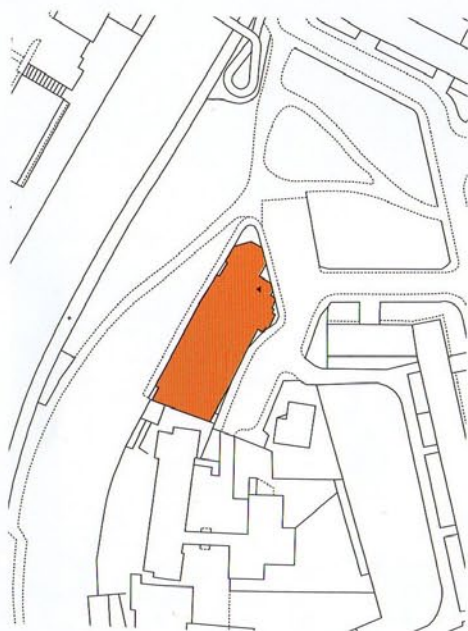




Women in Architecture



£10



Building study

On a mission

With its restoration and additions,
Dow Jones Architects is opening
up St Mary Magdalene, Paddington
to new community uses





This unusual project brings together the Church of England and a community development trust in an effort to save an 1865 Grade I-listed building on the Heritage at Risk register and give it new life by reconnecting it to the local community. The clients – the vicar and parish council and Paddington Development Trust – will jointly oversee the use of the church for a wide range of activities, with worship alongside performances, learning and community support.

Words Rob Wilson
Photography Anthony Coleman

The new-build element of Dow Jones' project to renovate, rework and extend the Church of St Mary Magdalene, Paddington, is still a large hole in the ground between its west end and the adjacent C of E primary school, getting deeper in parts as they excavate the lift pit.

The extension to George Edmund Street's 1865 church, now Grade I-listed, will provide space for a café, education room and offices plus, crucially, a new entrance and access at lower level to the Church's undercroft, which is being renovated and converted into an event and performance space.

Dow Jones director Biba Dow is clearly excited at the prospect of seeing the new building take shape over the next few months. Despite its tight site – only 2.5m wide at one point – the new extension structure will rise up to four storeys in height, 'opening up', as Dow describes it, the church building to the surrounding community and improving both 'physical' and 'cultural' access through its new facilities – a key element of the brief. This 'opening up' has been interpreted by Dow Jones not just practically – with the improved access, new entrance and spaces – but also figuratively. For while GE Street's architecture here is certainly elegant (he is more famous for his soaring Royal Courts of Justice) it is dourly Victorian on the outside. Inside, however, is a different story: still muscular Gothic, but a riot of patterning, with glazed tiles, stained glass and painted panelling – the latter even covering the coving of the roof. This will all be revealed in fully cleaned technicolour when the restoration is complete and the seven storeys of scaffolding currently filling the nave are removed.

In its design for the extension, Dow Jones has taken this decorative cue and nicely turned it inside-out, with a rich metallic faience covering the façade and a more robustly plain interior. Even the concrete frame, expressed externally, has an aggregate containing mica, designed to glint in the sun. This decorative face will both hint at the riches within, but also provide a bold, welcoming, non-ecclesiastical face to

its surroundings, balancing the church's otherwise rather forbidding carcass.

In particular there will be a café opening out to a strip of park running to the north along the Grand Union Canal, a dominant feature in this vicinity which defines the distinctive conditions of the site and its history. Acting more as barrier than connector, the canal separates the church from the multimillion pound residences of Warwick Avenue and Little Venice to the north. It seems to sit literally above the site, with the land dropping away from it: indeed there is drop of up to 5m across the site of the church itself.

It was the canal, as well as the railways at Paddington, that saw this area urbanise rapidly in the early 19th century. Relatively mean terraces of cheek-by-jowl workers' housing were developed for those building and working on this new infrastructure, and other industry was attracted to the area. It was this relatively impoverished condition that led to the building of the church – one of many Tractarian mission churches built in poor areas in the period – but which here had to squeeze onto a thin slip of ground remaining between the terraces – hence its skinny, attenuated form.

