

insideout

the journal of the Higgins Group

issue 9

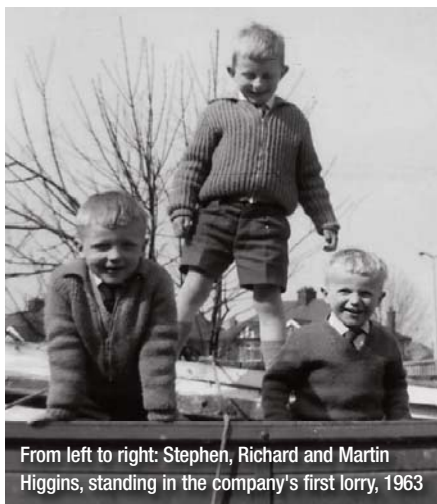


50 year anniversary edition

Half a century on.

“The policies which have served us so well as a family company will not change. The needs of our clients and the wellbeing of our staff are, and must always be, our first consideration”

Derek Higgins May 1994



From left to right: Stephen, Richard and Martin Higgins, standing in the company's first lorry, 1963



Derek Higgins with the Queen Mother



Ron Hatch's retirement after 25 years

Celebrating 50 years

“As we celebrate 50 years in business I am pleased to report that the Group continues to generate profit, despite a 20% reduction in turnover due to the challenging times we are enduring.

Having been engaged in both the construction and new homes disciplines for 50 years, we remain one of very few “hybrid contractor/developers” who are truly able to offer a “one-stop shop” for comprehensive mixed tenure estate regeneration.

Our key strength is a reputation for delivery, which is achieved through the professionalism of our employees. That, combined with clear strategic direction and strong finances, gives me continued confidence in the prospects of the Higgins Groups at all stages of the economic cycle”.

RG Higgins, ACIOB, Chairman

One day in 1960 a young building estimator told a friend and colleague, “I’m going to start up on my own in building.’ The response was immediate - ‘I’ll come with you”.

It was a bold decision. An early client predicted that the company would survive no more than 18 months. The founders’ first bank manager told them they were mad and refused to lend them a penny.

Derek Higgins and George Eastwood, defied discouraging predictions to prove that the fledging enterprise that they started would become successful and provide the solid foundations for growth into, as Higgins Group PLC, the prosperous major concern it is now 50 years on.

From when DJ Higgins & Sons Limited was first set up with a contract worth £36. 10s. 0d, to the company that today regularly has multi million pound contracts, the business principles first laid down by Derek Higgins are still firmly embedded throughout the company.

“At the end of the day, what I want to do is make a profit”

Derek Higgins

We are proud that the Higgins Group still has the same values and commitment for delivering quality services as it did 50 years ago and acknowledge that this was built on the support of Olive Higgins for her husband, and the clear-mindedness, passion and determination of Derek Higgins and George Eastwood.

The Higgins Group has grown through the team effort of family and staff at all levels into the mature organisation of today. With the qualities on which the Higgins Group was built, we have been able to weather the extremes of boom and recession and changing, challenging climates and have continued to be a flourishing organisation - which will continue for the next 50 years and beyond.



“The client is right and we do not fall out with anyone”

D J Higgins and Sons Ltd original motto

Investing in our manager future... a focus on Higgins S

“Success in community construction requires the ability to balance vision with not just technical expertise and experience, but the personal talent to deliver the very best solutions. This is why our people are so important”

Richard Higgins, Chairman

Today, success in the construction and development industry requires the ability to balance many qualities: leadership and teamwork, aggression and flexibility, vision and the ability to change with the climate. This kind of success requires management and individualism, and an organisation that knows the virtues that comes with experience. We believe that our staff are our biggest asset, they build relations with our clients, deliver services and develop the business.

We are committed to improving staff recruitment and retention by supporting staff to provide a quality service in an environment of learning, development and support. By investing and nurturing from the foundations up, we deliver highly skilled and experienced Managers and Directors of the future, retaining the experience and skills within the company - the high percentage of 'long service' employees only goes to confirm that by valuing staff a very focused and committed environment is created.



Sam Norton
Management Trainee

“Joining Higgins through their Construction Trainee Programme gave me the opportunity to get practical experience of the working world whilst continuing my learning

at University. I hadn't been aware of the professional side of the construction industry, but the role of Management Trainee that I began my career with is exciting, challenging and interesting.

The mentoring programme and secondment training throughout other departments, allows me to not only gain a wider insight into the construction industry but also the chance to meet and work alongside many Higgins colleagues.

I have been in the role for over three years, in Pre-Construction working along side the rest of the design team - surveyors, site mangers and contracts managers, to ensure the job successfully reaches completion. In addition to this is I am in the third year of my degree studying Construction Management.

The support I have received from Higgins has given me the confidence to take on more responsibility and I aim to continue to work hard and absorb all knowledge that I am provided with along the way”.



