

# Robert Cronk

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## Profile

Robert is a Chartered Surveyor specialising in town planning and development management and general real estate consultancy, with extensive experience of initiation and implementation of a wide range of property projects with both private and public sector partners and of development and project management for landowning and occupier clients. He has expertise in: Town Planning and general property consultancy on a range of projects including the rail sector; providing Corporate Real Estate consultancy on a range of property issues in UK, EU and internationally; managing out of town retail developments, redevelopments and refurbishments from site identification and acquisition through development to occupation and sale, both as direct developments and acting as development manager for external clients.



Robert's experience and pragmatism enables him to deliver results for clients was part of their wider development plans. Recent clients include Chiltern Railway Company Ltd, SBM Corporate Real Estate, Gift Universe Group, and Warwickshire County Council.

Robert is currently managing the town planning process for the developments at Kenilworth Station and Coventry Station, as well as planning and property aspects of the NuCKle projects.

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## Qualifications and Membership

BSc (HONS) Land Management (Development specialisation), University of Reading 1985

MRICS - Member of Royal Institution of Chartered Surveyors (Planning & Development, Valuation, Commercial & Project Management Divisions)

## Achievements and experience

### **Planning & Property Specialist, SLC Property January 2017 onwards**

Robert provides town planning consultancy and general property support on SLC Property projects, including:-

- Kenilworth Station – a redevelopment of a builder’s yard to re-establish a station closed in 1965. Outline consent was obtained for the development and a reserved matters application has since been approved. The project remains live as detailed design progresses.
- Coventry Station Masterplan – a major rearrangement of the station access, car park and associated facilities, alongside a separate major redevelopment of this part of Coventry. This project has a flow of town planning issues to resolve to keep each phase of the project on track.

### **Planning & Property Specialist, SLC Rail 2013 to 2015**

Robert provided town planning consultancy and general property support to SLC Rail project, including:-

- NuCKle – Two new stations at Bermuda Park and Coventry Arena, with complex land and town planning issues resolved to enable the stations to open and be handed over to Network Rail and their station facility owner.

### **Chiltern Railway Company Ltd**

#### **Various Projects**

#### **2007 to present**

Robert provides town planning consultancy to Chiltern Railways and has managed the town planning process for a wide range of projects which include:-

- High Wycombe Station – 4 level multi storey car park providing 718 car spaces, Certificate of Lawfulness obtained.
- High Wycombe Station – Full Planning, Listed Building Consent and Conservation Area Consent applications, for construction of a new transport interchange with new access and egress onto the highway, together with partial demolition and refurbishment of the balance of the Listed former Goods Shed (original Brunel terminus station building) to provide Class A1, A3 and B1 units, together with creation of new public spaces, landscaping and pedestrian and cycle facilities. All Consents obtained and conditions discharged. This project was the fulfilment of discussions and previous failed applications for this site over the previous twenty years, and succeeded on this occasion largely due to establishing a close working relationship with both Wycombe District Council and Buckinghamshire County Council, with regular monthly meetings.
- Gerrards Cross Station – Management of an application initiated by Tesco to Buckinghamshire County Council in respect to retention of temporary rail sidings (consented to assist construction of an adjacent new Tesco store), extension of the station car park, and associated improvements; Full Consent obtained.
- Solihull Station – Full planning application prepared and submitted to Solihull MBC, who are also the landlord of 60% of the application site (with Centro also having interests), for the

construction of one level of parking over the existing station car park to approximately double the total parking capacity to 457 cars; the proposals were worked up closely alongside Centro and SMBC who were both significant stakeholders on the site, and with whom we held regular monthly meetings during the project initiation through to the project completion. Full Consent obtained and conditions discharged.

- Warwick Parkway Station. Three planning applications over four years for temporary car parks to be formed on adjacent Green Belt agricultural land to address capacity issues, including one application to convert an area of temporary consented car parking to permanent use; consents obtained in each case. In addition, an application was made for a Certificate of Lawfulness for the construction of two upper levels of parking on the main station car park, adding 291 new car spaces. Certificate of Lawfulness obtained.
- Banbury Station. Planning applications for the temporary use of industrial buildings for station car parking, for the creation of station car parking on an adjacent open site, and for the construction of a four level multi storey car park and associated link bridge on land opposite the station across the operational railway. Consents obtained in each case.
- Banbury Light Maintenance Depot. Chiltern Railways and Network Rail together propose a new Light Maintenance Depot on non-allocated land to the South of Banbury. The planning application required an Environmental Impact Statement running to many volumes covering a wide range of environmental and other issues. Consent was obtained in early 2015. The project remains live as design detail is progressed with the phased construction of the site.
- Birmingham Moor Street Station and London Marylebone Station – a number of Listed Building Consent applications for various improvements at both Listed buildings, including new signage, new control room facilities above a platform, new flooring, aerials for hand held ticket reading equipment, new doors on a café unit, new information booth, etc. Consents obtained in each case.
- New Footbridges - as part of the line speed and safety improvements project, Robert managed the application process for the closure of level crossings, and replacement with new footbridges in sensitive locations within the Chilterns AONB, and associated footpath diversions.

## **Warwickshire County Council**

### **Various Projects**

#### **2013 to date**

Robert was retained by WCC to manage the planning application process and secure consents for various 'Regulation 3' infrastructure improvements including a new Access for All footbridge at Stratford on Avon Station, and new cycle paths in two locations in the County.

