



# A Piece Of Piccadilly Circus

*These airy, bright and stylish apartments in London's sought-after St James' district offer contemporary city dwelling in one of the UK capital's most historic and exciting areas*

BY GIOVANNA DUNMALL IMAGES COURTESY OF ST JAMES' GATEWAY

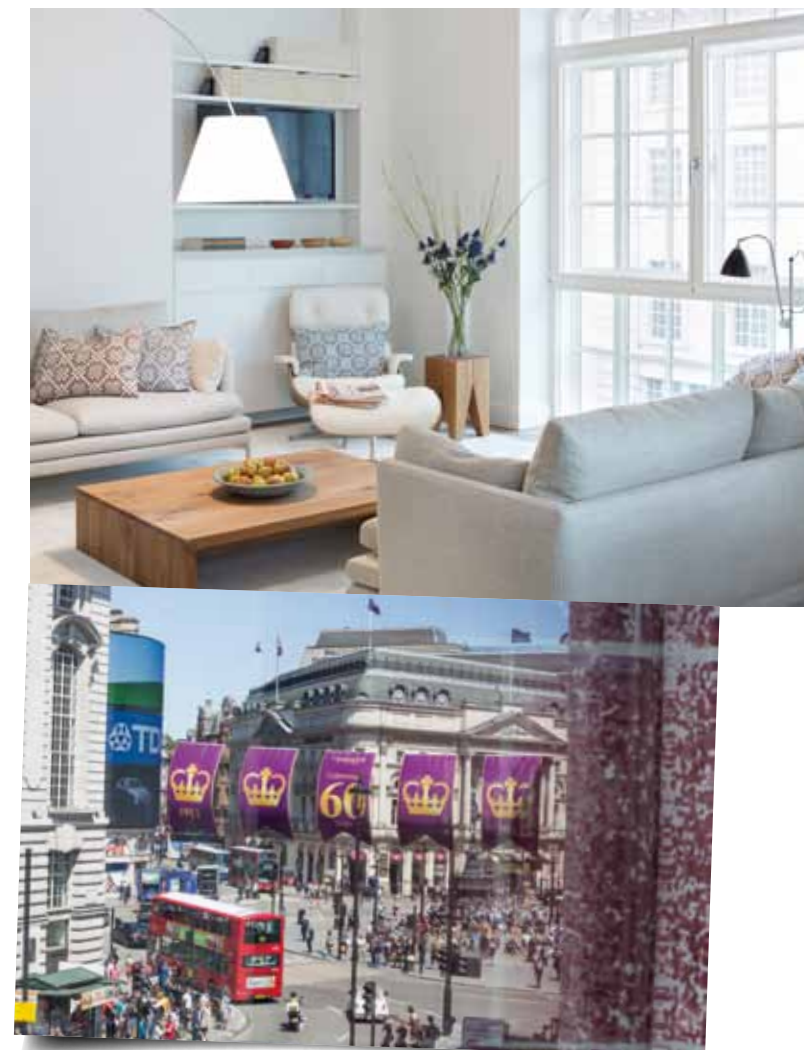
**N**amed after the royal palace, the London district of St James' lies between four city landmarks— Trafalgar Square, Piccadilly Circus, Green Park and Buckingham Palace — and is known for its historic shop fronts and buildings, luxury goods, art galleries (the area has a staggering 62 of them) and a Christopher Wren church. It is a place Londoners and visitors go to for art, culture and fine dining, high-end hotels and clubs and a distinctly British array of independent stores and boutiques. It doesn't always appear to be a particularly desirable place to live, however. For one thing it's noisy - the traffic on Piccadilly is loud – and it's also chaotic; Piccadilly Circus is lined with walls of neon flashing billboards and throngs of tourists gather there day and night.

**ABOVE**  
The development offers opportunity for elegant living amidst the hustle of Piccadilly Circus

**OPPOSITE PAGE, CLOCKWISE TOP LEFT**  
Views of the Big Ben can be enjoyed from various rooms; The rooms are appointed with designer furniture; A massive plan is underway to redevelop the St. James district; A few of the units also offer outdoor spaces

**Regeneration And Redevelopment**  
Yet the Crown Estate's £500 million plan to redevelop this conservation area may just change all that. The Crown Estate, which owns almost all the freehold for Regent Street and 50 per cent of the buildings in St James', hopes to woo companies and residential tenants to the area alike with the allure of cheaper rents than in neighbouring Mayfair or Belgravia and St James' amazing location. Aside from some of the best retail and dining in the country, it's a very short walk to uber buzzy and happening London district of Soho just north of Piccadilly Circus.

**A Multi-use Scheme With Artistic Touches**  
The first stage of the regeneration has seen London-based Eric Parry architects



refurbish, restore and rebuild a huge block at the east end of Piccadilly into a new scheme that offers 60,000sq ft of office accommodation as well as some retail space and 16 residential apartments on Jermyn Street (11 for rent, five for sale). As part of this £100 million St James's Gateway redevelopment a section of the original Portland façade has been retained, while the contemporary elements are by Eric Parry Architects. It was also Eric Parry's idea to get acclaimed British artist Richard Deacon on board to create a dramatic polychromatic cornice at the top of the façade of the new building structure. Another sculpture by British artist Stephen Cox adorns the corner building facing Jermyn Street and Eagle Place.

**Loft-like Spaces With High Ceilings**  
The apartments are in the middle of all the action. As project architect Merit Claussen, an Associate Director at Eric Parry Architects, says with a smile, "They are fantastic for people-watching and for city dwellers." The apartments

**"As the building was originally a purpose-built office building for Barclays Bank, the floor-to-ceiling heights exceed those of most residential buildings."**

for rent are particularly alluring, for several reasons. Located in a late 1920s listed building in the Beaux Arts style, six out of the 11 apartments for rent offer views of Piccadilly Circus, and two offer outdoor space (two also offer glimpses of Big Ben). Two of the biggest selling points of the flats were the imposing windows says architect and designer Eric Parry, and the generous floor-to-ceiling heights, which were achieved after the existing suspended ceilings were removed. "As the building was originally a purpose-built office building for Barclays Bank, the floor-to-ceiling heights exceed those of most residential buildings," he says. "The flat rolled steel windows, many of which are of considerable height, are a window type





often found in industrial buildings and lend a loft-like atmosphere to the spaces.” He continues. “Both, room heights and windows, offered the unique opportunity to create living spaces that breathe air and light, and associate space; qualities needed for creativity that are in contrast to the surrounding dense and busy urban environment - particularly on the Soho side of Regent Street.”