Following the Blitz and subsequent slum clearances in 1957, the housing was replaced by the Modernist blocks of the Warwick and Brindley Estates, leaving the church marooned in its small, undulating parkland setting. It had also largely lost its congregation, and has not regained another from the more diverse and sparsely spread community that surrounds it now. It was this relatively isolated situation that the new building is designed to help alleviate.

It will provide a café, volunteer and education rooms at first floor level, and new toilets and kitchen service areas – all in a church that previously had no running water. A series of foyers and a concrete stair work down through the building to serve the large undercroft. This is largely left open, with the

insertion only of a bar and ticketing area at its new entrance plus service installations, including a system of drawn-air ventilation. Otherwise its massive, sculpted vaults and brick walls and arches remain, Piranesi-like, restored simply to their rich patina of patched distemper and plaster.

This plain, robust finish will contrast happily with the delicately ornate Anglo-Catholic chapel by Ninian Comper, dating from 1894, that lies alongside it. This was a very high Anglican statement in a time of hypersensitivity to changes in worship. It was even fitted with a concealed panel in the reredos in which the host could be hidden in the event of Protestant riots – another instance of the hidden/revealed, plain/ornate theme from which Dow Jones' design takes its cue.

While this project can be seen as both clearly engendered by the practice's earlier work at historic churches, such as the crypt it redesigned at Christ Church in Spitalfields and its extension to the Garden Museum, this is no reprise. It seems both a development and concentration of many of the themes seen in the previous projects, repurposing an historic building with bold contemporary additions, but here with a clearer remit to help stitch the wider immediate area back together.

This year promises to be an interesting one for Dow Jones, with its Maggie's Cardiff finally beginning construction after frustrating earlier changes of site. This is a project that promises to see the strong forms seen in the practice's earlier houses translated to a larger stand-alone building.

Meanwhile it will be interesting to see how this new building at St Mary Magdalene handles its inside-out aesthetic and chimes with the newly renovated structure of the church. And indeed, more importantly, how it chimes with the needs of the local community, acting as it needs to like a knuckle to draw in life, flexibility and potential to the area and the building it serves.

