



## Pilgrim's Lane House in the Hampstead Conservation Area, London

When leading rare books dealer Bernard Shapero and his wife bought a derelict Victorian house in the Hampstead Village Conservation Area they asked Eldridge Smerin to transform and enlarge the property to provide a home for the couple and their three children.

Working with the limitations of a Victorian house, Eldridge Smerin aimed to breathe new life into the site, organising the existing and new elements of the house in such a way that they make a coherent whole, and avoiding an apologetic or low key 'infill' approach to working in a Conservation Area. The new three level extension the practice proposed is a light and robust steel framed structure expanding the house laterally across the adjoining garage space. The design creates living space almost equal in area to that of the original part of the house, which was stripped out and remodelled internally. The frontage of the new extension

is faced with full width birch plywood on edge panels. This sheer polished surface expresses a calm muteness. This is broken only by a single slot of frameless glass offering glimpses out from the kitchen area and a screened area at high level that forms a private balcony.

The connection between existing and new elements of the house now fused through the architecture is animated by the presence of a full height glazed volume. This, together with a series of metal clad, glass-roofed projecting bays and a new main stair to the house constructed entirely from glass, allows light to penetrate to the heart of the house. In the lower two levels of the house the layouts have the character of those found in a classical English house, with both double height and flexible elements, but mixed with a more European quality. A sequence of horizontally and vertically interlocking interior spaces works

hard to respond to the diverse activities of family life. These can be divided with sliding and folding doors, such as the translucent panel doors screening off the kitchen. A new library includes a balcony to the double height space. The two lower levels of the house extend externally at the rear onto generous terraced areas, the upper in the form of a floating balcony of translucent glass panels that glows at night. A ramp leads down from this to the new rear garden designed by Jinny Blom creating a connectivity with the house. The key fixtures and fittings were also designed by Eldridge Smerin, including work, play and storage units for the childrens' bedrooms and a sideboard unit in the dining area with a cutlery drawer the length of the room. The project was completed in 2003 and won a London Borough of Camden Building Quality Award and a Commendation in the 2004 CivicTrust Awards.

# eldridge smerin