#### **Preservation And Modernisation**

“We had to preserve all of the former structure that were not later additions,” says Parry, “and there were two main areas with listed original features that we entirely preserved.” One is the former banking hall (that will be used for retail) and the other are the bank’s grand former boardrooms located on the second floor and adorned with coved sections and period mouldings. These were turned into two flats; the largest weighs in at a massive 1,700 sq ft and offers glimpses of Big Ben. The interior architects won a battle to install new windows and in some cases added an extra layer of glazing – or secondary windows - too. “The replacement windows had to be visually ‘like for

#### **OPPOSITE PAGE, CLOCKWISE FROM TOP**

Light colours and a neutral palette helps to bring natural light into the apartments; Suave interiors add touches of sophistication in the spaces; Contemporary additions seek to keep the historic spaces from looking dated

#### **ABOVE**

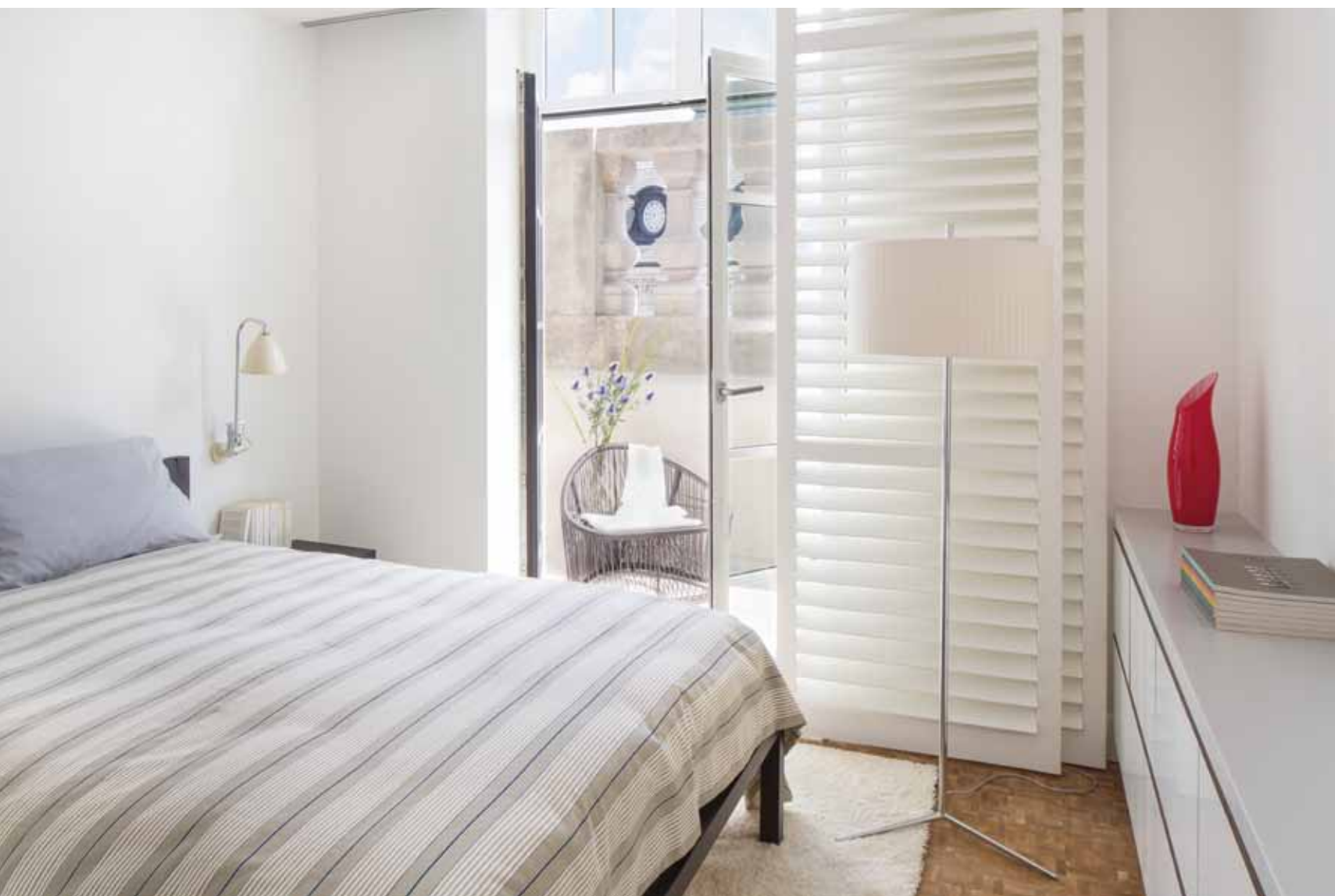
The units come ready equipped with designer trappings and furnishing

like’ with only small variations where inevitable as the building is listed and shares the façade with the neighbouring building which remained in office use,” explains Parry. “The secondary windows on the Regent Street side are set back by 150mm, and kept as simple as possible with the street facing frames sprayed in a dark grey colour to make them ‘invisible’ from the outside.” The result are high-performance, aesthetically appealing and unobtrusive windows, that cut out almost all sound. Interestingly, Gibson says all the Regent Street flats (which are the noisiest) went immediately. “Most people would say ‘Are you mad, I can’t live on Regent Street, I want to sleep’. But if the windows are this good and you have comfort cooling then why not?”

#### **Cosmopolitan Furniture And Atmosphere**

The furniture is recognisably European and the look and style is cosmopolitan, airy and bright. “All furniture is from high-end manufacturers selected for longevity and timelessness,” says Parry. “Each (2- and 3-bed) unit features a signature piece that is easily recognisable for everyone no matter of





**“Each (2- and 3-bed) unit features a signature piece that is easily recognisable for everyone no matter of the cultural background, which is either the Eames chair and ottoman or the Egg chair by Arne Jacobsen, both in their leather version for beautiful ageing.”**

the cultural background, which is either the Eames chair and ottoman or the Egg chair by Arne Jacobsen, both in their leather version for beautiful ageing. Those signature pieces are supported by sofas by Italian manufacturer Zanotta, coffee and side tables and dining tables by German wood manufacturer E15 and dining chairs by Thonet.” There is also a very fresh Mediterranean feel to the apartments with pastel blues and browns (in the cushions and bedcovers) and full-length white shutters. The interiors blend chic style and bespoke sculptural door handles with more industrial elements such as hard-wearing blond oak end grain flooring.

In terms of tenants Oliver Gibson, Director of Development and Investment at W.A. Ellis (the estate agent marketing the rental properties) says the rental flats are being targeted at employees of local professional

**OPPOSITE PAGE, CLOCKWISE FROM TOP LEFT**

Large balcony windows are part of the draw for potential homeowners; Pastel colours add warmth to the bedroom; Modern accessories give the spaces a vibrant and chic vibe

**LEFT TO RIGHT**

Sleek bathroom fittings add to the elegance of the apartments’ design; Plenty of storage spaces abound within the domain; The facade of this landmark building in the neighbourhood had been carefully preserved

companies and singles and couples. Among the tenants the nationalities include Singaporean, Chinese, German, Swiss and British, while on the buying side the two flats that have gone were snapped up by Hong Kong Chinese and Singaporean purchasers. “What is fascinating about St James’s,” according to James Cooksey, Head of The Crown Estate’s St James’s Portfolio, “is that it means different things to different people and consequently we are attracting interest from a global audience, all from different walks of life.” What’s more, the rental block also offers some of the most unusual accommodation in London. “As far as we are aware, it offers the only apartments that boast a view out over one of London’s most spectacular landmarks, Piccadilly Circus,” says Cooksey. **H**

**15 Jermyn Street**

**DEVELOPMENT:**

St. James’ Gateway

**NO OF UNITS:**

16 apartments (11 rental, five for sale)

**CONFIGURATION:**

Rental units range from one- to three bedrooms, including two penthouses with outdoor terrace space)

Sales units include two single bedroom and three two and three bedrooms

**COST OF RENTAL:**

£700 to £2,500 per week

**COST OF SALES:**

£1,600,000 to £4,150,000

**WEBSITES:**

[www.waellis.co.uk](http://www.waellis.co.uk)





AJ

04.07.13

# Eric Parry's Eagle Place

A dandy on Piccadilly

PLUS John Robertson's 199 Bishopsgate retrofit

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## A Mayfair dandy

Like a jazzed-up suit, Eric Parry's Eagle Place redevelopment cuts a showy dash in London's fashionable West End, writes *Jay Merrick*

In a period when facadism has given a great deal of British architecture bogus auras of quality and vivacity, it is daring for an architect to base the meaning of an important building in one of London's most cosmopolitan streets on what are, essentially, uncompromisingly vivacious surface effects.

