

MEWS NEWS

WINTER 2021



Produced by

LUROT BRAND

EST 1971

ONE-TO-ONE WITH SOREN ELLEMANN

Talking about how he worked with his architect to transform a mews used as an industrial space into a calm Danish haven in Lancaster Mews.

A modest mews house in Lancaster Gate, has undergone a radical transformation into a family home. Neil Dusheiko Architects were asked to turn a former industrial unit, housing a clothing showroom into a family home in a mews behind Hyde Park.

The L-shaped terrace is located in the Bayswater Conservation Area and occupies a snug corner of a cul-de-sac, historically the coach house quarters to Georgian properties behind.





What led you to Lancaster Mews and to buy this particular mews property?

- In 1963, I started my own company (Ellemann Design Company Ltd) representing Scandinavian men's clothing companies from a showroom in the West End. In 1982, after a rent review, I decided that the time had come to find and buy a property suitable for a showroom, and a mews immediately came to mind.

I found, liked, and bought Lancaster Mews soon after. The first task was to get permission to change the use from a garage/workshop to a clothing showroom. Once we had that, the first redevelopment of the mews took place. From 1983 to 2003, the mews worked very well. The showroom was then rented from me by my main agency (Oscar Jacobsen of Sweden) until 2017.

What condition was the existing house in and how long did you allow for the project works?

- In 2017, my wife and I decided to develop the property into a home. Although we'd made some changes to enable us to work

from here, it needed more changes to be able to live here full time.

Through a family member, I heard about her architect – Neil Dusheiko (www.neildusheiko.com), and visited him to discuss the mews. I invited Neil to a meeting on site at the mews, where we discussed how we could combine his ideas and mine to produce a spectacular home.

From the outset, it was very clear that the structure of the mews was in a poor condition and that there was no escaping that it would need a complete overhaul and involve an internal rebuild.

You have Scandinavian heritage, can you explain a little about where you're from, what led you to London, and a little about your background?

- I was born in a town north of Copenhagen, where I grew up in a happy home with my parents and two sisters. I thoroughly enjoyed school and made friendships that we maintain to this day, though many are no longer with us.

From an early age, I was always interested in clothing and design and decided to take

my interest further and join the “rag trade”. I arrived in London in 1957 to work at Simpsons of Piccadilly for one year on an apprenticeship. I worked there until 1963, when I decided that the time was right to start my own company selling to top West End stores.

The house has clear Scandinavian references in the choice of materials and the light, clean uncluttered interiors. What are the features you most admire about Scandinavian design and what influenced you in creating this with your architect?

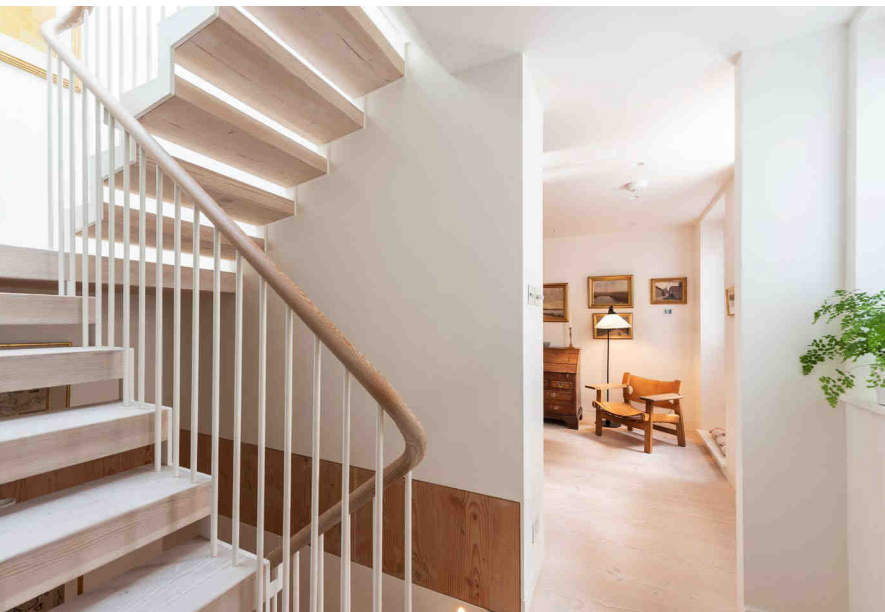
- Having grown up in Denmark and had my ideas shaped by the clean lines, simplicity and quality of Scandinavian design, it was a simple matter to try and incorporate many of these qualities in my own home. From the Douglas Fir white soaped floors to the large windows and skylights, from the beautiful wooden balustrades to the floating staircase, this home incorporates many features that make it a light, tranquil and open place to live, relax and entertain. Having underfloor heating certainly adds to the comfort as the evenings draw in!

Did the architect you chose favour this type of design, and what were some of the key features he was keen to include to reflect the mews and your heritage?

- Neil Dusheiko, the architect, grew up in South Africa and is married to a Swede. He is very inspired by Scandinavian design principles. He was particularly interested in the Dinesen flooring, which I knew I wanted to be a feature in the house.

Were there any building or installation hiccups during the renovation and refurbishment? Access to the mews for instance may have been a challenge?

- We were very lucky to work with a great team of Polish craftsmen, who showed great interest in working together to achieve our vision. Apart from the delays the building industry experienced as a result of Covid-19, they worked throughout 2020; whilst taking every precaution to keep themselves and their teams well. It took a little longer to complete the building than originally estimated, but this was not a major problem and the end result has definitely been worth the wait.





What are your most favourite details and elements of the design?

- Without a shadow of a doubt, my favourite aspect of the overall design is the light. This has been achieved by having large windows on both sides, and a skylight above the staircase so that the whole house is illuminated by natural light. This is unusual in mews houses.

In terms of a mews, it's really a genre of property we think of as quintessentially English, do you agree or is there a Scandi equivalent that influenced your choice of property?

- Scandinavia does not have any mews properties which are, as you say, quintessentially English. I have never seen anything remotely comparable in Denmark or any country I have travelled to.

Did Covid impact on the length of time it took for you to access materials and supplies and timings to complete the works?

- Covid caused minor problems in that certain materials were not always available when required. The lift, which was manufactured in Italy, couldn't be delivered for a number of weeks after the expected date but that was the only large item that was delayed.

Have you plans to undertake another property project in London or somewhere else?

- We have bought a house in Cornwall which needs some renovating, but a very small project in comparison to Lancaster Mews!

What would your advice be to anyone considering a mews project?

- My advice would be to incorporate as much natural light as possible and to choose carefully and work closely with your architect. It is important that you share a similar vision and passion for what you are seeking to achieve from the final build.