

buildburo



Family house in Stockwell SW8 [\[more\]](#)

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high quality
building &
refurbishment

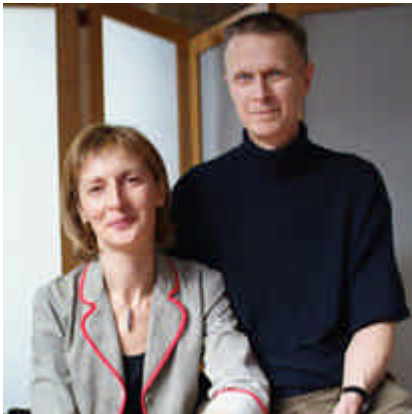


Sensitivity is a word rarely associated with the building trade. For buildburo, however, it's the first and last word on everything we do. But then, we are a building company a little different from the norm.

The way we see it, taking on a job means taking on board our client's hopes and visions for a property. This takes sensitivity: sensitivity to the needs of a client; sensitivity to the architect's aims; sensitivity and accountability over budget, the building environment and the time a job takes; and, most importantly, sensitivity to the skills involved in executing practical work to the highest standard.

Directors, Peter Tyler and Gordana Mandic, are both trained architects who understand the language of design. Based in central London, they have a 20-year track record of working closely with architects, interior designers and private clients, specialising in traditional and contemporary projects ranging in value from £100,000 to £1,500,000.

about us



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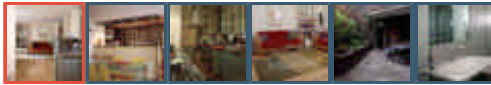
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Purpose built 70s flat in Covent Garden WC1

Brief Description: Converting ex-council flat into modern apartment

Duration: 13 weeks

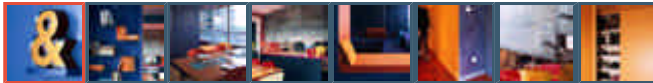
Our client wanted to convert a dark, labyrinthine, low-ceilinged 1970's ex council flat into a modern and bright 2-bedroom apartment that would live up to its fantastic trendy Central London location and make full use of it's surprisingly large yet private terrace.

But he needed to do it while he was travelling. We worked with him through fax and e-mail from various points on the globe!

Our solution was to demolish long space-eating internal corridors, open up the living room and extend it to create a new dining area and bar kitchen, whilst at the same time focussing on the terrace.

We hid immovable and ugly features such as the central electrics post in the middle of the living room and the communal fire hydrant by the entrance door . We created space and light in the bathrooms with clever use of mirrors and lighting, sliding instead of conventional doors.

The flat works well for its busy, hard-working owner: manageable and low-maintenance, with wooden floors, blinds, and easy-to-clean marble worktops in the kitchens. The job was completed in only 13 weeks, despite the restrictions of working within a pedestrianised area.



6th floor flat in 60s tower block overlooking river Battersea, SW11

Brief Description: Full refurbishment throughout
Duration: 10 weeks

Gordana knew exactly what could be achieved with this flat (she should have - it was hers). She wanted to take advantage of its 6th floor location in a 60's tower block - fantastic views and lots of light - to use dark floors and to push the use of colours and finishes beyond the conventional.

From the entrance, a slash of lowered ceiling in turquoise draws you straight in to the living area. There - on one side is the kitchen with upper cupboard doors in perforated steel and a shocking pink worktop, on the other side sitting room with purple plastered walls finished with a coat of yacht varnish - the two spaces being divided by a continuous form that was all at once a bench, cupboards, shelves and an archway. Every piece of it was designed to be storage.

Straight ahead the existing wall of glass framed views of Battersea Old Church and the Thames beyond - no design input required there!

The bedrooms with more fitted cupboards, were painted a restful lilac, and beds built to fit exactly. The separate loo and bathroom were knocked together - out with the world's smallest bath and in with a really decent sized shower - out with the white tiles - in with gold and green twinkly mosaics, a wall of mirror and bright lights - a room to linger in and pamper yourself.

The ingenious planning of storage kept all clutter hidden away,
and achieved an oasis of calm and order.

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Ground floor maisonette in Chelsea SW3

Brief Description: Total replan and rebuild to create modern interior

Duration: 12 weeks

This ground and 1st floor maisonette in a 1930's block was very dark and dingy, untouched since it was built. We wanted to make it feel spacious and light.

