Case Study: Slim Studio's

162 Clerkenwell Road, EC1
Central London

Conversion of a 3 storey single family dwelling located above a cafe to 3 studio flats. The building was also extended to the rear at first and third floors.

RIBA
Chartered Practice

MATA
ARCHITECTS

Key Data:

Begun (design work): April 2018
Begun (construction): February 2019
Completed: December 2019
Floor Area: 142m^2 / 1,528 sq.ft (increase of 14m^2 over existing)
Construction Cost: £494k

Overview

MATA were appointed in April 2018, following our client's successful purchase of 160-162 Clerkenwell Road at auction. Our brief was to maximise the rental value of the property.

At the time of purchase the property was configured as a single family dwelling over 1st, 2nd and 3rd floors (no. 162 Clerkenwell Rd) which was vacant and in a state of disrepair. This was situated above a cafe at Ground floor with ancillary space at lower ground floor (no.160 Clerkenwell Rd). The cafe was in operation and the only source of income from the building.

We obtained planning to:

- Extend the building at first floor (rear)
- Enlarge a small dormer in the third floor roof
- Convert the single dwelling into 3 studio flats

Key Challenges:

- The property, un-modernised in over 40 years, was constructed with staggered floors so that every floor was split over 2 levels, each separated by 3-4 stairs and approximately 60cm height difference. This, combined with the very small footprint at upper floors (approximately 35sq.m before extending) made it very difficult to configure the building as independent flats.

- Whilst we initially explored solutions that involved gutting the building internally, replacing the existing floors with new and level floors throughout, the associated increase in estimated construction cost was prohibitive in relation to the gain.

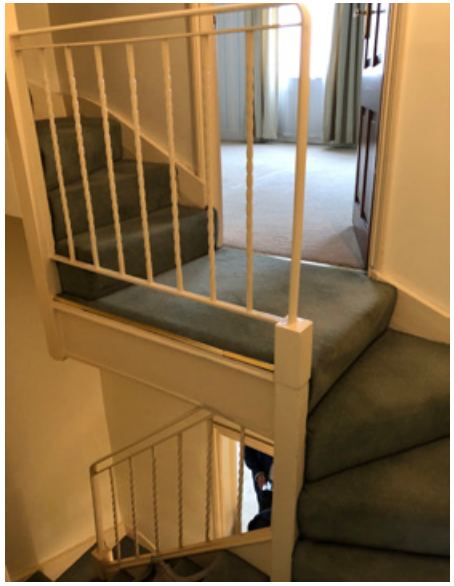
- Instead, we found a way to work with the split level character of each floor. The steps separating the two sides of the floor became a natural divide between living/ sleeping spaces on one side and kitchen/ bathroom on the other.

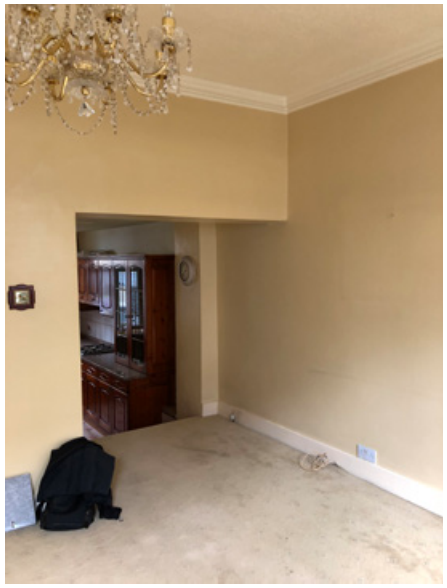
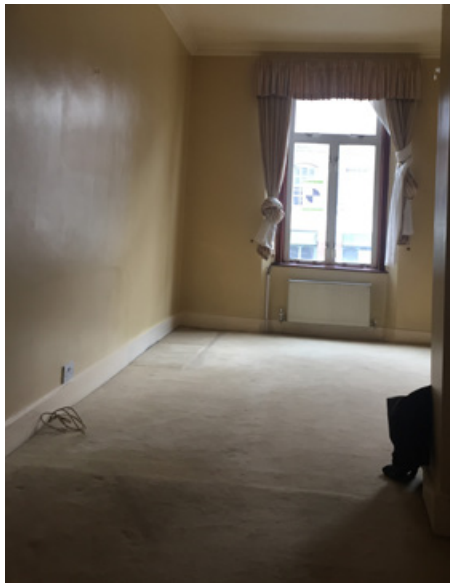
- Introduction of new services for 3 flats (bathrooms, kitchens, heating etc)

- Modifications to ground floor commercial unit as a result of rear extension at ground floor (new roof over kitchen, re routing kitchen extraction etc). These works were implemented with the cafe in operation with only minor closures.

