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Dentist-turned-architect Richard Mitzman's new Harley Street surgery. Photograph by Etienne Clément



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## Technical

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## Who's who this month

- 1 Sarah Featherstone's own home, in London's East End, is featured on page 20
- 2 Dentist, sculptor and architect Richard Mitzman's latest Harley Street surgery appears in this issue. Page 38
- 3 Much-travelled Peter Jurschitzka (right) and Andy Nettleton, at Blauel Architects, ran the Goethe Institut refurbishment. Page 30







The architect has devised a storage wall so that the surgery is clutter-free. All instruments are cleaned in a central sterilising area behind the wall.

# The tooth fairy

As a former dentist, architect Richard Mitzman believes his revolutionary design for a busy Harley Street practice will enable make dentists' lives both much easier and more profitable.

by Amanda Baillieu. Photographs by Etienne Clément

COMBINING DENTISTRY AND SURGERY, THE Harley Street Reconstruction Centre gives a glimpse of a future where popping in for an oral implant is no more harrowing than a visit to the hygienist.

Designed by dentist-turned-architect Richard Mitzman, this one-man campaign to drag dental surgeries up to date began with a children's practice in Weymouth Street, London W1 (RIBA, *Interiors*, September 1997). It was here he tested his ideas, such as reducing clutter and surgery 'turnaround' by establishing twin surgeries (so the dentist can go straight from 'dirty' to clean chair losing no clinical time). These ideas have been developed further at Harley Street.

The client is a dentist with a busy practice specialising in the fashionable area of oral implants. Since regulations now forbid the use of a general anaesthetic, he needed at least four surgeries, two of which are for surgery on patients under sedation – one is a dedicated theatre with the necessary ancillary services – and amenities such as recovery rooms. The client also wanted to be able to rent out the surgical suites to other practitioners.

The building's steel-frame made it possible to remove most of the internal walls and reposition rooms. This has two advantages. First, it freed the surgeries from the constraints of the existing windows, resulting in fewer, larger rooms. Second, the architect could create a dual circulation. Patients now move around the perimeter of the building alongside the windows, while staff use a route through the centre of the practice. Each suite

comprises two identical surgeries, a central sterilising area and a consulting room. Mitzman has worked out that twin surgeries, which save the dentist five or so minutes that would normally be spent on cleaning, raises net income by at least 30 per cent.

As much as possible is stored in the central sterilising areas, rather than the surgeries. Effectively they are no more than glass-fronted, double-accessed cupboards, but they are prominent – even eye catching – so as to reassure patients about the high standards of hygiene.

He is also a great believer in the 'seen to be clean' virtues of glass. The surgeries have glass work-tops and shelves (the latter inspired by Rick Mather) and, with the stainless steel sink, is more reminiscent of a 'prep' area of a modern kitchen than a dental surgery.

It all looks very expensive, but by sourcing all the equipment from a range of suppliers the project was completed for just under £325,000. Mitzman devised his own shelving system using Slingsby's cantilever shelf brackets back to front, and the trolleys are from Japanese shop Muji. Other items, for example the splash-back cabinets, are bespoke.

While dentistry has been overlooked among all the other big health issues competing for attention, the government has now set aside £35 million to upgrade the fabric of UK surgeries. But dentists are a conservative lot and make take some persuasion to adopt such a clean and streamlined aesthetic – despite the obvious clinical advantages of Mitzman's approach.



### Cost specifications

Total cost	£330,000
Area	290m <sup>2</sup>
Cost per m <sup>2</sup>	£160m <sup>2</sup>

#### Costs

General building works	£226,000
Electrical	£48,000
Mechanical	£25,000
Glass partitions	£30,000

#### Specifications

Electrical work by View-a-Vision (reader enquiry no 950), aircon/heating by Main Group Services (no 951). Glass partitions by Schiag UK (no 952). Flooring: rubber tiles by Dalouple (no 953), wood strip by Wicanders (no 954). Lighting by Zemtobel (no 955). Furniture by Fantoni (no 956). Trolleys by Desalto (no 957). Dental equipment by Pilton Crane (no 958) through Henry Schein. Sterilising room cabinet from Ikea (no 959). Surgery sinks and taps by Vola (no 960). Plaster finishes by Armourcote (no 961).

Patients circulate around the perimeter of the building (left), with both surgeries and consulting rooms (above) behind glass screens.

### Credits

**Client**  
Dr Malcolm Schaller  
**Consultant architect**  
Richard Mitzman with Jeffery Howard  
**Contractor**  
BHF Contracts