

Merrill Lynch Financial Centre

London, EC1

914,940 sq. ft.gross

Master Planning, Architectural and Interior Design and Space Planning

Completed: 2001

In July 1996, SHCA were appointed by Merrill Lynch Europe after competitive interview to assist them in finding a new corporate headquarters. SHCA provided the full range of integrated consultancy services offered by the Practice for this project. They included initial site searches, town planning consents, analysis of the client organisation and preparation of the space brief, strategic space planning, design of the base building, and design of the interiors including specialist support facilities. SHCA's Space Planning undertook a review of the organisation, its structures and lines of communication; including interviewing all departments and analysing likely space requirements. Benchmarking against similar organisations in the financial sector established the appropriate space standards to be adopted. Studies were undertaken with Ove Arup & Partners, acting as SHCA's sub-consultant, to determine the trading desk size for the expected technology, the overall IT, power and HVAC load. The resulting Space Strategy was then developed into a more detailed Amenity Brief to include departmental and support functions.

SHCA achieved detailed town planning consent from the City of London in March 1998. Demolition of existing buildings was completed in November 1998 when piling commenced. The design is based upon an urban masterplan solution which creates five building elements and a series of major public spaces. This met the organisational needs of the Client and gave the 85,000 sq. m (914,940 sq. ft.gross) complex a scale appropriate to the City Urban grain.

The difficult contextual site which is listed Grade II includes four Scheduled Ancient Monuments (including a bastion on the Roman City Wall), the setting of two Grade I listed buildings, three major street frontages, three conservation areas, and constraints imposed by St. Paul's Heights and Strategic Views.

