



1

**MEWS HOUSE EXTENSION,  
SOUTH KENSINGTON, LONDON**  
ARCHITECT  
**ZIGGURAT**

# Modernist mews

A diminutive mews house in London built in the 1970s has been enlarged,  
transformed with elegance and a great deal of ingenuity.

1  
Toplit dining room and table fixed  
to sliding door to courtyard.



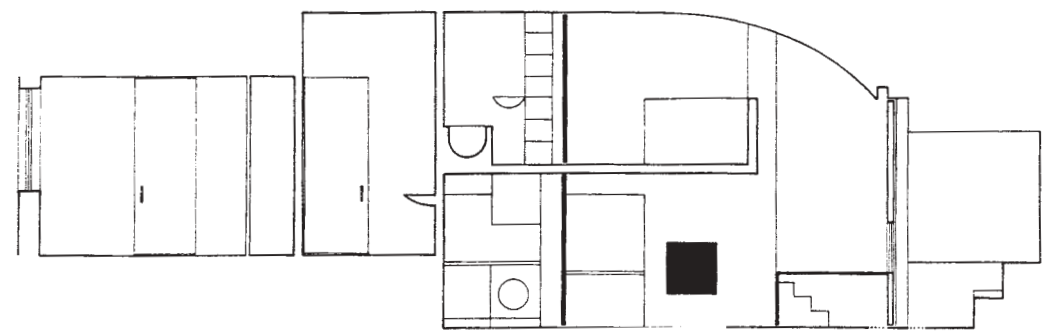
An ingenious scheme, by Ziggurat, for extending a tiny mews house in South Kensington, enlarges the vertical dimension and uses light to draw out the horizontal.

The original house was built as one of a pair in the 1970s, on derelict land. Stuccoed externally to accord with its Victorian neighbours, the house was one storey high with four rooms and very little natural light. The front of the building, with bedroom, bathroom, entrance lobby and hall, was retained with some remodelling; the remainder of the building was virtually demolished.

Behind the existing remnant, Ziggurat excavated and lowered

the floor level several feet, and created a double-height volume with a roof that curves away from the street, so that externally the building seems unchanged. A glass wall marks division between the house and a tiny courtyard, painted white to become an exterior room diffusing luminance back into the house. Ziggurat has cleverly established a shifting diagonal axis through the plan, from the entrance and hall on the south-west side of the building to the radiant white courtyard. The progression through the house is one from dimness to bright light, from enclosed space to its sudden dramatic expansion and colour.

At the front of the new volume, the architects installed a gallery containing sleeping quarters. The bedroom is partly enclosed by a cut-out wall, painted mint green, and looks onto a double-height dining room set under the reflective curve of the new roof. Beneath the gallery is a living room and small kitchen; and fitted under the stairs to the bedroom is a curved desk forming a tiny study. To have inserted so much drama and delight into such a small space is an achievement, and the scheme has been executed with a great deal of elegance. Materials are simple – painted walls and a beech floor flowing into concrete as it

