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Erect Architecture completes community centre in Stoke Newington


BUILDINGS 03.06.21

Attached to a Grade II*-listed Victorian church, the St Mary's Centre supports diverse community events while respecting its historic surroundings



London-based [Erect Architecture](#) has completed the St Mary's Centre, a community centre attached to St Mary's Stoke Newington, a Grade II*-listed Victorian church designed by Sir George Gilbert Scott and completed in 1856.

The brief for the new centre was to transform and extend the existing church extension from 1996. The new hub builds on St Mary's history of community outreach and support – including hosting a migrants' centre, a night shelter and a food bank – and enables these activities to grow sustainably. The church spoke to local people about the project, gathering feedback on what they wanted in a community centre, before appointing Erect.

The architecture for the new centre, which overlooks a peaceful courtyard, makes references to elements of the Victorian church building whilst creating a warm, inclusive, accessible and contemporary space that aims to evoke a sense of belonging.



A new core is inserted to define a cloister route along the fabric of the historic buildings, where it forms 'conversation niches' between the large stone buttresses. Strategic openings illuminate these spaces with natural lighting and enable views up to the church.

Early on, it was decided to reuse the existing steel structure, concrete slab and most external masonry walls of the extension building for reasons of sustainability. The new brick facade builds on the volume but its zigzag pitched roofline dips down strategically to open up views on to the stained glass window of the vestry building beyond. Large glazed openings allow the main hall to spill out into the courtyard

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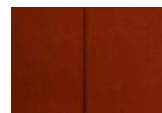

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The materiality of the new façade complements the palette and hues of the surrounding buildings whilst marking a subtle contemporary departure.

Photography by David Grandorge courtesy of Erect Architecture

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