

7 CLARGES STREET

We take a look at British Land's new mix of uses in Mayfair, 7 Clarges Street

Artist: **Basel Upon**
Architect: **Squire and Partners**
Engineer: **Waterman Group**
Contractor: **Laing O'Rourke**
Developer: **British Land**

THE ARTIST'S ACCOUNT

ALEX WELCH, CO-FOUNDER AND HEAD OF DESIGN, BASED UPON



Based Upon is a collective of artists. We travel the world to gather narratives, memories, textures and histories. These grow into sculptural works in our London studio.

The majority of our work is commissioned. We create pieces which tell stories, which have significance for the person or company that commissions them. Each Based Upon work carries the intention of its maker; every piece resonating with the personal or physical landscapes from which it was conceived.

We often look to the natural world for inspiration, focusing particularly on the fragments and cracks formed in natural materials over time. It was the resulting body of work which resonated most with British Land and

Squire and Farmers, who were keen to draw on these inspirations to build a landmark, statement piece for the entrance to the Clarges development.

Together, we formed the concept for a monolithic piece which would fracture into two component parts. A single block of bronze, cracked in two, would reveal a polished golden core—its apparent imperfection transformed into its most beautiful asset. Balancing sculpture with function, as it breaks

required several processes of design and development. We experimented with maquettes, at different scales and in various configurations, before working by hand to sculpt the fractured break-point. Using 3D scanning technology, we captured these sculpted elements and combined hand-crafting with digital manipulation to create a final form in timber and cast bronze.

The desk draws inspiration from the natural landscape at its largest and smallest scales—referencing elemental geological origins and the subtlest ephemeral marks that exist only for a moment. A musing on time within space, the sculpture is skinned with delicate textures of leaves, earth and bark, which we cast, using alginate paste, on a single autumn day in Green Park—a short walk from Clarges itself.

one half falls away onto its side, forming a lower desk for less able-bodied workers and visitors.

Although the strength of the sculptural concept lay in its physical simplicity, the functional brief

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The sculpture is skinned with delicate textures of leaves, earth and bark from nearby Green Park



Sculpture with function—the signature bronze desk

THE ARCHITECT'S ACCOUNT

TIM GLEDSTONE, PARTNER, SQUIRE AND PARTNERS



From the outset of the 7 Clarges Street project, we engaged in high-level conversations with British Land to envision a workplace which challenged established conventions of standardised office developments, offering a distinct identity, exemplary facilities and an intrinsically Mayfair character.

Our approach focused on creating a bespoke office building as part of a family of new buildings designed by the practice for the Clarges Estate redevelopment, which incorporates Clarges Mayfair apartments on Piccadilly, 7 Clarges Street and the Kennel Club headquarters.

Inspired by the established Mayfair streetscape, the facade uses Portland stone as the predominant building material, with detail introduced on hand-carved fluted stone columns and bronze-framed windows and balconies. An illuminated projecting canopy marks the entrance, referencing historic covered entrances at nearby Claridge's

and Burlington Arcade. Fully glazed openings at street level offer views into the office reception area – designed as a gallery space in which bespoke commissioned artworks are displayed – and a high-end restaurant unit.

Internally, a pale limestone floor is laid in a subtle checked pattern inspired by British tailoring and craftsmanship, also evidenced in the selection of soft furnishings which display various herringbone and check fabrics. Feature walls are lined with European walnut and blood-red leather panels edged with contrast yellow stitching in a nod to British fashion silhouet, the Dr Martens shoe. A partition wall features a fine bronze mesh encased in glazing which is illuminated to add texture and interest to the space.

At the centre of the reception area is a bespoke sculptured desk commissioned from creative studio Based Upon, presented as a fragmented mass of bronze – dark and textured on the exterior and molten smooth inside – which on closer inspection reveals relief patterns made from leaves collected from Green Park. Local greenery is also evidenced in a large-scale bespoke light sculpture by design studio Halseclawbery, which features hundreds of suspended glass shards etched with a repeating leaf motif.

A bespoke rug featuring a graphic interpretation of the walkways of Green Park marks the seating area adjacent to the main reception gallery space, designed to evoke a Mayfair clubhouse style. Furniture and fabrics respond to the influence of nature with a tonal palette of greens, browns and reds, alongside original commissioned artworks by British artists – painter Neil Canning and sculptor Tony Evans. British Land also installed five smaller paintings by Gwen Harcourt from their own collection.

