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The Practice

National award-winning practice Robert Dye Architects is based in NW London, and has more than 30 years experience in the design and management of domestic/residential architecture. Architectural project experience ranges from new-build houses, careful restoration and conversion of existing buildings for residential and commercial use, to international museum and university buildings.

Following RIBA regional success in London, the practice received the profession's highest award for residential architecture in 2005, winning the RIBA Manser Medal for a sustainable modern house in a sensitive conservation area context in Southwark.

The practice has a burgeoning reputation for delivered projects that have sustainability at their core, and has well-established contacts with structural and environmental engineers, quantity surveyors, and landscape/arboricultural consultants who are sympathetic to the studio's particular approach within new and existing contexts.

Typically the studio manages projects from inception through all stages to completion; it has extensive experience of preparing construction documentation and administering building contracts on site, from one-off residential to large-scale public works. The practice is particularly experienced in London's complex urban and suburban context, whether building new or modernising and extending historic residential buildings.

The work of Robert Dye Architects has been televised in the UK and Japan, the subject of various exhibitions in London over the two last decades, and is regularly published in the architectural press worldwide.

Principal, Robert Dye BA Hons Dip Arch RIBA

Robert won the annual RIBA student prize before graduating with honours in 1977. He has practised architecture both in England and abroad. Working for Sir James Stirling, his major projects included the Clore Gallery at the Tate, London, and as project architect a new-build expansion of the Fogg Art Museum for Harvard, and a new Performing Arts Centre for Cornell University.

Since establishing his own practice in 1990, he has continued the successful pursuit of design quality in more fine-grained, predominantly residential work. The practice's (timber-framed/recycled materials) new-build Stealth House was a finalist for a RIBA sustainability prize, then for the European Conference of Leading Architects annual Putz prize, and picked up the prestigious Manser Medal for 2005's best contemporary house at the Stirling Prize Awards.

Robert has taught sustainability, architecture and urban design at various universities in the UK and America for more than 20 years, and previously was a lecturer on sustainable cities for the Urban Design Masters course at the Bartlett School, University College London.

He has received several awards, contributed to a BBC2 programme on the future of London's architecture, was a member of the LDDC Urban Design Advisory Group shaping the future of Docklands, and active in judging architecture awards for the RIBA.



Grange Grove, N1 - Retrofit and Extension, Shortlisted for RIBA London awards 2024, Shortlisted for RIBA 'Daylight from Above Award'



Mews House, NW1, shortlisted for the RIBA London Awards 2014, and Camden Design Awards 2013, 'Enhancing Context', and 'Don't Move, Improve'



Hamilton Terrace, NW8 - Extension & modernisation of Grade II Listed terraced house, Long-listed for RIBA London Awards



Residence in Marylebone W1, Retrofit and Extension of Grade II Listed Building

Existing Property

3 Holly Mount is a Grade II listed property, a plum brick, flat-fronted Georgian house. It is one of a pair, alongside No. 4, and rises three storeys above a basement. The house forms part of a terrace facing east along Holly Mount and is set on a long plot with a garden to the west, connecting to Holly Bush Hill. The garden largely retains its historic layout, including arch structures beneath the garden, which were historically used by fruit stalls facing Holly Bush Hill.

3 Holly Mount is a Grade II listed property that forms part of a terrace on the west side of the lane. It was built between 1862 and 1874 and is one of a pair of houses with No. 4. A later historic addition infilled the gap between no 3 and no 2 with its elevation set at 45° to the main front façade as it negotiates the bend in Holly Mount. The property is a red-brown brick, flat-fronted Georgian house and rises three storeys above a basement. It is set on a long plot with a rear garden to the west, connecting through to Holly Bush Hill. The garden largely retains its historic layout, including arch structures beneath, which face onto Holly Bush Hill.

The front elevation of 3 Holly Mount is largely unchanged from its original construction. The building is predominantly red-brown brick, with red brick detailing around the windows, highlighting both the reveals and the flat arched lintels. The main entrance door is a painted panelled timber door framed by restrained georgian render details. The property features sliding sash windows with red brick reveals and flat arched lintels. Black-painted cast-iron railings separate the rendered areaway from the street level.

The rear elevation is different to that of its pair at no 4 as both houses have been altered over time.

There are some alterations to the building’s original fabric, mainly on the lower ground floor and rear elevation. Notably, a window on the second floor of the rear elevation has been bricked up. Additionally, there is an extension at the rear, which houses a utility room at ground floor, and WC at first floor. This extension, which was clearly added at a later date, is built over the original second-floor window. It is constructed from matching red-brown brick and consists of two levels, with part of the roof flat and the other part sloping with slate tiles. The original plaster ornamentation and flooring in the lower ground floor kitchen and dining space have been lost, though the layout of these rooms appears to remain unchanged.

