



Type of property
Studio apartment
Location
Notting Hill, London
Purchase price
£226,000
Money spent
£45,000
What it's worth now
£340,000

It's grand but on a smaller scale

This tiny studio in the heart of London was architect-designed to create the perfect retreat in a bustling city

Fashion consultant Mia Sorgi, 33, had long dreamed of having a little place of her own in the city. 'I used to draw pictures of how I imagined it would be,' says Mia. She eventually came across an apartment in a Georgian townhouse, which was being renovated and split into apartments, in London's Notting Hill, overlooking a pretty garden square. Mia continues:

What attracted you to the place?

'I loved the location, particularly the view over the square from the apartment's floor-to-ceiling sash windows, but I didn't like the way the developers had designed the space inside at all. Luckily, the work wasn't finished when I came across it. The plan was for a claustrophobically narrow hallway, but quite a large bathroom and kitchen area and lots of swing doors. I would have had to put my

Although the flat is small, it feels light and airy thanks to floor-to-ceiling windows that overlook a garden square



City oasis



Mia makes use of the extra living space on the studio's terrace, which overlooks the square and provides a sunny spot to enjoy a cup of coffee

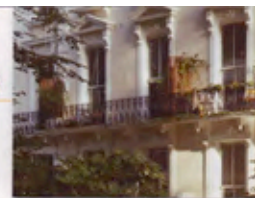


Above: The compact staircase is concealed behind white wooden cupboard doors and leads to the loft bedroom

Mia: The focal point of the studio is the view over the garden square. Mia's teak table was from eBay and is a Danish design by Hans Wegner. It extends to seat six people and the chairs tuck under, conserving the apartment's precious floor space. The antique chest behind was another eBay find and is thought to date from the early 1900s, while the tall, slim Creatherm radiators are a very modern addition from Bisque, their shape complementing the tall, oblong windows



City oasis



bed in the living room because there really wasn't anywhere else for it, but that reminded me of all the years I've spent living in student accommodation. I felt that in my thirties, I should be living like an adult, and craved the comforts that really make a place a home for me.'

So what did you do?

'The difficulty was how to fit all I wanted into the 35 sq metre space, and that's where architect Jennifer Beningfield came in. We met through a friend and Jennifer came up with an idea that's many rooms in one – rather than me moving between rooms, the single room moves around me.'

How does the room work?

'The sliding doors hide away the different spaces. So my kitchen is behind one set of doors and I can easily cook dinner for six people in the space. I really like to go upstairs to bed, so the neat staircase behind the kitchen leads up to my galleried sleeping area, which is reclaimed loft space – this almost turns the studio into a one-bedroom flat. My little study area is ideal for working from home.'



Above The studio is cleverly divided into zones for food preparation, work, eating and sleeping, by sleek white joinery. A compact staircase leads to the loft bedroom



MIA'S inside story

Designing the space and gaining confidence

'It seemed like such a small space that I couldn't believe it would be hard to renovate. In fact, though, it turned out to be quite an ambitious project. The whole place had to be gutted and I moved out for months, because in such a tiny apartment there's nowhere to hide. I was constantly popping back to see how the work was going and at one point a leak from the flat upstairs started trickling through my ceiling.'

'I've learnt so much from Jennifer that I will take with me to my future homes. Now I feel that I have the confidence to tackle another renovation project, on a larger scale, and will be able to have another home that I can be happy with.'

Right Mia's study, laminated in turquoise Lagon Polyrey, is concealed behind sliding doors when not in use. Shallow drawers store paperwork and there is a pull-out shelf for the computer keyboard. The Sony Vaio monitor is also Mia's television

Below Kitchen utensils are stored in tiny drawers that slide away into the under-stair recess, while Mia's Bosch oven doubles up as a microwave and the fridge and freezer are built-in compact versions by Bosch



'I craved the comforts that make a place a home' says Mia

Above Mia's kitchen is an exercise in compactness and even has an extension to the work surface, which rolls out on casters when needed. The custom-built spice rack is finished in the same Bleu Caraibes Polyrey laminate as the rest of the food preparation area, and is filled with jars which Mia was lucky to find in Habitat

Right Tempest the Singapura cat makes use of the flap that leads to the den she shares with brown Burmese, Tribune, in one of the built-in storage cupboards off the hallway

Far right Architect and friend Jennifer suggested extending upwards into the tiny loft space. It brings a whole new perspective

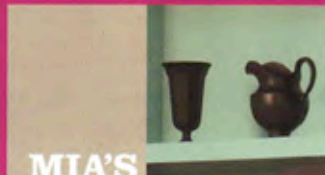




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Right Mia's sleeping area in the loft is surprisingly spacious and flooded with light thanks to the huge windows. The Swedish Hästens horsehair bed was ex-display and Mia removed the legs to make it fit the restricted height

Below To make the most of the bathroom space, Mia replaced the tub with a generous shower and chose simple, white sanitaryware from Ideal Standard teamed with taps and a shower by Hansgrohe. White Bisazza tiles from Italy and plenty of mirrors, fitted with HiB demister pads, keep this room feeling light and bright



MIA'S most treasured possession

'I love my collection of 18th-century Wedgwood Black Basalt, which was given to me by a French lady who had a couture line in Paris. My mother met her in a flea market there. She became a friend of the family and I adopted her as a sort of grandmother, so I treasure the things she gave me.'



I found a TV that doubles as a computer monitor, so in the evenings I simply move from the chair at my desk to my sofa.'


Where is your bathroom?

'I decided on a big shower, instead of a bath. It's behind sliding doors off the hall. Opposite, behind more doors, is a utility room with my washing machine in. It's also a den for my cats, and there's a cat-flap in the door.'

How do you avoid feeling claustrophobic?

'The best thing about the flat is the huge windows. Without them it wouldn't have been worth going to all this trouble – they're really what the flat is all about and what makes it feel so spacious. I love to step out and sit on the terrace, and spend time drinking coffee or reading the newspaper, and looking out over the lovely gardens of the square.'

Are you still glad you gave up space for location?

'It was the square that made up my mind to sacrifice space for a wonderful location. This is a spot for much bigger flats so I hope I've managed to retain some of that grandeur of those big houses, although on a small scale. Given the challenges of space, I'm delighted with what I've achieved here. It all fits together like a puzzle and totally fulfils my wish to live in a little place in the big city.' 

FOR STORE DETAILS SEE 'WHERE TO BUY' PAGE AT BACK OF ISSUE

TEXT: NICKY ADAMS PHOTOGRAPHS: RICHARD BRYANT/ARCAID