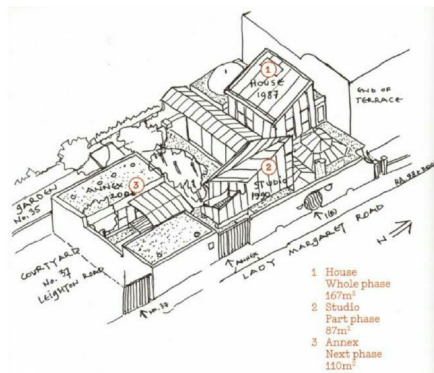


BACKGROUND



Sketch Design & Ground Floor Plan

(Richard Burton taken from An Extra Dimension The Burton House Modern Architecture in the Making published 2015)

Richard Burton designed and built his own house on this plot in Kentish Town by combining two back gardens into a single site large enough for a family house and garden. There were two mature trees on this site, one of which was rotten and was felled. The other, a London Plane Tree became an integral part of the design. The foundations and floor slabs were specially designed to allow for future growth of the tree, taking into account both its deep and shallow root systems. The design has in this respect alone been so successful that the tree has prospered beyond anyone's expectations and is now enormous.

As far as can be ascertained from a visual examination, no damage has been caused to date by the tree roots, however, the girth of the tree trunk has expanded to such an extent that is pushing over the brick boundary wall, which is now in danger of collapse.

The brick wall was also an important part of the design, "The street elevation shows a brick garden wall punctuated by a round gate...."

The round gate dramatically emphasises the Main Entrance to the house with the timber gates at the other end of the wall giving access to ancillary accommodation and an adjacent property.

The round gate, designed with artist blacksmith Stewart Hill, is on axis with the conservatory, and the position of the pivot hinge cleverly allows the gate to avoid the tree, or at least it used to. Now the tree restricts opening the gate to less than half its former arc and is likely to expand further blocking the gate and occupying the zone of the brick wall.

DIRECTOR: JEREMY PEACOCK RIBA AADIP

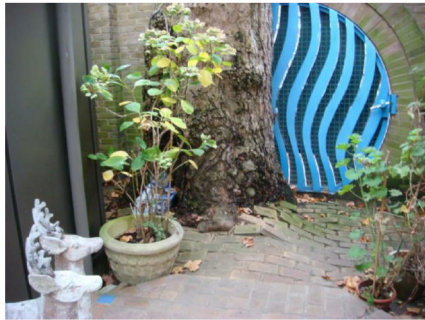
124 GREAT WESTERN STUDIOS
65 ALFRED ROAD
LONDON W2 5EU

/ JEREMY@JPALTD

RIBA

REG. OFFICE: 201 HAVERSTOCK HILL
LONDON NW3 4GG

REGISTERED
IN ENGLAND: 12161485



The gate is designed to restrict views into the entrance courtyard and conservatory beyond.

It follows that either the tree or the adjacent section of "Garden Wall" must be removed.

By removing the brick wall between existing brick piers on either side of the gate we are left with an opening about 3.7m wide for which we need to provide a fence for security and a gate for entry. The new gate cannot be placed on axis with the conservatory due to the girth of the tree which means it must be offset and asymmetric.

The existing gate is specifically designed to be incorporated into the solid brick wall which is "punctuated by a round gate". Reluctantly, we do not consider that this gate will work as intended either offset from the axis nor as part of a fence. But, it will be saved as a sculptural element in the garden.

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PROPOSAL

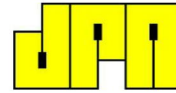
The entrance courtyard to the house containing the tree is considered to be semi-private space mediating between the street and the conservatory and is part of the general circulation as can be seen from the plan above. Whilst the existing gate, and the proposed 'screen' are intended to offer glimpses into this space it is not appropriate nor is it desirable to open it up entirely to public view.

Richard Burton died in 2017 [REDACTED] As we cannot know what Richard would have wanted to replace his design, we have gone for a much more restrained solution, being a semi permeable screen or fence containing a "secret" gate to disguise the fact that it is offset from the main axis, on account of the tree. We have taken the height of the adjacent wooden gates for the screen, but to make it special and to signify that it is the Main Entrance we are proposing a steel screen, not timber.

In place of the curvilinear slats to the existing gate we are proposing vertical steel slats slightly inclined to provide an element of visual privacy whilst allowing some visual permeability. In place of the "organic" flow of the curvilinear slats we are proposing "organic" self-weathering steel called Cor-Ten.

