

**DON'T
MOVE
IMPROVE!**

nla

2023 EDITION

Green ambitions

FEATURING

2023 Winners, Shortlist,
Longlist and more

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Advice from the experts

Don't flatten, reimagine

Don't Move, Improve! juror **Marie-Louise Schembri**, Sustainability Director at Hilson Moran, shares her thoughts on finding creative solutions to low carbon retrofits



It is fair to say that there has never been more expectation and scrutiny of environmentally responsible behaviour within

the built environment, with demolition making a case for villain of the year. In fact, this April the City of London announced requirements for all major developments to demonstrate the carbon impact of retention and demolition options before a planning application is made.

Also in April, NLA announced the shortlist to the 2023 edition of *Don't Move, Improve!* for which I was invited to act as one of the judges, and found it to be an inadvertent lesson in the art of low carbon retrofits.

What was most surprising to see in the award entries was the creativity applied to dealing with compromised sites, tight budgets and strict time pressures. Crucially, sustainability designs and decisions were being made outside the pressures of corporate reputation and net zero carbon governance, resulting in retrofit innovations (and necessities) such as:

- Retaining existing nibs, avoiding the cost (and carbon) of structural steel beams
- Challenging contractors to build a lightweight back extension, saving cost, time and reducing the carbon impact of foundations
- Restoring the existing fabric and using colour concepts to reinvigorate family homes, demonstrating the power of light touch transformation
- Tight budgets and material shortages leading to the use of recycled materials and offcuts.

Which made me wonder, why are we not applying the same rigour to retrofit in commercial development? Have we become so formulaic with our standards that we've stunted creative thinking? Why is there so much oversupply of office space in London while supply of Grade A space remains limited?

In this golden era of retrofit, we need to challenge the constraints that are increasing the rate of full building renewal in healthy economies. There is a sweet spot between over-designing and future flexibility, but in the first instance the market needs to flex to a new normal and embrace a space-type that tells a unique story. *Don't Move, Improve!* is a lesson for us all on how to challenge the counter-narrative to responsible and exciting design.

Temyson Road by ROAR Architects. Photography by Chris Wharton

Creative collaboration

UNIQUE CHARACTER — SHORTLISTED PROJECT
Walled Garden by nintim architects
 Brixton, Lambeth

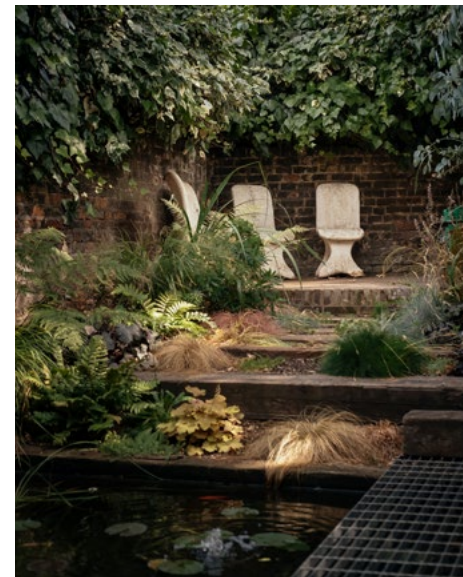


A reimagining of a London Victorian two-storey garden flat, within the Minet estate Conservation Area in Brixton. The project added a rear extension, re-configured the interior spaces and included a redesign of the existing garden. The objective was to create a space of reflection and sanctuary from the city: a home full of soft daylight and richly textured natural materials.

The project was above all a collaboration with the clients. Nintim began work on the project after planning had been secured. They worked closely to develop the internal layouts and material palette within the constraints of the approved envelope. The outcome was a true reflection of a collective vision and ambition.



Photography: **Jim Stephenson**



A view of the kitchen living area with framed views of the garden and natural light pouring in.



Uniquely different

The following longlisted projects have been selected for their characterful and unique material choices and colour palettes, while still meeting environmental targets and responding to restrained budgets.



Brabourn Grove
LONGLISTED

At Christmas 2019, it became clear to Emily and Ian that their Victorian property was too small. There was not enough space to host parties, nor a quiet corner to enjoy a glass of rosé. The extension has been carefully set back to create an additional east-facing facade, drawing light into the dining area and opening up views to the garden. The kitchen is neatly framed by a courtyard, connecting the front room with the extension. Towards the neighbouring properties, a curved junction transitions between the different heights of the extension. The walls are constructed in pale brick with punched oak-framed openings. Internally the elegant material palette is continued by using oak, concrete and curved plasterwork. The courtyard brings the design language of the exterior into the house.

