



There is a SURREAL FEEL of being at the seaside while being in PECKHAM

Clockwise from top right: Garden looking towards the 'beach huts' | Kitchen | The m² gallery space | Interior of top flat living space



lain derelict for two and a half years there was plenty of work to be done to transform the rundown building into its current incarnation. As well as the site of Taylor and Manheim's home, Quay House is now home to a further three self-contained apartments; Quay 2c, the multi-disciplinary design practice of architects, designers and artists set up and run by the pair; and even a small art gallery. (The studio, workshop and other apartments are all at the front of the building, ensuring a successful division for the couple between 'work' and 'home'.)

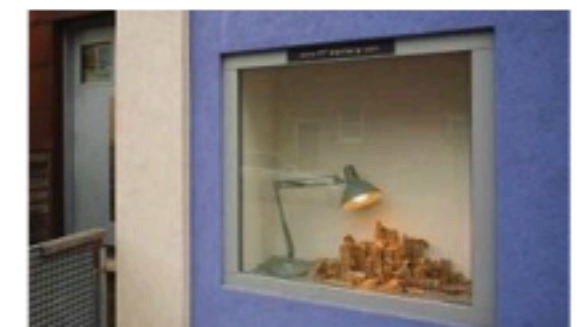
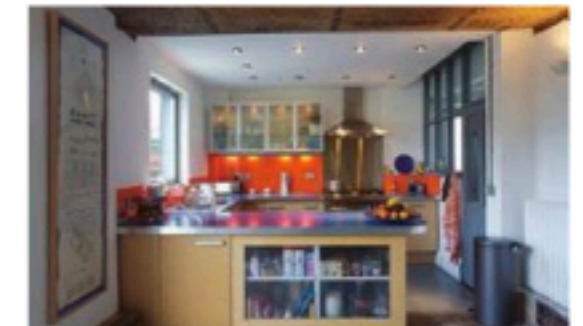
Part of the joy in undertaking the project for themselves was the opportunity to explore architectural concepts within their practice – as Taylor puts it, of "just being your own developer and not having a client". This allowed them to introduce playful ideas such as the four 'beach huts' erected on top of what had been the cold store towards the rear of the building, which would form the shell of the couple's home.

"There is a sort of surreal feel of being at the seaside while being in Peckham," Taylor laughs, delighted by the juxtaposition. As the project developed, so did their idea, leading to the large silver wave of the roof at the front of the building and the "green sea wall" to the side, while the coloured tube lighting that gives the building its nightly glow makes a nod to seaside fun fairs. All good fun, but practical too – the red cedar-clad beach huts, for example, came from a need to place them between the existing trusses

of the main roof. Further proof of the couple's playful-yet-pragmatic approach can be seen in the tiny m² Gallery, which sits at the front right-hand side of the building, echoing the porches of the 19th century terrace houses that run adjacent to Quay House. The room with all the electricity and gas meters sits behind here and "instead of just putting a blank wall to the street, we liked the idea of putting a metre-square gallery on the front of the meter room," he laughs.

The space is now home to a series of revolving exhibitions by local artists, with a special extended showcase planned for when Taylor and Manheim take part in the capital's annual Open House weekend in September. Make a note in your diary. ■

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HOMEHUTS

If you look hard enough, there are still great spots to build your own house. This former milk depot in south London has been turned into four homes, a workshop and a small art gallery – all inspired by the classic beach hut

WORDS CATHERINE JARVIE

Architect Ken Taylor's discovery of the site for Quay House, the disused milk depot in Peckham in south London that he and his partner Julia Manheim bought from the council 12 years ago, was one born more of happenstance than planning. "I was cycling regularly from my council flat in Brixton to lectures at Goldsmiths," he recalls. "I just kept passing it and saw the board outside and could immediately see the development potential."

Potential is an understatement. Having