

Semi-underground House At Pentland Avenue, Edinburgh

RICHARD MURPHY ARCHITECTS



Façade at Night

We were approached by the clients who live in a large Edwardian house on a steeply sloping site in Colinton, to ask for our help in finding a site for a new house. We immediately observed that the site was potentially at the bottom of their garden and although the local plan in Colinton specifically rules out development within the back gardens of large villas we were able to persuade Planning Officers and Councillors that the design of this particular house would be virtually unseen from both its neighbours and the original house itself.

The design uses the steep slope to make a semi-underground residence, the roof of which is planted with cotoneaster so that from above it appears to be an extension of the original garden. The single aspect nature of the house concentrates around a semi-circular garden terrace onto which all the main spaces; living, kitchen/dining and master bedroom look with additional light being provided by south facing roof lights. The design is a split level with the kitchen/dining, study and two guest bedrooms at a slightly higher level. Externally the whole building is clad in stone to match surrounding garden walls.

The project was completed in May 2004 and is a particularly interesting example of how design thinking can overcome the perceived rigidity of planning structures.

Other Details

Architects Richard Murphy, Craig Amy

Engineers SKM Anthony Hunts

Engineers	JRM Architects
Quantity Surveyor	Thomson Bethune
Contractor	Thomas Johnstone Ltd
Construction Cost	£545,000
Client	Neil and Marion Thomson

Awards

2006 Daily Telegraph Best Residential Architecture Award

Press

December 2007	Leadinglight	Selfbuild And Design
December 2007	Going Underground	Grand Designs
January 2007	Ground Force	Homebuilding & Renovating
25 Nov 2006	Best Residential Architecture Award	The Daily Telegraph
12 Nov 2006	Secret In The Garden	The Sunday Times Home Magazine
February 2006	A Hidden Treasure	Homes & Interiors Scotland
5 May 2005	Underground Moves	Architects' Journal
April / May 2005	Beyond The Garden Wall	Dwell Magazine

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