

Portrait of a Notting Hill family on the move: Camerons will be at home in Downing St with Ikea rug, Habitat drawers and bean bag

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When a neighbour once told Samantha Cameron the removal vans would soon arrive to whisk her family to Downing Street, she apparently replied: 'I ***** hope not.'

It is hoped she was feeling more sanguine yesterday - because that was exactly the picture outside the cherished Notting Hill home she shared with husband David and their children.

A removal van, with a fitting Tory blue and Lib Dem livery, was parked up outside the £2.7million townhouse in West London and soon men were loading up their belongings.



Load up: The Camerons' bed is loaded into a removal van outside their home in Notting Hill



Heavy lifting: Two removal men take a mattress out of the £2.7million townhouse in west London

Cardboard boxes were piled high in the back of the vehicle. Then came a chunky bed frame and mattress, a wide-screen Toshiba plasma TV and a huge purple bean bag.

Mr Cameron's much-loved bike - which he regularly rode to Parliament while Tory leader - followed. After all, these days he has a chauffeur-driven Jaguar for his transport needs.

A raft of toys including a Bob the Builder puzzle, a fragile-looking castle and a Meccano-style crane were also carefully loaded up.

It has taken the Camerons two weeks to sort out the move to Downing Street and leaving their Notting Hill home will be a huge wrench.



© AFP/Getty Images

Armed policemen look on as a removals man loads Mr Cameron's bicycle into a van



© Stephanie Schaerer



Easy does it: A Toshiba flat-screen TV (around £500) and an Ikea Lusy Blom rug (£29.99)





© Stephanie Schaerer

Toys go too: A letterbox castle (£20) and a Meccano-style crane are carried wholesale to the van



© Stephanie Schaerer



Two-man job: A Habitat chest of drawers (£769) and table lamps worth around £15 from the same store

They spent hundreds of thousands of pounds turning it into a minimalist haven with Scandinavian furniture and the open-plan kitchen was a particularly favoured spot.

What awaits them is a poky - by comparison at least - top floor Georgian flat from where it will be far harder to take time out from politics.

They will first live above No10 while the flat next door is renovated. On Mrs Cameron's orders, an agreement has been struck so that the kitchen will be remodelled.

The Prime Minister will pick up the tab if the bill exceeds the annual maintenance allowance for Downing Street - aware that a costly bill for the taxpayer would be a PR disaster.

But the couple are understood to have wider concerns than the decor.

Mrs Cameron, who is five months pregnant, in particular was believed to be reluctant to leave west London, where both their young children are at school.

The property also holds precious memories of their eldest son Ivan, who died suddenly in February 2009. The house had been specially adapted to help with his cerebral palsy and epilepsy.

It was suggested she had wanted to stay there until September but this was abandoned because the round-the-clock security for the four months would have cost more than £1million.



New digs: Mr Cameron leaving home today while wife Samantha helps out with the removals

Mrs Cameron, 38, left home earlier today. Dressed in stylish trainers, black trousers and plain grey long-sleeved top, she beamed at photographers and displayed no anxiety over the move.

Asked if she was looking forward to it, she insisted: 'Yes, yes.' But added: 'Not looking forward to the unpacking.'

The Camerons and their children, Nancy, six, and Elwen, four, had a final breakfast together at the townhouse yesterday before the Prime Minister left for work.

'We are moving in today. So we had the last breakfast at home this morning but I have got quite a lot of other meetings and things I've got to do at the same time,' he told the BBC.

The family home is expected to be put up for rent. Asked if he might sell it, Mr Cameron joked: 'I certainly won't be renting it to Miss Whiplash, if that's what you mean.'

Miss Whiplash was the professional name of a sex therapist who rented a flat belonging to former chancellor Norman Lamont - who Mr Cameron, now 43, once worked for.

The kitchen earmarked for an overhaul is in 11 Downing Street. Although the Chancellor usually lives there, the flat is bigger than quarters at No10 and more suitable for the Cameron clan.

They aim to keep as normal a family life as possible and will divide their time between Westminster and their constituency home in Oxfordshire.

The family will also be able to enjoy the occasional weekend at the Prime Minister's country house, Chequers.



Out: At the back of Downing Street, removal men start the unloading



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Bright: A fluffy bean bag (£77) is taken from the Notting Hill home (left) and unloaded outside No10 (right)



Storage: Removal men take a chest of drawers from the van outside Downing Street

They will have to stay in the No10 flat with the children until the larger four-bedroom flat at No11 is refurbished. The Osbornes will then be given the smaller space.



'I hope the Cleggs haven't bagged the best bedroom'

This arrangement was first developed by Tony Blair and Gordon Brown in 1997. Mr Blair persuaded his Chancellor, then a bachelor, to let him live in No11.

When Mr Brown had a family of his own, they were based in his own Westminster house, before moving into the No11 flat when Mr Brown became PM in 2007.

It became the only home his two young sons, John and Fraser, had ever known. They closely guarded their children's privacy until his very final day in the top job.

Hours earlier, it was clear the writing was on the wall because luggage was seen being loaded into a Land Rover at the back of Downing Street.

And the following day, larger items including a children's yellow and green Wendy house were loaded into a removal van.

Nancy and Elwen will now fill the flat with their own toys. And come September, there will be a new baby to share their new home with.

The Camerons were desperate for another baby after the sad loss of Ivan last year and announced they were expecting their fourth child shortly before the election was called.

Mrs Cameron will be only the second Prime Minister's wife in 160 years to give birth while living in Downing Street.

The boys were pictured in public for the first time when Mr Brown and his wife Sarah led them down the street before he was driven to hand his resignation to the Queen.



Goodbye: Gordon and Sarah Brown and their two sons leaving No10 after he announced his resignation as Prime Minister two weeks ago
