

## Firm shows it has faith in city's future

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**BREAKING NEW GROUND:** Tim Evans, Steve Salmon, Steven Bone, Denise Reeves, Richard Hoskin and David James

**MANUFACTURING** giant HellermannTyton says it plans to have its new multi-million-pound Plymouth plant built by June.

The company, which makes products such as protection and labelling for electrical cables, celebrated the start of work on its new Derriford base with a turf-cutting ceremony led by company top brass and Lord Mayor Mary Aspinall.

And it revealed the 48,000 sq ft building would be super-green, featuring rainwater recycling and a roof covered in solar panels which would even allow it to supply electricity to the National Grid.

Group chairman Steven Bone called it "the most environmentally friendly building in the South West".

The plant will allow the company to carry out research and development, as well as make its products.

The Herald revealed on Saturday that HellermannTyton was relocating from its 32-year-old Pennycross factory to the purpose-built facility at the International Medical and Technology Park.

Group chief operating officer Steve Salmon said: "It was important for us that the new facilities would create the right impression with our customers."

All 132 Plymouth workers will relocate to the new building, and Mr Salmon said: "We would expect, with our rate of growth, a gradual increase in the number of staff over time."

But he stressed the firm's work was technical, requiring a skilled workforce rather than being labour-intensive.

Retaining these highly trained staff was one reason the firm wanted to stay in Plymouth, he said. The city was also close to many customers, and the firm was influenced in its choice of site by Derriford's proximity to road and air links.

The company has 34 sites worldwide, including one in Manchester. Its products are used in the aerospace, automotive and telecommunications industries.

Mr Salmon said it survived the recession by building market share and "constantly refreshing products", adding: "We give the customer a better service at a lower unit cost. We have been affected, but came out of the recession stronger than we went in."

The two-storey plant, designed by Plymouth's Architects Design Group and being built by Midas, is slightly smaller than the firm's current base, because new machinery means it needs less space.

HellermannTyton said its decision to relocate to Derriford came after discussions with Plymouth City Council and the South West Regional Development Agency, from which it would buy the land. Its parent private equity firm Doughty Hanson, is funding the development.

The Pennycross site is likely to be disposed of, with the factory being demolished for redevelopment of the site.

*This article first appeared in the Plymouth Herald*