

BuildingFutures
AWARDS
2013

BUILDING TRUST



Award Category: Design Excellence sponsored by Sika

Project: 9 Old North Road, Royston

Client: Mark & Anika Gilligan

Project Team: NRAP Architects, Cambridge Architectural Research Ltd, Sherriff Tiplady Associates, LON-IST



This extension to a late-Victorian town house in Royston sits at a prominent junction on the approach to the town and replaced a single-storey pitched roof out-house.

The scheme was conceived as a playful manipulation of a traditional two-storey pitched roof box, separated from the original house by a predominantly glazed slot and distorted in response to the brief and site. The extension contributes to the

streetscape, with the corner window of the studio commanding the junction, echoing the same motif from the original house where a corner window addresses the entrance. The large north-facing gable inflects towards the street to create a strong end to the building as it turns the corner.

The choice of external materials was heavily influenced by the local vernacular of brick and slate. Slate covers the roof and top half of the walls, describing a faceted form that rests upon a brick wall. Bricks were recycled from the demolished previous extension while others were salvaged from another local demolition.

Windows and roof lights have sought to maximise natural light without compromising privacy. The horizontal corner window to the study is set at eye-height to allow views out while preventing views in. The double-height top-lit living space forms the heart of the interior, using a generous rooflight to animate the room throughout the day as the sun moves across the sky.

Entrance to the original house is a storey above ground level which allows for the new living space to be overlooked by the entry-level study and a balcony. The balcony offers an overall

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view from half way up the space before one descends past fleeting views through 'windows' cut into the wall to the stair to a landing at the level of the ground-floor kitchen in the original house.

Judges comments:

"Although this extension is relatively modest in scale, it nevertheless illustrates a bold and exciting response to a difficult challenge. On a prominent corner site close to a bridge over the railway near to Royston station, the site was not an easy one, and in particular the fall in ground level from the street provided a particular challenge that was turned into an opportunity. The result is a simple slate-clad side extension to the existing Victorian house that provides a dramatic double-storey height living space. The space is entered down a beautifully crafted stair which provides intriguing glimpses into the space below. The detailing is carefully considered, and the new space links back into the basement kitchen of the existing house, and out into the garden at the rear. This scheme demonstrates that a contemporary approach to extending a house can provide an inspiring and appropriate solution even on a prominent corner site."