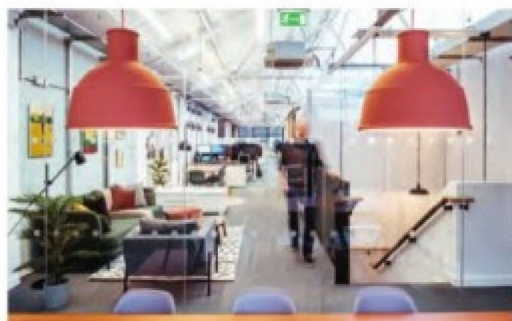


# Contents



REBECCA MOANES

## 18 Five Bristol practices

Cryer & Coe, Emmett Russell, Smith Maloney,  
Connolly Wellingham, 3|10 Studio

*Fran Williams*



ANTHONY COLEMAN

## 30 Cor-ten Courtyard House

Barefoot Architects

*Ellie Duffy*



KILIAN O'SULLIVAN

## 44 The Reach

Pitman Tozer Architects

*Rob Wilson*

## 1 From the editor

There is a sense that being different is OK in Bristol, and this filters through to its architecture

*Emily Booth*

## 4 In pictures

Including first look at University of Bristol's new library proposals

*AJ news team*

## 6 News feature

Grenfell Tower Inquiry – what have we learned so far about the causes of the tragedy?

*Ella Jessel and Richard Waite*

## 10 RetroFirst

The case for circular public sector procurement

*Will Hurst*

## 16 Opinion

Lawyers will have a field day when politicians start trying to write 'beauty' into the NPPF

*Paul Finch*

## 58 Opinion

'Building tall in Bristol poses real threats to the character of the city'

*George Ferguson*

## 60 Competitions

Kingston University goes on the hunt for construction framework team

*Merlin Fulcher*

## 62 Letters

Building Beautiful: 'Seize the opportunity to improve lives'

## 64 Astragal

Annalie Riches, circus trapeze artiste. Who knew?

13.02.2020  
Bristol

## On the cover

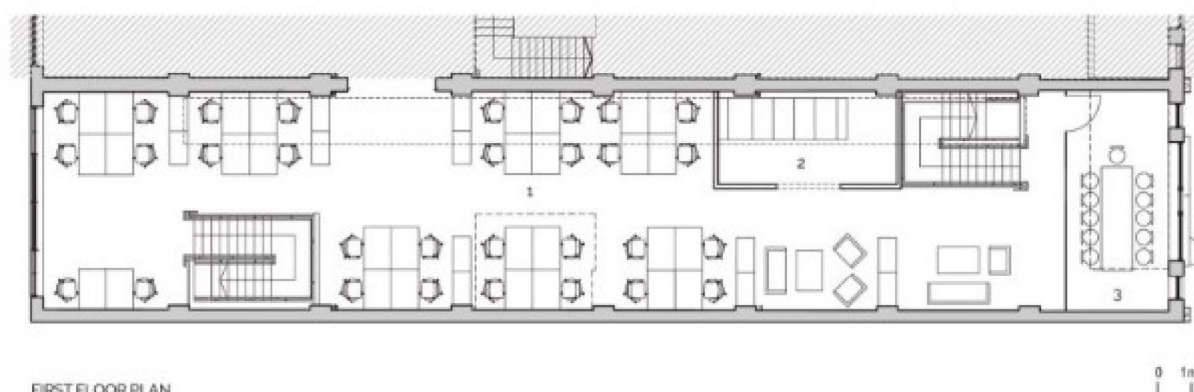
Cor-ten Courtyard House, Bristol, by Barefoot Architects. Photograph by Anthony Coleman

# Smith Maloney Architects

Founded 2012, incorporated in 2013 • Employees Seven

**KEY**  
1. OFFICE  
2. STORAGE  
3. MEETING ROOM

## 20 STOKES CROFT



FIRST FLOOR PLAN

### Ashley and Natasha Smith, directors

#### What kind of projects do you do?

We have deliberately tried to develop a broad portfolio of work to ensure the practice is resilient. Over the past eight years, our projects have included both developer-led and private housing, hospitality and leisure, workspace, galleries and education. This keeps work interesting for our staff and benefits project outcomes through cross-fertilisation of ideas.

As a practice, we believe that research and attention to detail is critical. The most elegantly designed and well-conceived project can be ruined if the detail design is not properly co-ordinated and finessed, so we try think about that from the very start.

Over the past few years we have worked on the upgrading of several railway stations, designed the recording studios for an internationally renowned Bristol-based artist, worked on a gallery space for one of the leading innovators of licensed pop culture products (Funko), renovated a Georgian hotel for the YMCA and designed numerous apartment blocks in London and across the South West.

#### Describe a project you have recently completed in Bristol

We have recently completed the retrofit of a 1950s light industrial building in the Stokes Croft area of Bristol. Commissioned by serviced apartment specialist Portland

Brown, the scheme delivers retail space at ground floor with office use above.

