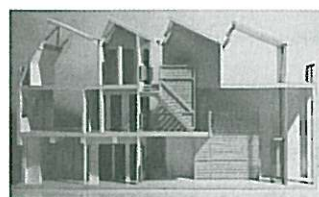
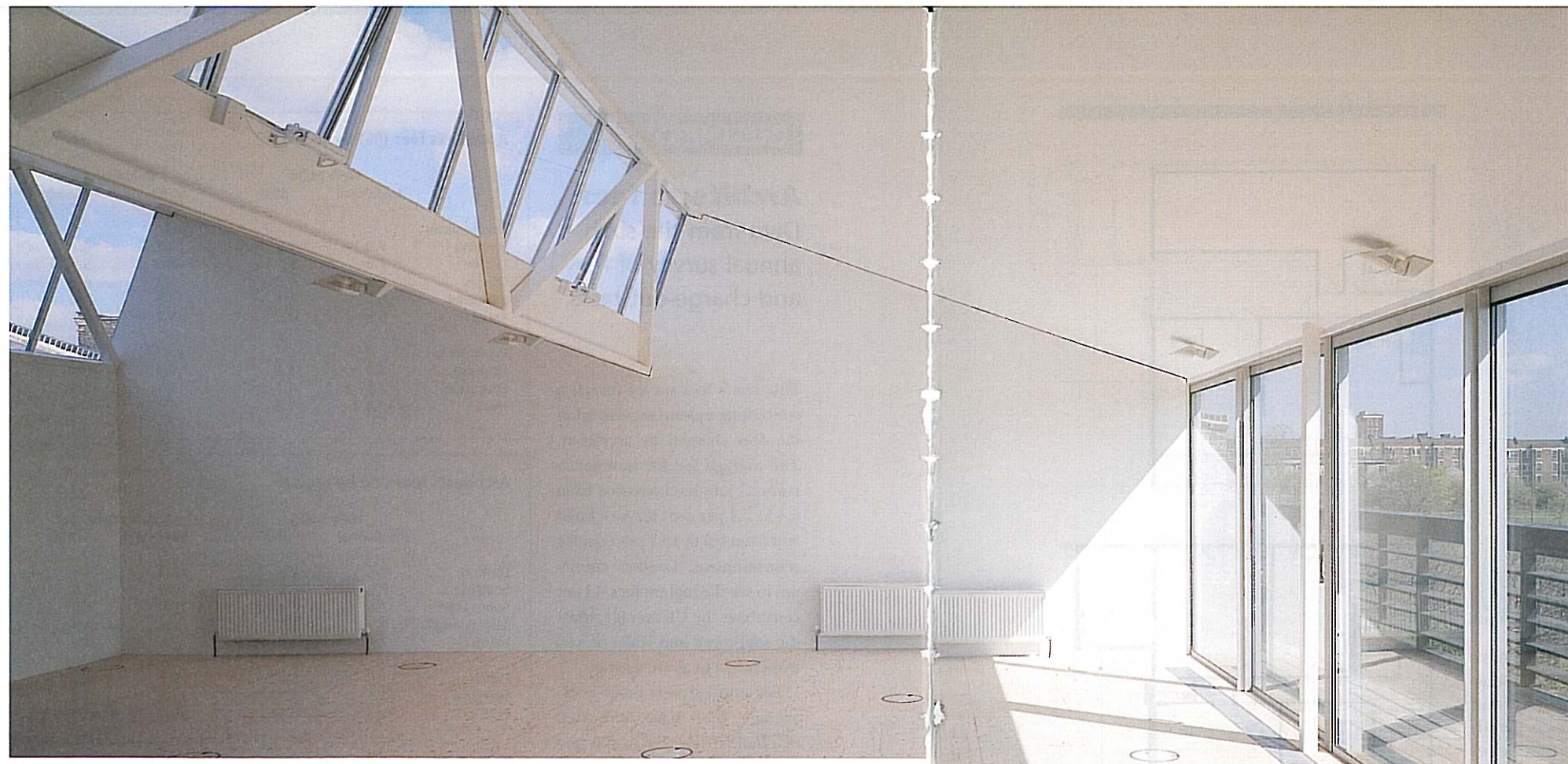


