

A detailed architectural sketch of a modern house's structural frame. The drawing uses fine black lines to represent the walls, floor, and ceiling, with a perspective view looking into the interior. A prominent feature is a large, rectangular window opening with a thick, solid red frame. The sketch is overlaid on a grid of thin, light gray lines. The overall style is technical and minimalist.

THE NEW MODERN HOUSE

REDEFINING
FUNCTIONALISM

Jonathan Bell & Ellie Stathaki

Urban GREENWOOD ROAD
Lynch Architects
UK





Lynch Architects are emboldened by the prospect of an architectural debate, which in itself suggests that writing about building is as important an element of the process as construction itself. This house in Greenwood Road, East London, was completed in 2006. Described by the architects as a 'new Georgian house', it was explicitly intended to reference the adjoining Georgian terrace without compromising its own form or material independence.

Semi-detached from its immediate neighbour, the house is anchored to the site by the sunken lower ground floor, a white brick structure that references the brick and rendered walls facing the road. Above this 'inhabited foundation' are two storeys constructed from timber, a 'bird's nest' perched on a 'sunken well'. From the tightly controlled daylight of the ground floor, rising up to a warmer light filtered through rooflights and bounced off the exposed oak frame, the house is an experiment in domestic landscape.

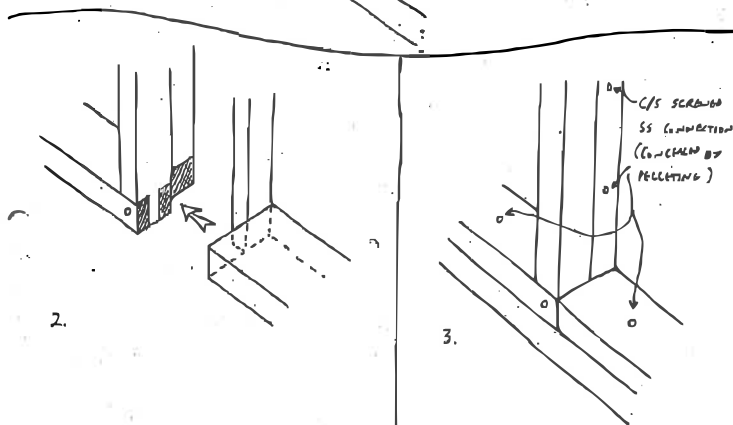
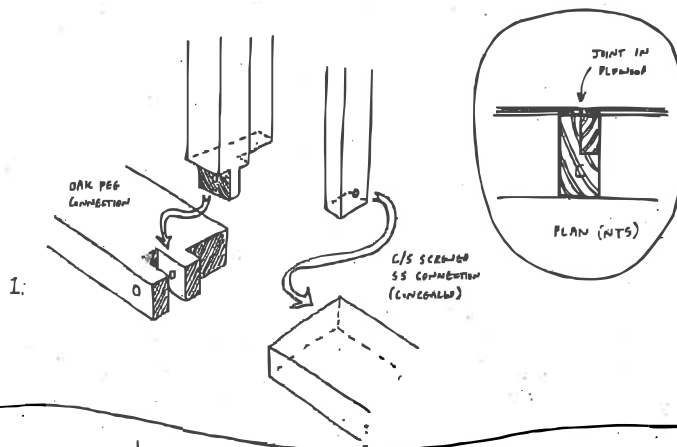
Material quality, craft and experience are crucial elements of Lynch Architects' work. Established by Patrick and Claudia Lynch, the studio is strongly rooted in the late-flourishing period of expressive British Modernism, and the practice of writing about architecture as well as building. Everywhere in this modest house, concerns for material experience dominate, from the thin oak panels that line the landing ('like a cigar box') to the thick, muscular rhythm of the oak frame. The progression from enclosed basement to open upper floor brings the occupants out in the heart of the city, looking over rooftops and gardens.

