Edgeways

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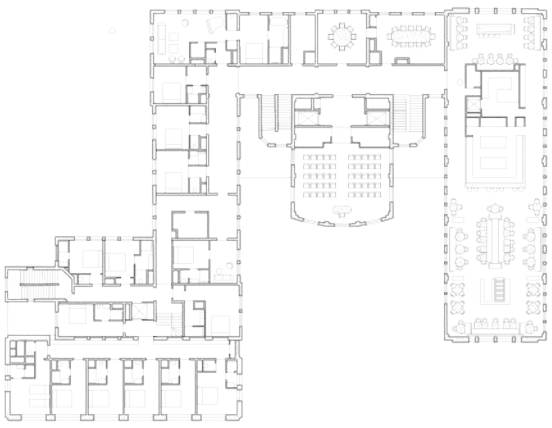
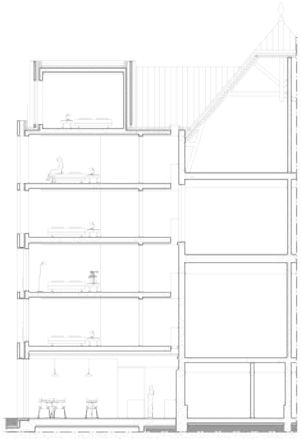
Pillows Grand Boutique Hotel Maurits at the Park, Amsterdam. Photo: Stefan Müller



First floor



Cross section, new and existing building

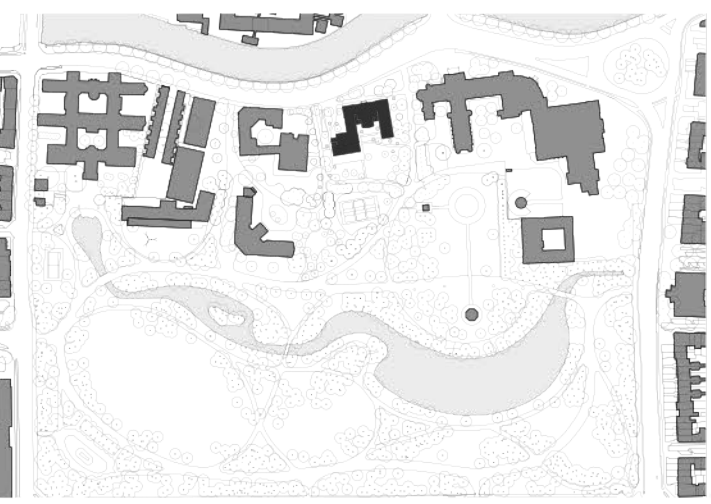
Elevation, east

"The 12 handmade special bricks are used e.g. on the recessed top floor that crowns the building. The idea was to express the richness of brick without merely copying the old brickwork."
Uri Gilad, architect, partner, Office Winhov

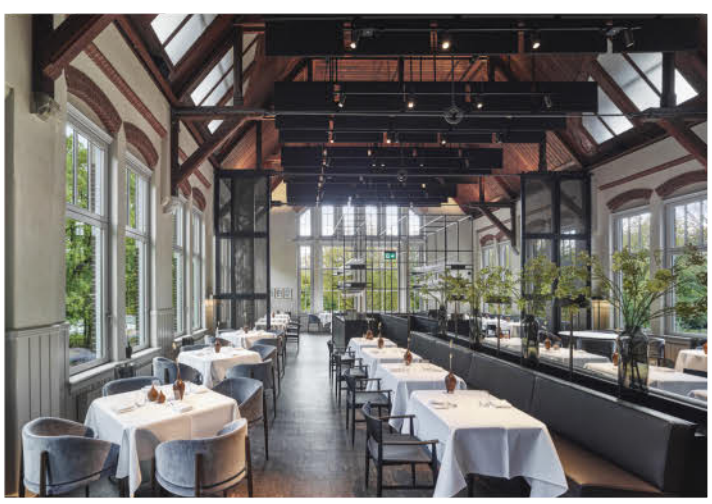
The gable of the new extension mimics the original gable of the university building, including the proportions of the façade, the dimensions of the brick and the use of pairs of tall, narrow windows.

Pillows Hotel is on the edge of Oosterpark, which was one of the first big public parks in Amsterdam when it opened in 1891. The project was based on the premise that the park should extend right up to the hotel, which does not have a private garden.

Osmunda in Vessem produced the cream-coloured floor tiles for the corridor in the university building 115 years ago. The company still exists and was able to reproduce them for the renovation project. The bricks on the ceiling and walls just needed to be cleaned.



Site plan with the hotel marked on it. Like the university building, the other buildings around the edge of the park were also built around the turn of the last century.



The VanOost restaurant is on the carefully and beautifully restored top floor of the detached wing of the original building.

The art of addition and transformation

THIS 115-YEAR-OLD BUILDING IN CENTRAL AMSTERDAM, FORMERLY A DISSECTION LABORATORY, HAS UNDERGONE A RADICAL TRANSFORMATION INTO A FIVE-STAR HOTEL. THE NEW EXTENSION'S DESIGN IDIOM AND BRICKWORK BEAUTIFULLY REFLECT THE OLDER BUILDING, YET IT STILL HAS A DISTINCT IDENTITY ALL OF ITS OWN.

The transformed building is near the Singelgracht canal on the edge of Oosterpark, one of the first major public parks in Amsterdam, which opened in 1891. Around 1905, the city started running out of space for large institutions, so in 1908, the Free University was granted permission to build a 4,800 m^2 laboratory in the park. Like the other institutions established here, the university was authorised to use a part of the park for its own purposes.

Around 120 years later, the City of Amsterdam decided it was time to give Oosterpark back to the people. In 2009, it launched the "Doubling the Park" initiative, which involved amending the local plan and allowing all the early-20th-century buildings in the park to change function as long as they opened their properties up to the connecting park.

The hotel is owned by Amerborgh International, a property development firm focusing on long-term investment and specialising in cultural heritage. Office Winhov was chosen as the project partner without the need for competition.

"When Amerborgh bought the building, another hotel project already had official approval. It called for the removal of the original interiors and the addition of a glassed volume to the existing building. Amerborgh took a big risk when they decided to start from scratch. The city had actually imposed a ban on building new hotels at the time, so a licence was by no means guaranteed," says architect and Office Winhov partner Uri Gilad.

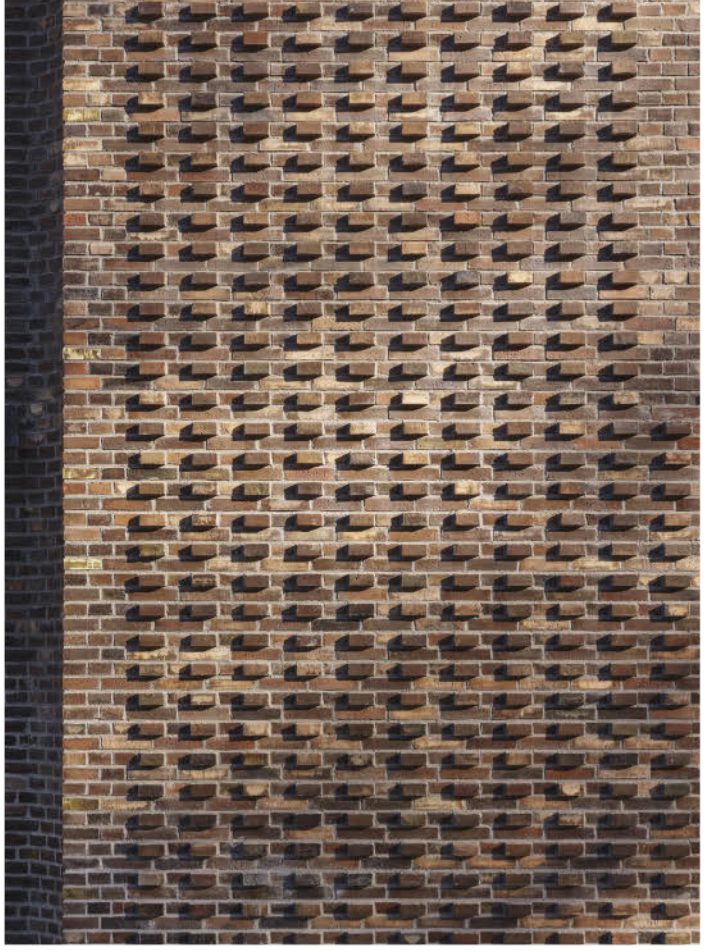
The original building was built in the form of a horseshoe, with two arms that stretch out into the park and a central wing for the lecture halls. The building was orientated towards the street – Mauritskade – with no real access from the park. In the new design, the original entrance facing Mauritskade has been retained and acts as the main entrance to the hotel. The former lecture hall, in the central wing on the ground floor, has been converted into a guest lounge, while the former anatomy exhibition hall on the first floor is now a chef's restaurant. The brick façades have been carefully restored, and great efforts were made to preserve the original interiors that remained.

"When we started looking at the building, we realised that the west wing, which had been added during the construction of the building, was constructed of less expressive materials compared to the main wing. We decided to make the extension a continuation of this wing, where it would respect the building's original shape towards the park. In this way, we kept the exisiting visibility and relationship with the park.

The new extension is a rectangular shaped building that has 27 rooms and a public brasserie facing the park. The building measures 8 x 25 metres above ground with an expressive top level and has 1,200 m^2 of floor space. The added building continues underground to accommodate an underground car park, back of house, offices and company restaurant; this extension brings the total new area to 8,500 m^2," explains project architect Rick Bruggink.

"One of the overarching and fundamental premises was that the restaurants and bars should cater to the local community. It was equally important that the building be integrated into the park, so the parkland extends right up to the hotel, which doesn't have a private garden," adds Bruggink.

The architectural and material relationships between old and new have been achieved in several ways. For example,



For the new façades, the architects and client chose D49, which has a play of colours that alternates between red, orange, brown and black with parts of light yellow. The protruding headers create a play of light and shadow that changes throughout the day.

Project architect Rick Bruggink and architect and partner Uri Gilad, Office Winhov.

The roof of the original building is the same height as the new one. The top floor of the new building is set back 60 cm from the façade, which makes it look less tall than it is.

Pillows Hotel faces Mauritskade, which runs along Amsterdam's outer canal, the Singelgracht. The original main entrance to the university building has been preserved and now serves as the entrance to the hotel.