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Throughout the office accommodation, we continued the clubhouse feel with high-end facilities including a cycle area with Brompton Bike storage, generous changing facilities and leather-lined lifts. Office floors are open area and glazed with full-height glazing and external terraces on the upper floors.



→ Sketch showing the offices, apartments and beginnings of Green Park



Mayfair club style, opposite the main reception area



↑ Stylish welcome – the reception spaces



→ Dog days – the scheme includes a new headquarters building for the Kennel Club

THE ENGINEER'S ACCOUNT

JODY PEARCE, DIRECTOR, WATERMAN GROUP



The project uses an innovative modular flooring system known as 'Megaplank'



Waterman Group was appointed as structural, building services, civil and environmental engineers on this multifaceted Mayfair development.

With the London Underground running directly underneath the site, an innovative approach was taken to procurement to obtain early cost certainty and maximise potential for off-site manufacturing. In this project, the appointment of Laing O'Rourke early in the pre-construction phase allowed a full integration of pre-manufactured building elements to the design process, without impacting on the efficiency of our performance.

Structurally, the DEMA (Design for Manufacture and Assembly) products we chose included precast 'twin-wall' concrete walls and stair flights within the central core. The core was erected on a floor-by-floor basis ahead of the main floorplate programme, providing early safe access for site personnel and follow-on trades.

We worked closely with Laing O'Rourke's DEMA product team to research and develop a new precast floor solution that connected and interfaced with the steel beam floor frame to form a composite deck.

This new product, used for the first time on Charges, is called E6 Megaplank and is a solid precast concrete floor slab. Each floor slab takes less than 10 minutes to be installed, allowing the entire floor to be placed in a single day, providing site personnel immediate access on to the newly placed planks.

This also enabled the placement of adjacent planks and subsequent grouting of the interlocking stud and pocket joint that provides the continuous diaphragm action required for overall building stability. The column-free floor plates provided a good test bed for Megaplank, allowing us to monitor and improve the design and installation methodology.

The scheme required a holistic approach to sustainability and carbon footprint reduction. Our building services team worked with Squire and Partners to optimise the facade design to provide an appropriate balance of natural daylight penetration and yet sufficient solidity and shading to reduce solar heat gain.

To further reduce the carbon footprint, the building is fed via the site-wide combined heat and power (CHP) plant. In combination with incorporating 130 sqm of rooftop photovoltaic cell panels to generate clean energy, the building achieves 45 per cent betterment over the regulatory Part L2A (TER) requirements and an

exemplary EPC A rating.

We adopted low-energy features throughout the development, including LED dimmable daylight-controlled lighting, the latest DC motor variable volume control fan coil units and high-efficiency condensing boilers supplementing the CHP. Our strategic sustainability advice has facilitated the scheme's BREEM Excellent rating.

We delivered the full MEP services design to BIM level 2 and engaged at an early stage with Laing O'Rourke's M&E team from Croom House Technologies to develop the design and BIM model to suit the M&E services' off-site prefabrication strategy. Our design adopted a 'plug and play' approach with modular wiring and integrated plant control packages to maximise the amount of pre-commissioning at the manufacturing works prior to delivery.

The off-site manufacturing has not only significantly reduced all site testing and pre-commissioning activities; it has also increased the entire programme's efficiency and quality, and helped to accelerate critical path activities.

THE CONTRACTOR'S ACCOUNT

ASH PATEL, PROJECT LEADER, LAING O'ROURKE



There are multiple elements to this development, including a high-end residential building, a commercial block and the new headquarters for the Kennel Club.

Surrounded by busy roads on three sides and working on a restricted footprint, our priority was to limit in site activity, so the team used digital engineering to develop a design that exploited off-site manufacturing to its full potential.

Approximately 70 per cent of the structural frame and envelope of the project has been delivered through Design for Manufacture and Assembly (DEMA) techniques, generating a 50 per cent reduction in workforce numbers and a 30 per cent improvement on programme compared with conventional methods.

The building's Portland stone and brick-pannelled exterior, which sensitively blends with the area's architectural heritage, were manufactured off-site by Group businesses, Explore Manufacturing, Venter and GRC.

To minimise impact on local traffic, state-of-the-art logistics software was used for planning deliveries and collections, while digital engineering helped programme the temporary works, ensuring components could be accommodated on-site, ahead of installation.

