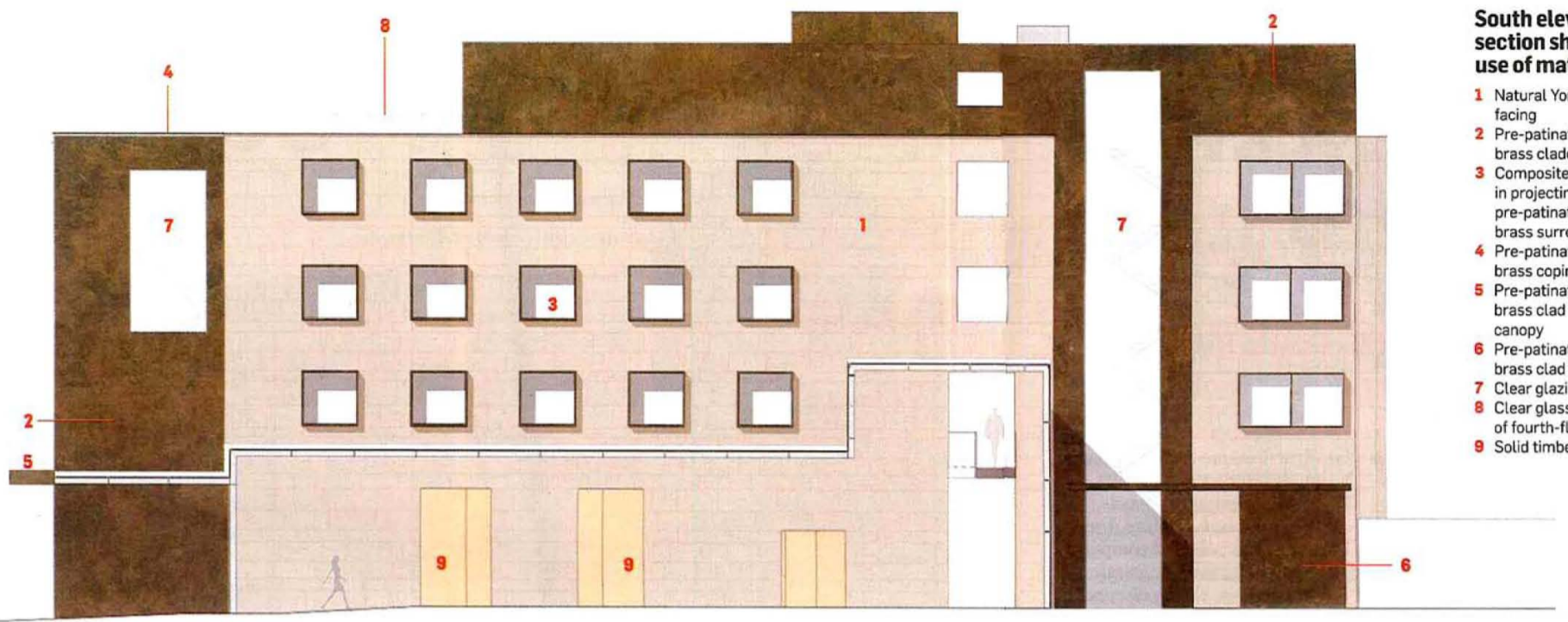


ENVELOPE: GOLDSMITHS' CENTRE

Goldsmiths' studios opt for precious metal

The brass cladding of John Lyall Architects' studios for the Goldsmiths Company in Clerkenwell gives a hint towards the work going on inside

Words Pamela Buxton



South elevation section showing use of materials

- 1 Natural York stone facing
- 2 Pre-patinated brass cladding
- 3 Composite window in projecting pre-patinated brass surround
- 4 Pre-patinated brass coping
- 5 Pre-patinated brass clad entrance canopy
- 6 Pre-patinated brass sliding door
- 7 Clear glazing
- 8 Clear glass balustrade of fourth-floor pavilion
- 9 Solid timber doors

PATINATED BRASS CLADDING

Having quickly established that solid bronze cladding would be prohibitively expensive, the architect settled instead on brass sheeting, treated by hand to give a deep, mottled patination.

German firm KME supplied rolls of brass which were cut and pressed into panels by CGL of Glasgow, and then sent to specialist patinator Capisco in east London's Leyton. The architect chose the effect it wanted from samples produced by Capisco, which is using hot and cold patination to create the desired mottled finish.

