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Sunshine House

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Sunshine House

Southwark Child Development Centre

Sunshine House on St Giles Road, South London, provides a new, bright and cheerful environment for the delivery of a range of services for children and young people with special needs and disabilities.

Located on a very constrained site, the building sits amongst dark brick mansion blocks of uniform and monolithic scale. Responding to this context, the Centre takes the form of a dark glazed brick block, a simple rectangle in plan and stepped rectangle in elevation, rising from three storeys to six and cantilevering as it meets St Giles' Road to provide a recognisable landmark for the area.

Sector :	Healthcare
Location :	London, UK
Address :	27 Peckham Road, Southwark, SE5 8UH
Client :	Building Better Health Ltd
Value :	£7.7m
Start :	November 2001
Completion :	August 2007
Contract Type :	Design & Building (LIFT Contract)

Key Dates

2001:	AHMM first contacted to produce footprint layouts for Southwark Child Development Centre
December 2001:	First indications that scheme may be included in LIFT procurement process.
2002:	Scheme becomes part of LSL LIFTCo's first tranche of projects
January 2003:	AHMM submit Planning Application
March 2003:	London Borough of Southwark grant Planning Approval
March 2004:	AHMM submit revised Planning Application
June 2004:	Scheme tendered
December 2005 :	Financial Close is reached, allowing Willmott Dixon to commence construction
March 2006:	Willmott Dixon finalise Party Wall Agreement and commence on site
August 2007:	Practical Completion is achieved
October 2007:	Opening of Sunshine House to public due

Areas

Gross Internal :	32,300 ft ² 3,000 m ²
Recovery Spaces :	6,950 ft ² 645 m ²
Public Spaces :	1,290 ft ² 120 m ²
Offices :	14,000 ft ² 1,300 m ²

Building Facts

- > The building is 22m high, 58m long and 12.8m wide.
- > The western end cantilevers 7.2m, supported entirely by the inner concrete walls.
- > There are 177 rooms in the building, 202 doors and 296 opening windows.
- > Over 140,000 glazed bricks were used in the construction of the centre. Due to the non-standard shape and coursing, every brick had to be drawn individually.
- > Over 1,500 cubic metres of concrete was used in the main frame, enough to half-fill an Olympic swimming pool.

Project Team

Client :	Building Better Health Ltd
Tenants:	Southwark PCT, Southwark Council, South London & Maudsley Trust
Architect :	Allford Hall Monaghan Morris
Project Managers:	Clarson Goff
Employer's Agent:	Davis Langdon & Seah International
Quantity Surveyor:	Davis Langdon & Seah International
Structural/Civil Engineer:	Price & Myers
Services Engineer:	WhitbyBird
Landscape Architect:	Whitelaw Turkington
Artist Consultant:	Modus Operandi
Charity Art Funder:	Guy's and St Thomas' Charity
Fire Consultant:	SAFE
Accessibility Consultant:	Vin Goodwin
Acoustic Consultant:	Sharps Redmore
Planning Supervisor:	Davis Langdon & Seah International
Approved Inspector:	MLM
Main Contractor:	Willmott Dixon
Sub-Contractors:	LJJ (Mechanical and Electrical Services); Toureen (Substructure and Frame); Lee Marley (Brickwork)
Suppliers:	Schueco (Windows); Taylor Maxwell (bricks); Freudenberg (flooring); Fermacell (drylining)

Allford Hall Monaghan Morris Team Members

Simon Allford, Nic Crawley, Thomas Gardner, Sonia Grant, Jonathan Hall, Sam Harvey, Andy Jones, Paul Monaghan, Peter Morris, Alexa Ratcliffe, Morna Robertson, Stephen Smith, Morag Tait & Philip Turner.

For further information and images please contact

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Project Description

The Southwark Child Development Centre is a new children's Primary Care centre situated on Peckham Road in South London. The building brings together under one roof the services currently provided in three different locations, including purpose built facilities for children with special needs. It aims to provide a stimulating and appropriate environment for child health services drawing on examples of best practice elsewhere.

The variety of services provided requires a range of different room types, each of a prescribed and differing size and with complex relationships that produce a naturally irregular internal plan. However, the highly constrained site sits amongst dark brick mansion blocks of uniform and monolithic scale. Responding to this context, the building thus initially takes the form of a dark glazed brick block, a simple rectangle in plan and stepped rectangle in elevation, rising from three storeys to six and cantilevering as it meets St Giles' Road to provide a recognisable landmark for the area.

Resolving the interplay between the complex and colourful internal arrangement and the formal urban envelope is the main driver for the façade design. To achieve this, a limited palette of devices is thus deployed in a range of ways.

Firstly, the dark brick block is shown to be only a thin skin. Long horizontal window cuts reveal a staccato pattern of mullions which corresponds to the irregular room layout. Aluminium side-hung casement windows are set back behind the skin and allow the reveals to act by name, exposing the bricks' overall thinness.

Voids cut out behind the skin then break down the interior volume while allowing the exterior massing to remain intact. The upper level voids create private outdoor terraces which provide natural daylight and ventilation to rooms deep within the building. These are then opened to public view through unglazed openings in the facade, and lined in brightly coloured render which is also expressed as a layer with its own thickness.

Voids cut between the three public lower levels are similarly lined in colour. These, however, are internal spaces which enable views between the floors to help visitors orientate themselves. As public elements their linings are brought out through the brick façade to address the street and welcome visitors, forming external sunshades, sheltered play areas, and the main building entrance.

This principle of pulling brightly coloured elements through the façade is then continued on the upper windows. Here bright sky-blue brise soleil spring from within the window cuts. These brise soleil are expressed as simple orthogonal elements: horizontal and louvred to the south, vertical and solid to the east and west. They orient their visible surfaces to catch and reflect direct sunlight, preventing overheating and animating the facade. To the north, where no brise soleil are required, the window frames themselves are bright blue, again expressing the building's colourful inner life.

Technically the construction looks deceptively traditional, following the basic principle of a cavity wall with full-fill insulation. However, the inner leaf is a solid and continuous reinforced concrete wall. This acts as a massive shear structure to support the building cantilever, provides integral lintels for long horizontal strip windows, and supports a variety of stainless steel bracketry to carry the thin skin brickwork, which otherwise could not take its own weight. Plastered internally, the concrete also provides thermal mass, slowing the building's heating and cooling cycle and helping the rooms within to be warm in winter, cool in summer. As with the activities within, although this appears to be a simple building, much is going on behind the scenes.

The façade thus embodies the philosophy of building as a whole: local but distinctive, strong but playful; a colourful but urbane solution to a rich and often conflicting set of programme and performance requirements.

Project History

Summary:

2001-2002: Design but don't Build

AHMM's initial involvement came out of a request from the Community Health department of South London NHS trust, who were looking at options for constructing new healthcare premises. At the time, no specific programme or means of procurement had been identified, and it was not known whether funding was available. As such AHMM were effectively working with little brief and little intention to build. This meant a significant amount of design freedom, and during this time we developed both the overall massing and form and the major ideas of the cantilever and cut voids seen through the building's outer skin.

2002-2004: Design and Build

In 2002 the project was then put forward to become part of a tranche of schemes built under the Local Initiative Finance Trust (LIFT). LIFT is a PFI procurement process whereby a consortium consisting of a developer (in this case, Building Better Health), building contractor (Willmott Dixon) and maintenance contractor (Kier Group) construct healthcare facilities and then lease these back to the NHS Primary Care Trust over a 25-year period. The process of qualifying for the LIFT process, winning planning permission and developing the scheme through the highly prescribed NHS Activity Database System then took a further two years, producing a stage D+ / E scheme that was to be the basis for the LIFT contracts. Negotiations over the terms of these contracts then took a further year and a half to resolve. These negotiations were carried out without significant architectural input, although changes to the scheme were made. Financial Close was only finally reached in December 2005.

2004-2007: Just Build

Once Financial Close occurred there was a great deal of pressure to start on site as soon as possible, and producing information quickly enough whilst maintaining quality became the challenge. The LIFT contract is purposefully quite inflexible, and the lack of change acted as a double-edged sword - while there was little opportunity for value engineering, there were also few opportunities for refining the design despite conflicts in the contract documentation and changes in the client requirements since 2004.

The lack of change did, however, mean that features such as the cantilever and coloured sunshades survived repeated revisions relatively unscathed. The originally specified black brick was replaced by a cheaper alternative, but this was of similar quality. The procurement process therefore meant that the building maintained its design integrity and finished on time, but it is interesting to speculate whether greater input from the end users in the later detail design stages would have been even more beneficial to tailor the scheme even more closely to their final requirements.

Planning History

Summary:

January 2003 - March 2003: Initial Planning Application

In January 2003 the initial planning application was submitted on behalf of Southwark PCT Community Health. The mass, site layout, overall height and character of the building were similar to the final built scheme, but there was almost no basement accommodation and the scheme was shown indicatively as white brick or render. The main Council concerns at this stage were clinical waste and ensuring the boundary treatment was sufficiently transparent through use of low walls and railings.

March 2004 - June 2004: Revised Planning Application

The need for increased accommodation resulted in this revised application, which included an enlarged basement and adjustments to the fenestration. The elevations and images of the buildings also showed the building as white, although a separate materials sheet indicated the walls as dark glazed brick. The application was granted, but with submission of materials samples as one of the sixteen attached conditions.

August 2004 - August 2007: Discharge of Conditions

At the consortium's request, three of the conditions were discharged prior to Financial Close (December 2006). However, the remainder were left to be discharged post-Financial Close, when the design development sufficient to do so had been carried out. However, at this stage Willmott Dixon were eager to start on site., and since several of the conditions needed to be discharge beforehand, these immediately became a major priority.

AHMM submitted a full materials sample board showing the dark glazed brick and brightly coloured brise soleil and render in March 2006. A long period of frustration ensued as Southwark Council went through staff shortages and changes and lost the sample board entirely, which meant they allowed construction to proceed whilst being unable to sign the condition off. Six months later in October, with the first lifts of brickwork already completed, they finally granted approval of details, to the relief of all concerned.

Unfortunately this proved to be a sign of delays to come, with every condition taking months to be addressed. Highways works had to be delayed post-completion as a result, whilst the final condition approvals arrived by fax on 19th August 2007 with scheduled completion achieved the very next day.

Existing Premises

External Photos

The context for the project involved not only existing geographical features, but also topographical change - new buildings adjacent - and the operational context of working within the NHS.



The Existing Southwark Council Administration Building on the site in 2001



View of the existing building looking east down Peckham Road



The existing building was demolished in 2004 - shown here is the site in 2005



The local context consists of dark brick Victorian mansion blocks, which the new centre needed to respond to and hold its own amongst.



Southwark Town Hall and offices lie immediately adjacent. Both are listed buildings, which set the height of the building's eastern end.



Existing NHS buildings and design processes follow rigidly established rules, which Allford Hall Monaghan Morris had to work within and which provided the programmatic context and brief for the scheme.

The local material context : dark brickwork laid in English bond.



A brickwork precedent, showing how glazed and textured brickwork can enliven the facade.



The Existing Sheldon Centre located nearby on St Giles Rd housed many of the facilities and staff which were to be relocated into Sunshine House. As an extension and infill to an old Victorian building, rooms were often cramped and lacked wheelchair access.

Internal Photos



Specialist areas for child health which needed to be integrated into the scheme include soft play rooms and examination facilities, precedents again investigated at The Wooden Spoon Centre, Lambeth, London.



However, as well as specialist rooms more standard public and private facilities were also seen as areas for reinvention: shown are staff offices at The Wooden Spoon Centre, Lambeth, London



Waiting area at The Wooden Spoon Centre, Lambeth, London

The early development of the scheme focused on three main aspects:

- 1 Articulating the massing of the building to respond to the local context
- 2 Providing a recognisable identity for the centre when viewed from the street.
- 3 Developing a suitable elevational treatment which could deal with the huge variety of room sizes the building contains.

The use of colour was also recognised early on as one of the key elements which could provide a stimulating, welcoming and child-friendly atmosphere.

