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September 2015

INSPIRING HOMES

- 20 **FOLLOW THE SUN** With its spacious new extension, this Sussex home is awash with light
- 27 **THE LONG VIEW** Although it took 40 years of hard work and patience, a Dutch farmhouse has been sympathetically brought back to life
- 40 **VISIONS OF GRANDEUR** A love of art and fine decor is apparent in this London home
- 48 **LABOUR OF LOVE** The coastal location has inspired the interior in this farmhouse in Ireland
- 57 **PAST MADE PERFECT** This medieval manor house in Somerset is the perfect backdrop for a mix of classic and contemporary pieces
- 69 **GOOD AS NEW** A positive attitude and an eye for upcycling eased this renovation in Surrey
- 78 **HIGH HOPES** While on the lookout for renovation projects, this owner found a Victorian terrace they wanted to keep for themselves
- 100 **EASY DOES IT** A patient approach has paid off in this Edinburgh townhouse renovation
- 122 **TRICKS OF THE TRADE** By cleverly revamping second-hand finds, these London owners have created an eclectic but elegant interior
- 126 **PERSONAL TOUCH** Moving from London to the Hertfordshire countryside was a welcome change for this growing family
- 132 **CALM & COLLECTED** The dated interior in an Arts & Crafts house in Cheshire was badly in need of some care and attention

COVER STORY



Painted furniture and country charm give this classic Arts & Crafts house its character (see page 132).



27



34



108



96

NEW - BUILD

- 52 **OPEN TO IDEAS** After waiting four years to get planning permission, this couple were eager to start building their weatherboard cottage in Surrey
- 62 **EASTERN EYE** Having lived in Southeast Asia for 20 years, this couple were inspired to add Oriental touches to the decor, furnishings and joinery in their Cumbrian home
- 89 **FRESH BEGINNING** A tired house in the Leicestershire countryside was the perfect project for one courageous owner

REPLANNED

- 44 **NEAT PETITE** This semi in southwest London was given a brand-new layout to suit its owners' lifestyles
- 72 **AFTER THE FLOOD** Following a dreadful natural disaster in 2007, this couple had to go through the upheaval of renovating their Cotswold cottage all over again
- 118 **BEST OF BOTH** A dash of New England style and a spacious extension have transformed a London townhouse

UNIQUE

- 84 **ON THE WILD SIDE** An impressive array of quirky prints and vintage finds adorns this Parisian apartment
- 96 **HOMeward BOUND** Looking to move closer to home, this owner couldn't believe her luck when a quaint Cornish cottage she'd long admired came on the market
- 104 **JEWEL PERSONALITY** Vibrant hues and bold fabrics have resulted in an unexpected interior in this London terrace
- 115 **NEW LIFE** The potential that a stone barn in North Yorkshire offered was too much for this couple to turn down

DISTINCTIVE

- 34 **A WELCOME RETURN** After moving back to a family home in Ireland, this pair were keen to inject a little bit of their own charisma and personalities into the decor
- 92 **A STABLE ENVIRONMENT** How a run-down former horse barn in Dublin was lovingly restored
- 130 **RESCUE MISSION** Unfazed by the challenge of renovating a dilapidated 200-year-old cottage in Derbyshire, this owner couldn't wait to get started
- 136 **OVER THE SHOP** Transforming a commercial property into a family home was the challenge this couple were after

REGULAR FEATURES

- 11 **NEWS** This month's hot shopping trends
- 15 **Q&A** Your decorating queries answered by our expert
- 67 **READER OFFER** Get 48 free lavender plants
- 83 **COMPETITION** Win £5,000 to spend on your dream kitchen, in collaboration with Wren
- 99 **READER OFFER** Amazing deals on river cruises and Italian escapes, plus great discounts on boutique wines
- 108 **THE SOURCE** Follow our expert tips and bring the ideas seen in some of this issue's properties into your home
- 140 **STOCKISTS** Find your favourite names here
- 154 **ROOM ENVY** The scheme that's inspired us this month



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WELCOME

One of the most interesting aspects of the houses that we include in *25 Beautiful Homes* is looking at the floorplans we receive with some of them. It always intrigues me how families work with architects and interior designers to reconfigure the basic layouts of British homes to suit their individual needs. I think most of us can think in terms of knocking a wall down here and there, and possibly even moving a doorway. However, I find it harder to imagine what might be gained from turning around or even repositioning a staircase. So studying these floorplans shows what can be achieved, at a price of course. With typical Victorian terraced houses there are some standard improvements, such as adding a side-return extension to expand the kitchen, knocking the two living rooms together and building out at the rear. It will be very interesting to look back in 30 years time to see what structural changes are made to the current crop of new-builds. I can imagine that incorporating the integrated garage, adding a full-width single extension and taking down walls to form an open-plan layout and create bigger rooms will be high on the list.

Deborah

DEBORAH BARKER, EDITOR IN CHIEF

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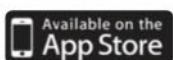
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POINTS OF INTEREST

Global treasures lend character and warmth to a modern, minimalist southwest London property



BORN AGAIN

How one couple oversaw the second coming of a neglected converted chapel in Oxfordshire



VISION EXPRESSED

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4



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6



7



8



9



PURPLE REIGN

The trend for lush berry shades and deep plum tones is here to stay. Mingle lilac, amethyst and lavender with rich damson to create a super-luxe look

1 LILAC LIGHT

Matthew Williamson glass table lamp, £80, Debenhams

2 BLOOMING BEAUTIES

Vintage-style orchid framed prints, £325 for six 14 x 17in pictures, The Farthing

3 BERRY TASTY

Polka tiered porcelain cake stand with beech stem, £85, Annabel James

4 SHADES OF VIOLET

Bespoke shutters in Lavender, from £320sq m, Shutterly Fabulous

5 PURPLE PEW

Chloe chair in Grape, £295, Within

6 LOUNGE IN LAVENDER

Filippa Polly cushion cover in fawn, £28, Broste

7 BLACKBERRY FLAVOUR

Halvåtta milk jug, £24, Clippings

8 EYE-CATCHING HUE

Julian Chichester Regency long wave cabinet, £4,543, The Longest Stay

9 FLORAL SHADES

Faux hydrangea flower, £4.95 per stem, Berry Red



ART DECO

A distinctive era when it comes to style, the feel of the 1930s is a key trend right now, so be inspired by the elegance, glamour and allure of this golden age

1 UPON REFLECTION

Biba Toulouse dressing table and mirror, £698, House of Fraser

2 ILLUMINATING IDEA

Constance table lamp, £476, 4Living

3 CRYSTAL CLEAR

Eichholtz Kasbah oval medium

chandelier, £770, Sweetpea & Willow

4 LET IT SHINE

Chikla cracked silver hurricane

lamp, from £39, Lizard Orchid

5 GLOW IN STYLE

La Collezione Merkur three-arm candelabra, £345, Ziggiziggi

6 YOUR ROUND

Round drinks trolley, £325, MiaFleur

7 SILVER SERVICE

Acorn stows in hammered stainless steel, from £25, In-Spaces

8 SILKY SHIMMER

Riviera duck egg cushion, £35, Fable

9 BOTTLE IT UP

Glamour decanter with ring stopper, £58, Artisanti

10 SLEEK SEAT

Signature lounge chair, £5,660, the Barbara Barry Collection at Baker Furniture

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Q&A

Our resident interiors expert Rachel Leedham is on hand to answer all your decorating queries

LOCATION COMPANIES

We have just finished renovating our beautiful detached home, with stunning views across open countryside. I would love to try to hire it out for photoshoots or films, but where do I start?
ALEXANDRA MAYER, MANCHESTER

The idea of your home earning money is appealing, particularly when photoshoots can earn around £500 a day, while a film can reap £2,500 a day. JJ Locations (020 7749 0500, jjlocations.com), one of the UK's biggest location agencies, tell me that the majority of shoots and films take place within the M25 – a house outside this area would need to have something unique to offer. Houses with good natural light and large rooms are particularly popular, and ground-floor access and parking are also important. You will need to be flexible, as the disruption can be considerable – a film may entail a 40-strong crew in your property, and rooms may be redecorated, although your contract will stipulate that they must be put back to their original state. Your best bet is to send in snaps to find out if your home could be suitable.



FLORAL CUSHIONS

Do you know of any ready-made cushion covers that resemble the floral patterned fabric on the sofa in Kate and Simon Clayton's sitting room (p106, June 2015)?
JANET BULMORE, BY EMAIL

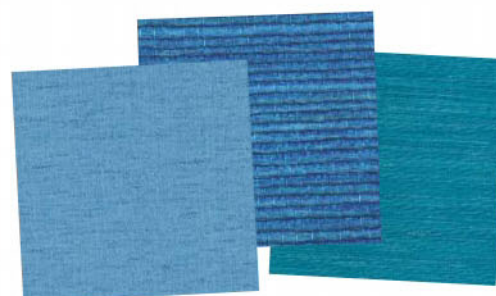
The sofa was made by John Sankey (0115 946 2121, johnsankey.co.uk), who tells me the fabric is no longer in production. Have a look at the range of cushions by

Sanderson (0844 543 9500, sanderson-uk.com), which includes its iconic Chelsea rose print, above. This has been increased in scale and printed on linen-mix fabric, with a velvet reverse. The cushion measures 50cm sq and costs £70, inclusive of feather pad. Kate Forman (01962 732244, kateforman.co.uk) offers cushions in traditional floral print, with a pretty piped trim; take a look at Roses, 51cm sq, £47, inclusive of feather pad.

TEXTURED WALLPAPER

Could you tell me where to find the blue wallpaper in Jessica Buckley's sitting room (p104, May 2015)?
CLAIRE WINTERTON, BY EMAIL

Jessica's choice of textured blue wallpaper is Juicy Jute grasscloth in Blueberry, centre, by Phillip Jeffries (0844 800 2522, phillipjeffries.com), from £51.60m. Harlequin (0845 123 6805, harlequin.uk.com) sells a wallcovering called Raya, engraved from a silk and linen slub fabric; have a look at the Blueberry colourway, left, £42 per 10m roll. Tektura's (020 7536 3300, tektura.com) Casbah, right, is a shimmering silk that is available in two rich blues, both £24.29m.



PENDANT LIGHTS

Our house has just had a glass extension added, and I'm trying to choose the lighting for above the dining table. I would like to have a pendant light but I don't want it to obstruct the view of the garden – do you have any suggestions?
PENNY LEWIS, SOUTH LONDON

One of the most discreet options would be an attractive free-hanging filament bulb, which will barely obstruct your sight lines to the garden. Because these are usually quite small, I would

recommend hanging them in a group or a row – and make sure you fit them with a dimmer switch. Olive & The Fox (01892 614197, oliveandthefox.co.uk) has a few choices, including a copper holder or this concrete version, £59; bulbs start at £14 for an Edison Pear bulb. If you prefer a more substantial pendant, the company sells a hand-blown clear glass pendant in four sizes – the largest, Dia39cm, costs £295. John Lewis (03456 049049, johnlewis.com) sells a clear glass design called William in an attractive bottle shape, H51 x Dia26cm, £130.



NEAT ARMCHAIR

I have been trying to find a chair like the small armchairs in Kevin Hillman and Liz Trunfull's sitting room (p48, July 2015), do you have any idea where I can find a similar-shaped piece?
NINA BRONSTEIN, BY EMAIL

These elegant chairs are from the couple's antiques company No 1 Lewes (01273 477714, theshoplewes.com) and Kevin tells me they are French, c1900, reupholstered in vintage linen. The shop regularly stocks similar pieces and currently has a chair in plain oatmeal linen, H90 x W78 x D73cm, £895. The Original Chair Company (01738 564777,

theoriginalchaircompany.co.uk) has an antique reproduction called Camille. Featuring a buttoned back, it comes in two sizes, a standard version measures H86 x W66 x D84, £595 plus 2.5m of fabric. Sofa.com (0345 400 2222, sofa.com) has a design called Alderney, above, H89 x W74 x D90cm, from £580, inclusive of fabric.

FAUX-MARBLE TILES

I'm keen to use Carrara marble floor tiles in our bathroom, but my husband is concerned about the maintenance. Can you recommend a porcelain tile similar to marble?
PAULA GERRARD, BUCKINGHAMSHIRE

Caroline Gow, senior category manager of tiles at Fired Earth (0845 366 0400, firedearth.com), says that white marble tiles, while highly luxurious, can be unforgiving and will show splashes and limescale unless wiped regularly. Porcelain is vastly less porous than natural marble, so easier to maintain. Have a look at the company's highly realistic South Beach range – pictured are the Townsend tiles in the 59.6cm sq format, £79.97sq m. Porcelanosa (0844 4818 951, porcelanosa.com) sells two faux-Carrara marble tile ranges – Carrara Blanco Natural and Bianco Carrara. Available in a number of sizes, the 59.6cm sq version costs £76.30sq m.



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FEATURE MELANIE WHITEHOUSE

INSPIRING



HOME TRUTHS

THE PROPERTY

Detached 1930s house

LOCATION West Sussex

ROOMS Sitting room/
kitchen-diner, family room, study,
cloakroom, four bedrooms (two en
suite), bathroom, summerhouse

PURCHASED 2008

PREVIOUS PROPERTY

'Before moving here, we lived near
Calais in France, in a modern house
close to the beach,' says Sue.

DINING AREA

'I wasn't sure about having curtains
in here as they would block out the
light, but opting for a soft linen
solved this problem,' says Sue.

Milton extending table, £1,000, Laura
Ashley, would work in this room.

Curtain fabric in Villa Nova's Foxley
Mimosa, £35m. Sheepskin rug, £79,
The Swedish Wooden Horse



THE SUN

*for Sue and Tim Wilkinson, who were
ray of sunshine in their new home*

PHOTOGRAPHY OLIVER PERROTT





SITTING ROOM
Flooring defines each area – oak planks in the living space are soft underfoot, while ceramic tiles are practical in the kitchen. Armchair upholstered in Leo Antique; footstool in Bernini Slate, both £43.20m by Clarke & Clarke, Portobello Fabrics

DECORATING TIP *‘Choose soft summery fabrics for a Scandinavian feel’*



SUMMERHOUSE
An all-white interior helps reflect the sun, creating a bright atmosphere. Ariel lounging armchair, £250, John Lewis, has this look. Zinc taper planter, £25, Top Topiary



KITCHEN

'For a streamlined finish, we chose handles that are set into the units,' says Sue.

Luxio Shaker solid-wood units, from £190 each; Caesarstone Quartz worktops, from £300m, both Hamilton Stone Design. Capao Mato Grey floor tiles, £32.50sq m, Topps Tiles, are similar

INSPIRATIONS *'I love subtle shades against a pale backdrop for a splash of colour'*



FAMILY ROOM

The stepped bookshelf forms a clever frame for artwork.

Try French Connection for a zinc rectangular coffee table like this one, £320. Caboche pendant light, from £380, Utility. Noah curved nickel floor lamp, £150, Laura Ashley



MASTER BEDROOM

Perfect symmetry portrays a feeling of stability in here.

Ornella wallpaper in Taupe, £43 per roll; headboard upholstered in Plush in Pebble, £25m, both Clarke & Clarke. Laura Ashley's Clarabelle chandelier, £300, is a close match

An instant decision to put in an offer on a 1930s house in a pretty Sussex village paid off for Sue Wilkinson and her husband Tim. 'The moment I stepped inside, I knew it would be ideal for our growing family as it had a lot of potential,' says Sue. 'It was on a good plot and had a huge amount of land, which meant we would be able to build an extension. As we were the first people to view the property, we knew we had to move quickly, because if we didn't, the sale would have gone to sealed bids.'

Shortly after, the Wilkinsons and their three children Ollie, now 19, Camille, 16, and Christian, 12, moved into their new home. 'For the first six months we just lived with the interior,' explains Sue, who has a keen eye for design. 'It was quite dark in some areas, so we paid attention to where the sun shone and how it moved around the house throughout the day. This way, we could figure out how to make it as bright as possible, which was important to us as

we love our home to be filled with natural light.' Once they had a plan in place, a makeshift kitchen was installed in the sitting room so the family could live comfortably in this side of the property while work was carried out in the other half.

The extension, which took around six months to complete, now stretches across the entire back garden and includes a new spacious sitting room/kitchen-diner that's connected to the exterior via bifold doors. 'The sun shines on the front of the building all day,' says Sue, 'so we put in a large roof lantern at the back of the house, which is north-facing, to maximise the light. In the evenings, the sun floods through the west-facing windows on the far side.'

Six months after completing the first renovation, the couple shut off the rest of the house and extended out to the side, creating an additional family room and a study, where Sue runs her interior business from home. Upstairs, a luxurious master bedroom with en suite was constructed. 'But it didn't

stop there,' says Sue. 'We also built a utility room on the other side of the property.'

Once all the work was complete, the decorating could begin. Light and off-whites have been used throughout, mixed with plush textures and flashes of bright colour. 'I prefer a neutral backdrop, but I wanted accent shades that tied the look together,' explains Sue. 'To keep the scheme fresh, I chose muted hues of yellow, grey and pink.'

'This is a very sociable house, and our dining area can now seat up to 14 people,' says Sue. 'Being the youngest of seven, I'm used to having lots of people around, and in summer, I love opening up the bifold doors for parties. Amazingly, heat from the log burner spills out into the garden, and we can sit there for hours. Visiting friends always say they feel like they're on holiday here.'

All of this hard work has resulted in a bright, sophisticated home that caters for the needs of a modern family. 'It's taken a while, but I'm glad we persevered,' says Sue. 'We've created a space that suits everyone.'

MASTER BEDROOM

A French-inspired space adds elegance. Shabby chic primrose dressing table, £629, House of Fraser, suits this style. Louise sofa, £649, Swoon Editions, is near-identical



GUEST BEDROOM

Bright red accessories offer warmth and colour. Lotta Jansdotter Sylloda duvet cover, £41; Korkek cushion in fuchsia, £20; Linea fleece throw in red, £30, all House of Fraser



CAMILLE'S BEDROOM

White furniture is versatile as the kids grow. Kimono wallpaper, £39 per roll, Laura Ashley. Shanghai garden peony duvet cover, £80, Feather My Nest, is a good alternative



DECORATING TIP *'Live somewhere for a while before you make any major changes – that way you can see how the sunlight affects your interior'*

EN SUITE BATHROOM

Wall-mounted cabinets give the illusion of more space.

London freestanding bath, £599, Bathstore. Ivory split-face mosaic tiles, £45sq m, The Stone and Tile Company



CHRISTIAN'S BEDROOM

Sue has made sure the children's decor expresses their individual personalities.

Pello armchair, £35, Ikea. Lava lamp, £20, John Lewis. Nantucket blind fabric, £20m, Clarke & Clarke. Blue sheepskin rug, £79, The Swedish Wooden Horse



STUDY

From here, Sue runs her curtain-making company, Soft Interiors.

Gersby bookcase, £17; Galant desk, £69, both Ikea, are a close match. Artichoke pendant lights, £299, Vita Interiors



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INSPIRING



HOME TRUTHS

THE PROPERTY

18th-century farmhouse

LOCATION Brabant, the Netherlands

ROOMS Hall, sitting room, kitchen, study, utility room, bedroom, bathroom

PURCHASED 1974

PREVIOUS PROPERTY

'Before moving here, we lived in an apartment nearby,' says Leny.

KITCHEN

Natural materials blend with modern fixtures and fittings in this contemporary take on a traditional farmhouse scheme.

Boston Carvers, £509 each, Lloyd Loom of Spalding. For similar lighting try the Large Hay Coolie Light Pendant in antique brass, £110, Fritz Fryer. Vegetable posters by Elizabeth Rice, from £29, Art.co.uk, are a match

THE LONG VIEW

Four decades of care and patience have turned Leny and Harrie Eltink's farmhouse into a romantic country retreat

FEATURE GEORGIE LANE-GODFREY / LINDA VAN DER HAM / COCO FEATURES | PHOTOGRAPHY ALAN JENSEN/COO FEATURES

SITTING ROOM

Pretty pastel furnishings provide a subtle touch of colour to the simple neutral walls.

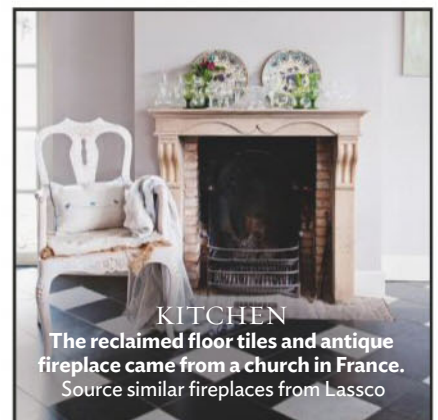
The Otto sofa in Elderflower lightweight linen would work here, £1,440; Bluebell footstool, from £245, both Sofa.com. Lenora blue wing chair, £650, Furniture UK. Sisal premium rug in Old Gold with black border, £199, Modern Rugs



FAVOURITE ROOM *'I love the sitting room, as it's so bright and peaceful, plus the mixed textures of the floor tiles, wood beams and stone walls give the room a cosy feel'*



KITCHEN
Vintage copper saucepans and hanging herbs add a rustic feel to this modern space. The Britannia Q-Line dual-fuel range cooker in gloss black is similar, £2,300, John Lewis



KITCHEN
The reclaimed floor tiles and antique fireplace came from a church in France. Source similar fireplaces from Lassco

Most homeowners would be prepared to work hard to create their ideal place, but very few would be willing to put in as much time and effort as Leny and Harrie Eltink. Having always dreamt of moving to a cottage in the countryside, the Dutch couple searched for three years before they finally found an old cotter's farm in the 1970s. The house was a complete ruin at the time, but with the help of an architect friend and some local craftsmen, the couple set about bringing this neglected building back to life. It took 10 months to initially renovate it and convert an old stable into a living area. 'I don't think Harrie realised just how handy he was until then,' laughs Leny.

However, the work didn't end there. The pretty 18th-century farmhouse had plenty of period charm, but not necessarily the right layout for modern living. 'Originally, we had

a long, narrow room as a kitchen, which was quite cosy, but we always wanted to have space for a large table that we could all sit round,' says Leny. So in 2003, the couple decided to extend their kitchen out into the garden. 'We wanted the extension to be in keeping with the rest of the house,' explains Leny, 'so we combined modern, custom-built cabinetry with reclaimed period pieces. The floor tiles are from a church in France.'

The most recent transformation took place two years ago, when Leny decided to completely refurbish the farmhouse. Inspired by the romance of the French and Swedish country look, Leny chose a palette of blues, whites and greys to transform her home. 'I think, when you're redecorating, a good place to start is with a few key accent colours to help tie the scheme together,' she says. 'For me, it was blue in all its nuances, from grey to lavender to aquamarine,

GUEST BEDROOM

A palette of pretty pastel blues and crisp whites creates a cosy country cottage atmosphere here.

Hastings ivory and brass double bed, £577, Laura Ashley. Blue Toile de Jouy quilted pillow sham, from £13, Surrey Linen Company. Ceiling painted in Parma Gray estate emulsion, £38 for 2.5 litres, Farrow & Ball



BATHROOM

Striking patterned floor tiles add interest to this monochrome scheme.

Fired Earth's Evora encaustic tiles in aubergine, blue and white, £224.70sq m, are identical to these ones



combined with shades of white.' To add a little warmth, pops of brown and red are also introduced throughout the house.

By keeping her base colours calm and neutral, Leny is able to adapt her home to suit the seasons. Blankets and baskets of wood near the fireplace keep the white rooms feeling cosy rather than cold in winter, while crisp linen and fresh cut flowers create a cool, airy look during the summer months. 'I love wandering through the garden and picking some blooms for inside,' says Leny. 'It's a great way to create a sense of continuity between our indoor and outdoor space.'

This sense of fluidity stretches throughout the house itself, too. In keeping with her Gustavian-inspired palette, Leny purchased new Swedish furniture that complements her existing antique pieces. 'I think it's important to keep those older items with sentimental value,' she says,

'just like a beautiful fabric from your last home, or a few of your mother's old teacups. Possessions with a story behind them make your home so much richer.'

As a result, Leny believes that when it comes to interiors, the best advice is to avoid trends as they can often be impersonal. 'Take inspiration from homes magazines, friends' homes and well-designed hotels, but make sure that you always pick whatever reflects your personal style rather than what is in fashion at that moment in time,' she advises. 'That way, you'll never tire of it.'

Now, after four decades of alterations and additions, the Eltinks have finally succeeded in creating their romantic, rural home. 'We'll always be buying new pieces of furniture or moving things around, but we're so pleased with the house the way it is now,' says Leny. 'All that's left to do now is enjoy it.' **25**

BE INSPIRED BY LENY AND HARRIE'S GARDEN



Insight

STATEMENT FLOORING

Inspired by the Eltinks' creative floors? There are plenty of individual ways to pep up your scheme

The Eltinks' home features a mixture of classic terracotta, modern geometrics, timeless black-and-white checks and painted floorboards. It can be hard to pull together so many contrasting styles and finishes, but a cohesive colour palette and a judicious approach to pattern and scale are all it takes to make an impact.

Mix it up

If you'd like to follow Leny and Harrie's lead, try mixing patterns and plains. Always consider scale, since a little motif or colour can go far, particularly in small rooms. Creating a mood board is a really helpful way of seeing how to achieve a sense of balance and proportion and how to build your scheme layer by layer. For example, if you're planning a really eye-catching geometric floor, try complementing it with a neutral palette and clean lines so you don't have too many colours and shapes vying for attention. Think about unusual combinations such as tiles set into wooden floors, large-scale floor tiles against small mosaics, and aged

stone mixed with timber. To keep the look fresh, stick to natural colours, with the occasional vibrant pop, such as a geometric tiled cloakroom.

