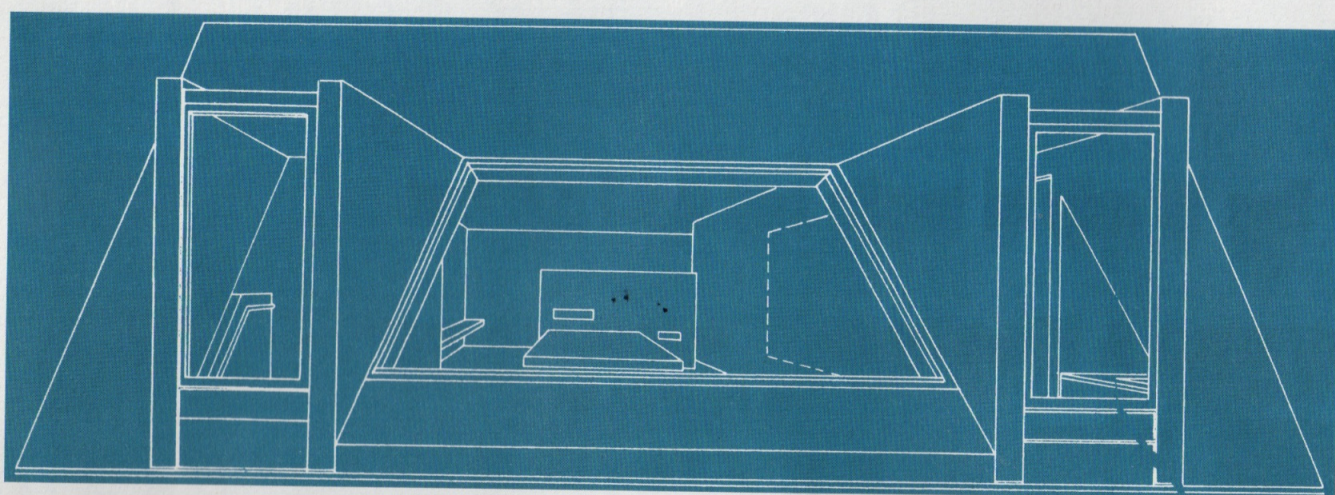


SMALL WORKS Azman Owens Architects' loft conversion, London NW8

Top of the town house



Alterations to the roof were limited to two dormers and a rooflight – used by the architect as an organising device inside.



New staircase is located within dormer.



Rear: dormers and kitchen.



The other dormer accommodates the bathroom.

PHOTOS: KEITH COULTE

Loft conversions have been neglected by architects for too long, leaving the skyline punctuated by the ugly additions of local builders. Azman Owens Architects' shows just how rigorous such projects can be. John Welsh reports.

Two dormer windows were the only alterations to the roof of a Victorian terrace house permitted by Westminster's planning authority. Yet Azman Owens Architects has managed to make order out of such inflexibility in a loft conversion, part of the refurbishment of an entire house in north London.

The clients' brief for the loft conversion was to provide a master bedroom with a roof terrace and bathroom – not too radical a suggestion. But the house is in a conservation area that does not permit any

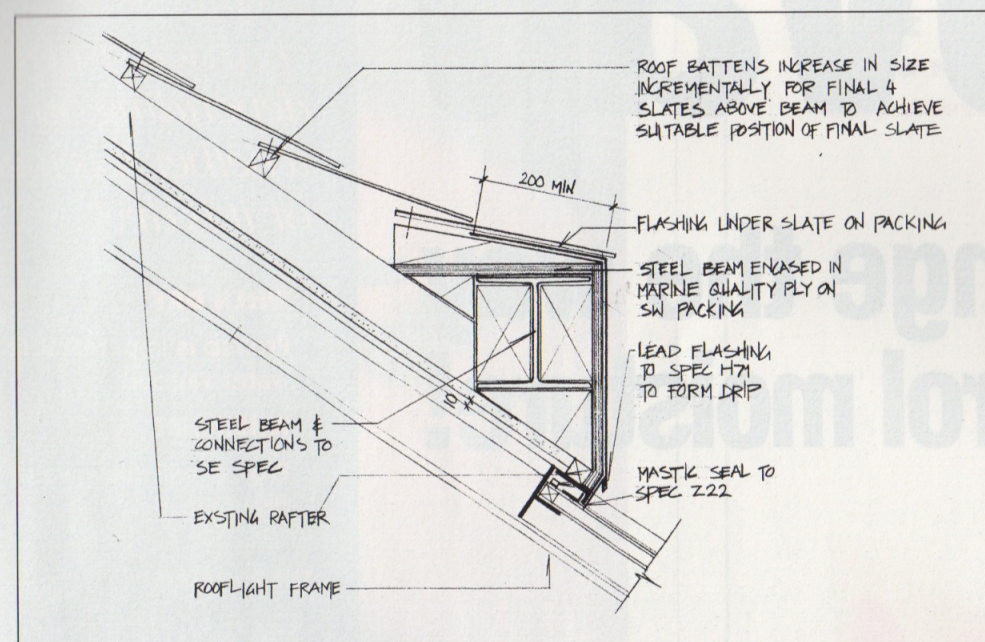
change in the pitch of a roof, restricting any alterations to two dormers and – if you are lucky – a rooflight to the rear.