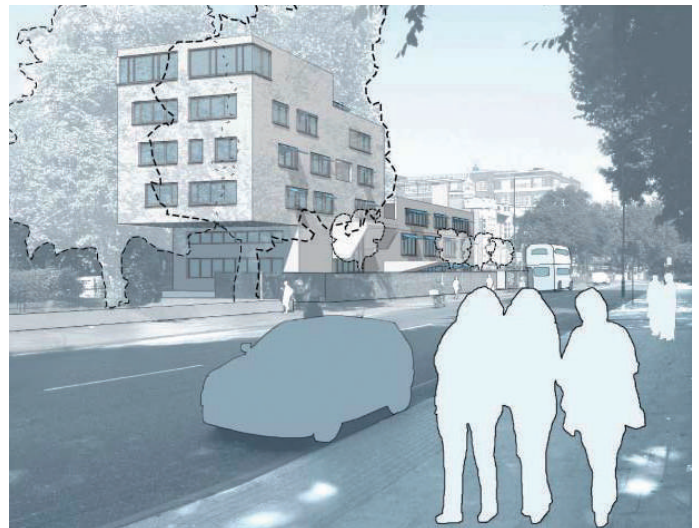
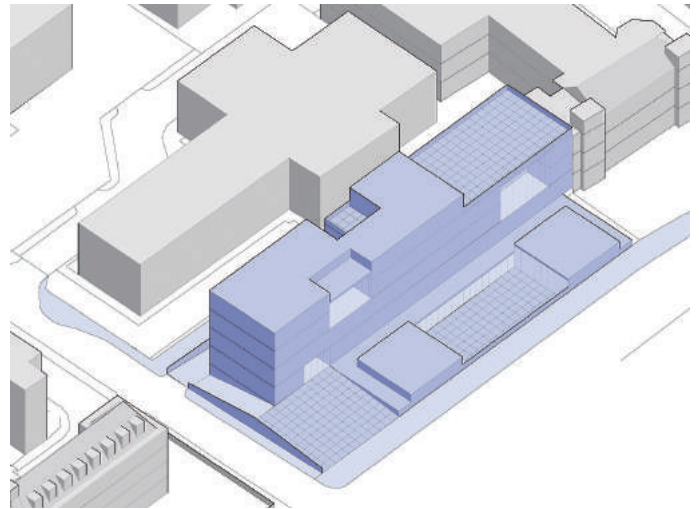
Design Development

Massing

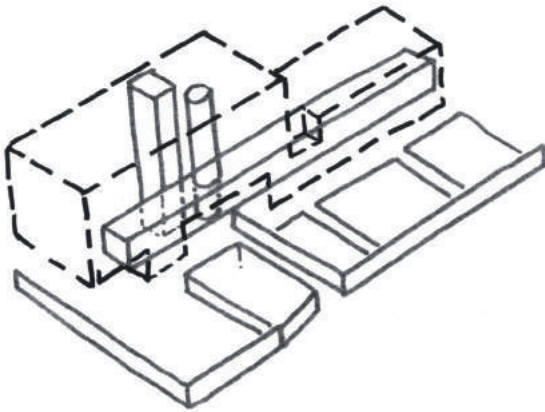
Initial massing models simply grouped volumes of programme to establish scale and parameters such as setting the building line back from the street to match the adjacent listed buildings and mansion blocks. The requirement for additional floor space led to the building growing taller to the west, providing a prominent corner and suggesting the idea of the cantilever.

The 7.2m cantilever provided drama and a sense of identity on the street corner, whilst also allowing free car parking access beneath - important on the tight site.

These massing principles were then developed in conjunction with colour and facade studies.



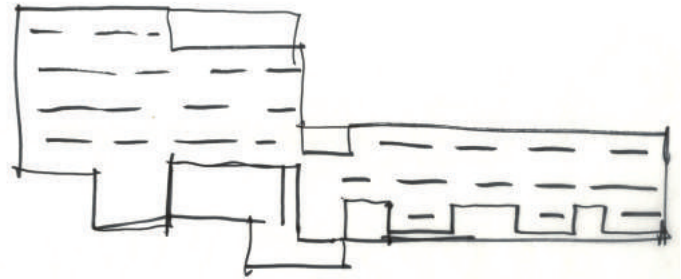
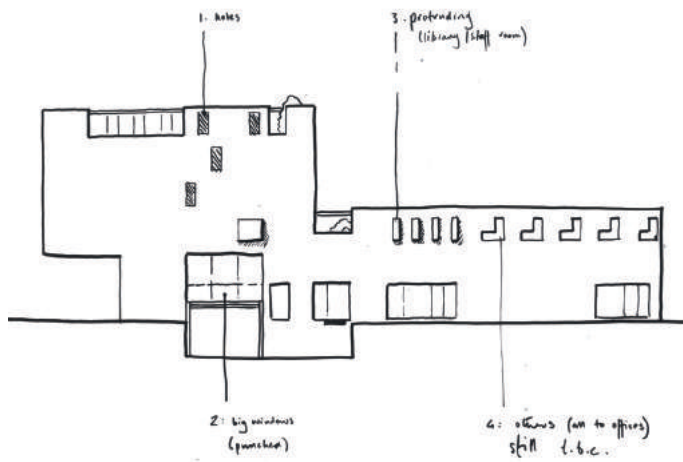
View



The view from Peckham Road was paramount, as the building needed to provide a coherent and legible identity. The initial proposals wrapped extensive fenestration around the cantilever and brightly coloured all of the internal surfaces. Over time this was refined, reducing the amount of fenestration but maintaining the principles behind the design.



Elevation



Elevational design development progressed from initial studies exploring means of articulation through studies of striated window designs and larger “voids” cut through the facade.



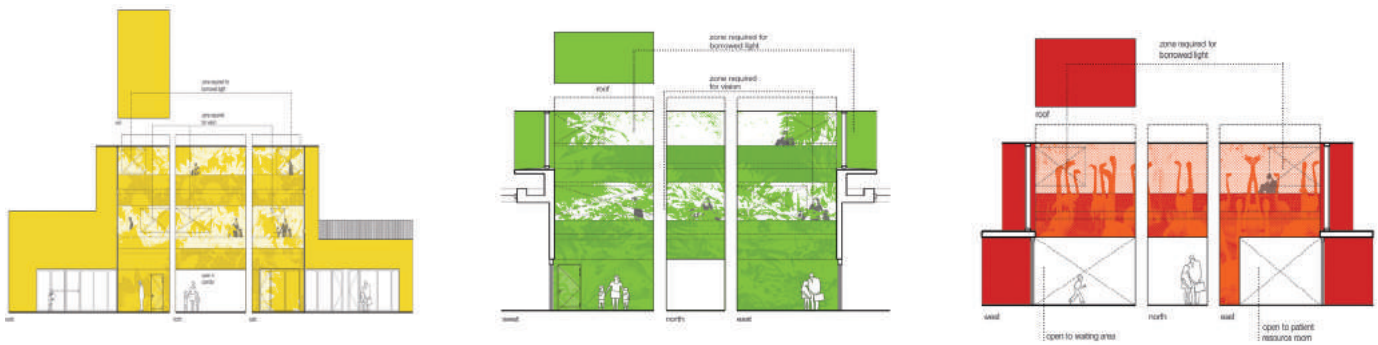
Once the basic principles had been decided upon, detailed elevational design development refined the facade, taking material treatment and sun control (brise-soleil) as key detail design drivers.

Colour

Unfolded elevations of the three internal voids. Bringing colour to the public spaces was a very early aim.

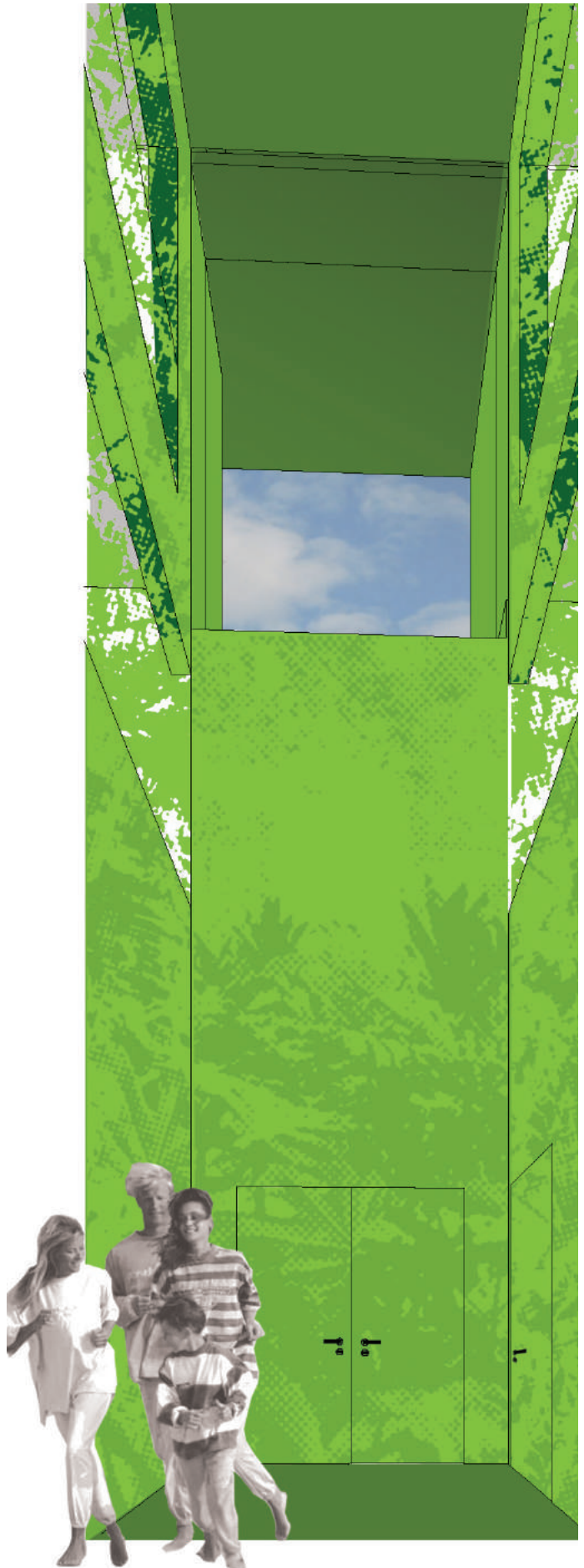
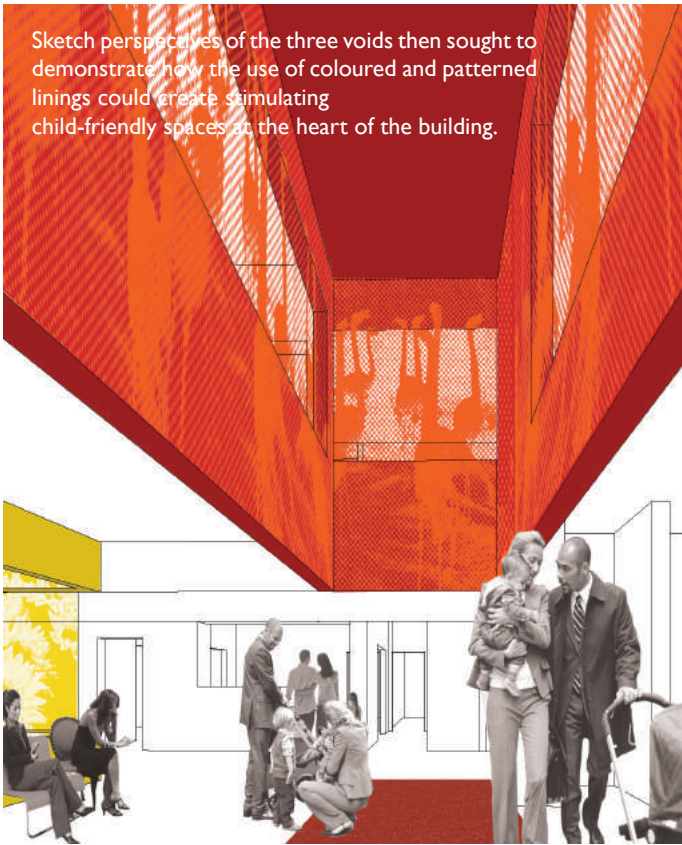
After many explorations and investigations into the clinical and psychological effects of colour, a different colour was chosen for each void - the orange, yellow and green shown here.

Pattern studies were also carried out, the ideas for which later filtered into artworks commissioned for these spaces.