Andy Brooks
Assistant Contracts Manager

“In the middle of a recession Higgins saw the potential I had and gave me an opportunity. I had recently been made redundant, as the

previous construction firm I had been working for had gone into liquidation. Although the role I interviewed for was not one I had previously held, Higgins' foresight recognised that my experience would bring benefits to the position.

With the support from colleagues at all levels, my career progressed from trainee through 6 further promotions until the role I hold now.

I am committed to developing the contracts manager role within the organisation and I have received excellent training to assist me further. The exemplar training course that I undertook included several modules that were extremely relevant to my future development. This has also assisted me on a day to day basis, which ensures that I deliver the best level of service for the company. I look forward to continuing my career progression with Higgins”.



James Parish
Senior Contract Surveyor

“I was on course for a career as a graphic designer whilst at school, but after achieving good results in my A-levels I realised

that I wanted to start working instead of further full time education. I knew that I would still require a challenging role where I would be able to develop and gain further qualifications. Living locally to Higgins I was very aware of the great reputation the company had and looked out for opportunities to join them.

I started as a Trainee Surveyor in 1999 and was supported through my Quantity Surveying Degree, completing it in 2007. This has stood me in good stead for the financial and contractual control of projects that I manage and I believe with my continued good work ethics and



s of the Staff

commitment there will be further opportunities within the organisation for me.

Over my 11 years at the company I have seen Higgins go from strength to strength and it feels good to know I have been a part of that. Higgins also has some great staff that makes the working day enjoyable”.

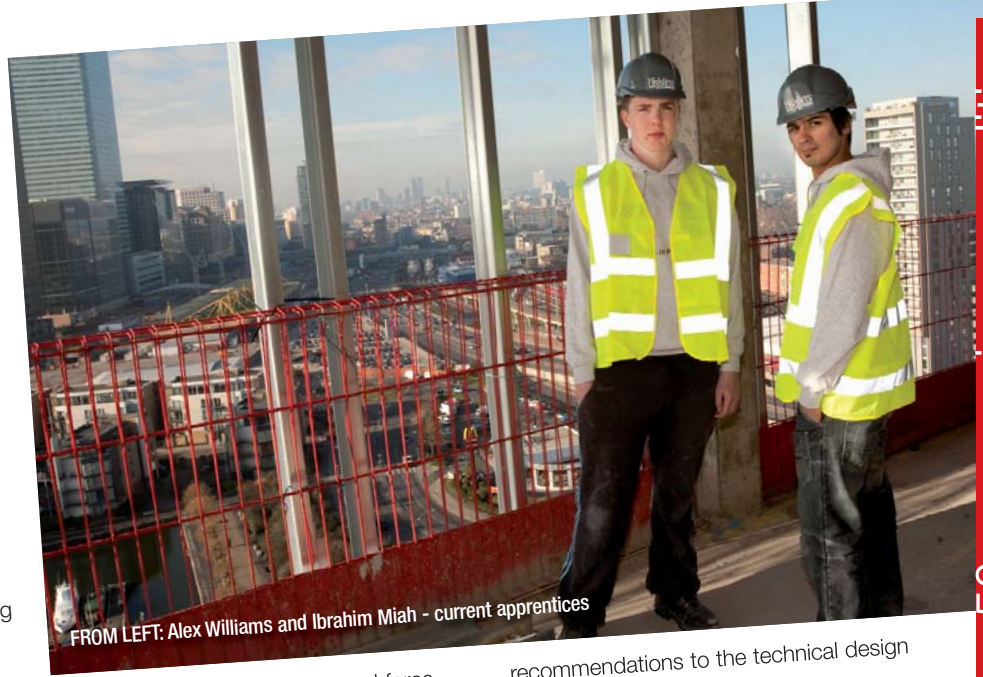


Dave Dorrington
Senior Project Manager

“37 years ago after finishing my exams, having no idea of what route I wanted to go down, I visited a career session at school. From this session I was helped on my journey of development from

an apprentice carpenter to senior project manager. I joined Higgins in June 1974 on a 4 year apprenticeship. On my first day, reporting to a site in Leytonstone, there was another new recruit - Richard Higgins. Higgins believes that it is important for staff to understand all areas of work they are delivering - and family members were no exception!

Whilst studying my City and Guilds Certificate I had tremendous support from senior managers and directors who regularly would contact me for an update - they were genuinely interested in how I was doing. I continued to develop my skills from practical and real experiences and shared my knowledge with new trainees that I was responsible for. Cascading information and knowledge is embedded in



FROM LEFT: Alex Williams and Ibrahim Miah - current apprentices

the organisation and with the workforce having a high percentage of long service staff, there is a great depth of experience that can be passed on.

