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Renovation and extension for the Space House

Squire & Partners in London

Historic England is calling this "one of the most important redevelopment projects of our time." They are referring to *Space House* in London, which takes its name from its futuristic façade and the general hype surrounding the moon landing in the late 1960s. According to plans by the local firm of **Squire & Partners,** the Brutalist icon and its annex were not only renovated but also expanded.

Initially known as *One Kemble Street* , the complex stood empty for almost seven years after its completion in 1968. It was originally designed by **George Marsh** of **R. Seifert & Partners** . He planned the building for the entrepreneur Harry Hyams, who took advantage of the property boom of the 1960s and had several office towers built in London during this time. Together with R. Seifert & Partners, he also built *Centre Point* . In keeping with his design philosophy, *Space House* was constructed almost entirely from prefabricated concrete elements. These elements were not only inexpensive but also served as scaffolding during the construction work. The ensemble, consisting of a 16-story cylinder and a seven-story cuboid, occupies a relatively central site directly on Covent Garden. It was first occupied by the Civil Aviation Authority (CAA) in 1975. Around the turn of the millennium, the building underwent its first energy-efficient renovation. In 2015, Historic England placed Space House on the list of listed buildings. After the lease with the CAA expired, Seaforth Land acquired the building from the previous owner, for just under £163 million, according to media reports. Shortly thereafter, Seaforth Land commissioned Squire & Partners to refurbish and expand it. The ensemble continues to be used primarily for offices. A tasteful website also presents lifestyle offerings such as wellness, a clubhouse, and restaurants. As part of the work, the layers of the initial renovation were removed, and the foyers of both buildings were completely redesigned. What is visibly new, however, are above all the additional storeys: although they are deliberately staggered back and thus hardly noticeable from the street space, their abstracted cubature detaches them from the uniform facade design of the existing building and gives it a new appearance.

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To create the roof edges, several prefabricated elements were removed and cut back. The green roof was removed, and the ceiling on the former highest floor was lowered. In addition to utility rooms, this will house a new roof terrace and rooftop bar. Including the additional storey, the ensemble will have a gross floor area of approximately 25,000 square meters after the renovation. The planners implemented the energy-efficient renovation using high-performance glazing and a water cooling system integrated into the existing concrete ceiling. *(tg)*

Photos: *Gareth Gardner*

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