

**DON'T
MOVE
IMPROVE!**

nla

2021 EDITION

CELEBRATION OF HOME

FEATURING

**LONDON'S 100
MOST INSPIRING
SCHEMES**

START YOUR
PROJECT TODAY

**ADVICE FROM
THE EXPERTS**



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NLA is an independent membership organisation for everyone with an interest in London's built environment, with a clear purpose to improve the quality of people's lives by making London a better place to live, work and visit.

We engage the broadest possible audience across government, business and the public to educate, challenge, connect and drive positive change.

NLA's activities include research, events, publications, exhibitions, walking tours, learning programmes, websites and social media platforms, awards and competitions, the world's largest architecture festival and public galleries that feature large interactive scale models of London.

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DON'T
MOVE
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2021 EDITION

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A CELEBRATION OF HOME

This year, our homes have played a bigger role in our lives than ever before. With so much time spent inside we have asked a lot more from our domestic spaces; from office to gym, from school to studio, home has been the place to eat, sleep, work, learn, relax, and play.

Don't Move, Improve! celebrates the homeowners and architects pushing boundaries to create spaces that improve liveability of homes and contribute to London's rich character. Across the programme we explore projects that show us innovation, creativity, daring and careful consideration of materials, as well as a clear strategy for the efficiency and longevity of the buildings.

It's fascinating to see how design trends evolve over time. This year, bold use of colour and pattern remains an ongoing theme. Yet, we've also seen a lot more projects heroing raw materials and finishes, with bare plaster walls, pigmented concrete and exposed interior brick.

The full impact of the work-from-home revolution is still to be seen and we look forward to witnessing how the projects being developed now will respond to these changing work patterns in the coming years' entries. Alongside this, a renewed energy behind the green agenda is set to inspire new creative solutions to greening our homes and reducing waste, an area that is only just taking hold within residential scale architecture.

We can't wait to be able to get people back together. Our year-round *Don't Move, Improve!* programme grows every year. With design surgeries, social evenings, workshops, product displays and exhibitions, we look forward to being able to invite you back to discover and explore the exciting renovation projects being developed across London.

Amy Till, Programme Director, NLA



House Recast by Studio Ben Allen. Photography: French+Tye

ABOUT DON'T MOVE, IMPROVE!

Don't Move, Improve! is an annual programme and competition that encourages great design in everyday life and celebrates the newest and most innovative home improvement projects from across London..

This magazine includes all 100 featured projects of *Don't Move, Improve!* 2021, highlighting the winning and shortlisted projects with exclusive insights from industry experts on emerging trends and styles.

THE COMPETITION

The annual competition is open to practices and homeowners who have carried out extensions on top of, underneath and on the side or back of buildings, and/or interior insertions, conversions, and garden studios in Greater London in the past two years. This issue covers the period between September 2018–September 2020. Projects featured in the awards demonstrate:

- Exceptional innovation, creativity and originality
- High quality design that improves liveability of space and quality of life
- Cost-effectiveness
- Environmental consideration for the materials, efficiency and longevity of the building
- Contextual design that adds to London's character and the life of the surrounding neighbourhood

PRIZES

As well as the Overall Winner, this year we have awarded seven special prizes that celebrate emerging trends and key challenges within home improvement projects. These are:

- Unique Character Prize
- Urban Oasis of the Year
- Compact Design of the Year
- Best Project Under £100K
- Environmental Leadership Prize
- Materiality and Craftsmanship Prize
- WFH Design of the Year



JURY

Our jury includes experts from across the industry. This year's jury includes:

- KUNLE BARKER, Melt Property, COO
MELISSA DOWLER, Director, Bell Phillips Architects
TOM FOXALL, Head of Region for London and South East, Historic England
PETER MURRAY, Curator-in-chief, New London Architecture
KAREN STYLIANIDES, Editor, Grand Designs Magazine
AMIN TAHA, Director, Groupwork
TAMSIE THOMSON, Director, London Festival of Architecture
SEBASTIAN WOOD, Founder, Whitby Wood

PEER REVIEW PANEL

Our Peer Review Panel was introduced this year to independently assess all of the projects submitted to the awards. The Panel, made up of the winning architects from *Don't More, Improve!* 2020, selected the top 100 projects to be featured in this year's programme. The Panel includes:

- PHIL COFFEY, Director, Coffey Architects
CHRISTIAN DUCKER, Director, Gundry & Ducker Architecture
RICHARD KEEP, Principal, Richard Keep Architects
OLIVER LEECH, Founder, Oliver Leech Architects
MAN LUO, Architect and Co-founder, Manyu architects
MIKE SHAW, Director, Proctor and Shaw
SILVIA ULLMAYER, Founding Director, ullmayer sylvester architects

CONCRETE CONNECTIONS

HOUSE RECAST, HARINGEY

OVERALL WINNER



House Recast by Studio Ben Allen has been selected as the Overall Winner for the *Don't Move, Improve!* 2021 competition. The project pushes the boundaries of off-site fabrication for small-scale residential and creates a unique home specifically catering to the clients needs. The owners, a retired couple, approached Studio Ben Allen to reconsider the piecemeal rear facade of their end-of-terrace Victorian house in north London and to provide a new kitchen and two new bathrooms — one to be on the ground floor and accessible. Studio Ben Allen were encouraged by the client to use the project as a testbed for ideas. Led by architects Omar Ghazal and Ben Allen, they used the project as a vehicle to explore the limits of off-site fabrication — something that they felt was lacking in smaller-scale residential or alteration projects.