There is a good deal more than that to the architecture of Eric Parry's redevelopment of five buildings on the Crown Estates site at the eastern end of London's Piccadilly. Yet the decorated facade of the centrepiece building so dominates the ensemble that it has effectively created a new and highly extraverted commercial building type in London.

In pragmatic terms, the £45 million Eagle Place development, on the south side of Piccadilly in territory defined architecturally by Nash and Blomfield, has delivered a skilful 11,500m<sup>2</sup> arrangement of ground floor retail frontages, optimised office floorplates, luxurious apartments, and an overall BREEM Excellent rating.

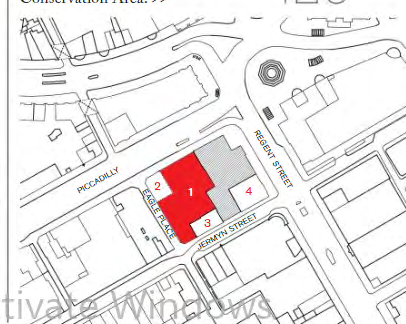
This has involved the demolition

and raising of the building at the corner of Piccadilly and Eagle Place; the demolition and redevelopment of 212-214 Piccadilly, 3-4 Eagle Place, and 18-21 Jermyn Street behind a retained facade; and the retention and internal remodelling of 27 Regent Street, which now contains luxury apartments designed by the practice. The first four elements are in the St James's Conservation Area, the latter in the Regent Street Conservation Area. >>

### Location plan

1. One Eagle Place, west building
2. 210-211 Piccadilly, rebuilt facades
3. 20 Jermyn Street, retained facade
4. 15 Jermyn Street, listed building

0 10m N



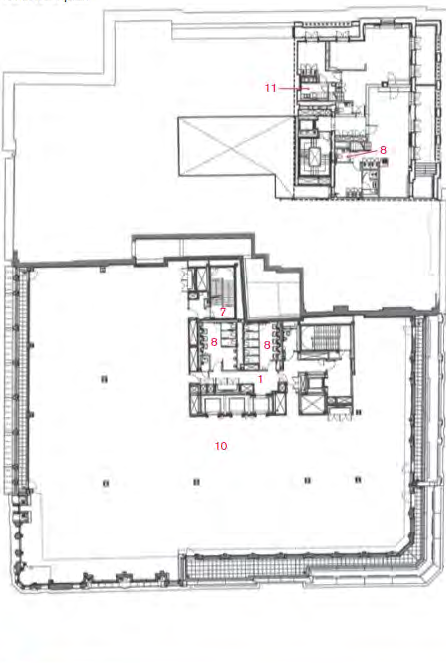
DAVID BUTLER



Ground floor plan

Typical floor plan

Sixth floor plan



This degree of functional worth has become a given in Parry's commercial work over the past decade. It's more challenging to judge Eagle Place in terms of his overarching interests in the city as an amalgam of history, architectural artefact and artifice, and art in general. Parry brings these conditions together with an outré combination of precision and ambiguity.

The defining centrepiece of the

Parry, who has introduced a Crayola sheen to Piccadilly, is hard to define

1. Office reception
2. Residential lobby/ reception
3. Resident bike store
4. Bin store
5. Retail unit
6. Service corridor
7. Escape stair
8. Toilets
9. Lightwell
10. Offices
11. Bathroom

scheme is the main Piccadilly facade, equivalent to a Savile Row suit coat cut and sewn by Anderson & Sheppard, and then jazzed up by Oswald Boateng. The well-known British architect who suggested to me that Parry's ribbed and faïenced extension of Bath's Holburne Museum was 'simply vulgar' will regard the elevation of the 212-214 Piccadilly segment as paroxysmal proof of his opinion.

The Piccadilly facade is ordered like a commercial palazzo: a plinth of ground floor retail; a band of Nash-like mezzanine windows; a Blomfield-inspired layer of double-height windows with inserted, one storey-high oriel; deeply-punched windows suggesting a *piano nobile* under the

cornice; and an attic level recessed behind a loggia. The horizontal ordering is based on a 3.75m grid that produces six bays.

This is the most startling major facade in London since the PoMo-Gothic blancmange off Fenchurch Street known as both Minster, and Munster, Court; and we might also compare its sheer visual voltage to James Stirling's No.1 Poultry.

For an architect so fascinated by the poetic depths of Adolphe Appia's 19th-century stage set designs, the Piccadilly facade comes as a surprise. The tidy surrealities of Parry's faïenced elevations at the Holburne, and in New Bond Street, have been upstaged by a stage-flat. It's the apotheosis of Parry's



Above Eagle Place office facade  
Left View of entrance lobby

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familiar combinations of refined decorousness, artistic decor and, most significantly, experimental instincts that have already produced inversions of classical and Corbusian orders in the elevations of his Bath and Finsbury Square buildings.

There is something temporally tense about the Holburne's deliberately hyper-distinct juxtaposition of 18th- and 21st-century architecture. In Piccadilly, the tension is greater, despite a facade that very logically imposes a grander 19th-century classical-urban scale on what had been a huddled set of four compressed, unremarkable frontages with dropped cornices that broke the longer streetscape perspectives. >>





OPPOSITE DAVID BUTLER



DIRK LINDER

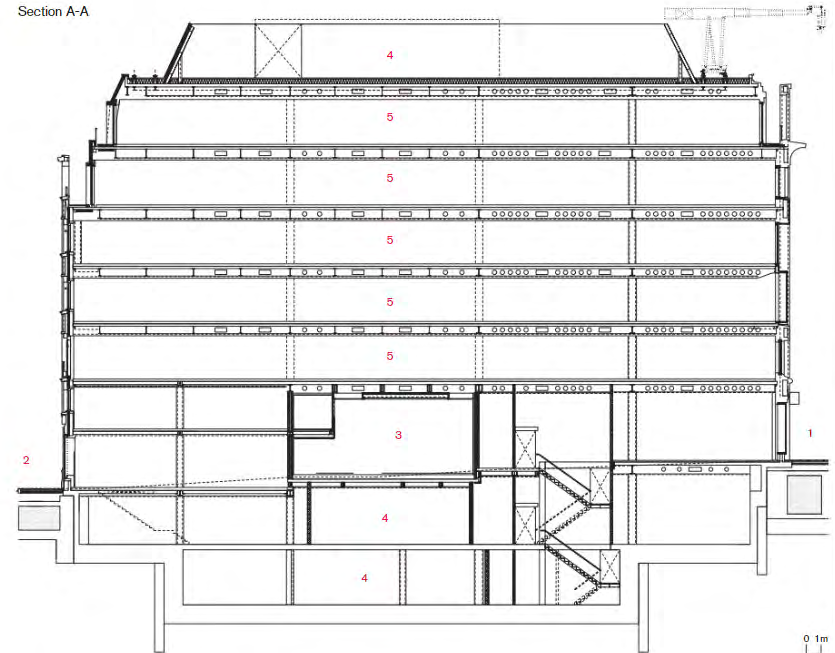
Parry's raised cornice reinstates the perspective, jutting out like a thick cicatrice from a flesh of the mug-white faience, producing a building as singular as Joseph Emberton's 1936 Grade I-listed Simpsons building (now Waterstones) a bit further west along Piccadilly.