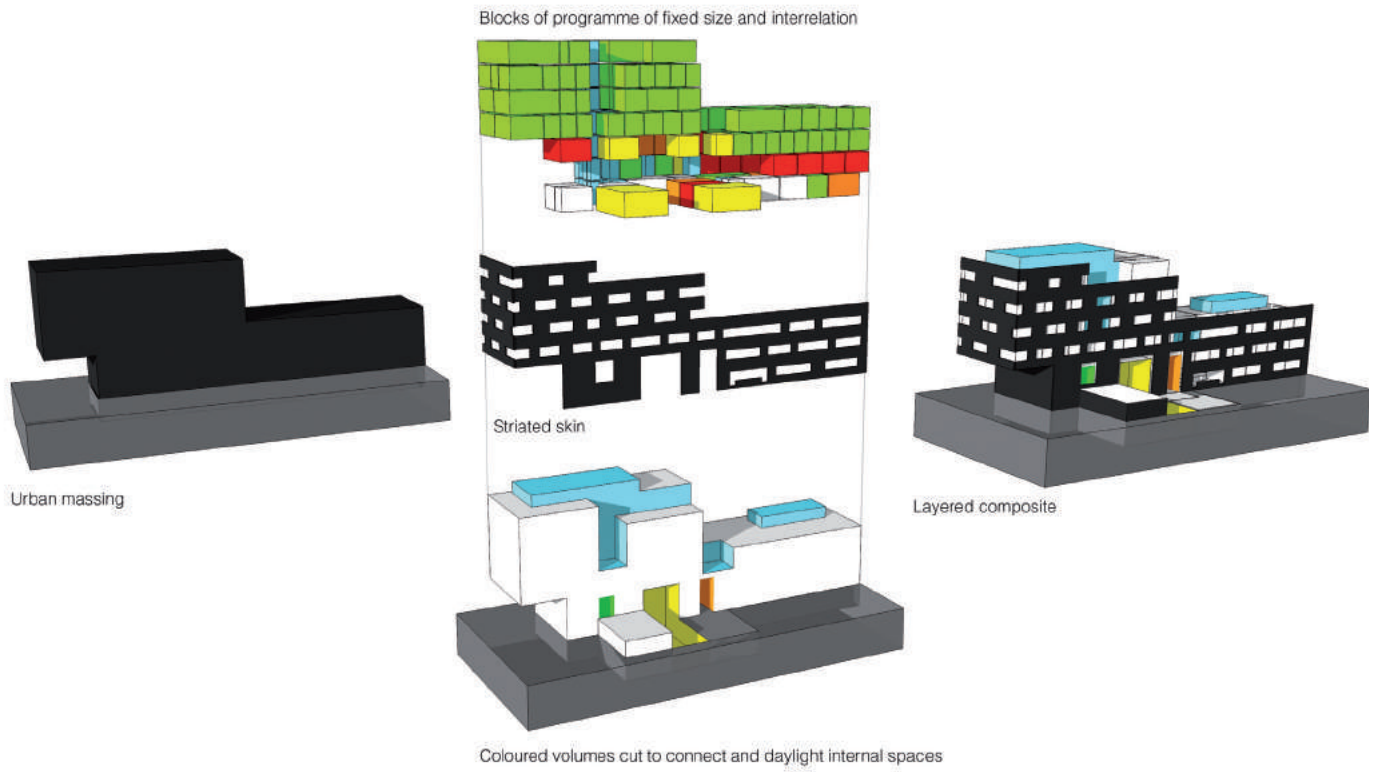


Key plans showing the public rooms (in red, orange and yellow according to clinical designation) and staff areas (in green). In order to achieve natural light and ventilation to as many rooms as possible a spine corridor model was adopted which could then also accommodate changes in individual room areas.

Sketch perspectives of the three voids then sought to demonstrate how the use of coloured and patterned linings could create stimulating child-friendly spaces at the heart of the building.



Consolidation



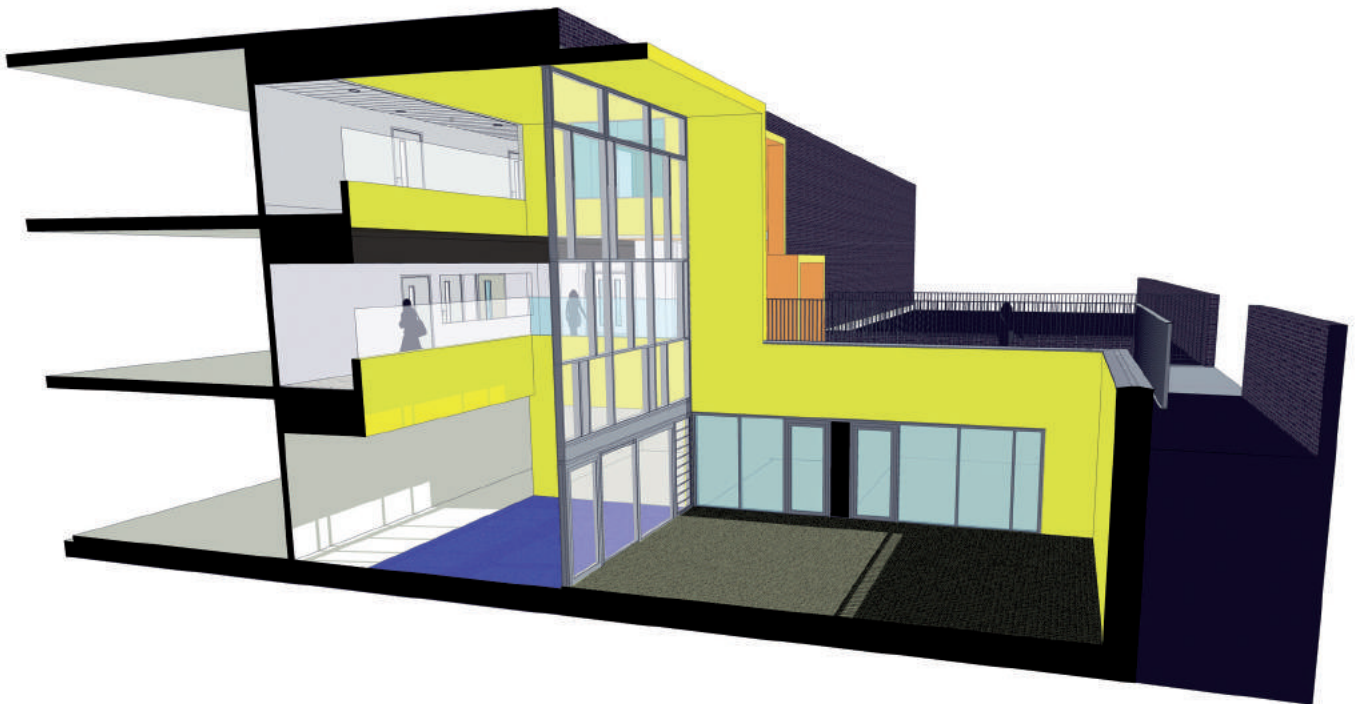
The interplay between the urban massing, the elevational treatment and the coloured linings to the voids which provides the basis for the overall design

CGI's

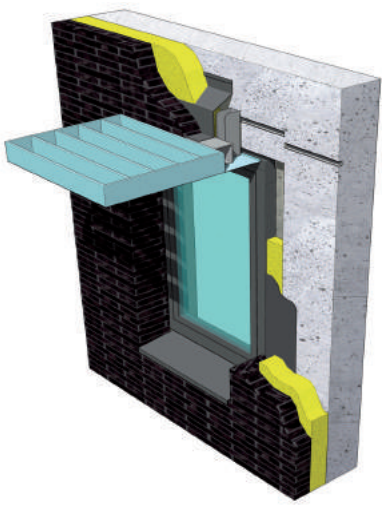
Prior to Financial Close the project had been out of the office for a year and a half, and once Financial Close occurred the speed of the project was such that there was little time to produce detailed photorealistic renderings.

Three-dimensional design development was therefore often tested through quick 3D sketch models which investigated details, colours and construction.

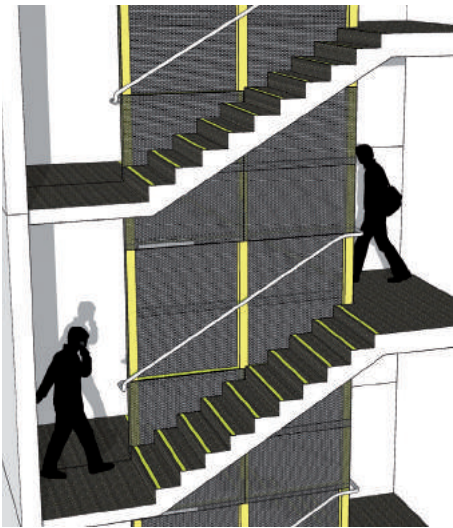
These are shown here together with photographs of the completed details to show how the design as built closely matched the developed design intent.



Perspective section through main atrium void showing the relationship between the three public floors and the external play courtyard, the design of the triple-height glazed screen, and the coloured yellow lining that extends from inside to outside.



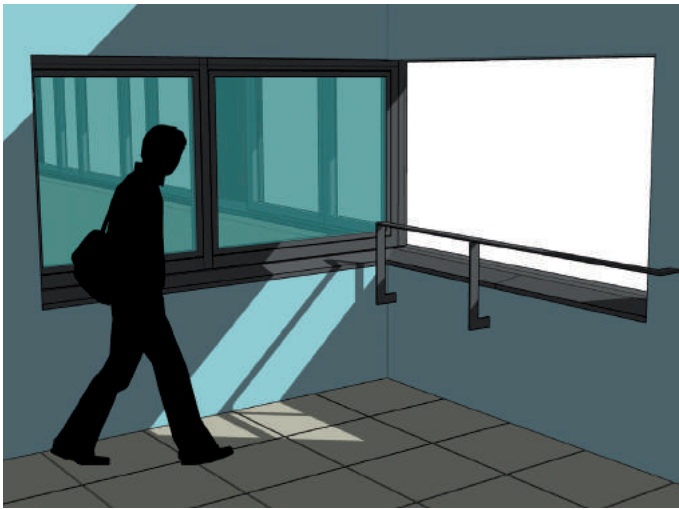
(Left) Cutaway diagram of the facade construction showing the solid concrete inner wall leaf with insulated window rebates and both brickwork and brise soleil supported off the same stainless steel bracketry. The brise soleil shade (Right) covers the internal areas only, while the external terraces behind the brick skin reveal their coloured render linings.



The stair balustrade design was inspired by Meccano, and alternately hides and reveals its bright interior in metaphorical response to the psychological work carried out in the building.



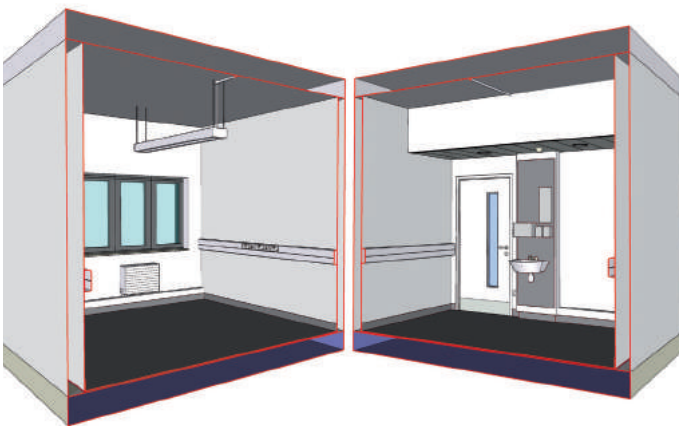
The reception desk is articulated as a miniature version of the building: a simple dark mass with coloured volumes cut and expressed.



Windows wrap back into the external staff terraces, with minimal handrails setback to allow unobstructed views to and from the street. The clear openings then also frame views out across Southwark's many treetops.



The coloured render extends out to the entrance courtyard, welcoming the public into the building. The simple flat bar railings are quietly urban, but change opacity depending on angle at which they are seen, opening up as the visitor approaches the main entrance.



Individual rooms were modelled to set coordinating principles for fixed services and equipment. These were then rolled out throughout the variety of room layouts present: every office is individual.

Artist Collaborations

Guy's and St Thomas' Charity appointed Modus Operandi Art Consultants to assist with the selection of two leading artists to produce works to enhance the design of Sunshine House.

Rotterdam based artist Milou van Ham was selected to bring her unique brand of text based artwork to the building and locally-based artist Jacqui Poncelet was chosen because of the playfulness and the juxtaposition of colour in her work.

This art commission was an extension of the Charity's policy of allocating one per cent of the cost of capital and refurbishments it is involved with, towards site specific artworks. Following an evaluation it is hoped that similar projects may be rolled out to other Primary Care Trusts in the Charity's catchment area.

Sunshine House, is the first major art project by the Charity for a community healthcare building and follows on from the commissioning of 15 artists to produce site specific artworks for the award winning Evelina Children's Hospital at Guy's and St Thomas' NHS Foundation Trust.

For further information about Guy's and St Thomas' Charity visit www.gsttcharity.org.uk or contact Kate Dawson, Head of Communications on 020 7188 1218 or email: kate.dawson@gsttcharity.org.uk

For more information about Modus Operandi Art Consultants visit www.modusoperandi-art.com or contact Vivien Lovell, Director on 020 7490 0009 or email: mail@modusoperandi-art.com

Artist Collaborations

Jacqui Poncelet

Jacqui Poncelet is an artist based in Peckham who has a passion for pattern, colour and texture. Past public commissions include the Didcot Arts Centre, Ipswich Crown Court and the Ocean Music Trust.

