

Asta Powerproject Case Study: Robertson Construction Group

NEVER HAS 'ON TIME, ON BUDGET' MATTERED MORE
ROBERTSON DEPLOYS ASTA POWERPROJECT TO PLAN A VERY
SPECIAL PROJECT

Photo © Philip Vile



For those seeking cancer care in the Aberdeen and Grampian regions of Scotland, the completion of the Maggie's Cancer Care Centre at Aberdeen could not come soon enough. Maggie's Centres are renowned the world over for providing the emotional and social support that people with cancer and their families need as much as medical care itself - and Aberdeen was the last major city in Scotland to receive one.

Time was not the only important aspect of the programme. With funds raised from public and corporate donation to the tune of £10 million, not one penny was spare. Just £1.7 million of this was allocated to the construction itself, and when Robertson

Robertson has evolved over the past 48 years into one of the largest privately owned infrastructure, support services and construction groups in the UK. It is proud of the quality of its work and dedication to clients, the entrepreneurial culture it has created across all of its companies and of the rewards they are able to achieve from this. From its first contact with the Maggie's Cancer Care Centre project in March 2012,

was awarded the contract it knew it would require careful cost management and excellent planning throughout the year-long build. It uses Asta Powerproject as a standard planning and project management tool.

through to its safe, on-time and on-budget delivery in August 2013, it embraced the Maggie's philosophy and vision and committed to delivering the ideal outcome regardless of the considerable challenges involved. The result is a unique, award-winning, beautiful and special building, which embodies the fresh construction thinking and problem-solving for which Robertson is known.

The architecturally ambitious building was designed by Norwegian architects Snøhetta. It would feature a concrete cave-like shell with carved openings within which a timber structure would appear, as if carved from a single seamless piece of

NEVER HAS 'ON TIME, ON BUDGET' MATTERED MORE ROBERTSON DEPLOYS ASTA POWERPROJECT TO PLAN A VERY SPECIAL PROJECT

white oak, and the internal spaces would flow into one another to balance open space and intimacy. Robertson was chosen to manage this complex build, thanks to its excellent track record of working with the NHS in Aberdeen, including its award-winning £80 million Emergency Care Centre – on which it also deployed Asta Powerproject.

► CAREFUL PLANNING WAS VITAL

Asta Powerproject was used to plan the project from the start, helping to forecast what would be needed, and thus helping the NHS client to define and secure the funding it needed for the centre -while Robertson started tailoring supplier contracts to fit the nature of this unusual project. From there it was used to manage construction sequencing and chart progress throughout the build.

The project involved numerous technical and logistical challenges, many of which were in direct relation to the site itself. Located on a plot within a busy working hospital, the construction team would need to manage deliveries and excavations without disrupting hospital traffic – including a live ambulance route running close to the site – making tight and accurate timings vital. Senior project manager Alistair Broadley explains: “We had to manage

deliveries carefully through designated access points. The utilities went across a live hospital entrance, so bringing in the communications, water and power had to be very closely coordinated while ensuring the hospital traffic remained live at all times. We added traffic lights and were excavating straight across the roundabout within 10 metres of the entrance.”

Close proximity to the hospital helipad, just 50 metres away, complicated matters still further: “We had to stick to Foreign Object controls – in other words, carefully manage any object that could become airborne and could interfere with a flight. That meant covering open skips, doing daily walk-arounds to check things, and the site had to be immaculate – everything you build and manage has to be able to withstand the downdraft of a helicopter at all times.”

“Asta Powerproject was particularly useful when delving into the details required to define safe sequences of work for complex interiors”

► COLLABORATIVE PLANNING WAS CRITICAL

This project exemplifies the power and potential of collaboration between the client, design and project management teams, and the principal contractor. The complex interiors, in particular, required careful planning and collaboration. “Asta Powerproject was particularly useful when delving into the details required to define safe sequences of work for complex interiors. These interiors included hand-built bespoke staircases and timber panelling – a lot of which was manufactured offsite. Asta could account for work ongoing offsite as well as the onsite build” explains Alistair.

