

Case study: Mace

Superb sequencing and logistics delivers a rapidly saleable office tower



Summary

Mace is an international consultancy and construction business that has an enterprise-wide commitment to planning and project management excellence. It uses Powerproject as its standard planning software for construction. It used this software to help managing a challenging office block project at New Fetter Lane, in the heart of the busy legal district of the City of London, between 2013 and 2015. The project manager and his team overcame many challenges, delivered innovations and delivered on time and on budget.

12-14 New Fetter Lane, a 15-storey office building on the western edge of the City of London, was a project that almost did not happen. After its original planning in 2007 was delayed, first by the recession and then right-of-light issues, it was finally redesigned and commenced in Spring 2013, with project completion achieved in November 2015.

James Williams, a new recruit at Mace at the time, certainly had a challenging first project for the company. Superb planning, sequencing and logistics were an absolute essential. The team had an ambitious programme to deliver, which required extremely careful planning to meet tight budget and timing



requirements alike. Mace utilised Powerproject, its standard planning and project management tool, for the purpose. Senior Planning Manager, Barry Hancock, told us: "This project required a lot of testing to try out different ideas. We use Powerproject first to set up contract and delivery programmes, and structure them so that we can easily put things in and take them out, in order to explore different scenarios." Using the software helped the team to explore and plan ideas that would enable smoother progress and even accelerate certain

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critical milestones, such as getting the building weatherproof; to this end, Project Manager James Williams re-sited a crane originally to be situated in the boiler room, moving it to a concrete cap on top of one of the low-rise lifts. This also accelerated progress on the mechanical, electrical and plumbing.

The project featured many innovative ideas, including re-planning how cladding panels were to be installed: instead of bringing them up the exterior of the building, above the busy pedestrian walkways of the City, with associated safety risks, they were instead brought up through the floors, distributed via a hoist, and finally positioned using a spider crane on the floor above. It meant frequent re-planning: "This project was more intense than usual in terms of our use of Powerproject. By the end the programme was very large, somewhere between 8000 and 9000 activities. We

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went into a huge amount of detail about the commissioning, and again to help us manage the close-out process – that was good, because we were able to manage the process better” explained Barry.

As an experienced Powerproject user for 25 years, Barry was able to use the software easily to resolve issues. He said: “The way we work is for the Project Manager, myself and the other team members to sit down regularly, sometimes with sub-contractors if necessary, and explore each issue. We try out different scenarios in Powerproject, to see ‘what if’ something happens and what would help the programme. We can use it to show clients what we had originally versus their changes, so that we can apply for an extension of time if we need it.”

Client communications were very important. Barry said that “We had a very informed client on this project, so we could use Powerproject to communicate timing of activities. We don’t always do this, sometimes clients

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need a more graphical approach such as with Powerpoint. We use the software to drive the data, taking all the information out in order to reproduce it as required.”

Managing progress on this complex site in a hugely busy part of the City of London was a challenge, and Barry has

since moved on to deploy Site Progress Mobile, the mobile site progress companion to Powerproject software, at a subsequent City development. In explaining why it would be useful, Barry outlined that: “It will be exceedingly useful to help us try to keep everything under constant control, and should improve things a lot. Planners go around sites all the time, checking all updates we have received, and verifying what we have been told. We really need a way to speed that up! If I can punch progress updates into the app and then upload it to the programme, it’s going to be a lot better.”

The team’s efforts certainly paid off in the end. Not only was the delivery of this project hailed as a triumph, James Williams received a Construction Manager of the Year Award as a result, and praised the whole-team effort that had led to the project’s success. The client was delighted too – and was even able to sell on the building before the construction phase had completed.

About Elecosoft

Elecosoft is a leading international provider of software and related services to the architectural, engineering, construction and retail industries.

Our core product, Powerproject, provides solutions for managing any size and any type of project and is widely recognised as one of the world’s leading project management software solutions for construction.

More information about Elecosoft and its products can be found at elecosoft.com.

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