

Streets Ahead

Historic purchase is a sign of business confidence

Every exit is an entrance somewhere else, said Tom Stoppard. The theatrical reference seems appropriate for Strand Hardware Limited. Over the past 18 years they have made a name for themselves in door seals and emergency exit hardware. Now they have now purchased their own name on a historic enamelled-steel street sign which once adorned London's Theatreland district.

Joint Managing Director Catherine Franks explained:

"Way back when we started the company, we chose a logo that was based on the iconic London street signage. So it was a nice touch to find ourselves in a position to buy the original."

In July of this year, Westminster City Council put a select number of their street signs up for sale in the first ever auction of its kind. Strand Hardware's successful bid for the famous Strand sign meant that it was soon on its way to its new home in Strand House, close to Walsall town centre.

"How much we paid is a trade secret," says Catherine. "But rumours that we're now going to be working our way around the Monopoly board are unfounded. We got the one we wanted."



Behind the purchase, of course, lies a confident vision of the company's future. "With the economic slowdown, fewer companies are launching new products," says Strand's Sales Director Craig Fox, adding that he understands why others see the need to sacrifice long-term growth for short-term savings. "However, we are bucking the trend by substantially investing in the future of the business. We have just launched three new products to strengthen our range of panic hardware and window/door fittings and to offer our customers greater flexibility and choice. More innovative products are scheduled for launch later this year."

Set against such investment, the acquisition of a street sign may seem trivial, but it is a sign of optimism nonetheless. Strand's slogan is 'The best way out'. Could it be that they have found the best way out of the recession?