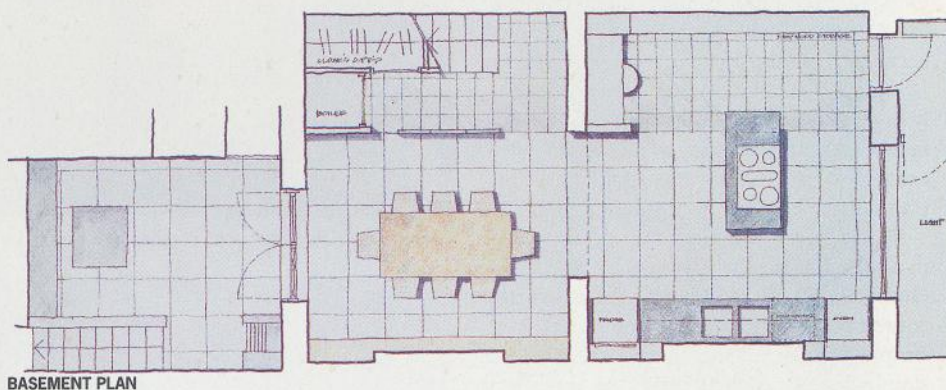


gave the most scope for new intervention.

Here the area at the rear of the basement kitchen/dining room has been excavated further to allow more light to enter and to provide an outside extension for eating. A crisply detailed new staircase with timber treads and risers and a mild-steel balustrade has been inserted on one side of the space, an area of the plan which has been defined as circulation right through the house. Having opened up the basement from front to back, the architect has added a stone floor and plain white walls, allowing it to read as an uninterrupted volume. Here, recessed stainless-steel skirtings and shadow gaps are typical Azman Owens details. The kitchen itself is made up of bespoke stainless-steel units ('a proprietary system would never have fitted so perfectly,' says Azman), while additional storage is provided in blue-lacquered MDF-fronted cupboards.

Further up the house, new interventions include a bench/shelf in the living room which passes through the original partition wall providing continuity and visually linking the front and rear spaces. Like the mantel over the fireplace, the bench is cantilevered off the wall and finished in stone. An opening in the rear chimney breast now accommodates the television behind sliding aluminium doors. On the first floor the clean-lined new bathroom has a slate floor and vanity unit finished in limestone on a ply base.

After four months on site the £102,000 contract is complete. But even now the house is only sparsely furnished, leaving Azman Owens' plain walls and simple carved spaces to provide a handsome backdrop to the life that goes on inside. □



#### CREDITS

##### REFURBISHMENT OF LISTED HOUSE, ISLINGTON, LONDON N1

CLIENT Fiona Morley;

