

Case study PowerGen Headquarters

PowerGen



A
PowerGen (now E.ON) Headquarters, Coventry
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Client
PowerGen

Duration
1992

Professional team
Bennetts Associates Architects

Our role
Circulation design advisor
User movement advisor

Key features
Building baseline study
Design development advice
Spatial modelling
User movement, behaviour and perception surveys
Post occupancy surveys

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The opportunity

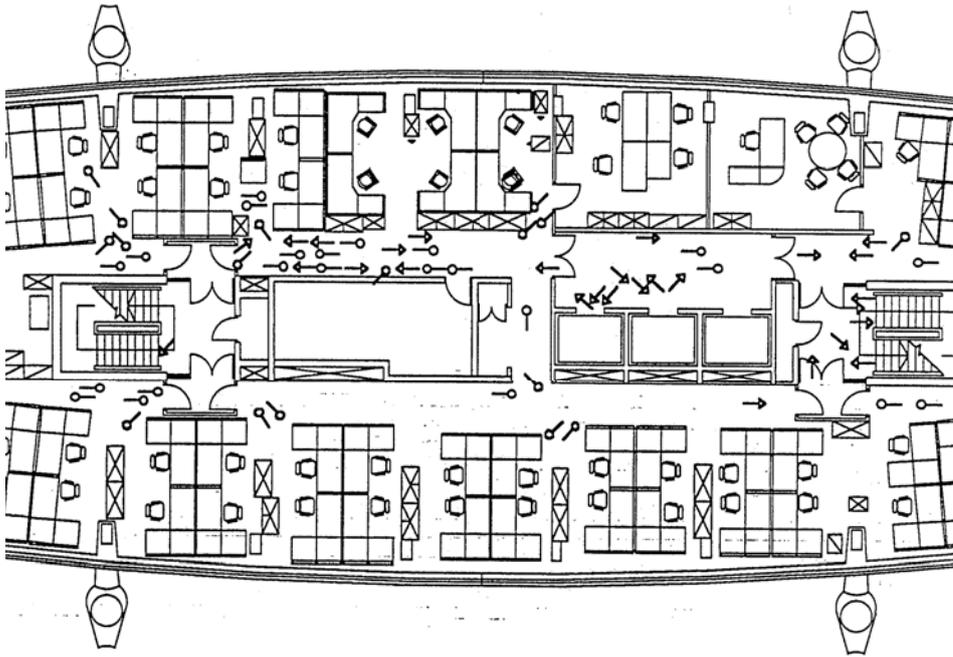
Built in 1994, PowerGen's (now E.ON's) headquarters consolidated a 600 strong workforce into a single site. The brief specifically called for the improvement of internal communication and for an environment conducive to the creation of a working culture that could foster innovation.

Our user-focused approach and the application of an evidence-based understanding of how spatial layout influences communication patterns enabled a design process that produced an innovative, award winning workplace environment.

Our contribution

Working closely with Bennetts Associates, Space Syntax's contribution was twofold.

Firstly, a combination of spatial modelling and on-site movement and communication pattern surveys of PowerGen's Solihull headquarters, established the importance of informal spontaneous communication and demonstrated the impact of an integrated building. The success of any informal communication between the different business units depended on the degree that individual departments were exposed to office-wide movement routes.



B A map of user movement showing individuals' locations and direction of movement.

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Secondly, using this information and using the spatial models as a design tool, we helped Bennetts to develop and test the design for the new headquarters building.

The key contribution was the proposal to move the main circulation routes so that they were adjacent to the street on either side of the two building wings. Our analysis showed how these changes had a significant effect on the spatial accessibility of the building and reduced 'cold' areas of movement. The atrium created visual connections between different floors while providing natural light to the workstations.

The outcome

The project won numerous awards including the RIBA Architecture Award and the British Council for Office award in 1996 and set a benchmark in the development of on-site surveys. Twenty years on, E.ON continues to occupy and enjoy the building.