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10

ways to update
your bathroom
on a budget

BEFORE + AFTERS

60 PAGES OF
STUNNING HOME
RENOVATIONS

SHOPPING EDIT

- ▶ HOME OFFICE STORAGE
- ▶ COFFEE MACHINES
- ▶ CLASSY CURTAINS

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ON-TREND
WALLPAPER
DESIGNS

BOLD
& BRIGHT
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FROM THE EDITOR

When my husband and I were searching for a new house a few years back, I was adamant about one thing: I wouldn't buy a property that needed a kitchen renovation. So, we settled on a 1937 home with a nicely updated kitchen... and three bathrooms that were sorely outdated. I'm talking floor-to-ceiling red tile from the 1960s outdated.

If I had to do it all over again, I'd reprioritise. Taking on three bathroom renovations is far more costly and labour intensive than the single kitchen rehab I was avoiding. Three years later, I'm still living with two seriously ugly bathrooms, and one upgraded to just OK with the help of paint and light cosmetic changes. I'm feeling a new sense of motivation thanks to this issue, however. Our feature on a homeowner's luxe bathroom on a budget (page 116) proves a high end feel can be achieved for less than £6k, and in under two weeks. The transformation is amazing, and has eliminated my list of excuses in one fell swoop. At the same time, our cost-cutting guide to bathroom renovations (page 120) has given me a practical template to follow for my first remodel (key takeaway: don't change the layout!).

Another highlight of this issue is our feature on the latest wallpaper trends (page 41). Unlike bathroom renovations, this is one DIY project I can't stop doing around my own home. Wallpapering is quite an easy task once you get the hang of it, and there are few

W



décor updates to rival it when it comes to impact. The right print can completely change the look of a room.

For expert tips on planning a major addition to your home, our guide to rear extensions (page 71) covers permitted development, breaks down project costs and includes plenty of style inspiration. Keep it handy if you're thinking about tackling your own soon.

Whether your project plans include mini or large-scale makeovers, you'll find plenty of ideas and direction in the pages ahead. See you in the spring!

KAITLIN MADDEN
EDITOR IN CHIEF
@KAITMADDEN

BUDGET BATHROOM BUYS



For the no-maintenance plant lovers. Faux plants honeycomb planter, £14, Matalan



These towels are the perfect injection of colour. Honey tile tassel towel, from £4, George Home



This bath mat is super cute. Peachy Clean bath mat, £19.99, Red Candy



Vathy soap dish, £8, Garden Trading



A fancy mirror for £15? Yes, please! Hexagon chain mirror, £15, Habitat

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YEAR – SEE
PAGE 8 FOR
MORE DETAILS





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GOING ECO

Look out for this logo on our favourite sustainable picks



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SPRING SWING

You can restock your home as easily as your kitchen cupboards as Habitat becomes the lead furniture and furnishings brand for Sainsbury's and Argos. The iconic make that has shaped our homes since the 1960s will be available to buy in selected Sainsbury's supermarkets, as well as online through Habitat, Sainsbury's and Argos. Swing into spring and fill your trolley with bold, retro-style pieces, like these from the brand's Apartment Living collection.

Multicolour 3L floor lamp, £55; Cooper two-seater sofa, £449; Cooper charcoal bouclé armchair, £350; black & white reversible flatweave cotton rug, £95; Loft living table, £35; mid-century record holder table, £42; Neo glass shelving unit, £119; Kota armchair in orange, £129; mid-century ornaments, from £2.75, and cushions, from £12, all Habitat

Callie fabric wingback chair in Petrol Blue, £180

Agra large palm faux floral plant, £30

Swift velvet three-seater sofa in green, £1,195

Agra Pinsonic velvet throw, £25

Exposed bulb lamp, £12

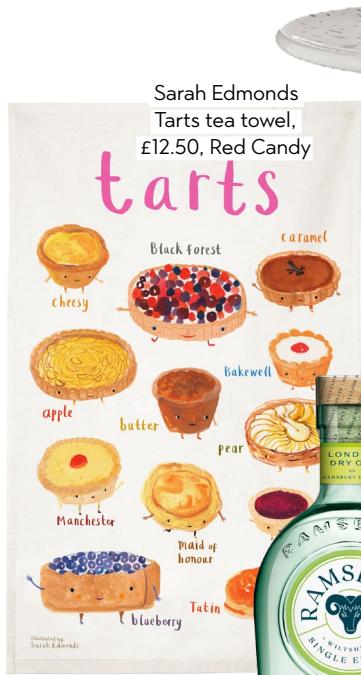
Mid-century mustard wall clock, £20

EASY LIVING

Get into the groove with Habitat's punchy colours and shapes that draw on its mid-century heritage

FEATURE ANNA MORLEY AND ALISON JONES

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Mad for it

Ever longed for a personal home stylist to root out those tasteful, interesting pieces perfect for your space? Acclaimed interiors writer Mad About the House, aka Kate Watson-Smyth, offers an expert hand through designstorey.shop – a curated online store where she's sourced the 'hidden gems of the high street and discovered new brands and small businesses'. Edited down to 50 of the best of each item, she even advises how to style them. Sign us up.



UNDER
£35

Mother love

Give your mum the gift she deserves on March 14 with one of these fab presents – all for no more than £35.

Leopard Home doormat, £29.50, Oliver Bonas



Bookworm

Me Time: The self-care guide that transforms you from surviving to thriving by Jessica Sanders (£9.99, White Lion Publishing)

It can take just a minute to restore some balance if you're struggling with the demands of your life. This book makes self-care a quick and regular practice, explaining why you need it and how you can nurture yourself with small acts or big adventures. An essential aid to help you cope and flourish.



Witty colours –
Enchanted Ivy
and Satin Lining
Flat matt emulsion,
from £35 for 2.5ltrs;
English Fire,
Mustard Jar and
Powder Blue matt
emulsion, £14 for
2.5ltrs; Dance Fever
Feature Wall paint,
£14.50 for 1.25ltrs,
all Crown

COLLAB ALERT

ROLL WITH IT

Let pattern blossom on your walls with new papers that speak to your daring, even decadent side. Months spent staring at four walls has prompted a rise in online searches for wallpaper. Now Lick Home has collaborated with digital flower arranger Natasha Coverdale, aka Studio Coverdale, on two limited edition designs – Mars Meadow and Electric Poppies – in two colourways, with layers of fantastic foliage. Rolls cost £125, and a tree is planted for every one bought.



Mars Meadow 01,
£125 per roll, Lick

Iconic Cubik
painted electric
pendant in
matt black, £80



Iconic Cubik
painted electric
pendant in
matt gold, £72



Hanging out

Bring a new angle to your lighting with these cage pendant lights from Iconic Lights. They come in matt black or matt gold for a touch of geometric goth or glam, both for under £100.

BOXING CLEVER

Home life has become all about multipurpose living: we want our spaces to work a little harder and the things in it to have more than one use. The Slumber Box footstool from Loaf isn't just comfy extra seating/table space – it pulls out into a double guest bed when needed, too. With its padded headboard and pick of more than 140 fabric finishes, it guarantees sweet dreams.



The Slumberbox
guest bed, from
£445, Loaf



Piano chest of drawers, £550, Next

Grown up glamour

Art Deco is the design gift that keeps on giving. Chic and timeless, we still feel its influence today – including in Next's bedroom and living room furniture for SS21. Curved edges and a line motif offer a quiet sophistication, with marble tops and gold-coloured brass detailing adding a hint of richness. It's a 'Mix me a martini while I dress for dinner' look that we fully embrace.



Tan spiked terracotta lamp with raffia shade £195, Rose & Grey

SPEND V SAVE

Switch on to a crafted look with textural lights that offer a hint of nature



CONSCIOUS COMFORT

This isn't just any sofa – made from zero foam, recyclable springs, sustainably sourced timber and soft fabric woven from recycled yarn, the Pioneer from Sofology is leading the way in green living. The plump seat cushions contain a fibre developed from recycled plastic materials sourced from Plastic Bank – a social enterprise that helps prevent ocean pollution. It's also super-stylish with its open, embracing design. Starting with a loveseat, the Pioneer costs from £999.



Global Explorer raffia table lamp, £110, Amara

Cleverly compact

When Sallie Agnihotri, founder of small space specialist Urbansize, moved into a small period terraced house, she discovered most regular storage didn't fit. So she's designed shallower desks, bookcases and units that slot into slim alcoves. They can store everything you need, including home office contents, while still making the house feel spacious. Scandi-inspired, made from oak or beech, this pared back, practical furniture is on legs to show off more floor.



Ladder desk, £295, Urbansize



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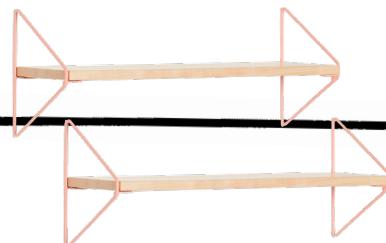
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COMPANY

STYLISH OFFICE STORAGE

Create the perfect home work space, whatever your budget, with these practical, on-trend solutions. Just remember to save room for those fluffy slippers



Gimmick blue wall shelf, £14.99, JYSK



Wooden shelf in apricot, £30 each, Bobby Rabbit



String pocket walnut-black wall shelf, £126, Utility Design



Copenhagen two-tone two-drawer desk, £170, Argos



Cult Studio Astrid ash wood desk in black and gold, £299, Cult Furniture



Outta Sight desk, £495, Loaf



Alex beige drawer unit on castors, £99, Ikea



Mustard Made Shorty locker in mustard, £129, Oliver Bonas



Marlborough drawer unit, £165, Garden Trading



Terrazzo desk organiser, £18, Rose & Grey



Hay tool box in Dusty Green, £25, Skandium



Ferm Living Grib toolbox in olive, £59, Kin Home

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STUDIO



THE REAL TEAL

Accentuate your abode with the soothing tones of blue-green and grey found in the 2021 Benjamin Moore colour of the year, Aegean Teal

1 Där Lighting Group Dynamo 1-light pendant in blue, £64.67, Lights2go 2 Cole & Son Botanical Botanica Bluebell wallpaper, £105 per roll, Rockett St George 3 Scatter cushion in Soft Blue clever laundered linen, from £25, Loaf 4 Aegean Teal 2136-40, from £24 per 940ml, Benjamin Moore 5 Angel Bay Resistance Ultra matt emulsion, £44 for 2.5ltrs, Graham & Brown 6 Teal Tension Mixing matt emulsion, £29.16 for 2.5ltrs, Dulux 7 Ernest armchair in Lagoon brushed linen cotton, £840, Sofa.com 8 Lali chest of drawers in teal and brass, £599, Made 9 Louis De Poortere Traditional Fading World medallion rug in Jade Oyster, from £74, The Rug Seller 10 Marea plate in blue, £10, Dwell 11 Esme two-seater sofa in Howell Azure Blue, £930, Living It Up 12 Piacenza mix turquoise wall tiles, £29.99 per m², Tile Mountain 13 Wonki Ware squat-style ceramic mug in Marine wash, £16.95, The Grey Works 14 Palm Springs Turquoise porcelain tiles, £66 per m², Porcelain Superstore 15 HAY conical candle set in Ice Blue, Arctic Blue and Teal, £29, Amara

Inspired by nature

Anna spent a year transforming a time-warp 1930s semi into her family's forever home by adding two new bedrooms, a vaulted kitchen extension and soothing décor inspired by the forest views



WHY WE LOVE ANNA'S HOME...

