

# Newsletter

Apex Architects Building the Future

Apex

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Issue 4

## News in Brief

### The Art of News

As part of the January 2009 celebrations for the London Sinfonietta moving headquarters to Kings Place (also now home to The Guardian newspaper), 'The Art of News' project was created. Composers, singers and poets were brought together to create new material inspired by the daily news, resulting in performances, cabaret and readings over several days and evenings.



One of our London Consultants was asked to create an installation that would deliver music to people in the cafe area of the Kings Place atrium and he created 100 audio 'newspapers', each containing super-thin cutting edge circuitry that could play back 20 seconds of audio when a certain area of the paper was pressed. These audio newspapers were distributed for use around the coffee tables and sofas and Apex also assisted by printing the Newspapers. The attached picture shows Joe Hurcombe 'listening' to his Newspaper.

## Investor in People



INVESTOR IN PEOPLE

APEX ARCHITECTURE is very pleased to announce that we have been rewarded for the way we treat our staff. We have received the Investor in People Standard, which gives business recognition for making the most of the people that work for us. It is the second time we have received the award. Our Managing Director, David Hurcombe, said, "We are delighted to have the recognition renewed. The whole process was extremely helpful in clarifying our business objectives and training needs to take us into the future".



Investors in People Assessor Aileen Fairclough said: "I am pleased that Apex Architecture Consultancy Ltd. has achieved the Investor in People Standard again. The company is very inclusive with every member of staff being consulted on all aspects of the business. . . . . The firm has a strong culture, led by the Managing Director, and characterised by openness and staff involvement".

Our Company Secretary, Ann Neale said that since we already held the Investor in People Standard the systems were in place and it was just a matter of fine-tuning to bring them up to date with the revised Standards. She believes it shows Apex Architecture's commitment to developing the business by making the best of our most valuable asset – our people.

## Dean Heritage Centre

In 1981, the Dean Heritage Museum Trust acquired Camp Mill in Upper Soudley. A former iron foundry site Camp Mill was being used as a car breaker's yard; work started on transforming the near derelict 19th century mill building into a Museum, which first opened its doors to the public in 1983. In 2002, it received £500,000 from the Heritage Lottery Fund to refurbish its exhibition space and storage facilities.

The Centre is now looking to the future with an exciting new extension to house exhibition space to display future technologies. The new building will also house a high quality function room and workshops.

The new extension should have a modern yet industrial feel that will be a positive statement for the future of the Forest of Dean whilst

having roots in its heritage. An important challenge for the design is linking the various levels of the site and the building to provide generous access to all users of the museum. Our ramps, bridges and balconies are a key feature of the design.

The materials for the extension have been chosen to reflect the heritage of the Forest of Dean. The exterior of cor-ten steel has been chosen as a suitable contrasting material to the stone of the existing building and make reference to the heritage of the area, a major source of iron ore in the past. The rusty appearance has an industrial character. The glass panels provide a further contrast and they reflect the sky and woodland scene. The building will have a sedum roof that will assist with maintaining an even temperature inside the building.



A glass walkway bridge links past and present technologies. The Future Room is to be a showcase of renewable energy technologies. An angled viewing platform looks down upon the energy generating technologies. Technologies to harness water, sunlight, geothermal heat, air and wind are all suitable for electricity generation at this location.

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## A Time of Opportunity



If the media were to be believed the world is facing a terrible calamity and has entered the deepest depression since the 1930s! We at Apex Architecture do not think things are nearly as black as painted.

Something we are all doing is looking more closely at how much everything is costing us. Moving property costs anything from £6,000 upwards, which will never be recovered. A better plan is to put that money towards improving your existing home or commercial property and, at the end of the project, you have a much improved, usable and comfortable space to live and work in.

A way of cutting costs is to cut your overheads and one of the biggest is office rental, ask yourself can you work from home? Is it feasible to expand or convert your home to include your office? That would immediately reduce overheads – no rental, smaller heating and running costs and, best of all, no commute.

If you own a commercial property, can you enhance that work place so that you can rent out a portion of it, or can you carry out alterations so that you can use the space in a more cost effective manner?

How can this work be funded? Banks and Building Societies are looking for custom and have reduced the price of a loan or mortgage. Conversely, the return on savings has dropped considerably so weigh up whether the improvement will eventually prove more of an investment than a savings account.

Other things to take into account - the cost of certain building materials has come down and most Builders have cut their fees and can offer shorter lead times.

The Local Authority's fees for Planning and Building Regulations Applications remain the same but they do now offer a relatively new service, a Pre-Application Enquiry, where, on a Client's behalf, we can discuss our basic design, either in person or on the telephone. This can prove to be very cost-effective as some Councils do not charge for this advice and, even with our vast knowledge, there can be local restrictions that only the Planner knows.

All of these factors make both residential and commercial improvement projects much more viable and attractive. Therefore, now is the time for everyone to look at their dreams for their home or work place and turn them into reality.

## Case Studies



### The Cromwell Hotel, London

The Hotel is part of a Victorian terrace building comprising seven stories with accommodation on all floors and four steps sweeping up to the main Reception area.

The Owners wished to extend The Cromwell Hotel, into the vacant adjoining premises and the design had to allow for additional accommodation, comprising twenty-eight bedrooms and ancillary accommodation distributed over all floor levels (an increase of 50% more rooms). In addition, a second lift needed to be installed to ensure that guests / residents (including those with disabilities) could move freely throughout the building from top to bottom.

One of the main considerations with this

design was to ensure that the work did not impinge on the existing hotel guests and that any noise / disruption be kept to the bare minimum.

In addition Apex acted as the Party Wall Consultant for our Clients, fulfilling the conditions under The Party Wall etc. Act 1996, Notification of Proposed Construction Work. This is where a neighbour, affected by any proposed construction work, must be notified and allowed to raise any objections or concerns they may have. If necessary a Surveyor may be appointed to adjudicate and that Surveyor's costs would be borne by the person carrying out the construction work.

In this instance, after discussion, the neighbour confirmed acceptance, so formal approval was granted in the form of what is called a 'Party Wall Award'.

### Church Lodge

Church Lodge is a stone-built Victorian Gothic, Grade 2 listed building, and is part of a group of buildings associated with Highnam Court. It was originally built as a house for the sacristan of the Church of the Holy Innocents and was designed by an Assistant of Pugin who was a very important figure in the world of Architecture. Care had to be taken with the re-design and alterations because of elements of special architectural and historical interest concerning Church Lodge and its setting and we had to incorporate historical details within our Design Statement for the Listed Building Consent.

The design involved demolishing the existing

single-storey rear wing and re-building a new wing based on the same footprint and general scale of the existing wing. This new wing incorporated a WC, Utility Room and en-suite, a new Bedroom and a rear entrance lobby. The ground floor alterations involved reorganising the kitchen and dining room and moving the bathroom to first floor level. Only natural materials, similar to those existing, and those reclaimed from the demolished wing were used throughout the repairs and new build to ensure continuity.



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