



History of MediaCityUK

Birth of a city

Appropriately enough, the UK's first media city has its roots in the ambitions of one of the world's biggest media brands... Back in late 2004 the BBC announced it was searching for a new northern centre where it could relocate five London-based departments. In August 2005, Salford Quays was shortlisted as one of four potential sites being considered by the Corporation, along with another in Salford and two in Manchester.

By January 2006 four had become two, with Salford Quays pitted against the Central Spine scheme in Manchester for the final stretch of the competition. It was at this stage that the MediaCityUK concept was truly born. A team of public sector bodies – the Northwest Regional Development Agency, Central Salford Urban Regeneration Company and Salford City Council – worked with site owners and developers the Peel Group to create a long-term proposal for a brand new media district supporting a whole host of like-minded businesses; a true digital hub, inspired by media clusters in cities like Dubai and Singapore.

This vision for a shared creative community proved compelling to the BBC, who selected MediaCityUK as their preferred site in July 2006. Our management contractor, Bovis Lend Lease started the construction of Phase One in summer 2007, and during the building period, a daily average of 2,000 personnel was on site.

Port to portal

MediaCityUK might be transforming the Salford Quays skyline, but it's really only the latest reincarnation of a corner of the world which already has an impressive track record of innovation. For much of the twentieth century the area was dominated by Salford Docks, a lynchpin of the region's industrial might and once one of the country's busiest dock systems. Opened by Queen Victoria in 1894, it was the terminal docks of the Manchester Ship Canal and handled millions of tonnes of cargo each year.

Along with many of its counterparts, Salford Docks suffered from the decline of heavy industry and the containerisation of shipping. It was finally closed in 1982, leaving the disused piers and waterways at risk of becoming a wasteland. But in 1985 the Salford Quays Development Plan was unveiled, signalling the start of one of the UK's first – and biggest – urban regeneration projects. During the intervening 25 years the area has made the gradual transition from dockland to destination, with attractions like The Lowry arts centre and Imperial War Museum North helping to bring in millions of tourists each year.

MediaCityUK has given The Quays a new opportunity to shine on the world stage – only this time we're dealing with creative content rather than container ships.