Paul Payne

ARCHITECT Azman Owens, London

##### STRUCTURAL ENGINEER

Richard Fryer Associates

##### CONTRACTOR

Conway Construction

##### SUPPLIERS

limestone floor

tiles & cladding to bench

StoneAge; lighting fittings

Concord, Elementer,

Artemide, Coexistence,

SKK; radiators Radiating

Style; bathroom fittings

Vola UK; slate floor tiles

Mandarin Slate; mosaic wall

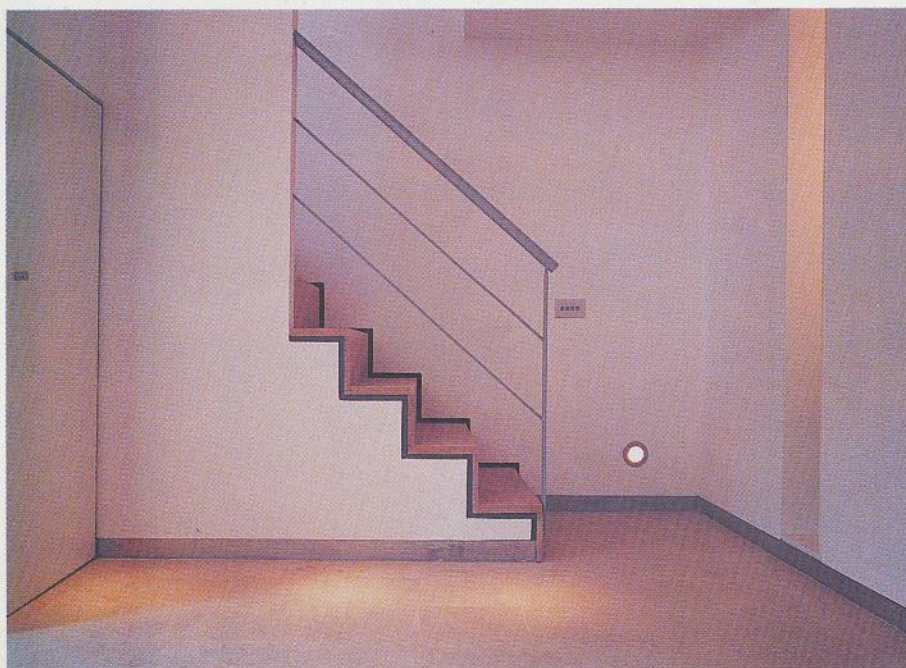
tiles Edgar Udney; furniture

Coexistence; ironmongery

Allgood, Elementer;

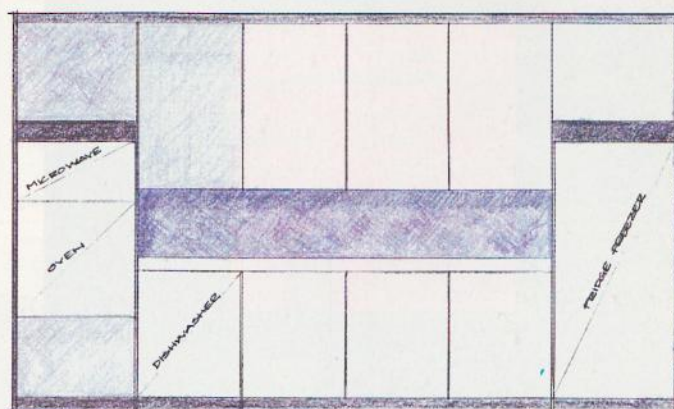
ceramic floor and wall tiles

Domus



Above: a stone-clad bench makes a new intervention in the living room. Left: the new staircase to the basement. Opposite page top: the living room. Below left: the new bathroom. Below right: the bespoke kitchen





KITCHEN ELEVATION





# aj interiors

## and fit-outs

### A flexible form for modern living

**The flat-fronted Georgian town house adapts well to minimalist remodelling, as Azman Owens' elegant refurbishment shows**

BY MARCUS FIELD

PHOTOGRAPHS BY KEITH COLLIE

London, like many other British cities, retains a large number of the flat-fronted houses which were the prevalent urban domestic model for the whole of the eighteenth and much of the nineteenth century. Outside they often appear unaltered, but inside they tell a different story with layers of accretion masking their original form. Islington, in north London, has a particularly high proportion of these houses, and this recent remodelling of a Grade II-listed example by Azman Owens Architects illustrates their flexibility for modern living.

Having purchased the run-down house in a smart street, the clients came to Azman Owens for advice on how to refurbish it in a contemporary manner. Their brief was simple: remove all the clutter and put in a stainless-steel kitchen. But the architect inspired them to do much more.

Established in 1993, Azman Owens is the partnership of Joyce Owens, who trained in Chicago, and Ferhan Azman, who trained in Turkey. Both have worked for respected British practices including Wickham Associates and Frederick Gibberd Partnership. Their common approach to architecture is based firmly on the principles of creating simple, functional, well-made spaces. 'We want our work to be timeless, not just trendy,' says Azman. Over their two years in practice together they have worked on a number of small-scale commercial projects, refurbished an up-market bakery and have recently completed an urban study on the regeneration of sites in London's West End.

In this Islington house the architects have applied their principles to strip the building back to its original form from ground floor up. Years of accretions have been removed to reveal the broad floorboards, mouldings, cornices and door details. Since the large basement had previously been altered this



Above and below: a bespoke stainless-steel kitchen and stone floor have been fitted in the basement

