Handel Hendrix House, Mayfair

Sensitive, detailed and extensive Listed building project to allow public access to George Frideric Handel's house and Jimi Hendrix's flat.

LOCATION
Mayfair, London W1K

STATUS
Completed

USE
Cultural & Arts, Heritage

CLIENT
The Handel House Trust

MAIN CONTRACTOR
Desertoak Limited

PHOTOGRAPHER
Jefferson Smith



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Reorganising the building to allow public access to Hendrix's flat

Haines Phillips Architects won the commission for the first phase of the long term master plan for the expansion of the museums facilities to complete the full reinstatement of the baroque composer George Frideric Handel's House at 25 Brook Street and to allow public access to the rock guitarist Jimi Hendrix's flat at the third floor of 23 Brook Street.

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Restoration and transformation of Grade I and Grade II listed buildings

A new mansard roof extension at fourth floor level above no.25 Brook Street allowed the museums office to be relocated, in turn releasing the spaces within the Hendrix flat at third floor level in no.23 Brook Street for public access. No.25 is Grade I Listed and no.23 is Grade II Listed.

The project funding was supported by the Heritage Lottery Fund and supplemented by private donations.

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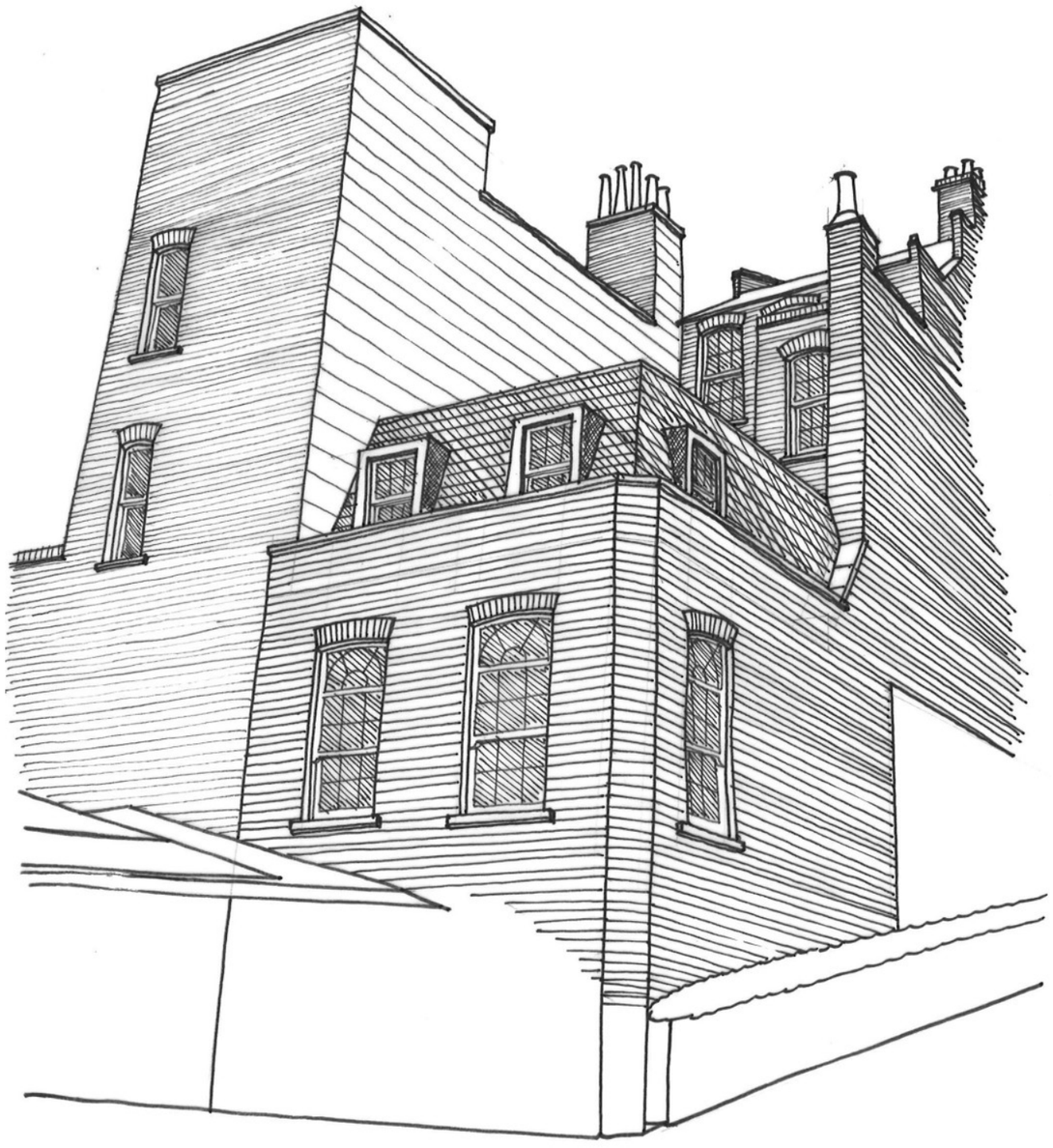
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New exhibition spaces

