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In the zone: natural light floods the loft conversion space with its open-plan kitchen/dining zone and feature fireplace, above



At home: Marwan Al-Turki and the glazed terrace, left, of his Fitzrovia flat, above

THE LOFT extension is the most popular space-creating project in the UK. Solicitor Marwan Al-Turki bought a top-floor three-bedroom flat in Fitzrovia as a buy-to-let investment but after having the work done, he liked it so much he moved in.

He bought for £550,000 in 2000 when Fitzrovia was 30 per cent cheaper than its more fashionable neighbour, Soho. The flat was just 860sq ft and the rooms felt cramped. Marwan, 53, decided to turn it into a spacious two-bedroom home and has almost doubled its size. He bought the loft above for £60,000 and hired

Nasser pushed the planned mansard roof well back out of sight of the street and proposed using exterior materials in keeping with surrounding buildings, the application was approved.

The entire roof was dismantled and rebuilt in a new shape, and huge plates of glass had to be swung in by crane. The project took a year but finally, in February 2011, Marwan moved into his new duplex. With the great views and natural light at the top of the property, he decided on “upside-down” home with two bedrooms, two bathrooms and a study on the lower floor and the dining/living area at the top.

The new staircase to the loft is lined with bookshelves for clever storage, and the loft itself is open-plan with three zones. On one side is a white kitchen, dining table and a modern zinc fireplace as a focal point, while on the other is a living room with low white sofas and turquoise cushions. In between, a terrace has been cut out of the roof, with glazed walls bringing light to the whole space. Full of plants and with plenty of room for table and chairs, it can be used as an alfresco dining room. One bathroom is black granite, while the other is white marble. Both have fitted shelves and wardrobes.

The project cost £600,000, and the flat is valued at £1.7 million to £2 million. Marwan reckons he has made a small profit – but says that was never the purpose.

“I intend never to move from here,” he adds – one satisfied customer.

TAKING OVER THE LOFT

‘I love it so much I’ll never move’

Shahriar Nasser, principal of Belsize Architects (belsizearchitects.com), to draw up plans to merge the two spaces. It took almost three years to win planning consent. To make the attic habitable, the steeply pitched roof needed to be raised but Westminster council officers were concerned about any alteration to the roof line. After

Photographs: David Butler

Simple's best: Marwan liked colour accents for the living space, right, but mainly used white, including one bathroom, far right



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