

WINNER

Wokingham Medical Centre

ARCHITECT

Barbara Weiss Architects

LOCATION Wokingham, Berkshire

COST £2.4 million

CLIENT TH-RR GP Practice

DATE January 2014

A developer-built 1980s office block has been converted into a state-of-the-art medical practice and, as our judges confirm, the transformation is 'stunning'.

Anticipating a rise in patient numbers triggered by the completion of 2,000 new homes in the area, the brief for converting the building was to improve accessibility and expand its footprint so that the practice could offer new services and an on-site pharmacy.

For reasons of cost, demolition was not an option, and the design responds to the extra spatial requirements by adding a penthouse conference room on the roof, expanding the footprint of the building by a third.

An extra benefit of the extension was the dismantling of the existing frontage, which was replaced with a new facade, notable for its oak curtain walling and 'intelligent glass', which our judges said would give visitors a 'good feeling about visiting this building'.

Internally, the existing steel columns were encased in internal walls, removed or transformed into colorful features.

In consulting rooms, blinds and curtains (which require refreshing every six months for hygiene reasons) have been replaced with windows, which, at the flick of a switch, can alternate between transparent and opaque.

Sustainability has been addressed by incorporating passive fabric improvements, replacing existing windows and creating cross-ventilation and night-time cooling. The annual predicted CO₂ emissions are 23.2kg/m².

SHORTLIST

• **Birmingham Children's Hospital MAU/HDU Alterations**
Horsley Huber Architects

• **Morrill Street Health Centre**
Hull Citycare

• **Guy's Tower External Retrofit**
Penoyre & Prasad



A penthouse conference room has been added on the roof



The existing frontage was dismantled and replaced with a new facade

PAUL RIDDLE

JUDGES' COMMENTS



Robin Nicholson

'The everyday crap we have to deal with has been turned into a great building. The transformation is stunning.

Barbara Weiss has risen to the challenge'



Roger Hawkins

'You get the sense everyone would have a good feeling about this building. It hasn't had money thrown at it'

→ Best Practice

- A model for how a medical practice can revitalise a vacant, outmoded office block.
- Bold facade transformation with white render, timber curtain-walling, entrance canopy and glazed ground floor.
- Infilling of original L-shaped plan and discrete rooftop pavilion increase floor area by over one-third.
- Cost-conscious approach to enhancing existing features, such as new car for lift.
- Rigorous handling of existing columns and bulkheads.