

Social Value Report 2023



Howells

At Howells we have a history of philanthropic activity with over 30 years of sponsorship, charitable giving, volunteering, and in-kind support.



This year we have continued to develop our partnerships with charities and not-for-profit organisations including the Architects' Benevolent Society, LandAid, and Smart Works, who were our nominated Charity of the Year 2024.

£32k

Raised for charities from Howells organised events

£17.5k

Charitable donations made by Howells



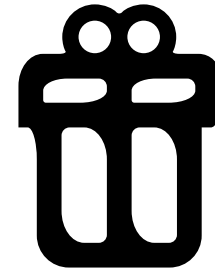
1,116 hours spent inspiring **400** young people about careers in architecture and design



Giving **744** hours to helping charities



We work extensively with local charities, schools and higher education organisations in Birmingham to deliver measurable social value on the ground. Our active Social Value group meets monthly to discuss future activity and they have organised several hugely successful events this year. We have also introduced a volunteering policy which allows all staff to donate one day of their time to charitable endeavours.



Sponsorship of **six CLEAN Awards** with **£1,550** prize money



Two apprentices employed from Birmingham City University



Sponsored **7 Part III** and **8 Part II** students during their studies

Inspiring young people

Inspiring young people to work in architecture and design is one of the most important things we can do as a practice.



Summer School

In July we hosted our annual one-week Summer School in our Birmingham studio, to demonstrate what a creative, fulfilling, and exciting career choice architecture can be. We receive applications via our website, and the event is open to any secondary school students aged 14–18 years old, who are just beginning to think about their future career choices.

This year we set the students a brief to design a gateway building into the new Smithfield Birmingham site. Both Lendlease and Birmingham City Council also joined the school to act as clients and they led the initial briefing and final 'design review' sessions. During their week the students were coached by our own architects and went on a site visit to Smithfield, attended masterclasses on architectural drawing and interior design, received a talk on careers in architecture and design, before then developing their sketch designs and making their own models with our in-house modelmaking team.



“Presentation skills are something I’ve definitely gained from the week. Normally I do make things and create things but then I don’t really get the opportunity to explain what I’ve made, instead of just showing what I’ve made, I’ve been able to explain my thinking.”



London Festival of Architecture

Since 2017, Howells has participated in the LFA with architectural tours and by opening up our London Studio to the general public who are treated to exhibits on our work and are able to chat to our architects or get careers advice. In 2023, we invited visitors to our studio to explore how the narrative behind our projects could shift and how “in common” is embedded in the approaches and attitudes shared by our multidisciplinary designers and our projects – now and in the future. Alongside, we also ran architectural tours of some of our projects including Wardian London and Royal Wharf.



“The week has been a really good experience. There aren’t many architectural experiences in Birmingham. I’ve done engineering before but not specifically architecture so that’s been really rewarding for me.”



Apprenticeships and sponsorships

Investing in early careers programmes and developing 'grassroots' talent is a big driver for us. We are continually growing our apprenticeship opportunities because we believe this is a great way to support the personal development and growth of diverse local talent.

We have worked with Birmingham City University on the launch of their Architectural Apprenticeship Level 7 course and have successfully joined this new programme with the employment of two Part I Architectural Assistants for 48 months plus 6 months evaluation.

The apprenticeships have enabled these employees to undertake their course with Howells paying for their tuition, and they are paid the amount set by the Living Wage Foundation whilst they are in full time employment. The first apprentice is now in their 3rd year and has become a true asset to the studio as the skills developed from 'on the job' experience coupled with active study, have proved a winning combination.

During the year we also sponsored seven Part III and eight Part II students during their studies and presented six Student Awards with £1,550 prize money at UK Universities.

Howells employs over 40 architecture/architectural technology students on their year / years in practice as part of their route towards qualification and offers short work experience placements to students both as a formal part of their studies or during their vacation period. We committed to employing staff who are returning to work for short- term contracts over the summer period. These include staff who are in education from across the UK who are seeking short-term paid internships.



Work experience, school and university visits

Our own building in Digbeth, Birmingham, and an office in Fitzrova, London, and so we have hosted visits from schools and universities for events, workshops and networking.