Emberton was a Modernist. Parry, who has introduced a Crayola sheen to Piccadilly, is harder to define, though we can be certain of his refined appreciation for architectural craft and his daring selection of collaborating artists. The chunky, asymmetrical modillion-cum-dentils of the Piccadilly cornice feature riotously blotched decal glazes by Richard Deacon; and a 6.5-tonne granite face

by Stephen Cox gazes gnominically out across St James's from the fourth floor of the new corner facade of Jermyn Street and Eagle Place. The sculpture has the same Vedantic otherness as his *Lingam of a Thousand Lingams* at the Cass Sculpture Foundation.

Parry himself has contributed artwork – the rather bloody speckling of the double-height window casings. These are extremely adventurous admixtures of public art and they deserve better than the bland bread-and-circuses justification by James Cooksey of the Crown Estate, who talks of 'creating an exciting retail and business destination based around a vibrant local community. Public art, like this piece by Richard Deacon, >>

Section A-A



1. Piccadilly
2. Jermyn Street
3. Reception
4. Plant
5. Office

**Opposite** View of office reception space

**Left** Typical master bathroom in Jermyn Street apartment

**Following spread** Eagle Place separates Parry's redevelopment from Lutyens' Midland Bank Building (right)



can inspire community connections.'

But, to return to tenser matters, what about temporal connections? Deacon's and Parry's decorative glazing decals could be seen as no more lavishly convivial than the ornate stone urns on the facade of Norman Shaw's last work, the 1908 Piccadilly Hotel (now Le Meridien); or the carved Portland stone pendants of fruits, flowers and festoons on the rather squashed attic storey of Lutyens' 1925 Midland Bank building at 196 Piccadilly, now inhabited by Hauser & Wirth.

But the classical and the colourist qualities of Parry's Piccadilly facade are not incidental. The beautifully crafted oriel window bays, the gleaming softness of Shaw's of Darwen's faience, the fineness of the lime mortar joints and the inwardly radiused double-height window casings create the sense of a perfectly cast foreground object in a street of grand, but not overwhelming architectural backgrounds. The formal civility of Parry's building remains beneath the decals, an architectural make-up baked on at 1,200°C.

This is not the case with the rebuilt building that wraps around the corner of Piccadilly and Eagle Place, whose raised brick structure is now linked to the steel frame of the *pièce de résistance*. The new facade in Jermyn Street and the asymmetrically modelled facade facing Eagle Place show Parry's skill as an architectural collagist, and they add something very fresh and historically alert to what was an unremarkable alley and to the oddly muted eastern end of Jermyn Street. The Eagle Place elevation is particularly engrossing; if only more secondary spaces in our cities were graced with this degree of design originality.

Parry, who has introduced a Crayola sheen to Piccadilly, is hard to define

Where does Eric Parry go from here? One must hope that the commercial success of the Eagle Place ensemble does not trigger a demand for copycat buildings from him – or, indeed, from lesser architects, which would be a truly hideous prospect. The tensions of Parry's arrangements of craft, detail and subversions of type that give his work its teasing fusions of virtuosity and strangeness surely preclude obvious repetitions.

What would Lutyens have made of Parry's Piccadilly palazzo? Perhaps Stephen Cox's meditative Vedic sculpture might know the answer: it overlooks a point midway between Lutyens' bank building and the mews studio in Apple Tree Yard, between Jermyn Street and St James's Square, where he designed his New Delhi projects. There is nothing in the Vedanta about Mannerism, but it must charge the Floris-scented air here, playfully and provocatively. ■

Jay Merrick is architecture critic at *The Independent*

#### Project data

START ON SITE August 2010  
COMPLETION June 2013  
GROSS EXTERNAL AREA 12,960m<sup>2</sup>  
FORM OF CONTRACT Construction management  
TOTAL CONTRACT COST £45 million  
COST PER m<sup>2</sup> £3,200  
CLIENT The Crown Estate in partnership with Health Care of Ontario Pension Plan  
ARCHITECT Eric Parry Architects  
MAIN CONTRACTOR Lend Lease  
STRUCTURAL ENGINEER Waterman  
PROJECT MANAGER Gardiner & Theobald  
M&E CONSULTANT Mecserve  
CDM CO-ORDINATOR PFB Construction Management  
PLANNING CONSULTANT CBRE  
COST CONSULTANT Gardiner & Theobald  
ACOUSTIC CONSULTANT Alan Saunders  
LIGHTING CONSULTANT DPA Lighting  
PUBLIC REALM CONSULTANT Atkins  
DEVELOPMENT MANAGER Stanhope  
CAD SOFTWARE USED MicroStation  
ESTIMATED AVERAGE ANNUAL CO<sub>2</sub> EMISSIONS 25.8kgCO<sub>2</sub>/m<sup>2</sup>  
FAIENCE Szorelmy and Shaw's of Darwen

DISK LUNDNER



Activate Windows  
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## Eagle Place, Piccadilly, London W1

Eric Parry Architects

### Window

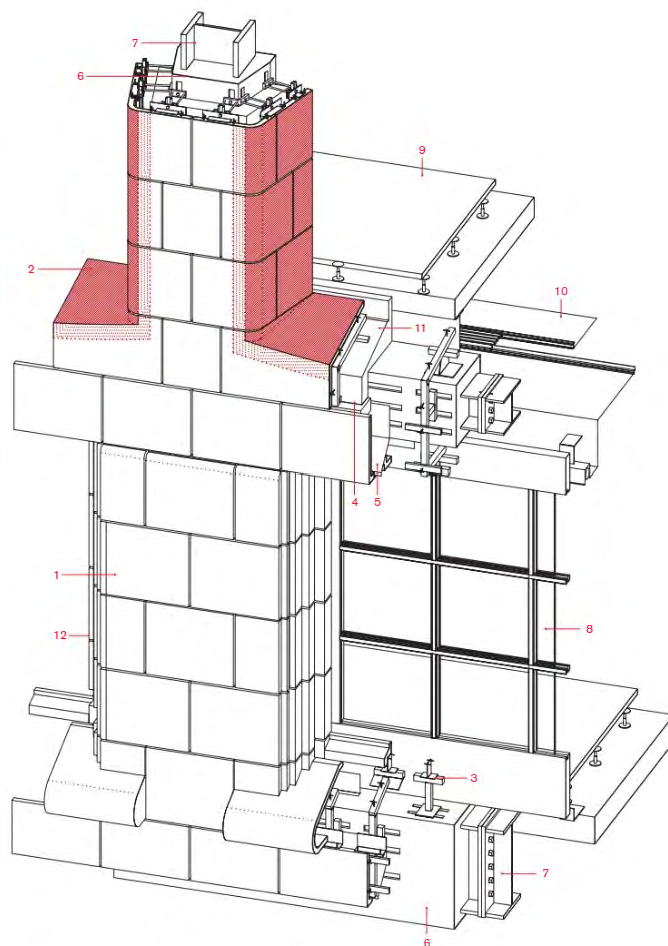
The relative depth of the elevation – 900mm – allowed the exploitation of the sculptural quality of faience as a cast material. The units incorporate complex stooing, reveals and running moulds that repeat over the six sections of the facade. The faience has a wall depth of 40mm and is coursed and sized to accommodate the tolerances of a fired material.

In order to bed the units in a lime mortar to create a continuous sealed surface, as opposed to an open joined rain screen, the structural substrate has to be stiff and a movement structure was designed to achieve this. A closely analysed support system to allow for the movement of the primary structure, the thermal expansion of the faience and the plasticity of lime mortar lies between the two systems.

The faience units all have a grey-white glaze and were fired at approximately 1,200°C to achieve frost resistance. The glazed polychromy was achieved subsequently by a transfer technique, fused through a second lower-temperature firing at approximately 850°C. The 39 cornice units, generally made up of two or three subsections, weighed up to 200kg. Extensive dry lays were required to check control of tolerances, colour and glaze. The intention was that this north-facing elevation would reflect the vivid life of Piccadilly, both in spirit and materiality.

