

Rene Dekker Designs Kensington Mansion Flat

Set on one of Kensington's smartest garden squares, this listed mansion flat received a complete refurbishment, breathing new life into its tired interior. Upon entering one is immediately struck by the textures and finishes which tease the senses. Exquisitely lacquered doors as smooth as glass, textured polished plaster expertly applied to expansive walls and delicate wall coverings abound throughout the interior, a common trait that runs through schemes commissioned to René Dekker.

Originally one very large home, the building was transformed and subdivided into apartments many years ago when space was not the premium it is now. The apartment has been sympathetically laid out across 3,000 square feet, it has a spacious entrance hall leading in one direction to the principle rooms and in the other to the bedrooms. At the front of the residence and facing the square is the reception room with an adjoining eat in kitchen and a further study. To the rear are three bedrooms all with en-suite bathrooms, a guest cloak room and a lobby. Built around 1850 and despite the subdivision, the flat retains many of its period features. The challenge was now for Dekker to add the magic. No major changes were made to the layout and Dekker worked closely with the architect and project manager to ensure that the finished product exceeded the client's expectation yet kept English Heritage agreeable.

The entrance hall is warm and inviting, and although classical in its detailing, it is refreshingly contemporary in its use of finishes. It flows off in two directions, fluidly linking the bedroom wing with the reception room through the use of a seamless pitted plaster finish on the walls and the random width and length oak planks that make up the floor throughout the apartment.

The reception room is resplendent with its luxuriously finished walls,



skilfully painted to look like aged silk. Dekker worked closely with renowned specialist decorators DKT to create this sumptuous blend of taupe, gold and pearl. The room is dominated by the dark panelled joinery, designed with classical proportions within a contemporary idiom. To ground the scheme and keep it in context, Dekker used heavily gilded lamps from Porta Romana which all sit squarely on a contemporary silk and wool rug. Despite the amount of future, there is still plenty of space around this seating area. Whilst the décor in this room is undoubtedly glamorous, chic and grown up, it has been cleverly interwoven with original artworks and objets owned by the client to make it feel whole and uncontrived.

Adjoining the reception room is the family eat-in-kitchen, separated when required, by full height oak and glass panelled doors. A far more modern affair, this room is the heart of the home, again with ample space, housing an eight seater table and chairs which do not encroach in any way on the flow of the room.

The study is a modest but well-proportioned room just off the hall. Panelled in dark oak, this bespoke arrangement was designed with the client's every need in mind. One of the subtleties that one picks up while getting the grand tour is the attention to detail, especially in the ironmongery. Attached like furniture jewellery to every door and cupboard, are the most exquisite >>

with polished chrome >> as the central theme. Each one is unique and beautifully crafted in a different design, some with leather while others have mother of pearl, adding that extra layer of design to complete the work.

The guest WC is tucked away just off the entrance hall and created a bit of a design issue admits Dekker. Whilst building was underway, Dekker and the project manager agreed to completely mirror one elevation, formatting the design to suit the architectural ambiguity of the wall. The outcome is a cleverly designed storage unit, hidden away and creating the impression of extra space. It was here as well that Dekker and the project manager rationalised the design to help eradicate the view

In an age of instant gratification, this home is a Homage to subtlety.

of the light well by hiding the original window behind stone and frosting the angled skylight.

At the end of the corridor just off the hall is the master suite made up of a generous bright bedroom, two walk in wardrobes and an en suite bathroom. The bed is centrally located opposite the fireplace and sits elegantly within an architectural folly that had to be kept due to the listing. In order to fit a padded headboard



seasoned veteran and these do not disappoint. Creating a bedroom for a young 16 year old girl, who is keen to study fashion design, was a challenge

Understated elegance would not be a clichéd term when describing this home.

to avoid predictability. 'I like children's rooms to combine the vitality of youth and an element of fun with adult sophistication. The boy's room is also a dream blend of masculine 'Ralph Lauren' tones translated into a boyish scheme. Shades of charcoal, smoke and gun metal scatter cushions, not usually associated with a boy's room, combine well with the faux fur throw and dark linen headboard.

In an age of instant gratification, this home is a Homage to subtlety. Delicate textures, restrained tones and luxurious finishes eagerly wait to be discovered, and woven into the very fabric of the design are the private treasures that make up the clients life. Understated elegance would not be a clichéd term when describing this home.

into the niche, a series of individual panels were created and upholstered in taupe nubuck, as was the client's original bed base. A pair of custom designed bijoux bedside tables was created to fit into the remaining space.

Both walk in wardrobes make use of the same dark oak finish that has been used throughout, to create spacious and well-designed clothing cupboards. There is storage for every conceivable accessory. Integrated lighting, seemingly emanating from nowhere, completes this room to the highest specification. At the other end of the bedroom is the en suite bathroom which is bright and refreshing with its large window and marble cladding to the floor and walls. This is the ultimate escape with its large spa bath, walk in steam shower and double vanity.

When it comes to the children's bedrooms, Dekker is somewhat of a

