

Shoji Apartment

Studio _____ Proctor & Shaw
Location _____ London, U.K.
Square footage _____ 29m² (312ft²)

For the architects at Proctor & Shaw, the commission to renovate a cramped apartment in North London became both an exercise in innovation and a rebuttal to the idea that size is everything.

"True quality of space, no matter how big or small, matters," the studio says, and Shoji Apartment demonstrates that a beautiful, functional home can be achieved with a smaller footprint than 37m² (398ft²)—the U.K. government's minimum space standard for the floor area of new homes, as given in its technical housing standards.

The new design dispensed with the second-floor apartment's existing layout of cramped rooms, removing partition walls and exposing the huge bay window at the front. While floor space was scarce, the ceilings soared to 3.4 meters (11.1 feet) high, so "by exploiting the vertical dimensions, space is conjured out of nothing." The architect added an innovative sleeping pod comprising a king-sized bed raised up on a wooden plinth that is accessed via a plywood staircase, with a walk-in closet below.



Top Left The design creates extra living space by stacking rooms and storage. Bottom Left Soft clay plaster walls complement the pinkish sheen of the birchwood joinery. Right Concealed lighting transforms the sleeping pod into a dramatic design element.