The Georgian interiors at first and second floor levels within no.23 were retained as an integral part of the Museum, providing exhibition spaces at first floor level and visitor and volunteer rooms at second floor level.

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Sketch design option for rear mansard extension

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Phasing of the building works through careful design

The Museum's requirement to remain open to the public throughout the construction period was an important consideration that informed the design, in particular in relation to the visitor route alterations and the careful phasing of the works.

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PROJECT

Hendrix Flat, London / Outside Studios and Haines Phillips Architects

033

It was 48 years ago today, that Jimi Hendrix had a pad to stay. His bedroom's now restored to style, pretty sure it would've made him smile. So let me introduce to you, the place that's waited all those years... 23 Brook Street, Mayfair. By *Herbert Wright*

1



2



In 1966, **Jimi Hendrix** left New York for London, seduced it and freaked out guitar gods like **Eric Clapton** with his wild fluidity. In 1967, his way-out debut album **Are You Experienced** hit no 2, behind **Sgt Pepper**, and he blew **McCartney** and **Harrison**'s minds when he opened a gig with that song. Then he burned his guitar at **Monterrey**, and America digged it. Next year, he had a place to mellow out...

The top flat Hendrix moved into with girlfriend **Kathy Etchingham** in July 1968, at £30 a week, is next door to no 25 where **George Frideric Handel** died in 1759. Both four-storey brick houses were built in **Sir Richard Grosvenor**'s estate shortly before Handel rented it in 1723 (He paid £35 per year.) It's said that Hendrix once saw a wigged figure standing in the bathroom, in the attic above the bedroom.

The Handel House Museum opened in 2001, with its offices in Hendrix's flat. Since February, the two houses have become Handel & Hendrix in London. Architecture practice **Haines Phillips** has adapted the building, returning the visitor entrance from at the back in Lancashire Court to Brook Street, installing a learning studio/recital room on the first floor, upgrading access and bringing the lift to the third floor. Another phase of works, further restoring Handel's rooms, is to follow.

The top of no 23 is where it's happening right now. **Outside Studios,** led by creative director **Catherine Halcrow**, has created a Hendrix museum. A discretely grey, fact-packed multimedia exhibition about him montages photos and text to brilliantly build a picture of the man and his London scene.

In pride of place is the guitar he worked up songs on, an **Epiphone FT79** acoustic. A separate Record Room about his vinyl collection includes a wall of album covers — psychedelia meets blues legends with Handel's **Messiah** thrown in. Not a digital interface in sight. And then there's the bedroom...

Halcrow, working with photographs, journalists' reports and Etchingham herself, has recreated it meticulously, taking six weeks to assemble it. The dominant feature is the bed, with a hat and guitar laid there and a fringed Victorian shawl canopied over it. They bought the bed, curtains, carpet and hippy-quilt cushions from nearby **John Lewis**. He enjoyed watching **Coronation Street**, and there's a boxy TV set on the floor, as are two rotary-dial telephones, an electric bar heater with fake logs, a **BOAC** flight bag and LPs stacked against the wall. A chunky new-fangled cassette recorder sits on a low table, next to a handwitten sheet with **Purple Haze** lyrics under a bottle of **Mateus Rosé,** and a pack of **B&H** (a brand also favoured by the Beatles for spliffs down at the Apple offices in Savile Row). Ashtrays abound, as do ostrich feathers, giving the room a twist of the Twenties. His reading material is there, mainly **Melody Maker** and TV Times, plus some sci-fi paperbacks.

