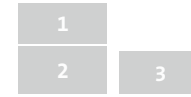




LONDON
COUNTRY UK
ARCHITECT Edgley Design YEAR 2014



1 Pear Tree House sits in a former Victorian orchard. 2 The house comprises two timber-clad volumes separated by a courtyard. 3 Inside, timber is matched by polished concrete floors for a sleek finish.

PEAR TREE HOUSE

Today, you would be hard pressed to find an empty plot of land to build on in London and, should you do so, prices are often prohibitive for the average household. So when prospective owners and their architects embark on a journey to design and build their own home, they often have to resort to creative solutions. Working with backyard plots and 'hidden' sites is not uncommon; in fact, it is becoming the norm with regard to new builds in packed residential areas.

This is the route taken by architect Jake Edgley, when he began looking for the right plot to build his own family home. Upon discovering a backland lot around a 100-year-old pear tree in the remnants of what used to be a Victorian orchard in South London, Edgley knew he had come across the site of his future home. He planned the building around the existing tree, both to protect it and to use it to articulate open and closed areas in his design. The internal courtyard created around the tree brings light and air into the heart

of the house. This gesture also turns the house inward towards this open space and away from the surrounding terraced houses.

The linear floor plan follows the long and narrow site in a rather intuitive layout. Divided by the central courtyard into two distinct volumes, the house features a ground-level playroom and four bedrooms, including a generous master suite, above in the front wing, and open-plan living spaces topped by a guest room and study within the rear wing. The two parts of the house are linked by a glazed passage through the courtyard that acts as a bridge.

These two volumes are punctuated by further clearings and light wells, and are flanked by gardens at the front and back of the site. Planted roofs add extra greenery to the complex; you could easily forget that this house sits within one of the most populated capitals in the world. They also cleverly reduce visibility of the building from neighbouring houses and, equally importantly, increase the project's





biodiversity, supporting existing local plant and animal life. Using tactile natural materials, Edgley sought to reference the site's historical use as an orchard by working with a vertical timber framework and wood finishes in both natural grains and a dark stained panelling effect. At the same time, smooth paving and polished concrete floors underline the house's contemporary character and minimalist interiors. Full-height, slim, gold trims around the windows and vent panels add an extra edge, but they also 'break up the mass of these elevations', explain the architects, making this humble home not only considerate to its owner's needs, but also respectful of its neighbours and surrounding nature.



4 The courtyard is arranged around the house's namesake, a 100-year-old pear tree. 5 Vertical timber framework and metal details highlight the contemporary style of the interior.

