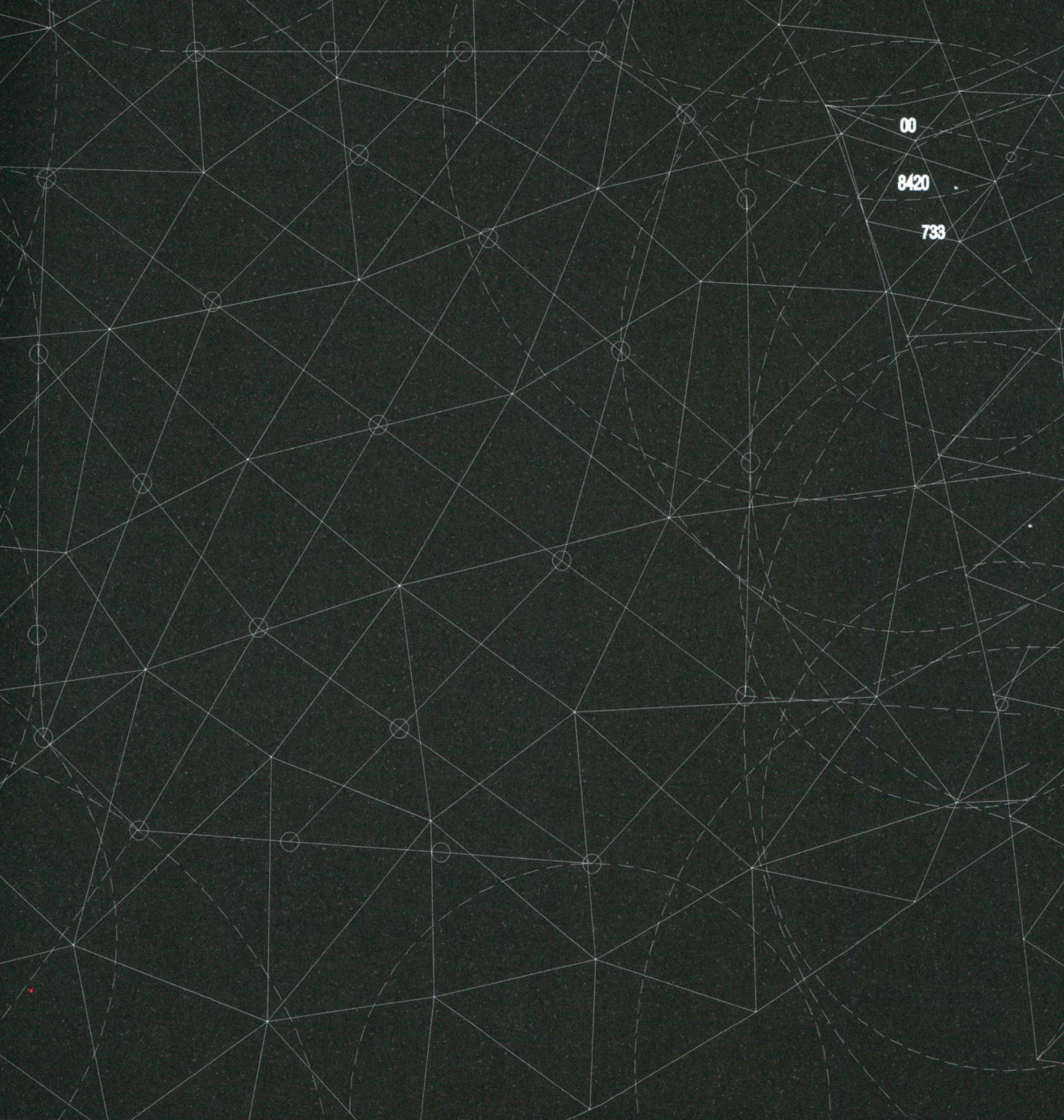




# SCRATCHING THE SURFACE

New London Facades by London Architects





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# Scratching the Surface

## New London Facades by London Architects

28 June - 1 September 2007

New London Architecture  
The Building Centre  
26 Store Street  
London WC1E 7BT

Scratching the Surface is part of the NLA/ Building Centre exhibition programme made up of six major exhibitions a year which take on key themes to explore London and its built environment.

[www.buildingcentretrust.org](http://www.buildingcentretrust.org)  
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**The Building Centre**



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## **Scratching the Surface**

Andrew Watts

The face of London is changing. Today's architects have an exciting range of traditional and new materials to choose from, and design and construction technology allows these to be applied with creative confidence.

Scratching the Surface explores the current state of the building envelope as proposed by London-based architects in their search for a contemporary interpretation of the London vernacular.

Their work demonstrates a diverse range of contemporary positions on design, the dialogues between the background and foreground, complex form and rectilinear geometry, sustainability, technological advancement, tradition and change, with each demanding an approach which is more than merely cosmetic.

The facade occupies a uniquely complex position as the public face of these new architectural approaches while integrating intelligent systems and environmental, material and structural functions. Scratching the Surface provides an insight into a world that is usually seen only from the outside.

**Southwark Child  
Development Centre**  
Client  
**Building Better Health**  
Architects  
**Allford Hall Monaghan  
Morris**  
Structural Engineers  
**Price & Myers**  
Services Engineers  
**whitbybird**  
Contractor  
**Willmott Dixon**  
Completion date  
**2007**

The Southwark Child Development Centre is a new children's Primary Care centre situated on Peckham Road in South London. The highly constrained site sits amongst dark brick mansion blocks of uniform and monolithic scale. Responding to this context, the building takes the form of a dark glazed brick block. Resolving the interplay between the complex and colourful internal arrangement and the formal urban envelope is the main driver for the facade design.

The dark brick block is shown to be only a thin skin. Long horizontal window cuts reveal a staccato pattern of mullions which corresponds to the irregular room layout. Aluminium side-hung casement windows are set back behind the skin

and allow the reveals to act by name, exposing the bricks' overall thinness.

Voids cut out behind the skin then break down the interior volume while allowing the exterior massing to remain intact. The upper level voids create private outdoor terraces. Voids cut between the three public lower levels are internal spaces which enable views between the floors to help visitors orientate themselves.