After living in a Victorian property on a busy street, Anna and Sam struck gold in their search for the perfect family home when they viewed their 1930s semi. Despite its London postcode, the property sits on a cul-de-sac behind a green and overlooks Epping Forest. The décor had been untouched since the 1950s, so needed totally gutting, but thanks to its connection to nature and well-proportioned rooms, interior designer Anna could visualise their forever home.

During a six-month renovation they transformed the space by adding two extensions – the first a stunning vaulted open-plan kitchen-diner, and the second a two-bedroom loft extension with a bird's-eye view of the forest. Anna's design honours the house's Modernist beginnings while giving a nod to her beloved Scandi style. She used colours and materials in warm, earthy tones, inspired by its natural outlook.

Anna's own expressive watercolour paintings are displayed in gallery walls which add confident flourishes of colour throughout. Living in the property during lockdown allowed her to identify how to best use the space, moving around furniture and finishing touches to give the home that all-important feeling of hygge. With her background in design, Anna has created a home as harmonious in layout as it is with its surroundings.

Chandeliers,
Cult Furniture.
For similar **dining**
chairs, try Thelma
at Made. **Lockers**,
Sklum. For an
occasional chair
try Liang & Eimil
Kemper at House
of Isabella



Profile

THE OWNERS

Anna Lea-Wilson, an interior designer who runs Fern House London (fernhouse.london), her husband, Sam Silverman, a lawyer, plus their three children, Austin, Leo and Sadie, and cats, Betty and Barry

THE PROPERTY

A five-bedroom detached 1930s house in Upper Walthamstow, London

PROJECT COST

£190,000



OVER TO ANNA...

“The kitchen-diner has completely changed how we live – we finally have space to live and breathe. I always knew that I wanted to add a vaulted roof extension for the kitchen, but we used an architect to do the planning as we were adding a huge 4.5 metre extension and wanted to ensure it would be approved under permitted development. We changed the plans slightly by adding a triangular window to maximise natural light, which I love as it makes the room feel almost celestial. I changed the location of the kitchen a few times before settling on the perfect spot.

‘We went with a Wren kitchen as it came in a modern design and the exact shade of green I wanted. We added oversized open shelves, which are actually timber window boards from loveskirting.com held up with Ferm Living brackets. The quartz composite worktops were last to be installed and we ended up moving in before the finished pieces were delivered.

‘Having three children at home for five months during lockdown was intense, but this space allowed us to be together while all doing separate activities. I can cook or work at the kitchen island while the children draw together on the table. The open-plan layout is perfect for play, and at the end of the day their toys can be put back in their place. I added hidden cupboards behind the breakfast bar and bought lockers on their level from Sklum to make it easier to keep things tidy.

‘I’m obsessed with our dining chairs; they complete the room. They were an Ebay find from a restaurant that was closing down, by Italian brand L’abatte. They were an absolute steal and the colour and shape of them works so perfectly with the design scheme. We also use the two accent chairs, which were given to me by a friend, every day. They sat unused for so long, but I decided to spray the frames in matte black Rust-Oleum paint and then upholster them in a neutral bouclé fabric from Ebay.

TOP TIP

For a cohesive, pulled together look, pick key colours and repeat through your soft furnishings and prints on your gallery wall



‘The big garden was a huge draw when I viewed the property. Adding the bi-folds has been amazing as they provide a seamless connection into the garden. It feels like we live outside a lot of the time, which is perfect in spring and summer. We can’t wait to have dinner parties and barbecues out on the deck in summer with friends again.

Chairs, Homebase
(painted black)

We spend most of our time in the kitchen-diner, but I love having the option of retreating into the front room when it all gets too much in there! I chose the colour scheme for the whole house at the same time, and opted for a bold feature wall in Saxe Blue by Craig Rose to give this room a cosy feel. It took me ages to choose a picture to hang above the fireplace as I wanted something that would tone down some of the other elements in the room. We brought in pieces from our old home in various colours, and there are lots of textures from the sofas, wall hanging and rattan cupboard doors. Eventually I found this piece by Maggie Stephenson – I adore its simplicity. 

Print, Maggie Stephenson,
Linen sofa, French Connection,
Wall hanging, HK Living





Above Velvet sofa, Wayfair. For a similar lounge **chair**, try the Farrah woven rattan chair, Oliver Bonas

Right Pendant light, Habitat. Coat rack, Anthropologie. Sideboard, H&M Home

Our builder had to gut and plaster the whole house in order to update the electrics and pipes for heating as the house had been empty for 17 years. When we added new carpentry we wanted it to honour the period of the house, so we chose 1930s-style doors, as we had to change them to adhere to fire regulations. We also had new stepped skirting and architraves made to match the originals. We were lucky the stained glass windows were still intact and added a new front door to complement them.



PROJECT TIMELINE

VIEWED THE HOUSE
March 2019

DEMOLITION AND GUTTING OF THE PROPERTY BEGAN
September 2019

WINDOWS IN
February 2020

HOSTED FIRST FIREPIT NIGHT
September 2020

PURCHASE COMPLETE, AFTER PROBATE ISSUES
August 2019

LOFT EXTENSION AND DOWNTIME BUILD COMPLETE
January 2020

MOVED IN
March 2020

TOP TIP

Combine a rich colour up to picture rail level with a lighter shade above to give the illusion of more height in a room



We decided to put the kids' bedrooms on the first floor so that they could be close by when we were busy downstairs. I hoped that giving them the largest rooms would encourage them to use them as playrooms. The yellow and pink colour palette in my daughter's room is a nod to my own childhood obsession with these colours. To get the kids to tidy I added lots of storage like the pink locker. I chose leather and brass handles to update the original built-in wardrobe.

Lockers, Mustard Made,
Bed, IKEA. **Handles**,
Dowsing & Reynolds



Below Locker.
Mustard Made. For
a similar **pegboard**,
try Block Design.
For a **basket**,
try H&M Home



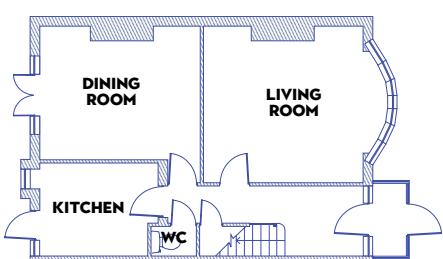
Above and right
Tiles, Mandarin Stone. **Vanity unit**, Lusso Stone. **Mirror**, Ikea. **Taps**, Soak. **Shelves**, Smallable Store

I'm proud of the bathroom because I fought hard for my design choices. Sam hated everything I'd selected, but I knew he just needed to have faith and now he's a fan. It feels like a sanctuary, which is hard to achieve in a house with three kids. In order to have a free-standing bath and separate shower, our builder took extra square footage from the old airing cupboard. The textured picture windows were delayed by six weeks, holding up the project as plastering couldn't begin until they were installed.

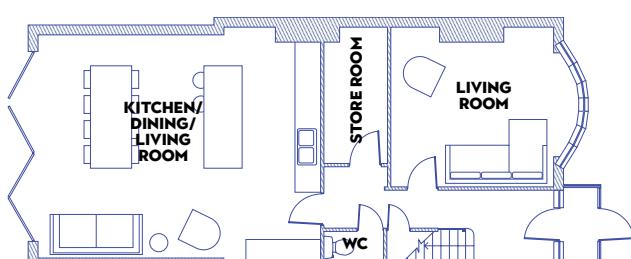
THE PLANS

GROUND FLOOR

BEFORE

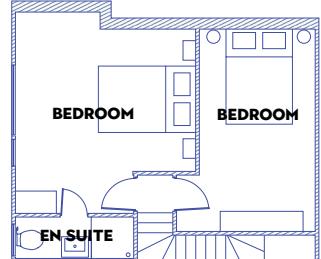


AFTER



LOFT

AFTER





TOP TIP

For a simple but striking splashback for the bath, use a colourful version of the white tiles used in the rest of the room

Costs & contacts

Build work £140,000

Glazing £22,000

Kitchen £20,000

Furniture £5,000

Planning fees £2,500

Architect Sean + Stephen,
020 7739 7142, seanandstephen.com

Interior architect/designer
Fern House, 0780 884 4005,
fernhouse.london

Glazing Hazlemere Windows,
hazlemere.co.uk

Kitchen Wren Kitchens,
wrenkitchens.com

When selecting furniture I tried to choose items that have mid-century shapes and features, mixing these with modern touches. In our bedroom, I wanted a feature wall behind the bed to ground the space, and picked a bed and lighting in light woods to give a nod to the forest, which you can look out over from the huge window in here.

'I create prints inspired by what I want to see in my home. They look great as part of a gallery wall, but I also have some displayed on the oversized shelves, which are hung throughout the house. They contain playful forms and shapes in a dusty colour palette to match the scheme I chose for the whole house.'

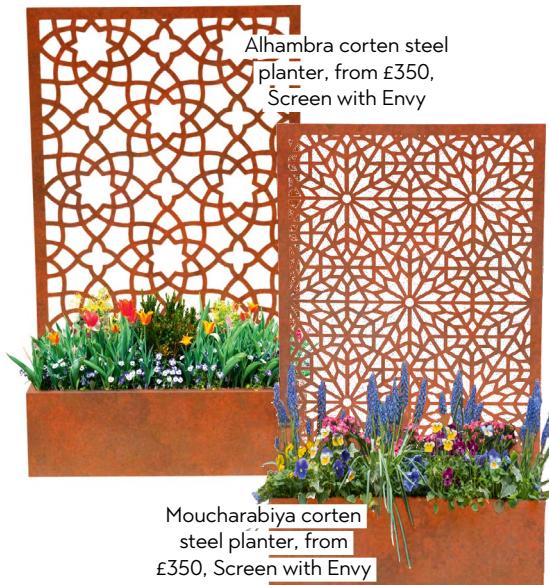
Bed, Made. Bench, H&M Home. Bedlinen, La Redoute and Ferm Living. Prints, Fig & Fern Studio



TOP TIP

Divide colours on a feature wall with a long shelf, which you can use to showcase a changing display of art and plants





PROJECT NEWS

THE LATEST IDEAS, TRENDS AND ESSENTIAL BUYS

GROWTH AREA

Zoning is as effective in gardens as it is in homes, creating distinct areas for relaxing or growing things. Start planning your layout so your green space is full of interest and places to be come summer. These new planters by Screen with Envy work doubly hard – the corten steel screens offer privacy while the planters can be filled with plants or herbs.

JUST AN ILLUSION

A natural wood floor brings authenticity and charm to any room, and the effect can be worth the little extra care it requires. But why not fake it with something that looks good, but doesn't need so much maintenance? Real Stone & Tile's Nordik Wood collection has the natural beauty of reclaimed timber – from the realistic grain to the unique imperfections – while being made from durable, easy-to-maintain porcelain. The wood-effect tiles enhance any scheme, even if you're yearning for a pared-back, minimal look that's soothingly clutter free.