Pillows Grand Boutique Hotel Maurits at the Park, Amsterdam, the Netherlands
Client: Amerborgh International
Operator: IHMG
Architect: Office Winhov
Interior designer: Studio Linse
Landscape architect: Buro Sant en Co, Piet Gijsel and Thijs de Zeeuw
Contractor: Kondor Wessels
Engineer: Van Rossum
Completed: 2023
Brick: D49, special size, 12 special format bricks in D49 clay
Text: Ida Præstegaard, MSc Architecture
Photos: Stefan Müller, Luuk Kramer (details)

Erich Mendelsohn Award 2023, Bronze Winner

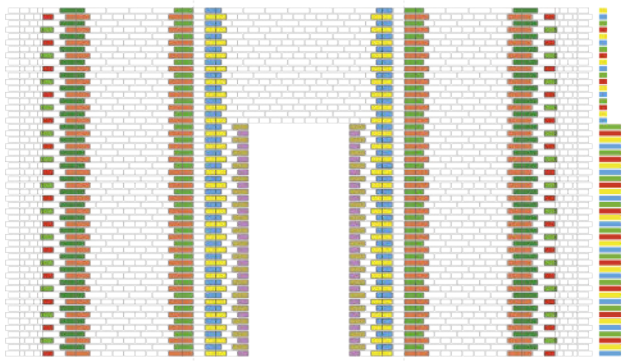
the windows in the new façades are in pairs and have a similar repetition as those in the existing building. This meeting of old and new also takes place inside the hotel, which showcases the exposed brick façades of the older building.

"For the new façades, we chose D49 which has a certain kinship with the original brick but a far more intense colour palette. We had a customised version made in the same dimensions as the laboratory brick, which makes the brickwork look at once familiar and different," says Rick Bruggink.

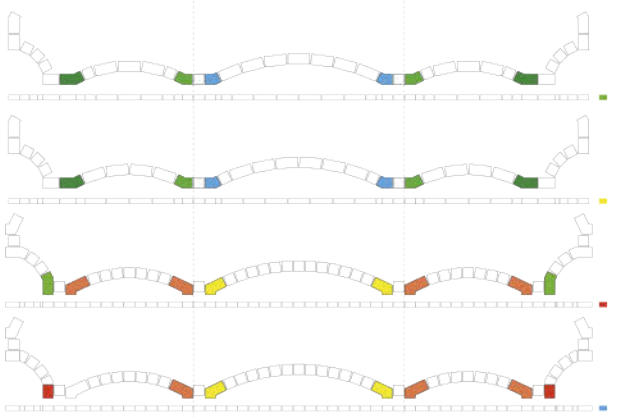
The 1908 façades have a cross bond, which is also used in the extension, only with every second header protruding. The three-dimensional pattern creates a play of light and shadow that changes throughout the day. "To generate the detailed effect we wanted, we designed 12 special moulded bricks, which the brickworks produced by hand. One of the places they are used is on the recessed top floor that crowns the building. The idea was to express the richness of brick without merely copying the old brickwork," Uri Gilad concludes.

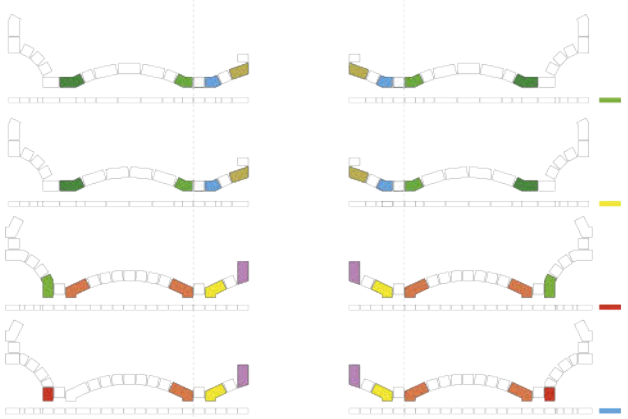
"For the new façades, we chose D49 which has a certain kinship with the original brick but a far more intense colour palette. We had a customised version made in the same dimensions as the laboratory brick, which makes the brickwork look at once familiar and different." Rick Bruggink, architect, Office Winhov

The former university building has been restored and transformed with great care and a determination to preserve as many of the original spaces and details as possible.

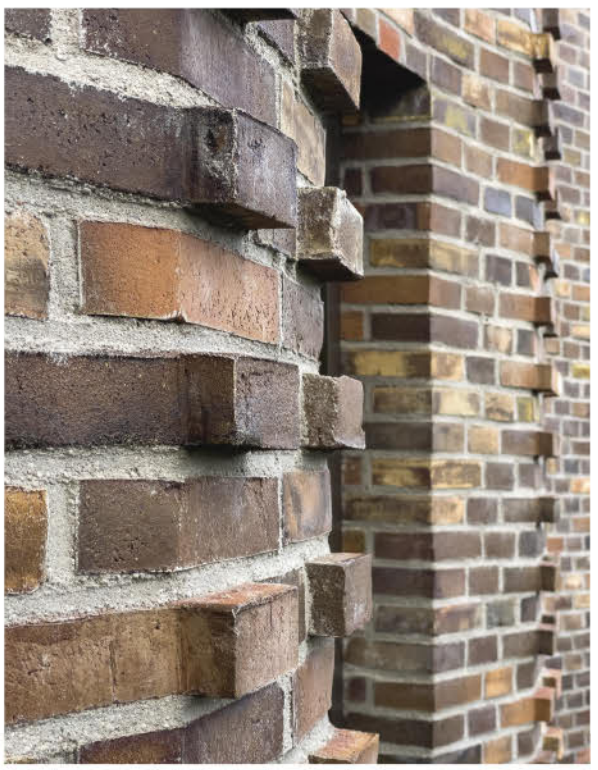


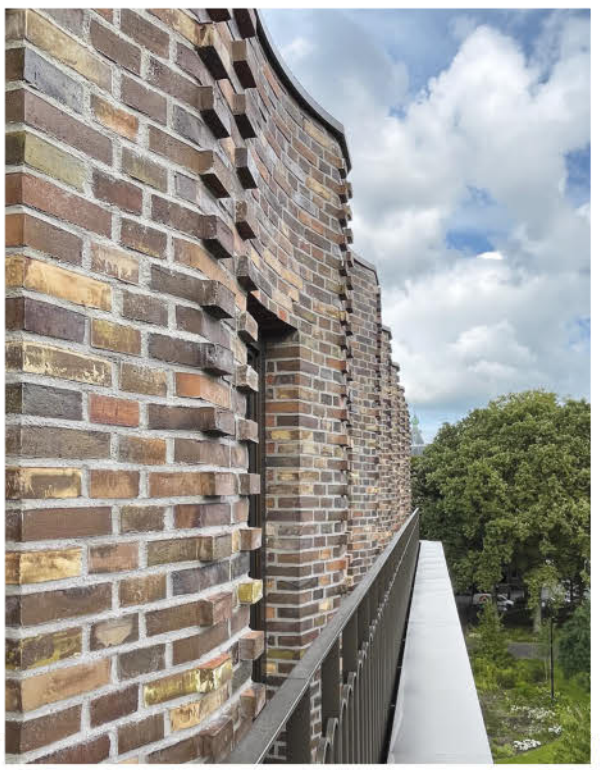
Elevation, brickwork





Plan, brickwork courses





Office Winhov designed 12 different moulded bricks for the new building, mainly for use in the crown, in the corners and around the doorways. The basic brick is also in a custom size, 210 x 100 x 50 mm, which was the format of the brick used in the 1908 university building.

The north façade of the new industrial building, which faces an open space, is highly symmetrical.

A corten steel and glass walkway connects the new building to the rest of the complex.

For the cladding on the new production hall, Völsing KG explicitly wanted to use materials that relate to the ceramic urns.

Production hall with ambitions

A NEW PRODUCTION PLANT IN GERMANY STANDS OUT BY COMBINING TWO DIFFERENT BRICKS IN THE SAME WARM SHADES.

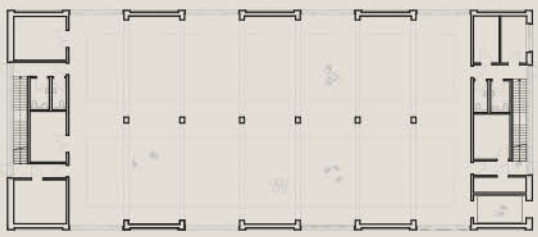
Germany is one of the world leaders in the manufacture of cremation urns, and Völsing KG is one of the top three producers in the country. Founded in 1948, it has been based in Giesen, about 30 kilometres south of Hanover, since 1956. The factory has grown with the business, and the different buildings reflect the eras in which they were built, with brick on the oldest ones and plaster or curtain wall façades on the more recent additions.

A new building from 2022 produces urns for animal ashes and was designed by Hildesheim-based K + H Architekten, which takes on many different types of projects and makes a point of using only high-quality, tried-and-tested building materials – a category to which brick clearly belongs.

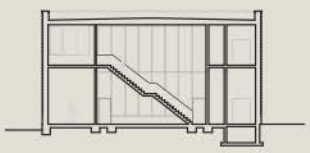
The new rectangular hall is a prefabricated concrete structure measuring 45 x 19 meters with a total footprint of 1,522 m^2 over two floors. Its façades are clad with two different bricks laid in sections. On the long façades, window sections framed by D48 alternate with large, unbroken sections in handmade C44. Both bricks are in the same warm, reddish-brown shades. The gables are clad entirely in D48.

The new façades relate beautifully to the factory's historic brick buildings. According to the architects, another good argument for brick is that the material is long-lasting and maintenance-free. A more subtle consideration is that brick has material associations with the building's purpose, as the same firing process is used to produce both bricks and ceramic urns.

Production hall, Giesen, Germany
Client: Willibald Völsing KG
Architect: K + H Architekten PartG mbB
Contractor: BMS Industriebau GmbH
Engineer: Ingenieurbüro Cazacu
Completed: 2022
Brick: D48 DNF, C44, 528 x 240 x 37 mm
Text: Ida Præstegaard, MSc Architecture
Photos: Florian Holzherr



Floor plan



Cross section

Site plan showing the production hall

The client and architect chose to combine a version of Cover and D bricks, the shades and colours of which harmonise with each other.

The Kensington Building has bevelled brick columns that meet curved lintels in a tribute to the traditional logic of building with brick. The roof terraces along Wrights Lane offer a highly desirable outdoor space, views of the city, and room for beehives that will produce 65 kg of honey in peak season.

