

Paul Vick Architect: Innovator Shaping Tomorrow's Lives Today



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What is the value of an architecture that helps you live longer (for you, your users, clients)?
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Fig 1. Paul Vick at the adapted grade 2 listed, B17, Royal Ordnance Depot. The rich, textures of the worn stairs from those carrying military equipment and clothes is a footprint of the past into the future. The building has been converted to office space with café. See also Fig. 7.

A Pioneering Legacy

'Value is important, but we need to define value in terms of quality of life and experience, as well as dollars, pounds and pence,' Vick states. From the ongoing regeneration of the Royal Ordnance Depot to the design of contemporary additions at £10m expansion of St Paul's Knightsbridge, the portfolio holds value for its innovation, sustainability and impact.

His practice has contributed to the architectural landscape across London, from designing office spaces for a global telecoms company to collaborating with the Corporation of London and Innovation Warehouse on what is understood to be the first start-up incubator in UK, at Smithfield Market. At the city scale he wrote a vision for the Diocese of London whose area covers Kings Cross to the Thames, St Paul's to Westminster. They explore how buildings can help improve our lives long term, as well as our daily experiences.

The practice's aim is to explore the positive impact of buildings on our lives. They have undertaken low energy new build and retrofit builds, mixed use, residential, offices and cultural institutions, reflecting versatility and dedication to crafting spaces that enrich and inspire ahead of the curve. They are currently reshaping the language of care with a vision for one of the oldest care homes in the country, post-Covid.

Meeting Paul Vick

'I was lucky enough to start my career with some of the great architectural innovators,' says Vick. 'The approach has instilled a commitment to innovation in the practice.'

A Chartered RIBA architect and a Fellow of the Royal Society of Arts (FRSA), Vick's studies at Cambridge University and Oxford Brookes University were complemented by extensive international exposure in Washington DC and Beijing, giving a global perspective to his architectural philosophy, and complementing his granular implementation. He is committed to

speaking to the industry, whether young architects or developers and has lectured at UCL, MIT and at the influential Gresham College in the City of London 695th Lord Mayor's Lecture Series.

Prior to founding Paul Vick Architects, his work included drafting the British Museum Masterplan, leading the ambitious White City at Shepherd's Bush London, and envisioning a pioneering zero-carbon 8000 home scheme. Vick's work, featured in Architect's Journal and World Architecture News amongst others, reflects a confluence of innovation, sustainability, and historical consciousness, establishing him in our opinion as a pivotal figure in shaping the future of architecture.

He has been a juror for a number of bodies such as the well-known International Property Awards spanning Europe and Asia (2016-20), the World Architecture News. Future Projects Awards 2015, the World Architecture News Glass Awards 2014 and on the 'Ask an Expert' panel of Grand Designs

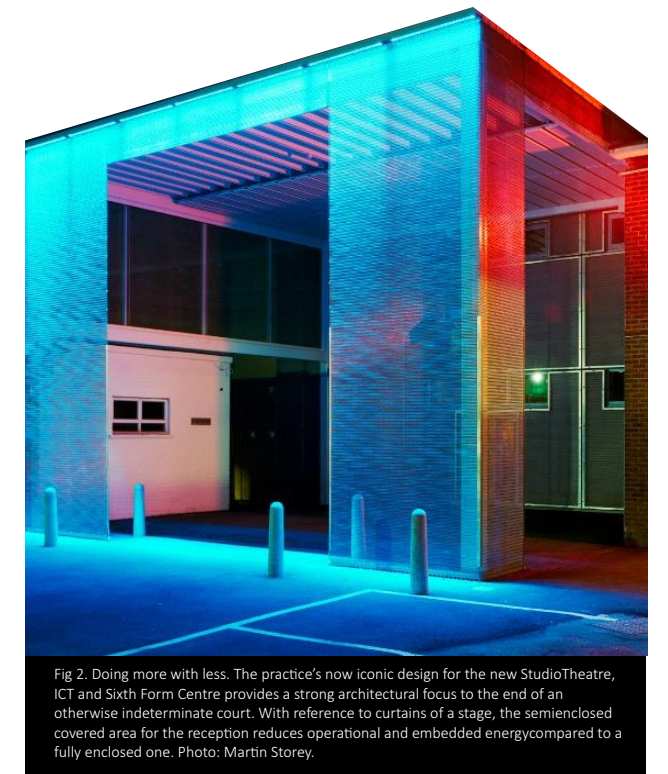


Fig 2. Doing more with less. The practice's now iconic design for the new StudioTheatre, ICT and Sixth Form Centre provides a strong architectural focus to the end of an otherwise indeterminate court. With reference to curtains of a stage, the semienclosed covered area for the reception reduces operational and embedded energy compared to a fully enclosed one. Photo: Martin Storey.