The principle of pulling brightly coloured elements through the facade is continued on the upper windows. Here bright sky-blue brise-soleil orient their visible surfaces to catch and reflect direct sunlight, preventing overheating and animating the facade.





**Herringbone Houses,  
Wandsworth**

Client

**Lyford Investments Ltd**

Architect

**Alison Brooks Architects**

Structural Consultant

**Price & Myers**

M&E/ H&S

**Peter Deer & Associates**

QS

**Carruth Marshall**

Landscape Design

**Christopher Bradley-  
Hole**

Completion date

**Summer 2006**

This project is a pair of 400m<sup>2</sup> houses and integrated landscape in a wooded back land site which overlooks the South London Bowls Club.

Each open-plan house is composed of two continuous planes of herringbone timber and graphite render surfaces forming walls, floors, decking and fences. These planes interlock and fold inward at the centre of the house to create a double height entrance hall open to the sky. This approach to the wrapping of spaces generates an apparent lightness to the houses which are conceived as an assembly of planar elements as opposed to "punched" masonry. The atrium holds a suspended timber staircase and galleries which lead to the first and

second floor bedrooms. The carports are green roofs on expanded metal trays supported by stainless steel picture frames.

The living rooms are recessed behind deep overhangs that provide shade, direct views to the south-east and shelter the ground floor entrance areas. Adjacent to these are the three storey volumes oriented north south, containing bedrooms and family rooms. These elements also have recessed glazing at the 2nd floor level to reduce solar gain, increase a sense of privacy for the occupants and create space for greenery at the buildings upper levels.



**Peabody Trust Housing,  
Silvertown**

Client

**The Peabody Trust**

Architect

**Ash Sakula Architects**

Structural Engineer

**whitbybird**

Services Engineer

**Atelier 10**

Contractor

**Sandwood Construction**

Completion date

**2004**

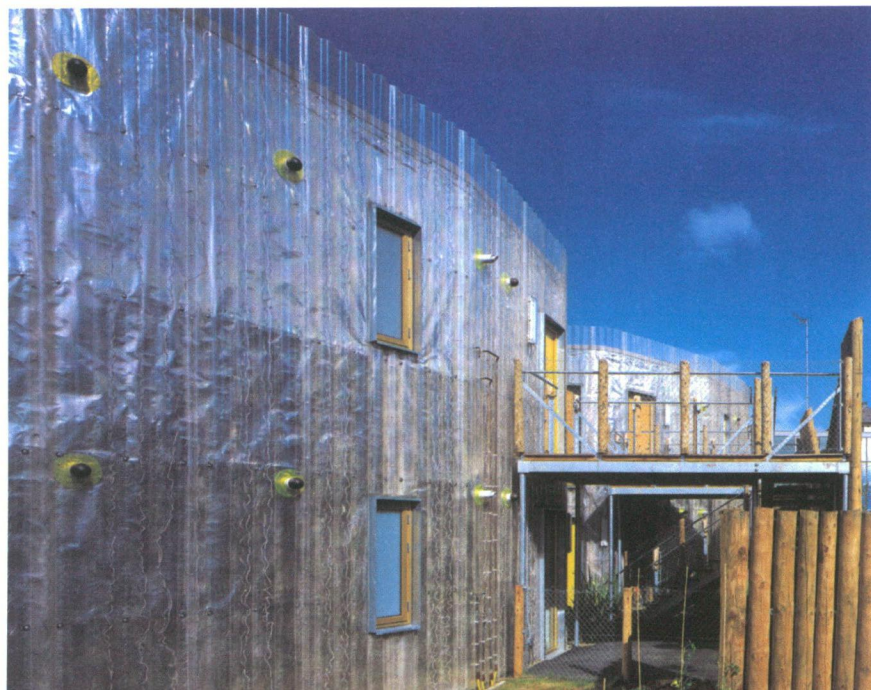
This housing project of 4 apartment units is a prototype development that grew out of a winning entry in a Peabody Trust competition for 'fresh ideas' for affordable new housing on three infill sites in East London.

The scheme is innovative because it rethinks what a minimum-sized dwelling should be and how the dwellings should be linked, proposing radical new ideas for its layout, how space should be prioritised, what it should look like and how it should be constructed.

The project combined an integrated and innovative approach to materials, specification and construction, aimed at economy, speed, sustainability and

comfort. The transparent profiled GRP sheets over a silver reflective breather membrane are extremely durable, as proven by their use on oil rigs. To the front the walls are clad in pale yellow tinted sheets oriented horizontally and the curved rear walls are clad in clear transparent sheet oriented vertically so accommodating the curve of this elevation. This lightweight rainscreen is installed over highly prefabricated insulated timber cassette wall panels.

High quality, high performance timber windows to the south and west gather useful solar energy and minimise heat loss and with the powder coated aluminium facings make external maintenance minimal.





**Bellingham FYP**  
**Gateway Building**  
Client  
**Lewisham Youth Service**  
Architect  
**Cottrell & Vermeulen**  
Structural Engineer  
**Engineers HRW**  
Building Services  
**Max Fordham LLP**  
Completion date  
**2006**

The new Bellingham Families and Young Peoples Gateway Building is located at the corner of Bellingham playing field in South London and provides new accommodation for activities on the site as well as bringing new activities and resources to it.

The building is conceived as an interconnected centre, offering the opportunity for users and resources to overlap and inter-relate. The linear form of the building is 57m long and 12.5m deep, containing a youth centre at its north end, a nursery at the south end and shared reception at the middle.

The building is conceived as part of the landscape and is designed to make a minimum impact on the open space. This is achieved by the use of a sedum roof and translucent cladding materials. The street side is clad in translucent GRP that reflects and creates shadows formed by the park trees that create a changing subtle street architecture.



## **Clapham Manor School**

Client

**London Borough of**

**Lambeth**

Architect

**dRMM**

Structural Consultant

**Michael Hadi Associates**

Services Engineers

**Fulcrum Consulting**

Cost Consultant

**Appleyard & Trew**

Acoustic Consultant

**Fleming & Barron**

Main Contractor

**Ashe Construction**

Completion date

**2008**

Clapham Manor School is a successful primary school with reception and nursery. It is planning to become a 2-form entry school with a new proposal for a four storey extension set back from the existing Victorian school and linked via a glazed connection.

