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Architect's Choice

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MONUMENTAL CHANGE

Our Question Time panelists discuss design and build in sensitive, built up areas

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COMMUNITY VALUES

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Faience Tile Revival in Contemporary Brixton Bar

LINDA MOREY BURROWS

JADE TILLEY TALKS TO **LINDA MOREY-BURROWS**, MOREYSMITH, ABOUT ENHANCING SPACES AND DISCOVERING DESIGN AS A POSSIBLE AND REAL CAREER



LINDA MOREY-BURROWS IS THE FOUNDER AND PRINCIPAL DIRECTOR AT MOREYSMITH. ESTABLISHED IN 1993, MOREYSMITH IS THE CULMINATION OF LINDA'S DISTINGUISHED 31 YEAR LONG CAREER IN THE INTERIOR DESIGN INDUSTRY.

Linda is renowned for her ability to refurbish heritage buildings as well as her creative approach to workplace psychology. Her clients span the full spectrum of business; from major entertainment and consumer brands to high-end residential developers. Most recently she designed headquarters for British Land, Primark's European headquarter in Dublin as well as the 60,000 sq ft London headquarters of Coca-Cola. Here, Linda discusses her desire to create spaces for people and the pleasure of experiencing living the country and city life.

WHAT IS YOUR EARLIEST MEMORY OF DESIGN HAVING AN IMPACT ON YOU?

I was always creative but I can only remember being aware of design having an influence on my life whilst I attended art college, aged 16 to 20. I studied 3D design and the first year covered every aspect of design from furniture to ceramics, graphics and architecture.

WHERE DID YOU STUDY?

Berkshire College of Art and Design.

WHAT KIND OF DESIGNER DID YOU ASPIRE TO BE?

I'm creative, an ideas person, a good communicator and I always loved making 3D models. I funded my four years at art college by working for a local model maker in the holidays. I always loved art and design at school, along with sports, and knew from an early age that I didn't want to have an office-

based job where I would be tied to a desk. Before Art College I actually didn't even know it was possible to have a career in design. I went to a large comprehensive school outside Reading where the careers advice was fairly limited and aspirations low generally. On leaving school I selected the longest, most interesting design course I could find so that I could be at art college for as long as possible and 3D design was broad enough to keep my interest.

For me, the really exciting part about the prospect of being a designer was the opportunity to have a positive, significant impact on the lives of other people. The buildings we create for instance, are designed with the people in mind, we think about how they will use the space, what appeals to them and what is going to enhance their daily life. This was a major inspiration for me as a young designer and I am thrilled



Images: Overleaf the Coca Cola offices and top, Primark HQ, Dublin

that I have been able to create and lead a design practice with this belief at its core.

WHO ARE YOUR DESIGN INSPIRATIONS?

I greatly admire what Conran has done for the face of design in the UK across all sectors, and James Dyson in industrial design. My son Felix is studying product design with engineering at Brunel currently.

WHAT DOES MOREYSMITH REPRESENT AS A FIRM?

Ultimately we represent people. We design spaces that we believe will enhance the lives of those people that live, work or visit them. We understand the changing ways in which people live and work today and endeavour to create environments in which they can thrive. We also have particular expertise in working with listed and heritage buildings. We really enjoy restoring old historic buildings, bringing them back to their original glory whilst giving them a contemporary and appropriate feeling. We enjoy exploring new materials and creating innovative environments for our clients.

WHERE IS THE MAJORITY OF YOUR WORK BASED?

80 per cent of our work is based in London. Five years ago I would have said 99 per cent so we have really grown our business internationally in the last few years. We currently have three projects in Paris, one major refurbishment/occupier project in

Reading (Primark), we have just finished an office in Madrid and of course, Primark's global HQ in Dublin. We are also working on an exciting project in Bath as well as the redevelopment and repositioning of a building in Birmingham for Ashby Capital where we are introducing cafes and redesigning receptions and common parts. This follows on from successful schemes we have delivered on behalf of Argent/Hines in Birmingham. In addition, we have recently started to work for a global confectionary company on a brief to redesign the brand's offices in the South East.

HAVE YOU EVER WORKED OR LIVED ANYWHERE ELSE? HOW HAS THIS HELPED TO SHAPE YOUR IDEAS ON DESIGN?

I lived in London for 22 years before deciding six years ago to move our family home to Bath. We now split our time between the two, spending the weekends in Bath and most days in the week in London living in Clerkenwell, which we love. It's fantastic to have that balance and the change of pace. The contrast between urban and country, heritage and contemporary is also inspiring from a design perspective.

WHAT HAS BEEN YOUR BIGGEST DESIGN COMMISSION TO DATE?

The redevelopment of Primark's global headquarters in Dublin. We were appointed to transform the entire 125,000 sq ft office in the heart of Dublin's shopping district. It was a

major architectural feat, which involved physically connecting a 20th century listed building together with a 1990's modern structure. Whilst it was challenging, the end result has made it incredibly rewarding. We have really transformed the company's working practices by providing staff with a bright, light, modern space that offers a range of workspaces encouraging greater social interaction. The Wellness Zone, which includes a Yoga Studio, is one of the most popular areas within the new office.

WHAT DOES THE FACE OF INTERIOR ARCHITECTURE LOOK LIKE TO YOU IN 10 YEARS' TIME?

Flexible technology will continue to dominate the changes to the workplace, closing the gap between home and working environment. We also expect to see an increase in density of occupation but with increased areas allocated for social facilities. I also foresee a continued trend towards less corporate, more human spaces. Perhaps an increased use of sustainable and natural or locally sourced materials, access to natural light, colour and interesting use of planting to attain a healthier environment.

IF YOU HADN'T BECOME A DESIGNER WHAT WOULD YOU BE DOING?

A Botanist!

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