Our new home in Liverpool: a regular update about our new building

As you can see from the diagram below, we are getting close to a final design for the internal floors of The Spine, our home in Liverpool.

Designed for our future needs, for the first time in our history entire floors will be dedicated to specific areas of our work. While there is clear labelling on the diagram about the purpose of the areas, most of our space will be flexible enough to be used in different ways.

We have listed co-creation as an important principle of the use of the space, so officers, members, partners and staff can meet and use the space to work together in ways that would not have been possible previously. There will be technological support for this, with integrated AV supporting modern educational methods and assessment practices.

The ground floor will be welcoming and include double-height space, with a cafe open to the public. The first impression will be that of a calm oasis, with planting built into the public and other areas as standard to support the wellbeing of those working and visiting as part of achieving the WELL standard for advancing health and wellbeing in buildings.

As The Spine is built on a sloping site, there will be another entrance at the other side of the building on the first floor. The two levels will be linked by one of the great features of the building – a set of large ‘steps’ where members, visitors and staff can congregate, meet and enjoy a coffee or sandwich.

The members area on the first floor will include different kinds of space – meeting space, open spaces to enjoy conversations with friends, or smaller areas where it is possible to hold a more confidential conversation. The flexible meeting spaces will include spaces for temporary exhibitions and display. Instead of a permanent collection, we will be able to host visiting exhibitions and also display the work and face of the modern RCP in the NHS.

Two workspace floors will house RCP staff from various departments including education, exams and assessment, care quality improvement, membership engagement, communications, finance, HR and IT. In addition to the usual desk space, there will be a variety of small meeting and gathering spaces, and confidential meeting ‘pods’, as well as kitchens and eating areas.

Our assessment floor will be where we will provide PACES and other examinations, including those for physician associates. This space will also be available to host similar assessments and tests for external bodies when not being used by the RCP.

The learning and co-creation floor will enable us to provide space for our care quality improvement and education departments to run their courses and also provide opportunities for partners to hire out the spaces. Our educational floor will include a multiscreen wall, a feature to support virtual meetings, teaching and collaborative working with people wherever they are across the world.

The top floor will be used for meetings and events both for the RCP and external organisations and companies – a flexible meeting space that can be configured in many ways to meet the demands of a wide variety of clients. A fantastic view of Liverpool and beyond will be visible from the top; possibly the highest vantage point in the city.

The seven floors in the middle of the building will be occupied by other tenants of the building, and the owners, Liverpool City Council, will look for healthcare organisations and companies to support the nature of the Paddington Village site as a whole. Our near neighbours include the Clatterbridge Cancer Centre, the Liverpool International College and the new Royal Hospital.

Sneak peek

This image shows the prototype of the trabecular feature columns for the new building. These special feature columns are technically challenging to cast, but are typical of the attention to detail that we are bringing to the new building. The pattern echoes that of trabecular tissue, bone or muscle that forms a supporting bar or framework within a bone or organ. The actual feature columns are taller and will be seen in the ground floor entrance.