



Lacon Road

Award winning house

The brief was to provide the clients with a contemporary family house with a garden space. The house was to be flexible and sustainable, was to cost no more than £150,000 to build, and was to be built as quickly as possible.

The site, measuring 45.5m², is at the beginning of a Victorian residential street in inner London and had previously consisted of a derelict garage and adjoining single parking space. The site had a history of enforcement action on it, from being illegally used as a mechanics yard and a dumping ground. The design of the building evolved to encompass the above criteria and to act as a punctuation mark to the street. Materials were chosen to match with the neighbouring white rendered building but in a contemporary manner. The scale was to compliment the Victorian Terrace.

Planning was eventually granted following a committee hearing where a lot of positive local community support was shown. Planning constraints did not allow any clear windows in the East, South and North Elevation due to amenity concerns. Additionally, we did not want to embrace a view of an electricity sub-station which exists to the rear. We resolved this by using a large rooflight above the staircase to allow light into the depth of the building. This meant that the majority of the glazing is on the west elevation, apart from a small amount that wraps around to allow views of the market street. Due to the amount of glazing we had to have a very thermally efficient building. Because the footprint is so small and we required thin walls we

opted for a SIP panel construction. The east elevation became the service wall with all the underfloor heating pipework, electrical services, Ethernet and TV wiring.

The open plan ground floor consists of a kitchen, lounge and dining area overlooking an evening garden with an olive tree. A pyro-glass protected lobby, with adjoining WC, leads to a well-lit staircase to the first floor. Two double bedrooms, each with storage walls and one with an en-suite bathroom, are on the first floor. The main bathroom, also on the first floor, is surprisingly large and utilises all the available space with a bath and walk-in shower.

The top floor is light and airy, with sliding doors leading onto a balcony which looks out onto the Victorian 'bedknobs and broomsticks' roofscape of inner London. The floor is one large room, used as a study/lounge, although it could easily be turned into another bedroom. Out on the balcony a bamboo screen is employed as a planning condition to prevent overlooking while provision has been made for a wind generator.

The soil conditions and type of building required a raft-type foundation; this thermal mass is used to help heat or cool the building by the use of under-floor wet

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heating, with the large overhead skylight allowing cooling by opening in the summer. The structural insulated panels (SIP) are clad with a recycled glass Verotec board followed by a Sto render. No steel beams are used and the house is a 100% timber construction, the majority of which is recycled. The roof and guttering are zinc.

The SIP panels arrived on site on two articulated lorries on February 14th 2005 after a month of foundation work. The construction was erected by a team of local builders in three weeks with the help of a mini-crane. The clients moved in at the end of October 2005.