For Lynch Architects, practice, culture and language are inseparable, bound by a combination of tradition and fact. Patrick Lynch has written that 'architecture is the articulation of mute matter, not just as metaphor, but as fact. Matter of fact qualities are such that wood will bend, concrete can be poured, glass is floated, bricks combine, steel is stiffened, stone is heavy but brittle, plastics thin but strong; and that materials can inspire form.'¹

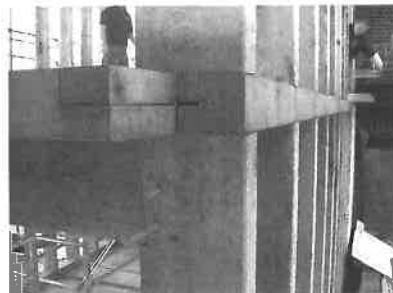
The Greenwood Road house expresses Lynch's belief that domestic architecture can form a harmonious and valuable whole, with a focus on typicality, on the familiar and the functional.

GREENWOOD ROAD IS A SEMI-DETACHED HOUSE THAT SLOTS INTO THE VICTORIAN STREETSCAPE. THE WOODEN-CLAD UPPER STOREYS SIT ABOVE A PAINTED BRICK BASE. THE HOUSE IS EARNEST AND QUOTIDIAN, WITH OCCASIONAL RICH DETAILS STANDING OUT FROM THE EVERYDAY SIMPLICITY OF THE CONSTRUCTION

1|Patrick Lynch, 'Design as translation and typicality: on autonomy & contingency in architecture', *Building Material* (AA1), 2007



VERTICAL JOINT IN PRE-ASSEMBLED OAK PANELS (JOINT IDENTICAL BUT REFLECTED AT WALL HEAD).



02

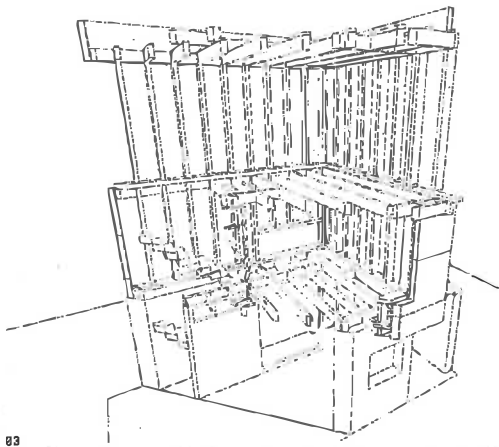
01-02
THE HOUSE IS CONSTRUCTED USING TRADITIONAL WOOD-WORKING TECHNIQUES: AN OAK FRAME SECURED WITH OAK PEGS, COMBINED WITH PLYWOOD PANELS AND PREFABRICATED ELEMENTS

03-04
DETAILED AXONOMETRIC DRAWINGS OF THE WOODEN FRAME

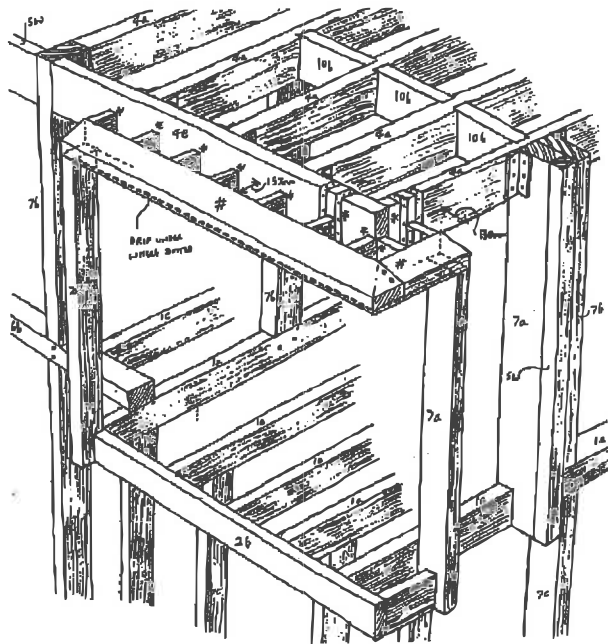
05
INITIAL CONCEPT SKETCH. THE ARCHITECTS LIKEN THE 'WOODEN BOX', WITH ITS OAK-LINED INTERIOR, TO A CIGAR BOX

