

**This is Workplace**



**Apt**

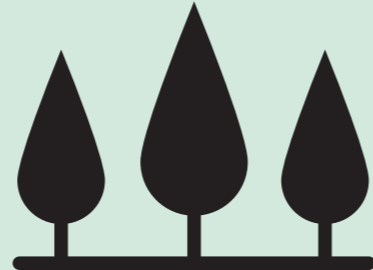


**At Apt, we have been designing and delivering award-winning, inspiring workplaces for our clients for over a decade.**

We believe our studio ethos of approaching each project afresh gives an agility that allows us to respond to the unique set of challenges and opportunities each project presents. The world of the workplace doesn't stand still, and neither do we.

We are constantly evolving and striving to deliver added value for our clients. We enjoy working closely with them, understanding what they are seeking out of each new project, what their key goals and aspirations are, and testing and challenging the brief to find creative, deliverable solutions.

As an industry, it is clear we need to balance some significant and often contradictory pressures shaping the way we think about providing workplaces. The mantra of “build it, and they will come” is less relevant now than it has ever been. We need to question whether we need to ‘build’ anything from scratch or whether adaptive and creative reuse of our existing urban fabric is often a better solution. We must also consider what it is that people want from their workplace currently and look forward to how buildings can adapt in the future.



In order to help deliver net zero... buildings must be designed to be **disassembled and recycled at the end of their useful lifespan**

(source: European Academies Science Advisory Council).

Building operations and construction are responsible for around

**40%**

of global energy-related carbon emissions

(source: ADP Research Institute)



**63%**

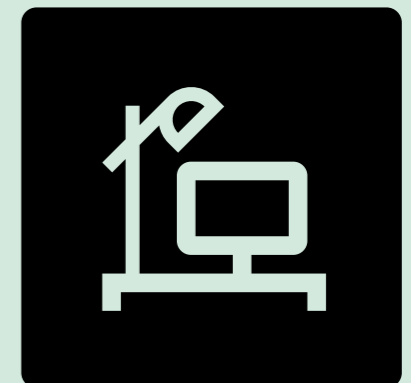
of 18-24 year olds would consider looking for a new job if their employer insisted on a full-time return to the workplace

(source: ADP Research Institute)

**69%**

of senior business leaders said that young workers working from home will struggle more to progress in their career

(source: YouGov for BBC)



**2050**

Government’s target to reduce net emissions to zero

# Workplace Experience



# Workplace Experience

At heart we are designers, creative thinkers and problem solvers. We sketch, we model and test the brief. We believe this is the only way to grow the value of sites for our clients and continue to deliver exceptional buildings.

We are also realists: we take pride in our ability to deliver our buildings, and we understand what it takes to see these creative designs through to completion. Ultimately, we want to design buildings which are occupied, well used, and enjoyed.

**Consented**  
**6.2 Million sq.ft.**

We have over 6 Million sq.ft. of consented projects, with over 2.2 Million sq.ft. of that being workplace since Apt's inception in 2009. No two projects are the same, each is distinct in approach and final design, demonstrating our commitment to finding unique solutions.

**Built**  
**3 Million sq.ft.**

Apt strongly believes that providing a 'Golden Thread' of design continuity throughout the process delivers a better building. It ensures the big ideas are preserved. We also enjoy seeing our ideas come to life, with the lessons learnt filtered through into new projects, so we are constantly improving.

**Local Planning Authorities**  
**25**

We have experience with over 25 Local Planning Authorities, achieving significant workplace consents in several London Boroughs including Westminster, Islington, Camden, City of London and Hammersmith & Fulham. Each borough has its own unique challenges, but we believe our flexible and responsible design approach allows us to navigate these idiosyncrasies and deliver great consents for our clients.



- |  |  |
|--|--|
| 1. Park House, Oxford Street, W1                   | 7. 66 Hammersmith Road, W14                  |
| 2. One New Street Square, EC4                      | 8. Luminary, 2 India Street, EC3             |
| 3. 2 Merchant Square, Paddington, W2               | 9. The Metal Works, 235 St John Street, EC1V |
| 4. 45 Old Bond Street, W1                          | 10. Lamb's Passage, EC1Y                     |
| 5. 400 & 450 Longwater Avenue, Green Park, Reading | 11. Project C, W1F                           |
| 6. The Earnshaw, 77-91 New Oxford Street, WC1      | 12. Hill House, 1 Little New Street, EC4A    |

# Timeline & Evolution

We have come a long way since 2009. We have rebranded, moved studios, grown to a 50-strong practice, and become Employee Owned. Throughout this period we have seen the way in which we work, and how we design workplaces evolve. Never a studio to stand still, our approach to design means we are constantly challenging the status quo.



400 & 450 Longwater Avenue, Green Park, Reading

400 & 450 Longwater Avenue challenges the status quo and raises the bar for what out-of-town business parks can offer. High flexibility, efficiency, and sustainability make these buildings adaptable for future generations of workplace occupiers.

45 Old Bond Street, W1

An extensive refurbishment and remodelling of the reception and third floor office space located at 45 Old Bond Street, that boasts a Grade II-listed façade. High-quality materials were used throughout, and the office floors provide flexible workplace accommodation with fully accessible raised floors.



2 Merchant Square, Paddington, W2

16 storeys of high-quality workplace in an outstanding location in the heart of Paddington. The ground floor embraces a permeable, fluid approach, with huge 5m high pivot doors that allow the lobby and café to open onto the main office entrance with a beautifully landscaped garden.



The Earnshaw, 77-91 New Oxford Street, WC1

On the site of Apt's former studio, The Earnshaw seeks to knit together and enhance the surrounding urban grain with an all-electric, highly sustainable, landmark workplace building.

Park House, Oxford Street, W1

A complex, mixed-use scheme, Park House cleverly creates independent identities for the residential, workplace and retail uses in one elegant form. An engineering triumph that saw half of the building acoustically isolated from the rest to reduce any potential vibration from the Central Line beneath.

One New Street Square, EC4

Pre-let in its entirety over a year before completion, One New Street Square is a landmark office building for Landsec. It took advantage of a unique setting to enhance the extraordinary views of St. Paul's Cathedral.

