

Haines Phillips Architects Contribute to the Parliamentary Review

We were pleased to be invited to contribute to the 2019 Parliamentary Review publication as a best practice representative in the field of Construction and Engineering.

Our article, written by senior partner Stanley Haines, gives some insights in to our firms approach and experience, as well as our perspective on current issues and best practice within our firm and the architectural sector as a whole. The Parliamentary Review is an independent publication that reviews the latest events in parliament from a non-partisan perspective with the goal of raising standards across multiple industries.

Read the article below, or view the full Construction and Engineering document [here](#).

Haines Phillips Architects



New-build town houses
Crouch End, London N8



Partner Stanley Haines

Haines Phillips Architects is a firm of experts that delivers tailored architectural services. Its projects are mostly residential and frequently in the heritage sector. Around a dozen people make up the firm at any given time, and it prides itself on its agility and closeness of contact with both clients and contractors. It believes that close involvement with its clients and proper understanding of their requirements is an important component of a top-quality service. Moreover, it has distinguished itself by showing great problem-solving abilities and creating customised solutions. Its goal is to create a splendid environment according to the client's brief and aspirations. Partner Stanley Haines tells the *Review* more about the firm and the sector it operates in.

The work we carry out happens in stages, from preliminary feasibility to the completion of the building works and the fit-out of the interiors. Our clients have the choice of utilising our full, start-to-finish services, or opting for a partial service – this could include, for example, starting from the receipt of planning permission (in accordance with the requirements of the project). Key to our success are the passion and personal commitment that drive our work, and the imperative that everyone feels involved and invested in the project's outcome.

Breadth and depth of experience

We can advise clients on the appointment of consultants – such as those relating to structural engineering, quantity surveying, party wall surveying or services

FACTS ABOUT HAINES PHILLIPS ARCHITECTS

- » Partner: Stanley Haines
- » Founded in 2007
- » Located in Kings Cross, London
- » Services: Architectural firm
- » No. of employees: 10
- » www.hainesphillips.co.uk

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engineering – and the best way of going about appointing a building contractor. Moreover, our in-house interior design services guarantee a high-quality design and specification of the internal fit-out, as well as finishes and decorations – carried out with the help of a specialist interior decorator should the project require this.

Where necessary or appropriate, we work on projects from the very beginning in close association with a contractor with whom we have successfully worked on previous projects. This helps us to bring a whole team of specialists together quickly, with the aim of starting building work as soon as possible; bringing about fast, streamlined turnkey solutions; or designing and building options with the benefits of a one-stop shop.

Best practice underpinned by technology, people and creativity

Important to our operational success is the use of computer modelling and visualisation. This helps us significantly with the design process and the analysis of buildings and spaces, as well as with the communication of these to other consultants in the design team and to the client. The software we use is the

latest version of Vectorworks Architect; we fully utilise its BIM capabilities as the design's development requires. The software helps us refine the design aesthetically and streamlines the production of technical information in a co-ordinated manner. Ultimately, this leads to a desirable outcome.

Our commitment to close relationships with clients and contractors means that there is an exceptional degree of consistency to the quality of our work. As most of our work – roughly 75 per cent – is repeat custom, and as we're a RIBA Chartered Practice, our clients can have a large degree of confidence that the firm conforms to all professional guidelines, including RIBA's, and that their projects will comply with all current statutory and regulatory requirements.

But perhaps the most important trait we have as an architectural firm is the ability to solve problems creatively. No two projects or clients are the same. Each new building brings a whole host of unforeseeable issues that we have to be prepared to surmount and circumvent. These difficulties are more easily overcome by a practice like ours, because we have wide-ranging experience with so many different clients, building types, towns and contexts.

Lauderdale House arts centre Camden, London N6



A planning system and an education system fit for purpose

If you were to ask architects what the primary issue in the industry is, the most common answer would likely be “the planning system”. The fact is, getting local authorities to consent to a proposal can often be an overly and needlessly convoluted task. Of course, part of our most valuable skill is in overcoming the challenges in the planning system. However, the inconsistency of the application of planning policy by local authorities can place a considerable hurdle in the way of a successful outcome.

Some clients are surprised to hear that – starting from a blank sheet of paper – it can take upwards of 18 months for a developed proposal to be fully approved by a local authority. The upside is that we rarely fail to receive permission, but the sheer time it takes can often be unpleasant and have serious implications for the project and our work. What makes this situation especially bad is that the system seems to be getting more complex as time goes on.

Another fundamental issue we face is the lack of architectural skills in the UK. As the industry increases in complexity, it’s all the more necessary that we train young people to work in this sector. At present, however, we find that too many university graduates lack the entry skills to start in a firm like ours. A more practical and thorough understanding of architecture needs to be more widely taught; otherwise, practices like ours will suffer in the future. Our firm invests heavily in skilling up the young graduates we employ to make up for areas of shortfall in their education, with no surety that the investment will pay off.



Extension of Grade II listed house Kensington, London SW7

Moving forward whatever the case

Any industry concerning buildings will always be cyclical – it’s simply the nature of the sector, as sometimes more and sometimes fewer projects are being built. The goal of business is to survive in the good times and the bad – an ability which we possess. As the economy rises and falls, we ensure we adapt to the needs of the time, even if this entails the unfortunate task of having to reduce staff size.

Nevertheless, this means that even when times are less than great – such as at the time of writing this, when our turnover is currently around 20 per cent less than it was in 2017 – we can still operate smoothly and provide our clients with the top-quality, tailored service they expect of us. In short, we are confident in our future health and success.

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