



In contrast with his showroom, above, Pacey's flat (right) tends towards more contemporary design. But he says that the best rooms always have an old focus, like his 400-year-old fireplace

Pacey's bedroom, like the rest of the flat, is the result of astute salvaging, strategic tampering and designer gifts. Take the bed – a Belgian cherrywood number. Pacey took the view that all these things are “boring cherrywood” so he asked a friend to colour-wash it white. Over the bottom of this he has spread another McNamee gift, a Mongolian lambswool throw.

So many of Pacey's possessions aren't the sort of thing you can easily find. He snuffed out the mirror above the fireplace in Paris' Clignacourt flea market but it was badly burnt from a house-fire. Undeterred, Pacey tidied up the frame and mounted a new mirror on the back of the fire-damaged one which gave the whole arrangement a dramatic patina of age.

On the wall above the bed hangs a piece of high Victoriana – an old pelmet found in the house of a client. Stuck on a blank wall as opposed to shrouding fussy curtains in a Victorian house, the pelmet fits nicely with Pacey's strategy of giving a modern interior an old focal point.

Pacey is doing well for a man who had to squat following the property crash and who almost lost an eye when attacked in the street with a cosh. His route to success has been punctuated by unlikely circumstances and good fortune, be it meeting a man at a party who owed him a favour and so got him a job with a door-stripping firm, to almost losing the eye – an event

which turned out to be particularly fortuitous. Exploring the local area between treatments at the Moorfields Eye Hospital, he found what would become his shop and home. Just across the road. An insurance payout also presented the bank forcing on his business. There have been other adventures too: Pacey once fell through a floor while installing one of his sales; more gothicly, one of his fitters discovered the skeleton of a Victorian sweepboy in a chimney in Spitalfields. Pacey clearly enjoys the variety of life. As he puts it: “I don't want to be a businessman or an entrepreneur, this is a hobby.” An interesting hobby in more ways than one. ■

One of Pacey's fitters discovered the skeleton of a Victorian sweepboy in a Spitalfields chimney

striking pieces of furniture by his friend, young contemporary designer Precious McNamee. These include a mirrored cabinet and an angular white chair positioned in the window that overlooks the flat roof of the shop. The roof currently has a few desultory chairs on it and a statue, but he hopes to get planning permission to turn it into a usable space. “Next door are the offices of the Hackney planners,” he confides, “so I can't do anything here without them asking.”