04/083/LRG/AA(2)02

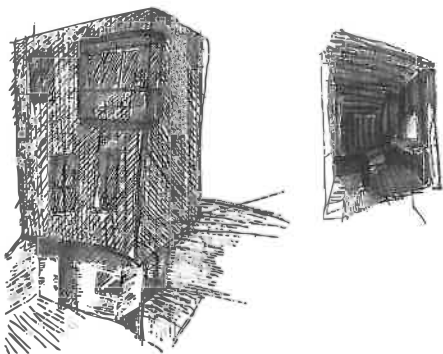
01



83



84



85

Urban GREENWOOD ROAD
Lynch Architects
UK



06



08

06-07
UNDER CONSTRUCTION:
THE WOODEN FRAME
IS INSTALLED. BELOW,
A DETAIL OF THE
WOOD PANNELLING

08
THE EMPTY SITE BEFORE
CONSTRUCTION BEGAN; A
TYPICAL LONDON TERRACE

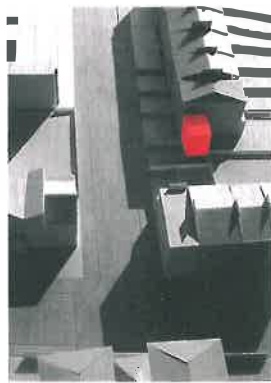
09-10
PRESENTATION MODELS
OF THE FINALIZED
DESIGN. THE HOUSE
IS PART-ATTACHED TO
THE EXISTING TERRACE
TO THE LEFT. THE
BRICK BASE IMPLIES
THE NEW STRUCTURE
HAS GROWN ORGANICALLY
ON THE SITE



07



09



10



11

11-12

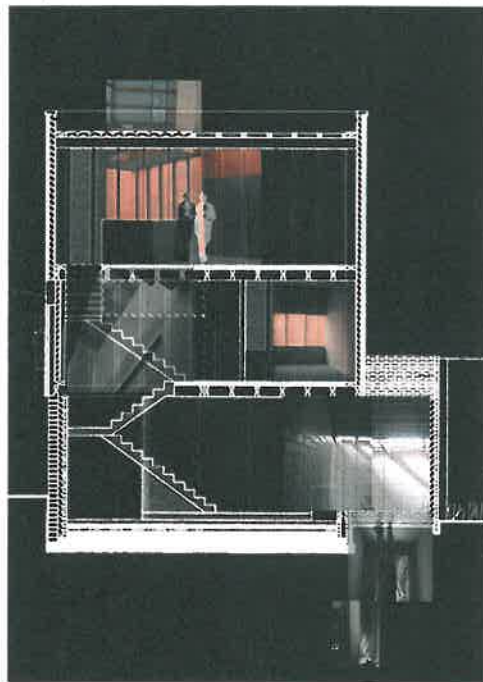
THE FINISHED HOUSE BEFORE OCCUPATION, THE RICH CHARACTER OF THE MOOD AND CAREFUL JOINERY CREATING AN ATMOSPHERIC SENSE OF PLACE AND HUMAN INVOLVEMENT



12



13



14

13
THE REAR FAÇADE. LESS SELF-CONSCIOUS THAN THE FRONT, LIKE THE NEIGHBOURING HOUSES THE REAR FEATURES LARGE WINDOWS OVERLOOKING THE GARDENS

14
SECTION. THE GROUND FLOOR IS SET SLIGHTLY BELOW GROUND LEVEL, ALLOWING FOR THREE STOREYS TO BE ACCOMMODATED WITHIN THE HOUSE WITHOUT COMPROMISING CEILING HEIGHTS