

# Project Profile



## Architecture

AutoCAD • Training • Technical Support • Consultancy

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## Building a Successful CAD Infrastructure

### The Requirement

Leading UK housebuilder Bellway Homes sought to standardise and update their entire CAD infrastructure to facilitate their regional offices carrying out a higher level of CAD work in-house.

### The Solution

Excitech worked with Bellway's preferred IT partner, Perfect Image, to provide a standard IT specification including the roll-out of AutoCAD 2007 to each division. Whilst PI rolled out the IT, Excitech provided bespoke training to each division and ongoing technical support.

### The Result

Various offices have reported significant productivity gains but the main benefit so far has been resolving AutoCAD compatibility issues with project partners. Having standardised their entire CAD infrastructure Bellways invested in a three year software subscriptions to ensure that these issues are kept to a minimum and that their CAD investment continues to reap productivity benefits.

The Bellway Group (incorporating Bellway Homes) has provided more than 100,000 homes since it was formed in 1946 and is one of the top four house builders in the country with operations spanning the United Kingdom. The company builds in excess of 7,000 new homes each year; all homes being designed, built and marketed by local divisions operating from regional offices.

Assisting the Bellway Group with their IT is their managed IT partner Perfect Image (PI) which is a full service IT solutions provider based in Newcastle upon Tyne. For the past fifteen years, Perfect Image has been overseeing the IT solutions, network services and systems for the Bellway Group. As the Bellway Group has no internal IT resource, PI

provides assistance with the delivery of Bellway's IT strategy, bespoke software installation and customisation.

Traditionally the Bellway Group outsourced some of its architectural design work to third parties; however, this started to change about ten years ago when the company implemented Bentley MicroStation software. Over the past few years, Bellway Homes recognised that the vast majority of CAD drawing files in the construction industry were Autodesk DWG format. Consequently the Bellway Group made a decision to migrate to an Autodesk AutoCAD environment. Within a short time period, the Bellway Group upgraded all of its AutoCAD software and migrated their remaining MicroStation licences to AutoCAD 2007 on a three-year subscription contract, the benefits of which are clear both financially and practically.

As each division of the group is autonomous, has its own structure and to some extent decision on purchasing, the group identified that there was a complete mix of AutoCAD licences across the entire organisation. Bellway also had a range of workstations differing in age and specification. Realising the potential further benefits CAD could bring to them, Bellway Group contacted Perfect Image to discuss upgrading their entire CAD infrastructure and standardising this across the entire organisation. Perfect Image sought Excitech's expertise when discussing Bellway's CAD requirements.

Having discussed the requirement with Excitech, Perfect Image were then able to agree on a course of action which meant implementing upgrades of all versions of AutoCAD to AutoCAD 2007 and rolling out a standard workstation to the entire organisation.

Starting the project was extremely difficult because each division had so much autonomy there was no standardisation. It meant liaising with each division



to correlate what hardware and software was in use plus what, if any, technical support was in place. Once completed the ideal workstation was sourced and a significant number of AutoCAD upgrades (to AutoCAD 2007) were ordered from Excitech with three-year subscriptions, a technical support contract and update training.

To complement the new system, Bellway purchased one day of training per division to use as and when required. Because some of the divisions were using more recent versions of AutoCAD and some were making significant jumps or even in one case moving from Bentley MicroStation, the decision regarding when to take the training was left with each division. The content of the training was again left with the divisions and Excitech were able to tailor this to suit the needs of the individuals.

The productivity gains have been dramatic and Bellway Homes is looking to further its CAD infrastructure with potential to implement Autodesk Revit technology in the future.

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