Press Release

Green vision, golden opportunity: sustainable lab space ready-to-go

Exemplar retrofit development in the Golden Triangle
60% carbon saving versus a new build
Be part of a net-zero carbon campus

Riverlabs is a new-to-market 28-acre life science campus in Hertfordshire which will deliver 440,000 sq ft of lab space with 141,423 sq ft (GIA) of ready-built, affordable, wet laboratory and write-up space available NOW.

Sustainability is a focal point with a vision to create a workplace that aligns with the UN Sustainable Development Goals and the RIBA 2030 Net Zero Climate and Bio-Diversity Challenge. The campus is targeting a 75%+ overall reduction in onsite carbon emissions to create a net zero carbon campus.

Availability, affordability and position, combined with Riverlabs' sustainable credentials, means this opportunity won't be around for long. Interested parties should contact the joint agents - JLL and Creative Places – immediately. Read on for more reasons to choose Riverlabs.

Riverlabs ticks every box

The 'RetroFirst' campaign, which supports prioritising retrofit over the demolition and rebuild of buildings, is gaining momentum with hundreds of architecture practices, organisations and individuals declaring their support.

Retrofit makes sense because of the substantial embodied energy savings made in repurposing existing buildings, compared with the ultra-high embodied energy costs of demolition and rebuild.

Riverlabs ticks all the boxes around sustainable re-fitting and adaptive re-use. 60% of embodied carbon is saved by retaining the foundations and structure of a building which means that future occupiers are already off to a flying start when it comes to meeting their own carbon reduction targets by being based at a retrofit lab.

Be an influential ESG leader by choosing retrofit

The trend for retrofitted buildings is growing at a rapid rate, with organisations realising the environmental, financial and reputational value of refitting existing buildings.

Trailblazing life science and manufacturing leaders are seeing the wider benefits in showing strong leadership on green issues when it comes to their real estate choices. Senior leaders demonstrating their focus on ESG is a key factor in talent attraction and retention, it's better for the local community and can improve the corporate bottom line.

These green leaders have a strong vision, a long-term perspective and act together toward achieving a better world – all traits which will help deliver transformational change on the business journey towards sustainability.

Become one of the front-runners of the rapidly spreading laboratory sustainability movement and help to address the climate emergency by seizing the unrivalled opportunity to secure pre-existing purpose-built lab space at Riverlabs.

The best path forward for creating net zero carbon labs

Riverlabs is being redeveloped by a world-leading team of designers, planners and architects. HOK, the global design, architecture, engineering and planning firm which designs buildings and spaces that respond to the needs of people and the environment is engaged on the project.

Gary Clark, regional leader of the HOK's Science + Technology practice and Honorary Professor of Sustainable Architecture at Queen's University Belfast, is an authority on green design. Gary frequently advises the UK government on sustainable policy. He says: "The only way to go is the sustainable way. Brand new lab buildings require far more energy to build and operate than most other building types. We need to opt for working with existing built fabric like Riverlabs, rather than demolition and rebuild."

As a former chair of the Royal Institute of British Architects (RIBA) Sustainable Futures Group, he has helped shape its official policy and guidance on energy-efficient buildings and resilient design: "The most sustainable lab space option is to reuse and adapt existing buildings. This 'retrofit first' principle will save over 500 kgCO2 e/m2 of embodied carbon without the use of limited global timber supply. It is our best way to achieve net zero carbon for our sector and an opportunity to re-invent the built environment," he says.

Riverlabs Project Director Graeme Anderson, a life sciences industry veteran with over 35 years' experience advising many of the top 10 global life sciences companies in the world adds: "The repurposing of the GSK R&D facility at Ware is a unique opportunity in the UK to provide a highly efficient low carbon solution. Orchestrated by a very talented team of scientists, the campus has seen many world firsts for innovation and scientific advancement throughout its history and it remains an ideal location that truly meets todays needs for a superior quality work/life balance.

"The professional team has developed a best-in-class solution to provide fully flexible wet labs and write up space using the most sustainable materials and technologies available to future proof the development, meeting current and ongoing trends to net zero, with highly efficient renewable power solutions throughout."

Sustainability in action

By taking a 'fabric first' approach to Riverlabs, the performance of the components and materials that make up the building fabric itself will be maximised, capital and operational costs will be reduced, energy efficiency will be improved, carbon emissions reduced, and the need for future maintenance will be reduced.

Not only that, the use of advanced building systems at Riverlabs will make the buildings smarter, more sustainable, energy-efficient, and resilient.

Lab owners will be able to offset their energy-hungry lab through a whole building approach to energy efficiency - part of a holistic approach to Riverlabs' low-energy design. And on top of that, occupiers can significantly reduce their carbon dependency with the addition of on-site renewables.

Sustainable biodiversity is also key with regenerative landscaping, sustainable water cycle, sustainable urban greening, and enhanced biodiversity planned on site.

High-spec wet lab space available NOW

An intelligent refresh, transforming the Campus' current labs into modern, welcoming and sustainable working environments, will take place in three phases in order to address the chronic shortage of UK life science space with almost immediate effect.

Currently available is Riverlabs 1. With occupation possible from May 2023, Riverlabs 1 offers 141,423 sq ft (GIA) of ready-built, affordable, wet laboratory and write-up space over four floors. The accommodation will be extensively refurbished to suit occupier needs with the benefit of existing high-quality equipment, including ducted fume cupboard provision.

The next opportunity, available for fit-out from May 2023 is Riverlabs 2 – 219,900 sq ft (GIA) of wet laboratory and write-up space over three floors. The first floor consists of existing fully fitted flex-labs with the remainder of the building refurbished to the latest industry standards. The labs are suitable for use from CL2 to CL4 with a maximum 30 air changes per hour.

Situated in Ware, Hertfordshire, within a 45 min radius of London, Cambridge and the established Cell & Gene Therapy cluster in Stevenage, Riverlabs puts occupiers at the heart of the Golden Triangle.

The race for space

With the huge demand for lab space and the lack of immediate availability, especially for retrofit labs, these spaces won't be around for long - there isn't anything else like this in the UK market right now. Don't delay, contact the agents today.

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