

# High Street Chic

Jess Lavers runs a small, friendly interior design studio in the heart of Chelsea and works on high-end residential properties in central London. Previously a jewellery designer, she studied at KLC School of Design and then went on to work at Helen Green. She is passionate about pattern and textiles and loves working closely with her clients to transform their dreams into reality.

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Copper laminate forms the reception desk

I was absolutely thrilled to be approached by commercial and residential developers Longharbour to work with them on their most recent project – One Eighty Stratford High Street, E15.

Longharbour have recently acquired an imposing 27 storey tower right in the very heart of London's Stratford with amazing views over the Olympic park and the city of London. The tower consists of 167 rentable residential units aimed at young professionals aged around 25-35 who mainly work in the nearby financial district.

The building was structurally sound but extremely dated and tired and the brief was to transform the internal entrance space of the ground floor reception to make the development a real 'destination' with character, soul and style. The client and I worked closely with their appointed branding agents fivefootsix to come up with the brief – the space needed to reflect east London's edgy, urban style with a nod to luxury and fine detailing. ▼



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Jess Lavers



A large scale zig zag grey wallpaper is set off with a band of yellow paint

▲ First stop Shoreditch – we had a really inspiring breakfast meeting at the Hoi Polloi brasserie in the nearby Ace Hotel to gather inspiration and collect our initial thoughts. It was great fun to be able to discuss potential finishes and textures over their delicious signature ricotta pancakes with maple syrup – and endless cups of coffee.

Shoreditch High Street was a great source of inspiration and I think I must have looked inside every single café on the street to check out the sort of colour palettes and unusual materials that are trending in the heart of London's most creative, artistic district.

Eventually I settled on a colour palette of grey and yellow with a copper accent, which is both chic, fresh and contemporary and the branding agents could carry this palette through to the design of the website and all the marketing material too.

There were three main spaces to design – the initial entrance which needed to accommodate seating for visitors and residents and led you through to the desk and concierge area. Then there is the lift lobby which serves all 167 flats, and thirdly there is the post room which houses the individual letter boxes for each apartment.

I wanted to give a feeling of rough luxury by combining some hard, urban finishes with refined detailing and a few glossier textures. This inspired a polished concrete floor in a warm grey tone which had to be hand poured into the 1500 square foot space and was a massive hit with the client!

With high ceilings throughout, I had huge amounts of wall space to play with so I decided to use a mixture of finishes ▼



Drum-shaped stools double up as side tables



▲ to give real individuality to the three separate areas. I used reclaimed timber panels to clad the wall on your left as you enter the building which gives a lovely warm feeling and I then added three copper wall lights from Davey Lighting which are actually exterior lights to hang above the sofa.

I am passionate about layering up textures so I added a bespoke buttoned oversized sofa upholstered in a soft grey tone of 100% wool which is not only wonderfully comfortable, the wool is seriously hard wearing and practical.

I wanted to use a copper tone throughout the space in order to give continuity of design hence the three drum-shaped stools, which were handmade in hardwood and then spray-painted in a copper finish. These double up as extra seating or side tables and are extremely heavy and durable.

The coffee table in front of the sofa was made in polished Carrera marble which is my absolute favourite type of stone for its grey veining and lovely light, restful colour. I cannot wait to install this particular marble in my kitchen when I acquire my dream home!

I commissioned a pair of buttoned club chairs upholstered in a sumptuous mercury coloured velvet finished with copper stud detailing and ebony legs. I like the combination of the classic design of these chairs twinned with the sleek contemporary sofa and cool marble table.

My client wanted me to design an imposing and striking reception desk which was big enough to seat two concierge members and also to conceal two computer screens, lockable storage, complex wiring, foot ▼



One Eighty has amazing views over the Olympic park and the city of London

▲ heaters and be both visually stunning but also within budget. We settled on a bespoke angular design with sharp angles and clean lines, which gives a contemporary edgy feel to the space.

The client was keen to have the desk cast in copper which would have ended up costing a bomb and would also get constantly marked with finger prints. Instead we used a copper laminate which gives all the effect of copper and the slightly mottled texture of this particular laminate adds more life to the finish.

Although the desk arrived in three separate

parts which clicked together once inside the building, we still had to remove the glass entrance doors in order to fit the huge desk inside the reception area!

My favourite finish in the space are the two walls of copper mirror tiles which look so luxurious and elegant. I discovered these gorgeous tiles at a design show and had them imported from Portugal. We ended up using thousands of them – I cannot imagine how long it took the poor tiler but the finished effect adds a massive wow factor to the space and you can even see the mirror tiles sparkling from the street.

The next area to tackle was the lift lobby which was a rather dark, poky space in desperate need of some life and personality. I clad the back wall with large panels of fabulous copper toned mirror which transforms the space and makes it feel about double the size and bounces the light all over the place.

I was conscious that residents would need a seating area as they wait for the lifts so I designed a long buttoned bench/banquette seat which runs the length of the back wall. I chose a chic grey herringbone fabric to upholster it and had the buttons covered in a smart yellow velvet – I love small ▼

▲ details like this and believe they make all the difference to a project – it's all in the finishing.

