

# inhabit

architecture today

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# CASSION CASTLE ARCHITECTS

## COAST HOUSE



- △ An exposed steel frame replaces a 600mm thick concrete wall, providing structural stability and supporting the glazing to the beach elevation.
- ▷ Built in 1908, the concrete-framed house forms part of a terrace overlooking a private beach. It is one of the earliest dwellings in the UK to have been built using a reinforced concrete frame.
- ◁ The existing cellular layout has been reconfigured to provide open-plan spaces that accommodate contemporary living and maximise the sea views.

Coast House by Cassion Castle Architects is a re-worked and refurbished beachfront dwelling on the south coast. Built in 1908 as part of a terrace overlooking a private shingle beach, it is one of the earliest houses in the UK to employ a reinforced concrete frame. Originally designed with a cellular layout, the interior was a warren of small, cramped rooms. A thick concrete wall set behind the frame was particularly problematic, resulting in an unwelcoming external aesthetic and separating the main living spaces from the sea views. Externally, the building incorporated a number of eccentric features, including crenellations to the parapet, as well as numerous ad-hoc alterations made over the years.

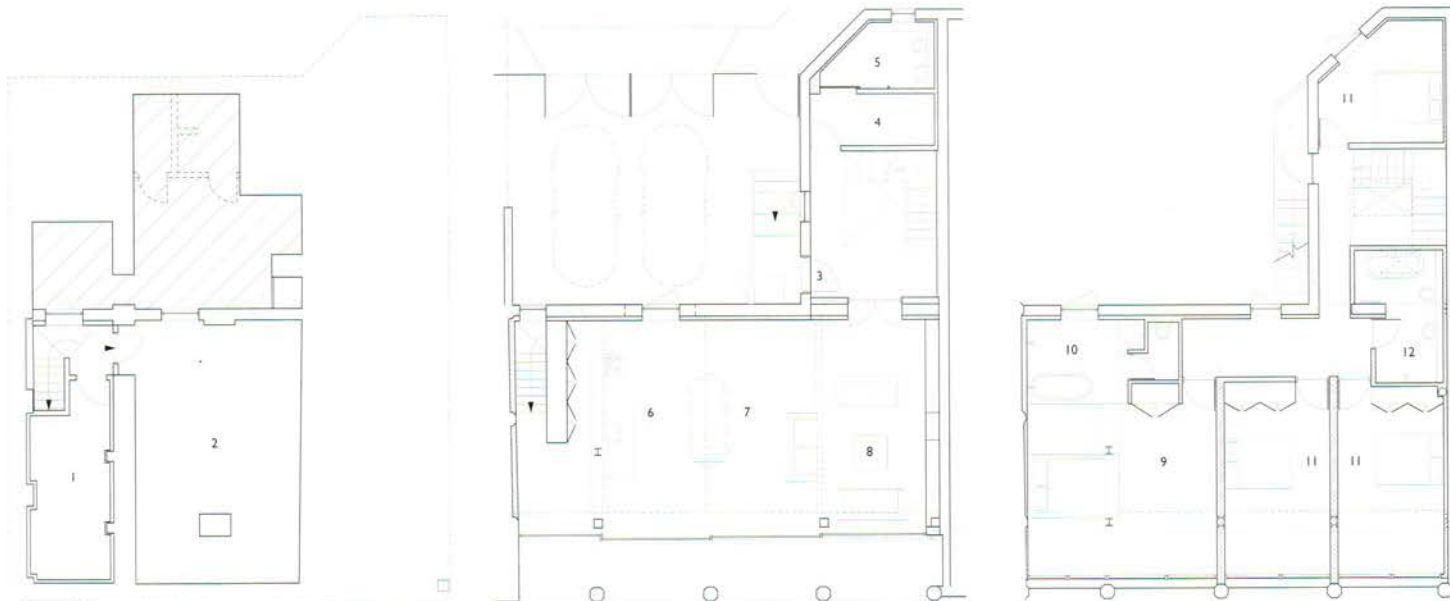
The architect's approach has been to strip

back the visual clutter, and reinstate a coherence to the detail and finishes of the facades that remains sympathetic to the neighbouring properties. Inside, larger brighter spaces that better suit the needs of the client and contemporary living have been achieved by opening up the plan.

The existing partitions and 600mm thick concrete wall were removed, the latter requiring major demolition work and presenting a significant structural challenge. In its place an exposed steel frame provides structural stability, supporting a glazed curtain wall to the beach elevation. Together, the columns of the concrete and steel frames provide a series of visual layers in which the retained elements of the facade sit alongside the more contemporary interventions. The ▷



- ◊ Articulated by an external staircase, the rear elevation has been remodelled to maximise privacy and security.
  - ▽ Exposed concrete soffit in corridor
  - ▽ Basement, ground- and first-floor plans.
- Key: 1 storage, 2 plant, 3 entrance, 4 cloak room, 5 wc, 6 kitchen, 7 dining, 8 living, 9 master bedroom, 10 ensuite bathroom, 11 bedroom, 12 bathroom.





new frame also supports retained concrete slabs, which partially protect the external terraces from the elements and provide privacy. Stripped back and fully restored, the frame columns have been set into new balustrades, creating a smart, modernist facade overlooking the beach.

To the rear, further demolition work has swept

away the accretion of poorly designed additions to form a generously sized courtyard. This has a deliberate 'fortress-like' appearance, with relatively small windows set into new white render to ensure privacy, and tall steel gates to enclose the yard and provide security. An external staircase articulates the otherwise simple facade. The

crenellated parapet has been filled in, complementing the contemporary aesthetic and safely enclosing a roof terrace

Internally, the original concrete ceilings have been revealed and repaired, creating a semi-industrial aesthetic alongside the exposed beams and columns of the new steel frame. Strip lighting set into the steelwork marks the line of the original concrete wall and emphasises the house's multiple layers – particularly at night. Timber floors and bespoke joinery are combined with a muted decorative scheme and high specification fixtures and fittings. □

▲ Clockwise from top left: top-lit bathroom; ground-floor hall with double-height space above; dining room. Timber floors and muted colours are combined with high-quality fixtures and fittings.  
 ◀ Site plan; section.

○ Architect Casson, Castle Architects structure Structure Workshop windows Sunflex by ID Systems, Velfac Windows tiling Mandarin Stone photos Killian O'Sullivan.  
 ○ Floor area 290 sqm form of contract bespoke construction cost £750,000 contract duration 12 months.

