

May 2003

**DV01**

**DERWENT VALLEY**

INVESTING IN LONDON

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WE ARE DELIGHTED TO LAUNCH DV01, THE FIRST ISSUE OF A BIENNIAL PUBLICATION WHICH WILL CIRCULATE THE LATEST NEWS ABOUT DERWENT VALLEY TO A WIDE AUDIENCE IN THE WORLDS OF PROPERTY, ARCHITECTURE AND DESIGN. OUR LAUNCH ISSUE CELEBRATES THE OPENING OF THE DAVIDSON BUILDING IN COVENT GARDEN, A UNIQUE AND INNOVATIVE NEW OFFICE BUILDING BEHIND AN IMMACULATEDLY REFURBISHED EDWARDIAN FAÇADE. WE ARE DELIGHTED WITH THE ACHIEVEMENT OF ARCHITECTS LIFSCHUTZ DAVIDSON, IN BRINGING TO COMPLETION AN URBANE AND SOPHISTICATED DEVELOPMENT WHICH CLEARLY DEMONSTRATES DERWENT VALLEY'S COMMITMENT TO INVESTING IN HIGH QUALITY, MEMORABLE NEW BUILDINGS IN LONDON. AN OVERVIEW OF THE COMPANY'S CURRENT ACTIVITY IS REVEALED IN A SURVEY OF OUR MAIN PROJECTS AROUND CENTRAL LONDON, FROM PADDINGTON IN THE WEST, TO SHOREDITCH IN THE EAST, WHILE NOT FORGETTING THE MORE ESTABLISHED AREAS OF THE CITY'S COMMERCIAL HEARTLAND SUCH AS MAYFAIR, BELGRAVIA AND SOHO. DERWENT VALLEY'S INVESTMENT IN THE BUILT FABRIC OF THE CITY AND COMMITMENT TO HIGH-QUALITY ARCHITECTURE AND DESIGN IS PARALLELED BY ITS PROMOTION OF THE FINE ARTS, AND PARTICULARLY OF POSITIVE DIALOGUE BETWEEN ARTISTS AND ARCHITECTS. THIS ISSUE PROVIDES AN INSIGHT INTO THE RANGE OF NEW ARTWORKS COMMISSIONED BY THE COMPANY FOR ITS BUILDINGS IN COLLABORATION WITH THE HALES GALLERY, AND AN OVERVIEW OF ITS SPONSORSHIP OF EVENTS AT THE ROYAL ACADEMY OF ARTS. OUR COMMITMENT TO SPONSORSHIP IS NOT LIMITED, HOWEVER, TO THE REALM OF FINE ART. WE ALSO SUPPORT TEENAGE CANCER TRUST, AND DV01 OFFERS AN UPDATE ON OUR WORK RAISING FUNDING TOWARDS THE PROVISION OF EXEMPLARY NEW UNITS IN HOSPITALS AROUND THE COUNTRY: AN ACHIEVEMENT OF WHICH WE ARE PARTICULARLY PROUD. LAST BUT NOT LEAST, WE INTRODUCE DERWENTXTRA, A UNIQUE NEW INITIATIVE OFFERED WITH OFFICE SUITES FROM 3000 SQ FT. THE PACKAGE COMPRISES SPACE PLANNING, PROCUREMENT AND FIT-OUT BY A DEDICATED PROFESSIONAL TEAM, WITH IMAGINATION AND VALUE FOR MONEY GUARANTEED. WE HOPE AND ANTICIPATE YOU WILL ENJOY DV01, AND LOOK FORWARD TO INTRODUCING OUR NEXT ISSUE LATER THIS YEAR. **SIMON SILVER**

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THE DAVIDSON BUILDING,  
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Clare Melhuish

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Better space, faster.  
Victoria McNelle



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The launch of Derwent Valley's new development at Southampton Street, in Covent Garden, is set to create ripples through the property world, and a new standard of office design in an area of London which, has been dominated by the Royal Opera House redevelopment for so long that there seems to have been no scope for modern design initiatives on other fronts.

