

## **Construction super campus phoenix rises from the ashes in The Smoke**

The University of Wolverhampton celebrated its investment of £100 million in a construction super campus at a prestigious event at the House of Lords in London.

The investment is part of the University's 'Our Vision – Your Opportunity' £250 million ambitious project to invest in world class education and training in support of economic growth in the region. The regeneration of the former [Springfield Brewery](#) in Wolverhampton has brought together businesses and the education sector with the aim of creating jobs and providing technical and professional experts required by the industry.

The derelict 12 acre site, a former Grade II listed brewery, is currently being transformed into Europe's largest specialist construction and built environment campus, providing a pathway for construction education and training from the age of 14 through to senior professionalism.

The transformed site is currently the home of the newly opened West Midlands Construction University Technical College with plans in place to start work on the University's School of Architecture and Built Environment. A hub for the [Elite Centre for Manufacturing Skills](#) is due to open in September this year.

The event at the House of Lords, hosted by the University's Chancellor, Lord Swraj Paul, brought [Faculty of Science & Engineering](#) staff together with key people from construction companies, education trade and technical awarding bodies and former Springfield Brewery employees to celebrate the completion of its first phase.

Professor Geoff Layer, Vice-Chancellor at the University of Wolverhampton, said: "The House of Lords celebration event recognised the efforts and commitment of partners who have invested time and money in the first phase of this ambitious project whilst at the same time highlighting that there are opportunities for developers, investors and partners to work with us on phase two of the project.

"Construction is a vital growth sector for the Black Country with the global construction industry forecast to grow by more than 70% over the next ten years. The new super campus will be well placed to take advantage of this rising international demand with strengths in architecture, engineering and sustainable construction – all designed to address the national skills shortage of engineers and construction workers."

Chris Blythe, Chief Executive of the [Chartered Institute of Builders](#), who was a guest speaker at the event, said: "The construction industry isn't different to any other industry. We have the ability to pull together many strings of activity and we can't continue to have wistful and wasteful concepts for growth. We need innovative approaches to skills and training.

"Building is at the heart of quality of life for people and we need a seamless transition from the past to the future. Springfield will most certainly make that difference."

James Hewitt was the Brewery Manager at Springfield, following in the footsteps of his father Geoffrey, who had been head brewer. He said: "I loved working at Springfield; the people were lovely and the atmosphere of the whole place was really good. I very much enjoyed visiting the site and seeing the marvellous reconstruction that is occurring."

The Springfield site was originally purchased in 1873 by William Butler to house his growing brewing business, with the Springfield Brewery opening in 1874 under the William Butler and

Company name. The brewery closed in 1991 and a fire destroyed much of the historic structure in 2004. The University purchased the site in 2014.