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04.07.13

Eric Parry's Eagle Place

A dandy on Piccadilly

PLUS John Robertson's 199 Bishopsgate retrofit

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A Mayfair dandy

Like a jazzed-up suit, Eric Parry's Eagle Place redevelopment cuts a showy dash in London's fashionable West End, writes *Jay Merrick*

In a period when facadism has given a great deal of British architecture bogus auras of quality and vivacity, it is daring for an architect to base the meaning of an important building in one of London's most cosmopolitan streets on what are, essentially, uncompromisingly vivacious surface effects.

There is a good deal more than that to the architecture of Eric Parry's redevelopment of five buildings on the Crown Estates site at the eastern end of London's Piccadilly. Yet the decorated facade of the centrepiece building so dominates the ensemble that it has effectively created a new and highly extraverted commercial building type in London.

In pragmatic terms, the £45 million Eagle Place development, on the south side of Piccadilly in territory defined architecturally by Nash and Blomfield, has delivered a skilful 11,500m² arrangement of ground floor retail frontages, optimised office floorplates, luxurious apartments, and an overall BREEAM Excellent rating.

This has involved the demolition

and raising of the building at the corner of Piccadilly and Eagle Place; the demolition and redevelopment of 212-214 Piccadilly, 3-4 Eagle Place, and 18-21 Jermyn Street behind a retained facade; and the retention and internal remodelling of 27 Regent Street, which now contains luxury apartments designed by the practice. The first four elements are in the St James's Conservation Area, the latter in the Regent Street Conservation Area. >>

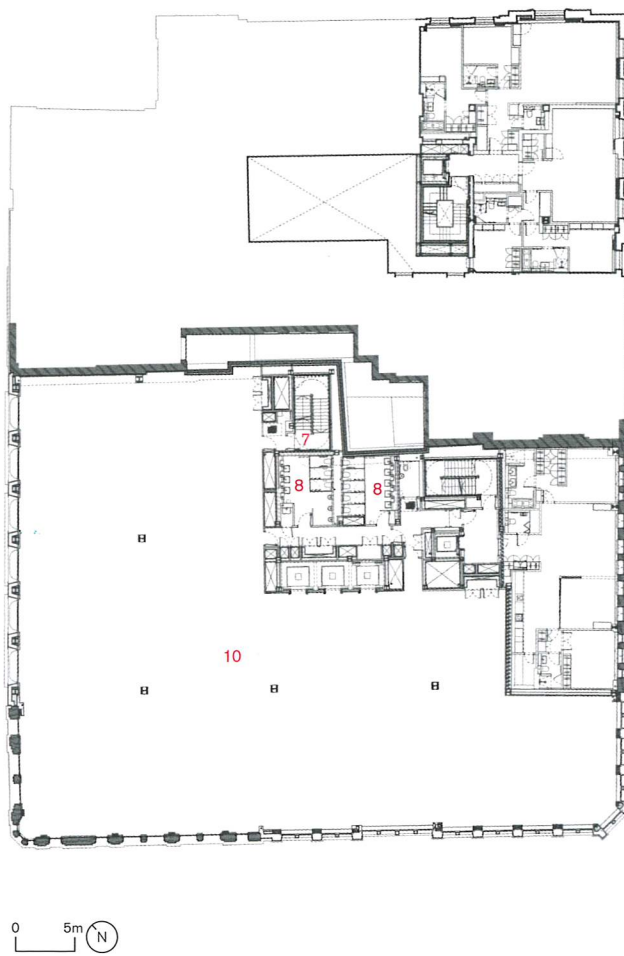
Location plan

1. One Eagle Place, west building
2. 210-211 Piccadilly, rebuilt facades
3. 20 Jermyn Street, retained facade
4. 15 Jermyn Street, listed building

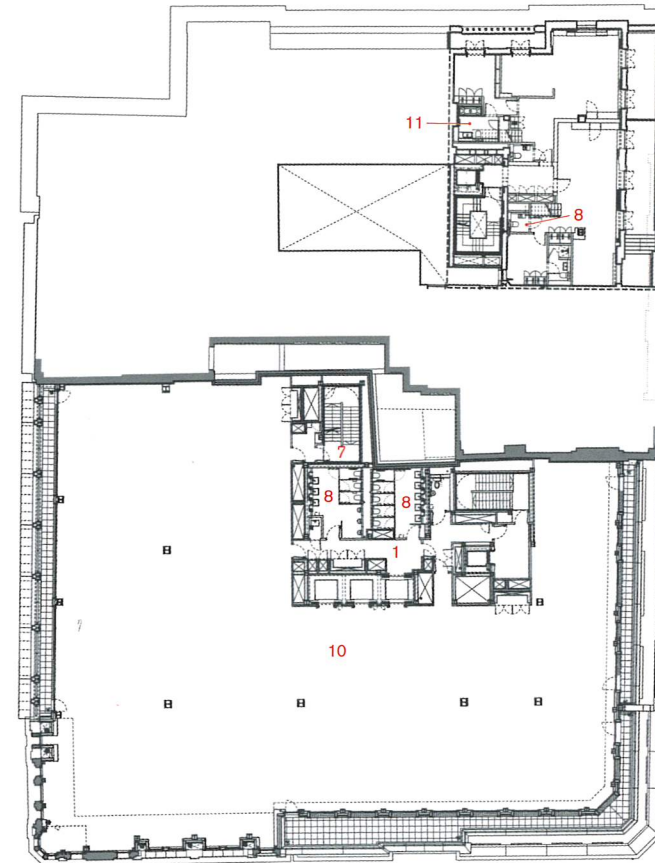




Typical floor plan



Sixth floor plan



This degree of functional worth has become a given in Parry's commercial work over the past decade. It's more challenging to judge Eagle Place in terms of his overarching interests in the city as an amalgam of history, architectural artefact and artifice, and art in general. Parry brings these conditions together with an outré combination of precision and ambiguity.

The defining centrepiece of the

Parry, who has introduced a Crayola sheen to Piccadilly, is hard to define

1. Office reception
2. Residential lobby/reception
3. Resident bike store
4. Bin store
5. Retail unit
6. Service corridor
7. Escape stair
8. Toilets
9. Lightwell
10. Offices
11. Bathroom

scheme is the main Piccadilly facade, equivalent to a Savile Row suit coat cut and sewn by Anderson & Sheppard, and then jazzed up by Oswald Boateng. The well-known British architect who suggested to me that Parry's ribbed and faïencé extension of Bath's Holburne Museum was 'simply vulgar' will regard the elevation of the 212-214 Piccadilly segment as paroxysmal proof of his opinion.

The Piccadilly facade is ordered like a commercial palazzo: a plinth of ground floor retail; a band of Nash-like mezzanine windows; a Blomfield-inspired layer of double-height windows with inserted, one storey-high oriels; deeply-punched windows suggesting a *piano nobile* under the

cornice; and an attic level recessed behind a loggia. The horizontal ordering is based on a 3.75m grid that produces six bays.

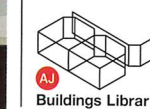
This is the most startling major facade in London since the PoMo-Gothic blancmange off Fenchurch Street known as both Minster, and Munster, Court; and we might also compare its sheer visual voltage to James Stirling's No.1 Poultry.

For an architect so fascinated by the poetic depths of Adolphe Appia's 19th-century stage set designs, the Piccadilly facade comes as a surprise. The tidy surrealities of Parry's faïencé elevations at the Holburne, and in New Bond Street, have been upstaged by a stage-flat. It's the apotheosis of Parry's



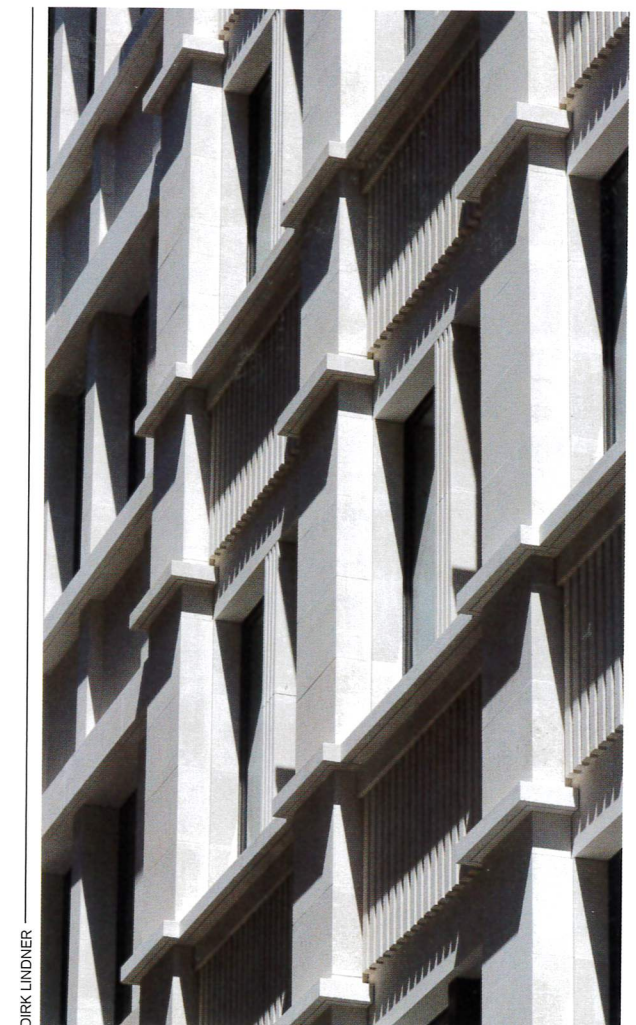
Above Eagle Place office facade
Left View of entrance lobby

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DIRK LINDNER



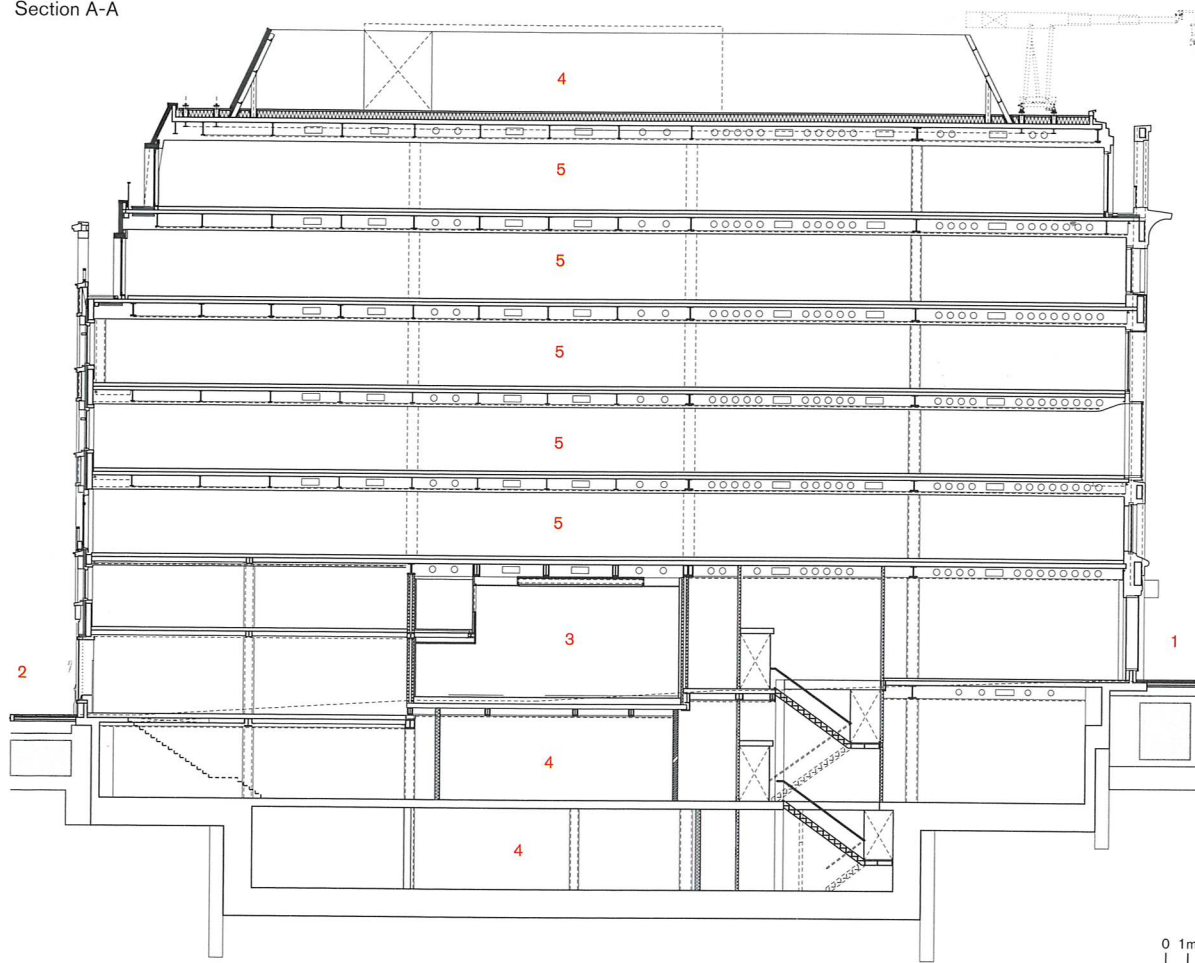
familiar combinations of refined decorousness, artistic decor and, most significantly, experimental instincts that have already produced inversions of classical and Corbusian orders in the elevations of his Bath and Finsbury Square buildings.

There is something temporally tense about the Holburne's deliberately hyper-distinct juxtaposition of 18th- and 21st-century architecture. In Piccadilly, the tension is greater, despite a facade that very logically imposes a grander 19th-century classical-urban scale on what had been a huddled set of four compressed, unremarkable frontages with dropped cornices that broke the longer streetscape perspectives. >>



OPPOSITE: DAVID BUTLER

Section A-A



- 1. Piccadilly
- 2. Jermyn Street
- 3. Reception
- 4. Plant
- 5. Office



DIRK LINDNER

Parry's raised cornice reinstates the perspective, jutting out like a thick cicatrice from a flesh of the mug-white faience, producing a building as singular as Joseph Emberton's 1936 Grade I-listed Simpsons building (now Waterstones) a bit further west along Piccadilly.

