

The journal for

Private Dentistry

Essential reading for private practice development

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The Sandford Contemporary comfort

10 REASONS TO
ENTER THE PRIVATE
DENTISTRY AWARDS

Treasure hunt
Uncover the hidden
gems in your patient list



The Sandford

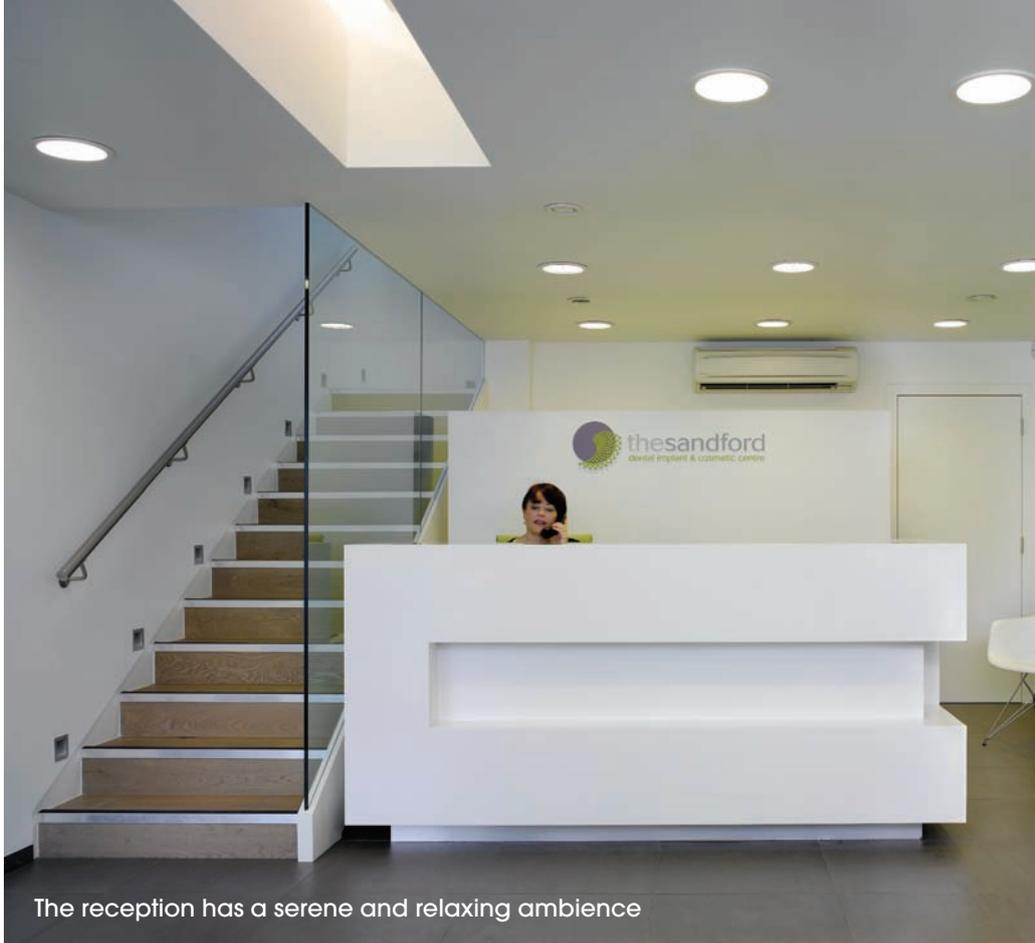
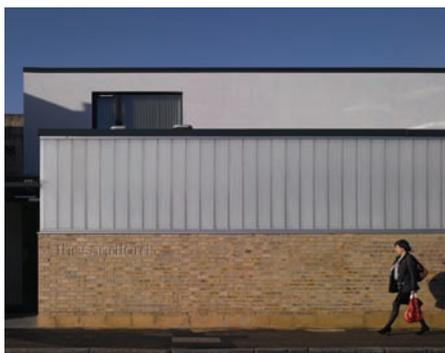
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The reception has a serene and relaxing ambience

How we did it

Hussein Shaffie explains how he and his wife have extended their practice and incorporated the separate implant and surgical unit, The Sandford

I came to the UK to practise in 1998, after I qualified in Sweden. I began my dental career as an associate and later became the principal of my first practice. My wife Katarzyna qualified in Poland in 1999 with honours.