# THE DAVIDSON BUILDING

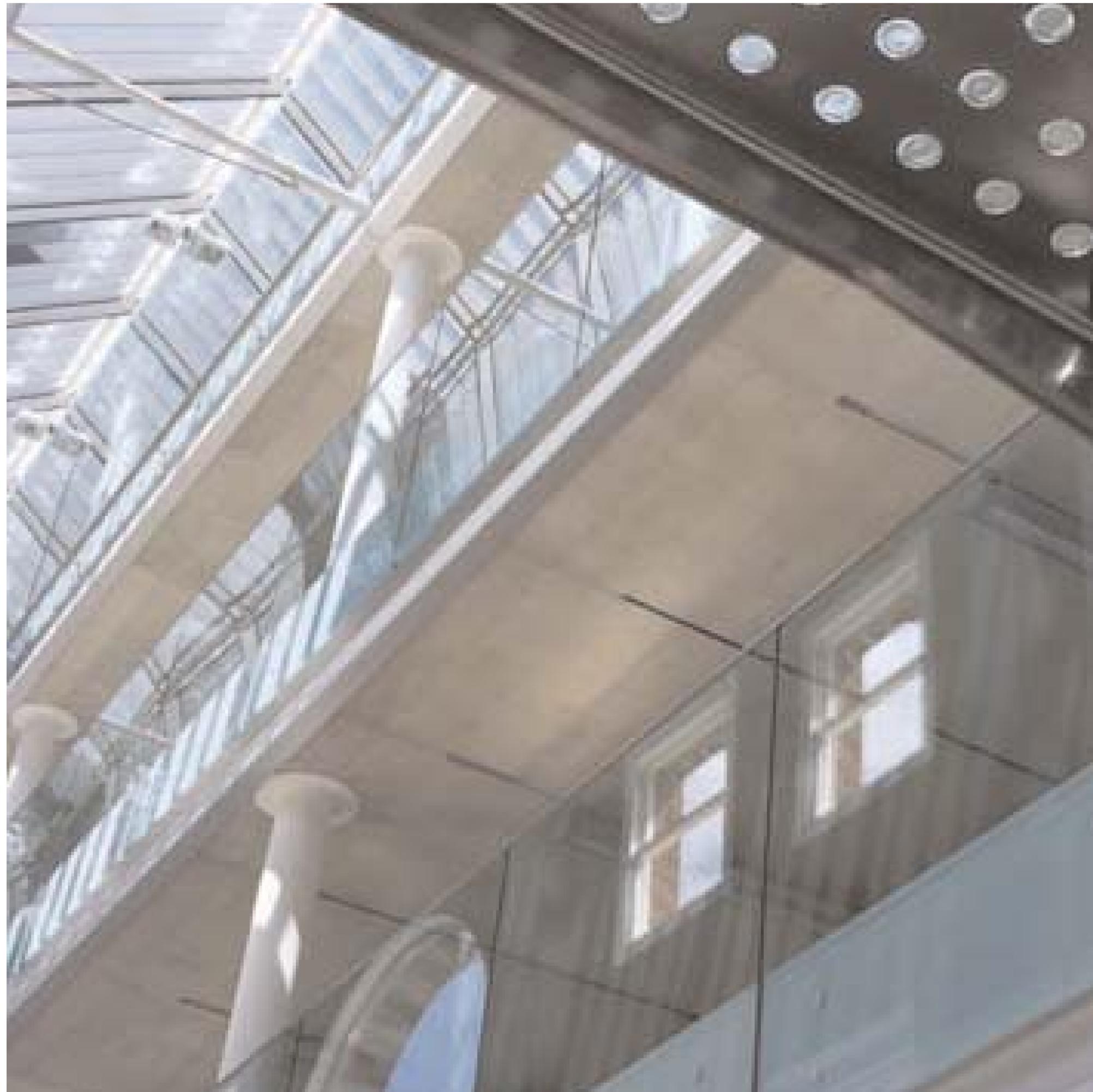
5 Southampton Street, WC2

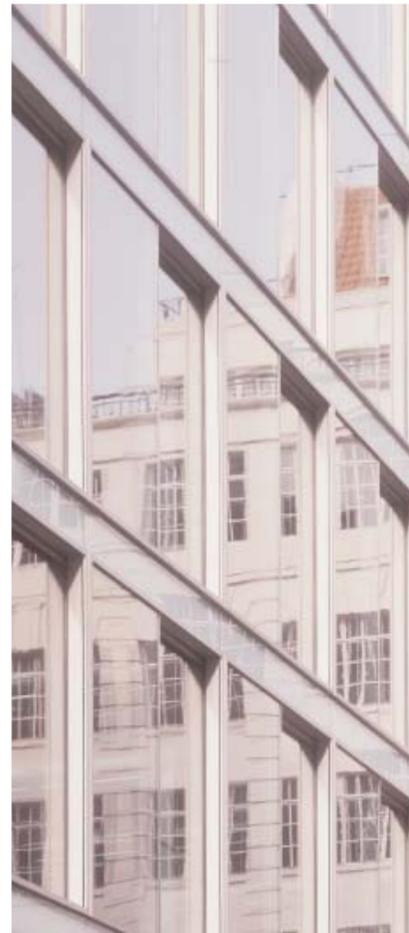
The new, glass roof-level pavilion of the Davidson Building, named in memory of the late Ian Davidson, commands views of an unfolding landscape of jumbled rooftops on all sides, revealing the complexity and density of the historic development of Covent Garden – **a unique quarter of the city sandwiched between contrasting urban cultures.** The general shape and appearance of the streets around Covent Garden market has altered very little in a century or more, and this makes the achievement of Derwent Valley in Southampton Street all the more surprising and striking – **a 21st century intervention which breaks out of the stranglehold of pastiche inadvertently spawned by the conservation movement.** Through the combined vision of director Simon Silver and David Rosen of agent Pilcher Hershman, and the sustained effort of Nigel George, Silver's