Eric Parry, principle,  
Eric Parry Architects

**Opposite**  
Piccadilly facade, with Richard Deacon cornice above double-height windows and jambs ornamented by Eric Parry Architects



OPPOSITE: DIRK LINDNER

1. 40mm faience tiles, once fired hand-applied glaze  
2. 40mm faience tiles, twice fired and transfer glazed above double-height windows  
3. Halfen stainless steel subframe

4. Continuous horizontal compartment cavity barrier  
5. Continuous horizontal cavity tray at storey level

6. Precast concrete encasement with cast-in stainless steel Halfen channels  
7. Steel moment frame with aluminium splice collars

8. Composite DGU  
9. Raised access floor on composite structural floor slab  
10. Suspended ceiling with integrated blindbox and

supply grille  
11. Rigid insulation to achieve 0.18 W/m²K U-value  
12. Lime mortar pointed joints with weep holes at soffit





# Beyond the blusher

1 July 2013

Words: Eleanor Young

Beneath its colourful eyecatching ‘make-up’, Eric Parry Architects’ One Eagle Place for the Crown Estate is more than just a pretty face. It’s an intelligent and thoughtful building whose classical lines nonetheless speak strongly of modern design values



Scored, sprayed and blooming with gross growths, One Eagle Place has the most beautiful facade. There are few architects with a track record like Eric Parry Architects for turning a standard, even banal, typology into something so special. His treatment of offices is not as exercises in net to gross but as individuals in an urban landscape.

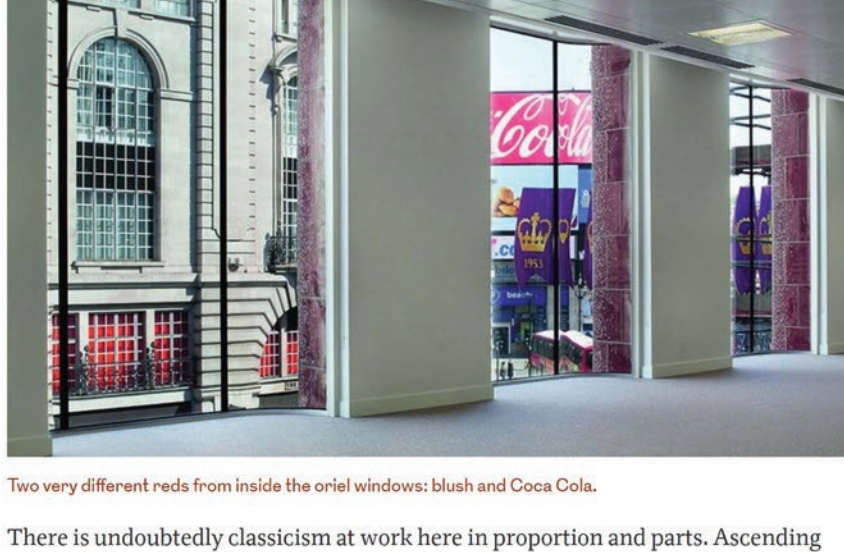
That has been most successful where there was a strong form to respond to. At Finsbury Square Parry’s Scottish Widows contributed the calmest yet most surreptitiously powerful facade to an admittedly jumbled context. At One Eagle Place, Piccadilly, the historic boulevard has given Parry material he loves to work with – and against. The cornice is symbolic of so much in this new addition to the street: the reimposition of the street form, a very different interpretation of classicism, essential ornament. Interestingly, this is also some of the ‘art’ of the building – Richard Deacon’s contribution to the project. If you are not expecting it then it is a shock of colour. The true scale of the cornice is of course imperceptible from street level where the mass of colour has a sense of other, its weight no more than a tree’s crown.



Piccadilly from Regent’s Street to St James’s Church. The Parry project, St James’s Gateway, encompasses the whole of the first block. To the west (right) are Waterhouse’s bank, Emberton’s Simpsons and a more recent project from Robert Adam Architects.

As Eric Parry talks, his references are to Sir Reginald Blomfield, Alfred Waterhouse’s bank in the next block and the grand Swan and Edgar opposite. The urns, dentil friezes and twiddles of these buildings are dispensed with, in favour of a new generation of ornament. The red on the window reveals reads like spray paint. Parry calls it a ‘blush’. He likens it to a made up face, ‘artifice’ to beautify a (north) face like the lights of Piccadilly Circus do. His description of ‘polychromy’ connects the building and lights to high Victorian architecture. To Parry, the fact the cornice and spray were part of the original conception and are fired onto the ceramic makes them a fundamental part of the building (although Parry’s own make up metaphor does suggest that it is applied as much as embedded).

The modernist Simpsons of Piccadilly, now Waterstones, designed by Joseph Emberton, doesn’t fit the narrative of Piccadilly’s cornice compliance. But in a strange way the curve and the lips of its display windows find a resonance with Parry’s oriel windows and oversized first floor sills (which turn the three shop frontages into six bays). It is interesting that Parry decided to design the windows rather than just add glazing in choice positions, as he has also at 50 New Bond Street. They are generously expressive, modelled into what Parry calls a ‘smile’ that dips the sill. Front on they do smile and glimpsed from along Piccadilly the red smiles with them.



Two very different reds from inside the oriel windows: blush and Coca Cola.

There is undoubtedly classicism at work here in proportion and parts. Ascending through the building, the elements of each layer – columns, oriel windows, attic and loggia – either draw together or gently pull apart the rhythm of those below. But, like many of Parry’s other buildings and very unlike its neighbour – 198-202 Piccadilly, completed by self proclaimed classicist Robert Adam in 2007 – the columns do not project from the facade but are cut into it.

This building is not just a facade. That is a small, though very public, part of it. The St James’s Gateway project, part of The Crown Estate’s St James’s masterplan, encompasses a whole block, abutting Blomfield’s bank on the corner of Piccadilly Circus and Piccadilly. Cleaning, clearing and rebuilding on the site mix with new build, after a more radical whole-block approach was dismissed early due to levels and leases.



Into the lobby of One Eagle Place, a picture window offers a view of the red lifts.

Blomfield’s listed Clydesdale Bank is being given a deep clean so it can once again stand proud in its prime corner position on Piccadilly Circus. Along from this were four smaller buildings, built before the height of the cornice and the scale of the street were established. Parry resolved to take down three of them (yes, even in a conservation area) and rework the base of the fourth, a corner building, from the second floor down. Significantly each element of the building – formerly the 1960s Baron outfitters – was removed and then replaced 1700mm higher. ‘Lots of rules were broken,’ he admits. The shift brings the cornice into line with the street and creates a ground floor retail unit with a far more lettable ceiling height.

Round the corner, down the alleyway of Eagle Place and onto Jermyn Street, the ground level drops away by nearly 2m. All these buildings have been reworked with vitrines handsomely poised to display the tailoring goods that have traditionally been sold in Jermyn Street. These continue into Eagle Place, an attempt by Parry to stop it being used as a pissoir. Offices mainly line the western elevation with apartments, in two clusters, above to the east and south east. Blomfield’s listed Barclays’ banking hall, facing onto Haymarket, has been left roughly stripped awaiting a retail fit out.