Emberton was a Modernist. Parry, who has introduced a Crayola sheen to Piccadilly, is harder to define, though we can be certain of his refined appreciation for architectural craft and his daring selection of collaborating artists. The chunky, asymmetrical modillion-cum-dentils of the Piccadilly cornice feature riotously blotched decal glazes by Richard Deacon; and a 6.5-tonne granite face

by Stephen Cox gazes gnominically out across St James's from the fourth floor of the new corner facade of Jermyn Street and Eagle Place. The sculpture has the same Vedantic otherness as his *Lingam of a Thousand Lingams* at the Cass Sculpture Foundation.

Parry himself has contributed artwork – the rather bloody speckling of the double-height window casings. These are extremely adventurous admixtures of public art and they deserve better than the bland bread-and-circuses justification by James Cooksey of the Crown Estate, who talks of 'creating an exciting retail and business destination based around a vibrant local community. Public art, like this piece by Richard Deacon, >>

Opposite View of office reception space

Left Typical master bathroom in Jermyn Street apartment

Following spread Eagle Place separates Parry's redevelopment from Lutyens' Midland Bank Building (right)

can inspire community connections.'

But, to return to tensor matters, what about temporal connections? Deacon's and Parry's decorative glazing decals could be seen as no more lavishly convivial than the ornate stone urns on the facade of Norman Shaw's last work, the 1908 Piccadilly Hotel (now Le Meridien); or the carved Portland stone pendants of fruits, flowers and festoons on the rather squashed attic storey of Lutyens' 1925 Midland Bank building at 196 Piccadilly, now inhabited by Hauser & Wirth.

But the classical and the colourist qualities of Parry's Piccadilly facade are not incidental. The beautifully crafted oriel window bays, the gleaming softness of Shaw's of Darwin's faience, the fineness of the lime mortar joints and the inwardly radiused double-height window casings create the sense of a perfectly cast foreground object in a street of grand, but not overwhelming architectural backgrounds. The formal civility of Parry's building remains beneath the decals, an architectural make-up baked on at 1,200°C.

This is not the case with the rebuilt building that wraps around the corner of Piccadilly and Eagle Place, whose raised brick structure is now linked to the steel frame of the *pièce de résistance*. The new facade in Jermyn Street and the asymmetrically modelled facade facing Eagle Place show Parry's skill as an architectural collagist, and they add something very fresh and historically alert to what was an unremarkable alley and to the oddly muted eastern end of Jermyn Street. The Eagle Place elevation is particularly engrossing; if only more secondary spaces in our cities were graced with this degree of design originality.

Parry, who has introduced a Crayola sheen to Piccadilly, is hard to define

Where does Eric Parry go from here? One must hope that the commercial success of the Eagle Place ensemble does not trigger a demand for copycat buildings from him – or, indeed, from lesser architects, which would be a truly hideous prospect. The tensions of Parry's arrangements of craft, detail and subversions of type that give his work its teasing fusions of virtuosity and strangeness surely preclude obvious repetitions.

What would Lutyens have made of Parry's Piccadilly palazzo? Perhaps Stephen Cox's meditative Vedic sculpture might know the answer: it overlooks a point midway between Lutyens' bank building and the mews studio in Apple Tree Yard, between Jermyn Street and St James's Square, where he designed his New Delhi projects. There is nothing in the Vedanta about Mannerism, but it must charge the Floris-scented air here, playfully and provocatively. ■

Jay Merrick is architecture critic at *The Independent*

Project data

START ON SITE August 2010
COMPLETION June 2013
GROSS EXTERNAL AREA 12,960m²
FORM OF CONTRACT Construction management
TOTAL CONTRACT COST £45 million
COST PER m² £3,500
CLIENT The Crown Estate in partnership with Health Care of Ontario Pension Plan
ARCHITECT Eric Parry Architects
MAIN CONTRACTOR Lend Lease
STRUCTURAL ENGINEER Waterman
PROJECT MANAGER Gardiner & Theobald
M&E CONSULTANT Mecserve
CDM CO-ORDINATOR PFB Construction Management
PLANNING CONSULTANT CBRE
COST CONSULTANT Gardiner & Theobald
ACOUSTIC CONSULTANT Alan Saunders
LIGHTING CONSULTANT DPA Lighting
PUBLIC REALM CONSULTANT Atkins
DEVELOPMENT MANAGER Stanhope
CAD SOFTWARE USED MicroStation
ESTIMATED AVERAGE ANNUAL CO₂ EMISSIONS 25.8kgCO₂/m²
FAIENCE Szerelmey and Shaw's of Darwin

DIRK LINDNER



Eagle Place, Piccadilly, London W1

Eric Parry Architects

Window

The relative depth of the elevation – 900mm – allowed the exploitation of the sculptural quality of faience as a cast material. The units incorporate complex stooling, reveals and running moulds that repeat over the six sections of the facade. The faience has a wall depth of 40mm and is coursed and sized to accommodate the tolerances of a fired material.

In order to bed the units in a lime mortar to create a continuous sealed surface, as opposed to an open joined rain screen, the structural substrate has to be stiff and a movement structure was designed to achieve this. A closely analysed support system to allow for the movement of the primary structure, the thermal expansion of the faience and the plasticity of lime mortar lies between the two systems.

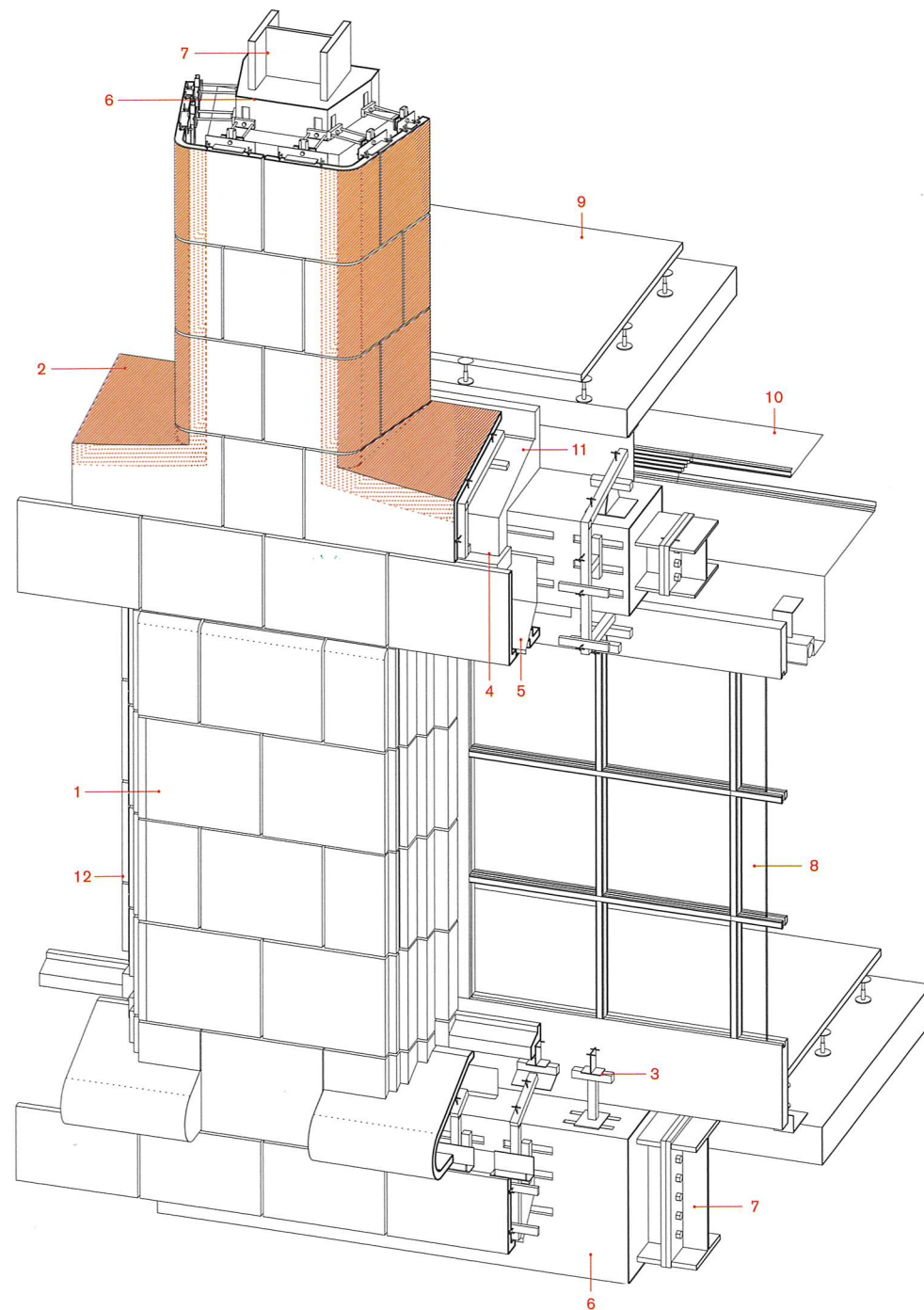
The faience units all have a grey-white glaze and were fired at approximately 1,200°C to achieve frost resistance. The glazed polychromy was achieved subsequently by a transfer technique, fused through a second lower-temperature firing at approximately 850°C. The 39 cornice units, generally made up of two or three subsections, weighed up to 200kg. Extensive dry lays were required to check control of tolerances, colour and glaze. The intention was that this north-facing elevation would reflect the vivid life of Piccadilly, both in spirit and materiality.

Eric Parry, *principle*,
Eric Parry Architects

Opposite

Piccadilly facade, with Richard Deacon cornice above double-height windows

and jambs ornamented by Eric Parry Architects



OPPOSITE: DIRK LINDNER

1. 40mm faience tiles, once fired hand-applied glaze
2. 40mm faience tiles, twice fired and transfer glazed
3. Halfen stainless steel subframe

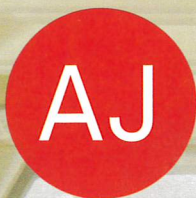
4. Continuous horizontal compartment cavity barrier
5. Continuous horizontal cavity tray at storey level

6. Precast concrete encasement with cast-in stainless steel Halfen channels
7. Steel moment frame with aluminium splice collars

8. Composite DGU
9. Raised access floor on composite structural floor slab
10. Suspended ceiling with integrated blindbox and

supply grille
11. Rigid insulation to achieve 0.18 W/m²K U-value
12. Lime mortar pointed joints with weep holes at soffit





12.12.14

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INTEGRATED ARTWORK

Artist *Richard Deacon* writes about his collaborations with architect Eric Parry, including a design for the Millennium Bridge and the colourful ceramic facade on London's Piccadilly



Architects and artists are different but can have similar concerns about craftsmanship, materials and visual weight; and both architecture and art exist in the real world. There is no reason why we should get along, although it's nice when we do – successful collaborations between the two disciplines are rather wonderful, but too often artists are invited along as decorators. I happen to think that people started making highly sophisticated sculpture long before they began making sophisticated buildings, and that the terms of the relationship between building and sculpture are changeable. If a building is an object, the contained or juxtaposed sculpture is its subject. What would it be like if it were the other way round? – the Statue of Liberty is perhaps a case in point. What is more interesting in the relationship, especially if the artwork is incorporated into the fabric of the building itself, is the sense that the combination has to work as a whole; the architectural elements and the artwork have to come together so that one could not exist without the other.

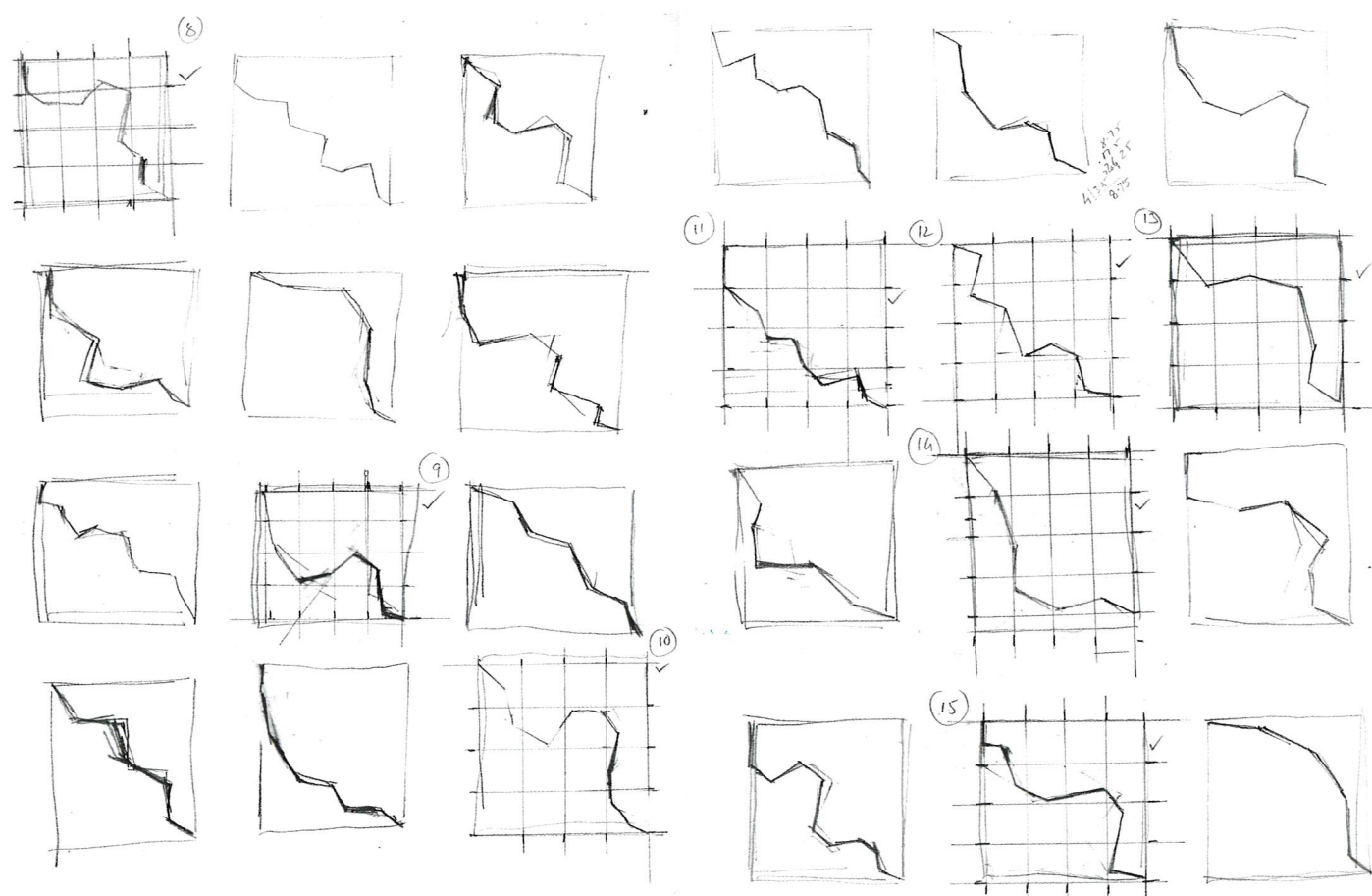
My collaboration with Eric Parry started in 1996, when we were put together as a team for the Millennium Bridge commission. Neither of us can remember who

