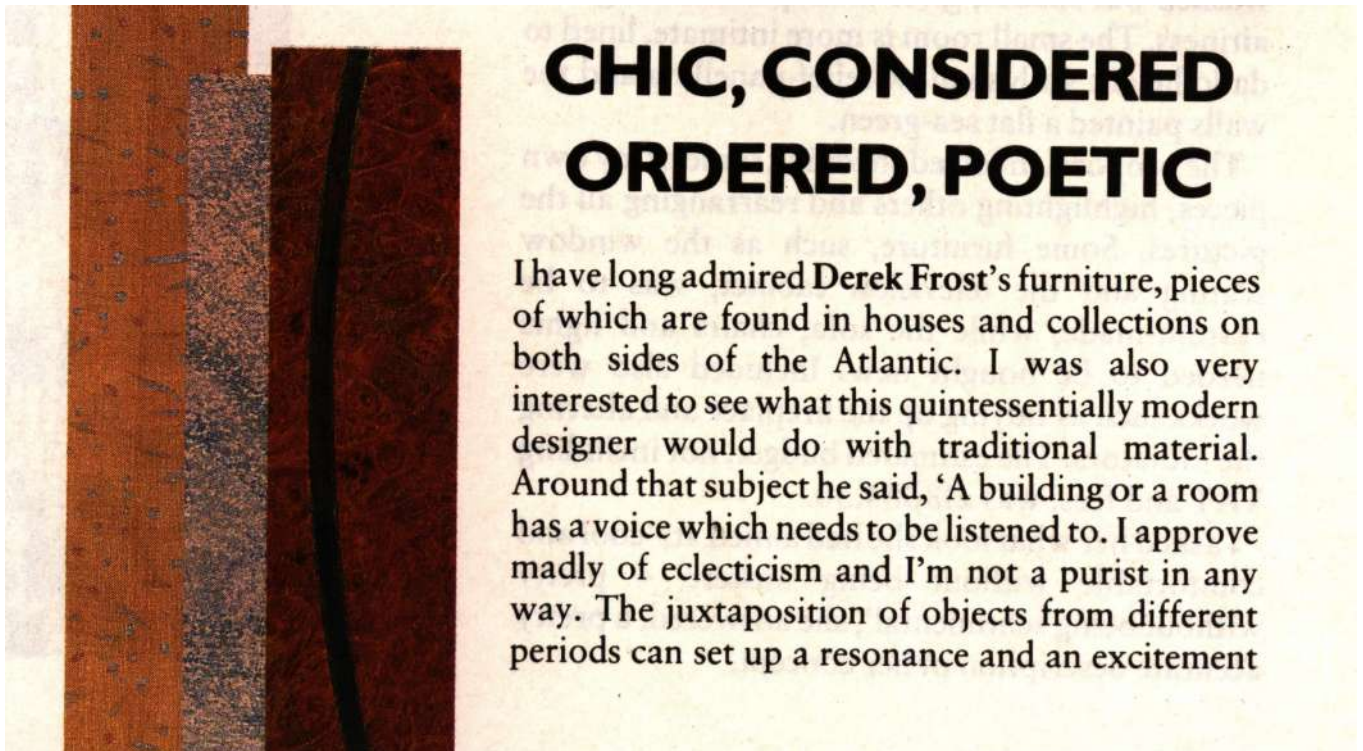


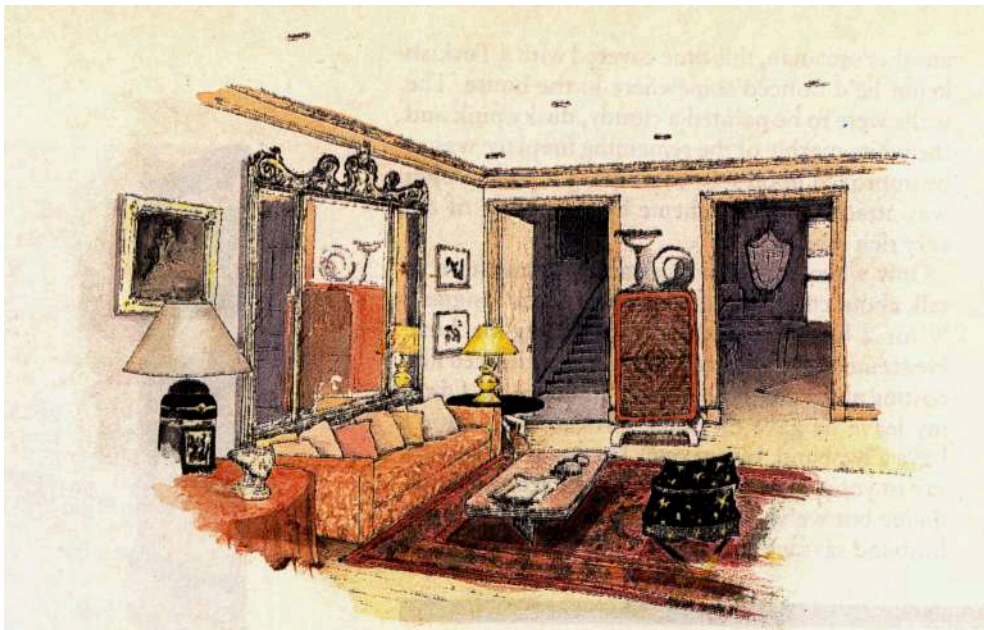
UK HOUSE AND GARDEN MAGAZINE - SUE CREWE
(EDITOR H&G) - 1989

Visuals by William Pounds



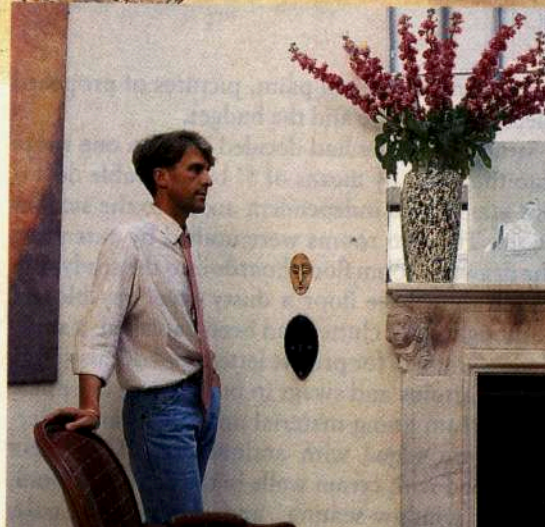
CHIC, CONSIDERED ORDERED, POETIC

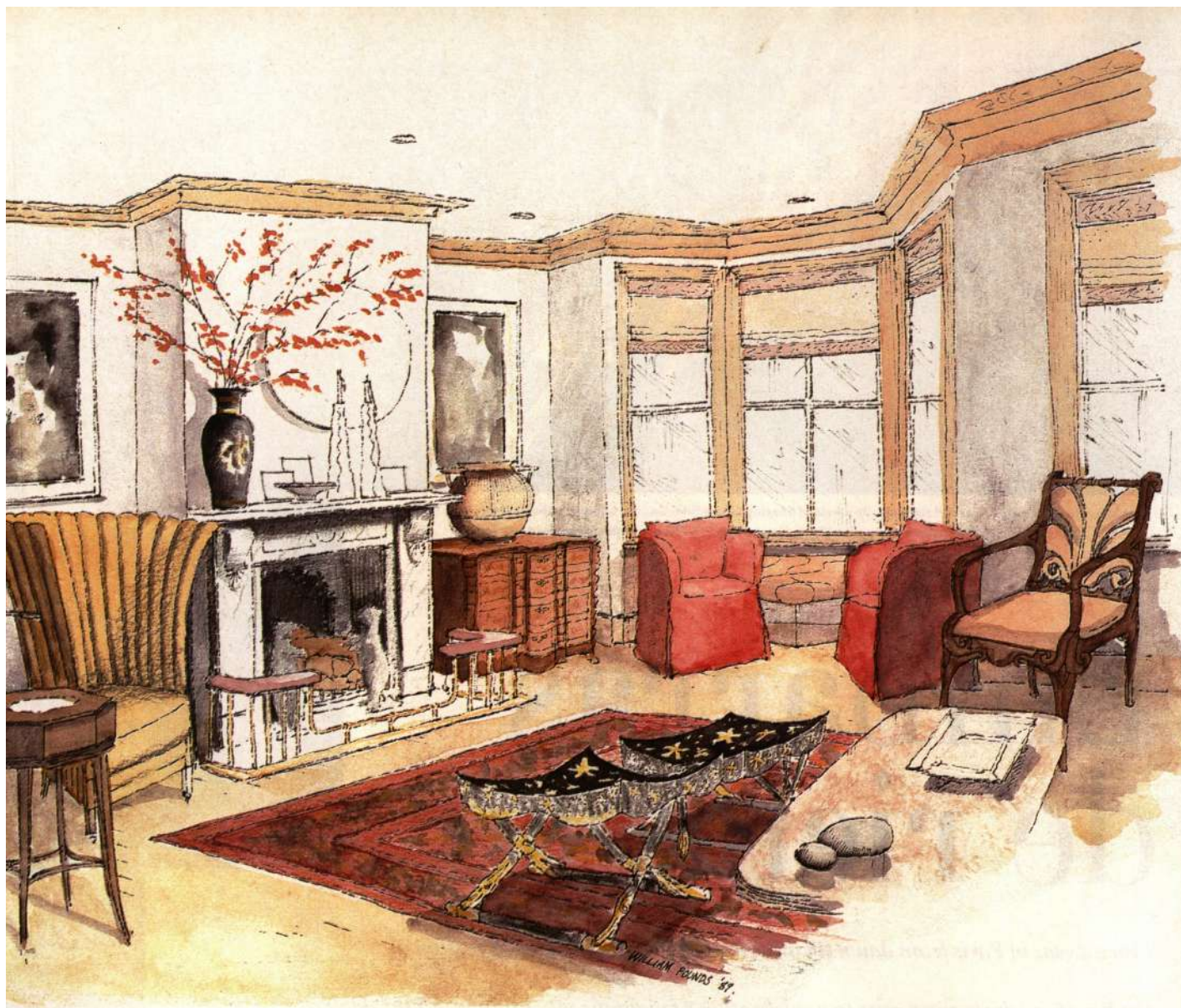
I have long admired Derek Frost's furniture, pieces of which are found in houses and collections on both sides of the Atlantic. I was also very interested to see what this quintessentially modern designer would do with traditional material. Around that subject he said, 'A building or a room has a voice which needs to be listened to. I approve madly of eclecticism and I'm not a purist in any way. The juxtaposition of objects from different periods can set up a resonance and an excitement



