

New Education Hub For South Leeds

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Leading corporate solicitors Shulmans LLP has played a pivotal role in the creation of an education hub in South Leeds that could have a far-reaching effect on the city.

Shulmans' Andrew Latchmore, a nationally renowned commercial property expert, has been involved in three of the four educational establishments in the South Leeds area. Andrew was involved in the new Leeds College of Building campus on Black Bull Street; the Ruth Gorse Academy Free School on an adjacent site, and now the University Technical College (UTC), also on Hunslet Road. The fourth project was Leeds City College's Printworks Campus on Hunslet Road, on the site of the former Alf Cooke Printworks

Latchmore had to deal with a variety of complex legal issues in order to affect the successful sale of each of the three sites. Both new build projects, for example, were on land formerly held by the now-defunct Yorkshire Chemical Company, requiring a high level of expertise to ensure the seller satisfied the requirements of the buyers and the Environment Agency that all necessary remedial works had been carried out.

In the case of the most recent deal, that of the sale of 1.1 acres of land forming part of the Braime Pressing factory to the Leeds Advanced Manufacturing UTC Ltd, Braime was selling part of a listed building that had been built in 1910; the transaction involved structuring detailed arrangements for dividing the building, against tight time constraints.

Nick Braime, chairman of the business his grandfather and his grandfather's brother founded in 1888, said: "This sale enables the company to eliminate the costs of maintaining and servicing an area surplus to our needs, in turn providing new funds for the remodelling of our Leeds operation. Andrew Latchmore's experience was especially helpful throughout the entire process of negotiation."

Latchmore has over 35 years of commercial property experience and is a senior member of Shulmans' real estate team, one of the most successful of its kind in the country. He said: "Braime is a leading engineering business, exporting all over the world. There is no doubt that keeping the business within the city boundary is good for Leeds and students of the technical engineering college will also benefit hugely from being situated right next to a leading high tech engineering works."

Three years ago Latchmore was appointed chair for Leeds Chamber Property Forum, which has as a key aim helping Leeds evolve as a leading UK city; he feels that this latest development in Leeds' southern area will help it do just that.

"Traditionally, money in this city tended to go north of the river, and the south was, shall we say, less well off," he said. "But it is my belief that these developments could change the face of the city forever. Historically it's been difficult to get residential development in any city centre due to the lack of facilities needed by families, but this siting of these educational establishments will help address that issue, having a beneficial effect on both the city's economy and quality of life of the people within it."

"This educational hub will provide economic activity. Schools and colleges attract families. With the arrival of the Ruth Gorse Academy Free School for example, young families will be looking to live in the vicinity of the school, as will many of the colleges' students. It is significant that there is plenty of space for building houses in the south bank area – more than 10 acres of vacant land in fact, enough to create the equivalent of New Town, Edinburgh. The creation of a park could also be considered. All cities need green lungs," he added.

"The introduction of quality residential accommodation that is, crucially, fit for families, could go hand-in-hand with this new educational hub; it could pave the way for family housing in the city centre. There's a real chance here for Leeds to re-invent itself."

The landowner who prepared and sold the sites to both Leeds College of Building and Ruth Gorse Academy was Yorkshire Design Services Limited, specialists in brownfield regeneration. Paul Ellison, operations director, said: "We are very pleased to have had a key role in the early stages of the regeneration of the south bank. We are the vision of the Leeds Sustainable Development Group - which facilitated the formation of the Ruth Gorse Academy – that quality educational facilities are an essential re-requisite to the development of family housing south of the city centre. We look forward to this becoming a reality in the near future."

Yorkshire Design Services were advised by surveyors Michael Shield Associates, and environmental consultants Eastwood & Partners. Braime Pressings Limited was advised by surveyors Dove Haigh Phillips.

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Notes to editors

Shulmans is a firm of corporate lawyers with a strong reputation for high quality work, based in central Leeds. The firm employs over 150 people, of whom there are 22 partners.

The firm has a number of specialist teams:

- Corporate and Commercial (including intellectual property, employment and corporate finance)
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- Commercial Property
- Residential Development (acquiring development sites for house builders)
- Plot Sales (primarily the sale of new homes on behalf of house builder clients)
- QCAS (bulk remortgage work for banks and other institutions, sales and purchases for private clients)
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