Opposite Richard Deacon among the ceramic blocks used for the facade at One Eagle Place
Above The blocks in place at One Eagle Place, and in a dry lay prior to installation

DISCUSSION
3-2=1: *Bridge, Bangle & Cornice*, a conversation between Richard Deacon and Eric Parry, chaired by Alex de Rijke, dean of the School of Architecture, Royal College of Art, 16 December 2014, Lecture Theatre 1, Royal College of Art, Kensington Gore, London SW7

paired us up (it was a requirement that architects teamed up with artists in preparing their submissions). However it happened, it was an inspired choice and, as demonstrated by the bridge model at our recent exhibition, *Bridge, Bangle & Cornice*, we had a very good idea! In fact Eric and I had both been at the Royal College of Art in the mid-'70s – he in Environmental Design and myself in Environmental Media, on the seventh floor of the Darwin Building, to the right and left of the elevator banks, so it is highly likely that at some time or other we shared the same lift. There is considerable symbiosis between Eric's interests and my own – including structure, materials and methods, but also history and context. In our proposal for the Millennium Bridge it was this shared interest in structure that drove the project forward.

Despite not winning that commission, there was a sense of unfinished business, that there could be a project we could do together. In 2000 Eric invited me to contribute to the office building he was designing at 30 Finsbury Square. What fired my imagination was his radical persistence in making a modern building in stone. He also paid me the compliment of having engineered a ▶



suitable location for the artwork on the facade. Although the building was built, the sculptural intervention did not happen. Nevertheless, that sense of there being a possibility of working together had been reinforced.

A joint project was finally realised at One Eagle Place, the office and retail building on London's Piccadilly (AJ 04.07.13). The main attraction for me was the use of faience for one of the facades, with the implication that it would be practical to consider ceramic in building – and not just surfacing – the 39 blocks forming the cornice. I began a steep learning curve in the production and installation of architectural ceramics, and the strengths of being associated with a multidisciplinary practice became apparent. The work of the artist follows different dynamics than that of the architect. Artists have the luxury of time to fiddle around with what interests them

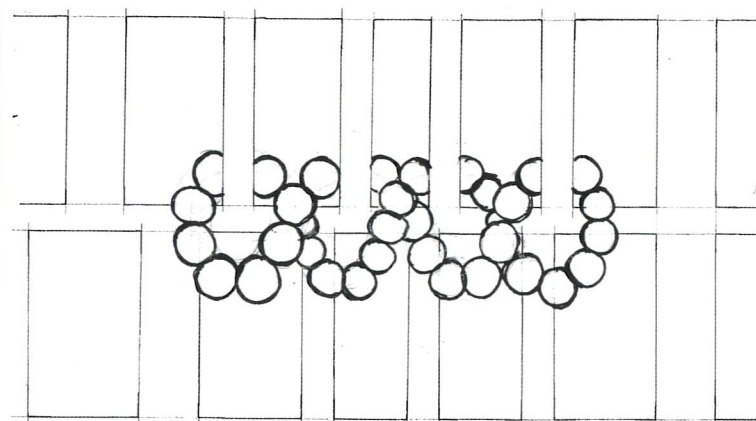
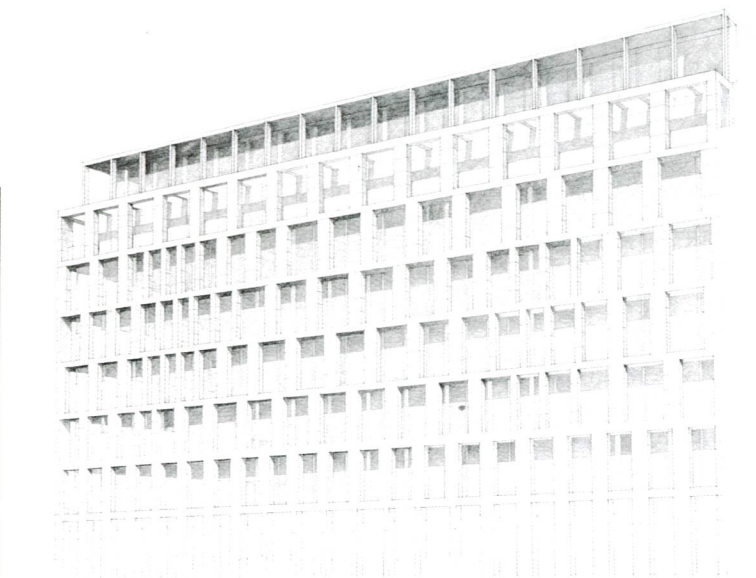
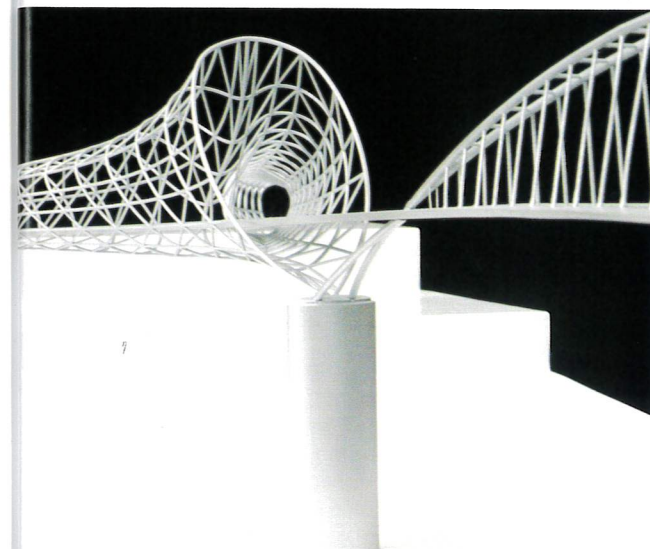
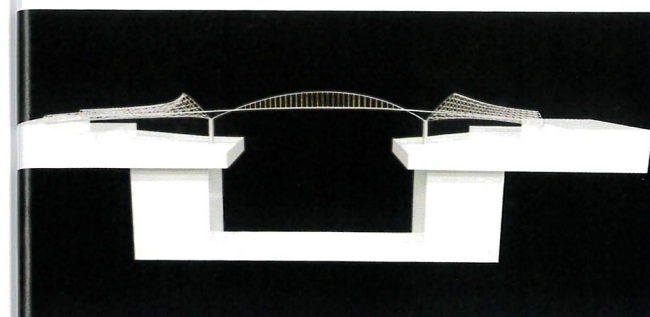
Artists have the luxury of time to fiddle around with what interests them

Above One Eagle Place, cornice sectional sketch study by Richard Deacon
Opposite left, top and middle Model of Eric Parry and Richard Deacon's design for the Millennium Bridge
Opposite top right Sketch of 30 Finsbury Square, ceramic 'bangle' facade installation, drawing study by Richard Deacon
Opposite bottom right One Eagle Place viewed from Piccadilly

and don't have clients in the same way architects do. In fact, I almost never work to a brief. However, some of the challenges of working with an architect – being part of a team, ability to meet deadlines and willingness to take on board others' opinions – are challenges (and opportunities) artists also face.

The facade at One Eagle Place is on one of the busiest and most prominent thoroughfares in the country – looking across from Eros you see the building. It is really important that not just that particular facade but the whole development respects that context and adds to it. The architect paid attention to making sure the line of the cornice ran through the entire block, raising the level on the adjacent, retained, facade. This gave my contribution a key role in knitting that line together. There is also something a bit syncopated about the way in which the variety of profiles is seen as you go down Piccadilly from either direction. Approaching the building, colour and pattern on the fronts of the blocks become more visible, the complexity of their combinations across the angled surfaces is a muted reference to the cacophony of signs and colours at Piccadilly Circus itself – also reflected in the gloss faience of the facade.

I suspect that there are overlaps in the way both



architects and artists start to think about something. A critical difference is the absence of a brief for the artist. In the studio it's broadly true to say that I make most of my decisions during the process, working with the material and at 1:1. The thing I make is (mostly) off-site. An architectural and building process is very different. Many, many decisions are made, and multiple different elements and procedures are brought together at the site. There are trials to make sure things work, but ultimately it all comes to bear at one place. This level of complexity doesn't exist for me, and I have enormous respect for the architect's ability to retain and project clear ideas in the light of this.

In general, when I am working, my ideas become clearer as I go along, and I foster a level of fuzziness in order to be able to take the thing in a different direction. Working with an architect involves adapting these two approaches. The very positive side is that I get to meet and exchange ideas with people who have very different ranges of expertise from me. Hopefully that somehow feeds back into the fuzziness. You would have to ask an architect whether the reverse is true. ■
Richard Deacon and Eric Parry discuss their collaboration at a talk at the Royal College of Art on 16 December

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Shaws of Darwen

John Ramshaw visits the Lancashire-based architectural terracotta and faience manufacturer.

Shaws of Darwen, best known for its fireclay Belfast sinks, is perhaps less well known as a manufacturer of architectural terracotta and faience (glazed terracotta). One of its most technically challenging schemes is St James's Gateway, a mixed-use office, retail and residential development currently on site in Piccadilly, London, by Eric Parry Architects. Designed in collaboration with artist Richard Deacon and due to complete next year, the 9,000-square metre building features a coloured faience-clad elevation, including a 39-piece cornice sculpture incorporating 14 different prismatic forms. With its reliance on state-of-the-art digital design and fabrication techniques, architectural faience of this type might appear a world away from the production of fired clay sinks. In fact, the two manufacturing processes have much in common – most notably the use of handcrafting.

Most architectural terracotta or faience projects begin with full-scale (1:1) drawings of the individual cladding units and/or mouldings produced in AutoCAD, with Autodesk Inventor used to create detailed three-dimensional models. The latter are not only used to check the relative positions and relationships of the cladding units across the facade, but also for design development and presentation purposes.

Above/opposite
Elevation and part axonometric drawing showing positions of faience cladding panels at St James' Gateway in London by Eric Parry Architects in collaboration with Richard Deacon.

To accommodate clay shrinkage the units are sized five per cent larger than required, and are manufactured to a tolerance of just one per cent (plus or minus). Structural support systems for the units are designed by external consultants or subcontractors (Szerelmey is the appointed subcontractor for St James's Gateway).

Dxf CAD files from the drawing

office are converted to CNC format files in the machine room, before being imported to a digital model-maker, which mills dimensionally precise positives from solid polystyrene blocks. Each positive is placed over its corresponding 1:1 scale, hard copy drawing to check its size and shape. Models featuring internal cavities or recesses are formed from a series of

tapered planes (glued together after milling), ensuring ease of core removal post-casting. Depending on their size, polystyrene off-cuts are reused or recycled.

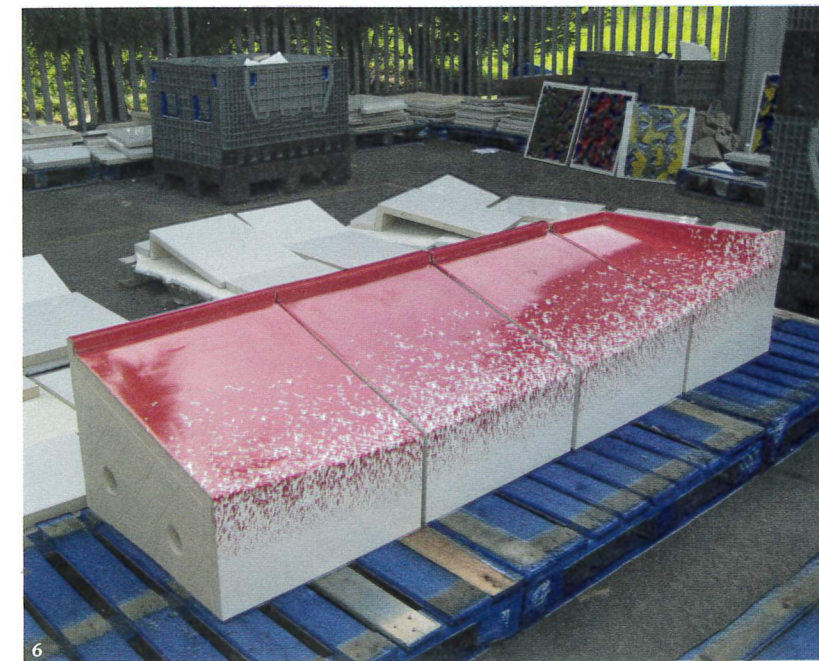
One of the benefits of this type of prototyping is the speed and ease with which lightweight models can be sent to architects, enabling them to evaluate their designs at full-size. The

completed polystyrene models are checked and signed-off before being delivered to the factory floor. In-house sculptors using traditional media and techniques produce sculptural and/or ornate forms commonly found on historic refurbishment projects.

