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WELCOME TO LONDONS FINEST HOMES, INTERIORS AND FURNISHINGS

Reprint of March 2010 edition of 25 Beautiful Homes featuring 8 Connaught Street W2

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# Tailor-made elegance

FROM THE PRISTINE FLOORING TO THE STYLISH CABINETRY, BESPOKE DETAILS ABOUND IN SHEILA AND DAVID WHEELER'S RESTORED REGENCY TOWNHOUSE



CLASSIC TOWNHOUSE

## LIBRARY

The antique-style shelving was designed to accommodate David's collection of rare books.

Wenge bookcase, £38,000; wenge drinks cabinet, £16,675, both CAD Property Refurbishments (0845 270 7118, cadpr.com)

## SITTING ROOM

Two modern chaises contribute to the relaxed ambience.

Bull horn chandelier, £9,975, Carol Anne Designs (0845 270 7116, carolannedesigns.com). Soane VI chimney piece, £3,464, Chesney's (020 7627 1410, chesneys.com)

Wesley-Barrell's (01993 893100, wesley-barrell.co.uk) Oxford 2.5-seater design, from £3,910, is a good match for the sofa

banker, and a successful businessman. THEIR HOME was a Regency townhouse. LOCATIONS: LONDON. ROOMS: Hall, entrance hall, family room, dining room, kitchen/breakfast room, library, study, games room, playroom, cellar, utility room, four bedrooms, four bathrooms.

We lived





With their first child on the way, Sheila and David Wheeler were in the market for a larger home. They had another reason for their decision to upsize, too – they had filled the walls of their old place with artworks, as David is an avid collector. ‘The need for more space – both inside and out – became our top priority,’ Sheila says. The couple viewed a variety of different properties before having an offer accepted on a Grade II-listed townhouse located in central London. ‘What particularly attracted us to this place was its generous floorplan, graceful high ceilings and pleasing proportions. We share a passion for period architecture.’

The Wheelers spent the next six months reconfiguring the building to suit their needs, with the help of interior specialists Peter Harrison and Carol Anne Hainsworth. ‘Peter and Carol Anne worked on our last home,’ says Sheila, ‘and we absolutely adored the results. They’re great at spotting the possibilities, knowing what needs to be done, then marrying contemporary comforts with traditional elegance.’

One of the main tasks this time around was to reintegrate the basement, which had been turned into a separate flat. But before that, the place had to be damp-proofed as in places, water was dripping down the walls. Structurally, the ►



#### STUDY

A French sofa upholstered in a dramatic zebra print makes a striking visual statement.

Bespoke floor, Peter Harrison at CAD Property Refurbishments (0845 270 7118, cadpr.com)  
Alma (020 7377 0762, almahome.co.uk) sells animal-hide upholstery fabrics, price on application

#### DINING ROOM

The Victorian marble fireplace is offset by a spectacular contemporary chandelier.

Chandelier, £9,300 Carol Anne Designs (0845 270 7116, carolannedesigns.com)  
Linen taupe wallpaper, £95 for a 10 metre roll, Brian Yates (020 7352 0123, brian-yates.co.uk)

### CLASSIC TOWNHOUSE



#### KITCHEN

Tucked into an alcove, the L-shaped seating area is a cosy place to enjoy breakfast and snacks.

Cabinetry and appliances, £32,000, CAD Property Refurbishments. Similar fridge freezer, Maytag SOV628ZB, £1,999, John Lewis (08456 049049, johnlewis.com)



## CLASSIC TOWNHOUSE

### HALL

An elegant stair runner leads the eye up to the first floor conservatory.

Roger Oates' (01531 632718 rogeroates.com) Commonwealth in Slate, from £700, is a match for the carpet

### MASTER BEDROOM

An Asian landscape is a bright note in this otherwise refined scheme.

Similar bedstead, Seba, from £795, Lombok (0870 240 7380, lombok.co.uk). For a throw that would not look out of place here, try The White Company's (0845 378 8150, thewhitecompany.com) Cashmere design in Alabaster from £295



### BATHROOM

The mirror fronted storage unit increases the sense of space. Ashlar Mason (020 8450 3300, ashlar-mason.co.uk) sells comparable marble, prices on application



### GUEST BEDROOM

Apple-green accents enhance the uplifting feel.

Dulwich Stripe, £72 per metre Osborne & Little (020 7352 1456, osborneandlittle.com) is a close match for the blind fabric

### CONSERVATORY

The textured walls are decorated with ethnic carvings from Thailand, which, teamed with the Asian-style furniture, create a languid, luxurious atmosphere.

Bespoke chaise longue, £4,500; sofa £6,300. both Westcote Design (01608 659091, westcotedesign.co.uk)




townhouse was in relatively good condition, although totally unloved, with an antiquated kitchen and bathrooms. Most of the original fireplaces had been stripped out and replaced by 1970s models, which jarred with the age of the property. The property had been built during the neoclassical revival instigated by architect Sir John Soane, and reproduction chimneypieces based on Soane's own drawings helped restore its grandeur. But not all the 19th-century features had been lost. 'One of our most exciting moments was when 160 years of paint was removed from the balustrade, and we discovered a gilded, fleur-de-lys design underneath,' Sheila recalls.

As well as updating the interior's classical style, the Wheelers were keen to have modern conveniences installed. So their kitchen features handleless cabinetry and easy-to-clean glass splashbacks. In the basement, a media lounge was created, which also doubles up as playroom. 'There's plenty of space there for Mason to run around in,' says Sheila.

Although the four small bedrooms comprising the second storey were knocked through to make up the master suite, the rest of the house was left as it was. 'Its Regency proportions couldn't be improved upon,' says Sheila, 'but to enhance each room, we introduced some new flooring. Inlaid designs were characteristic of homes of this era, so we chose white Russian sycamore teamed with tulipwood and wenge. The pale wood also had the effect of aiding the flow of light.'

The Wheeler household certainly has a bright feel and Sheila and David were fortunate enough to inherit some delightful details that keep the interior flooded with sunshine. In addition to the floor-to-ceiling windows on the first floor, a previous owner had converted the terrace at the back of the building into a conservatory, and the light from here cascades down the staircase. The conservatory itself is dressed with plantation-style furniture and artefacts the couple brought back from one of their frequent visits to Thailand.

Set on an L-shaped mezzanine just above the conservatory are the luxurious library and a sitting room. The latter features a delicate palette that is a perfect foil to David's collection of period landscapes. 'It's so peaceful and quiet up here – the ultimate escape,' Sheila enthuses.

The same restful mood is apparent in the bedrooms, which are dressed in a selection of calm neutrals. 'Even though it's in the heart of London, this place has the feel of a country house,' says Sheila. 'It really is the best of both worlds.' 

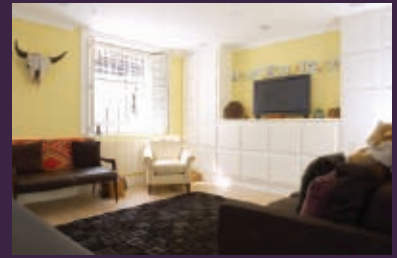




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