Stay safe

Step up your home security without making your house look like a fortress that's bristling with precautionary gadgets. ERA Protect's new floodlight camera offers two in one protection. Controlled via an app, it's motion activated, lighting up your outside spaces. It's also a camera you can use to watch your home, or talk to visitors. It is £159.99, ERA Everywhere



SMALL BUT MIGHTY

The popularity of real fires shows no signs of cooling down; woodburners add instant character and warmth. This Vogue 700 woodburning fire is a twist on the conventional stove as it is inset discreetly into the chimney breast. The cast-iron door is a nod to industrial chic. Eco-design compliant for minimal emissions, it gives off 7kW of heat. Toasty! It costs from £1,695, Stovax





NuHolme smart desk,
from £475, Wooden
Furniture Store

Ahead of the curve

Smart meets style in the answer to your working-from-home needs. The NuHolme smart charging desk has curves to keep your mouse hand supported. It's also packed with tech, including QI fast wireless charging, a 2.1 Bluetooth compatible stereo speaker, touch sensitive control panel, USB ports and an AUX port – all cutting down on desk-top wiring. A drawer lets you clear away your work when you clock off.



Outdoor lights

Keep it lit when you're coming home with a light that will enhance your entrance



LOOKING FOR A PROJECT?

For less than £300,000, we've found two houses packed with potential to extend, update and improve – starting with creating your dream kitchen



BIRMINGHAM

Two-bed period terraced house – Hartledon Road, Harborne, Birmingham, B17, offers over £275,000, Martin & Co



PENRITH

Character three-bed detached house by a beck – Shallowford, Orton, Penrith, CA10, guide price £295,000, H&H Land & Estates



Invest in an expert

Sade Akinsanya, senior architectural designer at Resi (resi.co.uk), on why employing an architect can be a crucial part of a renovation.

ARE ARCHITECTS BEST SUITED TO BIGGER PROJECTS?

The architect is often seen as an elite expense, brought in for enormous projects. But our profession is more mundane (and useful) than that. As architects can help inform each stage of a process, they are well placed to break down the details of what your home transformation will entail. This includes professionals needed, budget and planning requirements. While many assume renovations to be a simple process, if you want to change the façade of your property, remove a chimney, or alter a wall shared with a neighbour, there will be legalities for you to consider.

WHAT ARE THE PITFALLS OF NOT HIRING ONE?

Going in blind can expose you and your finances to some nasty surprises. Projects can be derailed by unforeseen costs should you not follow correct procedures. You may also face a court battle.

CAN THEY IMPROVE MY PLANS?

An architect can maximise the potential of your project. Renovating is no small feat, so why not get the most out of it? I help homeowners discover how much space they could get for their budget, while also helping them explore design options they may not have otherwise considered.

ARE THERE ADVANTAGES OTHER THAN JUST USING BUILDERS?

Many people come into the process only considering how much square footage they can add, or simply focusing on the latest trends. But there are other factors that go into great design. How does your family like to eat? Do you need space for hobbies? How much natural light do you get? Will your needs change in 10 years? A good architect will consider these things when putting your plans together.



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THE BIG DEBATE

WOULD YOU DECORATE LIKE YOUR PARENTS?

Does your décor give you déjà vu or have you left those styles far behind? Two readers reveal all



YES

'I've definitely been influenced by Mum, but she had good taste.'

Mel Sinclair (@its_all_about_the_house) lives with her husband and two daughters in a modern semi in Fife, Scotland

'My mum likes to remind me that some things I do to my house, she did 20 years ago. When I was growing up, she did an HND in interior decorating. The house continually had projects going on in it. I'd get home from school, go to my room and find the floorboards painted or the walls redecorated.'

'I've definitely been influenced by her. We have similar taste, and I have her passion for interiors. Being forced to watch *Changing Rooms* regularly and having all the interiors magazines around the house was where it all stemmed from.'

'When I was decorating my daughter's room, I wallpapered halfway up the wall and did a dado rail because it's quite small and having wallpaper floor-to-ceiling would have swamped it. Dado rails featured quite heavily throughout the house when I was young, so that threw it back. I probably wouldn't repeat the carpets, as they were flocked, floral and quite garish, but Mum had good taste so most things were done well.'

'There were times I'd find my whole room reshuffled or swapped with my brother's. That's something I can relate to – if a piece of furniture doesn't fit in my daughters' bedrooms, before you know it, the girls have swapped rooms.'

'I think you're always influenced by the past. My mum still likes to decorate, but the tables have turned and now she'll ask me for advice.'

WORDS ALISON JONES



NO

'Our house could have been sponsored by Laura Ashley – it all matched.'

Emily Smith (@emilysmith30) and her husband live with their two sons in a three-bedroom semi in Stafford

'Mum went through a phase when it was all about Laura Ashley. I went away for the weekend with my sister and when we came back everything in our bedroom was in the Honeysuckle print; the wallpaper, the curtains, the pillowcases. She'd wrapped our exercise books in wallpaper, and made pen pots that she then covered in it. Everything was a sea of pink and peach. She'd even bought toiletries that had peach packaging.'

'It was overwhelming, like a nightmare. I felt lucky that she'd spent time doing this for me and my sister, but also thought, "Oh my God!". It was like a dream where you're stuck in a crowd and can't escape; it was almost suffocating.'

'Even in my brother's room everything matched, though it was more masculine. Our house could have been sponsored by Laura Ashley. Mum had a wallet for each room with samples of wallpaper, paint and fabric, so she could match things to it if she was out shopping.'

'I think that's why I have more of an eclectic taste, and why I don't do wallpaper. I prefer block colours, and I can't have everything all matchy matchy. I can't even plant honeysuckle in the garden without having flashbacks.'

'When Mum's style changed and she had a bit more money, everything had to be antique. You'd be scared to put anything on the table in case it left a ring. And someone sat on one of the dining chairs and it broke. That's why I don't mind buying things like Ikea benches now; I don't want to feel that something is one of a kind and irreplaceable.'

'I understand why she did it, and bless her for it, but the way she decorated has had such an effect on me that I just couldn't do it.'

I did a dado rail in my daughter's room – that threw it back. They featured heavily when I was young

NEXT MONTH: WOULD YOU REDO A PRICEY DECORATING MISTAKE OR LIVE WITH IT?

REALHOMES.COM

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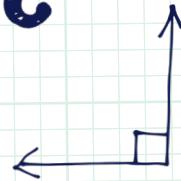
STYLE MATHS

Multiply your front entryway's style for less than £300 with our edit of the latest schemes and how to create them on a budget

$$(a+b)^2$$

$$1+2=$$

$$\pi$$



$$x \times y$$

£282.50

£17.50 LEFT FOR SOME COLOURFUL PLANT POTS

SLEEK MODERN

•1A•

The House Nameplate Company house number, £25, John Lewis & Partners

+



'Happy' door mat, £19.50, Bombay Duck

HAPPY

+



Hali wall light in antique silver, £189, LimeLace

=

TRANQUIL NATURALS



Wooden bench, £115.99, Wayfair

+

Kaare pastel string lights, £4.50, JYSK

+



Bayani outdoor artificial bamboo plant, £110, Maisons du Monde

+



Large bamboo hanging lantern, £59, Ella James

=

£289.49

£10.51 LEFT FOR A HALLWAY DIFFUSER TO KEEP THE CALM

COUNTRY CLASSIC



Brass dragonfly door knocker, £28, The Door Knocker Co.



Milk bottle holder, £25, Garden Trading

+



'Come in & cosy up' doormat, £38, Anthropologie

+



Small spiral artificial topiary tree, £136 for two, Homebase

=

£227

£73 LEFT TO GET YOUR MILK DELIVERED TO YOUR DOOR



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PAPER maker



Transform your scheme with an injection of fresh, on-trend wallpaper. This simple update is a fast way to make a big impact in your space, whatever your penchant for print may be



Vintage Tropical
Blush bespoke
mural, £35 per m²,
Graham & Brown

HOT TROPICS

If you're looking for escapism, set your sights on far-flung destinations with travel-ready scenes. Palm leaf and exotic animal prints give a totally tropical backdrop



1 Eden Tropical wallpaper in black, £16, I Love Wallpaper **2** Collection Botanica Folium 85946755 wallpaper, £61, Casadeco
3 Palmera Cubana Pink wallpaper, £175, Mind The Gap **4** Fresco Tropicana dark green wallpaper, £10, Wilko **5** Birds Birds by Karina Eibatova exotic tropical bird wallpaper, £99, Feathr **6** Essential Travellers Palmera 41 wallpaper, £219, Arte International **7** GoodHome Scolyme Cream Leaves textured wallpaper, £18, B&Q **8** Wild Jungle green wallpaper, £50, Newbie



Seville Flamenco
117/14043
wallpaper, £120,
Cole & Son

ARCHIVE PATTERN

Take inspiration from the past with the current trend for a heritage-style cottagecore aesthetic that merges a modern look with timeless design



1 Flora Nouveau Peacock Green wallpaper, £12, Dunelm 2 Compton wallpaper Onyx, from £125, House of Hackney 3 Blackthorn 216962 Autumn Morris wallpaper, £89, Wallpaper Direct 4 Henriette Fjord wallpaper, £40, John Lewis & Partners 5 Borastapeter Rosenvinge wallpaper 4501, £64, Your Stylish Home 6 National Trust Pomegranate Bazaar wallpaper, £101, Little Greene 7 The Chateau by Angel Strawbridge Wildflower Garden wallpaper, £30, Next 8 Night Bloom Damask wallpaper, £24.99, Wayfair



Coral Lapis
wallpaper,
£74, MissPrint

DYNAMIC GRAPHICS

If you like a shapely design, a geometric or curvy print could be ideal. Opt for a large or small scale depending on the size of the area and impact you want to make



1 Essentials Modulaire Module wallcovering 33, £125, Arte International **2** Christian Classic, £60, Graham & Brown **3** Ziggy Wedgewood wallpaper by Parker & Jules, £140, The Fabric Collective **4** Tourbillon BP 4807 wallpaper, £105, Farrow & Ball **5** Holden Metallic Glistening Industrial Maze geometric wallpaper in black silver, £13, I Want Wallpaper **6** Kempton wallpaper in cream gold, £63, Elizabeth Ockford **7** Fresco Maya blue wallpaper, £13.45, Homebase **8** Albany Geometric Cork Triangles wallpaper in blue and gold, £25, Wallpaper Direct



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big florals
are back

wallpaperdirect.com
designerpaint.com

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DESIGNER SPOTLIGHT

Support independent businesses and meet the creatives making waves in the interiors world.

This month: dried flowers

HANNAH MITCHELL, WIMBLE

Dried flowers are the perfect, long-lasting way to freshen up a room – and there's an art to creating these bouquets, as Hannah Mitchell knows. Wimble works with Dutch growers to create beautiful bunches of flowers and pampas grasses, all backed by the company's ethos of sustainability. We spoke to Hannah to find out more.

Hi Hannah! Describe your business for us.

We're Wimble, and through our dried flower bouquets we aim to bring a little nature, colour and design to your space, giving you that 'ah, I'm home' feeling.

How did you start out?

Wimble started as a passion project between my partner and I. I've always been creative, and from my time working within the wedding industry, pampas grass and

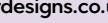
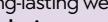
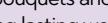
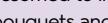
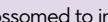
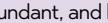
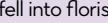
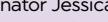
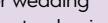
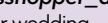
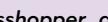
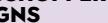
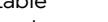
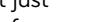
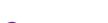
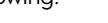
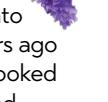
dried flowers popped onto my radar a couple of years ago and I was hooked! We booked onto a course and learned about tying, different flowers that complement one another and where we can source the best quality flowers. We're still new and learning every day, but can't wait to keep growing.