The models are used to make multi-piece plaster moulds. Plaster is favoured over other materials for its

Opposite/below

- 1 A digital model maker mills dimensionally precise positives from solid polystyrene blocks.
- 2 Ornate forms are sculpted by hand.
- 3 Plaster chimneys increase pressure, ensuring the clay slip fills the entire mould.
- 4 Classical terracotta moulding.
- 5/6 Faience panels for the St James's Gateway project have a white glaze overlaid with screen printed transfers of art works by Richard Deacon.

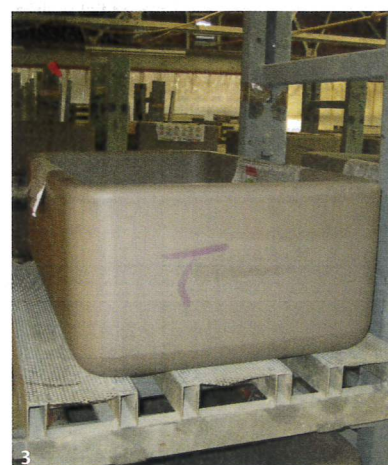


ability to extract moisture from the clay. The moulds have a limited life expectancy (around 25 casts for a sink) as their ability to absorb water diminishes each time they are used.

When it comes to casting, clay quality is paramount. Devon Ball clay is used exclusively at Shaws, with specific seams selected from approved quarries. Each delivery to the factory is batch tested for shrinkage, water absorption, strength and consistency. Prior to use, the clay is passed beneath a series of magnets to remove iron particles. Clay pellets, comprising both refined and fired clay (grog) for increased stability and controlled shrinkage, are mixed with water to form a liquid clay slip, which is then poured into the moulds. As the clay dries – a process that can take up to two days – it shrinks away from the plaster mould making extraction relatively easy. The cast unit, regardless of whether it is a sink or a column capital, is hand-finished using leathers and knives. It is then placed in a humidity dryer for 36 hours at 400°C, before being delivered to the glaze shop.

Glazing consists of a coat of engobe (a thin glaze film designed to smooth the surface of the unit) followed by a coloured glaze to a total depth of 0.4mm. An almost limitless range of hues and surface effects can be achieved by adding metal oxides to the glazing solution. Accurate colour-match is possible for existing mouldings and tiles on refurbishment projects. Glazing recipes and samples are produced in an onsite laboratory, which includes an extensive library of terracotta and faience colours. The faience panels produced for the St James's Gateway project have a white glaze overlaid with screen-printed transfers of highly coloured artworks by Richard Deacon.

Hydraulic lifts transfer the glazed units to one of seven kilns. For sink production, the firing process takes



approximately 30 hours. To avoid cracking or weakening of the faience, the temperature in the kiln is gradually raised to 1200°C, where it is maintained for five hours, before slowly being reduced.

For architectural terracotta and faience, the manufacturing process concludes with a 'dry run', involving assembling the cladding units and/or mouldings on the ground in bays or even complete elevations to check for fit and consistency of finish. The items are then carefully packaged and sent to site in wooden crates.

Above/below

- 1 Two-piece plaster sink moulds.
- 2 Liquid clay slip is pumped into the moulds.
- 3 The newly cast units are hand-finished using knives and leathers.
- 4 The sinks are placed in a humidity dryer.
- 5 A coat of engobe is followed by a white glaze.
- 6 The firing process takes around 30 hours with temperatures in the Kilns reaching 1200°C.

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New Bond Street, London.
Eric Parry Architects.

Hackney Empire, London.
Tim Ronalds Architects.

Holburne Museum, Bath.
Eric Parry Architects.

Wallpaper, London.
Chassay + Last Architects.



June 2013

Simon Allford on Eric Parry at Piccadilly

Stanton Williams' Britten-Pears Archive building

Cullinan Studio's Maggie's care centre in Newcastle

Mary Rose Museum: Wilkinson Eyre/Pringle Brandon

Foster in Munich • Jonathan Sergison on Zürich

BUILDING

Piccadilly dandy: Eric Parry Architects' One Eagle Place

The nimble repair of an urban block embodies London's volatile compound of continuity and change, finds Simon Allford. Photos: Dirk Lindner.

London, the 'Unique City' whose continuity so engaged Steen Eiler Rasmussen, is a unique city in which to make architecture – one where architects and informed clients are combining new into old to challenge ideas of programme, place and development. Having established its reputation by inserting new architecture into historically charged parts of the city, Eric Parry Architects has now delightfully refined this model of development-as-palimpsest with One Eagle Place, an office and residential project in St James'.

This project is in part Parry's response to Blomfield and Nash's interest in the use of the facade to define the West End as an urban stage set. As I am working with the same client, the Crown Estate, to build a city sandwich between Regent Street and Parry's own 23 Savile Row building (AT200), I have followed progress from the near distance, and have enjoyed witnessing the emergence of Parry's considered but bold risk-taking as he confronts comfortable ideas of taste.

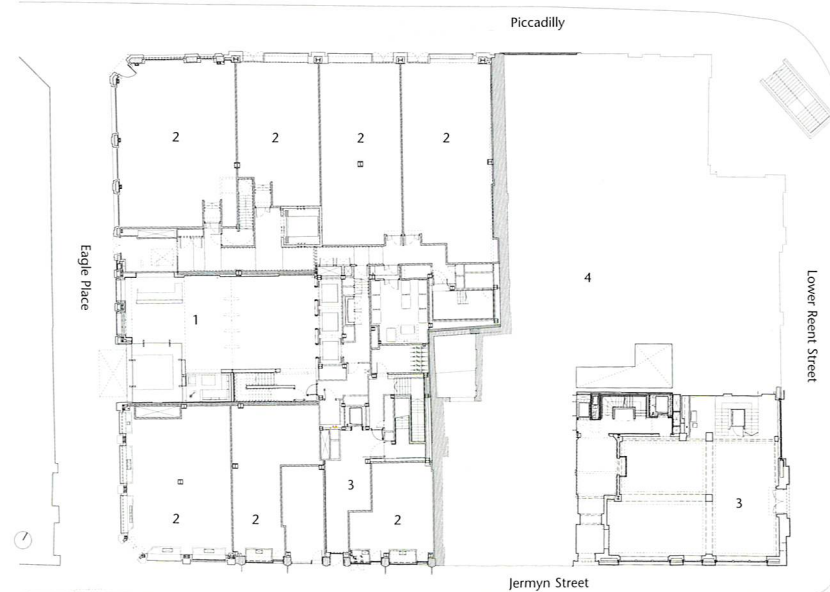
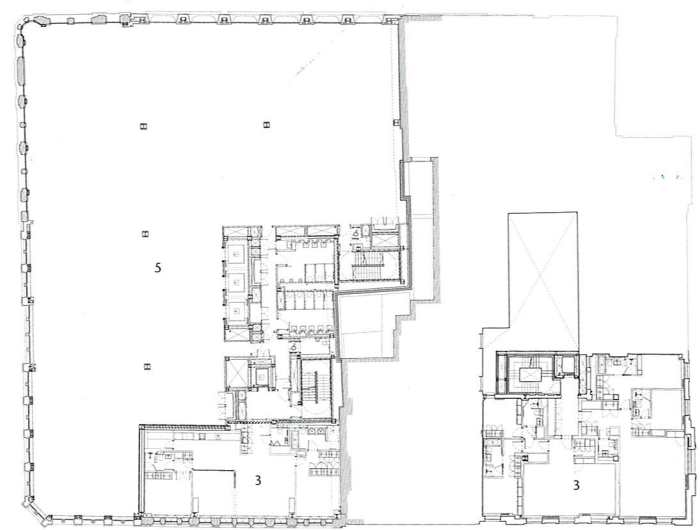
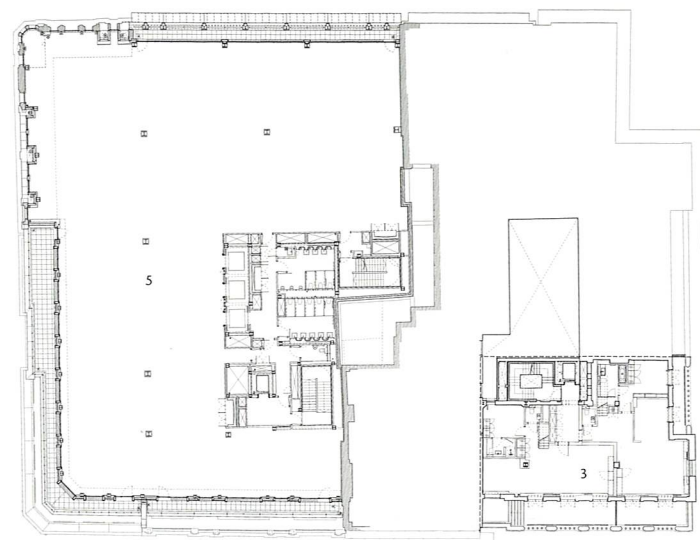
Parry articulates the relationship of the site's urban and architectural history to the cultural, financial, technological and political



context in which he operates, then utilises this to define the architectures of his response. Following surgical removal of failing and exhausted fragments, the retained is combined with the new to accommodate a rich mix of uses in an urbane, coherent yet commercially astute block. This repair and remaking is made more complex by the fact that the site is bisected by a building and theatre whose long leases preclude the possibility of negotiated adaptation.

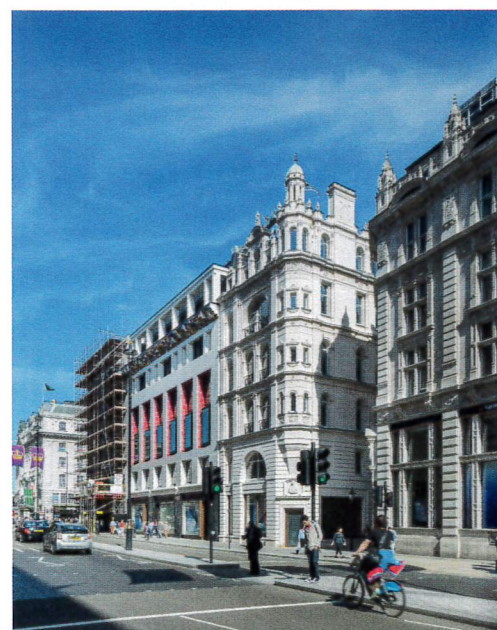
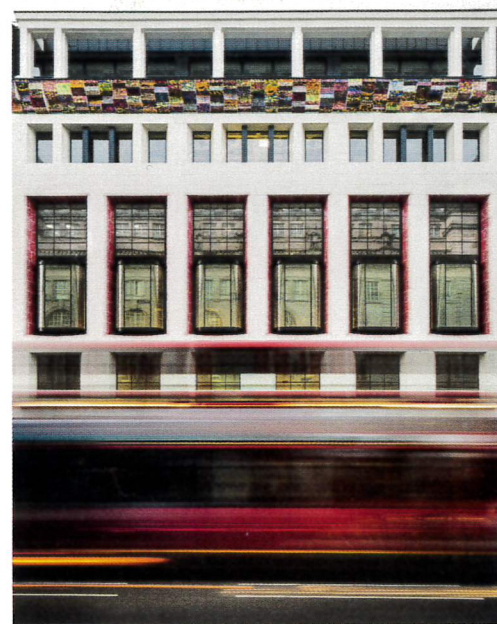
Above, right Location plan; view west towards Piccadilly Circus.
Below Office entrance lobby.





Eagle Place references an interest exhibited in Parry's 'palazzo' at 30 Finsbury Square (AT136), still for many a touchstone for its intelligence and wit. There, he detached structure from the cage-like constraint of the planning module expressed in the thermal envelope, and thus facilitated an independent exploration of architectural aesthetics – 48 • AT239

Above Ground, typical upper floor and sixth floor plans: 1 office reception, 2 retail, 3 residential, 4 existing building, 5 office. **Above right** Two views of the Piccadilly facade, and 'before' view of the corner of Piccadilly and Eagle Place. The facade to the corner building has been retained while Eric Parry Architects has created new facades for its neighbours on either side.



one where the loadbearing structural stone facade references the rationalism of both Gruppo Sette and the engineer. At Eagle Place the two new facades offer a richer take on Finsbury's bald idea of 'back'. Again the facade is structural, but this time used not to support a frame but to enable a material to be explored in depth; to generate an alternative

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One Eagle Place, Piccadilly, London.

Client: The Crown Estate
Developer: Stanhope plc
Architect: Eric Parry Architects
Main contractor: Lend Lease
Materials consultant: Arup
Facade specialist: Szerelmey Ltd

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idea of the aesthetics of the punctured wall.