Panels measure 750mm high and vary in length from 300mm to almost 3m. They

total approximately 800sq m. No two panels patinate identically, but together they give a homogeneous effect.

"We went to great pains to get the right colour and texture," says John Lyall. The treated panels were then waxed, by hand, before being installed on the building by Oskomera Facades, which detailed the cladding and window system. Each panel was hooked onto a rail system mounted on the blockwork and screwed into place. The panelling at the entrance incorporates a hidden fire exit door.

Oskomera also detailed the brass window cappings that slot onto the Schüco window system and the brass canopy

SUPPLIERS York stone Johnsons Wellfield Quarries, York stone installer Szerelmey, Brass cladding installer Oskomera Facades, Panel fabricator CGM in Scotland, Panel patinator Capisco, Windows Schüco/Oskomera

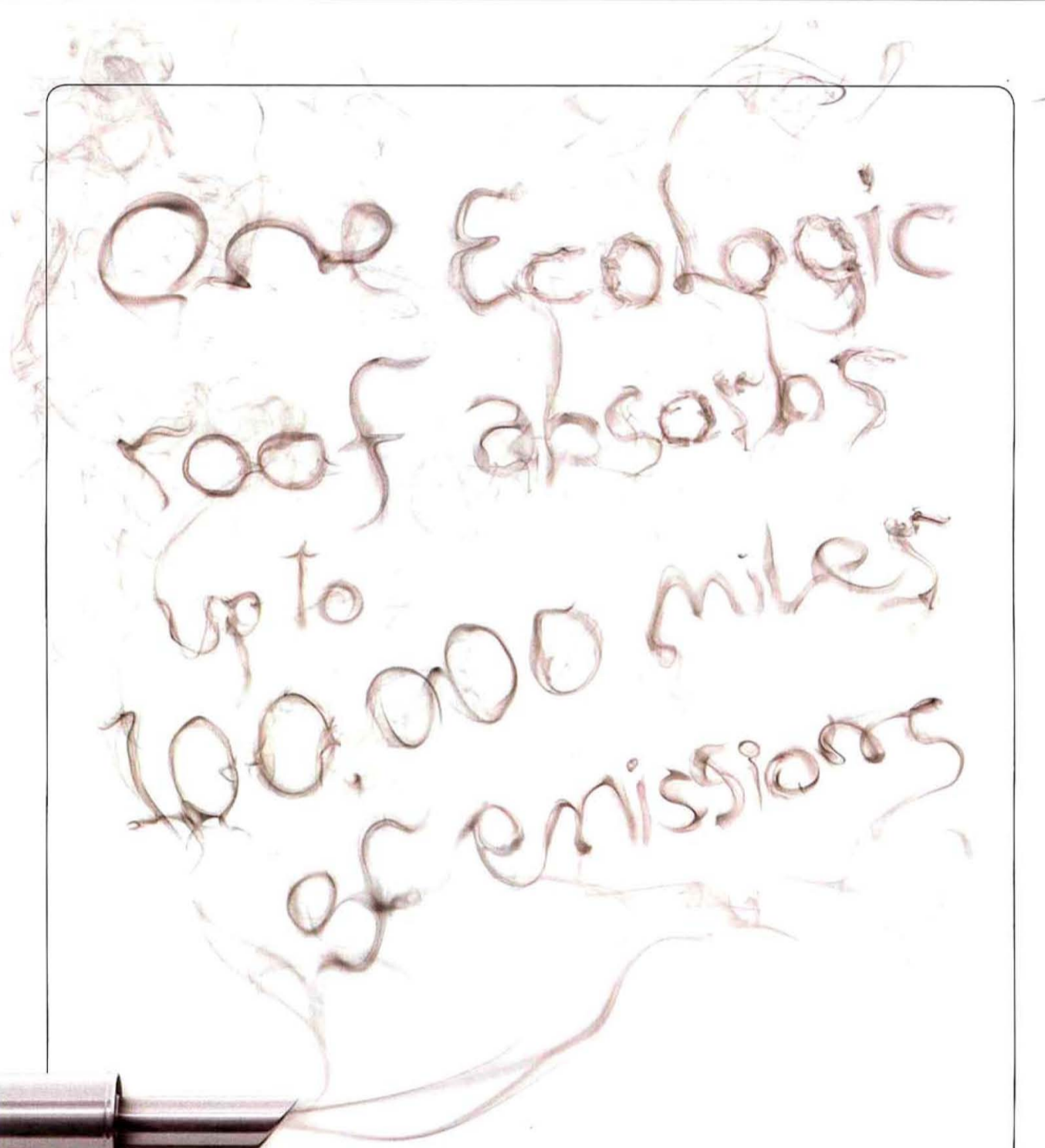


The brass panels' patination is never identical but together they create a uniform impression.

on the entrance facade of Britton Street. The same brass is used to clad sliding security doors on Albion Place which open to admit delivery vehicles. Adjacent to these doors is a perforated brass screen that shields an electricity substation.

As well as its aesthetic merits, the brass is robust and should age well, which was another priority for the client.

"The Goldsmiths' Company is very aware of its history. They want something that's solid and will still look good in 50 years' time," says Lyall.



The titanium dioxide coating on Ecologic tiles is a Marley Eternit innovation that soaks up nitrogen oxide (NOx) pollutants, the nasty stuff that aggravates respiratory problems like asthma.

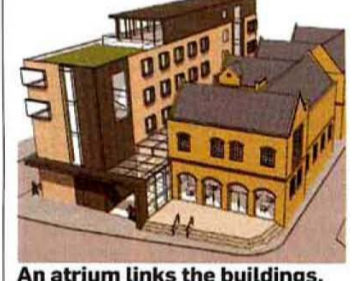
One average roof removes as much NOx from the air in its lifetime as a car produces in 100,000 miles. And, even better, it converts it into a solution that acts as a plant fertiliser. It's also made from over 50% recycled materials and can achieve an A+ rating in the Green Guide. Pretty amazing for a tile made from concrete.

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When John Lyall Architects was commissioned to design a teaching and studio facility for the Goldsmiths' Company, the idea of using metallic cladding was too good to miss. Eight hundred square metres of treated brass are currently being installed along with York stone in a £10.8 million project that is part-refurbishment and part-new build in London's Clerkenwell.