In contrast to the articulation of its two neighbours, the extension avoids composition. The principle of the facade treatment is to adapt a high-quality curtain wall system embodying characteristics of internal structure, virtually-flush finish and reflectivity, while introducing variation and flexibility with three types of panels: solid, translucent and clear. These are arranged by performance requirements of views,

ventilation and solar gain.

The reverse sides of solid panels are lined in pin board, acoustic panelling, and other surfaces depending on class requirements. Windows are manually operated so that occupants can control ventilation.

The principle of the colouration is to graduate the colours around the building from the existing context: from the red and terracotta of Stonhouse Street, through to the greens of the playground landscaping at the rear.





**Potters Fields Park  
Kiosks, Southwark**  
Client

**More London  
Development Ltd**  
Architect

**DSDHA**  
Structural Engineers  
**Jane Wernick**

**Associates**  
Completion date  
**2007**

In 2004, Gross Max landscape architects were appointed to redesign Potters Fields Park to meet the increasing demands of its 1 million plus visitors. DSDHA were appointed in 2005 to design two kiosks to provide amenities for the visitors, residents and local workers.

Inspired by 18th century grottos from stately gardens the aim was to make these comparatively small projects complement and enhance the area's history whilst mediating between the competing aesthetics of the monumental surrounding buildings and the organic layout of the park.

The buildings are clad almost entirely in hand crafted horizontal timber boarding. The sleek lines of each kiosk are then carved away to create grotto like entries to the buildings' amenities and to capture views into and out of the Park. The remaining facades are clad in curtain walling and timber sheet lining.

Designed as a pair, each kiosk's cladding (Siberian Larch) has a different finish to its exterior. Blossom Square Kiosk is finished in a light white preservative. Parkside Kiosk has an entirely charred finish, derived from the centuries old Japanese practice of Yakasugi, which reflects both the materials of the Park and makes reference to the bombing that took place during WWII.



**Blue House, Hackney**

Client

**Private**

Architect

**FAT**

Structural Engineer

**Elliott Wood**

Contractor

**Matt Blake**

Completion date

**2004**

The new building is a two-bedroom town house which incorporates an office space connected into the house, and a separate flat for rent.

The house in Garner Street refines an idea from an earlier competition entry for a billboard house whose premise was that the front facade would house advertising posters which would help to pay for its construction.

The front facade consists of a three-storey block with three rows of small windows at the top, making it look like a typical, if under scaled, office block. Superimposed on this block is a billboard which takes the shape of a house and extends to form the wall to the garden.

The front facade is deliberately "innocent" in appearance - a reaction against the abstraction of most so-called "serious" architecture. It contains a number of distortions which undercut its apparent innocence. These include its scale, a number of abstract cut-outs and additions, which reinforce its sense of being a two dimensional object, and manipulations of window sizes which subtly distort the sense of unity.

The building is of traditional cavity wall construction and is clad in a fire-proof, wood imitation, cement fibre board - a material which adds to the sense of unreality that the house conveys.





**London Centre for  
Nanotechnology**

Client

**UCL Estates**

Architect

**Feilden Clegg Bradley**

**Architects LLP**

Structural Engineer

**Buro Happold**

Services Engineer

**Buro Happold**

QS

**Edmond Shipway &  
Partners**

Contractor

**Bluestone**

Completion Date

**2005**

The London Centre for Nanotechnology is a joint enterprise between UCL and Imperial College and aims to put British science at the centre of this emerging field. This eight storey building on a site at 17 – 19 Gordon Street on the UCL campus contains a range of laboratory and office facilities.

The base is clad in Portland Stone with large glazed openings and white clay bricks facing the courtyard elevation. The central portion consists of a 'layered' facade made up of an inner stainless steel rainscreen-clad wall with fixed lights within, steel maintenance walkways between and an outer vertical perforate stainless steel 'brise soleil'. The upper two storeys are glazed full height with vertical solar shading fins.

The building seeks to exploit the material characteristics of the double skin environmental façade to create a 'moiré pattern' – moiré patterns being one of the tools first used by scientists to measure particles at the atomic scale.

The building fabric and services are designed to give laboratories a high degree of protection from electromagnetic interference, vibration and interruption to electricity supply.

The completed scheme provides one of the world's leading research facilities in the field of nanotechnology.



**Light House, Notting Hill**

Client

**Private**

Architect

**Gianni Botsford**

**Architects Ltd**

Structural and

Environmental Engineering

**Arup**

Cost Consultants

**Tim Gatehouse**

**Associates Ltd**

Shell Contractor

**Heery International Ltd**

Party Wall Surveyor

**Roger Rawlinson**

**Associates**

Landscape Architects

**Luszczak Associates Ltd**

Client Representative

**Malcolm Reading**

**Associates**

Completion date

**October 2005**

The Light House is a new house on an enclosed back-land site in Notting Hill, London, for a family of four who wanted the new house to be connected and interactive by being more horizontal. The site is heavily overlooked and overshadowed on the south and west elevations and it was critical to maintain privacy, whilst optimising daylight and sunlight penetration into the house. Cultural opacity in the UK demands sun and daylight to enter the site, to be redistributed, to be contained and to change perceptions about life in London.

The 'sky facade', the only visible facade, was seen as an environmental moderator, filtering sunlight and daylight through layers of transparency and

opacity. Three different densities of fritting were allocated to the roof panels according to criteria from the rooms below. Solar optimised terraces and gardens created internal courtyard volumes into which the surrounding spaces face.

The house is naturally ventilated, which is controlled by means of thermal mass, shading and air movement. The roof, although made of 300m<sup>2</sup> of glass, has a highly effective solar coating, three different frit densities to the glass, electrically operated blinds, and opening vents, all of which contribute to a high level of control of the internal environment by the occupants.





**Offices, 155-171 Tooley Street, Southwark**

Client

**More London**

**Development Ltd**

Architect

**Hawkins Brown**

Cost Consultant

**EC Harris**

Structural Engineer

**Adams Kara Taylor**

Services Consultant

**RHB Partnership**

Completion date

**2008**

The existing terrace of buildings located along Tooley Street is one of the last remaining plots of More London to be developed. The buildings lie within a conservation area and remain a fragment of a former streetscape. The proposal intends to provide a transitional element that joins rather than separates the new More London development with the existing locality. It is intended that the mixture of the old and new building elements complement each other and present an engaging presence to the new streetscape.

