







SENSE OF AN ENDING

31/44 Architects sensitively exploits a challenging restricted plot in south London

London is peppered with reinventions of the Victorian terraced house, from Neave Brown's Winscombe Street in Highgate from 1966, to 168 Upper Street in Islington finished by Amin Taha + Groupwork this year (AR September 2017). Caught in the crook of one of East Dulwich's many rungs of terraced houses, 31/44's Red House is another worthy addition to this cohort of modern-day reincarnations.

The Red House replaces a garage and yard on a small site at the elbow of two terraced streets in south London picked up by Arrant Land – a small independent developer which makes a habit of seeking out and densifying awkward urban infill sites. The house is a new bookend for the street, a reimaged 'end-of-terrace'.

On the street facade, the typical elements of a Victorian terrace frontage are crisply distilled: an arched portal continues the rhythm along the terrace, and a tall well-proportioned window watches out from the first-floor landing. But here the classic terrace composition starts to slip and shift. The arch which marks a doorway elsewhere along the terrace is recapitulated here as a frameless window, allowing light to flood the hallway behind. Instead, the dark metal front door is tucked next to the arch in the dynamic shadow of a cast concrete canopy – a

concrete underscore slicing across the facade.

The eponymous bright-red brick skin of the house subverts the brick palette of the surrounding houses, elevating the red bricks used sparingly as accents on its neighbours to the building's primary building material. Matching the brick colour exactly, a polite dog-tooth pattern is cast into the pigmented concrete of the ground-floor portion of the facade. This nod to Victorian ornament is actually a reference to the patterned tiles which traditionally adorn the paths and thresholds of terrace front gardens and doorsteps. The delicately tactile concrete reliefs were expertly prefabricated in computer-modelled, rubber-lined moulds before being craned into position.

The ubiquitous yellow London brick that characterises the rest of the street makes a guest appearance in the rebuilt and extended garden wall which swings out from



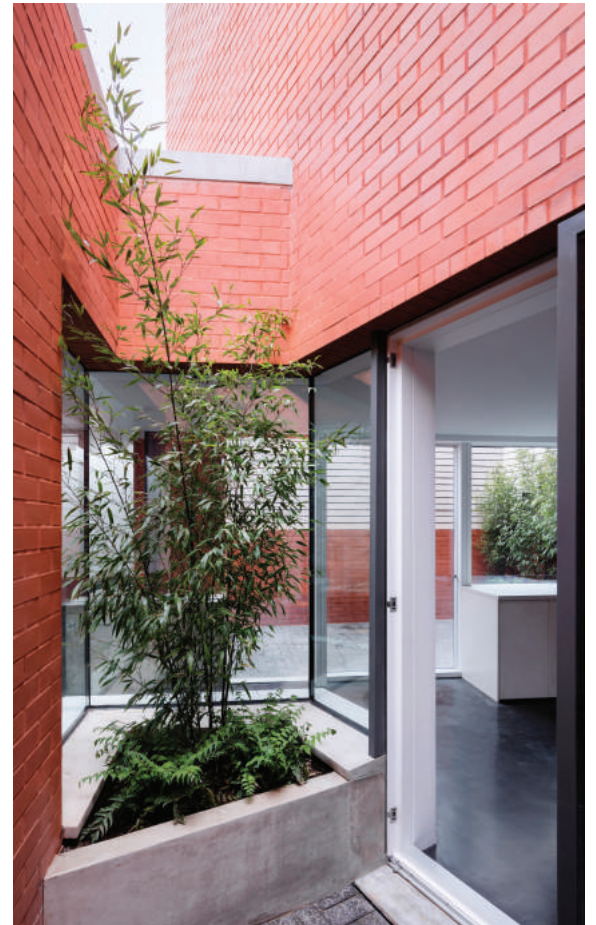
under the main volume of the house to meet the line of the pavement. Reconciling the line of the terrace with the curve of the street, the ground-floor plan floods to maximise the footprint across the small area of the constricted site. A top-lit studio is tucked behind the garden wall, sunk around a metre below the entrance and street level.

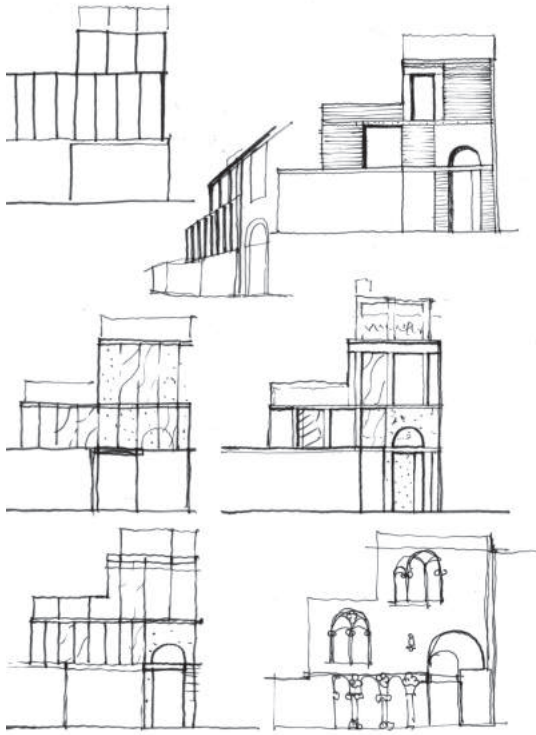
The kitchen and living spaces stretch back into the plot, wedged around two small high-walled courtyards. These trapezoidal yards allow light to wash down into the living spaces affording privacy from overlooking neighbours. Reminiscent of the walled-in yards of inner-city Victorian terraces, these yards are treated as outdoor rooms and the ground floor as a seamless domestic territory. The ground-floor spaces are fluid and visually connected, with stolen glimpses from the hallway and through the glazed courtyards.