What's key to you?

Sustainability is at the core of our company, not just for our practices but also for the product's durability. We're proud to work with Dutch growers with 30 years in the industry producing the highest quality dried flowers. They're a family-run firm accountable for all of their environmental impact, from using water-based dyes to powering their warehouse with solar panels.

What do you like working with?

I'm all about colour and



Master bedrooms

(FIT FOR ROYALTY)

Your biggest bedroom deserves to be a five-star, sleep-encouraging sanctuary bursting with luxurious touches and stylish storage. Read on to make it so...

The older we get, the more we worship at the altar of a Solid Eight Hours of sleep, that mythical beast that children, work and/or renos snatch from under our noses as we exit the parental home. So why is the master bedroom so notoriously neglected on the decorating schedule? Possibly because the budget's been blown on that dreamy kitchen extension or smashing out walls downstairs. Fair enough. But once finances/energy levels have recovered, the master bedroom should be next for some proper TLC.

When scheming your master bedroom overhaul, think of it as an investment in your mood, since poor sleep guarantees grumpiness. Even if you don't get a lot of it these days, you deserve quality sleep in luxurious surroundings. Windows are a stellar place to start. Aim for pitch black darkness, which helps you fall asleep quickly and regulates melatonin levels, so it's deeper and more restful. Think black out blinds with black out lined curtains, or even solid wood shutters, and cut out all white and blue light from charging phones etc.

Talking of charging, the future of tech is moving towards wireless, with hair straighteners, epilators, toothbrushes (if

you don't have bathroom sockets), Fitbits, and phones all queued up for an overnight recharge. If this sounds familiar, include a charging station inside your wardrobes or bedside cabinet – wired with plenty of sockets of course – so that charging docks, and all those messy cables and blinking lights, can be shut away while you sleep.

Unless the Storage Gods have blessed you, it's wise to build in as many ways to stash your Zara/H&M addiction as possible. A divan with generous drawers or lift-up base can take bulkier items like luggage and winter coats, leaving more wardrobe space spare. Using the loft or spare room to house vacuum-packed off-season clothing may sound a hassle but it can feel like getting a whole new wardrobe every summer and winter, or at least prevent items getting lost at the back of drawers. If you don't wear something before it's time to pack it away again, there's a good chance it can be listed on Ebay.

Finally, don't underestimate the joy of proper grown-up bedding – we mean hotel-grade, not from Lidl's bargain bin. Hotel stays are likely to be thin on the ground this year, but you won't care if you're enjoying five-star facilities every night.

SNUGGLE DOWN

Dress your boudoir with fab furniture, restful colours and a big bed



Maxi Steel Grey ottoman storage bed, £599, Time4Sleep



Scandi Pink French bedlinen bundle, £237, Loom & Last



Ebro dressing table in blue, £299, Made



Careful Whisper canvas print by Ben Lowe, £375, Loaf



Odele dark wood bedside table, £179, Danetti



Headboards are red hot on the design front right now, offering a quick way to upgrade a dull divan. There are all manner of striking shapes, fabrics and timbers available, from elegant velvet scallops and herringbone parquet inspired, to classic buttoned and on-trend rattan. Go high for an attention-grabbing statement, or opt for built-in lights and storage for extra functionality. Our fave haunts include KD Loves, Perch & Parrow and Loaf.

Blackthorn

wallpaper, £89 per 10m roll, from The Queen Square Collection by Ben Pentreath for Morris & Co

A. Vol. III.



If Instagram hasn't already made you up your bedside storage game, check out #bedsidetablestyling and prepare to weep! The best set-ups don't prioritise prettiness over practicality, though. A bedside light is essential, but try a wall light or pendant if there isn't enough room for a lamp and your current novel. Mobile phones shouldn't be charged next to your head, but we all do it, so make sure there's a socket available. You can buy bedside tables with wireless charging to swerve dangling cables – check out Ikea and Bensons for Beds.



We all know they spend the night on the floor, but a master bed piled high with cushions is glorious to behold by day. The perfect way to introduce a punch of pattern, cushions and throws are also easy to switch up seasonally. Mix and match cushions like a pro by sticking to three tonally similar colours and varying the pattern, scale and texture. Most upholstery brands will help you by creating collections of fabrics that work well together – head to stylelibrary.com for inspiration.

Don't underestimate the power of a decent mattress for helping you to sleep like a baby (or perhaps teenager would be more desirable). Go for the biggest you can comfortably fit in the room – especially if you share a bed, as movement transfer is reduced the further apart you sleep – and the best quality you can afford. Finding the right mattress can be a matter of trial and error, so look for brands that offer at least 60 nights' guarantee with a full exchange or refund programme. And check the small print to ensure carriage is included.



Above Fabrics from the Levande Collection in Cameo, from £22 per m, I-LIV

Fitted furniture is more efficient space-wise than freestanding furniture, no contest. The downsides are it usually costs more, and you can't take it with you when moving house. The upsides, besides more space to hide your latest H&M splurge, is that it can resolve any issues with wonky walls and uneven floors. Plus, you can take it right up to the ceiling, which looks neater and avoids dust piling on top. Go for bi-folding or sliding doors if space is tight between wardrobe and bed. A well-designed, tidy interior can look just as good when the doors are open.



FIVE THINGS... you'll realise when you've done up your bedroom:

ONE

Ironing sheets is a mug's game. You tried it, once, in a fit of new-sheets-euphoria, and it took longer than Lockdown I and II combined. The crumpled look is in though, right?

TWO

Blackout blinds only really work for those without children/pets/jobs/lives. You still have to get up at an ungodly hour, but now you spend a few minutes in a hot mess of disorientated confusion you haven't experienced since nightclubs were a thing.

THREE

It doesn't matter how many laundry baskets you've integrated into those shiny new wardrobes, or how helpful the 'Laundry' sign on the front, carefully calligraphed with 'whites' and 'colours', the floor will always win. Always.

FOUR

Switching the old pine bed for a fancy divan was a big mistake, huge. Now you can't hide your clothes purchases under it before stealthily assimilating them into your wardrobe. 'This old thing? Had it ages...' True story since you forgot it was there.

FIVE

There is one, just one, downside to installing that fancy new en suite bathroom that you share only with your partner... and their digestive system. Somebody pass the nose peg.



Linden lamp by Kelly Wearstler for Visual Comfort, £731, Lightsource.
Walls painted in Temple Pure Flat emulsion, £50 for 2.5ltrs, Paint & Paper Library.
Interior design by Gunter & Co

PHOTOGRAPH FIONA WALKER-ARNOTT (ADELE ARMSTRONG)

Lightbulb icon
You probably didn't start your career thinking it'd end up in the bedroom, but that's the reality for many now working from home. Make the most of the situation with a dedicated desk area to aid focus without disturbing your night's sleep. Keeping all blinking blue lights off or hidden will help, as will storage for papers and peripherals. Sit with your back to the bed to concentrate on work; near a window will help with screen breaks. Make the design flexible with a desk that doubles as a dressing table – you may get back to the office one day.



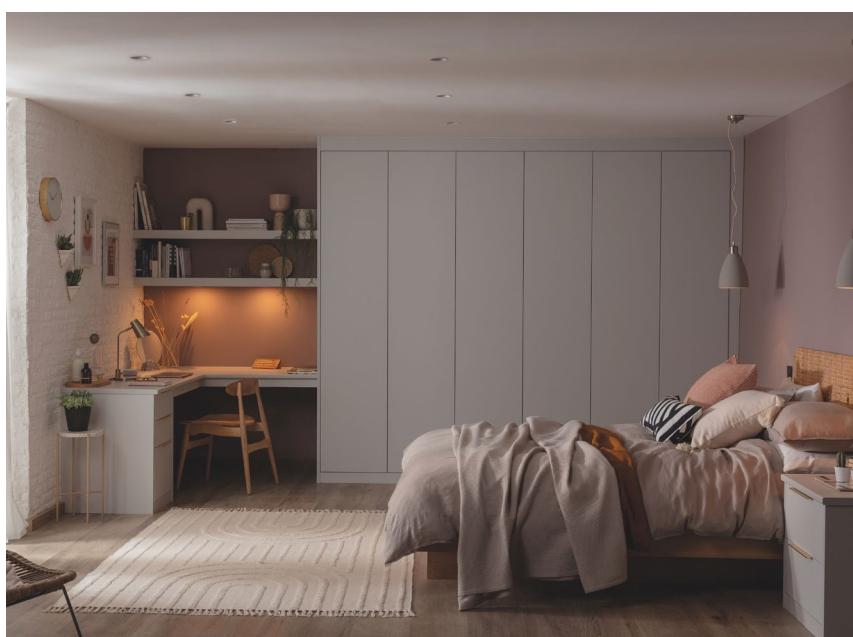
CRIMINAL JUSTICE WORKER ADELE ARMSTRONG

'This bedroom was extremely dated – think Artex ceilings and woodchip wallpaper. I wanted a really calming space so went for neutral colours, which I tend to be drawn to anyway. I love adding as many natural wood elements to a room as possible, so we went for wooden floors, which are really easy to clean, with a large cosy rug. We used skirting boards to create a shiplap feature wall as they come in such long lengths. I wanted it to look seamless with no joints in the wood. It also meant minimal cutting – an added bonus. And I decided against using a headboard to keep it looking minimal and really show off the shiplap. I love the look of large pendants instead of bedside lamps, and they free up space on the bedside tables. The bedding is a cotton bundle from Bedfolk, which I absolutely love. It gives the relaxed, crinkly look of linen but is super soft and – the biggest plus – no ironing! I always recommend layering textiles to create a really cosy feel. Using lots of different textures, from linen and knits to woods and metals, will really lift a neutral scheme.'

Insta: @hallie_and_harrisons_house



Left Manhattan home office and bedroom furniture in Dove, from £2,000, Sharps





Adding an en suite to your master bedroom can boost your home's value by at least five per cent, according to a Direct Line survey. But a room too poky to shower in without bashing your bottom is a waste of space and money. Think about pinching a metre or two from an adjacent room if necessary. An open-plan en suite is a great solution – it lets you use some of the bedroom footprint for a bath, and share daylight. Position the WC so it isn't visible from the bed – nobody needs an audience!



Copper Bateau bath, £8,850, and basin, £1,030, both William Holland. Bespoke washstand, £2,570; bespoke Carrara marble top and splashback, £2,892, all supplied by C.P. Hart



Introduce architectural details to a bland box of a bedroom (and hide bumpy walls) with panelling. Georgian or Edwardian panelling will take the décor in a classical direction, while reclaimed driftwood style panels lend rustic or beachy vibes. Shaker-style tongue and groove is timeless, and suits old and new homes. To DIY, try The Wall Panelling Company's self-assembly range.



Portafino made-to-measure bedroom furniture in Dusk Grey, from £3,250, My Fitted Bedroom



Give your master bedroom a sense of grandeur with a focal-point fireplace. It doesn't have to be working to provide an elegant feature. A recessed cast iron fireplace with slim mantelpiece won't take up too much space, and can be picked up fairly cheaply in reclamation yards and recycling centres. Add a marble surround for Downton-grade posh points, or pretty tiles for pattern.