Ensuite bathrooms have been added at both 1st and 2nd floor levels within the original rooms.

Access to the garden from the ground floor currently crosses a rear areaway, with a narrow cast-iron staircase leading down to the lower ground floor areaway. The areaway is bridged by a cast-iron grating with glass bricks. While these elements are of high-quality design, the staircase is impractical due to its narrow orientation, and the glass bricks of the grating are leaking.

Currently the lower ground floor, and ground floor both have open but narrow connections between each of their respective front and back rooms.

A full heritage report detailing the history of the building has been submitted separately for further reference.



Arial View of 3 Holly Mount - North



Arial View of 3 Holly Mount - North West



View of 3 Holly Mount - Front Elevation 1



View of 3 Holly Mount Full Front Elevation



View of 3 Holly Mount Rear Elevation, from Mount Vernon: Evidence of Bricked in Window on the Second Floor, and the later Extensions. Showing the construction of extensions over 1st Floor Window at right hand side



View of Rear Garden Extensions and Rear Areaway from Roof. Note Asphalt Roof



Later Extensions to Rear Elevation, at first floor level and rearward to garden. Note extensive pipework

The Design

The client wishes to undertake sensitive alterations to the Lower Ground Floor, Ground and first floor of the existing property improving some of the poor alterations made by former occupants and to make the house suitable for modern family living. The internal layouts of the ground and lower ground floor are currently cramped, and the organisation of spaces do not correspond to the architecture. There are also design elements that they wish to preserve, but also make the corresponding spaces practical, such as the rear areaway. This application proposes to improve circulation between the spaces, while preserving the buildings high quality historic elements.

Proposal

The Proposal comprises the following key moves.

- Widen the connection between the Kitchen and the Dining Room in the Lower Ground Floor.
- Widen the connection between the Living Room and the Drawing Room in the Ground Floor.
- Widen the arch within the Drawing Room in the Ground Floor.
- Addition of a enclosing wall/screen to Stair on the Lower Ground Floor.
- Create a Lobby in the rear areaway, preserving the cast iron detailing.
- Rehang door in entrance hall in its historic position.
- Remove the existing but not historic WC.
- Create a new WC in the rear wing.
- Remove post 1980's partition walls in hall/storage area in the Ground Floor.
- Alter roof to first floor over extension.

The Lower Ground Floor has already had significant renovations, most obvious in the plasterwork, and the modern large format herringbone parquet flooring. This application would widen the existing opening between front and back rooms to 2.5m. All of the plastering and covings would be made good to match the simple flat wall surfaces of the existing rooms.

The Rear Areaway is an underused space, there are high-quality cast iron elements, such as the staircase, and the historic grating with glass bricks. The glass bricks here currently leak, and the staircase blocks access to the end of the areaway, limiting the use of the areaway. This application would propose a minimal intervention that would leave the existing elements, but create an enclosed lobby space, with a crittall door and structural glass roof making the Areaway a more useful and practical space, and allowing for the retention of the glass blocks, as any leaking water would be shed by the glass roof below. The existing hot water cylinder is currently exposed and this is proposed to be concealed behind new painted timber doors. The french doors would be re-hung to open inwards, so that the lobby space can be used and is not cluttered with open doors. All of these items are additive and would not result in the loss of any historic fabric.

The Lower Ground Floor the kitchen is directly open to the main stair of the house, thus in its current form smoke and fire from the kitchen can directly enter the means of escape from the upper floors, creating a life hazard. To bring the building in line with Building Regulations and the Fire Safety act it is important to separate the kitchen from the stair. A new fire screen would enclose the stair. This intervention would be as minimal as possible, and be partially made of glass, as to ensure that the historic stair is still visible from the kitchen. No historic fabric will be removed.

The Ground Floor opening would be widened to 2m in this application. These rooms have higher quality historic building fabric, and this intervention would carefully preserve the intricate mouldings, cornicing and covings. The radiators in the Drawing Room of the Ground Floor would be removed and replaced with a double panel radiator as to maintain the existing heat output. All of the panelling on both sides of this wall, including to the reveals and soffits of the opening would be made good to match, or use the existing panelling adapted to suit.