2009

2009  
RPA is born!

2010  
New Street Square breaks ground

2013  
RPA becomes RPP

2015  
Sunday Times best small company to work for

2010  
Practice grows to 20 Staff

2012  
Park House wins Bentley Innovation Award

2014  
3 Merchant Square completes

2016  
New Street Square wins WAN Commercial award



▲ 66 Hammersmith Road, W14  
Designed as a modern warehouse, 66 Hammersmith Road is designed to create a flexible, adaptable workplace campus that appeals to any size of tenant. It allows a one person start-up to grow and expand within the building, or support a larger tenant by connecting floors together with voids and staircases.



▲ The Metal Works, 235 St John Street, EC1V  
The creation of a high-quality new studio for Apt. The innovative fit out involved creating a bespoke kitchen area and reception as well as furniture design for the whole studio. High-quality, crafted materials complement the existing building to create a rich, warm and welcoming working environment.



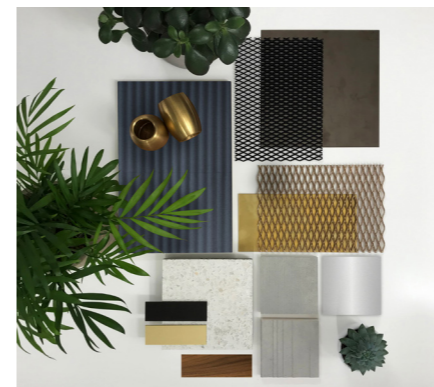
▲ Lamb's Passage, EC1Y  
A new flexible 30,000 sq.ft. office building that accommodates both affordable workspaces and start-ups located in the centre of Islington. Lamb's Passage brings back into use the historic Grade II-listed vaults which sit beneath the site that once formed part of the Whitbread Brewery.



◀ Hill House, EC1  
A high-profile central London workplace, seeking to retain the majority of the existing structure and substantially increasing the area. As a flagship workplace building, it is being designed to the highest environmental standards, including Nabers 5.5\* rating, BREEAM Outstanding and Well Building Standard Platinum Certification.



▶ Luminary, EC3  
A compact and beautifully executed boutique workplace enclosed in a wider redevelopment in the City of London. Luminary offers high-quality performance and design philosophy, in a compact form.



▲ Project C, W1F  
This project is a full fit out and refurbishment of an existing building in the heart of the Soho conservation area. Our approach is both creative and sustainable, retaining the maximum existing fabric, including reusing the existing timber floors throughout.

**Global and domestic events constantly change how the workplace is used. Evidence suggests this rate of change is accelerating, and there is a constant drive to be 'best in class'. It is difficult to predict exactly what these changes may be, but we appreciate that high-quality, well-considered design endures, and flexibility is key. The continued drive towards Net Carbon Zero is resetting the way we need to think about buildings from the ground up. It is a challenge that we as architects embrace.**

2017  
RPP becomes Employee Owned

2019  
Apt x Huguet explore reuse of materials at CDW

2021  
Launch of first Apt Architectural Apprenticeship

2022  
Longwater Avenue wins Regional BCO Award

2023  
Hill House planning submission

▲ 2018  
RPP Rebrands to Apt

▲ 2020  
Fulham Gasworks Highly Commended

▲ 2022  
Urbanest City wins City Building of the Year

▲ 2023  
Completion of the Earnshaw

**2024**



## The future of the office & the 15-minute city

Apt Lab

**Offices are no longer about the 9-5 grind or open plan versus cellular space planning. They are enablers: buildings which provide a platform to collaborate and build communities.**

Technology frees the digital nomad from a desk; they can work anywhere, an airport, a café or a park. This blurs the boundaries between home, workplace, and hospitality. As the pandemic now seems like a distant memory, the hybrid home and office working model appears here to stay for the foreseeable future. Many of us have embraced the flexibility and convenience of remote working and have come to accept that not everyone will be in the office at the same time.

So, in this new hybrid approach, what becomes of the traditional workplace? Emerging is the concept of the work 'ecosystem', consisting of a collection of workplaces, each offering something different. If working from home is about getting your head down, clearing to-do lists and undertaking admin, then the office must adapt to deliver certain aspects the kitchen table can't replicate. It needs to provide an environment for collaboration and career growth, bouncing ideas off one another, getting to know your colleagues and growing your professional network – all activities which are much easier in person.



Given that people will have more choice about where they work, offices and landlords will have to innovate to attract and keep tenants. If the office becomes more of a gathering place, then it needs to provide the corresponding amenities. Co-working spaces are one example, with their focus on flexible working arrangements, increased amenity spaces and events programmes, and often mixed ground floor uses.

Arguably, a positive side effect of the pandemic is the new appreciation city dwellers have of their immediate surroundings; unable to travel further afield, they discovered local parks, shops, and cafés, and even spoke to their neighbours. What bearing does this have on the future workplace?

Step forward the '15-minute city'. A concept popularised by Professor Carlos Moreno, the city is re-imagined as a series of neighbourhoods, each providing six key elements accessible within 15 minutes: working, caring, supplying, learning, enjoying, and living. Already embraced by the Parisian mayor, cities around the world are being enticed by this model for resilient, vibrant communities, including Madrid, Milan, Ottawa, Seattle, and Melbourne.

Yet while cities are crucial crucibles of creativity, innovation, growth, and wealth creation, not everyone lives in a city. Furthermore, remote working isn't possible for all – think of the hospitality, service and retail industries. A May 2020 study indicated that of the 70% of Americans who were working virtually, only 5% lacked a high school degree, highlighting the economic inequalities of who can, and who can't, work from home.

It could be argued that the 15-minute city and hybrid working models could widen existing inequality. It is worth noting that neighbourhoods aren't limited to cities, and many suburbs and towns have perhaps five of its six key elements. What is lacking is somewhere to work (unless you count bedrooms or kitchen tables).

As more people than ever are choosing to move further out and accept greater commutes (one figure suggests an extra 30 minutes) we need new ideas. The work ecosystem could include a halfway house between office and home, ideally a 15-minute walk away. This would mean local co-working spaces in every town, where you can work remotely, but also mix with other local professionals, a work 'club'.

