



Richard Parkins

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Summary

Highly accomplished Technical Director and Principal Architect with over 15 years of experience in designing, building, and leading engineering capabilities. Proven expertise in cloud-native architectures on Azure and AWS, AI-assisted workflows, and microservices development. Successfully led major digital transformation programmes, including establishing engineering standards and communities of practice. Adept at presenting technical strategy to senior governance forums and driving multi-million-pound contract wins. Committed to delivering secure, resilient, and scalable solutions.

Work Experience

Technical Director / Head of Engineering, Talent Consulting,

- Assembled and directed a permanent, multidisciplinary engineering capability encompassing engineering, architecture, DevOps, and QA.
- Served as Principal Architect for Department for Education programmes, providing hands-on leadership and assurance for architectural strategy.
- Engineered cloud-native platforms on Azure, encompassing identity, integration, data, and operational tooling.
- Instituted reference architectures, engineering standards, and communities of practice across multiple portfolios.
- Regularly presented technical strategy, delivery status, and risk assessments at Director-level and senior governance forums.
- Contributed to bids and technical propositions, securing multi-million-pound public sector contract wins.

AI Tooling, Talent Bid Manager,

- Designed and deployed AI-assisted bid workflows leveraging Azure OpenAI (GPT-4/4o) for draft content generation, response refinement, and structured scoring support.
- Implemented Azure AI Search with vector and hybrid retrieval capabilities to ground responses in approved bid content, thereby reducing hallucination risks.
- Constructed secure RAG (Retrieval-Augmented Generation) pipelines for the ingestion, chunking, embedding, and retrieval of data from historic bids, frameworks, and evidence libraries.
- Integrated Azure AI Document Intelligence to extract and standardise tender requirements from source documents, facilitating downstream automation.
- Utilised Azure Functions, Service Bus, and Logic Apps to orchestrate asynchronous AI workflows, ensuring auditability and resilience.

- Applied robust governance controls, including Key Vault, RBAC, and Application Insights, to support secure operations, prompt tracing, and performance monitoring.

Key Architecture Leadership – CPD & Family Hubs, Department for Education (DfE),

- Spearheaded the architectural vision for the Continuing Professional Development (CPD) and Family Hubs programmes within the Department for Education.
- Held architectural ownership for Azure-based, cloud-native services critical to delivering nationally significant outcomes for education professionals and vulnerable families.
- Defined target architectures for identity, access management, API-led integration, data flows, reporting, and operational tooling, ensuring alignment with GDS and DfE standards.
- Directed architectural decision-making across multiple delivery teams and external suppliers, focusing on service boundaries, data ownership, and integration patterns.
- Embedded security-by-design principles in close collaboration with cyber security and assurance teams, addressing IAM, network segmentation, secrets management, and audit readiness.
- Provided hands-on architectural oversight throughout the discovery, alpha, beta, and live phases, including conducting design reviews, maintaining ADRs (Architecture Decision Records), and assuring delivery.
- Engaged consistently with senior stakeholders to articulate architectural trade-offs, delivery risks, and considerations for long-term sustainability.

Applications Architect, Comparethemarket,

- Directed the architecture for the core Pricing Platform and partner risk services, handling high-volume consumer traffic.
- Orchestrated the decomposition of a large on-premises monolith into AWS-based microservices, employing API-led and event-driven architectural patterns.
- Introduced advanced resilience patterns, comprehensive observability, contract testing, and automated security scanning across the platform.
- Enhanced deployment frequency from monthly to daily, simultaneously reducing incidents and improving mean time to recovery.
- Mentored senior engineers and technical leads, and chaired technical forums to foster improved cross-team alignment and knowledge sharing.

Consultant dev - Seat Selection Services, EasyJet,

- Developed the customer-facing seat selection functionality, hosted on Microsoft Azure utilising an MVC and KnockoutJS architecture.
- Engineered an Azure Service Bus integration to facilitate real-time pluscard validation during bookings by a third-party provider via a REST API.
- Implemented a PHP client to interface with the Windows Azure Service Bus for the third-party integration.
- Supported the implementation of secure, resilient asynchronous processing patterns and provided operational troubleshooting for the integration.

Consultant dev - Digital Retail Platform, Tesco Entertainment,

- Enhanced www.tescoentertainment.com and its supporting services within an Agile (SCRUM) delivery framework.
- Developed a conceptual Android application (Java) for purchasing and downloading MP3 tracks within defined time and budget constraints, alongside ongoing .NET development.

- Maintained and expanded features for the Endeca search service, which powered the core entertainment experience.
- Delivered the 'was/now/save' price comparison functionality across approximately 400,000 products, managing the end-to-end release process.

Director, TouchScreenData Ltd,

- Managed a small company specialising in dotnet and PHP services.
- Secured a contract to provide an online platform for the antiques market.
- Developed a greenfield antiques platform using dotnet, hosted on Fasthosts.
- Undertook LAMP development for various small-scale projects serving the charity and retail sectors, including clients such as Coca-Cola and The Children's Trust.

Education

BEng (Hons), Electrical & Electronic Engineering, Loughborough University,

- Achieved First Class Honours.

Skills

C# .NET (Core / Framework) Java JavaScript / TypeScript Node.js

Python (automation, scripting) SQL Server (design, optimisation, HA/DR)

PostgreSQL MongoDB Cosmos DB Redis

Azure: App Services, Functions, AKS, Storage, Service Bus, Event Grid, Azure SQL, Key Vault

AWS: EC2, ECS, Lambda, RDS, DynamoDB, S3, CloudWatch, API Gateway

Azure OpenAI (GPT-4/4o) Azure AI Search with vector search and hybrid retrieval

RAG pipelines chunking/embedding strategies prompt orchestration

document intelligence and ingestion using Azure AI Document Intelligence/Form Recognizer

Event Grid/Service Bus triggers Functions/Logic Apps

secure storage patterns with Key Vault and RBAC REST & OpenAPI-driven APIs

Event-driven architecture (CQRS, Service Bus, SNS/SQS, EventBridge, RabbitMQ, TibCo)

Microservices & modular monolith decomposition DDD

Consumer-driven contract testing CI/CD: GitHub Actions, Azure DevOps, TeamCity

IaC: ARM, Bicep, Terraform Containerisation: Docker, Kubernetes

Feature flags & progressive delivery IAM, RBAC, PIM, secrets management

OWASP Top 10 WAF configuration Threat modelling

Public sector audit & compliance

Application Insights

Azure Monitor / Log Analytics

CloudWatch

Centralised logging & alerting

Incident management & PIRs