The Ground Floor has also been historically reworked internally, and this application would restore the layout close to its original plan. The existing but not historic Ground Floor WC currently divides the lateral layout of the house. The scheme removes this WC, allowing the door to be re-hung in its historic hanging, opening away from the landing and into the rear room. As this door currently swings across the top of the stair, this return to the historic layout will also help return the stair to a safe and building control arrangement. The WC is then moved to the rear extension, next to where the current utility room sits, and in the wing that would historically contain building services. The scheme also widens the existing opening within the Drawing Room so that it is symmetrical and more open to the room, again carefully preserving any mouldings, cornicing and coving, but removing the low level shelves on the opposite wall.

The Ground Floor Storage/Hall area is currently a dense and contorted space, divided by post 1980's partitions. This scheme aims to introduce more of a spatial logic, opening up the space and connecting it to the lower ground floor and ground floor. This is done by removing and reorganising the partitions and level changes. The rear storage would be enclosed by a new door, using an old door from the removed partition. This door appears to have been salvaged at some point in time, and though not currently in an original position is worth preserving. All the removed elements are non-historic, so there would be no loss of fabric.

A bookcase door would replace the current knock-through between the Living room and the Storage/Hall area on the Ground Floor which is a later addition. This would be within the existing opening and appear as a shelved niche when closed so that the party wall either side of the chimney would again appear to be complete, whilst still allowing access to the storage spaces behind when necessary. Again there would be no loss of fabric with this alteration.

Both the Lower Ground Floor and the Ground Floor have non historic laminate timber herringbone flooring. This will be removed and replaced with new engineered timber hardwood floors throughout. The pantry has modern porcelain tiles, which will be replaced with stone flags.

The existing First Floor rear extension contains the shower and basin for the en-suite on this floor. The floor level is set one step down from the main first floor level, but even with this step, the ceiling to this area is under 2m high. This, combined with an existing entry of only 1.9m, makes the space difficult and uncomfortable to use properly. Externally, it is clear that the extension is a much later addition to the building, built in an uncomfortable and compromised manner. The extension almost completely covers an original window opening, with a painted bitumen roof directly abutting the glass of the window. With no up-stands and reliant on mastic this junction requires continuous maintenance to prevent rot setting in and to repair leaks to the interior. The painted bitumen of the roof clearly shows that this is a later addition and not historic fabric. On the rear elevation of the extension, the insufficient height means that the window arch is truncated and almost completely obscured by the gutter. leading to a architecturally and constructionally poor resolution of the the wall to roof junction. The proposal raises the walls of the extension by approximately 5 bricks, to form a parapet to the extension. This parapet would be capped with cast stone copings. The window arch of the rear elevation can then be completed with red rubber bricks to match the original arches of the main house.

At the same time, with the revisions to the internal layout of this room, the opportunity would be taken to sort out the tangle of later plastic plumbing above and on the side of the extension, so that it is rationalised and allows the elevations to be more easily seen. The roof would be replaced with a glass skylight increasing the ceiling height and letting light into the room. This skylight is hidden behind the parapet, so that it is not visible from the surroundings and is similar to the approach that was used successfully on the extension to the listed house several doors down at no 9 Holly Mount.

Sustainability and Environment: Due to the listed status of the building and internal and modest extent of the works, alterations to the fabric will be difficult without significantly affecting the original features of the building.



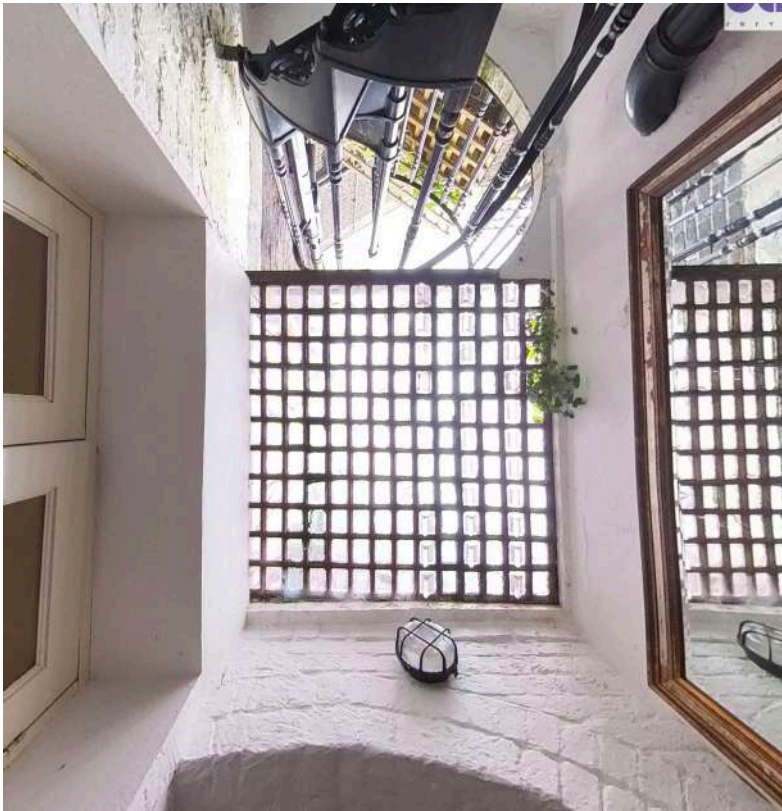
Lower Ground Floor Pantry, see modern porcelain tiles flooring to be replaced with stone flags