Working within this heavily congested part of London, surrounded by businesses and private residences, required high levels of communication

and engagement with local stakeholders – and exceptional logistics planning.

This project also used a sophisticated hydraulic jacking method to construct the basement. The first and second precast basement slabs are placed on top of one another, while excavation is under way on the third level. The first slab is already in its final position, but the second is being held immediately underneath it – in order to make space for the work taking place below. Once this is complete, the second slab is lowered into place using hydraulic jacks.

One of the stand-out successes was the development of an innovative modular flooring system, known as 'Megaplank'. These reinforced precast concrete units (up to 9 metres long and 8 tonnes in weight) can be installed by three people in 12-15 minutes, meaning an entire floor can be laid in a day. They do not require propping and provide an instant structural surface, allowing immediate follow-on work.

This quicker, quieter, cleaner and safer methodology is an evolution of our E6 design, which was pioneered on the Leadenhall Building for British Land.

For the structural walls, the project team used Laing O'Rourke's twin-

wall solution, which comprises two 70-75 mm-thick precast concrete leaves tied together with lattice girder reinforcement. These units are craned into position, propped upright, while concrete is poured into the 60-100 mm space between the leaves.

For the non-structural walls, a combination of cast-form panels and smart walls have been installed. The latter, made from insulated gypsum fibreboard, come complete with embedded mechanical and electrical services.

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The project used preassembled mechanical, electrical and plumbing modules, manufactured by in-house building services experts, Croom House Technologies, and commissioned a number of bathroom 'pods' – fully fitted units produced by Laing O'Rourke.



The scheme represents almost a full Mayfair block

THE DEVELOPER'S ACCOUNT

ROBERT SAMUEL, HEAD OF OFFICE DEVELOPMENT, BRITISH LAND



Located on the fringes of Green Park, 7 Clarges Street is a contemporary new office development in the heart of Mayfair, encompassing 51,000 sq ft of prime commercial space across six storeys. Seven Clarges Street is one component of a much wider development by British Land, which saw the construction of a new headquarters building for the prestigious Kennel Club, and a high-end residential development of 34 luxury homes at Clarges Mayfair, due to complete construction in late 2017.

Squire and Partners was responsible for the architectural design of all of the buildings within the Clarges Estate, resulting in a unified streetscape with an enveloped sense of place, on a site previously dominated by an unsightly 1970s block.

Clarges Street is steeped in history, characterised by Georgian townhouses dating back to the 18th century, and yet the wider Mayfair area is seeing an evolution in its occupier base, with creative agencies, tech companies and art galleries showing increased interest in prime office space.

It was therefore important that 7 Clarges Street was devised as a contemporary interpretation of Mayfair traditions, remaining respectful of the existing urban realm while providing the unobstructed and flexible column-free floorplates that occupiers require for modern working.

Another aspect of great importance was that the building embodied the



←
Property cycle –
the project caters
for a high volume
of bike commuters

→
The facade design
provides a balance
between daylight
and shading

fundamental pillars of British Land's commitment to creating Places People Prefer, delivering space that has a positive social, environmental and economic impact.

Our research has shown that 73 per cent of people would like access to outdoor spaces within their workplace

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and the design for 7 Clarges Street responds to this, with step-free access to open-air landscaped terraces on the three upper floors.

Health and wellbeing play a key role in the daily life of many of our occupiers, and this building has been designed to encourage a health-conscious lifestyle. Situated close to busy cycle routes south to Victoria and north to Oxford Street, 7 Clarges Street has been designed to accommodate a high volume of cycling commuters

with a comprehensive suite of facilities in the style of a high-end gym or club.

Natural light has a proven impact on employee wellbeing and is an intrinsic component within the design, with floor-to-ceiling windows maximising daylight across all levels to ensure a comfortable and enjoyable workspace.

In the ground-floor reception, bespoke artworks by British artists animate space, creating the exclusive feel of a small art gallery. This focus on creativity and culture is also a reflection of the building's wider West End location, with a host of artistic centres including the Royal Academy of Arts and the Gagosian Gallery only a short walk away.

The team that has designed and delivered 7 Clarges Street, and the buildings of the wider Clarges Estate, have done so with commendable passion and attention to detail, resulting in a development that encapsulates our commitment to providing well-designed workspaces that result in happier, healthier, motivated and ultimately more efficient businesses. ■

