

KNOTT ARCHITECTS - DWELLINGS & STUDIOS, NORTH LONDON



LONDON OPEN HOUSE



Acting, in part, as their own clients has allowed Knott Architects to convert an early 20th century hand-bag factory into two dwellings, two artists studios and their own architectural studio.

The strategic changes to the existing 12 x 30m "shed" have generated profound alterations to the spatial nature of the whole site. However, for ecological and economic reasons much of the existing shell and structure remains intact.

As found, the factory was landlocked. A slated and glazed roof spanned what was once the back garden to a villa house on the road. An open mezzanine deck ran its full length, through the steel roof trusses.

A third of the roof along one side of the shed has been taken away to form a sheltered walled garden. The corresponding space on the opposite side of the shed became double height living areas mirroring the garden. Between these two spaces is the two-story accommodation of "boxed in" elements; bedrooms, bathrooms, and the like. The boxes are fragmented and penetrated in various ways allowing spatial and visual links through them. A unifying timber facade marks the new boundary between inside and outside.

The strong definition of spaces and the clear parameters for the composition of the façade, set an architectural rigor in which flexibility of expression could exist.

The arrangement of windows and doors in the timber elevation reflects various differing aspirations of the two families living in the houses. Each house also treats its large living space with quite different attitudes: One house choosing to bisect the space with the stair, the other house keeping the stair against the wall allowing one large living-dining space.

Materials have been kept simple. The polished concrete floor slab contains underfloor heating, the internal walls are finished in unpainted white plaster, the original brick walls are simply sand blasted, the timber facade is of oiled Douglas Fir. Knott Architects collaborated with artist Kerry Stewart to design the glowing perspex rod wall

Architects	Knott Architects
Engineers	Michael Baigent Orla Kelly
Contractor	Terry and Thompson Builders
Contract Sum	£180K
Completed	2000