Lower Ground Floor Kitchen looking to Dining Room: see opening to be widened, see non historic herringbone laminate flooring to be replaced



Existing Rear Areaway, see cast Iron Staircase and grating to be preserved with the creation of a new lobby



Existing Rear Areaway, see cast Iron grating to be preserved with the creation of a new lobby

Ground Floor



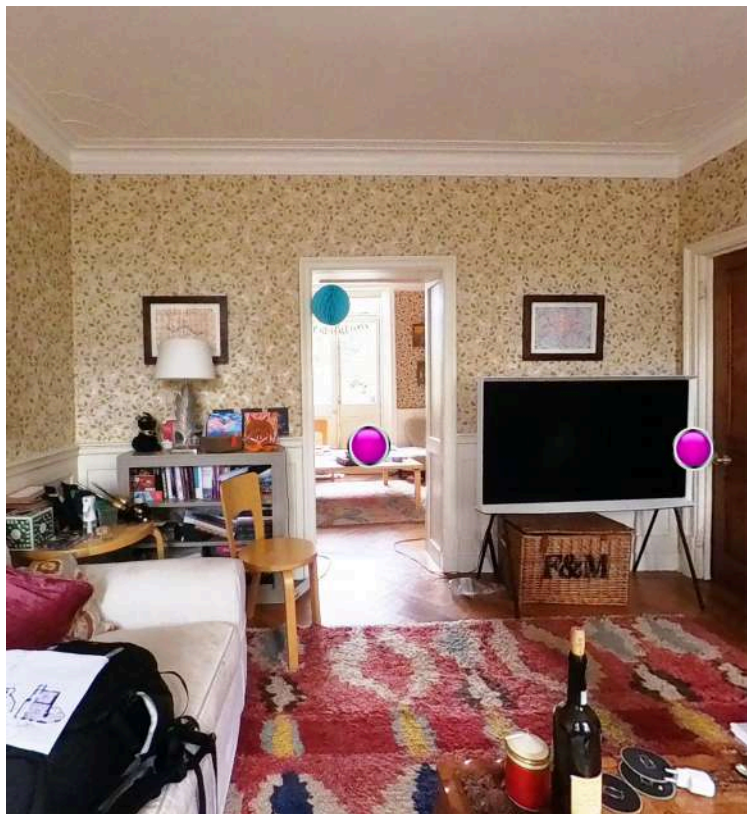
Existing Hall/Storage space, connecting the Lower Ground Floor and Ground Floor: see post 1980s partition wall to be removed.



Existing Ground Floor Living Room looking to tradesman entrance to Storage/Hall: see non historic door, to be replaced with 'bookcase door' reinstating reading of historic party wall



Ground Floor Drawing Room looking to Living Room: see opening to be widened, preserving all plaster mouldings, coving, and cornicing, see non historic herringbone laminate flooring to be replaced



Ground Floor Living Room looking to Drawing Room: see opening to be widened, preserving all plaster mouldings, coving, an cornicing, see non historic herringbone laminate flooring to be replaced



Ground Floor Drawing Room looking to Hall: see opening to be widened, and lower level shelves to be removed, see non historic herringbone laminate flooring to be replaced



Ground Floor Entrance Hallway: see existing door to WC to be rehung in historic position



Ground Floor Existing but not Historic WC: see WC to be removed, and door to be rehung in historic position



Ground Floor Drawing Room, backside of Existing WC: see wall to WC that will be removed



Ground Floor Rear Wing Existing Utility Room: see space for proposed new WC, see non historic herringbone laminate flooring to be replaced

First Floor Bathroom



Existing Rear Extension: top windows dissected by roof, lower window with incomplete and obscured arch



Existing Rear Extension view from side: see later plastic pipes



First Floor Bathroom: see high level window dissected by rear extension, and low ceiling in shower area



First Floor Bathroom: see low ceiling in shower area