Of course Azman Owens' original proposal to create an outdoor terrace between two dormers was swiftly rejected by the planners. An electronically operated, single-paned rooflight between the two dormers was proposed instead, essential for the success of the project in bringing light to the new bedroom and views out over west London.

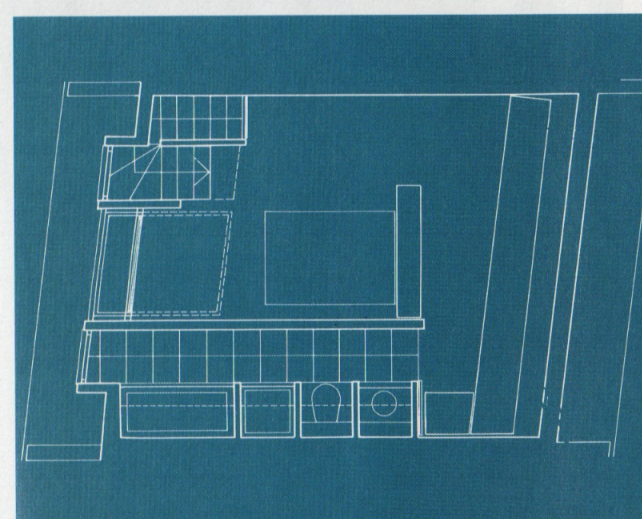
A new flight of stairs up to the loft is located within one

dormer and the circulation for the bathroom within the other. The washbasin, WC, shower and bathtub are placed in a strict line beside the circulation spine like compartments in a train carriage. The space in between the two dormers is left clear to become the master bedroom which, with the window open, feels like an outdoor terrace.

The single-paned rooflight, operated by a 250v motor and reducing gear box, is opened by a stainless steel cable running along its sides and bottom. Aluminium



Construction detail to skylight: a smooth transition between slate and glass.



Loft floorplan: stairs, bedroom and bathroom (top to bottom).

channels, fixed to the ceiling, conceal the steel tracks on which the moving frame glides, its guides and wheels located on the rooflight itself. The window can be opened fully or partially for ventilation.

Dormers are not traditionally the most effective addition to a loft, providing little additional floor space or a greater sense of space. But Azman Owens has turned an edict into an opportunity, exploiting the dormers as a rigorous organising device for the loft conversion as a whole.

Cost Specification

Costs	
Total	£110,000

Specifications

Loft
Electrically operated sliding rooflight by Diverse Engineering (reader enquiry no 101). Hard Maple 'grade one' planks in loft bedroom by Hardwood Flooring Co (enquiry no 102). Gill Tube Radiator by Radiating Style (enquiry no 103). Quadrant QT12 Track Light fixed on bespoke pole by PROluma (enquiry no 104). Stone floor in bathroom is Pietra Laro Grey from Stone Age (enquiry no 105). 'Alatherm Pisces' towel warmer also by Radiating Style (enquiry no 103). Recessed floor lights by Erco (enquiry no 106).

Kitchen

Stone floor is Pietra Laro Beige, also by Stone Age (enquiry no 105). 'Pretuff' sandblasted glass to pantry doors by Preedy Glass (enquiry no 107). 'Stremier' hinges to shower door in loft bathroom and knobs to kitchen pantry doors by Prefit (enquiry no 108). Quadrant QT12 Track Light fixed on bespoke pole also by PROluma (enquiry no 104). Kitchen appliances by Smeg (enquiry no 109).

CREDITS

Client Samantha Harrison and Suresh Sharma

Architect Azman Owens Architects (Ferhan Azman, Joyce Owens, Mark Rowe)

Main Contractor Varbud Construction Co

Structural engineer Dewhurst Macfarlane & Partners



The new kitchen, with its full height cupboards and sandblasted glass doors (far left), is a glazed infill structure between an existing rear extension and new party wall.