"It was important that a company like the Goldsmiths, who have been going for hundreds of years, was exploiting the building by having something metallic or crafted on the exterior," says John Lyall. "They approach it almost like a piece of jewellery with a meticulous obsession with detail." The Goldsmiths' Centre will combine postgraduate training with 24 start-up studios for young goldsmiths, craft skills for pre-



An atrium links the buildings.

apprentice silversmiths, plus a public gallery and café.

The site, opposite CZWG's famous house for Janet Street-Porter on the corner of Britton Street, incorporates a grade II listed former school that was once a training centre for Smithfield butchers and more recently premises for the London College of Fashion. Appropriately for the lively company, the location is close to Hatton Garden, heart of the capital's jewellery trade.

Former school
The 3,400sq m project refurbishes the former school for its new education use and links it with a glazed atrium to a new build along the Albion Place edge of the site. This contains a ground-floor gallery, three levels of studios, and a curtain-walled pavilion on the fourth floor for private functions, topped with a green roof.

The main entrance is characterised by a full-height wall of brass cladding. The use of brass took a little persuasion — initially the client was keener on brick, but Lyall was adamant that the new

building shouldn't ape the original school by using a similar brick stock. Elsewhere, it is clad in York stone with a slight line of russet from the Crosland Hill Quarry near Huddersfield.

"We wanted it soft enough in line and colour to work with the London stock brick and the patinated metal. Hopefully, none of the materials will overtake the building... We're trying to achieve a balance," says Lyall.

Acoustic issues

The building occupies the rectangular site of a now-demolished 1960s extension to the school and is constructed with a heavyweight concrete frame and blockwork walls. The 75mm-thick York stone is used in varying block sizes to accommodate the windows, with vertical movement joints at about every 15m and at every floor level horizontally. The stone, installed by Szerelmey, is backfixed by brackets to the concrete/blockwork. Insulation is fixed between the cladding rails, prior to fixing the stone or the brass.

The architect had to moderate its desire for a naturally ventilated building because of acoustic issues. Instead, it is using sealed Schüco window units which project 200mm in a regular rhythm from the stone-clad elevation and are capped in brass, treated to match the cladding's patination.

