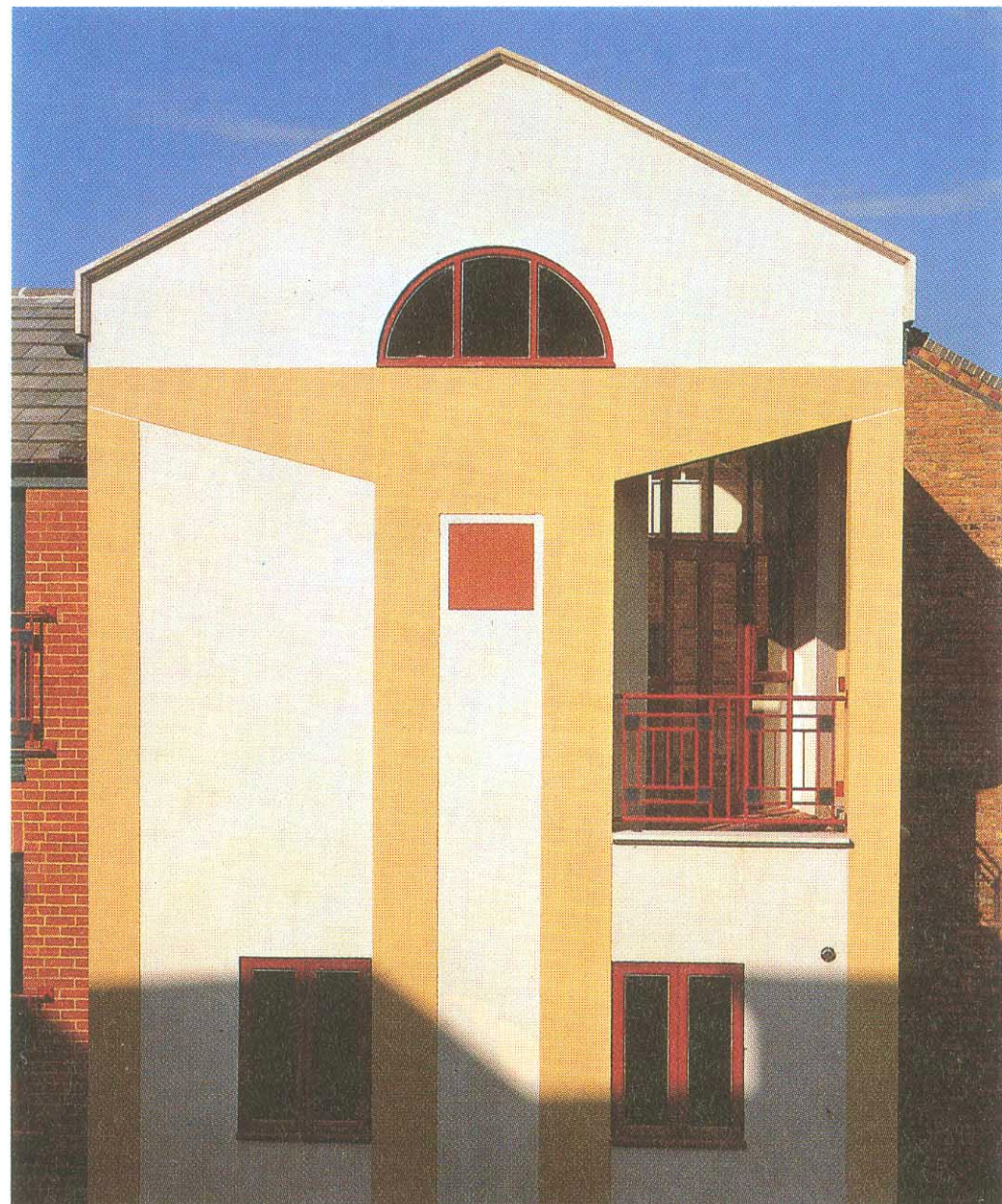
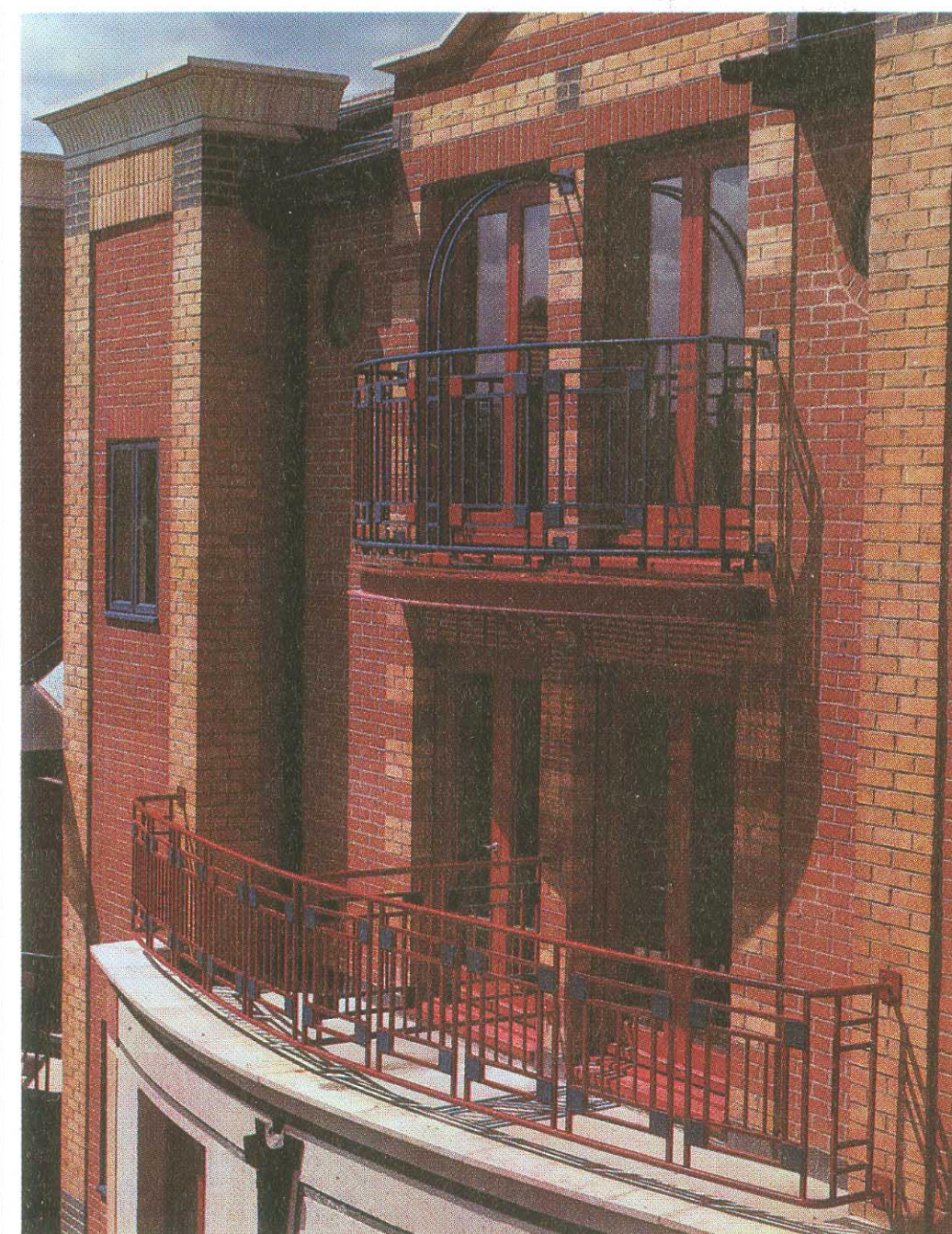