co-director in charge of the project, Derwent Valley has brought architectural credentials to this site which, in the hands of Lifschutz Davidson, are firmly rooted in a more progressive, mould-breaking school of architecture.

It was Lifschutz Davidson's commitment to the use of modern building materials and techniques, and their more 'cerebral' approach that initially attracted Derwent Valley to the idea of working with them. Lifschutz Davidson, for their

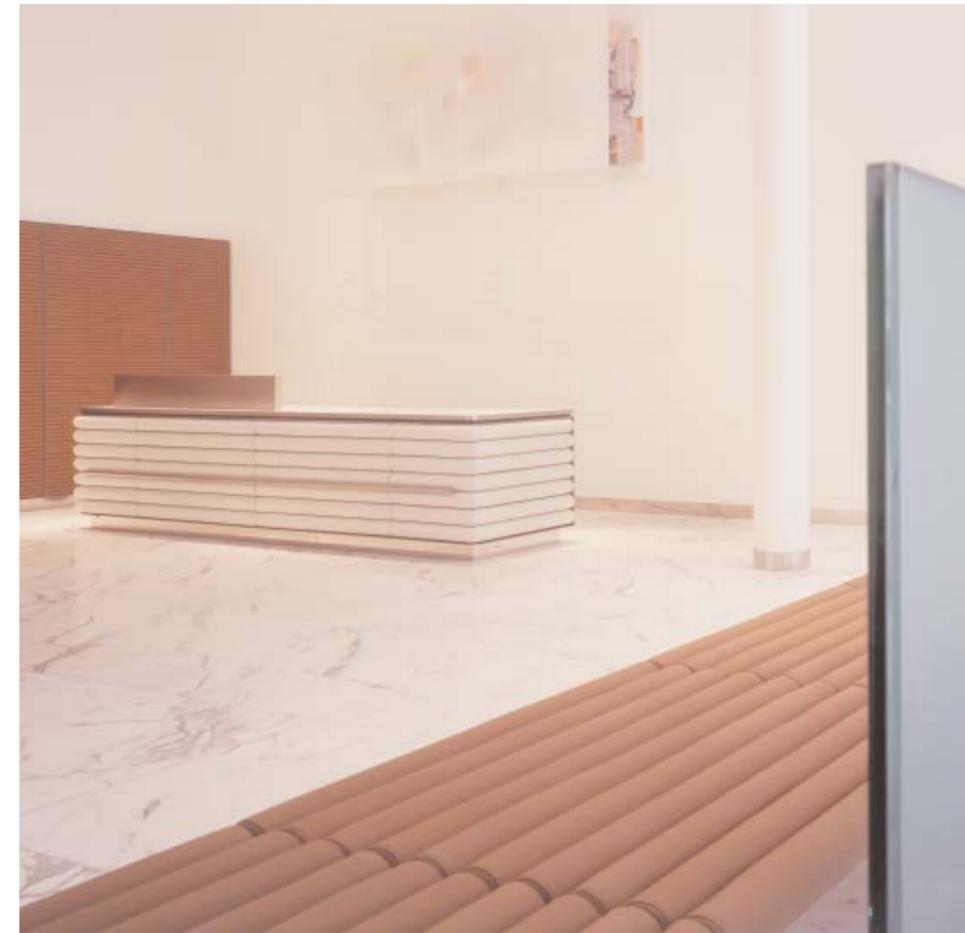
part, were aware of Derwent Valley's high standing with planning authorities who have recognised its commitment to a quality of design and construction rarely found in speculative development – 'quality assured', as Paul Sandilands of Lifschutz has put it. Derwent Valley's 'less conventional approach to building' presented the potential to offer the office market an innovative product, which would make a positive contribution to the overall character and mix of Covent Garden.