The bedroom is as cosy as it is groovily bohemian. For Hendrix this was his 'oasis of calm', recalls Melody Maker journalist **Chris Welch**, who visited him there. But the only authentic relic from its original contents is an oval mirror. Everything else is as close as possible. A teapot came through **eBay**. Halcrow, when not scouring Camden, Chelsea and Brighton markets, marshalled an army of experts for most things. Robert Opie of the **Museum of Brands** reproduced products including the period boxes of tissues. The chair is by **Bates and Lambourne**, bedside objects and peacock screen were adapted by **Scenetec**, curtains by **The Curtain Lady**, and **WallaceSewell** made the bedspread. Halcrow says that the wall hanging was actually 'recreated digitally by **Pat O'Leary** environmental graphics and printed by **Nicola Killeen Textiles**'. And that guitar on the bed is another Epiphone, modern but adapted by **Beej Guitar Repairs**.

Nowadays we have a sort of music-driven retro-FOMO — a fear of missing out, but on a scene that's long past. **Bowie**'s death rekindled a nostalgia for Eighties' Berlin, we pine to be in Seventies' New York, at **Studio 54** (see **Ian Schrager** in Blueprint 343), or maybe see the birth of punk in **CBGB** or hip-hop in the Bronx. In the late Sixties, London was where it was at, and the closest we can get to being there may be the Brook Street bedroom — real yet 'unreal' in the Sixties' sense, a 'far-out' flashback. Except that the air is silent, smoke-free... and Hendrix has gone.

He left the flat in 1969 and OD'd in Notting Hill in September 1970. Just before he died, he wrote: 'The story of life is quicker than the wink of an eye'. Then again, his **Voodoo Child** lyrics say 'if I don't meet you no more in this world, then I'll meet you in the next one — don't be late'. But first, drop by Brook Street.

1 BARRIE WENTZELL 2 MICHAEL BOWLES-HANDEL & HENDRIX IN LONDON

1 - Jimi Hendrix with fruit at 23 Brook Street, 1969
2 - The main room of 23 Brook Street faithfully recreated from pictures from the 1969 photoshoot

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Improving accessibility and creating new opportunities to understand Handel and Hendrix's music and lifestyles

As well as creating music, groups are given an opportunity to explore the House and to get an understanding of how and why Handel lived at Brook Street in the 18th Century. The restored Hendrix Flat allows visitors to get a flavour of how these two fascinating and hugely influential musicians, Handel and Hendrix, would both have lived in the building 'separated by a wall and 200 years'.

The new facilities mean that the Museum is now accessible to all visitors (including those in wheelchairs and with other impairments). It can receive educational groups on a more regular basis, without having to close the Museum to the public.

The project received considerable press coverage in a wide range of publications, including The Guardian, Independent, Telegraph, on the BBC, and in the architectural/design press including Blueprint magazine.

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A further mansard roof extension was created at first floor level to the rear of no.23 Brook Street to contain the new Learning Studio facility to allow school groups to visit the Museum while it remains open to the general public.



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Sensitive interventions and alterations tothe listed building

The Listed nature of the buildings, their historic significance, and the sensitivity of their context within the Conservation Area called for a sensitive and contextual approach to the design. This included designing the first floor rear extension to minimize its visual impact whilst maximising the internal volume of the space to meet the acoustic requirements of the recital room/Learning Studio.

The internal interventions, including to the visitor route, and creation of the Hendrix exhibition do not compromise the historic integrity of the layouts and spaces.