## **SBM Corporate Real Estate**

### **Various Projects**

#### **2009 to date**

Robert provides corporate occupier clients of SBMCRE with real estate consultancy on a wide range of issues, including lease renewal and renegotiation, property acquisition, property disposal, property strategy and redevelopment opportunities. Instructions range from various parts of the UK, through the EU and worldwide; recent instructions have included acquisition of new premises to replace several existing premises, where ongoing liabilities need to be limited, in locations as diverse as Durham, Coventry, Turin, Lisbon, Johannesburg and Mexico City. Other recent instructions include obtaining planning consent for a residential redevelopment of an industrial site in Lancashire, negotiating lease renewals where there is no security of tenure in locations in Belgium, Italy, Romania and Scotland, and managing the disposal of surplus property in India and Argentina.

**Gift Universe Ltd, trading as Menkind****Various Projects****2012 to date**

Robert provides project management consultancy to a UK national retailer, managing their store opening programme of over 30 units in the period between July and November, peaking at the rate of up to 4 store openings per week; this instruction requires a site visit to the proposed store, design of the layout and preparation of the specification of works required, instructing a contractor and the signage specialist contractor, liaising with the retailer's team to ensure the correct fittings are delivered on time, liaising with the landlord's team for the necessary consents, ensuring all works occur on time and without defects, ensuring all certification required is received and authorising the payments to each of the contractors and suppliers.

In addition Robert project manages the shopfitting of all permanent stores for Menkind, typically comprising 5 weeks on site from shell to opening; to date, 10 stores have been successfully delivered over two years.

**Senior Development Manager, John Laing Projects & Developments Ltd****July 2007 – October 2008**

Robert was a Senior Development Manager for a division of John Laing plc. JLPD was set up in 2006 to undertake infrastructure and development solutions to public authorities, through procurement methods other than by PFI, e.g. by establishment of URCs.

Core roles, projects and achievements:

- Robert's primary focus was to manage the negotiation and design development of major mixed use development proposals including £300m residential proposal over a rail depot and a £90m mixed use proposal at a main line railway station.
- Line management responsibilities.
- Property management.
- Advising on and/or bidding directly for property aspects of new business bids for projects ranging from railway station car parking proposals, to new railway depot facilities of up to 500,000 sq ft associated with a major rolling stock supply & maintain bid, conversion of a listed former mental hospital and other development on land surplus to proposed new mental hospital facilities. Projects throughout the UK.
- Consultancy role for Laing subsidiary Primary Plus in respect to site acquisition and financial feasibilities for new PCT development opportunities for the six LIFT Companies under their management.

**Associate Director, Redbourn Group Plc****1996 – 2007**

Robert was responsible for many of the company's own & joint venture/funding partner's retail warehouse, distribution warehouse, industrial, trade counter, town centre retail and office development and asset management projects, and also acted as project manager on behalf of occupier clients to negotiate and supervise the construction of both new and refurbished pre-let property.

Development projects include:

- A total of approx 800,000 sq ft non-food retail developed and let; total redevelopment of an occupied retail park of 100,000 sq ft, and asset management projects including extensive refurbishments of trading retail parks of up to 100,000 sq ft including re-gearing leases and relocating tenants.
- Assembling a town centre site for a 180,000 sq ft shopping centre, (including a CPO for part of the land assembly), managing the design team through to detailed planning consent and associated planning agreements, to tender stage, and managing all marketing, letting and legal aspects (including Agreement for Lease to anchor store), on behalf of a client.
- Two office development projects totalling approx 45,000 sq ft (prelet).
- A light industrial trade park project of 28,000 sq ft. (speculative)

Robert acted as the outsourced project management/occupier representative for a major UK retailer for over 10 years, personally managing the delivery of approximately 40 new and refurbished non-food retail stores totalling c.800,000 sq ft and 10 trade counter warehouses totalling c.80,000 sq ft. Robert managed a team of three other surveyors acting as client representatives and project managers for additional refurbished and/or new build retail and trade counter buildings, averaging 300,000 sq ft annually. Projects were undertaken in all parts of the UK.

#### **Position: Development Manager, now BAM Properties Ltd**

**1990 – 1996**

Robert was responsible for the full development process including sourcing development opportunities, site acquisition, design management, planning, project management, letting and funding of commercial developments primarily in Southern England and Midlands.

He was also responsible for development management of a portfolio which included joint ventures with public sector partners on major sites, as well as one off developments. Also responsible for the management of investment properties held by the group.

Core projects he managed:

- 100,000 sq ft retail park, acquired as a site with outline planning consent, and fully let following acquisition; forward sold on completion.
- Office developments totalling around 200,000 sq ft in Fulham, Southampton, Coventry and Uxbridge; Fulham included 55 houses and flats in addition.
- Secured a 60 acre strategic site for warehouse development and formed consortium with four adjacent commercial and residential developers to bring forward the entire 250 acre site adjacent to M1 junction 1.
- Masterplanning and promotion of two industrial/warehouse sites of 70 and 100 acres in the Black Country and Doncaster, including rail connected distribution warehouses, in partnership with Black Country Development Corporation and Doncaster Metropolitan Borough Council respectively.

#### **Graduate and Development Surveyor roles, Finlinson Group Ltd**

**1985 to 1990**

Robert was involved with residential, office and light industrial developments from site identification and acquisition, through design management and construction to completion, letting and sale, and assisting with the full planning process including several Appeals at Public Inquiry. He worked on joint venture developments with London & Edinburgh Trust & Scottish Metropolitan Property, initiated by Finlinson Group.