

these pages: At the heart of this apartment, walnut is used to great architectural effect. A curved panelled wall cleverly conceals the opening into the home cinema; the cantilevered staircase opposite is truly 21st century.



FINELY TUNED SPACE

location: Kensington, London, UK
architecture: Dominic Warren – Rawspace, www.rawspace.co.uk
interior design: Staffan Tollgård – www.tollgard.co.uk
photography: Richard Gooding

MANY LARGE APARTMENTS IN CENTRAL LONDON HAVE AN OVERLY ESTABLISHED FEELING ABOUT THEM, A SENSE OF DÉJÀ VU. THIS IS ESPECIALLY TRUE IN TERMS OF OLDER STRUCTURES RENOVATED BY DEVELOPERS; TODAY IT'S NECESSARY FOR THE RESULTS TO APPEAL TO A WIDER SPECTRUM OF BUYERS. ▷

these pages: An expansive lightpiece sofa from Flexform faces the concealed television above the minimalist fireplace.

right below: Foscarini's Allegretto pendant makes a futuristic statement.

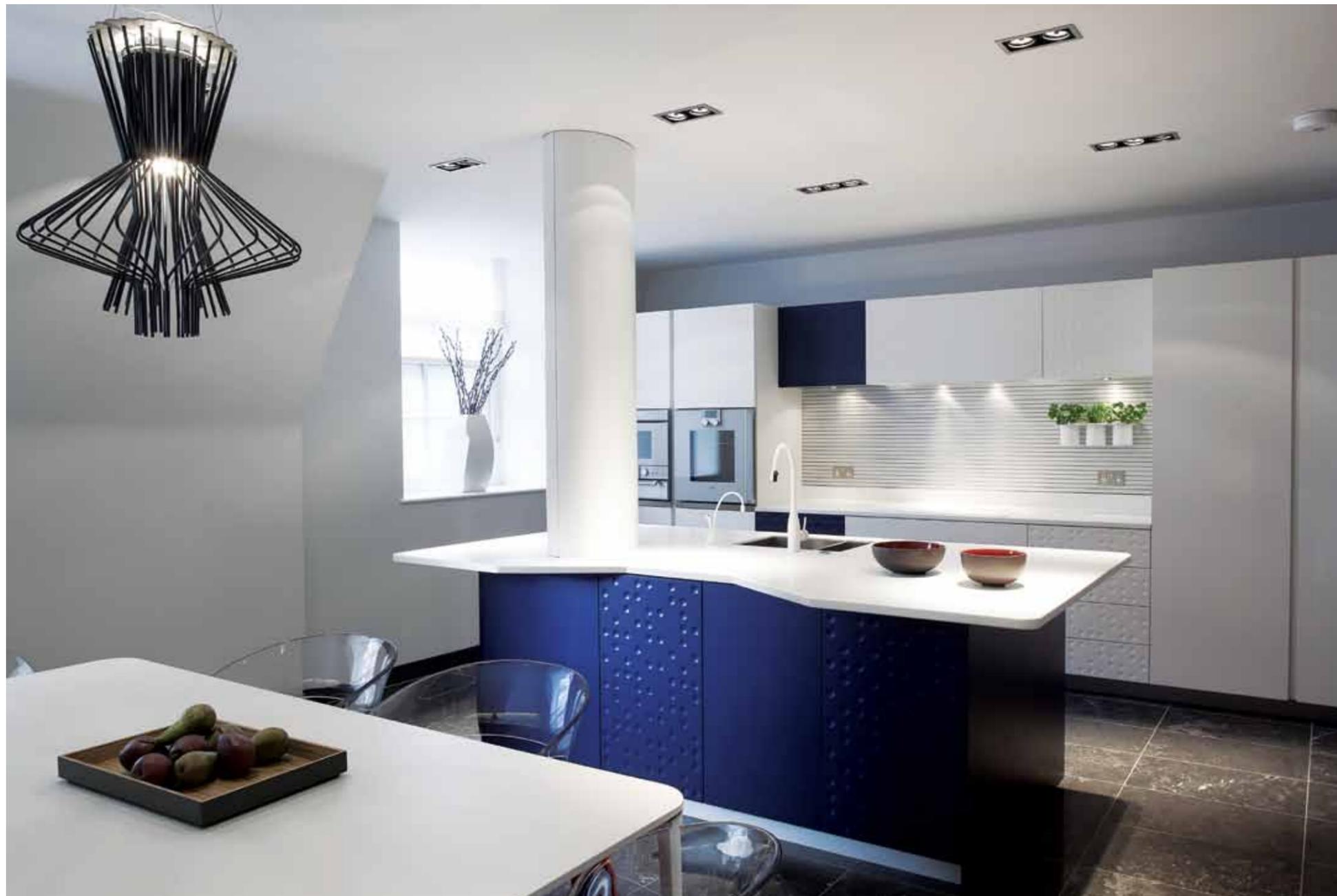


Like people, homes often require risk-taking to blossom. If we're not willing to risk, to embrace the unusual, the ordinary is all that's delivered. The developers of this project took the creative bull by the horns and have coupled a modern signature within a period building. Previously, what existed was an out-dated apartment of around 3000 square feet with a small balcony off the master bedroom overlooking Hyde Park: a location that receives and deserves accolade.

With 'contemporary penthouse' as their brief and without a designated end-user, the design team conjured various scenarios that may relate to the potential owners' preferences. The architects had cleverly planned a fourth bedroom to function as a bedroom / study as well as being wired as a home cinema. Thus, the eventual owner was able to choose what to do with this space.

Says designer Staffan Tollgård: 'This is a large apartment in a high echelon area of London. We therefore opted for top quality materials; i.e. although the apartment is über modern, real stone – and not porcelain tiling – was used.'

'An inspiration was to include a shade of orange, which I felt would work well with the walnut floors that the architect had specified. Orange has an almost retro quality and complements the clean symmetry and lines referenced in the rest of the interior. The artwork collection 'Pendulum' from artist Mark Francis also formed an inspiration and a co-ordinating accent; the ensemble now hangs in the apartment.' >





top: Silk wallpaper adds warmth and lustre to the master bedroom. Velvet cushions hang from the wooden bolster of Flexform's Patrik bed.

above: Natural marble throughout the master bathroom creates an elegant retreat.



The logistics in this old structure presented certain problems for the designers. Says Tollgård: 'It was impossible to conventionally move one large 210 x 210cm mirror and the beds into the apartment, so we hired a very large crane for a day and guided the pieces up to the penthouse balcony.'

The architects constructed an elegantly curved wall in the fourth floor corridor, which the designer found appealing. He adds: 'The cantilevered staircase is stunning. The Bocci 14.14 chandelier over the dining table is a personal favourite. We concealed the television in the living room behind a painting; one merely has to turn on the TV with the remote and the painting slides sideways to reveal the screen.'

'In general, the decorative features on top floors in old buildings are rarely that impressive. The important rooms with high ceilings and beautiful cornicing tend to be on the ground floor. This meant we had a blank canvas with which to push the whole apartment into the 21st century. The transformation included an elevator that opens directly into the living area, advanced mood lighting and audio visual systems and a first-class contemporary aesthetic.'

'My personal brief was premised on the understanding that if you can't compete with the calibre of period features, introduce a modern, sleek design that in turn emphasises the versatility of the apartment. This manifests today, as a generous open-plan living area with an empowering perspective on Hyde Park.' □