Dow Jones has taken the church's decorative cue and nicely turned it inside-out





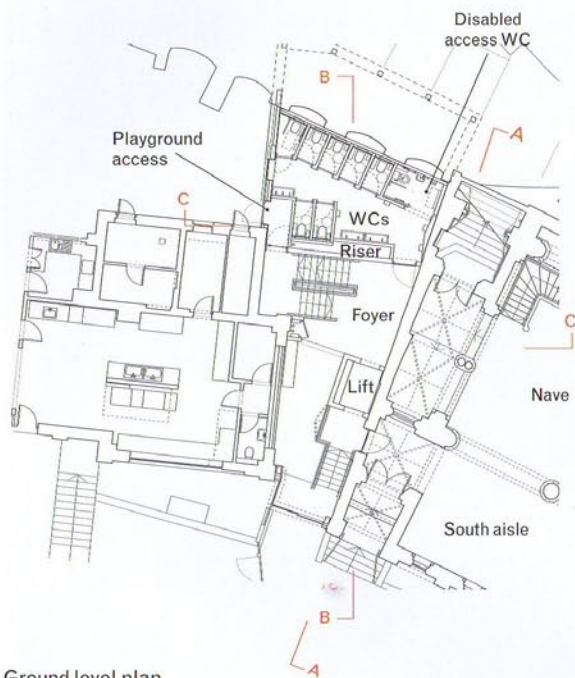
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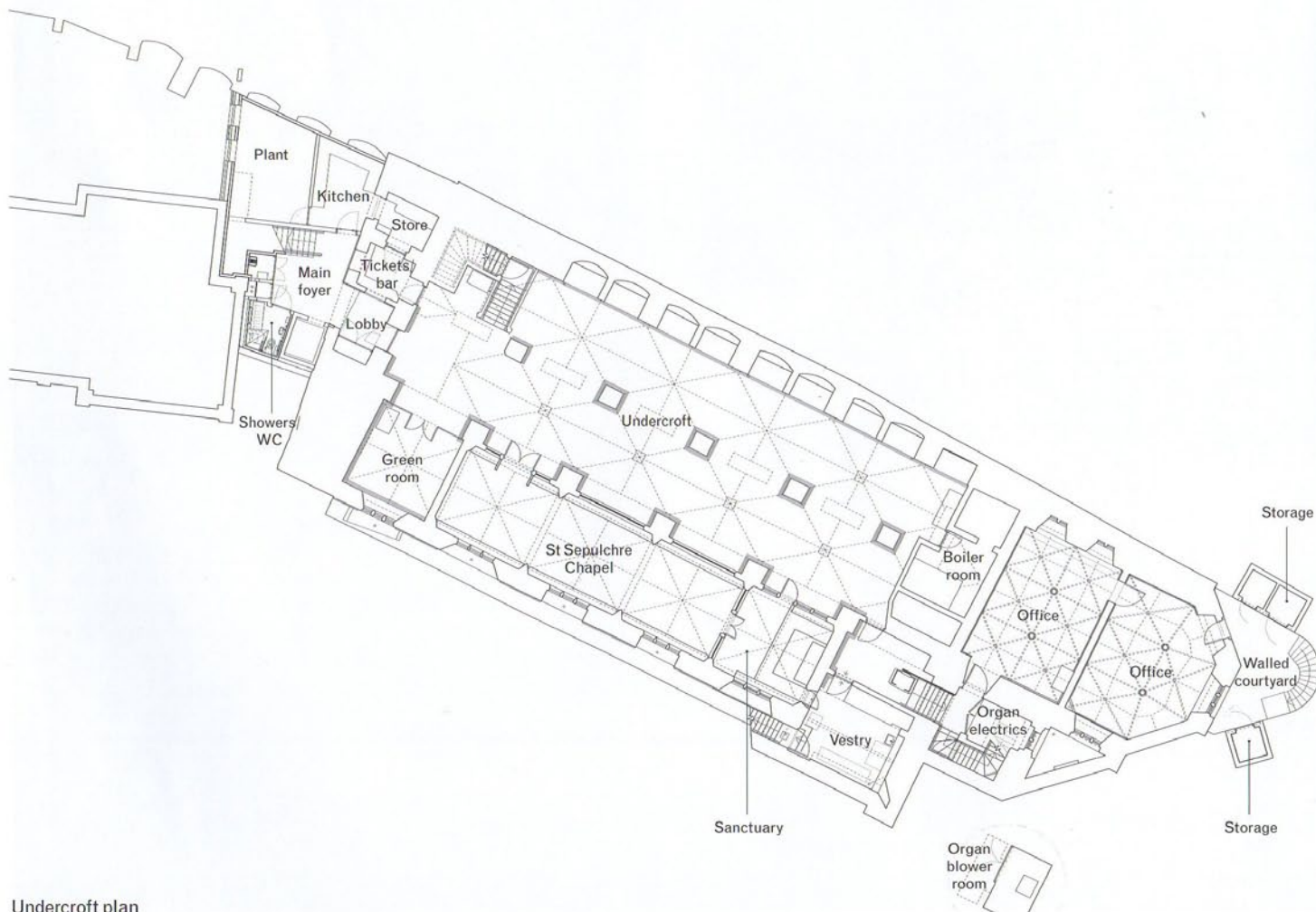
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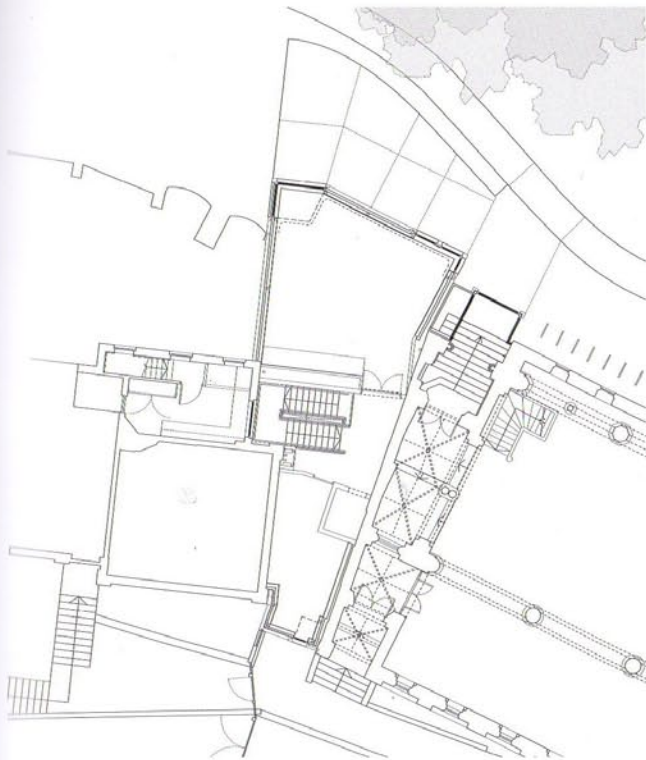




