

Appendix B

Case Study - Golden Lane, London EC1

In 2012 Amin Taha Architects completed the refurbishment of a period warehouse building on Golden Lane, London EC1, which is similar to 49-51 Farringdon Road. The following case study describes the approach we took to the project.

Built in 1850, 115 Golden Lane housed a button manufacturer on the ground and basement, a clock maker on the upper floors and was part of a terrace of such structures running the length Baltic Street to Aldersgate with detached villas turning onto Golden Lane. By 1910 a sprawling redbrick school had cleared all neighbouring industrial buildings annexing 115 Golden into its use until the mid-twentieth century. The school vacated and the building was let as offices to accountants and solicitors serving the adjacent City. Over this time, and to meet these changing needs, plaster boarded walls, cellular partitions, grid ceilings with integral lighting, and raised floors with blue carpet tiles were introduced. Later, retrofitted cooling units required windows to be screwed shut and others to be replaced with air-tight UPVC frames. Regulations prescribed fire and smoke partitions, and these with previous accumulating elements further diminished the building's inherent character and quality of space.

Following small opening up investigations revealing brickwork, cast iron columns and timber joists a bold strategy was agreed for removing all suspended ceilings, raised floors and any plasterboard wall linings. Almost all of the original walls, columns, beams, joists, noggins and floor boards were intact having been preserved behind the boxing out. Internally and externally the building quite easily expressed its structure of brick piers, cast iron columns and timber beams, and secondary elements. The removal of the UPVC windows also revealing cast iron mullions and transoms.

Expressing the structure's original materiality and quality of space would require these to remain unadorned with the standard approaches to meeting building regulations. Working together with an approved Building Inspector and creative Structural, Environmental, Acoustic and Fire Engineers new building technologies, regulations and British Standards were employed to reduce visually intrusive systems. This, in addition to a 20% saving on construction cost, persuaded the building owner to pursue this course.

An advertising agency purchased the building on completion of its shell and core and engaged with the overall philosophy for their fit-out with the ground and basement becoming their main office space. Workstations are set out across the lower level reached from an entry foyer platform spanning to a waxed steel bookcase with integral stair. A steel bridge spans from the bookcase to a glass vitrine meeting room balanced between cast iron columns, adding theatre for visiting clients while maintaining the visual and physical sense of the larger space. An oak lined utility box accommodating wc's, kitchen and store sits under the foyer. The concept is repeated on the upper levels.

Externally the principle interventions involved repainting timber windows casements, removing paint from stonework and cast iron, replacing recent aluminium and UPVC doors and windows, and the incorporation of a replacement rear extension over the original light well that had previously been built across blocking daylight from the south yard. Key to the expression of these external interventions was our interpretation of Victorian cast iron decorative vent grilles and screens. Working closely with the steel fabricator, we developed a hot bronze finished laser cut pattern that lends itself to a variation of texture and perforation able to breakdown from the solidity of a defensive gate to brise soleil. The two entry points are given a given a deeper threshold through 'placed' bronze entry portals, in themselves slowing the transition from the street, while emphasizing the ability to remove and replace all new elements with future changing needs. We were also commissioned to design desks, work benches, plan chests, some storage units and an occasional chair for the interiors.



Golden Lane facade



Golden Lane facade



Rear facade



Profiled & perforate bronze screen



Profiled & perforate bronze screen

