

129 Maze Hill London SE3 7UB

Overlooking Greenwich Park, at the top of Maze Hill, this is a fine example of a late 1960's architect's studio and family home. Designed by Myles & Deirdre Dove Architects, it is 50 years old this year, and to celebrate, 129 Maze Hill is open to visitors for Open House in September 2018.

The Architects

Husband and wife practice Myles & Deirdre Dove designed this architects' studio and family home for themselves and their three children in 1967. It was built and completed in 1968. Myles still lives here with his partner, Barbara Henley.

Myles and Deirdre Dove, who met while working for Richard Sheppard and Partners, were in practice together from 1959 until the sudden death of Deirdre in 1979. Their work included housing, community buildings, refurbishment of listed buildings and several award winning projects such as Ripon Hall, Oxford; Livesey Museum, Old Kent Road and housing at Nunhead Green.

129 Maze Hill was their place of work as well as their home, with enough space to employ architectural assistants and a part time secretary, and, from time to time, two of their children who later went on to become architects.



Deirdre and Myles Dove in the 1970's.



View from Maze Hill

A site on Maze Hill

The site on Maze Hill was at first glance an awkward trapezoid shape, occupied by a former billiard room and garage on the street side, and a solid concrete air-raid shelter at its narrowest end, bounded by back gardens and tall trees. On closer examination it offered the opportunity to create an unusual and unexpected house, in a prime location, overlooking Greenwich Park.

There were several constraints imposed by the planners – a limit on the number of habitable rooms permitted on the site led to the ingenious open plan or large rooms later capable of subdivision by bunk-beds or sliding doors. Height restrictions to window cills on the southern boundary to prevent overlooking were overcome by using horizontal windows giving good sunlight and view of the sky.

Much of the preparation and demolition was carried out by Myles with assistance from his brother-in-law Michael Downer. Myles and Deirdre managed the construction, including brickwork, roofing, joinery and M&E services carried out by specialist sub-contractor craftsmen, with Myles ordering materials such as all the below-ground drainage. Much of the finishing elements were carried out by the Dove family – for example Deirdre assisted in painting the damp-proofing on the concrete slab, while the children helped by painting the walls, varnishing woodwork, and sieving pebbles for the building-path edge detail around the house.



Building plot for Sale - former billiard room and garage on Maze Hill.



An exemplary small practice library, this featured in an RIBA book on Libraries.



Demolition on site - Myles apparently wearing improvised hi-vis on the roof of the old clubroom.



The building team (left to right):
Plumber Arthur Swainson, Bricklayer Pat O'Connell,
Electrician Ken, from Dellwood, Cross & Co and
Joiner/Carpenter Eric Muir



View from Maze Hill

Home and studio

On arrival, the narrow frontage and mono-pitched gable are deceptive - you arrive at a welcoming side entrance and discover a spacious home filled with light - double height living room and gallery, open plan, flexible living spaces connecting to the studio to the rear. Space is used to great advantage – upstairs the 4-5 bedrooms have sloping ceilings and have light and views over the park to the west, or to trees and sky to the east and south. The mono-pitch roofs minimise the massing of the house, which is longer than its neighbours, and it is constructed of handmade brickwork externally. Fair-faced brickwork painted white, birch faced ply and Douglas fir door frames and linings, and tiled floors internally, reflect Scandinavian influences.

It has many ingenious features, including a laundry chute at first floor, concealed in the stair balustrade, and connecting to the downstairs utility room.

The garden surrounds the house, and all ground floor rooms connect directly to outside through large full height windows and sliding doors. The west-facing walled garden is very private and enjoys views of the trees in the park to the west.



