

# Active Design



CREATING ACTIVE ENVIRONMENTS  
THROUGH PLANNING AND DESIGN

## CASE STUDY

### Activity at and around work

Supported by



## CASE STUDY

## Activity at and around work

## Fact File

Name: **Activity at and around work**

Location (town, county): **Various**

Local planning authority: **Various**

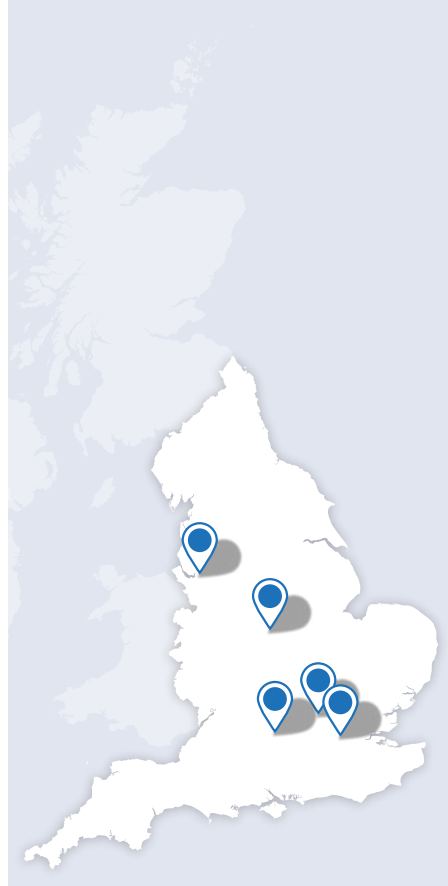
Date of planning consent/  
construction/completion: **Various**

Case study type: **Employment**

There are many different types of employment and working environments, and millions of us spend considerable amounts of our lives there. The principles of Active Design can be applied across a wide range of employment locations, encouraging people at work to be physically active, and making the areas in which people work more conducive to active travel and physical activity.

This case study draws from several different locations to give an overview of how Active Design can be applied at work and in areas where people work:

1. Maylands, Hemel Hempstead – an older industrial estate being transformed
2. Here East, Olympic Park, London – a new mixed creative and innovation district
3. Rutherford Appleton Laboratory and Daresbury Laboratory – large institutions with complex employment characteristics
4. Baytree Nuneaton – a large modern warehousing facility



## ACTIVE DESIGN PRINCIPLES IN ACTION:



### How it happened

- At Maylands, a recognition that regeneration was required translated into a masterplan that prioritised mixing uses, active travel-friendly streets and a healthy environment to ensure the district retained its long-term competitiveness.
- At Here East, the sporting legacy of the 2012 Olympics was put into practice through creative repurposing of the buildings and spaces around them.
- The Rutherford Appleton and Daresbury Laboratories, are large institutions away from nearby facilities and this has meant that on-site provision of sports and recreational facilities were included, and staff demand is driving new provision and improved cycling facility provision.
- At Baytree Nuneaton, the demands of a competitive labour market means employers are keen to retain and attract employees with an improved quality of workspace, and to minimise loss of work due to ill health. These factors have combined to make health and wellbeing key design points of the buildings.

### Why is it successful?

- Enabling people to be active during their working day, especially for those who work in offices and are largely sedentary in their employment, can bring significant benefits to the workforce's health and overall happiness.

### Lessons Learned

- Activity can be incorporated into a wide variety of work environments, and the main requirement is a recognition that employees want to work in healthy places and workspaces, with access to sport and recreational facilities during downtime.
- Early masterplanning of new sites and schemes can yield significant benefits by articulating a vision for an active and healthy place.





# Applying the principles

## Maylands, Hemel Hempstead

Maylands is a major mixed industrial estate, created as part of the 1947 New Town plan for Hemel Hempstead. Formerly the home of Kodak in Europe, it now hosts a vibrant mix of light industrial, office and warehousing uses. To support its regeneration, a masterplan was prepared to guide new development into a more mixed and integrated district.



### **Principle 2: Providing connected active travel routes**

Supporting the mixed uses at Heart of Maylands, the key streets through

the estate are being progressively upgraded with new dedicated cycleways and improved pedestrian crossings. These connect to the Nickey Line, a former railway line and now cycleway, to the north, and to the emerging Quietway network of rural lanes with traffic reduction measures. Localised junction improvements and cycle crossings on the A414, a major dual carriageway, increase the connectivity of the network and make it more accessible to less confident cyclists.



### **Principle 4: Mixing uses and co-locating facilities**

The 'Heart of Maylands' centre sits in the middle of the estate and is easily

accessible by walking from most businesses. It is being regenerated as a mixed-use centre, with local retail, cafés, restaurants and essential facilities being developed. Residential development is also occurring above ground floor active uses, with a focus on affordable housing close to jobs. A co-working hub increases the job density around this key centre. This mixed-use development is being concentrated at the most connected and accessible location, and enables workers within Maylands to access facilities within a close distance of their work.

