



- is it possible to
fill the space
with natural light
but screen it off
from
the outside world?

PROJECT: A MEWS HOUSE IN REGENT'S PARK
LOCATION: LONDON
ARCHITECTURE: BELSIZE ARCHITECTS
PHOTOGRAPHY: COURTESY OF THE ARCHITECTS



This is a small, contemporary mews house in Regent's Park, nested amidst listed buildings by John Nash. For Belsize Architects, it was an exercise to see how a building could be designed on a very confined site within such a sensitive and historic part of town, yet have ample light, feel much larger than it in fact is — and still create the sense of a private residence. An extra challenge — successfully accomplished — was persuading the authorities that a modern contextual design could have its place even within Regent's Park.

The brief sounded not just original but also paradoxical. Large windows were formed in the brick walls and roof lights were added everywhere to bring in as much light as possible. Yet most of the windows were designed to have shutters over them, made of vertical slats with gaps in between, so that they could be closed permanently. In this way, light pervades the house, scattered into separate, even rays, but the interior still does not feel too open to the mews and allows life inside to go on without concern for the world outside.

Equipped throughout with intelligent home technology (all of which is concealed within walls and fittings), the house consists on the ground floor of garage, guest bedroom, bathroom, entry hall and cloak room. Kitchen, dining and living space occupy the first floor, while master bedroom, bath and steam room are found on a gallery above. By using galleries and glass walls over the three levels, the architects intended to arrange the spaces so that they would flow together in an interconnected fashion. The visual connection between living and sleeping zones enables the maximum use of the space; as a result, the small area feels spacious and inviting. The sense of unity is further enhanced by the dominant dark grey colour chosen for the main materials (volcanic stone, textured leather, lacquered timber): the internal treatment creates an atmospheric sense of place and an impression that the house is carved out of a monolithic material.