‘One of our favourite parts of the project is the use of light through the arched ceiling into the stunning kitchen.’

Russell and Alan, homeowners



House Recast is a spatially rich project to create an extension to a house in Haringey of in situ concrete made in Cornwall and craned into place, with all the time-savings that entails. But it is also a lesson in creating a ‘mature narrative’ through views that elegantly connect spaces, whilst celebrating materials at the same time.

The primary exterior structure is expressed in a light green hue, itself a test of using pigmented, graduating-patterned concrete, partially to hark back to some of the Victorian structures in the neighbourhood, and offset by a salmon coloured-infill. The rear elevation includes a louvred window to bring light into a new ‘Hammam-like’ wetroom pod. The bathroom has bespoke brass handles and spouts and stripped back ironmongery setting off a green bench plus a concrete

bathtub pre-cast in Kent. Another louvred ceiling alongside brings dappled light from above onto many interior fittings and floors also made of concrete in the kitchen, with a small hatch connecting kitchen to living room.

The kitchen leads up some steps into a ‘light touch’ dining room with a table designed by the practice. From here there are views back out through another arch to the garden and up to a second arched window above at the top of a new double-height volume and mezzanine reading ‘nook’. This in turn connects to the house’s main stair, whose balustrade was also designed off site as a kit of parts. The motif on this balustrade relates to the pattern on the concrete. Yet another new archway leads back from dining room to entrance hallway to living room and back through the ‘peephole’ hatch.





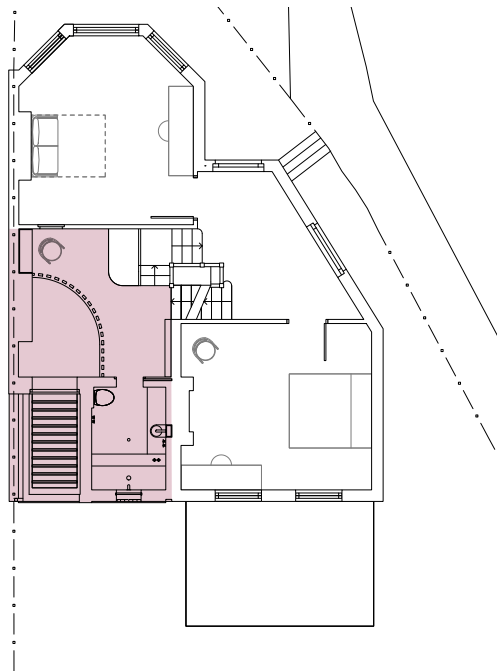
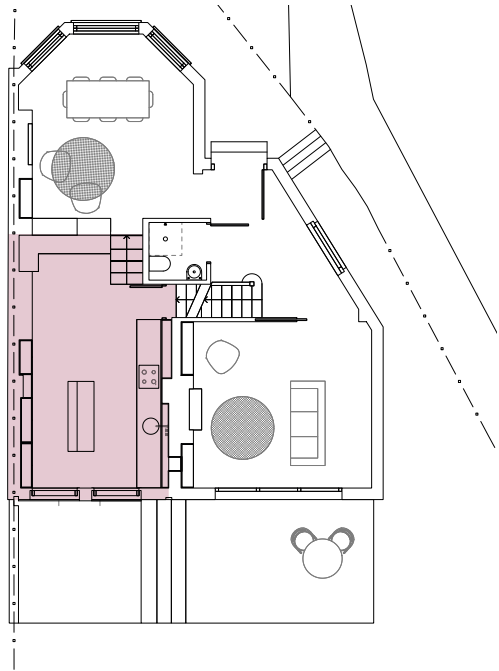
‘That was one of the themes; trying to create connection points throughout the house’, said architect Ben Allen. ‘The client gave us a lot of freedom. In our concepts we don’t talk about materials at all, but in this case we did talk about it being concrete, but we hadn’t investigated it. So it was more about making these connections with the double-height space and establishing both axial and diagonal views through the house’.

The scheme is also an exemplary case for a small, emerging practice investigating the advantages and limitations of using concrete — although building it in four days was ‘quite intense’. What is more, says Allen, it was also a way of furthering the practice’s interest in stretching clients’ budgets to what they did not think they could afford to build — in essence through using off-site and other ‘interesting ways of building things’. ‘It’s definitely been a journey’, Allen adds. □



ARCHITECT: STUDIO BEN ALLEN | STRUCTURAL ENGINEER: ENTUITIVE | LANDSCAPE CONSULTANT: DANIEL BELL LANDSKAP | CONCRETE SUPPLIER: CORNISH CONCRETE AND CONCREATIONS | PHOTOGRAPHY: FRENCH+TYE

New ground and first floor plans, highlighting the small but impactful extension



JUDGES’ COMMENTS

‘I love this house! It feels very much like a modern intervention, yet is completely in-keeping with the period of the property and original motives. I think they’ve played off that relationship really nicely, without falling into pastiche or cliché. It’s all that layering as you move through that is just so special.’ — Melissa Dowler