Of course, there aren't necessarily suitable office spaces in every town. This provides an opportunity to be creative, the catalyst to reinvent the beleaguered high street. High streets already have the existing infrastructure to serve the community and are typically well located to serve the greatest number of residents. The decline of the traditional high street retail provides an abundance of empty spaces.


Couple this with the emerging 'sharing economy', in which younger generations are pushing a prioritisation of health, experience and wellbeing over assets and ownership, there are interesting possibilities for workspaces as multifunctional spaces. We are all familiar with the café as an informal co-working space, but there's no reason why this model can't be expanded and evolved. Who wouldn't want a florist, a yoga studio or a bakery on their office doorstep?

The benefits of office workers spending more time and money in their local area could trickle down to other sectors. In rethinking the office, there is also the potential to narrow the gap between the haves and the have nots, rejuvenate our high streets, and create a better work life balance.



# Case Studies





**THE EARNSHAW**  
**ONE NEW STREET SQUARE**  
**400 & 450 LONGWATER AVENUE**  
**HILL HOUSE**  
**PARK HOUSE**  
**66 HAMMERSMITH ROAD**  
**LUMINARY**



**Designed as a best-in-class workplace, a West End office building which slots seamlessly into a complex urban context.**



# The Earnshaw

The Earnshaw is a highly contextual architectural response to a complex site. Providing nine storeys of exemplary office accommodation above ground floor retail, the scheme has been developed with a focus on the wellbeing of its occupants. A daylight circulation feature stair connects lift lobbies, whilst numerous external terraces are accessed from the floorplates.

The introduction of a new arcade route through the middle of the site aims to increase pedestrian permeability through and around the scheme. The building represents the latest thinking in best-in-class office buildings, incorporating smart technology and Well Building Standard® Platinum, BREEM Outstanding and Net Zero Carbon (operation) as well as WIRED and SMART score.



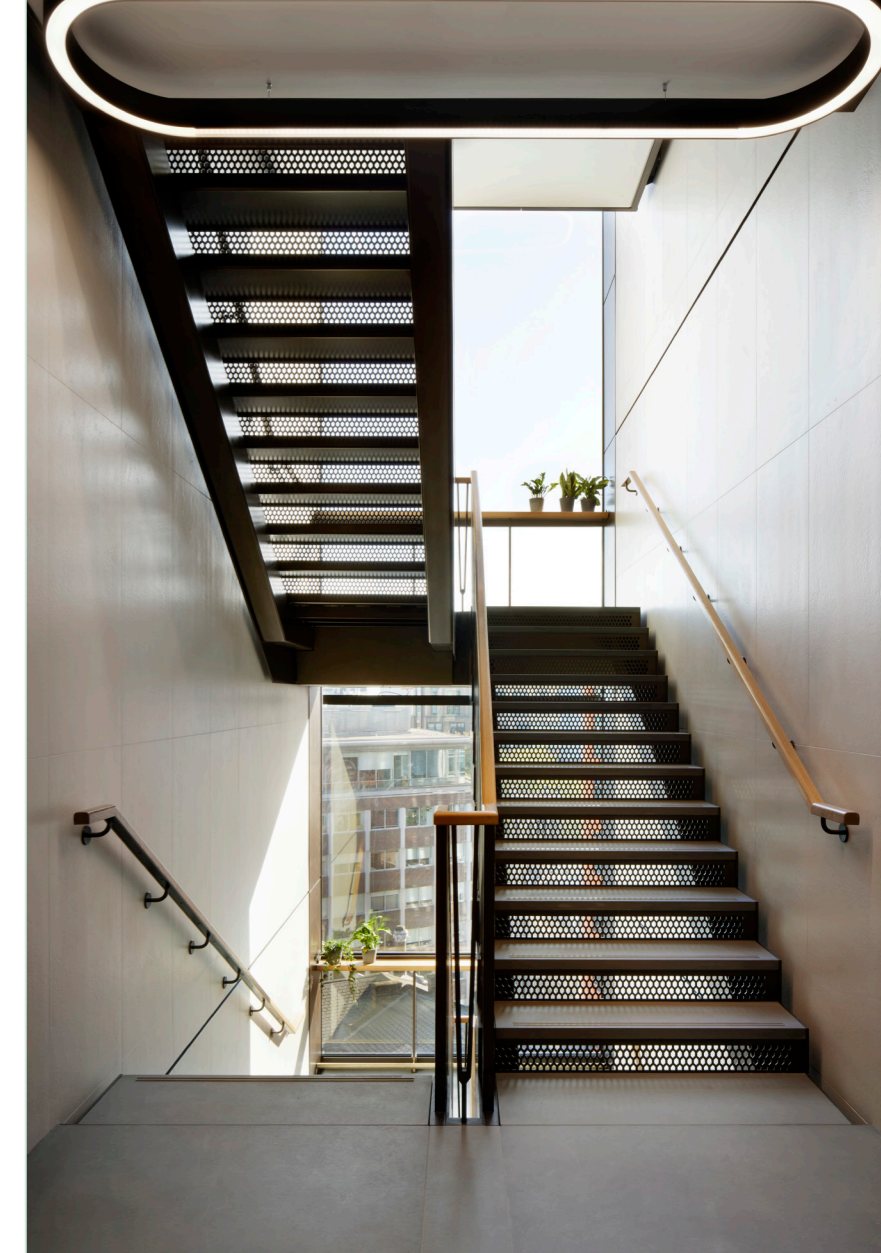
### Added Value

Sitting between the well-established London neighbourhoods of Soho, Bloomsbury and Covent Garden, the ground floor of the building is designed to be engaging, permeable and animated on all sides. The Earnshaw sits comfortably in this bustling part of London, and actively improves the wider urban context, knitting together the redevelopment around Centrepont, Central St. Giles and Princes Circus.

The scheme is all electric and benefits from two completely diverse incoming supplies providing unparalleled resilience and security for tenants. Wellbeing was at the forefront of the concept, contributing significantly to pre-letting the whole building. Top-spec, end-of-journey facilities, multiple terraces, and a daylight circulation stair running the height of the building, paired with WELL Platinum accreditation, contribute to a healthier, happier workplace environment.



