



Joe Patrick, Jos Patrick, Steven Adams and Chris Green, of Simply Factoring Brokers, the latest business to move in

Historic city building is now drawing modern businesses as a base

LORD Tredegar's former estates office in the heart of Newport has become a magnet for business in the 21st century after being transformed into serviced offices.

The historic city centre building is proving a honey pot for small and medium-sized businesses after reopening a year ago after a complete refurbishment and rejuvenation.

Dating back to 1905, the Grade II listed building at Pentonville, Gold Tops, is in the heart of the city of Newport's commercial and professional district.

A financial factoring business, which moved to Newport from Bedwas, Caerphilly, is the latest to take space at The Estates Office and means that the 8,000 sq ft building is now almost full with just 600 sq ft remaining.

In total there are now nine separate businesses in the

building together employing almost 40 people.

Bought by private investors from the South of England after previously being used as a court house, the historic building provides ultra modern connected office accommodation.

Fiona Weaver, of lettings agency Hutchings and Thomas, which is also based in the building, said: "The Estates Office is providing just what the SME market needs in terms of serviced office accommodation. The iconic building, with its eclectic mix of historic architectural features and modern fit out, is also ideally located next to the city's main line railway station and close to the M4.

"The Estates Office has had and continues to play an extremely important part and a significant place in the history of Newport. The building Turn to page 5

Expansion and 18 new jobs for manufacturing company

By Jo Barnes

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An Ebbw Vale factory has undergone a major expansion and created new jobs with help from NatWest.

Express Contract Drying, which manufactures colourings and flavourings for the food and pharmaceutical industries, has installed new machinery and taken on 18 more staff.

The company started in Tregaron, mid Wales, in 1991 and opened its plant on the Rassau Industrial Estate in 2001.

Managing director David McDermott has invested £3m in the Gwent site in the past three years, building an extension to accommodate the new equipment, which has significantly increased the plant's capacity.

Now the firm has capacity across its two sites to manufacture nine tonnes a day of its products, including flavourings for crisps, cereals, bakery goods and soup.

The latest machine to be installed in Ebbw Vale is a micro-encapsulation machine, which takes the moisture out of food products, leaving behind a flavouring or colour in powder form.

It has been designed by Mr McDermott, and took around two years to go from drawing board to operation.

"I think we have invested at the right time," he said. "When the country wasn't doing so well I decided that was the time to start planning ahead - in a recession you want to be at a point where you're ready and waiting for the upturn.

"It's also a good time to invest in Ebbw Vale. We're an international business,

not just one which sells on our doorstep, and with the improvements in the road network around Blaenau Gwent we are going to be very well connected. For instance, we'll be able to get to Birmingham in about an hour. There will be no reason why this area won't be as attractive to business as the South West currently is."

Mr McDermott worked with NatWest and the bank's asset finance arm, Lombard, to finance the latest machine.

NatWest relationship director Graham Harvey said: "Manufacturing has long been the lifeblood of the Gwent valleys and it's great to support a business which is creating new jobs and investing in the area.

"We wish Express Contract Drying every success and look forward to continuing to support Mr McDermott and his workforce in the future."



David McDermott, right, shows NatWest's Graham Harvey around the Express Contract Drying plant in Tregaron