



GIVE IT AWAY TO GO GREEN

Getting the Ska rating for the Audit Commission was achieved using recycling and finding innovative ways of sourcing materials.



ENVIRONMENTAL CASE STUDY

Audit Commission, Leeds

Focus – Ska rating

SOUND RECYCLING METHODS AND A NOVEL SURPLUS MATERIAL GIVE-AWAY HELP OVERBURY MEET THE SKA RATING TARGETS SET BY THE AUDIT COMMISSION.



“It was a great site to work on. Good access, a nice open floor plate, easy parking, there was even a Costa Coffee concession in the building. The challenge came in ensuring we met the environmental standards required to achieve the Ska rating that the client wanted.”

Says Overbury project manager, Darren Skarratt.

Skarratt and his team set to work on site at the Audit Commission's new office in Leeds, their task to complete an office fit out in just nine weeks. The client, who was relocating from an older office in the city, set a target of achieving a Ska rating and potentially a British Council for Offices (BCO) Award.

“The Ska rating is something that we are used to and can tailor our working methods to suit,” says Skarratt. In addition, “the BCO Award is governed mostly by the architect's design. To help we have been able to make some suggestions about the specifications of materials and fittings that could improve the project's chances of winning an award.”

After the tender interview Overbury put forward recommendations for a number of changes to materials and fixtures that will put the completed project in the running for a BCO Award.

SETTING OUT FOR SKA

More important was the Ska environmental rating. As the building in which this 240 sqm fit out was carried out is already BREEAM rated, Overbury had only to make minor additions to mechanical plant – installing DX units to the communications room air conditioning system and fan coil units to the landlord's supply.

The majority of green-minded thinking came in the form of recycling, using local labour and intelligent sourcing of materials. Skarratt says:

“Overbury has a nation-wide supplier network, but we targeted local firms for as many elements of the fit out as possible. The carpets, blinds, joinery and m&e equipment were all sourced from within a few miles of the project. Our sub-contractors were also local and they were similarly encouraged to source locally. This drastically cuts down the carbon miles of both products and operatives coming to the site.”



FRIDAY JUNK SHOP

The minimisation of waste is another area where Overbury swung into action, providing dedicated recycling bins for a variety of materials, thereby segregating them on site. Metals, paper and cardboard, plasterboard, and timber were all segregated to cut down costs and ensure efficient recycling.

“Another idea we had was to ask if anyone wanted any of the unused materials for their own use,” smiles Skarratt. “We had a sort of Friday afternoon junk shop, where site operatives and office workers from within the building where we were working were invited to look over the surplus materials. We put a sign up ‘spare building materials, help yourself’ and folks would come and take timber or carpet off-cuts, bits of plasterboard and the like for their DIY jobs at home.

It sounds a ridiculously simple idea and it was, but the result is that more materials are reused, the site workers and office staff get something out of it. These actions reduce materials being sent for recycling, so cutting down costs to us and the client.”

TARGETS MET

These combined initiatives resulted in a recycling rate of 78%, plus the savings made through the reuse scheme. Almost nothing apart from general rubbish has been thrown away.

Skarratt says:

“Like I say, it was a great site to work on. The job was completed on time and within budget; all the contractors worked well together. The site operatives and office staff got a bit extra too.”

The Audit Commission has achieved a Bronze Ska rating and is planning to enter the 2011 BCO Awards.

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

www.overbury.com



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