



It has been an unusual year for everyone and we would like to take the time to reflect and share with you some thoughts of our year in 2020.

Clearly 2020 will be remembered for the speed and the terrible impact of the global coronavirus pandemic on people's health and well-being. We all witnessed the amazing healthcare professionals and key workers that carried on putting themselves at daily risk as we lost access to many of our community and economic structures and the country was placed on a series of national lockdown.

I don't think anyone can really say that they saw it coming and we are proud of the preparations taken. One of The Fire Surgery Directors is qualified in Business Continuity and Disaster recovery and so we invoked our Business Continuity plans in Mid-March to protect our staff and our business-critical activities. Our resilient business model and robust business processes resulted in our services remaining of the highest quality. Whilst we initially ceased site visits, once safe to do so we have resumed near normal operations. In fact, we stood down our response team quickly and have been working alongside our clients to continue to provide fire engineering designs which have supported their creative visions – albeit it whilst continuing to work from home.

Team

Our team stayed safe and more importantly connected. Months of working in your home environment in a city which felt strangely abandoned clearly took its toll at times, but we have come through this year with not only some great project successes but also some amazing memories of evenings spent 'quizzing' or just catching up over a 'virtual' morning cuppa. We accounted for each other every day and got to share some good times in amongst the gloom.

We replaced our Thursday lunches in town with a Deliveroo allowance so that we could meet, eat and chat as normal as possible!

Through the measures taken and the efforts of everyone we were able to support the physical and mental health of all our staff and are immensely proud of every member of our amazing team.

We were also able to announce 3 promotions mid – Roshni was promoted to Senior Engineer, and Marshall and Guoxiang to Fire Engineer so we have seen the team flourish.

We continue our patient and considered recruitment strategy and will hopefully filling new roles in 2021.

Competency and outreach

We continue to support the fire and wider construction industry following the tragic events of the Grenfell Tower fire.

Following on from our work with the Building Regulations Advisory Committee (BRAC) to support the working groups for the update of Approved Document B, Matt Ryan has been selected by CLG to support the Technical re-write of Approved Document B.

We have also participated and presented at several virtual conferences and CPD events such as the Royal Institute of Chartered Surveyors (RICS) annual UK Fire Safety Conference and Fire 2020. A presentation entitled "Fire Engineering post Grenfell" has been delivered to a number of high profile project managers including Gardner and Theobald, M3 and Buro 4. This considered some of the pertinent issues affecting the fire engineering community including rising levels of PI insurance, concerns regarding no test certification of building products and the EWS1 debate.

We have also continued to support our Industry through sponsorship of CHAIN London 2020, an interdisciplinary conference focused on bringing together engineering institutions to see how they can better work together

Heritage and Valuable Contents

Our strong repertoire of heritage sector projects continues, and we are becoming the fire engineer of choice for this sector. We have been appointed on some very high-profile heritage buildings in 2020 such as:

- Woburn Abbey
- Boston Manor
- Eltham Palace
- Kew Gardens

Our work at Royal Garden Kew looked at a contents protection strategy to the herbarium including plant samples collected by Darwin himself!

Our Directors have been asked to contribute to the updating of the Fire Protection Association Handbook – Heritage Fire Risk Management which will be published in 2021.

Andrew Nicholson has also agreed to author a new section for the ABTT publication, Theatre Buildings, on fire safety design.

Awards

As in previous years, The Fire Surgery is proud to have worked with design teams on several projects that have been nominated for RIBA Awards in 2020.

- The Bloomsbury Theatre, UCL by Nicholas Hare Architects (RIBA London)
- Boulevard Theatre by SODA Studio (RIBA London)
- Royal College of Pathologists by Bennetts Associates (RIBA London)
- Kings College Sports Hall and Swimming Pool Project by David Morley Architects (RIBA London)
- Brighton College - School of Science and Sport, Brighton by Office for Metropolitan Architecture (RIBA Regional Awards South East)

- Imperial War Museums Paper Store by Architype (RIBA East)
- Winchester Cathedral South Transept Exhibition Spaces by Nick Cox Architects with Metaphor (RIBA South)
- The Dorothy Wadham Building, Oxford by Allies and Morrison (RIBA South)

A real highlight for us was winning the SME Engineer of the year award at the inaugural Engineering Talent Awards 2020, a new set of national awards to celebrate the diversity of the engineering and technology profession. We were recognised for our supportive culture and our diverse team and were very proud to receive this award and external recognition. We know that we are a great place to work – but it's always nice to be told!

Corporate Social Responsibility

It's not all about fire engineering although involvement in wider charitable events was severely restricted this year.

We did continue to support our Industry through sponsorship of CHAIN London 2020, an interdisciplinary conference focused on bringing together engineering institutions to see how they can better work together.

Thank you

We are very grateful to our clients and design team members who continue to recommend us and support our mission to be the Fire and Risk Consultancy of choice.

We wish you all a Merry Christmas from The Fire Surgery and a safe and prosperous New year and we look forward to working with you in 2021.