

# Concrete check-in

Ipswich's waterfront is the site of considerable regeneration. The £4 million extension to the Salthouse Harbour Hotel by architect Barefoot & Gilles is a handsome quayside addition



In common with many historic ports, Ipswich is reinventing its waterfront as a leisure and retail destination. The Salthouse Harbour Hotel, Ipswich's only four-star hotel, occupies a former quayside Victorian warehouse. A new six-storey extension provides an additional 27 bedrooms, a new reception and enlarged restaurant and dining area.

Hotel guests have outstanding views across the marina with extensive areas of glazing to the building's facade and a number of south facing balconies to guest rooms that capitalise on the waterfront location. Clad in terracotta-coloured metal, the contemporary design contrasts with the original warehouse. It is crisp and robust and the cuboid shape relates well with the industrial quayside's architecture.

Inside the new hotel extension, the contemporary feel is continued with moveable shading screens in the bedrooms with some having innovative vision control glass to provide privacy from the bathroom at the flick of a switch. The new restaurant features a number of modern art installations for which the hotel has become renowned since it first opened in 2003.

The choice of a concrete in-situ frame for the extension offered a number of benefits not least of which was successfully working within the tight site constraints. The concrete flat slab provided reduced storey heights, an important planning consideration, while the concrete columns were dimensioned to be hidden flush within the wall construction depths.

The inherent benefits of concrete

**Above**  
The six-storey extension to the hotel makes the most of its waterfront location.

mean it is well suited to hotel construction. Acoustic insulation, minimum vibration and up to four hours' fire resistance are all built-in. The hotel stayed open and operated as normal during the extension's construction.

Due to be opened in November this year, the extension to the Salthouse Harbour Hotel is a quietly confident newcomer that sits well with its historic and new-build neighbours.

It is architecture that makes its presence known without having to make a song and dance about it.

#### PROJECT TEAM

Architect: Barefoot & Gilles  
Client: Gough Hotels Ltd  
Structural engineer: MLM Ltd  
Contractor: ISG Jackson