

Construction innovator Merit to create 50 new jobs in Northumberland expansion

Cramlington construction company Merit is forging ahead with plans to expand its site to accommodate plans for continued growth.

The Northumberland innovator, a former North East Company of the Year, has previously revealed plans to extend its base at Admiral Business Park, where it specialises in work on high-tech, complex structures for healthcare, pharmaceutical, energy, manufacturing, retail, commercial and nuclear clients. Now, having gained approval for its bid to create a new high-bay extension at its base, the firm is extending its factory space to add an extra 40,000sqft, adding to its current floor space of 270,000sqft.

Merit has already doubled its workforce in the last two years to more than 220 staff and expects the facility expansion to add over 50 new jobs. The extended high-bay facility will accommodate two new manufacturing lines for Merit's UltraPOD+ product, an expandable full building solution, and will enable the pre-assembly and testing of two-modules vertically stacked. Additional equipment, such as two 50 tonne gantry cranes and a module lifting frame, will also be included into the new setup.

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Merit expects the new facility to be operational by April of this year. Unlike traditional construction methods which fail to drive measurable productivity growth, Merit's approach sees more than 75% of structures built offsite at its Northumberland base before being sent to site for final

installation. The method means it greatly reduces project lead times, maximises material efficiency, lowers capital and revenue costs and significantly reduces external professional consultant fees.

Last month, for example, it completed the first phase of a £66m advanced therapies manufacturing site in Stevenage in record time, delivering it in 17 months, three years faster than the biotech industry standard of around five years.

Tony Wells, CEO of Merit, said the factory expansion will enable Merit to compete even more successfully for larger contracts against global competition and deliver long term growth for the business.

He said: “Merit’s strategic objective is to deliver a step change in productivity within the construction industry and to show that investment in R&D and leveraging innovative approaches, such as advanced 4D BIM modelling technology, can lead to significant improvements. Our factory expansion will enable us to further optimise our way of working and better serve our customers.”

Projects Merit has been involved in include the new RNA Centre of Excellence for the Centre for Process Innovation (CPI), Abingdon Health’s lateral flow manufacturing site, and Piramal’s ADC manufacturing facility expansion.

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