- Birmingham City University
- Birmingham Metropolitan University
- Westminster University, London
- University College Birmingham
- University of Nottingham
- University of Sheffield
- Bartlett School of Architecture (UCL)
- Westminster University
- Manchester Met University
- WMG Academy Trust, Birmingham
- Cardinal Weissman Catholic School
- Edgware Primary School, London
- King Edwards School, Birmingham
- Solihull Sixth Form College
- King Edwards Vi Camphill School, Birmingham
- WMG Academy Coventry





RIBA Young Person Design Group

We hosted the launch of the RIBA Birmingham Young Person Design Group with a Youth Design Day for students from local secondary schools. This was a high energy day, filled with fun activities that aligned with Birmingham City Council's objective to get local children more involved with the regeneration of their city. This was a great success with accessible fun activities such as tower making with spaghetti and marshmallows, hot air balloon games and interactive quizzes, all of which related to the future of Birmingham.

I Can Be

I Can Be is a registered charity that introduces primary school-aged children to the world of work, helping them to discover the breadth of opportunity around them, breaking down the barriers to work, connecting them with inspiring professionals and learning about their jobs. The programme gives 7-8-year-old girls the opportunity to meet a wide range of professional women through online virtual visits.

Three colleagues at Howells took part in an I Can Be 'virtual visit' with primary schools in Newham and Hammersmith & Fullham. During the virtual visits, the children asked questions they had prepared, found out about Howells and jobs in interior design, graphic design, and communications, and took part in an activity to gain further insight into their jobs.



