# Spiral stair “unlocks” cramped Georgian home for chef Andrew Wong



A sweeping spiral staircase now threads through a reconfigured Georgian townhouse in west London, forming the organising gesture of a compact family home for chef Andrew Wong and his family. According to the original Dezeen report, the intervention by architecture studio Michaelis Boyd replaces a tuckedaway rear stair with a flowing, sculptural spine that connects all five floors and reshapes how the narrow, wedge‑shaped plan is used. The property, known as Flat Iron House, is the place Wong grew up in and has returned to with his wife Nathalie Beufond and their children.

Relocating the staircase to the building’s centre was described by Alex Michaelis as the crucial move that “unlocked the house.” He told Dezeen that placing the stair centrally allowed the team to organise living areas and bedrooms on one side and bathrooms on the other, turning previously wasted rear corners into usable rooms. The project had to work within the constraints of a conservation area, so the principal Georgian façade remains intact while the internal plan was rethought to suit family life.

Michaelis Boyd made the stair the project’s sculptural heart: an organic, spiral form that intersects each floor and culminates in a double‑height void beneath a new skylight at attic level. According to the studio, the new central position of the stair also draws daylight into the house via reinstated sash windows and the top‑light, helping to animate the minimalist interior through natural light and shadow.

At ground level the staircase announces itself beside the entrance, separating a blue‑painted boot room from a kitchen‑diner. The kitchen establishes the earthy, pared‑back material language used throughout: a large dark timber island with a marble top, a bespoke leather banquette in the dining area and a tall indoor tree that brings a biophilic note into the centre of the plan. The owners asked for an internal palette that evoked memories of holidaying in a Moroccan villa, a restraint that the architects interpreted through layered, textured paints and natural materials rather than ornament.

Michaelis said the surrounding finishes were chosen so the interiors would “complement rather than compete” with the staircase, adding that “this minimalism flows throughout the house, anchoring the architecture and allowing natural light and shadow to do much of the work,” in comments made to Dezeen. Oak floors, Provence limestone, fine fabrics and carefully detailed joinery provide tactile variation and warmth within the deliberately uncluttered scheme.

Below ground level the family room opens onto twin courtyards at either side, ensuring light reaches the basement despite the confined plan. The architects fitted a large curved sofa that echoes the stair’s geometry, and retained the original chimney wall, softening its edges to meet bespoke cabinetry. A guest suite with an en‑suite sits adjacent to the living spaces, with steps leading further down to a utility area and the house’s original vaulted cellar, now fitted with storage and book shelving.

Bathrooms are positioned at the narrowest seam of the plan on the first and second floors; here the practice made space for freestanding bathtubs and showers enclosed by gently curving walls clad in Japanese‑style tiles. The main bedroom benefits from dual‑aspect windows, looking forward to views of Battersea Power Station and backwards towards the Chelsea water tower chimney through a newly created opening in the rear elevation. The attic was reworked into an additional bedroom with bespoke cabinetry shaped to the apex, augmented by new skylights that frame neighbouring chimney tops.

Michaelis Boyd had initially hoped for a light‑touch renovation but the practice found the existing joists to be in poor condition, necessitating a near‑complete rebuild within the constrained envelope. “With only around 36 square metres per floor, fitting in the full programme and required storage without sacrificing volume was a constant challenge,” Michaelis told Dezeen, noting that the irregular geometry made “every millimetre” count and required custom joinery and meticulous execution.

The Flat Iron House project sits comfortably within Michaelis Boyd’s established catalogue. The practice, founded by Alex Michaelis and Tim Boyd in 1996, is known for carefully calibrated interiors that prioritise light, flow, material tactility and biophilic touches. Industry project pages and features record the studio’s work on the Battersea Power Station redevelopment, where it designed interiors for hundreds of apartments and developed two complementary material palettes that draw on the site’s industrial character, alongside other residential and hospitality commissions that favour sculptural stair elements and finely detailed joinery. Profiles of the founders describe a client‑centred process and a willingness to adopt playful, bespoke interventions within rigorous, technically precise schemes.

