



SMERIN ARCHITECTS HOLLAND PARK HOUSE

Set among the Victorian villas and terraces that surround Holland Park, west London, a new house by Smerin Architects reinterprets a classic type to suit modern family life. The 265-square-metre project is at the southern end of a long terrace of five-storey houses, and replaces a much smaller 1950s dwelling that was built on a second world war bombsite.

The front garden of the new house is flanked by a block of garages also built in the 1950s, while the rear courtyard garden is bounded by the backs of mews buildings that run parallel to the terrace, and by the back extension to a Victorian pub that sits on the road linking the terrace to the mews.

The simple rectilinear block fills the available footprint between front and rear building lines, and extends upwards to the eaves of the terrace. The front is set back by one metre at the top to form a narrow balcony, while the rear projects by one metre on the lower floors. The side steps out at the lower two levels, where the line of the boundary changes, forming a rooflight to the lower floors. Above, a projecting bay acts as an oriel window and signals the end of the terrace.





The main entrance is on the upper-ground floor, which contains the main double-aspect formal reception room. The entrance hall has separate stair access up to bedrooms on the upper floors and down to the remaining living spaces at lower-ground level, where kitchen, dining and sitting areas connect with the garden.

The structure combines solid cross-laminated timber panels used to form the interlinked spaces of the upper floors over an in-situ concrete transfer structure forming the single volume of the lower-ground floor level – a hybrid developed to cope with the shifting series of volumes without vertical continuity required by the layout, and to minimise the dimensions of floors and walls to make the most of the narrow site.

Externally, the main volume is clad using a brick slip system over rigid insulation, which allows a mix of running- and stack-bonds to be used, adding subtlety to otherwise mute walls,

and minimises the wall thickness while maximising thermal performance. The pale buff colour echoes the facades of nearby terraces.

Elevations visible from the street are predominantly solid, with a series of glazed openings to the front, framed in part by a metal-clad element that links the openings with a mix of frameless glass roofs and sides. 'In this way the glazed bays echo the traditional symmetrical bay and framed windows of the adjoining terrace while expressing the less formal internal logic of the house', explains architect Piers Smerin.

The rear elevation has a similar logic, with vertically oriented openings giving way to wider glazed openings on the lower levels. Where windows and glazing are required to bathrooms and the staircase, alternating stacks of brickwork are omitted to form an open screen, allowing diffused natural light and ventilation while maintaining the apparent solidity of the facade.

- ▲ The two 'semi-public' levels are linked by glass floor panels, and both have a bank of folding-sliding doors, enabling the rear elevation to open to the courtyard garden. From the courtyard garden, a discrete route leads up to street level at the front past a concealed off-street parking space.
 - ◀ Plans: Lower-ground, upper-ground, first, second, and third floors. The bedroom areas on the upper floors are oriented front and rear and are accessed off a staircase in the rear corner lit by windows and a rooflight.
- Architect: Smerin Architects; client: contractor TKEI; structural engineer: Lyons O'Neill; services: Mendick Waring; construction manager: Charterhouse Developments; in-situ concrete groundworks: ribbed slab DM O'Brien; tanking/waterproofing: CETCO Europe; cross-laminated structural timber panels: KLH; rigid insulation: Celotex; brick cladding system: Conuriv/Taylor; Maxwell; single-ply membrane roofing: Renolit; structural glazing: IQ Glass; aluminium-framed windows: Grove Windows; aluminium-framed glazed sliding doors: Solarlux; aluminium cladding: Precision Projects; timber flooring: Turgon; underfloor heating system: Timalcon; photographs: Lyndon Douglas.
- Floor area: 265sqm; form of contract: construction management; contract duration: 12 months.