**Character role**  
A nineteenth-century workshop transformed by Burd Haward Marston. Photos: H  l  ne Binet

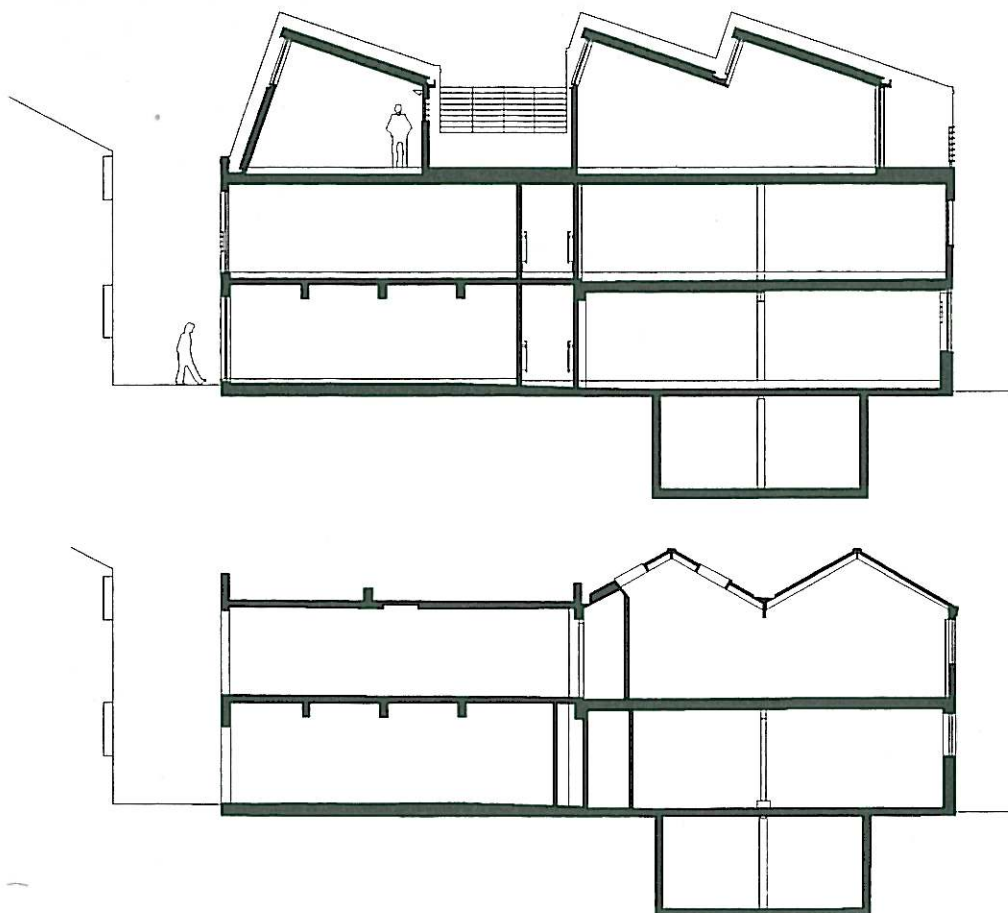


The UK is fortunate to enjoy an extensive heritage of industrial buildings bequeathed from the nineteenth and early-twentieth centuries. These buildings are rightly valued not just for their age but for their character, texture and sense of place, qualities which are often hard to re-capture in new-build projects of today. But in adapting such buildings for present-day