Fig 3: A glass bridge at the London HQ of a global telecoms firm defines the HQ's presence and offers resilience to make the most of the existing buildings' fabric, connecting spaces while reducing reception costs. The illuminated bridge elevates the building's evening atmosphere. The project includes diverse office and use arrangement, a new refectory, and expanding the current amount of workspace. Photo: Mel Yates



Fig 4: New refectory provides a number of types of seating and was carefully sized, to promote community and belonging for staff and clients. The design includes a curved wall around a new stair to create space and identity. Photo: Mel Yates.

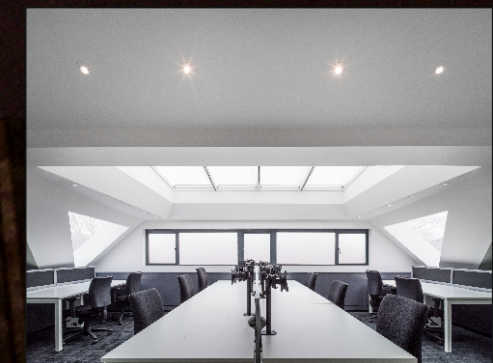


Fig 5: Paul Vick Architects secured an additional floor of office space with creative use of natural light. The new space was created above the original requirements of the brief. Photo: Mel Yates.

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2015. Their work for St Paul's Knightsbridge was displayed at 'Tomorrow's Architecture' exhibition by the AJ and a private office was exhibited by NLA. The practice has won many awards.

In an interview, on his vision for 'Pandemic What Next?' for the Leader's Council setup by a former Home Secretary, he described how resilience emerged through re-combinations of demand.

'It is important that architecture and its power for impact has a voice with decision-makers. They are planning our future,' he says. He is a Freeman of the City of London and sits on the Climate Action Group for a City Livery Company and is a member of the West London Business Built Environment Steering Committee.

In a world increasingly defined by digital integration & ecological concerns, Vick's vision for the future of architecture is timely and prescient.



Fig 6: Low energy 10 storey tower, opposite the Thames, London.

The Future Through Digital and Ecological Lenses

He emphasises our need for adaption in our relationships with the world, each other and ourselves to create a future that is sustainable and optimistic. He asks, "What are the gradations of public to private today? What common ground can we usefully redefine? What is a society and architecture that reflects us and helps us flourish?"

Yet, it is the firm's 100% success rate in securing planning permissions that illustrates its deep understanding of the intricacies of urban development and its ability to create projects with clients, users and public bodies.

At the heart of Vick's architectural philosophy is a deep-seated belief in the power of design to elevate the human spirit.

His projects shape environments to embrace the complexity of human needs and aspirations with deceptively simple and elegant solutions that achieve more with less – a recipe for economic and cultural profit.

Rarely, do architects and urbanists contribute so well across scales while creating beautiful buildings and he is proud of creating spaces where people want to be.

Vick's work is a vibrant testament to the power of architecture to inspire, challenge, steward and transform, making him a true architect of change in 2024 and beyond.

Paul Vick Architects www.paulvick.co.uk
Awards: Best Commercial Architecture Firm, London 2023; Property and Construction Business of the Year, West London 2022; Most Innovative Architecture Firm London 2018, 2019 and 2020; Best Cultural Architecture Practice UK 2019; Best Construction Adviser UK 2017.