"**Weathering steel**, often referred to by the [genericised trademark COR-TEN steel](#) and sometimes written without the hyphen as **corten steel**, is a group of [steel alloys](#) which were developed to eliminate the need for painting, and form a stable [rust](#)-like appearance after several years' exposure to weather." (Wikipedia definition)

In other words, this steel is allowed to rust in order to form a protective coating. The process of rusting is not evenly distributed so that an effect similar to the random pattern of bark on the adjacent Plane Tree will quickly develop, and this will provide a dynamic quality to the design. The steel screen / gate can



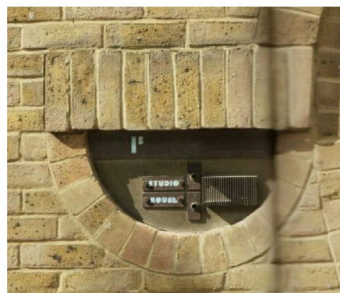
then be sealed using an appropriate colourless sealant which will enhance the rich rust colour effect and prevent further rusting.

For a good example of Corten Steelwork you need only refer to the new building next door to the Council offices on Goods Way.



In addition to the gate itself, Richard designed several details which we would like to re-use as a memory of the original design.

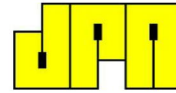
Carved foundation stones, one of which contains a 'time capsule' are to be reclaimed and built into the new brickwork adjacent to the re-built brick piers.



Specially designed details such as the existing entryphone system and letterbox will also be reclaimed and incorporated into the new screen and gate, which will help to make sense of the remaining semi-circular brickwork details that lie beyond the re-built brick piers. Please refer to drawings.

Once the existing brickwork has been removed and the piers on either side re-built with the necessary supporting steel posts inside, we will be able to run strings across the opening to see how far the tree leans towards the street. We will then be able to design the slatted railings and their support structure around the tree leaving sufficient space for some movement and future expansion. If or when the tree continues to expand, some of the slats immediately adjacent to the tree may have to be further modified accordingly and in this way, we will attempt to future proof the design and preserve the tree.

It follows that until we can accurately survey the tree we will not be able to finalise the design of the screen and gate.

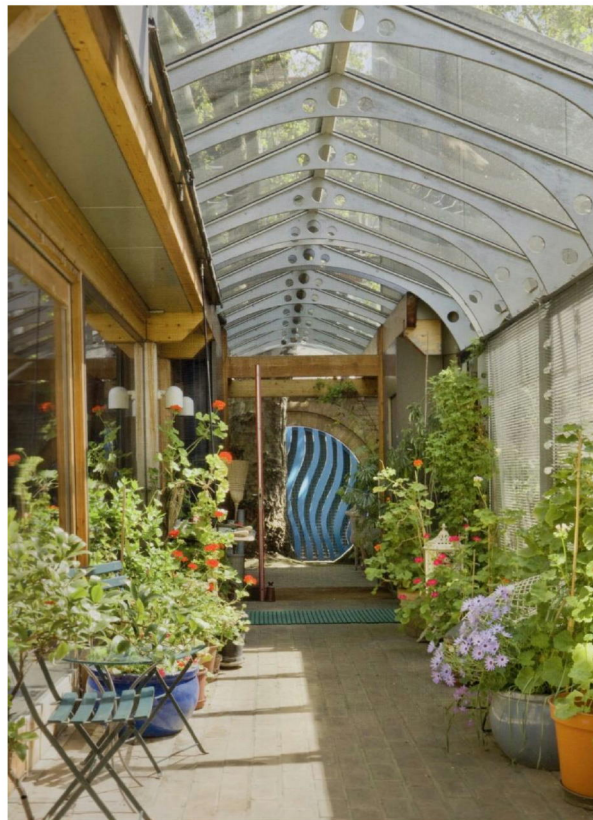


Therefore Planning Permission for the design in principle will allow us to get the work underway and we will then be able to submit detailed construction drawings of the screen and gate, which we will need in any case for fabrication, as a condition to the Planning Permission. That would seem a sensible way to proceed, provided the inclusion of the details described above can also be agreed in principle. We would hope that all this can be accomplished without the need for a further Pre-App which will only serve to delay the progress of the works, during which time my Client, [REDACTED] will have to scramble through a building site to enter her home.

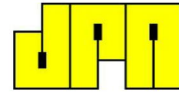
With regard to the tree, which as you know we are doing our very best to preserve, I cannot see why we need to incur further costs by commissioning a Tree Protection Statement?

Nothing we are proposing interferes with the root systems in any way as the piled foundations are already in place. Removal of the brick wall will provide the (root free) space we need to insert the new screen and gate.

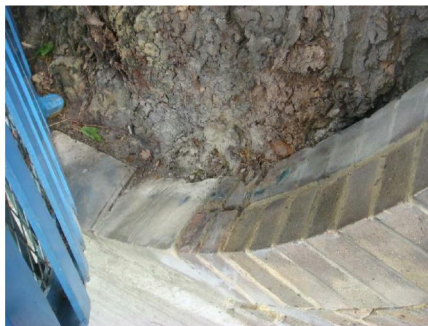
Once the brickwork has been removed and the tree can be inspected, we are more than happy to liaise directly with the Council Tree Officer and if necessary, we will employ specialist tree surgeons to implement his recommendations.



View of the gate from the conservatory



CURRENT CONDITION



Current size of tree in relation to front wall.