Giving back



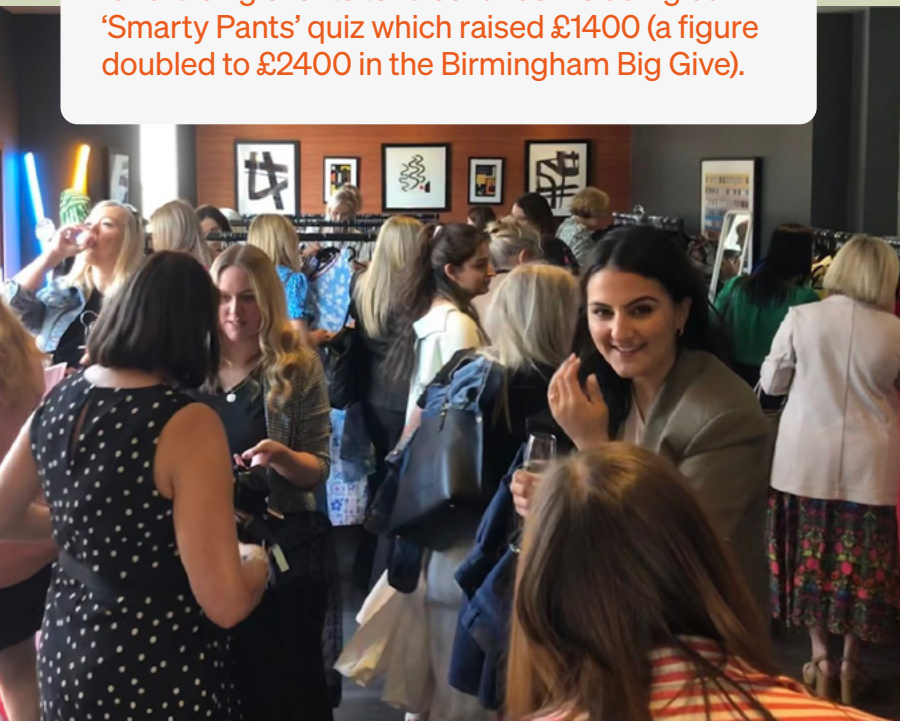
Smart Works

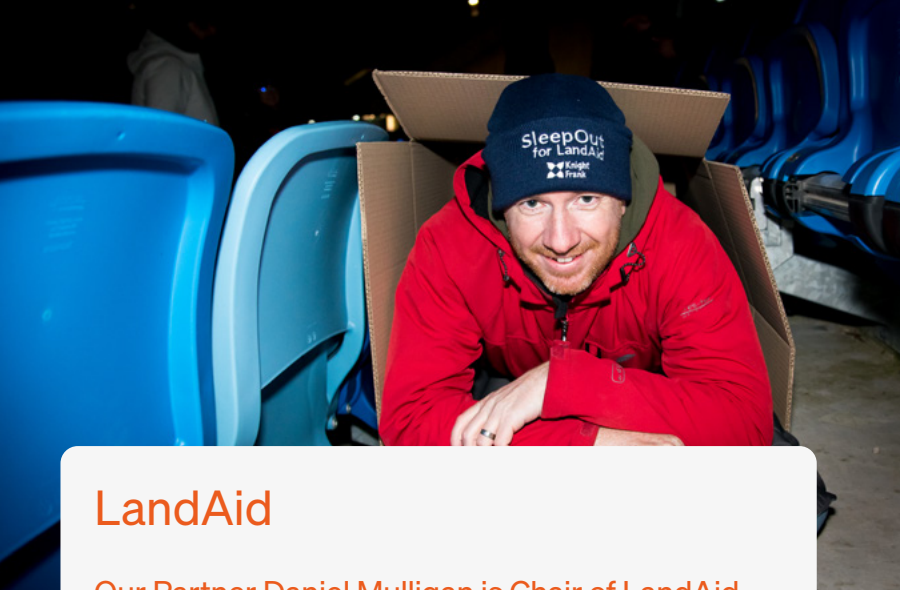
Smart Works are a UK Charity that gives women the confidence they need to reach their full potential, secure employment, and change the trajectory of their lives. The women are referred from Job Centres, mental health charities, women's refuges, homeless shelters, the prison service, care service and youth organisations and they help by giving women smart interview clothes, CVs and interview coaching. The aim is to unlock their potential and enable them to succeed at interview and in their new careers.

Smart Works Birmingham's branch is based in our offices, and we have organised several fundraising events to raise funds including our 'Smarty Pants' quiz which raised £1400 (a figure doubled to £2400 in the Birmingham Big Give).

“This year Smart Works Birmingham aims to empower 800 women from the West Midlands to succeed at interview and get the job and we are very grateful to Howells for choosing Smart Works Birmingham as their charity partner. The fundraising has been non-stop; they have organised cake bake sales, attended our fashion sale events and lunches, taken part in a sponsored running event and of course organised the fabulously named Smarty Pants Quiz. It is a joy doing anything with the team, they are passionate to support what we do and understand the impact it has.”

Lilly Clements, Fundraising and Partnerships Manager, SMART WORKS BIRMINGHAM





LandAid

Our Partner Daniel Mulligan is Chair of LandAid Midlands, which brings together property professionals to fundraise and offer pro bono support to local charities. As well as taking part in the annual fundraising SleepOut and organising a football tournament, Howells has been working pro bono with LandAid to refurbish buildings in nearby Sandwell for St Basils, creating 54 homes for young people and partnering with the NHS to provide training in healthcare.

Charities supported during 2023

- Smart Works
- Architects Benevolent Society
- LandAid
- St Basils
- University College London Hospitals Charity UK
- Acorns Children's Hospice
- Dementia UK
- DEC Appeal for Turkey and Syria Earthquake
- Royal Marsden Cancer Charity
- Support Dogs
- Alzheimer's Research UK
- The Brain Tumour Charity
- Myton Hospice in Warwick
- Birmingham Children's Hospital
- Macmillan Cancer Support
- Motor Neurone Disease Association
- Cancer Research
- Brain Tumour Trust
- B:Music
- City Heart
- Children's Cancer and Leukaemia Group
- Angelman charity





Voluntary memberships

- HS2 Independent Design Panel
- Tower Hamlets Design Review Panel
- Bromley Design Review Panel
- Islington Design Review Panel
- NLA Tall Buildings Panel
- Birmingham Hippodrome
- B:Music
- LandAid
- BAA Committee
- Open City
- Architects Benevolent Society
- BCO WM NextGen
- Ikon Gallery
- Variety Club
- RIBA 2030 Climate Challenge
- SME Climate Hub
- LETI London
- Architects Declare
- ACAN
- Good Homes Alliance
- UK Net Zero Carbon Building Standard
- Design:Midlands