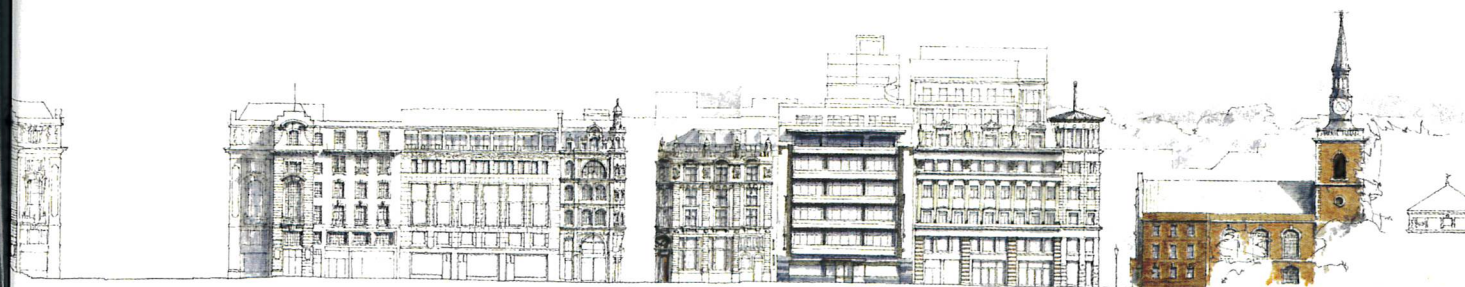
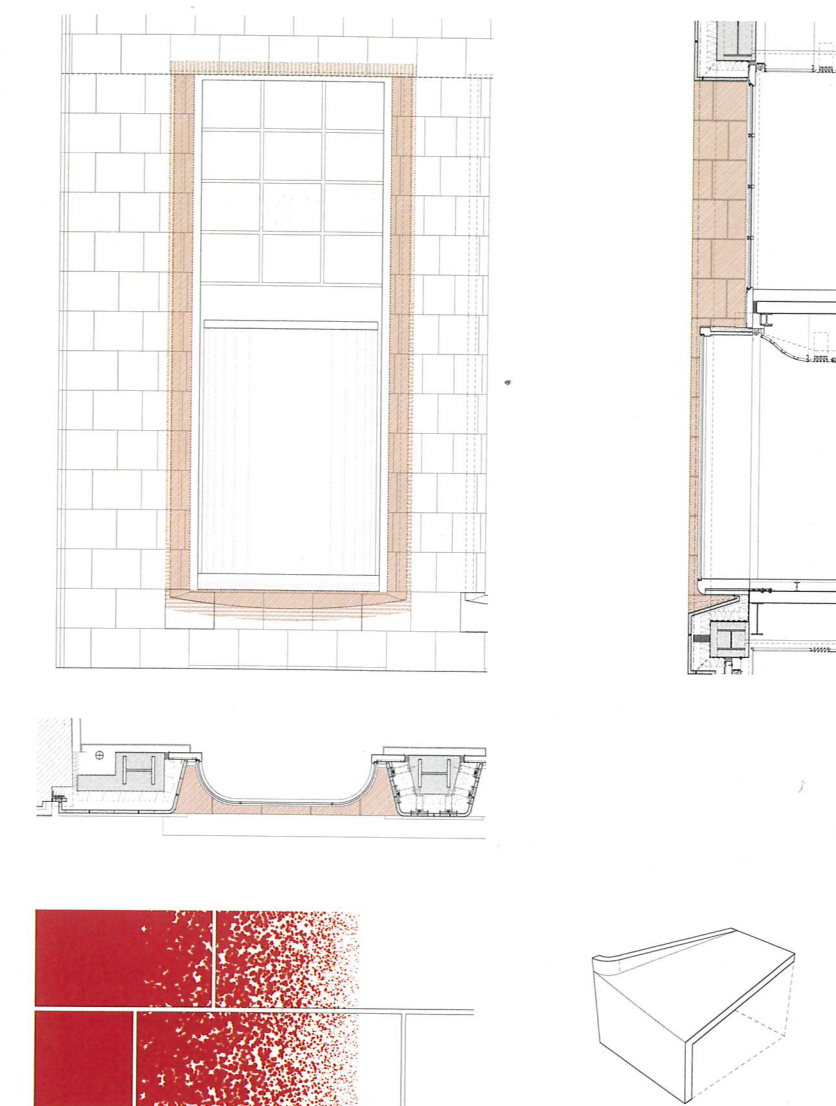
The first of these, a ceramic facade fronting Piccadilly, is sandwiched between elderly stone neighbours, while the second, faced with stone, forms a new corner where Eagle Place meets Jermyn Street. Parry likens the project's challenge to extracting and replacing teeth, though I note that one tooth – the Baron building, formerly a menswear shop owned by the family of Sacha Baron Cohen – has been dismantled and re-erected five feet higher up (these are buildings designed in imperial dimensions) on a new base that is carefully related to, but inevitably somewhat different to that which was vandalised in the 1960s. The shock of the new ensures that the Piccadilly facade, with its polychromatic Richard Deacon frieze and red reveals, has already achieved a certain notoriety.

The programme behind provides three 'new' buildings – one office, two residential. While the office sits behind new and reconstructed facades, the two residential buildings are behind historic facades, one retained and the other carved out of a listed building. This is definitely a single project, however, concerned with the remaking of the city block, and challenges orthodoxy by prioritising the

Right Piccadilly facade details. The 25-metre cornice was designed by artist Richard Deacon. It is formed of 39 individual ceramic sculptures. The ceramic transfer method, used for both the cornice and red-coloured window frames, was developed in the eighteenth century but has not been applied to a building in the UK before.

Below Cornice pieces in the yard; view from offices.

Bottom Elevational drawing of Piccadilly by Eric Parry.





programme of the city over the programme of use – which is entirely logical: the use will change. The city will change, too, but the former much more rapidly than the latter.

The commercial programme is skilfully woven in plan and section. A sequence of interlocking parts that work together,

Above, below Portland stone facade to Eagle Place; view north along Eagle Place towards Piccadilly; Eagle Place elevations. The contract cost was £45m – a gross internal floor area cost of £3500 per sqm. The building achieved BREEAM Excellent and Code for Sustainable Homes level 3 ratings; its emission rate is 25.8 kg CO₂/m².

sharing servicing, lifts and stairs to create an urban whole, reminding us that London's urban blocks – even when in single ownership – are a collection of parts, of uses, of leases, of buildings. Large-scale development is challenged not just by commerce and conservation but by the urban morphology that can be traced through the language of facades expressing party walls. Parry's skill is in undertaking large-scale redevelopment while celebrating the complexity. Modern servicing and infrastructure weave between new volumes which, through engagement with the 'found', have acquired more specific and thus memorable characteristics.



In the office, beyond the crafted volumes of the entrance hall (which like its neighbour, Luytens' banking hall, has longevity) Parry understands that a lesser level of architectural control, reflecting the inevitability of fit-out and change, is appropriate. In the apartments, however, he has designed everything beautifully, simply and economically, from the carving out of habitable space in unique found volumes down to the throws on the beds. The refurbished and reinvented interiors of these apartments are a microcosm of the project: in the architecture of remaking and the urban palimpsest, merzbau becomes gesamtkunstwerk.

Relationships between new and old, inside and out and building and city are never quite as might be anticipated. The new Piccadilly facade is traditionally constructed of jug-white glazed ceramic and lime mortar, specifically so that it can be sculpted to capture reflections from the famous neon of Piccadilly Circus. Versions of this material

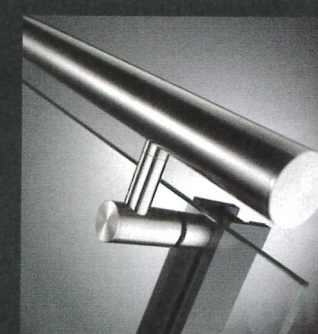


Cutting EDGE

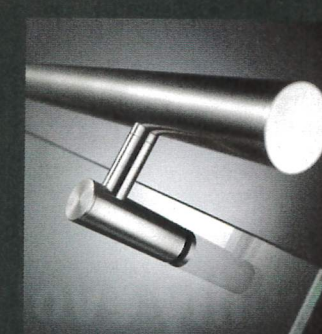
Engineered stainless steel balustrade



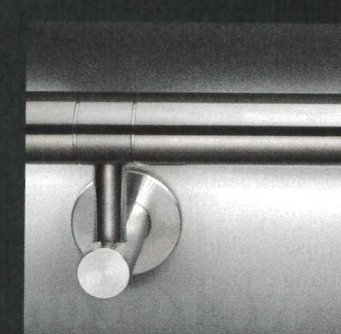
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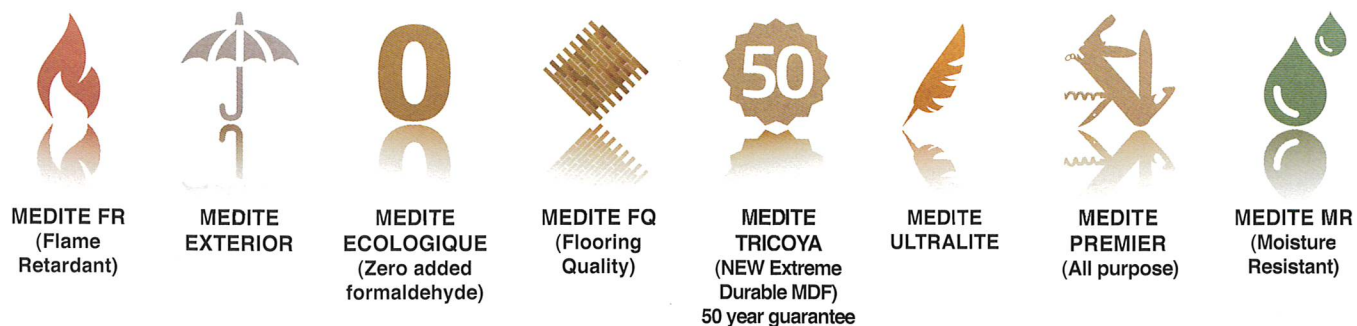
EDGE is the latest member of the **icon** modular handrail and balustrade product range. The system is derived from the desire to specify an alternative to tubular balusters whilst adhering to the strict philosophy of highly engineered, non-fabricated solutions. A single flat bar upright is so subtle, at a distance it virtually disappears from view.

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have long been used to bounce light, but in secondary elevations, lightwells and courts, and always for amenity not effect. Here ceramic is used on one of London's greatest, widest streets. Again, in contrast to the norm, Portland stone is then used on the 'lesser' Jermyn Street and Eagle Place, in a rich mix of bed types articulated by string courses and worked transoms (a nod to a history of tailoring and the figure of the dandy) and topped by Stephen Cox's sculptural relief. There are of course other logics at play here: following conservation battles, the neon of Piccadilly Circus is celebrated as an important urban and historical asset while commercial logic



dictates the use of Portland stone on Eagle Place to give this reinvented address the stature that the office requires.

Both new facades are studies in scale and proportion, in light, shadow and depth, and in bay widths, rhythms and modulation – a play of the neutral and the vibrant. Which is neutral and which vibrant is perhaps less certain than first glimpses might suggest. The Piccadilly facade is actually a modest and subtle play of black and white. The stipple effect stencil around the windows is, on inspection, not red but a 'blush'. This elevation is a play of modulated interlocking bays that decrease in size, complexity and evidence as they rise to the open loggia and then to the sky beyond. Its vivacity is largely concentrated in a polychromatic frieze by Richard Deacon, whose 39 steps draw a sculptured line across at cornice height. While this line harnesses the technology of the same architectural craft that constructs the facade, the mark of its maker ensures that artifice is transformed into art.



Top Stephen Cox's facade sculpture at the corner of Jermyn Street and Eagle Place.
Below Jermyn Street elevation.

Through its detail, depth, oriel and terrace, this new Piccadilly facade allows the inhabitation and enjoyment of the threshold between room and city. It also questions our understanding of the likely longevity of building and facade. Parry's engagement with the detail of its making suggests to me that he believes that the 'facadists' Nash and Blomfield were in fact right to construct an urban stage set that is still the locale's defining quality.





This challenges my 'flat cap rule' that suggests no-one ever sees above the shop front, so a demolished facade is instantly forgotten by even the most assiduous observer of architectural detail. (Ask yourself what you recall of the supposedly much-loved facades that preceded Parry's). Alan Powers' recent Royal Academy exhibition, 'Eros to the Ritz: 100 years of street architecture', offered the same challenge, encouraging me to scurry from Burlington House onto Piccadilly to discover for the first time the facades of the street that I believed I knew.

One Eagle Place is a variegated container of uses, architectures, histories and technologies, and challenges our thinking on design strategies, on the relevance of use and on the urban importance of the aesthetics of the constructed facade. It questions aesthetic and artistic predilections and speculates on ideas of time and context. It is a project in which the architects are testing themselves, their audience (both lay and professional) and our shared ideas of history, present and future.

At the unveiling of his frieze, Richard Deacon diverted eyes from his art by doffing his cap and thus elegantly drew attention to the fact that it was adorned with but two words: 'No Fear'. I can think of no more appropriate an epithet for this most particular, creative and challenging project.

Simon Allford is a director of AHMM, where his projects include the Angel Building, Chobham Academy, and the Yellow Building. He is a visiting professor at the Bartlett and Harvard University.

Left, below Residential interiors. The scheme comprises 7600 sqm of office, 3000 sqm of retail and 2450 sqm of residential space.



Project team
Architect: Eric Parry Architects; design team: Eric Parry, (principal, left), Nick Jackson, (project director, far left), Merit Clausen, (associate director), Jeremy Foster, Ros Cohen, Alvaro Valdivia, a l'Onions, Ze'ev Feigis, Joanne Hemmings, Will Aitken, Cecillie Kjeldsen, Vania Ramos, Lewis Benmore, Anthony McGoldrick; artists: Richard Deacon, Stephen Cox, Alan Micklethwaite; structural engineer: Waterman; m&e consultant: Mecserve QS; planning consultant: CBRE; cost consultant, project manager: Gardiner & Theobald; acoustics: Alan Saunders; lighting: DPA Lighting; public realm: Atkins; development manager: Stanhope; main contractor: Lend Lease;

client: The Crown Estate in partnership with the Health Care of Ontario Pension Plan.

Selected suppliers and subcontractors
Faience cladding: Shaws of Danwen, Szerelmy; Portland stone cladding: Albion, Szerelmy; stone restoration: PAYE; composite windows: Schindler; shopfronts: Drawn Metal; metalwork: PAD; facade lighting: DPA; lifts: Otis; joinery and interior fit out: Brown & Carroll, Ruddy; stone floors: Haysom, Grants; stairs: WHL, PAD; handrails and balustrade: Handrail Design; doors: Shadbolt; glazed sliding doors: Record; sanitaryware: Duravit, Villeroy & Boch; taps and showers: Hansgrohe.

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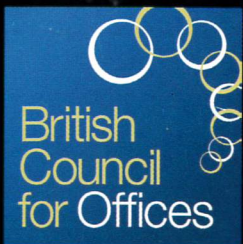
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One Eagle Place

London

The sensitive design marries the rich history of St James's with the modern-day requirements of business life



The carefully considered positioning of the entrance is a master stroke which has transformed what was once an unloved dark alley

This superb building belies the challenges that this redevelopment faced from its restrictive site within a sensitive location.

Eagle Place represents the Crown Estate's first major project in its extensive St James's portfolio, and acts as the benchmark for the proposed £500m investment programme for the area.

