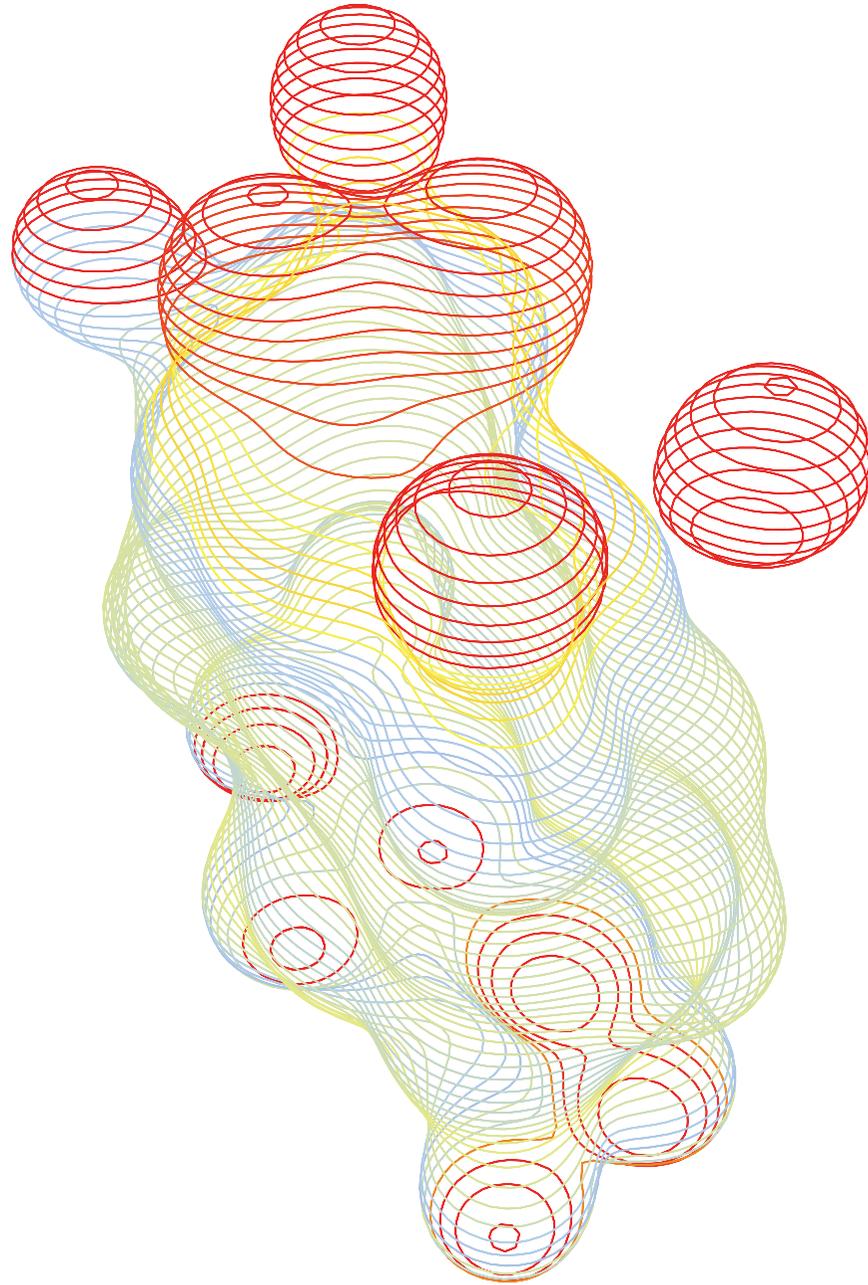


Simon Rickards



Selected Projects

Summer 2020

Introduction

I am a qualified Architect working in Private Residential and Development sectors, with a passion for design across all media and artistic disciplines. A graduate of the University of Bath and the Royal College of Art, my final thesis project explored the intersection of Architecture and finance in London's real estate market.

I have worked on a variety of projects in the UK and New Zealand, with particular expertise in concept design and planning stages. Previous experience in the publishing industry has helped me to develop an ability for clear communication across design disciplines, and to ensure excellent results to tight deadlines.

I believe in simple design and careful details, and I champion the use of technology to improve the quality of design. As a certified Passivhaus designer, I appreciate the need for a holistic approach across planning, design, and detailing to create comfortable spaces.

Outside of work I enjoy breaking down the technical nuances of Italian cooking, brewing coffee, Japanese martial arts, and national-level competition swimming.

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Hilder's Yard

Shortlisted competition entry for the rejuvenation and revitalisation of a Victorian warehouse in Sevenoaks – the winning project will be announced in late September

Sevenoaks, TN13
520 sqm
5,597 sqft

A self-initiated project entered into a RIBA Journal competition, I explored the use of oriented strand board (OSB) to provide new opportunities for a derelict building.

Competition Entry Text

The year is 2022. A cyclist, hairdresser and weaver walk into a coffee bar, in Sevenoaks' new public 'Yard' - their shared commercial area woven into an OSB framework.

The high-street and small-scale manufacturing are under existential threat from online shopping, lucrative high-end retail, chain businesses, and Brexit uncertainty. The 2020 pandemic dealt another blow, both economically and with trepidation over social mixing.

In a forward thinking strategy, Sevenoaks District Council implemented radical changes within the high-street to ensure quick regeneration post-lockdown. Working with a local young architecture practice, their key drivers were to promote responsible reimagining of existing buildings and rekindle business, alongside special measures to protect local heritage.

A cost-effective and sustainable infrastructure was sought to create retail accommodation. As a test bed, they chose a former garage, Hilder's Yard, on Lime Tree Walk.

Lime Tree Walk was an 1878 housing experiment to place local working-class people in an affluent area. Cottages, a coffee-house, and a hotel were developed alongside commercial units. The Yard was a rectilinear Victorian coach-makers workshop; latterly a carpet store, then vacant. The socially enterprising context made Hilder's Yard a choice site for the LPA's promotion of small businesses.

Social distancing, isolation and loss meant a more supportive commercial model appealed. The first phase saw Hilder's Yard converted for mixed-use. Businesses operate independently but within a balanced community, forging bonds and sharing creativity. Revenue generated subsidises the building maintenance, and contributes to the Yard's longterm, permanent rehabilitation.