↑ Glenn Howells, Chair of Board, Birmingham Hippodrome



↑ Dan Mulligan, Chair of Board, LandAid



↑ Rob King, Variety Club Board Member



↑ Francesca Ghavami, WM Committee member, BCO WM NextGen



↑ Dazhong Jin, Ambassador, BAA Committee



↑ Dav Bansal, HS2 Independent Design Panel, Bromley Design Review Panel, Board Member of B:Music, Trustee / Vice-Chair of Open City



↑ Reinhold Schmaderer, NLA Tall Buildings Panel



↑ Sandeep Shambi, Board Member, Ikon Gallery

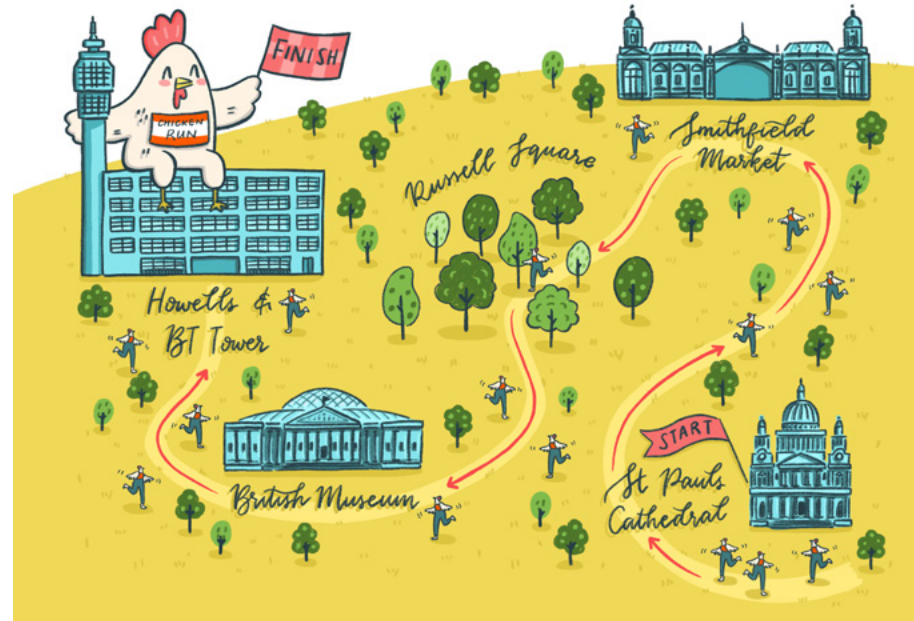


↑ David Henderson, Islington Design Review Panel



↑ Jamie Parish, Ambassador, Architects Benevolent Society

Health and wellbeing



Looking after ourselves

This year we organised events around Mental Health Awareness Day & Week, Gratitude Day and Cycle to Work Day, with bake sales, free breakfasts and cycle workshops and office wide lunches. These days give us an opportunity to raise awareness of mental health and driving positive change for everyone and give colleagues a chance to get away from their desk and discuss ideas for positive change in the business. We also offer free weekly Hatha yoga, a monthly art club and seasonal softball and football activities.

Volunteering

Volunteering allows us to build long-term partnerships with charities, through making regular connections and providing ongoing support. It's also an excellent way to support our clients' initiatives and strengthen our relationship with the local community. For individuals it's about giving their time and skills, for the benefit of others, and very importantly themselves. This year we introduced a volunteering policy for all staff and our team has been volunteering at Birmingham Hippodrome, Smart Works and Feedo Needo.



29 all-staff CPD & training sessions offered to all staff

Company memberships

- National Living Wage Employer
- NLA Diverse Leaders Pledge signatory
- Future of London Diversity Pledge signatory
- Architects Benevolent Society, Keystone-level corporate supporter
- ISO 9001 accreditation
- ISO 14001 accreditation
- Constructionline Silver Membership
- Cyber Essentials Plus accreditation

100%

Success rate for Part II and III candidates



8 in-house **Howells Academy** sessions

70%

of employees live **within 10 miles** of their office-base

Howells

.uk