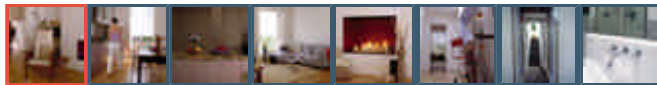
We removed all downstairs internal walls and turned four poky rooms into one large space. The need for light meant painting all of the walls white, but how then to avoid a sterile and precious 'designer' look? Broadly speaking, with three things.

Firstly we made a feature of the staircase, which also increased the sense of space and light. We designed our own, to be as transparent as possible, and had it made from steel in a specialist workshop.

Secondly, we kept the stairs away from the wall, allowing a specially commissioned textile art feature to float in the double height stairwell adding vibrant colour and, importantly, reducing the horizontal nature of the long narrow space by drawing the eye up between two floors.

Thirdly we went for primary colour accents in the furniture: red sofas, a green kitchen, a yellow child's bedroom.

The result was featured in several magazines across the globe.



Upper maisonette in Islington N1

Brief Description: Refurbishment with new kitchen and study
Duration: 14 weeks

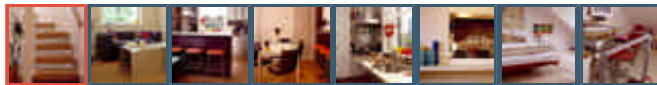
This job involved creating a room from nothing. Our clients had the top two floors of a fine Georgian house in Islington. Their kitchen was falling apart, and the kitchen companies they contacted produced samey designs. But they knew they wanted that little bit extra to reflect their artistic professions.

By a stroke of luck, Jerzy spotted colourful photos of one of our designs in a newspaper left on the tube. He was so enthusiastic about the use of colour and abundant storage space, he rang us the next day.

Initially all they wanted was a new kitchen and oak floor downstairs, but the project grew to a new bathroom and - though no room existed - an office upstairs. We replaced the roof over the landing with a huge skylight, and created an office below - one new room! We punched another skylight into the gloomy, windowless bathroom, making it light and airy.

Extensive discussions evolved a kitchen that is a “work of art” - and involves motorbike spray paint! And we created a wow entrance by painting the hall in hoops that wrapped around the ceiling.

The owners were thrilled to discover that their creative approach had increased the value of the flat beyond all expectations and that not a penny of their money was wasted - quite the opposite!



Riverside maisonette Battersea, SW11

Brief Description: Conversion of attic to luxury living space with total refurbishment throughout
Duration: 20 weeks

How can you replace a rotten roof without disturbing the residents in the flat below - and double the attic living area into the bargain? That is exactly what we did to this Victorian villa near Battersea Bridge. Here was a case of a client who had a sense that something could be done - light, open and modern - but found it hard to visualise the end result they were hoping for. We achieved it. This is how:

We removed the old roof and replaced it with a steel framework that could carry the new one without any load-bearing walls under. This gave us a clean slate to re-plan the space underneath. Lowering the level of the floor increased the attic head height and the useable floor space. Into this space we put a massive master bedroom and bathroom with almost floor-to-ceiling dormer windows, allowing the daylight to come pouring in and opening up the treetop views.

By redesigning the staircase we gained the room to add another bathroom on the lower floor and a study on the upper one.

Open plan living area was created with contemporary lifestyle in mind, all the kitchen mess being hidden behind a bar counter. The sense of luxury is heightened by real oak floors, the sleek fireplace, and minimalist bathroom fittings.

All this complied with sensitive conservation area planning laws,

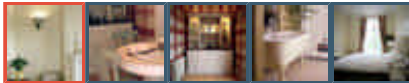
and took five months to do.

The clients were delighted - not only with their beautiful new home ('all our friends are just so envious') - but with the significant increase in its value as well.