As one (or possibly, ‘the’) longest serving member of staff at Higgins I can say that the fair and generous way you are treated instills a loyalty and dedication to the company that drives you to be committed and deliver great services”.



Malcolm Wallace
Head of Design Development - Higgins Homes

“I joined Higgins 11 years ago as a Contract Manager. At that time my role encompassed both the management

of the design process and the construction activities that were required to deliver a project. With experience I was promoted to Senior Contracts Manager on larger schemes and gained further knowledge on both aspects of the build process.

As the industry became more technically demanding it became apparent that in order for Higgins Homes to continue as a key player in the market the design and construction elements of projects needed to have dedicated roles. I put forward a proposal to the Board to split the role and offered to head up the technical design side and relinquish my construction element to other Construction Managers.

That was 4 years ago, and through my new position I have been able to address changes in construction methods and policy to ensure that Higgins Homes is equipped to deliver quality homes to budget and exceed the required standards. I am able to use the practical knowledge and experience of a working site to provide workable suggestions and

recommendations to the technical design element of projects.

As a company Higgins continually motivates staff to embrace challenges, continue their personal development and welcomes innovation. The company develops a relationship of trust and loyalty with its staff, which I believe, is derived from it still being a family run business and staying true to its beginnings”.



N'Chika Myers
Management Accountant Group Services

“I have only been with the Group for just over a year but have already experienced the support given by colleagues and the great

working atmosphere. Joining Higgins was a career progression that has many opportunities for me to develop and broaden my horizon. I have developed a depth of experience and knowledge from my past roles and, as I am new to the construction industry, am continuing to build on these.

Though in my earlier years I had serious inclination to study the sciences and work in that field, I now passionately enjoy being an accountant.

The commitment that the organisation has to training staff, is such that, should I require to undertake further qualifications/training to help me succeed in my role I would have the total support of my Managers. Higgins Group is unique in that it is a large successful organisation, undertaking multi million pound contracts, but still retains the feeling of a company that values its staff and their input”.



From left to right: Paul Robbins from Nicholson Carpentry, Mark O'Lone from Higgins, Anthony Gibbons and Andrea Blackman from Lambeth Building Partnership



Projects

From great foundations exception

Although there are great differences in the construction methods, size, quantity and cost of projects - the underlying values, vision and foresight of DJ Higgins has continued throughout the years.

1990
Care

Limewood Court,
Ilford

The first sheltered housing scheme by DJ Higgins 1990

2008
Care

Huntingfields

Saffron Housing Trust awarded Higgins Construction a £5 million contract to deliver a state-of-the-art resource centre for the elderly, to include sheltered homes, respite care beds and daycare services. A key element of this project was that 40% of the homes had been earmarked for people with physical disabilities.

By creating and developing an open partnership with Saffron Housing Trust we worked together to give a centre of community to this care home. Being involved at the very beginning allowed our expertise and experience to influence the project to ensure that the final outcome was that the new care home was more than just somewhere to live - they were homes for the new residents.

1970's
Education

Science block,
Rainham
Secondary School

One of many system-built schools constructed by DJ Higgins in the 1970's.

2010
Education

Science block,
Latymer School

Latymer School is an independent, co-educational day school based in Hammersmith, London. Higgins Construction was awarded the £8 million contract to construct a new 4-storey science and library building.

This unique project had to integrate a new Science and Library building into an adhoc set of buildings with the heart of the established private school being constructed in 1890. A totally bespoke design was developed for this project. Much of the equipment and technology had only previously been used in a BRE test environment and every element was designed to an incredibly high specification.

The completed project incorporates many groundbreaking and environmental technologies, delivering the very best in innovation in modern construction. The constant challenges of new techniques and finding solutions for other areas has led to an exceptional product being delivered.

1985
New build

Richard's Place,
London E17

One of the first new build projects constructed by D.J. Higgins in 1985

2010
New build

The Old Hospital,
Maidstone

One of Higgins Homes newest developments, The Old Hospital, sees the transformation of Maidstone's former Ophthalmic and Aural Hospital into a stunning new collection of apartments. This exclusive development won the award 'Best Apartment in the UK' and fuses together history and modernity in a seamless effort and comprises 17 studio, one, two and three bedroom apartments carved from the former hospital's Grade II listed buildings.

In the grounds are a further 57 new build apartments which conform to Level 3 of the Government's Code for Sustainable Homes.