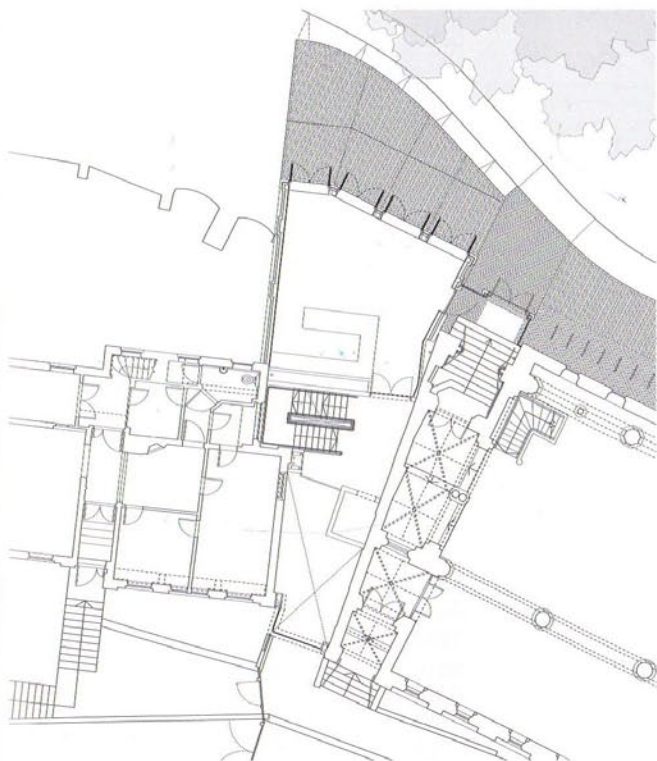
Ground level plan



Undercroft plan



Level 1 plan



Canal level plan

Architect's view

One of the biggest challenges of this project, and what has made it so interesting to work on, is designing something characterful that stands up to such a powerful neighbour. This is integral to our brief – how to make a new building that is both appropriately responsive to GE Street's architecture and also opens its arms to people who might not feel inclined to enter a church.

Our site is squeezed between the ends of the church and its primary school. We wanted to make a building that enlivens the public space around the church, revealing the decorative character of the interior. We are cladding our building with precast concrete and faience, with a raised decorative frieze which is a reference to the ceramic floor tiles within the church. The faience is metallic and will have a lustrous surface, which reflects the expanse of sky.

Getting to know Street's complex building has been very rewarding. We knew his Royal Courts of Justice, which he was building at the same time; he was also very influenced by Butterfield's All Saint's, in Margaret Street. What is curious about St Mary Magdalene is that its original context has since been entirely demolished, so the tight urban site is now open and sparse.

We reconstructed the original context from photographs, and looked at previous buildings on the site, which supported our argument for making a trabeated building. As it is a Grade I-listed building, the scrutiny by statutory consultees has been intense. The new building is made of concrete, with exposed floor, walls and stairs. The foyers and stairs will retain the more exterior character of the site, with the exposed brick walls of its neighbours, while joinery within the café and education room will give a more interior quality.

