



CASE STUDY COLOURFUL EXTENSION

We talk to the founder of David Kohn Architects about his agency's design ethos and the making of this fun, bright space in London

What's your USP? We design places that look like you would want to live in them.

What are you currently working on?

A new quad for New College, one of the oldest of the University of Oxford colleges, and a house, studio and gallery space for an artist living in Devon.

Most unusual request? We tend to make the unusual requests. I once asked a client to install a sauna and outdoor ice-bucket shower for a one-bedroom hotel on the roof of the Southbank Centre. The client wriggled out of it. But he did accept a pyramidal spire with a library inside and a wind turbine on top.

Dream project? A confidential project that we have already been working on for a couple of years. We hope that the details will be announced in 2016 – watch this space.

Tell us more about this bright and bold rear-extension, added to a 19th-century house in London...

It is a perfect example of our ability to combine the fun and the functional. The clients wanted added space for a replacement kitchen and a new dining area, as well as for the back of the house to open into the garden. We agreed that a standard box-like building was not the best way forward for this project and instead conceived a stylish compromise of old and new design, inspired by the work of Austro-Hungarian architect Adolf Loos. The extension is intended to feel like a pergola, with concrete columns framing the garden and a glass sliding screen to maximise the views. davidkohn.co.uk



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1 Colour scheme

The bright colours used in this extension were inspired by the work of architect Adolf Loos. We spent considerable time working out the perfect combination of shades that would highlight the architectural features, and then just as long persuading the clients that they would work. They loved it in the end.

2 Dining room

This space's barrel-vaulted ceiling, with two shaped windows at either end, is intended to add a sense of occasion. Both the dining and kitchen zones stand on oak parquet mats that have been fitted flush into the concrete floor.

PICTURES: WILL PRICE

3 Kitchen

The kitchen has a flat ceiling, with its strong lines visually lifted by a sunny yellow colour. We designed the kitchen ourselves using smoked oak, stainless-steel appliances and a sleek, black-tiled splashback. The clients were most involved in the design of the handles for the kitchen doors, insisting that they be very long for ease of access.

Concrete structure

A strong frame made from poured concrete is used to delineate this open-plan space. The separating columns are not supporting the extension, but are there to add aesthetic structure without obscuring diagonal views. They also create a sense of distance between the kitchen and the dining room, so that when you're sitting down to eat you are away from all the mess of cooking. The concrete was deliberately left exposed to link the inside and outside.

4 Windows

The more formal living rooms in the front of the house were connected to the extension through a new, playful arched window. There's also a perfectly framed view through to the garden and a tree in the distance through the circular window. Overall, the space is not conventionally modern – we wanted to retain a sense of ambiguity.

5 Exterior

The red brick façade of the extension matches the more ornate street-facing side of the house, suggesting that it is now of equal importance to the original architecture. The pattern of the brickwork makes playful reference to the different geometrical shapes that link the new build to the original house. It was only while drawing plans for the roof of the extension that the fox-like shape took form, but once it did we worked to subtly emphasise it.