

perspective

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INSPIRING ARCHITECTURE & DESIGN

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Ken Shuttleworth, Mahesh Acharya • Pipipi, Hoesli • Ping Tian Village • Des Voeux Road Proposal by Benny Aubrey House, London



AUSSIE RULES

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The residence is designed in a modern vernacular to include a plethora of glass, black basalt and bronze details, while the building elevations offer a counterpoint to Chelsea's traditional brick and stucco villas

A rare and precious jewel

Taking its name and inspiration from a famous diamond once included in the Russian crown jewels, Ashberg House was designed by Morpheus London's Alex Isaac to be just as exclusive and extraordinary

TEXT:

Suzanne Miao

PHOTOGRAPHY:

Courtesy of Morpheus London | morpheuslondon.com

Ashberg House is a striking new residential property situated in the heart of Chelsea, central London, spanning nearly 9,000 sq-ft arranged over five floors. It takes its name and inspiration from the famous Ashberg diamond, an amber-coloured cushion-cut diamond once included in the Russian crown jewels.

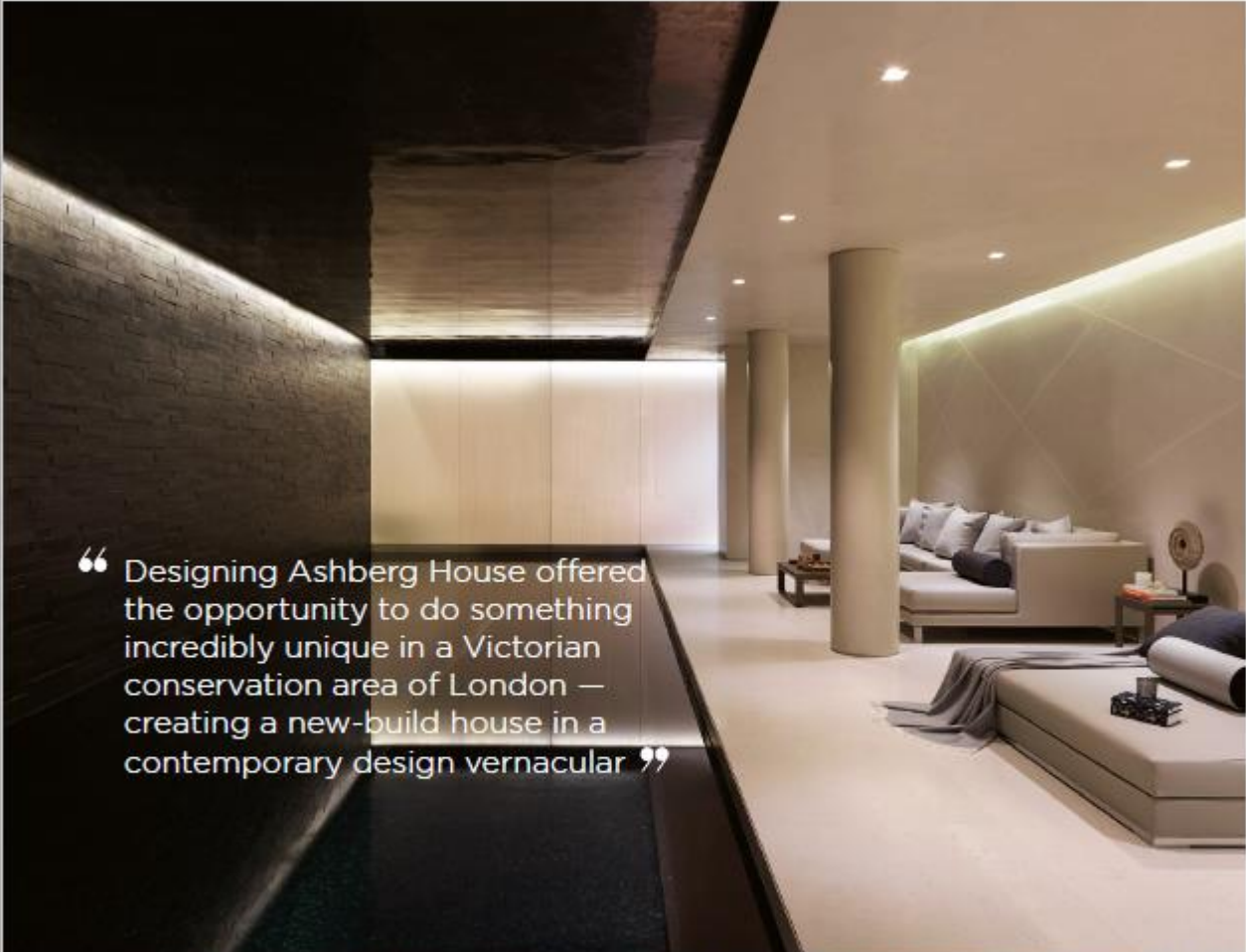
"Designing Ashberg House offered the opportunity to do something incredibly unique in a Victorian conservation area of London – creating

a new-build house in a contemporary design vernacular with a bountiful use of glass façades, making it a rare jewel in the midst of traditional Chelsea architecture," explains Alex Isaac, head of design at interior design studio Morpheus London and former creative director of Linley.

