



overbury
a passion for perfection

MAKE DO AND MEND

Government departments get environmental rewards. Environmental best practice at DEFRA and the Department of Energy and Climate Change diverts 98% of waste from landfill.

ENVIRONMENTAL CASE STUDY

DEFRA and the Department
of Energy and Climate Change

Focus – Reuse, recycling and
waste minimisation



WITH CLIENTS BY THE NAMES OF THE DEPARTMENT FOR THE ENVIRONMENT, FOOD AND RURAL AFFAIRS AND ITS SISTER THE DEPARTMENT OF ENERGY AND CLIMATE CHANGE ENVIRONMENTAL BEST PRACTICE WAS A MUST FOR OVERBURY.

Overbury, the office fit-out firm has been employed by DEFRA for over seven years now and its Aftercare team has taken on three projects in the corridors of Whitehall over the past year. At Nobel House Overbury has installed a new gymnasium and changing facilities; in Ergon House, all bathrooms have been refurbished, kitchenettes renewed and a new emergency operations room has been fitted out; while at 3 Whitehall Place, a new ministerial floor has been created, along with meeting and quiet rooms on all other floors.

These projects are diverse and separate: however, with clients keen to maximise sustainability and incentives for environmental initiatives on offer, Overbury has used its contacts within industry and construction experience to bring multiple savings to the projects.

DELICATE EXERCISES

At Nobel House, making room for the new gym meant demolishing existing block walls but rather than the swing of a sledge hammer, cold chisels and lump hammers were the order of the day. The blocks were carefully taken down, cleaned and reused to build the new changing rooms. Additionally, insulation was also saved and reused – supplemented by new lambs' wool insulation. In fact, even the raised wooden floor of the gym wasn't new. Construction manager Lee Watson says:

“ One of our regular flooring contractors had recently taken up a sprung floor, so we struck a deal to use it. Recycling products on the job or from other projects is something we constantly look to do, and ask our suppliers to think about too. ”

PARTITION POLICY

Across the road at the DECC's headquarters, tight budgets meant more proactive environmental thinking. Watson's team dismantled partitioning from the space that would become the new ministerial floor, refurbished and reused it to build meeting rooms elsewhere in the building. Carpets were taken up, cleaned and re-laid, while existing timber fixtures were re-polished rather than replaced. Partitions that could not be used weren't thrown away but stored; none were taken off site.

Over at Ergon House, construction manager Barny Phillips saw an opportunity to reuse partition insulation and so surplus material from the DECC was transferred and used there. Similar to the DECC project, existing partitions were taken down and reused or stored for future use; carpets cleaned, as were ceiling tiles, too; even the old WCs were recycled, being ground down by a specialist company for use as aggregate in the manufacture of paving stones. Watson says:

“ It is this kind of pro-active thinking that saves so much money. We reuse and we minimise waste. And what waste there is can be mostly recycled with a little bit of work. ”



A CLEAN SWEEP

Watson refers to the waste minimisation scheme operating on these three government contracts. At each site, waste is sorted by hand into separate bins – metal, paper, wood, plastics etc – and removed from site by a specialist contractor. At Nobel House over 90% of waste was diverted from landfill; at the DECC that figure has risen to a phenomenal 98%. Watson says:

“Hitting these kinds of figures takes real involvement from everyone, from managers to site operatives. We train and encourage everyone to work to our goals and the client, Overbury and sub-contractors see the benefits: the subbies are now taking our initiatives onto other jobs.”

Watson and his team are making big strides in the drive to make construction more sustainable. But these strides are formed from small steps – minimising waste, recycling, repairing and reinvigorating materials, keeping eyes peeled for opportunities to reuse items left over from other jobs.



It's not rocket science but it does take a certain kind of devotion to duty. Watson recently found a home for DEFRA's out-going gym equipment, at his local running club; while spare carpet from Ergon House was used by the waste disposal contractor in its own offices.

“There are ample opportunities to reuse or recycle, whether on Overbury jobs or elsewhere,” smiles Watson. “It saves the client money and reduces unnecessary waste to a minimum.”

If you would like information about our environmental initiatives, please call **Liz Collett**, Group Environment Manager on **020 7307 9000**

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IF IT CAN BE
REUSED
IT SHOULD BE

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