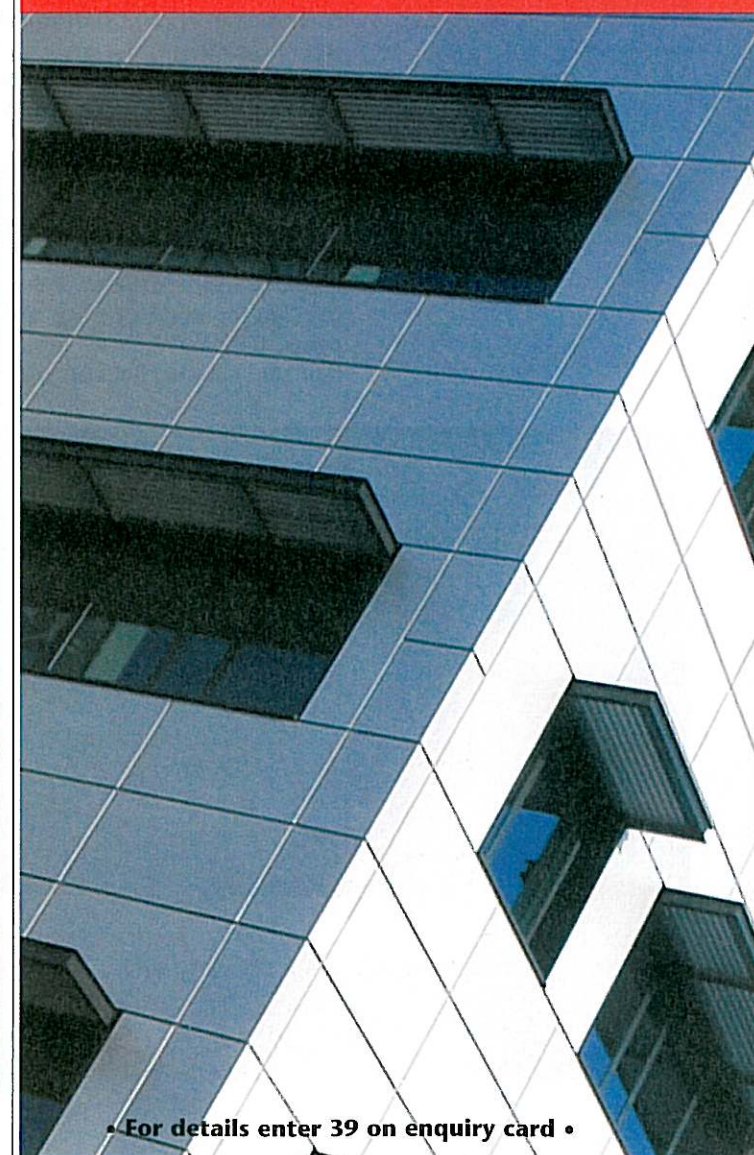
needs, how are those characteristics to be protected and enhanced? A recent project in east London by emerging practice Burd Haward Marston provides some interesting answers.

In 2001 we were appointed by a private developer to convert and extend a two-storey industrial building in Bethnal Green, writes Burd Haward Marston. The brief was to provide

**Above** Main top-floor studio. The north light form creates possibilities for unexpected wall/ceiling relationships and volumes and maximises internal headroom while keeping overall additional height to a minimum, as required by the planners. **Below** Street view. The building, which faces almost due south, is located between a Victorian terrace of two-storey housing and a market trader's yard. **Opposite** Cross section (after and before); model showing added floor with saw-tooth roof. Completed earlier this year, the £830,000 project is Burd Haward Marston's largest to date.



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**Above** View from Weavers Fields.