"The rarity of the property combined with the abundant fenestration in turn inspired the name, Ashberg, from a singular gemstone once part of the Russian crown jewels."

A striking 'falling leaf' chandelier handcrafted by glass couturiers Lasvit, which connects the ground level with the garden floor below via the impressive internal stairway, is made up of more than 140 glass 'leaves' in graduated colour





“ Designing Ashberg House offered the opportunity to do something incredibly unique in a Victorian conservation area of London — creating a new-build house in a contemporary design vernacular ”

According to the designer, the swimming pool sums up in one area what he set out to achieve in the whole project, encapsulating a sense of balance within the house, offering a spa-like quality for relaxation and escaping the buzz of central London

With the name in place, the theme went on to inform various elements of the interior design in subtle ways, from chamfers and facets in the joinery and furnishings to a bas-relief motif in the polished plaster emulating the refraction of light through a diamond. “Gemstones by their very nature are standalone single items, whereas a home the scale of Ashberg House is the sum of multiple component parts,” he adds.

The linear and clean-lined modern architecture of Ashberg was thus counterpointed with softening elements inspired by nature’s organic forms – the rear of the property looks out on some beautiful foliage, which in turn inspired two ‘falling leaf’ chandeliers, one in the entrance hall and the larger of the two spanning two floors above the dining table.

Handcrafted by glass couturiers Lasvit and providing a centrepiece to Ashberg House, the larger chandelier connects the ground level with the garden floor below. Composed of more than 140 glass ‘leaves’ in graduated colour, the chandelier imitates the external foliage of the trees in the garden,

connecting the interior of the house to the exterior.

The property includes five bedrooms, a spacious open-plan living, kitchen and formal dining room, private cinema room, staff quarters and a stunning spa area complete with swimming pool, steam room and gymnasium. The house also offers vast outside areas perfect for entertaining.

Overall, the residence is designed in a modern vernacular to include a plethora of glass, black basalt and bronze details. The building elevations are a provocative counterpoint to Chelsea’s traditional brick and stucco villas, with every detail and element of the project designed to the highest standard – in fact, more than 90 per cent of furniture pieces were designed bespoke for the property.



From top

The interior design drew its influence from the extraordinary Ashberg diamond, not least in its glass architectural aesthetic and faceted interior details, but also the precise and exacting construction methods employed - A series of bronze foils separates the entrance hall from the formal reception room, and at the touch of a button, will revolve to allow access into the home - The interior architecture has also been carefully considered to maximise the flow of natural light around the space, which pours into the home via expansive windows throughout



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The rear of the property looks out on some wonderful foliage which inspired a custom-designed headboard wall in the master suite, hand-painted and embroidered with leaves and branches on a field of silk

Outside, the excavation of the site down to a depth of 10.5m also allowed Isaac and his team to produce a tiered garden on the lower ground floor level, in addition to the two terraces on the ground and first floors.

"In the main living space which opens onto the garden, both of which are supremely private, we zoned the areas into dining, lounging and garden with the use of high-level planting and cladding to the external walls further shielding the space and offering privacy," he says. "The introduction of the external fireplace truly completes the area and really makes the space a useable outdoor living space and extension of the internal family area."

Behind the scenes, the level of technology and facilities are also unparalleled. Ashberg House has a fully integrated home automation system; audio-visual, lighting, window treatments, environmental, security and internal communications are all controlled, via Crestron and Lutron, through touch panels and iPad devices located across the home.

These allow the home owner to manage their comfort and needs easily and effortlessly. One of Isaac's favourite design details is a series of bronze foils separating the entrance hall from the formal reception room: at the touch of a button, these revolve to allow access into the home, creating a

theatrical reveal of the generous living volume Ashberg House offers.

"The Ashberg diamond is a product of nature fashioned by artisans into a jewel that could never be recreated," Isaac concludes. "The same could be said of Ashberg House, from its location and siting, to the external architecture and its bespoke interiors. This unique combination of factors make it a project that will always remain extraordinary."

"The whole house has been designed with a sense of balance and proportion in mind; rough textures against smooth, light finishes contrasting with dark, more feminine elements juxtaposing the more masculine, the exterior blending seamlessly with the interior. We feel this approach has resulted in a design that offers a great sense of tranquility and wellbeing." ●