

Official opening of Illumina Inc's new research facility and European HQ at Chesterford Research Park

Professor Lord Rees, President of the Royal Society and Master of Trinity College, Cambridge presides over official opening day celebrations

Chesterford Research Park's Gonville Building, home to Illumina since November last year was officially opened today by Professor Lord Rees, President of the Royal Society and Master of Trinity College, Cambridge.

An eminent guest list joined the senior management team of Illumina for the event. In addition to the official 'cutting of the ribbon' ceremony, the gathering gave the company an opportunity to celebrate its innovation and achievements to date and to debate the future impact of Illumina's world-leading DNA sequencing technology on science and health.

Illumina is one of the world's leading developers, manufacturers, and marketers of next-generation life-science tools and integrated systems for the analysis of genetic variation and biological function. In an opening address Illumina CEO, Jay Flatley, charted the development of the technology from its roots within the Chemistry Department at Cambridge University to the foundation of the spin-out company, Solexa. Illumina then acquired Solexa in 2007 fuelling the unprecedented growth that followed.

Having officially opened the facility, guests were taken on a tour of the laboratories which form part of the bespoke 41,500 sq ft Gonville Building.

Martin Sylvester, Director of Churchmanor Estates Company Plc, joint developers of the Park with Aviva Investors, commented: "The expansion of Illumina's facilities is a great endorsement for the Park. We are delighted that Illumina decided to establish their European headquarters with us and it has been a pleasure to work with the Illumina team to make this new facility a reality."

Alan Kersey, Vice President and Site Manager for Illumina, said: "The phenomenal infrastructure and facilities available at Chesterford make working on this site very enjoyable. The Park has worked with us throughout the formative stages of our company, offering flexible and innovative solutions as our requirements changed and grew. Because of this long-standing collaborative relationship, Chesterford was the obvious choice when it came to choosing a location for our European headquarters."

The expansion of Illumina at Chesterford Research Park cements the Park's reputation as a centre of excellence within the South Cambridgeshire Biotech Cluster. The Park is now a thriving community made up of innovative, world-class R&D companies. Looking to expand on the success of the Park to date, the joint venture partners, Aviva Investors and Churchmanor Estates Company Plc are pushing development plans forward to increase the facilities available to new occupiers. Planning permission has been granted on both the Robinson Laboratory and the Science Village development and the joint venture partners remain keen to push these projects forward during the coming months.

Representing the ultimate in flexible design, the Robinson Laboratory will provide two separate wings of laboratory space, linked by an elegant atrium designed to house an impressive reception area and a versatile range of meeting rooms. As always at Chesterford significant thought has also been given to the external finish of the building, with sympathetic landscaping of the immediate area adding to the overall aesthetic.

The Science Village is similarly forward thinking in design. The low energy building will allow for flexible use as R&D offices and/or laboratory suites. Catering for companies at all stages of their life-cycle, the Village will offer one suite of 28,000 sq ft and a further 16 smaller suites ranging from 1,510 sq ft to 1,965 sq ft.