

Light at the top

What was once an uninspiring three-room flat has been transformed into a bright, split-level apartment thanks to dormer windows, a modern steel-and-glass staircase and a bold loft conversion

WORDS JANE CRITTENDEN
PHOTOGRAPHY ANDREW BEASLEY

IN BRIEF

NAME Will Perrott AGE 30
 LOCATION South London
 TYPE OF PROPERTY Flat within a converted Victorian house
 BEDROOMS 2 BATHROOMS 2
 PROJECT STARTED March 2017
 PROJECT FINISHED September 2017
 SITE DESIGN
 BUILD COST £75,000
 CURRENT VALUE Approx £95,000



Lye was used to remove the pigment from the oak-engineered boards, which have been laid throughout the apartment. The floor was finished with Danish Waco oil.

When Will Perrott bought his new London home, a top-floor flat in need of updating and situated within a conservation area on the south side of the River Thames, he was determined that the finished property would be bigger and better than his last redevelopment. 'I wanted to push the design this time and make this flat look architecturally interesting,' he explains.

Will, who works in the commercial property world, had spotted this third-floor flat, which overlooks a leafy park, while visiting friends in December 2015 and had immediately liked the look of the tall, 19th-century cruck-roofed building that stands at one end of a terrace.

Inside, the flat was arranged over two floors, with stairs from the front door up to a bathroom on the lower floor, then, up to a generously sized living room, two bedrooms and a kitchen on the upper floor. It was this level that Will realised could be transformed.

'With uninterrupted views of the surrounding area in both directions, I knew I could improve the natural light

'I wanted to push the design this time and make the flat look architecturally interesting'

by knocking through the walls to create an open-plan kitchen and living space,' he says. Of greater importance was the design of the loft bedroom and bathroom, which he was determined would be impressive. There was just one sticking point: he had bought the flat without any rights to the loft space.

'I had the option to buy it from the freeholder for a separate price,' he recalls. 'I struck a deal and said I'd only complete the purchase subject to planning, my thinking being that I would simply refurbish the flat and sell it on if things didn't work out.'

To get the project underway, Will met architect Ben Hawkins of Grant, a Clapham-based architecture and interior design practice that had been recommended by friends. The firm's modern design ideas for traditional buildings particularly appealed, as did the team's knowledge of the local planning authority.

Will showed Hawkins around both his old flat and the new one, and explained that instead of a pastiche Victorian look in his new home, he wanted a clean-lined space that was naturally lit. The architect's design revolved around the installation of a new, industrial-style steel staircase that would allow light to be drawn through the »



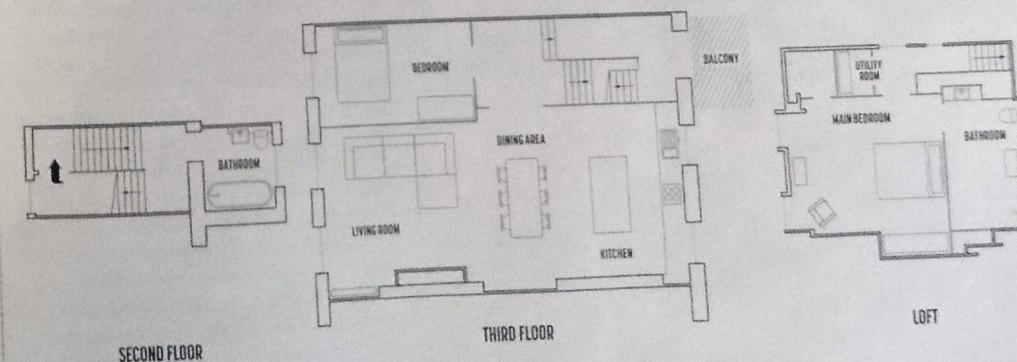
Contrasting stair designs provide a timeline from old to new

GD HOMES SOUTH LONDON



Three rooms have been knocked into one to create easy movement between cooking, eating and relaxing areas

FLOOR PLANS





Fitting a basin and vanity unit into an otherwise unused space beneath the roof joist gives more clear floor space in the compact en-suite bathroom.



New windows are made from PVCu for a maintenance-free finish, with frames matched to a matt grey colour code supplied by Will.



Two individual downers and a step down into the room ensure the loft bathroom gets natural light and there's space to store. The floor is fitted with underfloor heating.

'Ben was great at executing my ideas. The steel structure is solid but the open treads and glass balustrade disperse the light'

For the building work, Will appointed refurbishment company IQ Living, having taken a liking to the reasonable quote for the work required. 'The cost of access to the third floor could have been problematic,' says Will. 'One firm talked of an external lift but the IQ Living team set up a rope-and-pulley system, while the steels were craned into place.'

When the work began in March 2017, Will moved in with friends around the corner and was able to visit the project every day to see how things were going. The flat was stripped back to a shell and 12 supporting steels were lifted into place. A few design changes were made along the way: Will moved the basin to an alcove in the bathroom and he liked the builder's

suggestion to divide the boiler cupboard on the landing into two, to create a small utility cupboard.

The flat's completion date had been scheduled for the end of July 2017 but such was the complexity of the loft, with the amount of supporting steel work needed to create the shell, that it took longer than expected to finish. The staircase, which was manufactured off site and delivered in three pieces, was also delayed, but by September the project was finally complete.

'I'm really happy with the flat,' Will says. 'My bedroom is one of my favourite rooms and I like the contrast between the old and new staircases. The quality of light is great throughout the space and the layout is now far more comfortable to live in.' GD

GD HOMES SOUTH LONDON



The original idea was to have one to go dormer on the rear roof but permission was refused. Smaller dormers were installed instead.

SUPPLIERS

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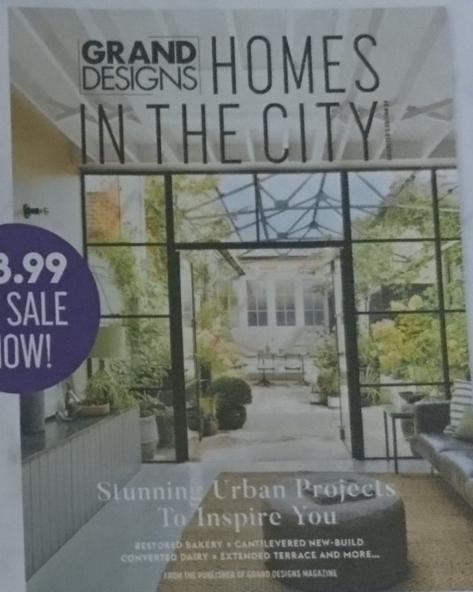
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