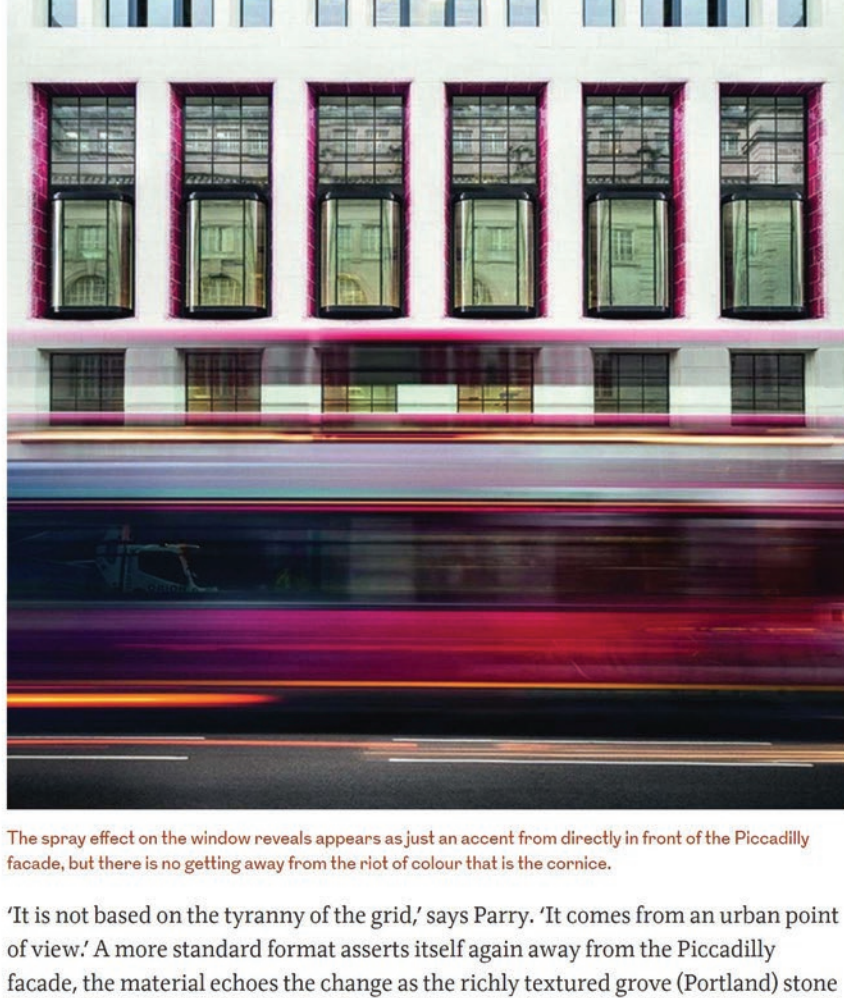
A terrace with unexpected colour and the distant icon of Big Ben on the other side of the parapet.

It all sounds complicated and the plan and section confirm that it is. But on entering the generous lobby and ascending to the L-shaped office floor it appears simple. Just the few touches allowed by the Cat A fit-out suggest that outside this is something special. The first are the lifts with their red enamel surrounds, and white glass inside. The loos continue the theme with red ceramic handbag shelves (for gents as well as ladies) next to the basins and red glass behind the toilets. Then there are the bay windows curving voluptuously back into the building, displaying the red of the window reveals. The windows do require something of a contortion in the suspended ceiling which swoops up to the facade to ensure it doesn’t cut off the windows in their prime.

## “One Eagle Place picks up the strong threads of classicism and expressive, materially rich city buildings”

The core feels a little squeezed but manages to serve both offices and the cluster of apartments for sale. They share an escape stair and the residential lift is twisted just 90°. And speaking off efficiency, the new work has seen significant uplift on the site as a tiny, uneconomic hotel as well as numerous offices and a few shops were replaced. Apartments for rent sit above the bank hall set around a light well of glazed bricks. Here Eric Parry Architects gets to show its attention to detail at a completely different scale, dressing the apartments from handles and bathrooms to fridges, furniture and crockery. Envious good taste.

There is something rather Victorian about the Piccadilly side of One Eagle Place – certainly a sense that it predates the thin facades of modernism. The ceramic laid with lime mortar is part of it, not load bearing but at least a material with depth and presence in front of the steel frame. Here the facade actually manipulates the office space. It feels heretical. Parry tried a more typical office grid of 3m centres which gave him eight bays, but he didn’t feel the rhythm was right. Six (and six bays and six oriel windows) did. So 3.75m centres it is.



The spray effect on the window reveals appears as just an accent from directly in front of the Piccadilly facade, but there is no getting away from the riot of colour that is the cornice.

‘It is not based on the tyranny of the grid,’ says Parry. ‘It comes from an urban point of view.’ A more standard format asserts itself again away from the Piccadilly facade, the material echoes the change as the richly textured grove (Portland) stone takes over, although in uncomfortably harshly-incised joints.

One Eagle Place picks up the strong threads of classicism and expressive, materially rich city buildings that have been seen in iterations from Stirling, Wilford and Associates at Number 1 Poultry to the best Foggo Associates buildings – but with refinement. In less skillful hands this block could easily look clumsy. But classical lessons of scale and proportion, crafted materials and some bravura colour moves make One Eagle Place an unexpectedly human and deeply satisfying piece of city. Can Crown Estates maintain this original, high quality standard of design in the development of the rest of St James’s?

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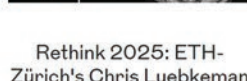
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June 2013

## **Simon Allford on Eric Parry at Piccadilly**

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## BUILDING

### Piccadilly dandy: Eric Parry Architects' One Eagle Place

*The nimble repair of an urban block embodies London's volatile compound of continuity and change, finds **Simon Allford**. Photos: Dirk Lindner.*

London, the 'Unique City' whose continuity so engaged Steen Eiler Rasmussen, is a unique city in which to make architecture – one where architects and informed clients are combining new into old to challenge ideas of programme, place and development. Having established its reputation by inserting new architecture into historically charged parts of the city, Eric Parry Architects has now delightfully refined this model of development-as-palimpsest with One Eagle Place, an office and residential project in St James'.

This project is in part Parry's response to Blomfield and Nash's interest in the use of the facade to define the West End as an urban stage set. As I am working with the same client, the Crown Estate, to build a city sandwich between Regent Street and Parry's own 23 Savile Row building (AT200), I have followed progress from the near distance, and have enjoyed witnessing the emergence of Parry's considered but bold risk-taking as he confronts comfortable ideas of taste.

Parry articulates the relationship of the site's urban and architectural history to the cultural, financial, technological and political



context in which he operates, then utilises this to define the architectures of his response. Following surgical removal of failing and exhausted fragments, the retained is combined with the new to accommodate a rich mix of uses in an urbane, coherent yet commercially astute block. This repair and remaking is made more complex by the fact that the site is bisected by a building and theatre whose long leases preclude the possibility of negotiated adaptation.

