

# Holmes Road Studios / Kentish Town

Holmes Road Studios in Kentish Town is a holistic homeless facility opened in early 2020. It was commissioned by Camden Council and the facility was designed by Peter Barber. Holmes Road Studios are located on previous site of Holmes Road Hostel.

## THE ARCHITECT

Peter Barber is specialising in domestic projects and social housing. He runs a small practice, located in a 'Dickensian' building in London's Kings Cross. Many of his design adopt his 'street' philosophy where the community / neighbourhood are at heart of design (Donnybrook Quarter, Hackney, 2006). He previously designed developments with a courtyard too (McGrath Road, Newham, 2019). End users and their needs are at centre of his designs, he is known for speaking to communities while developing the projects. Homes Road Studios has been awarded a prestigious RIBA award 2021, The Guardian Top 10 Buildings of 2016, NLA Wellbeing Award of 2016 and

## THE DESIGN

- Internal area of development measures 1575m<sup>2</sup>.
- Accommodation in 59 units for 59 people.
- Most of housing placed in terraced micro-home brick cottages surrounding the courtyard garden in the centre.
- Design influenced by 10th century almshouses.
- The end user at heart of the design - often vulnerable homeless people, with complex needs.
- Each resident to have own front door, both giving sense of security and social as opening to the common, open space.
- Vibrant door colours give each small abode individuality and creates a cheerful atmosphere in the courtyard.
- Double height ceiling giving a sense of space in the micro homes and allowing enough space for a kitchen/dining area, bathroom and a bedroom on mezzanine above the bathroom.
- Potential psychological needs thought about, for example an opening in low wall next to bed, so the door can be seen, giving reassurance (as seen in Fig. 3).
- Brick façades, topped with a wavy parapet intended to give the space a domestic scale. Interior lit by window in door, circular window above and skylight in a vaulted ceiling.
- Central courtyard garden to be a social space as well as an opportunity to develop gardening skills and learn about nutrition. Working in the garden intended to reward residents with sense of ownership. Space for a small garden building / private space for conversations or counselling.



Fig. 1 Holmes Road Studios location.



Fig. 2 Peter Barber at his Kings Cross Studio.

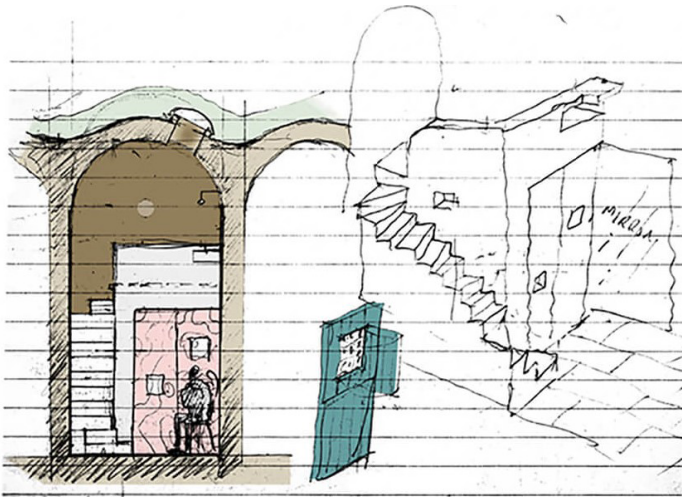


Fig. 3 Development Sketch.

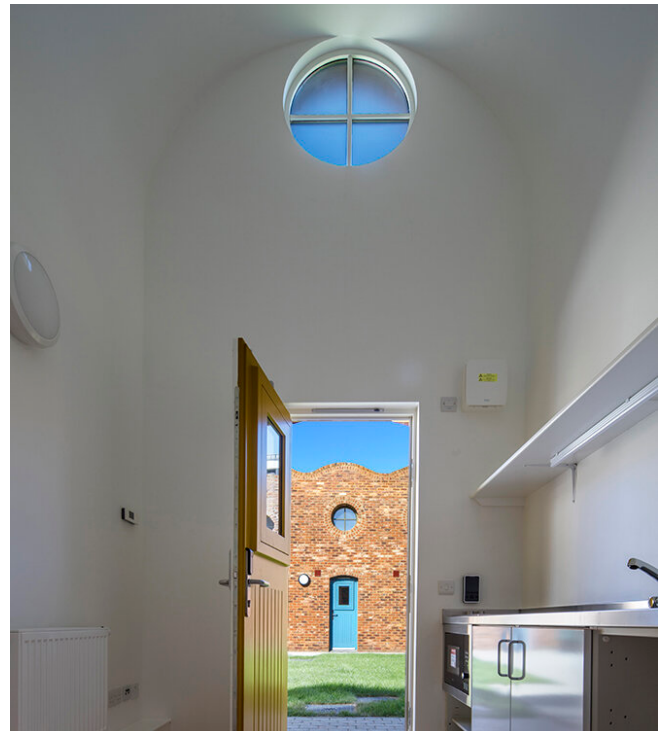


Fig. 4 Interior.



Fig. 5 Holmes Road Studios, a homeless facility in north London.