

'Good design is essential'

Howard Phillips, chief executive of PegasusLife, explains why design is the cornerstone of its homes for the discerning older generation



What do you mean by the 'discerning older generation'?

Simply put, we view 'older' people as sophisticated customers, and not surprisingly, they have a wide and varied mix in taste and aspiration – yet few choices.

The onus is on us as developers to come forward with a rich mix of product offers, designed, delivered, serviced and marketed in a thoughtful way in order to stimulate and seduce a consumer profile not reached by others in the market.

Do you think retirement homes have a bad reputation in the UK?

Retirement isn't the problem – it's a stage in life to be celebrated. The problem is the benign housing offer. That's what we're addressing.

You came from McCarthy & Stone, that is also now looking at high-end design for baby boomers. What will differentiate you from them?

McCarthy & Stone is a successful company who do an excellent job in the markets they pursue. We are focused on delivering bespoke, site-specific solutions, as opposed to a repetitive model, as well as schemes of a scale and/or in locations where McCarthy & Stone are not generally active. We're doing this to widen choice and attract new customers.

Where does design fit into your thinking?

Thoughtful design matters in every corner of the consumer marketplace. Good design is essential.

Are you looking for architects?

We are constantly seeking to get better and better in every aspect of our business, therefore we never stop looking for the best talent. At the moment, we are working with 10 different architecture practices, as well as another four firms on projects that we are close to acquiring. If someone has an interesting design idea or development opportunity, we want to hear from them.

What do you want from an architect?

Their very best work. We are uncompromising in our pursuit of excellence.

What schemes do you have on and what is next?

We have live projects in Dawlish, Bude and Woodbridge. Woods Bagot is consulting on all projects, with Arup Associates working on our project in Bournemouth, Design Engine is doing our Winchester proposal, Duggan Morris is designing schemes in Hampstead and Sevenoaks, RCKa in Seaford and Harpenden, Glenn Howells Architects in Sutton Coldfield and Cheltenham, Proctor and Matthews on Tetbury, mæ on Westminster, and Tom Russell Architects is designing our scheme in Portishead. We will be acquiring another 20 sites in the next 12 months.

NEW PRACTICES



COUSINS & COUSINS

Cousins & Cousins



MAIN PEOPLE Ben Cousins and Jelena Cousins

BASED Highgate, London

FOUNDED October 2012

CONTACT

www.cousinsandcousins.com

Where have you come from?

We are a husband and wife team who met at the Bartlett. Jelena ran her own practice after working at Hawkins\ Brown and Wilkinson Eyre. Before co-owning CWA, Ben worked at Hopkins and as an associate at ESA.

What work do you have?

Current projects include a number of Grade II-listed townhouses in Westminster, Kensington and Chelsea; an extensive new-build family home in Highgate; a retained facade rebuild with basement; and a large new-build multi-unit residential unit scheme in West Hampstead. We have recently been shortlisted for the Connecting the Seven Lochs competition outside Glasgow.

What are your ambitions?

Quality and contemporary craftsmanship are our key values. A rigorous attention to detail is maintained through every scale. We hope people find our architecture engaging and thoughtful. The team grew from five to 15 people this year and we would now like to maintain a steady, sustained growth.

How optimistic are you?

Joining forces allowed us to consolidate our experience and contacts. It has given us confidence also as co-directors. We wish that public authorities and universities would entrust young practices as they did in the past. It is disheartening that we can't enter many competitions as we don't score highly enough on the PQQ system.