

September 2009

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2c Kings Grove and Quay House Fact Sheet

History

- 2c Kings Grove was bought by the Architect Ken Taylor and the Sculptor Julia Manheim in February 1998 from Southwark Council.
- Negotiations for the sale took some time having to convince lenders to go with what was plainly not a straight forward semi. Additionally the sale could only occur if the Planning Dept. accepted a change of use from light industrial to live/work.
- Fortunately the local residents were very supportive of this new use. The council had previously let the building to a lighting manufacturer and before that a tropical food wholesaler.
- With the roof being in poor condition, i.e. leaking, uninsulated, made of cement asbestos sheets and rusty steel patent glazing bars, the building had remained empty for two and a half years, apart from a few squatters and a feature in an episode of "The Bill".
- Up until the early 70's the building was used as a milk depot. From the information that has been gathered we think that it was designed and built during World War II. With rationing in place the authorities presumably made a strategic decision that a milk depot was required in the area.
- From a 1914 map we know that the shops to the main Queens Rd had gardens. As these were probably not used a great deal the assumption was that the land was requisitioned. Over the years 2 Kings Grove to the North became the managers house and its garden concreted over to become a yard for charging up the milk floats at night.

Phase 1 ; Ground floor 2c Kings Grove

- Julia & Ken lived in the building while all the construction work went on, having had one of the old works loos taken out and replaced with a shower, the day they moved in.
- They commissioned the photographer Bob Berry to record the building when they moved in and subsequent work on phase 1
- Construction work started in the summer of 1998 with the initial building of the "beach huts" and the reglazing of the central rooflight with thermoclear insulated translucent panels. This was completed by Xmas of that year.
- Fitting out of the huts and the construction of the walkway followed in the summer of 1999. The initial works described as phase 1 include the area to the rear of the ground floor which still have the original steel trusses in place now painted a light grey.

Design Strategy

- The principal design idea was to try and keep the simple industrial "urban barn" qualities of the building, in terms of volume, texture and detail. This was not for nostalgic reasons but rather to reveal, as an archaeologist might enjoy, the previous uses, transformations and wear that the building had undergone.

- As the stripping back was undertaken there was a realisation that some of these materials could be reconfigured in the new design, adding to the sustainable agenda and budget constraints that were a given at the onset of the project. This principal of adding layers became a design idea or tool to introduce the new facilities that were required, namely a sculpture studio, architects office and residence.
- The work areas are more public towards the street with the residence addressing the small private courtyard to the rear. This was formed by taking off a leaking flat roof, the line of which can be seen imprinted into the white gabled party wall, a remnant of the building that was there before the newer Day Centre to the rear. The big sliding patio window replaces a solid brick wall.
- The major problem with the building fabric was that all the roofing materials were well past their sell by date. Bedrooms and a Bathroom were required.
- The old cold store in the building to the north had a heavyweight construction and only one small opening to the yard for thermal reasons. Sliding doors and windows were thus cut into it. Its strength however could be utilised to site the new accommodation on top, while replacing a quarter of the main buildings roof.
- The beach hut allusion came about by having to place them between the existing trusses to the main roof. They were then given their own independent roofs and could be similarly seen as little sheds in a big shed !
- The beach huts are clad in western red cedar boarding with an aluminium corrugated sheeting roof, while the steel walkway to get to them, has to find headroom through the middle of the trusses.
- The beach hut to the rear is built on a new timber joisted floor over the existing works toilets. The cold store had a wall knocked down internally to become a kitchen/dining area with a meeting room and library in the room nearer to the front door.

Work done in 2002

- The main space is reserved for the living area with underfloor heating pipes embedded in the polished concrete floor. This was pored over the existing floor, with insulation installed between.
- The bay beyond the dining area and stair is now the office with easy access to the meeting room and library. This is made of galvanised steel studwork frame exposed internally and clad with translucent sheeting which acts as a light lantern to the whole space at night.
- The roof of this structure is accessed from the walkway with a big undereaves store. This is clad in a recycled sculpture of Julias.
- The end wall with the silver insulation in place is again clad in opal thermoclear sheeting with 28 fluorescent tube lights behind.
- The north wall to the courtyard and seen internally as well is clad in the corrugated galvanised steel panels taken from the original roof. This material covers all the services for the full length of the cold store wall. Concealed strip lights highlight and frame the existing doors.
- All internal doors to the ground floor have been salvaged from the building and reused.

Phase 2; Quay House (The building to the Street)

History

- From the first sighting of the building it was recognised that a way to replace the poor repair of the roof was to build a building to the front. This could match the scale of the four sets of three storey semi detached houses of the mid 19th century adjacent to the 2c Kings Grove.