What are the options?

With so much choice available in terms of both material and pattern, it can be daunting to find the right option. Herringbone styles are very popular, either in ceramic or wood, and they're an ideal way of introducing subtle yet beautiful patterns and a sense of texture into even the simplest floor, instantly creating a focal point. Bold geometrics and Moroccan designs are a particularly contemporary and versatile choice, as they have a timeless appeal that's equally at home in both modern and traditional interiors. There are plenty of options when it comes to materials – consider printed plywood, wood stained in zingy hues, reclaimed wood with encaustic tiles, rubber – which is particularly durable in kitchens and bathrooms – poured resin, concrete and luxury vinyl, available in a host of smart patterns and geometrics.



PROFESSIONAL ADVICE

'Floors are a blank canvas, so there's endless potential for getting creative and allowing them to take centre stage. Tiles are usually confined to kitchens, bathrooms and hallways, but they're becoming an increasingly popular choice for other rooms, thanks to the wider availability of decorative designs that are striking enough to grace any area in the home.'

Even the simplest and most inexpensive monochrome tiles can be used to fabulous effect. Checkerboard always makes an impact but you could take the look a step further by using unusual colours. Cream and green look particularly fresh in a kitchen, while black and green has a lovely Art Deco feel. Try laying tiles at different angles to subvert the classic look.

Mosaics work really well, too, and shaped tiles are very much on trend. For example, the geometric lines of hexagonal terracotta tiles offer a stunning contemporary alternative to traditional terracotta floors.

Another option is to harness the rich colour variation found in certain stones to design a floor with a completely natural, unique format. Just as you would do with any other type of pattern, dry-lay the tiles first so you can move them around and achieve the best spread of colour across the floor.'

ROB WHITAKER, FIRED EARTH

ADDRESS BOOK

■ **Fired Earth** 0845 366 0400, firedearth.com

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■ **Victorian Woodworks** 020 7730 6957, victorianwoodworks.co.uk

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A pattern in a bathroom adds interest to all-white schemes

Wood is classic and hardwearing in a hall

Tiles are a good choice in high-traffic areas



EXPERT EYE 'Keep it simple and don't use too many different tile formats, colours and finishes. Less is more when it comes to bold flooring, so use pattern selectively'

DOROTHEE JUNKIN, INTERIOR DESIGNER

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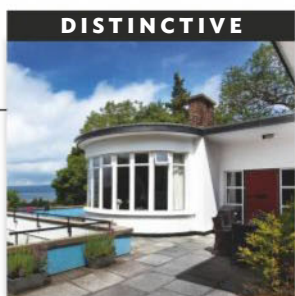
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DISTINCTIVE

HOME TRUTHS

THE PROPERTY

Art Deco 1920s detached

LOCATION Belfast

ROOMS Hall, sitting room, dining room, kitchen, playroom, three bedrooms, bathroom, self-contained floor with sitting room, study, utility room, two bedrooms, bathroom

PURCHASED 2012

PREVIOUS PROPERTY

'Before moving here, we lived in New York,' says Fiona.

A WELCOME RETURN

After Fiona Kennedy and her family moved into the house her husband grew up in, it was important for them to put their own stamp on the place

FEATURE JUDE ROBINSON-LYTTLE | **PHOTOGRAPHY** RORY CORRIGAN

1 DINING ROOM

'These chairs were red, but I decided to freshen them up with a coat of blue paint,' says Fiona. Reclaimed flooring, from £18sq m, Parquet Parquet, is alike. Vince chair, £120; Jak chair, £60, both Habitat, are similar. Vita Carmina

shade, £64, Cloudberry Living, is a match. Gallery Hammersmith antique mirror, £63, WorldStores, would suit this look

2 SITTING ROOM

Framed photos and pretty knick-knacks add a personal

touch to this reading corner.

Lövbacken side table, £40, Ikea. For a compartment bookshelf that's comparable to this one try the Antonn, £595, Habitat. Milano Luna Bark upholstered chair, £90, My Furniture, is an alternative. Cushions, from £20, TK Maxx

SITTING ROOM

'This is my favourite space in the entire house – I just love the light from the large windows and the high ceilings,' says Fiona.
 Branagh ottoman in Lime Green, £299, Made. Curtains in Belle Epoque, £49m, Voyage at Kingdom Interiors. Davis three-seat sofa in Mink, £1,350, Crate & Barrel. Walls painted in Crown's Gentle flat matt emulsion, £23 for 2.5 litres, B&Q



1 KITCHEN

This extension is one of Fiona and David's favourite features. Kitchen units, from £15,000, Leicht. Glee bar stool, £45, Atlantic Shopping. Janinge chair, £40, Ikea, is similar. Walls painted in Crown's Pure Brilliant

White matt emulsion, £10.99 for 2.5 litres, Homebase

2 HALL

Industrial-inspired railings teamed with Mid-Century furnishings add a retro edge. Mahogany Village Demilune

console table, £160, Wayfar, is alike. Walls painted in Oxford Stone estate emulsion, £36 for 2.5 litres, Farrow & Ball

3 PLAYROOM

Sammy and Edith love having their own space where they

can entertain themselves.

Mammut table, £17; Mammut stools, £5 each; PS 2014 cushion in pink and yellow, £10; Morum rug, £50, all Ikea. Walls painted in Crown's Prospect Bay matt emulsion, £19.99 for 2.5 litres, B&Q

DESIGN TIP
'Shop around to get an interesting mix of furniture and accessories for your own eclectic scheme'



Fiona Kennedy's interiors style was inspired by the artistic energy and diverse design influences she absorbed while living in New York. 'I spent six years there with my husband David, and I thrived on the vibrant lifestyle,' she says. 'I'm very arty, so I loved exploring galleries and yard sales.' Luckily, Fiona channelled this inspiration into her husband's former home in Ireland. 'We moved back in 2007,' says Fiona. 'We lived in a semi in Belfast at first, before relocating to the suburbs of the city to David's family home, which had been in the family for over 30 years.' Returning to David's old dwelling with their children Sammy, 5, and Edith, 3, feels

very special for Fiona. 'He has many great memories of this place, and we couldn't wait to start making our own,' she says.

The 1920s Art Deco property was a labour of love for David's parents, who painstakingly revived the rundown interior while living in a caravan on the driveway. 'My father-in-law was a landscape architect and artist,' says Fiona. 'He had an interest in design, so the house was sympathetically renovated and the decor was quite edgy. We feel lucky to be able to live in such a unique house that fits our style.'

Split-level in design, the main living space is on the top floor with a staircase leading to further accommodation below, which is still a



DESIGN TIP *'Displaying photos and mementos is an easy way to add a personal touch to your interior'*

MASTER BEDROOM
Combining auction finds with items from Fiona's shop, Red Ruby Rouge, the look here is casual and effortless.

Malabar bed, £655, Natural Bed Company, is near-identical. Ruffle ruched grey bedspread, £158, The French Bedroom Company. Verpan Pantop copper lamp has this look, £335, John Lewis



work in progress. 'There's so much potential for this floor though as it's ideal for guests, with two bedrooms, a bathroom and a sitting room, which is currently used as a study,' says Fiona 'It just takes time.'

'When we first moved in, we knew we wanted to keep the Art Deco features, including the parquet floor, staircase railings and large front door,' continues Fiona. 'However, we did update the original black-and-red colour scheme to suit our furniture and put our own stamp on the place, opting for a muted palette that has softened the look in each room.' The couple have also introduced their personalities with an eclectic mix of furnishings and accessories,

including some that have travelled all the way from New York with them. Old pieces are paired with new and Fiona has even upcycled some of her in-laws' furniture with a fresh coat of paint.

Fiona's experience of life in New York coupled with moving to such a quirky home in Ireland has allowed her artistic flair to flourish and also prompted her to launch her own boutique online shop, Red Ruby Rouge, selling lesser-known designer fashion, accessories and beauty products. 'Living here has enabled us to spend more time being creative, as well as reconnecting with friends and family,' says Fiona. 'We've still got a lot of work to do, but it will continue to evolve along with us.' 25

BATHROOM

Unique shelving creates extra space.

Sanitaryware, from £350; floor tiles, £455q m; both Porcelanosa



CHILDREN'S ROOM

Sammy and Edith love this vibrant scheme.

Quentin Blake Cockatoos wallpaper, £42 per roll, Osborne & Little



MASTER BEDROOM

A coat of paint has revived these wardrobes.

Caned faux-bamboo chairs, £3,399 for two, Cherry Lane Modern at Etsy, are alike



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VISIONS OF GRANDEUR

INSPIRING



HOME TRUTHS

THE PROPERTY

Victorian terrace

LOCATION

Southwest London

ROOMS Sitting room, kitchen-diner, TV room/guest suite, library, study, cloakroom, two bedrooms (both en suite), dressing room

PURCHASED 2012

PREVIOUS PROPERTY

'Before this, we lived in a 1930s terrace nearby,' says Alison.

FEATURE RACHEL LEEDHAM | PHOTOGRAPHY RACHAEL SMITH



SITTING ROOM

'I saw this painting a few years ago and had to have it,' says Alison.

Bluebell sofa, from £930, Sofa.com.

Bespoke glass and black lacquer

coffee table, Camhall Interiors.

Cushions in Golden Starburst,

£192m, Jim Thompson at Fox

Linton. Painting by Attasit Pokpong

Despite its modest footprint, Alison Papworth's home has an impressive and spacious feel thanks to a careful remodelling and sophisticated schemes

After passing a Victorian terrace in a quiet enclave in Chelsea for the last 20 years, Alison Papworth always had an inkling that one day, she, her husband and her son, Sebastian, 19, would live there. 'I've been going to the local Lots Road auctions ever since I can remember, and I would often park outside this property and I loved its distinctive appearance,' says Alison. 'It was

my dream home, and when I noticed it was for sale, I just had to have a look.'

The house had clearly been smartened up in order to make it more saleable, with plasterboard and a coat of paint camouflaging a multitude of sins – from dry rot to rising damp. But having already renovated several properties, interior designer Alison was not averse to a challenge. 'I like tackling buildings that require a lot of attention. That way,

I can bring them back to life and also put my own stamp on them,' she explains.

Inside, the layout was typical of a modest Victorian terrace, but Alison wanted to make the rooms feel more expansive with added light. On the entrance level, part of the hall wall was removed to widen the sitting room, which was knocked through into a reception area, creating one large space. At the back of the house, a bathroom was transformed into



VICTORIAN TOWNHOUSE | 25BH

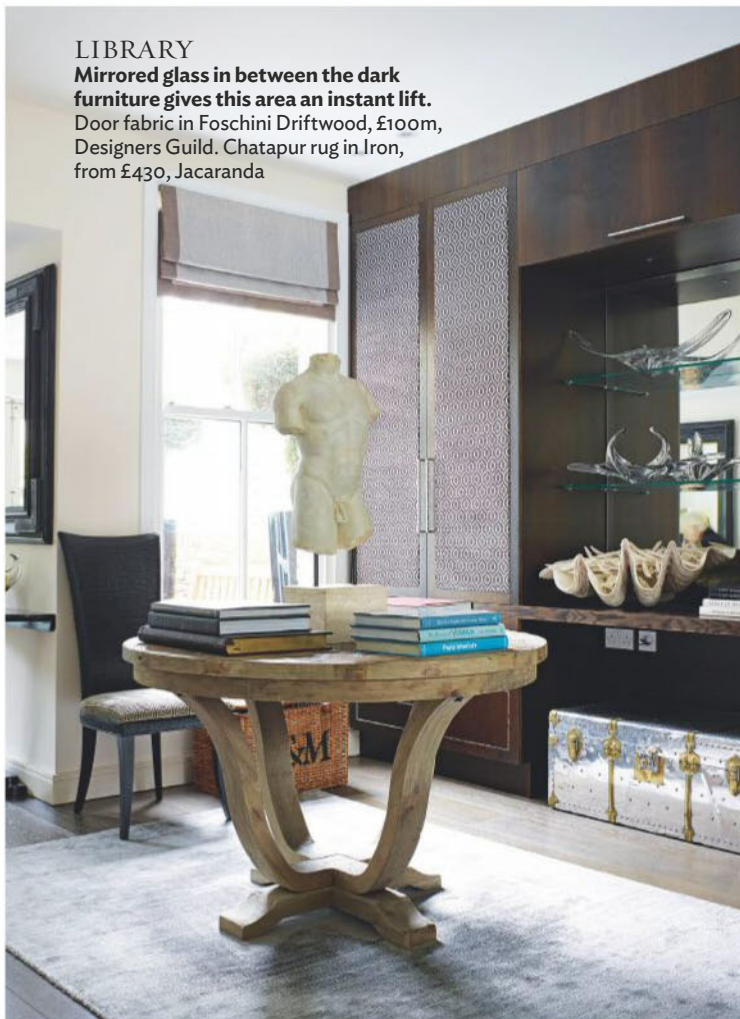


KITCHEN-DINER

'Painted cabinets give a welcoming and comforting feel,' says Alison. Bespoke units and worktops, Verve Design. Cabinets painted in Stone III water-based eggshell, £55 for 2.5 litres, Paint Library. For pendant lights like this try Buttermilk old school lamps, £98 each, The French House

LIBRARY

Mirrored glass in between the dark furniture gives this area an instant lift. Door fabric in Foschini Driftwood, £100m, Designers Guild. Chatapur rug in Iron, from £430, Jacaranda



DINING AREA

A large glass table lends a sense of airiness. Le Corbusier style LC6 table, £459, Vita Interiors. Woven Flare chairs, £499 each, Ecco Trading. Luccombe outdoor rattan furniture, from £345, Oka



a study, and the stairs leading to the basement and first floor were reconfigured.

The basement was the biggest project that the family took on. They extended this space into the garden to create a large kitchen-diner and guest suite, which also serves as a TV room. 'The exterior was originally level with the ground floor,' explains Alison. 'But we had it dug out so that the new kitchen now leads out to the garden. It was hard work as 10 skips of earth had to be removed to achieve this, but it makes a huge difference with the amount of sunlight that now comes through.' Upstairs, Alison created an elegant master suite by turning a space on the landing into a dressing area, while on the second floor, a bedroom with a roof terrace and en suite for Sebastian was built.

Having refurbished numerous properties before, Alison has developed a signature style that she always returns to. 'I'm drawn to neutral tones, such as grey, taupe, cream and black,' she explains. 'If I do end up using any bright colours, it's only ever in the form

of an accent hue, such as a cushion or a piece of artwork. I also like to introduce wood and fabrics – I find that textures help bring an interior to life by giving it character.'

Another of Alison's favourite decorating principles is symmetry. 'It makes a room look incredibly elegant,' she explains. 'I designed the entire kitchen around the island as it gives the room a focal point.' The

DESIGN TIP *'When working with a neutral palette, introduce different textures with fabrics, such as sumptuous velvets, luxurious silks and rich furs'*

dining area features a bespoke banquette seat, which Alison designed to anchor the table within the space and provide easy access to the sunny courtyard.

The open-plan sitting room is divided into a family area and library, where fitted storage conceals books and Alison's filing system. 'I've introduced a lot of built-in storage as it's the best way to maximise space

in a room,' she says. 'Customising it with a geometric woven fabric on the doors, adds some pattern and creates interest.'

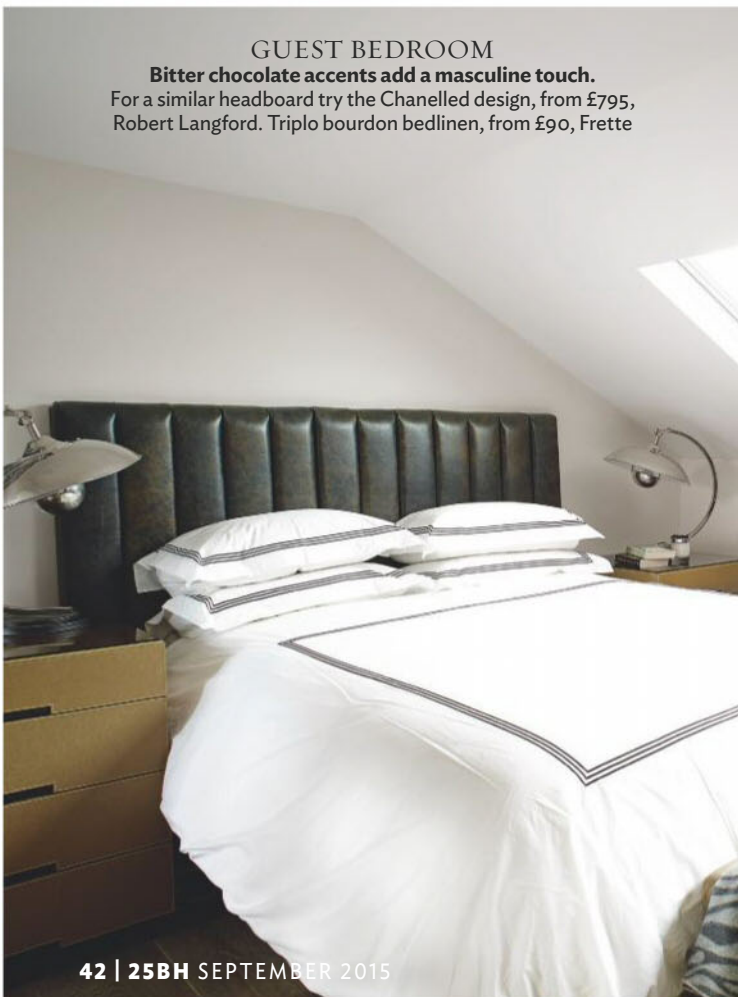
Upstairs, Alison's master suite exudes boutique hotel style, with its oversized headboard and chic monochromatic fabrics. The space isn't huge, but it is made to feel bigger owing to mirrors, which flank the bed and are incorporated into storage on the opposite wall. Mirrors also come into their own in the adjoining bathroom, where an Arabescato marble and mirrored alcove houses a classic slipper bath. 'I've never liked seeing baths standing alone – I prefer to feel cocooned,' says Alison.

Her fail-safe neutral tones ensure that a feeling of calm prevails throughout the interior, providing a much-needed haven to return to after a busy day. 'This house is perfectly situated for my work as we're right in the middle of a well-known design quarter,' says Alison. 'But when I close the door at the end of the day, I can leave all that hustle and bustle behind me.' 25

GUEST BEDROOM

Bitter chocolate accents add a masculine touch.

For a similar headboard try the Channeled design, from £795, Robert Langford. Triplo bourdon bedlinen, from £90, Frette



STUDY

Although work is nearby, Alison has created a place where she can run her interior design company, Camhall Design & Consultancy, from home.

Vitra Eames aluminium chairs, £2,970 each, Nest



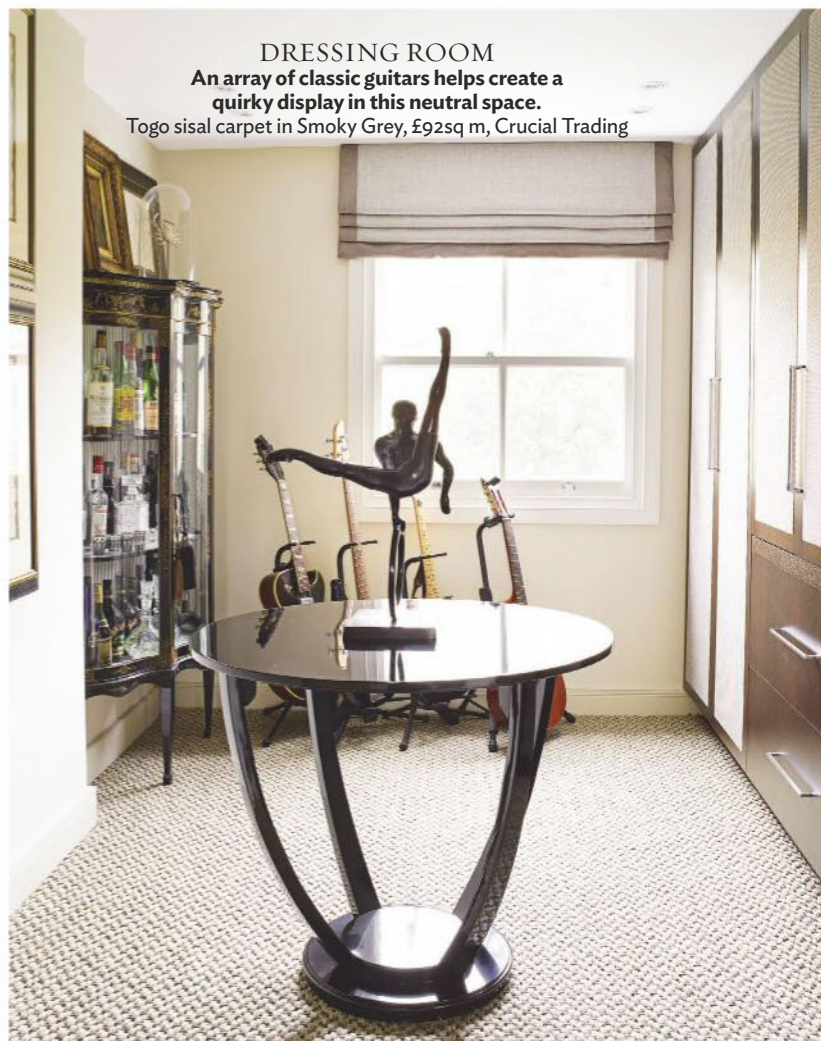


MASTER BEDROOM
 Textured fabrics in a range of patterns combine to give a sense of grandeur.
 Headboard upholstered in Cosimo in Pewter, £66m, Clarke & Clarke. Venetian Orchid mirror, £217, The French Bedroom Company, is a close match



BATHROOM
 The Art Deco style in here was inspired by a design Alison came up with for The Plaza Hotel in New York.
 Heritage Madeira cast-iron bath, £4,455, Bathroom Supplies Online

FOR STOCKIST DETAILS GO TO PAGE 140



DRESSING ROOM
 An array of classic guitars helps create a quirky display in this neutral space.
 Togo sisal carpet in Smoky Grey, £92sq m, Crucial Trading



REPLANNED



HOME TRUTHS

THE PROPERTY

Semi-detached villa, built in 1862

LOCATION

Southwest London

ROOMS Sitting room/
kitchen-diner/study, family room,
cloakroom, three bedrooms
(one en suite), bathroom

PURCHASED 2012

PREVIOUS PROPERTY

'We lived in a semi-detached
Edwardian house in Ealing before
we moved here,' says Claire.

NEAT petite

*Perfectly planned and supremely
sophisticated, Claire and Ron
Davis's home is a masterclass
in downsizing with style*

FEATURE RACHEL LEEDHAM | PHOTOGRAPHY RACHAEL SMITH



KITCHEN-DINER
Subtle touches help fuse the kitchen together with the rest of the open-plan zones. Schüller C3 units, price on application, Northpoint. Fusion tap, £870, Quooker. Pluto wall clock, £120, Newgate



DINING AREA
Metallic furnishings reflect the light around the room. Extending gloss table in Stone, £549, Dwell. Bifold doors and roof lantern, price on application, Express Bi-Folding Doors. Casa Couture hammered candle holder, £35, Tesco, is similar



Moving to a Victorian cottage in Richmond was always Claire and Ron Davis's retirement plan. 'We were living in a house in Ealing, but we wanted to downsize,'

says Claire. 'For us, Richmond was perfect. There's plenty of green areas but the shops and theatre are still right on our doorstep.'

However, downsizing is never easy, and when the couple found this semi-detached villa, they realised they would need to reconfigure the space to suit their lifestyle. 'The house was in good shape, so we could move in straight away,' says Claire,

'but we did spend two years figuring out the best way to adapt the original layout.'

Ron was an architect before becoming a project manager in the construction industry, so he was well equipped for the task. The couple decided to adapt the space from a side return to widen the dining area and add an extension at the back. He also moved the staircase forward to create a third bedroom on the first floor. 'The house only had two bedrooms, but we wanted an additional space for guests,' explains Claire.

While Ron finalised the plans, Claire designed the kitchen cabinets, layout and lighting. 'I used to be a fashion buyer

STUDY Wallpaper helps define this space.

