

DENCORA HOUSE

The firm is pleased to announce that it has acquired major new premises which will give it a striking double presence on one of the city's most significant commercial streets. The new office will provide 4000 sq ft of ground and first floor office space within Dencora House, on Theatre Street.

The new premises, which have been purchased from the adjacent Theatre Royal, are a stone's throw from Hatch Brenner's existing Theatre Street head office near Chapelfield and the Assembly House. The refurbishment of Dencora House was successfully completed in December 2006, and Hatch Brenner will now operate from the two Theatre Street sites after giving up the lease it held on offices at Regency House, on Duke Street. Alan Dobbins, managing partner of Hatch Brenner – which has nine partners and around 60 staff – said the acquisition of Dencora House stemmed from the right premises becoming available at the right time. "We are delighted to have acquired such a significant part of Dencora House, and we believe this move will raise the profile of the firm by giving us a promi-

nent position in one of the major locations in the centre of Norwich," said Mr Dobbins. "In practical terms its proximity to our existing Theatre Street offices just a couple of hundred yards away will be extremely convenient. The firm will now occupy a dominant position with offices standing almost like bookends at either end of Theatre Street, which has become one of the most significant commercial areas in the city centre as a result of developments such as The Forum and Chapelfield."

Mr Dobbins said the move also underlined Hatch Brenner's determination to set the very highest standards in legal service provision. "We live in a competitive age in which standards constantly need to be improved, and we are determined to stand in the vanguard of delivering improved legal services to the people of Norwich and Norfolk," said Mr Dobbins. "I feel that the legal profession has in many ways been a little too comfortable for a little too long. To be successful a firm has to look at the quality of the service it gives, not just in terms of personal service, but also in terms of the location and surroundings



in which that service is provided.

"We always aim to provide our clients with an impeccable service. The acquisition of Dencora House will enable us to ensure that in future our clients at both offices also enjoy facilities of the highest standards of comfort and convenience."

The office space taken over by Hatch Brenner became available when it was deemed surplus to the requirements of the Theatre Royal's £10million refurbishment plans. The Theatre Royal will continue to occupy ground and first-floor space to the left of the central foyer at Dencora House, with Hatch Brenner occupying space to the right of the foyer, overlook-

ing Chapelfield Gardens.

"We were pleased to be approached by Savills on behalf of the Theatre Royal, and both sides were very satisfied with the outcome," said Mr Dobbins. "We got the office space we wanted, and the Theatre Royal received cash to put towards its own project."

The refurbishment of Dencora House will include internal glass features designed to enhance the building's natural sense of airiness and light. The offices are currently home to the Employment and Commercial department. 4 Theatre Street remains the traditional base for the Personal Injury and Civil Litigation.

Referral Fee Crackdown

It is no secret that since the lifting of the ban on the payment of referral fees there has been what is described by some as an auction for personal injury claims.

Essentially many insurers receive payment for the referral of personal injury claims to their panel solicitors. This is a process which has been essentially legalised since the lifting of the referral fee ban but it is not without its problems. The ban was lifted subject to strict regulation to ensure that the client's interests were not compromised; however, there is evidence to suggest that the system is just not working. The system has come under fire

from the Solicitors Regulation Authority (SRA), the new regulator of the profession in England and Wales, which has decided to introduce what it describes as a "tough enforcement of the rules on referral arrangements".

Anthony Townsend, chief executive at the SRA, said: "Clients are aware that referrals have been made but what they do not understand is that money has changed hands as a result. Our process will be about empowering the consumer and stamping out abuse.

"The situation does not just impact upon the general insurance business but has also stretched into other sectors, such as

conveyancing, where money has changed hands between solicitors and estate agents for referrals."

The SRA will roll out compliance reviews in May and November this year, and if it does not see significant improvement in the situation, it will consider a ban.

It is not only solicitors who should be criticised. There is currently little regulation of insurers who are involved in this practice and it is arguable that the Financial Services Authority should take an equally tough line.

Hatch Brenner welcomes the reintroduction on a complete ban on this

practice. It potentially compromises the solicitor/client relationship and can lead to a situation where insurers refuse to permit an individual the freedom to choose their own legal representative. Hatch Brenner are members of Accident Line, the only Law Society Approved no win—no fee funding scheme currently operating in England and Wales. As a matter of principle Hatch Brenner does not pay referral fees.



