MAGGIE’S CENTRE BARTS
London, United Kingdom

SQ FT
6534 BGSF

OWNER/AFFILIATION
Maggie Keswick Jencks Cancer Caring Centres Trust

ARCHITECT(S)
Steven Holl Architects

COMPLETION DATE
2017

SITE MAP

ABOUT | DESIGN INTENTIONS
The site in the center of London is adjacent to the large courtyard of St Bartholomew’s Hospital. Founded in Smithfield in the 12th century, the hospital is the oldest in London and was founded at the same time as the St Bartholomew the Great Church in 1123. Rahere founded the church and hospital “for the restoration of poor men.” Layers of history characterize this unique site, connecting deeply to the Medieval culture of London.
VESSELS WITHIN VESSELS

The building was envisioned as a “vessel within a vessel within a vessel.” The structure is a branching concrete frame, the inner layer is perforated bamboo and the outer layer is matte white glass with colored glass fragments, recalling “neume notation” of Medieval music of the 12th century. The word “neume” originates from the Greek pnevma, which means ‘vital force.’ It suggests a ‘breath of life’ that blurs oneself with inspiration like a stream of air, the blowing of the wind.

VESSELS WITHIN VESSELS

The building was envisioned as a “vessel within a vessel within a vessel.”

New contrast to Old

Exposing Corner “Quoins”

MERGING INTO HISTORICAL CONTEXT

Maggie’s Centre offers free practical, social and emotional help to anyone affected by cancer. There are already a number of these centres around the UK, by architects including Rogers Stirk Harbour + Partners, OMA and Snøhetta.

While most all of the realized Maggie’s Centres have been horizontal buildings, the centre at St Bartholomew’s is more vertical, sitting on the historically charged site. It replaces a pragmatic 1960s brick structure adjacent to a 17th century stone structure by James Gibbs, holding the “Great Hall” and the famous Hogarth staircase.

Holl’s design pays tribute to the building’s medieval heritage. The geometric facade is modelled on the medieval method of writing down music, called “neume notation.” It features lines at 90-centimetre vertical intervals, interspersed with the colourful glass panels.
The first floor has a library with seating areas, as well as two separate rooms that can be used as office space or additional counseling rooms.

The uppermost floor comprises a room with a curved glass wall. This opens out onto a roof garden—a flexible space that can be used for meetings or classes such as Tai Chi and yoga.

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**GROUND LEVEL:**

Note: "Departmental Square Footages take-off based on Analysis of Departmental Area in Contemporary Hospitals calculation methodologies & Design Factors Report, 2014"
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LEVEL 02:

Maggie's Barts replaces a 1960s brick structure, abutting the last remaining wing of the hospital’s 17th-century buildings.

This wing, called the Great Hall of St. Bartholomew’s, was designed by renowned British architect James Gibbs, who also built the dome of the Radcliffe Camera at Oxford. The hall contains the Hogarth Staircase, which is painted with murals by William Hogarth depicting Jesus Christ healing the sick.

The new center’s proximity to such a historic building, combined with its contemporary facade, caused controversy when the plans for first revealed. At one point critics even mooted a rival scheme they commissioned from British architect Michael Hopkins, but Holl’s design prevailed.

The three story centre has an open curved staircase integral to the concrete frame with open spaces vertically lined in perforated bamboo. The glass facade geometry, like a musical “staff” is in horizontal strips 90 cm wide, which follow the geometry of the main stair along the north facade, while lifting up with clear glass facing the main square, marking the main front entry. There is a second entry on the west opening to the extended garden of the adjacent church.

LEVEL 03:

THIRD FLOOR PLAN

Note: “Departmental Square Footages take-off based on Analysis of Departmental Area in Contemporary Hospitals calculation methodologies & Design Factors Report, 2014

Image Sources: https://

Building Section
MAGGIE’S CENTRE BARTS
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THIRD FLOOR PLAN
The building tops out in a public roof garden with flowering trees open to a large room for yoga, Tai Chi, meetings etc. The interior character of this building will be shaped by colored light washing the floors and walls, changing by the time of day and season. Interior lighting is organized to allow the colored lenses together with the translucent white glass of the facade to present a new, joyful, glowing presence on this corner of the great square of the Barts Hospital.

JURY’S COMMENTS
- Maggie’s Centre Barts — Steven Holl Architects A vertical Maggie’s — small program of intimate spaces is give an inspirational, poetic, uplifting experience.
- A delightful piece of candy amongst serious buildings — poetry, art, delight inserted as therapeutic form and space.
- Interior has ethereal light, artful color based on musical notations layered with bamboo staircase of warmth and comfort — a healing environment.

PROJECT SUMMARY:
Project: MAGGIE’S CENTRE BARTS
Project location: London, United Kingdom
Owner/Client: Maggie Keswick Jencks Cancer Caring Centre Trust (Maggie’s)
Architect: Steven Holl Architects
Associate Architects: JH Architects
Landscape Architect: Darren Hawkes Landscapes
Construction manager: Sir Robert McAlpine
Engineer: Arup
Historic Building Advisor: Donald Insall Associates
Lighting Consultant: L’Observatoire International
Cdm Coordinator: Floor Projects LLP
Code Consultant: Butler & Young
Planning Advisor: DPS
Cost Estimator: Gardiner & Theobald
Archaeology: MOLA
Glass Consultant: Arup

For Additional Project Information:
https://vimeo.com/65395492
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▶ A delightful piece of candy amongst serious buildings — poetry, art, delight inserted as therapeutic form and space.
▶ Interior has ethereal light, artful color based on musical notations layered with bamboo staircase of warmth and comfort — a healing environment.