Betsy desk, £395, Graham and Green. C Jere Raindrops mirror, £1,950, Jonathan Adler



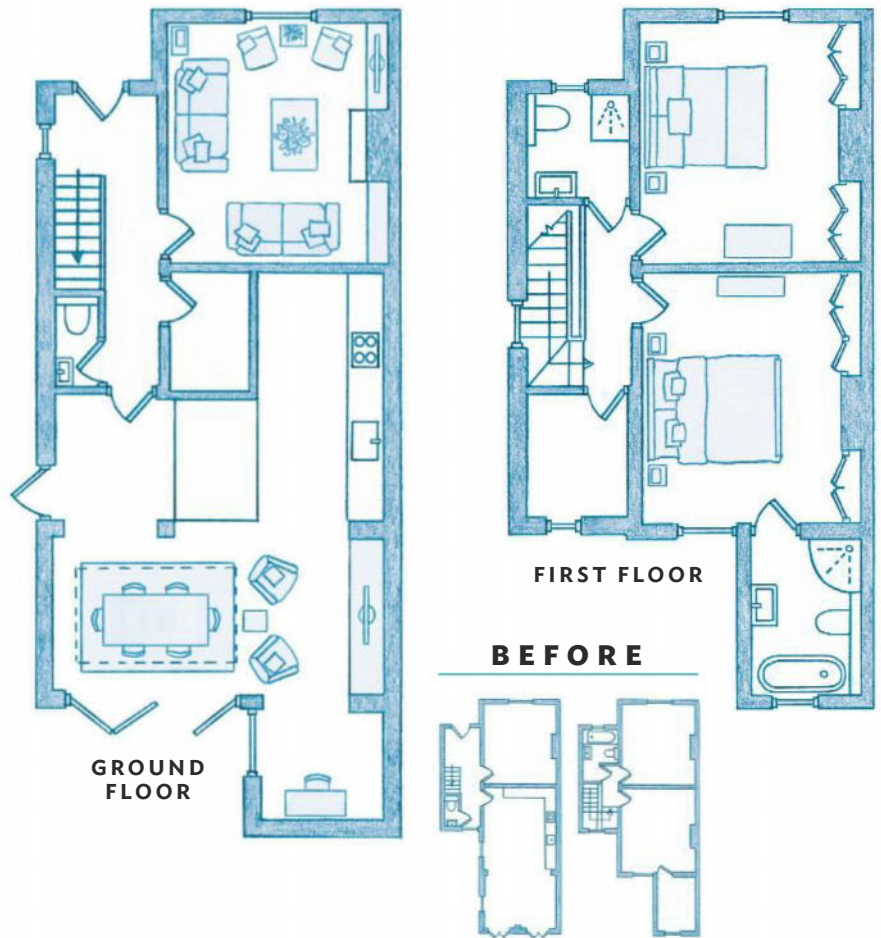
but I've always had an eye for interiors,' she says. 'I took time figuring out where our furniture would be best suited.' As well as organising the work, the couple lived in the house throughout and project managed the renovation. 'It was a challenge, but everything ran smoothly,' she adds.

Although alterations to the footprint of the building were small, the change is dramatic. The open-plan space is now awash with light thanks to roof lanterns and bifold doors, and there are four clear zones – the kitchen, dining area, sitting room and study. Claire has cleverly used wallpaper in the latter two to define them. The kitchen has been designed so it 'disappears' in the space, with appliances hidden away. 'I also chose not to use tiles and had a glass splashback painted to blend in with the units,' she says.

While the couple favour an uncluttered style, they also wanted to create a sense of warmth, and so wallpapers and fabrics in subtle hues feature throughout. Glamorous touches include eye-catching mirrors, metallic fabrics and statement lights. Simple cupboards and doors have been given an elegant finish with crystal door handles. 'Working in fashion definitely taught me to understand the importance of detail,' reflects Claire.

The house now has a sense of space and elegance that belies its modest size. 'I think a house feels bigger if you have a consistent theme running through it,' says Claire. 'We don't miss the extra space we used to have, as we've tailored this home to suit all our needs.' 25

AFTER



FAMILY ROOM

Deep-pile carpet adds a luxurious touch.

Sligo sofa, £1,220 for a two-seater; Emma chair, £490, both Sofa.com, are comparable. Wallpaper in Flint, £49 per roll, Harlequin. Silken Grace carpet by Lano from £32sq m, Flooring Megastore



GUEST BEDROOM

'I like using large, striking pieces,' says Claire.

Valentin headboard in Baltic Roosevelt velvet, £625, Sofa.com, is a match. Maskros pendant, £50, Ikea



EN-SUITE BATHROOM

Wall-hung pieces of furniture help small spaces seem larger.

Viado Bath, £1,194, BC Designs. Lemon Marble polished brick mosaic tiles, £88.78sq m, Topps Tiles

MASTER BEDROOM

'This is one of the darkest spaces and the mirrored wardrobes help increase the light,' says Claire.

Bespoke wardrobes, RSP Cabinetmakers & Joiners. Chainmail mirror panel (right), £375, Wesley-Barrell. Oralia wallpaper, £48 per roll, Harlequin



LABOUR OF LOVE

Shirley and Brian Bonnar spent three years sympathetically reviving a run-down farmhouse with salvaged finds

FEATURE JUDE ROBINSON-LYTTLE
PHOTOGRAPHY RORY CORRIGAN

INSPIRING



HOME TRUTHS

THE PROPERTY Two-storey farmhouse, built in 1862

LOCATION Portballintrae, Northern Ireland

ROOMS Hall, sitting room, kitchen-diner, snug, utility room, five bedrooms (one en suite), bathroom

PURCHASED 2010

PREVIOUS PROPERTY 'We've moved numerous times within this area, but we built our last home ourselves,' says Shirley.

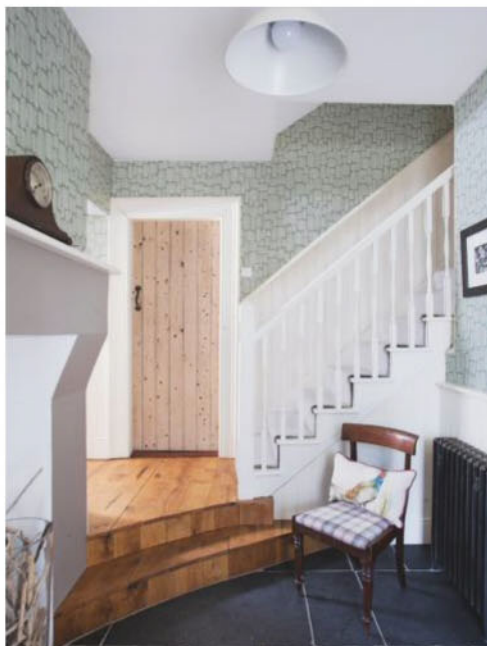


KITCHEN

As the old floorboards were in quite bad condition, they were replaced with salvaged French barn oak. Kitchen units and island, £4,000; reclaimed French barn oak flooring, £30sq m, both Wilsons Yard. Walls painted in Skimming Stone estate emulsion, £38 for 2.5 litres, Farrow & Ball. Liquid glass glacier wall tiles, £184.80sq m, Fired Earth, are comparable

HALL The original architectural features have been enhanced through quirky decor.

Miss Print Little Trees in English Grey wallpaper, £59.95 per roll, Jude Burrows Interior Design. Tongue-and-groove panelling painted in Old White; fireplace painted in Mole's Breath, both estate emulsion, £38 per 2.5 litres, Farrow & Ball



SITTING ROOM

'There was a concrete floor in here, but for warmth and texture I decided to have a light-coloured carpet laid,' explains Shirley. Emily sofa in Granite soft wool, £1,610, Sofa.com, is a close match. Stove, £800, Lamont Fireplaces. Fuji Slate carpet, £45sq m, Crucial Trading, is similar



DINING AREA

Informal seating is great for casual entertaining. Finished off with quirky, vintage accessories, the look is laid-back and effortless. Asha wooden bench, £250, John Lewis, is a good alternative. Reclaimed timber farmhouse dining table by Home Barn has this look, £1,125, Notonthehighstreet.com. Star throw, from £139, Lexington

UTILITY ROOM

This practical space keeps clutter away from other areas.

Metod cabinets, from £57; shelves, £10 each; sink, £140, all Ikea. Victorian-style pulley clothes airer, £55, The Holding Company, is near-identical. Walls painted in Skimming Stone estate emulsion, £38 for 2.5 litres, Farrow & Ball



BATHROOM

Whitewashed flooring creates a beach house look.

Victoria Plumb is a good place to source roll-top baths, from £249. Tongue-and-groove panelling painted in Dove Tail estate emulsion, £38 for 2.5 litres, Farrow & Ball. Pembroke cast-iron fireplace, £465, Cast Fireplaces, suits this style



GUEST BEDROOM

This scheme has been designed with a cool Hamptons feel in mind.

Roman blind in Hartford Teal, £20m, New England collection at Clarke & Clarke. Walls painted in Skimming Stone, £38 for 2.5 litres, Farrow & Ball. Throw, £70, Laura Ashley. Vintage poster, £15, Travel Posters Online



MASTER BEDROOM

'The internals of the gable walls have been finished in a specialist limewash to allow the stone walls to breathe,' explains Shirley.

Gatsby chair is comparable, £595, Alexander & Pearl. Pheasant cushion, £45, Voyage Maison. Walls painted in Castle Gray limewash, £44.50 for 5 litres, Farrow & Ball. Throw, £50, Laura Ashley

SNUG

'With its cosy woodburner and idyllic sea views, this is my favourite room,' says Shirley.

Stove, £600, Lamont Fireplaces. Blakes purple ottoman, £119, Made, is similar. Walls painted in Cornforth White estate emulsion, £38 for 2.5 litres, Farrow & Ball. Miss Print Denver Palomino wallpaper, £59.95 per roll, Jude Burrows Interior Design





PATIO
A sail canopy complements the coastal location. Shade sail, from £14.99; forest garden sleeper bench, £60, both Greenfingers.com, would work well here. Strawbridge House is available to rent through causewaycoastrentals.co.uk

DESIGN TIP
'Enlist the skills of a good quantity surveyor, especially if you're renovating an old home – this will help keep the project on budget'



Cycling along the coast one day in a seaside village in Northern Ireland, a 'For sale' sign almost made Shirley Bonnar and her husband Brian fall off their bikes. 'We'd always loved this house, but had never seen it on the market,' says Shirley. Unfortunately, the property was out of their budget but the estate agent promised to let them know of any changes. 'Shortly after, they called to say the price had been lowered, as it had been repossessed,' she explains.

After selling their holiday cottage in Donegal to partly finance the purchase, Shirley and Brian were able to retain their existing home, where they lived during the three-year renovation process. 'We built our house years ago and have moved many times before, but we'd never taken on a restoration project,' says Shirley. 'And, with the property being listed, it was essential that we met like with like.'

Having been boarded up for over four years, the dwelling was in a dire state. The ceilings had fallen in and a burst pipe had caused damp, so some of the flooring had to be restored. The roof needed felting, so the original Bangor Blue slates were removed and relaid, and the walls were replastered and finished with traditional lime mortar both inside and out to keep the fabric of the building breathable. All the windows

were replaced and the internal doors were restored. The couple also installed a back door and laid limestone flooring in the kitchen.

Once the building work was completed, Shirley was able to focus on the decor. 'Fortunately, my old friend Jude Burrows who has a passion for interiors was on hand to help,' she says. 'While everything was in disarray, Jude helped me visualise how it would look – and this was what kept me going.' Some vintage railway posters were the starting point for the scheme. 'I adore old travel posters as they have a nostalgic style,' she says. Jude drew inspiration from these, using chalky tones in fresh coastal blues and soft sandy shades to achieve a laid-back vibe. By gathering items from salvage yards and auctions and using reclaimed flooring where the original boards were past rescue, Shirley and Jude created a balanced scheme with just the right amount of contrast. 'I love colours by Farrow & Ball and have also become a fan of wallpaper and wood panelling – it adds warmth and texture,' explains Shirley. 'Thanks to Jude, I'm now more daring with pattern.'

Now that the farmhouse is finished, the couple are able to enjoy its new lease of life. 'Undertaking such an extensive project on a period property was hard, but it's been a great learning curve, and we've loved bringing it back to life,' says Shirley. 'It's our dream seaside escape.' 25

OPEN TO IDEAS

Clever use of cutting-edge materials has ensured Yolande and George Hesses' self-build will stand the test of time

FEATURE MAGGIE COLVIN | PHOTOGRAPHY ROBERT SANDERSON



PATIO AREA

Linked to the dining room by folding doors and surrounded by high walls, this smart outdoor space is a wind-proofed sun trap. Bramblecrest Sahara modular corner chair, £359, Gardenfurniture4u.co.uk. Millboard composite decking in golden oak colourway, £66sq m, Quality Timber Decking



NEW-BUILD



HOME TRUTHS

THE PROPERTY

Self-built detached cottage

LOCATION Surrey

ROOMS Hall, sitting room/
kitchen-diner, utility room,
cloakroom, two bedrooms
(one en suite), bathroom

BUILT IN 2014

PREVIOUS PROPERTY

'Before this place, we lived in
a three-bedroom house also
in Surrey,' says Yolande.

DINING AREA

'George and I really enjoy the view of our
sun deck while sitting in here,' says Yolande.

Sheldrake extending oak dining table, £995;
Chichester glazed-rack dresser, £1,850, both
Neptune. Camargue chairs, £189 each, Oka



SITTING ROOM

The ceiling was painted white to increase light in this cosy, wood-panelled space.

Sanderson Milton wool footstool fabric, £77m, The Curtain Agency



KITCHEN

Shaker-style units fit in with the property's pared-back style.

Bespoke cabinetry designed by Yolande and made by Farnham Furnishers. Eiger oak floorboards, £58.76sq m, V4 Woodflooring



SITTING ROOM

A New England vibe was developed using pale plain surfaces and timber planks.

For a Charnwood C4 woodburning stove try Firesandstoves.co.uk, from £695. Chinese wooden storage trunk, £275, Oka



HALL

Pastel hues create a fresh, summery feel.

Lamp, £290; silk pleated shade, £130, both Lighting Agency. The Lloyd Loom chair is painted in Gentle Sky intelligent matt emulsion, £21 for 1 litre, Little Greene

When Yolande and George Hesse decided to downsize from their three-bedroom home in Surrey, they had their heart set on a vibrant village nearby, where they could enjoy a blend of town and country living. 'It has an art school, a theatre, hospital, plenty of gastropubs and restaurants, and a farmers' market once a month,' says Yolande. 'Plus, you can get around on a bike.'

The couple were already well acquainted with the area as their architectural practice is located there. But when it came to finding a property, they didn't expect the perfect proposition to be right under their noses. 'Behind our office was a converted Nissen hut that was getting past its sell by date,' explains George. 'We bought it without planning permission and spent the next four years trying to obtain approval to knock it down and rebuild, because it sits next to a Grade I listed Georgian house. As you can imagine, we were extremely delighted when we finally got the go-ahead.'

Work began in earnest, and the existing structure was replaced with a pretty two-bedroom weatherboard cottage. In contrast to its traditional appearance, the house is actually state-of-the-art, with the fabric of the property made entirely from SIPs (Structurally Insulated Panels) – a composite material consisting of foam sandwiched between two structural facings. 'We're so well insulated that our heating bills are very low,' says Yolande. As well as being energy efficient, it was important that their new home would also be long-lasting and easy to maintain. So the Georgian-style sash

DESIGN TIP *'In a small space, try restricting pattern to maintain a calm and uncluttered feel'*

windows are constructed from Accoya wood, which has a longer life span than standard timber, and the gutters are made of powder-coated aluminium. Also, there's no worrying about the weatherboard rotting or warping as the fibre-cement planks used are durable, weather-, pest- and fire-resistant.

Yolande and George squeezed pockets of garden to the side, front and rear of the modest-sized plot, too. Most of the outdoor area is enclosed and features Millboard decking – a composite alternative to real wood that's hard-wearing, mould resistant and eco-friendly. It extends into the living area, for a seamless flow.

Inside meanwhile, architectural elements including vaulted ceilings, roof lights, beams and tongue-and-groove panelling, plus a traditional woodburning stove lend character and charm. All the timber is painted either pale grey or left unpainted to add texture and highlight the beautiful natural woodgrain.

To create visual definition between the different areas within the open-plan ground-floor level, Yolande chose contrasting floor finishes – carpet for the sitting room and wooden boards for the kitchen-diner. Colourful artwork, furniture and accessories soften the look further, creating a relaxed feel, and this laid-back theme continues throughout the property. 'I was inspired by the Cape Cod style, because it's so warm and romantic,' says Yolande.

'George and I both have such busy lives, so a sense of peace is extremely important to us,' she continues. 'The views from our windows are wonderfully rural, and after a hectic day in the office, this is the perfect place to come back to. We love it.' 25



MASTER BEDROOM
Splashes of red add colour and warmth. Antique pine four-drawer chest, £235, Coppice Old Pine, has this look. Try the Regency red Moroccan leather jewellery box, £120, Sellingantiques.co.uk



MASTER EN SUITE
As a contrast to the adjoining bedroom, the planks run vertically instead of horizontally. See more of the couple's projects at backtofrontexteriordesign.com. Farrow & Ball's Cornforth White estate eggshell, £53 for 2.5 litres, is a comparable paint shade

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PAST MADE PERFECT

Finny Muers-Raby combined classic and contemporary to create a stylish look in her Elizabethan family home

FEATURE AND PHOTOGRAPHY JO SHELDRAKE

INSPIRING



HOME TRUTHS

THE PROPERTY

Elizabethan manor

LOCATION West Somerset

ROOMS Hall, sitting room, dining room, breakfast room, kitchen, snug, boot room, laundry room, five bedrooms, three bathrooms

PURCHASED 2006

PREVIOUS PROPERTY

'We used to live in a farmhouse on the edge of Exmoor,' says Finny.



KITCHEN
Sunny yellow walls form the perfect backdrop for Finny's paintings and accessories. Similar large glass orchid centrepiece, £129, Bloom



DINING ROOM
An eclectic mix of objects fills this quirky space. Walls painted in Quartz Grey flat matt, £36 for 2.5 litres, Heritage Range, Dulux. Mirrors, from £95 each, West Country Interior Design

FAVOURITE ROOM *'I love our kitchen. With three sons – who are always hungry – and their friends coming and going, it's usually a busy room and a great gathering point with everyone sitting around the kitchen table'*



Finny Muers-Raby and her husband Nigel, were originally drawn to their historic Somerset manor not only by its glorious red Quantock stone façade and rare rounded mullion windows, but also for its history. 'There is only one other house from this period in England with similar mullions,' says Finny. 'It was originally given to Sir Adam de Coveston by William the Conqueror in 1066, but partially destroyed by Cromwell's forces in the 1600s.' Restored 200 years later, it is now home to Finny and Nigel, their three sons Tom, Ollie and Jack, together with two Sealyham terriers, Maud and Moley, Guinness, the cocker spaniel and several

hens who provide the family and their bed and breakfast guests with fresh eggs.

When the family moved here in 2006, they were relieved not to have any structural work to face. Instead they just painted the walls throughout to freshen things up. With her keen eye and natural flair for interior design, Finny quickly set about putting her own mark on the place. 'I run my own interior design business, West Country Interior Design, and I love to create beautiful schemes that are also homely and intimate – rooms to be lived in rather than admired,' she says. 'I really enjoy combining classical and contemporary design and the period features here provide the perfect backdrop. I also

tried to use elegant fabrics and natural materials as much as possible,' she continues. 'I do think that everything, from lighting to the way pictures are arranged on the walls, should be carefully thought out.'

Her attention to detail, choice of colours, ornamentation and furnishings clearly demonstrate Finny's ability to create a stylish and practical family home, and to combine impromptu purchases to achieve an elegant look without spending a fortune. 'I'm always picking up bits and pieces from auction houses, antique markets and specialist interior suppliers,' she says. 'I will spot something and know it will work with other items I already have – the silk orchids in



MASTER BEDROOM
Finny has created a sense of symmetry in this classically designed room. Framed paintings from Imperial Flowers collection, £402 each, Trowbridge Gallery. Cushions, from £35 each, West Country Interior Design. Decorative birdcages, £28 each, Homesense



GUEST BEDROOM
The themes here were inspired by nature. For similar wooden seagulls, £12 each, The Contemporary Home



BATHROOM
Accessories add a pretty touch here. Tealight holders, £8 each, Zara Home, have the same look

the kitchen are perfectly fine as a decorative feature on their own, but placed in stone/resin planters and softened with a touch of green moss, suddenly add something more interesting and stylish to the room.'

The floral arrangement on the kitchen table is simply a collection of single-stem flowers in decorative glass. 'You don't have to go to expensive shops or spend a lot of money to achieve a great look,' says Finny. 'We bought our kitchen table from a hotel clearance sale and gave it a new lease of life by

painting it with a few coats of Hollyhock by Little Greene. I also like mixing different tones of grey, as these shades complement the strong features and stone structure of the manor. We painted the dining room walls in a pale grey colour and introduced other tones with the furniture and different objects of interest to create a stylish effect. I think it helps to look at a room in terms of layers to create interest and help build your own look.'

Inexpensive sisal rugs have been used to break up the floor space and finish off a room,

while groups of pictures and antique mirrors add interest to the walls. Finny's great love for design, choice of interesting furniture and attention to detail have helped her bring out the best of this stunning medieval property with its distinctive structure and ancient beauty. 'Although this is quite a grand house, we now have a family home where our friends and guests feel welcome and relaxed,' says Finny. 'It also demonstrates that whatever sort of canvas you start off with, you can always paint your own picture.' 25

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SITTING ROOM

Colourful artworks provide a pretty focal point.

The Judge painting by Lisa Ridgers, £1,800. Three-seater leather Chesterfield sofa in Rustic Chocolate, £2,190, Old Boot. Santana rustic oak coffee table, £315, Furniture Shop UK, is comparable



NEW-BUILD

HOME TRUTHS

THE PROPERTY

Contemporary detached

LOCATION Cumbria

ROOMS Hall, sitting room, kitchen-diner, study, snug, studio, shower room and gym, utility room, five bedrooms (three en suite), dressing room, bathroom

BUILT IN 2014

PREVIOUS PROPERTY

'Before here, we lived in a townhouse close by,' says Julie.

EASTERN EYE

A long spell in Southeast Asia was the inspiration behind the decor in Julie and David Cox's seaside home

FEATURE JANE CRITTENDEN | PHOTOGRAPHY JEREMY PHILLIPS



Julie and David Cox have a special bond with Southeast Asia having spent the best part of 20 years living there. So when they decided to build their own home in coastal Cumbria, naturally most of their Eastern belongings came with them. 'David's work as a chartered engineer gave us the opportunity to live in three major cities with access to

amazing shops, where we bought some beautiful pieces of furniture,' explains Julie. 'One of our favourites is our four-poster bed from Hong Kong. The simple, straight lines are typical of modern Asian living, and that look became the basis for our interiors.'

The Coxes began their transition back to the UK in 2005, and they lived in a couple of houses in Cumbria for a few years before deciding it was the ideal location for



HALL

Clean, straight lines create a modern backdrop. Tongue-and-groove panelling painted in French Gray estate eggshell, £53 for 2.5 litres, Farrow & Ball



FUTURE PLANS *'We're still looking to buy some more art. Although in the past, we've found that changing the frames of pictures we already have works well'*



KITCHEN

'We spent a long time trying to decide what colour to paint the units in here as we wanted it to complement our coastal surroundings,' says Julie. Silestone worktops in Anthracite, £2,800; oak worktop, £750; handmade cupboards, £9,750; all Thwaite Holme. Doors painted in Pigeon and White Tie estate eggshell, both £53 for 2.5 litres, Farrow & Ball

MASTER BEDROOM

'Our four-poster never looked right in our old house, so this time we designed the space around it and had the ceiling lifted,' says Julie.

Natural teak four-poster, £1,649, Raft. Curtains made in Corby Apple Green Check, £30m, Laura Ashley. Bespoke bookshelves, £6,000, Thwaite Holme

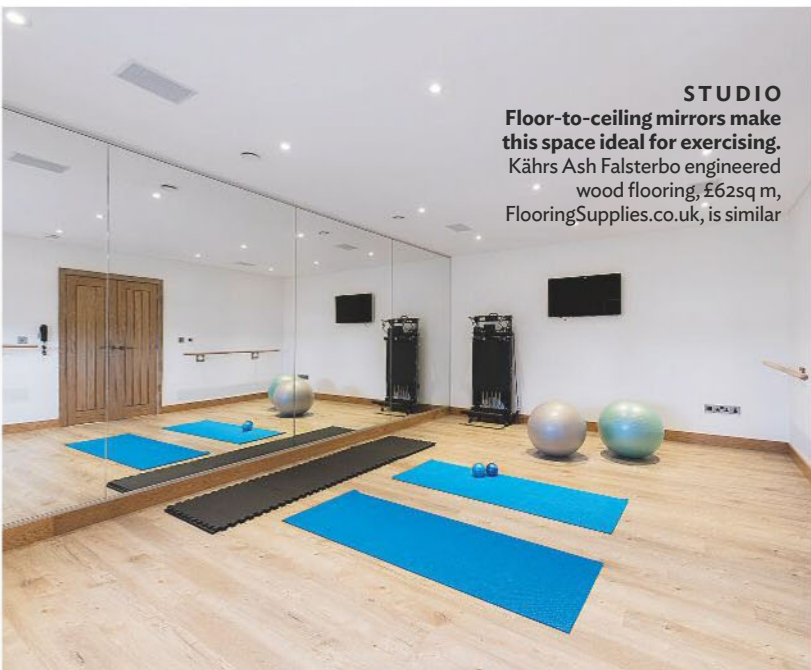


them and their children, Lucy and Drew, who had both recently finished their schooling. 'We all enjoy being by the sea and in the countryside, so it's perfect,' says David. In 2011, the couple bought a plot of land in a rural spot bordered by trees but still within walking distance of the village, and began building their dream home. Planning permission had already been approved for a five-bedroom house clad in

locally sourced red sandstone and render. 'The style is loosely based on a modern cottage, as we find it blends in very well with the natural surroundings,' explains David.