Deirdre working in the studio, c 1974



Myles in his studio, 2018

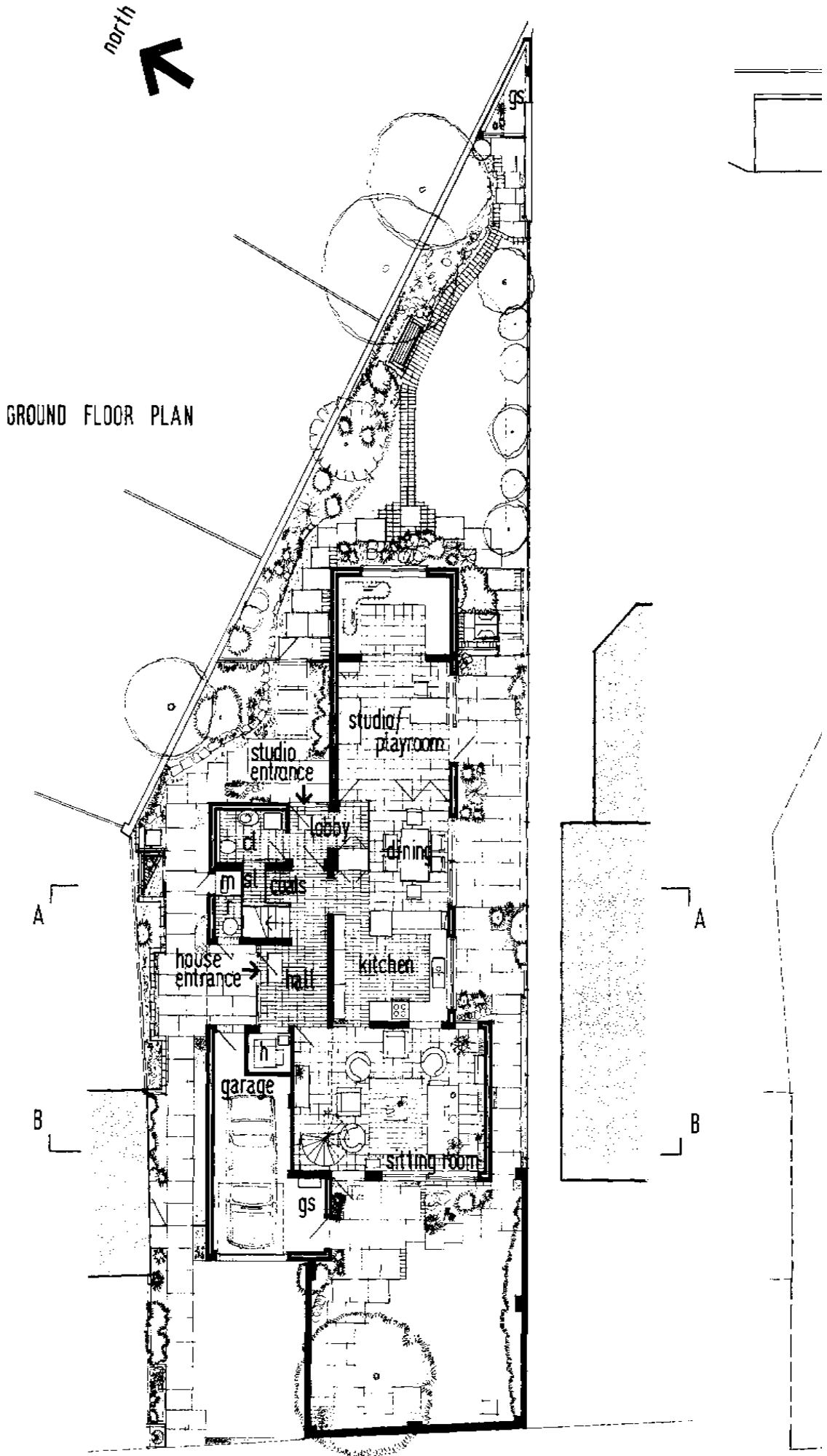
When the studio was in use up till Myles's retirement, the separate entrance was used for visitors and staff. A sliding door and a folding timber partition separated the studio and the kitchen from the dining room, so it could be used for meetings. Children could come and go while work carried on in the studio.

Living and working have always been intertwined at Maze Hill. The linked studio spaces allow all kinds of activity – not only working - alongside family life. The generous double height living space once had Deirdre's baby grand piano, which was essential to the development of the career of one of their children, the composer Jonathan Dove.