Not all contributions to the Maggie's fundraising campaign were in monetary form: many local and national suppliers stepped forward to offer elements of the planned build in the form of goods and services, while others were delivered by contracted suppliers. Managing this was a further planning priority: “Using Asta we were able to manage the lead times for the many specialist products and time the mobilisation of a raft of subcontractors. Timing throughout the build was delicate, as we had to juggle deliveries with donor companies and add some new donors into the plan.”

Photo © Philip Vile



NEVER HAS 'ON TIME, ON BUDGET' MATTERED MORE ROBERTSON DEPLOYS ASTA POWERPROJECT TO PLAN A VERY SPECIAL PROJECT

▶ KEEPING THE CUSTOMER SATISFIED



All projects require regular construction progress reporting, but with such a short build and vital function, the team knew it was even more important than usual: "With Asta Powerproject we could stay ahead of things: re-forecasting the end date when necessary and advising our client who could then keep Maggie's informed, so that they, in turn, could prepare their teams for mobilisation, schedule their training around the end date and start providing cancer care to the Aberdeen and Grampian regions as soon as possible."

▶ A WINNING APPROACH

The building has already won multiple awards for its design and construction, and is shortlisted for yet more:

- ▶ Building Awards 2014: Small Project of the Year
- ▶ RICS Scotland Awards 2014: Design Through Innovation award
- ▶ Construction News Awards 2014: Project of the Year (under £10m)
- ▶ RICS National Awards 2014: finalist
- ▶ Construction Manager of the Year awards 2014: Alistair Broadley, finalist – New Build and Refurbishment below £2 million

▶ ON TIME, ON BUDGET, NO COMPROMISE

Despite numerous changes and real-time problem solving along the way, the Robertson team brought the project to a commercial conclusion at just £1.45 million, well under budget, and on time at just 51 weeks, all while maintaining the architect's vision without compromise. While some of this was secured by the client's project team successfully championing some further large donations from key contractors, such as the electrical and mechanical contractors, much was also due to excellent planning. Meanwhile, the Robertson staff became fully engaged in the entire ethos of the project, organising several fundraising events of their own and participating in others.

Asta Development is always proud when clients put its software to work on any award-winning project, and this one is clearly very special. Plus, after this project, Asta also hopes that it has another firm convert in Alistair, who admits: "I've mainly been a user of other planning products, but started using Asta Powerproject 2½ years ago because Robertson uses it as a standard application. I did some online training and regularly pick up the phone to the technicians – who are very helpful. There are a couple of others in the company who are really well versed in the product, and have shown me tips on things like jagged line programme reporting or how to import info against a baseline." And his conclusion? "It's good!"



▶ ABOUT ROBERTSON

Since 1966, Robertson has been building quality and creating value throughout Scotland and the North East of England. It has evolved into one of the largest privately owned infrastructure, support services and construction groups in the country and now operates six business units throughout the UK.

Its aim is to deliver environmental and sustainable solutions for its clients and continues to work in partnership with its clients to achieve these goals.

Robertson has long-standing experience in the healthcare sector. It has the experience to work via a private or a public procurement route and as one of the early pioneers of PFI/PPP it can work with local authorities and health trusts to deliver a cost-effective value for money solution. Through experience it has the knowledge to work sensitively in live healthcare environments, working as a good partner and a good neighbour.

▶ ABOUT ASTA DEVELOPMENT

Asta Development is a leading international developer of project, and resource management software which provides solutions for managing any size and any type of project.

Since its launch in 1988, the company's core solution suite, Asta Powerproject, has evolved and improved driven by regular feedback from users and using the latest technologies available. It has proved its capabilities over the years on high profile

projects throughout the world and is now used by thousands of planners in a wide variety of industry sectors in the UK, Europe, Asia Pacific and the USA. Asta Development supports customers directly from its offices in Oxfordshire and Shropshire. Outside of the UK, Asta Development has a network of distributors who supply, train and support customers, with the software available in up to seven different languages. Asta Development is a

part of Eleco plc, a holding company focused on software development and services for architectural, engineering and construction industries. The company is listed on the London Stock Exchange's Alternative Investment Market (AIM).

More information about Asta Development and its products can be found at www.astadev.com and information about Eleco plc can be found at www.eleco.com.