**Warmth of textures and earthy materials, combined with natural light throughout, for great comfort.**



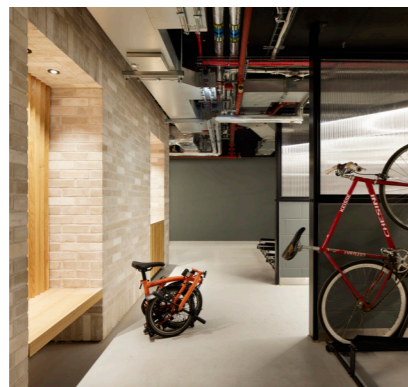
# The Earnshaw



The high level of architectural details on the facade is carried out internally in the common areas and facilities.

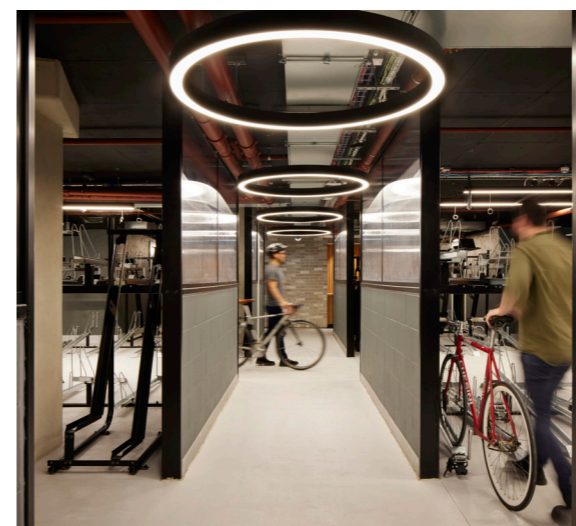
The staircases and the bathrooms benefit from a vast amount of natural light and views across Central London skyline.

The exposed services within the workspaces have been carefully coordinated and designed to offer a great textured ceiling



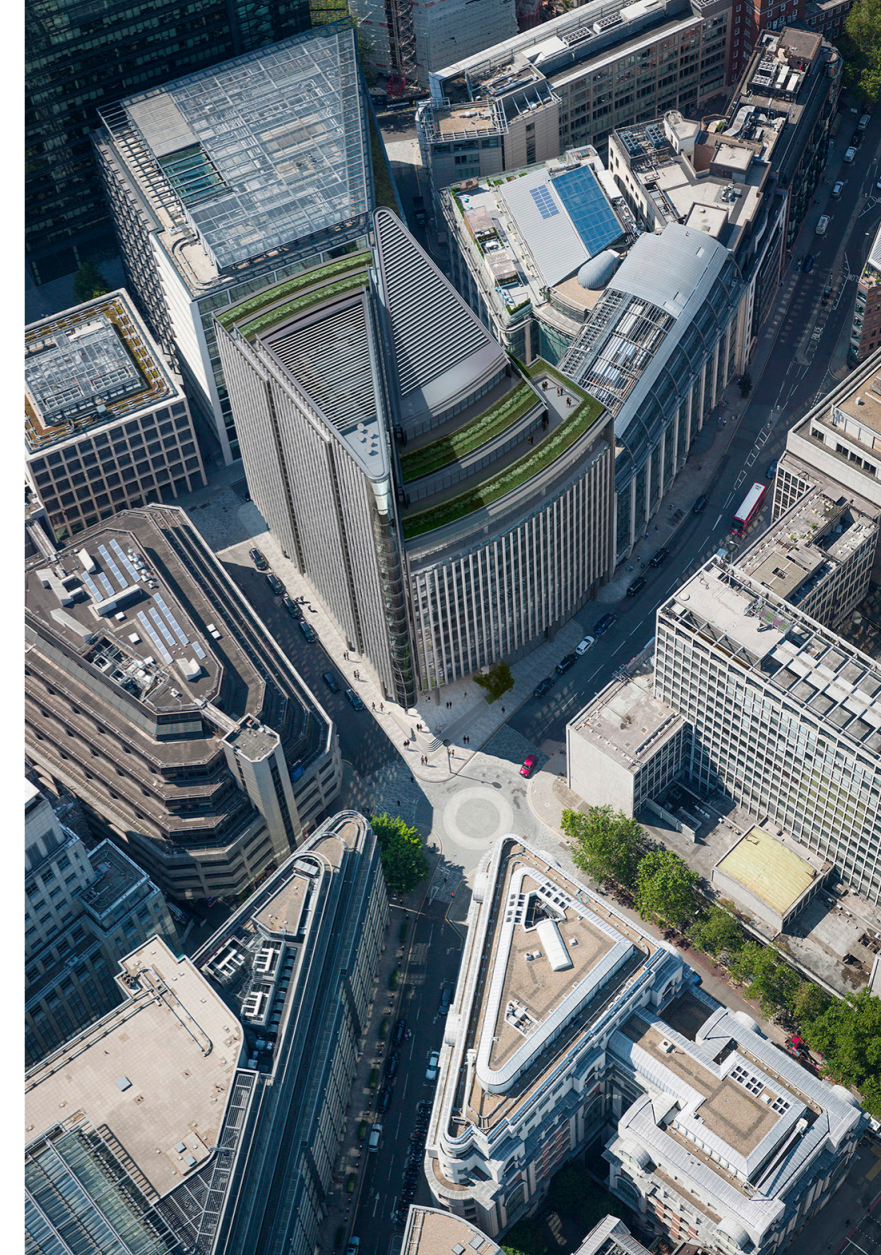
## Achievements

- Pre-let in its entirety to GSK
- Smart technology
- Well Building Standard® Platinum & BREEAM Outstanding
- Net Zero Carbon (operation)
- WIRED and SMART score





**Cleverly turning the constraints of the St. Paul's viewing corridor into the building's biggest asset.**



## One New Street Square

Beautiful, sustainable and dynamic, One New Street Square is the final jewel in the crown of this landmark Landsec development.

Building on the success of New Street Square, with its striking architecture and high-profile business occupiers, One New Street Square is an important part of the regeneration of this popular quarter of

London. The building provides 280,000 sq.ft. of BCO Grade A, BREEAM Excellent office space.

