

We will implement an appraisal strategy at Syndicate West, but will carry it out differently than previously. A 360 degree appraisal with you answerable to all your colleagues and we might throw in a client as well. Below is my last formal self appraisal at the old firm. I didn't get a response to this. We had a sit down in which the ideas of moving up to the top table were muted. Ideas of the future were all in our minds and new ideas must have been emerging. We have removed any reference to the past lot.

ANNUAL STAFF APPRAISAL FORM [Summer 2012](#)

NAME: Martin West

FORMAL JOB TITLE: Director

DATE OF JOINING HERE: Sept 1998

DATE OF REVIEW: Summer 2012

EXPERIENCE – WHAT PARTICULAR ASPECTS OF PROFESSIONAL EXPERIENCE DO YOU FEEL YOU HAVE ACHIEVED AND LEARNT FROM, DURING THE PAST 12 MONTHS?

We closed out St Paul's Sq. That is a huge chapter and body of work. The lesson learned is that attention to detail pays. The last building is recognised for its quality and I recognise the bits I played in achieving this.

The role of senior management is a balance between micro and macro engagements. Playing to one's strength and the strengths of one's team is developed over time. I've come a long way in this respect over the last fourteen years.

Consolidating urban design skills with Chester and RAD have been good. The frustration of the inertia these projects have taken on is infuriating.

Rarely take on face value a client or his project manager. The latest spat on Leeds just makes me less trusting.

Life as an architect is hard. Life as an architect in a recession is hell. We do this job for many reasons. I've learned now it's not for money. It used to be pleasurable. This is fading. The reward came from the creative process. Under these conditions it's now a rare experience.

Clients respect and gratitude sometimes helped. That now comes at a premium.

I continue to play my part in the graduate scheme and that has its moments. I have stronger links with UEL and that's satisfying. I'm getting better and pitching for work but still not winning enough.

Finally I've learned that the collective spirit here is not as strong as it used to be and that my fellow directors are an insular bunch. I haven't quite worked out why that is, but I'm beginning to understand a little.

PERFORMANCE - HOW WOULD YOU EVALUATE YOUR PERFORMANCE?

It's very difficult to assess, in what is described as the worst recession in living memory, how you evaluate your performance. I'm still here and still alive. So there's a start. Have I done everything one could expect in these circumstances? That's difficult. On RAD I was extremely pleased with my performance. With students on Campus Unlimited less so but we got a prize. On Stockport despite being completely undermined by a client I kept on going. Croydon has turned around and not sure how I could have performed better. On Chester and my text to Gemma, I feel vindicated on the reaction. I actually don't regret sending the text. I feel often we should be stronger with clients. On the bids I have done, the BCO brochure on the projects Stoke, Chester, Salford etc we continue to serve our clients the best we can.

On extra duties like finding new work I am in two minds. I would like to be better but it's hard to motivate one self when one is not sure of the future and if you are being taken advantage of. It's a bit like my take on IDS. He has asked all those hard working folk to just work that bit harder. If you already believe you have a strong work ethic squeezing out that bit more might not be possible and if it is, what do we get at the end of it.

AIMS – IDENTIFY ASPECTS OF PROFESSIONAL EXPERIENCE THAT YOU AIM TO ACHIEVE - DURING THE NEXT 12 MONTHS?

I want the practice to support me through my part 3 at last
I want to find the winning formula to finding work and winning competitions
I want to reacquaint myself with all things cad
I will continue to read and learn more urban theory
I will expand my teaching
I will engage with selected younger members of staff to discuss their aspirations and motivations here
I would like to join the NLA and use this as a networking opportunity to find work in the south east
I want to be healthy
I want to feel job satisfaction
I want to get home earlier

SKILLS – IDENTIFY ANY ADDITIONAL SKILLS THAT YOU FEEL YOU NEED TO DEVELOP IN ORDER TO ACHIEVE YOUR PROFESSIONAL EXPERIENCE AIMS:

Part 3, BIM, refresh on best practice in all things sustainable, current regs, Business acumen.

TRAINING - HAVE YOU HAD ANY TRAINING DURING THE PAST 12 MONTHS? IF 'YES' PLEASE DESCRIBE BELOW (include course title, location, cost, & a brief description).

None

TRAINING EXPERIENCE – DESCRIBE HOW THE ATTENDED TRAINING FULFILLED THE "TRAINING AIMS" IDENTIFIED IN YOUR LAST ANNUAL APPRAISAL.

NA

TRAINING AIMS – IDENTIFY ANY PARTICULAR TRAINING THAT YOU FEEL WOULD BENEFIT YOU & THE REASON/S WHY. Please provide information for applicable courses, location and cost (where appropriate).

I would like to discuss the allocation of a budget to attend some seminars and networking events.

CPD AIMS - IDENTIFY PARTICULAR TOPICS OF CPD THAT YOU FEEL WOULD BE BENEFICIAL TO YOUR PROFESSIONAL EXPERIENCE.

I would like to see a mapped out succession plan so I know where I fit into the organisation.

OVERALL - EMPLOYEE COMMENTS/ACTIONS

I am not very optimistic about my future here. I am disappointed on the level of dialogue we have at a formal level. I fully appreciate the difficulties the practice is under. I will be 52 next year. My salary is capped. The ability to predict incoming work and profitability from that work is impossible. Client's attitudes are becoming ever more hardnosed. The perceived lack of investment is worrying. The exit of certain PD's is equally worrying. Our succession plan as listed in the quality management hand book does not go far enough to allow me to make meaningful decisions about my future.

If your career has three chunks, a beginning, middle and an end, I'm beginning the end. I have over thirty years of work experience under my belt. To have such an uncertain future at this point in my career is either terrible planning on my part or circumstantial. I need to plan it rather than just being a victim of circumstance. I need a meaningful discussion on these points.

That didn't occur so I resigned.