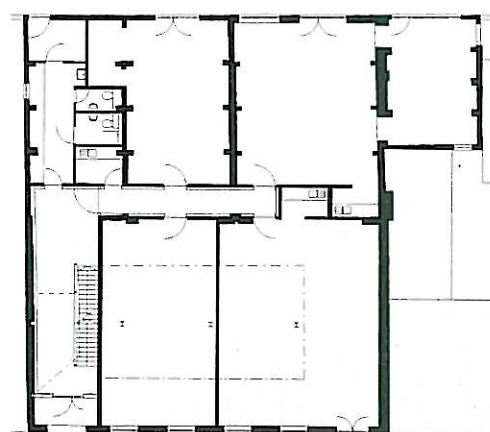
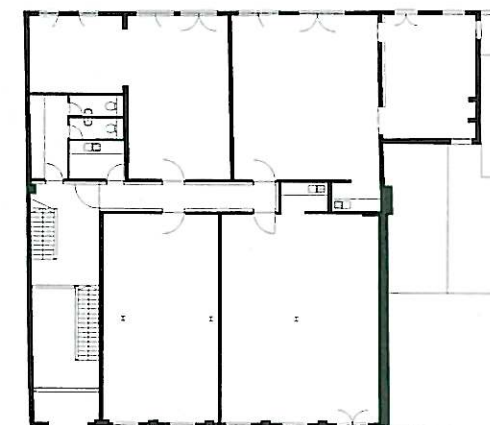
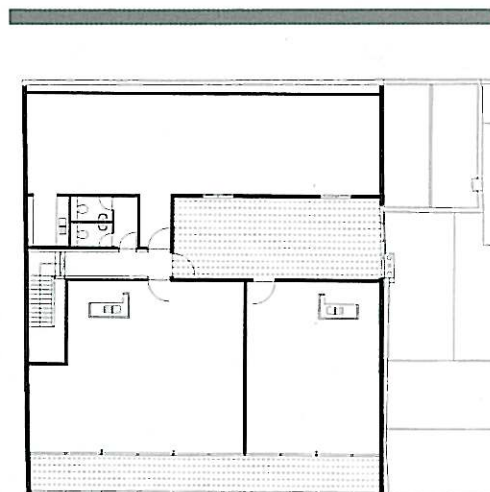
**Below** In the lower parts of the building, the existing brickwork is left unpainted, revealing sprayed-on datum marks from the building works as part of the fabric's history.

**Plans** Ground, first and second floor. The plan has been re-ordered, retaining the existing structure where possible, to provide an efficient layout with large workspaces and generous communal areas.

11 low-rent studio workspaces for small businesses. Although only a step away from the bustle of Bethnal Green Road, Derbyshire Street overlooks the open space of Weavers Fields and has an almost pastoral quality that belies its urban location.

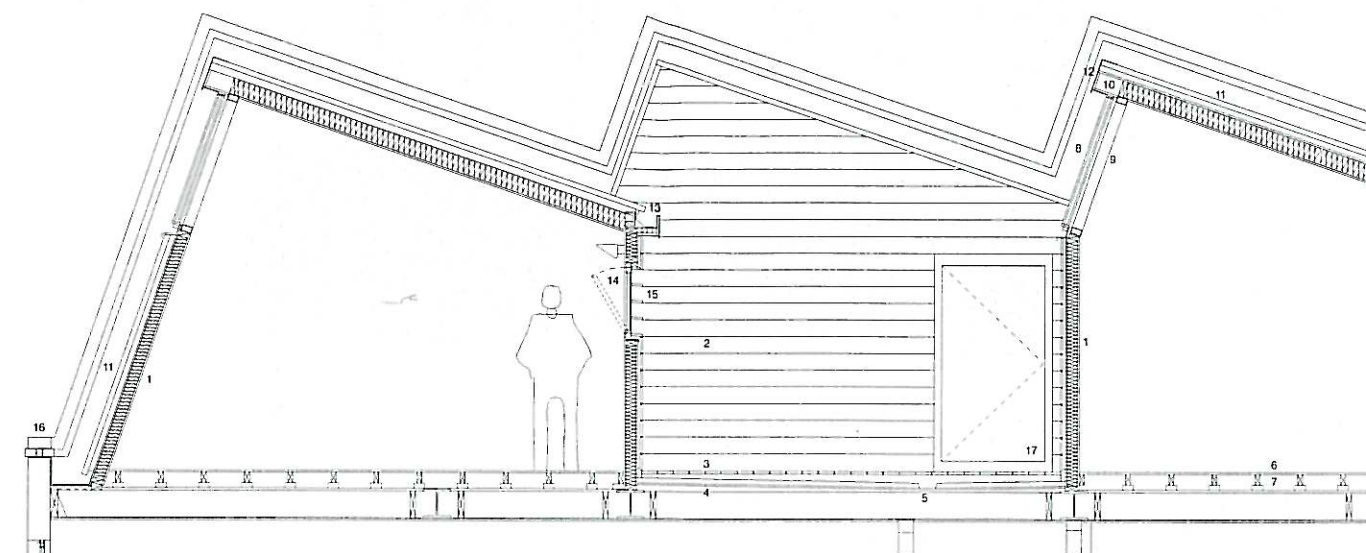
Persuading the developer to add a new floor and roof was the key to making both a new volume and a new external form. The new roof comprises a series of four north lights. Their scale is revealed at the gable end of the building, where they echo the neighbouring domestic valley roofs and form a romantic reminder of the previous industrial use.

