



Gregory Phillips' house

Timeless design

The dreaming child who used to draw buildings is now a prestigious architect able to turn your flat into a private oasis with a panoramic view. Gregory Phillips' beautiful residential projects won numerous awards and are the subject of many articles. Here, we try to know more about the man behind the work.

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Details of a beautiful property in Totteridge, a perfect example of a sophisticated lighting

Each of his projects is a distinct homogenous and relaxing universe. The lines drawn by his mind evoke precision and calm, while his use of lighting brings a poetic touch. During his studies he was inspired by Le Corbusier, Ludwig Mies van der Rohe, Alvar Aalto, Carlo Scarpa. He gained extensive experience in residential and office projects, restaurants and galleries working for David Chipperfield and Julyan Wickham. Today he creates refined modernist buildings which are striking for their modern but personalized formula.

“I have worked on high quality private houses since the late 1980’s. I set up my own office in 1991 largely based on residential projects. So I am very aware of the changing attitude and trends that have affected people’s houses. There has been a shift in expectation level. Today’s clients’ expectations are extremely high. They want their house to be better than the best hotel they have stayed in and they have an extremely high level of knowledge gained from international 5 stars travel”. By managing numerous assignments and coping with a variety of

needs and expectations he developed the ability to deal with all the aspects of the process. Among his clients he counts some important personalities, both in the field of arts and business thanks to his reputation for fulfilling even the most ambitious plans. “I have developed an understanding of which question to ask to elicit the brief from my clients. We also do have a routine. However all of our designs are bespoke. Tailored to each individual client. The analogy with Savile Row works in that whilst they have a routine of measuring, a style of pocket they



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Partial view of an extension in the north of London, which opens out to a immense garden

prefer and a technique for checking the suit fits, each suit fits the customer perfectly. We make houses that "fit" our client lifestyle."

Gregory provides full architectural and interior design services. "I am equally obsessed with interiors and architecture. I always loved the work of Le Corbusier, a man who had ideas about city planning, architecture, interiors and furniture. He also painted. I have taken a leaf from his book and started painting on large canvasses lately".

His inspiration drives him to a certain rigour and sobriety.

He loves to follow all project's pha-

ses against the general trend of specialisation. That's why there is a strong trust between him and his trades people.

"I like the traditional role of being the main person in charge of the entire project. In the era of building cathedrals and castles, before even the term architect came into being, there was one man responsible for everything, all the different skilled craftsmen and artisans."

His end-to end job guarantees integrity and the respect of the strong idea behind a project. Since an architectural renewal always constitutes an emotionally overloaded project, the commitment of all

the parts involved can lead to a result that is plenary, scathless.

Indeed he likes to create houses that combine pragmatic thinking with a sense of being a sanctuary from the outside world, joining glamour with spirituality. "I enjoy art that can be based on ideas and elements that live in two domains. I think for example of the work of Gerhard Richter, whose work I admire for his complexity and beauty."