Maylands centre incorporates a wide mix of uses including:

**Left:** Cafés and retail facilities **Middle:** Residential apartments **Right:** a co-working hub



## Here East, Olympic Park, London

Here East is an innovation and technology campus situated in Queen Elizabeth Olympic Park, London. It is located in the former 2012 Olympics Media Centre and hosts a mix of creative companies, educational institutions, supporting retail and catering, and cultural spaces. Creative businesses based in Hackney and neighbourhoods nearby can occupy spaces in Here East, making it a valuable part of the local community. Adjacent to Here East are two local primary schools, small industrial workshop units, a canal, and the former Copper Box Arena, which is now a multifunctional sporting facility. The site also includes some residential apartments for an even wider mix of uses.



### **Principle 5: Network of multi-functional open space**

As part of the Queen Elizabeth Olympic Park, Here East is located within a major network of open spaces strung along the Lea Valley, which provides a wider network, and access to a wide range of sporting facilities both formal and informal. Within Here East itself, spaces include a civic square ('the yard'), a canalside terrace and a landscaped walk, which connects to nearby woodland, playing fields and nature reserve.



### **Principle 6: High quality streets and spaces**

Here East prioritises active travel throughout, with only limited service access for delivery vehicles and a route for buses. Car parking is consolidated at the edge in a multi-storey car park which allows the streets to be focused around active travel. Buildings have active frontages facing streets and spaces, exposing the activities within to provide a visual link between the outside and inside, and making the outdoor spaces more usable and attractive.



### **Principle 10: Activating spaces**

At the centre of the scheme is 'the yard', a flexible space that can accommodate an outdoor cinema, public markets and a public events space for the local community. At one end of the yard is the auditorium, which is used for talks, screenings, exhibitions and cultural events for the local community.



**Top:** The Yard space hosts events and is a gathering space outside the main buildings

**Middle:** Seating and planters within public realm make spaces usable and active

**Bottom:** A play area integrated within the public realm provides amenity and activation



## Rutherford Appleton Laboratory and Daresbury Laboratory

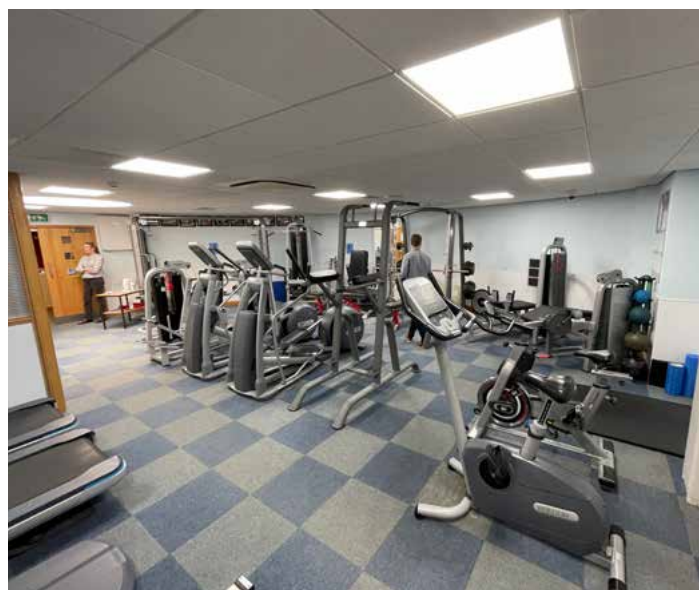
Rutherford Appleton Laboratory (RAL) and Daresbury Laboratory (DL) are the Science and Technology Facilities Council (STFC)'s two major national laboratories, hosting national scientific experiments and facilities, and employing nearly 3,000 people on site. Both are large 'campuses', located away from nearby towns, and provide a wide range of amenities on site for their mixed and diverse workforce.



### Principle 7: Providing Activity Infrastructure

Both sites have on-site gyms, and RAL offers football pitches, tennis courts and bookable indoor rooms, which enable staff to engage in sports and physical activity at lunchtime or before and after work. Both laboratories are both located in the countryside, and have access to an extensive network of wider public rights of way. The RAL site is large enough to include hiking routes and woodland within an area of landscape created from an excavated area, previously associated with a major facility. Low-cost interventions have been made in this area, with benches and tables provided.

Both laboratories are keen to encourage people to get to work via active means, particularly cycling. New buildings provide secure bicycle storage and showers.



**Above:** On-site gym provides subsidised classes and physical activity opportunities

**Right top:** Secure cycle parking is provided next to main buildings within the site

**Right middle:** Table tennis tables are located within a linear park

**Right bottom:** An annual fun run from the campus through the surrounding woods



### Principle 10: Activating Spaces

Daresbury Laboratory runs a regular 5k/10k run from the site through the surrounding woodland, encouraging staff to take part and providing a visible sporting event and creating publicity for the wider recreational networks.



## Baytree Nuneaton

Baytree is a major developer of logistics facilities, part of the AXA Group. At Nuneaton, it is developing a new group of major warehousing facilities which put the health and wellbeing of employees front and centre. In a competitive jobs market for logistics at the heart of England, employers in this space (who will lease the buildings) are looking to retain employees and minimise staff absence due to illness and poor health.



### Principle 8: Active Buildings

The new warehouses incorporate a range of physical activity and wellness interventions around the exterior. A

running route around the building will link outdoor gym equipment, recreational seating and gathering areas within planted landscaping, that also incorporates essential drainage and ecological habitats.

Inside the buildings, the office and circulation areas prioritise staircases for internal movement, and include seating areas and recreational spaces. Internal facilities include a climbing wall, to encourage regular physical activity during breaks.