However it wasn't all plain sailing. As soon as the couple started getting into the design process, they came across some problems. 'We realised the layout wouldn't work for us and it wasn't going to be big enough,' says David. 'So we recruited period

property renovators Carrock Design & Build to rework the plans and build the house.' After a while it became clear that the sloping site, neighbouring trees and restricted ridge height would make extending the footprint impossible. Instead, Malcolm Iredale, architect and managing director of Carrock, suggested building a basement. 'It was a good solution as it's provided space for the biomass boiler and



STUDIO
Floor-to-ceiling mirrors make this space ideal for exercising. Kährs Ash Falsterbo engineered wood flooring, £62sq m, FlooringSupplies.co.uk, is similar



BATHROOM
‘We installed a shower bath to save on space in here,’ says Julie. Eco square shower bath, £550; Quartzite Blanco and Grigio wall tiles, £40sq m; basin, £255, all Aquajade Bathrooms

DESIGN TIP *‘It’s important to bring samples home so you can see how the colours work in different lights’*



EN-SUITE BATHROOM
Country-style decor combines with all the modcons to create a chic and practical space. Demisting mirror, £800, Aquajade Bathrooms. Blind in Provence Toile fabric in Charcoal, £42m, GP&J Baker



BEDROOM
‘The bed and the side tables were bought in Singapore,’ says Julie. Double sleigh bed in oak, £795, Riverwood Bedmakers, is a close match. Spring Green throw, £149, Welsh Blankets, is an alternative

fuel store, plus a cold store, gym and shower room,’ says David. ‘It’s also given us much easier access to the lower garden levels.’

When it came to the interior, Julie and David have referenced their Eastern living experiences, not just in their furniture but in the joinery and decoration, too. ‘We were adamant that we didn’t want spindly handrails and balustrades on the stairs nor vibrant colours on the walls,’ explains

Julie. Instead, nearly all the woodwork is plain oak and we’ve kept the walls a fresh white.’ The decision to opt for a neutral palette has been an ideal springboard to showcase their key pieces of teak Asian furniture, ornaments and artwork, as well as complementing the coastal location. Little touches of wood panelling have been introduced on the staircase and in the kitchen and bathroom, which ties in

with the vertical-panelled door frames, creating continuity throughout.

The Coxes moved into their home last year with a finish so precise that no snagging has been needed. ‘We’re delighted with how the rooms work together,’ says Julie. ‘Even when the children aren’t home, we use all of our living spaces every day, which wasn’t the case in our previous properties – it’s been amazing to build this place from scratch.’ 25

Insight

FINDING A PLOT

Looking for a site for a new-build like the Coxes'? Consider these top tips before you take the plunge

Finding the right plot of land where you can build your own home is a daunting task, but it's also a sound investment if you know what you're after. Buying land presents some unique challenges, including securing planning permission, hiring a solicitor and conducting any relevant searches. Once your purchase is complete, you'll need to think about appointing an architect, choosing a project manager and forming a team that can help to execute your vision.

Perfect plot

With land at a premium, especially in the southeast, it's often hard to spot an opportunity before it's snapped up. But there are a number of ways to successfully search for plots. Look for agents whose business is to deal solely in finding land, both with and without planning permission. Agencies like this will have more specialist knowledge compared with traditional estate agents.

Auctions are another cost-effective way of buying your own plot – search through local notices and newspaper advertisements in your preferred area for information of any upcoming events. Land auctions often work on a sold-as-seen basis, so ensure you visit the location beforehand, and that you are able to transact swiftly. Several websites offer a plot-search facility where private landowners advertise, and many of these include aerial pictures. Try searching on selfbuildportal.org.uk, plotfinder.net and uklandsearch.com. It's also worth scanning the local newspapers for any prospective sales. Alternatively, try placing an advert stating your interest in purchasing a plot nearby.

Finally, because estate agents occasionally sell building land, let any local agents know what you're looking for. They'll be able to put you in touch

with a network of developers and building specialists who can help.

Make your mark

Once you've found an area of land that appeals, you'll need to do your research. Bear in mind that building plots should be at least one tenth of an acre in size, which allows space for an average-sized dwelling with room left around the property. Contact a reputable surveyor and ask them to assess the site and consult a solicitor to check the paperwork and liaise with the local authority beforehand.

The most important question is whether your purchase includes planning permission. This might come in the form of outline planning permission, which is valid for five years and permits a new building to be constructed, although the type of property is still to be approved. Detailed planning permission, also known as full planning permission, means that approval has been gained for a specific proposed development, where building work must start within two years. Plots in conservation areas or near listed buildings are almost always sold with this kind of consent. If your land has no permissions attached, you must apply for them before constructing a home. Research the local area and its amenities to assess the value of the site and consult the Valuation Office Agency to examine recent land prices.

BEAR IN MIND...

Local councils sometimes have land for sale, so make enquiries in your preferred area. In sought-after areas where land is at a premium, think about a replacement build on an existing site whose property may be ripe for redevelopment. Many self-builders find that demolition is surprisingly cost-effective.



PROFESSIONAL ADVICE



'You can buy land with planning permission, but be aware that you'll pay the full market price for the value of the plot with planning. But, while land without planning permission is

more affordable, you'll have to take the risk of planning refusal. Alternatively you can buy a plot 'subject to' planning permission, but be prepared to risk the cost of getting planning, then potentially paying more for the land itself.

Make sure that the location is suitable.

Avoid flood plains, look out for tree protection orders and consult the local authority to uncover the site's history and any potential problems. Think about whether your plot is cost-effective.

Local planning departments offer advice by way of a pre-application enquiry for a small fee. However, this advice may be conservative as local authorities can be very cautious.

For more measured advice, consult an architect. Ask for some outline ideas, and an explanation of the opportunities and the constraints. Be clear about your brief – you will have to balance the priorities of cost, quality and speed. Consider spatial requirements alongside more qualitative aspirations and be clear about your budget.'

CHRIS MACKENZIE, DESIGNSCAPE ARCHITECTS

ADDRESS BOOK

■ **Royal Town Planning Institute**
020 7929 9494, rtpi.org.uk

The Planning Aid Advice line offers up to 15 minutes of free and objective planning advice.

■ **Valuation Office Agency**
03000 500 400, voa.gov.uk

Consult property market reports, including its section on residential building land.

■ **Vantage Land**
01727 701330, vantageland.co.uk
Land for sale from UK land agents.

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OFFER 3 Lavatera ‘Barnsley Baby’

A dwarf version of a cottage garden favourite. Compact and floriferous, it's perfect for patio containers or small gardens. The racemes of saucer-shaped, soft pink blooms attract plenty of bees and butterflies. Height x spread: 75 x 60cm. **Buy 1 x powerliner plug plant + 1 free for £9.98, or buy 2 + 2 free for £15.98**

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TCB44937	Buddleja ‘Buzz Velvet’ 2 x jumbo plug plants	£11.98		£
TCB44938	Buddleja ‘Buzz Velvet’ 4 x jumbo plug plants	£17.98		£
TCK10264	Star Jasmine 1 x 9cm potted plant	£13.99		£
TCK10265	Star Jasmine 2 x 9cm potted plants	£18.99		£
TCB62010	Lavatera ‘Barnsley Baby’ 1 plug plant + 1 free	£9.98		£
TCB62011	Lavatera ‘Barnsley Baby’ 2 plug plants + 2 free	£15.98		£
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SITTING ROOM

A grey colour palette makes the perfect backdrop for a collection of holiday snaps.

Otto sofa, from £1,080, Sofa.com. Design

Vintage sells similar grey rugs, from £95



GOOD AS NEW

While renovating her Edwardian home, Liz Daborn discovered a passion for upcycling flea market finds and vintage homeware

FEATURE MAXINE BRADY | PHOTOGRAPHY BRIDGET PEIRSON



INSPIRING



HOME TRUTHS

THE PROPERTY

Semi-detached Edwardian house

LOCATION Surrey

ROOMS Sitting room, kitchen-diner, utility room, study, cloakroom, three bedrooms, bathroom

PURCHASED 2007

PREVIOUS PROPERTY

'We lived in Kingston in a three-bedroom semi-detached Victorian house,' says Liz.





When looking for a larger family home, Liz and Mark Daborn were sent the details of a house, but disregarded it. 'It was completely out of our price range,' explains Liz. 'But we took a look at the insistence of our estate agent.' Once inside, the couple fell in love with the large spacious rooms and the tall ceilings. 'We were determined to have this house, so we bargained hard and, luckily, we got it.'

In dire need of renovation, the property had been poorly modernised. There were chocolate brown carpets throughout which made the house feel dark, and the tiny yellow kitchen had hardly any windows. 'We thought we could save up and do things gradually as we went along,' explains Liz. 'We had no spare money but we do love a project, so that didn't put us off.'

The couple wanted to start off by revamping the kitchen, but first they were forced to deal with an unexpected leak. Damp patches had been appearing in the bedrooms, then, after a heavy storm, the ceiling fell in. 'We couldn't ignore the problem any longer so our tiny budget had to go towards paying for the roof,' says Liz. It was another two years before the couple were able to start work on the kitchen.

In 2009, the family finally called in the builders to extend the kitchen out into the garden. Two skylights and two more windows were added, as well as a set of French windows to let in more

1 & 3 KITCHEN-DINER

Liz picked up the table and chairs for a bargain. She has transformed the chairs and the pew with a few coats of paint.

Pew painted in Charleston Grey estate eggshell, £53 for 2.5 litres, Farrow & Ball. Chairs painted in Lamp Black intelligent eggshell, £53 for 2.5 litres, Little Greene

2 BETH'S BEDROOM

A desk with a built-in storage shelf makes an ideal spot for doing homework.

For a similar desk, take a look at Micke workstation, £90, Ikea. Boards Direct sells long wall chalk boards, from £66

4 HALL

After removing the laminate floor and dark brown carpet Liz and Mark salvaged the original flooring underneath.

Geometric rug, from £30, Design Vintage

5 STUDY

Now used as a home office, this sunny room always contains one of Liz's latest furniture finds.

Chest of drawers, from £595, Owl and the Elephant

6 BETH'S BEDROOM

Liz's daughter has inherited her mother's style. 'It was her idea to make the bed out of wooden pallets,' says Liz.

Walls in Feather Flock matt emulsion, £24.49 for 2.5 litres, Dulux

7 & 8 MASTER BEDROOM

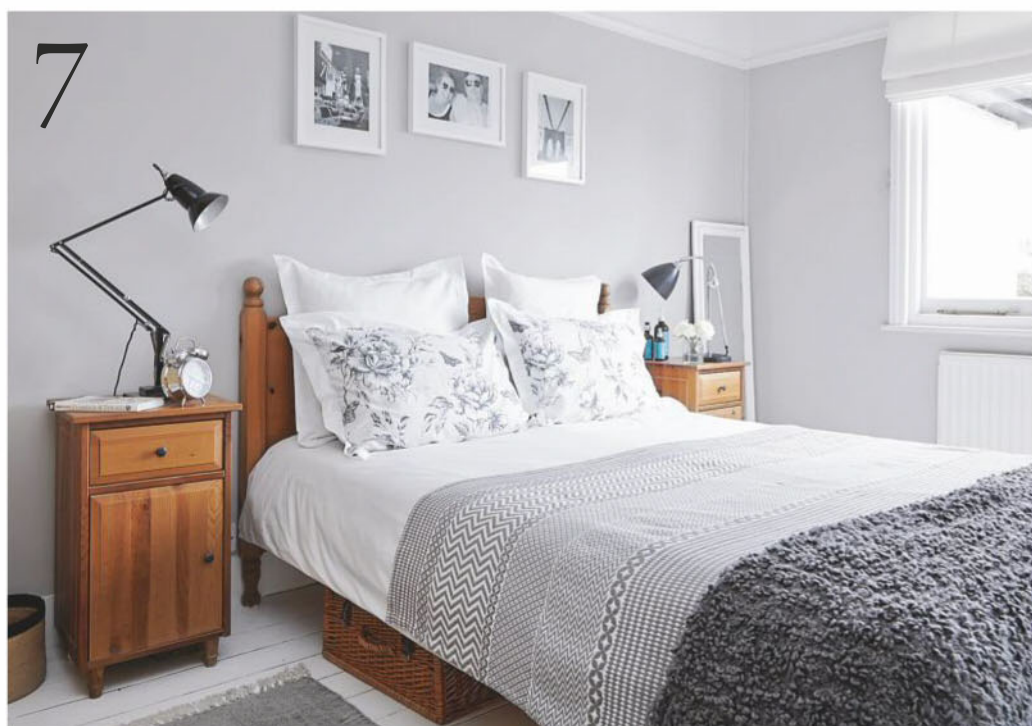
A combination of vintage furniture and Ikea pieces gives this room a relaxed style.

Lamps, £175 each, Anglepoise

9 BATHROOM

This classic look comes from the Victorian-inspired sink and deep bath.

Subway oval bath, £595, Villeroy & Boch



light. Mark, a design engineer, did a lot of the work, while Liz found retro fixtures for the shelving and painted vintage furniture to finish off the room.

Next on the couple's list was the overcrowded bathroom. They took out the shower unit and over-sized bath, and replaced them with a slimline tub with an overhead shower. Together they also tackled the other rooms, ripping up the brown carpet and laminate flooring to reveal wooden floorboards. 'We replaced parts that were missing with reclaimed boards and then sanded them back ourselves to reveal the grain, or painted them white to brighten them up,' says Liz.

When it came to decorating the walls, Liz settled on a palette of soft greys. 'I didn't want to have anything too dark and grey suited the period of the house,' she explains. Inspired by this idea, she started to paint vintage furniture picked up in flea markets and antique fairs in similar shades.

'I loved doing it so much that I started to sell pieces locally,' says Liz. 'Then last winter, I took the plunge and opened an online shop. My 14-year-old daughter Beth came up with the name Owl and The Elephant.' Now, a spare room has been converted into a studio space. 'My furniture is scattered around the house. As one piece goes out, another one comes in, so the house is always changing its look. Fortunately, my husband doesn't mind the constant to-ing and fro-ing of furniture.' 25

AFTER THE FLOOD

FEATURE ANN BROAD | PHOTOGRAPHY COLIN POOLE



Faced with devastating damage to their stone cottage, Chris Burton and Phil Reedman were forced to replan the interior from scratch

REPLANNED



HOME TRUTHS

THE PROPERTY

Stone-built Cotswold cottage, dating from 1850

LOCATION

West Oxfordshire

ROOMS Hall, sitting room, dining room, kitchen, garden room, cloakroom, four bedrooms, two bathrooms, shower room

PURCHASED 1999

PREVIOUS PROPERTY

'I lived in a larger property in a nearby village before,' says Chris.

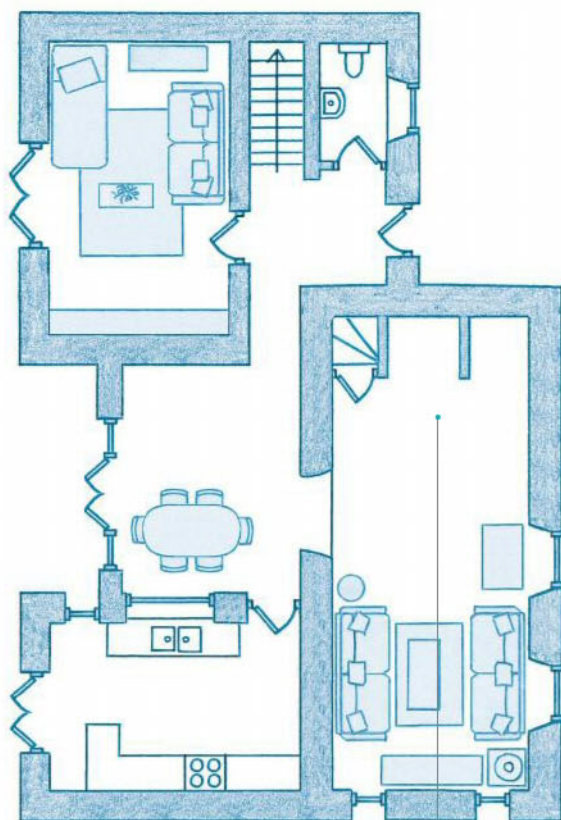
SITTING ROOM

This white, chic scheme is an elegant mix of modern and vintage furniture.

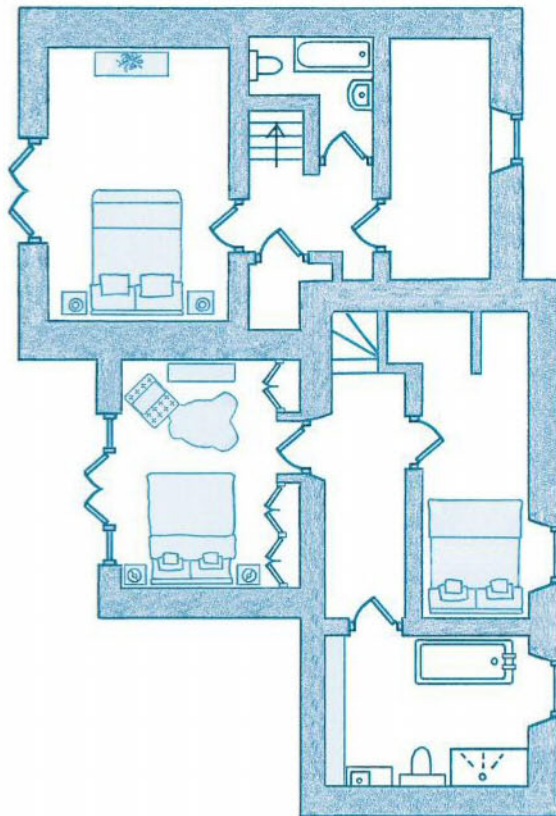
Lewis two-seater sofa, from £1,700, the Hartford collection, Westcote Design. Aspen white gloss long cabinet, £450, Habitat, has the same look. Large Kensington rug, £225, The Rug Seller, would suit this scheme



AFTER

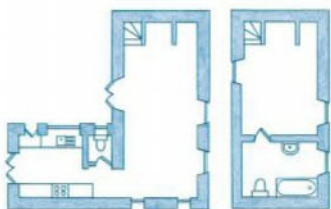


GROUND FLOOR



FIRST FLOOR

BEFORE



REPLANNED

'When I first bought the cottage in 1999, it was really only big enough for one person to live in,' explains Chris. 'It had one bedroom, bathroom, sitting room,

kitchen and cloakroom. Now the ground floor has been extended, which allowed us to redesign the kitchen, while also adding a garden room and new cloakroom.' In 2014, the

couple embarked on a second extension, which gave them a dining room and means they now have four bedrooms – plenty of room for when their friends come to stay.

When Chris Burton first saw her cottage in West Oxfordshire, it was considerably smaller than it is today. 'The house was in such a lovely location and, although not very big, it was perfectly formed,' says Chris. 'At the time I was single and I felt it had everything I was looking for, with one bedroom, a sitting room, kitchen and bathroom.'

Chris trained as a geologist and it was her love of stone that lured her to the beautiful Oxfordshire countryside. 'The honey-toned houses of the Cotswolds are so appealing,' she says. 'Once you've discovered them, dry stone walls are hard to resist.'

Fast forward six years, by which time Chris had met and married Phil Reedman, and so their home

gradually evolved around their busy lifestyle, which includes their wine and retail consultancy. Chris also runs a self-catering, holiday-cottage business in the Cotswolds. 'The cottage began to feel cramped for two of us,' says Chris. 'So in 2007 we decided to extend, adding two bedrooms, a bathroom and sitting room.'

Unfortunately, just 24 hours after the building inspector had passed the work and complimented the couple on the impressive finish, the cottage was two feet deep in water as a result of the severe floods that struck Oxfordshire and surrounding counties in July of that year. 'It took us six months to repair most of the damage, but we tried hard to take some advantages from the flood,' says Chris. 'The original sitting room floor was stone and had been laid directly onto the bare

DINING ROOM

Chris searched for some time to find the oak beams for the opening to the kitchen. 'I didn't want it to look like a 1970s serving hatch,' she says. Similar Dropleaf table, £399, Dwell. Vilmar dining chairs, £30 each, Ikea





LAST WORD 'We are in a beautifully unspoilt village that has a real heart and very active community – we consider ourselves extremely fortunate to live here'



HALL
Thick walls and winding stone steps contrast with the modern white decor. Noce tumbled travertine tiles, £30m sq, Floors of Stone. Blekviva curtains, £35 per pair, Ikea, have the same look



KITCHEN

Chris has chosen a sleek contemporary design with stainless steel and gloss finishes. Metod cabinets, from £74 for a base unit, Ikea, are a close match. Stainless steel splashback, 50cm sq, from £15.60, The Metal Store



GARDEN ROOM

A bespoke fitted shelving unit designed by Chris provides ample storage.

Square white coffee table, £249, Dwell. Shetland
Leno throw, £65, Cotswold Woollen Weavers



earth. Quite often weeds would poke through the cracks, which we found rather endearing.' Regrettably the floodwater lifted some of the flagstones, and broke many of them, so Chris and Phil decided to replace them all, and re-lay them with insulation and underfloor heating. 'It was a memorable low point, but we were determined to move on,' recalls Chris.

Undaunted by the huge task of recreating the interior, Chris chose a neutral palette for a light, modern look throughout the cottage. Using her keen eye for design and attention to detail, she combined old and new with ease. 'White is a great way to merge period architecture with contemporary parts of a house,' she says. 'We like the juxtaposition of modern materials, such as stainless steel alongside glass and wood.'

Last winter marked the start of the second phase of improvements. 'Our first project eight years ago was carried out by a local builder and architect,' explains Chris. Delighted by their sympathetic approach to combining both traditional and contemporary elements, Chris and Phil enlisted their help once again, this time with the addition of Robin Perry and his team



MASTER BEDROOM

White walls softened by faux fur and stacks of cushions help lend a luxurious feel.

Similar luxury faux fur throw, £200, Feather & Black. Barcelona-style chair, £329, Milan Direct. Fillsta table lamp, £11, Ikea

LESSON LEARNT 'Don't underestimate the potential of your home. I never dreamt our house would evolve as it has'

to build the new extension. 'We wanted to create a large dining area next to the kitchen and so we decided to sacrifice a section of the courtyard to build a two-storey extension,' explains Chris. This also included a new double bedroom on the first floor. 'We then partitioned the original bedroom to create an extra double room and corridor leading to the bathroom.'

The couple were also keen to incorporate clever storage solutions in several of the rooms. 'I've always preferred a slightly pared-down look,' says Chris. 'But it's quite hard to be minimalist in a Cotswold cottage because storage is always an issue, but we made the most of the available space wherever we could, including building a cupboard under the stairs, and floor-to-ceiling fitted wardrobes in our bedroom.'

Despite the enormous upheaval of having to go through the building process twice over, Chris and Phil are delighted with the result, and can once again enjoy living in this beautiful part of the world. 'The cottage with its new extension suits us perfectly – it's spacious enough to have family and friends to stay, but still small enough to feel homely,' she reflects. 25

BATHROOM

Utilising all the available space was a priority in here.

I-line Pool bath, £1,695, Waters Baths. Ivory square-edged travertine tiles, from £25m sq, Floors of Stone



HIGH HOPE

Colin and Mairead Wendel knew they could transform a derelict home with a little bit of hard work

FEATURE & PHOTOGRAPHY
BARBARA EGAN/REPORTAGE

INSPIRING



HOME TRUTHS

THE PROPERTY

Victorian terrace

LOCATION Dublin

ROOMS Hall/sitting room/kitchen-diner, two bedrooms, bathroom

PURCHASED 2014

PREVIOUS PROPERTY

'We lived in an apartment in the Dublin suburbs before moving to this place,' says Mairead.

SITTING ROOM

Pops of colour brighten up this otherwise neutral space.

Izzy sofa in squirrel matt velvet, £1,600, Sofa.com, is a match. Yellow throw, £45; elephant cushion, £12, both Habitat. Gäser rug, £80, Ikea



COURTYARD

'Even though this area is small, it's great to have outside space,' says Colin. Läckö table and two chairs, £59, Ikea. Granite paving, from £26sq m, Millbrook Paving





KITCHEN
'The metro-tiled splashback is one of our favourite things,' says Mairead.
 Bespoke kitchen, Elphin Fitted Furniture. Atlantico circle table, £350, Lakeland Furniture, is a good alternative. Jak chair, £60; Callum chair, £50, both Habitat

Building contractor Colin Wendel has renovated many houses in Dublin, but from the start, this pretty terrace in the city centre was one he wanted to keep for himself. 'It was the location that appealed to me as the property is in a street of Victorian homes next to a 19th-century reservoir,' says Colin. 'It was derelict, so we got it for a reasonable price and I knew I could bring it up to scratch. The designer Wesley O'Brien had initially scouted the building as a potential renovation investment, but there was just something about it,' he explains.

Colin and his wife Mairead were ready for a bigger house and

they also loved the idea of living in the middle of the city. 'But to be honest, the first time I saw the place, I did think that Colin and Wesley were out of their depth,' says Mairead. 'It had been empty for 20 years and had been used as a squat. Plus it was tiny with just three poky rooms, a bathroom and a garden only large enough to store a few bins. But Colin and Wesley insisted it was worth the risk, so I agreed to go with it.'

