



# CASE STUDY – National Grid

The refurbishment of a commercial property owned and leased by National Grid

## Challenge

National Grid is responsible for a vast estate of c.1,680 properties and land holdings across the UK, and one such property is this former call centre at Swan Lane in West Bromwich. During a vacant period the building became the target of vandals, who stripped it of any valuables. Following this, National Grid sought a contractor capable of delivering the diverse works necessary to make it a safe and rentable facility once again.

## Solution

VINCI Facilities' construction arm, 'Building Solutions', secured the contract thanks to its vast experience conducting similar commercial refurbishment projects for the likes of Lothbury Property Trust, Ropemaker Properties, and Royal Mail. Now complete, the following aspects proved crucial to the project's success:

**Flexibility/rapid mobilisation:** Thanks to Building Solutions' efficient operations, it was able to mobilise the project and deliver M&E design works within just three weeks – less than half of the standard time frame. In addition, Building Solutions demonstrated a flexible approach during this mobilisation period, as significant revisions to the scope of works required us to adapt at short notice and re-phase the programme as necessary while still meeting the original delivery period.

**Challenging the brief:** The initial brief was designed to enable the site to be used for an operation with a small headcount, such as a warehouse. However, Building Solutions challenged this brief, suggesting that if it was adjusted to incorporate a few modest additions (such as extra sockets, larger IT cabling containment, and more powerful air handling units) then the facility would also become suitable for a large headcount operation, such as a call centre. As a result, the brief was adjusted accordingly, in turn both maximising the flexibility of the site and enabling tenants to expand their operations as their business grows.

**Maximising security:** Due to the history of vandalism at the site, Building Solutions invested in a 24-hour manned security provision, with further support being provided by Building Solutions' Project Manager, who was available 24/7 via phone in the event of any emergencies.

**Continuous improvement:** A culture of knowledge sharing was established, with both parties subsequently adopting each other's best practice initiatives within their own organisations. For example, Building Solutions adopted National Grid's Bucket Down Policy, which ensures that any diggers lower their buckets and switch off their engines whenever someone walks within 5 metres of the machine. Similarly, National Grid adopted Building Solutions' Health and Safety Dashboard, a report which summarises all accidents, inspection scores, close calls, positive interventions, and performance league tables for site managers and subcontractors.

## Impact

**Project delivery:** The project was successfully delivered on time and on budget.

**Health, Safety, Environmental (HSE):** Building Solutions achieved positive scores across all 44 HSE KPIs, along with achieving zero accidents and environmental incidents.

**Investment in local supply chain:** The project saw c.£550k invested in local suppliers.

**Customer satisfaction:** Building Solutions' customer satisfaction survey saw us achieve an average score of 8.75/10, with many areas scoring the full 10/10, including H&S, professionalism and attitude, and understanding the client's organisation and culture. Due to the project's success, the contract administrator, Capita, has subsequently requested that Building Solutions prices for c.£200k of similar works in Romford.

## Contract information

- **Client:** National Grid
- **Location:** West Bromwich
- **Value:** £650k
- **Time frame:** Aug-Nov 2016
- **Contract:** NEC Contract
- **Internal scope of works:**
  - » Complete strip out
  - » M&E works
  - » Replacement of lighting, air handling units, roller shutters, windows & doors
  - » Removal of structural walls and installation of steel beams
  - » Creation of facilities including offices, reception, canteen, toilets, and plant room
- **External scope of works:**
  - » Replacement of curtain walling and cladding to external façade
  - » Removal of earth contaminated with oil and liquid gas
  - » Demolition of portacabins, and removal of associated asbestos
  - » Block paving, tarmacking and landscaping



"You all did a great job. On time, on budget and with a great SHE culture."

Richard Alden  
Head of National Grid Property