



Behind closed doors

Innovation is ingrained into the timber-battened screen which connects the open living area of this apartment to a beautifully understated kitchen

Photography Ståle Eriksen

A home that is spacious and clutter-free; the dream for many but achieved by few. This brief certainly aligns with the vision of the owners of a modest 75-square-metre apartment who enlisted architect firm Proctor & Shaw to recreate their abode into an open living space which seamlessly leads into a minimal kitchen. As he approached this project, architect Mike Shaw soon realised that the success of this would “require precise planning of storage and careful consideration of materiality.” Thus the kitchen was segregated into three main elements which together form an L-shape plan. The most significant of these three is the douglas fir-battened timber screen. Stretching across the length of the apartment, it acts not only as a threshold between the private en suite bedrooms and main living area, but also as a disguise to a range of kitchen storage spaces and appliances. These include an integrated fridge-freezer, coffee machine, larder and, quite impressively may we add, the boiler. Upon first glance, the kitchen and apartment may appear simple, but to carry off this look so effortlessly and with such degree of accuracy takes serious planning and an eye for detail.

As part of the full interior renovation, the floor plan needed to be reconfigured to allow for an open-plan kitchen that sat naturally in the living space without being visually impactful. Each and every decision made took into consideration the efficiency and functionality of the space and as a result, the characterful timber screen delivers on both an aesthetic and practical level



COMPANY PROFILE

Mike Shaw and John Proctor have been creatively collaborating together since 2004, but it wasn't until 2018 that they professionally joined forces to create the architectural and design firm known as Proctor & Shaw. While both of their portfolios boast an impressive range of projects, the company focus is on residential design work in and around London. proctorandshaw.com

Lined perpendicular to the timber wall is a series of dark-toned, monolithic cabinets which are topped by a complementary black concrete worktop and a seamlessly integrated sink and backsplash. This theme is further reinforced by the Quooker boiling water tap, which has been bespoke sprayed matt black, and the colour matched flush wall sockets. In combination these lessen the visual impact of the kitchen in the home. Above these sit white cabinets that stretch across the wall and are finished in a subtle matt white lacquer to allow the units to blend into the plastered ceiling and walls. "Concealed linear LED lighting coves above and behind these units allow them to 'float' above the dark cabinetry below"





MEET THE ARCHITECT

Mike Shaw, half of the creative drive behind Proctor & Shaw, talks us through the thinking behind this minimal kitchen.

What did the clients want from their new kitchen?

The Marylebone apartment kitchen is designed to support the overall concept for the apartment fit-out for an elegant and materially rich open-plan living dining and kitchen space, unified with full-height profiled timber panelling that spans the length of the room. It was important to the client that the kitchen was clutter-free and sat easily within a comfortable living/dining space, and this required precise planning of storage and careful consideration of materiality.

Why did you choose this particular layout?

While arranged in a simple L-shape plan, the kitchen furniture is expressed in three key elements with distinct materiality and characters. The first of these houses full-height units, including an integrated fridge-freezer, a larder unit with foldaway doors and a service cupboard housing boiler and water tanks, all cleverly disguised behind a seamless full-height timber screen wall in white oiled douglas fir by Dinesen.

The second element is the under-counter cabinetry, finished in a dark subtly textured through coloured MDF timber finish by Valchromat, with factory routed integrated handles and an ultra clear matt lacquer finish. The monolithic dark tones of these base units

are complemented by a rich black concrete countertop and integrated sink and backsplash above. A Quooker boiling water tap was custom sprayed matt black to further complement the tones in the concrete.

The third element is the over-counter cabinetry which span wall to wall. It is finished in simple matt white lacquer to closely match the plastered finishes of the walls and ceiling, and it's deliberately played down in the design to allow it to become less prominent in the room. Concealed linear LED lighting covers above and behind these units allow it to 'float' above the dark cabinetry below.

What would you say has been the biggest challenge and why?

Perhaps the most difficult area of the kitchen design was the integration of various items of services equipment and built-in appliances seamlessly behind the full-height timber-batten wall. This included an integrated fridge-freezer, coffee machine, sprinkler pump, boiler and hot water tank, and the profiled face of the timber cladding meant various hinging mechanisms had to be carefully considered to allow the integrated fridge doors, a larder style fold away door (revealing a coffee station behind) and various drawers, hinged cupboards and access panels to open freely without any visible ironmongery on the face of the timber screen.

Words Eleanor Rice



PROJECT NOTES

ARCHITECTURE
Proctor & Shaw
proctorandshaw.com

CONTRACTOR
Northpole Construction

BUILDING CONTROL
Cook Brown

JOINERY
Dovetail Woodcraft

FLOOR/TIMBER SCREEN SUPPLIER
Dinesen

WORKTOP
Forma Studios

CABINERY FINISHES
Valchromat