The other rooms stack and pivot around the sculptural central chimney, like wheel spokes from an axle. Standing proud of the main volume, the chimney is a gentle play on another classic element of a Victorian terraced house. Cleverly disguised as a two-storey building, the three storeys of accommodation are betrayed only by the large, quietly minimal windows on the front facade, drifting from the rational 19th-century rhythm. *Eleanor Beaumont*



Balancing respect for the Victorian terrace with complex geometry due to a bend in the road, the unconventional floor plan fully exploits available space while maintaining the occupants' privacy





Architect

31/44 Architects

Project team

Stephen Davies/Kate Nicklin
(project architects), Will
Burgess, James Jeffries, Katie
Braatvedt, Tobias Jewson,
Floriane Gonsalves

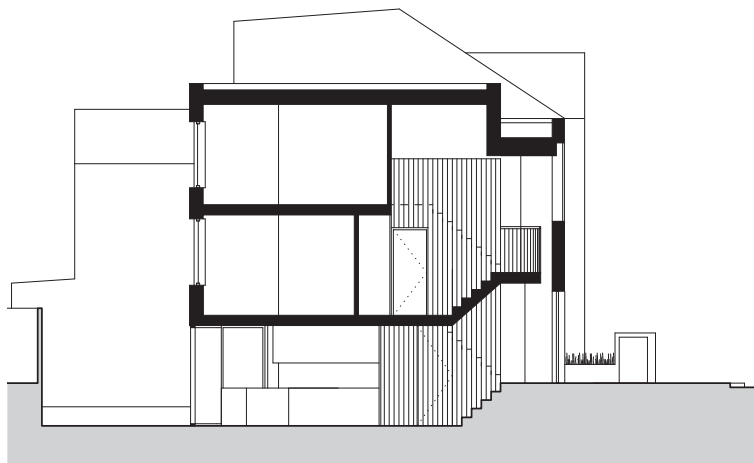
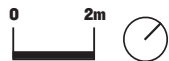
Structural engineer

Elite Designers
Structural Engineers

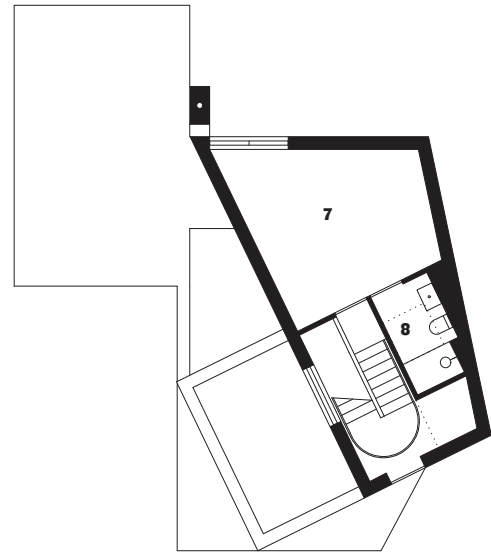
Photographs

All photographs by Rory
Gardiner, apart from the first
which is courtesy of
The Modern House

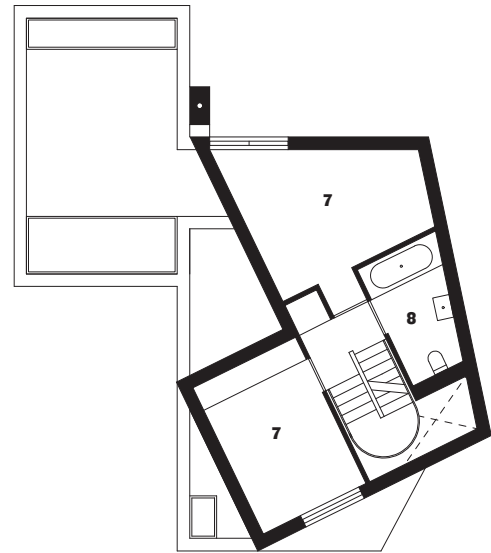
- 1 hallway
- 2 study
- 3 WC
- 4 courtyard
- 5 kitchen
- 6 living/dining room
- 7 bedroom
- 8 bathroom



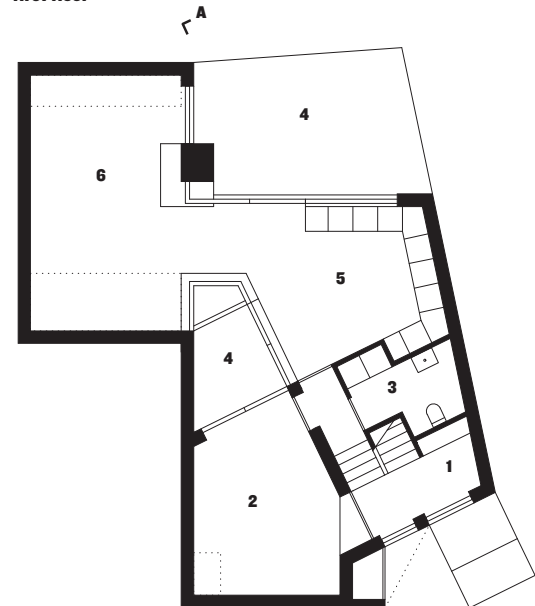
section AA



second floor



first floor



ground floor plan

L A