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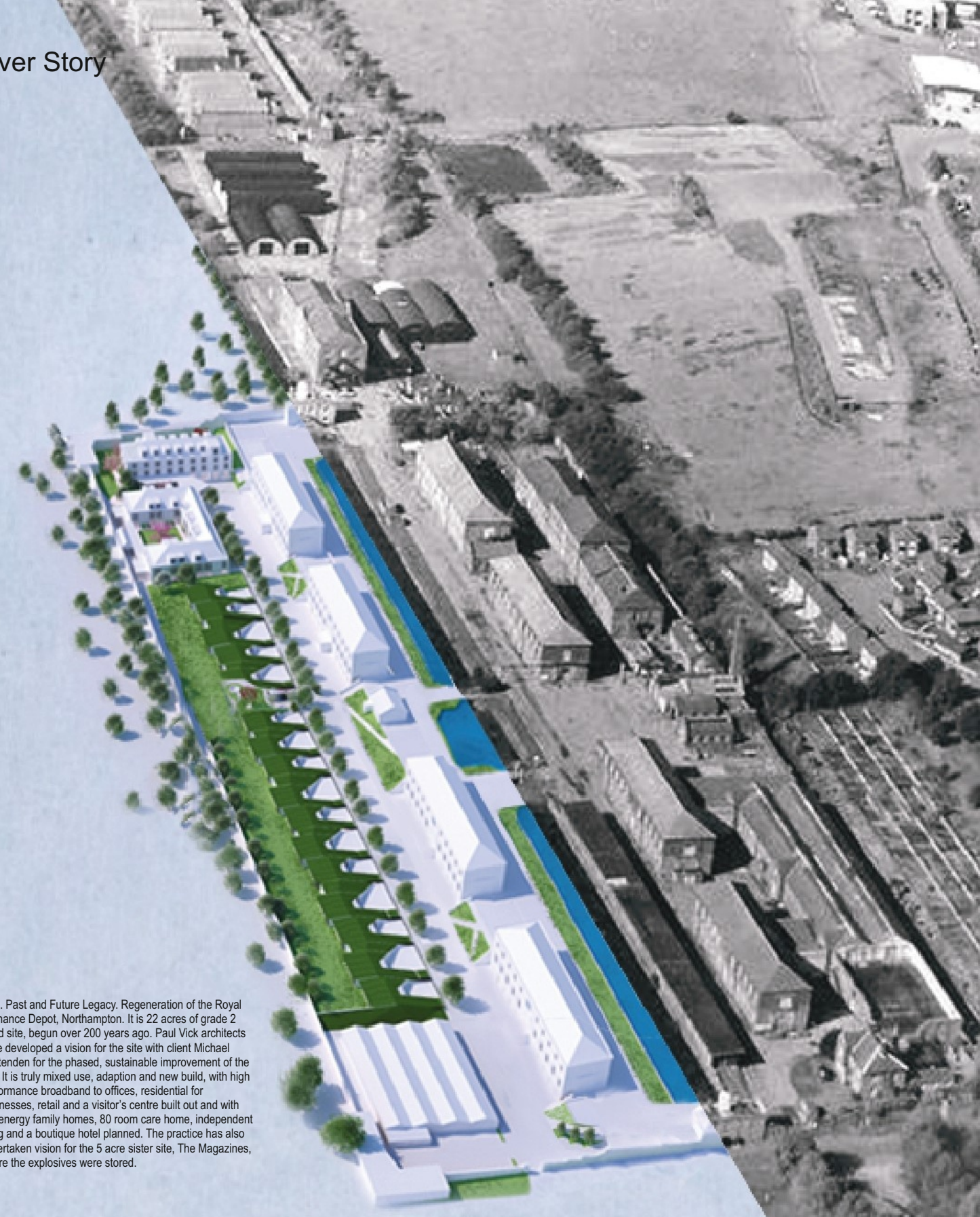


Fig7. Past and Future Legacy. Regeneration of the Royal Ordnance Depot, Northampton. It is 22 acres of grade 2 listed site, begun over 200 years ago. Paul Vick architects have developed a vision for the site with client Michael Chittenden for the phased, sustainable improvement of the site. It is truly mixed use, adaption and new build, with high performance broadband to offices, residential for businesses, retail and a visitor's centre built out and with low energy family homes, 80 room care home, independent living and a boutique hotel planned. The practice has also undertaken vision for the 5 acre sister site, The Magazines, where the explosives were stored.