HOME INSTAGRAMMER

LIZZY
LITTLECHILD

'We moved to our new-build home just over five years ago. The developers had whitewashed throughout inside, and with three young boys, it was a few years before we got around to redecorating. By then I was seriously ready to change things up. I dabbled with a feature wall, but it just wasn't bold enough. Going black (Valspar's Heron) was a huge decision. I was nervous, but once it was finished, I knew I'd made the right choice. I originally had a small gallery wall above the bed. As I like to change the pictures, I switched to picture shelves, which are far more flexible. The room isn't huge, but we've made the most of it storage-wise, with a wardrobe on the opposite side of the room and a proper chest of drawers instead of a bedside table. We also bought a bed with four drawers underneath, which really helps. If you're contemplating a bold move, do it and don't be swayed by other people's opinions. I haven't regretted it for a moment.'

Insta: [@in_the_house_that_we_live](#)





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CREATIVE WAYS WITH COLOUR BLOCKING

Paintbrush at the ready! Inject some vibrancy and fun into your home with the latest colourful ideas for your walls

As a nation, we're getting braver and bolder with our decorating choices. A quick scroll through Instagram sees us inundated with vibrant coloured living rooms, dark kitchens, and even lavishly patterned downstairs loos. A key player in this evolution of courage is the technique of colour blocking – seeing your walls as a blank canvas from which you can get creative. No longer are we filling every wall with one single colour, but we're embracing the painting tape and layering up shades for a statement, bespoke space. We've gathered some of the best colour blocking ideas of the moment, so you can colour outside the lines for a bright, playful and unique home.

FEATURE AMELIA SMITH



Divide and conquer

Wall panelling is a great way to bring texture and depth to your room, but it also adds a traditional feel. If you want to modernise the look, divide your room up and go for strikingly different colours in each section. Use a spirit level for a perfectly straight vertical line like this, and extend the colours onto your ceiling for extra drama. Green paint is Eva and white paint is Safety Pin, £44 for 2.5ltrs of Resistance Ultra matt emulsion, Graham & Brown



Lesson in geometry

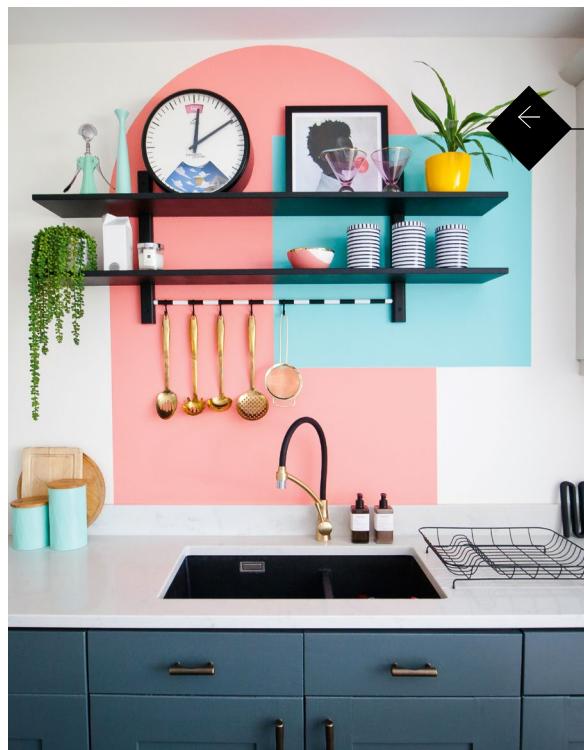
If there's one room where you can go wild with your paint brush and masking tape, it's a kid's room. Get fun and playful with large geometric shapes, like this bedroom by Lizzy at @lizzyhigham_interiorstyling, and choose bold colours that they love. Simply draw out your straight lines, apply masking tape along them for a crisp edge and paint in your chosen shades. For similar paint colours, try Lemon Punch, Black and Fine Cream, each £29.16 for 2.5ltrs of matt emulsion, Dulux

TOP TIP
Choose one bold colour and two more neutral colours, so you don't overwhelm the space



Take shape

Curved shapes and standout arches are making an impact among interiors updaters, and this kitchen focal point by Lissi at @oxfordone really stood out to us. We love the overlapping of the arch and square in happy, contrasting shades, creating a feast for the eyes while doing your washing up. It's the perfect backdrop to open shelves, helping to display and frame your decorative items.





High hopes

Sometimes it's best to take your cue from existing architectural features, such as picture rails, dado rails, or even corners like this, in order to decide how to combine multiple colours. Here, the soft pink base is brought to life by a rich red above the picture rail and corner edge. Red is English Fire, £18 for 2.5ltrs of matt emulsion; pink is Satin Lining, £37.99 for 2.5ltrs of matt emulsion, both Crown

OVER TO YOU

These ideas on Instagram have caught our eye



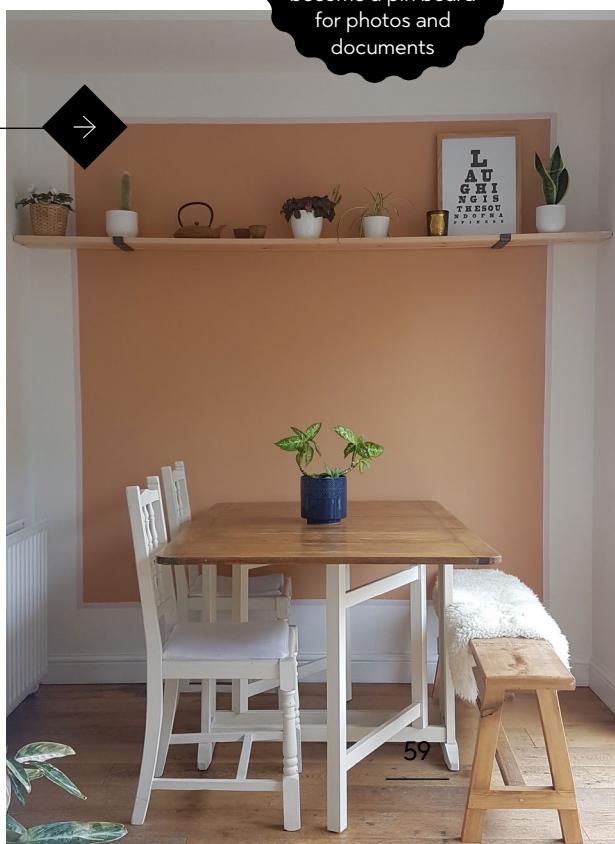


Go overhead

Create the illusion of a cocooning canopy above your bed by extending your colour block wall across your ceiling. This creative idea by Ellie at @atnumbersixtyeight was created by drawing out a thick stripe on top of a plain green wall, applying frog tape and painting at least two coats for a solid block of colour. This makes for a unique, statement and inexpensive focal point. Pink is Tutu and green is Sigh of Relief, each £28 for 2.5ltrs of Premium Blend, Valspar

Picture this

Colour blocking is a great way to zone specific areas, and painting a large picture window-style square, rather than the whole wall, is an easy way to do this. Use frog tape to mark out your perfect square or rectangle, and paint as normal. Square in Freckle; pinstripe in Cupcake, wall in White Clay, each £45 for 2.5ltrs of Claypaint, Earthborn



TOP TIP

This is a great way to designate a home working space, too – your square could even become a pin board for photos and documents



Colour clash

Working from home isn't always easy, so curate a space that brings you energy. Bold, vibrant colour can be uplifting, and get your flooring involved, too! This zingy yellow, hot pink and powerful blue carpet work together for a home office that's energizing and dynamic. Norfolk Twist carpet in turquoise, £17.99 per m², Carpetright. For similar paint colours, try Mullholland yellow and Paradise Pink, each £69.50 for 3.79ltrs of Regal Select matt, Benjamin Moore

TERRACED HOUSE RENOVATION

COLOUR ME HAPPY

Friends helped Anneka and Stephen realise their bold vision for their former wreck of a house. Assistant editor Alison Jones hears how



Profile

THE OWNERS

Anneka Broomfield (@83renovation), a hair stylist, and her husband, Stephen, who manages a tool hire company

THE PROPERTY

A 1930s two-bed end-of-terrace house on the River Gipping, Suffolk

PROJECT COST

£4,593





This image 'I'm very creative – I love decorating and getting stuck in,' says Anneka. 'The cupboards were all charity shop buys that I upcycled.'

Pendant light, La Redoute. **Armchair**, Chesterfield. **TV unit**, charity shop. **Planter**, Matalan. **Coffee table**, H&M Home. **Artwork**, family and friends, Thesecreatives, Desenio and Junique. **Image opposite** Upcycled drawers, charity shop. **Clock**, Newgate

WHEN it comes to renovating a house, sometimes a village to raise a child, it can take a small army of friends and relatives to help you tackle the daunting list of makeover tasks, happy to bring experience and, ideally, the right tools.

When I bought my first house, I paid work mates in takeaways to help me strip walls, assemble wardrobes and fit my kitchen, only hiring tradespeople to tackle the electrics and plumbing. With my second, a total renovation of a period property, I have upped my bribes to meals out in return for assistance in doing as much prep work as we could before calling in the professionals.

When Anneka and Stephen Broomfield bought a rundown 1930s terraced house on the River Gipping in Suffolk, Stephen's former job as a carpenter meant he had lots of contacts in different trades. They pitched in to do the few jobs the couple didn't have the time or specific expertise to do themselves. This invaluable help meant Anneka and Stephen have been able to transform a house in such disrepair that it had a hole in the living room floor, into a characterful home that cocoons you in colour for under £5,000. I was anxious to discover how they've done so much for so little.

Q Hi Anneka! I found what took longest was finding a house with plenty of potential and work I could tackle. Did it take you a while to find the perfect property?

A We'd found a Victorian house but it took six months waiting to get it. We were like, 's** this, let's find something else'. This house was up for sale and was in an absolute state! It'd been owned by a housing association and rented out for years. By the time the last people moved out, I think they thought it'd need too much work doing to rent it out again, so we managed to get it really cheap. It was larger than the houses we were looking at, and we felt this was the chance for us to get something bigger with more opportunity to be really good after we had done it up, so we went for it. It's also quite close to my family, so it was a good area for us.

Q Often houses look good on the surface but have real issues lurking beneath the pre-sale coat of paint. Here it sounds like you could see exactly what you were in for.

A Oh God, there was no flooring anywhere – it was bare wood because everything had been ripped up. There was a big hole in the living room floor where damp had got into it. The kitchen had old tiles on the floor and every single one of them was cracked – you could pick them up with your hands. The walls were covered in gross stuff – there was grease and grime. And the bathroom was from the '90s. Buying the house went really quickly. From putting the offer in to moving in was only six weeks. But we had to move into it filthy because everything had been capped off, so we couldn't even fill it with buckets of water to wipe things down. There was no gas, no electric. Luckily we have friends in different trades; they all came over and managed to get things sorted out for us.

Q Was there one room you had to tackle first? I couldn't bear the old bathroom in my house, so that had to go.

