans for office space.