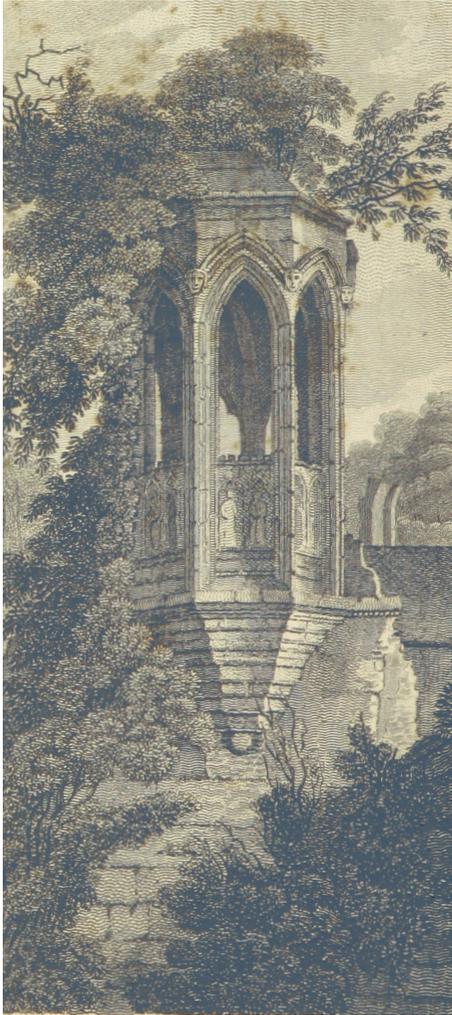
All defunct material was carefully removed and retained, leaving a buff brick envelope and metal roof structure. The deconstruction ethos was to keep reusable resources intact, which inhabitants were encouraged to creatively repurpose.

A pre-fabricated OSB framework was inserted and services established. Here, OSB is used to symbolise rejuvenation, subverting any connotation as boarding for declining buildings.

The Yard was fitted with communal connections to power and internet. The pandemic forced people to work in new environments; the information revolution equipped them to do so. Here, anything can happen in any space. Retail areas were customised by inhabitants, thus the OSB framework supports varied, flexible activities linked by a common material and scale.

The Yard's diverse offer remains the centre of community life. OSB facilitates its progressive function. The materials key characteristics make it possible to reinvent the garage through spontaneity and creative churn, within the key tenets of this development ideology – affordable, low-energy and time-efficient.

1



The romantic notion of the building as ruin in an urban context.

Image from British Library Flickr Commons / Cropped from original.



In 2020, the condition of Hilder's Yard presents the reality of a derelict building on the high-street.



From 2021 OSB heralds rejuvenation, subverting the image of a building in decline. No longer sacrificial, OSB features maintain the durability and industrial texture of the existing.

1 Progression from historic reference image, through current condition, to a visualisation of an element of the proposed intervention

1



1 Triptych produced to support the competition entry, they demonstrate the phases of occupancy in the life-cycle of the building.



Mercenary Architecture

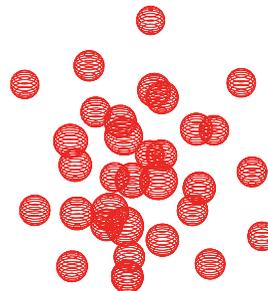
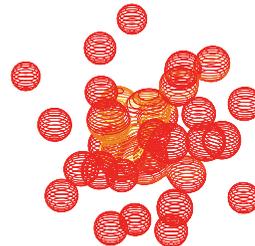
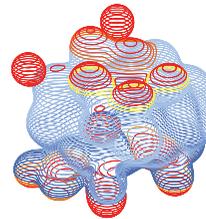
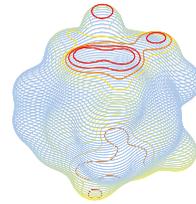
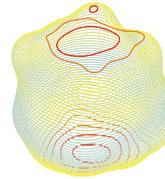
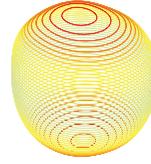
A speculative algorithm that underpins post-humanitarian property development

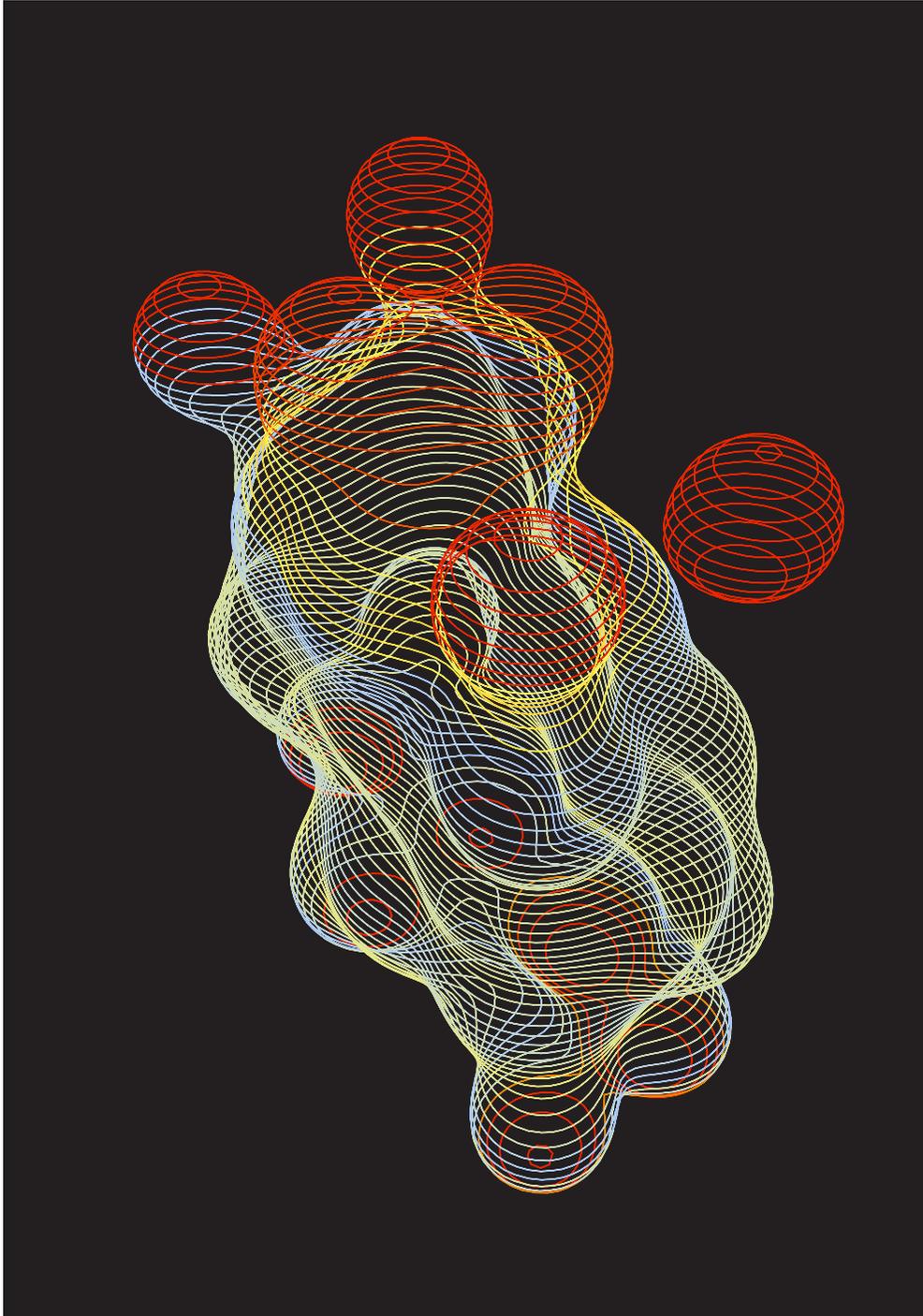
As part of a Post-Capital design studio at the Royal College of Art, my final year thesis project was an extensive investigation into the London property market. I looked at gaming the development industry by unapologetically refocusing the requirements for housing on financial outcome rather than habitability.

