

# THE ART OF CONVERSATION

DESIGNED FOR EASY LIVING, THE LARGE ROOMS IN MIKE FISHER'S GRAND LONDON HOME ARE FILLED WITH TALKING POINTS

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## PAVILION

*Mike could not resist the chance to create a theatrical pavilion overlooking the garden. Furnished with a Georgian dining table, it makes a convivial entertaining space.*

**Architect,** Mike Fisher, Studio Indigo, 020 7349 1290, [studioindigo.co.uk](http://studioindigo.co.uk)

**Dining chairs,** made to order, from £1,800 each, The Parsons Table Company, 020 7352 7444, [theparsonstablecompany.com](http://theparsonstablecompany.com)

**Similar chandelier,** Compiègne Leaf, £3,150, Vaughan, 020 7349 4600, [vaughandesigns.com](http://vaughandesigns.com)



**FAMILY ROOM**

*Spanning the full width of the house, this room (also below) is used for informal suppers and quiet evenings, with a long low modular sofa and plenty of cushions placing the emphasis on relaxation.*

**Kalmar dining table.** £9,168, Decorus, 020 7349 9777, decorusfurniture.co.uk.  
**Studio 42 floor lamp.** £4,273, Fortuny, 020 7225 0110, fortunysshop.com.  
**Curtains in Carlton Stripe** 21076983, linen, £119m, Hodsoll McKenzie at Zimmer+Rohde, 020 7351 7115, zimmer-rohde.com.

"IT'S WHAT I'VE ALWAYS WANTED: TRADITIONAL STYLING WITH MODERN AMENITIES"





**LIVING ROOM**  
*Symmetry is key to the classical style of this room, with a faux zebra rug and flashes of bright blue adding contemporary notes.*  
 Antique marble fireplace, Jamb, 020 7730 2122, jamblimited.com. Armchairs covered in Palma Damask in Crème, £250m, Claremont, 020 7581 9575, claremontfurnishing.com.

"THIS WAS INTENDED ALL ALONG TO BE A HOUSE FOR ENTERTAINING"





Looks can be deceptive – in the case of architect Mike Fisher's west London home, pleasingly so. From the outside, the

building looks just like the other houses that surround it, but behind its original 1840s façade is a structure that is barely two years old.

Mike has lived on the same road in this part of London for two decades, but of the three houses he has renovated in that time, this is the one with which he has been the most adventurous. The project began with a decision to demolish most of the building, and to start again from ground up. "What was particularly appealing about this house was its early-19th-century front and its west-facing aspect over the garden," he explains. He adds that by rebuilding everything but the façade, "I was able to create the home I had always wanted – a

traditionally styled house equipped with modern technology and amenities such as an indoor swimming pool and a sauna complex, and an integral double garage."

As an established architect (Mike set up his practice, Studio Indigo, 20 years ago), his years of working on residential projects were crucial in his plans for this considerable preservation and rebuilding project. His design began with

### DINING ROOM

*Instead of taking a purist approach when buying furniture and accessories, Mike chose beautiful pieces from various eras (opposite page, bottom). "I thought of this house as a book, with each of the rooms being a different chapter," he says.*

**Reproduction Queen Anne dining chairs,** made to order, from £1,350 each plus about 2m fabric, The Parsons Table Company, 020 7352 7444, [theparsonstablecompany.com](http://theparsonstablecompany.com); **covered in Ecorce Beige 01, £636m,** Braxton Collection at Alton Brooke, 020 7376 7008, [alton-brooke.co.uk](http://alton-brooke.co.uk).

the view of the gardens, and the internal layout centres on a sight-line that runs from the front door through the heart of the building to the garden at the back. The sense of quiet splendour builds as you walk into the inner hall, where an elliptical staircase rises gracefully through the five floors.

"Whatever style of house I'm designing, I always celebrate the staircase," says Mike, adding that his inspiration for this one was William Kent's magnificent staircase at 44 Berkeley Square. Installing a lift was not an option. "It wouldn't be appropriate in a period house and, besides, running up and down stairs is good exercise." The galleried first floor landing is an unusual feature. "I like being up there looking down on the hall, and when we have our Christmas party, it becomes a minstrels' gallery, with musicians serenading the guests on the floor below."

