

A CLEAN START

This washed-up former laundry has been cleverly converted into a sleek and stylish city home

Feature **JO MESSENGER** Photography **ALESSANDRO DE BESI** Project **FIVE SEXTILLION**

THE PRIME LOCATION

When Freddie à Brassard's local laundry came up for sale, he discovered that part of it had the potential to be turned into an apartment with a courtyard garden. In poor condition, the commercial property had primarily been used for storage. 'There was no planning permission in place so I appointed an architect to review the options, and we encountered no initial issues other than a requirement to maintain the outside visual appearance,' he explains.

The property had to remain within the original footprint, and although the initial application for Art Deco-style windows was turned down, a few tweaks to the glazing ensured that permission for a one-bedroom apartment was granted. 'Adding very large skylights came with further complexity as they required steel supports, and due to the size of the glass, we needed specialised double-glazing,' Freddie explains. 'It retains heat during the colder weather and ensures that the property doesn't feel like an oven over the summer.'

PLANNING THE LAYOUT

A family member recommended interior designers Five Sextillion, and Freddie commissioned the husband-and-wife team to work with him on

the transformation. 'I wanted to have the same company take responsibility for every element of the project, right through to the final internal finishes, and they were a perfect match,' he says.

The location of the front door dictated where the living space would be, while the location of the bedroom had already been decided. Once the placement of the kitchen had been finalised, the designers were able to develop a dining area off the main living area. 'For the bedroom and cloakroom areas, we dropped the floor level to offer more head height,' Freddie explains.

The basement was tanked and vented to make it a fully finished utility and storage room, which houses an electric boiler and water tank. The insulation, which was added to the walls, ceilings and underfloor heating throughout, ensures Freddie uses very little energy.

CLEVER DESIGN TRICKS

Detailing such as recessed shadow-gap skirting has been implemented throughout to help maximise the floor space, while hidden strip lighting creates a soft, indirect light in the evening. 'I wanted to be able to open the front door and walk into a modern, open-plan space with lots of natural light,' says Freddie. 'I love it – it's like nothing you would find in this neighbourhood.'



THE PROJECT DETAILS

MEET THE RENOVATOR

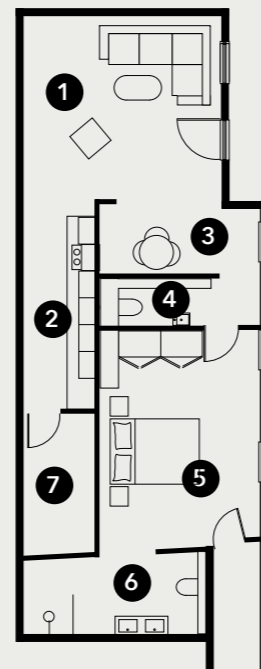
Freddie à Brassard, who works in TV production, lives in this one-bedroom apartment in south-west London

BUILD BRIEF

To convert a former commercial unit, which had previously been let as a laundry service, into a small yet modern semi-detached home with courtyard garden

GROUND FLOOR

- 1 Living area
- 2 Kitchen
- 3 Dining area
- 4 WC
- 5 Bedroom
- 6 En suite
- 7 Courtyard



GH PROJECT RENOVATION



CONTEMPORARY RENO

Double-glazed sash windows provide high levels of sound and heat insulation. The exterior was painted in grey and black by Zoffany, with plaster detailing added above the door and windows, and to the top of the property. Inside, the narrow galley kitchen leads out to a small, secluded courtyard



↓ **DESIGN DETAILS** Hidden recessed LED lighting integrated into the walls and floors creates an ambient glow. All the lighting and electrical devices are securely connected for smart-home usage



