

Vibrant healthcare

Attwood Green Health Centre in Birmingham is a stunning £13m development which brings together two GP practices and other primary care services under one roof as part of a major overhaul of healthcare provision in the area.

The 4,500sqm, six-storey development is located in a prominent position along Birmingham's Bath Row. Its bright exterior is warm and welcoming with its landmark status complementing the neighbouring urban regeneration. Just a stone's throw from the city centre, it also offers a range of health and social care services to a patient population of around 16,000.





The challenge

Attwood Green was undergoing a **huge transformation as part of Birmingham City Council's Park Central initiative**. The area was identified as one of the most deprived in Birmingham and in the late 1990s, plans were developed to clear the derelict post-war high-rise tower blocks and replace them with modern, low rise residential housing, all built around acres of urban parkland.

With new park-side housing being built, a run-down area changed to an aspirational one, and Attwood Green's prime real estate was snapped up by people looking for modern, affordable housing adjacent to the city centre. **Park Central attracted a changing demographic, including young families, students and retirees**, but the already stretched local health services were not equipped to meet the new demands. In addition, existing services operating from St Patricks Health Centre in Highgate needed to be relocated as the building was no longer fit for purpose.

Birmingham and Solihull LIFT (BaS LIFT) and its private sector developer and investment partner Prime, secured funding to build a brand new health centre. The facility needed to be home to both the Bath Row and Hyman GP practices. The centre also needed to offer out-of-hours dental services, physiotherapy, outpatient clinics, speech and language services, a stop smoking clinic, sexual health services, a pharmacy and a specialist drop in centre – all **located in the heart of the community it would be serving**.

The health centre was designed by One with a particular focus on working with the community to achieve an end result that everyone could be proud of. The vibrant yellow and grey cladding was chosen in focus group meetings after patients decided on a contrasting look for the building. The winning pictures from a local photography competition have also been used throughout to give residents a sense of ownership and pride in the new development.



“ Tracey Millward, Centre Manager, NHS Property Services:

The move has had a really positive effect on staff and patients and we've received so much great feedback since it opened. The building is spacious and light and gives each practice enough space for it to feel like their own but with all the benefits of shared resources. ”

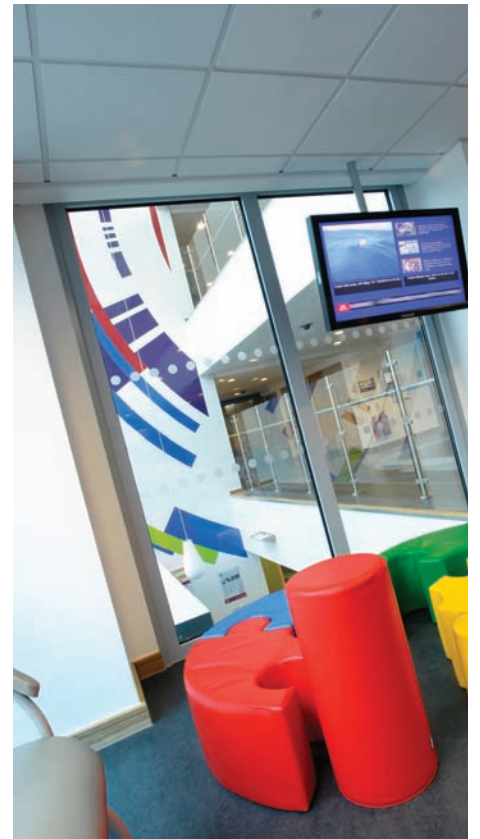
The solution

Built in the early 1990s, the existing health centre site on Bath Row was too restrictive for redevelopment. There was no room to extend the property and a pharmacy to serve the two practices had for many years been set up in a temporary building in the front car park because there was no room to accommodate it inside.

Further along Bath Row, a large site with planning permission for a residential development had been acquired by house builder Crest Nicholson as part of its involvement in the Park Central project. The Attwood Green housing association Optima decided there was no requirement for social housing on the site, so Crest Nicholson was keen to sell the land rather than leave it vacant. Prime used its property expertise to negotiate a good deal for the plot.

The planning permission for the new site was quite prescriptive. The building would need to be built up to the boundaries to complement the other properties on the 'urban boulevard' and had to be six storeys high to mirror the surrounding landscape.

Prime worked alongside BaS LIFT, architects One Creative Environments Ltd (One), the two GP practices, two PCTs, clinicians from ancillary services and the local community throughout the planning and design stages. The result is an innovative solution to a restricted brief – a landmark building that delivers modern and flexible healthcare services for this up-and-coming area of Birmingham.



“ **Robert Moore, Director of Architecture (Technical), One Creative Environments Ltd:**
The result of One's full service approach to this project is a well-loved and engaging building which delivers high quality, flexible healthcare services for the up-and-coming borough of Attwood Green. ”





Prime comment

“ Ewan Forsyth, Development Director for Prime (UK) Developments Ltd:

Our property and funding expertise has allowed us to deliver a functional and flexible building which goes beyond the original expectations for the provision of new health services in the area. ”

Project at a glance...

Attwood Green Health Centre, Birmingham

Statistics

Size: 4,500 sqm

Value: £13 million

Services and facilities

- Two GP practices
- Dental services
- Physiotherapy
- Podiatry
- Outpatient clinics
- Speech and language services
- Stop smoking clinic
- Sexual health services
- District nursing, school nursing and health visiting teams
- Onsite pharmacy
- SAFE project drop-in centre

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The benefits

Prime’s partnership approach is key to the delivery of this much-needed healthcare building. Working with the landowner and the two PCTs involved, Prime was able to secure a plot of land to meet the needs and aspirations of both trusts. The resulting facility has the capacity to accommodate more clinicians, not only allowing a wider provision of healthcare services on the one site but the potential for increasing the patient list size.

By opting for a separate site for the new health centre, Prime was also able to ensure continuity of primary care services in the area and create a smoother transition for patients and staff to the new facility.

The patient experience is central to the building’s success. The bright cladding and five storey atrium provide a welcoming reception, while the use of natural light in waiting areas and a recurring water theme throughout the community artwork and interior design create a calming effect to put patients and staff at ease.

Prime has helped bring a range of health and social care resources under one roof. This includes the relocation of the Birmingham SAFE project drop-in centre, which provides support to female street workers. Understanding the need to sensitively approach the inclusion of this facility at a family medical centre, the health and welfare services for street workers are delivered in a sectioned-off area of the building that has its own out-of-hours access point away from the front entrance.

