

Below: Jason Kedgley, his wife Anna and their two-year-old son Finn (top, centre), and retaining shims of their minimalist/modernist home. Original features such as the concrete stairs (bottom, centre) have been revealed, but this is contrasted with new cherrywood-lined walls. Fixtures and fittings are sleek and modern.



Rough cut

THE FIRST time Jason Kedgley saw his home to be, a large safe was being lifted out of the window. But it wasn't just any old safe and it wasn't just any old window. The safe was so big you could have walked around in it, and it was dangling from a crane three floors up. But then this wasn't any old neighbourhood either. He was walking down St Cross Street which cuts across Hatton Garden, the home of London's jewel and gem trade. It turned out the flat had been a jewellery. Until recently silver-smiths, goldsmiths and watchmakers had all worked there, but it was being converted into residential accommodation. Intrigued, he got in touch and moved in.

The flat took the scars of standard rental units - white plasterboard, bad carpets and cheap fittings. But Kedgley, a graphic designer and one of the founding members of respected creative agency Totems, had ideas to carve out a modern living space. When you think of a modern home what springs to mind? If it's whitewashed walls and pine floors then you're probably not alone. After all it's not unreasonable to believe that modern equals minimal equals slightly predictable. Walk into Jason Kedgley's home and you're forced to think again. It's totally modern and yet there's not a hint of pale pine.

"That pine look is a very popular current day version of modern living," he says, "but it isn't modernist living to me." Instead, Kedgley's home is a testament to the more "brutalist" style of architecture of which he is a fan, with



features left deliberately raw. Concrete ceilings and floors have been left exposed downstairs, and upstairs there are weathered wooden boards lining the walls and the way of contrast, in materials if not in colour: a dark brown shagpile carpet. It seems a little blasé to describe it as a "bachelor pad" - since Kedgley lives here with his wife Anna and their two-year-old son Finn - but it is undeniably masculine.

"The design was my idea," he says, "but Anna was totally involved." The couple worked closely with an architect, Alex Ely from Mae, and their mutual agreement was a factor Ely warmly welcomed. "I can't tell you how many projects I've worked on where you end up becoming marriage counsellor to the couple," he says. "Jason obviously had very strong ideas and was prepared to push the boundaries of what's feasible, but they were both really supportive and it worked." The idea was to strip the flat back to show off the original architecture, such as the concrete walls and stairs, but also to provide a new lining, like the cherrywood that covers the downstairs walls and wraps round up the stairs.

As we walk upstairs I'm half expecting to find a pair of skin leaning against the wall - I find like I've been transported to the Alps. Kedgley agrees. "It's like a mountain lodge isn't it, but I really like that and I love the wood." It's also quite dark, but he likes that too. He's not interested in whitewashed walls and discreet lighting, remember. The bedroom is home to an enormous 4ft 7in

good with room enough for the whole family plus dog. The lapped wooden (maple) boards on the walls are curious: it's as if a ski chalet has been turned inside out and the external walls now face in. Ely the architect is more direct, saying he thinks it looks a bit like a garden shed. Some people might object to their architect making a remark like that, but not here. Kedgley rebuffs other people's reactions. "I couldn't tell you the truth about what people have said when they come round," he says. "Some people come in and they love it. The woman from Hampton's Institute agent was visibly shocked."

Reluctantly the couple are being forced to move as their number two is on the way. The flat is on the market (they're "open to offers" in the region of £62,000) though, says Kedgley. "It will be sold in a matter of a couple of days. I love the market on Leather Lane - as crap as it is, they're very friendly. There's always people looking out for you, there's Mrs Fitzwilliam out the back, Arthur the book geyse downstairs who waters the plants and collects our post when we're away." But Kedgley admits that he's starting to get jittery about it. He is all too aware that it's not to everyone's taste, but the chances of him modifying his style to suit any prospective buyers are pretty slim. "Anna's dad has a long-standing joke," he adds. "Every time he comes down he looks up at the ceiling and says, 'I've got a good plasterer.'"

A Mae 020-7032 1180, Jason Kedgley 0409-233 1077

Below: polished concrete and dark wood predominate throughout the flat, but the effect is softened by the furnishings, carpets - and Finn's boys. The master

bedroom (bottom, centre) features a stunning 4ft 7in bed and lapped maple-wood walls, compared by architect Alex Ely from Mae to a wooden shed.