The building's distinctive form respects important sight lines to St. Paul's Cathedral and provides a variety of office floors with access to generous, landscaped roof areas and dramatic views of the local townscape and City beyond.



### Added Value

From the outset, our aspiration was to create the best building possible for this site. The result is a development that provides great space and amenity for occupiers as well as a positive contribution to the local area and wider townscape.

Sustainability, occupant health and wellbeing are at the heart of this development, providing a platform to deliver the world's first BREEAM Outstanding, WELL Gold dual-certified office fit-out.

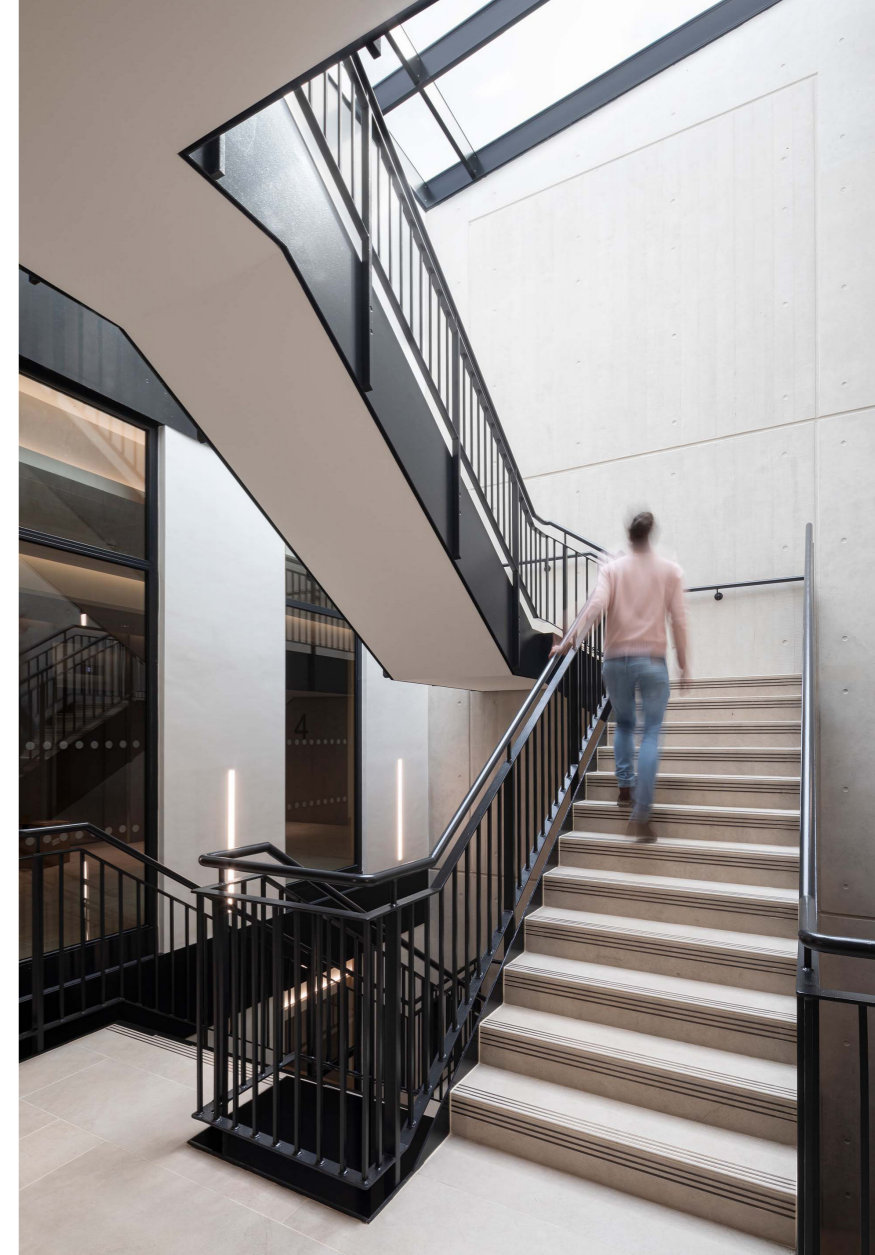
The bespoke, efficient cladding system integrates user-controlled blinds and solar shading fins that provide panoramic views and good daylighting for the floorplates.

### Achievements

- Pre-let in its entirety to Deloitte LLP more than a year ahead of completion
- BCO Grade A, BREEAM Excellent
- World's first BREEAM Outstanding, WELL Gold dual-certified office fit-out (fit out by ID:SR)
- WAN Awards – Commercial Winner
- BCO Awards – Commercial Workplace – Regional Finalist



**400 & 450 Longwater Avenue sets a new benchmark for regional office building design and future adaptability.**



## 400 & 450 Longwater Avenue

400 & 450 Longwater Avenue is a striking office development forming part of the Green Park masterplan in Reading. The 314,100 sq.ft. GEA office building is designed to be a harmonious addition to its wider surroundings, successfully integrating into its spectacular landscaped setting and offering views across the adjacent Foundry Brook and surrounding countryside. Incorporating impressive

structural spans and floor-to-floor heights, the building has been designed to provide column-free office floor plates for maximum flexibility, whilst also safeguarding the building's future adaptability for alternative uses. The scheme has been designed to achieve a BREEAM Excellent rating, Well Building Standard® Platinum Certification and is a winner of a BCO Commercial Workplace award.



### Added Value

400 & 450 Longwater Avenue has successfully raised the bar for its building typology and location and is positively contributing to a new age of business park maturity. The elegant form with its voluminous column-free floor plates and floor-to-floor heights will shape current and future thinking with exceptional internal daylight quality and uninterrupted views of the park's beautifully landscaped surroundings.

The building successfully addresses the idea of achieving inner-city office quality, with imaginative detailing and thinking achieved on a strict budget and capital expenditure price point of £181/sq.ft. The result is a highly sustainable, best-in-class, flexible office space that focuses on the wellbeing of its occupants and is well equipped for future adaptability, all of which sets it apart from its peers.