While the proportions of the house are unashamedly grand, the monumental scale is

### KITCHEN

*Positioned at the front of the house, the modern kitchen features a wooden counter that doubles as a favourite spot for breakfast and a servery for the adjoining dining area.*

**Bespoke Bulthaup kitchen,** Hobsons Choice, 01793 490685, [hobsonschoice.uk.com](http://hobsonschoice.uk.com). **Similar stools,** Tokyo bar stools, £149 each, John Lewis, 0845 604 9049, [johnlewis.com](http://johnlewis.com).





SCALE IS BALANCED BY A PERVAIDING SENSE OF COMFORT AND WARMTH



#### BEDROOM

*The walls of this generously proportioned room (above) are lined with slub silk to lend softness to the scheme.*

*The antique trunk at the foot of the bed conceals a rise-and-fall television.*

**Walls** in paper-backed slub silk in Lead Grey, £108m, de Gournay, 020 7352 9988, degournay.com.

#### BATHROOM

*This scheme features early-20th-century basins (opposite page) and a roll-top bath, all offset by marble.*

**Large bow-fronted single basins**, £3,420 each, The Water Monopoly, 020 7624 2636, thewatermonopoly.com. **Contessa mirrors**, €6,360 each, Donghia, 020 7349 1590, donghia.com.

balanced by the pervading sense of comfort and warmth. "This was intended all along to be a house for entertaining. On special occasions, I hold big parties, but generally it's a dinner party for eight or ten or an informal lunch for friends and family, either in the garden room or downstairs next to the kitchen. Creating inviting settings that are conducive to conversation was always uppermost in my mind when designing the house."

Both the living room and the main bedroom on the floor above span the full width of the house. With a fireplace at each end, both spaces look and feel warm whatever the weather. In Mike's opinion, installing the perfect fireplaces was crucial to the success of the scheme. "Georgian fireplaces would have been wrong and Victorian fireplaces too cumbersome, but the pair in the living room have an early-nineteenth-century look, which I felt was ideal."

Colour was another important factor in creating the calm yet intimate atmosphere. An

antique carpet in shades of blue and orange, for example, was the starting point for the decorative scheme in the living room. "It would have been obvious to pick out those colours in the curtain and upholstery fabrics but Fleur Liversidge, a member of my interior design team at Studio Indigo, selected a variety of textiles in more subtle tones that suggest warmth rather than shouting it," says Mike. "She has an unusual eye for colour and her input to this project was invaluable." Naturally

### DRESSING ROOMS

*An enfilade of two dressing rooms (below, right) links the bedroom and bathroom, with linen-lined glazed wardrobes and shagreen-topped island units providing ample storage. A pair of crystal chandeliers adds characteristic grandeur to finish.*

**Bespoke glazed wardrobes**, Rosewood Joinery Cambridge, 01223 508777, [rosewoodjoinerycambridge.co.uk](http://rosewoodjoinerycambridge.co.uk). **Antique French silvered chandeliers**, Matthew Upham Antiques, 020 7731 4444, [moraandupham.com](http://moraandupham.com).

Mike, who prefers to surround himself with antiques rather than with more contemporary pieces, had accumulated a considerable collection of furniture and accessories in his previous homes, but when he sold his last house, the purchasers were happy to buy the contents too. "When I asked them if they wanted any of the furniture," Mike says, "their response was, 'Yes, everything, please; just take your clothes.' It was gratifying that they didn't want to change a thing."

This fortunate resolution left him free to shop for furniture and antiques to complement the new house. "I have many good contacts in the antiques trade," he explains. "With a range of projects on the go all the time, I keep a warehouse full of things that I am able to incorporate into a scheme when the need arises. The one thing I didn't have to buy, however, was the mahogany dining table, which I have had for many years. I don't plan to move again but, if I do, the table definitely comes with me." ■