Analysing existing properties and values created a latent desirability manifold. External variables were then assembled on a canvas, creating governing bounds and forces. Internal variables created spherical volumes, and these were given physical characteristics (boundary protection and stickiness) to govern their interaction. The chaotic swarm of accommodation was processed, as primary, secondary and tertiary adjacencies strove to reach their lowest entropic state. When the cloud is given form, it appears as metaballs: combined with both the marketing materials for the property and financing it becomes an *Abstract Property Volume (APV)* — the absolute optimal fiscal arrangement of spaces.

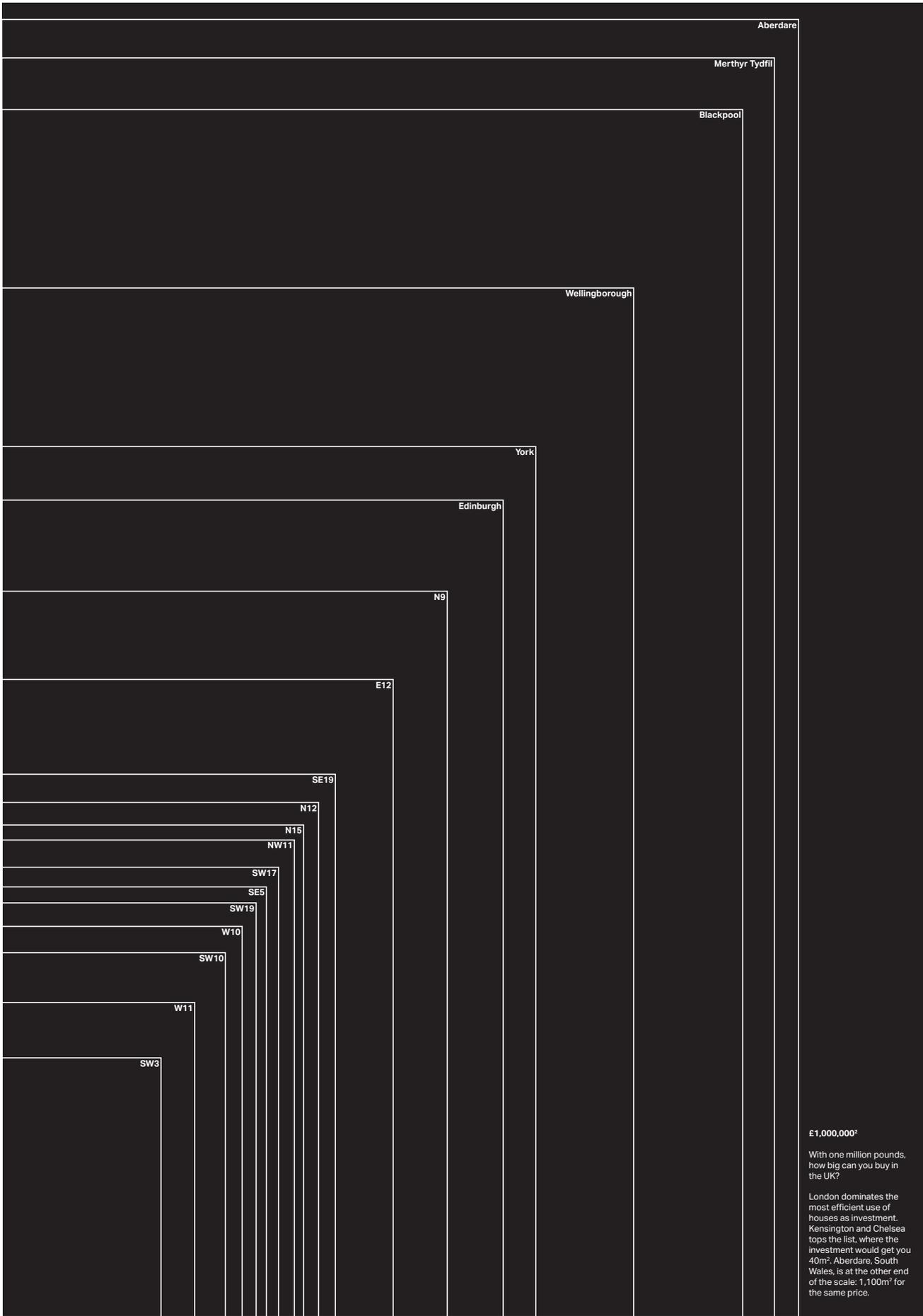
When the APV is filtered through construction constraints there are a number of outcomes. The typical domain of the Architect, it involves analysis of the occupancy, cost and character of the area. Outcomes can include extensive demolition, incremental change, space-grabbing from the public domain, and more conventional extension.

