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OLD *school* NEW *style*

The owner of this apartment in a former school in Shoreditch wanted a minimalist, utilitarian look, which his designer softened with the addition of subtle colour and texture, to create a cool yet comfortable space

TEXT KASIA MACIEJOWSKA
PHOTOGRAPHS JAKE CURTIS

THIS PAGE The kitchen, from Poliform, can be shut away behind the dark grey doors. OPPOSITE Next to the kitchen is the sitting area, with a bio fire from Indian Ocean. The coffee table and black chair, from B&B Italia, add to the apartment's industrial theme



When Andrew Daniell moved to London from Australia's Gold Coast, he set his heart on converting an 'old' property.

Having already developed several new apartments in a minimalist modern style, he felt that it was time for a change. He wanted a warehouse-style loft in the East End: something with which he could really get creative.

Andrew met Maurizio Pellizzoni in 2005 and they struck up a friendship, discussing their ideal conversion project while Maurizio was studying interior design. During this time, Maurizio was working at Ralph Lauren, overseeing the brand's home lines and creating window displays in stores. 'We had been saying we'd work together for years, and when I found this place, it was obvious who to call,' Andrew remembers.

The place he refers to takes up the top floor of a turn-of-the-century redbrick corner house in E2. It sits above a side street off Redchurch Street in Shoreditch, where you will find luxury lifestyle shops such as Maison Trois Garçons, along with Shoreditch House and the Terence Conran-designed Boundary hotel – so called because this locale marked the boundary past which Victorian City of London police refused



FROM TOP Blue lighting under the kitchen island creates a futuristic feel. A glazed sliding door separates the sitting area from the minimalist study. Blue Bang & Olufsen speakers provide a stylish sound system in the sitting area



to cross, so murky were the slums beyond it.

Andrew's property is within the headmaster's house of what was Rochelle Street School, built in 1899, which served London's first public housing estate. Shoreditch's connection with its layered past is what makes it a deeply romantic place, but Andrew rose above such Old World sentimentality when settling on a scheme for the old school house. Glass walls, blue highlights and industrial features were his dream, and he enlisted Maurizio to execute it.

You enter the apartment through a heavy steel door that wouldn't look out of place in a New York nightclub, before passing through the entrance corridor into a light-bathed, double-height living space. Exposed brickwork indicates the disused chimney breast, while an industrial steel vent traverses the ceiling to provide air conditioning. The kitchen, from Poliform, can be entirely shut away behind dark grey doors, save for a white Corian-topped island that appears to float above a line of floor-level blue lighting. Beyond it sits a simple grey sofa facing four towering windows. Through a glazed sliding door to the side of the sitting area is the study, which is surprisingly cosy despite being minimalist and modern, and a bathroom connects back to the entrance hall.

Maurizio had to jump through several hoops to get planning permission for the staircase, which links the sitting area to the mezzanine bedroom and a small roof terrace. First the staircase had to be craned in, then the council had to close the street while giant glass panels for the bedroom were hoisted up into place.

The cool overall mood hinges on an interplay between blue, white and grey. It was Maurizio who pushed for patterned details such as the striped bedroom carpet and the pretty patchwork rug beneath the coffee table in the sitting area. Accessories from Ralph Lauren Home are dotted around, and much of the furniture comes from Poliform and B&B Italia. One of the apartment's greatest pleasures is the tactility of its materials: from the poured resin bathroom floors to the sheer white curtains that shield the wardrobes, it is the textural details that reveal the level of care within the design.

Maurizio refers to this project as the James Bond flat, because of its technology and slick looks. It's a bachelor pad, but it has a soft touch that stops it from being too macho: maybe it's the Victorian schoolhouse windows, or the discreetly patterned wallpaper and textiles. The final effect – a sort of soft reductionism with graphic accents – was a compromise between Andrew's all-white style and Maurizio's usual, more traditional signature, plus a bit of flashy fun. It's a winning combination □

MPD London: 020-7352 3887;
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A powder-coated steel staircase (top left) leads up to the mezzanine bedroom, which has a striped carpet from PWC International (this picture). Industrial-inspired features include the Boffi shower in the main bathroom (top right)

LIGHT

The owner found the large wooden pendant light in Australia, but for something similar on a smaller scale, consider Finnish company Secto Design. This birch light, available at John Lewis (0845-604 9049; www.johnlewis.com), is 60 x 30cm diameter and costs £395.



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CEILING FAN

If the ceiling fan in this apartment has caught your eye, look no further than Boffi (020-7590 8910; www.boffiuk.com). This slick design is also available in black and white; it is 160cm in diameter and costs £2,964.



BLANKET

The striped blanket in the bedroom provides a subtle splash of colour within an otherwise monochromatic scheme. This lambswool blanket from Welsh weavers Melin Tregwynt is a close match in colour palette and design, and would create a similar effect. It measures 180 x 120cm and is available at John Lewis (0845-604 9049; www.johnlewis.com), where it costs £95.



RUG

The patchwork rug in the sitting area is a modern take on more traditional designs. It is part of Maurizio Pellizzoni's own collection and can be bought at the MPD shop (020-7352 3887; www.mpdondon.co.uk). It measures 390 x 370cm and costs £4,500 □