



St Mary's Centre

Erect Architecture has designed a textured brick community centre adjoining a church by Sir George Gilbert Scott in Stoke Newington, north London.



Photos

David Grandorge

Hackney-based studio Erect Architecture was asked to upgrade a mid-90s extension to the Grade II* listed Victorian church completed in 1856, which provided extra rooms in a cloistered formation. The new addition, which has a textured glazed brick facade, fills in the courtyard of that earlier extension.



"Our key conceptual approach considered the new building as an extension of the existing narrative of the 'collection of buildings' – connected by a circumferential

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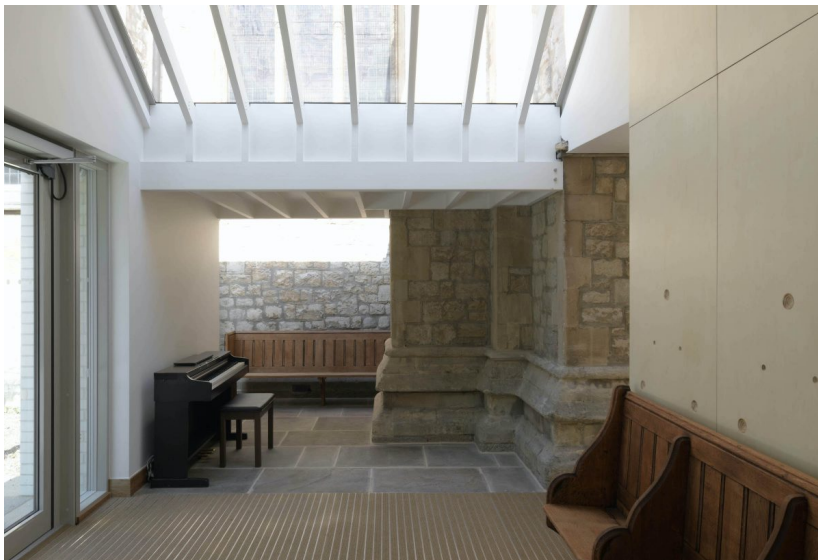
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"The new core is inserted to define a cloister route along the fabric of the historic buildings, where it forms natural conversation niches between its large stone buttresses. Strategic openings illuminate these spaces with intimate natural lighting and draw views up onto church elevation."



The architects recycled the existing steel structure, concrete slab and masonry walls of the pre-existing building and added a double pitched facade that bows down to open a view to the stained-glass window of the vestry behind.

Glazed doors open from a small plaza into a skylit foyer, where the once-external walls of the church become the primary feature.



The centre regularly hosts community groups including a choir and Jewish faith group, and operates as a cafe. It's migrants' centre, night shelter and food bank also support the local community.

"The new centre integrates characteristics of the listed building to transform and extend the community space and create a warm, welcoming and inclusive centre, that aims to evoke a sense of belonging," says the practice.

The project was the winner of the Hackney Design Award in 2020 and is included in *Women's Work: London*, a publication featuring buildings designed by women to coincide with the Barbican exhibition *How We Live Now: Reimagining Spaces* with Matrix Feminist Design Co-operative.



Credits

Architect

Erect Architecture
Structural engineer
Momentum
M&E Engineer
OR Consult

Heritage Consultant

Heritage Collective
QS
Huntley Cartwright
Contractor
Ash Contracting
Client
Parochial Church Council of St Mary's Stoke
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