The local community has been involved in the project in a central way. Tiles made and designed by local residents, which describe the changing history of Paddington, are being cast into concrete walls. A volunteer design group has shadowed the design process and contributed to design reviews, and volunteers are supporting the conservation work on site. The project will be completed in the autumn, and it feels as if its community will already know it well.

Biba Dow, director, Dow Jones Architects



Section A-A

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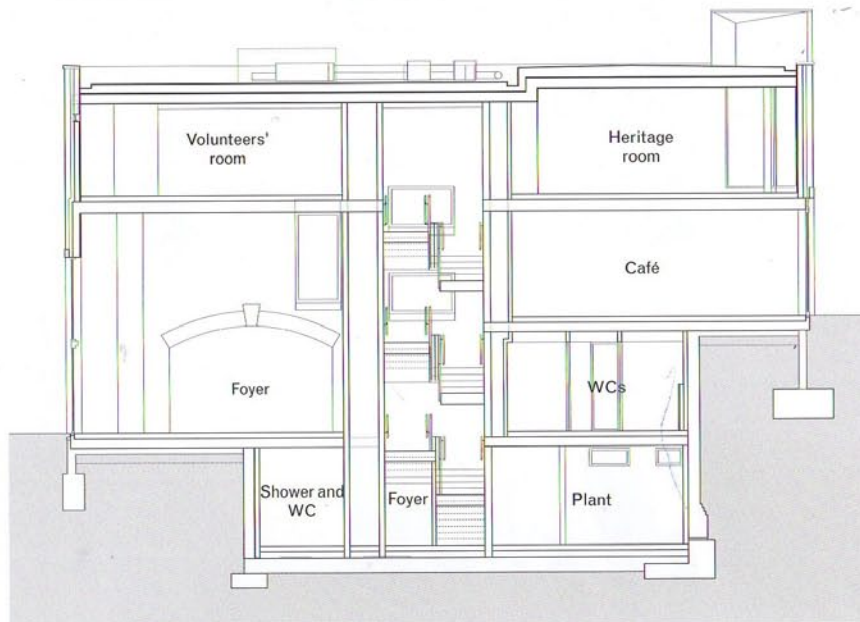
Service engineer's view

The goal for the new extension was to provide simple, low-energy services integrated with the fabric to minimise the space required and visual impact. The environmental strategy is to use passive measures, such as efficient fabric, natural light and natural ventilation to provide an efficient and comfortable environment. Dow Jones worked closely with Max Fordham to understand and plan the services strategies from a very early stage to ensure the building services were well integrated from the outset.

The biggest challenge was bringing the existing undercroft into use for a wide variety of events. It was important to understand the client's brief and what that would mean for the services in the space. When we considered the impact that introducing heating and ventilation to the space might have on the fabric, it put limitations on the occupancy and frequency of use.

A balance had to be struck between the level of environmental control, the amount of use and the potential impact on the

fabric. The ventilation strategy is designed to minimise the impact of heating and ventilation, drawing fresh air from the nave, with the nave air acting as a buffer between inside and outside. This allows slightly tempered air to be supplied to the undercroft without large and expensive air-handling equipment. This will provide enough air and warmth for occupants while minimising moisture movement through the fabric.
*Matt Oliver, senior engineer,
Max Fordham*