The curtain walling on the new build element of the scheme has been designed as a flush glazed system in an irregular pattern with a combination

of glazing and anodised aluminium panels. The solid, new build element to the rear consists of anodised panels concealing service cores. The facade breaks down as it wraps around the building with glazing making up the majority of elevations to the South and North elevation, thus maximising the light within flexible workspace. The glass consists of a combination of clear and coloured glass with varying degrees of transparency achieved through use of coloured film interlayers. The colour palette was developed using contextual colours from Tooley Street and the surrounding More London Development. At night it is envisaged that the combination of lighting and colour will act as a beacon along Tooley Street.



**103 Greenwood Road,  
Hackney**

Client

**Tim Fowkes**

Architect

**Lynch Architects**

Structural Engineer

**Rodrigues**

Completion Date

**2006**

A new three storey house sits between two tall 'Georgian' terraces in Dalston. A sustainable approach has been adopted to the design of the structure and the cladding, and the house is designed to complement its historic context.

The facade on the two upper floors, above the brick base, is made of vertical oak boarding which acts as a rain screen. The use of oak boarding gave the opportunity to wrap the building in a continuous skin, rather than create a distinct front and rear as is the case with the existing terrace houses, thereby creating an appropriate end to the terrace.

The architects have loosely imitated the proportions and mouldings of the

existing street fenestration and the vertical striation of the facade helps to make a quite squat house appear slender and tall. The balcony and windows are framed with projecting oak reveals that mimic the stone window mouldings of the existing terrace. Ventilation to the rooms is provided via hinged oak panels beside the fixed glazing. The southwest corner of the building is lined with translucent white glass panels that are dappled by shadows of trees on sunny afternoons.

The detailing of the cladding also gives the front facade, which does not receive sunlight for most of the day, a more textured quality, emphasised when the early morning sun shines on it obliquely.





**17 Old Nichol Street,  
Bethnal Green**

Client

**DAD Developments Ltd**

Architect

**Maccleanor Leavington**

Structural Engineers

**Techniker Ltd**

Services Engineers

**Freeman Beasley**

Completion date

**2003**

17 Old Nichol Street is an infill site between two warehouses which is clearly recognisable as a piece of industrial history with its old stock brick, loading doors climbing up the facade and a projecting lifting beam at the top.

The brief for this residential project has evolved over time: new opportunities arose with the purchase of the neighbouring 19 Old Nichol Street. The internal layout of number 17 was amended in order for one common staircase to serve both buildings and the pair previously perceived as “close relatives” were combined into one building. Although number 19 was subsequently sold on, the internal layout of number 17 remained the same.

The rear facade is timber stud, clad in lapped sheets of resin-protected timber panels. This is only punched with windows in particular locations allowing for privacy to bedrooms. The front façade consists of large timber framed windows resting on steel channels spanning from party wall to party wall, bringing light into the deep plans of the living room spaces and reflecting a contemporary industrial atmosphere to the setting. The large timber windows with flush glazing units appear as abstract floating figures along the street and take inspiration from the configuration and the proportion of the façade of 19 Old Nichol Street, making them read as a pair.



**55 Baker Street,  
Westminster**

Client

**London & Regional**

Architect

**Make Architects**

Structural Engineers

**Expedition Engineering**

M&E

**Blyth & Blyth**

Contractor

**HBG Construction**

Project management

**Tweeds**

Lighting artist

**Jason Bruges Studio**

Mask subcontractors

**Seele**

Completion date

**2007**

This development radically transforms an unremarkable 1950s office building on Baker Street into a striking new urban amenity. In addition to providing increased office accommodation, it offers a mix of uses enhancing activity and interest at street level by introducing a substantial new public space to the streetscape.

The transformation of the building is expressed by three glass 'masks' which span the voids between the existing blocks to create a unified but dynamically modulated new facade. The masks situated at either end of the facade provide double-skinned glazing for the new office floor space, while the central mask encloses a seven-storey atrium, accessed directly from street level and open to the public.

The folding of the roof section of the central mask also serves an important structural purpose. The angled planes offer the most efficient means of spanning the distance between the existing fingers of accommodation to create the enclosure required for the new development. At street level, the convex folded form of the central mask creates a generous entrance canopy.

The faceted facade of the central mask is glazed with a system of overlapping panes of frameless glass, each of which is diamond-shaped and measures approximately 3.3m high by 1.5m across. Inspired by the glazing typically used in nineteenth-century glass houses, this scale effect enhances the play of light across the facade and lends it additional articulation.





**Gellatly Road, Lewisham**

Client

**Private**

Architect

**Mangera Yvars**

**Architects**

The site is a narrow infill space currently occupied by a single storey garage in the Brockley Conservation Area. The scheme is slotted between a local shop and an existing Victorian house and is 2.5m wide at its narrowest point. In order to provide as much usable space as possible, the scheme is organized around a structural and service 'island' acting as the core for the house. The floor, walls and roof of the house are hung and cantilevered off the island, eliminating the need for perimeter structure and freeing valuable internal space.

The upper volume is cantilevered and clad in a super reflective metallic skin. With the absence of any obvious structural support, the upper volume will

appear as a cloud-like space floating over the house. The faceted cladding will reflect the sky, providing an indication of weather, season and time, and acting as a counterpoint to an otherwise harsh inner city environment.

The ground floor lounge is set under a double height triangular lightwell to roof level, giving the sensation of height in a small space. The second bedroom upstairs is bathed in light from a 'light shaft', which projects to roof level.

The architects are currently working with a national newspaper to provide a digital newsheet as the new elevation for the neighbouring shopfront.



**House and Gallery,  
Portobello Road**

Client

**Private**

Architect

**Meadowcroft Griffin  
Architects**

Structural Engineers

**David Warren**

M&E

**Michael Popper**

**Associates**

QS & Party Wall Surveyor

**Robert Martell & Partners**

Environmental

Consultant

**WSP Environmental**

Completion date

**2003**

This new building at 319 Portobello Road offers a new insight into contemporary urban living as part of the context of the vibrant street market. The house occupies the site of an original end-of-terrace shop and residence, found to be beyond repair. The new building consists of a gallery/shop on the lower two floors with a private residence above.

