

Grand Central Hotel, Belfast

A legend reborn

GRAND CENTRAL
HOTEL BELFAST

£53m

/ Project value

July 2016

/ The build commenced

June 2018

/ Completion

Grand in name and grand in composition, the Grand Central Hotel evokes the character of the past while encapsulating Belfast's vibrant future. Standing tall in Bedford Street as Northern Ireland's largest hotel, and the tallest commercial building in Ireland, this £53m project involved the transformation of a 1970s era office block into an iconic four-star hotel. It features 300 bedrooms, three restaurants, conference and meeting room facilities and an observatory bar on the 23rd floor, its 'jewel in the crown', as the breath-taking setting for panoramic views over the city. 6,500 individual sections of cladding, carefully selected from a three-grey palette, ensure the external appearance of the building is subtly different depending on the angle, time of day and weather conditions.

The Brief

A continuation of our trusted relationship with the Hastings Hotel Group, the new Grand Central Hotel's design, construction and finish had to reflect the dynamism and prestige of the Group's existing portfolio. Deeply ambitious, this modern hotel has ushered in a new era of high-end hospitality in the heart of Belfast.



"We are delighted to open the doors of the Grand Central Hotel and see the vision of our late Chairman, Sir William Hastings, be fully recognised. The Grand Central Hotel is a really unique proposition for Belfast."

Stephen Meldrum
Grand Central Hotel General Manager

“We’ve worked with GRAHAM for a considerable length of time and we’re absolutely delighted with the workmanship in every aspect of the new Grand Central Hotel. From our point of view, it’s been a really good project and GRAHAM delivered to our expectations to budget and on time. It’s been a remarkable achievement.”

Howard Hastings
The Hastings Hotel Group’s Managing Director

The Challenges

The tallest crane in Ireland, standing 475 feet tall, was manipulated throughout a complex two-year construction programme, which incredibly necessitated one flight path adjustment into Belfast City Airport. In addition, the existing frame, shape and flooring presented consistent challenges, particularly in transforming a 1970s era office building into a fit-for-purpose hotel - front and back of house. The Grand Central Hotel’s location within Belfast’s Commercial District, and in the Linenhall Conservation Area, also created logistical restrictions in terms of site access, high volumes of pedestrian footfall within the vicinity and considerable, and consistent, vehicular traffic.

GRAHAM’s added value solution

Our experts reinvented the 122,000 square feet building, which was originally a 1970s concrete framed office space, known as Windsor House, through an innovative design and build strategy that demanded challenging part demolition, rebuild and extension processes. Initially, the existing façade had to be removed before the entire building was reclad in an operation described as “the biggest jigsaw puzzle in Belfast”. Indeed, 1,810 tonnes of new concrete, equivalent to over 1,200 Ulster Rugby teams, were used on the project, while 1,280 doors, equating to three Slieve Donard mountains, were hung. Over 2,000 workers contributed to the completion of the four-star property, which was constructed utilising 560 tonnes of steel fabricated in Lisburn and finished with marble from Coleraine. All of the 62 sub-contractors utilised on the journey to completion were also all from Northern Ireland.

Outputs & Benefits

- / **Scale:** Northern Ireland’s largest hotel, and the tallest commercial building in Ireland
- / **Finish:** 1,280 doors were hung – totalling 2,688 metres in height while, 46,800 metres of plasterboard sheets were used
- / **Electrical cables:** 310 miles of electrical cables were installed, which is just over the length of Ireland
- / **Recycling:** 840 tonnes of concrete were removed from the old façade for recycling
- / **Environmental Sustainability:** An artesian well has reduced the Hotel’s reliance on the existing water infrastructure
- / **Local Partnership:** All 62 sub-contractors were from Northern Ireland
- / **Strong Workforce:** Over 2,000 workers contributed to the development



For more information on how we’re delivering lasting impact:

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