

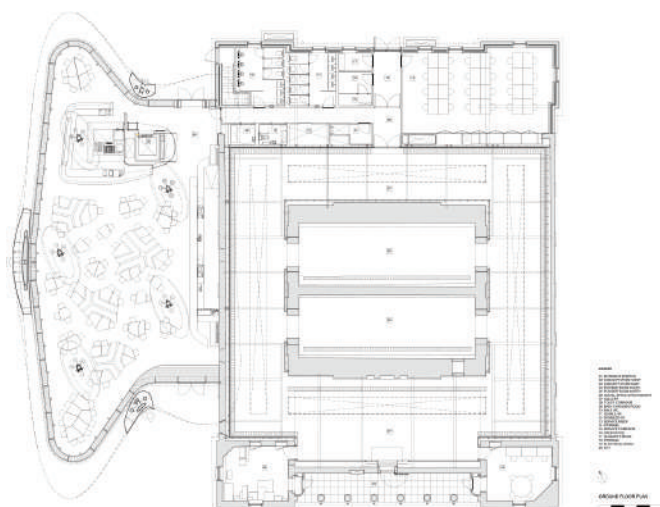
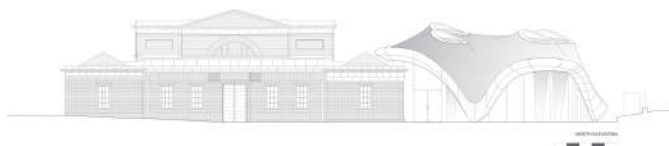
The serpentine Sackler gallery

Zaha Hadid Architects
Kensington Gardens London UK
2009-2013
Internal area 1355 m² Building footprint 1328m²
Tensile structure



The Sackler Serpentine Gallery is housed in a Grade II listed building, a former 1805 gunpowder store, to which an extension has been added. Both the renovation of the historic building and the addition were designed by Zaha Hadid architects.

Along with a temporary exhibition gallery, the building also houses a social space, a restaurant, a shop and offices in use by the Serpentine Galleries staff.



The intervention envisaged a careful restoration of the old store, known as The Magazine, so to respect and at the same time emphasize its architectural value; for this purpose the non-historical parts were removed and the original courtyards were covered so to obtain more exhibition surface.

The resulting space is characterized by a continuous gallery running around an inner core, constituted by the two raw brick barrel vaulted rooms where once the gunpowder was stored. Natural light, provided by several roof-lights, contributes to further underline the visual power of the core.



Five internal columns create the roof high-points and convey the skylight inside. The perimeter enclosure is realized through a curved glazing, thus leading to an ethereal space filled with natural light coming from all directions.

The building follows the basic principal of a tent :

The extension is made of a curvilinear skeleton constituted of round steel hollow profiles across which a glass fibre woven textile membrane is stretched.



The curvilinear skeleton and the five columns that convey the skylight inside the building once the woven textile is stretched.



The membrane is firstly attached to the columns.



It is stretched by being fixed to the curvilinear steel structure.



The membrane is now fully stretched.



Curvilinear glass panels are then put in place.



The structure is hidden by a plastic white shell (which is therefore not structural).

The use of a strong material such as steel is then key in making the woven textile membrane stretched to its maximum.