



solidspace

PRESS ENQUIRIES

Claire Curtice Publicists
claire@clairecurtice.co.uk
+ 44 (0) 20 7613 1442
[Download press kit here](#)

PRESS RELEASE**81–87 WESTON STREET****03/2019**

Independent developer Solidspace and Stirling Prize-winning architects Allford Hall Monaghan Morris announce the completion of their long-standing collaboration: 81–87 Weston Street, a new mixed-use, mid-rise building in Southwark. Eight spacious, multi-level apartments have been stacked in a tessellated arrangement above a generous ground floor commercial space.

The plot at numbers 81–87 Weston Street is a gap site south of the Thames and close to London Bridge. It was originally occupied by an old warehouse building, which once functioned as Solidspace's office. The rear wall of the warehouse served as a boundary to Guy Street Park to the south. It has been preserved and integrated into the new building as a record of changes to the area over the years.

The architecture of the local area is varied, characterised by new developments such as The Shard built in amongst more ubiquitous mid-rise Victorian warehouse buildings. The external appearance of the new building aims to reflect Southwark's historical fabric whilst asserting the building's unique spatial arrangement.

Solidspace, led by architect-turned-developer Roger Zogolovitch, has a reputation for building high-quality homes which prioritise volume, light and character. The Solidspace model involves taking infill sites and building mid-rise, arranging the main social spaces of each residential unit – those for eating, living and working – over half levels on either side of a double-height space. The eight apartments of two and three bedrooms are arranged in two staggered blocks, three apartments in one and five in the other, with a stair and lift core running up the middle of each cluster. This intelligent design ensures that all the apartments have a split section, are dual aspect and benefit from both north and south light.

The mass of the building steps up and away from the adjacent buildings on Weston Street to preserve the neighbours' rights to light. In keeping with the diverse architecture of the neighbourhood, the block is also given variation by way of the fenestration: the interconnected volumes of the apartments inside are expressed externally by way of large L or T-shaped window openings that permit glimpses of the split-level spaces within. The windows are set into deep reveals, and further surface relief is given by terraces set into the stepped roofline and by the large pre-cast balconies which cantilever out from the elevation.

The envelope of the building is a skin of hand-finished Wienerberger bricks in a light, creamy-grey tone which reflects the colour and texture of the structural concrete shell behind. These bricks, with the anodised aluminium windows, reference the warehouse aesthetic of many of the adjacent buildings. The window spandrel panels have a vertical bar detail which reflects the design of the balcony balustrading – which is also of anodised aluminium.

Inside, the apartments are all unique, whilst demonstrating the same approach: they are split across several floors and centred around an open-plan, double-height space which contains the internal circulation and forms the main heart of the home. Each multi-level apartment is flooded with light from either a large full-height window or, in the case of the apartments in the centre of the two blocks, by rooflights. The social spaces – living, kitchen, dining and study areas – are placed in this fluid central volume, separated by stairs and not doors, with more cellular bedrooms located above, below or adjacent.

The apartments interlock vertically and horizontally to allow for both two and three-bedroom layouts. The main entrance to each is on upper floor (for those with two bedrooms), or middle floor (for three-bedroom apartments) and leads first into the large kitchen and dining space. Living areas are located on the south side of the building in the lower part of the same open-plan space, with access to a large roof terrace or balcony. In the upper part of the social space, also overlooking the park to the south, there is a dedicated area for homeworking.

Bedrooms are located on the lower floor of each apartment, and the three-bedroom apartment has an extra upper floor to accommodate the master bedroom suite. With the apartments arranged over several half levels, all floors have secondary entrances to the communal stair for fire escape purposes; this also gives the potential for one of the lower floor bedrooms to be let out as a discrete unit with its own bathroom and 'front door'.

81–87 Weston Street is built of in situ concrete. Due to the shape and size of the large window apertures, a traditional column and slab structure was not viable, so the building has a structural concrete shell, cast using traditional timber shutters of rough-sawn Douglas fir, the plank marked surfaces giving a strong patina to the interior. The stair cores have a smooth matt concrete finish with expressed joints. In contrast, the apartment and office interiors incorporate self-finished materials to complement the concrete, and give a warm, handcrafted feel. The solid oak windows are combined with extensive joinery – workspace desks, bedroom storage, library shelving and timber linings to the internal stair – finished in either oak or walnut. The apartments are 'buy to live' not 'buy to rent', and home buyers have the opportunity to specify finishes to imprint their home.

The ground-floor office space consists of one single open-plan room which covers the entire southern part of the building footprint, with smaller meeting room and ancillary spaces tucked into the northern part of the plan, between the apartment cores. Like the apartments, the office is self-finished in board-marked concrete, the vast soffit and structural beams giving a sculptural effect. To the western end of the space, a large circular hole is punched into the soffit, bringing daylight in and offering views into the tree canopy of the adjacent park.