"Modern construction techniques tend to see brick as a skin, little more than a veneer. In The Kensington Building, bricks play a greater role in the modelling of the façade. The brickwork has weight. It is not just skin; it also adds muscle."
Nathan Romero Muelas, architect

The elevations follow the traditional street lines and restore the classic three-part hierarchy of the façade. All window frames, muntins and canopies are made of powder-coated metal, their darkness contrasting with the protruding columns clad in light-coloured brick.

The Kensington Building, London, UK
Client: AshbyCapital in conjunction with developer Janson Urban
Architect: Pilbrow & Partners
Contractor: ISG Ltd
Engineer: WSP
Finished: 2022
Brick: K91, plus various special formats in K91 clay, in all 27,257 bricks
Text: Nathan Romero Muelas, Architect MAA and author
Photos: Hufton + Crow, Philip Vile

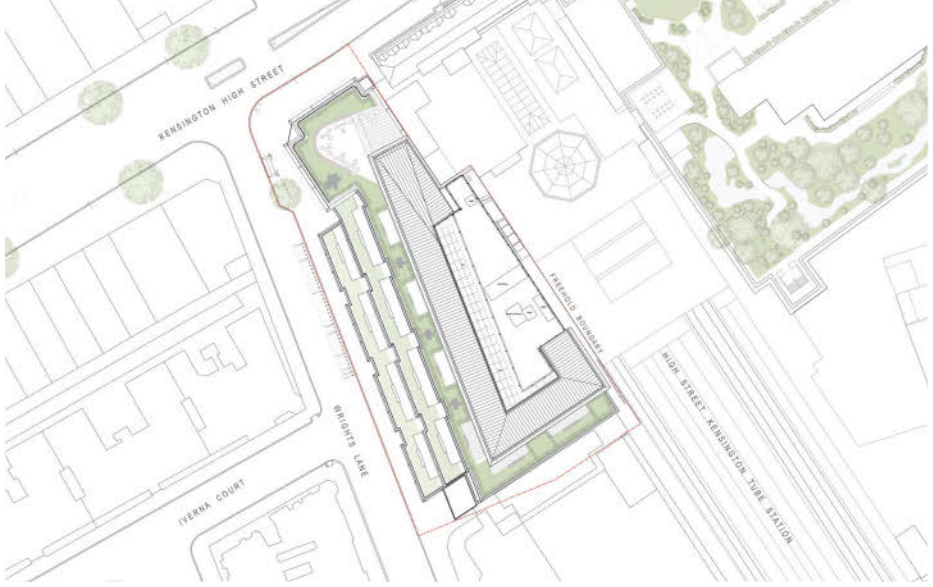
The Kensington Building

A MIXED-USE TRANSFORMATION PROJECT RESTORES CULTURAL AND HISTORICAL TIES TO THE HIGHLY TRADITIONAL KENSINGTON HIGH STREET WHILE MEETING THE DEMANDS OF A MODERN WORKPLACE.

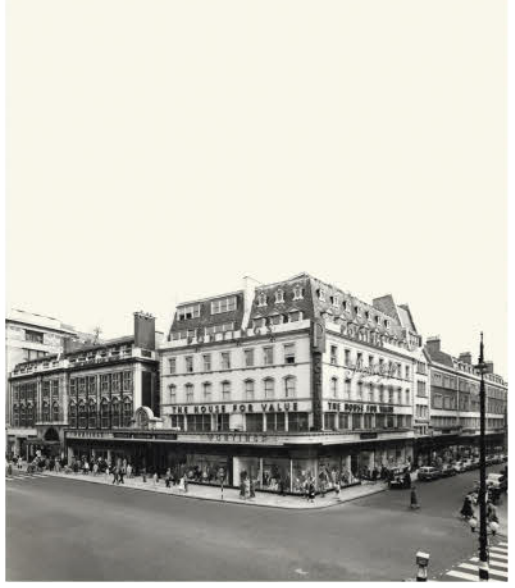
The Kensington Building, at the corner of High Street and Wrights Lane, replaced Pontings department store's cheerless 1970s building. The previous brutalist edifice was itself the successor to the original Pontings – one of the grand dames of the hey-day of department stores along with nearby Barkers and Derry & Toms. It looked out of place on such a traditional high-end London shopping street. Its rigid orthogonal volumes altered the traditional street lines, its thermal and environmental performance was poor, and the bleak concrete fronts did little to entice shoppers.
The Kensington Building is the result of a comprehensive transformation project that set out to atone for the sins of the past and provide more office and retail space.

Working with the past
Architecture is an art of revision and continuity. Etymologically, the word "tradition" is derived from the Latin "tra-dere", which means to carry the past into the future. Transforming and building anew always entails working with the past, especially in an old city, where the voice of the architect joins an already large choir.

In the past, it was usually for practical reasons (money, supply shortages) that buildings were reused in whole or part – hence Roman columns in a Christian basilica or Islamic mosque. Nowadays, cultural preservation and environmental responsibility weigh heavily on architects' decisions. In The Kensington Building, after stripping the previous store down to its structural frame, the architects were able to reuse over 60 % of the old structure. Not only is this very good news in terms of carbon emissions, but it also allows for an undercurrent of continuity as the structural DNA of the old building endures into the 21st century.



The site plan shows The Kensington Building's terrace gardens. Opposite the tube station is the former Derry & Toms, of which the original Kensington Roof Garden has been preserved.



Pontings department store was built 1899-1901 and demolished in 1971. The photograph was taken around 1950.

The successor to Pontings, built in 1975, transformed in 2022.

Old virtues and new needs

Necessity is the mother of architectural invention. The new gallery connecting Wrights Lane to the tube station is a case in point. It provides new retail space, improves mobility, opens up the building, endows the street with a sense of permeability and dynamism and offers a new urban and architectural experience.

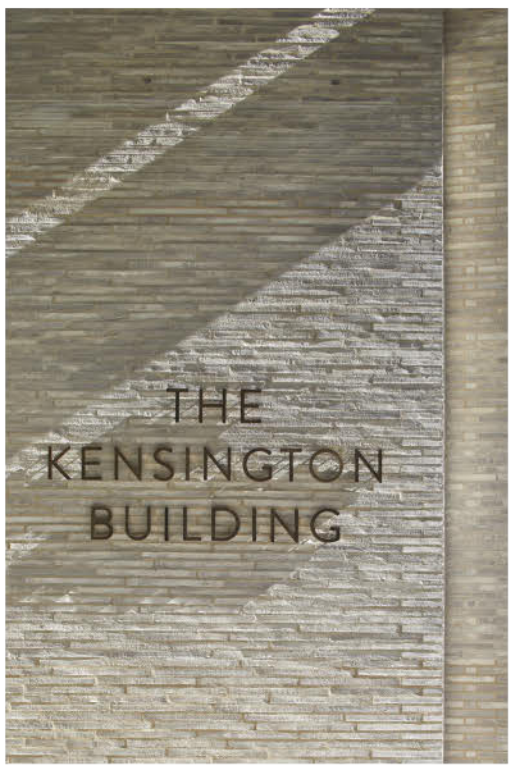
The same applies to the three new office floors at the top, facing Wrights Lane. To allow exterior access to the offices and prevent views into private homes, the architects added buffer gardens at the edge of the recessed storeys. These "hanging gardens" improve both biodiversity and the quality of life for staff and shoppers alike.

Brick being brick

Modern construction techniques tend to see brick as a skin, little more than a veneer. In The Kensington Building, bricks play a greater role in the modelling of the façade. The brickwork has weight. It is not just skin; it also adds muscle, as is particularly obvious where the arched window lintels animate the elevations, paying homage to the construction logic of traditional brick buildings.

Much of the façade's structural gravitas is down to the choice of brick, in this case Petersen Kolumba K91 'Roman' brick. Laid in flush pointing, the bricks look uniform and blend well with the Moleanos stone when viewed from a distance. Up close, they assume greater textural richness. The subtle variations in the warm grey tones contrast nicely with the glass and delicate bronze detailing of the windows. The sensitive choice of materials goes a long way towards humanising the building and re-integrating it into the High Street.

The delicate, beautiful bronze graphics complement the handmade bricks.



The new gallery that stretches throughout the building connects Wrights Lane to High Street Kensington tube station.

The new building's neighbour on High Street Kensington is The Kensington Arcade, followed by the two buildings, built in 1930, that once housed the legendary department stores Derry & Toms and Barkers. The façade structure on the new building, including slender, light-coloured columns and recessed, three-storey window sections, is reminiscent of the almost 100-year-old Art Deco buildings.

When you step into the lobby of The Kensington Building, with its betwen 4.6 and 5.6 metre high ceilings, you are transported to the grandeur of 1930s department stores, translated into a modern design idiom but with the same quality of materials and craftsmanship. The handmade bricks on the façade continue inside, contrasting with the black honed Basaltite stone floor and wall panels with narrow wooden panels in various shades of stained ash.

Honouring architectural history

The Kensington Building acknowledges the character, proportions and material palette traditionally used in the area. It takes inspiration from both the Art Deco stepped terraces of the nearby Barkers department store and the classical, stately rhythm of Derry & Toms' façade, with its alternating vertical lines of metalwork and Moleanos stone. The Victorian brick façades on the mansions on the other side of Wrights Lane add to this polyphony of references.

The Kensington Building has a modern idiom but it also blends in with the high standards of its historically rich urban context. It looks as if it has always been there – and in a sense, it has. Since the renovation, the corner of High Street Kensington and Wrights Lane looks lighter and airier. If streets can breathe, The Kensington Building is helping this traditional London enclave to do so a little easier.

"Much of the façade's structural gravitas is down to the choice of brick, in this case Petersen Kolumba K91. Laid in flush pointing, the bricks look uniform and blend well with the Moleanos stone when viewed from a distance. Up close, they assume greater textural richness."
Nathan Romero Muelas, architect

The rounded brick wall in the lobby serves as the backdrop for the luminous artwork Sphere 14, created especially for the building by London artist Lesley Hilling. The curved niche is made from custom-made, rounded Kolumba.

One side of the solid staircase is a curved, brick section made of customised, rounded Kolumba. Steps are in honed Basaltite stone. The handrail is in solid dark stained ash.

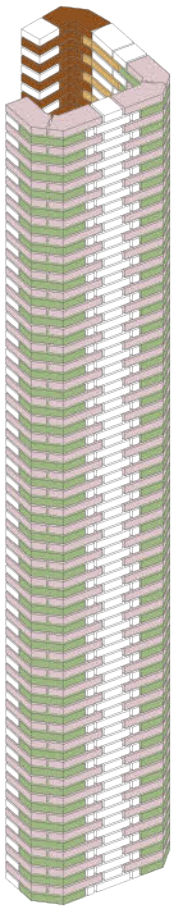
"Wall grazing" highlights the irregularities of the handmade bricks and dramatises the texture of the lobby walls.

