

Beacons for Change

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The late spring of 2008 seems a long time ago. It was at this time when it became impossible to ignore the warning signs—an intermittent but piercing signal that all was not right in the developed world's economy with the sub-prime market in the United States beeping the loudest. For most of us, we had no idea that this would spark a near collapse of the global banking system and reveal other major economic weaknesses.

Within BDP's studios, the level of activity continued undeterred. Major city centre regeneration schemes were either completing, such as the seminal Liverpool One project, or progressing well. Public sector spending fuelled a flow of projects in two other of BDP's market-leading sectors—education and healthcare. And framework agreements to design workplaces for some major public and private institutions such as the BBC and PwC produced an array of

challenging assignments. And our determination to offer our integrated and humanistic design approach internationally was spreading our portfolio of work to over 25 different countries. The result of all of this activity meant that it was clear that BDP was going to achieve a turnover target of £100m for the first time.

But the signals were clear. Things were changing. By the late autumn, the beeping became a persistent alarm. Banks had to be propped up by governments. Commercial projects were put on hold, and some public sector programmes began to slow. The design and construction industry began to shrink at an increasing rate. BDP's sector and geographic diversity, coupled with our financial strength, protected us from the worst excesses of this downturn, but not entirely, and by the spring of 2009 we too had to experience some pain, especially in Ireland. We ended our financial year with a turnover of £104m and a dedicated

and talented team of over 1100 people, and with a series of major project wins in transport, healthcare, regeneration, and education. Diversity and quality have always been guiding lights for BDP. We emerged from the 90s recession stronger and more determined to follow these beams of inspiration. And the same is true today. We have an even stronger platform of leadership, talent and infrastructure across Western Europe. We have advanced plans to extend this further afield, such as India and Abu Dhabi, and are responding to our clients' invitations to work in Scandinavia, China, Australia, North Africa, and the Middle East, as well as throughout Europe. Wherever we are invited to design, our approach is to create places for people—and in this, our people, our clients, and the users of our buildings and spaces are our beacons of change.