The client's brief was to retain as much of the existing building's structure and industrial character as possible, so we worked closely with its in-house team to create a light-filled workspace using simple design interventions, industrial detailing and a light touch fit-out.

The scheme forms part of a wider redevelopment by Portland Brown, which it hopes will act as a catalyst for further improvements to the area – such as the creation of a 900-capacity hospitality venue and café/co-working facility.

The client was keen that the layout should accommodate a number of future occupancy scenarios in which the building could be split into separate lettable units so the design can be subdivided into one, two, three or four separate units, each with separate access and welfare facilities.

Feature staircases were created at the front and rear of the building. The front, made from in-situ concrete, is configured to avoid compromising the extensively glazed ground-floor shopfront, facing Stokes Croft, while the rear consists of a lower flight fabricated from structural steel plate.

The walls have been painted white to unify the new and existing office space but have not been drylined or plastered to ensure imperfections and signs of wear and tear in the retained building fabric are left exposed.

#### What sustainable strategies have been included in this design?

As the building is locally listed and within a conservation area, there was little scope for the integration of externally mounted renewables. We adopted a fabric-first, low-tech approach, which included natural mixed-mode ventilation, coupled with the upgrade of non-structural thermal elements. New interventions have also been designed with future disassembly in mind, prioritising the use of mechanical fixings and minimising the use of adhered decorative finishes.

The design represents a very robust and lean approach to retrofit office design and fit-out without compromising on functionality or comfort.

#### What has been the project's biggest challenge?

While the desire for a complementary industrial aesthetic simplified the material specification, it also made the detailing more complex. For sustainability and aesthetic reasons, plasterboard linings and partitions were kept to a minimum, with junctions and abutments between different building elements exposed. There was little scope for 'covering up' or 'boxing in' so details had to be carefully developed to ensure they worked. This was the case with the stairs and new structural openings. Similarly, furniture and the services had to be carefully co-ordinated and set out in



relation to the existing structural bays to ensure they felt integral to the design.

Portland Brown's expanding workforce necessitated a fast-track approach. The stairs were therefore configured to maximise usable floor area while minimising structural alterations required to accommodate them.

#### What is it like working in Bristol?

It's a joy to work in Bristol. The city is very compact so all of our staff cycle to work and to meetings. It is very well connected, which has enabled us to work on projects nationwide (London, York, Ipswich and Colchester). Compared with London, we benefit from comparatively low rents and living costs, which allow us to deliver projects economically when they are further afield. From a social and cultural perspective, the city has a very tight-knit creative community with a strong social and environmental agenda. This invariably has an impact on our work and creates opportunities for collaboration.

As a provincial city, it tends to be more conservative where architecture is concerned. It is often harder to deliver projects that might be considered more challenging or less normative in approach. It is also somewhat risk-averse. Historically, a number of good ideas that would have given the city a global presence, such as Populous's city-centre Arena and Behnisch Architekten's harbourside centre, have fallen by the wayside.

#### What do you think about Bristol's architecture scene?

The architectural scene has transformed since the financial crash in 2008. Small and medium-sized creative studios are starting to pick up larger commissions

and challenging the status quo, such as recent work by Cryer & Coe, Barefoot Architects on East Street, Emmett Russell at Challender Court and our ongoing work at Stokes Croft. The city is also fortunate to have UWE and the University of Bath on its doorstep, both of which run architecture courses. Like us, many local practices have close relationships with these universities, supporting events and teaching, which provides extra creative stimuli that help keep things fresh.

#### What other projects are you working on?

We are working with Arup on a golf club redevelopment in north London. We have also recently been commissioned to convert a Grade II-listed Georgian Townhouse in Lyme Regis, are finalising tender proposals for a large venue in the centre of Bristol and completing the construction stage package for an eco-annexe which extends a Grade II-listed farmhouse to enable multigenerational living.

#### 20 STOKES CROFT

**Start on site** April 2019

**Completion** October 2019

**Gross internal floor area** 396m<sup>2</sup>

**Form of contract** Traditional

**Construction cost** £400,000

**Client** Portland Brown

**Structural engineer** DJP Consulting Engineers

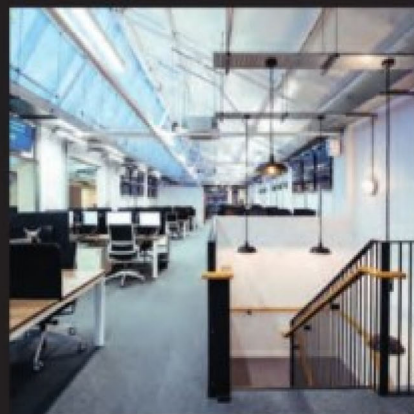
**M&E consultant** J Projects

**Quantity surveyor** Cubix

**Project manager** Cubix

**Main contractor** J Projects

**'The city has a very tight-knit creative community with a strong social and environmental agenda'**



REBECCA INGRAMS