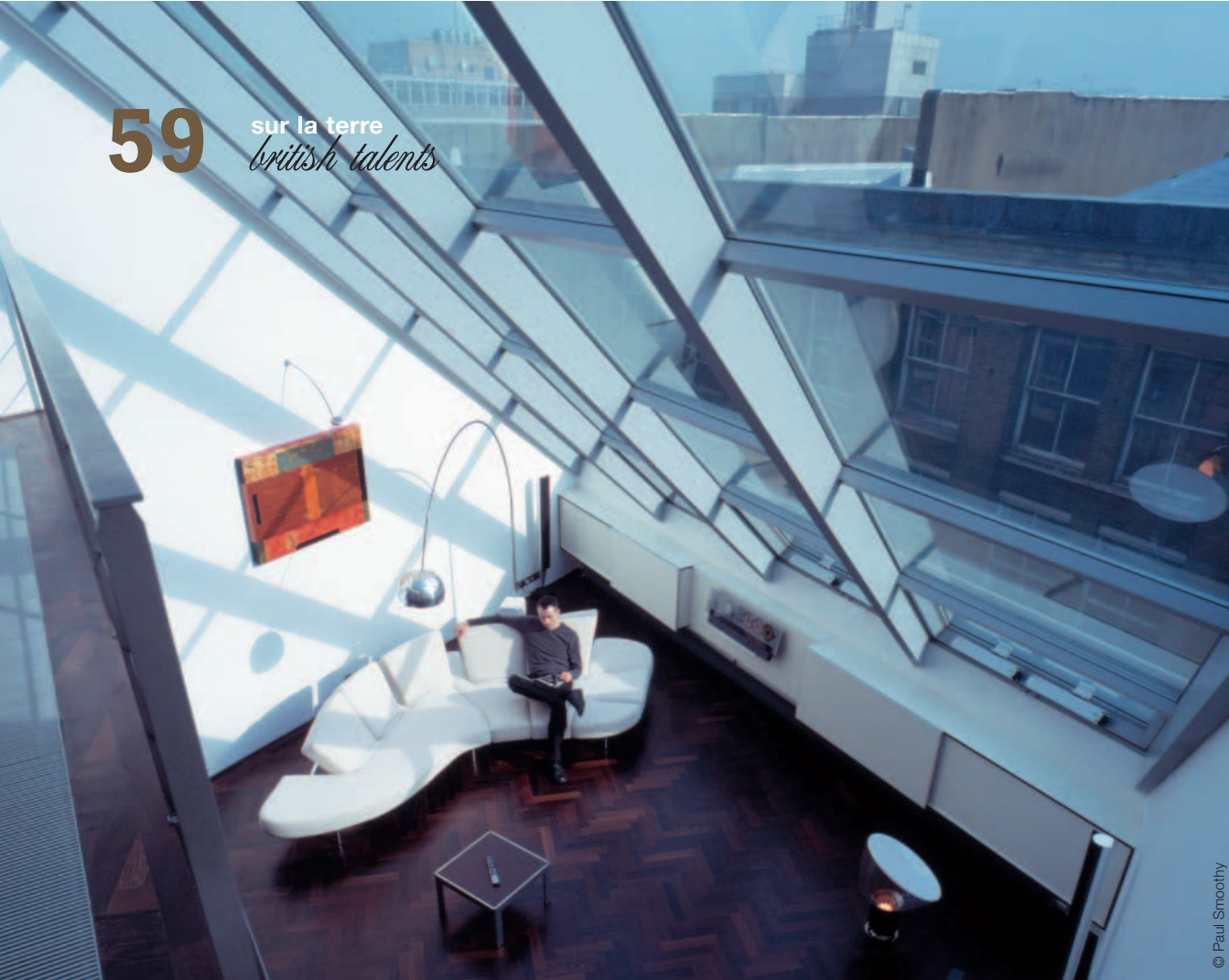
Complexity is an element that Gregory can handle. He has indeed worked with listed buildings and has risen to the challenge of maintaining the historical

exterior while obtaining a new striking building, harmoniously.

He has turned English Heritage restrictions into a great opportunity. His extensions can span the width of the back of the house with giant windows. This option has proved very successful since it gives a great view to the outside without injuring the historical beauty and value of the structure.

An extension to a Victorian home in Kew earned him the Bentley International Property Award in 2005, and since then Gregory has become a kind of ultimate creator of extensions.

"In my extension I have made my



The upper floor of a building in Tabernacle Street, called Contemporary Chic. The sloping glass offers a wonderful connection to the outside, especially at night. Thanks to the electric actuators, it can also be instantly transformed into a balcony.

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signature out of creating a strong connection with the inside and outside space. The ability to have a window about 10m long that looks onto a modern designed garden is a joy to live with. It creates a situation where the changing daily weather and changing season become part of the experience of living in the house.”

Indeed Kew house was found to be very important for the family to create a new space where the family can spend more time together and entertain friends.

Thanks to his many tricks, like his walls of storage, and the use of unfussy materials, Gregory is also

a master in creating uncluttered spaces. “My view is that the design should be luxurious and simple, I would rather have one fantastic thing rather than ten indifferent things. I like things in their place, a wall of books is a pleasure to see but I won’t put it beside a screen because it would distract the eye. I consider comfort highly important, perhaps paramount”.

We are grasping for more pearls of wisdom from his lips. “I believe that combined kitchen with dining area and a sitting area that is elegant and ideally has a great external view helps support family life,

as everyone can eat and live together. I prefer the home cinema to be in a dedicated room. Media rooms need to be darkened down and to allow for loud volume, so you can enjoy a movie with speakers tuned up and the lights turned down.”

The use of modern technology is indeed another element that can be used to control mood effectively.

After all the awards and nominations, we can expect other superb examples of interiors and exteriors. We hope he keeps his inspiration and his humble manners. ●