Externally the design is both brave and testing, whilst elegantly retaining the original façades. Internally the building delivers highly efficient but simple floor plates that maximise the aspects along Piccadilly. The development also delivers high environmental credentials.

The sensitive design marries the rich history of St James's with the modern-day requirements of business life. The 5,575m² of contemporary office

space makes for a bright and efficient working environment. The fitting choice of colour scheme was extremely well received by the largest tenant in the building. The overall astute choice of design, the creative architecture and the pragmatic workspaces are all key contributing factors as to why the scheme was around 2/3rds let within three months of practical completion.

The jacking up of the listed façade has been carried out so seamlessly that the passerby would never realise the engineering challenge that was involved. The carefully considered positioning of the entrance is a master stroke which has transformed what was once an unloved dark alleyway into a glorious addition to the urban streetscape.

The public art

incorporated into the freize, positioned below the second floor from the top, is bold but beautifully delivered. The striking use of colour in the Piccadilly façade adds life and vibrancy which is carried through to good effect to the office entrance hall, lifts and toilets.

On the ground floor the space offers fantastic retail opportunities adding to the ambience of the building as a whole, and of course to the revenue stream. The small, discrete shops on Jermyn Street are in keeping with the area's culture and heritage, whilst the Piccadilly side offers larger units suited to the surrounding retail.

One Eagle Place is an exemplary redevelopment in an inner city location which combines the new and the old with nothing less than total success.



Sponsored by Jackson Coles

Client

The Crown Estate in partnership with the Healthcare of Ontario Pension Plan

Owner

The Crown Estate in partnership with the Healthcare of Ontario Pension Plan

Project manager

Stanhope

Quantity surveyor

Gardiner & Theobald

Architect

Eric Parry Architects

Interior designer

Eric Parry Architects

M&E engineer

Meccserve

Structural engineer

Waterman Group

Contractor

Lend Lease

Investment / property co.

Stanhope

Developer

The Crown Estate in partnership with the Healthcare of Ontario Pension Plan

Agents

Strutt & Parker / CBRE



A Piece Of Piccadilly Circus

These airy, bright and stylish apartments in London's sought-after St James' district offer contemporary city dwelling in one of the UK capital's most historic and exciting areas

BY GIOVANNA DUNMALL IMAGES COURTESY OF ST JAMES' GATEWAY

Named after the royal palace, the London district of St James' lies between four city landmarks— Trafalgar Square, Piccadilly Circus, Green Park and Buckingham Palace — and is known for its historic shop fronts and buildings, luxury goods, art galleries (the area has a staggering 62 of them) and a Christopher Wren church. It is a place Londoners and visitors go to for art, culture and fine dining, high-end hotels and clubs and a distinctly British array of independent stores and boutiques. It doesn't always appear to be a particularly desirable place to live, however. For one thing it's noisy - the traffic on Piccadilly is loud – and it's also chaotic; Piccadilly Circus is lined with walls of neon flashing billboards and throngs of tourists gather there day and night.

ABOVE
The development offers opportunity for elegant living amidst the hustle of Piccadilly Circus

OPPOSITE PAGE, CLOCKWISE TOP LEFT
Views of the Big Ben can be enjoyed from various rooms; The rooms are appointed with designer furniture; A massive plan is underway to redevelop the St. James district; A few of the units also offer outdoor spaces

Regeneration And Redevelopment
Yet the Crown Estate's £500 million plan to redevelop this conservation area may just change all that. The Crown Estate, which owns almost all the freehold for Regent Street and 50 per cent of the buildings in St James', hopes to woo companies and residential tenants to the area alike with the allure of cheaper rents than in neighbouring Mayfair or Belgravia and St James' amazing location. Aside from some of the best retail and dining in the country, it's a very short walk to uber buzzy and happening London district of Soho just north of Piccadilly Circus.

A Multi-use Scheme With Artistic Touches
The first stage of the regeneration has seen London-based Eric Parry architects



refurbish, restore and rebuild a huge block at the east end of Piccadilly into a new scheme that offers 60,000sq ft of office accommodation as well as some retail space and 16 residential apartments on Jermyn Street (11 for rent, five for sale). As part of this £100 million St James's Gateway redevelopment a section of the original Portland façade has been retained, while the contemporary elements are by Eric Parry Architects. It was also Eric Parry's idea to get acclaimed British artist Richard Deacon on board to create a dramatic polychromatic cornice at the top of the façade of the new building structure. Another sculpture by British artist Stephen Cox adorns the corner building facing Jermyn Street and Eagle Place.

Loft-like Spaces With High Ceilings
The apartments are in the middle of all the action. As project architect Merit Claussen, an Associate Director at Eric Parry Architects, says with a smile, "They are fantastic for people-watching and for city dwellers." The apartments

"As the building was originally a purpose-built office building for Barclays Bank, the floor-to-ceiling heights exceed those of most residential buildings."

for rent are particularly alluring, for several reasons. Located in a late 1920s listed building in the Beaux Arts style, six out of the 11 apartments for rent offer views of Piccadilly Circus, and two offer outdoor space (two also offer glimpses of Big Ben). Two of the biggest selling points of the flats were the imposing windows says architect and designer Eric Parry, and the generous floor-to-ceiling heights, which were achieved after the existing suspended ceilings were removed. "As the building was originally a purpose-built office building for Barclays Bank, the floor-to-ceiling heights exceed those of most residential buildings," he says. "The flat rolled steel windows, many of which are of considerable height, are a window type



often found in industrial buildings and lend a loft-like atmosphere to the spaces.” He continues. “Both, room heights and windows, offered the unique opportunity to create living spaces that breathe air and light, and associate space; qualities needed for creativity that are in contrast to the surrounding dense and busy urban environment - particularly on the Soho side of Regent Street.”

Preservation And Modernisation

“We had to preserve all of the former structure that were not later additions,” says Parry, “and there were two main areas with listed original features that we entirely preserved.” One is the former banking hall (that will be used for retail) and the other are the bank’s grand former boardrooms located on the second floor and adorned with coved sections and period mouldings. These were turned into two flats; the largest weighs in at a massive 1,700 sq ft and offers glimpses of Big Ben. The interior architects won a battle to install new windows and in some cases added an extra layer of glazing – or secondary windows - too. “The replacement windows had to be visually ‘like for

OPPOSITE PAGE, CLOCKWISE FROM TOP

Light colours and a neutral palette helps to bring natural light into the apartments; Suave interiors add touches of sophistication in the spaces; Contemporary additions seek to keep the historic spaces from looking dated

ABOVE

The units come ready equipped with designer trappings and furnishing

like’ with only small variations where inevitable as the building is listed and shares the façade with the neighbouring building which remained in office use,” explains Parry. “The secondary windows on the Regent Street side are set back by 150mm, and kept as simple as possible with the street facing frames sprayed in a dark grey colour to make them ‘invisible’ from the outside.” The result are high-performance, aesthetically appealing and unobtrusive windows, that cut out almost all sound. Interestingly, Gibson says all the Regent Street flats (which are the noisiest) went immediately. “Most people would say ‘Are you mad, I can’t live on Regent Street, I want to sleep’. But if the windows are this good and you have comfort cooling then why not?”

Cosmopolitan Furniture And Atmosphere

The furniture is recognisably European and the look and style is cosmopolitan, airy and bright. “All furniture is from high-end manufacturers selected for longevity and timelessness,” says Parry. “Each (2- and 3-bed) unit features a signature piece that is easily recognisable for everyone no matter of



“Each (2- and 3-bed) unit features a signature piece that is easily recognisable for everyone no matter of the cultural background, which is either the Eames chair and ottoman or the Egg chair by Arne Jacobsen, both in their leather version for beautiful ageing.”

the cultural background, which is either the Eames chair and ottoman or the Egg chair by Arne Jacobsen, both in their leather version for beautiful ageing. Those signature pieces are supported by sofas by Italian manufacturer Zanotta, coffee and side tables and dining tables by German wood manufacturer E15 and dining chairs by Thonet.” There is also a very fresh Mediterranean feel to the apartments with pastel blues and browns (in the cushions and bedcovers) and full-length white shutters. The interiors blend chic style and bespoke sculptural door handles with more industrial elements such as hard-wearing blond oak end grain flooring.

In terms of tenants Oliver Gibson, Director of Development and Investment at W.A. Ellis (the estate agent marketing the rental properties) says the rental flats are being targeted at employees of local professional

OPPOSITE PAGE, CLOCKWISE FROM TOP LEFT

Large balcony windows are part of the draw for potential homeowners; Pastel colours add warmth to the bedroom; Modern accessories give the spaces a vibrant and chic vibe

LEFT TO RIGHT

Sleek bathroom fittings add to the elegance of the apartments’ design; Plenty of storage spaces abound within the domain; The facade of this landmark building in the neighbourhood had been carefully preserved

companies and singles and couples. Among the tenants the nationalities include Singaporean, Chinese, German, Swiss and British, while on the buying side the two flats that have gone were snapped up by Hong Kong Chinese and Singaporean purchasers. “What is fascinating about St James’s,” according to James Cooksey, Head of The Crown Estate’s St James’s Portfolio, “is that it means different things to different people and consequently we are attracting interest from a global audience, all from different walks of life.” What’s more, the rental block also offers some of the most unusual accommodation in London. “As far as we are aware, it offers the only apartments that boast a view out over one of London’s most spectacular landmarks, Piccadilly Circus,” says Cooksey. **H**

15 Jermyn Street

DEVELOPMENT:

St. James’ Gateway

NO OF UNITS:

16 apartments (11 rental, five for sale)

CONFIGURATION:

Rental units range from one- to three bedrooms, including two penthouses with outdoor terrace space)

Sales units include two single bedroom and three two and three bedrooms

COST OF RENTAL:

£700 to £2,500 per week

COST OF SALES:

£1,600,000 to £4,150,000

WEBSITES:

www.waellis.co.uk

Richard Deacon sits among his ceramic elements that make up the distinctive cornice of One Eagle Place

PICCADILLY POLYCHROMATIC

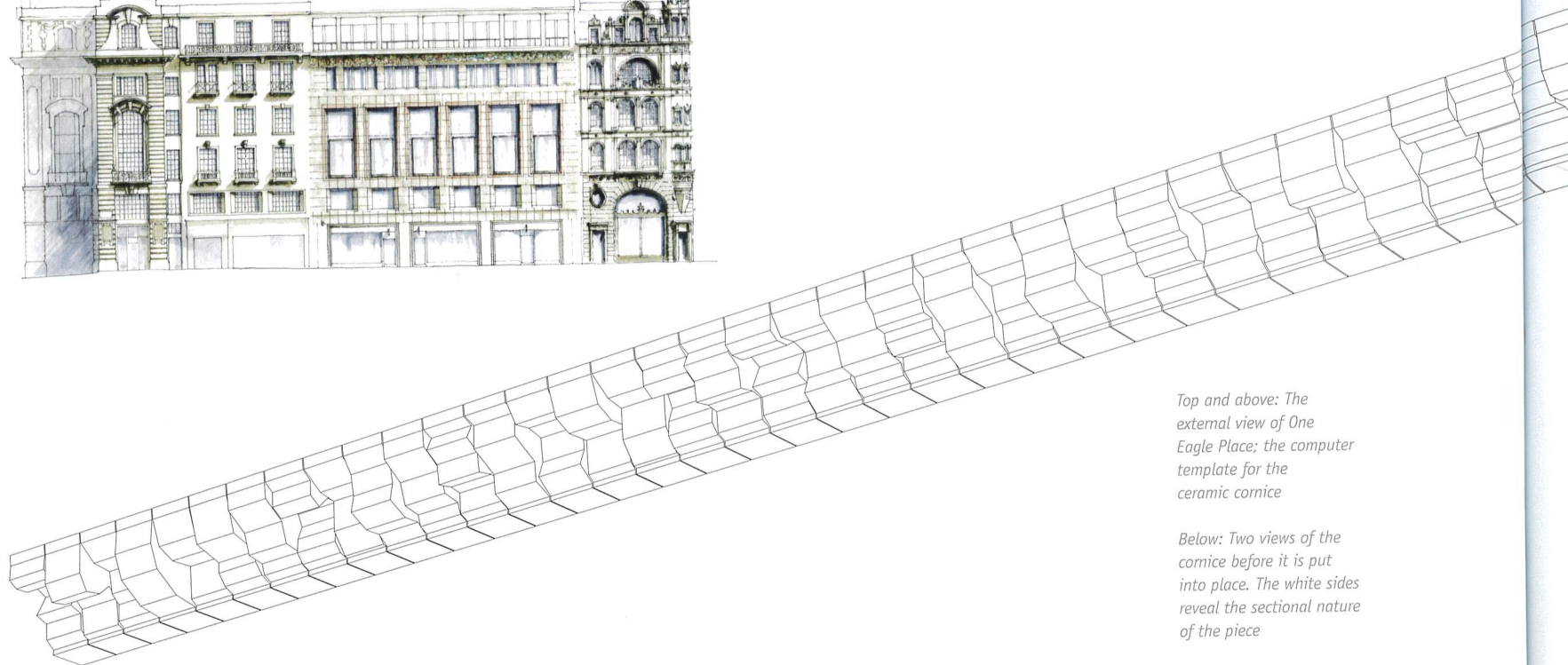
ARCHITECT **ERIC PARRY**'S ONE EAGLE PLACE MIXED-USE BUILDING IS AN EXCEPTION TO THE RULE. WHILE ART IS NOT UNKNOWN IN ARCHITECTURAL PROJECTS, FOR THIS ONE SCULPTOR **RICHARD DEACON** WAS BROUGHT IN AT THE VERY BEGINNING, AND HIS MULTICOLOURED CERAMIC CORNICE IS AN INTEGRAL PART OF THE ARCHITECTURE. *GIOVANNA DUNMALL* TALKS TO BOTH ARCHITECT AND ARTIST ABOUT THEIR COLLABORATION

Bold collaborations between contemporary artists and architects are unusual. Public art, be it a sculpture, canvas or digital installation, is often commissioned once a building project is completed, almost as an afterthought.