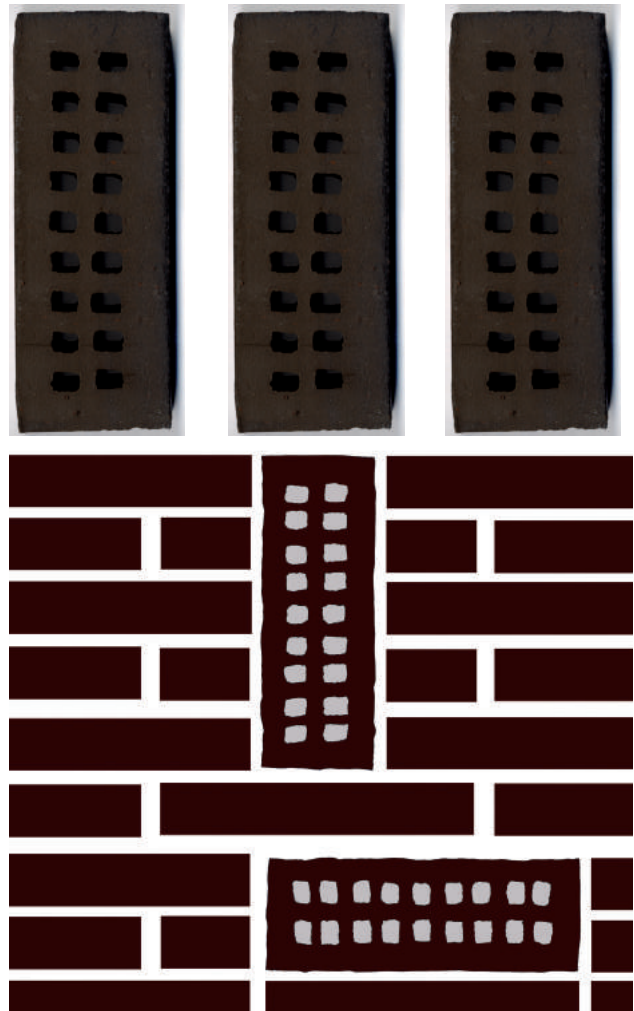
Jacqueline was interested in how the building is experienced through touch and vision, and proposed changing everyday elements so that they appear extraordinary. This includes work to the external fabric of the building such as brick “stitch” patterns on the facade and a brick carpet to the entrance courtyard. This also includes internal elements such as brightly colouring doors throughout the public areas with patterned kick and push plates, and small enameled badges that are located on walls at different heights so as to be discovered by children of different ages. She also designed a tapestry of enameled panels that runs through the main waiting area and allows notices and children’s artworks to be displayed using magnets.



Examples of Jacqui Poncelet's previous work, showing her use of colour, pattern, texture and light

Brick Studies

The form of the brick provided the inspiration for Jacqui, who read it as a microcosm of the entire building - two rows of open cellular spaces in a soft interior with a dark, glazed exterior



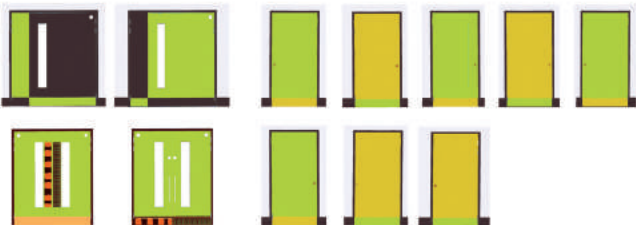


Use of repetition transforms the brick motif into a pattern field.



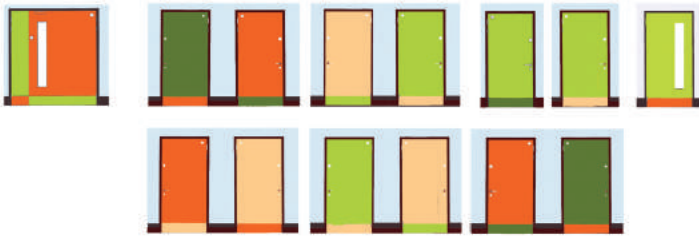
Filling the bricks with Terrazzo forms a coloured "carpet" laid in front of seating at the main entrance.

Internal Door Studies

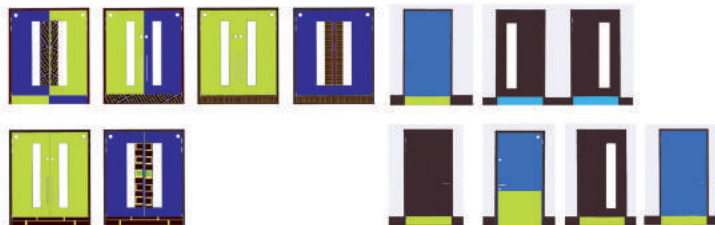


Jacqui proposed using coloured doors and patterned kick and push plates throughout the public areas, colour coded by floor and accompanied by enamelled badges, to create a unique experience for children on each visit.

First Floor

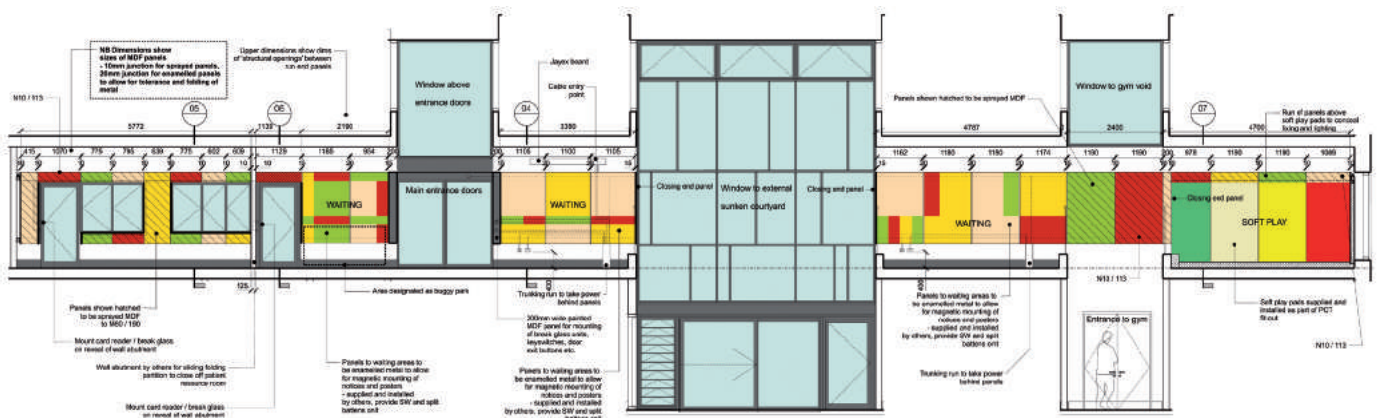


Ground Floor



Basement

Internal features



Jacqui also used enamelled and lacquered panels to enliven a noticeboard which runs the entire length of the waiting area, creating an abstract tapestry of colour.



The panels vary in material, being enamelled, lacquered and padded, and use tonal variations of the void colours to blend in with and enhance the colour scheme.

Milou van Ham

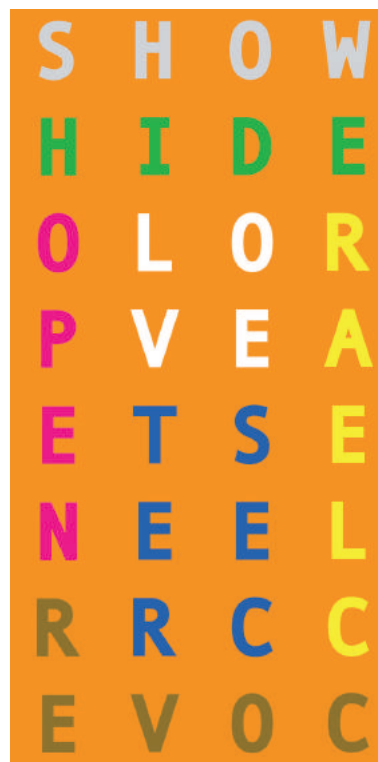
Milou van Ham is an artist based in Rotterdam, the Netherlands. She is interested in combining words and images to create new associations and meanings. She has recently made artworks for two new school buildings in the Netherlands, involving pupils and staff in their creation.

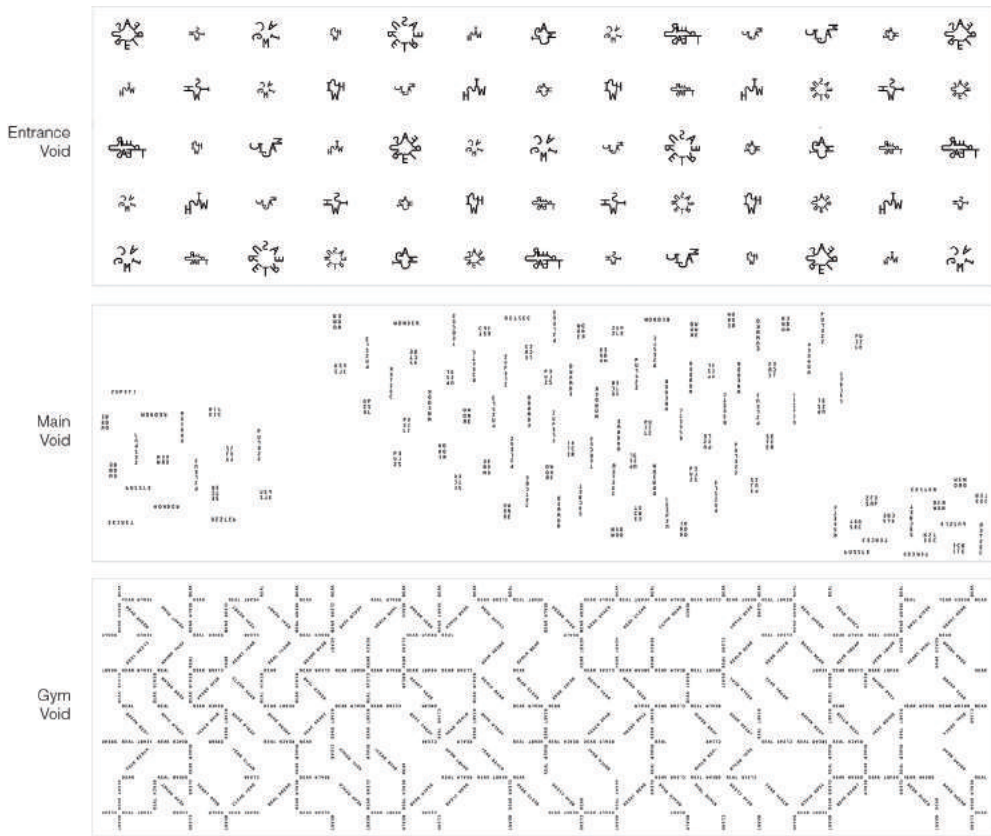
For Sunshine House Milou was interested in using words and letters chosen by local children as objects hung inside the void spaces and applied patterns on their inner glass surfaces. Individual letters then become inviting tactile objects, available for play and exploration.



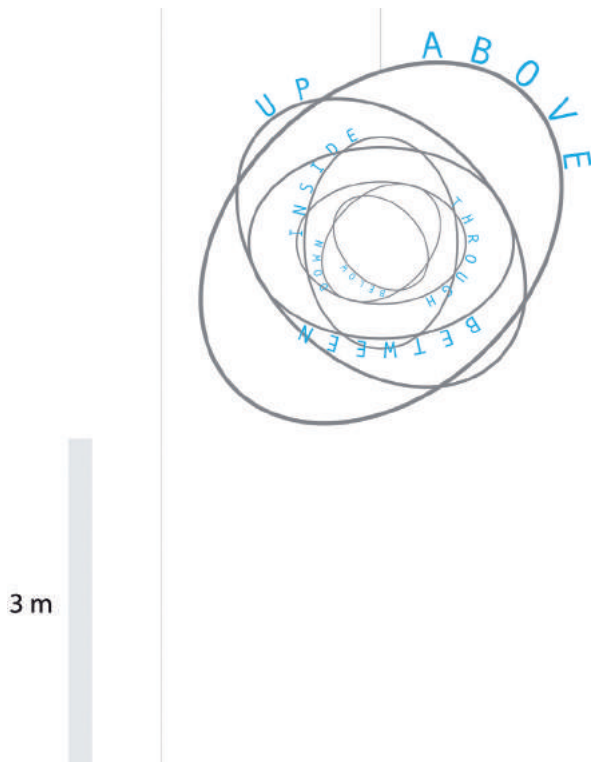
Examples of Milou van Ham's previous work, showing use of text and image to create layered readings of public spaces.