Simon Silver is very direct about the company's remit: to 'stick with good, contemporary, minimal architecture – and hope it's the taste of the market.' There is a clear understanding that 'you pay for good materials', but that **'the best of contemporary architecture' is both good for the city and, since it is likely to attract 'an A class tenant', good for shareholders.** However in the case of Southampton Street it was known from the outset that Westminster's planners would be extremely unlikely to permit a clean replacement of the existing building with a sparkling new development in a rational, contemporary style. Planning consultant Richard Hillebron, of Slaughter and May, spelled out the likelihood that the ornamental Edwardian facade would have to be retained, imposing a





Caption



Caption



serious constraint on design options for the site. **'None of us like facadism'**, says Simon Silver - 'including the planners'. **The solution** which emerged, through the collaborative efforts of Lifschutz Davidson and Ove Arup in its role as structural and mechanical engineer, and through extensive dialogue with Westminster's planner Mike Gray, **is an accomplished and surprising fusion of old and new** and also represents Derwent Valley's most technically innovative contribution to contemporary office design to date.

The original facade has been immaculately cleaned and restored, with new timber-framed sash windows above ground level matching their historical counterparts, and new frameless glass shopfronts below. **At first sight it seems that nothing has changed, until the light catches on the slender stainless-steel cables and springs which run down from the top to first floor level at intervals along the facade.** The cables hold the brickwork in tension, and are pinned back by thin steel rods to a new glazed atrium structure behind, which forms a buffer zone to a whole new office building. What appears from the street to be a traditional, solid mansard roof behind the old parapet is in fact a new glazed roof held between aluminium fins which provide fixed solar shading to the void, complemented by internal blinds.

This intriguing structural and aesthetic solution, which delighted the planners, means that the new development achieves an 18m-deep floor-plate, avoiding any constraints imposed by the original irregular window-line, and enjoys the enhanced sense of space, volume, light and air which the full-height atrium provides despite the small sash window openings of the retained facade. The four new office floors, organised on a 6-metre grid, with thin steel double-storey height columns which minimise disruption to the internal space, each look down into the atrium through glazed shoulder-height or full-height screens (depending on whether the floors are let individually or to a single occupier), with two balconies, or 'break-out' areas

projecting right into and over the void itself. At fifth-floor level, a fully glazed roof pavilion looks down over the whole of the surrounding neighbourhood.