Eric Parry's One Eagle Place, a large mixed-use office, residential and retail scheme on London's Piccadilly, is an audacious and joyous exception to this rule. Art was part of the project from the planning stages and it features two unabashedly eye-catching and tactile sculptures on its facades.

Though One Eagle Place (a joint venture between the Crown Estate and Canadian pension plan provider HOOP) won't be completed till late spring, one of the artworks – a wildly polychromatic cornice by world-renowned sculptor Richard Deacon – has already been unveiled. (The other, a 1.5m-high mask made of Indian basalt by sculptor Stephen Cox, will be installed on a different building in May). 'I have stuck things on facades before,' says Deacon, 'but to build a work into the architecture is very different and very exciting.'

Deacon's cornice measures 25m across and is made up of 39 individual but multifaceted ceramic blocks that are painted »



Top and above: The external view of One Eagle Place; the computer template for the ceramic cornice

Below: Two views of the cornice before it is put into place. The white sides reveal the sectional nature of the piece

Right: The cornice is in situ, sitting above the window external treatment

FOR PARRY THE PROXIMITY OF PICCADILLY CIRCUS WAS MORE DIRECTLY RELEVANT: 'IN MY MIND THE CORNICE WAS ABOUT POLYCHROMY BUT ALSO ABOUT ARTIFICE. PICCADILLY CIRCUS, ITS BRIGHT LIGHTS, EROS – IT'S LIKE A PAINTED FACE'

using a palette of seven vivid colours. 'I thought each face should be a different colour or pattern so that the blocks were not only different shapes but each facet was differently coloured,' he explains. 'The patterns were arbitrarily distributed on various facets across the cornice, so it worked a bit like a plainsong musical score.'

Initially the profiled blocks were going to be wider but Deacon says they made the cornice look heavy. 'As soon as the proportions were narrower it suited the whole idea better, it became more vertical rather than horizontal, and the cornice rippled up, taking the building up in a very nice way.' That the sides of the cornice blocks are white further reveals the sectional nature of the cornice. 'Carrying the pattern over would have been confusing, it would have camouflaged it,' he explains. 'The white sides makes the rhythm of the in and out of the cornice work.'

The neon billboards of neighbouring Piccadilly Circus were a subliminal rather than a conscious influence on the work says Deacon, but he admits that there is a relationship between the whirling and almost symphonic bursts of yellows, reds, blues and greens and the architecture and dazzling displays of light on the square. »



COURTESY ERIC PARRY ARCHITECTS







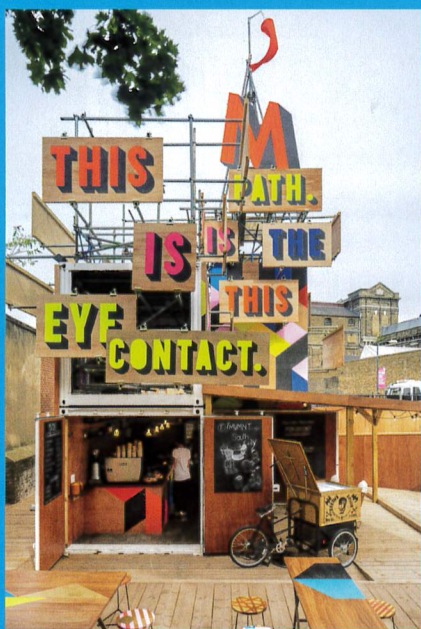
Above: The 25m-long cornice of 39 individual but multifaceted ceramic blocks is crafted into place as masonry with lime mortar

VIBRANT DIALOGUE

Property development company Cathedral doesn't just use art on its completed schemes but well before any construction has even begun. 'When we take over development sites our immediate objective is to open a strong and vibrant dialogue with the community that lives and works around it,' says Martyn Evans, Cathedral's creative director.

To that end the company creates graphically bold and alluring cafes, galleries, performance spaces and temporary cinemas on its sites that the local community can staff and use. 'Our temporary projects need to delight and engage, often in grim, post-industrial places, on low budgets and to very speedy deadlines,' says Evans. 'It takes the sensibility of a clever and inspiring artist to do this.'

Morag Myerscough is a graphic designer who has worked with the developer for years. 'Cathedral want to make places that people will connect to, places that they will love and want to look after,' says Myerscough. 'I often start my talks with the Chinese proverb "Make happy those who are near and those who are far will come". Together that is what we aim to do.'



COURTESY CATHEDRAL

'Piccadilly is slightly Thirties and the cornice is slightly jazzy, slightly syncopated,' he says.

For Parry the proximity of Piccadilly Circus was more directly relevant. 'In my mind the cornice was about polychromy but also about artifice,' he says. 'Piccadilly Circus, its bright lights, Eros – it's like a painted face.' The glazed ceramic facade of the new building on to which the cornice is incorporated, emphasises this artifice even further. Ceramic is, after all, not a natural material. 'The glazed facade is north-facing so it picks up the light of the street and the digital lights from the advertisements, which wash across the facade in a much stronger way than I ever imagined,' says Parry.

Parry designed the facade's six double-height black bay windows to be further framed by deep red reveals that recede to a light red frit outside the frame. The sills below are curved with rounded corners and 'quite erotic' he says, with something of a knowing smile. The effect is sophisticated and resolutely modern. It's also very different from the way ceramic is often used as an extruded material. 'This is put together as masonry with lime mortar and it has the sense of being crafted,' he says.

The use of ceramics wasn't without >>



DAVID GRANDORGE



DIRK LINDER

A STEP UP

From the vermilion auditorium drum by artist Antoni Malinowski in London's Royal Court Theatre to the 180-panel installation by Clem Crosby behind aluminium mesh on the outer wall of the Young Vic Theatre, London practice Haworth Tompkins has worked with artists as long as it can remember. More recently it has collaborated on several projects with Turner Prize-winning artist Martin Creed (see p60), including the revamping of the historic Scotsman Steps (right) in Edinburgh and the quirky ceramic and marble-tiled toilets for its London library refurbishment and extension. 'Martin was really keen that it wasn't something that we just brought in or put on a wall,' says Graham Haworth, founding director at Haworth Tompkins. 'He wanted to work with a physical part of the building. The difference between artists and architects, he says, is that artists don't have to compromise, whereas architects have to accommodate many conflicting requirements. 'A lot of people commission architects just to solve problems,' he says. 'By bringing an artist in you can raise the balance back up a little. I find it really refreshing.'



COURTESY HOWARTH THOMPKINS

*Above left: Eric Parry showed the cornice concept as part of the installation *Inhabitable Models* at the 2012 Venice Biennale, in collaboration with Haworth Tompkins and Lynch Architects*

Above: The facade of One Eagle Place is complete, with the ceramic cornice by Richard Deacon sitting above the double-height black bay windows further framed by deep red reveals that recede to a light red frit

risk. 'At every stage of ceramic production there is a sense in which it might fail,' laughs Parry. From completion to unveiling the project took around two years, and one of the greatest challenges was using screen-printed ceramic transfers, a technique developed in Stoke-on-Trent in the 18th century but never used in the UK on architectural ceramics, until now.

Deacon says that both he and Parry have been trying to do new things with an old material and technology for years. They tried to do some 'tricky' things with ceramics once before on a previous (but never realised) project in London's Finsbury Square. 'I proposed a ceramic sculpture that was strung through the window frames like a necklace of beads garlanding the building,' says Deacon.

The most important element of their collaboration has been trust. 'Eric is the most supportive and trusting architect I've ever worked with,' proffers Deacon at one point. But what does that mean in practice? Was he given a lot of freedom? 'It's not the freedom that matters so much, because most architects will give you that,' says Deacon, who has collaborated with the likes of Zaha Hadid and Richard Rogers. 'It's actually the support. And feeling like they really wanted >>



AS ARCHITECTS WE'RE ALREADY ONE STAGE REMOVED FROM THE ACTUAL ACT OF BUILDING; THE ARTIST IS MUCH CLOSER. WHEN YOU BRING THE TWO WORLDS TOGETHER, IT'S A GREAT DIALOGUE

it, that I was contributing something to the building rather than it being a decoration or an add-on.'

It is because of the integrated nature of the work that Parry believes absolute confidence in one another was fundamental: 'Richard has put things on buildings before but this growing out of the body of the building is an incredible act of trust.' Parry continues: 'The wonderful thing about a great artist is that in a way they are working without a brief. It's a wonderful point of meeting between a realm of freedom and the air and the everyday of the pavement, which the architect deals with and rises from.'

Parry speaks with admiration of the 'total focus' and 'obsessiveness' that an artist brings to any piece, and how artists spend 'a huge amount of time with one material'. 'As architects we're already one stage removed from the actual act of building; the artist is much closer,' he says. 'When you bring the two worlds together, it's a great dialogue.'

Though Parry has worked with artists throughout his career he wouldn't do it on every project. 'Art should be used where it matters, where it means something, where a dialogue can meaningfully take place,' he says. American sculptor Joel Shapiro's two-tonne geometric bronze sculpture for

his Savile Row office-and-retail complex 'liberated the building' he says. And when he commissioned visual artist Shirazeh Houshiary to design the East window in St Martin in the Fields, the result 'was an amazing contemporary adjunct to the 18th-century architecture'.

Deacon agrees that art can have a powerful catalysing or transformative effect on the architecture around it. 'If you look at what Shirazeh's work does, it changes the tempo and ramps up the content of that space. It increases the possibilities of it having meaning, the same as Gerhard Richter's window does in Cologne Cathedral.'

There's been a terrific history of artists and architects collaborating, concludes Parry. 'So it's very odd to me that it's been so savagely severed by an architectural mindset that suggests that the architecture is the art,' he says. 'This seems to me an incredible fallacy.' At One Eagle Place the architecture and the art are integrated and, together create something exuberant, sensual and characterful in a part of Piccadilly that needs just that, while the ceramic cornice and its glazed backdrop celebrate just how much a material can do and transmit when crafted and worked with. ■

Above: The cornice is made up of 39 individual ceramic blocks, each with a different colour combination and pattern. Sculptor Richard Deacon says that he and Eric Parry have been trying to do new things with an old material and technology for years

Raising of the colours

Eric Parry is leading the way with ceramic transfer to give his buildings an extra dimension.
By Amanda Birch



Above: Good to go – Richard Deacon's ceramic transfer blocks for One Eagle Place, Piccadilly.

Right: Nearly complete, the Parry building hides its cornice colours before unveiling.



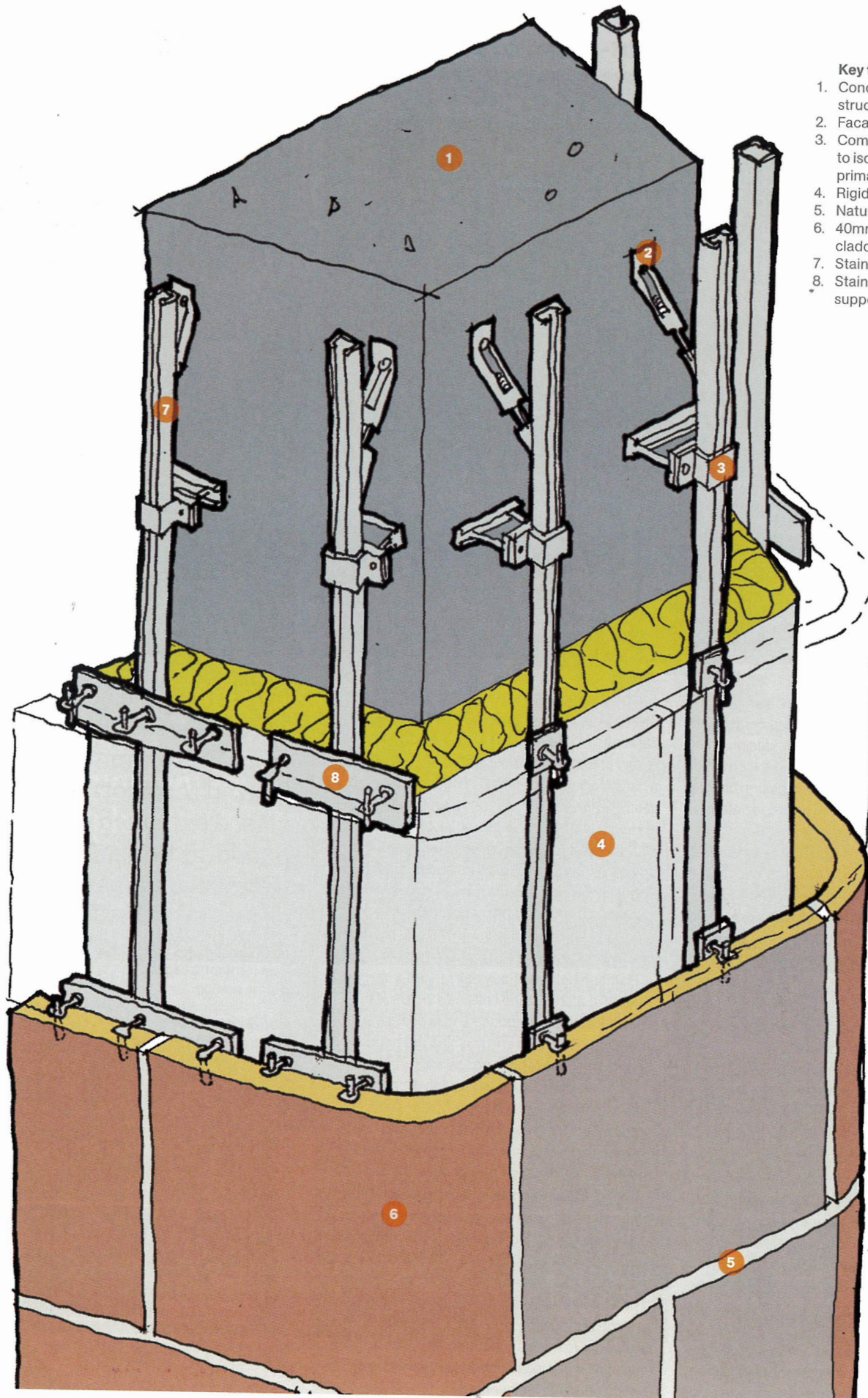
When the vibrantly coloured cornice to central London's One Eagle Place is unwrapped in early March, its significance in the world of architectural ceramics will go largely unnoticed. Most people will probably be more interested in the fact that the artist Richard Deacon created the decorative design and the complex geometric forms of the cornice.