For Andrew Wong, a Michelin‑recognised chef whose own biography traces a childhood and career rooted in Cantonese family cooking, the remade home appears to balance the practical demands of family life with the kind of composed, light‑filled minimalism the owners wanted. According to the restaurant’s official profile, Wong and his wife Nathalie run their acclaimed restaurant together, and returning to a childhood home reworked to suit contemporary family routines adds a personal layer to the architectural narrative.

Flat Iron House is a compact, carefully resolved example of how a single, decisive architectural move can reorganise a constrained urban interior. By turning circulation into the central spatial device and pairing that gesture with a muted, earthy palette and considered daylighting, Michaelis Boyd has produced a home that reads as both sculptural intervention and quietly domestic setting—an outcome consistent with the studio’s broader work translating context, material memory and biophilic ideas into everyday spaces.

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## Reference Map:

* Paragraph 1 – [[1]](https://www.dezeen.com/2025/08/15/sculptural-staircase-centrepiece-london-home-michaelis-boyd/), [[7]](https://www.awong.co.uk/about-us/), [[6]](https://www.livingetc.com/style/designer-profile/designer-profile-michaelis-boyd-194125)
* Paragraph 2 – [[1]](https://www.dezeen.com/2025/08/15/sculptural-staircase-centrepiece-london-home-michaelis-boyd/), [[6]](https://www.livingetc.com/style/designer-profile/designer-profile-michaelis-boyd-194125)
* Paragraph 3 – [[1]](https://www.dezeen.com/2025/08/15/sculptural-staircase-centrepiece-london-home-michaelis-boyd/)
* Paragraph 4 – [[1]](https://www.dezeen.com/2025/08/15/sculptural-staircase-centrepiece-london-home-michaelis-boyd/)
* Paragraph 5 – [[1]](https://www.dezeen.com/2025/08/15/sculptural-staircase-centrepiece-london-home-michaelis-boyd/)
* Paragraph 6 – [[1]](https://www.dezeen.com/2025/08/15/sculptural-staircase-centrepiece-london-home-michaelis-boyd/)
* Paragraph 7 – [[1]](https://www.dezeen.com/2025/08/15/sculptural-staircase-centrepiece-london-home-michaelis-boyd/)
* Paragraph 8 – [[1]](https://www.dezeen.com/2025/08/15/sculptural-staircase-centrepiece-london-home-michaelis-boyd/)
* Paragraph 9 – [[2]](https://find-an-architect.architecture.com/michaelis-boyd-associates-ltd/london/battersea-power-station), [[3]](https://homeworlddesign.com/battersea-power-station-michaelis-boyd-studio/), [[4]](https://designanthologyuk.com/article/battersea-power-station-michaelis-boyd/), [[5]](https://domusnova.com/design-directory/michaelis-boyd/), [[6]](https://www.livingetc.com/style/designer-profile/designer-profile-michaelis-boyd-194125)
* Paragraph 10 – [[1]](https://www.dezeen.com/2025/08/15/sculptural-staircase-centrepiece-london-home-michaelis-boyd/), [[7]](https://www.awong.co.uk/about-us/)
* Paragraph 11 – [[1]](https://www.dezeen.com/2025/08/15/sculptural-staircase-centrepiece-london-home-michaelis-boyd/), [[5]](https://domusnova.com/design-directory/michaelis-boyd/), [[6]](https://www.livingetc.com/style/designer-profile/designer-profile-michaelis-boyd-194125)