Section B-B



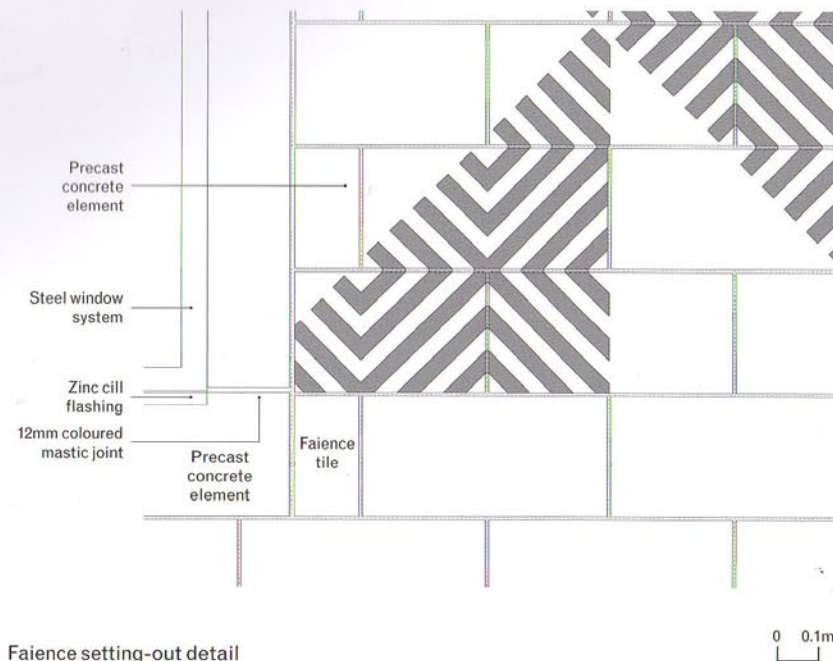
Section C-C

Costs

	Cost/m ²	% of total
Substructure	106.45	4.86
Demolitions/Alterations	159.59	7.28
Superstructure		
Frame	103.54	4.73
Roof	43.80	2.00
Staircases	16.61	0.76
External walls	281.42	12.84
Windows	75.15	3.43
Internal walls and partitions	13.81	0.63
Internal doors	41.49	1.89
Internal finishes		
Wall finishes	76.73	3.50
Floor finishes	34.86	1.59
Ceiling finishes	56.72	2.59
Group element total	168.71	7.68
Furniture	89.68	4.09
Services		
Sanitary appliance	22.72	1.04
Disposal installations	33.72	1.54
Water installations	25.37	1.16
Space heating and air treatment	201.34	9.19
Electrical services	212.08	9.68
Lift installations	47.20	2.15
Protective installations	22.77	1.04
Communications installation	18.72	0.85
External works	24.61	1.12
Preliminaries and insurance	482.73	22.03
Total	2191.12	100.00

Project data

Start on site July 2015
Completion October 2018
Gross internal floor area Church: 1,150m², and extension: 314m²
Construction cost £3.5 million
Construction cost per m² £2,191.12
Architect Dow Jones Architects
Conservation architect Caroe Architect
Interpretation Simon Leach Design
Heritage consultant Alan Baxter
Artist Linda Florence
Access consultant Access Design
Catering consultant Lynda Brewer
Structural engineer Momentum Structural Engineers
M&E consultant Max Fordham
Quantity surveyor William G Dick
Project manager Gardiner & Theobald
CDM co-ordinator BBS
Approved building inspector Assent Building Control
Main contractor Lengard
CAD software used Vectorworks