The design articulates the tension between the role of dwelling as private oasis and the need for the client to retain public prominence as shop window for his affairs. This sense of two worlds meeting is articulated by the layering of glazed shop front screen and concrete enclosure on the front facade. Rough, textured concrete projects the presence of

landscape to the rear within the context of the street.

The integrity of the terrace has been preserved with a continuation of the rhythm of window openings on the front facade. Internally, spaces break the conventions of typical terraced house arrangements and respond to views across neighbouring gardens to the rear – a 'borrowed' landscape which gives a sense of space within a restricted site. Vertical ascent has been accentuated through a sequence of interlocking double height volumes and staircases which have been choreographed as a journey between views which provide glimpses of the surroundings and orientation between the market and landscape to the rear.





**25 Daleham Mews,  
Belsize Park**

Client

**Michelle Green**

Architect

**Moxon**

Structural Engineers

**Built Engineers**

Contractor

**Qube Developments  
(UK) Ltd**

Completion date

**2007**

The project provides additional space to a much loved mews house to accommodate the client's expanding family. The scheme is in the Belsize Conservation Area of North London and has the complexities of being 'landlocked' between adjacent properties as well as being located above a functioning mechanics garage.

Working with Built Engineers, the minimal and lightweight two storey addition is a combination of solid and transparent elements, wrapped with an untreated Cedar screen at upper level. The addition allows for access to a new full width extension at roof level, providing an additional 5 rooms to the property as well as a largely glazed double height space opening to a roof terrace.

The envelope is a combination of black rubber and glazing, with Western Red Cedar brise soleil screening at the upper level. The louvres inhibit solar gain in summer whilst the lower level glazing and large rooflights open completely to allow for an unhindered stack effect to ventilate the whole house.

The treatment of the new elements creates a modulated facade from outside, where transparent, obscured and opaque elements are suspended above retained brickwork. The goal was to create a distinctive and refined modification that nonetheless retained the compact domestic charm and delight of the Mews. On the inside the arrangement allows for far views across North London but simultaneously respects the privacy of the adjoining properties.



## **Lowe Building, Haggerstone**

Client

**Private**

Architect

**muf**

Structural Engineers

**Atelier One**

Project Manager

**Savant**

Completion date

**2008**

This five storey new build project is composed of two storeys of studios and a café with three floors of apartments over and terraces sunk into a planted roof. The first two storeys are a concrete frame with solid timber construction above. The site is on the south side of the Regents Canal and therefore opposite the towpath. The canal side elevation is treated as the principle façade. Generally, in this part of London, the south side of the canal is privately owned and inaccessible to the public. In this scheme, access (both views in and pedestrian) is made by locating the entrance to the building at the canal edge and cutting a route through at an angle.

The selection of facade materials reflects this reorientation to the canal. The canal and street elevations are clad in mathematical tiles. The tiles are glazed on the facades facing the canal and are matt on those to the street. The architects selected these materials because they are both a repetitive and uniform treatment. At the same time, the handmade tiles and inconsistencies of the glazes can co-exist in this singular treatment of the envelope.

An interest in revisiting ubiquitous and traditional materials by introducing the hand-made and the non-uniform at the scale of the facade is a theme found in many of muf's projects.





**Peabody Trust Housing,  
Silvertown**

Client

**The Peabody Trust**

Architect

**Niall McLaughlin**

**Architects**

Contractor

**Sandwood Construction**

**Ltd**

Completion date

**2004**

In 2001 the Peabody Trust held a design competition called '*Fresh Ideas for Low Cost Housing*' in which competitors were asked to consider innovative ways of designing apartments on a low budget. The site is the old industrial zone of Silvertown in East London. NMLA won the competition and developed the design with the Peabody Trust and the builders, Sandwood Construction Ltd.

Low-cost housing often uses modular timber frame construction involving considerable prefabrication. This industrialised building process is usually wrapped in a conventional material like brick or tiles to give a traditional appearance. The architects investigated a variety of wrapping designs and

materials, and working with the artist Martin Richman, a beautiful envelope for the apartments was developed.

The French physicist Augustin Fresnel explained the colourful iridescence of dragonflies, peacocks and films of oil, caused by light reflecting off different layers within a material resulting in interference patterns. The artist found a 'dichroic' film by 3M and the architects designed a layered construction in which the film selectively reflects and transmits light to generate shifting colourful patterns.

The 12 apartments have two bedrooms, a bathroom, a kitchen and a large, south-facing living room to give views of the Millenium Dome.



**Moorfields Eye Hospital**  
**The Richard Desmond**  
**Children's Eye Centre**

Client

**Moorfields Eye Hospital**  
**NHS Foundation Trust**

Architect

**Penoyre & Prasad LLP**

Contractor

**Balfour Beatty**

**Construction Ltd**

Services Engineers

**Arup**

Structural Engineers

**Price & Myers**

QS

**Turner & Townsend**

**Cost Management**

Planning Supervisor

**Currie & Brown**

Completion date

**2007**

The new centre makes a bridge between the outstanding clinical expertise of Moorfields Eye Hospital and the research prowess of the adjacent Institute of Ophthalmology to provide a world class facility for treating eyes of people from 6 months to 18 years of age. On a very tight site, outpatients clinics, a day surgery unit, research facilities and short stay patient/parent hostel, framed by ceramic granite, 'float' above a public ground floor cafe, shop, and computer arcade.

The soaring main facade is glazed curtain walling with folded aluminium louvres forming a filagree in front. The projecting bay on the third floor is clad in aluminium rain screen coloured

bright orange. The east elevation has a ceramic granite finish with circular glazed openings set within it. These 'lenses' give views at various levels internally for both children and adults as they move through the building. The remaining elevations have a calm and restrained appearance, with a palette of brick, render and aluminium-framed windows.

The aluminium solar control louvre blades of the facade were inspired by the idea of birds arrested in mid-flight.