A The kitchen – it was so disgusting that we ripped it out. We moved in without an oven – I said I wouldn't buy one if we were going to redo the kitchen, so we didn't. We set up temporary tables, had a halogen oven, a microwave and gas hob, and lived like that for 10 months. In the living room we ripped out the floor, sorted the damp out and put new flooring down. We stripped the walls and redecorated. The spare bedroom was painted and we slept on mattresses on pallets. We got the kitchen from Wren. I had in my head what I wanted, and we booked the week off work so we could get it fitted,

but it turned up and was the wrong kitchen! It was going to take two weeks and a redelivery charge for it to come again, but after having words with them, they sent it out two days later. Stephen was going to fit it himself but because it came late in the week, he didn't have time. Luckily, his friend fits kitchens and he literally did it in a day. He was a lifesaver.

Q It sounds like you have a good – and very handy – support group. That must have been invaluable.

A My husband was a carpenter, and we have a lot of friends who are plasterers, carpenters, plumbers, electricians; we've been really lucky. They were able to help with anything. A friend did the kitchen flooring for us and we made a lot ourselves, like the shelves and table. Renovating was new to us – we learnt as we went along.

Q Speaking of creative, you went all out in the bathroom – it's not your standard white. Who picked the pink?

A We were looking for kitchen tiles and my husband stumbled across the pink tiles. I thought they were amazing. He said, 'You should get them for the bathroom'. I was like, 'You're really going to let me have a pink bathroom?' He said, 'Definitely, I love them'. I bought them there and then so he couldn't go back on his word. I wanted to make it a bit more masculine so I went for off-black paint above the tiles and black hardware. I also like an industrial edge, so we picked the concrete flooring and Crittall-style shower doors.

Q I like that you've taken the colour in the rooms right up to the ceiling. It feels quite intense but really cosy.

A I like rich, warm, inky colours, and I personally think there's something a bit weird when the ceiling is white and the walls are a different colour – I like it to be like a cocoon, really. I love artwork – I've got a lot of my sister's up and my stepdad's. She's an art teacher and he's a gamekeeper, but he painted in his spare time. Some pieces are mine. It's nice to have friends and family's artwork up – it's more personal. In the living room the flooring is OSB. We talked about things we'd want before we even bought a house, and we were going to make the kitchen out of OSB. When we needed a floor for the living room, I was like, 'Oh my gosh, can we have OSB flooring?' My husband said, 'Yeah, let's do it'. We got this resin that we poured on top to protect it and it's worked out really well. We layer rugs over it to make it feel warmer.

Q You've really put your hearts into the house. Will you be enjoying it for a while?

A I think we will stay in this house a little while before we sell it and move on. I literally live in the kitchen – it's my favourite room. It's a good social space. We managed to have a couple of good parties before the lockdowns, but all the people who helped us have got to come round. It's crazy – I can't believe how the house looks now, but we're loving living in what we have created.

Right. 'We had a Chesterfield sofa to go with the chair, except it wasn't the most comfortable, so we bought the blue sofa. I thought it might be a bit OTT with all the blue walls but I quite like it.'

Walls **painted** in Azure Fusion 1, Dulux. **Sofa**, Made. **Rug**, Ikea. **Cushions**, H&M Home. **Wall hanging**, iamfy. OSB **flooring**, laid by Stephen. For a similar round **mirror**, try Maisons Du Monde



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#SCREAMHOMES



Left, above and right
 'The Frida Kahlo beaded curtain came from a shop in Manchester called Oklahoma Homeware,' says Anneka. 'I got it to cover like a boiler room, but it was so amazing we had to put it in the kitchen.'

Beaded curtain,
 Oklahoma Homeware. **Bar stools,**
 Homebase. French door,
 original, **painted** with Zinzer
 paint. **Metal shelves,** IKEA.
Freestanding unit, Made.
Print (above unit), Desenio.
Light fitting, IKEA. **Kitchen**
units and work surfaces,
 Wren. **Appliances,** Bush.
Sink, Wickes. **Tap,** Plumbworld.
OSB chopping boards, Tiger



Costs & contacts

Kitchen £2,700

Flooring £793

Bathroom hardware £400

Bathroom suite £350

Plastering £200 (by friend)

Kitchen fitting £150 (by friend)

Kitchen Wren,

wrenkitchens.com

Bathroom Better Bathrooms,

0871 244 0935,

betterbathrooms.com

Bathroom installation

Renaissance Renovations,
renaissancerenovationsuk.com

Bathroom floor Big Image

Flooring, 07881 301361

'The colour was my influence,' says Anneka. 'If I'm going to paint a room, I want it to be from the skirting board up to the ceiling.'

Walls **painted** in Gardinia Green, Sanderson. **Table**, handmade. **Bench**, Ikea.

Flooring, Big Image Flooring. Vertical **radiator**, Soak.com



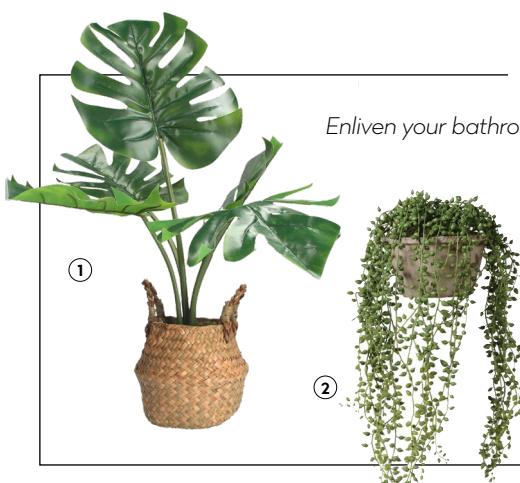
Below and right 'We managed to get the bathroom done in a week, which was good because we only have one bathroom so couldn't be without it for too long. A couple of friends came and did the whole thing for us.'

Pink tiles, Topps Tiles. **Suite**, Better Bathrooms. **Shower, shower screen** and **all taps**, Soak.com. **Shelf brackets**, Screwfix. **Wooden caddy**, Tiger. **Mirror**, Dunelm



GOING FAUX

Enliven your bathroom with greenery that's always luscious with these realistic finds



- 1 Faux cheese plant in rattan basket, £43.50, Gisela Graham
- 2 Faux string of pearls in pot, £45, Marquis & Dawe
- 3 Faux bracken fern with cement pot, £34, Audenza
- 4 Faux Zamifolia plant in pot, £17.99, Dowsing & Reynolds





'Stephen made the bathroom vanity unit out of scaffold board and covered it with yacht varnish.'

Walls **painted** in Top Hat, Fired Earth. **Blinds**, Blinds2go. **Artwork**, These Creatives, Audrey Krako. **Flooring**, Big Image Flooring

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A GUIDE TO Rear extensions

Is your home ripe for expansion? Follow our tips and be inspired by these unique designs that are practical, future proof and easy on the eye

The likes of Victorian and Edwardian homes are often united by their tendency towards cramped and narrow rooms. Even in more modern properties, the back of the house can suffer from lack of light and a layout that's less than ideal for the way families live now.

Remedying this might mean taking advantage of space to the rear to build an extension. Expanding into the garden could turn your ground floor into a comfortable space with natural light and room for family and friends to gather.

Size does matter. An extension that's larger than you need can look out of place against the existing building and feel cold rather than cosy; too small and it might not be fit for the purpose you intended.

Whether you want living, dining and cooking or even bedroom space, ensure the plan makes the most out of what you have and works for you now and in the future. These projects have done just that – take inspiration from them and read our tips for success.

WORDS IFEOLUWA ADEDJI | PHOTOGRAPH GEORGE KING ARCHITECTS



REALHOMES.COM

SEE HOW THIS HOMEOWNER CREATED A FLEXIBLE SPACE FOR WORKING AND RELAXING WITH AN EXTENSION >>>>>

READING THE VIEW

Richard and Emma Lawson's 'reading room' allows the couple to enjoy the views from their 17th-century Cotswold cottage out across the valley

'Our cottage sits on the edge of a hill, but as the windows in the original house are quite small, we weren't able to make the most of the views looking across the valley,' says Richard. 'The reading room is mostly glass so the views are now panoramic, and it's the lightest and brightest part of the house. It's changed how we use the house and especially the garden, which was previously sloped and uneven – we levelled it out during construction, and now indoors and out are on the same level.'

'The house sits within an AONB and Conservation Area, so we wanted an architect who would understand the difficult site and the historic building, but who would also create something unique. After describing to George King Architects how we wanted to use the space, they suggested adding sliding glass doors that disappear behind bookcases, which would allow us to open up the entire room to the garden. The result is quite magical. The local planning department were also very supportive of the design, acknowledging that the extension was sensitive to the existing building and surrounding landscape while also being a thoughtful and contemporary addition.'

'We love having barbecues outside in the summer, and in winter we move into the reading room without feeling like we've left the garden. The new extension means we spend a lot more time outdoors now. It's very flexible. We spend a lot of time reading, but we use it for all sorts of things – most recently, it's been invaluable as a place to set up a temporary home office. It has been great to have a place to work at home with lovely views and a strong connection with nature – it certainly made lockdown a lot more bearable!'

COSTS & CONTACTS

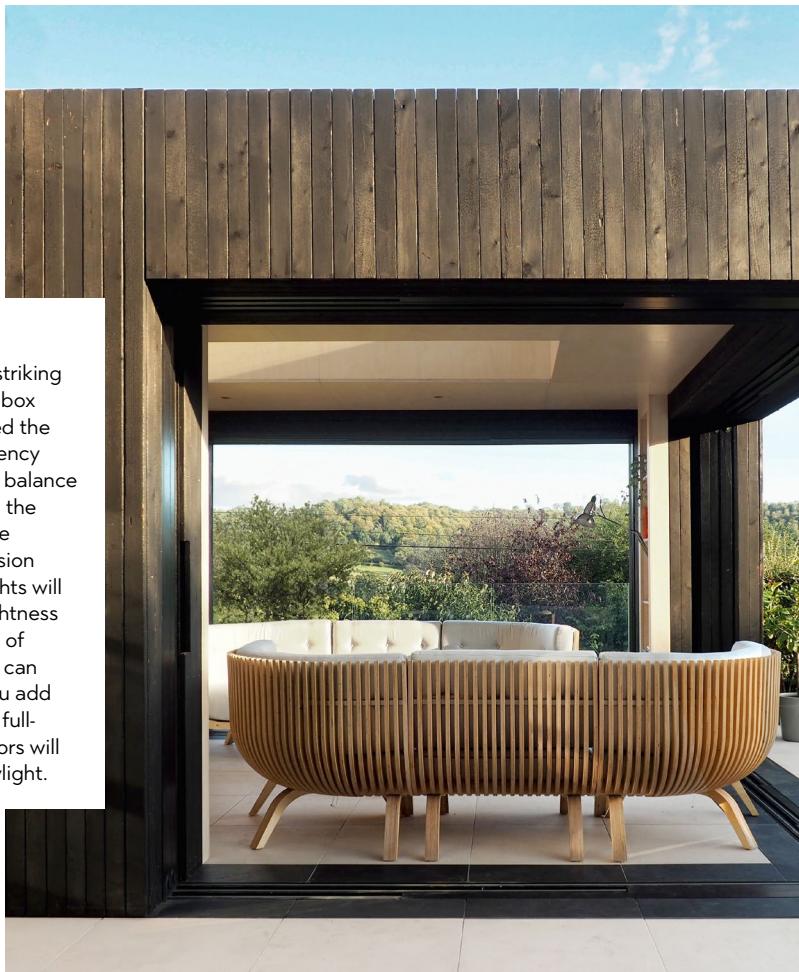
Project cost £70,000

Architects George King Architects, 020 3239 2376, georgekingarchitects.com



NATURAL LIGHT

It's possible to add a striking contemporary glazed box to your home, provided the house's thermal efficiency has been improved to balance out the heat loss from the new addition. With the majority of rear extension projects, using rooflights will help filter natural brightness through to the middle of the new layout, which can become dark once you add an extension. A set of full-height glazed rear doors will also bring in more daylight.