Milou took words chosen by local children as the basis for creating artworks which use the letters themselves as beautiful objects and patterns. Below image of the entrance void proposal model: coloured letters are hung in a grid, inviting multiple readings.

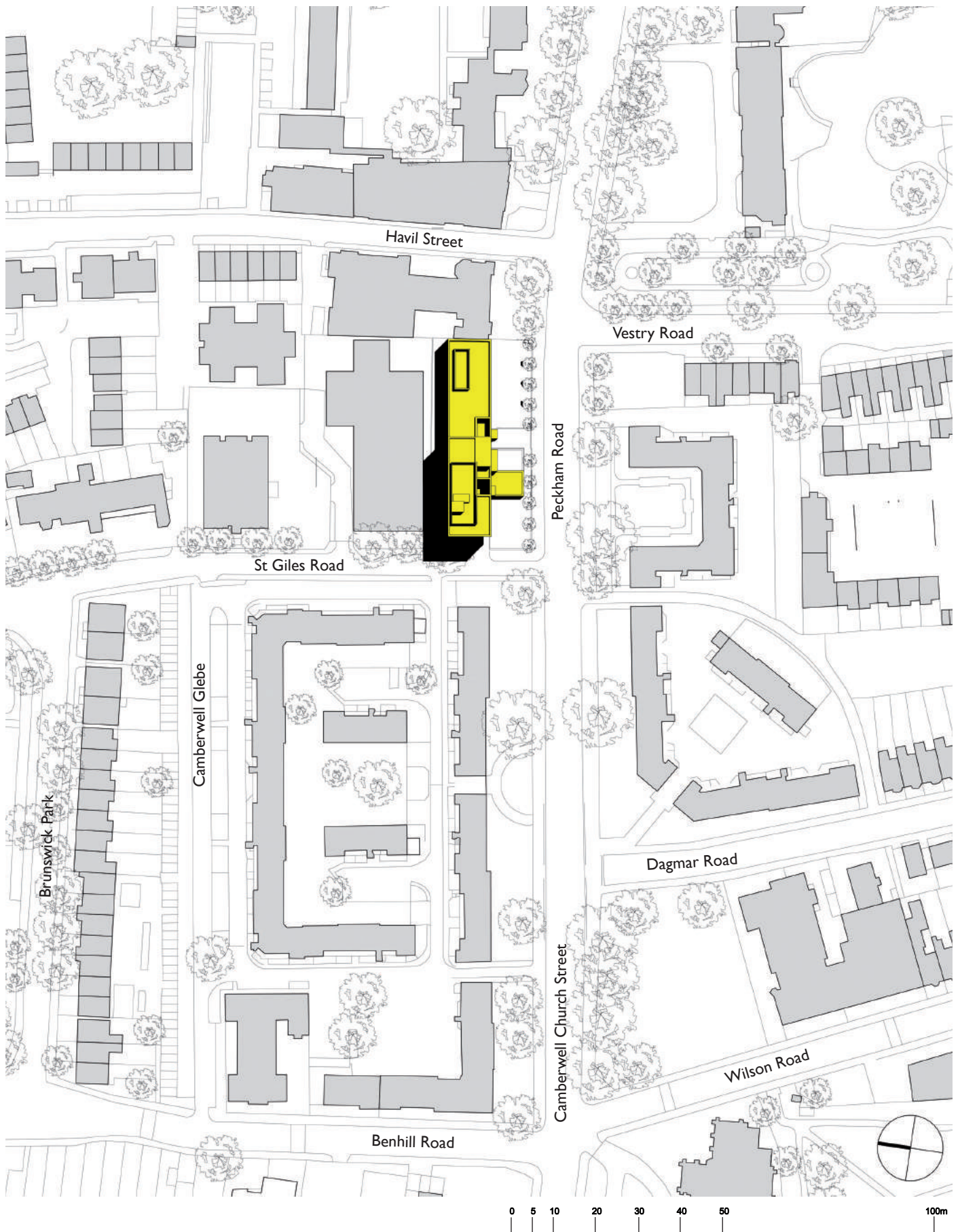




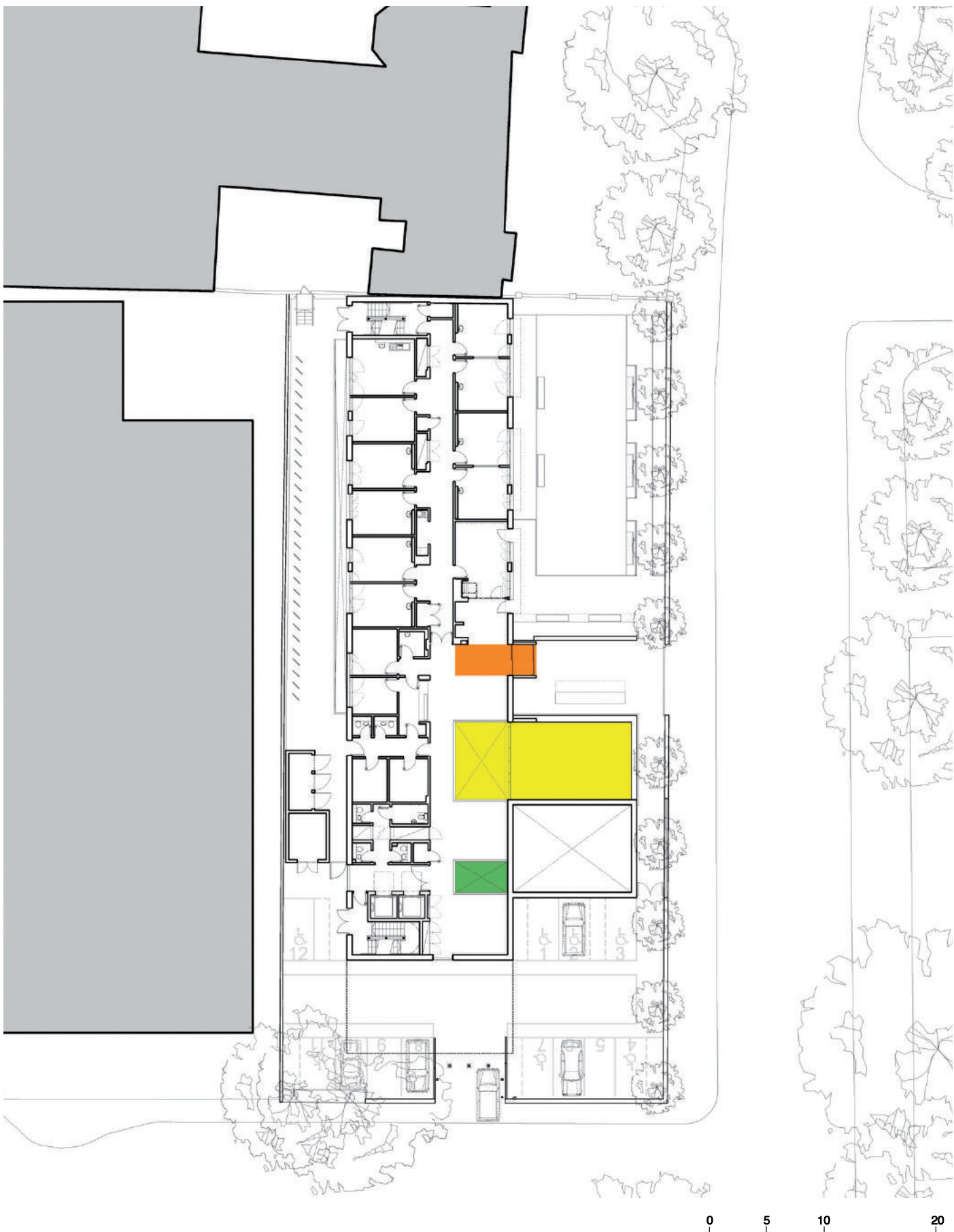
Letters are directly applied to glass screens and balustrades within the voids, with each assigned its own words and pattern. Opposite image of the proposed gym void model, where "sound" words criss-cross the open space.