The ceiling height in the lobby of 5.6 metres towards the street creates a sense of openness. Recessed windows highlight the brick-clad columns and create a shadow effect on the façade.

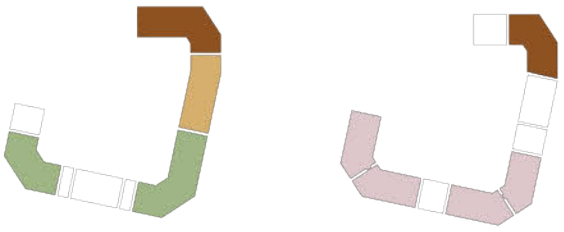
Ground floor with office entrance at 1 Wright's Lane and retail fronting Kensington High Street and the new arcade linking to the Underground station.

Roof level with flexible workspace and garden.

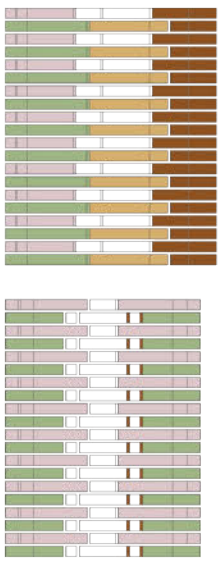
Light-coloured Moleanos stone inserted into the columns marks the different storeys and finishes off the brickwork at the top. Kolumba is laid with a flush joint so that the brickwork follows the façade line of the Moleanos stone.



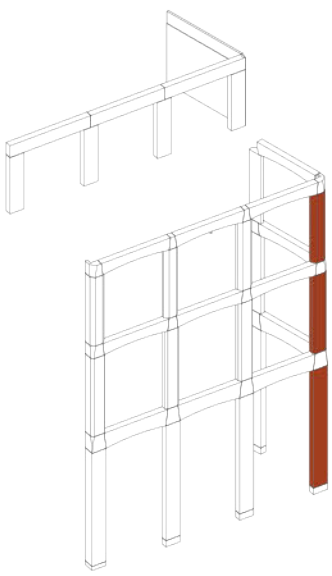
Isometry of a column



Specially moulded bricks, plans of courses in columns

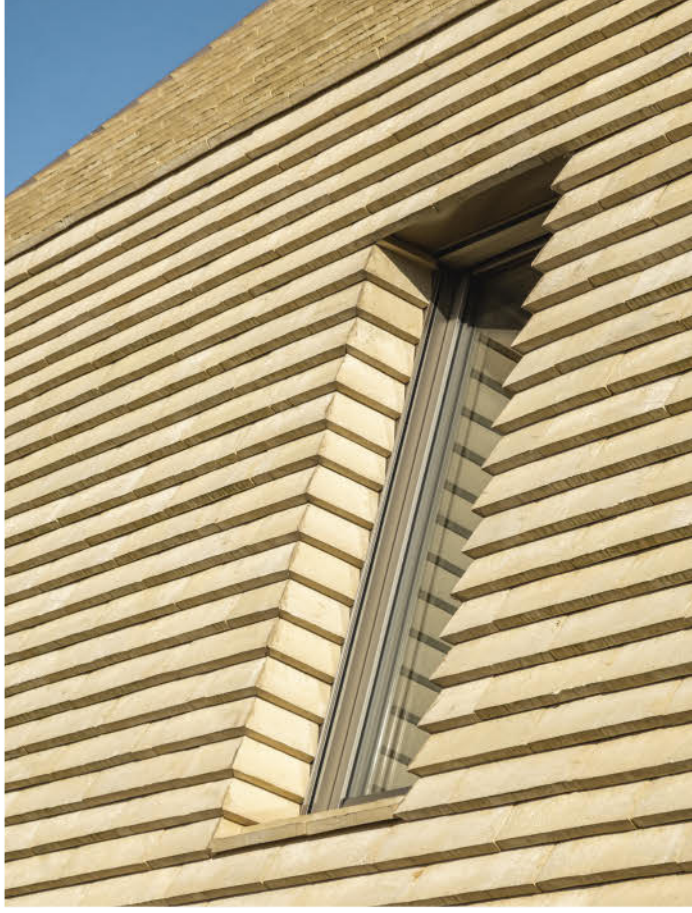


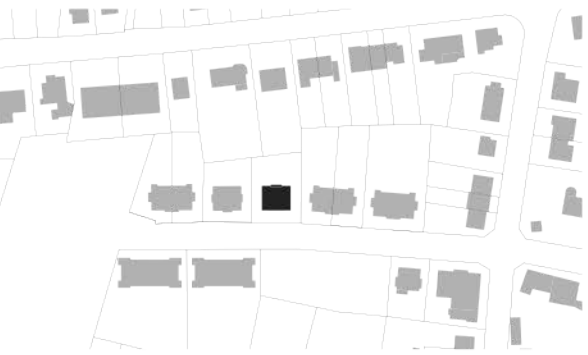
Specially moulded bricks, elevations unfolded



Construction principle, façade columns

Pilbrow & Partners designed a number of special Kolumba formats, e.g. for the octagonal columns on the façade. A total of 27,257 custom bricks were produced in various geometrical shapes.





Site plan

The use of Cover on both the roof and façade made it possible to clad the whole volume in brick so that it stands out in the neighbourhood.

Thanks to careful planning and skilled craftsmen, every detail has been executed to perfection.

Brick precision

IN TERMS OF SHAPE AND COLOUR, THIS NEW DETACHED HOUSE IN LUXEMBOURG HAS A DISTINCT KINSHIP WITH THE OTHER HOMES IN THE AREA. BUT THAT IS WHERE THE SIMILARITIES STOP.

The parameters were highly specific. The local authorities placed strict requirements on the number of storeys, footprint, distance from ground to eaves, roof shape and quality of materials. So Bruck + Weckerle Architekten had limited room for manoeuvre when designing this home for two, complete with a private art gallery, just outside Luxembourg City.

It was to be built on a quiet residential street in a neighbourhood full of large, traditional-looking residences, most of which have mansard roofs in slate or roofing felt and façades in plaster or natural stone.

The client was familiar with the architects' work and expected an innovative modern house in unconventional materials. Although the local planning requirements presented a challenge, the solution lay in the architects' choice of façade cladding.

Viewed as a silhouette in the dark, you might think the house has traditional façades and mansard roofs, but in daylight, it is clear that only the external form mimics the neighbours.

The architects treated the house as a solid block and covered it with a skin of light-yellow Cover. They then cut holes in the surface as needed and lined these apertures with the same brick. All of the windows are pulled back by around 300 mm, and the doorways, window ledges, lintels and entrance and terrace walls are clad with Cover. The craftsmanship is exquisite, the look is crisp and precise.

The house meets all of the stringent regulatory requirements. It combines an unconventional, modern idiom with 100 % natural materials – clay, moulded by hand, dried and fired.

Private home, Luxembourg

Client: Private

Architect: Bruck + Weckerle Architekten

Contractor: Façade, Stefan Feltes

Engineer: INCA Ingénieurs Conseils Associés

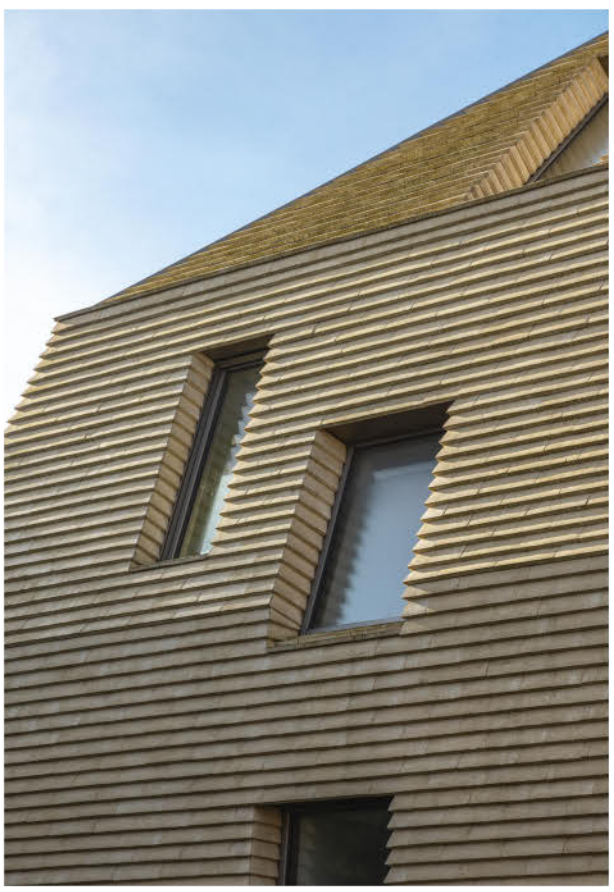
Completed: 2022

Brick: C71, 528 x 170 x 37 mm

Text: Ida Præstegaard, MSc Architecture

Photos: Luuk Kramer

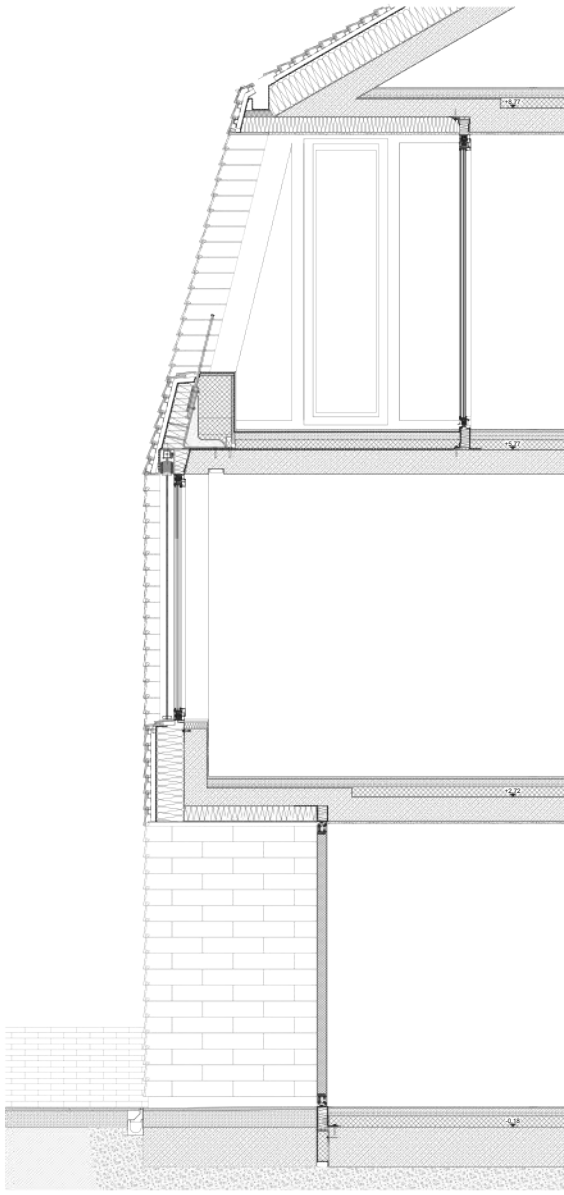
The simplicity of the exterior has been continued inside. In the dining and kitchen area, the floor is in light-coloured brick. The ceilings are concrete, and the kitchen units are made of oak.



