

Croydon's Crowning Glory

"Size of chair, flexibility of operation, value for money in terms of quality and functionality and reputation for reliability..."

Finding your practice the subject of a compulsory purchase order would spell disaster for many so when this happened to Croydon Dental Solutions, the owner and dentist Krystyna Walker realised she'd have to take some decisive action to save her business.

When Croydon Council announced plans to build a new shopping centre in the heart of the town it meant Krystyna's practice would be right in the demolition zone. She recalls how she first felt when the compulsory purchase order landed on her doorstep. "Talk of a new shopping centre in Croydon had been going on for many years but when finally the CPO arrived I remember experiencing a whole range of feelings... anger and sadness at what was to happen to our building, terror at the thought of losing our patients and apprehension at having to uproot everything but I also knew we'd been left with no choice and had to make the best of the situation we found ourselves in. It was up to us to find new premises and create something new."

Right in the heart of bustling central Croydon, Krystyna knew to keep Dental Solutions in business she had to relocate as close to the old practice as possible. It was imperative that the move didn't jeopardise the 5000 strong NHS and private client base she has worked hard to build over the last 9 years. After a lot of searching Krystyna and Chris, her husband and business partner, settled on a building just a few shops down from the old practice. "It met all of our main requirements; the building was a solid 1950s construction



with spacious hallways, a wide staircase and lift access. It had formerly been used as building society offices and as it was empty we could easily get a feel for the potential of the space."

Krystyna and Chris committed to a tenancy and set about obtaining the necessary approvals from the council to convert into dental use. With Alan Tate from Grey Associates as architect and builders Aspects Building Contractors on board, the work to convert the space into a 3 surgery practice started in October 2009. Their architect managed the project with constant input from Chris while Krystyna continued to work full time in the practice. She is thankful her husband maintained a watchful eye over the day to day work. "Fortunately it was his involvement that saved the front door being put in the wrong way round!" With no major hiccups along the way the refurbishment was completed by mid March 2010 just two weeks later than the original planned completion date.

To choose the furniture and equipment Krystyna and Chris undertook extensive research visiting dental exhibitions and trawling through numerous dental publications and marketing literature. Their research for dental chairs led them to the UK Headquarters of Takara Belmont where they chose the latest Cleo II Treatment Centres for all three of their surgeries. "The relatively small size of chair, flexibility of operation, value for money in terms of quality and functionality and reputation for reliability were all important factors in our final decision."



All the cabinetry, furniture and equipment were purchased through suppliers SPS Dental whose involvement in the project proved to be indispensable. "SPS' input and advice on the final design, positioning of units and the ergonomics of each surgery's layout was really valuable. They worked tirelessly with Chris to get it just right."

With their vision now a reality Krystyna has thoughts for anyone undertaking this sort of project. "I'd really advise getting good professionals on board. Whether these are builders or designers, they need to be on the same wave length as you. In our case we were happy with the team we chose. Since opening we're still working through some software issues but to a certain extent teething problems are inevitable. I think you have to be prepared for this and not expect everything to be 100% perfect right from the start."

Now that the new practice has been up and running for a few months Krystyna can reflect on what they have achieved with an enormous degree of satisfaction. "Having new premises that we are all truly proud of makes a huge difference to the moral of the staff team. We are regularly boosted by the wonderful feedback we receive from our patients who say the new practice has a real wow factor."

Please make enquiries to ~
Lucy Moscrop on 020 7515 0333
or email lucy@takara.co.uk
www.takara.co.uk/dental