

# Architectural Association insurance project: From listed buildings to century old blueprints

**CLIENT:** Architectural Association  
**SECTOR:** Education  
**COST CATEGORIES:** Insurance

## SUMMARY OF SAVINGS

Insurance

21%<sup>o</sup>

Protecting the heritage of one of the finest Architectural schools in London is no mean feat.

From the influx of international students to the very buildings in which the campus is housed. The complexities of the various insurance policies left Architectural Association's Company Secretary, Kathleen Formosa, a little perplexed. But she was determined to discover whether the current cover was adequate and if improvements could be made. And so, as the time for renewal approached, Kathleen drafted in the help of Expense Reduction Analysts (ERA) for expert guidance.

## THE CLIENT

Founded in 1847, the Architectural Association opened as a day school in 1901 and moved to London's Bedford Square in 1917. The school that originally occupied 34-36 Bedford Square now fully inhabits 10 buildings. The 68,000 square foot campus means that for the first time in 50 years, all students and staff are located at Bedford Square. The school's students are responsible for a large majority of London's impressive skyline as it now stands today.

## THE CHALLENGE

After a brief meeting with Kathleen, ERA Client Relationship Manager, Iain Wales, was confident that ERA could offer significant benefits to Architectural Association. He introduced Kathleen to one of ERA's leading insurance experts, Chris Coomber. Chris has a team of six former brokers and insurance specialists whilst his own background covers international project management. He co-ordinates and delivers unprecedented levels of service, savings and policy benefits to his clients.

## COMPLEX, NICHE RISKS, NO MATCH FOR ERA

Quite apart from the normal educational risks associated with an international school drawing in students from all over the world, the listed buildings themselves also contain listed artefacts, from fireplaces to artwork. And the schools underground archives store some of the most significant, irreplaceable designs which have contributed to the shape of the London skyline.



Architectural Association  
School of Architecture

"I'm perfectly capable of dealing with a broker and renewing insurances but I'm not an insurance expert and we don't have one in the organisation. In reality you just have to trust the broker is giving you the best deal and that the policy will do what you need it to should the worst happen. The huge benefit of working with Chris at ERA is that they're totally independent so their reviews are not only meticulously thorough but have your best interests at heart. Having their expertise in your corner is very powerful."

**KATHLEEN FORMOSA,  
COMPANY SECRETARY,  
ARCHITECTURAL ASSOCIATION**

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# ERA turns up the heat: Impressive insights & significant savings for Alpha Heating Innovation

In addition to its prestigious London campus, the school owns an impressive construction and exhibition facility in Dorset. Here, students can have their designs built to test engineering specifications and review aesthetic qualities. This site is now home to increasingly valuable mock-ups and the early creations of some of the most world renowned architects. Identifying this related site and protecting the heritage as part of Architectural Association's insurance policy was a vital part of ERA's work.

## BESPOKE SOLUTIONS & AN INDEPENDENT PROCESS

Authorised and Regulated by the Financial Conduct Authority (FCA), Chris and his team are able to carry out thorough, unbiased reviews the likes of which a broker cannot. As a totally independent entity, the team's only interest is enhanced benefits and cost efficiencies for their client - they have no interest in actually winning any business therefore can be totally impartial in their research and reporting.

As with all ERA insurance projects the first part of the process was a totally independent review of any risk exposures faced by Architectural Association. All of the school's policies were reviewed to ensure that the insurance programme was fit for purpose and finally, cost savings and added benefits established. Whilst the incumbent broker had been providing a very good service, there were a few significant areas which hadn't kept pace with developments in the business. By identifying and selecting an alternative broker more suited to the task, Chris and his team were able to improve on these identified weaknesses and advance the effectiveness of the programme whilst reducing costs.

## NO JARGON ALLOWED

Insurance policies are notoriously riddled with jargon, in fact, even two like-for-like policies will never read the same. Chris prides himself on translating what he feels are unnecessarily complicated documents into plain English. A process which involves reading every line of every policy to ensure his clients are clear on content and have a full understanding of the services and cover they will receive.

Having presented the alternative broker to Kathleen, Chris also introduced the specific individuals who would, if accepted by the school, be Kathleen's daily contacts after the handover. This level of service is just par for the course for Chris and his team but Kathleen was delighted nonetheless. ERA's client relationships don't end with identifying the best supplier and saving costs; transitions to any new broker are fully managed

by Chris to ensure no lapse in cover and to help forge great relationships between both parties for the future. "I'm delighted with the outcome of our work with ERA. Not only do we have the right levels of cover in the right places, we now have a supplier who will work with us not against us when issues arise. I'm confident that the business and its heritage are protected in the best possible way" enthuses Kathleen.



## ADDED VALUE

- Cost saving reinvested in the school.
- Policies simplified and updated to multi-site.
- Improved level of service and support.
- Enhanced levels of cover at no extra cost.
- Access to specialist insurance experts.

"Insurance isn't everyone's speciality and that's nothing for any business to be embarrassed about! My team's priority is to ensure that our client's insurance programme is fit for purpose, not just for today but for the future. We take the time to fully understand a business as it stands whilst also considering its growth plans and aspirations. This ensures we can select the best-fit supplier and design policy that can adapt with the business."

**CHRIS COOMBER,**  
EXPENSE REDUCTION ANALYSTS