The shingle-like bricks are laid so that they overlap, which gives a shading effect that changes throughout the day as the sun moves across the surfaces.

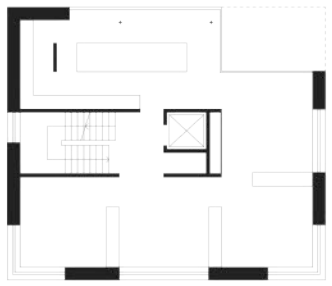
The façades are 100 % sober. The only variation is in the different window formats.

The building is on a steeply sloping plot, so it has three storeys facing the road. The kitchen, living room and bedroom are spread over two floors and face the garden, 3.5 metres above street level.

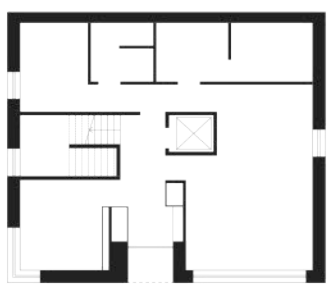


Construction, section

Cross section



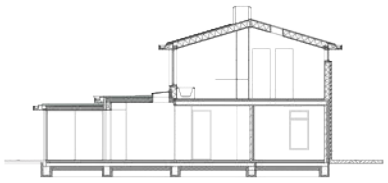
Floor plan, garden level



Floor plan, street level

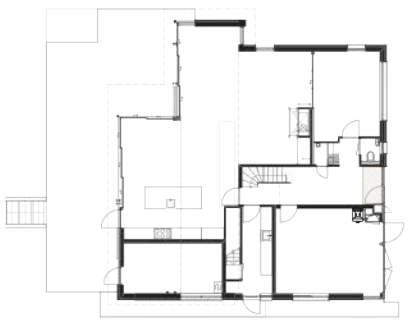
Using the same natural material for both the roof and façade enhances the sense that the house is integrated into the topography of the site.

The façade proportions are based on the dimensions of the Cover brick. An unbroken brick belt spans the entire length of the building. A long row of windows under the roof provides light to the rooms on the first floor.



Cross section

First-floor plan



Ground floor

The architect and client chose two materials for the house and used them consistently. Zebrano wood covers the underside of eaves and is used for all doors and entrances.

A composition in brick, copper and wood

A PRIVATE HOME IN THE NORTHERN NETHERLANDS, BUILT ENTIRELY OF NATURAL MATERIALS, BLENDS BEAUTIFULLY INTO THE SURROUNDING WOODLAND.

The clients originally bought a 1970s detached house in Bloemendaal, northern Netherlands, with a view to remodelling and extending it. However, following consultation with their architect, Rogier Groeneveld, they instead decided to build a new home tailored to the 1200-m^2 plot bordering a wooded area to the south.

Local planning regulations allowed for a two-storey house with a hipped roof with a 16-degree slope and large eaves. The top priority was maximising the view of the garden to the south from as many rooms as possible. This meant placing the house close to the road so that it spans almost the entire width of the plot, with large, south-facing glass panels on both the ground and first floors. A rectangular, single-level volume containing the kitchen and dining area juts out into the garden.

The façade to the north is mainly closed, with the main entrance in the middle and flanked to the left by a garage with a wooden doorway and to the right by a large, low-set window into the music room. An 11-metre-long, narrow strip of windows under the roof draws natural light into the first-floor rooms.

The surrounding woodland inspired the designers to use natural materials. Hard Zebrano wood, with its distinctive light and dark stripes, has been used in parts of the façade panels, the underside of the eaves and the garage door. The window and door frames, as well as the roof, are made of oxidised copper. C44 has been used to clad the whole of the north façade, the chimney and the corners. The hard-fired brick's red-brown, almost burgundy shades are echoed in both the wooden and metallic elements.

Cover was developed by Dutch design studio Min2 in 2009 and is now exported all over the world. Architect Rogier Groeneveld chose a version with a colour scheme in reddish-brown shades.

The house number is sandblasted into the brick, a discreet and beautiful solution for a façade with a shingle profile.

Large glass sections open the 387 m^2 home up to the garden. The one-storey pavilion-like extension houses the kitchen and dining area.

Villa, Bloemendaal, The Netherlands

Client: Private

Architect: Rogier Groeneveld, Mens als Maat

Contractor: Kenza Bouw

Engineer: Quinten Wildeboer

Completed: 2021

Brick: C44, 528 x 240 x 37 mm

Text: Ida Præstegaard, MSc Architecture

Photos: Luuk Kramer

With the forest as its backdrop, the white and greyish surfaces harmonise with the sand and clouds. Through sliding doors, rooms flow freely toward the sea, incorporating the beach into family life.

In the front garden, new cherry trees flank the water, bringing light and movement to the garden and the interior. Eventually, the ivy will form a lush carpet in the courtyard.

The fewer materials the better

SIMPLE GEOMETRY AND CONSISTENT USE OF MATERIALS HELP THIS MODERN FAMILY HOME FIT IN WITH ITS MORE TRADITIONAL NEIGHBOURS.

A new home in Snekkersten stands out from the other new houses on the road. Here, as elsewhere in Denmark, many late-19th- or early-20th-century dwellings are being demolished and replaced – more often than not by generic white boxes made of plaster and glass. This ostentatious pseudo-modernism pops up everywhere, perhaps because it doesn't really belong anywhere. From Miami to Costa del Sol, from Esbjerg to Hellerup, these immaculate boxes dot the landscape like discarded fridges.

This is different. While it is clearly a modern home, the volume's simplicity and material unity anchor the project in a place and even in a tradition – that of the archetypal Danish longhouse. Few roads are quite as exclusive as Strandvejen, but unlike some of the other newcomers to the area, this new home speaks clearly and with a serene voice.

An experienced architect once said, "In our projects, we should try to use two materials instead of three. Even better if we can do it with just one." Each material is a system, a language with its own grammar, potential and limitations. Restricting the options helps make a project coherent and endows it with a distinctive character.

That is the case here. The same brick is used from the ground to the roof. The façade bricks are made of the same clay as the ones on the roof. Cover makes this happy solution possible by overlapping bricks – a technique borrowed from slate and wooden shingle roofs.

The façade facing Strandvejen has quite a restrained, even muted look, given life by the shadows of an old cherry tree that constantly shifts across the vibrant texture of the brickwork. Handmade brick introduces a human touch, bringing blessed imperfection to the tight geometry.

Between the garage and a utility room is a fine concrete pavement leading to the main entrance. Light reflects from a pond between the utility space and the house – an ancient Islamic technique rediscovered by early modernists such as Richard Neutra and Sigurd Lewerentz. The shallow pond mirrors the sky and trees, casting light and movement into the home, giving the impression of crossing a drawbridge to enter the house.

An open anteroom carved into the façade provides access to a vertical space – a double-height hall topped by a skylight. From here, across the kitchen-dining room, is a breath-taking view across the Sound, all the way to the coast of Sweden.

As usual in modern Danish houses, the dining-kitchen space is the beating heart of the home. While the brickwork endows the exterior with a monolithic look, the interior strikes a balance between the warmth and softness of wood and the harder and cooler stone. Walls lined with floor-to-ceiling wooden shelves contrast with Italian Ceppo di Gré floor tiles and the Iranian silver travertine used on the kitchen island and other spots around the house.

Vast sliding doors allow the interior spaces to flow unhindered towards the sea, first onto a wooden terrace, then across the grass lawn and onward to the sandy shore. On a mild Danish summer day, the beach becomes this family's living room.

In the garden, old and new planting harmonises with the white and grey brick, softening the edges and further embedding the home on the site. Other small brick constructions, like the garage, the shed and the low walls reach out towards the beach, merge into the landscape, anchor the home and give it roots. This home may be new, but it already belongs.

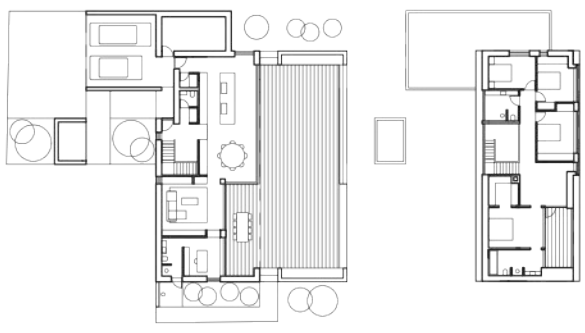
The Kolumba on the façades is also embedded in the grooves in the concrete paving used throughout the arrival area. This detail, and a series of smaller brick structures, help to anchor and root the building.

In the kitchen, floor-to-ceiling oak walls contrast with silver travertine and Ceppo di Gré floor tiles.

The simple geometry of the building, the nuanced grey tones of the brickwork and an old cherry tree add a discreet presence to Strandvejen.

A roof terrace and traditional dormer bring light to the first-floor bedrooms.

Cross section



Plan, ground floor

Plan, first floor

"The same brick is used from the ground to the roof. The façade bricks are made of the same clay as the ones on the roof. Cover makes this happy solution possible by overlapping bricks – a technique borrowed from slate and wooden shingle roofs."
Nathan Romero Muelas, architect

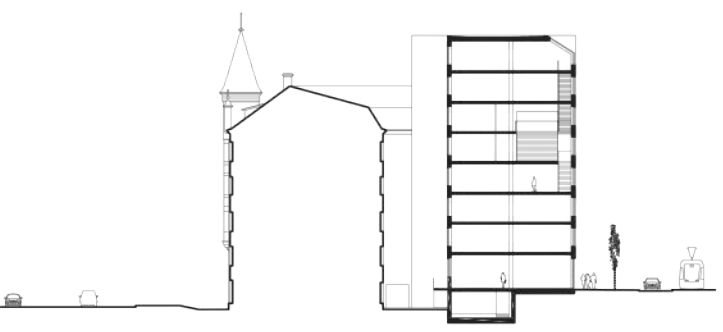
Private home, Snekkersten, Denmark
Client: Private
Architect: BAKS ARKITEKTER
Contractor: B. & V. Kristensen
Completed: 2022
Brick: K91, C91, 528 x 240 x 37 mm
Text: Nathan Romero Muelas, architect MAA and author
Photos: Anders Sune Berg

The main façade on the old Merkurhuset from 1897, designed by Ernest Krüger, faces River Göta but now turns its back on the new building.

