

3.a Design Development

3.1 Design

Not all the problems with the character of the conservation area around this slight bend in Parliament Hill road can be solved though the redevelopment of 15a. The character and scale of the pre and post war mansion blocks and their large pavement crossover to underground garages are beyond the scope of this project. The redevelopment of 15a, however, can work to improve the continuity and character of the existing adjacent terraces and of the Conservation Area more generally.

The site at 15a sits between two slightly different historical periods of development, and perhaps as a result this junction has never been given thoughtful attention. The loss of the front gable and the additional floor added to 15 have made matters worse. The materials, small scale, and setback of 15a results in a break in the continuity of the fabric of the conservation area. Lesser but also important practical design problems include the need for good light, and generous spaces. The internal planning challenges posed by the unusual binary front/back structure of the site plan were also very important.

The primary architectural and planning challenge of the project is to create a building which will subtly mark this unconsidered point of historical change in the built fabric and simultaneously reinforce the continuity and character of the larger terrace. Light, overlooking, and the protection of the adjacent trees are critical considerations. As a practice we also wanted to create a building which is quietly contemporary and of its period.

Finding a form which answers these architectural problems is not straightforward. After some very initial volume studies a series of different approaches were developed. All tried to develop a building form and fenestration that was contemporary in character, but was predicated on and related to some aspect of the existing surrounding built fabric of the conservation area.

3.2 "Parapet & Mansard" Scheme

This very preliminary scheme was based on the form of the existing building and on the very common parapet and mansard forms seen in the existing terrace to the southwest. By its formal reference to the present and inappropriate existing building this scheme failed to transform the site and did not provide sufficient links to the character of the larger surrounding context.

3.3 Flat Roofed and Stepped Scheme

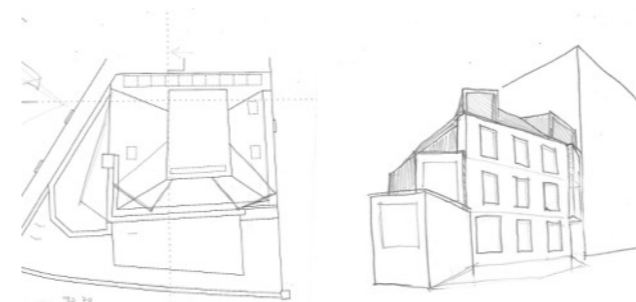
This scheme again used the common parapet form, but without the mansard. The stepped form was based on a formal connection to buildings set into the sloping landscape. Again, this approach failed to establish a sufficiently strong connection with the character of the existing conservation area. The formal relation of the scheme to the existing and mansion blocks opposite was also unfortunate.

3.4 Early Pitched Roof Scheme

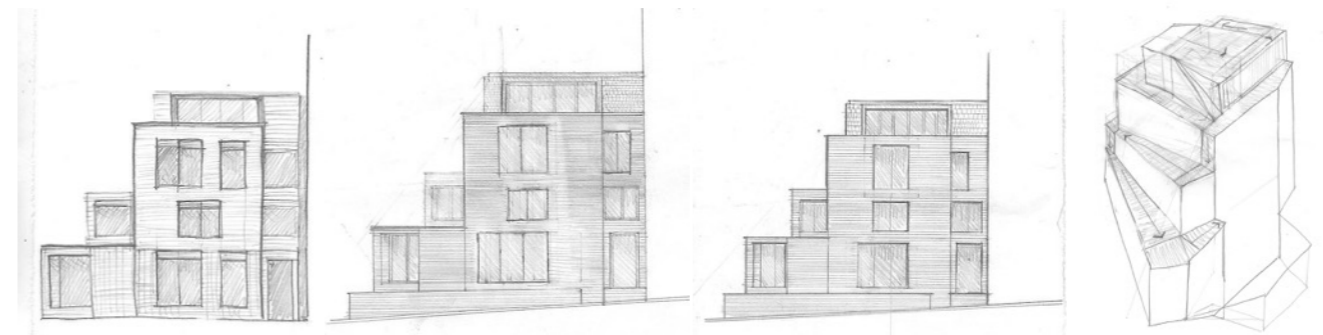
The pitched roof in this scheme established a clear and appropriate connection to the gable forms in the terrace running up Parliament Hill. The gable end also gave a slight punctuation to the gently bend in the road. This sense of connection between the form and the site and larger context encouraged more extensive design development. The present proposals are the result.



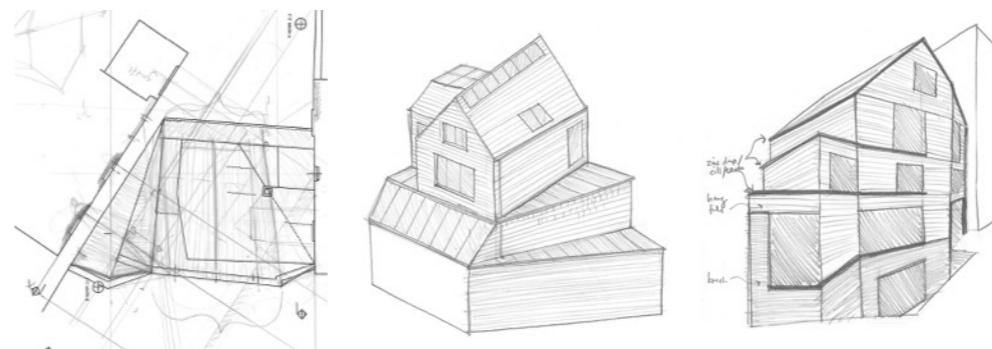
3-d Volume Diagram



"Parapet & Mansard" Scheme



Flat Roofed and Stepped Scheme



Early Pitched Roof Scheme