Once on board, Mairead was keen to get involved. 'As the entire property had to be gutted, we knew we'd be starting with a blank canvas,' she says. Colin brought in his own builders, and also enlisted the help of his friend Damir Catic from Catic

FAVOURITE ROOM *'The open-plan ground floor is a beautiful area to be in. It feels really spacious and the layout works so well'*



HALL
'A painted finish on the stairs is both attractive and very hardwearing,' says Mairead.
 Stripes painted in Ronseal Diamond Hard Anthracite satin, £30 for 2.5 litres, B&Q

MASTER BEDROOM
Second-hand upcycled furniture adds a retro vibe. Feather & Black is a good place to source brass beds like this one, from £399. Alvine Kvist duvet cover is similar, £30; Gurli grey throw, £5; Ranarp pendant light, £30, all Ikea



BATHROOM
The abundance of strong, angular shapes provides a contemporary feel. Godmorgon/Odensvik washstand in gloss grey, £300; Dalskär mixer tap, £50; orange towels, from £2, all Ikea. Zamora grey tiles, £35.32sq m, Topps Tiles, suits this style

GUEST BEDROOM
Simple and fresh furnishings create a sleek space in here. Phoenix metal bed frame in white, £94, WorldStores, is an alternative. Sakura orange duvet cover, £25, Habitat

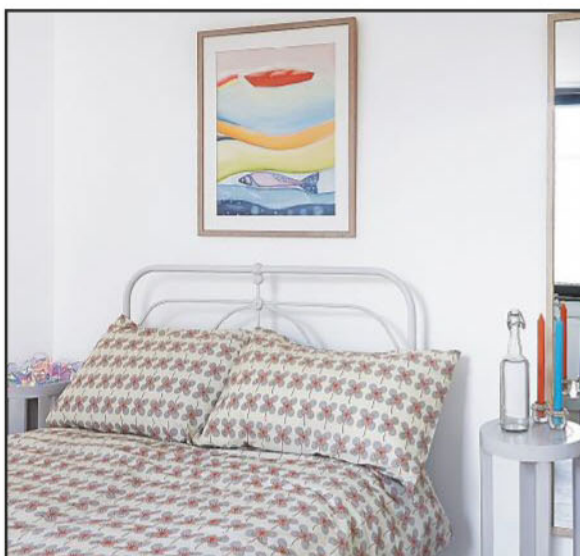
DESIGN TIP *'Draw an open-plan space together by using a backdrop of soft whites and grey hues with yellow accents throughout'*

Construction. It was only after the house was stripped down and the roof removed that they realised exactly what they could do. Damir was the one who pointed out that as there had been space under the suspended timber boards, there was enough room to fit in another level. 'At first, I wanted to extend the ground floor to include a second bedroom, but Wesley fiercely defended the exterior courtyard, and I'm glad he did,' says Colin. 'Building over the outside space would have been a mistake, and having a first-floor bedroom instead is much better.'

The next step was the decor. 'We didn't have much to spend on furnishings but Wesley solved this problem,' says Mairead. After scouring second-hand and free recycling websites, he ended

up with some beautiful furniture that was simply in need of some love. 'Colin wasn't convinced at first, but seeing them in situ has changed his mind,' she adds.

For Mairead, the eventual transformation was a revelation. 'Seeing our ideas turned into reality was amazing,' she says. 'I wouldn't have believed that such a run-down house could become such a beautiful home.' Now the property is finished, it looks completely different with its open-plan ground-floor space and new master bedroom. 'The first thing that strikes you is how bright it is,' says Mairead. 'It's a huge change and I love that it's so functional – everything in the house has a use, which is crucial in a small space. We're definitely city-living converts.' 25



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Shaker kitchen
in Roman Leaf,
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Update the hub of your home with a striking new scheme from Wren Kitchens

Give your kitchen the makeover it's been waiting for with Wren Kitchens' stunning collection. At the forefront of the UK kitchen market in choice, style and innovation, Wren Kitchens has collaborated with Linda Barker to offer a range of exclusive designs that are nothing short of divine. With innovative storage solutions, a choice of 40 sumptuous shades and three finishes, choosing a design is just the beginning. There are eight door styles to peruse, so whether you're looking for something sleek and

contemporary or traditional and charming, finding a harmonious design is easy, especially with free 3D planning available. All of Wren's kitchens arrive fully assembled, with finer details such as soft-close doors and drawers coming as standard. You can explore the entire range and see it for yourself in one of their nationwide showrooms, or visit wrenkitchens.com.

Q How many shades can you choose from in the Linda Barker collection available at Wren Kitchens?

A 10 shades B 20 shades C 40 shades

HOW TO ENTER

ONLINE Visit house.tohome.co.uk/competitions and fill in your details.

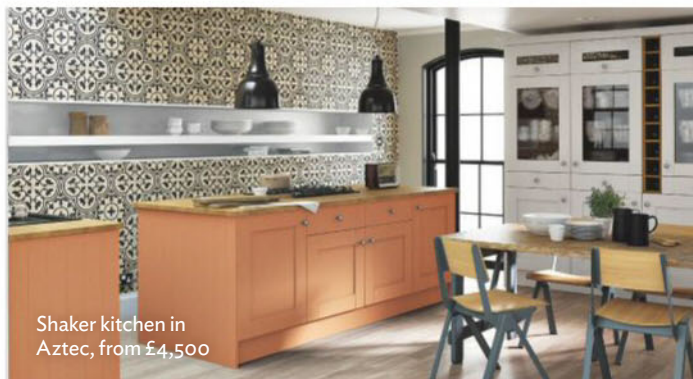
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full name, house number and postcode to 85088, eg 25BHCOMP [answer] Chloe Smith 16 NN32 6PX. Texts cost £1 per entry, plus network charges.

BY POST Write your name, answer, address, telephone number and email address on a postcard to MRM, 25 Beautiful Homes/Wren reader offer, PO Box 502, Leicester LE94 0AB to arrive no later than 19 September 2015.

TERMS AND CONDITIONS One winner will receive £5,000 worth of credit to spend at Wren Kitchens. If the value of their order totals more than £5,000, the difference will have to be paid for by the winner. Open to UK residents aged 18 and over. Competition closes at midnight on 16 September 2015. If you call or text after this time, then you will not be entered but you may be charged. Winners will be selected at random from all correct entries received. When you enter by text, you may in future get SMS marketing messages from Time Inc. (UK) and 25 Beautiful Homes. If you don't want to receive these, please end your text with NO INFO. SP: Spoke, 0333 202 3390.



Shaker kitchen in
Aztec, from £4,500



Handleless
kitchen in Satin
Rose, from £3,800

SITTING ROOM

An abstract painting by Philippe Croq is complemented by an eclectic selection of retro furniture.

Starrett sofa in rose house linen, £910, Sofa.com, is comparable.

Pipistrello lamp by Martinelli Luce, £974, Made in Design.

The Lövbacken side table is similar, £40, Ikea. Knitted tea cosy, £8, Madame LaBroc



ON THE WILD SIDE

Vintage vibes and contemporary touches exude Gallic charm in Stephanie and Romain Rottée-Lesné's Parisian cottage

FEATURE HELENA AMOURDEDIEU | PHOTOGRAPHY RACHAEL SMITH

UNIQUE



HOME TRUTHS

THE PROPERTY

Terraced workman's cottage,
built circa 1900

LOCATION Paris

ROOMS Hall, sitting room,
dining room, kitchen, studio,
two bedrooms, bathroom

MOVED IN 2010

PREVIOUS PROPERTY

'Before here, we lived close by
in Les Yvelines,' says Stephanie.

DINING ROOM

Choosing a mix of patterns
in similar colours has
created a quirky look.

Cole & Son Fornasetti II
Nuvolette wallpaper, £240
per roll, Houseology. Top hat
light, £206, Jake Phipps.
Edelweiss table, £259, Made,
would suit this look. Hans
J Wegner-style elbow chair,
£99, Cult Furniture, is a match.
Unglazed Victorian tiles,
£103.75sq m, Walls and Floors





1 KITCHEN

Every wall, cupboard and surface has been utilised in this small space.

FS Westminster floor tiles, £61.68sq m; Glossy White wall tiles, £5.78sq m, both Topps Tiles, have this look. Madame LaBroc is a good place to source vintage signs like this one

2 HALL

The offbeat decor in the entrance sets the scene for the rest of the house.

Dame Jeanne bottle, £45, Vintage Foggy at Etsy, is an alternative. For similar geometric-patterned cushions try Ferm Living, from £49 each. Faux sheepskin, £10, Ikea

Five years ago Parisian Stephanie Rottée-Lesn  and her husband Romain realised that they needed a home to suit their busy lifestyles. 'I spend my days transforming the weird and the wacky into contemporary homewares with a retro feel,' explains Stephanie. 'So we started looking for somewhere that could accommodate a studio office where I could work from home.' The couple and their daughter Satine, 10, instantly fell in love with the classic charm of a 1900s cottage in a suburb in Paris. 'The house benefits from the advantages of city living, as central Paris is a short train journey away, but it also has a village-like atmosphere that's ideal for family life,' says Stephanie. 'But on a practical note, the extension is perfect for running my interiors company Madame LaBroc.'

As the property is rented, Stephanie was unable to carry out any major structural work, but they have redecorated from top-to-bottom, leaving only the original tiles in the dining room and the wooden floorboards intact. Everything else was given a complete facelift, including the kitchen cabinets. Throughout, a romantic palette of soft pastels is given a slightly edgier feel with bold animal print accessories and Mid-Century furniture. Stephanie stays true to her unique and playful style, defined by a quirky mix

of prints and patterns and a no-holds-barred selection of contemporary design and off-the-wall vintage finds.

On the ground floor, the sitting room, which opens through to the dining area, has a whimsical yet traditional atmosphere, with authentic black-and-white tiled flooring contrasting with dramatic wallpaper. An eclectic array of antique and modern touches gives this space a sense of fun. At the back of the house is the small kitchen and Stephanie's all-important studio, which is filled with a range of objects ready to be revamped. Upstairs, Stephanie has moved away from the subtle colour scheme to an energetic backdrop of rich shades, which create a more mysterious and moody vibe. 'All of our furniture, accessories and the choice of colours are a case of *coup-de-c ur*,' she says of her style preferences. 'We never plan ahead and change things frequently. It all depends on how we feel and what inspires us at that particular moment in time.'

Working on instinct and drawing on inspiration from her passion, for interiors, Stephanie has waved her wand and created a little piece of magic for her family, hidden behind the fa ade of a traditional Parisian cottage. 'I love the fact that the interior is such a surprise,' she says. 'That element of the unexpected is a very French notion.' 25



3 MASTER BEDROOM

A dark wall colour teamed with ombre bedlinen gives a soft yet moody atmosphere.

Hague Blue estate emulsion, £38 for 2.5 litres, Farrow & Ball. Ocean Blue ombre bedding, from £59, Redbubble, has this look

4 BATHROOM

Accessories in energetic shades add warmth.

Regal Grey polished tiles, £40.08sq m, Topps Tiles, are similar. Reidar chair, £45, Ikea, looks like this

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NEW-BUILD



HOME TRUTHS

THE PROPERTY

Detached house

LOCATION Leicestershire**ROOMS** Sitting room, dining room, kitchen, family room/study, cinema room, cloakroom, four bedrooms, four bathrooms, basement with gym and pool**BUILT** 2008

PREVIOUS PROPERTY

'Before I built this place, I lived in the house next door,' says Barbara.

FRESH BEGINNING

Seeking a new challenge, Barbara Mansfield never considered that the dilapidated property next door would become the perfect project

FEATURE AMANDER MEADE | PHOTOGRAPHY RACHAEL SMITH

FAMILY ROOM-CUM-STUDY

This intimate area doubles up as an office where Barbara can catch up on emails.

Compton leather wing chair, £1,500, John Lewis. Sofa upholstered in Plain Dotty in Duck Egg, £46m; footstool in Stockholm Stripe in Duck Egg, £48m, both Vanessa Arbuthnott



KITCHEN

'This is my favourite room – it's such a light, sociable space,' says Barbara. Design, cabinetry and appliances, price on application, all Mark Wilkinson Furniture. Conical prismatic railway light, £75, Artifact Lighting, is similar. Bottichino marble floor tiles would suit this look, £73sq m, Topps Tiles



DINING AREA

A large bay window is the perfect place to enjoy a cosy breakfast.

Rochelle table, £439, Made, is near-identical. Cushions and blinds in Flora and Fauna Duck Egg Denim, £46m, Vanessa Arbuthnott

DESIGN ADVICE *'It's easy to get carried away when designing a house from scratch – walk through the house mentally at the planning stage to make sure it works for you'*



SITTING ROOM

The neutral backdrop offers a flattering contrast to darker pieces of furniture. Tetrad sofas, from £1,195, Harvest Moon Interiors. Home Farm Oak is a good place to source bespoke coffee tables like this one



A love of property renovation and an adventurous spirit was what inspired Barbara Mansfield when she was hunting for a new home in the Leicestershire countryside. 'I've lived in this area for years and love it,' she

says. 'After building my last home, I was after a new challenge, and amazingly the house next door, which had two acres of land, came up for auction.' Although the place was falling to pieces and Barbara was away for the auction, she didn't want to let the opportunity pass her by, so her builder bid in her place. 'I tried to be philosophical when he told me I hadn't won,' she says. 'But I was thrilled when the highest bidder was unable to proceed and the house was mine.'

Barbara's original brief to the architect was to revamp the existing property into a cottage-style dwelling that complemented its rural surroundings. But it soon became clear that the most efficient way to create her dream home was to demolish the house and start from scratch. Far from being daunted by the scale of the task, Barbara was full of ideas. 'I've always enjoyed renovations,' she says. 'There are definite financial advantages compared to carrying out a difficult restoration with extensive building work. As my budget went further than expected, I was able to splash out on a pool in the basement and invest in my favourite room – the kitchen.'

Working closely with the planning and building teams has also meant that Barbara has been able to put her own stamp on the design process from start to finish. And just 18 months after purchasing the plot, she moved into Bluebell Cottage – named for the carpet of flowers that appear each spring at the boundary of the grounds. Blue also happens to be Barbara's favourite hue and is used throughout the interior. 'While unpacking, I found some blue curtains that I hung in the sitting room. After this, the colour just seemed to work everywhere,' she says.

Self-building is always a challenge, but Barbara is thrilled with the results of her hard work and clear vision. 'The project has allowed me to create a home that suits my lifestyle and is perfect for me in terms of looks, layout and running costs,' she says. 'I like to think the house and I have started a new chapter together. It's turned out to be everything I'd hoped for – a place full of fun, friends and laughter.' 25

1 CLOAKROOM

Painting tongue-and-groove panelling in a bright shade gives it a contemporary update. Blind in Birds & Butterflies Indigo, £80m, Rapture & Wright. Panelling painted in Velvet Blue eggshell, £51 for 2.5 litres, Zoffany. Walls painted in New White estate emulsion, £38 for 2.5 litres, Farrow & Ball

2 EN SUITE

Period-style furnishings lend a classic touch to this uncluttered space. Bespoke cabinetry by Philip Dowse Interiors. Belgium Blue stone tumbled marble tiles, £47.99sq m, Stone Tile Market, would suit this style. Woodwork painted in Lupin matt emulsion, £17.99 for 2.5 litres, Crown Paint

DETACHED COTTAGE | 25BH

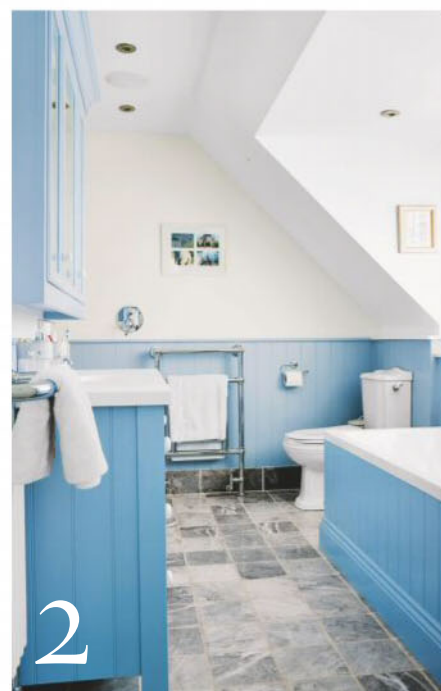


GUEST BEDROOM

Soft blues create a relaxing environment. Orleans bed, from £810, Revival Beds, is comparable. Madley chandelier, £100, Laura Ashley. Marine woven striped cushion, £16, Next, is an alternative



1



2



GUEST BEDROOM

Placing the bed under the eaves makes the most of this space.

Chair upholstered in Pretty Maids Duck Egg, £46m, Vanessa Arbuthnott



DINING AREA
 'The industrial-looking table was made by a carpenter from scaffolding planks,' says Simon Eames style chairs, £53 each, S. Alternative Furniture. The Kroby double pendant lamp has this look, £29, Ikea. Artwork by Cliona Doyle, from £200, Graphic Studio Dublin

DISTINCTIVE



HOME TRUTHS

THE PROPERTY

Converted Georgian stable and coach house

LOCATION Dublin

ROOMS Sitting area/kitchen-diner, five bedrooms, two bathrooms

PURCHASED 2012

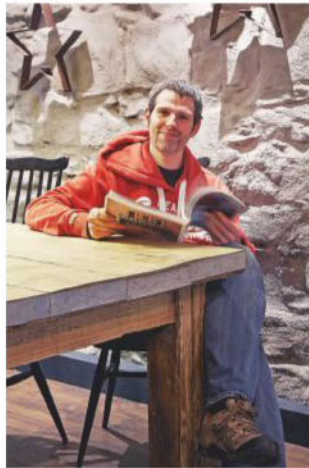
PREVIOUS PROPERTY

'We also own a redbrick Victorian house in the suburbs,' says Simon.

A STABLE ENVIRONMENT

Simon Carthy took up the reins to transform a former coach house into a cool and relaxed urban living space

FEATURE & PHOTOGRAPHY BARBARA EGAN/REPORTAGE



FAVOURITE ITEM *'I love the dining table. It's huge, impossible to damage and can be used for food prep, kids' projects, as an artist's work table, and just about anything else – it also easily seats 10 people'*



KITCHEN

This small, simple space draws inspiration from industrial cooking spaces, pubs and loft living. Cabinetry, price on request, The Panelling Centre. Novum tiles in white/black, £17.15sq m, National Tile. Set of three flying blue swallows, £9, Rua Dublin



SITTING ROOM

This cosy, casual seating area contrasts with the industrial feel of the kitchen-diner.

Lövbacken coffee table, £60, Ikea. The Carrick sofa in Chestnut soft textured linen is a match, £1,540, Sofa.com. Ginger rustic check cushions, £16 each; Orange textured weave cushions, £12 each; House Rules tapestry cushions, £12 each, all Next

A Georgian former stable for sale on a quiet Dublin street instantly caught the eye of serial renovator Simon Carthy while looking for a new home for himself, his wife Jo and daughter Freja, 4. 'Although the upstairs had been residential, the ground floor had been a workshop, gallery, then latterly a café,' he says. 'I loved the unusual urban mix of industrial and domestic space. I also liked the idea of city living, and because this is in the centre, it fitted the bill perfectly.'

The sole survivor in a narrow lane that had been completely redeveloped, the empty building was semi-derelict. The inside was in poor condition and the outside covered in graffiti. It was a daunting task to undertake a complete renovation, but it was Simon's third project and he was ready to tackle a major job. 'I love interior design and really looked forward to taking on a run-down property and applying TLC to make it really something special,' he says.

To start with, the building was stripped back to its bare bones. It was gutted, all extraneous material was removed and internal plaster taken back to the stonework underneath. 'I wanted to retain the building's character, and I enjoy open-plan living, so I decided to keep the downstairs former commercial/industrial space as an open space

with a sitting/dining area and a small working kitchen,' says Simon. 'We still use the ground floor as a gallery on occasion, so the kitchen is deliberately unobtrusive but has everything we need.'

Rather than going for a fully-fitted kitchen, Simon had it made to fit the space and installed freestanding and hidden storage, with a huge scaffolding-plank dining table doubling as a prep surface. 'I was going for a laid-back loft look, rather than something sleek,' he says. 'I wanted an industrial palette of dark and light greys with bleached timber, and to add in surprising touches of strong colour.' He also took a casual approach to furnishings. 'I like how pieces stand out against a dark background, and I love to collect quirky furniture and fittings.'

Since the ground floor area is where Simon, Jo and Freja spend most of their time, he opted to keep the bedrooms very simple, and while they are not huge and spacious, they are comfortable and cosy. 'One of my favourite places in the house is Freja's bedroom, tucked away up a tiny staircase in the attic,' says Simon. But it's just one of the things he is pleased about in this labour-of-love home. 'I really enjoyed working on this renovation,' he says. 'It's a complete one-off, a building with extraordinary character, and we really enjoy being here.' 25



MASTER BEDROOM

The plush headboard is a design touch that lends a luxurious feel to the compact sleeping quarters.

Billow headboard in Terracotta clever velvet, £545, Loaf. Årstid table lamps, £16 each; Alvine Strå bedlinen, from £25, both Ikea. Lambswool rich charcoal check Stirling throw, £45, Next



LANDING

Paneling was used to solve the problem of uneven walls.

Find similar antler chandeliers on Etsy, from £130



FREJA'S BEDROOM

This attic room is accessed by a small winding staircase from the master bedroom, and Freja loves this secret hideaway.

Trogen yellow storage bench, £60; Gåser rug, £80, both Ikea. Rugby stripe and check bedlinen would suit this scheme, from £30 for a 2-pack single duvet and pillowcase set, John Lewis



GUEST BEDROOM

This home can be rented through Simon Carthy Rentals, at Flipkey.com

Hounds single duvet set, £14; Hounds cushion, £8, both Harvey Norman. Hemnes bedside table, £40, Ikea



SHOWER ROOM

Character was added here by incorporating vintage-style floor tiles.

Green Park Retro Metro tiles are a match for the splashback, £74.98sq m; the Patisserie range of floor tiles is comparable, £74.70sq m, both Fired Earth



GUEST BEDROOM

Simon kept this compact space simple and light.

The Wilton double bed has this look, £175, John Lewis. Stag duvet cover set, £21, Harvey Norman. Raharp pendant lamp, £30, Ikea



HOMeward BOUND

Jacqueline Bolt's return to her childhood town was perfectly timed and richly rewarded

FEATURE JANE CRITTENDEN | PHOTOGRAPHY JAMES FRENCH

1 SITTING ROOM

Removing a set of stairs and adding a window created more space and light. Steptoe vintage leather two-seater sofa, £1,545, Alexander & Pearl, would work. Prestigious Autumn Leaves in Red Berry Roman blinds, £92, Blindsuk.net

2 SNUG

This is a great spot for Jacqueline to go online and check her emails. Prestigious First Class in Charcoal Roman blind, £38, Blindsuk.net

SITTING ROOM

An original wooden lintel is the standout feature of this cosy reading corner.

Woodwarm Fireview multi-fuel stove, £1,221, The Stove Shop. Stripy cushions, £10 each, Dunelm. Boat print photo art on canvas, from £52, Jacqueline Bolt



2

UNIQUE



HOME TRUTHS

THE PROPERTY

18th-century detached stone and cob cottage

LOCATION North Cornwall

ROOMS Hall, sitting room, kitchen-diner, snug, utility room, three bedrooms (one en suite), dressing room, two bathrooms

PURCHASED 2009

PREVIOUS PROPERTY

'Before moving here, I lived in a 300-year-old thatched cottage in Devon,' says Jacqueline.



KITCHEN - DINER

Jacqueline designed the country-style cabinetry herself and had craftsman Dan Bailey build it. Handmade freestanding units, £3,300, Black Barn Crafts; painted in Bone estate eggshell, £53 for 2.5 litres, Farrow & Ball. Stenstorp kitchen island, £200, Ikea. Rag slate wall clock, £45, Roger Bolt

When a cottage in a familiar hamlet in North Cornwall came onto the market in 2009, Jacqueline Bolt was desperate to buy it. 'I lived in the area as a child, and my mother and siblings are all still there. So I've known the property all my life, and grew up with the three sisters who owned it,' she explains. 'I had always admired the house because it's so quintessentially Cornish, and the timing of its sale couldn't have been better because I was looking for a home nearer my family.'

Although pretty, the cob-and-stone cottage wasn't habitable as it had been neglected for many years. In fact, a surveyor advised Jacqueline to knock it down, which was the proverbial red rag to a bull. 'Demolition wasn't an option!' she states. 'I was determined

to retain as much of the original cottage as possible, because I was worried that if the integrity of the building was lost, I wouldn't love it anymore.' Instead, she asked an architect to help revive the three-bedroom property.

The biggest challenge was replacing the early 1900s lean-to with a two-storey side extension, which would create enough space for a kitchen-diner downstairs and a master en-suite bedroom with dressing room above. But the west cob gable collapsed during its demolition. 'It was a big shock, but fortunately no-one was injured,' assures Jacqueline. Then later an internal cob wall fell down, and more problems were uncovered leading to all the walls being stripped right back and the roof being completely removed.

Undeterred, Jacqueline stayed true to the fabric of the building. 'We rebuilt

STAIRCASE

This was custom-built by local craftsmen to complement the cottage's rustic nature. Try the hessian-lined log basket, £36, Amazon





GUEST BEDROOM
This harmonious scheme is designed around Jacqueline's own photo artwork.

Mauve Union Jack crewel cushion, £13, Dunelm.
Prestigious Serenity in Lavender Roman blind, £66, Blindsuk.net



LANDING
Recycled floorboards make characterful wall cladding.

the walls in the original materials and we refitted as much of the Delabole rag roof slates as we could, and sourced others locally,' she explains. 'And to recapture the rustic feel inside the cottage, I reused the flagstone flooring in the kitchen and porch, and recycled a small window we'd taken out and refitted it above the kitchen sink.'

The old floorboards were also put to good use, after Jacqueline removed many layers of paint. 'Whatever didn't come off stayed on,' she says. 'Then my carpenter made a window seat, extractor fan housing and wall cladding from them.'

