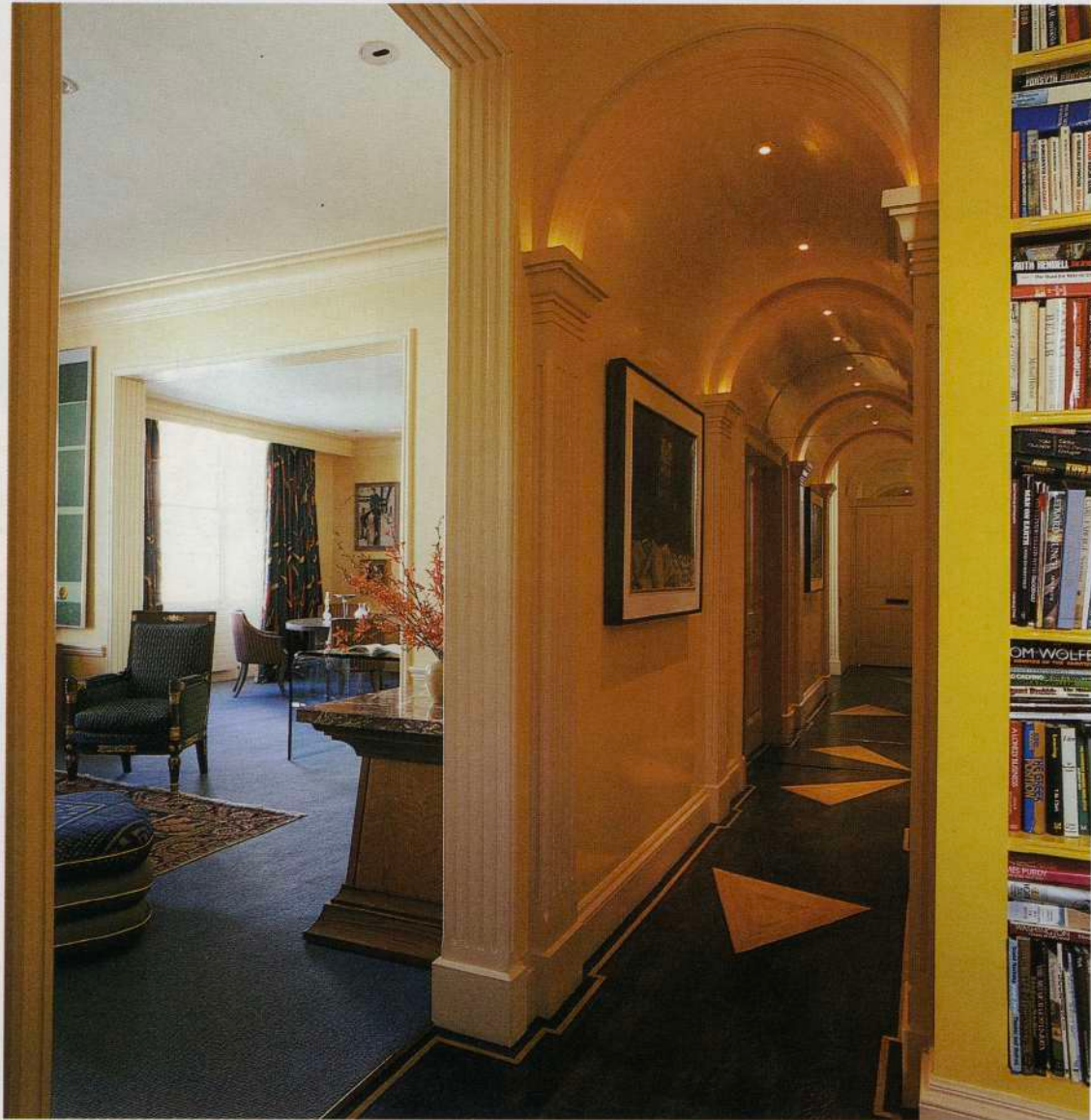


SOUTH AFRICA HABITAT MAGAZINE - ALBANY, LONDON - 1993

Client: Tony S Gibb



Albany Apartment

location Central London
interior design Derek Frost

London-based Derek Frost is no stranger to the pages of *Habitat* and we have featured a number of his interiors both here and in London. This apartment in Albany, Central London is a typical example of Frost's subtle approach to design. The result is always an understated, comfortable and elegant shell accentuated with Frost's own custom furniture designs and very often accessorised with excellent artworks. ▸



previous page:

In the entrance hall, access to a storage space and the staircase is concealed behind jib doors. The parquet floor is stained blue with inset oak triangles; walls are in Chinese Yellow lacquer.

above:

The period fireplace in the drawing room is accentuated with an antique painting of bell ringers. Here, too, is a fine Heriz carpet; cushions on the sofa are by Fortuny, others are in silk damask. The excellent antique pieces are a foil for good contemporary pictures.

Says Frost of this interior: 'This is actually a most unusual apartment within a Grade One listed building in Central London. The rooms are of generous height on the main floor and are connected by the narrowest of twisting staircases to an upper floor of two minute rooms, used in the former owner's day as Dickensian servants' quarters.

