

CASE
STUDY
2023
Awards

East Midlands
Conservation &
Regeneration
Award Winner

The Birkin Building

Constructing Excellence
Midlands



"The recipient of the first maximum Heritage Action Zone grant awarded nationwide. I don't think I'm overstating it in saying that The Birkin Building Regeneration Project represents the very best of conservation-led regeneration – an exemplary building repair project twinned with a vibrant new use in one of the most significant conservation areas in the country... representing stewardship in its best sense."

Clive Fletcher
Regional Director
Historic England



Historic England

Summary

The Conservation and Regeneration Award 2023 was won by Spenbeck, a female-only, family micro-SME in a male-dominated environment.

Former home of world-renowned Victorian international lace manufacturers Birkin & Co, the 40,000ft² Grade II listed Birkin Building sits at the heart of Nottingham's historic Lace Market.

The Birkin Building Regeneration Project delivered the façade restoration of one of Nottingham's most architecturally and historically significant buildings to optimise energy performance and preserve it for future generations.

The four year project, lead solely by the two co-owner sisters, brought together Spenbeck, Historic England, McNeil Construction and Urban Fabric, specialist heritage stakeholders required to navigate the uncertainties and challenges both of Brexit and the pandemic to deliver an exemplar of heritage-led regeneration.

It has become the springboard for vocal advocacy for the urgent development of heritage skills and infrastructure.

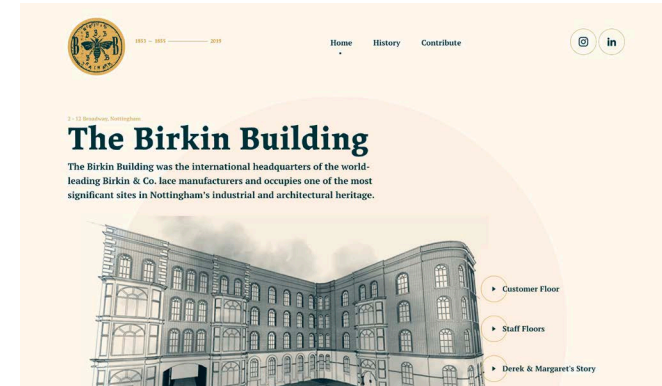
The project preserved and built on the legacy of Spenbeck and its founder Mich Stevenson OBE DL, both of whom are synonymous with regenerating Nottingham's Lace Market in the 1990s.

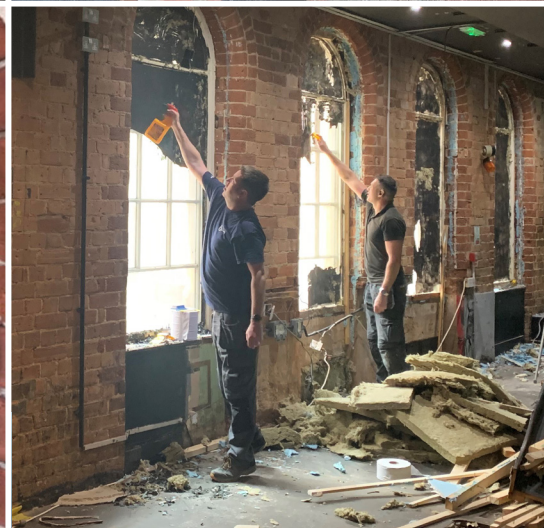
Why this project won

- Fully committed to the highest standards of building materials and project delivery
- Project remit was over and above what was needed, for example:
 - lead flashing on stone parapets which wasn't part of the original design to maximise the weathering protection
 - the creation of an interactive online archive to publicly share the building's history
- Expertise and passion for heritage preservation shared by all the stakeholders using a collaborative approach
- Commitment to ensuring the industrial and cultural heritage was as valued and preserved as the architectural
- Multi-award winning project with equal focus on building preservation, environmental and maximising social value