Merkurhuset received the Kasper Salin Prize 2022. The jury said: "This office building forms part of an urban development project designed by the city to reconnect the urban space with the River Göta. The building is an addition to a crowded site where the architecture blends in and takes up space – a perfectly balanced achievement."

The new Merkurhus in Gothenburg

THIS POWERFULL NEW BUILDING, CLAD IN NARROW, GREY BRICK AND PERCHED ON THE EDGE OF THE RIVER GÖTA, HAS A SYMBIOTIC RELATIONSHIP WITH THE 126-YEAR-OLD MERKURHUSET NEXT DOOR. PETERSEN TEGL MET THE ARCHITECTS BEHIND THE BUILDING, PER BORNSTEIN, JOHAN OLSSON AND ANDREAS LYCKEFORS.



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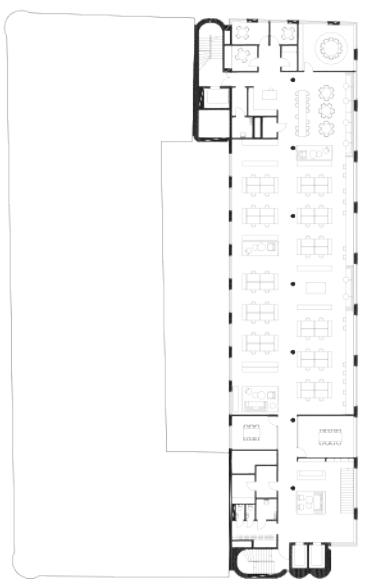


Plan, 5th floor

Designing the new Merkurhuset in Gothenburg was a dream job. The building's future occupant, advertising agency Forsman & Bodenfors, had no hesitation in choosing Bornstein Lyckefors Arkitekter (now Olsson Lyckefors Arkitektur), with whom they had worked in the past. They also asked the architects to design all of the interiors, creating a Gesamtkunstwerk.

Prior to adopting this approach, Forsman & Bodenfors had considered whether or not to renovate the original Merkurhuset and use it as their company HQ. In the end, they opted for an entirely new building next door, on a narrow, 13.6-metre plot facing the city.

The original Merkurhuset is on Skeppsbron, overlooking the Göta River. It is a stately, symmetrical edifice, with three towers, rose-coloured plaster façades and partially clad in sandstone. Designed by Ernest Krüger and built in 1897, it originally housed the offices of a number of shipping companies, and this association with the maritime industry persisted for a very long time. Since the building is so closely interwoven with its surroundings, both architecturally and historically, the proposal to build so close to it might have been expected to encounter resistance. That was not the case.

"Both the local authority and community were positive about the project and the new building was extremely well received when it was completed in 2022. The horseshoe shape of the 1897-building allowed a courtyard to be created between the new and the old buildings, leaving the façade largely unobstructed. This also meant the new building could have windows facing the courtyard," says Johan Olsson.

The narrow site called for a special solution. "We were inspired early on by the famous 1958-plan for SOM's Inland Steel Building in Chicago. The 13.6 m-wide and approximately 59 m-long body of the new Merkurhus – the exact same dimensions as the site – is similarly organised, with service cores at each end housing stairs, lifts, toilets and small meeting rooms. The load-bearing construction consists of the prefabricated concrete parts of the façades and seven central columns, allowing the floors maximum flexibility," explains Per Bornstein.

Towards the city, the façade is 100 % regular and beautifully proportioned, with uniform dimensions in its brick piers and parapets. The windows have elegant, narrow frames and muntins. Instead of a traditional roof, the brick piers on the façade shoot up beyond the 45° angled studio windows, where they are truncated horizontally to form the building's distinctive profile. The curved ends, which constitute the transition between new and old, were inspired by the aesthetics of the local area.

"The round motif is everywhere in Gothenburg, including the neighbouring Rosenlund Power Station. The organic shapes in both gables join the new building with the historic Merkurhuset," says Andreas Lyckefors.

Traditional industrial options such as plaster and steel panels were considered as cladding for the façades, but the client chose brick in the end, which is also seen in Rosenlund Power Station.

Siteplan

Towards the city, the façade is 100 % regular and beautifully proportioned, with uniform dimensions in its brick piers and parapets. The windows have elegant, narrow frames and muntins in aluminium.

Service cores with stairs and lifts are in the gables, wrapped in rounded, windowless towers that contrast with the otherwise angular building. According to the architects, the organic shapes act as a link to the old Merkurhuset.

The three architects behind Merkurhuset, from the left: Per Bornstein, Johan Olsson and Andreas Lyckefors.

"The grey hues are found in clay and in the street. They also blend beautifully with the dusty pink façade and sandstone cladding of the historic Merkurhuset."
Johan Olsson, architect, partner, Olsson Lyckefors Arkitektur

The architects and client chose the narrow Flensburg format of 228 x 108 x 40 mm laid with a relatively wide 20 mm joint. The diameter of the organic shapes meant there was no need for custom bricks.

Merkurhuset is distinctly structural, and its skeleton is clearly visible. At the top of the building, the brick piers on the façade shoot up beyond the 45° angled studio windows, where they are truncated horizontally to form the building's distinctive profile.

Merkurhuset, office building, Gothenburg, Sweden
Client: Platzer Fastigheter, Bygg-Göta, Forsman & Bodenfors
Architect: Bornstein Lyckefors Arkitekter (now Olsson Lyckefors Arkitektur)
Interior design and furnishings: Bornstein Lyckefors Arkitekter
Contractor: Bergman & Höök
Engineer: PE Teknik & Arkitektur
Completed: 2022
Brick: D91 FF
Text: Ida Præstegaard, MSc Architecture
Photos: Ulf Celander, Erik Lefvander (interiors)

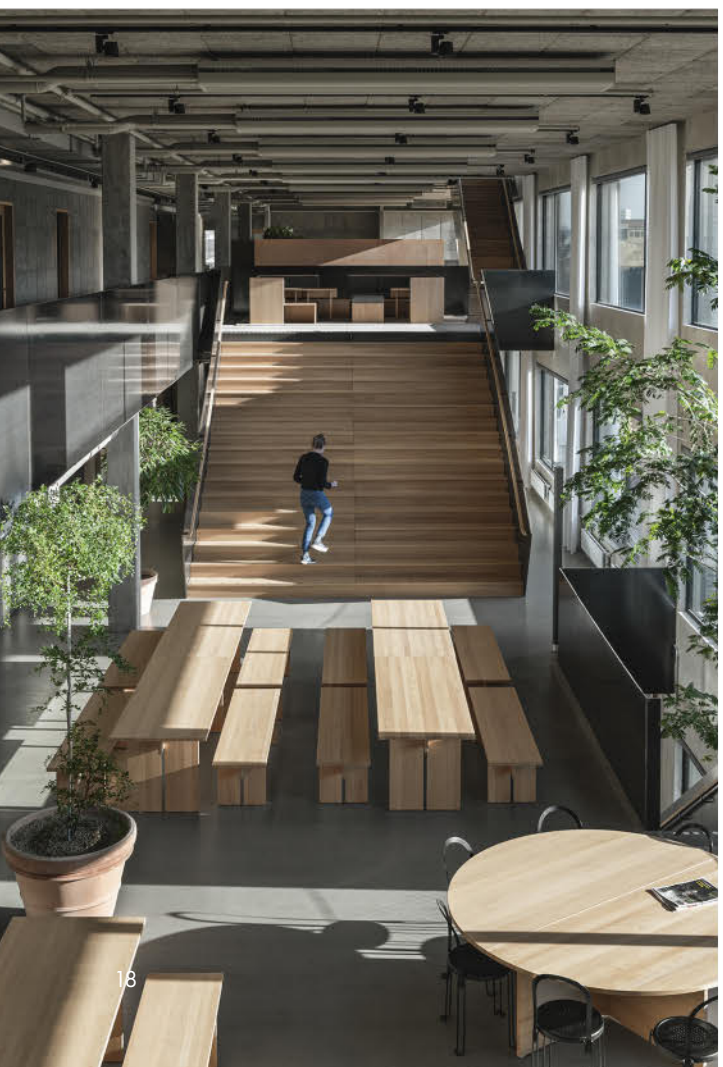
The Flensburg brick D91 measuring 228 x 108 x 40 mm, along with the standard format 228 x 108 x 54 mm. The Flensburg brick and Kolumba are almost identical in height, which means they can be used in the same bonds.

"We considered several colours, including yellow, the classic Gothenburg brick, but our client was leaning towards the purest possible colour – almost a non-colour – and decided on the blue-tempered D91. The grey hues are found in clay and in the street. They also blend beautifully with the dusty pink façade and sandstone cladding of the historic Merkurhuset. We chose the narrow Flensburg format, which adds sophistication to the façades, and used 20-mm joints, which further accentuate and flatter the narrow format," says Olsson.

With the new Merkurhuset, Bornstein Lyckefors Arkitektur have succeeded in creating a building that is both distinctive and original. It is at once almost brutal and refined, combining organic shapes with a simple, industrial aesthetic that feels right at home in this architecturally diverse area.

The Merkurhuset was awarded the Kasper Salin Prize 2022.

The fourth floor is double-height and houses a reception, lounge and meeting rooms for customers and employees.



The studio windows on the top floor provide phenomenal views of the city.

The simple beech furniture and fixtures are inspired by Donald Judd's ascetic design.

Mill House is located in the heart of historic and idyllic Cambridge, right next to the Mill Pond, on which people like to punt the famous flat-bottomed boats. The three gables face the pond.

Sense and Sensibility

A NEW BUILDING IN THE CENTRE OF HISTORIC CAMBRIDGE EMPATHICALLY CAPTURES AND REFLECTS THE SHAPES, SCALE AND MATERIALS OF ITS SURROUNDINGS.