The Davidson Building demonstrates Derwent Valley's belief that people enjoy volume and light in the working environment. **The rear facade is perhaps the most significant as an architectural statement of intent, forming a focal point at the end of a long vista from the Aldwych.** Comprising a sophisticated, transparent aluminium-and-glass curtain wall, animated by floor-to-ceiling height sliding doors, it reveals the surprising internal scale and volume of the building. The sheer quality and refinement of the design and detail eliminates any association of the materials with a utilitarian aesthetic, and establishes a strong sense of connection with the most sophisticated, purpose-designed office buildings of the modern era. It clearly sets out Derwent Valley's commitment to a less conventional approach than most property developers will risk, aiming to break new ground both architecturally and in terms of what the commercial market might respond to.

These qualities equally inform the whole concept of the internal space and fitting-out. The use of opening sliding screens, in conjunction with a displacement air system, and the rejection of the still-conventional fan-coil air-conditioned sealed building (although there is space to retro-fit a conventional air-conditioning system) marks out the Davidson Building as forward-thinking for its time, and likely to appeal to the increasing numbers of occupants, especially in the creative sectors, who also want a naturally-ventilated workplace. The spacious feel of the office floors is achieved by an open, uncluttered plan with service cores located at each end of the building, and generous 2.85m ceiling heights. The exposed, fairfaced concrete soffit also means that the building benefits from radiant cooling, which significantly decreases the building's energy load and running costs.



Caption



Caption

#### THE TEAM

**Derwent Valley:**  
Simon Silver, Nigel George

**Lifschutz Davidson:**  
Paul Sandilands  
(Director in charge)  
Charles Olsen  
(project architect)

**Ove Arup:**  
Structural & services engineers

**Equation Lighting Design:**  
Mark Hensman

Paul Sandilands, of Lifschutz Davidson, describes the overall aesthetic as 'a marrying of raw, wrought and highly finished materials'. He is delighted by the quality of the concrete fabrication, particularly of the sculptural, precast staircases. The reception, which makes an impressive impact by virtue of its sheer height, and can also be opened up to the atrium if the building is in single occupancy, is lined in white marble and leather panelling (from Bill Amberg), and furnished with custom-made seating, textured glass 'modesty screens' to provide a layer of privacy behind the glazed street facade. Behind the reception desk hangs an artwork by Andrew Bick.

Lifschutz Davidson have demonstrated in this building how received perceptions of particular materials and architectural aesthetics can be fundamentally altered by sheer quality of design, detailing and fabrication – an achievement made possible by the remarkable spirit of dialogue and supportive collaboration sustained throughout the project between the client and the project team. For the agents whose responsibility it is to find appropriate occupants for the building, this has resulted in what is still a 'very radical' development by West End standards, but one, which clearly occupies a special place in the market, and which is likely to attract an interesting, possibly high-profile tenant. In terms of its aesthetic appeal and location, this might well be a company from the worlds of media, advertising, or possibly law or accountancy. Whoever it is, the Davidson Building seems set to demonstrate that speculative office developments have the potential to make a positive contribution to both the landscape and culture of the city's contrasting neighbourhoods.

#### Ian Davidson 1954-2003

Derwent Valley's decision to name 5 Southampton Street in memory of Ian Davidson, one of the founding partners of Lifschutz Davidson and the partner in charge of this project, was taken following his premature death at the age of 48. The loss of this talented, kind and understated man is keenly felt both by his family, and by all those who worked with him. In Simon Silver's words: "Ian was an immensely talented, yet understated individual. I was fortunate to spend so much time with him in recent years, and to experience his very special qualities. Our project meetings were always lively and productive, mainly due to Ian's enthusiasm and sharp sense of humour. He always had time to discuss even the smallest of details and working with him was more like meeting up with a friend. Our company's latest scheme in Covent Garden is a fitting tribute to Ian's individuality and skills. We will all miss him very much indeed."

Nigel George says: "Ian worked tirelessly for over five years on the Southampton Street project from the initial feasibility through planning and then construction. These efforts with his forward thinking and intellectual architectural approach have achieved a very special building which is a true tribute to his work. The retained facade and atrium now seems such an obvious solution but I will not forget Ian's patience and commitment through the many options to its evolution. The result is a perfect modern building for this sensitive location in the heart of Covent Garden. I will miss his input and enthusiasm on future schemes and I am delighted to name the building after him in his memory."