Milou van Ham design for a hanging mobile



Location plan



Ground floor plan



Basement plan

0 5 10 20



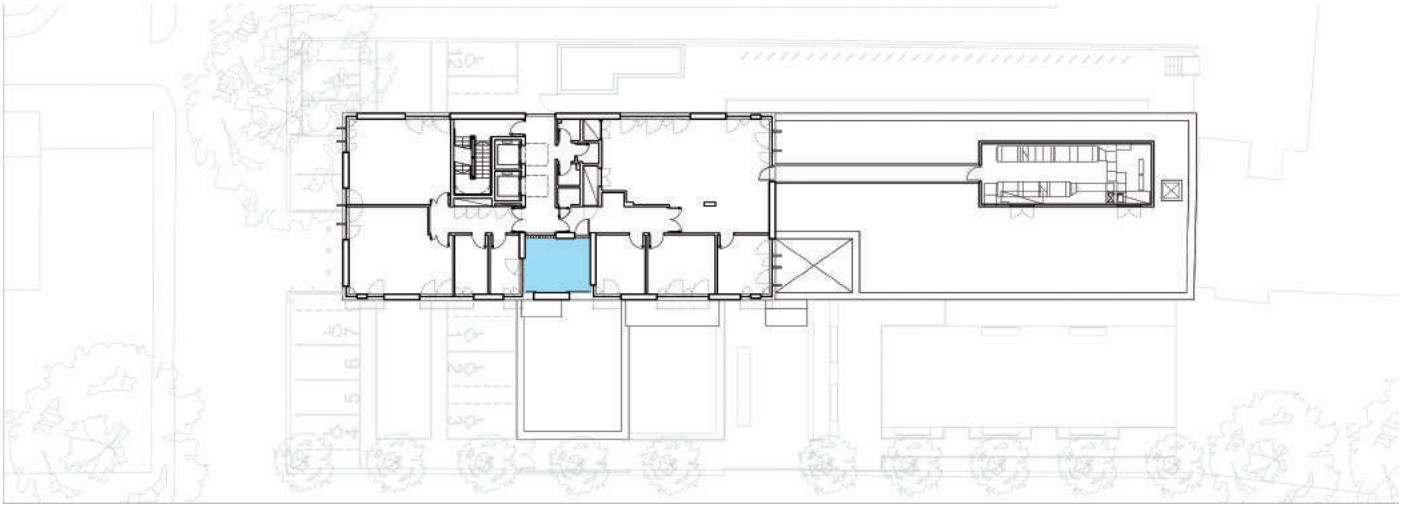
First floor plan

0 5 10 20



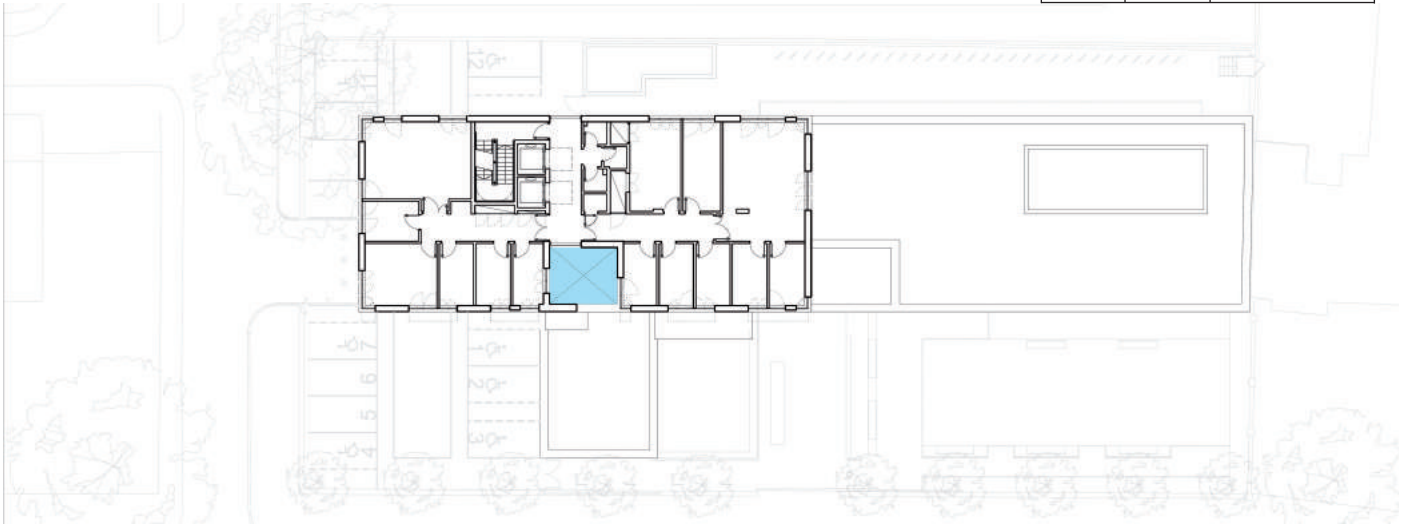
Second floor plan

0 5 10 20



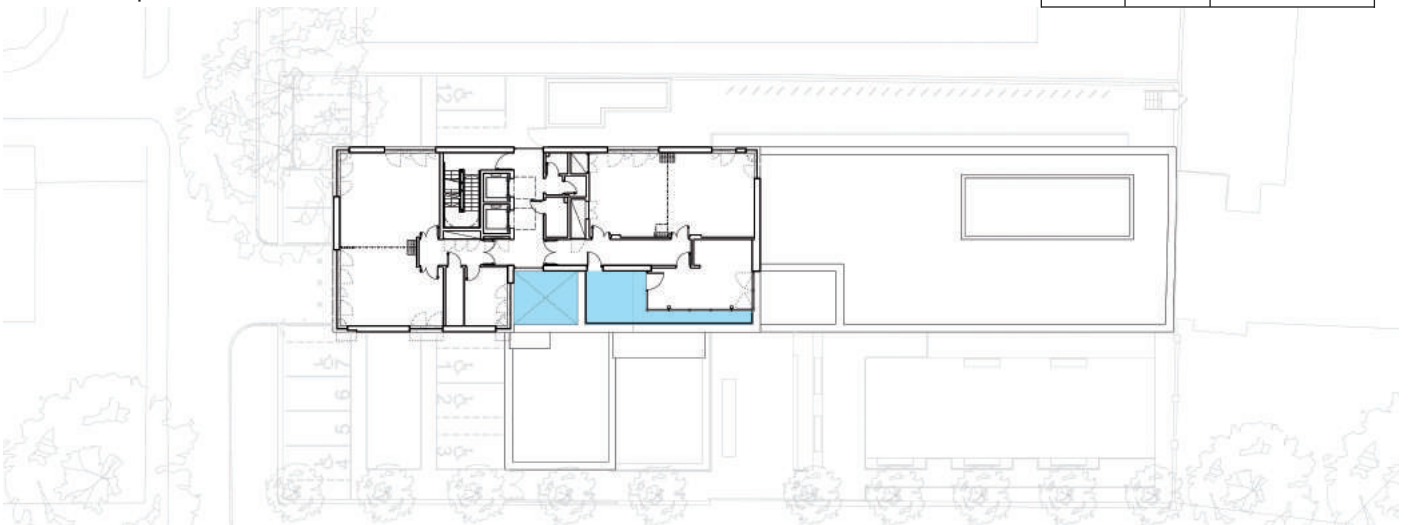
Third floor plan

0 5 10 20



Fourth floor plan

0 5 10 20



Fifth floor plan

0 5 10 20



South (Peckham Road) elevation, looking north



Long section, looking north



Short section through gym void, looking west



Short section through main void, looking west

Site photos

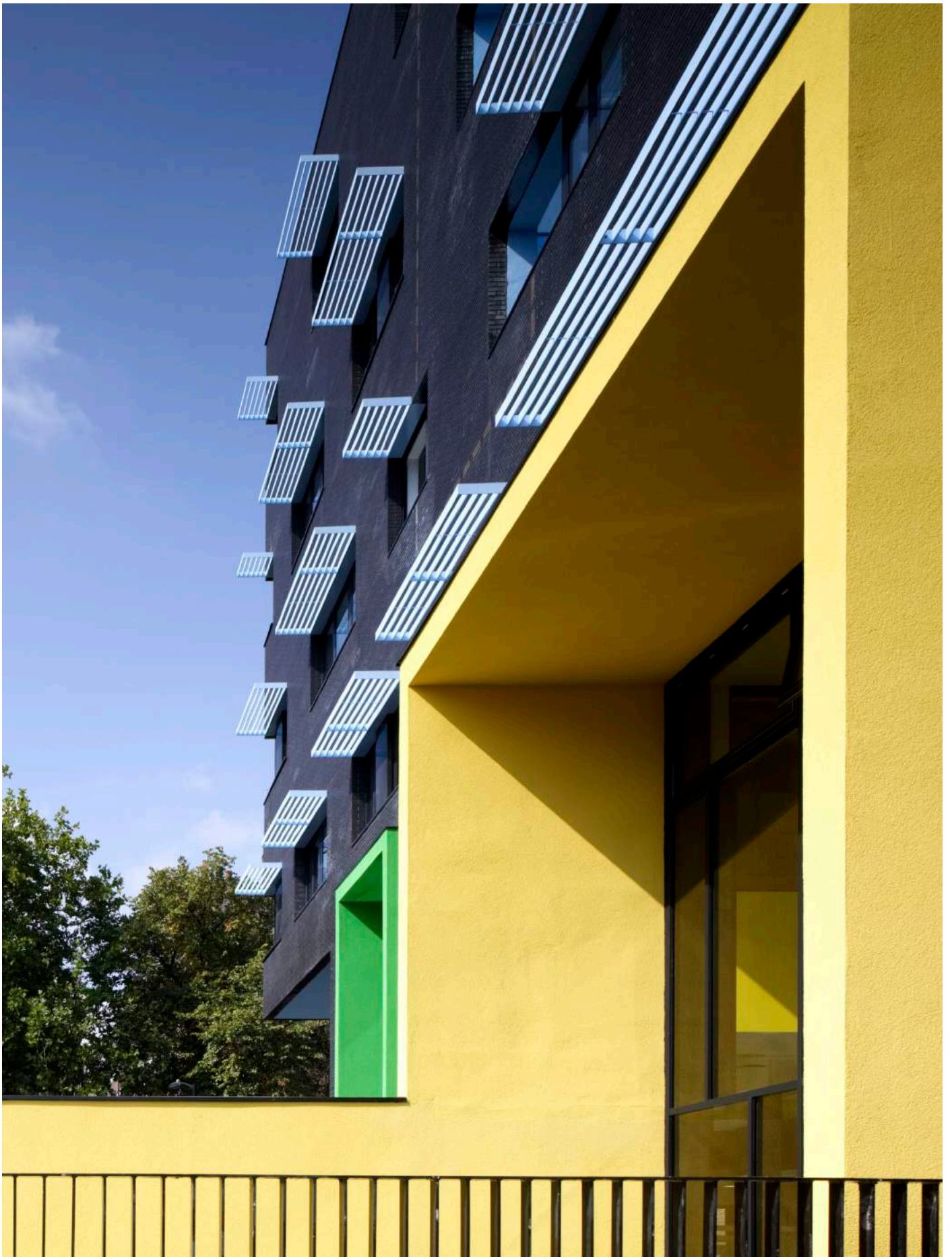




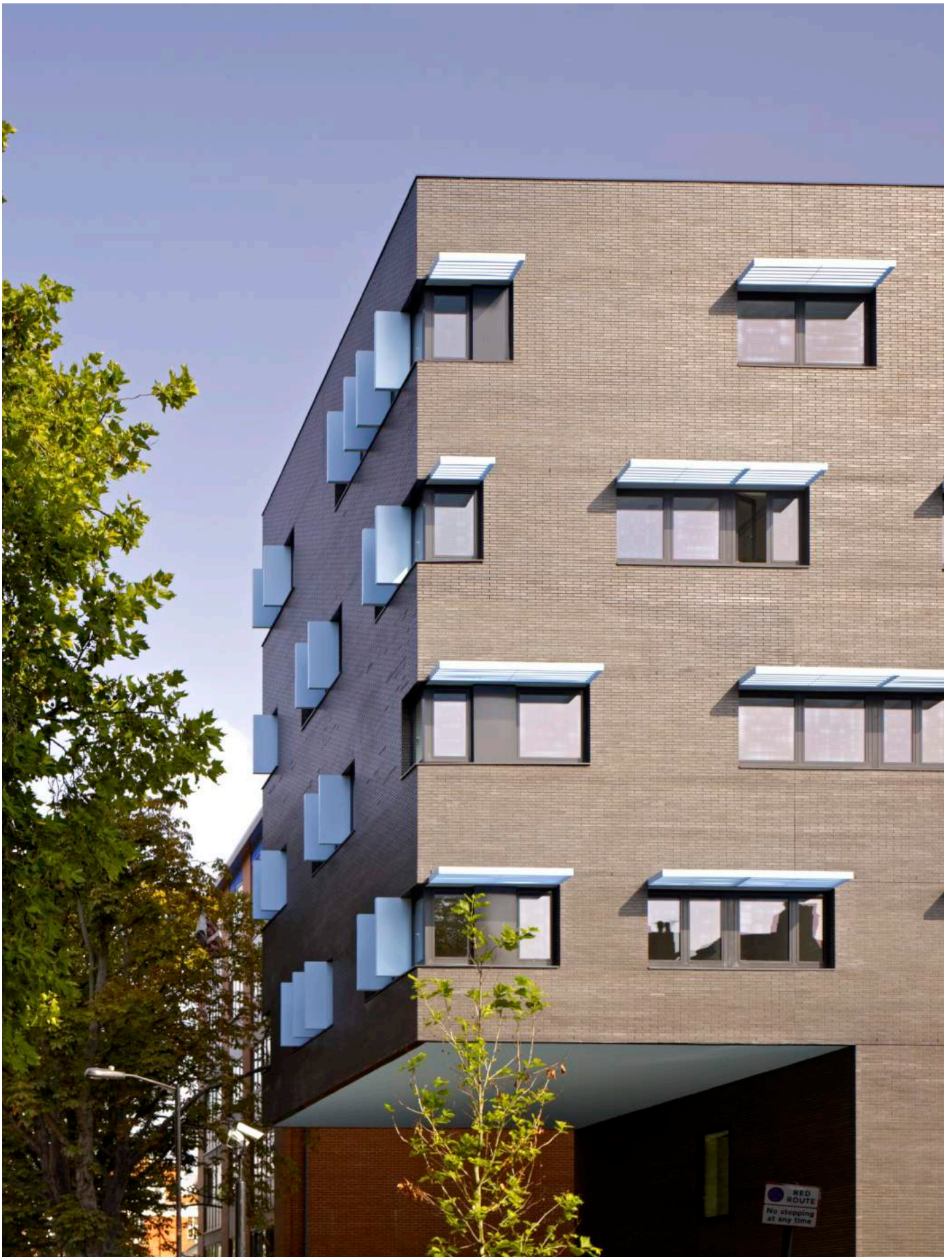
Sunshine House sitting within a leafy suburban context



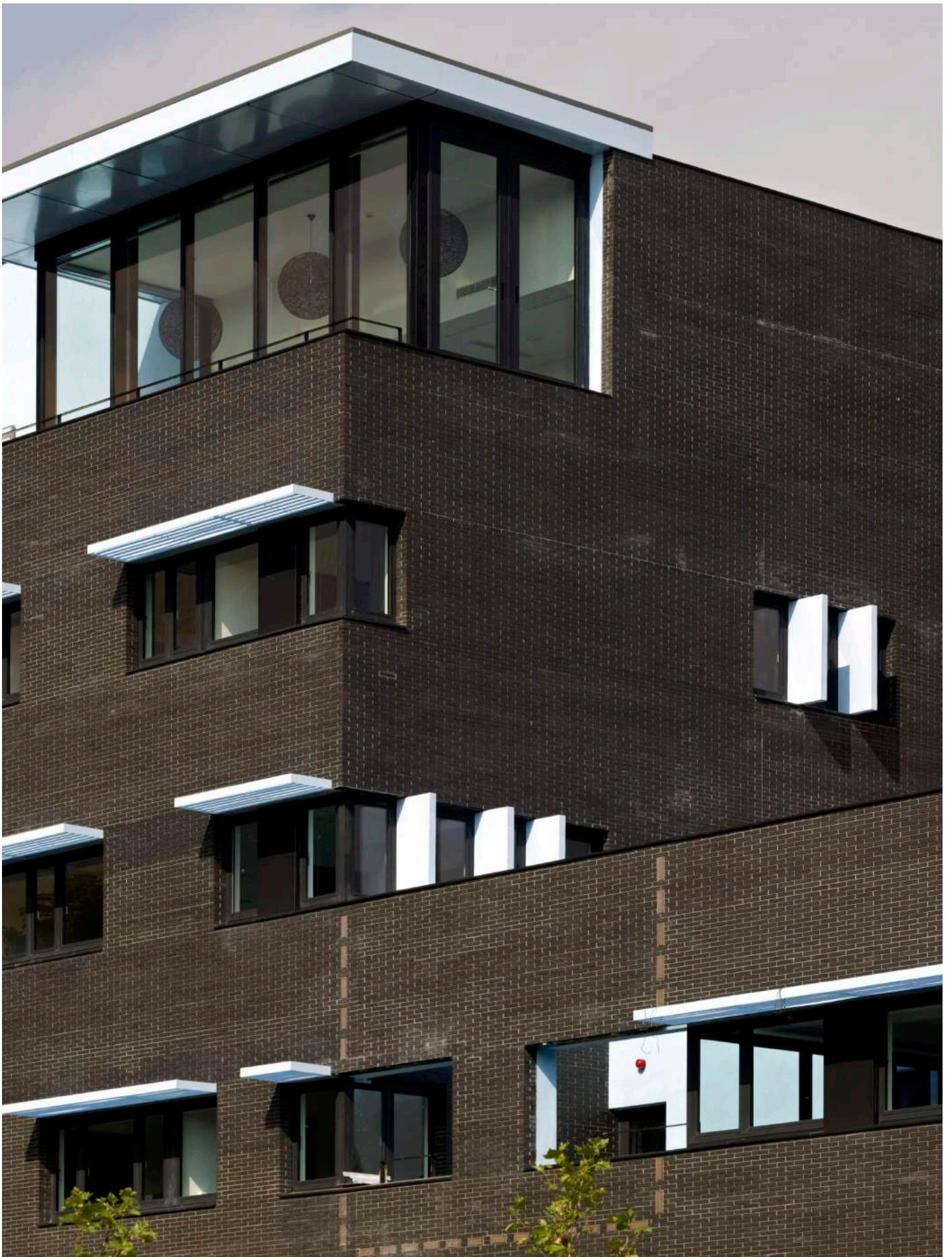
The setback from Peckham Road matches the adjoining buildings



