

Curriculum Vitae

Christopher Smart - Architect

Christopher Smart is a Chartered Architect who combines dispute resolution work with architectural practice. He regularly receives commissions as an expert witness from a variety of clients and has acted as an adjudicator, arbitrator and expert determinator. He has over 30 years experience of private architectural practice, including being Director of an award winning design-focused firm.

He is a Chartered Arbitrator and is on the Panel of Arbitrators for the Chartered Institute of Arbitrators and the Royal Institute of British Architects. He is also on the Panel of Adjudicators for the Royal Institute of British Architects, the Royal Institute of Chartered Surveyors and the Chartered Institute of Arbitrators. He has acted as an Investigator for the Architects Registration Board and recently concluded six years on the Hearings Panel of the Disciplinary Committee of the Royal Institute of British Architects. He regularly gives lectures to fellow architects on the perils and pitfalls of practice.

Christopher has been involved in dispute related matters since 1996 and has been instructed by a wide range of clients on behalf of insurers, consultants, contractors and building owners. Matters in which he has been involved include building defects relating to damp-proofing, tanking, cladding, roofing, doors and windows, flooring and building services, as well as contract administration matters such as specification, certification, delays, inspections and completion. A regular feature of Christopher's work is to provide an opinion for insurers and/or clients and contractors on the performance of architects.

Christopher is currently practising on his own account, via Smartarch Ltd, having previously run the Bath office of Probyn Miers, a specialist architectural practice dealing mainly in dispute related work. The Bath office was operated from September 2002 to September 2004 when Christopher added substantially to the turnover of the practice, working mainly as expert, adjudicator and arbitrator.

Prior to September 2002, Christopher spent more than 4 years as Senior Associate at Stubbs Rich, a commercial practice of architects in Bath, whose workload included projects up to £25million for clients such as IKEA and MEPC. Christopher built up a range of consultancy work which included defects investigations, technical audits and project monitoring as well as dispute related work. Technical audits included a £300M strategically significant project in Cheltenham and projects for Bristol University. The lessons learned from the mistakes and errors of others played a vitally important role in informing the procedural and technical aspects of live projects and Christopher was actively involved in disseminating this information to colleagues. Whilst acting as adjudicator during this time, he became involved in one of the leading cases relating to payment of adjudicator's fees where a losing party challenged the fees and ultimately lost.

Between 1996 to 1998, Christopher was in practice on his own account, working on architectural projects and as an expert witness. During this time he was the plaintiff's expert in a significant action in the Technology and Construction Court against freeholder, surveyors, designer and contractor. The plaintiff was successful and resisted an appeal. The Judge at first instance complimented Christopher for his assistance and described his expert opinion as "treading the fine line between dogmatism and equivocation".

From 1987 to 1996 Christopher was at Niall Phillips Architects in Bristol, a practice specialising in innovative conversion of historic buildings and new buildings in sensitive locations. He was a Director from 1989 and was responsible for the procurement and contract administration stages of the practice's work. Many projects won Civic Trust and RIBA Awards and Christopher played a major part in developing the practice's reputation.

Christopher lectures regularly and is currently a RIBA professional examiner and has examined on the professional practice courses at the Bartlett School of Architecture at UCL, the Welsh School of Architecture at Cardiff University, Oxford Brookes University and Bath University. He is a committee member of the Western Counties Branch of the Chartered Institute of Arbitrators and is a member of the Society of Construction Law. He commenced his training at Gloucestershire College of Art and Design, Cheltenham, completing at Kingston Polytechnic where he gained a Diploma in Architecture in 1981. He was in 1995 awarded the Masters Degree in Construction Law and Arbitration from Kings College, University of London and in 2000 he was elected a Fellow of the Chartered Institute of Arbitrators.