Concept Design:

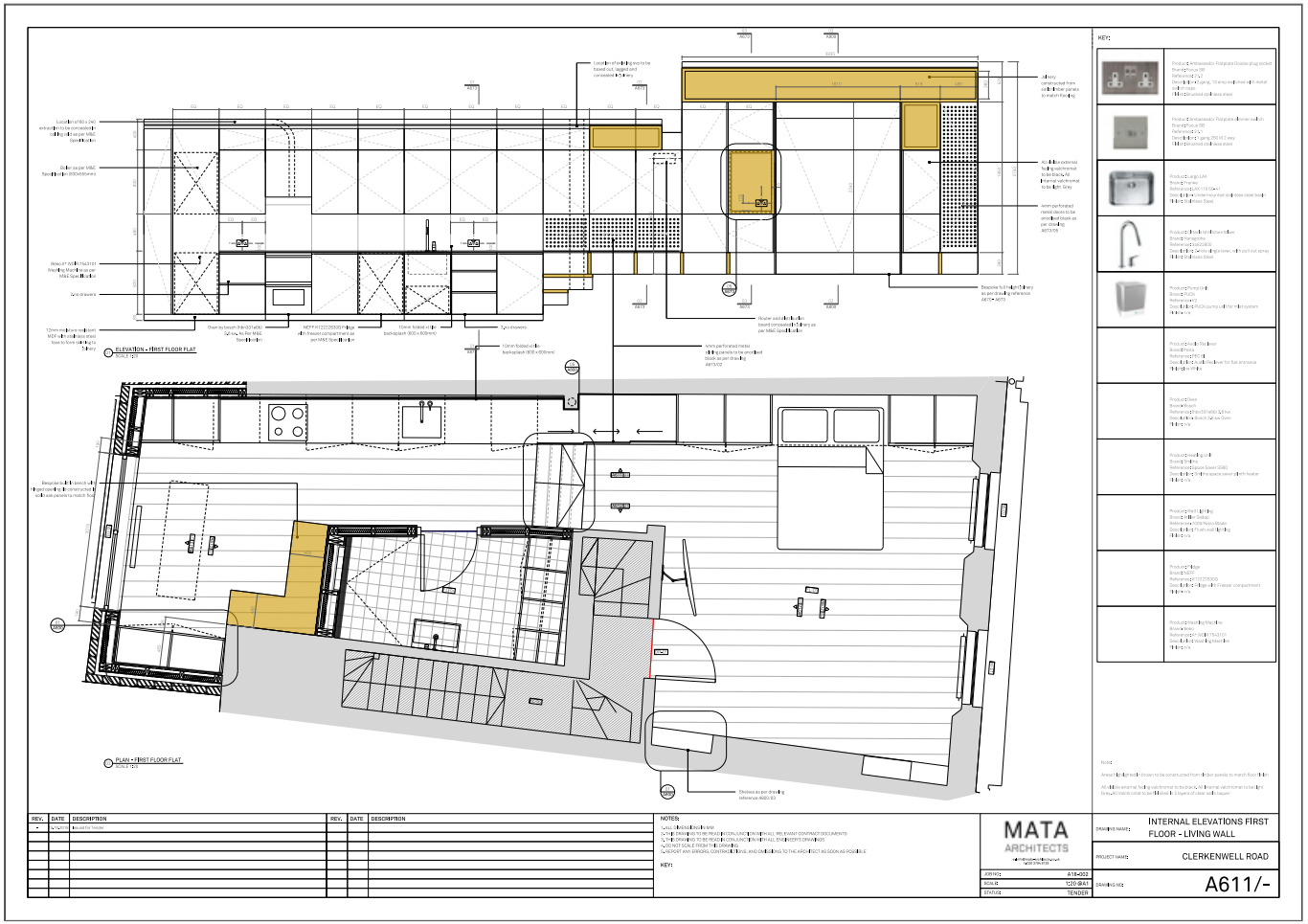
- Then we developed the project's central concept of a 'living wall'; a continuous wall of joinery that runs along the back wall of each studio from the living/ sleeping level and down to the kitchen. This wall of joinery contains all of the elements of every day life; a fold up bed, plenty of storage, kitchen etc so that clutter is easily contained and these small studio flats (average 37sq.m) don't feel so small.

