

BEHIND THE BUSINESS

SPEAKS WITH WALK INTERIOR ARCHITECTURE & DESIGN



There can be few businesses with so many glowing testimonials as are to be found on the website of Walk interior architecture & design.

Whether a complete home renovation, extension, remodelling of the entire interior, or an exciting new scheme designed for a single room the clients experience is always one overwhelming thanks, praise and complete delight feeling the way they life has been transformed. One only has to look at their portfolio of work to see why, no matter what type of design Elaine and Gary create results that are simply stunning.

As Elaine explains, "We're sometimes asked how much it will cost for an interior design. But without knowing what level of design is needed, or taking a brief, it's like asking how much it will cost for a diner party, without having a menu and knowing for how many?"

"The list may include "meat, wine, bread", but that could mean a burger or filet steak. Value wine or a vintage label. White sliced bread or an artisan fresh baked loaf? For any interior project, multiply those decisions and you get the picture. Even if we've designed basic white tile, everybody's budget level is different. Should we be looking at £10 per sqm ceramic or £100 per sqm quarried stone. When designing a room as complicated as a kitchen or a bathroom, the list could be so extensive that, understandably, they need more time and questions asked to get the best solution. Ideally it would be best to suggest some parameters about what you're hoping and aiming for, so that a fuller and more focused brief can be discussed and agreed."

Elaine started their interior design consultancy business in 1995 and were located in central Southampton but are now pleased to announce their move to new premises in Stockbridge.

What prompted your move from Southampton to Stockbridge?

Gary: "We've lived and worked in Southampton for many years, whilst renovating several properties of our own. Our last home & studio of over ten years was very modern, but being designers we wanted another project of our own, as well as a change of area and house style. So already having clients in the Test Valley and having explored it on foot, and with cycles, it seemed like a good idea to focus our search in this area. The tricky bit is then finding the right 'project' property we can live in and work from, whilst also renovating it. After over a year of searching, and a few lucky escapes

from failed purchases, we found 'The Cricketers' in King's Somborne. Originally a pub and former coaching house it was ideal in so many ways - apart from the interior design-, which is where we come in!"

Elaine: "Change is a sign of creativity. As the new season starts to show signs of change, we're embarking on a new and exciting adventure ourselves."

What is the ethos of Walk Interior Architecture and Design?

Gary: "We practice what we preach!"

Are you happy with the idea that your designs both architectural and interior may change and evolve in the future?

Elaine: "Evolving is natural; we're both progressive people. We embrace new, interesting products and materials, whilst appreciating and respecting all things gone before."

Do you both share the same taste for your own home?

Gary: "On the whole yes - which helps! But as we help our clients - we have to resolve all kinds of functional and practical issues first and as a priority. So any taste aspects or differences almost sort themselves as part the solution."

Elaine: "It helps that we are a husband & wife team as we can see a situation from both sides and can often help couples come to a harmonious solution!"

How important is the relationship between you and your client?

Gary "VERY! Working with client, their families, their homes and lifestyles becomes quite personal, it has to be so we can design the most effective and tailored solutions. Even from more decorative schemes to fully considered structural & layout improvements"

Elaine "It takes determination and patience to realise any renovation project, especially whilst living (and maybe working) in the same space, as many of our clients do. We've done it before, and know that it is worth the perseverance. Gary and I have over 30 years (individual) experience in this field. It's important for us to spend time with our clients in the early stages, to understand their personality and circumstances so that we can pass on the knowledge gained, combined with our creative skills, to give our clients a comprehensive design approach. We pride ourselves on being able to develop a solution that not only meets the brief but also surpasses all their expectations."

What and who inspires you?

Gary "Design for us is not just a day job. We've always been involved in the creative industry, starting way back in graphic design & advertising (which is how we met) so we are constantly looking at and absorbing design and all things creative. Movies, art, travel/ holidays and architecture are always inspiring. There are a couple of contemporary product designers I personally find inspiring as their work covers many areas, Marc Newson & Patricia Urquiola."

Elaine "The most important inspiration in the creative process is our clients and their homes. Helping to shape people's lives' that will make a difference to them every day."

What is your greatest pleasure regarding your work?

Gary "Making a difference to people's lives."

Elaine "We can play an integral role in helping clients grow, move on and make a space there own."

What next for Walk Interior Architecture and Design?

Gary: "We are keen to continue working on all kinds of varied projects. We work best when we can be involved from the early stages and where we can at least have an overview of the wider project to ensure we can provide the most comprehensive design. Working as part of a team with the client and associated contractors etc. It can be frustrating for our client's and us when we are asked to help 'after' works have started which can lead to unnecessary compromise or extra expense. The best projects are when the clients know what they don't know and when to seek help."