### Achievements

- BCO Award 2022 Commercial Workplace - Regional Winner
- BREEAM Excellent and Well Building Standard® Platinum Certification
- CIRIA BIG Biodiversity Challenge 2021 - Legacy Award Winner
- Ultimate flexibility and adaptability with column-free floors and generous floor-to-ceiling heights
- Design focused on occupier wellbeing and sustainability, raising the standard for its typology



**A low carbon, healthy workplace of the future with access to nature at every level.**



# Hill House

Hill House will create a sustainable and healthy workplace for the future with access to landscaped terraces at every level.

Significant tree planting on the curated terraces creates a vertical forest, hosting wildlife and improving biodiversity.

A vibrant mix of uses at ground floor includes a new and improved home for the Shoe Lane Library. Gunpowder Square will be enhanced to celebrate the area's rich history and provide a unique green space for people to enjoy.

At the top of the building, a rooftop restaurant and a cultural events space with extensive landscaped terraces will offer stunning views over London.



## Added Value

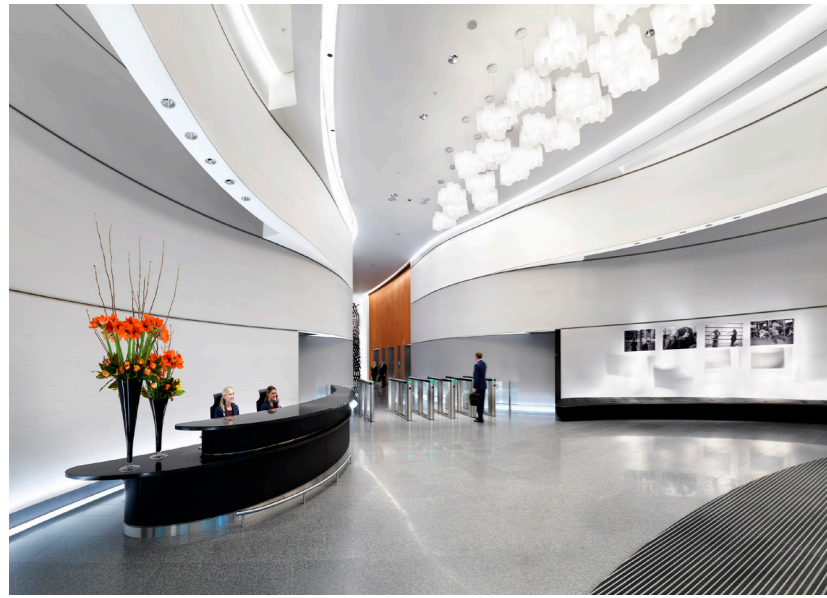
The design has been developed to retain and re-use almost 60% of the existing building's structure, supporting the significant increase in floorspace without any new foundations.

The facade design has been developed to provide passive solar shading and opening vents for occupant comfort whilst maintaining good daylighting levels and views from the floorplate.

Hill House outperforms comparable projects and the GLA's Benchmark with embodied carbon at 695kgCO2/m2 GIA for modules A1 to A5 with further improvements targetted through innovation at future stages.

## Achievements

- Re-use of existing basement
- Floorspace more than doubled without any new foundations
- BREEAM Excellent WELL Gold and NABERS 5 Stars
- Extended and improved public realm with a UGF of 0.42 and BNG of 532%



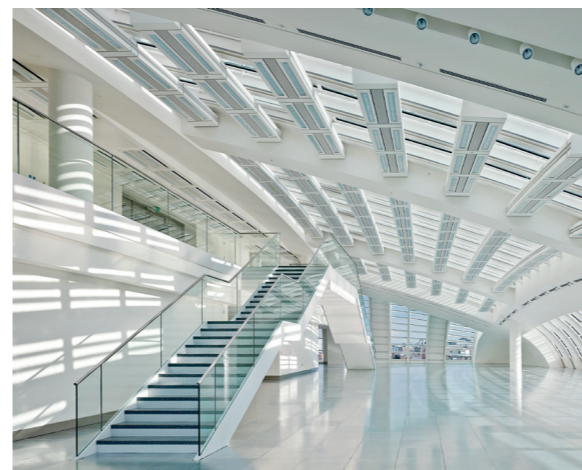
**An entire mixed-use city block in the heart of London's West End.**



## Park House

Park House presented a rare opportunity to redevelop an entire 1.04-acre city block on the edge of Mayfair. The innovative design accommodates a mix of uses each with their own address and a strong individual sense of identity. The building delivers high-quality office accommodation close to the centre of Mayfair's vibrant business community.

Large flexible floor plates ranging up to 28,000 sq.ft. are attractive to major occupiers. These include long-term flexibility to accommodate single, dual, or multiple tenancies on a typical floor and interlink floors. The sixth floor enjoys a generous perimeter balcony, with the seventh and eighth floors designed as one unit that enjoys spectacular double-height interlinked spaces.



### Added Value

The offices enjoy a formal Park Street address. A dramatic double-height arrival and drop off flanked by stunning artworks by Walter Bailey and Carpenter Lowings draws visitors towards the commanding yet welcoming reception area, appropriate for a building of this scale and location.

A legible sequence of spaces naturally segregates busy workers hurrying to get through the security gates, from visitors requiring the assistance of reception.

The space was also designed with flexibility in mind to accommodate a multi-let configuration with dual reception desks and comfortable seating areas suitable for a range of potential occupier configurations.