1





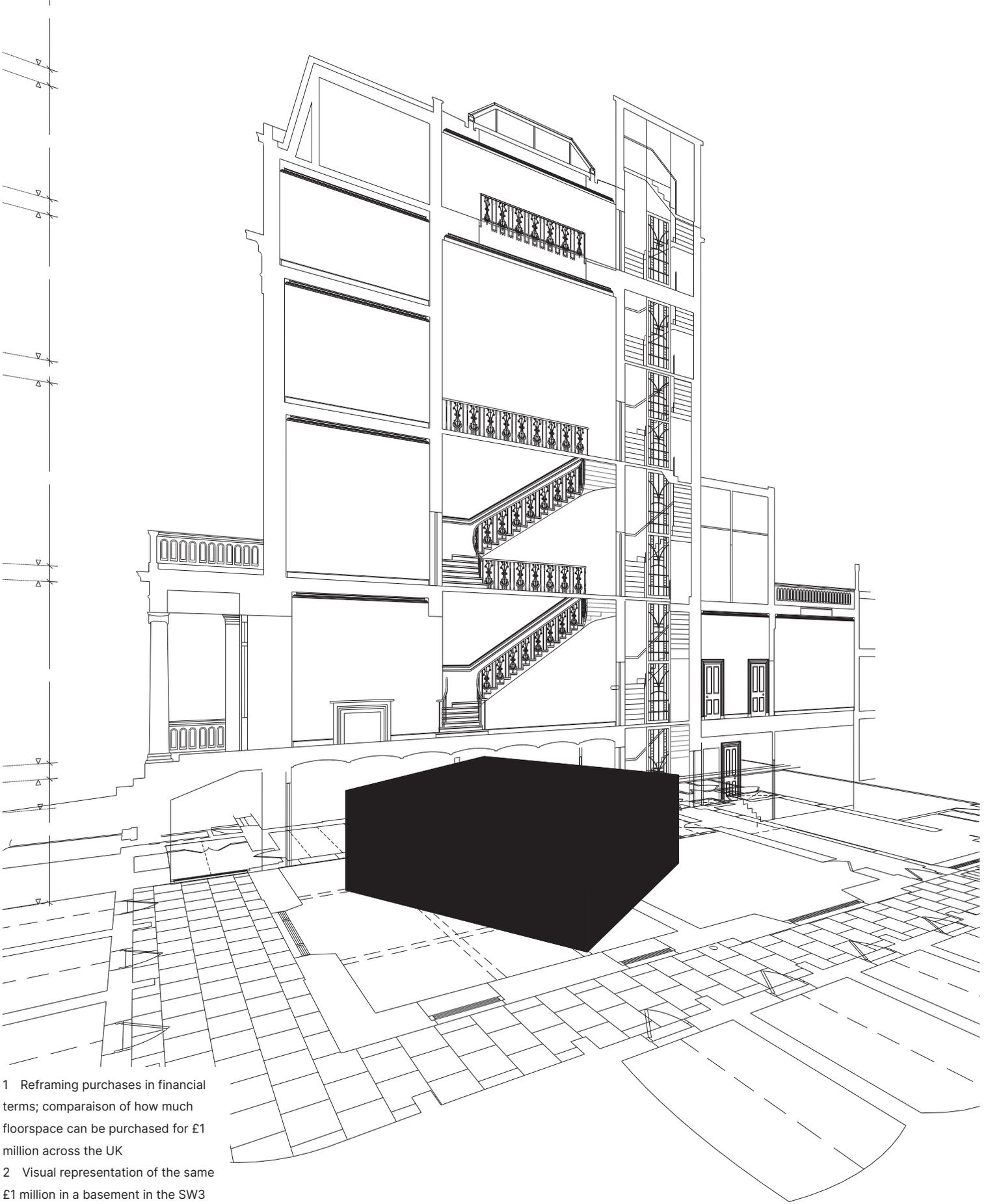
- 1 Progression through stages of optimisation
- 2 An Abstract Property Volume, showing the financial entropy of an existing property at 2 Belgrave Square highlighting areas for improvement



£1,000,000²

With one million pounds, how big can you buy in the UK?

London dominates the most efficient use of houses as investment. Kensington and Chelsea tops the list, where the investment would get you 40m². Aberdare, South Wales, is at the other end of the scale: 1,100m² for the same price.



1 Reframing purchases in financial terms; comparison of how much floorspace can be purchased for £1 million across the UK
2 Visual representation of the same £1 million in a basement in the SW3 postcode

Aran Islands

Exploration of the myth and history of the patterned Aran jumpers

In 2014 I visited the Aran Islands, in Galway Bay off the west coast of Ireland, as part of a project studying architecture in remote locations. Inis Meáin is the middle of the three islands, and while it is the least populous it has retained more of the cultural heritage which makes this bay so special.

From the Iron Age hill forts to JM Synge's enduring presence, Inis Meáin has a full spectrum of historic charms – but perhaps the most famous of these is the Aran jumper. So well-known that it has become a ubiquitous name for cable knit clothing, legend has the origins rooted deep in history, when every style and pattern held meaning and read as a symbol of the wearer. There is a tale, recounted by JM Synge, in which an unfortunate victim of tragedy at sea washes ashore to be identified by a local who knew the pattern of the cables knitted on the jumper to belong to a villager.

Unfortunately, this is mostly fabricated. While cable-knit jumpers were appropriated by fishermen on the west coast of Ireland and England historically, the myth of the symbolism behind the designs most likely originated as a marketing scheme in the early 20th Century.