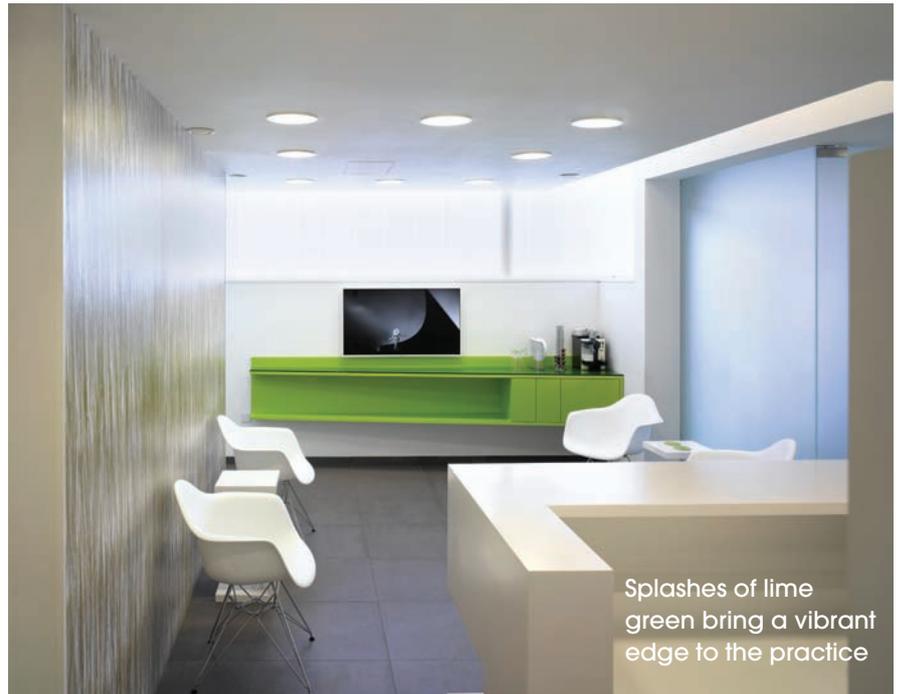
I bought Bexleyheath Dental Practice nine years ago; there were just two rooms available and a reception area. We needed more surgeries, so I continued to develop the practice. Over time I managed to refurbish and convert three rooms into surgeries as well as an upstairs waiting room. The practice went from two to six dentists, five nurses and a hygienist.

However, it was three years ago (when Katarzyna and I had just finished implantology training) that we knew that the original premises were not big enough to accommodate our growing implant business. So we decided to investigate building an implant centre behind the original premises using the garden area.

Starting blocks

Before we could begin the project, we had to ensure that we had the support of our bank, as we needed to finance the build with a loan. We also had several obstacles to climb with the local planning department as the first plans were rejected.

We contacted our bank RBS at the start of the thought process to discuss the plans. The accountant was confident that with our turnover, we would have no problem securing the funding for the build. It was at this stage that we knew we would have to fund the



equipment we needed in other ways. On advice from our accountants, we decided to do this through a lease.

Thankfully, we didn't have to spend years trying to find the perfect location, as we already had it; we simply extended our current building into what was the garden. However, it wasn't all smooth sailing and we came across a number of stumbling blocks along the way.

Our original plans were referred to the committee. Our project manager, Matthew Barrett, attended the meeting to discuss any

potential problems and managed to secure planning approval.

The design wasn't right, so we took on new architects (dental practice design specialists Richard Mitzman Architects), who agreed to the project on the basis that the scheme needed a complete redesign.

They carried this work out – at their own expense – and resubmitted the new plans, which were in turn approved too.

The build

We wanted a dedicated four-surgery

implant and advanced surgical unit to supplement our existing NHS practice. Our vision was to create a recognised state-of-the-art centre of excellence.