## **Supercontextualism**

Client

**Private**

Architect

**Piercy Connor**

Broadening the spectrum of 'site analysis' - beyond the boundaries of mundane description - and the enjoyment of the uncovered information - beyond a box-ticking exercise in site sensitivity - is the basis of Supercontextualism.

Supercontextual site analysis, as opposed to garden-variety site description, requires a discernment and subjectivity that differs greatly from passively recording only the most prosaic and indisputable site information. A broader definition of what a site actually is; physically, culturally, and economically; prompts focused and necessarily prejudiced investigation into vernacular highlights and habits, uncovering unique characteristics.

These broader analyses are filtered for suggestions of potential reinterpretations and reapplications which in turn shape a formal and functional language that is intrinsically tied to the locality.

The most interesting characteristics of a site may lie in subjectively illuminated visual clues, objectively imposed physical constraints or witnessed programmatic/behavioral patterns. Often the architectural profit lies in superimposing and cross-referencing various analytical sets of data which at first glance may appear to be unrelated or even contradictory.



**The Straw House,**  
**Islington**  
Client  
**Sarah Wigglesworth and**  
**Jeremy Till**  
Architect  
**Sarah Wigglesworth**  
**Architects**  
Project Management and  
Main Contractor  
**Koya Construction Ltd**  
Structural Engineers  
**Price and Myers**  
Acoustic Consultant  
**Paul Gillieron Acoustic**  
**Design**  
Completion date  
**2004**

This project explores meanings of domesticity and work in the 21<sup>st</sup> century. It uses the Surrealist technique of strange conjunctions to challenge our assumptions and expectations about the meaning of things. Just as the spaces of the building swap spatial typologies, so the facades swap identities with their 'other'. Moreover it aims to posit a new aesthetic for ecological architecture by the eclectic way it uses different types of materials including farm waste, recycled products as well as both high and low technologies.

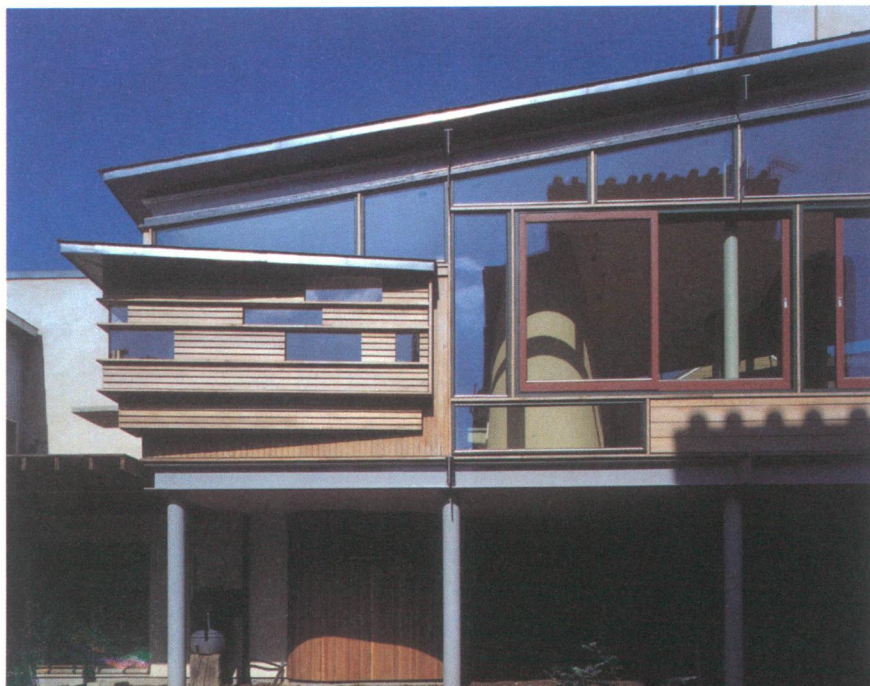
As a self-build project intended to encourage others toward experimentation, the architects were keen to use products and materials that could be built using

simple, easy-to-learn techniques and in so doing challenge the notion of the 'expert'. Materials were selected on the basis of a set of criteria including embodied energy, recyclability, transportation distances and toxicity.

Sandbags: a technique developed in response to the office's proximity to the noise of trains on the main railway line 4 metres away.

Straw: a waste product from farming, this is both the substance and the surface of the north walls and those surrounding the bedrooms.

Cloth: the cladding to the office signifies domesticity. Consisting of a series of bands of padded rainscreen, it resembles upholstery or quilted clothing.





**Studio House,  
Hackney**

Client

**Private**

Architect

**Sergison Bates  
architects LLP**

Structural Engineers

**Greig Ling Consulting  
Engineers**

Completion date

**2004**

Located in a previously semi-industrial area of East London which is now dense and fragmented in character, the site occupies a piece of derelict land on a street of light industrial buildings and large pre-war housing blocks. The complex requirements of the brief – two apartments, a studio for an artist and a space for a joint therapy practice – suggested a form that did not immediately announce its purpose. It can be read as an urban house or a small industrial building.

External claddings and windows are detailed as added layers to the framed structure and become visibly more complex by the misalignment of structure and cladding and the use of semi-reflective glass that cover solid and void

alike. Brick was chosen as the primary cladding, a material which is common to the modest architecture of London. However, in this situation it is treated and detailed as a coarse wrapping with a mortar slurry washed over the surface. The construction method adopted on two walls was a brick slip system where thinly cut bricks, bonded to rebated strips are slotted together in the manner of ship-lap boarding to achieve a surface cladding.

The contradictory character of the wall, as both monolithic and delicate, gives it a quiet awkwardness and imperfection which connects it with the flawed heroism of nearby industrial buildings. In this way the building adds to the realism of the city condition 'as found'.



**Three Small Houses,  
Chance Street**

Client

**Rebecca Collins**

Architect

**Stephen Taylor**

**Architects**

Contractor

**Charter Construction**

**Plc**

Structural Engineer

**Paul Hardman**

Service Engineer

**Intengis**

QS

**Measur**

Completion date

**2005**

This project for three houses occupies a small infill site in London's East End neighbourhood of Bethnal Green.

The site of this project was, in the 18<sup>th</sup> Century, one of the densest and poorest parts of the East End, characterized by workers cottages occupying tightly packed urban neighbourhoods. These cottages defined hard-edged, intimate streets, generally referred to as 'turnings'.

