

## Handel & Hendrix museum featured in Blueprint magazine

We were delighted to see our project for the restoration and improvement of the Handel & Hendrix museum in Mayfair is featured in an article in the March 2016 edition of Blueprint magazine.

A version of the article can be viewed on this Design Curial [webpage](#).

### PROJECT

Hendrix Flat, London / Outside Studios and Haines Phillips Architects



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



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 Monterey, and America dugged 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 wiggled 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 handwritten 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 Scenotec, 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 - JIMI HENDRIX WITH TRUNK AT 23 BROOK STREET, 1969  
2 - The main room of 23 Brook Street faithfully recreated from pictures from the 1969 photoshoot