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JAMIE MACGREGOR-SMITH



Architect profile *De Matos Ryan*

At this Grade II-listed house on a Gloucestershire estate, architect duo Angus Morrogh-Ryan and José Esteves de Matos have restructured the property, adding a glass pavilion to connect it to an adjoining barn. By **Judith Wilson**

Angus Morrogh-Ryan and José Esteves de Matos formed De Matos Ryan in 1999, having met while studying architecture at Cambridge University. Angus worked for Tim Ronalds Architects, specialising in theatre projects, while José joined Eric Parry Architects, focusing on hotel refurbishment. De Matos Ryan have a formidable reputation for the sensitive restoration of listed buildings, combined with modern architecture, and work on hotel, residential, commercial and school projects. They are known for their work at Cowley Manor, and current commissions include the spa at The Lakes by Yoo; a newbuild house in Devon; an office in Shoreditch; and the conversion of a Victorian water tower in Suffolk. Angus and José both live in north London with their families.

'Our client had already purchased this gabled, Grade II-listed, sixteenth-century house, with seventeenth-century additions, on a Gloucestershire estate. He hired us to restore and restructure the house, linking the property to a derelict barn with a modern glass pavilion. When working on a listed property, it takes detective work to unlock what is significant. Every intervention over the years adds something new but it can be pastiche. We are careful about what elements must be conserved, and what should be taken away. 'Despite its size, the house did not have enough living accommodation, so the new pavilion provides a family kitchen and the converted barn creates a garden television room and guest suite. The pavilion is site-specific, responding to its immediate context. Behind it is the wall of the churchyard, which had to be retained as the pavilion is set into a sloping hillside. The winged roof is structurally

complex, because we wanted it to stand up without visible structure or the need for corner columns. Its design minimises visual perception of the roof when you look straight at the extension, and the churchyard wall can be seen above the kitchen units, via frameless wrap-around clerestory glazing. We like our work to be intelligent and visually surprising, questioning traditional structure.

'From the exterior, we wanted the pavilion to appear detached, so an external limestone staircase conceals the link between it and the house. The glazed doors have a very thin aluminium frame, to add to the effect of an open shelter, and can be pushed back to open up the kitchen to the outside. We've used visual tricks for the barn, too. We have positioned the new glazing mullions directly behind the original barn posts for a fusion of old and new.

'The house is built from ashlar Cotswold limestone, which has been repaired and repointed. For consistency of materials, we have chosen honed, tumbled Cotswold-limestone slabs on the pavilion floor, and solid Cotswold limestone for a modern interpretation of an original spiral staircase in the house. The cladding in the television room is natural oiled oak, a material also used for the door and window frames throughout.

'In the house we have restored the timber-framed lath-and-plaster walls and ceilings, and the stonework and fireplaces. New windows, to match the original leaded lights, have been installed, and engineered-oak floorboards are finished with a dark stain to match the sixteenth-century oak ceiling in the sitting room. We have modernised with a light touch, adding new staircases, bathrooms and



doors. We like to treat additions distinctly as linings or furniture-like objects in the space, keeping the primary room surfaces intact. We enjoy the contrast of old and new: for example, we used a toughened glass panel at the top of the original wooden spiral staircase in place of a traditional baluster.

'All the spaces we design are obsessively tailored to the client. That is a governing tenet of our practice. As well as underfloor heating, our client had specific audio-visual requirements for every room and wanted provision for air conditioning in the kitchen, so technology has been seamlessly integrated. A house is successful when spaces feel simple and don't appear to be working too hard. It looks effortless but it was hard work making everything invisible.

'It was a challenge to link the modern pavilion with the restored period house. But our client was supportive of modern design and keen to explore new ideas. We get great satisfaction out of intelligently appraising existing buildings. Ultimately, it is the enjoyment of the space that matters' □

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OPPOSITE José Esteves de Matos (left) and Angus Morrogh-Ryan redesigned this listed house in Gloucestershire. THIS PAGE CLOCKWISE FROM TOP The kitchen doors can be pushed back to open up the room to the outside. The glass pavilion was designed to appear detached from the main house, from the exterior. Angus and José restored the timber-frame, lath-and-plaster walls in the main house. The new flush doors are modern yet discreet