Opposite: Caption



# DERWENT XTRA

For any company, setting up a new office is a significant event. It focuses minds on the future of the organization and on ways to improve working life. And a new office in a landmark building is a wonderful opportunity for a company to associate itself with the best of contemporary design.

But the down-side of an office move is that relocation is invariably a time-consuming experience that all too easily can start to dominate the management agenda. As many organizations discover, space planning and contract administration are specialized skills and the customizing and equipping of new space is a complex exercise.

Appointing an architect or an interior design consultancy is one route to follow. This, however, is only the start of the process: cost consultants, contractors and furniture suppliers will also have to be chosen and incorporated into the relocation team. **Typically, it then takes three months for works to be designed, costed and receive landlord's approval and for fit-out work to start – which eats into the rent-free period.**

Derwent Valley, which sees development quality and tenant satisfaction as part of the same equation, wants to see companies get better value from the rent-free period. The sooner office space is brought into productive use, the sooner the company's investment starts to pay off. This has been the starting point for an innovative service initiative called Derwent Xtra.

**Derwent Xtra helps tenants move quickly and easily into fully customized offices.** It incorporates high quality space planning, procurement and fit-out services delivered through a team of experienced professionals - architects ORMS, relocation consultant Alison Poole, quantity surveyor Collins Partnership and contractors Interior plc.

For tenants, Derwent Xtra means flexibility and value. **The tenant chooses the package to suit his programme and budget, converting any proportion of the rent-free period into the service.** Derwent Xtra is available with office suites from 3,000 sq. ft and is currently offered at five Derwent Valley buildings in central London.

Extensive choice is available within every element of the offer. By working closely with the team, tenants can decide on their approach to space planning and achieve optimum floor layouts. They can then take up options within partitioning systems, doors and floor finishes, lighting and air-conditioning control and all reception and office furniture.

'Derwent Xtra has a number of benefits,' says Derwent Valley Director Paul Williams. 'You get an experienced design, costing and contracting team that knows all about the building you are moving into. This gets the process going quickly. You also get tremendous value for money because we've put a lot of effort into procurement and negotiated discounted rates from top-range suppliers and manufacturers. And you get guaranteed delivery dates too.'

But significant cost savings and fast-track occupation are only part of the story. ORMS Director Dale Jennings explains. 'Space planning is a constantly evolving science. Any good architect or interior designer will evolve layouts that give you a pleasing and efficient environment. But we have a technical edge when customizing offices in these five Derwent Valley buildings.'

## THE DERWENT XTRA BUILDINGS:

**Tower House**  
Covent Garden WC2

**The Courtyard**  
Soho W1

**Gordon House**  
Victoria SW1

**Berkshire House**  
Holborn WC1

**The Davidson Building**  
Covent Garden WC2

**Panton House**  
Haymarket SW1

**55 North Wharf Road**  
Paddington W2



This is no empty assertion. ORMS's space planning acknowledges the detailed grain of these newly completed buildings, in particular the air conditioning layout that structures the possibilities of cellular space. They also understand the spatial implications of the new generation of flat screen technology. As Jennings points out, 'The flat screen has got rid of the need for desk returns, so companies can now use space differently. We work to produce spaces that will support each company's business processes and management structures - and that will feel generous too'.

Derwent Valley has assembled show floors at two of its buildings - Tower House, Covent Garden and The Courtyard in Soho. These demonstrate space planning options and display the range of fit-out choices for every part of the office including workstations, meeting and conference spaces, reception areas and kitchens. A CD-ROM is also available. 'We want to demonstrate the quality and value of Derwent Xtra,' says Paul Williams, 'and I think prospective tenants will find the show floors do precisely that.'

**And what of the typical three month mobilization period between appointing a team and starting fit-out?**  
**'Derwent Xtra will save you about two-thirds of this.** This service short-circuits the process of assembling the team, finding out about the building and getting landlord's approval. We really do save time as well as delivering value. And we reckon that this service, which is unique at the moment, will become essential in years to come.'