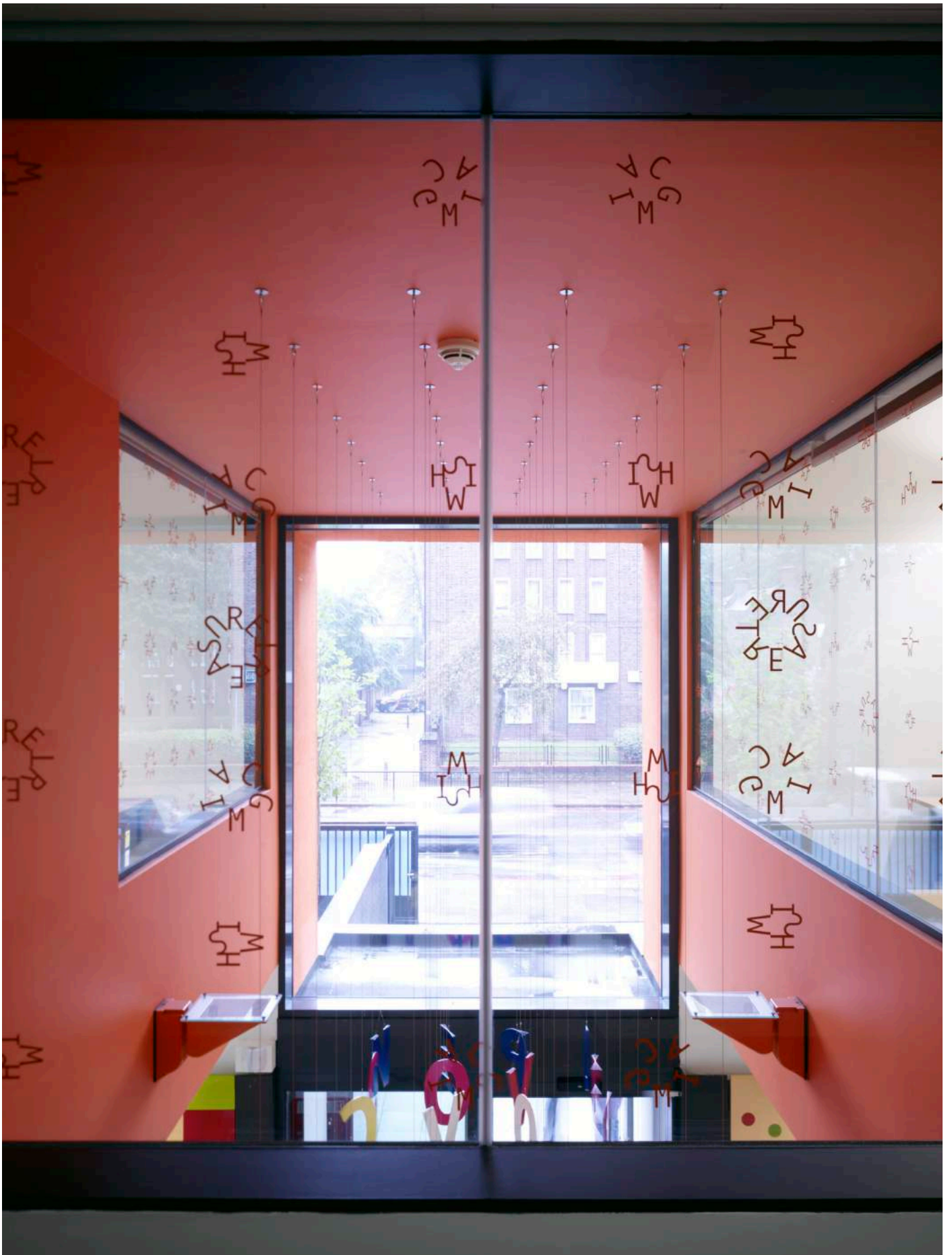
West entrance view taken from the courtyard



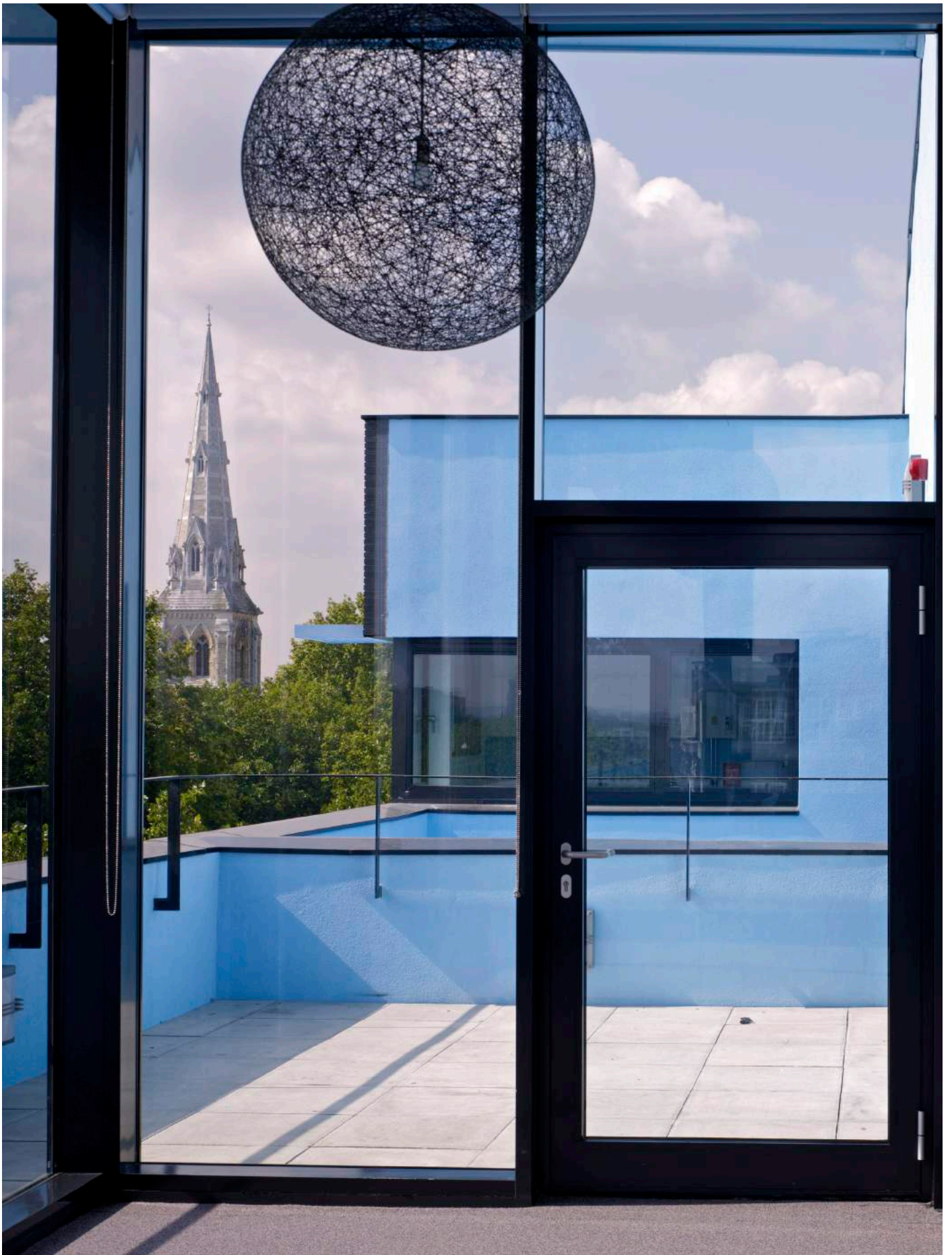
The cantilever adds drama to the street



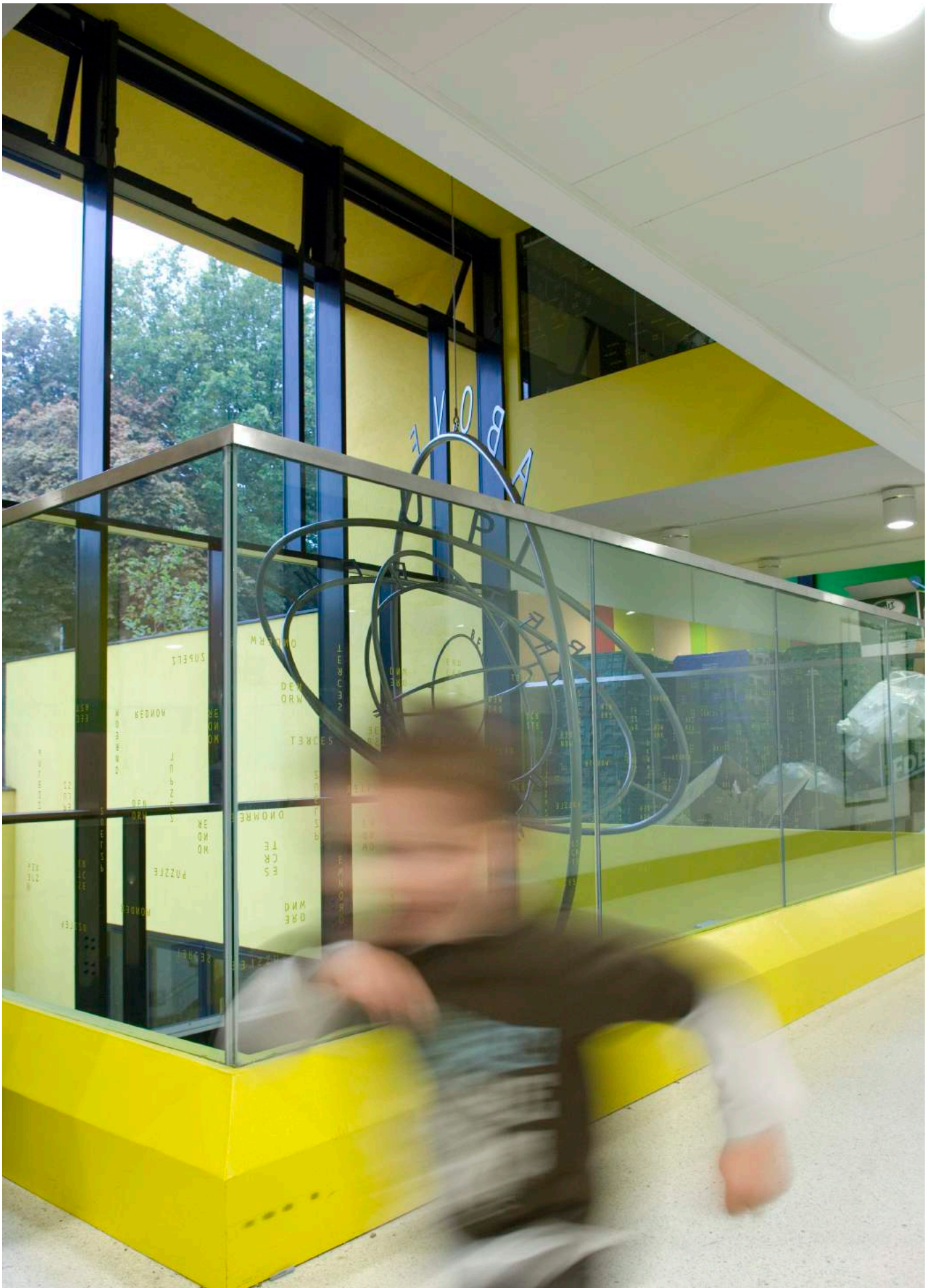
Dark brickwork acts as a backdrop for the bright sunshades



