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Introduction

Alex Silk is currently studying his RIBA Part 2 course at Bath University, which begins with 6 months of work experience. He is currently completing that experience at Kendall Kingscott Ltd architects, which would complete a 2-year stint at the Company. The Company is based in the South West, with offices in Bristol and Exeter, and has completed a range of work across the country in sectors such as: health care, residential, education and retail.



How did you get started in your career?

As the path to becoming an architect is fairly intense and staggered, I have used many of the stages as opportunities to travel. This has included taking a gap year either side of the part 1 degree and participating in the ERASMUS scheme in Milan for the 3rd year of my 4 year degree. Once I came back from travelling after university I applied for jobs and have since been working with Kendall Kingscott architects.

Can you outline a typical work day?

A workday starts with a vital coffee, before typically discussing prospective work tasks with my team leader. If I am working on a project by myself I will organise and progress where is appropriate to the up and coming deadline. Work normally is in the form of creating drawings using computer software before printing and discussing the work with my relevant team leader or director. If I'm working on a project by myself then work can also include, sketching out design ideas, building 3d models and creating relevant documents and booklets for a submission.

What do you enjoy most about your job?

The reward and addiction of the job is in creating something hopefully meaningful and important to many stakeholders after much hard graft. It's an art in many aspects but it is the tool for transforming the built environment in which many people live. Fortunately or not, the many stages of a work project offer many moments of reward: as a project design emerges; a project bid is successful, as a project gains planning permission, or as the project is being built.

What skills are important for anyone wishing to start in your profession?

Autonomous working and development. Taking responsibility for your work, workflow and development of skills. Often software to enhance your work is self-taught and from a desire to improve your own workflow and project delivery.

What main personal attributes do you think is important for your type of job?

As a service based industry it is important to remain professional and to be empathetic to other stakeholders with other perspectives. The art of architecture is emotional as you realise designs and impart on them your beliefs and morals. Therefore different opinions, logics, and outcomes can be difficult to take and to fight for, requiring a need to be professional and empathetic in difficult circumstances.

Do you have any tips or suggestions on how young people and adults can enter your industry?

Currently the route into architecture is quite prescribed, with a series of requirements needing to be met. This includes a part 1, 2 and 3 of which a part 1 is often a degree, part 2 a Masters and part 3 is an exam with the governing body as a climax to all work experience and university experience. There are other ways to acquire the stages and quite likely a route through apprenticeships will soon be possible.

What career progression opportunities are available in your business/sector?

From becoming an architect opportunities to climb the chain are often experience related, therefore becoming a senior architect, an associate of a company and then perhaps a director. Alternatively setting up your own practice is plausible. However for me progression comes in the form of seeking work and employers that match your beliefs and the vast range of outcomes in architecture allow you to pursue work that has meaning to you, or similarly to find work that allows you to have a certain life balance.

Why is it important for your sector to attract and train young people and new entrants?

It is important for architecture to attract and train up young individuals as it also has benefits to the company and profession. The long process provides individuals numerous opportunities to be exposed to different styles, software and architecture in a constantly developing profession. This means youth can bring in fresh ideas, new and updated skills, and then to take over and replace other architects and roles.

What trends do you predict for your industry within the next 10 years? E.g. is it a growing market requiring more young entrants

The industries priorities constantly adapt as the worlds priorities around it change. The biggest current shifts are in sustainable principles, growing populations and city living. This means work in these areas grow and with it an opportunity to participate in or to expand upon the knowledge of these sectors.

General words of advice

Rewards can seem constant but pursuits endless. The process to becoming an architect alone is long and constantly requires engagement and then architecture itself often takes years to complete. It is not for the faint hearted, certainly not for the money conscious, but can provide meaningful work and constant personal development. It is because of this you need to be sure it is right for you and therefore get sustained periods of work experience (a week may fool you), start learning computer software where possible and engage in numerous mediums of architecture (magazines, online articles, visit new architectural buildings).

Further contact/information

www.kendallkingscott.co.uk

For more information on becoming an Architect, simply search the Job Profiles on the National Careers Service website.