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THE CLIMATE ISSUE



## PROPERTY WATCH

London-based interior design and interior architecture studio **Laura Hammett** offers recommendations for heads of mission and diplomats posted to the capital in order to make the most of their stay in diplomatic accommodation



**LAURA HAMMETT IS** an award-winning London-based interior design and interior architecture studio specialising in luxury residential projects throughout the UK and abroad. Founded in 2008, husband and wife team Aaron and Laura bring a wealth of experience from the international property market, along with a thorough understanding of the dynamics of contemporary living.

Recent work includes substantial family homes in India, Abu Dhabi, Dubai and Brussels, as well as private apartments in New York, Miami, Athens, Paris and China, plus commercial projects in London and the UAE. Laura has also just completed an exceptional boutique development in Kensington 'Vicarage Gate,' as well as a 3,700 sq ft three-bedroom lateral apartment in Knightsbridge, which features the most amazing bathroom made entirely of Calacatta Macchia Vecchia marble.

With such experience, Laura was happy to offer *Diplomat* some tips for readers newly arrived in their diplomatic accommodation. Laura believes that quality of life can be enhanced through exceptional design, with every detail, material, and element of space creating a luxurious whole. This can enhance a property's value while still retaining a truly personal touch. In diplomatic life, she notes that "hiring a professional is almost more

important than ever when working with a high-end rental property" that is not your own, "because it needs an extra level of attention to make the best of the space, which may not be exactly to your liking."

Laura recommends the use of bespoke size rugs to cover as much as possible if you are not convinced about the flooring, and pieces like bespoke headboard walls are worth investing in. "They look built in but can be fitted around existing architectural features and taken away at the end of tenancy." So too, freestanding storage is better in place of built-in joinery. She says: "media walls and display units are a great way to personalise your home while creating more storage space." When investing in furniture, keep sizes standard where possible so that they will work in a different property if needed. She says it's relatively straightforward to replace decorative light fittings. After all, she notes, "the style of light fittings can transform and dictate the whole room."

Laura reveals that landlords are often open to arranging a reduction in rent if improvements are being made to the property, "such as new fitted carpets, wallpapering and redecoration, and new curtains or blinds. So, it is always worth asking, especially when working with a professional design company."