Few will appreciate that the building, designed by Eric Parry Architects, is the first in the UK to employ ceramic transfer to the faience facade, featured on both the cornice and the red-coloured reveals to the double height windows. Eric Parry is pioneering the application of this latest innovation in the field of architectural ceramics to buildings.

'I wanted to take crafted ceramic one stage further, to reinforce that sense of a material being from nothing, the idea of the artificial and creative,' says Parry. 'For the facade, I had this idea of rouged cheeks around the double order windows, so as you walk down Piccadilly you would see this warm blush on a white powdered [ceramic] face.'

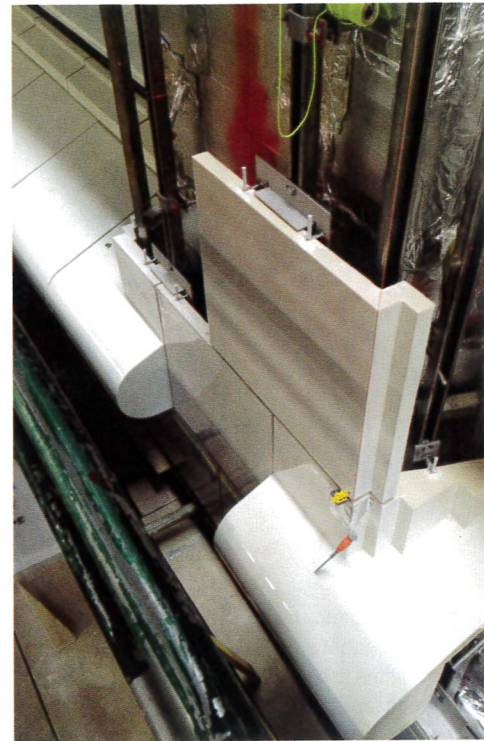
Ceramic transfer was developed in Stoke on Trent around the mid 18th century to hasten the process of decorating tableware. Although

'I wanted to take crafted ceramic one stage further, to reinforce that sense of a material being from nothing, the idea of the artificial and creative'



Key to drawing

1. Concrete-encased steel structure
2. Facade anchor
3. Compression tension brace to isolate channel from primary structure
4. Rigid foil-faced insulation
5. Natural hydraulic lime mortar
6. 40mm thick slip cast faience cladding units
7. Stainless steel 'C' channel
8. Stainless steel faience support anchor



the method had not been used for architectural ceramics before, it was decided to use ceramic ink transfer to achieve Deacon's intricate design on the 39 cornice clay units. The traditional method of hand painting or spraying the glaze design directly onto the piece was considered too labour intensive and inconsistencies could arise.

Alexis Harrison, senior designer at Arup Materials, advised the architect on the use of architectural ceramics and explains how it works: 'Watercolour artwork was digitally scanned and transferred to a silk screen for printing onto a transfer paper using ceramic ink. This produced a decal which was applied to the surface of the pre-fired white ceramic unit, before being fired again, which allowed duplication of the design and preserved the integrity of Deacon's original work.'

The bold use of ceramic transfer on One Eagle Place may be the start of something big, but this is by no means Parry's first exploration of the potential of architectural ceramics. He first used the material on a wall, in the form of intertwining shades of red and blue, for Wimbledon School of Art (1997-2004) and has since used it to dramatic effect for the blue-green glaze of the ceramic fins at Bath's Holburne Museum and the mould-green faience sculptural ribs at 50 New Bond Street in London. Parry admits he only uses ceramic when he wants 'to play with the issue of ambiguity architecturally'.

Architectural ceramics is a modern term which encompasses everything from Victorian faience (glazed terracotta) used at the Savoy Hotel to the primary coloured glazed extruded terracotta planks

and baguettes seen at Renzo Piano's Central St Giles, both in the capital. Glazed extruded terracotta is a highly engineered product that is very precise and consistent, while faience is a handmade process that is either hand or slip cast. The latter is a faster, more repetitive process, and was used to make the white, blue and green cladding tiles for Dixon Jones' Quadrant 3, again in London, and Parry's Holburne and 50 New Bond Street. Hand cast faience is more conventional, typically used for one off pieces. Either method produces an almost natural finish that has depth and inconsistencies in the surface and the glaze.

Harrison believes Parry has ignited a renewed interest in architectural ceramics: 'He is at the forefront of this resurgence and is doing the most interesting buildings and pushing the boundaries of what the material can do,' he says.

Architects like Zaha Hadid have proposed architectural ceramics for recent competition entries, but Harrison suggests collaborations between architects and artists produce the best results, as Parry has done with Deacon and others.

'We're blown away by the creative potential of the clay techniques and materials emerging in ceramic art, but adapting them to the demanding constraints of a building facade needs more than just a good creative partnership,' says Harrison. 'There are complex engineering challenges too, and the partnership with skilful manufacturers who are willing to push the boundaries of fired clay is essential – just look at how the humble brick has been completely reinvented.'

'Architectural ceramics encompasses everything from Victorian faience (glazed terracotta) to the glazed extruded terracotta planks at Renzo Piano's Central St Giles'

Above left: Hand cast terracotta capital before glazing.

Above right: Glazed faience cladding being installed at One Eagle Place.

Beyond the blusher

1 July 2013

Words: Eleanor Young

Beneath its colourful eyecatching ‘make-up’, Eric Parry Architects’ One Eagle Place for the Crown Estate is more than just a pretty face. It’s an intelligent and thoughtful building whose classical lines nonetheless speak strongly of modern design values



Scored, sprayed and blooming with gross growths, One Eagle Place has the most beautiful facade. There are few architects with a track record like Eric Parry Architects for turning a standard, even banal, typology into something so special. His treatment of offices is not as exercises in net to gross but as individuals in an urban landscape.

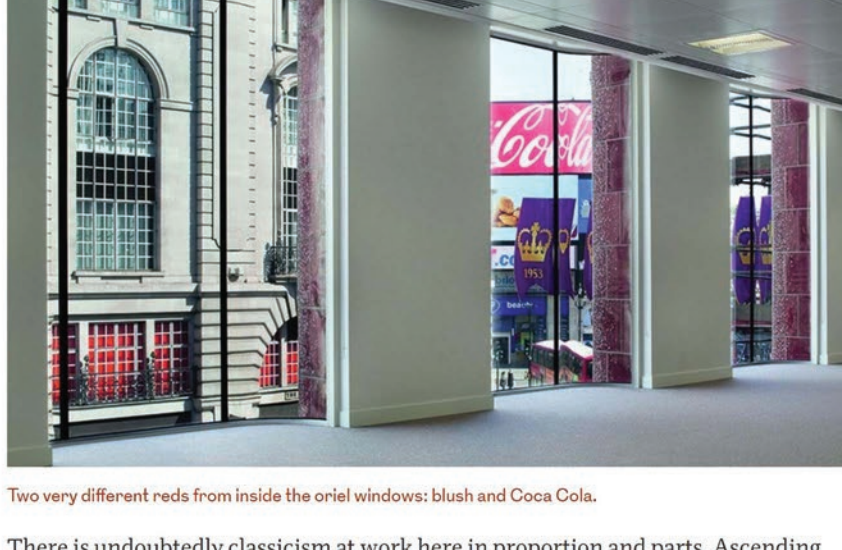
That has been most successful where there was a strong form to respond to. At Finsbury Square Parry’s Scottish Widows contributed the calmest yet most surreptitiously powerful facade to an admittedly jumbled context. At One Eagle Place, Piccadilly, the historic boulevard has given Parry material he loves to work with – and against. The cornice is symbolic of so much in this new addition to the street: the reimposition of the street form, a very different interpretation of classicism, essential ornament. Interestingly, this is also some of the ‘art’ of the building – Richard Deacon’s contribution to the project. If you are not expecting it then it is a shock of colour. The true scale of the cornice is of course imperceptible from street level where the mass of colour has a sense of other, its weight no more than a tree’s crown.



Piccadilly from Regent’s Street to St James’s Church. The Parry project, St James’s Gateway, encompasses the whole of the first block. To the west (right) are Waterhouse’s bank, Emberton’s Simpsons and a more recent project from Robert Adam Architects.

As Eric Parry talks, his references are to Sir Reginald Blomfield, Alfred Waterhouse’s bank in the next block and the grand Swan and Edgar opposite. The urns, dentil friezes and twiddles of these buildings are dispensed with, in favour of a new generation of ornament. The red on the window reveals reads like spray paint. Parry calls it a ‘blush’. He likens it to a made up face, ‘artifice’ to beautify a (north) face like the lights of Piccadilly Circus do. His description of ‘polychromy’ connects the building and lights to high Victorian architecture. To Parry, the fact the cornice and spray were part of the original conception and are fired onto the ceramic makes them a fundamental part of the building (although Parry’s own make up metaphor does suggest that it is applied as much as embedded).

The modernist Simpsons of Piccadilly, now Waterstones, designed by Joseph Emberton, doesn’t fit the narrative of Piccadilly’s cornice compliance. But in a strange way the curve and the lips of its display windows find a resonance with Parry’s oriel windows and oversized first floor sills (which turn the three shop frontages into six bays). It is interesting that Parry decided to design the windows rather than just add glazing in choice positions, as he has also at 50 New Bond Street. They are generously expressive, modelled into what Parry calls a ‘smile’ that dips the sill. Front on they do smile and glimpsed from along Piccadilly the red smiles with them.



Two very different reds from inside the oriel windows: blush and Coca Cola.

There is undoubtedly classicism at work here in proportion and parts. Ascending through the building, the elements of each layer – columns, oriel windows, attic and loggia – either draw together or gently pull apart the rhythm of those below. But, like many of Parry’s other buildings and very unlike its neighbour – 198-202 Piccadilly, completed by self proclaimed classicist Robert Adam in 2007 – the columns do not project from the facade but are cut into it.

This building is not just a facade. That is a small, though very public, part of it. The St James’s Gateway project, part of The Crown Estate’s St James’s masterplan, encompasses a whole block, abutting Blomfield’s bank on the corner of Piccadilly Circus and Piccadilly. Cleaning, clearing and rebuilding on the site mix with new build, after a more radical whole-block approach was dismissed early due to levels and leases.



Into the lobby of One Eagle Place, a picture window offers a view of the red lifts.

Blomfield’s listed Clydesdale Bank is being given a deep clean so it can once again stand proud in its prime corner position on Piccadilly Circus. Along from this were four smaller buildings, built before the height of the cornice and the scale of the street were established. Parry resolved to take down three of them (yes, even in a conservation area) and rework the base of the fourth, a corner building, from the second floor down. Significantly each element of the building – formerly the 1960s Baron outfitters – was removed and then replaced 1700mm higher. ‘Lots of rules were broken,’ he admits. The shift brings the cornice into line with the street and creates a ground floor retail unit with a far more lettable ceiling height.

Round the corner, down the alleyway of Eagle Place and onto Jermyn Street, the ground level drops away by nearly 2m. All these buildings have been reworked with vitrines handsomely poised to display the tailoring goods that have traditionally been sold in Jermyn Street. These continue into Eagle Place, an attempt by Parry to stop it being used as a pissoir. Offices mainly line the western elevation with apartments, in two clusters, above to the east and south east. Blomfield’s listed Barclays’ banking hall, facing onto Haymarket, has been left roughly stripped awaiting a retail fit out.



A terrace with unexpected colour and the distant icon of Big Ben on the other side of the parapet.

It all sounds complicated and the plan and section confirm that it is. But on entering the generous lobby and ascending to the L-shaped office floor it appears simple. Just the few touches allowed by the Cat A fit-out suggest that outside this is something special. The first are the lifts with their red enamel surrounds, and white glass inside. The loos continue the theme with red ceramic handbag shelves (for gents as well as ladies) next to the basins and red glass behind the toilets. Then there are the bay windows curving voluptuously back into the building, displaying the red of the window reveals. The windows do require something of a contortion in the suspended ceiling which swoops up to the facade to ensure it doesn’t cut off the windows in their prime.

“One Eagle Place picks up the strong threads of classicism and expressive, materially rich city buildings”

The core feels a little squeezed but manages to serve both offices and the cluster of apartments for sale. They share an escape stair and the residential lift is twisted just 90°. And speaking off efficiency, the new work has seen significant uplift on the site as a tiny, uneconomic hotel as well as numerous offices and a few shops were replaced. Apartments for rent sit above the bank hall set around a light well of glazed bricks. Here Eric Parry Architects gets to show its attention to detail at a completely different scale, dressing the apartments from handles and bathrooms to fridges, furniture and crockery. Envious good taste.

There is something rather Victorian about the Piccadilly side of One Eagle Place – certainly a sense that it predates the thin facades of modernism. The ceramic laid with lime mortar is part of it, not load bearing but at least a material with depth and presence in front of the steel frame. Here the facade actually manipulates the office space. It feels heretical. Parry tried a more typical office grid of 3m centres which gave him eight bays, but he didn’t feel the rhythm was right. Six (and six bays and six oriel windows) did. So 3.75m centres it is.



The spray effect on the window reveals appears as just an accent from directly in front of the Piccadilly facade, but there is no getting away from the riot of colour that is the cornice.

‘It is not based on the tyranny of the grid,’ says Parry. ‘It comes from an urban point of view.’ A more standard format asserts itself again away from the Piccadilly facade, the material echoes the change as the richly textured grove (Portland) stone takes over, although in uncomfortably harshly-incised joints.

One Eagle Place picks up the strong threads of classicism and expressive, materially rich city buildings that have been seen in iterations from Stirling, Wilford and Associates at Number 1 Poultry to the best Foggo Associates buildings – but with refinement. In less skillful hands this block could easily look clumsy. But classical lessons of scale and proportion, crafted materials and some bravura colour moves make One Eagle Place an unexpectedly human and deeply satisfying piece of city. Can Crown Estates maintain this original, high quality standard of design in the development of the rest of St James’s?

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