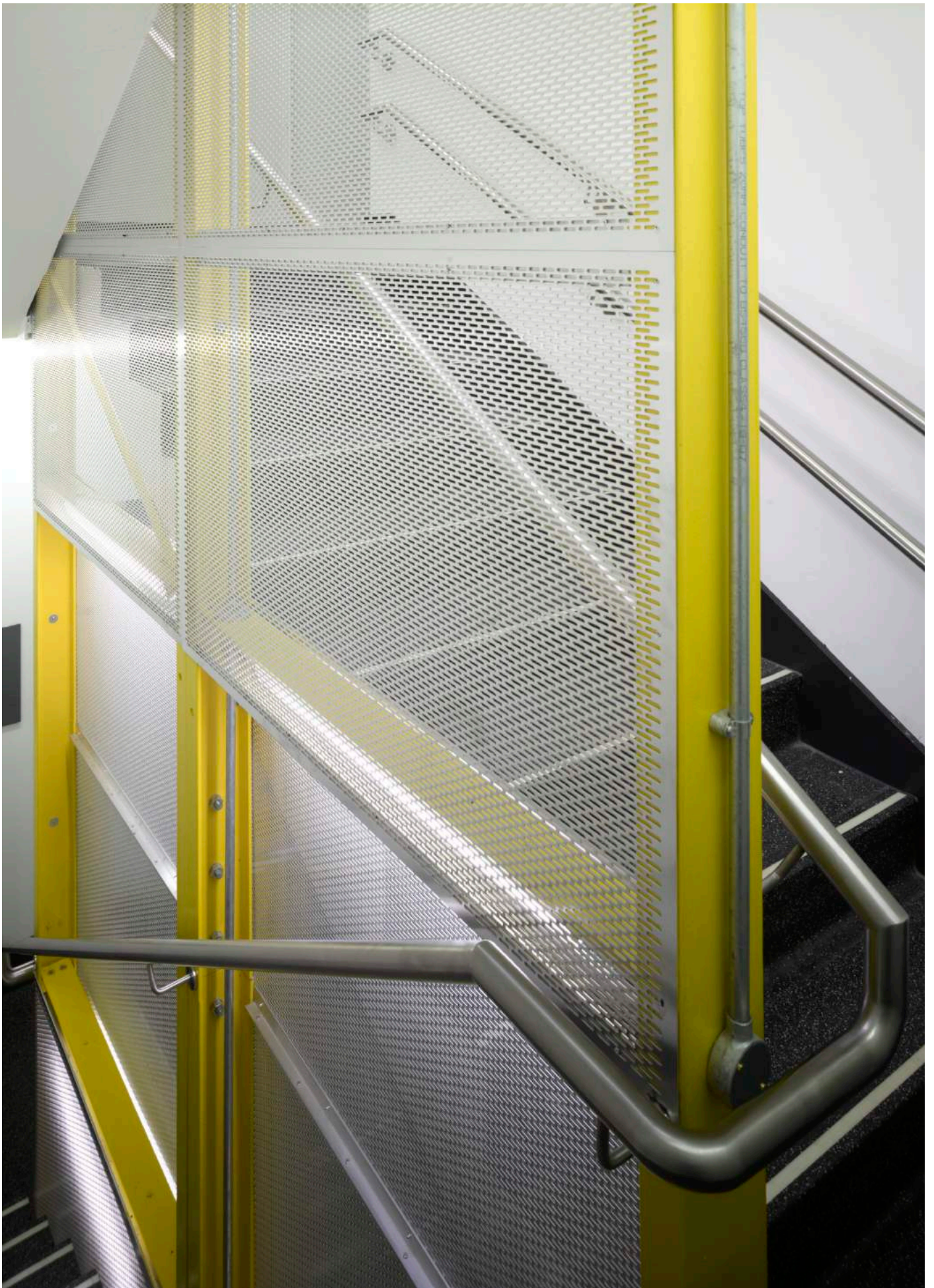
The first floor windows frame views back to the street



Views of St Giles' Church and rendered terraces from the staff relax room



Main waiting area allows children to play



The staircase balustrade, inspired by Meccano

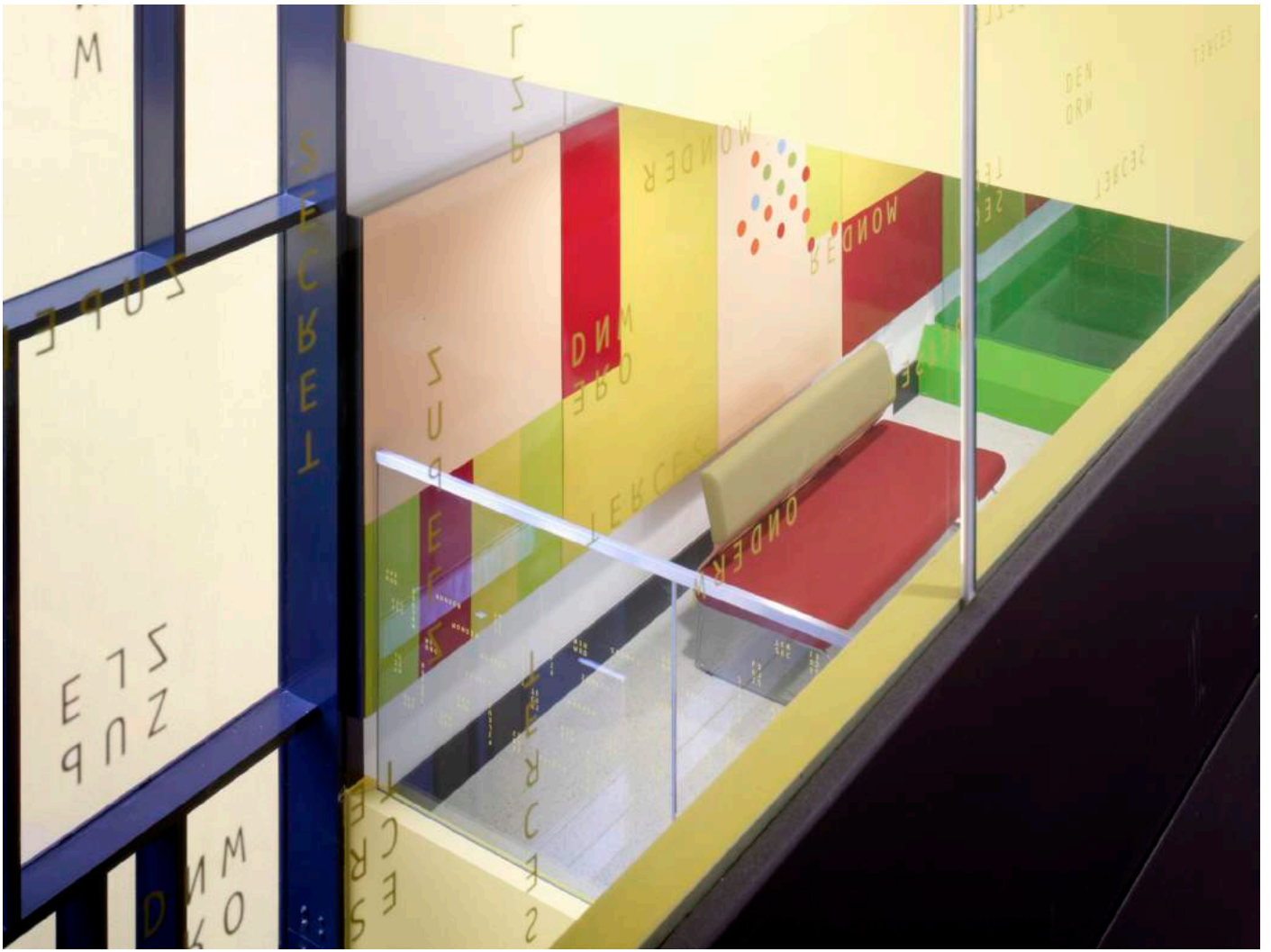


Looking at the gym void



Panoramic view south across the Borough from staff relax room

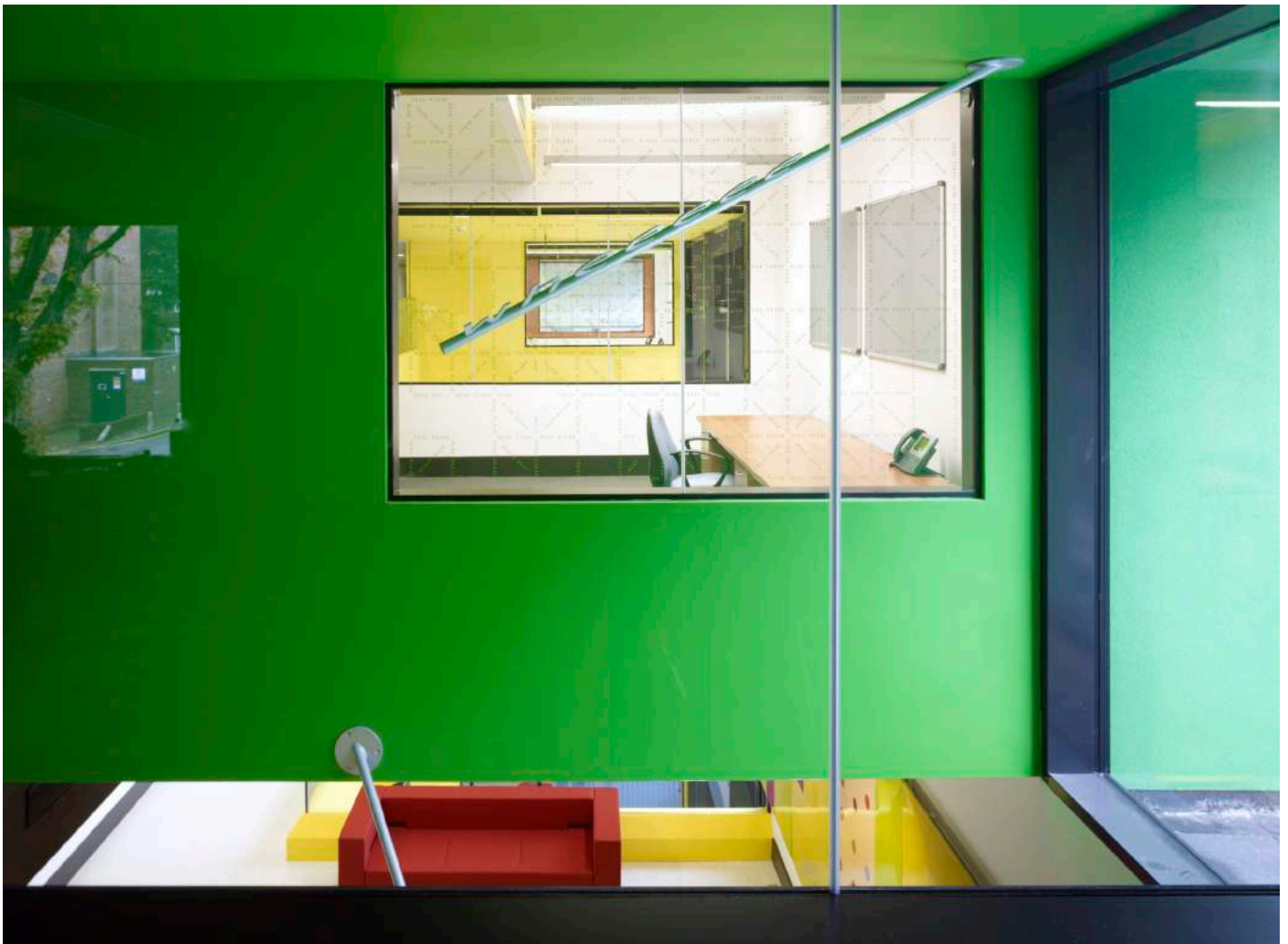
A459_062 © Timothy Soar



The main waiting area is visible from all public floors



The waiting area is structured through colour and pattern



Views through the first floor rooms connect back to the main waiting area

A459_075 © Timothy Soar



Enamelled push plates designed by Jacqui Poncelet



Sensory play room