Kew House

Set within the Kew Green Conservation Area of south-west London, this four bedroom family house is formed of two pre-fabricated weathering steel volumes inserted behind a retained nineteenth century stable wall.

First and foremost a family home, the tone is informal but rich with incidental spaces, unexpected light, and complex vertical volumes. Approaching the design as a kind of built diagram of the way the family wanted to live, Piercy&Company created an internal landscape of alternative routes, levels, and spaces – many of which are aimed more at children than adults.

The simple plan makes the most of the constrained site, reduces the building's mass in the streetscape, and responds to the living patterns of the family. Two rectangular wings each have living spaces on the ground floor and bedrooms above. Connecting the wings is a glass encased circulation link, allowing light to fill the house and courtyard.

The two shells housing each wing are formed of 4mm thick weathering steel – a hardworking combination of structure and façade. The weathering steel is maintenance free, essential for the enclosed site, and softened by a patchwork of expressed welds and perforated panels. The deep orange tones and perforations within the skin echo the dappled light and autumnal palette of nearby Kew Gardens. Inside, oak veneer panelling and Dinesen flooring are the basis of a warm and natural material palette.

Kew House was an experimental build, driven by the architect's and clients' shared interest in a 'kit-of-parts' approach, prefabrication, and the self-build possibilities emerging from digital fabrication. CNC milling and an on-site joinery workshop were used to create a bespoke fit-out that could be installed by the client and a small team of architecture graduates.

Twin gabled roofscape