**Watch this space.**



# ART IN ARCHITECTURE

Once upon a time, if you ran an art gallery you had to be within a paint pot's throw of Cork Street, safely in the shadow of the Royal Academy. But for the last couple of decades the focus of the art world has been moving east – to places like Hoxton, Shoreditch, Hackney and even Deptford.

Deptford High Street, where passers by are more likely to be looking for soap powder and sweet potatoes than shock art, has been home to Hales Gallery since 1992. Not only is the gallery in an unlikely location, it is tucked away in a basement under a cafe.

Paul Hodge, who runs the gallery with his business partner Paul Maslin, did not purposefully set out to find an outlandish location or try to be different. It just happened that way. Hodge studied art at Goldsmiths College – the birthplace of BritArt - but worked as a postman for nine years to make ends meet. Delivering letters in SW1 to the St James's galleries he dreamt of opening his own – a place that would be accessible, unpretentious and unintimidating.

In the early 90s, the two Pauls were working with their local Deptford church on an anti drugs programme when a undertaker's parlour in the High Street, owned by the church, became available. The church didn't know what to do with it so Hodge and Maslin suggested they open a caff with a gallery attached. "So that people could see the art on their way to the lavatory," says Hodge.

Over the last ten years the gallery has built up a solid reputation for avant garde shows and interesting artists. One of the best known is Tomoko Takahashi, who was shortlisted for the Turner Prize in 2000. Ben Ravenscroft, Richard Galpin and Andrew Bick are on the books. Charles Saatchi is a regular visitor.

So well has the gallery taken off that Hales is about to move; it will be one of the first tenants in Derwent Valley's Tea Building in Shoreditch High Street. The move cements a relationship with Derwent Valley that is more than just that of landlord and tenant. Hales advises Derwent Valley on the selection of art for their buildings. Walk into DVH's Sutton Row or Southampton Street buildings and you can see the works that Hodge has selected in close collaboration with Derwent Valley director Simon Silver. "The final choice is always made by Simon" says Hodge "It's a great way to work, there's no committee; good art collections are never made by committee"

Neither is there a defined style. Silver's taste tends towards the cool and the minimal but Hodge is continually trying to push him towards less restrained works. "Our plan is to make Derwent Valley's buildings look good with the work of some hot artists – one day we hope they will find they are worth a lot of money."

While Hales helps Derwent Valley bring together art and architecture in their developments, the company supports the intellectual debate with its sponsorship of the Academy Forum, one of the few places where artists and architects can meet to debate issues relating to the conjunction of their arts. Its proceedings are reported in the Architectural Review and have covered topics such as decoration, urban monuments and minimalism.

The most important event in the Forum's calender is the Annual Architecture Lecture. This year's speaker is Italian maestro Renzo Piano. His lecture at the RA is timely as the public enquiry into his design for the 62-storey London Bridge Tower in Southwark is under way. The proposed building will make a significant impact on the skyline of London, its dramatic form the antithesis of the usual extruded tube that is the modern skyscraper. The architect describes it as a "sharp and light presence in the London skyline." English Heritage call it a "spike in the heart" of the capital. The debate around these issues will be aired in the discussions organised by the Academy Forum to coincide with the exhibition on tall buildings which will be part of the RA Summer Exhibition.

These events place the Royal Academy firmly into the centre of the debate about architecture in London – a position it has commanded at various times in its history since the 18th century. Derwent Valley's support of the Academy's programmes fits neatly with the company's aims of developing quality architecture and marrying their buildings with new art. Deptford High Street and Burlington House are not so far apart after all.



The Courtyard, 12 Sutton Road, Soho, W1

*Andrew Bick Variant  
(for sitting down and walking by) 2002*

This piece was specifically created to respond to its setting, notably the grid proportions and materials of the building. The 600 x 900 mm grid of the paving slabs and orange desk elements is treated as an abstract variation., which never appears quite the same to viewers as they rush past it to the lift.