Mill House was designed by MCW Architects, who have had a studio in Cambridge for 12 years and have designed many excellent new buildings in the city and elsewhere in the UK, not least for universities. They chose Petersen Cover for Mill House, which contains seven small rental apartments and a café. We met Colin Moses, one of the company's three directors, and architect Andrew Badley, to discuss the project.

The unique site stands on a corner beside the Mill Pond and affords views of Sheep's Green, a famous green space in the city through which the River Cam flows. Lining the banks of the river are many of the colleges that make up the University of Cambridge. Mill House replaces an early 20th-century Edwardian structure that was severely damaged by fire. The conservation authorities described it as "a building that detracts", so its demolition met with little resistance. Both the local authorities and the community followed the project closely.

"It is always crucial that the locals are happy with the changes to their community. We held regular meetings with various groups, who provided input for changes along the way," explains Colin Moses.

The recent development is surrounded by 19th- and 20th-century single- and two-storey gabled buildings with pitched roofs, which are used for student housing, shops and small businesses. One challenge was to design and scale the new volume to the cityscape, which meant the new building could not be monolithic under any circumstances.

The result was a cluster of three smaller volumes that look like separate buildings, no matter from which angle you view them. In reality, they form a single structure. Closest to the corner, the building is two storeys, while the section behind is three. A shorter, three-storey wing shoots out from the main wing – which is at a 25° angle to the others. By pointing in different directions, the property beautifully reflects the complex geometry of the building stock in this part of the city.

The new building is set further back from the small T-junction than the previous building on the site. This made room for a café with outdoor seating, which was an instant hit.

A 20th-century Edwardian building, which had been badly damaged by fire, was demolished to make way for the new building.

According to Moses, MCW Architects was familiar with Petersen Tegl and knew right from the start that Cover would be suitable.

"We wanted an authentic and traditional material that also has a contemporary feel. Cover can clad both façades and roofs, which enables the three shapes to form a coherent silhouette. From the wide range available, we chose three different versions to differentiate the volumes from each other. Our client asked us to look at tiles from other suppliers but had to acknowledge that none of the alternatives could compete with Cover's colour choice and nuance," he continues.

Initially, the idea was to build a wooden construction, but the risk of flooding meant the architects had to cast the foundations, the ground-floor columns and the first-floor deck in concrete. "All of the electrical installations start at the top and work their way down, so they are safe in the event of rising water. The rest of the construction is wood. The two chimneys were an important part of harmonising with the local look, and their dimensions reflect others in the area. In our building, they are used to ventilate the bathrooms," Badley explains.

In addition to brick, the other recurring façade material is grey-powder coated aluminium, which is used for all of the window surrounds, as well as cladding on columns and window sections. "Everything has been custom-designed, including window frames at various angles, to provide the best possible view. The intersections between roof surfaces or façades are marked by aluminium profiles that flow directly into the Cover," he notes.

Cambridge's historic architecture attracts over eight million tourists a year. The city has every reason to be proud of the new Mill House, which shows that modern architecture is also able to offer exciting, aesthetic experiences.

The building consists of a cluster of three smaller volumes. No matter the angle from which they are viewed, they look separate. All three are clad in different versions of Cover, all the colours of which are echoed in the brick façades and tiled roofs of the surrounding buildings.

Seven apartments and café, Cambridge, UK

Client: CamProp

Architect: MCW Architects

Contractor: CamProp Construction

Engineer: MEP-Scotch Partners Structure-Cooper Associates

Completed: 2023

Brick: C48, C50, C54, 528 x 240 x 37 mm

Text: Ida Præstegaard, MSc Architecture

Photos: Philip Vile

The new café is particularly popular with the many students in Cambridge.

The chimneys are visually important and are used for ventilation.

Among other things, the dormers and window surrounds are clad in grey-powder coated aluminium, all custom-made.

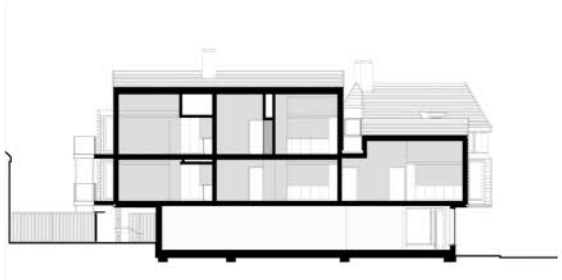
The east wing of Mill House is clad with C54 and C50. Both brick shades are found in the yellow brick façades on the neighbouring Newnham Mill, originally built in 1798, but altered over the years.

In addition to the aesthetic qualities of the brick, the fact that Cover can be removed and reused almost endlessly played a significant role for the architects and client.

Site plan

The architects had several options for the corners where the Cover cladding on the roof and on the gable meet the Cover-clad façades. In both cases, MCW Architects chose to run the Cover bricks perpendicular to an aluminium profile. Also the ridge on the roof is finished with aluminium flashing.

Project architect Andrew Badley, architect and director Colin Moses, MCW Architects, and co-owner of Mill House, Ben Griggs, Ferrersmere Estates, outside the café.



Longitudinal section

Cross section

Floor plan, second floor

"We wanted an authentic and traditional material that also has a contemporary feel. Cover can clad both façades and roofs, which enables the three shapes to form a coherent silhouette."
Colin Moses, architect and director, MCW Architects

MCW Architects did a lot of modelling before deciding on the final scale and design of the building.

"The railway area is on the site of an old brickworks with clay soil. On an abstract, symbolic level, it is as if we have pulled the bricks out of the soil."
Troels Dam Madsen, architect, Henning Larsen

KAB House is in the transitional zone between the dense city blocks and the open railway terrain. With traffic whizzing by in many directions, the pentagonal building does not have a rear side: all of the sides are visible and equally important.

Edgeways

OFFSET BRICK-ON-EDGE COURSES WRAP KAB HOUSE IN A FINELY MESHED COSTUME, LENDING WARMTH AND TEXTURE TO THE PENTAGONAL BODY OF THE BUILDING.

Designed by Henning Larsen Architects, KAB House is in the bustling area where the Copenhagen neighbourhoods of Vesterbro, Bavnehøj and Carlsberg Byen converge. The building stands on former railway ground at the transition between densely packed tenements and apartment blocks and the open terrain beside the river of rails that runs from the hinterland in the west to the city centre.

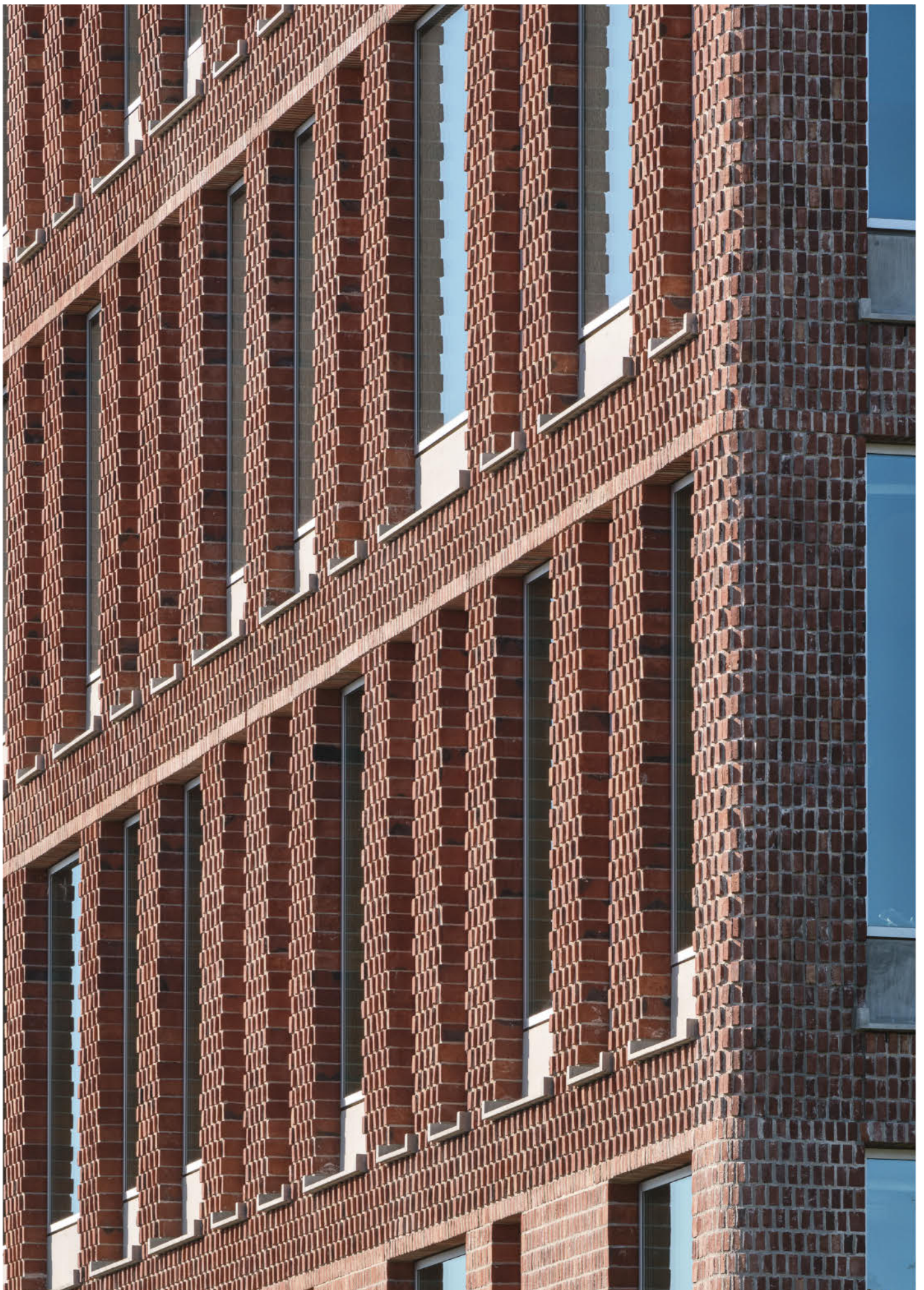
Two large, preserved trees help define the building's irregular, pentagonal footprint, and the choice of brick for the façades is similarly rooted in the site and its history. "The railway area is on the site of an old brickworks with clay soil," says architect Troels Dam Madsen. "On an abstract, symbolic level, it is as if we have pulled the bricks out of the soil."