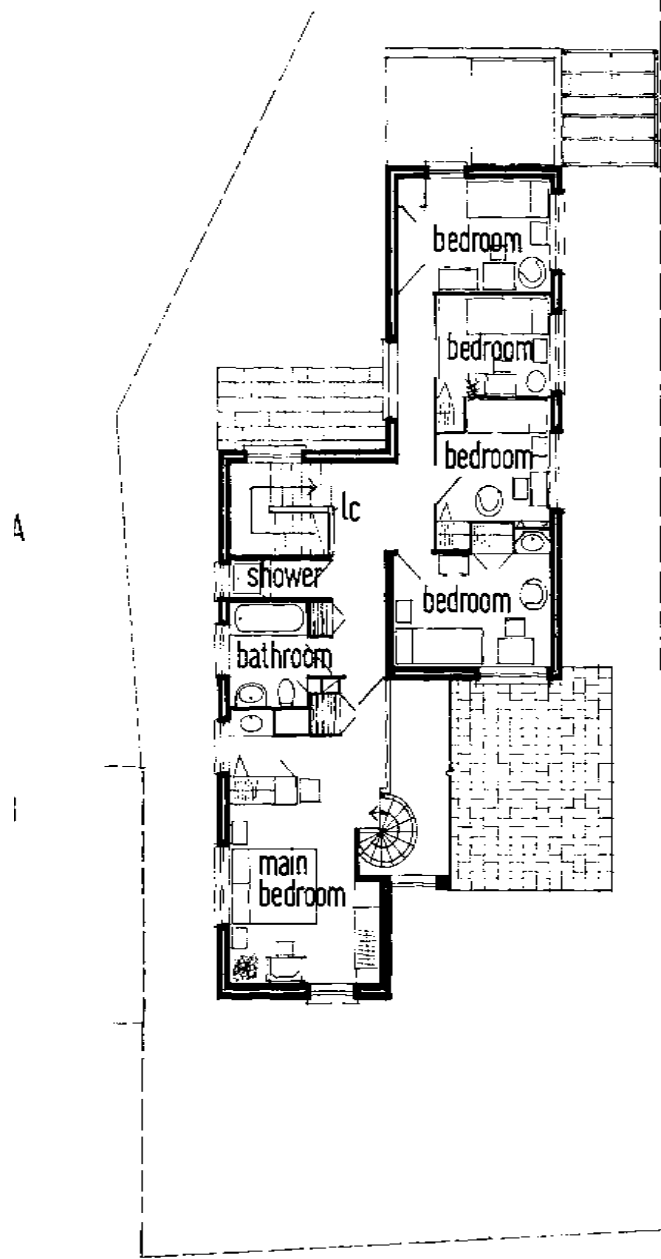
The house easily accommodates many children, grandchildren and friends and a feeling of extra space with the gallery above. Children love the excitement of running round the house, escaping up and down the two staircases, or launching a flight of paper aeroplanes from the gallery down to the living room below.

The studio provides extra space for family gatherings and parties.

The whole house was able to accommodate 120 people for the wedding celebration of Myles's daughter Caroline, extended to include the awning-covered front garden, and a band in the living room. More recently many of the Westcombe Park neighbours came for Myles's 90th birthday tea.

