

**Inspirational young practice, Gavin Langford Architects, have been commended in the RIBA East's Spirit of Ingenuity Awards 2007.**

*"This single storey extension to the front of a 1950s house is a brave and bold gesture of defiance to conventional thought," commented the Awards' Jury, "The ground floor bedroom projecting out from the house with its mono pitch set at an angle is clad - both roof and walls - in zinc and transforms what was a dull elevation in a suburban street."*

The commendation came for the practice submission under the category of 'Home Award schemes under £250,000' for a domestic extension and improvement scheme in Girton near Cambridge.

*"The quirky idiosyncrasy of this project is a true reflection of brief, context and design aspiration, all squeezed through the usual constraints of a tight budget, and a planning system seemingly obsessed with convention," commented Gavin Langford. "To receive a commendation from the RIBA as part of the 2007 eastern region awards for a domestic scheme endorses the client, design and construction teams' dogged tenacity to see the project become a worthy part of the client's home."*

As well as asking for additional guest accommodation to this large 1950s house, the brief was to improve the existing building ergonomically, visually and environmentally.

The clients are delighted with the result. *"Not only has Gavin's design created very practical and usable interior space, but it has framed the extension within an interesting exterior that nicely complements and improves our existing home and fits well with its surroundings."*

Initial design ideas were to add a new full height stairwell to the front of the house to include a new entrance and make the most of a simple, single, vertical circulation route. This would free up space in the main house and create a naturally lit, user-friendly, dynamic, open central hub to a busy home. The forms

proposed responded to function and ergonomics rather than any predefined stylistic considerations.

Flow of space from the site entrance, and throughout the house has been considered, as well as responding contextually to orientation and private or open views both in and out. The form of the new guest suite reflects its proximity to the site's boundaries, keeping the eaves low and the entrance welcoming, whilst internally volumes are expressed. Materials have been chosen for robust, natural qualities, which age well with minimal maintenance.

The final scheme consists of a new entrance, separate guest rooms and vertical circulation to the front of the house, with stairs to the refurbished attic moved to the rear. The new work comprises a terne-coated, steel clad, blockwork and timber framed structure, utilising thermal mass and high levels of insulation. Full height glazing to the new entrance and stairwell articulates its position as focal point and link between the guest suite extension and the existing house. Views into the guest rooms are controlled by a new screen wall and external solar shading.

The existing house has had new windows with a natural, lime-based render to the existing front elevation. This provides a neutral backdrop to the new building work and updates the house visually without major upheaval for the client. There are further extensive alterations internally, including a new kitchen, a new family bathroom, new floor finishes, solar thermal roof panels for water heating, and a new high efficiency boiler. Externally the driveway has been completely renovated and re-surfaced, allowing a simple, clean, uncluttered space, and also incorporates new surface water drainage with rainwater recycling facilities.

The resulting building responds to its context and articulates its use by creating a variety of visual and spatial experiences, offering character and interest with its use of materials, control of natural light and interplay of geometry.

**END**

### ***Notes to Editors***

1. For further information relating to this news release and photographs please contact Claire Lalaguna at Satellite MPR  
t: 01903 885 414 e: [claire@satellitempr.com](mailto:claire@satellitempr.com)
2. Gavin Langford Architects - [www.gavinlangfordarchitects.com](http://www.gavinlangfordarchitects.com) - Call Gavin Langford on 08707 202 964.

3. The RIBA East Spirit of Ingenuity Awards is a regional awards scheme and an annual event aimed at recognising architectural design excellence in the counties of Bedfordshire, Cambridgeshire, Suffolk, Hertfordshire, Norfolk and Essex (excluding London Boroughs.)
4. Out of a total of 47 projects entered in May 2007 from architects and their domestic, commercial and public sector clients, 18 made it onto the Awards shortlist.

Satellite MPR  
Old Bank House  
1 High Street  
Arundel  
West Sussex BN18 9AD

t: 01903 885 414  
e: [enquiries@satellitempr.com](mailto:enquiries@satellitempr.com)  
w: [www.satellitempr.com](http://www.satellitempr.com)

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