The façades consist of red D23 bricks cut and laid in staggered brick-on-edge courses. However, this meant that the stub joints in every second course would be exposed toward the door and window openings. The solution was a custom-moulded brick. Troels Dam Madsen explains. "Petersen Tegl helped us by producing heavy bricks shaped like traditional Danish loaves of black bread so we could avoid the exposed stub joints at the openings. These give the building its distinctive character."

Vesterbro's red-brick tenements, which also face the railway, feature a classical horizontal division between a clearly marked base and the floors above. KAB House's brickwork divides the building in a similar fashion. On the lower two floors, all of the bricks are flush. However, on the upper three, every second one is recessed a few centimetres, creating a simple, chequered relief that changes character depending on the light. The layered effect also prevents the building from looking overly monolithic.

"D23 was specified early on, at the tendering stage, because we wanted bricks that were not homogenous but were imbued with a sense of life and history," says Troels Dam Madsen. "In normal brickwork, we see the long side of the brick, the stretchers. Instead, we have played with the brick as a building block and turned the less commonly seen side, the headers, outwards. This reveals traces of the production process. When you look at the recesses, some dark tones are visible. These seem like minor flaws in the interweaving of the bricks and speak of where they come from."

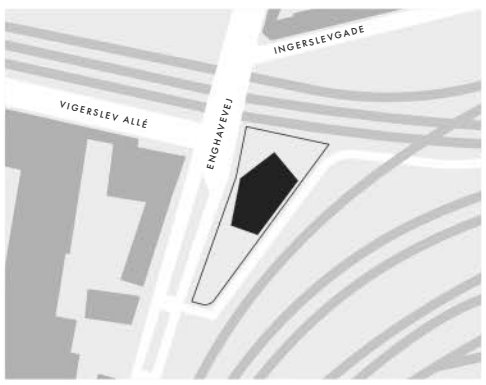
The red D23 bricks are laid in brick-on-edge courses to expose the headers. A delicate relief spreads across the top three floors, created by every second brick being a few centimetres further back. Reliefs cast a network of shadows across the façade that change with the sunlight.



To the south of KAB House is a small park for the building's users and the neighbourhood's residents and visitors. The raw look of the planting is inspired by the wild biotopes that grow in many railway areas.

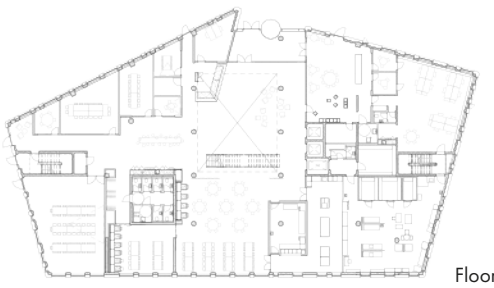
The top of the building is designed as a roof garden with a greenhouse, and space has been made for a double-height loggia on the south-west corner.

"In normal brickwork, we see the long side of the brick, the stretchers. Instead, we have played with the brick as a building block and turned the less commonly seen side, the headers, outwards. This reveals traces of the production process."
Troels Dam Madsen, architect, Henning Larsen

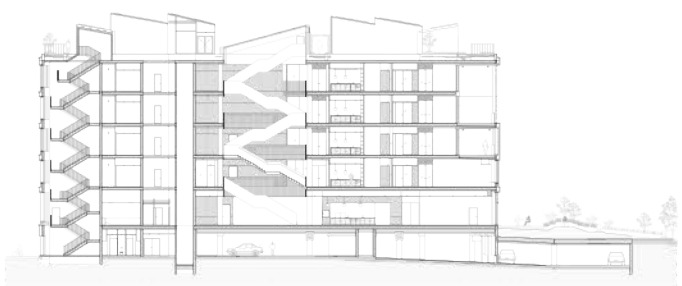


Site plan

The choice of brick as a façade material was inspired by the neighbouring red-brick tenements in the Vesterbro district of Copenhagen. Like its older neighbours, KAB House is divided into a lower and an upper part, marked with flat brickwork and brickwork with a relief effect, respectively.

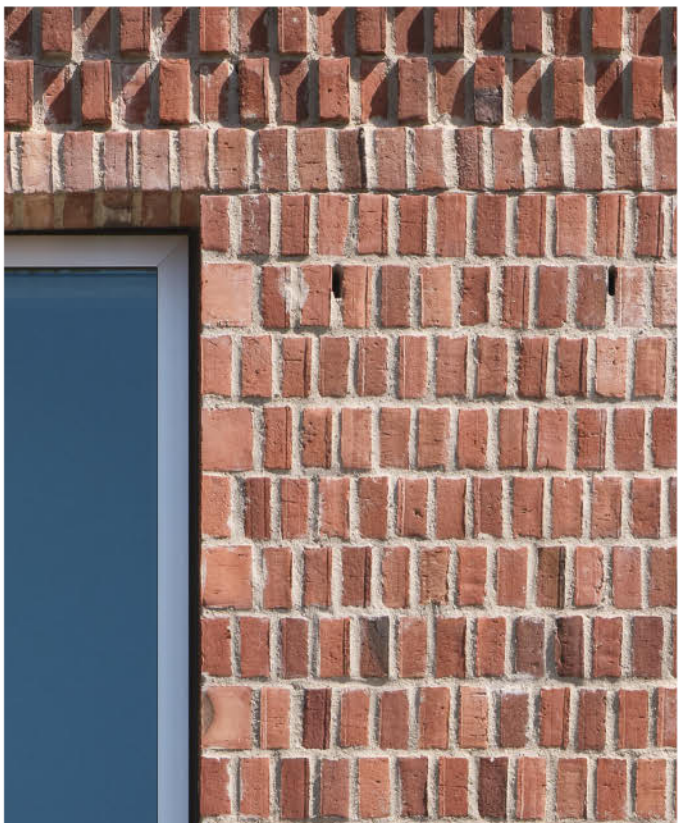


Floor plan, ground floor



Longitudinal section

The rusticity and colour play make the brickwork varied and vibrant. Every second course is finished off towards the window openings with a wider, custom-made brick to avoid stub joints on top of each other.

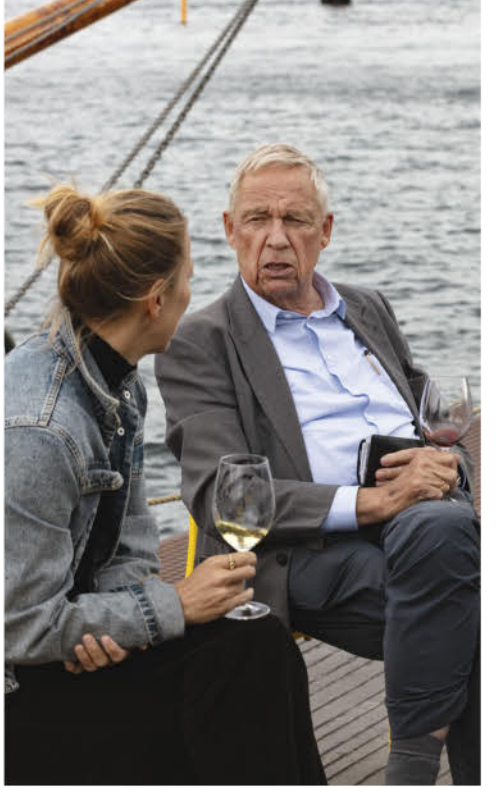


The new building is the headquarters of the KAB housing association, which manages approximately 65,000 social housing units in the Greater Copenhagen area. It has an administrative staff of around 400 people but also serves as a centre for more than 40 housing organisations run by KAB. The headquarters act as a meeting point for the organisations' operational staff and the resident-elected board members.

This dual function is reflected in the structure of the building: The bottom floor serves primarily as a venue for meetings. This floor opens up to its surroundings and houses a reception area, meeting rooms, a canteen, and a social enterprise café open to all. The other floors house administrative offices and meeting rooms. At the top are a greenhouse and roof garden, with views to every point on the compass.

An open atrium at the centre of the building houses a grand staircase that connects the floors. Kitchenettes on each floor face the atrium, serve as meeting places, and provide visual contact with life elsewhere in the building. "The intention is that the employees will meet each other on the different floors, just like in an apartment block where you meet your neighbour on the stairs," says Madsen. Pine panelling throughout brings warmth to the interior and stands in contrast to the exposed concrete columns and walls. Inside and out, the look is both warm and rough at the same time.

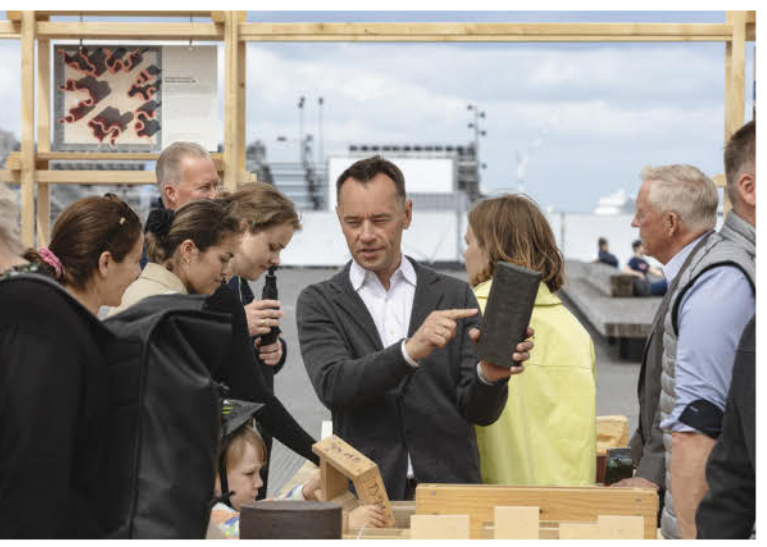
KAB-Huset, Copenhagen, Denmark
Client: KAB
Architect: Henning Larsen
Landscape architect: SLA
Turnkey solutions: 5E Byg
Engineer: Niras
Completed: 2021
Brick: D23 DNF, one type of special brick
Text: Martin Søberg, PhD, architectural historian
Photos: Anders Sune Berg



Photos: Jacob Bloch

Petersen on the waterfront

Copenhagen is the UNESCO-UIA World Capital of Architecture 2023, as part of which various events focusing on the overarching theme of sustainability have been organised. Copenhagen also hosted the UIA World Congress of Architects from 2–6 July, during which a unique programme of activities and events attracted thousands of architects from all over the world. Petersen Tegl's contribution was a pavilion at Ofelia Plads, in which we exhibited projects with photos, text and models. The M/S Emma, a ship owned by the brickworks, sailed from Broager and docked as a landmark for the duration of the exhibition. Thank you to all those who popped in!



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