Architect: **SAM Architects**
 Photography: **Michael Franke**

Gladsmuir House
LONGLISTED

Set over eight part floors, the house was ample but divided for family life, the client's brief for Gladsmuir House demanded a timeless, playful, flexible proposal. A Douglas fir framed and clad garden room provides a living space to the rear of the property, uniting the kitchen and dining. The modest extension expands into the garden, harnessing a deceptively large space. The stepped angled form responds to the extents of the existing side extension and neighbours. A long southwest aspect is captured by the angled plan. The interior is stained in white oil; the exterior in vibrant blue contrasting with the brick. A utility and pantry lie to the interior, with a playroom converted at the front — a secret passageway running between. The attics were remodelled as a master suite, with a raised bath to capture views over London.

Architect: **Beasley Dickson Architects**
 Photography: **Emily Marshall**



Pirouette House
LONGLISTED

Invisible to the adjacent passage, the spatial drama of Pirouette House is revealed in its surprising interior. A timber cloister unfolds in two directions along a new courtyard, while the kitchen, dining and living spaces pirouette around a triangular blue column that marks the transition between old and new. The secret courtyard garden is designed as an outdoor room, picking up on the language of rhythmic red timber piers that give the exterior a striking presence. Low cost and low carbon, the house transformed the living environment for a young family.

Architect: **Artifact**
 Photography: **Nick Dearden**

Tennyson Road
LONGLISTED

The owners of this property asked for a radical rethink of their house, which required maintenance prior to the works. With a growing family and regular visitors coming to stay, they needed to build up and out to the rear but this had to be achieved within the confines of a modest budget. Inspired by the history of grand architectural gathering spaces and ship-building techniques, a vaulted roof was developed so that head heights could be increased beyond the standard sloped side extension and still fall within the constraints of planning.

Architect: **ROAR Architects**
 Photography: **Chris Wharton**



PROJECT DIRECTORY

WINNERS

Brückenhaus by R2 Studio Architects **22**
CLT House by Unknown Works **42**
Colour Casing by District.Architects **70**
Elizabeth Mews by Trehwela Williams **62**
Kitchen in the Woods by A Small Studio **52**
Low Energy House by Architecture for London **12**
Lubetkin Apartment by Studio naama **32**
The Secret Garden Flat by Nic Howett Architect **4**
Graphic House **COMMENDED** by Office S&M **49**
White Patio House **COMMENDED** by Pashenko Works **48**

SHORTLIST

Banya and Garden Studio by Cooke Fawcett **58**
Breathable House by Mike Tuck Studio **18**
DB Apartment by Studio Hallett Ike **78**
Rotherfield Street by ATELIER BAULIER **38**
Walled Garden by nintim architects **50**

LOGLIST

5 Kirkstall Road by Minima Sliding **19**
Blurton Road by Emil Eve Architects **28**
Brabourn Grove by SAM Architects **51**
Brixton House by Studio Carver **68**
The Connected House by Studio 30 Architects **40**
Cooper House by Studio Webster Dale **59**
Courtyard House by Yellow Cloud Studio **68**
De Beauvoir Square by envelop. **59**
Elgin Avenue Apartment by BOCCI GHODKE **28**
Finnis Street by Studio Manifest **19**
First Haus by Young and Co **68**
Gladsmuir House by Beasley Dickson Architects **51**
Green House, Hackney by [Y/N] Studio **59**
Home Office in a Garage Conversion by VATRAA **79**
A House for an Engineer by David Leech Architects **79**
A House Within a House by David Leech Architects **39**
Leytonstone Loft by Rees Architects **39**
Mikwell House by Lowell Design and Build **28**
Piroutte House by Artifact **51**
Queens Wood by Mulroy Architects **69**
Rift House by Proctor & Shaw **39**
Rosebery Road by Matthew Giles Architects **69**
Roxwell Cavern by Gestalt Developments **40**
Sky Latern House by Proctor & Shaw **29**
Spitalfields House by Common Ground Workshop (with phase 1 works by Studio Idealyc) **29**
Stepped Loft by Andre Kong Studio **40**
Stepped Wall House by Proctor & Shaw **69**
Stone House by Architecture for London **29**
Tennyson Road by ROAR Architects **51**
Tranquil House by Stiff + Trevillion Architects **30**
Tree View House by Neil Dusheiko Architects **59**
Vaulted House by Proctor & Shaw **69**
Waffle House by Merrett Houmøller **19**
Waghorn Street by Emil Eve Architects **30**
Waveney Avenue by SAM Architects **30**