

From drawing board to practice perfect

Cosmetic dentist Chris Orr takes that step to the next level



Below: Hands-on clinical training



Left: Chris Orr and his wife Zeynep and above with Schottlander's John Spicer, and Guy Crabb from ODB in front of the funky ADS logo-coloured columns

When we first started running seminars back in 2003, we never imagined that the demand would be so great. We rapidly outgrew the facilities available to us (renting space in a hotel) and needed a dedicated facility.

Our purpose-built centre in London Bridge is the culmination of years of work, dreams and careful planning. It is one of the largest privately owned post-graduate training facilities in Europe. My wife, Zeynep, and I now plan to expand our clinical practice and further enhance the clinical training we offer, taking the quality of our educational programmes to the next level.

The story is a long one that started back in 2004. Zeynep identified the ideal location – London Bridge. It is centrally located, vibrant and has the excellent transport links which are essential – only 30% of delegates attending our courses are from London, with the rest coming from all over the UK and Europe.

It took a long time for us to find a suitable property. We became adept at viewing buildings and mentally carving up the space, but nothing was right, and there were times when we very nearly gave up. Then we found a late-Victorian warehouse in Bell Yard Mews, better than anything we had seen before – just what we were looking for.

When it came to appointing an architect, we decided not to use anyone regularly involved in dental construction. We wanted a building company that came with no preconceptions, and we chose ODB who had a really fresh approach to the project, and who came up with interesting and innovative ideas.

Clear idea

Zeynep had a very clear idea of what she wanted the final result to look like. She gave ODB a detailed design brief, which Andy Terry brought from the drawing board into reality. As well as this, ODB also fulfilled the roles of building surveyor, structural engineer, planning consultant, interior designer, main contractor, health and safety coordinator, making for a 'turn-key' solution for us.

Before work commenced, our building was just a bare shell, 6,000 square feet of space over two floors. It was decided to put six dental surgeries on the first floor, with our Advanced Dental Seminars (ADS) training facilities on the ground floor – a seminar room, plus a laboratory and phantom head room.

ODB came up with inventive solutions to problems of pre-existing structures. For example, there were columns underpinning structures above, which could not be removed. Rather than covering



Above: Chris Orr on hand to help



Above: Chris in one of the six surgeries, built around a central sterilising and storage zone
Left: The phantom heads slide neatly away into cupboards at each work station

these up and just incorporating them into a wall, Andy added further dummy columns, painted them in the bold red pink and grey colours of our own ADS logo, and made the whole thing into a striking, eye-catching feature in the main reception area.

Zeynep had the important idea of using Smart Glass. An electric current run through the glass turns it from clear to opaque at the flick of a switch. We've used this in the room divisions on the ground floor and it is an essential component and critical to the use of space and lighting in that whole area. As I'm a gadget person, it wasn't difficult for her to persuade me that we had to have it.

In terms of its look and design, the realisation of the whole project is very much down to the successful collaboration between Zeynep and ODB.

Our ground-floor education facility caters for groups of up to 20 delegates. The reception area has the coffee station and is the main catering area, and we have designed it specifically so that people mingle. There is leather furniture – handmade in Italy, in our corporate colours of white, red and grey – and it is easily moveable. This is important because we run a wide diversity of programmes and the facility needs to be as flexible as possible.

Beyond the seminar room is the laboratory, phantom head room for clinical hands-on training. Up until now, most of our teaching has been done in hotel rooms; now that we can extend our practical clinical teaching, we are redesigning much of our programme.

We have used Schottlander Erio cabinetry throughout the facility, both in the surgeries and sterilisation zone on the first floor,

and in the laboratory and phantom head room below. We chose Erio for several reasons. It has the stylish look we were after, it is made of galvanised steel so it is immensely robust and durable, and – a key factor – it is incredibly adaptable. Its modular style of construction meant we were able to have exactly what we wanted, exactly where we wanted it. And the price is amazingly competitive. We actually flew out to the Erio factory in Italy on two occasions to discuss our requirements.

John Spicer, Schottlander UK sales manager, advised us on the purchase of our phantom head benches. The versatility of the Erio benches in the phantom head room allows a special flexibility. Normally, phantom heads are on a torso and stick obstructively out of the bench, making it difficult to do other exercises. But we are able to put the phantom heads away into cupboards at each work station, leaving effectively a normal lab bench for technicians, clear for different work.

On our second visit to Erio, Zeynep spotted special strip lighting with a mechanism allowing it to adapt to the degree of ambient daylight in the room, thus keeping the light level constant. It was so innovative that we said firstly: "Do you sell it?" and secondly: "Can we get it?" It costs little more than standard lighting, and is so energy-efficient that it will undoubtedly save money in the long term.

Innovative solutions

On the first floor, we have six surgeries, built around a central sterilising and storage zone, all fitted with blue Erio cabinetry.

Again Erio came up trumps by being ready to devise innovative solutions. I wanted bins with



hands-free opening to avoid cross-infection issues. Most standard pedal bins have a little kick plate and spring which breaks after a few months, but Erio came up with an elegant alternative – a pneumatic pedal which uses compressed air.

In many practices, materials and equipment tend to gravitate towards one or two rooms, and people are regularly running in-between surgeries, borrowing things. It can slow down treatment and be very intrusive. We are often asked what materials we use for different procedures during our lectures, so several years ago we made a list of all the products we were using to incorporate into a course hand-out. It was about four pages long and we realised that, if we want to keep everything in stock, it is important to keep stock levels under control.

So, for all those reasons, we've designed things here so that

everything is kept centrally. Thanks to Schottlander we have plenty of mobile carts and each dentist has their own cart which is loaded up before a session with the relevant materials needed for treatment. Then everything is returned to the central room for cleaning, re-sterilising and storage at the end of the session.

So, anyone can work in any room and we can keep stock levels under control. It's a matter of

simple efficiency.

During the course of the development, ODB have expertly handled both the aesthetics and the technical logistics. We've got two plant rooms; the upstairs one houses compressors, brought in from Italy and custom-built here, the size of what you'd find in many dental schools. We need that capacity because, as well as running the six surgeries, we can have 20 people drilling in the phantom head room.

The downstairs plant room houses a sophisticated and costly air-conditioning system, which provides heating, cooling and fresh air throughout the facility.

ODB have taken pride in every detail of the project. Most importantly, they promised something and they delivered it – on time and on budget.

Schottlander have been very helpful through all stages of the project and it would have been difficult for us to do it all without them. John Spicer, in particular, has been integral to the whole development and he has been unfailingly generous with his time and experience.

Schottlander and ODB did a great job of understanding each other's requirements and working together to make the whole thing seamless from start to finish.

We've had visitors here from Europe who run similar sorts of facilities who can't believe the quality of what we have here. They say it's just fantastic. We are both so pleased with what has been achieved.

Chris Orr is one of the UK's most prominent cosmetic dentists. The founder and past president of the British Academy of Cosmetic Dentistry (BACD), he has a high profile for his work promoting the importance of cosmetic dentistry in the UK. Chris runs the Advanced Dental Seminars' comprehensive one-year course on cosmetic dentistry which, over the last five years, has trained more than 500 delegates. For further information, visit www.advanceddentalseminars.com. For information on Erio Surgery & Laboratory furniture, contact Schottlander on freephone 0800 97 000 79, Freefax 0800 97 000 78, or email sales@schottlander.co.uk. To contact ODB Group call 01252 704400 or visit www.odbgroup.com.