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Mowat & Company wins approval for all-wood overhaul of timber merchant HQ

9 APRIL 2024 • BY ANNA HIGHFIELD



1/4 Mowat & Company's design for the Sykes Timber HQ retrofit

Source: Mowat & Company/Studio Birch (@studiobirch_)

Mowat & Company has been granted planning permission to retrofit the headquarters of a family-run timber merchant in the East Midlands

Sykes Timber's HQ is currently a 'tired old building', according to the practice, on the company's 4ha site in Atherstone, a market town in North Warwickshire, east of Birmingham.

The 1960s brick building features a flat roof, plain brick elevations with single glazing, and sits in front of a series of 'huge' warehouses containing the company's

60 species of timber arranged by species, grade and size.

Mowat & Company's design will replace the building's leaking flat roof with a rain-collecting butterfly timber roof engineered by Structure Workshop.

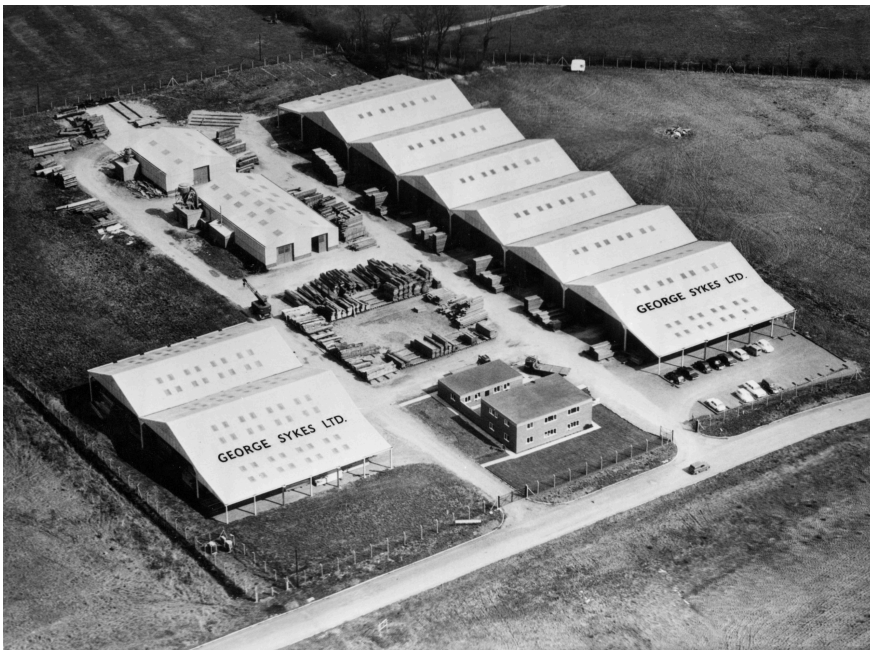
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The building's original brick walls will be clad with sweet chestnut timber and insulated with woodwool fibreboard.

The project has been approved by North Warwickshire Council and is set to go on site this summer.



Source: Mowat & Company/Sykes Timber
Atherstone early days - the site in 1966

The south London-based practice says its retrofit, which was designed with a team of timber-specialist consultants, aims to be an 'exemplar of how timber can be used in retrofitting buildings in the UK'.

A new internal office for sales will be refurbished with ash timber shelving, while oak-lined changing facilities will house personal protective equipment.

The building will also include meeting rooms and a new exhibition hall telling the story of the family timber business, established in 1865, which can be used by local schools and colleges.

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Operational carbon will be reduced by the addition of new windows, heat recovery and a wood waste boiler.

Planning officers recommended the project for approval, praising its 'bold, striking' butterfly roof for adding visual interest to the 'plain' host building and 'monotonous street scene', and timber-clad exterior which they said 'relate well to the site's function' and 'unify the building design'.

Mowat & Company said the seed for its design was planted when practice associate Ray Cheung met Sykes director Joe Sykes at a Woodland Heritage 'woodland to workshop' course in 2021.



Project data

Location Carlyon Road, Atherstone, Warwickshire, CV9 1JD

Local authority North Warwickshire Council

Client Sykes Timber

Architect Mowat & Company

Planning consultant Enabl

Structural engineer Structure Workshop

M&E consultant OR Consulting Engineers

Quantity surveyor Enabl

Principal designer Project Four

Lighting consultant OR Consulting Engineers

Main contractor TBC

Funding Private

Tender date 22 April 2024

Start on site date June 2024

Completion date February 2025 (approx)

Contract duration TBC

Gross internal floor area 674m²

Form of contract and/or procurement JCT Intermediate

Annual CO₂ emissions Not available

Total cost £1.15 million (to be confirmed)

Graphics Rose Reeves

CGI Visuals Studio Birch (@studiobirch_)

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