Her heavy investment into the shell of the property forced Jacqueline

to be inventive and creative with the finishing touches. Much of her furniture is sourced from auctions, antiques shops or donated by friends, and she's kept the walls neutral with just splashes of colour via nature-inspired window treatments and her own photographic art, which she sells. 'I've always liked a naturally relaxing environment,' says Jacqueline.

She is thrilled with how the project has turned out and is even happier to be back in her home town. 'My close family is nearby, and the sitting room brings back fond memories of playing here with my friends as a small child,' says Jacqueline. 'It's a very special place, and I'm so glad I made the move.' 25



EN SUITE
This simple design looks clean and fresh. Slipper freestanding bath, £329, Bathrooms.com. Driftwood heart, £80, Etsy



MASTER BEDROOM
'I love any kind of needlework so I enjoyed making the cushions,' says Jacqueline.
Bed canopy crown and drapes, £132, Lavender & Sage



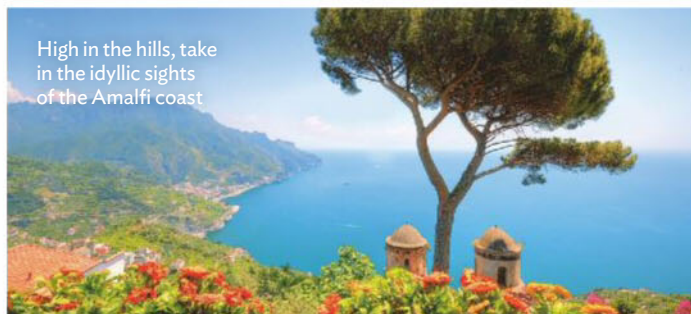
GUEST BATHROOM
The baroque-style mirror adds wow factor to this small room. Feature wall painted in Bowler Hat matt emulsion, £24.49 for 2.5 litres, Dulux

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EASY DOES IT

Louise and Scott Coates took the time to let their ground-floor garden apartment in Edinburgh naturally evolve into a cool and calming family home

FEATURE ALISON GIBB | PHOTOGRAPHY DOUGLAS GIBB

DRAWING ROOM

The shutters are original, and as the fireplace was in relatively good condition: 'It was probably the one thing that didn't need any work,' says Louise.

Hope pendant light, from £763, Catalog. Secto floor lamp, from £534, Ambiente Direct. Sullivan coffee table is similar, £229, Swoon Editions. Koldby cowhide rugs, £180, Ikea. Walls painted in Dimity estate emulsion, £38 for 2.5 litres, Farrow & Ball



INSPIRING



HOME TRUTHS

THE PROPERTY

Apartment, built in 1800

LOCATION Edinburgh

ROOMS Sitting room, drawing room, kitchen-diner, study, utility room, larder, snug, cloakroom, four bedrooms (one en suite), two bathrooms

PURCHASED 2011

PREVIOUS PROPERTY

'Before moving, we had a smaller apartment nearby,' says Louise



DRAWING ROOM

This cosy corner is a perfect reading spot in this peaceful scheme.

Karla armchair, £329, Swoon Editions



STUDY

The woodburner is neatly fitted into the wall, providing an economical way to heat the space.

Walls painted in Smoked Trout estate emulsion, £38 for 2.5 litres, Farrow & Ball. Desk, £900, Wharfside



SITTING ROOM

Double doors to the drawing room can be left open for a convivial feel, or closed for a cosier space.

Stella design is similar, from £1,240, Sofa.com. Woodwork painted in Slipper Satin estate eggshell, £51 for 2.5 litres, Farrow & Ball

FAVOURITE ITEM *'We saw the kitchen table while on a winter holiday in Copenhagen and ordered it as soon as we got home – it arrived just in time for Christmas'*



KITCHEN-DINER

Louise has placed an American-style fridge-freezer in one of the chimney breast spaces, two modern ovens in another, and kept one of the original ranges as a secret drinks cabinet. Bespoke painted hardwood cabinetry, £30,000, Tremmel Properties. Hal Vitra dining chairs in chocolate/light oak are similar, £307 each, Heal's



Knowing they wanted to make central Edinburgh their home, Louise and Scott Coates took on the renovation of a substantial ground-floor garden apartment in the heart of the New Town.

The property was in an almost ghostly state when they bought it, as it had been badly neglected. But, unfazed, the couple went ahead with the challenging transformation. 'I grew up on a farm and saw my parents gradually renovate all the old outbuildings into holiday cottages, so restoration is in my blood,' says Louise.

Located in a beautiful townhouse in an elegant curved crescent, the house itself had once belonged to the well-known Scottish Colourist artist Francis Cadell. He is known to have favoured the front room (now Louise's drawing room), as his studio because of the amazing light that pours in. It's a fitting connection, as Louise herself studied Fine Art. Pieces that she and Scott have collected over the years adorn the walls of their home, and served as the starting point for their calm and peaceful decor.

DESIGN SOLUTIONS

Louise favours a pale, beachy and whitewashed look, whereas Scott prefers stronger, more defined interiors. But, collaborating together, they have devised a scheme that is clean, simple, works for the two of them, and is a calm and beautiful home for themselves and their children Daniel, 5, and Martha, 3. 'We both love Scandinavian design and it has provided us with a good compromise between my preference for shabby chic and Scott's inclination for more of a statement,' says Louise.

A recent trip to Copenhagen was a major inspiration, as the couple returned home with renewed enthusiasm – and a big shopping list. 'We soaked up the wonderful art and design there,' explains Louise. 'We even ended up ordering a few beautiful pieces of Danish furniture.'

QUALITY MATERIALS

Working with well-known Edinburgh builders Tremmel Properties meant the whole process went very smoothly. 'We had the luxury of renting during the worst of the renovations – it was essential, really, because everything needed gutting,' says Louise. 'We were guided by the builders quite a lot, as they are so experienced and specialise in Georgian properties, so we had good advice from them and knew what would work. They were very keen that the materials throughout were of a high standard, so we haven't skimped on the bones of the house, and this has really paid off in the end.'

The fittings complete, Louise and Scott then chose the finishing touches slowly, leaving things like furniture until they knew what they wanted. 'We actually spend a lot of time deciding sometimes, preferring to get things right, rather than make mistakes in a hurry,' says Louise.

This patient approach combined with contemporary design, classic architecture and the use of natural materials has resulted in a serene and relaxed family home. 'My advice is to buy what you love, and let your house evolve organically,' says Louise. 'A renovation is a journey.' 25



MASTER BEDROOM

A pretty French-style bed with taupe and grey linens set the tone in here. Joa's White estate emulsion, £38 for 2.5 litres, Farrow & Ball. Bedspread from The White Company, similar from £120. Tables, £129 each, Anthropologie



MASTER BATHROOM

The large mirror against the bath wall creates the illusion of space. Geminus roll-top tub, £1,700, Albion. Corinth Tumbled Travertine flooring, from £18sq m, Mandarin Stone



DANIEL AND MARTHA'S BEDROOM

Louise has made this space equally fun for boys and girls. Oundle single bed is similar, £275, Aspace. Walls painted in Ringwold Ground estate emulsion, £38 for 2.5 litres, Farrow & Ball. Dress rail, £180, John Lewis



A diverse mix of eclectic furnishings and an array of vibrant hues fill Louise and Steve Matthews' refreshing home with personality and charisma

JEWEL PERSONALITY

FEATURE JANE BOWLES | PHOTOGRAPHY COLIN POOLE

104 | 25BH SEPTEMBER 2015



UNIQUE



HOME TRUTHS

THE PROPERTY

Terraced villa, built in 1904

LOCATION West London

ROOMS Hall, sitting room, kitchen-diner, study, utility room, cloakroom, three bedrooms, three bathrooms

PURCHASED 2013

PREVIOUS PROPERTY

'Before here, we lived in a large apartment nearby,' says Louise.

1 KITCHEN-DINER

Vivid green walls and natural materials create an earthy look.

Kitchen units, price on application, Habitat. Zelliges tiles in Kasbouri Clair, from £160sq m, Emery & Cie at Retrouvius. Pale Lime absolute matt

emulsion, £37 for 2.5 litres, Little Greene, is a good match for the wall paint. Hans Wegner-style wishbone chair, £117, Swivel UK. Casserole dishes, from £120 each, Le Creuset. Euston 1 pendant light by Dār Lighting, £100, Wayfair, is comparable



STUDY

The Mid-Century office chair and classic rocker give this room a vintage look.

Original 1227 desk lamp, £175, Anglepoise. Ercol chairmakers rocking chair, from £695, Heal's. Harlequin soleil rug, from £244, John Lewis, has this look

2 SITTING ROOM

A focal point wall filled with bold artwork expresses the couple's dynamic characters.

Ralph Lauren's English Riding Velvet in Palomino is an alternative for the sofa fabric, £80m; Mariedal in

Peony is similar to the cushion fabric, £87m, both Designers Guild. Carthen Clover throw, £115, Melin Tregwynt, would work well in this scheme. For statement rugs like this one try the Kendra range at Rugs Direct, from £43

Given the trend for downscaling and decluttering, Louise Matthews' decorating approach is refreshingly different. 'I wanted our home to be a feast for the senses, so forget "less is more" – I always think "more is better",' she says. But when moving to her west London home, many months of laborious renovation lay ahead before her colourful dream became reality.

Louise and her husband Steve were originally moving because they needed more space for themselves and their two children Sam, 20, and Holly, 12. Finding the right house, however, proved to be a challenge. 'The agent warned us this place was in a terrible state, and he wasn't even sure we'd want to consider it,' says Louise. 'It had previously been owned by an elderly couple who had lived there for 40 years and had let it fall into disrepair.' Undaunted, they decided to take a look. 'Not only was the property extremely run-down, every room was filled with books,' says Louise. 'But despite this, it had a lovely atmosphere and felt warm and welcoming. We both knew it was the place for us.'

The couple rented a flat nearby while the building was renovated. 'We decided this was the best way to survive the challenges ahead,' says Louise. Having opted to manage the project herself, she promptly began assembling a team of builders. 'We were lucky to find a great team who worked tirelessly throughout the build,' says Louise. 'Plus, they all really liked the house, which helped immensely.' Initially, the dwelling was gutted, rewired, replumbed and new sash windows were installed. A lean-to at the rear of the property was also demolished and replaced with a ground-floor extension to house the new kitchen-diner.

'I love the high ceilings and proportions of this home and one of my overriding priorities was to restore a sense of its former grandeur,' says Louise. 'So we introduced taller doors throughout, which instantly made it feel more substantial and imposing.' Reclaimed parquet floors and reproduction Edwardian plaster mouldings were also added to enhance the period ambience. Louise then designed separate bathrooms for herself and Steve. 'My boudoir-style space is a relaxing retreat, while Steve and Sam, who's now at university, favour functional, high-tech designs,' says Louise.

Another of Louise's priorities was to create a vibrant, jewel-rich decor. 'I'd originally planned to paint everything grey, but I knew that green would be better suited to this interior.' Louise's teenage daughter Holly helped tweak the decor using myriad paintings and sumptuous fabrics to add contrast and texture to the scheme.

Two years on, the project is complete. 'Now that it's finished, I love the sense of visual richness in every room, and I'm really proud of what we've achieved,' says Louise. 'It's become our dream home.' 25

1 HALL

A bold striped stair runner makes a real design statement.

Audrey Sunrise carpet, from £53.50sq m, Crucial Trading. Reclaimed parquet wood flooring, price on application, Retrouvius. Walls painted in St Giles Blue, £38 for 2.5 litres, Farrow & Ball

2 LOUISE'S BATHROOM

'I wanted this space to be a sanctuary – somewhere I could unwind,' explains Louise.

Burlington 2TH Victorian basin and chrome washstand, £352, Victorian Plumbing, is near-identical. Tongue-

and-groove panelling painted in Celadon eggshell paint, £50 for 2.5 litres; Versailles cast-iron bath is a match, £2,195, both Fired Earth

3 & 4 MASTER BEDROOM

'The Turkish bedspread is one of my favourite items – it's such a bold centrepiece,' says Louise.

Try Bird of Paradise bedspread, £95, Plum Chutney at Notonthehighstreet.com. For a console table like this one try the Stroller design in green, £379, Made. Woodwork painted in Down Pipe estate eggshell, £53 for 2.5 litres, Farrow & Ball. Metropolis fabric in Panther, £50m, Linwood, is similar





3



4

DESIGN TIP *'When you're deciding on a colour scheme, you can often find inspiration by opening your wardrobe. By decorating using the hues you love to wear, your house will always be a delight to come home to'*



HOLLY'S BEDROOM

Architectural features combine with contemporary touches for a sleek finish.

Cushions, from a selection, Designers Guild.

Bianco bed, £345, Next, suits this style. Anglepoise

desk lamp in Dusty Blue, £235, John Lewis.

French carved wall shelf, £184, Dibor, is similar



THE SOURCE

Erica Miller shows how you can achieve the style secrets in this issue's homes

Design ideas



STRIPED STAIRCASE



Pages
78–80

Colin and Mairead Wendel have injected personality into the heart of their stylish Victorian home by painting their wooden staircase with smart blue stripes. Fresh and bright, this style

recreates the look of a conventional stair runner. The same effect can be easily achieved by using floor paints. Here, the stairs were painted in an off-white shade, then using masking tape to mark out the area, smart grey-blue stripes have been applied. To bring the look together, the bottom larger steps have been painted in a complementary tone of grey. Painted floors and stairs are good-looking, affordable, hardwearing and low maintenance. Any chips that appear over time can be retouched with floor paint.



BANISTER SUPPORT



Pages
96–98

The staircase is often the first thing people see when they walk through the front door. The Bolts have turned the staircase in their Cornish cottage into an interesting architectural feature by using the

banisters as the means of support. Strong yet slim steel rods serve here as structural supports for the cantilevered wooden treads on this stair. To ensure that the stairs are structurally sound and load-bearing, the banisters have been attached to the joist above. As well as making an attractive design feature, this also allows the stairwell to be filled with light – a refreshing departure from many period properties. If you're thinking of renovating or repositioning a staircase, always seek professional advice first.



CHECKERBOARD FLOOR



Pages
27–32

Large-scale black-and-white ceramic tiles have been laid in a diagonal pattern to create a striking look in Leny and Harrie Eltinks' Dutch farmhouse kitchen-diner. A checkerboard floor is

extremely versatile with a timeless appeal as it suits traditional and contemporary schemes equally well. While the floor makes a bold statement, it doesn't dominate the room and lends a classic appeal. In the Eltinks' kitchen-diner, the design gives this spacious room a strong, graphic quality and a very definite identity. Both chic and practical, this high-impact floor really helps anchor the room scheme. Subtle taupe walls, black granite worktops and warm wooden units help offset this daring floor design.

Inspired shopping



Pages
130–133

Sealife wall art

Marine-themed wall art has been used to great effect in Louise Trevatt's home. For something similar try *Koi Fish II* by Chariklia Zarris, £115 framed, art.co.uk.



Elegant dining chair

When choosing dining chairs, James Neil placed equal importance on comfort and aesthetics. For something equally distinctive try the Diamond dining chair in a grey handpainted finish, £590, Nicky Haslam at Oka.



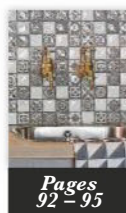
Pages
122–125



Pages
126–129

Upholstered bed frame

The boldly patterned upholstered bed makes a stunning addition to the Sparkes' home. Similarly impressive is the St Germain bed in Indigo on white feathers, £845, Sofa.com.



Pages
92–95

Mosaic tiles

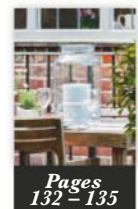
The patterned mosaic-style tiles in the Carthys' kitchen are similar to these Lattice and Mandir tiles, 12.5cm sq, £1.49 each, Archivio collection, Topps Tiles.



Pages
44–47

Circle mirror

A unique mirror made up of lots of small circular mirrors individually set on gold frames creates a focal point in the Davis's bedroom. For a similar eyecatching design take a look at the Wagon gold round circles mirror, £336, Där Lighting.



Pages
132–135

Hurricane lamp

Hayley Trenholm's garden table has a simple jar-shaped hurricane lamp like the Bloomingville lantern, £45, Amara.

Zinc-top coffee table

If you covet the striking zinc-top coffee table in the Wilkinsons' sitting room, check out the Lotus coffee table in reclaimed elm and zinc, £399, Swoon Editions.



Pages
20–25



Inspired shopping



Tartan cushion

Tartan cushions add a cosy element to the Carthys' sitting room. Emulate this look with the large tweed cushion, £19.99, Dunelm.

Pages
92 – 95



Iron day bed

A simple wrought-iron day bed works beautifully in Hayley Trenholm's attic room. To create the look try the Restoration day bed in black, £299, John Lewis.



Pages
132 – 135



Buttoned-back sofa

Buttoned-back sofas give the Muers-Rabys' sitting room a five-star look. The Georgian design, from £2,805, David Seyfried, is equally stylish.

Pages
57 – 60



Felt rug

A tiger-inspired rug helps anchor the scheme in Hedda Pier's children's playroom. A comparable style is the Tiger rug handmade in felted wool, 140 x 70cm, £65, Aspace.

Pages
136 – 139



Pages
57 – 60

Faux plants

A selection of striking, no-maintenance faux plants is showcased throughout the Muers-Raby home. This 3ft potted grass, £59, Bloom, will give the same look.



Pages
27 – 32

Black range cooker

Looking for a cooker similar to the Eltinks'? You may like this Everhot 100 electric black range cooker, from £6,995.



Pages
104 – 107

Rocking chair

The rocking chair in the Mathews' study is similar to Voyage Maison's Juno mustard rocker, £608.



Design solutions

HOME OFFICE SOLUTIONS

A well-organised space is crucial when working from home – have a look at these neat designs



CLEVER STORAGE



Pages
69 – 71

A well-designed desk like the one in the Daborns' home can integrate plenty of storage and even a notice board. Ideal for a small study area or a bedroom, it ensures that clutter is kept to a minimum and

everything is to hand. This ingenious design (above) cleverly incorporates ample storage space. Made from reclaimed fir, the back of the desk is fitted with an easel for drawing, too. Even the chair provides extra storage with an integrated book bin at the base. As a quirky finishing touch, the chimney pot doubles as a moveable pen pot. Roofus desk and chair, £495, Loaf.

DOUBLE-DESK STUDY



Pages
40 – 43

The Papworths' sleek study has been designed with back-to-back desks so two people can comfortably use the space. Here, a large undressed window ensures that the space is filled with natural light. Comfortable

leather office chairs that glide freely over wood floors complete the look. In this colourful, contemporary office (above) vibrant orange desks sit back-to-back and funky wall storage creates an interesting display. Rydebäck/Backaryd table in orange, £40; Helmer drawer unit on castors in grey, £25; Skallberg/Sporren swivel chair in white, £25, all Ikea.

BESPOKE WORK AREA



Pages
136 – 139

A loft conversion can increase the value of your home by up to 25 per cent, particularly if it's well done. Hedda Pier's converted attic is perfect for working from home.

Pale walls and a soft aqua floor enhance a good working environment. Tailor-made storage fits into the eaves, and a large desk by the dormer window enjoys the natural light. To save space, storage is confined to one wall. This bespoke study (above) utilises the often-overlooked room under the stairs. Harpsden Office range in Light Praline with a dark pine worktop, from £2,500, Hammonds.

5 OF THE BEST *Security cameras*

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D-Link DLI DCS932L/B wireless home Network camera is easy to set up, £130, QVC



Flir Fx IP camera, allows remote viewing and has cloud storage, £150, Maplin



Withings Home wireless HD camera comes with wide angle and night vision, £170, withings.com



Nest Cam has a magnetic stand so is easy to position. It also features night vision, £159, Nest



Netgear Arlo Smart Home single HD security camera, for indoors or out, £190, amazon.co.uk

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An injection of contemporary simplicity enhances the natural beauty of the oak in Annie and Ken Stirks' historic barn conversion





KITCHEN

'The stools were an indulgence, but they look beautiful,' says Annie. Hardwood stools, £500 each, Peter Thompson of York



DINING AREA

Annie wanted a calm and uncluttered feel in here. Walls painted in Pigeon estate emulsion, £38 for 2.5 litres, Farrow & Ball. Grenadier dining chairs, £285 each, Barker & Stonehouse



UNIQUE

HOME TRUTHS

THE PROPERTY

Stone barn, built in the 1400s

LOCATION North Yorkshire

ROOMS Sitting/dining room, kitchen, utility room, study, galleried reading room, two bedrooms (one en suite), plus a two-bedroom guest cottage

PURCHASED 2011

PREVIOUS PROPERTY

'We lived in a terraced house nearby,' says Annie.

Annie and Ken Stirk nearly overlooked a 15th-century barn in Brandsby, North Yorkshire during their search for a new home.

On paper it looked too small, but visiting the historic building soon revealed its potential. 'We saw the four beautiful oak trusses and thought, 'wow', recalls Annie. 'Then we crossed the courtyard and were pleasantly surprised by the old wood store and outbuildings.'

As well as realising that they could build on the footprint to create a study and utility room – the couple saw another exciting possibility, too. 'We'd been hoping to start a small business with our move,' continues Annie. 'We discovered there was space to construct a holiday home within the outbuildings, too.'

The key to the design was creating a home that enhanced the existing architecture and features of the Grade II-listed barn, while maximising the space. The oak beams became

a bold statement in the double-height sitting room and the builder suggested a mezzanine level under the rafters for a reading room.

Architect Adrian Pearson submitted plans for the outbuilding and holiday home, now Barn Owl cottage, and a barn extension. Despite the building being listed, the design was approved for its sensitivity to the original style.

Annie and Ken knew they wanted a modern interior with a neutral backdrop and splashes of colour in furniture and furnishings. 'We like a clean, minimalist feel,' she says. Furniture has been key to anchoring the interior, with statement sofas in a vibrant shade, alongside Ken's beloved leather and tweed Tetrad wing chair. 'I felt the pieces we bought had to look beautiful in the open space,' says Annie.

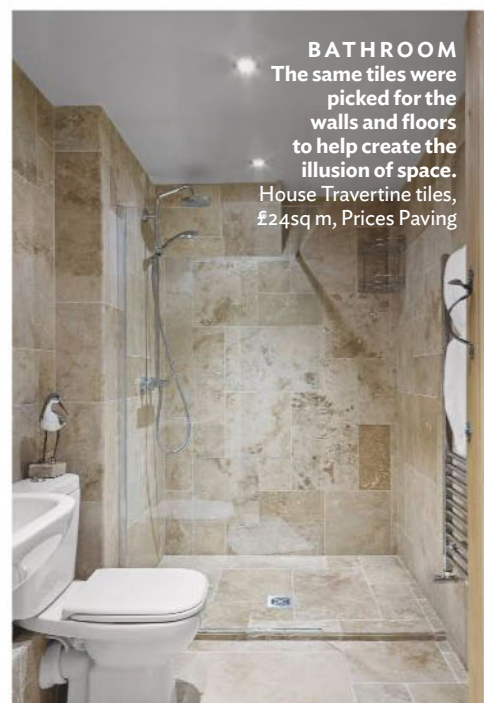
With the work complete, the pair are still in awe of the transformation. 'It's hard to believe this was once a crumbly old barn,' says Annie. 'We both feel very lucky to be living here.' 25



BEDROOM

'I relied on advice from Penelope Mitra at Vision and Perspective as I didn't want to make costly mistakes,' says Annie.

Heather check throw, £150, Abraham Moon. Laura Ashley sells similar storage boxes, £38 for set of three



BATHROOM

The same tiles were picked for the walls and floors to help create the illusion of space.

House Travertine tiles, £24sq m, Prices Paving

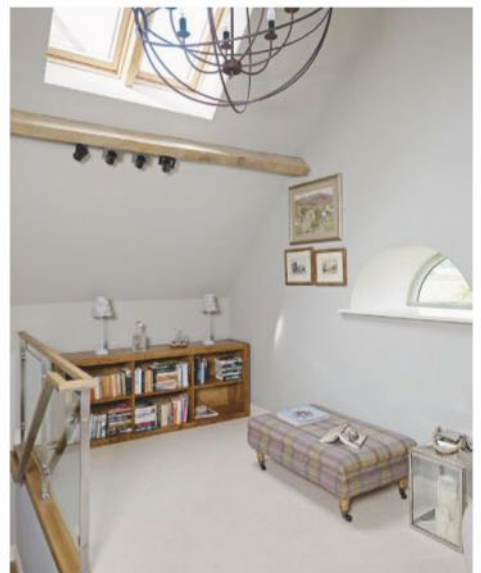
BE INSPIRED BY ANNIE AND KEN'S COUNTRY HOME



SITTING ROOM
A vivid sofa adds a splash of colour to this neutral space. Alwinton large sofa in Fisher Plum, £1,200, Sofas & Stuff, is similar



READING ROOM
The oak trusses are an impressive feature. Eric cushions, £65 each, Bluebellgray





BEST OF BOTH

Molly and John Curtin wanted to combine styles from each side of the Atlantic to transform their 140-year-old home

FEATURE RICHARD WEBBER | PHOTOGRAPHY COLIN POOLE

When New Yorkers Molly and John Curtin decided to build a ground-floor extension and redecorate their west London home, they wanted colours and themes inspired by the people, places and things they love most. 'We considered not just how we wanted the house to look but how we and our children Charles, 6, and Ellie, 3, wanted to feel in it,' says Molly. 'Some of our happiest times have been summers on Cape Cod, and I also love flowers, so when it came to decorating, I chose fresh and cool whites, pinks and blues – all typical of Cape

Cod hydrangeas. Those were the tones I imagined bringing out in the decor.'