Roger Zogolovitch, Creative Director, Solidspace, said:

"This is the development of a typical gap site, formerly occupied by a single storey warehouse which historically provided storage for the leather traders in Bermondsey. We sculpted apartments and an office out of this volume to take advantage of views over the park to the south, and to mature plane trees to the west. It demonstrates how an imaginative engagement with the fixed constraints of the gap site has become the driver of this project. It plays on memory of this particular location in the city, while offering a new vision of living to its residents. It is a tribute to a long lasting creative collaboration with Simon and our wider team."

Simon Allford, Director, AHMM, said:

"Weston Street is a sectional tale of a spatial idea finding a site, a form and a facade. Cast in concrete and faced in clay it is brutally simple. Eight apartments interlock around two stairs and an office below, to create a 21st century mansion block. One where each apartment is a 'house' differentiated by its place within the spatial puzzle and the city.



It is also a tale of ‘slow architecture’. Of ideas arriving in searching conversations over many years of ‘breakfasting with Roger Zog’. But slow architecture pays with the production of a crafted urban palazzo, part Milanese but rooted in Bermondsey.”

Following completion in spring 2018, Weston Street has received an RIBA London Award, RIBA National Award, a Commendation in the AIA UK Excellence in Design Awards and a Housing Design Award.

‘Collected Volumes’ published June 2018 by FifthMan tells the story of 81–87 Weston Street, in a collection of essays by Simon Allford and Roger Zogolovitch, Hank Dittmar, Owen Hopkins and Alan Powers.

FACTS AND CREDITS

Location	81–87 Weston Street, Southwark, London SE1 3RS
Gross internal area	Office: 470 m ² (1446 m ³)
Residential	8 apartments: 1,400 m ²
3-bed apartment	150 m ² (375 m ³)
2-bed apartment	118 m ² (300 m ³)
Value	Undisclosed
Environmental rating	BREEAM Excellent
Schedule: Planning	June 2014
Construction	July 2015–Dec 2017
Client	SolidSPACE
Architect	AHMM
Main contractor	Bryen & Langley
Structural engineers	Form Structural Design
MEP engineer	Desco
Environmental consultant	Hilson Moran
Planning consultant	AZ Urban Studio
Cost consultant	Orbell Associates
Landscape architect	Coe Design Landscape Architecture
Party wall surveyor	Andrew Karoly
Building control	MLM Building Control
Fire consultant	Optimise Europe
Acoustic consultant	Sandy Brown Associates
Concrete frame	Oliver Connell & Son
Photographs	© Timothy Soar, © Rory Gardiner, © Rob Parish

SolidSPACE is an award-winning London-based independent developer delivering crafted projects on brownfield plots. SolidSPACE has an ambition to create new house types that have generous volumes, providing alternatives in a market dominated by identikit products by typical house-builders. SolidSPACE homes are designed around a split-section form which offsets floors by half a storey, creating generous, light-filled interconnected volumes to suit modern-day lifestyles, allowing daily activities to take place with differing levels of openness and privacy.

Quality and integrity are the company’s core values. Treating development as an art form rather than a sector in which to meet targets, SolidSPACE caters to discerning buyers, providing them with well-designed products that are not currently available. Central to SolidSPACE’s philosophy is the belief that tough strategic problems of the city can be mitigated with small-scale interventions in complex infill sites, which benefit not only the occupiers, but also the local community.



Collaboration with award-winning architects is at the heart of every development. Built works to date include: No. 1 Centaur Street, four apartments in a 4-storey block in Lambeth with architects dRMM; Zog House, a single family house and self-contained apartment on a tight suburban plot in Queens Park with Groves Natcheva; Essex Mews, three detached modern houses with MW Architects; Stapleton Hall Road, a pair of townhouses in north London with Stephen Taylor Architects; Shepherdess Walk, a development of townhouses and an apartment block in Shoreditch with Jaccaud Zein Architects; and The Houseboat, Poole, designed by Mole Architects, which was awarded the prestigious Stephen Lawrence Prize in 2017.

Creative Director Roger Zogolovitch is the author of 'Shouldn't we all be developers?', which was published in June 2015 to critical acclaim. It articulates his vision for recognition of the independent and creative developer playing their part to generate supply of new homes in the UK and beyond, to meet population demand.

www.solidspace.co.uk

AHMM

Established in 1989 with offices in London, Bristol and Oklahoma City, Allford Hall Monaghan Morris makes buildings that are satisfying and enjoyable to use, beautiful to look at and easy to understand. The practice as buildings that work over time and have lasting qualities intrinsic to their architecture.

Winner of the RIBA Stirling Prize and recipient of many other awards for architecture and design, the practice has received public and media acclaim for its work across sectors. AHMM is known for its reinvention of buildings and places including the Angel and Tea Buildings, Television Centre, the Barbican, and New Scotland Yard, as well as key new commercial, residential and education buildings in London, around the UK and internationally.

www.ahmm.co.uk



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