Each of the three houses is of single room depth and is built upon the site of a former print factory constructed after the war. Seen as a piece of urban repair this project acknowledges and celebrates the 'patchwork city' to which it belongs - its brick facade provides the missing

fragment of the urban block of which it is part.

The building references the 18<sup>th</sup> century small London house typology that once occupied the site and the level of urban intensification that came with them. Themes of compact urban dwelling are explored.

Flat fronted and abutting its adjacent neighbours, the nature of these dwellings lies firmly in support of the 'street' and continues to define the hard edge intimate character of Chance street.





**Cutty Sark Visitor  
Centre, Greenwich**  
Client

**Cutty Sark Trust**

Architect

**youmeheshe** with

**Grimshaw**

Structural Engineer

**Buro Happold**

Services Engineer

**WSP**

Cost Consultant

**Walfords**

Scheduled completion date

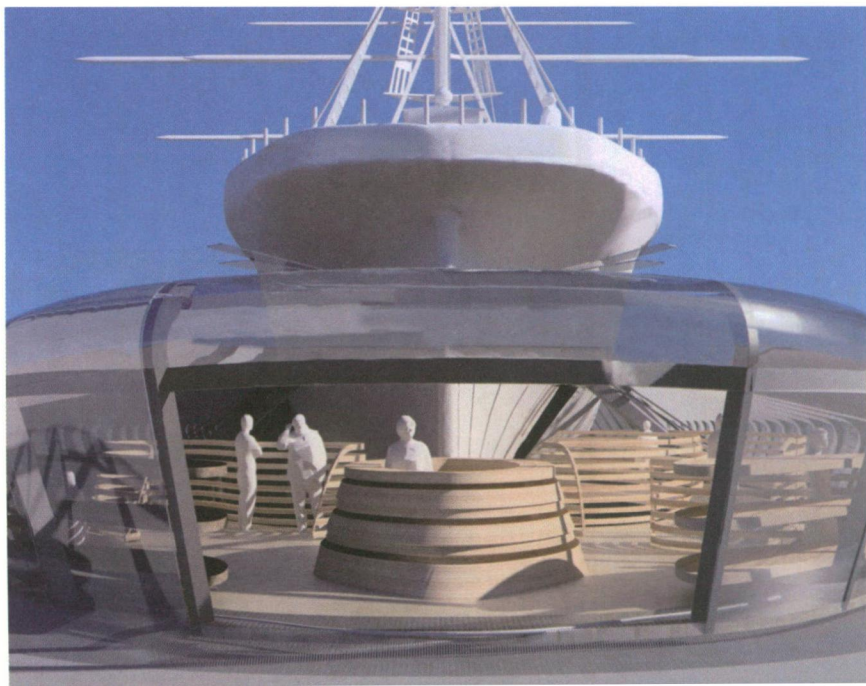
**2010**

On 21<sup>st</sup> May 2007, one quarter of the way through a remarkable project of conservation and reanimation, The Cutty Sark was subject to a devastating fire - a fire so intense that the two remaining decks were completely destroyed and elements of the iron frame left buckled and warped. The Cutty Sark Trust is now appealing for help in order to recover this project.

The project team will employ advanced technology available for a project of this scale and importance, without unnecessary innovation. There are three areas of architectural intervention: the canopy, the structure and the dry berth.

The scheme uses a structural mechanism that lifts the hull above the dry berth in which she currently resides, generating 1000m<sup>2</sup> of space to house a new museum. The engineered timber structure provides a flowing surface, reminiscent of the vortices of water that would have appeared around the hull when the Cutty Sark was at sea.

A geometrically and structurally complex glass roof has been designed using parametric CAD tools to allow a tight fit installation between two very different existing geometries: the berth and the hull. The ability of glass panels to be mechanically curved on site allows an affordable solution to the creation of a double curved surface through use of a greater ratio of flat panels.



## **Credits**

### **The exhibition has been curated and designed by Newtechnic**

Andrew Watts  
Yasmin Watts  
Laura Bradley  
Ying Jin  
Isabella Percy

### **Exhibition and catalogue produced by The Building Centre**

Andrew Scoones  
Jackson Hunt  
Meghan Fernandes

### **Exhibition Structure**

Design: Jackson Hunt  
Construction: A D Baker

### **Additional Design Assistance**

Malcolm Frost

### **Exhibition Printing**

IGMA Imaging

### **Catalogue Printing**

James Pool & Sons

### **Public Relations**

Caro Communications

The book, *Scratching the Surface: New London Facades* by London Architects is edited by Andrew Watts, published by Springer and is available in The Building Centre Bookshop.

The exhibition was opened by Elliot Lipton, Managing Director of First Base, on Wednesday 27 June 2007.



## **Morning Talks**

### **Wednesday 4 July**

Potters Field Kiosks  
Deborah Saunt, DSDHA

### **Wednesday 11 July**

Bellingham Young Peoples Centre & Lloyd Park School  
Brian Vermeulen, Cottrell & Vermeulen

### **Wednesday 18 July**

Peabody Trust Housing in Silvertown  
Cany Ash, Ash Sakula

### **Wednesday 25 July**

Herringbone Houses  
Alison Brooks, Alison Brooks Architects

### **Wednesday 1 August**

Cutty Sark Visitor Centre  
Simon Beames, youmeheshe

### **Wednesday 8 August**

Clapham Manor School  
Philip Marsh, dRMM

### **Wednesday 15 August**

Speaker to be confirmed

### **Wednesday 22 August**

Creating New Facades with Digital Techniques  
Andrew Watts, Newtechnic

All morning talks are free to attend but booking is essential.  
To book a place please visit [www.newlondonarchitecture.org/talks.php](http://www.newlondonarchitecture.org/talks.php)

## Showcase Sponsors

This exhibition is also being supported by a display of products that make a significant contribution to facade design, engineering and the environment.



**ParaClad™** is an external cladding facade panel system designed to improve both thermal and acoustic insulation to existing buildings where space is at a premium. The panel consists of a revolutionary Aspen Aerogel insulation core laminated to recycled and recyclable PVC facings. ParaClad™ is a trademark of Parasol Panel Systems.



