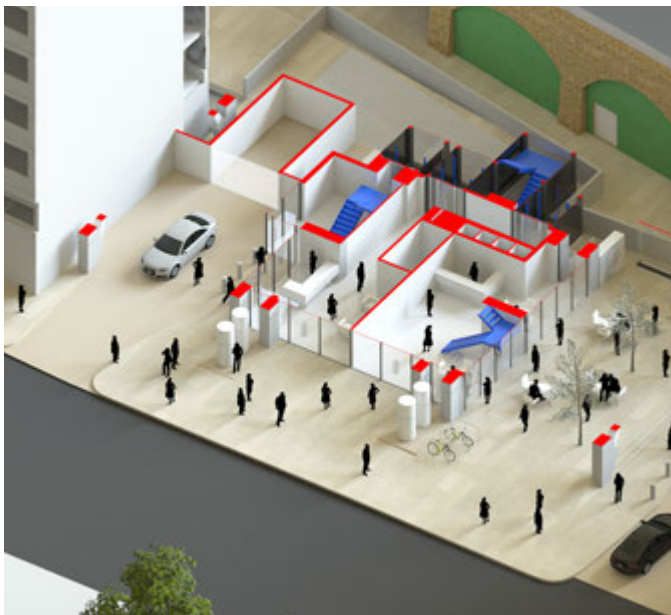




Merano

London - Built



Location
London, UK

Date
2011 - 2019

Client
St James Group

Gross Internal Area
Office: 837m²
Cafe: 100m²
Residential: 6100 m²

Structural Engineer
Ramboll

Landscape Architect
Gillespies LLP

2019
RIBA National Award

2019
RIBA London Award



The three bay plan form of the proposal creates an elegant building with interesting roof profile which breaks up the existing 'wall like development' and provides a successful integrated public space.

Lambeth council planning officer, Merano

Located on the Albert Embankment, opposite the Tate Britain and within sight of the Houses of Parliament, Merano offers a high quality, mixed-use development, including apartments, offices and a cafe. The building is formed of three stepped bays, providing a dynamic skyline of varying heights in contrast to the existing 'wall' of monotonous and dilapidated developments that occupy this area.

At the base of the building, a four-storey public space offers a café and access through to Vauxhall Pleasure Gardens via Tinworth Street. The height of this public space is on par with the neighbouring Rose pub which is part of the Albert Embankment conservation area. This project creates a strong visual presence along the riverfront and acts as a gateway to east Lambeth as well as a natural gathering space, overlooking Albert Embankment Gardens.

All apartments greatly benefit from the east-west orientation of the site. The vertical circulation core is placed on the eastern elevation, allowing bedrooms and winter gardens to be placed on the eastern side so that they can appreciate the morning sun and living spaces to be positioned on the western side of the building where they

can enjoy views out to the river and sunsets in the evening. The different uses of space within the building are arranged vertically, with commercial office spaces occupying the three floors above the café and public piazza and 46 dwellings taking up the upper levels, consisting of a mixture of private and affordable units.

The structure of the building is a simple concrete frame with steel bracing used to provide stability. This allows for the east and west facades to be primarily glass – creating a lightweight, transparent envelope – and enables open and flexible floor plates. Balconies and winter gardens are formed of a lightweight steel structure with colour applied to the undersides and flank walls, which brighten the exterior in contrast to the building's monochromatic surroundings.

Graham Stirk, Partner in charge of Merano, commented: "We have designed a highly flexible residential building that is tailored to its fantastic riverside setting. Its dramatically stepping profile responds to its immediate context and frames a much needed new public space at its base."