To keep it separate from the NHS clinic, we knew we would need a different entrance, reception and waiting area. The building materials were carefully selected to ensure the new practice sat discretely against the streetscape of neighbouring buildings.

In addition to the four surgeries, we wanted a surgical theatre, a separate consultation room, an admin office and a decontamination unit with separate clean and dirty room together with a separate scrub area.

Our architects at Richard Mitzman Architects suggested that the surgeries should be located between two parallel corridors, which would ensure separate circulation for patients and staff. This made sense to us and it would help eliminate cross contamination as well as give us ergonomic efficiency.

The project manager Matthew supported us throughout and helped the project run very smoothly. Richard Mitzman Architects ensured that the build met with our expectations and the builders translated the vision we had.

A splash

We had a clear vision of what we ideally wanted the building to look like. The aim of





the décor was to reduce patients' stress levels. To achieve this, we knew the colour scheme would need careful consideration.

The branding consultants, Chris O'Connor Design, worked closely with Richard Mitzman Architects to design a logo and colour palette for the building. Chris knew we were using natural colours using woods, reeds and dark brown tiles. To complement this feel he used different shades of grey/brown with a lime highlight.

An abundance of natural light and a variety of materials were used to create a serene atmosphere in both communal areas and clinical surgical.

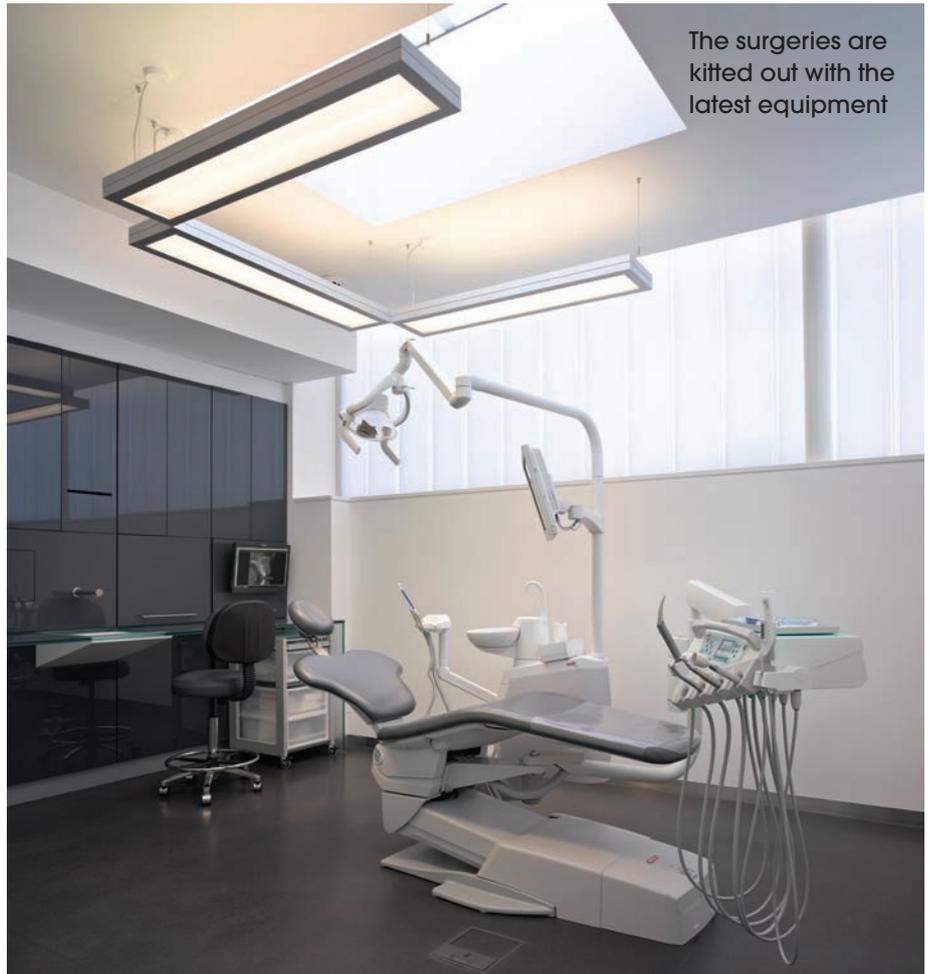
As soon as we saw the colours, we knew they were the look we wanted. The logo was developed using natural objects found in nature and represents a kind of symmetry that is seen in nature.