*Andrew Bick is represented by Hales Gallery, London*





View of main entrance to TCT unit



View of relaxation zone and sensory pod



View of rest zone

**DERWENT VALLEY**  
supporting



# Teenage Cancer Trust

Last November, 450 guests filled the Lancaster Room of the Savoy for a fundraising lunch organised by Derwent Valley which raised £130,000 for the Teenage Cancer Trust.

The result of the combined auction, raffle, and Derwent Valley donation, far surpasses the £25,000 targeted towards the construction of a new TCT ward. Derwent Valley has been supporting the work of the TCT since 2001. Its primary involvement has been in facilitating the Trust's ongoing initiative in setting up special units for teenagers in NHS hospitals. TCT's Chief Executive Officer Simon Davies points out that teenagers being treated for cancer usually find themselves isolated either on children's wards, where most of the other patients are babies or toddlers, or on adult wards, where the majority are over 60. For 10 years, the Trust has been responding to this problem by building special units which specifically cater for the needs of teenagers, providing teenage-friendly facilities and a positive environment which, it has been shown, can improve the chances of recovery by 15%.

To date, TCT has built eight units around the country, towards a projected total of 20. Each costs between £750,000 and £1,000,000. This year, another two are being developed, one in Cardiff, due for completion in 2004, and one in Glasgow. Primarily acting as development and design consultant, Derwent Valley has introduced architects ORMS and Lifschutz Davidson to these projects, and work is currently well underway. ORMS has completed an outline scheme for the Cardiff unit, to be built on an infill site at University Hospital, Wales, and is now working on the detailed design. In the

meantime, Lifschutz Davidson has prepared a scheme design for a temporary ward within Glasgow's Western Infirmary, which is due for completion in the summer, and anticipated to have a 4-year lifespan pending relocation of facilities to a new site. A third practice, AHMM, has also been introduced to TCT by Derwent Valley, and is now developing preliminary ideas for another potential unit in Glasgow.

ORMS's involvement with TCT began with refurbishment of the daycare suite at the Middlesex Hospital, followed by the development of a Design Manual with TCT and Derwent Valley, setting out the philosophy and technical agenda for the units. This provides an invaluable evolving document of best practice, recording past and current experience of the design and construction of TCT wards for all parties to draw on, and, as such, represents a foundation stone for the development of future projects. It incorporates a fund of knowledge which ORMS subsequently used to design an ideal unit to be auctioned at last autumn's fund-raising lunch. This was a scheme design for a freestanding pavilion within its own gardens, equipped with comfortable bedrooms, relaxation zone, sensory pod (or snoozelum), and coffee bar. Guests bid for different elements of the design, from the walls and roof to the playstations and pool table.

This year, TCT is organising fundraising treks to Cotopaxi, in Ecuador, and, closer to home, Hadrian's Wall, plus a bike ride

in the rift valley, Kenya. These trips are an excellent way of getting fit, while visiting some of the most beautiful landscapes in the world. Participants are required to raise a minimum amount, of around £2000, to cover the cost of the trip and provide a surplus towards the funding of new projects.

A third fundraising initiative, which Derwent Valley is actively supporting, is the annual TCT Bandanna campaign, which will run for the whole summer this year (1st May -- 30th September). Four designs are available - three created by Frangi in Italy (graffiti, retro and geometric), on sale for around £5 each in outlets such as Tie Rack and Topshop, and one limited edition designed by the Sugababes, available for £3 (£1 to charity) at MK One stores from the end of January. The TCT bandannas will also be on sale in Derwent Valley's buildings, and all visitors and those attending site meetings are encouraged to buy one - following the example of the commissionaires, who will be flaunting their bandannas for the duration of the campaign.



Aaron Marsh "I hope if any teenager is unfortunate enough to have cancer, they will be fortunate enough to go onto a TCT unit!"



Teenagers with cancer on stage celebrating with Marti Pellow after his fundraising show at the RAH." Photos by Simon Brown

## Teenage Cancer Trust Helping Teenagers Fight Cancer

If you want to donate or just to know more about Teenage Cancer Trust and their work, please contact [Simon Davies](mailto:simond@teencancer.bdx.co.uk). It isn't just money that they need, maybe you can help in other ways - advice, networking, getting their message across.

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