

Birth of the Boho Zone

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WATCH out: the centre of Middlesbrough is about to change for ever. The Boho Zone - the town's digital media, digital technologies and creative quarter - is rising fast.

Work started on Boho One (pictured) - the Boho Zone's £10m flagship building - in late January. With an expected completion date in April 2009, the 30,000 sq ft building will become the commercial centre for the emerging digital and creative cluster in the Tees Valley.

It will offer a cutting-edge environment for the businesses moving in, and others who come to use its facilities including superwide connectivity (involving fibre optic technology) and a render farm - a very powerful computer network that produces top quality graphics, animation or TV footage.

Boho Two will join the first building on its Bridge Street site. Developed by Erimus Housing in association with DigitalCity, it's a £2.5m complex of live-work homes for digital and creative professionals, allowing freelancers and smaller businesses to work right next to Boho One and enjoy its facilities. With funding now approved, expect to see them ready for occupation in summer 2010.

And there's Boho Three - artists' studios going into a beautifully refurbished Victorian warehouse situated in Middlesbrough's railway station forecourt - with an expected opening mid Summer 2008.

But that's not all. Take a walk down Gosford Street and you'll find Royal Middlehaven House: already there, a wonderful private art gallery on the ground floor - funded by the property owners, Python Properties with Arts Council support - and, on the second floor, the first wave of digital companies coming into the Boho Zone, including games developer 3rd Dimension Creations, internet marketing company BoxesRed and web technologies company Thap.

And with them DigitalCity Business - the force behind the Boho Zone and the business end of the overall DigitalCity project. Previously housed at the University of Teesside, DigitalCity Business is now gearing up to spread its activities far and wide and make the project a genuinely Tees Valley, North-east phenomena.

Director of DigitalCity Business, Mark Elliott said: "The time is right for a move. We're ready for the move, and the first generation of the companies we've been helping are ready to spread their wings too. In effect, the move in January, coupled with the start of work on Boho One, signals the birth of the Boho Zone.

"It is a very exciting time for us, our next stage of development. It makes it very clear that we are not just here for companies coming out of the university. We are here for every single digital, technology and creative company in the Tees Valley. All they have to do is knock on our new door."

DigitalCity Business can help companies at all stages of their development, from start up to expansion or when dealing with a specific contract. For more information, and for information on buildings in the Boho Zone, go to www.dcbusiness.eu

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