SPENBECK





Examples of best practice

- Deliberate use of local specialist contractors to drive regional heritage skills base development – excellent collaboration
- Support of specialist heritage skills for implementation
- Continuation of relationships throughout both Phases meant streamlining of the process and all round efficiencies
- Long-term trusted relationship with Historic England meant reviews and refinement implemented quickly to the highest possible standard
- Strong attention to details and the deliberate use of the highest quality, appropriate materials to optimise building envelope performance and mitigate against the impacts of climate change, for example:
 - stone sampling used and bespoke bricks fired to ensure exact matches
 - Burnt mastik and lime render to ensure the continued permeability of the façade and the proper performance of internal energy efficiency measures
 - Installation of lead flashing, not part of the original building but done to ensure the longevity of the building for another 150 years
- Project has been used for several case studies study for many different organisations – including Historic England, Nottingham Trent University, Nottingham Heritage panel to demonstrate both climate change mitigation and adaptation of traditional and heritage buildings and the need for a strong focus on heritage skills and infrastructure development
- Even though it was a private commercial project, Spenbeck wanted to showcase its building, knowledge and expertise so that its stakeholders could then share it with their stakeholders
- Use of the project to support skill development at Nottingham Trent University’s Schools of Architecture, Design and the Built Environment, and Nottingham Business School through facilitating student and professor site visits and the employment of stonemason apprentices via the lead contractor
- Both co-owners qualified in Level 3 Energy Efficiency in Traditional Buildings to support the project management and gain a full understanding of how the building performs
- Project used as the backdrop for the co-owner delivery of keynote speeches, expert panels, feature articles, round tables, university micro-credential and textbook case studies
- Strong environmental focus using the UN Sustainable Development Goal framework to maximise the positive social and environmental impact of the project and minimise the negative
- Vocal advocates for the urgent need for improved skills and infrastructure in the heritage sector to achieve government Net Zero targets





Becky Valentine
Victoria Green
 Co-owners, Spenbeck

@ enquiries@spenbeck.co.uk
 www.spenbeck.co.uk
 Spenbeck
 @Spenbeck1981
 @spenbeckltd

This project was managed by Spenbeck, multi-award-winning experts in delivering sustainability, building health, commercial and residential interior design client support, as well as sought-after office rentals in one of Nottingham's most prestigious addresses.



Value

The project was deliberately focused on delivering social and environmental value rather than solely concentrating on financial value and a financial return on investment.

- Focus on local companies with extensive experience in heritage regeneration and a commitment to developing heritage skills and infrastructure to support the sector
- Collaborative ethos to mitigate uncertainties caused by Brexit and supply chain limitations through Covid
- Approximate hours on project – 6,840 in total

Phase I 2017-2019	Phase II 2019-2021
Cost (exc VAT & fees) £149,460	Cost (exc VAT & fees) £147,942
Fees for Architect and other advisors 12.78%	Fees for Architect and other advisors 12% Architect 0.75% principal designer £500 structural advice
HAZ funding £50,000	HAZ funding £50,000
TOTAL £415,624 inc. VAT	

The social value of this project cannot be overstated. The Birkin Building is one of the most culturally and architecturally-significant buildings in Nottingham and the project was specifically focused on preserving not only the architecture but also the history of the business activities contained within.

The project fully aligned with Spenbeck's values of stewardship and custodianship, ensuring that the lace industry's heritage and wider impact on Nottingham's social and cultural development would live on for future generations.

The impact of the project went way beyond the financial. Spenbeck ensured that the investment was made in its widest sense: historical, social, environmental and architectural.

Contact details for more information

If you are in a similar circumstance then use this form of procurement for a guaranteed and insured price from a collaborative and effective team. See other CE Midlands case studies at [cemidlands.org/case-studies](https://www.cemidlands.org/case-studies)

If you have a project that provides outstanding benefits and demonstrates best practice to the standards of this case study, why not enter the CE Midlands Awards next year and share your experience to the benefit of the industry?

www.cemidlands.org