KEEP WARM

A fairly crucial element to check early on is whether your existing heating system is sufficient for your new heating demands. Will you install radiators or lay underfloor heating? If you choose the latter, an electric option costs less to install and will mean you can heat this part of the house separately. Speak to a heating engineer, who will be able to advise you on the best options and check whether your boiler will be able to efficiently carry more radiators.



USE OF SPACE

By adding a rear extension you can create a completely new living area, kitchen-diner or even another bedroom with direct access to the garden. Ensure you're clear about what the space will be used for in order to make the most out of the addition: that way, you'll be able to plan the design and position of furnishings. You'll also be able to design for the right type of glazing or fenestration for your needs.



PARTY WALLS

When building within six metres of a neighbouring property, you'll need to serve a Party Wall Notice citing Section 6 of the 1996 Party Wall Act. It's worth speaking to your neighbour before you do this to tell them about the plans you have, which could make them more amenable to agreeing to the works without any objections. They should respond within two weeks of receipt of the notice.



REAL HOME 2

HOUSING GEOMETRY

Victoria Allen enlisted the help of architects to add a rear extension to her small 1950s terraced infill, creating a bright and open living space

'My house was built in the 1950s, while the neighbouring properties are mainly Victorian period homes,' says Victoria. 'The downstairs was made up of two long, narrow spaces, with an open-plan living-dining area and a small hallway and galley kitchen. The ceilings were low and the back of the house had a poor connection to the outside, which was a shame as it's relatively large compared to the size of the ground floor. I wanted to have both a larger living area and a more usable garden, as well as incorporating some slightly boring but useful elements like a utility room into the design.'

'On the recommendation of a friend, I got in touch with local architects nimtim. They worked with me to develop the design and also project-managed the build itself, which took six months in all. They've created a large usable space with high-quality materials that's not only more practical, but is also filled with light and has a great connection to the garden.'

'The outdoor space is now a good-sized patio with some wide flower beds. We incorporated additions such as a downstairs toilet and utility room in a subtle way, so as not to ruin the "architect-designed" look of the house.'

'With the new extension, I'm able to utilise all of the inside and outside. I can spend all my time in the kitchen/living area. The house used to feel small and poky, but it's got such wow-factor now – and I love that it's allowed me to enjoy and use the whole of the space.'

PHOTOGRAPHS ELYSE KENNEDY

COSTS & CONTACTS

Project cost £120,000

Architect nimtim architects,
020 8693 0878, nimtim.co.uk

Glazing AJ & D Chapelhow,
01931 714 289, ajdchapelhow.co.uk



GLAZING RESTRICTIONS

As with all big refurbishment projects, it's important to comply with the Building Regs. Part L outlines the limits on glazing for extensions. Roof windows, windows and glazed doors are allowed to be a maximum of 25 per cent of the new extension's floor area. Many extensions exceed this, but only because the owners have improved the thermal efficiency of the rest of the property.





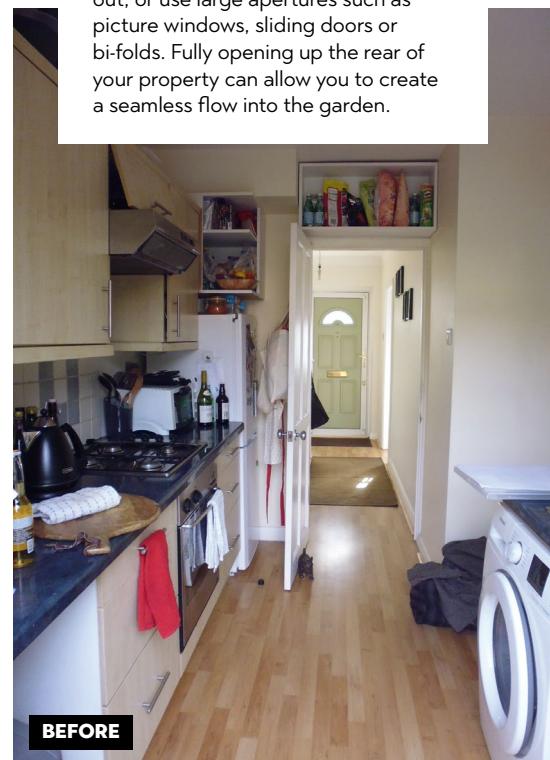
TALKING COSTS

The average cost of building a rear extension can start from £40,000, but this fee depends on many factors including the design, access to the site, and where you live, as labour costs vary. If you use an architect, their fees are usually 10 per cent of the project costs. Don't forget to factor in the VAT costs, too. Using special materials, construction methods and adding a lot of glazing could also drive up costs. Budget for furnishing and finishes at the beginning of the works – you don't want to run out of money before the fun bit starts!



INDOORS AND OUT

Planning how the extension will connect to your garden early on will ensure that you can enjoy both spaces in all seasons. Use the same colour or style of flooring to create a sense of connection from the inside out, or use large apertures such as picture windows, sliding doors or bi-folds. Fully opening up the rear of your property can allow you to create a seamless flow into the garden.



BEFORE



PERMITTED DEVELOPMENT

It is possible to build an extension without applying for planning if your house isn't listed and you don't live in a designated area. The Government's permitted development rights allow owners of terraced properties to extend up to three metres out to the rear and those in detached properties to extend out by six. You can seek permission from the local council if you want to go out further and if you want to exceed those limits. Head to realhomes.com/planning-permission for more details.

FUTURE PROOF

A rear extension connected Will and Sharon Clifford's 1930s home to their garden and transformed the old layout into a family space

'When we bought this house, it was pretty tired,' says Will. 'The kitchen was small and access to the garden was difficult thanks to a big change in level. We wanted to refurbish the entire house, keeping some original features but creating a large open-plan family space that opened up the views and brought in lots of light.'

'We worked with local company Barc Architects to design an open-plan extension that would give us access to outdoor space and a place where we could spend time together. Our youngest daughter has a severe form of epilepsy and our architect, Caroline, got to know us well in order to understand her particular needs.'

'It's quite a tricky, sloping site, but Barc designed a glazed kitchen/dining/living extension, angled to make the most of distant views to the River Exe, with an overhanging flat roof providing shelter and privacy. We applied for planning permission as the appearance of the extension with the burnt larch cladding is very different in appearance to the original house – we wanted a contemporary addition. The new stepped terrace cleverly links the extension to the lower garden.'

'The top terrace allows for flow between inside and out, with an integrated planter to avoid any risk of falling, while the central terrace is great for outdoor dining. We can't put a price on the difference it made to work with an architect and make a really special design. The angles of the extension, combined with the softness of the burnt-larch cladding, breathe new life into our tired 1930s semi. Being able to watch our daughter play outdoors, allowing her to move and grow safely, has made a huge difference to us. The house supports and enables our family life – and it'll work for us in the future.'

COSTS & CONTACTS

Project cost £96,000

Architects BARC Architects,

01392 435051, barcarchitects.com

Builder Dan Stride, stride-spaces.co.uk



ROOF STYLE

Depending on whether you'd like to match the existing vernacular or wish to create a completely different finish, you have several options to choose from. There are pitched, flat, curved and sawtooth roof styles. Each has their own advantages and disadvantages, from increasing the amount of light that can enter a space, to offering you the option of adding a green roof. If you're taking an adventurous route, speak to your designer and, of course, check that the local planning department is also happy with the design.





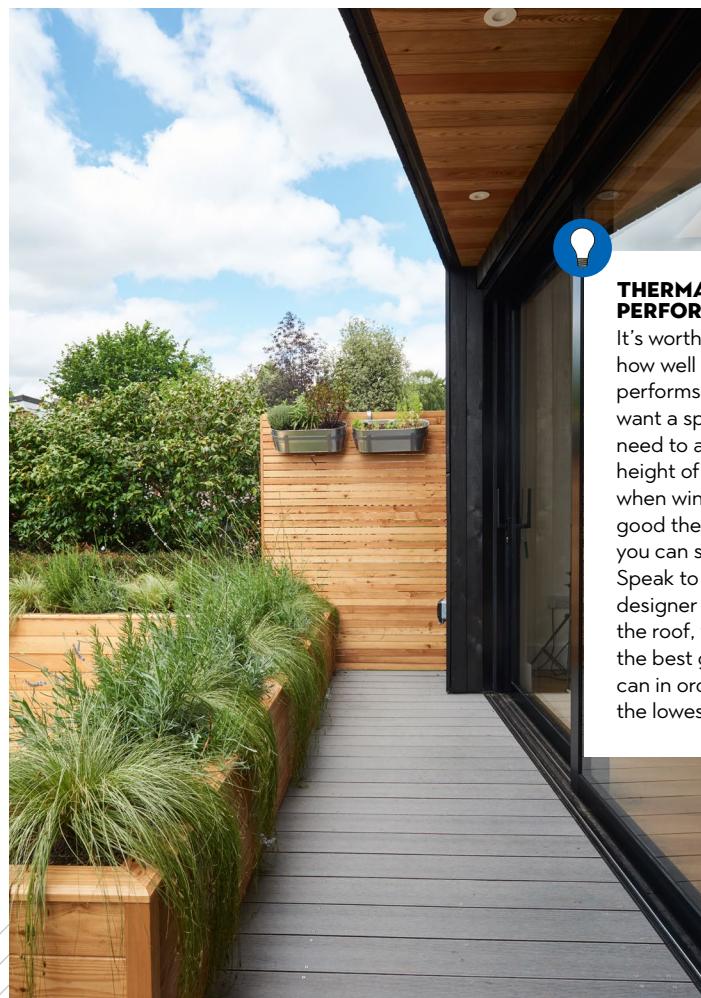
CONSTRUCTION METHOD

From brick and block to timber, steel frame or pre-fabricated structural insulated panels (SIPs), the construction method you choose will have an impact on both cost and how long works take. Traditional brick and block has its advantages, being a familiar trade, but rain can stop play. If you choose the pre-fab route, you will have to make decisions on where to place sockets and perhaps even furniture right at the design stage. And there's a long lead time from planning to the structure arriving on site, although it can be erected in just a couple of days.



EXTERIOR FINISHES

With exciting options like charred cladding and corten steel or traditional brick and render, it's possible to have your extension blend in with the original property, or create a striking distinction. Traditional finishes will be easier to achieve and will cost less as trades and materials will be readily available. And while more contemporary finishes will have a higher outlay, it might result in just the look that you're after.



THERMAL PERFORMANCE

It's worth looking into how well your extension performs thermally – you want a space that you don't need to abandon in the height of summer, nor avoid when winter comes. With good thermal efficiency, you can save on bills, too. Speak to your builder or designer about insulating the roof, walls and fitting the best glazed units you can in order to achieve the lowest U-values.