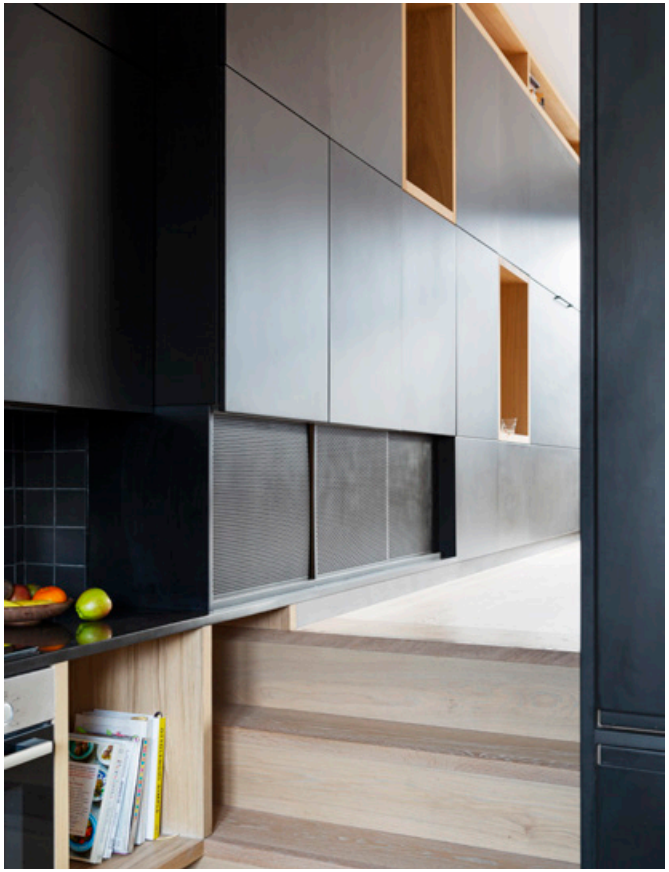


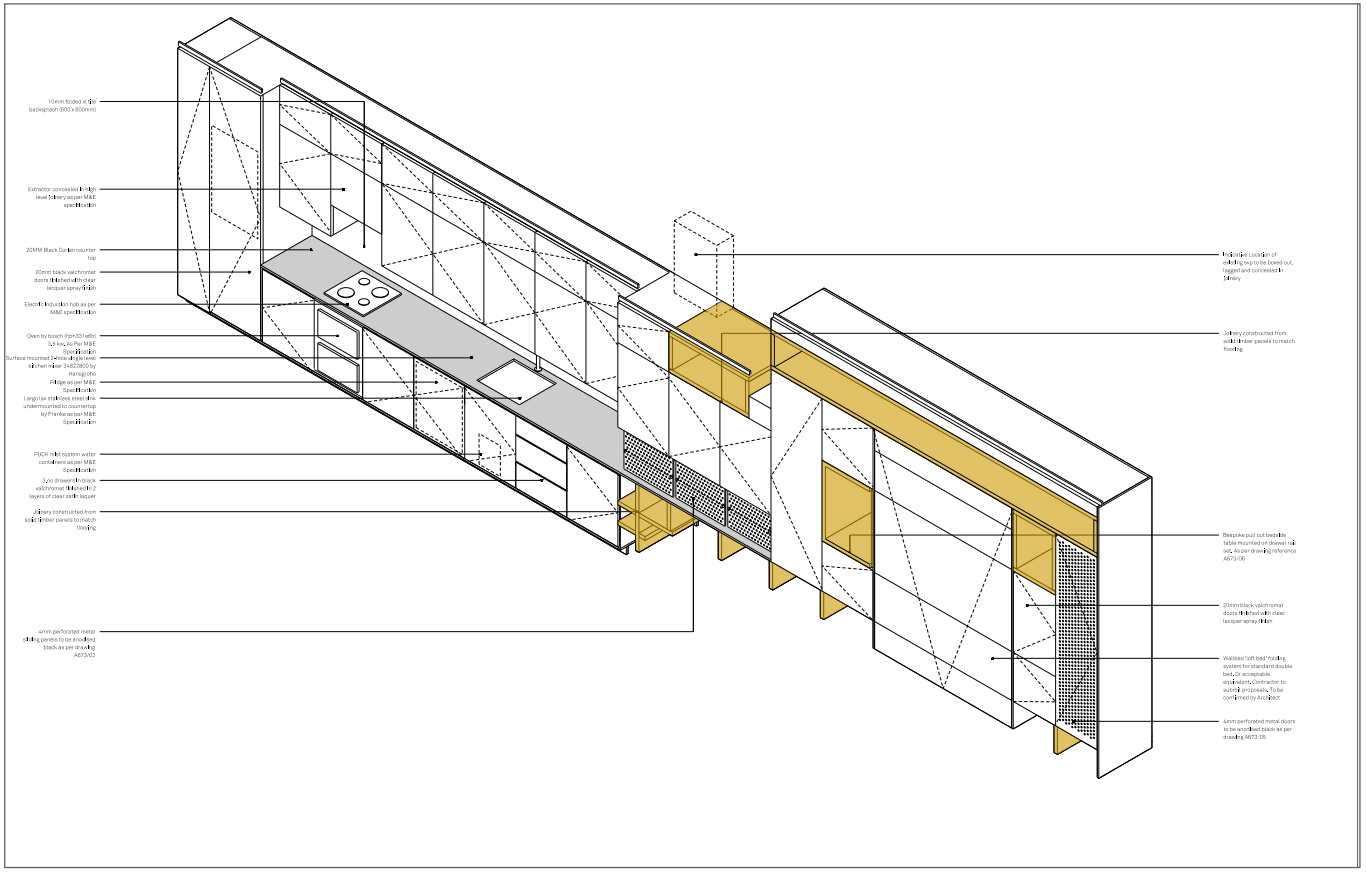



Living Wall Concept:

- Our concept for the scheme utilises the existing staggered floor plates to create characterful, split-level accommodation with front and rear aspects.
- A continuous 'living wall' of bespoke joinery stretches from the front to the rear of each floor housing all essential components for living. Kitchen fixtures and cupboards transition to general storage, a dressing area, a fold up bed and further storage in the living space.


ELEVATION - FIRST FLOOR FLAT.
PLAN - FIRST FLOOR FLAT.
KEY:
REV.
DATE
DESCRIPTION
NOTES:
MATA ARCHITECTS
INTERNAL ELEVATIONS FIRST FLOOR - LIVING WALL
CLERKENWELL ROAD
A611/-
18-002
1:20 @A1
TENDER