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2nd floor apartment off Sloane Street, SW1

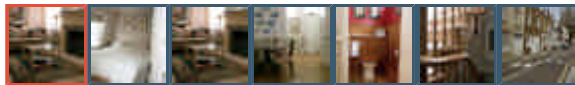
Brief Description: Complete gut out and refurbishment of luxury apartment

Duration: 20 weeks

A very tired 2-bedroom flat, converted 40 years ago, required serious revitalisation. The idea? To completely gut it out, removing every non-load-bearing wall, and totally refurbish, reinstating the classical proportions of the original principal rooms whilst providing contemporary kitchen and bathrooms. All this was achieved without an architect, instead the structural engineer acted as contract administrator, with the client's interior designer producing and sending sketches from abroad. We did all of the detailing ourselves.

The job was won on tender - we came out 20% cheaper than the lowest of our rivals - and since the structural engineer knew our work, he felt we were the right people for the job 'without a blink'. The interior designer trusted us to the point of sending us a photocopy of a dresser she'd seen in a magazine: 'I need something like that.'

The job was successfully completed ("to Buildburo's usual high standards" - interior designer) on budget, in 20 weeks.



Mews house in Cadogan Lane, SW1

Brief Description: Additional mansard floor and full refurbishment throughout
Duration: 28 weeks

Our client in this two-storey mews house, cheaply and shoddily refurbished in the 1980's, had bought a new freehold and wanted to double the accommodation by adding an extra floor. The Cadogan Estate, from whom he'd bought the freehold, recommended us for the work. He had planning drawings only, but was reassured by his own architect that with us he was in safe enough hands to proceed without further assistance, so the work was done from these drawings.

All of the detailed decisions were made by the client, from the electrics to the kitchen and bathroom layouts, wardrobe designs and the use of decorative hardwoods. He visited the site once a month from his base in Spain, covering the rest by fax and e-mail.

One detail might explain why he was more than happy with the overall result: he was concerned that his Porsche would fit in the very tight garage, but still wanted plenty of storage cupboards built on the wall above the bonnet. We went as far as ringing up a Porsche dealer to check all the critical dimensions and fitted a stop bar so he parked his car in exactly the right place without danger of scratching it.

The contract was completed in 28 weeks, and we are now finishing a far bigger, brand new house just around the corner for him.



Family house in Stockwell SW8

Brief Description: Refurbishment, reconfiguration, and new 2 storey conservatory

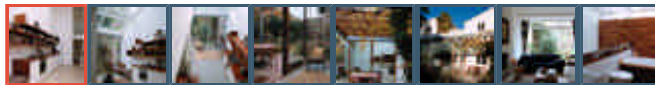
Duration: 2 stages: 15 weeks and 20 weeks

Our clients wanted to rebuild their dark, small-roomed four-storey Victorian house to accommodate four children, create a lot more light and some large family spaces. They saw our work in a neighbouring house, employed an architect, and used us in two stages, three years apart. They lived in the house throughout the work.

Stage one involved converting the top floor to a children's floor: from two bedrooms to three, with a bathroom and laundry. Installing a large skylight in the roof opened out a large landing that became a play area. On the floor below we created a master bedroom with a private bathroom and dressing room.

Stage two involved removing all the structural walls in the basement to create one huge family room opening onto the garden. A two-storey conservatory was added to the rear and the kitchen was rebuilt with a balcony to look down into the new room and a new 'wall of glass' with uninterrupted views of the garden. The kitchen and living space below were connected visually by a double height wall of mirror.

Miraculously, given the scope of work (and the fact it spanned two entire pregnancies and births), architect, client and builder are all still on speaking terms! In fact we went to client's birthday party recently.



Family house in Camberwell SE5

Brief Description: Extension and refurbishment of 19th century villa

Duration: 15 weeks

This pretty Grade 2 listed 19th century villa was previously owned by a larger-than-life architect, and sported features such as aluminium cladding, a greenhouse for an upstairs bathroom and a polystyrene garage door. Eccentric yes, practical, no. Our clients wanted to keep the spirit, but introduce some modernity of their own.

They employed an architect to design a two-storey wedge-shaped glass-roofed extension making a new kitchen, dining room, bathroom and landing, with an upper balcony overlooking the kitchen. The architect was hired only to do the design and get planning permission.

With no detailed drawings, we worked directly with the clients, helping them to realise some quite definite ideas of their own, especially on finishes.

The result? An extension in harmony with the Georgian architecture of the house through, of all things, its 60's overtones; a job completed within 15 weeks and within grumbling distance of a jealous neighbour, whose own project (with another firm) took seriously longer.