- The Planning Application for what became Quay House was submitted to Southwark Council in the Autumn of 1999 and eventually granted permission 23 weeks later in mid March 2000.
- Although planning applications are mandated to take 8 weeks it took longer as the planners we guess were nervous that the building didn't follow the London stock brick aesthetic of the building directly opposite which was given planning a year or so before. This was despite a number of letters from local residents, all of whom supported the Quay House scheme.
- Demolition work started in mid July 2000 with the roof being stripped along with the trusses. (see Quay2c postcard)
- As the old floors sloped substantially to slop out the old dairy depot, taking the roof off allowed the rain to drain to the front. With the careful use of sandbags Julia and Ken who lived in the rear of the building throughout, didn't get too wet despite the worst year of rain since 1706! This along with the petrol crisis did slow down progress. But the building was substantially sealed by Easter of 2001.

Design Strategy

- The decision was made to keep the front walls both for security reasons during construction and for the simple fact that it would have taken a heck of a lot of skips to get rid of all the brickwork. This didn't seem a sustainable option.
- There was a strong intention from the onset to try and continue the theme of layers from phase 1, continue the coastal allusions and maintain a sustainable agenda.
- A tabling strategy was thus evolved structurally avoiding the footings of the old walls which were not strong enough to withstand the weight of the new building.
- Long trench footings were dug 1.4 meters in from the south wall inside the building forming the common staircase to the flats in Quay House. To the north the big green columns are 1.4m outside the building forming a colonnade at ground floor level, like being under a pier. Above it provides balconies to the first floor flats.
- There are two flats on the first floor, Front (67m²) Back (52m²) and one on the top floor (145m²) with a big mezzanine giving views to Crystal Palace & Central London.
- The building is a steelwork frame with terracotta infill blockwork and softwood stained timber windows and sliding doors.
- The white walls complimenting the other rendered buildings in the street are of "Sto" render. This is a system that allows air blown polystyrene to be glued to a single skin of blockwork. Nylon mesh reinforcement is added with a topcoat producing a very durable highly insulated wall that doesn't require movement joints as it is super elastic.
- The charcoal wall to the north is imagined as a tough retaining wall but is the original wall covered in Sto with fairground coloured strip lights inserted.
- The green translucent sea coloured wall to the south sits lightly on the old brickwork wall of the milk depot. It is made of glass reinforced plastic and is the first one of its kind in this country. The material is usually used horizontally in industrial garage doors.
- Being south facing this wall encourages a certain amount of "greenhouse effect" so allowing the internal solid wall passive heat gains.
- The roof is of Aluminium with standing seams. This was thought about as a large silver wave to compliment the beach huts.
- The ground floor front of the building is clad in corten steel; an extremely durable material used on oil rigs and at the seaside etc. is self protecting leaving a rusty coloured patina.

M2 Gallery

- In April 2003 the m2 gallery was inaugurated with a show by the artist Jacqui Poncelet.
- The gallery is literally a 1m square window to the street that is half a meter deep. It is accessed to install work through the small meter room that contains the gas and electric meters that are part of the porch to the flats to Quay House.

- Ken & Julia have run seven shows a year since 2003 with a variety of work and artists, who are wonderful in their contribution of time and energy to the 24 hour gallery that is half public art work, part shrine, part curious adding to the Peckham landscape.
- Being between Camberwell and Goldsmiths Art schools that are nearby enables work from student summer shows to be shown in the summer.
- In the winter the 2m2 gallery comes into play. In the longer dark evenings this allows back projections on the window within the green wall to Queens Rd showing artists videos that relate to the m2 gallery on the pavement below.

Costs

- All costs are approx.
- Initial Cost of Milk Depot from Southwark Council Feb 1998 £77,000
- Phase 1 2c Kings Grove Rear House Construction Costs. £90,000
- Phase 2 Quay House Construction to shell with landscaping. £350,000

Consultants

Architects	Quay 2c; Julia Manheim, Colin Bennie, Ken Taylor
Structural Engineer	Cooper Associates; Martin Cooper
Environmental Consultant	Max Fordham & Ptns; Kin-Yoong Au-Yeong
Acoustic Consultant	Acoustic Dimensions; Nick Edwards
Planning Consultant	Peter Kyte Associates; Peter Kyte
Phase 1 Carpenters	Sean Hegarty & Peter Quinn
Phase 2 Foreman	Nick Swain & Michael Tye
Back Flat & Top Flat fit Outs	Michael Tye & Rod Vella
Photography Commissions	Phase 1; Bob Berry (In the office) Phase 2; Peter Fraser (In the Living room)