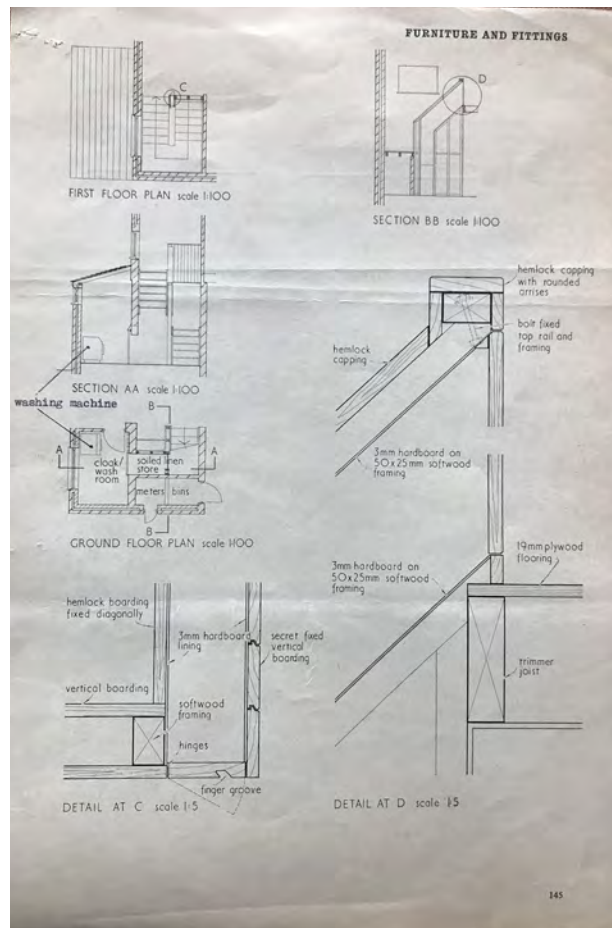
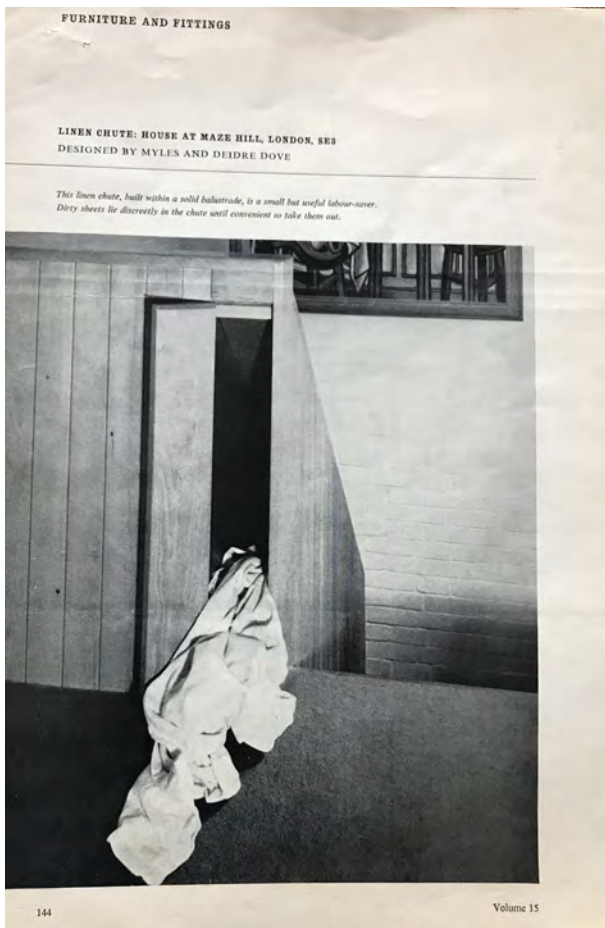


FIRST FLOOR PLAN

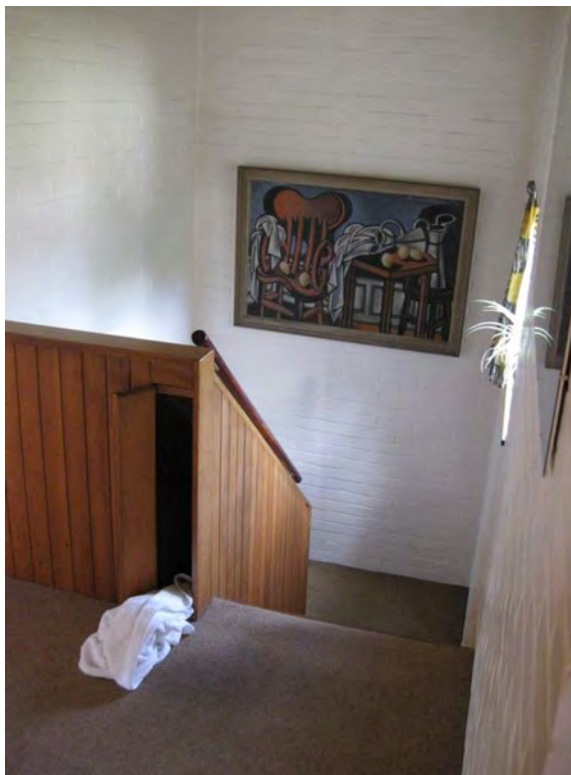


1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 11 12 13 14 15 16 17 18 19 20 21 22 23 24 25 26 27 28 29 30 31 32 33 34 35 36 37 38 39 40 41 42 43 44 45 46 47 48 49 50 51 52 53 54 55 56 57 58 59 60 61 62 63 64 65 66 67 68 69 70 71 72 73 74 75 76 77 78 79 80 81 82 83 84 85 86 87 88 89 90 91 92 93 94 95 96 97 98 99 100