**Dobel Nova** is one of a new generation of sustainable coatings from Dobel. It is friendly to the environment, it contains no isocyanurates, no PVC, and when it is recycled no dioxins are released. Exhibited is Euroclad's new half round profile in Dobel Nova with details manufactured by Euroclad Facades Ltd.



**Hanson's Wonderwall** brick cladding system can be installed faster than traditionally built masonry, to high levels of quality and finish and is suitable for use as a durable, decorative and thermal insulating finish to external vertical walls. Existing or new build structures that use masonry, dense concrete, modular units, timber or metal frames are suitable for fixing to.

**Hanson's LockClad** is an external terracotta cladding for commercial, industrial and residential developments, providing both a rainscreen and a decorative terracotta façade. LockClad is suitable for most types of construction, including concrete, timber and steel framed buildings, and can accommodate curved facades, corners, angles, windows and door openings.



**Hunter Douglas** presents the Luxalon QuadroClad Ventilated Rainscreen Facade System. The system incorporates panels, windows, doors and louvres manufactured from pre-coated, lightweight recyclable aluminium. The open joints allow for natural ventilation and enable the fixing of sun control elements onto the track support system.





**Techrete** is a leading company in the design, manufacture and supply of architectural precast cladding, to the Irish and U.K. construction markets. The company offers a complete precast solution, providing services ranging from design through manufacture to erection.



**Marley Eternit Ltd** are at the forefront of fibre cement technology and the design, development and supply of lightweight decorative rainscreen cladding. Strength, lightness, durability, workability, ease of installation and outstanding fire performance determines a range suitable for both refurbishment and new build projects and aligns well with modern methods of construction.



**Alumasc Exterior Building Products** manufacture a complementary ranges of lightweight and traditional renders, along with market-leading external wall insulation systems provide long lasting and architecturally vibrant solutions for every building context



**Bell & Webster Concrete Limited** have developed a 'Fast Build' method of constructing rooms for many varied projects. The method of construction was developed to service the rooms market, suitable for Hotels, Student Accommodation, Prisons, MOD Barracks and general accommodation blocks.

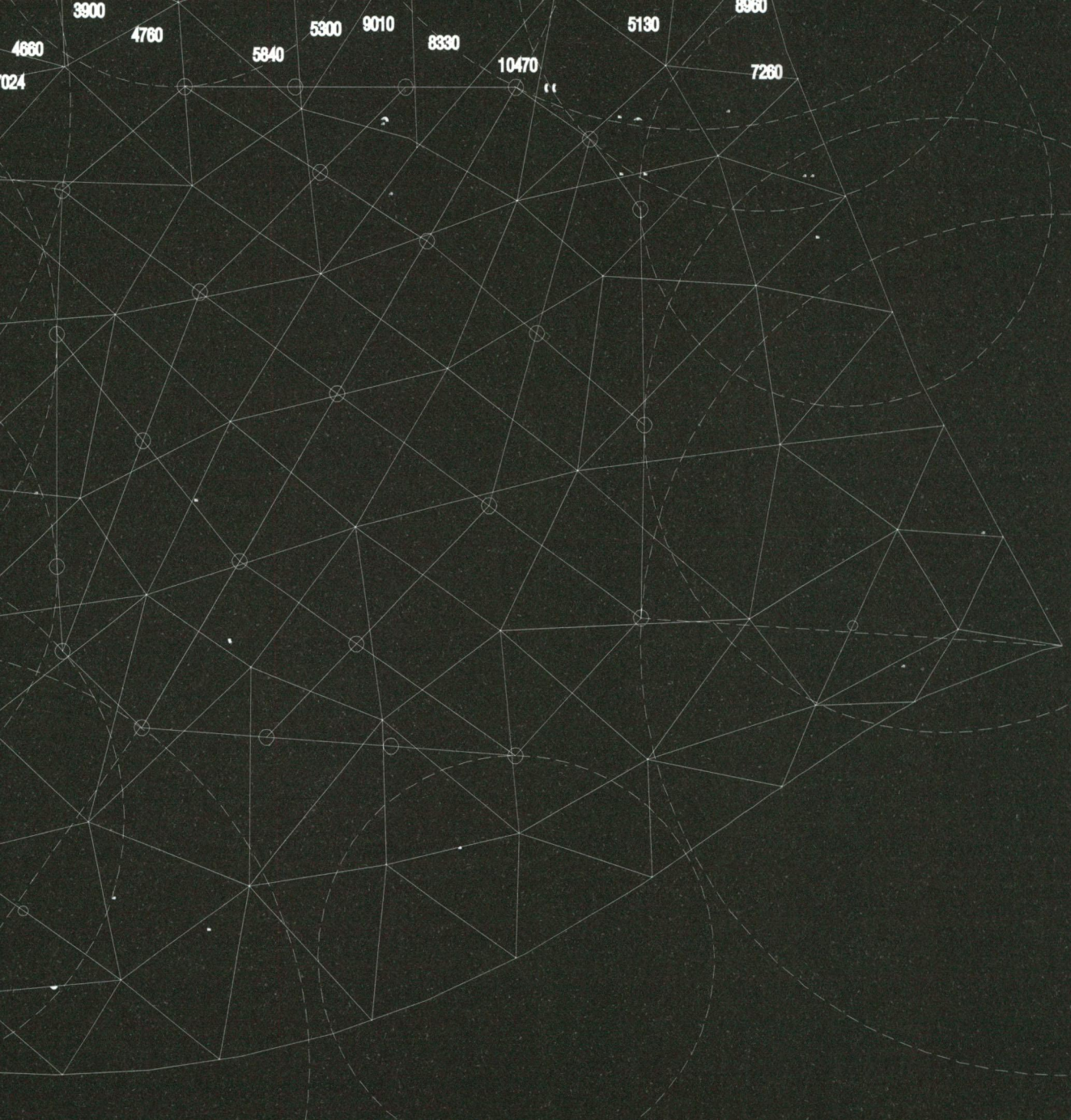
Fast Build rooms are constructed using precision factory engineered precast concrete components; each designed and manufactured to suit individual projects. Being precast concrete, Fast Build rooms are durable, have good acoustic values, virtually maintenance free and are very quick to erect offering the Client a Fast Build room occupancy programme.

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