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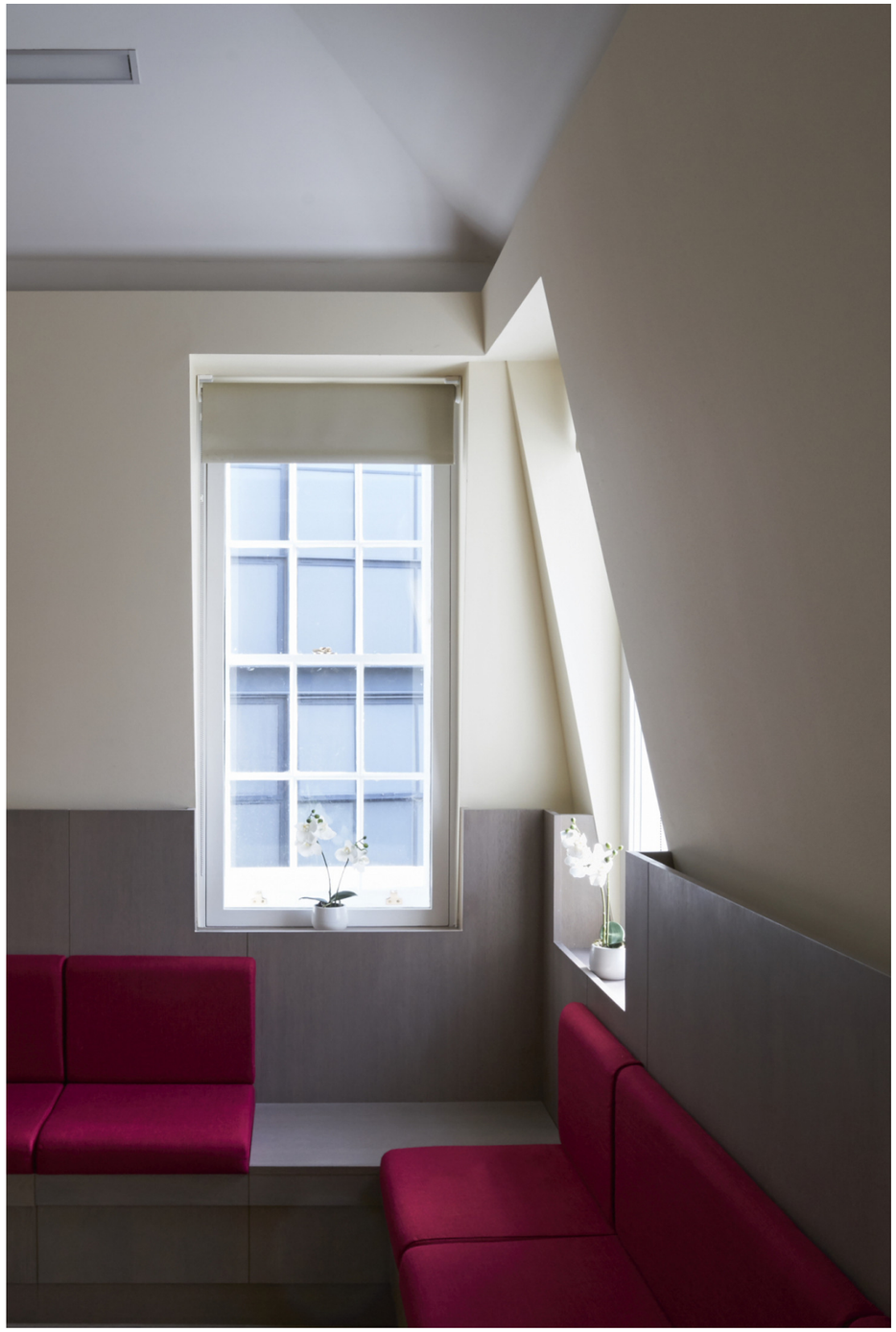


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Jimi Hendrix

Jimi Hendrix forms double act with Handel at London museum

The guitarist's restored 1960s flat will open to visitors next spring in a building adjoining the 18th-century composer's former home

Maev Kennedy

Tue 27 Oct 2015 15.25 GMT

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Hendrix rented the attic flat at 23 Brook Street, in the centre, long after Handel lived next door. The two buildings have since been knocked together. Photograph: Facundo Arrizabalaga/EPA

A top-floor flat in London, regarded by many as a shrine to the greatest guitarist in the history of rock music, is to open permanently to visitors -

Advertisement



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Jimi Hendrix's London flat to open fully to public

27 October 2015



Jimi Hendrix lived at the flat with his girlfriend Kathy Etchingham

Jimi Hendrix's London home is to open as a permanent museum for the public to visit on 10 February 2016.

The flat at 23 Brook Street, Mayfair, has undergone a £2.4m restoration with the help of money from the Heritage Lottery Fund and private donors.

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