

Practice offers perfect solution for tight site city residential projects

An outstanding architectural practice, focused predominantly on the developer-led residential market, together with mental health care schemes and now branching out into other areas, Bellis Cooley Architects provide a full service - from feasibility through to planning and building regulations, and contract administration.

Bellis Cooley Architects were formed in August 2010 in a spirit of optimism during a recession. Since then the company has continued to grow and remains optimistic for the coming years.

Working out of a friendly, creative studio in Clerkenwell in the centre of London, the practice has the skills to design projects of any size - from bespoke contemporary single houses, to large mixed-use developments. They are currently working in the healthcare, residential, student housing and commercial sectors, although their staff have a huge range of experience and are keen to explore architecture of any kind.

The company's core focus and knowledge revolves around the London Boroughs, although they have also undertaken projects nationwide and overseas.

The practice has a particular flair for rising to the challenge of projects maximising the potential of tight urban sites, particularly in central London boroughs.

The ethos of the company is strongly client, as well as design-focused - particularly in understanding and delivering what clients are looking for in terms of commercial return.

The practice is also active in the mental health care sector, including working with health care specialist Blake Associates as a joint venture partner. Other developments in this sector include ward refurbishment projects, and the creation of new facilities for two mental health trusts in North West and Central London.

Bellis Cooley's Ralph Cooley says: "We're good to work with and enjoy being part of a team - understanding what clients want and working with them to get that. We adopt a flexible



approach whenever we take on a new client and aim to be a part of the team rather than just a consultant hired to do a job. We are also very commercial-minded when it comes to identifying sites for clients - therefore generating our own work. This is particularly true of clients in the property development sector - rather than simply taking on given a job, we will find out what they actually want and deliver opportunities to them.

"We are keen on expanding our involvement with social housing projects having worked in the sector in the past.

"Although most of our work has been private developer-led, social housing has become an increasingly important element of many private schemes, so we are keen to work with more social housing developers.

"Another area of interest which we are targeting is public sector projects such as schools and community developments (we are currently working on a project to provide a youth club as part of a larger development, and this element of the project is proving to be very interesting)."



The practice also has an international presence including projects in China on which they have been engaged over the last two years. One current scheme includes undertaking the concept design and planning for the development of the Yunjing Hotel in Nanning, China. The 5-star hotel will become a meeting point for this part of the city, and will also offer the several thousand new residents a series of top quality amenities, such as a swimming pool, spa, golf and tennis, as well as a range of restaurants and bars. The hotel will contain about 300 bedrooms and is being aimed at a major international brand.



Margery St. Penthouse

Current projects being carried out by the practice in the UK include a development with AWR Developemnts to create nine high quality apartments on the site of a former public house on New North Road in Islington . This contemporary building will provide a mix of apartments in a highly accessible and desirable part of London. The site occupies a prominent corner in the neighbourhood and can be viewed from many angles, so the concept was to create a building that has no distinct front and back. The project was designed by Ralph Cooley whilst a director at Ramsden and Partners Architects Ltd. The apartments should be on sale in the Spring of 2012

Bellis Cooley's client, IPE Capital, acquired a site at Cubitt Street London WC1 with consent to build two apartments in a dense urban location near Kings Cross. The challenging constraints of the site led to innovative design solutions, at details stage.

An additional development which Bellis Cooley undertook with Sond Construction on a site at Margery Street London N1 was completed earlier this year. The project was constructed on a tight urban site with unusual constraints. An underground railway tunnel passes directly beneath the site which is partially occupied by a Victorian Steam train vent shaft. The shaft could not be removed for logistical reasons, and the already constrained site was further restricted by the need to offset any construction 1m from the shaft. Ralph Cooley, whilst a director at Ramsden and Partners, steered the design through two planning applications, one of which saw a four-storey building approved, and a further approval was given for a fifth storey. The project was completed in Spring 2011 and all apartments are now sold.

Other developments on which the practice is engaged include a scheme on St Pancras Way, London, involving the country's largest student housing developer – Unite Group plc, together with Travis Perkins Builders' Merchants, Bellis Cooley Architects were appointed to undertake the design of a major new development to provide 563 student rooms over a new state of the art facility for Travis Perkins. Bellis Cooley worked within a large and diverse team in order to achieve planning consent, and their close working relationship with the planning consultants and the local authority was crucial in securing the approval.

Further schemes include a recently completed contract at Hornsey Road and Tollington Way, London N19. This high quality mixed use development involves the provision of eight new private houses and four new private flats in Holloway.



Max Glatt Ward

The flats are situated on a main road above a new shop and the houses on a quieter residential street. Ralph Cooley and Gebina Ham steered the original design through planning whilst working at Ramsden and Partners, and Bellis Cooley Architects were involved in further design and planning matters from summer 2010.



Yunjing Hotel