



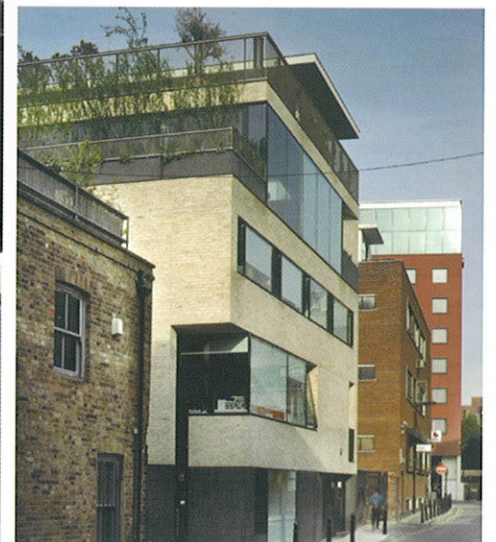
THE HACKNEY SOCIETY

# SPACES 2011

News and views about Hackney's built environment

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## Bateman's Row By Kevin Moore



I first came across the architect couple **Soraya Khan and Patrick Theis** in 1999 when I asked them to renovate my own house. They were keen to create a kitchen in the basement, but less excited about the prospect of renovating an entire listed building. Wanting a single contractor, I took them out of the equation. Big Mistake! Bateman's Row is a remarkable building reminiscent of a Le Corbusier villa, recalling that period of heroic modernism. The interior with dark, deep corners, numerous turns and small cupboard spaces hints at a mixture of medieval and modern.

The building is a clever mix-use development with the architects' own home on the second, third and fourth floors, with an office on the first floor. Two studio flats and a one-bedroom flat also occupy this constrained site. The ceiling heights vary, to reflect the use of the rooms. There are a lot of ideas packed into a small building. The cantilevered staircase provides the wow factor, but flush, frameless windows, glazed corners, and contrasting deep recesses accentuate the rich texture

showing this to be a finely crafted and considered building.

The corner of Bateman's Row and French Place is outside the South Shoreditch Conservation Area. I only wish there were more new buildings of this quality within it.

Of the building the RIBA said: 'In its response to its surroundings, its scale and its mix of uses, this development defines a vision for the future of Shoreditch. It provides an environment for family-living within a tough urban context and an apartment with qualities that you couldn't easily find in a house ... . It is a relevant piece of city-making that is ordinary in its programme yet is executed with extraordinary care and judgement, taking it into the realms of the special.'

No wonder Bateman's Row was shortlisted for the Stirling Prize. The building has been rightly much-lauded. It first came to my attention when I was a judge for the Civic Trust Awards; the panel was unanimous in awarding a commendation. Indeed, I think we should have been more forthright

with our praise. It also received a Hackney Design Award.

View this building at night from Shoreditch High Street, looking up towards Kingsland Road. It encapsulates exactly what is meant by a contextual building within the existing cityscape. The building is dark and solid at the bottom and lights up to a floating, glazed open top. It also has solar panels, a green roof and natural ventilation. The lucky owners also have a generous top floor roof terrace. Hackney deserves more buildings of this kind.

*Photos: (bottom right) by Philip Vile, the others by Nick Kane*

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