Molly wanted the interior to be a nod to the casual elegance of the New England style. 'I wanted cool tones throughout – no magnolia in this house,' she says. 'Where we've chosen bolder colours, like in the sitting and dining rooms, the soothing shades are offset against white skirting boards, sash windows, plantation shutters and the original white cornicing and ceiling roses.'

Undertaking a complete overhaul of the interior could have been a daunting task, but Molly relished the opportunity to unleash

her creative talents. The challenge was made easier when it came to choosing paint. 'Some companies make it more straightforward to choose your own palette. In the kitchen, we went down one column of the Paint Library chart, using Lead 1 on the cabinetry, Lead 2 on the walls and ceiling and Lead 4 on the interior beadboard of the cabinets. For the hall and living areas, we moved one row over on the chart, so the colours work well together, which is vital in an open plan.'

'We then brought these shades upstairs to the landing, bedrooms, guest rooms and bathrooms, not just in paint but in terms of

DINING ROOM

The blue painting provides a splash of Molly's favourite colour. 'It was hanging in the hall but didn't feel as special there,' she says.

Tolix stackable chairs, £143 each, Made in Design. Table from Lombok, their Malang extending model is comparable, £1,395.

Try the Silver Leaf Lacquer sideboard, £2,595, Orchid Furniture. Rug, £250, City Cows

REPLANNED



HOME TRUTHS

THE PROPERTY

Victorian terraced house

LOCATION West London

ROOMS Dining/sitting room, kitchen, utility room, wine cellar, playroom, five bedrooms, two bathrooms

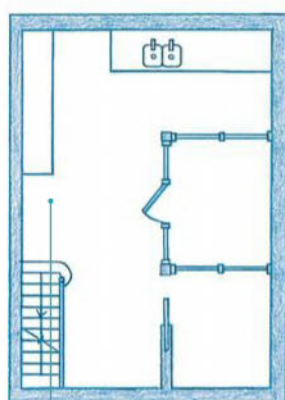
PURCHASED 2007

PREVIOUS PROPERTY

'Before moving here, we had an apartment in a mansion block in Kensington,' says Molly.



AFTER



BASEMENT

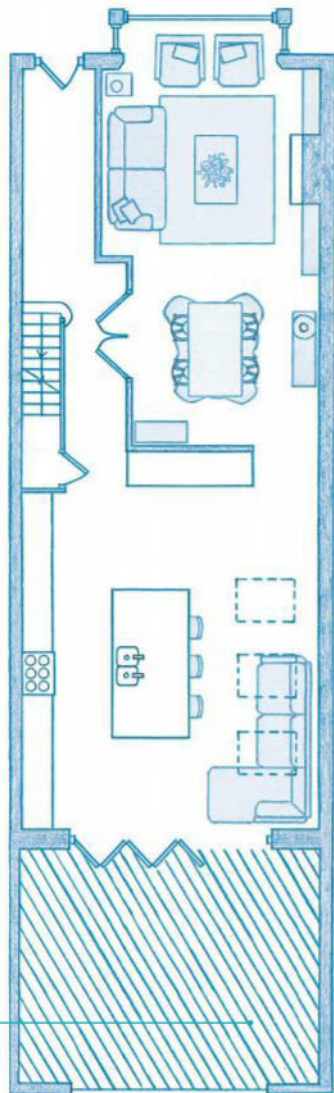
CELLAR

The couple engaged BTL Property to dig half a basement for a wine cellar and a utility room. 'We wanted a separate laundry room like ones we had in our childhood homes,' says Molly.

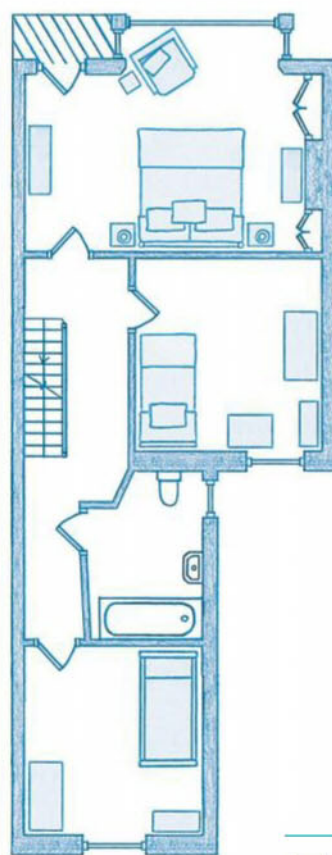


OUTSIDE AREA

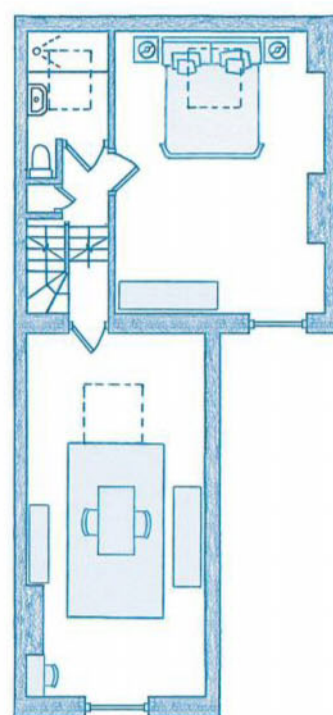
The decision to retain one level throughout the entire ground floor makes the outdoors feel like an extension of the kitchen.



GROUND FLOOR

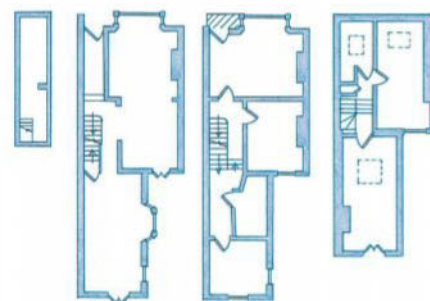


FIRST FLOOR



SECOND FLOOR

BEFORE



tiles, furniture and textiles,' Molly continues. 'Even the stripes painted on the wall in Charles' room are a shade of the Lead family.'

The newly extended cooking area is the hub of the house. Molly and John wanted to create a 'living kitchen' with a sofa, TV and space to relax together. Integral to this theme is the huge bespoke island, which is not only practical for cooking but an ideal spot for the children to do homework or help with baking. 'It was always going to be a focal point, and the unique carved pillars are a feature often seen in New England kitchens,' says Molly. 'Along with the deep blue colour, the shape gives the eye somewhere to rest in the midst of all the white.'

As well as its aesthetic qualities, the light-filled space affords Molly and John plenty of storage options, from countertop

bifold doors hiding small appliances, to the hidden drawers on the outside of the island. Together with full-height larder cupboards, they keep the kitchen clean and uncluttered.

Separate from the food prep area, the living/dining room at the front of the house has been cleverly demarcated into two very distinct spaces. 'I know it bucks the trend of kitchen-diners, but we enjoy having a separate dining zone,' says Molly. 'Its proximity to the kitchen is perfect and makes time spent there feel like a special occasion.'

Running throughout the ground floor are rich, wide-planked oak floorboards, which allowed the Curtins the opportunity to install underfloor heating while they were replacing the old flooring. 'The floorboards create a beautiful, long sightline from the front door to the glass doors by the back

garden, connecting the rooms in an understated way and providing warmth against the cool, white colours,' says Molly.

Being so heavily involved in the project means Molly has learnt a lot – such as the importance of a lighting plan. 'I went through the house room by room with our building company because correct lighting makes such a difference,' she says. 'The space not only functions better with the right mix of ambient and task lighting, but it also looks more considered. You can spend hours debating details like drawer pulls, but it won't matter if the room is poorly lit.'

Reflecting on the results, Molly feels she's created a clean, classic New England style, while respecting the integrity of the Victorian house. 'It's been a learning curve, but a really enjoyable one,' she says. 25



SITTING ROOM

Here, a fireplace provides a cosy feel, making this area ideal for reading or family games.

Armchairs from Pimpernel & Partners, for a comparable style, try the Malplaquet chair, from £830. Table from Lombok, for similar try the Blora coffee table, £795



I

I CHARLES' BEDROOM

These painted stripes are often mistaken for wallpaper. Wall stripes in Lead 4 flat emulsion, £36 for 2.5 litres, Paint Library. Stowford bunk bed is a match, £595, Aspace

2 BATHROOM

A handpainted unit contrasts with the white scheme. Chichester wall cabinet, from £370; undermount washstand, with marble top, from £1,025, both Neptune

3 MASTER BEDROOM

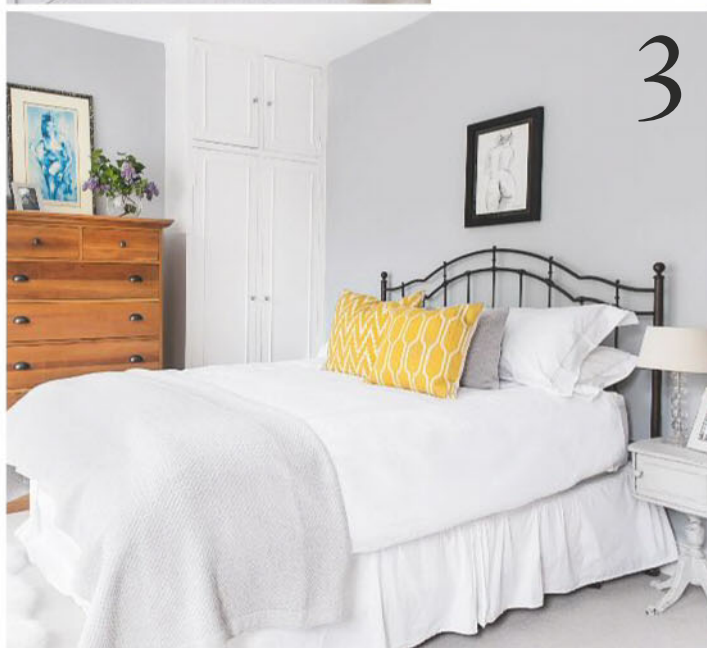
The colour scheme continues the home's sense of flow. Try the yellow chevron zigzag cushion, £39, Zazzle

4 PLAYROOM

Bright elements make this a fun space. Stripe rug in white/grey has this look, from £50, John Lewis



2



3



4



DINING AREA
This beautifully upcycled desk also doubles as a sideboard on dinner-party nights.
Hadley dining chair, £155, India Jane. Framed 19th-century prints, £20 each, Portobello Market

I



INSPIRING

HOME TRUTHS

THE PROPERTY

Victorian apartment

LOCATION

Southwest London

ROOMS Hall, sitting/dining room, kitchen, bedroom, bathroom

MOVED IN

2010

PREVIOUS PROPERTY

'Before here, we lived in a two-bedroom flat nearby,' says James.

TRICKS of the TRADE

The home that interiors specialist James Neil shares with Giles Morrison showcases their talent for reinvention

FEATURE MAGGIE COLVIN
PHOTOGRAPHY ROBERT SANDERSON





James Neil, PR for interiors brand India Jane, and his partner Giles Morrison took a creative approach when it came to decorating

their small but perfectly formed London apartment. 'Less is more' isn't a mantra that appeals; instead, the pair love to upcycle unusual pieces.

'We like using our imagination, and none of our ideas break the bank,' says James. 'For example, an inexpensive way to create a marble tabletop is to use floor tiles,' he says pointing to a hand-carved oak table in the sitting room, which took six bottles of paint stripper to clean up before being topped with a large stone floor tile cut to size. 'It was such a plain-looking piece before.'

Their gem of an apartment is situated on one of the city's busiest and most desirable streets. 'Many of the flats in this area and within our price bracket had depressing box-shaped layouts and low ceilings,' says James. 'So when we found this place, we knew we'd discovered something special. Although it's not very big, it exudes elegance on a grand scale.'

The flat had been painted magnolia throughout and lacked



DECORATING ADVICE 'Customise inexpensive frames by applying gilt cream to the inner edges. It's really effective'

1 SITTING ROOM

There's plenty to admire in this characterful, high-ceilinged area.

Walls painted in Salt IV and Sand IV matt emulsion, both £37.50 for 2.5 litres, Paint Library. The couple added coving to a Billy bookcase, £35, Ikea, to create a period look

2 DINING AREA

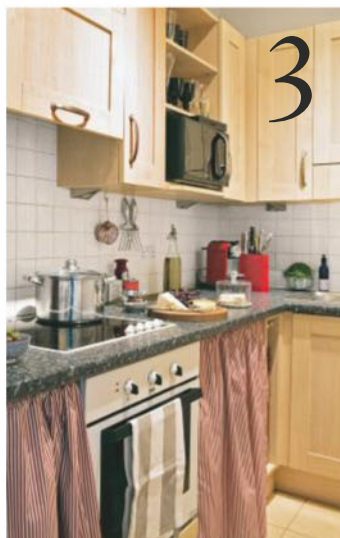
The gate-leg table can be easily folded away to free up space when needed.

For a similar table design try the Wolsey, £1,190, India Jane. Rosewood Furniture custom-makes dining chairs like these ones, price on request

3 KITCHEN

Cupboard curtains lend a farmhouse vibe, while also hiding appliances.

Double-width ticking cotton curtain fabric, £28m, The Millshop Online, would work well. Microwave, £135, Samsung. Pixie coffee machine, £139, Nespresso





character, but James and Giles knew instantly how to improve it. 'We decided to paint one end wall of the sitting room in a darker tone to the rest, to give the space more depth,' explains James. 'It's an optical illusion that appears to stretch the room.'

And their furniture choices? 'If you're furnishing mainly from car boot fairs, eBay and junk shops, it's good to mix in a few expensive pieces, too – some silver accessories will add a little glamour,' advises James. 'You should never skimp on a sofa,' he says, pointing out their tweed three-seater, 'but coffee tables are different. We found this mahogany one leaning against a tree in a nearby street. Giles gave it a base coat in red and a second coat in black. While that was still wet, he wiped the edges with a damp cloth exposing a softly blurred red edge. The pine desk beside it was given a similar treatment and some Edwardian cup handles,' he adds.

It's been five years since the couple moved into their home, and the buzz of the area still appeals to them. 'We spend a lot of time people-watching,' says James. 'I'm sure we'll want a house with a garden one day, but for now, this vibrant street and our lovely flat will be hard to leave behind.' 25

DECORATING TIP 'Mustard is a really warming shade for bedrooms and gives off a positive, sunny vibe all year round. It also offsets black furniture and accessories perfectly'



1 & 2 MASTER BEDROOM
'A four-poster bed can make a small bedroom even cosier,' says James, who transformed this previously varnished-pine design with cream paint.

Bed painted in Lime White estate eggshell, £53 for 2.5 litres; Dayroom Yellow estate emulsion, £38 for 2.5 litres, is a similar wall colour, both Farrow & Ball

3 & 4 BATHROOM
Glass shelving and storage baskets fit snugly into an alcove, making the most of this compact room.

Small seagrass basket, £11, A Place for Everything, is a good alternative. Trooping the Colour tea towel, £8.50 (unframed), The Cooks Kitchen. Walls painted in Skimming Stone estate emulsion, £38 for 2.5 litres, Farrow & Ball

Insight

SPATIAL PLANNING

Keen to make the most of your space? Scale it up, like James Neil and Giles Morrison have done

Compact and larger homes can benefit from good spacial planning, both at the build or renovation stage when you'll be able to design the layout yourself. And in the case of existing properties, all it may take is a simple tweak or two to improve the flow of the layout.

Scale it up

Though James and Giles's home is a one-bedroom apartment, their decorating approach makes the space appear much larger than it is, and while 'less is more' is a common interiors mantra, in this case, larger pieces of furniture and plenty of eye-catching accessories have created the illusion of a more spacious property. The key is to add a sense of generosity and scale by using bigger pieces that may at first feel too large, rather than smaller items, which can create a cluttered look.

It's important to vary scale to create interest – try juxtaposing deep sofas with a slimline console, or teaming an oversized coffee table with a pair of delicate side tables. Pattern, fabric, artwork and strong colours can have a cocooning and welcoming effect. James and Giles have used darker hues and copious framed art in the hall for interest, while elsewhere, light tones, full-length curtains and plenty of mirrors add depth and a touch of luxe. Storage is key, too – a corner bookcase makes clever use

of limited space, while a compact kitchen and bathroom is improved with large, deep baskets to hold accessories, as well as additional cupboards.

Make a plan

If you are renovating or building from scratch, aim to avoid creating rooms of identical proportions – varying the layout within a new-build, from a double-height hall to a more compact snug, will introduce a sense of variety throughout. It's important to respect the setting of your home, too and, if possible, enlist the help of a professional architect at the earliest planning stages to help realise your vision.

Colour is closely related to scale, too. For instance, a house that has a light-coloured interior will appear much larger, while a darker exterior, featuring materials such as grey render or timber, will make a building seem smaller and more discreet within its landscape or streetscape. Doorways and windows can impact on our impression of space as well – in an existing property, try heightening and widening doorways, or even remove the doors and replace them with glass versions. Consider adding skylights or roof lanterns and in an apartment, create an enfilade – where one room leads to the next without a corridor – which can both simplify and enhance the sense of space and proportion.

EXPERT EYE



'Keep colour and pattern considered and not too busy or dominating. If your budget allows, opt for bespoke pieces that are purpose-built to suit your home. Multifunctional furniture is incredibly useful when optimising available space'

MILA PODIABLONSKA, ABSOLUTE INTERIOR DECOR



PROFESSIONAL ADVICE

'Successful spatial planning depends upon your home. In some cases, building regulations will make decisions for you – for example there usually has to be a protected lobby or staircase in an apartment or three-storey property. If a building is listed, there will be similar rules on what can and cannot be done.

Beyond restrictions, there are a number of things you can do to achieve a good flow of space. Introducing an open-plan layout helps connect rooms together and is an easy way of creating a better arrangement.

You can add a sense of fluidity by reducing circulation space. Opening up a staircase to the rooms is sometimes a good approach, as it removes the need for corridors or halls, which are generally less exciting parts of a house and often take up valuable space.

Larger windows or glazed doors can help to lighten smaller rooms, while roof lights bring in light and make an area feel larger.

Depending upon the size of the house, consider the vertical flow of areas if you can. Double-height spaces can create interesting spatial relationships – although this does compromise square footage above.

Open-plan kitchens allow rooms to look larger. If necessary, the kitchen can be closed off with sliding or folding doors.'

SHAHRIAR NASSER, BELSIZE ARCHITECTS

ADDRESS BOOK

■ **Royal Institute of British Architects**
020 7580 5533, architecture.com

Professional body, offering information to homeowners as well as a list of architects

■ **Royal Town Planning Institute**
020 7929 9494, rtpi.org.uk

Planning Aid Advice line offers up to 15 minutes of free planning advice

■ **Belsize Architects** 020 7482 4420,
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Award-winning architectural practice, specialising in modern extensions



PERSONAL TOUCH

A hint of colour, artwork and texture made Kelly and Dominic Sparkes' house more homely

FEATURE MAXINE BRADY | PHOTOGRAPHY JONATHAN JONES



SITTING ROOM

Different materials have been used here to make it feel warm and inviting.

Portrait of a Lady artwork, £183, Mineheart. Eames Lounge chair in cream, £1,229, Voga. Sheepskin rugs, £130 each, Kelly Sparkes Interiors

INSPIRING



HOME TRUTHS

THE PROPERTY

Converted 1950s bungalow

LOCATION Hertfordshire

ROOMS Hall, sitting room, kitchen-diner/family room, playroom, utility room, cloakroom, three bedrooms (one en suite), bathroom, garden study

PURCHASED 2008

PREVIOUS PROPERTY

'We lived in a Victorian terrace in London before this place,' says Kelly.

GARDEN

A chic pathway lined by silver birches creates a mini boulevard.

Betula Pendula trees, £149, Barcham Trees. Natural slate maxi bag, £7.99, Homebase, would work here



1



2

When Kelly Sparkes and her husband Dominic began searching for a family home, they were keen to find a place they could put their stamp on. 'We'd been looking at flats in London, but then my sister recommended a property she'd seen in the same Hertfordshire village where my parents and sisters live,' says Kelly. 'As soon as we saw it, we decided to take the plunge and move to the countryside.'

The couple loved the spacious rooms and the large garden but were less than impressed with other aspects. Downstairs, the open-plan layout had numerous floorcoverings, making the rooms feel mismatched, while the run-down kitchen had no working oven. Upstairs was no better, with a bathroom tucked so low under the eaves that Dominic always banged his head. Nevertheless, Kelly could see the potential.

The couple called in a team of architects to brainstorm ideas for an extension upstairs. 'They came up with lots of plans, but they were beyond our budget,' says Kelly. 'Instead, we worked out how to make the most of the space ourselves and I project-managed



FAMILY ROOM

'This space is ideal for relaxing with Aria, while Dominic cooks the dinner,' says Kelly. Halo Ertle grand chesterfield leather sofa, £2,399, John Lewis. Large ottoman, £299, Made. Mirror, £699, Kelly Sparkes Interiors



3

1 DINING ROOM

Using the same wooden flooring throughout the ground floor has helped draw the areas together.

Kartell Louis ghost chair, £230, John Lewis. Padang wooden table, £1,195, Lombok, is comparable

2 KITCHEN

Units with extra-wide drawers are a practical touch here.

For similar try the Metod horizontal cabinet in white, £47, Ikea. Birch bark vase, £5, Pom Joy Fun at Etsy

3 HALL

The stairway acts as the perfect gallery for displaying Kelly's collection of unusual art.

Walls and banister painted in Basalt absolute matt emulsion, £37 for 2.5 litres, Little Greene. For bespoke mirrored panels try Mirrors & Glass UK

**FAVOURITE
FEATURE**
*'I found the
ABC wallpaper
mural before Aria
was born but knew
I wanted it for her
nursery – and now
she loves pointing
out all the animals'*

the renovation, sourcing workmen through recommendations.'

The builders ripped out the interior and moved the kitchen into the L-shaped living space. 'The previous owners had used the area as a gym but we decided to make it open plan, turning the old kitchen into a cosy sitting room where we can watch TV,' says Kelly. Across the back of the house, bifold doors that open out into the garden were installed. 'We always liked the feel of the ground floor, but the layout just needed to work harder,' she says. Upstairs, internal walls and a chimney breast were removed, allowing Kelly to design an en suite master bedroom, two guest rooms and a family bathroom.

Initially, the interior was painted white throughout, but when Kelly fell pregnant with her daughter Aria, now 2, she decided to add colour and texture. 'As soon as I added little touches with art and wallpaper, the house started to take on its own distinctive personality,' she says.

After renovating her home, Kelly's passion for interiors has grown, resulting in her opening her own homeware shop. 'Doing this place up has taught me that introducing colour, pattern and art are the key touches that give a house its unique look,' says Kelly. 'I love adding a sprinkle of my own style to my clients' projects.' 25

FOR STOCKIST DETAILS **GO TO PAGE 140**



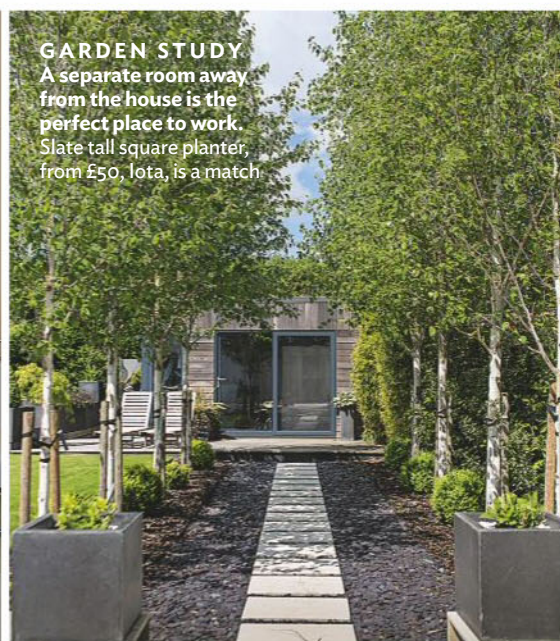
**ARIA'S
BEDROOM**
**'Grey is the perfect
colour to offset
the baby pink in this
room,' says Kelly.**
Bailey three-piece
cot bed set, £537;
Solo hanging rail,
£45, Izziwotnot.
Abc You mural, £30sq
m, Mr Perswall



MASTER BEDROOM
**'Upstairs, we reshuffled the layout and took space
from the hall to make this area bigger,' says Kelly.**
Cushion in Chaing Mai Dragon fabric by Schumacher,
£82, Pop O' Color at Etsy. St James scoop chair,
£290, Sweetpea & Willow, is a good alternative



BATHROOM
**Mirrors and white marble have
become Kelly's signature style.**
Antalya Crema marble tiles,
£75.44sq m, Topps Tiles, would
work well in this scheme



GARDEN STUDY
**A separate room away
from the house is the
perfect place to work.**
Slate tall square planter,
from £50, Iota, is a match



STUDY

Instead of a formal workspace, Louise opted for a relaxed environment here. Solid Georgian bureau, £225, Heavenly Homes & Gardens, is a good alternative to these



GARDEN

'My neighbour Pam helped me build the cat ladder,' says Louise. Maze Rattan Baby four-seater dining set, £449, Zebrano Rattan Furniture

RESCUE mission

A positive, can-do attitude helped life coach Louise Trevatt single-handedly orchestrate the revival of a neglected but noteworthy period house

FEATURE MAXINE CLARKE | PHOTOGRAPHY LU JEFFERY

KITCHEN

'I often prefer working here at the island, where the kettle is an arm's reach away,' says Louise.