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About Hatch Brenner

HATCH BRENNER was formed in 1992 by the amalgamation of Hatch & Hatch and a large part of Crotch Brenner & Dunkley.

Both firms have been providing legal services to the people of Norwich and Norfolk for over one hundred years.

Hatch Brenner aims to provide a full legal service to the highest standards of professional expertise and integrity for family and commercial clients. Personal service is of crucial importance.

The firm now comprises a team of 20 solicitors and 11 legal assistants trained in all aspects of the law.

THE COST of seeking legal advice may often seem daunting. At the start of every transaction, we will discuss with clients the likely cost as well as the method and time of payment to ensure that you are clear about this before we undertake any work.

Legal Aid is available for many types of work for clients who fall within the guidelines laid down by the Legal Services Commission. Where appropriate we will discuss this with you and help with the completion of the application form.

Our People

Employment Law

Whether acting for a large international firm or a local sole trader, you can be assured that we offer unrivalled expertise and comprehensive services. From simple contractual advice to TUPE guidance and from preliminary contentious action to representation before the Employment Appeal Tribunal, we are proud to say that we can be there to address all your Employment needs. All the lawyers in the team are specialists in their field and full members of the Employment Lawyers Association.

Richard Cassel



Head of Employment Department. Richard specialises in all aspects of employment and discrimination law and has wide experience of advocacy and Tribunal practice and procedure. Part-Time Chairman of the Employment Tribunals since 1993.

Direct Line: 01603 214205

Sally Davenport

Sally previously worked as a commercial litigation specialist with City firm Theodore Goddard before moving abroad with her family. Sally is fluent in Spanish, German and French. Since returning to the UK she has completed an LLM in Employment law, with distinction, at the University of East Anglia. She is also a Fellow of the Chartered Institute of Arbitrators and is an adviser at a local Citizens Advice Bureau.

Direct Line: 01603 214205

Jo Chimes

Jo joined Hatch Brenner in June 2002, having been admitted as a solicitor in 1989. She is highly active within the profession as a member of the Employment Law

Association, and a contributing member of the employment team of the Adviser editorial board. Jo also works as a freelance trainer – designing and delivering specialist employment training. She sits on the Law Society employment law committee. Her current practice focuses on complex discrimination matters in employment. Jo has extensive peer review experience, most recently for the Carter Review.

Direct Line: 01603 214205



Takis Vachaviolos

Takis joined Hatch Brenner in April 2003, and has specialised in employment law since he was admitted as a solicitor in 2001. Takis has acted for both claimants and respondents in the employment tribunals and the employment appeals tribunal in London, and has received instructions from unions and national charities. He has achieved a very high success rate when carrying out his own representation before the employment tribunals. He writes articles for various publications and magazines.

Direct Line: 01603 214205

Civil Litigation and Personal Injury

We have a well established Civil Litigation department at Hatch Brenner which is headed by Rosemary Escott, partner. For Personal Injury cases can offer a free initial consultation when we can advise on a range of funding options (including no win — no fee) ensuring each individual client's circumstances are taken into account. We also have specialist legal advisers dedicated to providing an efficient and comprehensive service covering a wide range of commercial disputes including arbitration/mediation/ADR, County and High Court litigation.

Rosemary Escott



Head of Civil Litigation Department. Rosemary is a Personal Injury specialist in fatal and serious injury claims, arising out of road traffic accidents, accidents at work, clinical negligence and sexual abuse. Member of the Law Society's Specialist Personal Injury Panel since 1995.

Direct Line: 01603 674539

Mark Fitch



Experienced in a wide range of disputes; enjoys particularly professional negligence claims, contested probate matters and claims against the police. He qualified as a mediator in 2005 becoming one of the youngest members of the Mediators in East Anglia Group.

Direct Line: 01603 674552

Colin Cook

Colin was previously a partner at a firm in Chancery Lane in London where he dealt with a wide

range of personal injury claims for both Claimants and Defendants.



He deals with all aspects of personal injury including road traffic accidents, accidents at work, criminal injuries, trips and slips. He is an Accredited Senior Litigator of the Association of Personal Injury Lawyers.

Direct line: 01603 674544

John Cushing



John is well-placed to assess landlord and tenant claims from both perspectives, having acted for either side in a vast number of possession actions, rent collection matters and damages claims. He also deals with other property-related matters including boundary and neighbour disputes, building disputes, and professional negligence claims. He is highly experienced in debt collection, and regularly appears before the district judges in the local county courts.

Direct Line: 01603 674525