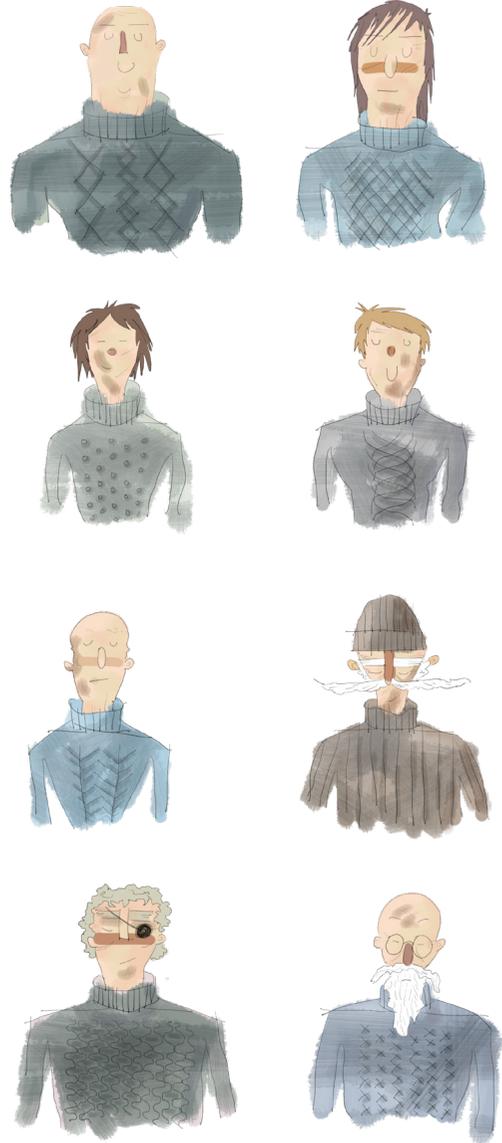
The project investigated the propagation of the myth, the objectification by tourism, and the subsequent creation of the factory as an icon.

1



2





1 Photo taken on Inis Meáin during a site visit in 2014

2 Collages illustrating the progression from propagation of the myth through the objectification and reframing of the factory as icon

3 Illustrations created as part of a story book fabricating the history and meaning of stitches used in Aran jumpers

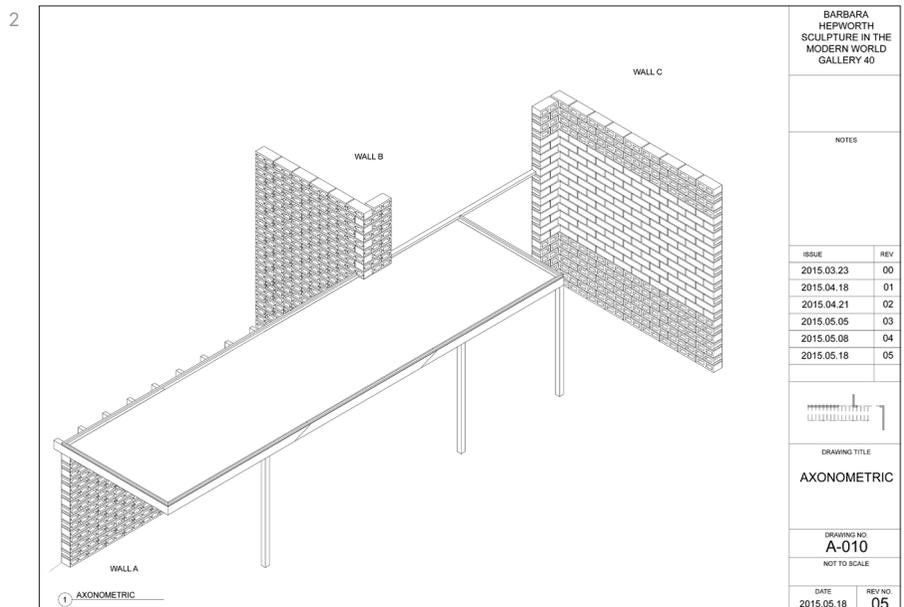
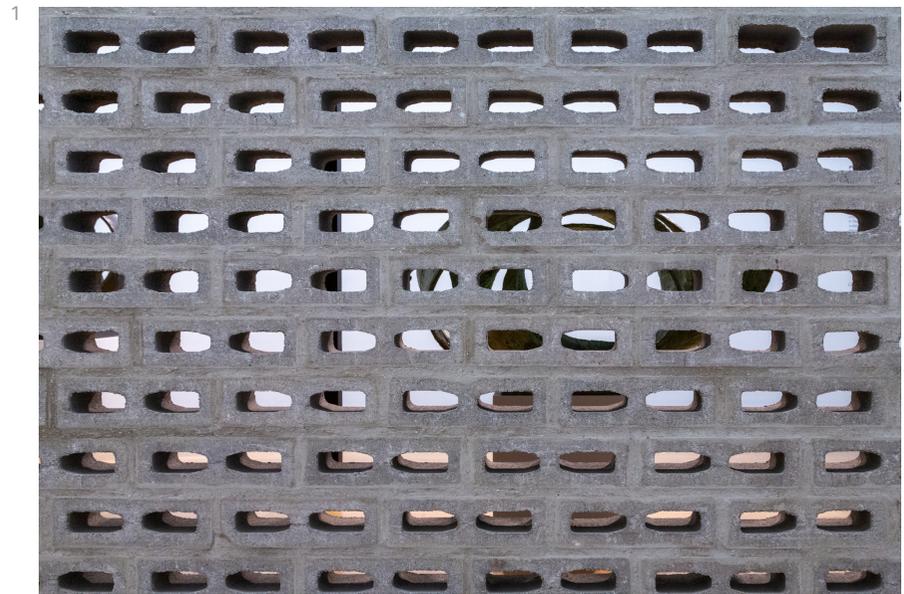
Barbara Hepworth

Exhibition background for the *Sculpture for a Modern World* exhibition

Tate Britain, SW1P
100 sqm
1,076 sqft

I had a leading role as the part of the Royal College of Art team working alongside the Tate Britain to design the setting for the final room of the Barbara Hepworth retrospective in June 2015. Drawing inspiration from the Kröller Müller pavilion by Gerrit Rietveld (where Hepworth envisaged many of her sculptures), a small pavilion was built within the Tate Britain to frame many of her most significant pieces.

After much searching, blocks similar to those originally used were sourced from a merchant in south London and left with their original markings in place. The holes were left open in some areas, and closed in others, to allow varying degrees of transparency.



