

# HOW WE DID IT

Interview with **Julian Martin**



Julian Martin, lead partner at Devonshire House explains how the Cambridge practice has grown and evolved with the aid of a new out-of-town location

**D**evonshire House is a unique practice in lots of ways, but the main way in which we stand out is that all of our dentists are specialists. This wasn't the case when I joined as the specialties weren't yet recognised, but part of Devonshire House's development process at that stage was the decision to move away from general practise towards supporting the incoming specialties and being a centre for education. Our main site, a 1920's house on Cambridge's ring road, has been constantly evolving to support this.

Unfortunately it couldn't expand indefinitely, so the Copley site initially housed our dental laboratory and offered storage to free up space at the main site and it has further evolved to offer dentistry and hygiene services at two surgeries.

## PRACTICE HISTORY

The practice was first based in the centre of Cambridge, near to Addenbrookes hospital, which it carried out dentistry for. When the NHS arrived in 1948 the practice decided against providing dentistry within the NHS - even then they felt it would compromise their treatment. Devonshire House has occupied it's current site since the 1980s. I joined in

1989 after completing my masters - I also had oral surgery qualifications - and I wanted to work somewhere where I could carry out implant dentistry which was in its infancy.

When the dental specialties were introduced a few years later all the partners decided together to work to be grandfathered onto the new lists - we were a mixtures of older dentists with lots of experience and younger guys like me with Masters.

The site developed and more dentists and specialties were added until we had every area covered, including carrying out oral surgery. A large extension was added to cope at the main site but we'd hit critical mass, so the decision was made to relocate our internal dental laboratory - which took up a

lot of room - to a trading estate at Copley three miles out of town. This was a bit of a risk - having a dental lab on site was a big plus for the practice and there was a fear our technicians would be less accessible, but we found it worked very well. The laboratory was able to expand as the building we choose was a bigger than it needed to be at the time and we added two new surgeries to the main site.

## FURTHER DEVELOPMENTS

Later Copley evolved to host more training as we

grew that area. It's well recognised that if you train dentists then they will become referring dentists. We created a larger and larger circle of contacts who referred cases to us, came to us for advice and further training. A training surgery was set up at Copley, equipped with cameras. This and the laboratory could host courses, away from the running of the main practice. We have also been able to mentor dentists at Copley, spending all morning with them in the surgery. The new site has proved to be a great educational resource.

As the services at Copley have grown and become more successful we realised the patients don't mind coming here like we thought they would. We were even asked why not have a hygienist there, some were fed up of dealing with traffic on the



60  
SECOND  
TOUR

### THE PRACTICE

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### THE PHILOSOPHY

Devonshire House provides high quality dentistry for all of the family. Our Specialist Dentists and supporting team combine a modern approach to dentistry with great customer service. Our dental practice in Cambridge is also a training centre, providing postgraduate education and mentoring to fellow dental professionals.

### DEVONSHIRE HOUSE AT COPLEY

Devonshire House at Copley is an extension of our main practice and is located out of town with easy access and parking. The surgery is based at Copley Hill Business Park, Cambridge Road, Babraham and the premises houses two dental surgeries and a sitting room, our dental laboratory and our finance team.



A refurbished surgery at the  
main Devonshire House surgery





## PRACTICE DESIGN



Shown on this page: reception, waiting room and surgery at the Copley site



ring road just to have their teeth polished. Currently we have hygienist services here five days a week, I work half of my week here. It has also meant the dental technicians are much more clinically connected - they can take shades in a surgery and our senior tech is a CDT so he can see patients for impressions and fixing dentures. Being on a trading estate means the costs are about a third of the main practice's too.

### MAIN SITE REFURBISHMENT

The other partners set me the challenge of setting up the Copley surgeries without spending much money, so they mainly feature Ikea cupboards as well as an A-dec chair that had previously been used in the main practice. The great thing about A-dec chairs is that a lot of their features run on compressed air, so are very reliable. Over time we've changed the upholstery so they still look swish and are comfortable for the patients and it is still going strong.

This has also meant two surgeries at the main site have been able to be fully refurbished - including with new A-dec chairs. Refurbishing these surgeries has been a big job, with lots of planning by our builder Mick Hill and SPS Dental who provided



## PRACTICE DESIGN



Shown on this page, the main Devonshire House site

and installed the equipment. In both cases everything has been achieved in just two weeks which is quite an achievement as far as I'm concerned - especially where we have moved internal walls and doors.

The way we work now means that these new surgeries need to be nicely set up, with lots of room for digital equipment like scanners to be used and stored and our designs have all been done with this in mind. I've now seen eight surgeries refurbished like this and it has just got better and better each time.

### OVERALL BENEFITS

The new site at Copley has allowed us to expand our business without moving away from our prime site. It is prime in lots of ways but we are no longer allowed to grow it. We were initially worried about offering complementary services in an out-of-toen

location and patient and staff journeys being affected but that has just not been the case.

The laboratory is now firmly established here, our current breed of technicians are so different from how they used to be - they are much more clinical, which the dentists like and the patients benefit from. They like the idea that there is a whole team of people working together to look after them and providing their treatment. The patients definitely benefit from the close dentist-technician relationship.

Having such a good laboratory set up is also an attraction for dentists either joining or working with the practice too. ●

### COMPANIES AND EQUIPMENT INVOLVED IN THE PROJECT

#### A-dec

Dental chairs

TELEPHONE: 024 7635 0901

WEBSITE: [www.adec.co.uk](http://www.adec.co.uk)

#### SPS

Equipment and surgery planning

Telephone: 0844 5675151

Website: [www.spsdental.co.uk](http://www.spsdental.co.uk)

### COMMENTS TO PRIVATE DENTISTRY

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