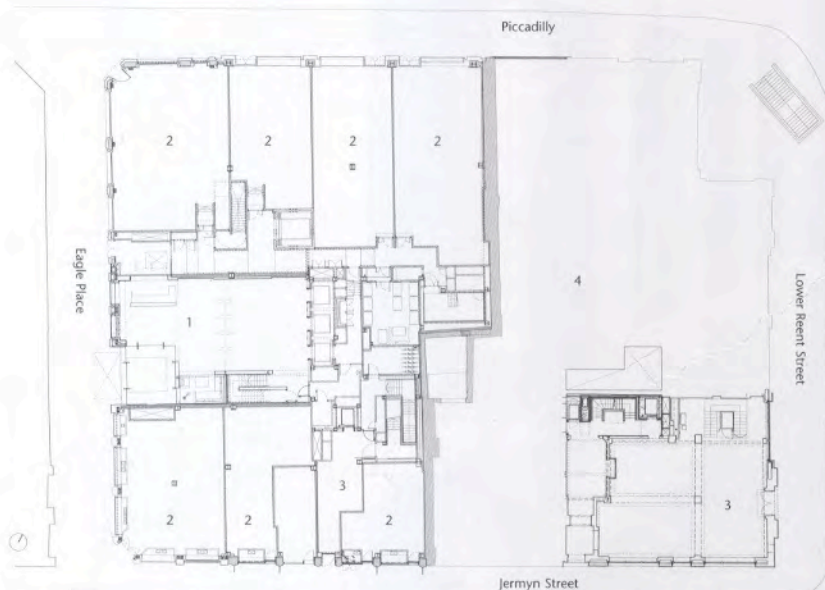
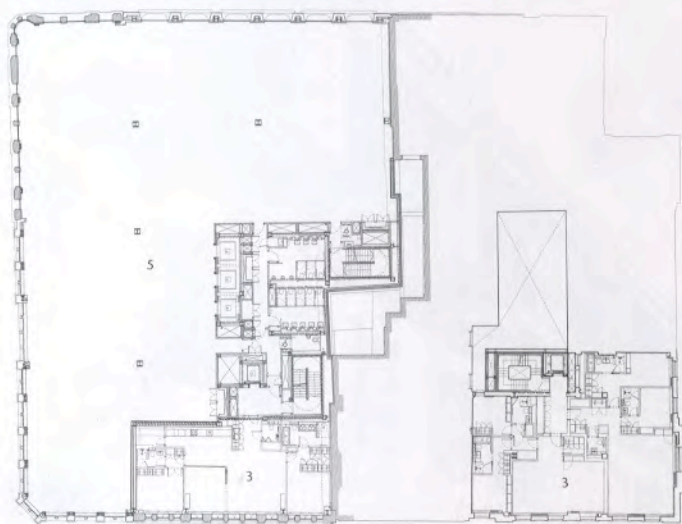
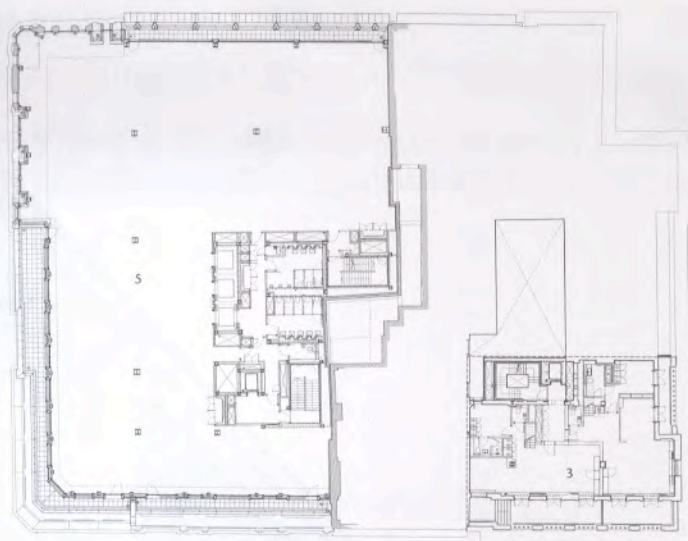
**Above, right** Location plan; view west towards Piccadilly Circus.  
**Below** Office entrance lobby.











Eagle Place references an interest exhibited in Parry's 'palazzo' at 30 Finsbury Square (AT136), still for many a touchstone for its intelligence and wit. There, he detached structure from the cage-like constraint of the planning module expressed in the thermal envelope, and thus facilitated an independent exploration of architectural aesthetics –

**Above** Ground, typical upper floor and sixth floor plans: 1 office reception, 2 retail, 3 residential, 4 existing building, 5 office. **Above right** Two views of the Piccadilly facade, and 'before' view of the corner of Piccadilly and Eagle Place. The facade to the corner building has been retained while Eric Parry Architects has created new facades for its neighbours on either side.

one where the loadbearing structural stone facade references the rationalism of both Gruppo Sette and the engineer. At Eagle Place the two new facades offer a richer take on Finsbury's bald idea of 'back'. Again the facade is structural, but this time used not to support a frame but to enable a material to be explored in depth; to generate an alternative

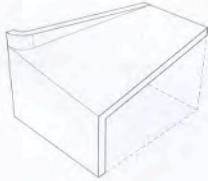
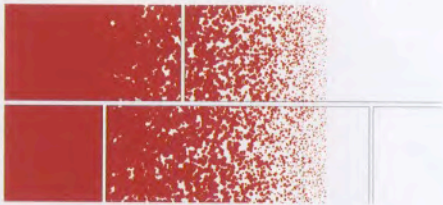
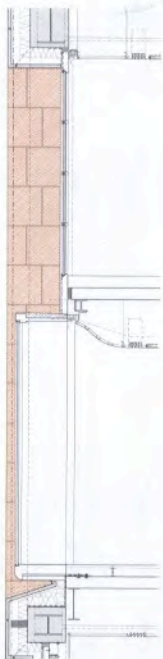
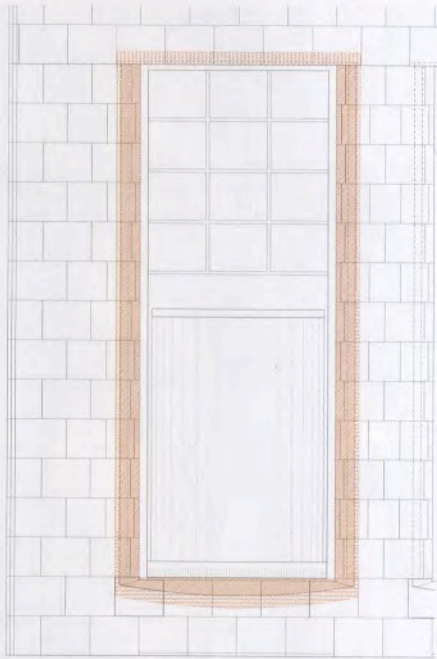


idea of the aesthetics of the punctured wall.

The first of these, a ceramic facade fronting Piccadilly, is sandwiched between elderly stone neighbours, while the second, faced with stone, forms a new corner where Eagle Place meets Jermyn Street. Parry likens the project's challenge to extracting and replacing teeth, though I note that one tooth – the Baron building, formerly a menswear shop owned by the family of Sacha Baron Cohen – has been dismantled and re-erected five feet higher up (these are buildings designed in imperial dimensions) on a new base that is carefully related to, but inevitably somewhat different to that which was vandalised in the 1960s. The shock of the new ensures that the Piccadilly facade, with its polychromatic Richard Deacon frieze and red reveals, has already achieved a certain notoriety.

The programme behind provides three 'new' buildings – one office, two residential. While the office sits behind new and reconstructed facades, the two residential buildings are behind historic facades, one retained and the other carved out of a listed building. This is definitely a single project, however, concerned with the remaking of the city block, and challenges orthodoxy by prioritising the

**Right** Piccadilly facade details. The 25-metre cornice was designed by artist Richard Deacon. It is formed of 39 individual ceramic sculptures. The ceramic transfer method, used for both the cornice and red-coloured window frames, was developed in the eighteenth century but has not been applied to a building in the UK before.  
**Below** Cornice pieces in the yard; view from offices.  
**Bottom** Elevational drawing of Piccadilly by Eric Parry.







programme of the city over the programme of use – which is entirely logical: the use will change. The city will change, too, but the former much more rapidly than the latter.

