

Railpen cements commitment to boosting local economy with contractor appointments for two Cambridge developments



Investor, Railpen, has named Skanska UK and Morgan Sindall Construction as main contractors for its Botanic Place and Devonshire Gardens developments. During construction, the two projects are set to provide over 85 employment opportunities for local residents and generate over £115,000,000 in social value, which includes a £68,000,000 spend in the local supply chain through trades and materials acquisition. Both projects are being developed by impactful developer, Socius, on behalf of Railpen.

Skanska, one of the UK's leading contractors, has secured the preconstruction phase of the £200 million contract to build Botanic Place, the new 540,000 sq. ft office scheme on Hills Road that is set to be the most sustainable speculative office scheme outside of London. The new premises will prioritise energy efficiency, designed to stay warm in the winter and cool in the summer while using 70% less energy than traditional office buildings, and will be powered using renewable energy sources. The project will also preserve the historic public house, The Flying Pig, which is located on the development site, and the creation of 15,000 sq. ft of internal amenities, events, and food and beverage space, alongside 40,000 sq. ft of terraces on multiple levels for both private and communal uses.

Elsewhere in the city, Railpen has also appointed Morgan Sindall, the tier one construction contractor, to construct Devonshire Gardens at the repurposed Travis Perkins site on Devonshire Road. Devonshire Gardens will comprise a new community connected by a landscaped park. Located in the heart of Mill Road, it will deliver up to 150,000 sq ft of commercial space, 70 residential apartments, 8,500 sq ft of food and beverage space, and 1.55 acres of public open spaces.

Richard Van Lente, Senior Asset and Development Manager at Railpen, said: "The appointment of both Skanska UK and Morgan Sindall marks a significant moment within our Cambridge portfolio as we work to deliver development that will benefit and serve the community, while generating employment opportunities and economic growth for Cambridge. We look forward to seeing these projects come to fruition and continuing our long-lasting commitment to Cambridge."

Doug Higgins, Development Director at Socius, also commented: “Botanic Place and Devonshire Gardens will be fantastic additions to the Cambridge ecosystem, with Skanska and Morgan Sindall driving forward Railpen’s vision to deliver inspiring, sustainable and valuable assets for the city. With their expertise and proficiency, we are on track to deliver and curate a pair of major, flagship developments for Cambridge, which will catalyse an array of benefits to the local community and economy.”

Morgan Sindall is set to begin works on Devonshire Gardens in May, and Skanska is due to start on-site at Botanic Place in August, with estimated completion dates of April 2026 and April 2027 respectively.

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Photo caption: Left – Artist’s impression of Botanic Place. Right – Artist’s impression of Devonshire Gardens.

About Railpen

- Railpen (formerly known as RPMI and RPMI Railpen) is authorised and regulated by the Financial Conduct Authority (FCA).
- Railpen acts as the investment manager of the railways pensions schemes and is responsible for the management of around £35bn.
- Railpen runs the railways pensions schemes on behalf of its parent, the Railways Pension Trustee Company Limited (RPTCL).

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About Socius

Socius is an impactful developer with a £2.2bn development pipeline across the UK’s fastest-growing cities including Bristol, Brighton, Cambridge, Milton Keynes, and London. Privately-owned and a certified B Corporation, Socius partners with institutional investors, leading architects, and local communities to create inspiring and sustainable places whilst balancing profit and purpose.

Current projects include Botanic Place, the AHMM-designed 500,000 sq ft workspace scheme in central Cambridge, the £210m regeneration of Soapworks in Bristol, a £190m development of innovation space and homes in the centre of Milton Keynes and the London Cancer Hub, a new five-hectare district dedicated to cancer research in Sutton.

For further information please visit: <https://socius.dev/>

Socius publishes an annual social value report. You can read the 2022 report [here](#).