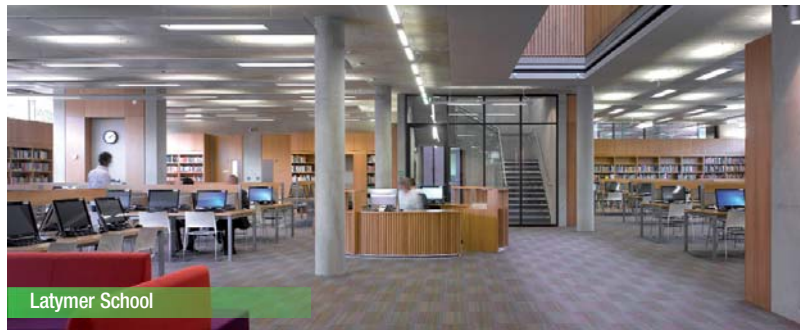
Higgins Homes have once again used their much-reputed skills to deliver these exceptional stylish, high quality new residences. The commitment by the team to continually improve on each development ensures that unique showcased homes are fresh and inspiring for the ever demanding market and the reputation of the Group continues to strengthen as one of quality.



Science block, Rainham



Latymer School



Latymer School

High quality and service is delivered

1978
Refurb

Chelsea Manor Buildings, Flood Walk, Chelsea

One of the first larger refurbishment projects for DJ Higgins

2010
Refurb

Brockley PFI

This was a £73 million contract awarded from the London Borough of Lewisham to carry out the refurbishment of 1365 tenanted and 464 leaseholder flats, maisonettes and houses within 93 blocks. Higgins was part of the Regenter consortium that carried out this project.

This process intruded on the every day lives of many residents so their perceptions and satisfaction was crucial to the successful delivery of this project. Building relationships with residents, along with ensuring that the site workforce had the skills to deal with situations in their day-to-day work, constructed a positive risk adverse strategy.

Higgins were totally committed to the community development of this project and engaged with the residents at every opportunity.

Although there was no contractual obligation to use local labour on the project, Higgins set their own local target of 20% of the workforce. We are pleased to say that the reality of this was that we achieved 25% throughout the site.



Richard's Place



The Old Hospital



Chelsea Manor Buildings



Brockley PFI



Limewood Court



Huntingfields

Looking towards the next 50 years

“The Higgins Group has made a positive impact on everyone we have worked with over the last 50 years... whether that be our employees, local authorities, communities or individual residents and purchasers.

Our reputation for delivering a quality product, coupled with the ethics of the organisation, has been strengthened with each project and I am excited about the future for the company.

Things are going to be challenging, but I am confident that we have the right people in the business to continue the Group's progress”

Paul Lewellen
Group Finance Director



On the cover

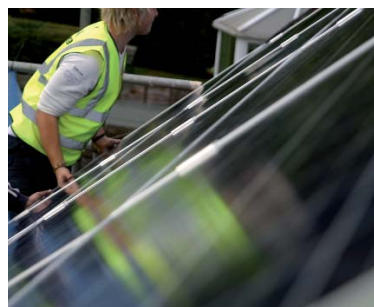
Higgins Head Office,
Loughton, Essex

001 licence to retrofit

Higgins Construction is the first construction company in England (and the world!) to complete a BREEAM retrofit property. This groundbreaking milestone achievement is being used by the BRE to help develop the new national standard for the sustainability of housing refurbishments. The ‘green features’ that were installed in this property have made a massive 80% reduction in carbon emissions.

The initial works carried out will provide valuable information regarding the challenges, options, costs and on-going benefits of carrying out retrofit works in the future.

We considered several options as to how improvements could be achieved, with the final goal of finding a solution



that would be viable to roll out to further properties in the future - with the ultimate aim of passing on benefits to residents and having an increasingly positive affect on the environment.

If you would like information on how we could work together to deliver energy efficient homes please contact Allan Ronald on 0208 508 5555.

The future looks good...

Since the beginning of the year we have been very busy in our estimating department. Our prices remain extremely keen and although we are seeing an increase in competition we are pleased to say that we have continued to be successful on a number of schemes.

As a result of the good working relationships we have with our clients and our reputation for quality delivery and service we have a busy time ahead to look forward to.

Recently awarded

St Johns School Epping,
£18m, Essex County Council

Braintree Decent Homes,
£4m, Greenfields Community Housing

Royal Road,
£11.8m, Affinity Sutton Housing

Springfield Lodge,
£3.2m, Salvation Army

St Michaels C of E School,
£4m, Governors of St Michaels School

Pavilion Leisure Centre,
£3.7m, London Borough Bromley

Conway House,
£4.2m Irish Centre Housing

Juniper Close,
£2.5m Family Mosaic

Craylands Demolition,
£400k Swan Housing



In addition to these projects we have also been appointed as framework contractors with many clients, creating further exciting opportunities for the company.

Higgins Homes has also had a great start to 2011 with the launch of four sites. Show homes ‘showcase’ the exceptional standard that is continually developed and we are confident that we have the right product on the market to generate sales.

With our expertise in both construction and sales there are great opportunities for us to add value and create benefits for your company. Please contact Robert Charnock on 0208 508 5555 to discuss how we can help.



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Higgins Group

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