

# 40 years of enhancing lives



## Introduction

Our 40-year anniversary is all about celebrating together, acknowledging our work, our people and the impact that P+HS Architects has had over the years. Since the start of the year, we have partied together in fine 1984 style, heard reflections from our Healthcare and Residential Leads and today we are taking a whistle stop tour of the practice's history of enhancing lives. From our beginnings (without which, there would be no 40 years' impact!) the intervening years, and importantly, what lies ahead at this exciting time in P+HS Architects' evolution.

## In the beginning

There were two. Chris Potter and Rowland Holmes-Smith founded P+HS Architects in 1984. They had big ambitions but started small, working on modest residential projects and house extensions, including their own!

From home working they secured their first premises – a small high street office in the market town of Stokesley, North Yorkshire. Our head office to this day remains in Stokesley, after the business moved to the Old Station. Recruitment ensued and two quickly multiplied as new staff joined the team. Some of those early colleagues are still with us today: Chris Dennis (then employee number six) is now our MD and Angela Rossi (number fifteen), an Associate.





Longevity is reflected across the practice with several staff celebrating major milestones along with the practice this year. 2024 will see Angela celebrating 35 years of service, and a further four senior members of staff celebrating 20 years. As a percentage of our company 38% have been with P+HS for more than 5 years, with over 60% of these holding more than 10 years of service.



### Strategic expansion

With growth came more opportunities for work, and healthcare was identified as a sector of interest. Chris Potter and Chris Dennis having medical experience at previous practices and a passion for social impact, P+HS made one of the first in its history of bold strategic moves, acquiring a practice already entrenched in healthcare, Johnson and Turnbull. This purposeful move opened the door to healthcare and so the practice's relationship with the NHS began.

To this day, the core sectors of the business follow the blueprint laid down by our founding directors with Chris Potter leading on healthcare design and Rowland specialising in residential & masterplanning design, with Chris Dennis leading on design quality and social housing. Chris Dennis also tempted Joe Biggs (a future MD) who had significant experience in clean room design and the medical field, to join the practice.

Building their reputation and workstream was as much about the people as it was about specialist knowledge, and the relationships created and nurtured in those formative years would go on to spawn repeat work and recommendations for years to come.

Over the ensuing years, as part of its planned strategic growth, P+HS Architects would open further offices in Leeds (2000), Newcastle (2017), and Manchester (2024).

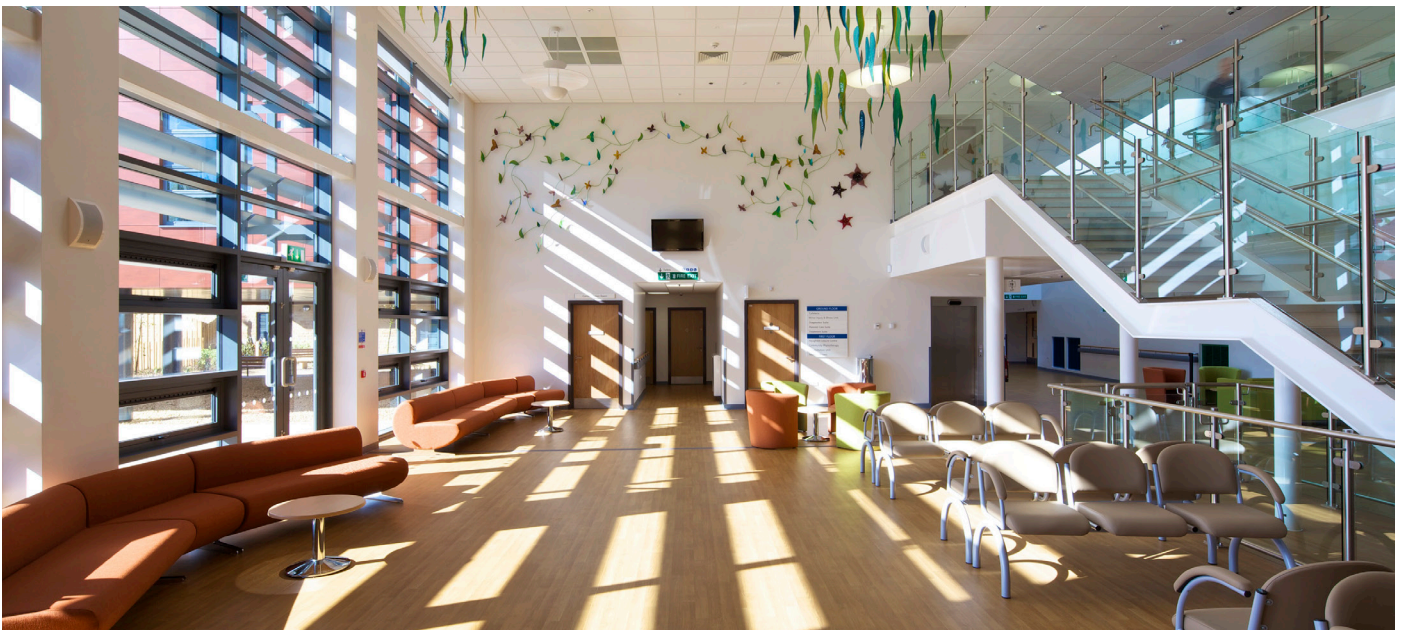


## Highs, lows and future facing

Of course 40 years of progression has not been without challenges: economic, social, political, and legislative changes all impact construction, and then there was the small matter of a global pandemic! But it is the way that P+HS has responded to change that has been key to its ongoing success.