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## Bibliography

1. <https://www.dezeen.com/2025/08/15/sculptural-staircase-centrepiece-london-home-michaelis-boyd/> - Please view link - unable to able to access data
2. <https://find-an-architect.architecture.com/michaelis-boyd-associates-ltd/london/battersea-power-station> - RIBA’s project page describes Michaelis Boyd’s interior designs for the Battersea Power Station redevelopment. The entry explains the practice designed layouts and finishes for over 250 apartments within the Grade II\* listed complex, referencing the building’s original materials and detailing two complementary interior palettes inspired by the A and B stations. It highlights careful attention to natural light, Crittall‑style glazing, and a blend of historic and contemporary materials to retain the power station’s industrial character while enabling modern living. The page situates the work within the broader restoration and emphasises the studio’s role in interpreting heritage for residential use. projects.
3. <https://homeworlddesign.com/battersea-power-station-michaelis-boyd-studio/> - HomeWorldDesign’s project feature showcases Michaelis Boyd’s interiors for Battersea Power Station penthouses and apartments. It outlines the studio’s brief to create 254 luxury homes across the restored boiler house and façades, noting the translation of industrial features into residential finishes. The article mentions varied apartment types from studios to five‑bedroom penthouses, the creation of two material palettes, and the studio’s commitment to salvaging brick, metal and original character. Photographs and design credits illustrate the interplay of exposed brick, brass accents and contemporary fittings, and the piece frames the work as a sensitive reinvention of an iconic London landmark for residents.
4. <https://designanthologyuk.com/article/battersea-power-station-michaelis-boyd/> - Design Anthology’s feature on Battersea Power Station narrates the building’s long history and the recent large‑scale restoration. It describes WilkinsonEyre’s oversight of the masterplan and Michaelis Boyd’s interior role in converting the turbine halls into apartments, shops and cultural spaces. The piece highlights the retention of original materiality, the insertion of rooftop gardens and courtyard spaces, and the re‑use of artefacts such as switchgear as sculptural elements. Emphasis is placed on daylight, Crittall‑style glazing and two distinct interior palettes reflecting the power station’s A and B phases, presenting the redevelopment as both heritage conservation and contemporary urban regeneration and design.
5. <https://domusnova.com/design-directory/michaelis-boyd/> - DomusNova’s design directory entry summarises Michaelis Boyd as a London‑based architecture and interiors practice founded by Alex Michaelis and Tim Boyd. It states the studio was established in 1996 and outlines its focus on elegant, environmentally conscious residential and hospitality projects. The profile highlights the firm’s biophilic approach, attention to materiality and tailored client work, and mentions signature projects ranging from private houses to large commissions. It positions Michaelis Boyd as a practice that combines contextual sensitivity with playful, sculptural interventions such as bespoke staircases, underlining the studio’s breadth and reputation within UK and international design circles and client satisfaction.
6. <https://www.livingetc.com/style/designer-profile/designer-profile-michaelis-boyd-194125> - Livingetc’s profile of Alex Michaelis offers insight into Michaelis Boyd’s founders and design philosophy. The feature recounts how Alex Michaelis and Tim Boyd began working together in the mid‑1990s and developed a practice known for simple, elegant interventions that prioritise flow, light and space. It references their residential and hospitality commissions, willingness to embrace bespoke joinery, sculptural staircases and material attention, and notes Michaelis’s own curvy, modernist house as an embodiment of the studio’s approach. The article illustrates the duo’s client‑centred process and the way their work balances playful touches with rigorous, technically precise execution and an international project list.
7. <https://www.awong.co.uk/about-us/> - A. Wong’s official about page profiles chef Andrew Wong, outlining his family culinary heritage and professional trajectory. The biography explains he is British‑born of Chinese descent, worked in his parents’ Cantonese restaurant before studying and later training in culinary arts, and in 2012 reopened the family restaurant as A. Wong with his wife Nathalie, who manages front‑of‑house. The page highlights his research into regional Chinese cuisines, the restaurant’s award of Michelin recognition, and Wong’s commitment to blending tradition with contemporary technique. The entry corroborates details of his career, family involvement and partnership with Nathalie in running the acclaimed London restaurant.