IT Kitchens Cream Gloss slab cabinetry, £959 for an eight-unit scheme, B&Q. Bellini black bar chair, £275, John Lewis. Walls painted in Mizzle estate emulsion, £38 for 2.5 litres, Farrow & Ball



DISTINCTIVE



HOME TRUTHS

THE PROPERTY

Georgian detached house
LOCATION Derbyshire

ROOMS Sitting room, reception room, kitchen, study, cloakroom, three bedrooms, bathroom

PURCHASED 2013

PREVIOUS PROPERTY

'I rented a 1970s rectory in Derbyshire, while the renovation took place,' says Louise.



SITTING ROOM

Custom-made wooden seating disguises the stairwell, leading to the office and kitchen.

Bespoke seating by Dan Beard/W Spencer Buildings. Karlstad sofa in Tenö light grey, from £499, Ikea. Firebelly T1 woodburning stove, £750, Quality Stoves, has this look. Close Up artwork by Susie Perring, £250 unframed

Louise Trevatt might not have been looking for a project, but when a 200-year-old run down house in Derbyshire caught her eye, she rose to the challenge. Although it needed a great deal of work, she knew it suited her needs. 'I'd converted a barn years ago, so I wasn't scared to take it on,' says Louise. 'I couldn't wait to get started.'

Louise wanted a place where she could both live and run her life-coach training business, Simply Changing, from. 'Even though the property was in a terrible state and full of clutter, it had a really good, homely feel that said a lot about its quality and history,' she says. 'The fact that there were two workshops attached was a

bonus.' The building is significant in the area, due to its age and the fact that it stands on the approach to the town's bustling market place. So Louise felt duty-bound to return it to its former glory. 'I think we're entrusted with houses, which have to be looked after,' she says.

But first, there was decades of debris to clear away. 'There was no space to move,' says Louise. With the windows being boarded up for 25 years, the house was also cold, dark and draughty. The next few months were taken up by applying for planning permission, navigating building regulations and adhering to strict conservation area requirements. 'I wanted to honour the structure by working

around the existing spaces,' says Louise. 'Everything was purpose-built.'

Louise chose a warm palette of muted shades, punctuated with neon brights. 'I found that contemporary colours worked better than traditional,' she says. 'I chose neutral tones to let the features of the house to speak for themselves.' Though she had fun putting it all together, Louise admits to the odd disastrous buy. 'I had to take a few things back, so I got to know the sales assistants quite well,' she laughs.

'The whole project took more than a year,' she continues, 'but it was such an exciting time. Renovating this house was a challenging but rewarding experience — and definitely a great move for me.' 25



MASTER BEDROOM

A dramatic piece of art sets the mood and palette for this sober scheme.

Kensington cotton bedspread, £40, TK Maxx. Moooi double-shade floor lamp, £529, Houseology



BATHROOM

A simple neutral scheme was designed around the original features.

Bali basin, £70, Victoria Plumb, is a similar style to this one

CALM & COLLECTED

Thanks to vintage buys and craft-fair bargains, Hayley Trenholm and Brian McCabe's home is a haven of tranquillity

FEATURE MAGGIE COLVIN | PHOTOGRAPHY SPIKE POWELL

INSPIRING



HOME TRUTHS

THE PROPERTY

Grade II listed Arts & Crafts villa, built in 1903

LOCATION Cheshire

ROOMS Hall, sitting room, dining room, kitchen/breakfast room, cloakroom, four bedrooms, three bathrooms, attic room

PURCHASED 1997

PREVIOUS PROPERTY

'Before we bought this place, we lived in a small three-bedroom 1960s house nearby,' says Hayley.

DINING ROOM

'Painting the Edwardian-style mahogany chairs in a light shade was a labour of love,' says Hayley. Chairs painted in French Linen chalk paint, £18.95 for 1 litre, Annie Sloan. Metis stripe cream square tablecloth, £50, La Maison Bleue, is a match. Chairs upholstered in Belmont fabric, £65m, Cabbages & Roses

Viewing a run-down home that required a huge number of urgent updates would put most people off buying it, but not Hayley Trenholm and Brian McCabe. 'When we were house hunting, our son Henry was two, so finding a place close to good schools in this part of Cheshire was our top priority, and we knew this was a respectable area,' says Hayley. 'We were competing with many parents of the same mindset, so it was a case of too many people chasing after too few houses in the same catchment area and we didn't hold out much hope. But their luck was in.'

The couple went to look at an Grade II listed Arts & Crafts house and fell in love with it. It was badly in need of attention, with its run-down interiors from a 1960s modernisation, but they were able to see beyond that. 'I think the Arts & Crafts style is an acquired taste,' says Hayley, 'and it took us a bit of time to fully appreciate its quirky charm.' There were sawn-off corners to some rooms and square bays in others, as well as right-angled double windows that wrap around corners, and stained-glass bullseye windows – all typical of the Arts & Crafts vernacular, and all lovingly restored by Hayley and Brian.

Inside the house a centrally placed staircase divides into two and leads to an attic room that has breathtaking views of the Peak District. 'It reminds me of the attic in Frances Hodgson Burnett's *The Little Princess*,' says Hayley. 'We all loved this space



HALL
Circular windows, which add interest, are typical of the Arts & Crafts era. Floorboards painted in Moles Breath estate eggshell, £53 for 2.5 litres, Farrow & Ball. Bonham ceiling lantern, £238, Jim Lawrence

SITTING ROOM

'I wanted this space to be inviting,' says Hayley, who invested in the most comfortable sofas she could find.

Mirror and cupboard painted in Duck Egg Blue chalk paint, £18.95 for 1 litre, Annie Sloan. Cushions in Hatley Cerise fabric, £48m, Cabbages & Roses. Walls painted in Pointing estate emulsion, £38 for 2.5 litres, Farrow & Ball





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2



so much that we decided to keep it universal so we can all use it, which is typical of the whole house – it's very unconventional.'

Brian has been happy to leave the interiors to Hayley, and her style has blossomed over the years. The scheme is now pared-down, relaxed, uncluttered and calm with a backdrop of soothing sun-faded colours. 'I find most of my furnishings at local Mansion House Fairs, auctions and antique shops,' explains Hayley. 'I like to rummage around and find a scrap of vintage fabric to make it into some napkins or cushion covers. Transforming a run-down piece of furniture with a coat of paint and some care and attention gives me so much pleasure.'

After Hayley's mother downsized, a few Victorian mahogany pieces came into the mix, including the chest and grandfather clock in the dining room. 'They provide a homely dimension and a slight change of pace,' comments Hayley. 'You need some mahogany pieces to break up the predictability of a shabby chic interior in which everything is painted, including

1 KITCHEN
'This was a maple kitchen with honed granite worktops. We handpainted it for a fresh update,' says Hayley.

Base units painted in Charleston Grey estate eggshell; top units in Wimborne White estate eggshell, both £58

for 2.5 litres, Farrow & Ball. Lacanche range cooker with five gas rings, £4,050, Range Cookers

2 BREAKFAST ROOM
Traditional-style shutters and an upcycled fireplace complement the age of the house.

Dorchester pine dining table, £199, The Cotswold Company, is near-identical. Victorian chairs painted in Old White chalk paint, £18.95 for 1 litre, Annie Sloan. Byron pendant, £95, Neptune. For similar shutters try Lasso, prices on application

DESIGN TIP *'If you see something you like, buy it there and then, otherwise you may never find it again. You can always find a home for it afterwards'*

the floorboards. I also like the fact Mum's old furniture links us with previous generations and reminds us that this house has a history.' Other original features are still intact, too, such as the old servant's bells in the breakfast room. 'When we first moved in, Henry and his friends loved ringing these,' says Hayley.

Having completed work on her house and enjoying it so much, Hayley and her friend Nikki have set up their own business, Love My Design, which focuses on upcycling furniture. 'We started by helping each other,' explains Hayley. 'Nikki painted my kitchen with me and vice versa, then it just evolved from there.' Now the pair juggle their time to fit the business in around family life. And it doesn't stop there, with a new camper van being the latest project to catch Hayley's eye. 'I've been busy making cushions for it,' she says. 'After taking the time to decorate this place and uncovering its natural beauty, I now find it hard not to look at the design potential of everything.' 25



MASTER BEDROOM

'This is visually the most peaceful area with its soft palette,' says Hayley. Classical white Bella bed, £973, Sweetpea & Willow. Floorboards painted in Elephant's Breath estate eggshell, £53 for 2.5 litres, Farrow & Ball. Chest of drawers painted in Old Ochre chalk paint, £18.95 for 1 litre, Annie Sloan

BATHROOM

A wooden ladder is a quirky alternative to hooks and shelving.

Marlborough bath, £2,590, Victoria + Albert. Aldsworth shelf ladder, £155, Garden Trading, is comparable



ATTIC ROOM

With breathtaking views of the Peak District, this space has become multifunctional and is used for reading, unwinding and playing.

Torino single day bed, £145, Sofa & Home, is a good match. Roberts Revival mini DAB/FM digital radio in cream, £130, John Lewis



OVER THE SHOP

Hedda Pier and her husband Michiel Lenstra had a vision that a commercial property could be transformed into a unique family home

FEATURE ISOBEL DIAMOND | PHOTOGRAPHY HOLLY MARDER



SITTING ROOM

A pale scheme is a calm backdrop for vibrant cushions, original artworks and wood furniture. Lower half of walls painted in Mizzle estate emulsion, £38 for 2.5 litres, Farrow & Ball. Koldby cowhide rug, £180; Karlstad three-seater sofa in Blekinge white, £300, both Ikea. Teal blue Panama cotton sofa cover is similar, £239, Bemz

DISTINCTIVE



HOME TRUTHS

THE PROPERTY Four-storey townhouse, built in 1897
LOCATION The Hague in the Netherlands

ROOMS Sitting room, kitchen-diner, study, playroom, four bedrooms, two bathrooms

PURCHASED 2011
PREVIOUS PROPERTY

'Before moving here, we lived in a period ground-floor flat nearby,' says Hedda.



DINING AREA

The custom-made oak table and matching bench make a striking centrepiece, while mismatched chairs complete the look.

The Lourmarin distressed wood dining table, £1,196; and Avignon mango wood bench, £180, both Maisons du Monde, would suit this space. The Sevilla grey cantilevered chair, £95, Habitat, is similar. Norm 69 X-large pendants in white, £125 each, Normann Copenhagen

**KITCHEN-DINER**

The sleek cabinetry coordinates well with the black worktop.

Fantasy Oak units are comparable, from £2,108, Magnet. Cooke & Lewis designer black laminate square-edge kitchen worktop, £152 for 3m, B&Q, is a good match

**PLAYROOM**

A rich maroon scheme combined with pops of pastel is a subtle contrast against the wicker baskets.

Walls painted in Brinjal estate emulsion, £38 for 2.5 litres, Farrow & Ball. Maffens basket, £18 each, Ikea, is similar. Otis rug, £870, House of Rym

When Dutch couple Hedda Pier and Michiel Lenstra went in search of their first family home, they were smitten by a 19th-century townhouse in The Hague. The four-storey property had previously been commercial premises and had changed guises over the years, from a grocery shop to a doctor's surgery. 'We were looking for something we could transform,' says Hedda. They also needed space for their children Stella, 4, and Phineas, 2. Although the couple were attracted by the house's unique layout and the 13ft ceilings on the ground level, its location was the big draw. 'It's just a 10-minute bike ride from the beach,' says Hedda.

Turning the property back into a residential dwelling meant embarking on a large-scale renovation. Forsaking the services of an architect, Hedda created the plans, oversaw the structural planning, and left her marketing job to oversee the project. 'Managing it full-time made everything a lot less stressful,' she says. Hedda not only worked closely with the contractors, but also took charge of the decoration throughout. Across every room, she has blended rich, autumnal colours with pastel tones. Nature-inspired furnishings, vintage and reclaimed pieces, artworks and vibrant textiles make the space feel both cool and tranquil in summer and cosy for the colder months.

Hedda and Michiel planned the layout of their house to allow plenty of family time. 'The children have free rein downstairs,' says Hedda. On the ground floor, the pair created a large kitchen-diner at the back. The front room, which still has the original shop windows, has become a playroom with a sophisticated scheme of dark maroon. 'It has a sofa and it's become more of an informal family room for us,' says Hedda. 'The first-floor sitting room is what's known as the "fancy room" – we watch TV there and have a glass of wine on the adjacent roof terrace in the summer months.' To complete their home, the couple converted the attic into a study, where the decor is bolder and more experimental.

Having grown up in Ghana, Hedda's taste is influenced by African art and design. 'I like strong prints and deep shades,' she says. 'Although there are plenty of Scandinavian touches here, the Dutch style is very contemporary and clean and that's not really me.' The combination of mixed patterns, contrasting palettes and layers of texture succeeds in feeling serene rather than overwhelming. 'Visitors are surprised by the amount of different colours and materials, and that it doesn't look too busy,' says Hedda. Though her style may look perfectly planned, it has grown organically. 'Calm and eclectic is how I describe my home and it suits us down to the ground.' 25

I STELLA'S BEDROOM

The cute pink and white scheme, lace curtains and bunting are given a grown-up feel with the leather armchair.

Vintage leather armchair, £995, Rose & Grey, is similar. Farg Form bunting, Moln Cloud, £35, Northlight Design, is a match

2.5 litres, Farrow & Ball. Kartell Spoon office chair by Antonio Citterio, £449, Heal's, has a similar look

2 STUDY

Handmade bookcases with a built-in desk make maximum use of the space, while the painted floor adds a splash of colour.

Arsenic floor paint, £58 for

3 BATHROOM

The bright, contemporary wall tiles look striking with the ornate mirror and cream mosaic floor.

Godmorgon/Odensvik hi-gloss grey wash stand, £240, Ikea. For similar blue tiles try the Belleza Midnight tile, £4.60 each, Topps Tiles. The Dorneywood mirror, £179, The Chandelier & Mirror Company, has the same look

DECORATING TIP *'Use professional decorators and good quality paint, as it really makes a difference – water-based types are great for children's rooms'*



MASTER BEDROOM

The wallpaper is a unique and playful take on wood panelling, while the white painted floorboards give the space a softer, feminine feel. Piet Hein Eek Scrap Wood wallpaper, £158.21 per roll, Wallpaperwebstore.co.uk. Starling's Egg floor paint, £59 for 2.5 litres, would work here, Little Greene. Labour and Wait's green enamel lampshade, £45, is identical



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WHERE TO BUY

September's list of contact numbers and web addresses

A Abraham Moon 01943 873181, moons.co.uk
Adrian Pearson 0161 834 6251, lep-architects.co.uk
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Alexander & Pearl 020 8508 0411, alexanderandpearl.co.uk
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Ambiente Direct 0870 005 2275, ambientedirect.com/en
Anglepoise 0239 222 4450, anglepoise.com
Annabel James 0845 548 0210, annabeljames.co.uk
Annie Sloan 01865 713089, anniesloan.co.uk
Anthropologie 08000 026 8476, anthropologie.eu
A Place For Everything 0844 414 2885, aplaceforeverything.co.uk
Aquajade Bathrooms 01524 273007, aquajade.co.uk
Art.co.uk 020 8435 6556
Artifact Lighting 0238 194 3014, artifact-lighting.com
Artisanti 0345 259 1410, artisanti.com
Aspace 0845 872 2500, aspace.co.uk
Atlantic Shopping 0121 230 1644, atlanticshopping.co.uk

B Baker Furniture 020 8878 1994, bakerfurniture.com
B&Q 0333 014 3098, diy.com
Barbed 020 8878 1994, barbed.co.uk
Barcham Trees 01353 720950, barcham.co.uk
Bathrooms.com 0845 867 1189
Bathroom Supplies Online 0800 612 2606, bathroomsuppliesonline.com
Bathstore 0800 023 2323, bathstore.com
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C Cabbages & Roses 020 7352 7333, cabbagesandroses.com
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Cast Fireplaces 01773 749060, castfireplaces.co.uk
Catalog 01312 252888, cataloginteriors.com
Cath Kidston 08450 262440, cathkidston.com
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Clarke & Clarke clarke-clarke.com
Clippings clippings.com
Cloudberry Living 0330 123 3301, cloudberryliving.co.uk

Coppice Old Pine 01989 769625, coppiceoldpine.co.uk
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- | | |
|-------------------------------------|---------------------------------|
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| 152 Blinds | 148 Lighting |
| 148 Conservatories | 152 Miscellaneous |
| 147 Fabrics & Decoration | 148 Sofas & Sofabeds |
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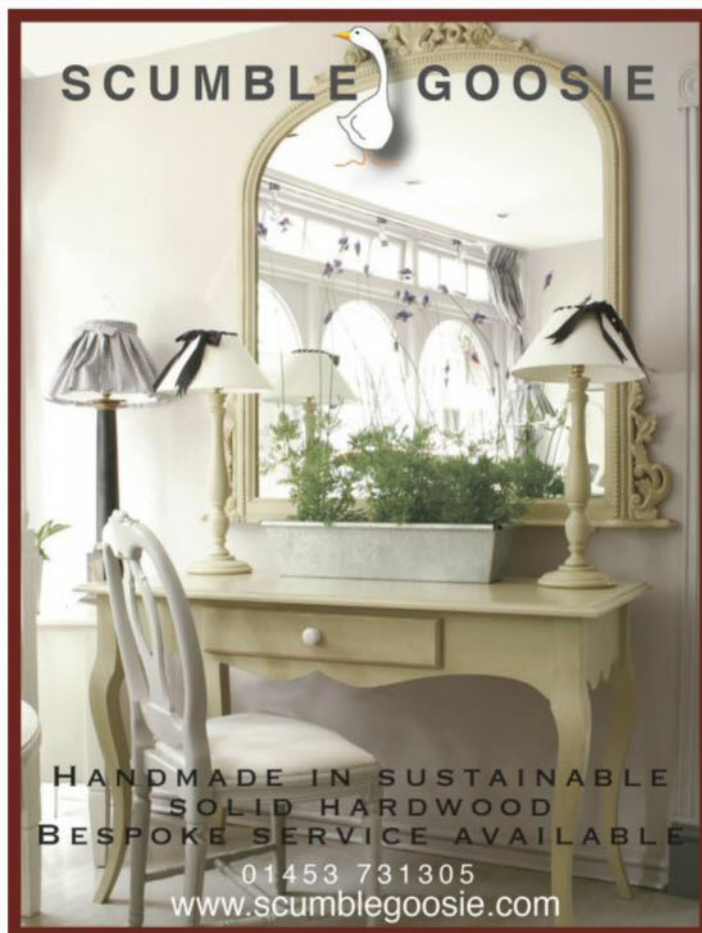
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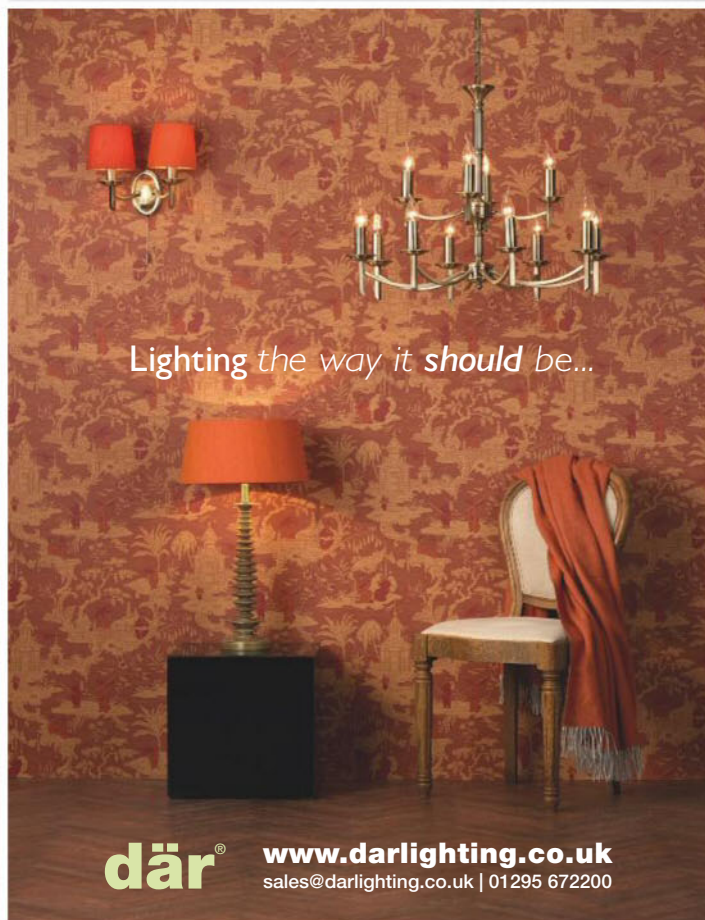
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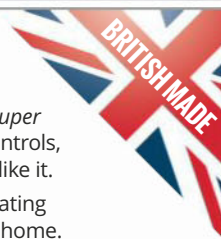
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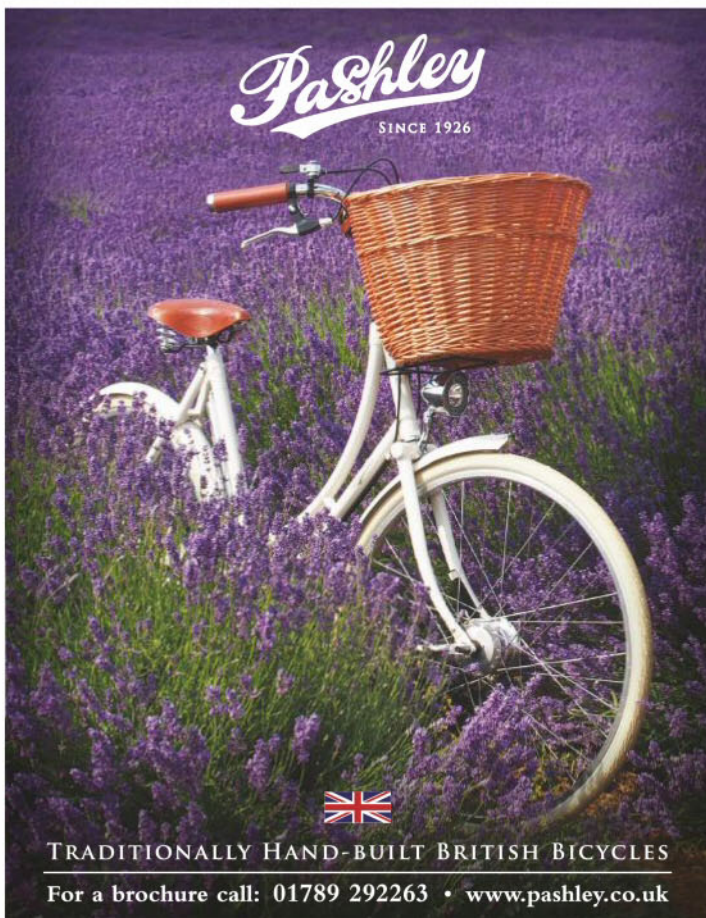
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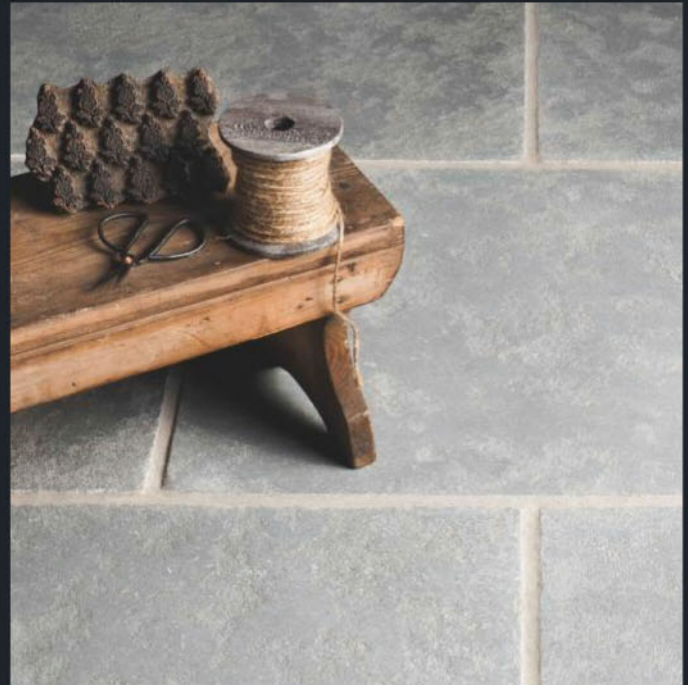
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ROOM ENVY

Each month we bring you a scheme that intrigues, delights or dazzles us

It's important to get the right balance between bold and neutral, and this modern country kitchen has got it spot on. Cabinetry painted in four shades – an aubergine island, lavender cook station, pink corner cabinet and a green larder – gives the illusion of freestanding furniture in this pretty pastel scheme.

To keep the units centre stage, the rest of the palette is modern and neutral, but

not at the expense of style. Wooden chairs add a natural touch, the floors and walls inject light, and a sleek stainless steel tap, extractor and cabinet handles lend modern practicality to this candy country look.

The result is a cosy kitchen that pulls off the trick of being carefully planned (the jewel-toned glass bottles that match the cabinetry colours are an inspired touch), while still looking casual and welcoming. 25

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