

2001–2004 Electric Wharf, Coventry

Lead artist to Complex Development Projects and architects Bryant Priest Newman for the design development of a former power station as live/work accommodation and 400 metre canal frontage.

RICS Awards Winner 2007, RegenWM 'Vision for Placemaking' Winner 2007 and 'Outstanding Place of the Decade' Award 2010.

2001

At Electric Wharf, we are doing three things:

- we accept the properties of 'place' and the dimensions of 'site' of the former Sandy Lane Power Station;
- in terms of the site, we are re-shaping the former Power Station in an unexpected and new way to produce Electric Wharf. Examples of this include the vertical glass 'box' inserted into the centre of Block D and the horizontal stretching of timber from one end of the site (the canal) to the other (the street);
- in terms of place, we are emphasising the vestiges or traces of the former Power Station to produce a narrative richness for Electric Wharf.

Frances Lord: Case Study Electric Wharf, Public Art Online, 5th July 2006 (Summary)

Electric Wharf, a mixed use canalside development in central Coventry, was created from the shell of Coventry's former Victorian power station and depot, Electric Light Works. Ian Harrabin of developers Complex Development Projects (CDP) engaged Sam Wilkinson of InSite Arts and artist David Patten to develop a Public Art Strategy for the site. David Patten, whose role on the project later became that of lead artist, worked with architect Larry Priest of Bryant Priest Newman Architects (BPN) to develop a Design Statement for the site. This artist/architect collaboration influenced many aspects of the overall design and material specifications.

A team of artists was engaged between 2002 and 2006 with briefs to create temporary and permanent works of art. Charlie Gallagher photographically documented the site before works commenced; Esther Rolinson designed Trace Elements, a major integrated lighting work which connects the development with the adjacent canal and muf developed a community programme to engage different sectors in the community affected by the development and produced subsequently unrealised proposals for a foot bridge and car park.

Working Note, 11th April 2007

"The concern with space bores me. I insist on my experience of sensations in time – not the sense of time but the physical sensation of time."

– Barnett Newman in 'Selected Writings and Interviews', ed. John O'Neill, New York: Alfred A. Kopf, 1990, p.175

"Energy used in making objects is now used in locating them. This art occupied eight months of my life – I began to travel."

– Dennis Oppenheim / <http://www.dennis-oppenheim.com/>

Electric Wharf, 10th May 2007

RICS Awards Winner West Midlands Final 10 May 2007

"...and there were two worthy winners in the regeneration category - Electric Wharf, Coventry (Bryant Priest Newman) and Ricoh Arena, Coventry (Coventry City Council)".

regenWM Vision for Placemaking Winner 2007

"...this transformation of a redundant Victorian power station and depot shows how a commitment to creative practice and a belief in involving the arts can lead to sensitive redevelopment of our industrial heritage".

regenWM Place of the Decade: Electric Wharf, 2010

Coventry's Electric Wharf has been named 'place of the decade' at a regional awards ceremony. Ian Harrabin, managing director of the developer behind the project, Complex Development Projects, said that the award "really helps put Coventry on the map and proves that we can take on Birmingham and win".

The judges said: "Joint working between artists, architects and the clients ensured overlap of ideas and made artwork an integral part of the design rather than an applied element."

The £15m project, which included the redevelopment of a former Victorian power station, was named as RegenWM's Outstanding Place of the Decade.

Electric Wharf now comprises offices, live/work units, canalside townhouses and loft apartments. It fought off competition from Bullring Birmingham and The Mailbox to win the prize.

David Tittle, chief executive of design watchdog MADE, was on the panel of judges. He said: "Electric Wharf was up against tough competition but the sheer complexity and attention to detail made it stand out from the rest.

"The project has huge potential to act as an example for the regeneration of other industrial sites around the country and has already been lauded as a national example of best practice.

"The project was exemplary in the use of artists in an innovative way and the dedication to recycling both the buildings and left over building materials was highly innovative."

The project was a partnership between developer, Complex Development Projects, Coventry City Council and Advantage West Midlands.

Ian Harrabin, managing director of Complex Development Projects, said: "It's fantastic to have won the Outstanding Place of the Decade in the West Midlands, this really helps put Coventry on the map and proves that we can take on Birmingham and win."