

Reference No: OH334

Interviewee: Stuart Wood

Surname: Wood

Given name: Stuart

Date of Birth: 06 March 1977

Length of recording: 00:41:12

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Track 1 of 1 [00.41.12]

Stuart Wood (SW) was born on the 6th of March 1977 in Worcestershire. He describes how his early career ambitions were influenced by his parent's professions. SW mentions his early career in unique furniture designs and how this progressed to a role within Heatherwick studio, as a Junior Designer. He describes career progression within the studio and the various projects he has worked on and the experience he gained. SW explains how this led to more responsibilities and to directing a team on multiple projects. [00:04:49] SW explains the work that Heatherwick Studio does and the projects, including architectural and infrastructure projects, furniture and products. [00:06:14] SW explains what the New Routemaster design project entailed and the intention for it to be contemporary while simultaneously remain an iconic London design. He explains the design process beginning with researching previous successes including materials. He discusses the design brief and working with Wrightbus. He explains the technical considerations that were made to ensure that the design was holistic in meeting the needs of passengers. He mentions that the team began with the exterior and the idea of seeing views of the city. He discusses the shaping of the bus. [00:13:38] SW discusses the interior design of the New Routemaster. He explains the coordination of designing for passenger comfort and the underlying technical components. [00:14:50] SW describes the design ideas behind the interior surface colours. He then goes into detail about the rear staircase design and creating a unified design throughout the entire bus including its shaping. [00:17:48] SW describes one of his favourite design moments, designing the bell push. [00:18:48] SW describes designing the seating and looking back at past designs to see what had been taken away. He mentions the bench seat and bucket seats. He describes the interior environment of contemporary buses as becoming fractured in their approach for ergonomic comfort and states that the New Routemaster was an attempt to combine ergonomics with social engagement. [00:22:07] SW explains design ideas of the moquette and making it specific to the seating. He describes taking the shaping of the seating as a topographical survey which created patterns and combining them with a black and deep burgundy checkerboard; fusing the past with the contemporary.

SW explains that the design had to be able to disguise dirt. [00:25:04] SW explains that this design is unique because it required one giant pattern for the seat and the seat back. It allowed the pattern to coordinate with the seat shape. [00:26:25] SW describes how many designs were made and explains how the team went through different iterations of patterns, thickness of lines and colour palette. He explains that the surface colours had to work in harmony. He then explains that the colour palette followed on from the traditional colours used in the original Routemaster. [00:29:20] SW then goes on to discuss the lighting describing it as more akin to domestic lighting. [00:30:14] SW describes unique features including three doors and two staircases and a number of seating formations, forward facing and rear facing – communal areas over wheel arches. Aiming to facilitate the needs of London and be energy efficient. [00:32:56] SW describes the energy efficient engine system. [00:34:00] SW explains his role as a Group Leader, leading teams and multiple projects from a design strategy and delivery point of view. He also explains his role on the New Routemaster project. [00:34:50] SW explains how long the project took and how it began with research of archives and research visits. He explains that there was a team of around five people testing prototypes. He explains the buses were produced in Northern Ireland with Wrightbus. [00:36:20] SW describes the challenges of the project including technical performance of the bus, ergonomics, and dimensions and ensuring that the bus was compliant with regulations. [00:37:30] SW says that the biggest achievement was arriving at a totally holistic design. He also discusses particular elements such as the bench seats and the selection of materials. [00:40:58] SW explains that his favourite project to work on whilst working for Heatherwick Studio was design the New Routemaster bus.

End of track [00:41:12]

Please note: this is a summary of the edited web version rather than the full original recordings.