1 Lightweight blocks laid on edge to allow visual permeability

2 Extract from the construction drawing package

3 Progress photo as the walls were about to be painted, and the roof timbers are tested for size





1 View on entering the final room of the exhibition; a strong perspective highlights the sculptures

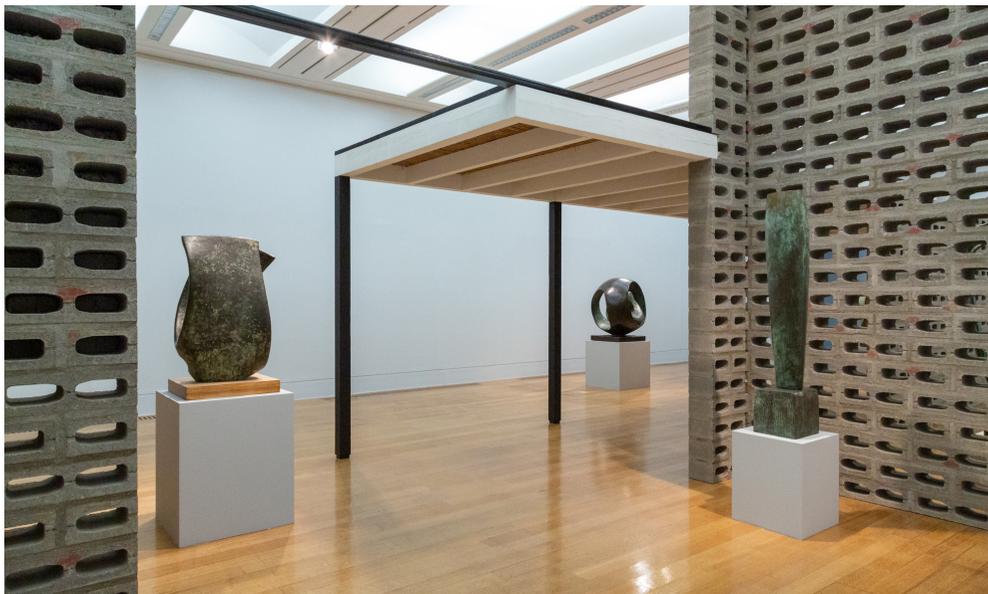
2 The unusual use of the blocks creates a textured backdrop

3 Moving around the room allows different pieces to be shown in context

2



3



Project complete

Ellerslie Racecourse

Race day stable complex for the Auckland Racing Club

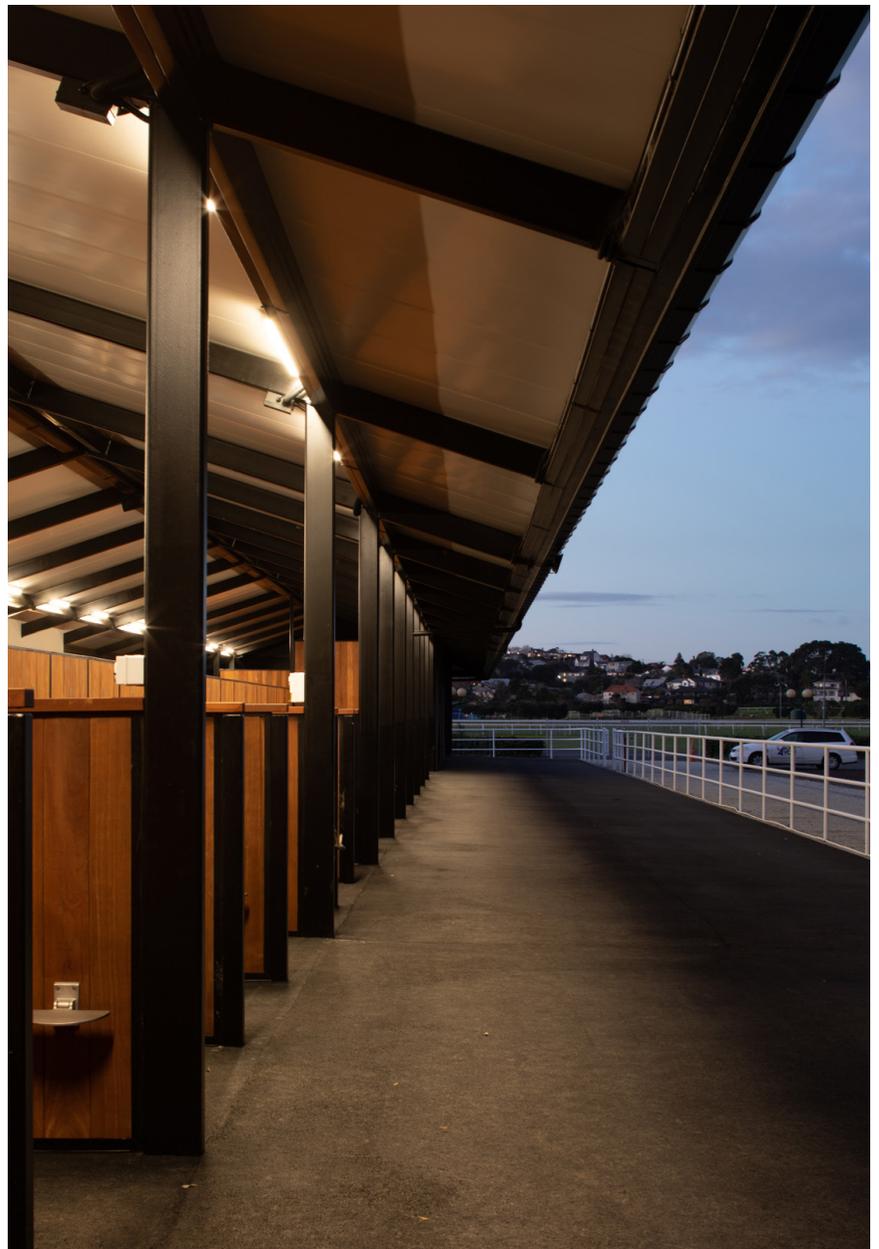
Auckland, 1051
1,900 sqm
20,451 sqft

Ellerslie Racecourse has been home to Auckland Racing Club since 1872, and is home to the first automatic totalisator (by George Julius) built in 1913.

As part of a team at Young+Richards architects in 2014 I was the lead designer responsible for obtaining resource and building consents for the demolition and replacement of the race day stables at this historic venue. The concept was to allow spectators unprecedented views of the horses before and after the races.

The masterplan included tie-up stalls for 126 horses, a warm up ring, veterinary boxes and office, a function room, and trainers' cafe. The project was finally completed in 2018.

