



31/44  
Architects

**PRESS ENQUIRIES**  
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PRESS RELEASE

## TY BRYN (HILL HOUSE), CAERGWRLLE

10/2020

31/44 can reveal designs for a new 320m<sup>2</sup> house which will be built into a rural hillside in North Wales.

The house is located on Rhyddyn Hill on the edge of the Caergwrle conservation area in a part of Wales synonymous with mining and farming, and, in the 20th century, the site of Caergwrle Spa. The design has now been granted planning approval by Flintshire County Council, and will start on site in October.

The topography and wooded nature of the sloping site, which descends over 15 metres, embeds the house on three sides, creating a spectacular presence on the south-facing façade which overlooks the village of Caergwrle below.

The three-storey masonry and concrete framed red-brick building is cut into the hill and features large-scale fenestration and inset balconies and terraces. It has a bold presence which aims to enhance its surroundings by creating a focal point in the landscape. The design aims to maximise its setting by connecting the dwelling's interiors with the wider natural landscape.

Paying homage to the local heritage, the design references the Victorian industrial buildings built during the village's zenith as a bottling spa: buildings of material richness and unapologetic ambition and presence.

The client, a retired couple, commissioned the contemporary house with an ambition to make both the elevated position and gradient of the site a virtue, and with an express wish that the floorplan would allow long-term accessibility as physical capabilities and needs change over time.

The main living spaces and principal bedroom suite are grouped on a single level – the highest (second floor) – for ease of movement and expansive views across the landscape. Set among the building's frame of columns and beams, a sequence of generous living spaces leads to a dining room on the south elevation which is flanked by two covered terraces.

Accommodation for visiting extended family – three bedrooms and two bathrooms – is located on a middle level (first floor), creating separation and privacy. Access and amenities including parking, storage, utility and laundry, are located on the ground floor level, adjacent to the main entrance with double-height hall.



Externally the house is grounded on the lower levels by two-storey brick piers which support the upper fenestration and open terraces on the upper floor. The journey through the house emulates the experience of walking up a steep hill to the treeline at the crest, and you are rewarded for the climb in the upper floor. The design makes provision for a lift, in case of future mobility issues.

The building is being developed in the spirit of Passivhaus, with the central circulation core functioning as a central passive stack. This is supported by mechanical ventilation with heat recovery (MVHR) system; high insulation values achieved through thick wall construction and a high performing glazing specification; and a solar thermal heating system.

Referencing the now defunct local brickworks of Buckley and Ruabon, the house will be constructed primarily of brick. The dark, red-brown brick was chosen to reflect the earthy colours of surrounding vegetation, and is finished with a smooth-brushed mortar. The use of concrete banding, sills and corbels reflects the traditional stone window sills and datums redolent of 19th century buildings in the area. The roof construction will provide a wild meadow green roof, visible from neighbouring hillside properties, enhancing biodiversity and local wildlife. The structural brick columns and piers of the building's frame are reduced in scale from first to second floor, reducing the building's loadbearing construction and referencing the buttress and brick detailing found on local buildings. Internally, materials are robust and tactile, using painted brick and tiled floor surfaces, with joinery and cabinetry reflecting the traditional methods of crafting to provide a simple domestic interior finish.

A. Wells, Flintshire planning officer, said:

*'The final design presented has evolved as a result of the careful analysis of the topography of the site... This application is well conceived and appropriate for the site at Rhyddyn Hill.'*

Stephen Davies, director, 31/44 Architects, said:

*'We are really pleased that this ambitious project was well received by the local planning department and we look forward to seeing the project progress on site in October. Fingers crossed for a dry winter in Wales!'*

**Press enquiries:**

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**NOTES TO EDITORS**

<b>Address</b>	6 Rhyddyn Hill, Caergwrle, Flintshire LL12 5EW
<b>Site area</b>	1550m <sup>2</sup> (0.155 hectares)
<b>GIA</b>	320m <sup>2</sup> (including garage)
<b>Schedule</b>	Appointment: Nov 2017 Design phase: May 2017 – Mar 2020 Construction phase: October 2020 – ongoing Anticipated completion: winter 2021
<b>Client</b>	Philip and Irene Davies (private client)
<b>Architect</b>	31/44 Architects
<b>Design Team</b>	Will Burges, Stephen Davies, Rosy Jones, Tobias Jewson
<b>Project Architect</b>	Tobias Jewson
<b>Structural Engineer</b>	Andrew Barnard, Barnard Engineering Ltd
<b>Energy assessor</b>	Daryl Price, DK Property Services
<b>Model photos</b>	© 3144 Architects
<b>Visualisations</b>	© 3144 Architects



**31/44 Architects** is an architectural practice headed by Will Burges and Stephen Davies. The practice name refers to the practice's two studio locations in the Netherlands (Amsterdam) and the UK (London), when founded in 2010. The practice is now based in London, with a satellite office in Nantes, France, led by Benoît Sanson.

The practice works on projects ranging in scale from strategic masterplanning through to smaller scale residential work. Buildings are characterised by a thoughtful response to context – they are not conceived in isolation, but instead grow out of the particular conditions of each setting, resulting in buildings with an inherent connection to their site, whilst ensuring that they are a close reflection of their clients' requirements.

Recent award wins include RIBA London and National Awards for No. 49 (Lewisham) and Red House (Dulwich), in 2017 and 2018 respectively. Red House won the Manser Medal in 2018, was shortlisted for the RIBA House of the Year 2018, shortlisted for the Stephen Lawrence Prize 2018 and nominated for the EU Prize for Contemporary Architecture Mies van der Rohe Award 2019.

31/44 has taught an undergraduate studio at Kingston School of Art and Architecture since 2010, and they are regular professional practice examiners at a number of architecture schools. Teaching has become a fundamental part of the practice; the constant articulation of ideas, observations and proposals required in the teaching studio also enriches the design studio.

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