

SMOOTH OPERATOR



CW STUDIO

Blue limestone and swaying grasses create a relaxed, contemporary space

CW Studio designed the landscape for telephone answering company Money Penny's new £15m headquarters in Wrexham. The striking new building, designed by AEW Architects, is designed to accommodate over 1,000 staff. Set in a 10 acre landscape, it has its own 'village pub', an indoor treehouse for meetings and dramatic views over meadows, orchard, woodland and the countryside beyond, all designed to create a happy and relaxing setting for employees and visitors.

The brief

The brief was to create an inspiring and stimulating environment and a place where staff want to be, with picturesque views and places to relax.

The site was originally agricultural fields and rough grassland with one hedgerow, a

500-year-old oak tree and a seasonal pond.

The concept for the landscape design was to work with and enhance the incredible rural setting for the new building and to create a relaxing and inspiring landscape for the employees of Money Penny.

The frontage

A contemporary blue Irish limestone walkway leads to the entrance through a landscape of tall swaying grasses, echoing the natural landscape of the meadow beyond. Directional paths pre-empt desire lines towards the entrance and create spaces for seating within the planting.

The bespoke solid granite benches feature the greetings 'Croeso' and 'Welcome' in a vintage typewriter font with ink splatter as a nod to the work done by Money Penny. The text was sandblasted into the surface of

the stone using laser cut templates.

Planting beds feature an 'ornamental meadow' planting style, incorporating swathes of grasses with highlights of flowering perennials. Layers of spring bulbs complete the seasonal transformations against a background of hornbeam hedges and evergreen Quercus ilex trees.

The meadows

The 1841 Tithe map of the site shows a 'garden meadow' in this location, which we have recreated with five different wildflower mixes. They cover a variety of locations from wetland and woodland edges to sunny grass mixes and a cornfield meadow mix beneath the orchard.

A hoggan path meanders through the meadow and groves of trees, while mown paths in the long grass offer additional routes for a lunchtime stroll. A circle of cropped stone

blocks in the meadow provides an unusual seating option for a sunny day.

An orchard, planted on a grid of mown paths in the meadow, adds a contemporary feel to the rural feature. The trees provide apples, damsons, plums and black cherries; all species were chosen to provide fruit for the staff to enjoy.

The wetland

The timber deck to the rear of the building leads out to a wetland, which incorporates the

- 1 Verbena bonariensis to the front of Money Penny HQ
- 2 An attractive setting for a special building
- 3 An Irish blue limestone path leads to the building entrance
- 4 Solid granite seating stones in the meadow
- 5 Bespoke welcome bench made from solid granite with etched writing



PROJECT DETAILS

Project value
£660k

Build time
15 months

Size of project
43,500m²

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existing small, seasonal pond on site. Deeper micro pools and islands were created within the shallow wetland to provide a variety of habitats for wildlife.

Sustainable drainage (SuDS) was used to collect the surface water from the car park and building, filter and discharge it into the wetland, whilst encouraging biodiversity and creating a pleasant environment for employees. A wet meadow detention basin was designed to hold any overflow in severe weather.

Boundary planting

Areas of broad-leaved woodland, wet woodland planting, native tree planting, and species-rich wildflower grassland were created along the site boundaries. New woodland planting to the north links the central woodland to the river corridor.

Sourcing materials

CW Studio worked closely with Hardscape to select the natural stone and artscape techniques for the bespoke welcome benches, the cropped stone seating in the meadow, and all the paving on site:

- Main entrance walkway – Carlow blue limestone, flamed with mixed fossil
- Diagonal crossing paths – Kobra granite, flamed
- Stone edging – Kobra granite, bush hammered
- Stone benches – Kobra granite solid stone, honed with Artscape etching



- Stone deck to the rear – Kobra granite 'planks' flamed
- Stone seating circle – Split face solid Kobra granite blocks in a mown circle within the meadow.

Special requirements

The extremely wet winter of 2015/16 created



delays on site, as the clay soil to the rear of the building was too wet to work on with heavy machinery, delaying some of the tree planting until November 2016.

Planting included a total of 1,750 trees, which included:

- 180 semi-mature trees around the building, meadow and car park
- 1,570 woodland trees around the boundary
- 150 oak trees
- 165 birch trees
- 165 rowan trees
- 290 willow trees
- 440m of hedges
- 500 bulbs
- Over 1,000 ornamental grasses
- Over 1,000 wetland plants
- 12,000m² of wildflower meadow
- 10 oak saplings from the 500-year-old oak tree on site were transplanted and replanted in the meadow to protect the heritage of the tree for at least the next 500 years.

ABOUT CW STUDIO

Carolyn Willitts, director and founder of CW Studio, is a landscape architect based in Manchester who works all over the UK with architects, developers and private clients to create beautifully designed and functional spaces. Carolyn is involved with the detailed design and implementation of contemporary schemes, sensitive settings for listed buildings and private residential gardens.

www.cwstudio.co.uk

CW Studio

Image 1 © CW Studio; Image 2 © Alva UK



BEFORE



DURING



6

4

3



7

- 1 Split-face granite seating stones
- 2 Ornamental grasses bring a meadow feel to the frontage planting
- 3 The existing site
- 4 Constructing the wetland to the rear
- 5 Moving the solid granite blocks into position
- 6 Cirsium rivulare 'Atropurpureum' and hornbeam hedges to the frontage
- 7 The wetland with shallow areas, micropools and islands to create a variety of habitats

REFERENCES

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Architect
AEW Architects
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Stone paving and benches
Hardscape
www.hardscape.co.uk

Timber deck
John Brash
www.johnbrash.co.uk

Trees and plants
Crowders Nursery
www.crowdersnurseries.co.uk

Wildflower seed
Phoenix Amenity Supplies
www.phoenixamenity.co.uk

Bulbs
Boston Bulbs
www.bostonbulbswholesale.co.uk

Soil consultant
Tim O'Hare Associates
www.timohare-associates.com

Soft landscape subcontractor
Wrights Landscapes
www.wrightlandscapes.co.uk

Hard landscape subcontractor
Bora Construction
www.boraconstruction.co.uk

Main contractor
Pochin Construction
www.pochins.com

Development manager
Hatrick Property Services

Project manager
Avid Property Consultants
www.avid.eu.com