West Bromwich’s £63 million arts centre opens in full after years of financial turmoil and public derision.

Large crowds were attracted to the opening of the state-of-the-art electronic gallery after the building finally opened in full to the public. The Will Alsop building was designed in 1999 but has been dogged by funding difficulties, building delays and technical failures.

The building contains technology and learning resources, education and community facilities, offices and 3000m² of managed workspaces for small businesses. The centre has attracted more than 65,000 visitors since it was

Source: Kevan Shaw, Kevan Shaw Lighting Design

http://www.architectsjournal.co.uk/news/daily-news/the-public-opens-t...
partially opened in June 2008 with conferences and events being hosted there. The interactive gallery has remained closed since the centre went into administration in January 2009. Emergency funding from local authority Sandwell Council and £3 million from the Arts Council helped complete the gallery.

The centre has been delivered two years late and £15 million over budget. Since the takeover by the council-owned Sandwell Arts Trust, the planned £7 admission fee has been dropped. Linda Saunders, the general manager of the site, said ‘The interactive experience has been made simpler and more accessible. It is lower tech than the original vision but, as a council, we have had to make hard decisions about what we can realistically deliver.’