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- 1 View along the tie-up stalls, protected by a large overhang
- 2 The stalls are unusually open to view from the public spaces
- 3 The new stables integrate with the sympathetically conserved 1913 totalisator

1



2



- 1 Bespoke fold-down seats fixed to sustainably sourced timber in the tie-up stalls
- 2 The design called for off-the-shelf steel components to manage costs, finished to an extremely high standard

Beach Huts

A boat shed inspired beachfront holiday house on Waiheke Island

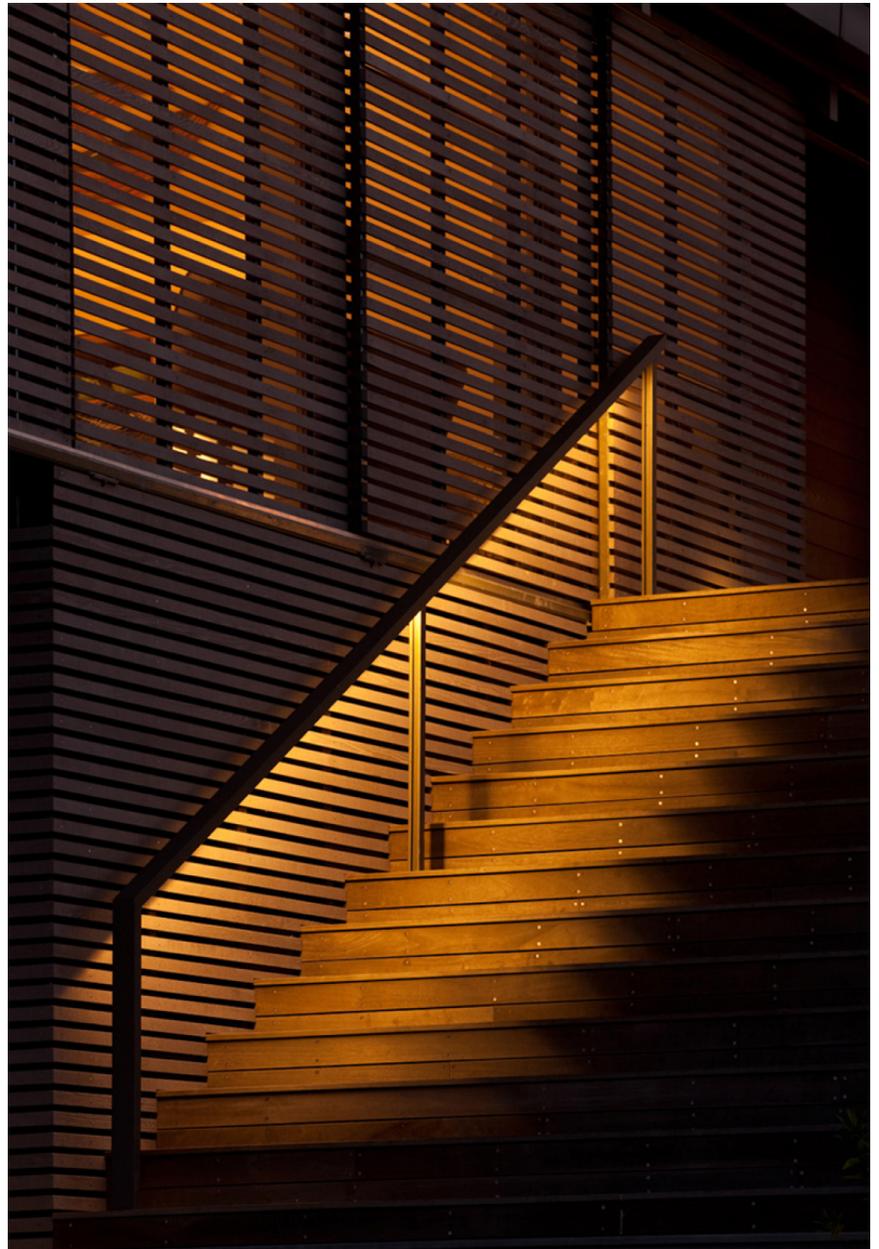
Waiheke, 1081
220 sqm
2,368 sqft

Off the coast of Auckland, Waiheke Island is host to many *baches* (holiday homes) for the inhabitants of the city. Designed as a regular getaway, this project sits immediately on the beach.

Inspired by the neighbouring boat sheds, the project consists of two simple volumes facing the sea, clad in unfinished timber. The simple material palette will allow the buildings to weather and settle into their surroundings.

I worked on the detailed design package, bringing together the façade, lighting, and interior finishes for construction. The project was completed in early 2014.

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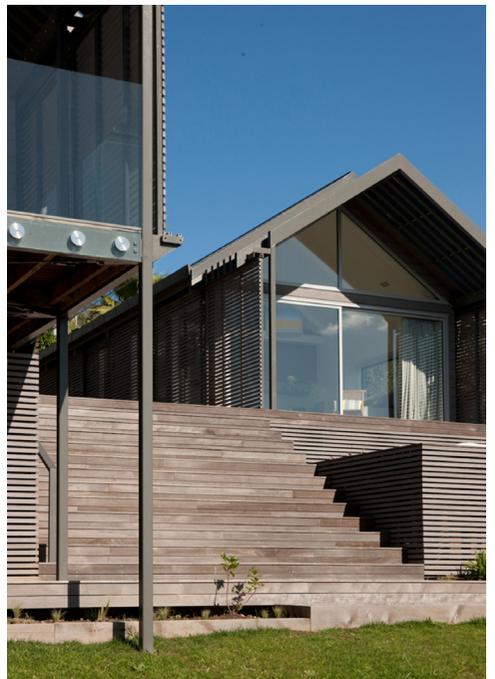




3



4



- 1 Lighting integrated into the handrail complements the view of the interior behind the timber screening
- 2 The framed view of the beach from the main living spaces
- 3 Timber stair detail
- 4 The exterior of the property is designed to evoke the spirit of the boat sheds that characterise this coastline





Meadow Way

New-build dwelling designed as an interpretation of an Arts & Crafts home

London, BR6
410 sqm
4,413 sqft

I was the Project Architect and job runner for a project to design a new-build house in a conservation area. The planning process was negotiated successfully following extensive discussions with the council. The client's brief was for a modern dwelling – initially at odds with the setting – which was ultimately achieved with a blend of contemporary cantilevered steelwork to the rear, behind a contemporary twist on a traditional Arts & Crafts frontage.