California meets Camberwell, top, in Quigley's colourful asymmetry. Above: another facade, another country. The architect plays with an Egyptian tendency. The post-modern wallpaper of lavish detail and polychromatic brickwork, right, confronts the unsimiling face of LCC austerity



The enclosed courtyard is the focus of Hopewell Yard, above. The building's function might remain mysterious from the outside, but the nature of each unit is clearly delineated for those who gain admittance to the inner sanctum. Stair rails and balconies are picked out in vibrant colours, right



David Quigley's brick pyrotechnics in south London are hard to ignore. Andrew Sim visits the flexible spaces of Hopewell Yard

INNER CITY DECO

Camberwell Green is anything but. The hinterland of the municipal open space that gave the area its name is a wilderness of badly landscaped, run-down public housing. Despite the area's proximity to the building sites of Rotherhithe and Surrey Docks, there is little private development here on Southwark's tube-less fringe. Camberwell's public realm is something to retreat from: high-security doors and broken intercom systems set the tone.

In this context, David Quigley's optimistically named Hopewell Yard development takes on something of the character of a border outpost. He has taken a former omnibus terminus – an early Victorian building complete with ramps for horses – and used it as the starting point for a courtyard development that combines workshops, offices, flats and two three-storey houses.

The courtyard is Quigley's solution to what he sees as the dual problem of life in the area: the bleakness of the public realm and the isolation of the private. It becomes a controllable semi-public space and acts as a buffer between the individual dwelling and the street. "On the Continent, courtyards are an accepted, traditional part of urban living. In England, there seems to be a misplaced obsession with the street as a focus," says Quigley, who sees this as a primarily suburban preoccupation. Hopewell Yard is, in his view, a "hard urban space", and he is proud of the housing density that he has achieved there. It compares well with the four-storey LCC block that borders his development, but also offers much flexible space. Mezzanines can be inserted; workshops can be simply converted for domestic use.

The enclosure of a courtyard, of course, also holds negative connotations and Quigley is particularly anxious to differentiate his building from the security-fenced fortresses that have sprung up elsewhere in London. He maintains, however, that it is not security and privacy that local people would object to but the ugliness and bad manners of overt security.

Hopewell Yard is intended to present "a smiling face" to its neighbours. Its colourful and highly detailed exterior elevations – all

polychromatic brickwork, painted joinery and decorative render – are described by their designer as "urban wallpaper". The level of detail on the facades is maintained even at the rear and sides of the building, where neighbouring blocks might more usually have a bare brick wall to stare at. With some justification, Quigley contrasts the "jolly visual impact" of Hopewell Yard with the "long-faced" dourness of the locality in general.

The lavishly detailed and colourful eclecticism of the facades is unequivocally post-modern – the style Quigley is best qualified to handle. Eleven years ago, aged twenty-two, his first architectural job was to work on Charles Jencks's London house with Farrell and Grimshaw. Later, after working for Venturi in the States, he returned to London to work once again with Terry Farrell.

These experiences have clearly left their mark: Hopewell Yard's facades seem calculated to make the classical purist and modernist alike squirm with discomfort. With a wilful disregard for any relationship between the internal structure and the appearance of the exterior, it is impossible to tell from the outside how units relate to each other. This is a deliberate ploy, the intention being to blur the distinctions between the office space and the residential accommodation. From the street it is not entirely clear what the building is (the private elevations of the inner courtyard are, by contrast, clearly delineated) and the monolithic quality of the block from the street is broken down.