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Architecture Firm of the Year 2017 - West London

P A U L V I C K
 ARCHITECTS

Paul Vick architects consistently deliver added value with a creative and global view of their clients' needs. We profile the firm to learn more and explore the secrets behind its success.

Paul Vick Architects' approach to projects delivers value above the norm. As Chartered RIBA architects, the practice offers the full range of services from initial feasibility testing of what may work for their clients spatially, through planning permission, Building Control, tender and a presence on site.

Unusual perhaps for visionary architects, they achieve this with their particularly engaging approach to understanding their clients' business values in cultural and commercial settings, as well as a tailored approach to private work. To date, their approach has delivered a 100% planning permission rate, ensuring clients secure the potential value of each project.

This approach is client focused from the start to ensure an outcome which meets the customer's individual needs. Initially, Paul Vick Architects discuss the client's business aims and the types of value they are trying to achieve. This is often accompanied by directed research. Paul Vick architects take their wider architectural, urban and artistic viewpoint and tailor a vision to achieve more with less space and resource for their clients.

It is this deeper, wider vision that allows them to deliver 100% planning permission record with listed and unlisted buildings, new build and those in conservation areas.

Currently, the practice is working on a multi-million pound scheme to regenerate the 200-year-old Royal Ordnance Depot in Weedon Bec, near Daventry, Northampton – preserving the heritage of the Grade II Listed 20-acre (8 hectares) site whilst creating new homes and several hundred new jobs.

Included in the new site plans are a boutique 35-room hotel, 12 apartments, 16 low energy family homes, retail units and visitor centre, an 84-bed care home and 17 independent living "close care" homes where the elderly or disabled can live while having care close at hand.

Central to the thinking has been conserving and restoring the very best features of the site – the canal, the 14.5 feet high containing walls and four bastions as well as the remaining Napoleonic era buildings – while creating a legacy for the future.

The site already provides 77,000 sq ft (7,150 sq m) of creative business space housed in eight former warehouses on either side of the disused canal spur, and this is currently being upgraded. Paul Vick Architects have already gained a number of permissions for the site in these buildings.

There is huge potential for the Royal Ordnance Depot to be reinvented as a hub for the creative and IT sectors. Strategically located close to the M1 and national rail network, it offers interesting workspace in a character setting and it is served by superfast broadband – which is exactly what forward-looking businesses are looking for.

The project combines regeneration and curation for the future, which is a rare mix in architectural practice and hard to do well. Thanks to its innovative approach and client focus, as well as its experience, the practice is able to meet the many needs of the Royal Ordnance Depot.

When producing a Vision for the 1400-year-old Diocese of London Paul Vick Architects engaged with the very composition of society and what that might be in the future. What is not widely understood is that the Church is the only institution which is public, private and voluntary in the UK, has more people in development than the UK Government, founded some of the most important educational establishments (e.g. Oxbridge) as well as providing housing, cultural buildings and being a patron of the arts. These ideas have been developed at C19th grade 2 listed, St Paul's Knightsbridge by the architects which received planning permission and a faculty in 2017 for the first phase. The project consists of reordering under the west end tower with new glazed in offices making the most of views down the rich nave with new stairs, civic welcome, ambulatory, meeting and support spaces.



Theatre, office and ICT suite, West London, UK



Low energy, 1st to 3rd age private house, West Country, UK



Royal Ordnance Depot, reuse and new construction, near Northampton, UK

Previously the practice designed an innovation hub for Corporation of London and Innovation Warehouse at Smithfield which used both formal and informal spaces. The value-added for the client is the hub has already produced several unicorn businesses.

Overall, the firm's ethos is the application of skill and use of resource in a focused way that makes more of what we have. Perhaps counter intuitively, and not reflected in any of the low energy standards, it is a fundamental starting point for the practice that: if you do not need it, then do not build it. New energy production measures are employed when this basic principle has been addressed. Discussing the future, Founder Paul Vick is optimistic that his firm can continue to grow and build upon its current success.

"Technology frees us to do so many things, and it is the context and the way we use it that gives value. The Greek meaning of 'techne' refers to skill and resource. It is not just about the lever, but about the lever and how you use it. Within the market currently, we are seeing an even more interconnected world with greater inter-dependencies and consequences whether this is climate change, demographic demands or personal needs. At the same time, the opportunities for better solutions through technology and innovation have never been better. This is an opportunity to do more with less for our clients, their users and future users."