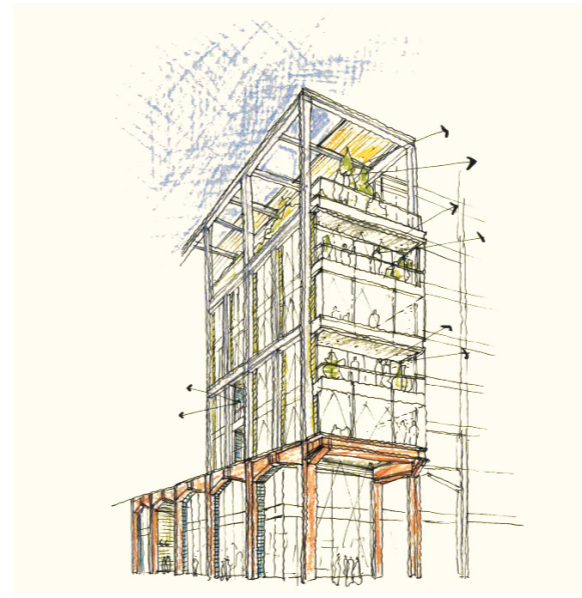
### Achievements

- Bentley: Innovation Award 2012 Winner
- Bentley Be Inspired: Generative Design Award 2012
- Acoustic Awards 2013: Commendation
- Considerate Constructors 2012: Silver Award





**A building which puts future flexibility, adaptability, and reuse at the heart of the design.**



# 66 Hammersmith Road

A re-interpretation of the Victorian warehouse, 66 Hammersmith Road looks to create a new generation of building which responds to rapidly evolving approaches to the workplace. Conceived as a reconfigurable flexible volume, the floor plates are based on a simple 9m structural grid, evident in the striking external form and structural exoskeleton that was developed to

allow the massing to respond to the surrounding townscape constraints, while also allowing for future expansion. Plant and toilets have been located in service columns on the buildings perimeter to give maximum freedom, and dedicated affordable workspace results in a genuine workplace campus.



### Added Value

The floor plates and massing concept are based on a simple 9m structural grid, creating a structurally efficient, easy-to-plan, regular floor plate, whilst also allowing the design to be articulated both in plan and section to suit the surrounding context.

The design was developed further to rationalise structural connection details, reduce cladding unit numbers, and simplify interfaces to create an elegant and refined building that is a celebration of architectural and structural integrity.

Designed to accommodate a single entrepreneur, small growing businesses or a large company who need multiple interconnected floors, the building can adapt to suit the evolution of a tenants needs.

### Achievements

- BREEM Excellent
- Reuse of existing basement significantly reduced carbon footprint
- Tripled the existing GEA floor area on site
- Each 25,000 sq.ft. floorplate could easily be divided into four tenancies



**Distinctive, flexible workspace with an abundance of facilities, great daylighting, and stunning views.**



connection between the interior and the extended public realm beyond.

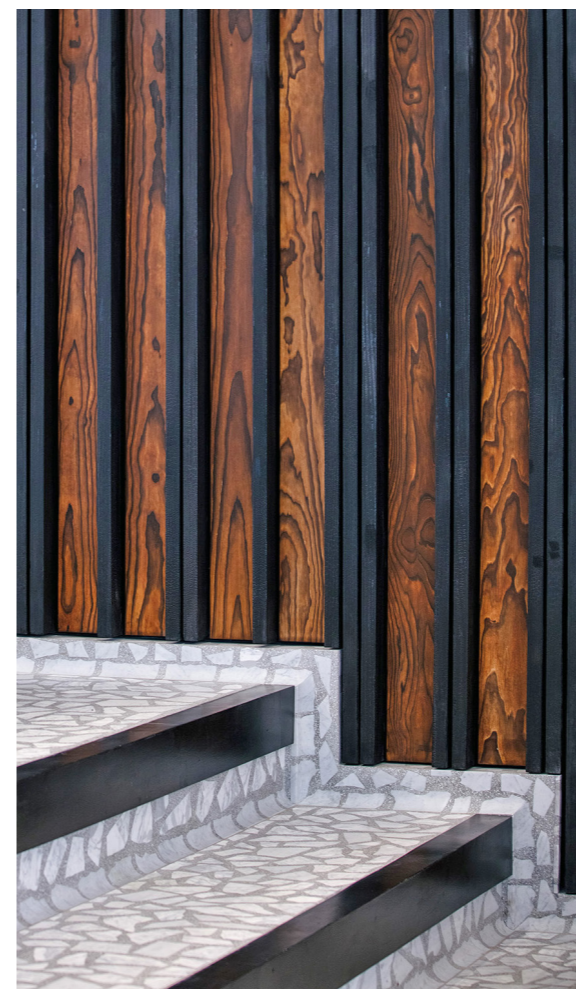
Part of a wider development that includes extensive student accommodation, a Roman Wall exhibition space, coffee shop, and incubator workspace, Luminary is connected with these elements through the provision of a new public walkway.



## Luminary

Luminary provides 11 floors of boutique workspace with fantastic views of the City of London. The building's form creates a variety of floorplates, ranging from 2,800 to 4,800 sq.ft. with an external terrace provided at level 10.

The double-height reception provides generous spaces for interaction with views onto both Vine Street and Jewry Street that create a strong



### Added Value

Exposed services were selected to maximise the sense of height, light and volume and animate the space whilst reducing the quantity of materials used. Carefully detailed, post-tensioned concrete floor slabs provide a beautiful, natural finish, efficient spans and flexible column-free space.

The floorplates benefit from great views and fantastic daylighting, with 72% of the floor within 6m of the façade and the rest within 12m and no deep plan space. Extensive end-of-journey facilities are provided that support the travel requirements of today's talent.

The communal areas feature in-situ palladiana terrazzo and bespoke mouldings that create a seamless finish, integrating elements including the reception desk, bleacher steps and seating with the floor finish.

### Achievements

- WCCA City Building of the Year 2022
- First office development for client Urbanest
- Successfully sold to Crosstree ahead of completion
- BREEM Excellent and WiredScore Gold
- 100 % Renewable Energy & EPC Rating: B

# Exploring Opportunities



# Exploring Opportunities

**At Apt, we understand the importance of providing trustworthy information to our clients around what we believe can work on a particular site. Numerous clients come to us for early input on schemes they are considering – our advice can often help them decide whether there will be value in moving forward.**

This can range from an initial two-week feasibility, to more in-depth studies developing a variety of design solutions to help support bids, financial appraisals, or a first pre-application meeting with the planners to evaluate potential proposals.

We draw on our wide range of experience to give the best advice possible. We value honesty and integrity, communicating what is achievable and managing client expectations.



## 01 Initial Consultation

**A low commitment way to quickly test the viability of an opportunity.**

An initial high-level exercise testing massing on a site, that generates indicative GEAs based on an assumed use class. This will include investigating the opportunity to retain and reuse any existing buildings on site.