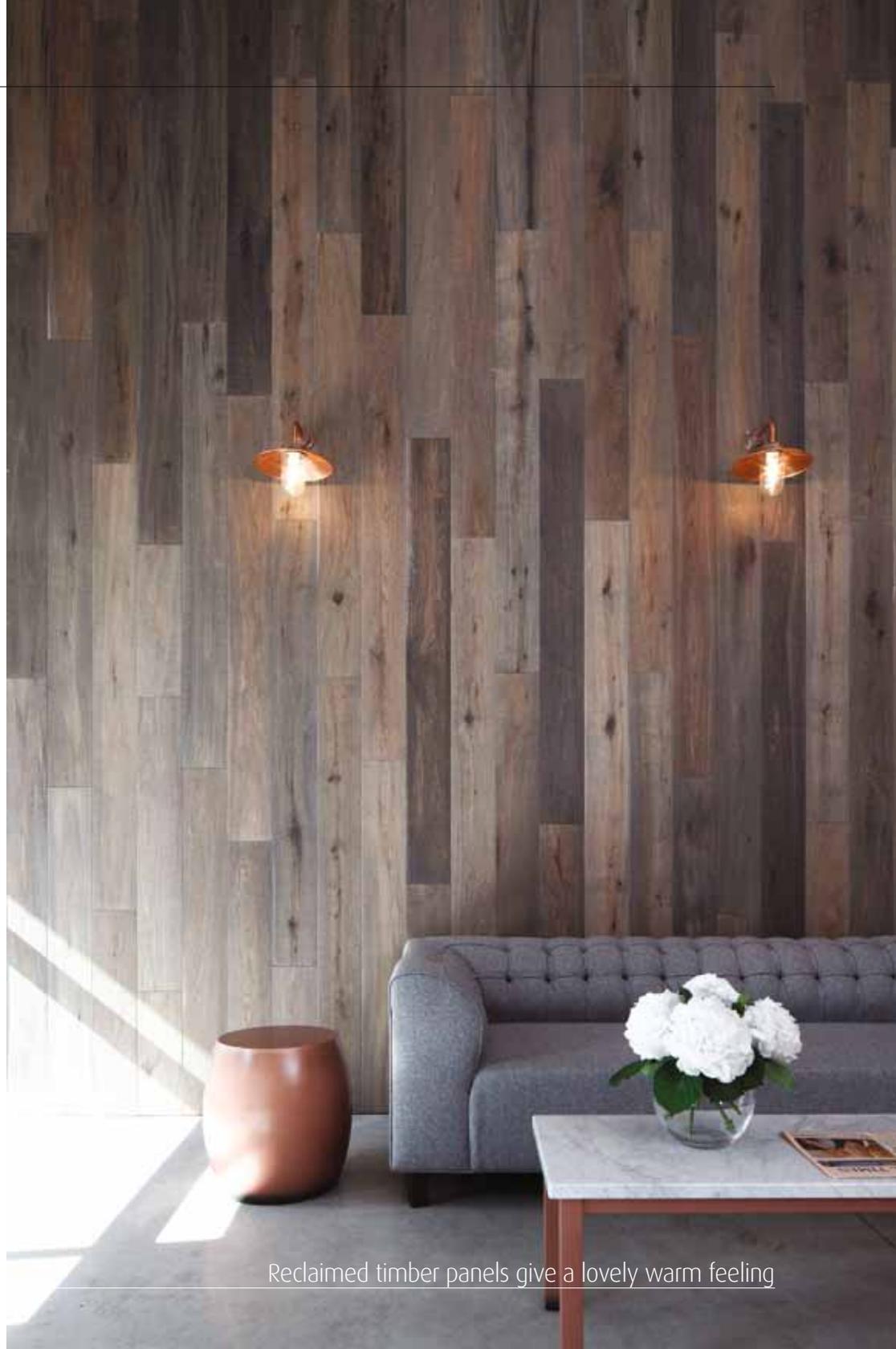
I was keen to introduce some pattern into this area and I also wanted to incorporate more of the signature yellow we had initially chosen with the branding agents. It took me weeks of searching to hunt down a wallpaper with exactly the right shade of yellow and the appropriate scale of pattern for the lift lobby – thank you Turnell & Gigon for your stunning Domino pattern which fitted the bill perfectly!

Perspex panels were then fitted over the wallpaper to preserve its life and to allow residents to lean against the walls if they want to.

Last but not least comes the post room. I chose some old shipyard pendant lamps for their urban industrial feel and I like the way they are suspended on long chains with the bulbs caged in.

True to the brief, I was keen to include colour and pattern in this area so I went for a fun, large scale zig zag grey wallpaper and set it off with a band of yellow paint below the post boxes. I matched the colour of the post boxes exactly to the shade of grey in the wallpaper to give a seamless colour palette to the area.

One Eighty was such an exciting project that I feel really lucky to have been a part of. I worked alongside a very slick team of highly professional architects, contractors and branding consultants. The project brief was an absolute dream – my client trusted me to transform a tired old building into a beautiful, exciting, contemporary space and we all had a lot of fun on the design journey.



Reclaimed timber panels give a lovely warm feeling