

Be First announces completion of London's first new generation multi-storey scheme, Industria

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JLL & LSH appointed to let Industria, a 45-unit multi-storey industrial scheme in Barking September 12, 2023

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Be First, the regeneration arm of The London Borough of Barking and Dagenham has completed an innovative new industrial property development called *Industria* in Barking. The development is London's first new generation multi-storey ramped industrial/warehouse scheme.

The scheme has been built to provide employment space for local businesses and help the growth of SMEs in the borough. It comprises over 100,000 sq ft of industrial floorspace in two connected buildings, one of three and one of four floors. The scheme was designed by London-based architect Haworth Tompkins in collaboration with industrial architect Ashton Smith.

In the past two decades (2001-2020) Greater London lost nearly 1,500 hectares of industrial land to other uses, the equivalent of over 2,000 football pitches. As a result, businesses that need to service customers in London (whether B2B or B2C) often find it difficult to secure space. In response, the Greater London Authority (GLA) has updated the London Plan to encourage 'industrial intensification' and make best use of existing industrial sites in London. Whilst Industria is not targeted at any specific sectors, the scheme is

well suited to support the growth of film and food-based businesses – two key growth sectors in the borough.

The completion of *Industria* by Be First marks London's first scheme to respond to the London Plan, by providing a new stacked industrial building that will bring well specified industrial floorspace to East London. The scheme comprises two parallel rectangular wings containing a total of 45 industrial units, arranged around three levels of loading bays and service yards. The workspaces inside range from 20 to 450 sq.m., providing a mixture of SME and Flatted Factory units and could provide employment for up to 300 people.

Industria is a cutting edge scheme that boasts a range of sustainability features, having been built to minimise the required land and carbon by optimising built volume and orientation and by employing a lean structure with energy-efficient services and controls. *Industria* was built to reach BREEAM Excellent standards, provide 2,000 sq.m. of photovoltaic solar panels and include green wall landscaping.

In addition to being a highly sustainable development from an environmental perspective, BeFirst has developed *Industria* with wellbeing at its core, featuring a number of amenities including a café, breakout spaces and cycle facilities in addition to visual features, such as green walls, which provide improved street frontage, shading, privacy and visual interest. Staff wellbeing is becoming increasingly important in building design and Be First's scheme is at the forefront of industrial design in this respect.

The scheme is located in the heart of the River Road Employment Area, a Strategic Industrial Location (SIL) within the London Plan. This area is adjacent to the A13 and close to new Barking Riverside station and pier and is home to many businesses that support the London economy. Property agents JLL and LSH have been appointed to market the scheme. The project also received £1m from GLA's Good Growth Fund.

Be First is a development company, dedicated to accelerating the regeneration and progressive development in the London borough of Barking and Dagenham, making it easier for partners to deliver successful projects, and ensure that Barking and Dagenham continues to be a great place to invest. Be First is a leader in its field, having delivered more homes than anywhere else in London over the last five years. The organisation also actively directs council investment and Government funding into new homes, transport, infrastructure and the public realm. Property agents JLL and LSH have been appointed to market the scheme.

Be First has also appointed Bewonder*, JLL's marketing agency firm to market the scheme whilst it is being let but also during occupation to create engagement with occupiers and the wider local community within Barking.

Darren Rodwell, Leader of Barking and Dagenham Council, said "I am so pleased to see Be First rise to the challenge of the London Plan and deliver such an innovative industrial scheme. Multi-storey industrial is a new concept for London but common in other global cities. *Industria* is a great example of making best use of existing land to create new space, new business investment and new jobs to support London's economy."

Jules Pipe, Deputy Mayor for Planning, Regeneration, and Skills, added: "I welcome Be First's innovative *Industria* development which showcases the intensification and modernisation of industrial floorspace in line with the London Plan, as well as putting small and medium-sized businesses at the heart of the local

economy. It is creating jobs and business opportunities that benefit the community, leading to a greener and more prosperous London for everyone.”

Alex Peck Senior Development Manager at Be First stated: “Be First is delighted to deliver the *Industria* development for Barking. We hope it will relieve the industrial supply constraints our borough has faced and help to secure new business investment into the borough. *Industria* is the first new development in London to embrace policy from the new London Plan to deliver a new stacked multi-storey industrial scheme. We look forward to seeing the building fill up with businesses and hope the communal spaces within the development will promote collaboration between them.”

Tessa English, Head of Urban & City Logistics at JLL said: “We’re pleased to have been appointed by BeFirst on this momentous scheme as they lead the way in industrial intensification in London, in the bid to tackle issues of land loss faced in recent years. *Industria* is symbolic of London’s energy to continuously adapt and change, along with the need for greater density and more efficient land use.”

Jeffrey Prempeh, Associate Director at JLL added: “There is a lot of much needed new development proposed along the A13 corridor, but it’s great to see a development that has been brought forward that is truly aimed at start-ups and SME’s and delivered to such a high specification such as *Industria*.”

Graham Haworth, Director at Haworth Tompkins commented: “*Industria* reflects London’s ability to continuously adapt and change, responding directly to the loss of industrial land and the need for greater urban density. Our project for BeFirst provides a model for sustainable industrial intensification, emphasising accessibility, functionality, and a strong identity that links it to Barking and Dagenham’s rich manufacturing heritage. *Industria*’s provision of shared amenities alongside flexible, high-quality workspaces will help foster a sense of community among the many businesses based here.”

Richard Flood, Director at LSH concluded: “We are delighted to be involved in such a flagship scheme as *Industria*. We are already seeing a lot of interest in the scheme and can’t wait to see it let up.”

[1] London Industrial Land Supply Study 2020, GLA