**Duration: 2 weeks**

Deliverables:

- GEA Area schedule
- Initial height, bulk and massing
- Simple 3D chalk models in context (subject to availability of information)
- Identify possible 3rd party risks which may affect the site's potential

## 02 Initial Feasibility

**Testing a variety of approaches for a site, enabling an initial brief to be set for financial appraisals or bids.**

A detailed exercise to test a variety of approaches and generate areas, floorplans and some initial architectural responses to a site.

**Duration: 4-6 weeks**

Deliverables:

- As Option 01 +
- Indicative typical floorplans
- Accommodation schedule
- Additional iterations of design massing to refine the proposal
- Investigation into site history, planning context, and site constraints
- Illustrative material to explain the main architectural concepts and principles of the scheme

## 03 In-Depth Feasibility

**Developing an initial brief to a point where the principles can be discussed with the Local Planning Authority.**

An in-depth review of a potential site to test a variety of approaches and refine a solution which could represent the first step towards a planning application.

**Duration: 4-8 weeks**

Deliverables:

- As Option 02 +
- Design development sufficient for initial pre-application with the Local Authority
- Attendance at initial pre-app meeting
- Sketch models of context and proposal
- Sketch perspectives / in house renders showing the scheme in context
- Initial GA drawings

## 04 Existing Consent Review

**Review an existing consent and discuss ways it could be optimised or improved to suit your brief.**

Analysing a pre-existing proposal and identifying any potential improvements, or test alternative uses within the same footprint.

**Duration: 2-6 weeks**

Deliverables:

- Alternative scheme with indicative typical floorplans
- GEA and accommodation schedule
- Identify possible 3rd party risks which may affect the site's potential



## What next for the UK's Business Parks?

James Ewen,  
Executive Director Apt

**Over the last few years, we have seen extensive coverage in the press related to ‘The future of the office’ and ‘Working from home. Is it here to stay?’**

The property and construction industry has debated the ‘*Future of the high street*’ and the perceived impact that the mass ‘exodus from our major towns and cities’ to the countryside and affluent green spaces of suburbia is having on our daily lives. There has been minimal discussion however, related to the somewhat unloved, out-of-town, edge-of-city business park and how these exceptional times are likely to mould the future of this key contributor to the UK’s workplace model.

This is a vital question that Apt has been considering, and it has become highly pertinent following the successful completion of two new significantly scaled office buildings, 400 and 450 Longwater Avenue at Green Park, Reading. It is within one of the UK’s most successful examples of the business park model, sitting within the M4 tech corridor and close to London and Heathrow.

Rather than focusing on these elegant new office buildings with their voluminous column-free floor plates and floor-to-floor heights in excess of 4.4m, instead let’s explore how these buildings are shaping current and future thinking with their exceptional internal daylight quality and uninterrupted views of the park’s beautifully landscaped surroundings. They are also buildings that successfully address the idea of achieving city centre office quality, via imaginative detailing and innovation, delivered to a strict budget and capital expenditure price point.

We enjoy the challenges and opportunities business parks bring as we rethink this model. It’s time for creative re-imagining around how business parks can develop as we look ahead – an exciting thought.

As recently as 2019 business parks have been viewed as a relic of the past, as an unfashionable model for the workplace, with a standardised formula of office buildings with large floorplates, expansive car parks and in some cases, uninspiring

surroundings. Business parks now also have the additional challenge of competing with home working and hybrid flexible working arrangements.

As recently as two years ago the BCO correctly cited a ‘trend for companies relocating to more vibrant urban centres’. We are faced with the question: how can business parks evolve sufficiently to provide a better experience and what assets do they already have at their disposal to make themselves more attractive?

A key asset of the UK’s business parks is their setting, often within a well-designed bio-diverse environment. As we readdress our relationship with green space, this is appealing because many business parks enjoy close proximity to the openness of the green belt, the potential to capitalise on their surroundings is a significant asset, where outdoor space and fresh air has become much valued. Many business parks, in terms of buildings and infrastructure, have built-in flexibility, but it is evident that they need to start demonstrating this more effectively.

At Green Park, this is all underway as it re-imagines its future. New transport links back into Reading are progressing, as well as new homes adjacent to the park that cover a variety of residential models. These key elements will assist the park in attracting new tenants and providing vibrancy to its green spaces and surroundings.

The idea of rethinking the business park as a mixed-use community is something that Apt were exploring as far back as 2013 when our Longwater Avenue project was in its infancy. The early ideas for this project had the spaces in front of the office buildings characterised as community hubs, and flexible green spaces for weekend markets, sport and leisure, was one of the first drawings re-imagining a village green and cricket pitch, against the backdrop of our buildings. As the project progressed, this idea fell away, but it has since re-emerged in recent discussions related to future phases of the park.

These include hotels, leisure pavilions, crèches and community halls, food offerings and small retail all co-existing alongside variations on the office workplace model, which feed off each other improving the environment, sense of place and desirability.

It is evident that business park buildings can make a significant and positive contribution to the debate on the climate crisis. Many of the 1980’s and 1990’s business park building stock is already becoming obsolete. By pursuing aggressive retrofit programmes utilising materials with low embodied carbon, business parks can set a new standard for holistically sustainable design, that goes well beyond BREEAM and WELL certification. This in turn is more befitting of the natural environments that they are closely linked to.

In providing a greater mix of uses and focusing on a meaningful, sustainable agenda that promotes health and wellbeing for their occupants, there is an opportunity to accelerate the idea of greater localisation. Drawing parallels with the idea of the 15-minute city, where everything one needs is within 15 minutes either by foot or by bicycle, business parks can become more self-sustainable. The current sight of building frontages dominated by car parks becomes redundant and the existing challenges that they face around location become less restrictive.

So why is this important? Without evolution, business parks will naturally struggle, but they have great potential to create a more positive identity than currently exhibited. Attracting greater diversity over the next ten years and evolving into small village communities, leading to lasting success. At Apt we look forward to contributing to this new age of business park maturity.



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inspires through great design,  
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At Apt we are always interested in working with like-minded, motivated, and progressive people who want to deliver great buildings.

We believe our studio approach allows us to robustly test briefs and challenge preconceptions, ultimately helping our clients find the best solution to any given opportunity. We enjoy working collaboratively and believe this is why we build long lasting relationships with many of our clients.

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