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 11 12 13 14 15 16 17 18 19 20 21 22 23 24 25 26 27 28 29 30 31 32 33 34 35 36 37 38 39 40 41 42 43 44 45 46 47 48 49 50 51 52 53 54 55 56 57 58 59 60 61 62 63 64 65 66 67 68 69 70 71 72 73 74 75 76 77 78 79 80 81 82 83 84 85 86 87 88 89 90 91 92 93 94 95 96 97 98 99 100



The Architect's Journal published a working detail on the Linen Chute in 1971 (?).

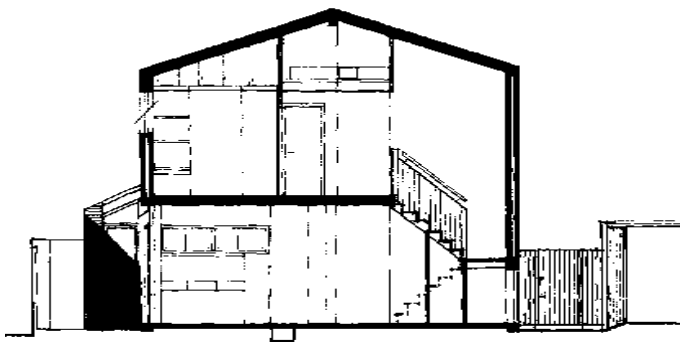


First floor linen chute



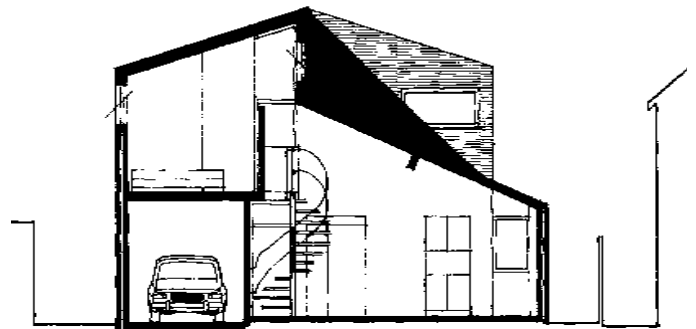
Front door - access to garage on the right and bins on the left. The screens can be removed for special occasions.

Space and light - view of the gallery from the living room



SECTION AA

Section through kitchen and main stair, children's bedrooms at first floor



SECTION BB

Section through garage, gallery and living room, with spiral stair to main bedroom and gallery



Front garden from the living room.



Living room from the gallery



Dining room, kitchen and living room beyond



Spiral stair in living room



Gallery joinery detail



8 Table tennis in the studio



Living room from the front garden



Walled front garden



Studio from the rear garden



Studio from the side garden

Accommodation

Ground Floor: Living, kitchen, dining, studio, entrance hallways, utility room and garage.

First Floor: Four bedrooms (one of which can be subdivided to create a fifth bedroom), dressing room, bathroom, shower room, storage.

Materials

Original materials and fittings still in place include:

Externally

Hand-made bricks from Kent – Tonbridge hand-made heather grey;

Redland Stonewold concrete tiles;

Double glazed anodised aluminium and black-stained softwood window and sliding door frames, with Welsh slate sills.

Internally

Buchtal tiles through hallways, kitchen and utility room;

Cork tiles throughout rest of ground floor;

Fair-faced fletton brickwork painted white;

Hessian finish on insulation board;

Beech veneer doors, Douglas fir door frames and internal face to sliding doors and windows, pine boarded ceiling in living room and main bedroom;

Ceilings ground floor generally vermiculite panels;

Ceilings first floor and ground floor where single storey roofs – Slotac insulation board;

Mosaic tiles in bathroom;

Ironmongery by James Gibbons;

Franke sink;

Gas-fired Warm air heating and hot water.



Main bedroom and gallery - varnished pine ceilings and gallery linings



Paving and rainwater detail



Bathroom: Birch faced ply and mosaic wall finish