

BUSINESS PROFILE



10 Paternoster Square

WHAT DO YOU DO TO RELAX?

I like to walk and visit museums. I mainly walk in English landscapes, but will walk wherever I find myself. I've been on journeys across landscapes with archaeological or historical significance in European culture. For example I've walked the Via Appia in Rome, a very long passage through Italy, and I've walked Hadrian's Wall in Northumberland. I certainly tend to follow a historical thread through a landscape. That sort of approach goes hand in hand with the artefacts you find on these kinds of walks, which you also find in museums.

WHAT IS YOUR GREATEST INDULGENCE?

Making time for drawing of any kind – fictive, imaginative, or just recording places. I also do building propositions.

WHERE DO YOU GO FOR INSPIRATION?

I find myself looking for inspiration in books and literature, especially in plays, theatre, poetry and great critical texts. But I also turn to the visual arts, especially contemporary art. In terms of artists that I admire, I'd include Antony Gormley, Prunella Clough, Sean Scully, Richard Serra and Anish Kapoor. Another important part of my inspiration is conversation with friends, where we can discuss and explore ideas.



Name: **Eric Parry**

Age: **54**

Company:

Eric Parry Architects

Current position:

Principal

WHAT IS YOUR FAVOURITE PIECE OF TECHNOLOGY?

I think I'll plump for graphite and paper. It's not that I'm a technophobe, but there's a lot of technology involved in getting the right pressings on paper. Paper and a graphite pencil are a wonderful source of difference. It's not that I don't appreciate good sound systems, but for me graphite and paper is it.

WHAT WAS YOUR FIRST JOB?

I was a manual labourer on a civil engineering site. I was on a concrete gang working on a sewage treatment works in Liverpool. It was over a summer vacation before going to university and by then I already knew I wanted to be an architect.

DO YOU REMEMBER YOUR FIRST BOSS?

No. I've always done my best to sidestep authority and I can say I have no idea who my first boss was. Maybe a school teacher somewhere or something. More or less, since leaving school, I've been my own boss.

HAVE YOU EVER BEEN SACKED?

Not to my knowledge, no. I'm sure I have somewhere down the line, in somebody's imagination anyway. I've disappeared before they've had time to sack me.

WHO DO YOU MOST ADMIRE?

I'd say a few teachers and thinkers. Namely, an architectural critic and writer, called Dalibor Vesely, because of the depth of his knowledge and understanding. And also Richard Sennett, a well-known urban sociologist.

WHAT'S THE BEST ADVICE YOU'VE EVER BEEN GIVEN?

It's just a quote: "Try again. Fail again. Fail better." It's from Samuel Beckett. To me, it means that you need to persevere and not expect to succeed with ease, and, indeed, question success when it's acknowledged.

WHAT DO YOU LOVE ABOUT YOUR CURRENT JOB?

I love the intensity and creativity of it, that I need to constantly be inventive and to judge appropriate responses to design constraints and programmes, which are all part of a client's brief.

WHAT DO YOU FIND DIFFICULT?

It's difficult to conclude an interesting idea because there's a tendency to go on and keep refining the idea. Behaving according to a rational programme is very difficult. By this I mean that there are always time limits on design and while the process of creating is immensely enjoyable you have to be ruthlessly self-disciplined to close issues you might rather keep open and keep working on.

WHAT HAVEN'T YOU DONE THAT YOU WOULD LIKE TO DO?

I have no idea of what that might be, actually. I couldn't even begin to answer this question, and if I did answer it, I would be disappointed. I don't know because I don't want to know. I feel that if I knew, it would lead to a kind of disappointment. I will find out what I haven't done by a chance encounter at some point is the best answer.

WHAT HAS BEEN THE PROUDEST MOMENT OF YOUR CAREER?

I think sharing in the completion of a successful project with the teams involved in its design and construction. One such project to date was 30 Finsbury Square, an office building in London. Sharing the completion with a team is important because working in architecture is a bit like making a film, where completion would be the equivalent of the film's premiere.