The images to the right show my sketch proposal for the house following a productive initial client briefing. The design has remained true to this vision, right through to construction.

Currently, I am managing the project on site as the Lead Consultant and, despite the COVID-19 related delays from March through to June, it is due to finish 3 month ahead of schedule in Winter 2020.



- 1 Initial concept sketch
- 2 Elevation taken from the construction drawing set
- 3 CGI created in support of the planning application
- 4 Various photos from the construction stages

3



4

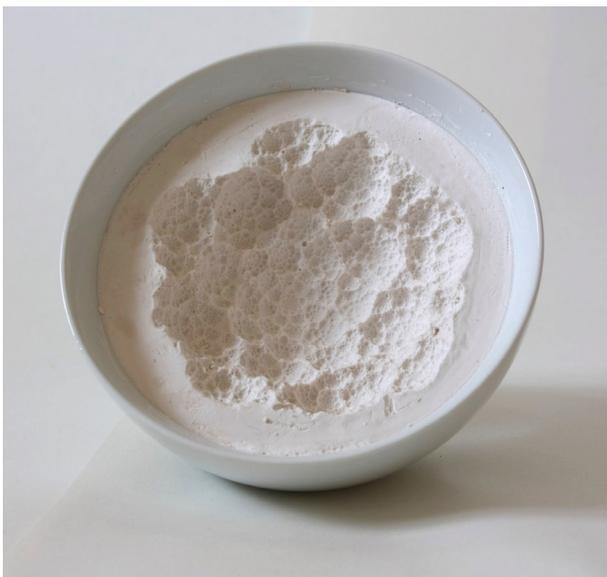


Other Recent Work

A selection of other recent projects

Concept Stage

Early study model for the internal design of a temple dome created by casting plaster of Paris around a cauliflower.



Preparing for Construction

Concept design in pen and ink wash for 5 dwellings with the appearance of a single Italianate villa in Tunbridge Wells. Currently acting as Lead Consultant as site works are prepared.



In Planning

Design of three sustainable homes on a large suburban site in a conservation area. Each is a unique dwelling, with the composition of the site envisaged as pavilions in a rolling meadow. Concept sketch in pen, coloured in Photoshop.



In Planning

Visualisation of a contemporary extension to a Baillie Scott house in a conservation area. Currently in negotiations with the planning department, the key aspects are improved energy efficiency across the dwelling and a unique mirrored facade.



Simon Rickards

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Employment

OPEN architecture

Sevenoaks
Associate Architect

May 2014 – Present

Working on a variety of projects, from small residential alterations to masterplanning and large scale developments across all RIBA Workstages. As part of the commercial and domestic teams I have designed local award-winning projects; developed a specialism in development and planning through winning planning permission for numerous complex dwellings in the greenbelt and AONB; and helped to deliver a scheme of 14 aspirational market houses in Tunbridge Wells.

Notable projects that I have taken from Stage 0 include a series of townhouses in a conservation area designed to appear as a single Italianate villa; a mixed-used scheme that has formed a precedent for quality design in a prominent town location; and a split-level dwelling that uses the limitations of the greenbelt to generate a deceptively large, airy contemporary family home.

Young+Richards

Auckland
Architectural Assistant

Oct 2013 – May 2014

As part of an expanding team in a forward thinking practice, I was involved in several projects at varying stages of design and completion. The majority of my time was spent preparing Resource and Building Consent sets for two high end houses; concept design and master planning for both Housing New Zealand and a private developer; and successfully submitting Resource Consent and then detail design for Building Consent at the new Ellerslie Race Day Stable complex for Auckland Racing Club.

The Architectural Review Magazine

London
Architecture & Publishing

Jul 2012 – Oct 2013

Assisting with the running and compilation of an internationally distributed architecture magazine as an editorial intern. The position had a number of responsibilities, including reading drawings and plans for both web and print media. The pressure and stress of the publishing industry was something that I had to adjust to, but gained essential time management experience while producing high quality work to very tight deadlines.

The role then developed into a consultant position for digital media. I had an active involvement with the website, both designing and writing code. It allowed me to expand my knowledge of web standards and the languages used through self-initiated learning. Several projects were undertaken using various combinations of HTML, CSS, PHP and MySQL.

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Education

RIBA North West

Advanced Diploma in Professional
Practice in Architecture

2017

Royal College of Art

MA (Architecture)
Distinction

2014 – 2016

As part of a research focused design studio, I completed my thesis on the financial Architecture of real estate. Using digital tools and live connections to financial markets, a real-time model of London's most fiscally dense neighbourhoods was created. This was manipulated to generate financially optimised plans and sections based on individual property's spatial characteristics. A large body of research was undertaken, acquiring an intimate knowledge of the city's micro-markets – particularly the relationship of international stability on sub-regional house prices. These ultimately produced monetary heat maps that represent instantaneous spatial reconfigurations. Presented as an interactive digital model, it demonstrated the presence of hidden fiscal currents in the planning and development of London's urban fabric.

I was awarded a Distinction for my dissertation, an exploration into liminality and betweenness. Taking the form of a book, it includes layers of self-awareness woven around a narrative that is structured to counter the numbness evolved to technological interference.

University of Bath

BSc (Hons) Architecture
2:1 Degree

2009 – 2013

Dartford Grammar School

International Baccalaureate
37 Points

11 GCSE's at A and A*

2002 – 2009

Proficiencies

Certified Passive House Designer
'PassivHaus Institut' Accredited, 2013

Very Good Command of French
Common European Framework B2

Adobe Creative Suite (InDesign, Photoshop, Illustrator, Premiere Pro / After Effects)
AutoCAD, 3ds Max, & Revit
Sketchup & VRay
Rhino, Grasshopper & Galapagos
Photography, Videography
Drawing and Model Making
Web Design (HTML, CSS, JavaScript, PHP, MySQL)
Full clean UK driving license

Referees

Mr Paul McPartland
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Dr Benedict Singleton
Tutor at the RCA and Partner at Rival Strategy
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Mr Phineas Harper
Director at Open City and author at Dezeen
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