Underpinned by robust processes, systems, and management and with highly dedicated, knowledgeable teams, the practice has been fortunate to be able to adapt and ride out difficult times with the continued focus on great Architecture and the ability to enhance lives. As early adopters of new technology, when Covid hit, our digital capabilities allowed us to work from home immediately. Hugely complex schemes continued to progress with our teams harnessing technology to communicate and refine design proposals without compromising stakeholder engagement or technical information.

Sustainability too has always been important to P+HS, both in the way it has operated the business (no boom and bust here) and its mindful use of resources. Despite the challenging economic outlook, 2010 saw P+HS creating an ambitious first for the NHS: a primary care building to BREEAM Excellent standard. Houghton le Spring became an award-winning exemplar within healthcare and an inspiration for the future.



At the heart of everything, our colleagues have remained our constant core strength from the early days of smaller numbers to over one hundred today. With continued, planned growth, ensuring one voice and consistency in approach across teams working remotely or split across offices was a priority. Key to success was P+HS's passion for great design, robust policies, QA systems and shared values.

The values that we work by were shaped in those early years by our founding directors and absorbed organically across the practice. But increased scale creates a need for formalisation and latterly we have worked with our colleagues right across the practice to define and agree what P+HS means to us as a collective and the values that guide our work. Our purpose: Creating places that enhance lives. Our values: We are one team, ambitious, progressive, and proud of our reputation.





## Achievements

Today, P+HS Architects is a practice of over 100 colleagues, with four UK offices and an enviable reputation in both healthcare and housing.

Some may measure achievement in terms of awards, and we have won our fair share – 4 times Architectural Practice of the Year for Healthcare Estates, and numerous project awards in both healthcare and residential, and make no mistake, we are always thrilled to get an award! But for us, achievements are more about people and positive impact.

Our team value the importance of the architecture we deliver. Taking the thoughts and needs of our clients and providing the aspiration of greatness. Founded by our purpose, we have supported our clients with achieving many fantastic buildings over the years, from small gems to multi-million-pound complex developments, we have embraced and ensured great design.





P+HS as a practice has achieved great things, providing scores of people with a fulfilling career over 40 years and creating a connected community where people can flourish and progress into the future. We are immensely proud of our teams; their personal and professional wins as they progress through their careers: students that we support to qualify as Architects or Technologists, colleagues that go on to enhance their learning through ongoing training, and the mentoring they provide sharing their knowledge and expertise with the next generation; our outreach teams visiting schools and colleges, and our RIBA mentors and STEAM ambassadors. All are part of a legacy of training and support which we value highly.

Our strong foundations have developed into a practice-wide ethos centred around enhancing the lives of our clients, their staff and the communities they serve.

### Social Impact

Creating positive impact through our project work is hugely satisfying generating value for our clients and creating affordable, accessible, and vibrant places that support community wellbeing. Our two core sectors of residential and healthcare are in themselves socially valuable. Whether a project provides a safe and supportive place to live, an improved environment supporting mental health recovery, a state-of-the-art operating theatre, or a quiet break out space for a weary NHS nurse to grab a coffee, all enhance people's lives in some way, the small ways just as big a win as the large.

Social impact has always been a part of our practice at P+HS, but its prominence in the wider sustainability agenda is now increasing. As the understanding and recognition of social impact in the built environment improves, in our 40th year we are committed to engaging with the conversation and evolving our own approach to maximise the impact we can have.

Developing our own bespoke strategy, we appointed Social Impact specialist consultants Hoare Lea to work with us. The process has been incredibly rewarding and proven that developing a business centred around place and people exemplifies social impact. Working alongside Hoare Lea we have developed our three pillars that stand at the forefront of our Social Impact Strategy and encompass the work we have developed in the past 40 years. These include Practice, Place and People; exemplifying the three areas of impact that sit at the heart of P+HS Architects.

Practice: Delivering value for our employees through our workplace and community.

Place: Generating social impact in our projects, through the design of places and spaces.

People: Supporting our local communities and sharing our skills and expertise.

The sectors we choose to actively engage with deliver a multitude of benefits to people across the country. This principle is at the core to P+HS as a business and is embedded in the roots that were established 40 years ago. We believe in building long lasting relationships, which is why 70% of our workload comes through repeat work with longstanding clients, some of whom we have worked alongside for the full 40 years that P+HS Architects has been in existence.



## The future

P+HS Architects, 40 years on from its two young and ambitious founders, continues to go from strength to strength. It is a bold organisation, unafraid to flex in response to the needs of a changing world, innovate in Architecture, take calculated risks, relearn, embrace advances in technology, and trust in its talented colleagues to succeed. Yet, in many ways it remains the same, with strong shared values, an unshakeable business ethos, and a clear sense of direction. Underpinning the practice is a solid robustness and a clarity of message as to who we are collectively, what we stand for, and what motivates us to progress.

People continue to be the mainstay of the organisation, and our identity and purpose of enhancing lives that was established back in 1984 endures.

Looking ahead we are excited to explore new opportunities, consolidating success, growing our new Manchester office, exploring technological advances through our innovation group, researching, and developing more solutions to reduce carbon and support the sustainability agenda, as well as supporting our colleagues to advance in their careers.

Wherever the future takes us, one thing is for certain, P+HS Architects will remain first and foremost committed to creating positive impact and enhancing lives.



The final word must go to our longest serving colleague, Managing Director Chris Dennis:

*"I feel privileged to have worked with and continue to work with some incredibly talented people all playing their part in the success and longevity of the business. Working together with a common aim, enhancing lives and creating great outcomes for our clients and building users whatever the sector."*

*"Whilst this year we reflect on the last 40 years of the practice, for me and our board directors we are clearly focused on the future: the development and career progression of our team ensuring future succession, allowing P+HS Architects to continue the creation and delivery of well-designed and cost-effective sustainable schemes that add value to our clients and the community."*

