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Clients: John R Schlesinger / Michael Childers



Sky High

LOCATION: CENTRAL LONDON
INTERIOR DESIGN: DEREK FROST ASSOCIATES
ARCHITECT: PETER WOOD

The top floor of a mansion block, plus the roof space over it, were united to form the volumes of this spectacular apartment in Central London. From its tall rooms there is an extraordinary 360 degree view across the entire breadth of the city plus a wonderfully close connection to the constant changes of sky and light. >





The owner of this enviable space is an eminent and much acclaimed British film and opera director. Interior designer, Derek Frost, and his client have been close friends for many

years and have worked together on other houses of his in the past. Both were very passionate about the project, taking this space and moulding it into a new London base which combined both office and separate guest apartment, and home.

Here was a great opportunity to start anew. The space existed but was in an appalling structural state. The upper floor was barely habitable and the connection to the floor below was mean and precarious. None of the existing internal spaces provided the sort of layout that was required and during the course of the work, every internal wall came down. This extensive design and building work was carried out in partnership with architect Peter Wood.

Says Derek Frost: 'The client was to move from a much larger house and was therefore scaling down. Over the years he has been an assiduous collector of things – oriental pieces, contemporary ceramics, pic-



PREVIOUS PAGE: THE OWNER WANTED A HOME THAT WOULD GIVE HIM LIGHT, SPACE AND LOFTY VIEWS OF LONDON.



THE CLIENT FOUND IT TO BE A GREAT LUXURY BEING ABLE TO CARVE UP THE OVERALL VOLUMES INTO EXACTLY THE CONFIGURATION OF ROOMS AND CONNECTIONS THAT HE REQUIRED. THE UPPER FLOOR IS SERVED BY AN INDEPENDENT KITCHEN WHICH HAS PROVED MOST USEFUL.



THE APARTMENT IS COMFORTABLE AND ALLOWS FOR ENTERTAINMENT ON A LARGE SCALE. THE OWNER INSISTED ON CLEAN ARCHITECTURAL LINES AND SIMPLE DECORATION TO ENSURE THAT HIS COLLECTION OF PAINTINGS AND *OBJETS* WERE GIVEN PROMINENCE.

DEREK FROST SUGGESTED FORMING LOFTY INTERNAL OPENINGS WHICH WOULD ALLOW A LOT OF LIGHT INTO THE APARTMENT. THIS SERVED TO MODERNISE THE LOOK OF THE FLAT AND VASTLY INCREASE THE SENSE OF HEIGHT AND SPACE.



tures mostly from the '60s and '70s, tribal rugs, kitsch – and he continues to collect. He has a great love of design and decoration and an extraordinary perceptive and finely tuned eye. A hectic creative working schedule accompanied by an equal-

ly active private life, swim closely together through these rooms and there is much evidence of activity, interest, texture, colour and life. Much is demanded of the space. The rooms are rich in energy, but reflect a quiet ambience.'

There is a complete difference in feel between the two floors which constitute the living space; a difference the designer actively sought to strengthen.

Frost explains: 'The upper floor is the ultimate garret studio with all



THIS COLLECTION OF INDIAN WORKS WAS HOUSED IN THE DINING ROOM OF THE OWNER'S PREVIOUS HOME. DEREK FROST SUGGESTED A RULE – 'NEVER HANG ANYTHING IN THE SAME ROOM AS BEFORE'. THE COLLECTION IS NOW HOUSED IN THE MAIN BEDROOM.

the great and magnificent timber structures, which support the roof, exposed. It combines sitting room and office into one enormous sunlit space with two sets of large double doors leading to a terrace strung along its length. A huge ceiling lantern and other high level openings further strengthen the connection to the sky and light.'

A sculpted, gently twisting stair of ash and polished stainless steel connects this upper space with the entrance hall below; bringing with it a great flood of light from above.

On the lower level conventional room shapes, tall and very simply

detailed, provide bedrooms and bathrooms, a further office, dining room and kitchen. On this floor too is a separate guest apartment comprising bedroom, bathroom and sitting room. Hugely tall openings, hung with flush-faced doors clad in a lustrous fiddle ash veneer, strengthen the connection between these rooms and allow the maximum amount of light and view to penetrate into the heart of the space.

The designer summarises: 'The noise of the street below barely reaches this height. It is an aerie high in the sky. A quiet, lofty space filled with light, colour and tranquillity.' □