The colours from the logo have been used to build a consistent look throughout the practice, using the lime as a highlight against a lot of white.

We have used contrasting coloured walls in the surgeries to help reduce the formality and help increase patient comfort.

All furnishing are very contemporary with clean lines and finishes.

The only real thing we would change would be that we would have liked the rooms to be slightly bigger; it has taken some getting used to.



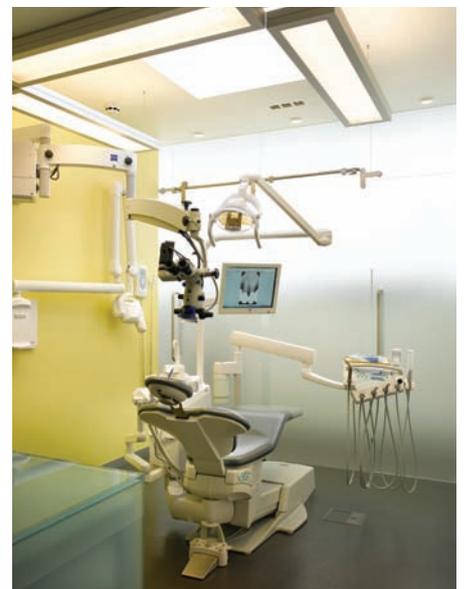
Power to the people

As the new building runs as a separate business, we have had to recruit additional staff such as reception team and nurses. We recruited the reception staff by advertising locally. The nursing staff were already in place.

We have also developed the type of specialist services we can offer, and we now have a visiting orthodontist, periodontist and endodontist. To recruit the specialists we used dental magazines such as the *British Dental Journal* and existing colleagues who recommended the practice.

As we were looking to provide a very different service to our patients, we have also engaged the services of a treatment coordinator. This has changed how we run

'Getting all the IT organised early and tested would have been an advantage.'



TIMELINE

November 2009 when we decided to do it	October 2010 plans drawn up	February 2011 planning permission granted	October 2011 building work begins	September 2012 practice opens
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The practice lends itself perfectly to training and education



our business and we are very happy with the results.

We use various website links to market the practice. We are lucky that we are able to optimise our own website. We also utilise our existing database. To reach potential new patients, we advertise locally.

Sound advice

We found the banks to be very difficult to work with. The builders require payment prior to the bank releasing money therefore having good cashflow is essential. There are lots of additional costs involved in the build that I had perhaps not considered, for example the cost of a monitoring surveyor who we had to pay to work on behalf of the bank.

If we were to give any advice to those looking to undertake a project like this, it would be to make sure you have the right people in place to support you through the build; you really need a project manager to



handle the day-to-day issues.

There is a time period on opening where teething problems occur and this can be a stressful time. Looking back, getting all the IT organised early and tested would have been an advantage.

We have also had issues with the cost of running the new building; the electricity bills are far higher than anticipated due to not knowing how to use the air conditioning economically.

A different experience

The end result is that we now have a light-filled and spacious dental implant and surgical practice. It's in the perfect location, positioned independently but adjacent to our existing, more conventional practice.

In addition to offering a better experience to patients, we can also offer training to colleagues. Up to 16 delegates can remotely watch operations being performed in the surgeries on the ground floor.

With nine surgeries in total, our staff has grown to 30, including some visiting specialists. This bigger support structure has made me more confident in my work. I have also purchased several pieces of equipment – such as a microscope and CT scanner – that enable me to improve the standard of my work.

I have a nicer environment in which to work and I am very proud of it. What's more, our new practice can offer patients a different experience when visiting. [PD](#)

COMPANIES INVOLVED IN THE PROJECT

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Richard Mitzman Architects LLP
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Vatech
(CT scanner)
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