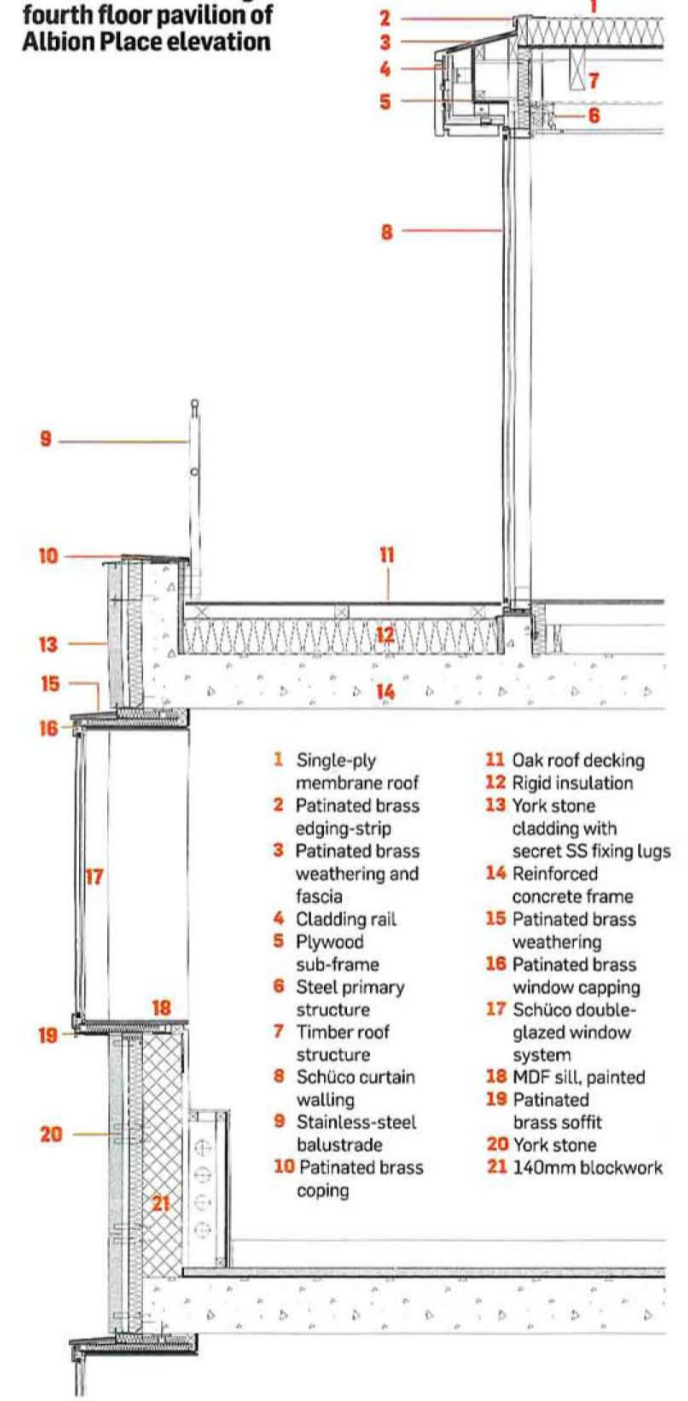
The composition of the elevation was influenced by over-looking issues, particularly concerning the former Street-Porter residence opposite. The solution was to use horizontal bands of etched glass with clear glass above, to minimise visual intrusion but maintain light into the new studios. The depth of etching varies from 300-900mm depending on proximity to the corner house opposite.

At the existing school building a series of original arches that had been bricked up have been reinstated with opening glazed doors along the Eagle Court elevation. These form the elevation to the café and open onto a new landscaped terrace to the right of the main entrance.

The original building's generous 4.5m floor-to-ceiling heights should suit the new use well — the high-silled windows give useful indirect light for the goldsmiths as they work. Secondary glazing has been introduced in noisy workshop areas and the floors reinforced to cope with machinery.

The Goldsmiths' Centre is due to complete this autumn.

Detail section through fourth floor pavilion of Albion Place elevation



A wall of brass greets visitors at the new entrance to Britton Street. The Albion Place elevation is clad in mainly York stone.



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