



# Mountford Pigott Partnership

## Leading architectural practice chooses Adobe® Acrobat® as communication and collaboration tool of choice

Mountford Pigott Partnership, established in 1921, today is a highly successful architectural practice specialising in retail, leisure, commercial, and residential design. The partnership believes the fundamental element of good design is vision and is founded on two principles: listen carefully and intuitively to clients; and deliver appropriate and innovative but practical solutions, both on time and on budget.

A Mountford Pigott partner personally oversees each job from concept to completion. This core commitment enables the firm to achieve consistently high-quality design and project delivery. The practice has clients across the United Kingdom, Europe, and Russia and counts a large number of leading brands and funds amongst its clients including Axa, Deutsche Bank, Pillar, Thames Water, Carillion Richardson, and Trinity College.

### Establishing best practices in communication and collaboration

One of the primary sectors in which Mountford Pigott works is retail. Recently the firm won a project to create an 11-acre, out-of-town shopping destination, called Prospect Place, in Dartford, Kent. The multiphase development was highly complex, involving major infrastructure and highways work, including making part of Dartford's one-way traffic system two way.

The challenge for Mountford Pigott IT was to create a best-practice method for communication and collaboration amongst stakeholders—including the client, planning officers, subcontractors, and prospective tenants—to ensure the project ran efficiently. The plans, elevations, and visualisations to be distributed originated from a variety of software applications such as AutoCAD and 3D Studio Max and needed to be delivered securely, whilst preserving the accuracy and presentation of the original. Unauthorised alterations were prohibited and all documents were strictly version controlled.

“We previously used various methods to distribute documents but this had not been satisfactory. Not all recipients have the same software applications or versions, making it difficult to share plans and move projects forward in a timely manner,” says David Clark-Bell, IT Manager for Mountford Pigott Partnership.

### Finding an industry standard

Mountford Pigott considered several solutions, including Oaysis, Columbus, Autodesk Volo View, Microsoft® One Note, and Adobe Acrobat Professional software. The firm found Adobe Acrobat to be the best option. The software significantly reduces file sizes, and the intuitiveness and versatility of Adobe Portable Document Format (PDF) are great for IT novices.

Clark-Bell believes that when changing a business process, if you can convert the people at the top, then it is easier for people at lower levels to change. “We started with a solution acceptable to the client, knowing that the contractors and subcontractors would follow. Acrobat provided an ideal solution for everyone,” he says. “Adobe PDF is the simplest and most effective method of safely delivering a document of any type to anyone. Drawings can be shared faster and at a fraction of the traditional printing, paper, and postage costs.”

### MOUNTFORD PIGOTT PARTNERSHIP

[www.mountfordpigott.com](http://www.mountfordpigott.com)



### INDUSTRY

Architecture

### CHALLENGES

- Share specialist document with a variety of stakeholders
- Create a best-practice method for communication and collaboration
- Improve project efficiency

### SOLUTION

- Collaboration
- Document Control and Security
- Document Generation

Mountford Pigott is leveraging Adobe Acrobat and Adobe PDF for efficient, reliable delivery and review of architectural drawings and all related project documents.

### RESULTS

- Saved thousands of pounds in lowered postage and consumable costs
- Improved project effectiveness
- Reduced project completion times
- Enhanced communication with clients
- Improved collaboration processes
- Enriched visualisation deliverables

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David Clark-Bell,  
IT Manager,  
Mountford Pigott Partnership

The IT team used Adobe Acrobat in combination with a secure extranet site named ePIN. This enabled all documentation to be stored in a secure, password-protected place as Adobe PDF files.

“Not all stakeholders had the specialised applications the architects use. Adobe Acrobat and Adobe PDF acted as a common denominator for everyone, enabling everyone to access the file, no matter how distant they were from the original design team. This also meant there were no excuses for not reviewing documents on time,” says Clark-Bell.

#### **Efficient, cost-effective communication with project stakeholders**

During the project, the team used Adobe Acrobat Professional extensively for collaboration with the client, contractors, and external consultants, achieving vast improvements in the efficiency of document distribution. As a result, Mountford Pigott Partnership reduced its postage costs substantially, making a real difference to the bottom line. Clark-Bell explains, “Previously, the practice spent a lot of money sending parcels. This has been reduced significantly, providing a speedier service to our clients. In addition, because the Adobe PDF files sizes are small, we don’t have to burn CDs—the files can be transmitted electronically in seconds.”

The practice has also saved money on consumables. Reducing the amount of ink and paper used may seem like a minor benefit. However, when printing large colour documents, this is a considerable expense. For Mountford Pigott, using Acrobat and Adobe PDF has greatly reduced their cost of sale.

According to Clark-Bell, “The speed with which Adobe PDF files can be prepared and distributed, coupled with the savings on postage and consumables, more than compensate for the time spent training staff on new ways of working.”

#### **Creating a company-wide standard**

The Prospect Place project was the first time the practice set a standard format for use by all project members. Today, Adobe PDF is the default file format for 90 percent of client-facing documents and Adobe Acrobat Professional is used daily throughout the practice. The firm’s portfolio of work, originally a 256MB file, is now a diminutive 6.2MB thanks to Adobe Acrobat Professional. The portfolio can be instantaneously distributed to prospective clients via e-mail and easily updated.

#### **Improving visual deliverables**

As Mountford Pigott projects progress across the United Kingdom, Europe, and Russia, Adobe Acrobat has made it easy to deliver visually rich content, bridging the gap between technical drafting and client proposals. The team also has significantly enhanced deliverables with Adobe Creative Suite, regularly using Photoshop CS to create documents that can be authored and then delivered electronically in Adobe PDF or sent for professional printing.

#### **Making legal obligations simple**

Adobe PDF is also used as the archive format across the firm. Architects are contractually obligated to keep project documentation for up to 12 years following Practical Completion. In the event of a dispute, material must be readily retrievable and certifiable as true. Adobe PDF files are backwards compatible, meaning that files created from legacy applications can be opened without the original application. Adobe PDF files take up significantly less storage space, and the security features guarantee a document’s fidelity to the original years later.

As a matter of policy, new employees now receive Adobe Acrobat training when they join, and the firm also has a number of Acrobat champions. Most employees have at least five or six specialist applications that they use regularly such as AutoCAD, Revit, 3D Studio Max, Adobe Creative Suite, and Microsoft Office 2003. There are a significant number of open workstations where staff can then manipulate the files and create Adobe PDF files to accommodate the wide variety of file formats.



## SYSTEMS AT A GLANCE

- Adobe Acrobat Professional 6.0 and 7.0
- Adobe Creative Suite Premium
- Platform: Windows XP Professional
- Database: Goldmine
- Core Applications: AutoCAD, Revit, 3D Studio Max, Microsoft Office 2003



Prospect Place, Dartford

Illustrative Image 1 

“Today visualisation is key, and 3D is certainly the way forward,” says David Clark-Bell. “I was really impressed with the 3D capability in Acrobat 7.0. There is a lot more information in 3D content, so it is vital to have an accessible container. The fact that this practice has been enriched with Adobe Acrobat 7.0 is fantastic. Everyone can see and share content-rich information without expensive specialised software.”

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95005210 05/05