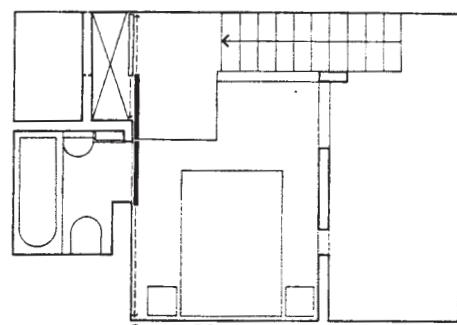


south-north long section

**MEWS HOUSE EXTENSION,  
SOUTH KENSINGTON, LONDON**

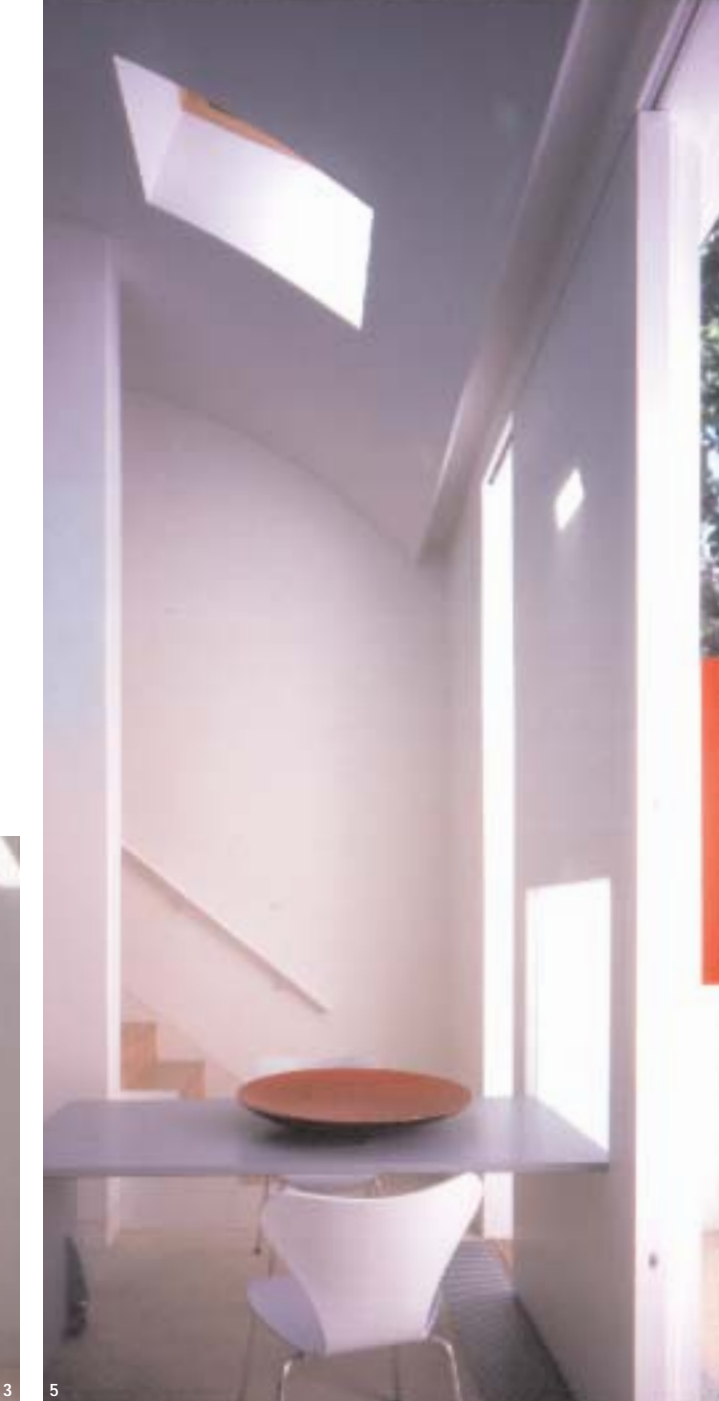
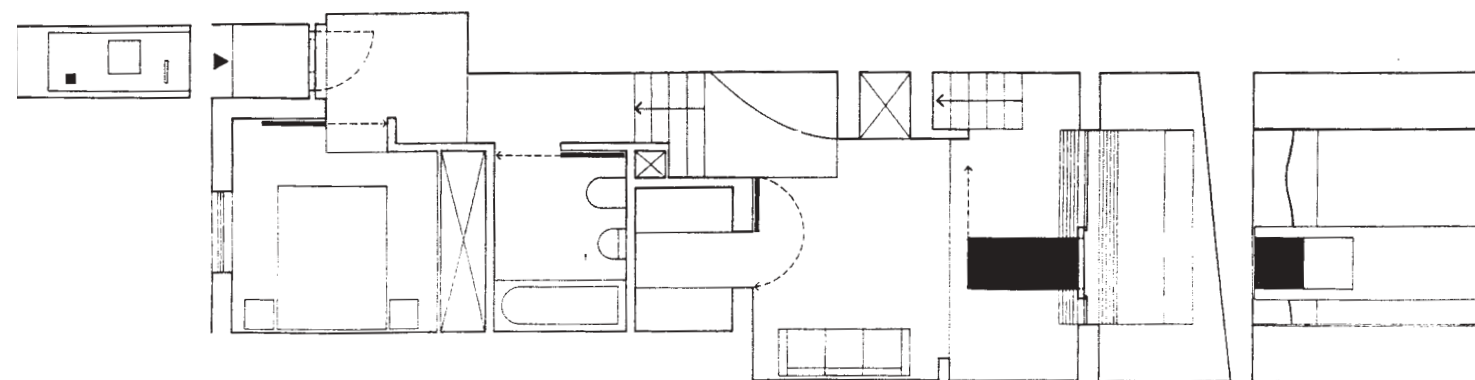
ARCHITECT  
**ZIGGURAT**

- 2 Dining room, stairs to gallery bedroom and television recessed into wall under stairs.
- 3, 5 Dining table and sliding door to courtyard is one assembly.
- 4 Dining room under curved ceiling. Bedroom gallery above.



gallery plan

- 1 entrance
- 2 bedroom
- 3 bathroom
- 4 kitchen
- 5 living
- 6 dining
- 7 study
- 8 courtyard



approaches the courtyard – and the composition, which has the clarity of an early Modernist work, is sharpened by use of colour here and there. Details are constantly intriguing: the dining table that is part of a sliding door to the courtyard, the sinuous concrete bench, like a piece of sculpture, lining and seeming part of the courtyard wall, and the rotating door to the kitchen, which simultaneously turns out to be a cupboard.

**Architect**  
Ziggurat, London  
**Project architects**  
Andrei Bowbelski, James Davis with  
Laurence Guerrini, Areti Theofanopoulou  
**Structural engineers**  
Whitby Bird and Partners – Special Projects  
**Photographs**  
James Morris