Faience setting-out detail

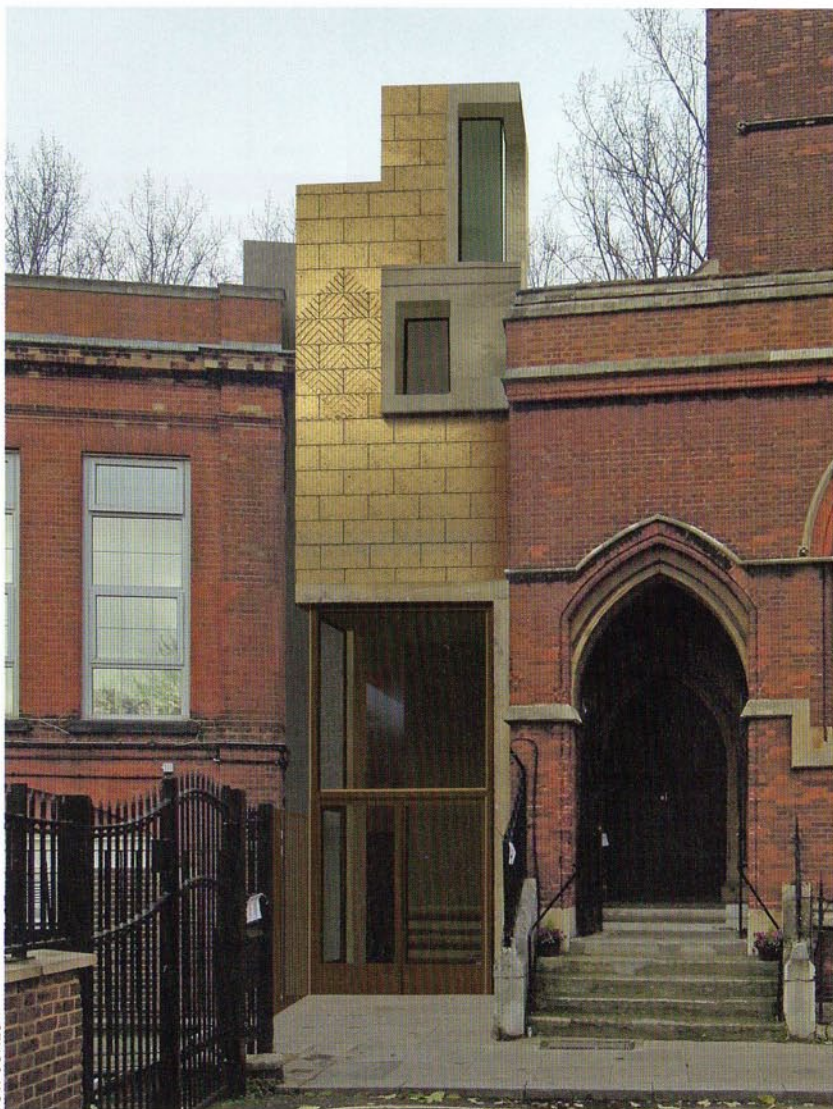
Client's view

Over the past 15 years the parish of St Mary Magdalene in Paddington has worked with Paddington Development Trust, a local regeneration charity, to reinstate our beautiful GE Street church to the centre of community life, as parish church and 'living heritage centre for Paddington'.

The brief was clarified through years of feasibility studies and consultations and, following a competition, we appointed Dow Jones Architects to design a small, wedge-shaped annexe between the Grade I Neogothic church and the neighbouring primary school, to provide education room, café, lavatories and lift, enabling 'soft' access to the church, which will enable it to serve the ethnically and religiously diverse local community.

We were delighted by Biba Dow's enthusiastic response to the Victorian building, and her desire for the annexe's exterior to hint at the spectacular beauty inside Street's church (whose exterior is mostly austere and restrained). We were clear that the annexe should have its own artistic integrity, and be accessible in all senses, and Biba has entirely understood our vision for the project.

She has given commitment, and outstanding leadership, by her wholehearted engagement with the community and her embrace of collaborative working, which is central to our ethos. Her ability to listen and respond sensitively has been invaluable in negotiating with neighbours, stakeholders and consultees. Her ability to hold firm to her artistic vision while being positively responsive to others has enabled the community to embrace the project. *Henry Everett, vicar, St Mary Magdalene in Paddington.*



Working detail

Our extension is an in-situ concrete frame building with a façade made of faience tiles and precast concrete. The concrete elements are used to frame the openings, allowing us to make all the faience tiles with one visible face only and without exposed corners. The tiles are 40mm-thick, cast terracotta and the faience is being assembled with lime mortar joints, so that the wall will read as a solid surface. The tiles are fixed back with stainless-steel dowels to the wall. This is a concrete frame with infill blockwork and 100mm insulation to its face.

The precast concrete is being made with white cement and a high mica content, cast with square edges. The faience glaze is metallic so that the building will be reflective and catch the light. The metallic glaze is being made in-house by Darwen.

Folded pigmented zinc sheet forms the sills and flashings, and the steel windows and doors are pushed back into the reveals to emphasise the difference between wall and opening.

Changes in level across the site called for five external walls, ranging from two to four storeys high. These disparate façades are held together as a composition by a giant decorative frieze running in a band around the building within the faience cladding. The frieze is formed by raised ridges in the tiles. The design is based on the floor tiles of the church, which has a complicated and varied geometric pattern made from square and triangular tiles in red, black and white.

Biba Dow, Dow Jones Architects