The roof is formed by lightweight, large-span open trusses which run across the width of the building, bearing onto the gable walls, thereby both avoiding internal columns and allowing future flexibility. The trusses incorporate glazing and guttering and act as north lights, flooding the top studios with natural light and allowing natural ventilation.



The internal spaces are informed by a clear reading of the volume and structure, rather than through the use of applied surfaces or expressive detailing. A limited range of materials is used to simplify and express planes and volumes. New brickwork is left unpainted, new ceilings are in white painted plasterboard, and the floor (structural-grade ply) is left unsealed. The raised floor houses services and accommodates the existing (uneven) floor, so no chases in the walls were required.

On the top floor, an external roof terrace has been carved out of the plan to provide a shared, protected external space for the users of the building. The detailing here again works to express volume, with the junctions between



external wall, roof and floor kept flush. Low-cost sawn timber, stained with traditional agricultural tar paint, is used as the external floor finish and wraps up to line the walls.

In the entrance hall, the upper floor plates are cut away to form a dramatic triple-height volume, through which the new stair rises. Again stained timber boards are employed, forming the screen, handrail and balustrade, as well as dado behind which services are concealed. Black laminate-faced phenolic plywood, a cheap and ready-made sheet material, is used for the flooring and for the stair treads. These dark communal spaces contrast with the simple bright office spaces and give the development a recognisable character of its own.

**Top** Top-floor courtyard; entrance area and staircase rising through the three floors of the building.

**Section 1** Softwood stud wall, 100mm mineral wool insulation, 12mm external ply sheathing; 2 treated softwood weatherboarding on softwood battens; 3 treated softwood deck on softwood battens; 4 single ply polymeric roof membrane over 40mm ply-backed rigid insulation on 18mm wpb ply sheathing laid to a fall; 5 gutter formed in roofing membrane; 6 plywood floating floor; 7 saddle support under softwood timber batten; 8 aluminium double-glazed rooflight; 9 steel roof truss; 10 150 x 50 treated softwood rafter at 400mm centres; 12 aluminium flashing; 13 aluminium gutter, fascia and soffit; 14 top-hung double-glazed aluminium casement window; 15 treated softwood louvres; 16 brick parapet with aluminium flashing; 17 aluminium double glazed door.

**Project team**  
Architect: Burd Haward Marston Architects;  
design team: Catherine Burd, Buddy  
Howard, Lucy Marston, Jan Chaitas, Mark  
Hadden, Mark Robinson; structural engineer:  
Price & Myers; services engineer:  
Arup; qs: Moulton Taggart; contractor:  
Roof; client: Marston Properties.

**Selected subcontractors and suppliers**  
Sheet metal roofing: Rigidal Ziplock; flat  
roofing: Rephanol; steelwork: Steelbuild;  
W20 steel doors/windows: Rea Metal  
Windows; aluminium doors/windows:  
Technal, Kawneer; fabricator: Andrew Mark  
Aluminium; roof lights: Vitral, Hi-glaze  
Concepts; sheet flooring: UPM Kymmene  
Wood, Schaubman; raised floor: Danskin;  
stair joinery: Denne Joinery; roller shutters:  
SDS; damp proofing: Ward Damp Proofing;  
ironmongery: Doorplan, Allgoods; sanitary-  
ware: Armitage Shanks; paints: Dulux,  
Natural Building Products; internal stain:  
Sadolin; lighting: Lightworks.