Top: proposed view of drawing-room looking through to study. Above: study lined with books and china

Right: Derek Frost listening to a room. Below: from left, fabric for window-shades; finish for walls; finish for woodwork





Derek Frost's modern scheme for the drawing-room is light, fresh and relaxed, but still manages to incorporate the existing fine bits of furniture and pictures

because of their disparity.' His priorities are the bones of a room, 'the actual decoration is less important than the making of the shell. Too many people spend a fortune on fancy curtains and neglect the bones.'

He was not unfamiliar with my sort of brief. 'Yours is the stage in life when people do approach a decorator for the first time. Economic factors are favourable and it is very often the moment when people want to go modern. Women particularly find they have been confined and frustrated by the shortcomings of their houses and suddenly have the will and the impetus to change things.' The more time and energy a client is prepared to give, the better pleased Derek is. 'I'm the opposite of a bully, my job is almost one of helping people to do it themselves. My clients work extremely hard – they get towed from fireplace shop to fireplace shop – but on the other hand I know that in some instances I have turned people on to the visual world, opened their eyes to looking.'

I can't say that on this occasion I did any work at all; shortly after Derek's visit to me the plans were ready for viewing at his Pimlico studio and it was obvious at once that his input had been considerable. First he took me through the ground plans, structural plans, a lighting plan and only then was

I allowed to see the sketches by William Pounds of what he envisaged. Then we went through photographs and drawings of pieces of furniture that he would like to make or buy for the room.

Of his scheme he said 'I pay as much attention to what is in a room as to what you say. Although you asked me to be modern, I reckoned that a place should be found for some of your fine things. I've emphasised a sense of objects. I've also tried to retain as many reasons for being in the room as possible. Why not try to work out of the nicest room in the house and enjoy it. Light is at a premium in England so I have tried to maximise the amount of light with reflective surfaces and mirrors. As for the artificial light, I don't hold with the view that period houses can't have modern lighting and here I have striven to given uneven lighting, pools of brightness and lovely expressive shadows.'

Getting the bones right involved enlarging the existing entrance to the drawing-room to match a new pair of concealed sliding rosewood doors which would open one room into the other, altering the skirting, matching the cornice from one room to the other and removing the study fireplace. The inspiration for the colours, which are pink, peach and black, comes from my large

Tony Fry nude and a black lacquer Chinese chest. Specialist painter Harry Lendrum devised a finish for the walls which is a pale-pink base overlaid with a silver-grey patina. The woodwork is also treated with a specialist finish rendering it glossy and lacquer-like.

The Roman shades in all the windows are made out of peach silk, hand painted by Auriol Innes in a 'lightweight Jackson Pollock' scattering of iridescent pink and silver. Derek said, 'I love the idea of using as many craftsmen as possible so that it has a crafted, one-off look.' He went on to summarise what he had planned for me. 'It's urban, you can be countrified elsewhere. It's light, feminine, sexy. You've shed the children and now it's time to be chic, poetic, ordered, considered. Anyone looking at these rooms would know that they are really thought through, we've clearly worked hard, made a huge effort and spent a fortune.' How much of a fortune rather depended on which objects I succumbed to. Getting those famous bones right, building, carpentry, lighting, heating and painting looked as though it was going to cost about £30,000. I could easily spend that again on fleshing out the bones, or I could stop there for the time being, knowing I had a strong foundation on which to build.