



## Snooker Multi Flat

London

Year : 2020 (Permission Granted)

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Unagru obtained planning permission to extend and convert a tired minor warehouse building into a mixed-use eight-flat development. Working with the client, our planning consultant Hollins Planning and Ealing's planning department, we devised several schemes that grew from six to eight flats. The site and the building are extremely complex. The site wraps around a functioning Snooker hall, with often overlapping escape routes. Part of the ground floor could only be minimally affected by construction as it was leased.

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### Background

Our client owned a substantial warehouse building wrapped around the Snooker Hall on Broadway in Greenford, London. The two buildings, with different owners had gradually merged on some floors. Thus, the warehouse building served as a service staircase, storage space and, in some areas, was an integral part of the Snooker's main hall. The warehouse building itself was erected in a succession of stages and resulted from a combination of more than one building. It had a deceivingly small presence on The Broadway, with a two-storey elevation of very poor quality and design; it then extended south towards the rear of the plot, where it overlooked a significant school ground. The composite building also had two accesses, one from the main road and a service entrance at the rear reached through a small alley. A retail unit on the front ground floor also partially occupied the building.

### The scheme

The brief was to partially demolish and partially extend the existing building while preserving the ground floor commercial unit on Broadway (the works could not impact the unit). We approached the local planning authority with a master plan and massing proposal highlighting the area's prominence and propensity to development. We also showed how the building we were designing could re-establish a pattern of three-storey buildings along Broadway. The proposal placed the bulk of the development at the rear of the Snooker Hall, taking advantage of the exceptional opportunity provided by the unused south portion of the building facing extensive school grounds with almost in-existent impact on the neighbouring buildings towered by the Snooker Hall.

The initial scheme, comprising six flats received planning permission, thanks to the construction relationship we built with the planning department. We tackled all the planners' reservations through design solutions that give character to the building. The provision of amenity space on the roof, ensures all the levels of the building are inhabited. A very efficient use of the ground floor for bicycle and waste storage has determined the design of the façade on this side. In time and through further conversations with the planners, we expanded the development, bringing the original six units to eight. The building will have various flat types to take advantage of the complex layout, the required setbacks, and constrained core locations, as well as as a result of conversations with the planning department.

### The building

The highly complex boundary conditions (contested or unclear in some areas, with odd overlapping levels) were an important constraint for the design. To secure the required circulation, access, and means of escaping, we had to design the new building starting from the core and design the cores in three dimensions with a complex articulation. The flats are designed to provide an exceptional quality of life, dual aspects where possible, generous living, and various outlooks.

The treatment of the massing and the elevations responds to the context. We valued the dual nature of the building, therefore treating the two portions of the building accordingly, with string courses providing some continuity. The facade on the board Broadway was treated as a civic architecture with classical proportions, symmetry and, in one design iteration, a loggia to frame the top floor setback. The symmetry was a reference to the context where

buildings of similar proportions and symmetrical facades framed the more urban section of The Broadway. The south elevation has a freer and more informal composition, responding to the natural setting and making the most of the views. The material selection shifted between grey and red bricks with same-colour GRC and precast concrete accents. The final decision was to honour the context with a combination of red brick, dark red GRC and dark red precast concrete elements.

Planning permission granted in 2020.

Unagru Limited was retained as client agent and quality control, collaborating with a delivery practice. The scheme was sold with planning permission in 2021.

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