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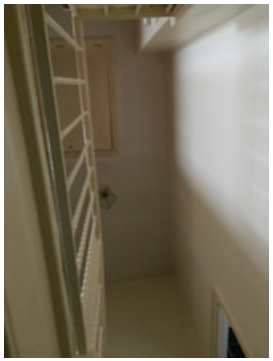
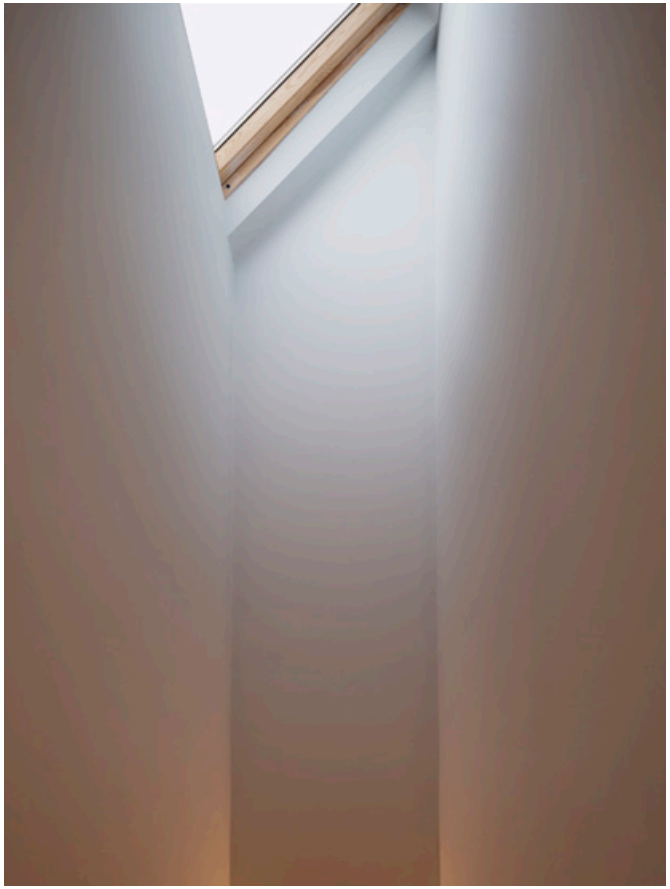
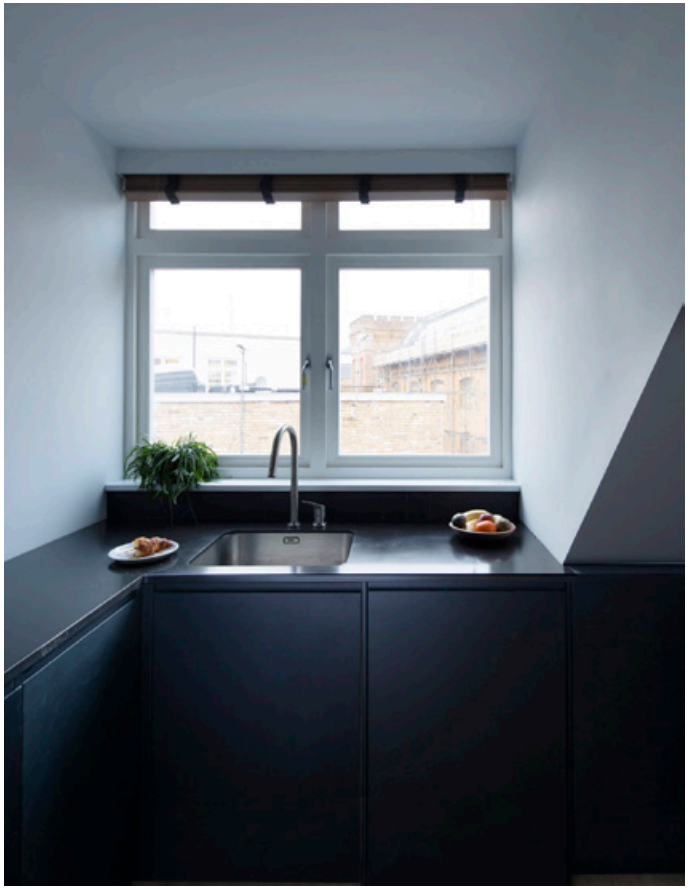
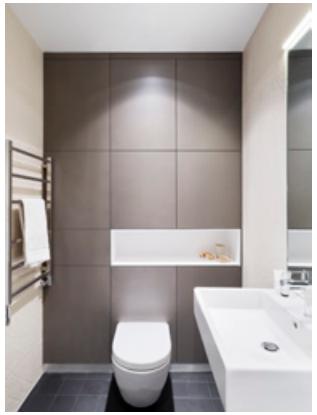


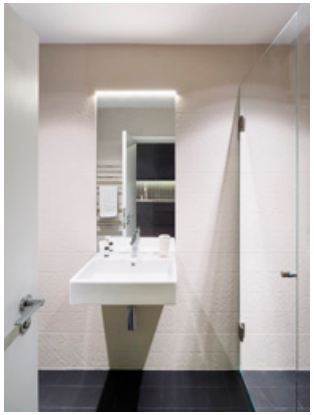
Automatic Opening Vent (AOV) added to head of stair as part of fire strategy increases natural daylight to common parts.

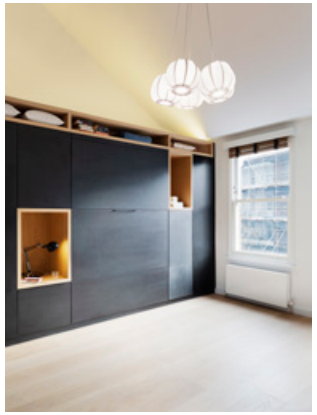
Enlarged dormer at 3rd floor adapted to house new kitchen.

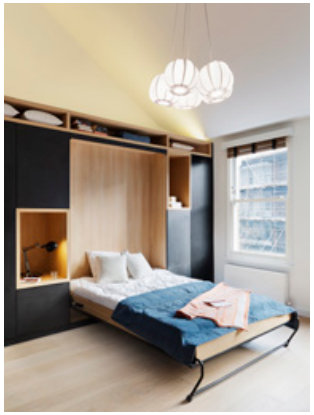












Tired PVC windows replaced with timber sash windows. Elevations stripped of paint and repointed, window cills and lintels repaired.

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