The commercial programme is skilfully woven in plan and section. A sequence of interlocking parts that work together,

**Above, below** Portland stone facade to Eagle Place; view north along Eagle Place towards Piccadilly; Eagle Place elevations. The contract cost was £45m – a gross internal floor area cost of £3500 per sqm. The building achieved BREEAM Excellent and Code for Sustainable Homes level 3 ratings; its emission rate is 25.8 kg CO<sub>2</sub>/m<sup>2</sup>.

sharing servicing, lifts and stairs to create an urban whole, reminding us that London's urban blocks – even when in single ownership – are a collection of parts, of uses, of leases, of buildings. Large-scale development is challenged not just by commerce and conservation but by the urban morphology that can be traced through the language of facades expressing party walls. Parry's skill is in undertaking large-scale redevelopment while celebrating the complexity. Modern servicing and infrastructure weave between new volumes which, through engagement with the 'found', have acquired more specific and thus memorable characteristics.



In the office, beyond the crafted volumes of the entrance hall (which like its neighbour, Luytens' banking hall, has longevity) Parry understands that a lesser level of architectural control, reflecting the inevitability of fit-out and change, is appropriate. In the apartments, however, he has designed everything beautifully, simply and economically, from the carving out of habitable space in unique found volumes down to the throws on the beds. The refurbished and reinvented interiors of these apartments are a microcosm of the project: in the architecture of remaking and the urban palimpsest, merzbau becomes gesamtkunstwerk.

Relationships between new and old, inside and out and building and city are never quite as might be anticipated. The new Piccadilly facade is traditionally constructed of jug-white glazed ceramic and lime mortar, specifically so that it can be sculpted to capture reflections from the famous neon of Piccadilly Circus. Versions of this material



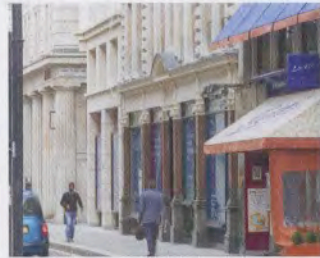


have long been used to bounce light, but in secondary elevations, lightwells and courts, and always for amenity not effect. Here ceramic is used on one of London's greatest, widest streets. Again, in contrast to the norm, Portland stone is then used on the 'lesser' Jermyn Street and Eagle Place, in a rich mix of bed types articulated by string courses and worked transoms (a nod to a history of tailoring and the figure of the dandy) and topped by Stephen Cox's sculptural relief. There are of course other logics at play here: following conservation battles, the neon of Piccadilly Circus is celebrated as an important urban and historical asset while commercial logic



dictates the use of Portland stone on Eagle Place to give this reinvented address the stature that the office requires.

Both new facades are studies in scale and proportion, in light, shadow and depth, and in bay widths, rhythms and modulation – a play of the neutral and the vibrant. Which is neutral and which vibrant is perhaps less certain than first glimpses might suggest. The Piccadilly facade is actually a modest and subtle play of black and white. The stipple effect stencil around the windows is, on inspection, not red but a 'blush'. This elevation is a play of modulated interlocking bays that decrease in size, complexity and evidence as they rise to the open loggia and then to the sky beyond. Its vivacity is largely concentrated in a polychromatic frieze by Richard Deacon, whose 39 steps draw a sculptured line across at cornice height. While this line harnesses the technology of the same architectural craft that constructs the facade, the mark of its maker ensures that artifice is transformed into art.

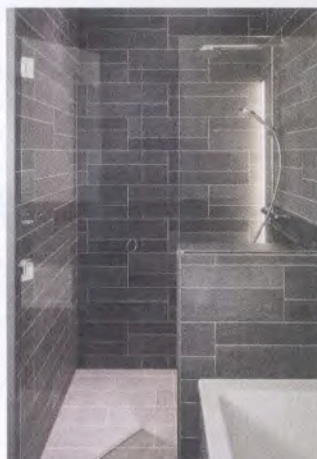
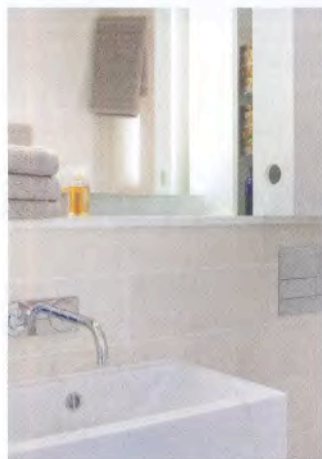


**Top** Stephen Cox's facade sculpture at the corner of Jermyn Street and Eagle Place.  
**Below** Jermyn Street elevation.

Through its detail, depth, oriel and terrace, this new Piccadilly facade allows the inhabitation and enjoyment of the threshold between room and city. It also questions our understanding of the likely longevity of building and facade. Parry's engagement with the detail of its making suggests to me that he believes that the 'facadists' Nash and Blomfield were in fact right to construct an urban stage set that is still the locale's defining quality.







#### Project team

Architect: Eric Parry Architects; design team: Eric Parry, (principal, left), Nick Jackson, (project director, far left), Merit Claussen, (associate director), Jeremy Foster, Ros Cohen, Alvaro Valdivia a l'Onions, Ze'ev Feigis, Joanne Hemmings, Will Aitken, Cecilie Kjeldsen, Vania Ramos, Lewis Benmore, Anthony McGoldrick; artists: Richard Deacon, Stephen Cox, Alan Micklethwaite; structural engineer: Waterman; m&e consultant: Mecserve QS; planning consultant: CBRE; cost consultant, project manager: Gardiner & Theobald; acoustics: Alan Saunders; lighting: DPA Lighting; public realm: Atkins; development manager: Stanhope; main contractor: Lend Lease;

client: The Crown Estate in partnership with the Health Care of Ontario Pension Plan.

#### Selected suppliers and subcontractors

faience cladding: Shaws of Darwen, Szerelmy; Portland stone cladding: Albion, Szerelmy; stone restoration: PAYE; composite windows: Schindler; shopfronts: Dravon Metal; metalwork: PAD; facade lighting: DPA; lifts: Otis; joinery and interior fit out: Brown & Carroll, Ruddy; stone floors: Haysom, Grants; stairs: WHL, PAD; handrails and balustrade: Handrail Design; doors: Shadbolt; glazed sliding doors: Record; sanitaryware: Duravit, Villeroy & Boch; taps and showers: Hansgrohe.

This challenges my 'flat cap rule' that suggests no-one ever sees above the shop front, so a demolished facade is instantly forgotten by even the most assiduous observer of architectural detail. (Ask yourself what you recall of the supposedly much-loved facades that preceded Parry's). Alan Powers' recent Royal Academy exhibition, 'Eros to the Ritz: 100 years of street architecture', offered the same challenge, encouraging me to scurry from Burlington House onto Piccadilly to discover for the first time the facades of the street that I believed I knew.

One Eagle Place is a variegated container of uses, architectures, histories and technologies, and challenges our thinking on design strategies, on the relevance of use and on the urban importance of the aesthetics of the constructed facade. It questions aesthetic and artistic predilections and speculates on ideas of time and context. It is a project in which the architects are testing themselves, their audience (both lay and professional) and our shared ideas of history, present and future.

At the unveiling of his frieze, Richard Deacon diverted eyes from his art by doffing his cap and thus elegantly drew attention to the fact that it was adorned with but two words: 'No Fear'. I can think of no more appropriate an epithet for this most particular, creative and challenging project.

*Simon Allford is a director of AHMM, where his projects include the Angel Building, Chobham Academy, and the Yellow Building. He is a visiting professor at the Bartlett and Harvard University.*

**Left, below** Residential interiors. The scheme comprises 7600 sqm of office, 3000 sqm of retail and 2450 sqm of residential space.