

INTRODUCTION



Hives Architects LLP is a long established architects' practice based in Reading, with a wide range of experience of residential and commercial development throughout the Thames Valley and Home Counties.

Eric G. V. Hives established the practice in the 1930's and in time brought his sons Colin and John into the business. Eric G.V. Hives and Sons grew into a substantial regional architectural practice, designing buildings of all types, from farmhouses to large office buildings and factories.

In particular, the work of the practice can be found in Reading, particularly at the University, in Henley and its environs, and in the new town of Bracknell.

The practice was never in the avant-garde of modernism, but focused on producing practical designs that met its clients' aspirations. Many of its buildings were in historic environments, and here the practice was not afraid to pay respect to context by using traditional detailing.

The practice maintains this tradition to this day, and won an award in 2009 for brickwork detailing from the Brick Development Association.

Hives Architects has been under the direction of Nigel Garrett Dip Arch (Portsmouth) RIBA since 1996 and has recently become a Limited Liability Partnership with the introduction of Cornelius Kavanagh Dip Arch (Liverpool) RIBA as a new partner.



EXPERIENCE AND EXPERTISE

Nigel has over 30 years experience in private practice and has particular expertise in commercial projects including major office developments and trade parks, as well as a variety of public buildings and residential developments. Nigel worked with John Hives on the renovation of the grandstand in the 1990's.

Cornelius joined Hives Architects in 2000 and has been involved in a number of commercial and residential projects including a number involving Listed Building and Conservation Area issues. He lives in Henley and has been a member of Phillis Court Club for several years.

Our clients are generally locally based commercial and private organisations. Amongst these we include the Oxford Diocesan Board of finance with whom we have been involved for in excess of twenty years.



The wide range of our experience and our local knowledge allows to respond to the challenge of fitting new development into an area of England of such history and beauty.

On highly constrained sites featuring Listed Buildings, Conservation Areas and Preserved Trees we have been able achieve outcomes that are popular with clients and public alike.



Despite our knowledge of traditional detailing both of the brick and tile typical of Berkshire and the Costwold style, and although we retain a great deal of skill at hand-drawing which can be used where appropriate, we employ the latest computer aided design software in our office. As well as the obvious advantages of productivity and precision, this allows us to model designs in three dimensions in a very realistic way.



It is generally a requirement of the present day planning and building control process that new developments demonstrate high levels of energy efficiency. Our approach is to ensure that sensible design decisions are taken early to avoid adding complexity and cost to the project later on.

DESIGN APPROACH

In view of the history of the project, it seems likely that any works to the grandstand will be put under intense scrutiny by English Heritage and SODC, the Planning Authority.

It is clear however that the changes to the grandstand that were so controversial twenty years ago have now become a much loved feature of the Henley townscape.

It is to be hoped that the fact that the fears of the preservationists were unfounded then can be a precedent for the fact that there would be nothing to fear in an incremental change to the grandstand now. As the original Architects, we feel that we would be well placed to make this argument.

Hives Architects has a reputation for obtaining permission for buildings where listed buildings or other heritage constraints would suggest that permission would be impossible. We have done so by “architectural diplomacy”, avoiding confrontation with the planning authorities, and drawing them gradually around to our client’s objective.

It will help that the Planning Authority can have confidence in our ability to carry through the work to detailed design and construction, as one of the chief fears of conservation officers is that the details will be crude.

We have, however, considerable experience of working to tight budgets, and we would be keen to control cost also.



Nigel Garrett was partner in charge of the refurbishment of Albion Terrace, one of Reading’s finest buildings, as well as key town-centre properties such as Blandy and Blandy in the Market Place.

Nigel managed to obtain permission for a building, in a modern style, in the churchyard of St Mary’s in Reading. This is now under construction after the removal of several skeletons of Saxon date from under the foundations.



Cornelius Kavanagh was the project architect for the conversion of a derelict Georgian building on Castle Street into offices for Pitmans Solicitors. This required the replacement of roof, windows, floors, even parts of the walls.

He was also the project architect for “Adshead Park” which although a new building was under intense scrutiny since it was in a very prominent location in an Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty.

Hives were not the original architect, but produced an entirely new Lutyens-inspired design which could be built in phases, as we gradually persuaded the Local Authority to concede ground. This house also won an award.