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Jeremy Norman and Derek Frost's first home in Moreton Terrace Mews North, London SW1



A spatial exercise

Designer Derek Frost's solution to small-space living was photographed by Michael Dunne

WHEN DESIGNER Derek Frost acquired a clutter of derelict workshops at the end of Moreton Terrace Mews North in Pimlico, he also inherited planning permission for three 'dwellings'. The one shown on these pages was the first to be completed and provided a base for the designer while work proceeded on the other two.

Derek Frost now runs his own design consultancy from a spacious studio in the mews, specialising in interior and furniture design. He has applied his design skills to this house which, he stresses, was decorated and furnished comparatively cheaply. The secret he contests, lies



in the initial design.

'The main thinking behind it was to avoid the usual mews house pitfall of the staircase overtaking the whole space,' says Derek Frost. 'By putting the living-area on the upper floor we eradicated the bulk of the staircase which now shares the ground floor with bedrooms and bathroom.' Space was important: 'The ceiling follows the roof line and we put a skylight into the east-facing roof incline so the living-area is flooded with light.' Walls and ceiling were painted white and lighting tracks recessed into the ceiling.

An L-shaped banquette was installed to maximise space in the



sitting-area. 'I used a relatively cheap Indian cotton for the upholstery – which requires yards of fabric – and then splashed out on glitzy fabrics for the cushions which only need half a metre each,' recalls Derek Frost, 'a principle I employ on most of the projects we do.' The coffee-table was simply created from a sheet of glass set on a wooden base. The dhurrie, designed by Derek Frost and obtained through Mary Fox Linton, picks up the colours of the cushions. Knockdown shelving from Conran occupies the end wall with a selection of pictures – ranging from framed postcards to photographs to original prints – close-hung for greater effect.

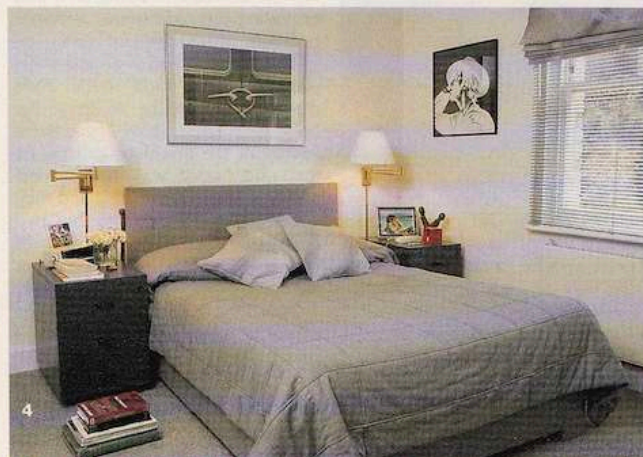
Plia chrome-framed chairs and a 20mm custom piece of pink granite on two Perspex trestles form the dining-area: 'highly effective, and inexpensive to put together,' says the designer. French doors lead out

1 Plain upholstery is enlivened with bright cushions. The space over the staircase, at left, increases the feeling of space in the living-area.

2 The kitchen is a continuation of the living-space. In the foreground, a low table designed by Derek Frost and Tim Deans.

3 Marble obelisks on the coffee-table with a flower vase from Habitat.

4 Hand-painted fabric, designed for a client, was used for the bedroom blind.



from this area on to a little balcony, another device which increases the sense of space in the room. Curtains and blind are of cream glazed chintz bound in white and turquoise.

The kitchen is unobtrusive with white laminate units blending with the white walls, and grey diagonal-striped tiles. The high-level units, designed to match the kitchen doors, neatly conceal the boiler and cold water tank which presented potential storage problems given the lack of roof space.

The main bedroom downstairs was painted pale grey with the same grey Berber carpet used throughout. The headboard, bed-base and quilted cover are uniform in dark-grey flannel with bedside tables created from office desk system filing cabinets. Angled wall lights save valuable space and flank the framed photograph above the bed by Derek's brother, Clive □

The bottom half of Moreton Terrace Mews North, Pimlico, London SW1 - as we bought it in 1984



Post development showing 5 & 6 Moreton Terrace Mews North and the Front Door into Moreton Yard - photo date approx. 2008