'When the new owner purchased the apartment the state of repair was virtually non-existent. None of the room shapes conformed to his requirements and the services were very basic.

'My bachelor client has modern

tastes reflected in a fine collection of contemporary pictures, excellent furniture and strong personal ideas on interior design and décor. But there was a prerequisite here because all the new work that needed to be done had to conform to the very strict requirements of a Grade One listed building'.

Frost and his client took a brave decision to locate the master bedroom and bathroom on the upper floor, despite the restricted area, which released the lower floor for use as living/entertaining space. All internal walls were removed and repositioned to create two large reception rooms, entrance hall,▷





opposite:

In the downstairs bathroom a dado of Chinese red contrasts with the chair rail and skirting in blue/grey laminate. Walls are painted red and rubbed over with copper and wall lights are in frosted glass. The window treatment is a white silk damask festoon blind.



desk and a TV/video/audio cabinet designed by Derek Frost over which is a fine abstract painting. Yellow silk festoons match the walls in the entrance hall.

Fine upholstered pieces include a stool covered in silk ikat next to the pebble table designed by Frost in burr elm, inlaid with mother of pearl. A fine Louis XV chair in velvet, a French directoire chair with brass mounts and a Gainsborough chair are other notables; the latter stands next to an invisible glass desk.

The dining room table is another Derek Frost design in stained oak with contrast banding. It stands on a perspex base and is matched to reproduction sabre-legged chairs; beyond is a David Hockney lithograph which emphasises the eclectic approach to design in these reception rooms.

On this floor is a guest bathroom and kitchen. The latter, featuring custom-made units finished in deep turquoise metallic car enamel, rise full height to a reflective ceiling clad in polished aluminium. Counter tops are in black pearl ▶

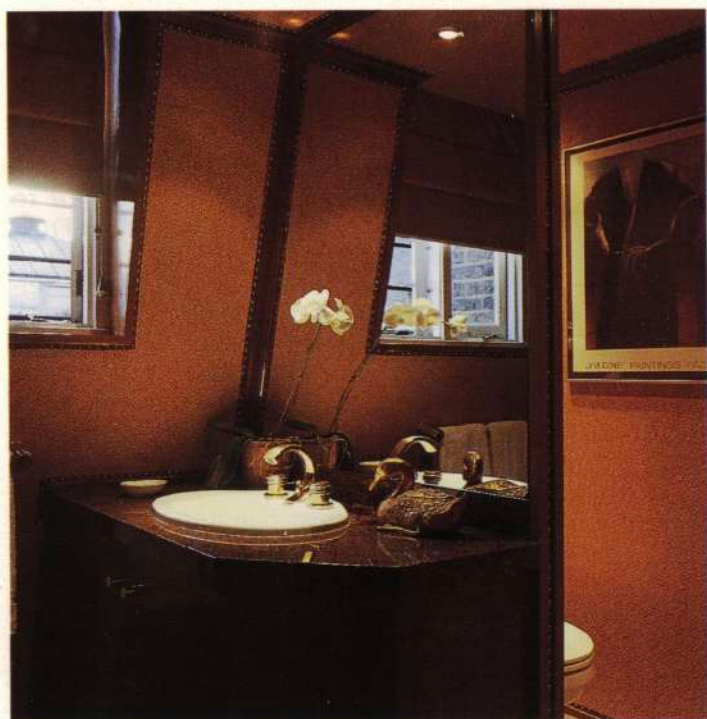
bathroom, kitchen and storage room.

The designer then focused on internal detailing and installed cornices, architraves, columns and doors – all of which are purpose-made. Says Frost: 'There were some existing positive features in the tall windows and the three working fireplaces with original period surrounds; all were reburbished and retained'.

In the entrance hall the designer lacquered the walls in Chinese yellow. From this area, there is a large rectangular opening to the first of two reception rooms via a vaulted corridor with pilasters and uplighting. Says Derek Frost: 'I created an illusion of double length by placing full height mirrors on the end of the corridor wall. The result is that a single door, with architrave running on one side and the top only, visually becomes an impressive double door'.

In the drawing room/dining room the ambience is patently English. Adjacent to the entrance hall is an 18th Century Dutch inlaid fall-front





above:

This unique and tiny main bedroom suite was designed to look like the inside of a travelling trunk. The adjoining bathroom is identically finished and blinds and curtains are in the same fabric.

left:

The units in the kitchen are custom-finished in deep turquoise auto enamel. A turquoise silk damask festoon accentuates a polished aluminium Venetian blind.

granite and the plinths below the units are clad in polished stainless steel to increase visual depth.

Says Derek Frost of the upper floor: 'Due to the minute spaces, I decided to detail both rooms to represent the inside of a fine travelling trunk. A small printed cotton lines all walls, doors and ceilings and a mahogany strip emphasises all the edges. The fabric finishes against the timber with a line of contrast braid fixed with spaced brass nails. The effect is almost that of upholstery finish and the blinds and curtains, which conceal the storage space, are in the same fabric'. □

Custom Furniture designed by DFA for this Apartment