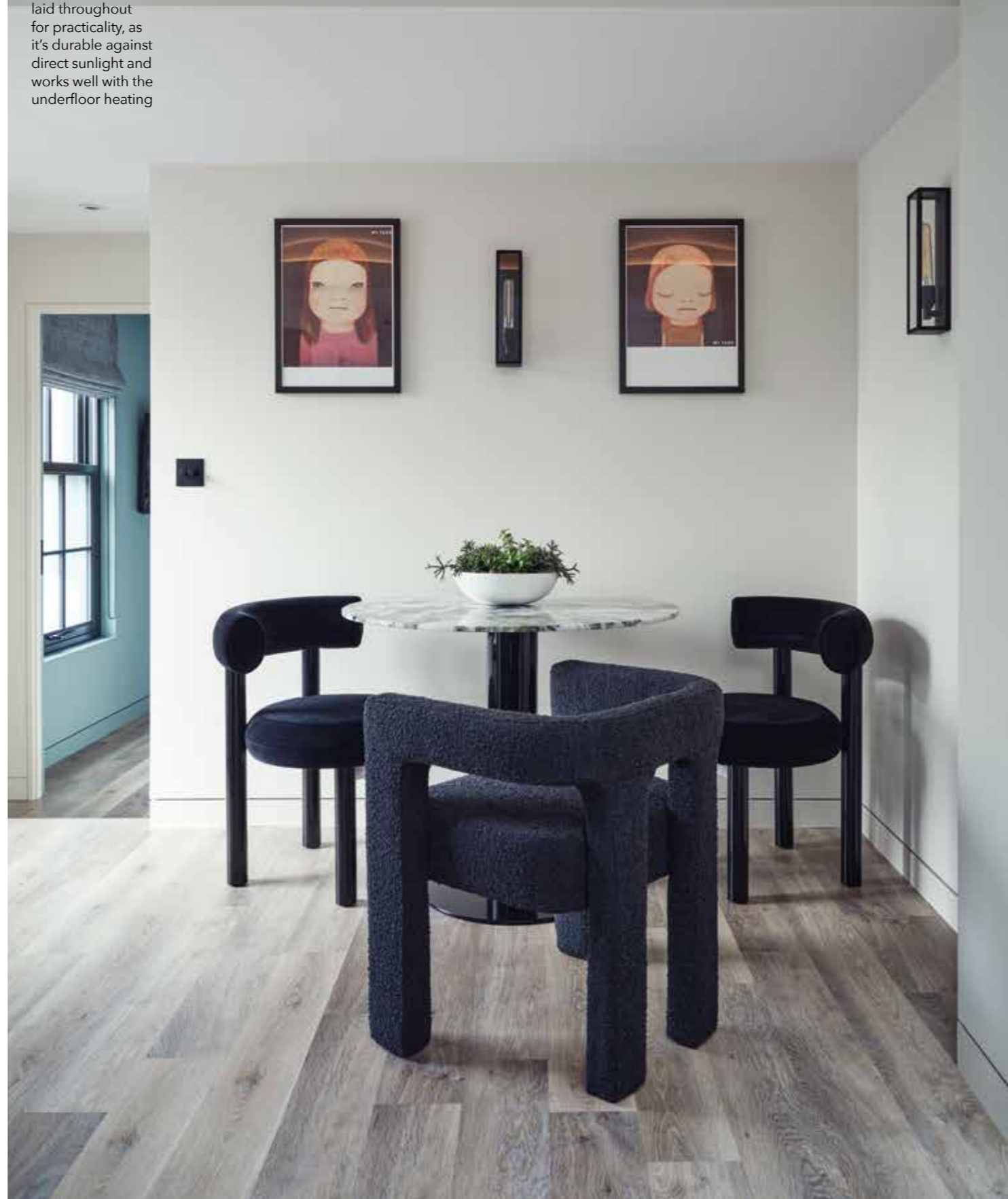
NEED-TO-KNOW: VINYL FLOOR TILES

WHAT IS IT? There are two types of vinyl flooring - rolls, which come in large sheets, sold by the metre, or luxury vinyl tiles (LVT), which are available in a range of formats and sizes including planks. Comfortable and quiet to walk on, many are now manufactured using recycled and recyclable materials. Designs can replicate natural flooring such as wood and stone, as well as decorative ceramic tiles, and thanks to advances in technology it can be hard to tell the difference between the two. Easy and quick to install, tiles and planks are the most popular, and come in either glued-down options or rigid versions that simply click together.

IS IT PRACTICAL? Vinyl flooring is durable, but the quality and manufacturing of the material and how well it was installed can have an impact on its life expectancy. It's waterproof, so ideal for areas like kitchens and bathrooms, but it is essential that tiles are laid correctly to avoid water seeping through the seams.

ANY DISADVANTAGES? Vinyl can be difficult to remove if glued down, and heavy or sharp objects placed on top can cause the flooring to dent or even puncture. Cheaper options may even fade, but a good-quality, well-laid floor should last you up to 30 years.

DINING AREA
Kardean wood-effect flooring was laid throughout for practicality, as it's durable against direct sunlight and works well with the underfloor heating



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↑ **CLOAKROOM** Eye-catching wallpaper by Le Corbusier packs a punch in this small space, with black brassware selected to match the en suite



LIVING AREA A new fibre-glass roof included two skylights, designed and specified by Five Sextillion, to introduce more light to the living areas

KEY CONTACTS

Bespoke skylights AGC **Underfloor heating** Omnie **Glazing** Vrogum **Concrete basin** Gravelli **Shower panel** Drench **Wet-room tray** Unidrain **Wallpaper** Arte International

↓ **SHOWER ROOM** Freddie's en suite has an industrial vibe with a concrete basin, slate floor, iron oxidised ceramic wall tiles and black detailing



BEDROOM

The window in this calming space, which features walls and skirting painted in a warm sage shade, looks out to the courtyard