The open-plan kitchen and dining room extension is Suzi's favourite addition to their home as the family now have a space where they can cook and eat together. 'Before, there was surprisingly little storage in the house,' says Suzi. 'We had made-to-measure cupboards fitted everywhere so all our belongings have a place.'

Kitchen units, Handmade Kitchens Direct. Units **painted** in Hague Blue, Farrow & Ball. Stone-effect porcelain **flooring**, Claybrook Studio. **Drawer pulls**, Yester Home. **Velux windows**, Glazing Vision. **Range cooker**, Rangemaster



VICTORIAN HOUSE EXTENSION

ATTENTION TO DETAIL

After months of meticulous planning and extensive building work, Suzi Jench and Lewis Robinson's Victorian terrace house has been decorated in calming coastal shades and dressed in vintage finds





Clockwise from top left **Light fittings**, Trinity Marine. **Wall tiles**, Mandarin Stone. **Doors**, ID Systems. **Peg rail**, Carved By Tom. Pantry door **painted** in Babouche, Farrow & Ball. **Dining table**, Ebay. **Chairs**, Franklins. **Pendant lights**, Trinity Marine. **Artwork**, Telegramme



Stepping into the home of Suzi and Lewis, you instantly feel at ease, aided by the calming décor painted in a relaxing colour palette. 'A gazillion litres of paint have gone into this renovation,' Suzi says. 'By the end of this project, I knew the Farrow & Ball paint chart better than the back of my hand! The colours were the starting point for my designs for this house. Many of the walls were finished with lime plaster, which is very breathable and textured for a natural look. I used shades that would complement each other, like dark blues, soft greys and off-whites, as these create a serene atmosphere.'

The couple bought their Victorian terrace in the Kemp Town area of Brighton from an Icelandic singer and performer. 'We actually rented a house on a nearby street in 2012 for a few years, and fell in love with the area,' Suzi says. Not able to find a house in Kemp Town, they moved to the Sussex countryside, renovating an 18th-century farmhouse. 'After five years of commuting to London from the sticks, we'd had enough. Our boys missed living by the sea and we craved the bustle of Brighton. We decided to move back.'

This house had been neglected over the years. 'It'd been empty for a while and before then rented out. It felt unloved and rough around the edges,' says Suzi. At the back, there was a narrow galley kitchen with a plastic lean-to on the side return, which leaked in wet weather and was freezing in winter. Every surface needed ripping out or fully renovating. 'It was a big project. We lived here for a year so we could get a feel for the space, and it gave us time to plan our renovation.'

Top of the family's wish list was converting the attic and creating an open-plan kitchen-diner. In the spring of 2018, their architect and his team of builders set to work. 'In less than a week, we had a crane outside lifting huge steels onto our roof,' says Suzi. 'Our kitchen was in pieces and the lean-to was gone.' To speed things up, the family moved into a rented two-bed flat nearby. 'The house was uninhabitable. There was a gaping hole where our kitchen used to be. We had to resite the soil stack so there was no working bathroom, either. It was my job to manage the build. I came to site every day to sort out any issues, keeping the project on track.'

Not long after starting, the builders hit a stumbling block. 'The house is made from bungaroosh,' explains Suzi. 'It's a mixture of broken bricks, cobblestones, pebbles and sand set into lime. It's notorious for crumbling when disturbed. We had to reinforce areas and wait for the planning office to approve the work. It set us back about three weeks.' They also discovered the bathroom and bedroom ceilings were sagging and had to be replaced, which was an unexpected – and very messy – job.

After three months the house was taking shape, with the loft completed, the bathrooms gutted and the steels at the back installed. A second team of builder started on the internal fit, including the painstaking job of renovating the floorboards. 'We salvaged some from the kitchen to replace damaged ones elsewhere,' Suzi says. The wooden floor had to be sanded back and treated by hand with Danish 'softwood lye' – a solution that bleaches the wood – before finishing with two coats of matt clear varnish for protection. 'When lifting up the boards, we found tiny matchboxes hidden underneath dating back to the 1950s, which we plan to display in our living room.'



The walls in the living room create a neutral backdrop for Suzi's patterned accessories and map of Europe. She had cushions made up in vintage cottons and Sari silks,

Walls **painted** in Slaked Lime, Little Greene. Woodwork **painted** in Cornforth White and Off Black, Farrow & Ball. **Armchair, rugs, standing lights**, Parker Knoll and Sofa.com. **Settees, Ebay. Footstool and map**, Ardingly Antiques Fair



Profile

THE OWNERS

Suzi Jench, a property renovator (@a.carma.home), her partner Lewis Robinson, a financial consultant, and their two children, Marlowe, 11, and Carter, eight

THE PROPERTY

A four-bedroom Victorian terrace in Kemp Town, Brighton

PROJECT COST

£223,125



Left and right 'All the furniture in this room has a back story,' says Suzi. She found a pair of mirrored antique wooden doors in The Vintage Workshop in Kemp Town, hanging them above the fireplace.

Below The original staircase was restored by the couple. 'Eventually we plan to have a staircase runner fitted, but while we're saving up to pay for that we still need the hallway to look cohesive,' Suzi says. 'It's the first impression guests have of our home and sets the tone for the rest of our house.'

Stairs painted in De Nimes, Farrow & Ball. **Coat hooks** salvaged from a previous renovation project. **Round mirror** from a local salvage yard. **Radiator**, Cast Iron Radiator Centre



Chest of drawers, Rockett St George. **Mirrors**, Reginald Ballum. **Armoire**, Design Vintage. **Armchair and rug**, found on Ebay. **Antique light fitting**, bought from a friend. **Radiators**, Cast Iron Radiator Centre



By April the following year, the extension was in place ready for the Crittall-style aluminum back doors to be fitted. 'We wanted to fill the kitchen with light, so we went for industrial metal doors across the whole of the back and convinced our planning officer to let us install four Velux windows in the ceiling,' says Suzi. Being super organised, she confirmed her kitchen design early into the renovation process. 'I shopped around for an affordable solid wooden kitchen. The company I found were brilliant but as they get so busy, there was limited flexibility on the delivery date. It was nail-bitingly close to our build completion date.'

Just in time for the summer holidays, Suzi and Lewis and their two sons moved into their renovated home. 'We still had a carpenter here finishing off bits and pieces. Our kitchen was his workshop. We had family stay for a week in August when the carpenter was still using the space to build joinery. It was a squash, but you get through it!'

Suzi's existing furniture slotted neatly into her new interior, and her eye for a bargain saved her money on new pieces. 'I've become a regular at Ardingly Antiques Market and I'm a bit of pro at finding bargains on Ebay,' she says. 'Our sofas are ex-photo shoot samples that I picked up for a steal. My home style is a mix of classic design, vintage finds and antiques that I have upcycled myself.'

After nearly six months of solid building work, Suzi and her family are comfortably settled into city life. 'Lots of energy went into this house to turn it into a home,' she says. 'We love our kitchen most because we all have room to hang out. As with all projects of this scale there have been highs and lows, but the end result has been a big win for our family.'



**'LOTS OF ENERGY WENT
INTO TURNING THIS
HOUSE INTO A HOME. THE
RESULT HAS BEEN A BIG
WIN FOR OUR FAMILY'**



Left, below and right In the master bedroom, the paint colours have been picked for their restful tones. The floorboards were sanded and treated with wood lye.

Bed and dressing table, Ebay. Woodwork **painted** in Inchyra Blue; wall **painted** in Mizzle, both Farrow & Ball. **Bedside table**, Rockett St George. **Chest of drawers**, Reginald Ballum. **Mirrors**, Ardingly Antiques Market



KEEP CLASSIC

Be inspired by Suzi and choose a traditional-style chest of drawers for a timeless look



Highgate rustic chest of drawers, £379.99, Oak Furnitureland



Venise chest of drawers, £1,060, Sweetpea & Willow



Odeline dusky blue chest of drawers, £1,095, The French Bedroom Company



Millbrook two over two chest, £695, The Painted Furniture Company

Below The coastal-inspired blue and white colouring of the period house's façade is echoed on the inside



Right Above
the bed hang
fabric animal
prints that Suzi
found in Flying
Tiger. Simple
wooden storage
crates keep
clutter at bay.

Woodwork **painted**
in Inchyra Blue,
Farrow & Ball.
Blue Kantha **quilt**,
found at Ardingly
Antiques Market



Above and right By removing an airing cupboard and taking out a water tank, Suzi increased the size of the master bathroom. 'My builders were surprised that we wanted to keep the original roll top bath, but I wanted to save as many of the period details as I could. It made good sense to keep it,' she says. So the space remained clutter-free, a recess was built above the sink to provide a little shelf area for pretty bottles. There is another in the shower.

Basin, Burlington Bathrooms.
Bath, original. **Floor tiles**,
Stone Deals. **Wooden
shelving unit**, Blue
Ticking. Walls **painted** in
Clay White, Earthborn Paint





Costs & contacts

Build work and professional fees £180,000
Kitchen (including glazing) £36,000
Bathroom fittings £5,000
Radiators £1,500
Furniture £625

Sliding doors ID Systems, 01603 408804, idsystems.co.uk
Kitchen Handmade Kitchens Direct, 01202 475515, handmadekitchens-direct.co.uk
Flooring Claybrook, 020 7052 1555, claybrookstudio.co.uk





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SPRING FORWARD

With a new season comes fresh new trends and a plethora of buys – and along with the magazine, realhomes.com will be bringing you all the inspiration you need for a thoroughly sunny spring. Check out realhomes.com/design



Sling seat bow back dining chair, £225, Cox & Cox



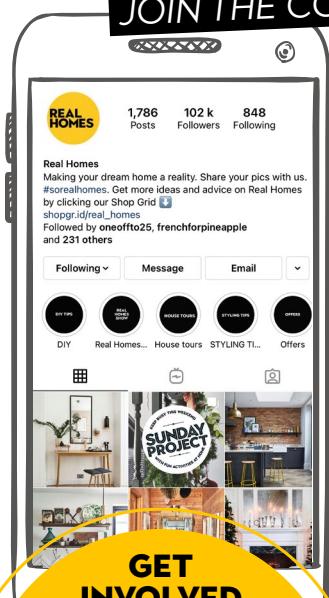
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GO FOR GARDENING

It's almost time to get out in the garden again! Make sure you're ready and prepped with our top tips, need-to-know advice and buying guides – this might just be your best green-fingered attempt yet. realhomes.com/garden

SPRING STYLE IS IN THE AIR

Why do we love a spring refresh? And how can we make the changes in seasons and style a harmonious part of our homes? Jennifer Morgan finds out...



Perhaps this year, more than any other, we are looking for spring to deliver a little more. After winter, spring is just the tonic to lift our moods. But it also lifts our homes too. 'There's something almost biological about the emergence from winter,' explains Naomi Pollard, head of homes and interiors at Trend Bible (trendbible.com), who's already looking at spring 2023 trends. 'We shake off the sleepy hibernation that we've been in since November. It's the perfect time to set new goals and start afresh – from a personal perspective, but also in our homes.'

'We are surrounded by newness in nature and want to replicate this,' says Amy Jones, interior designer and founder of Greta-Mae (greta-mae.co.uk). 'We love a spring refresh as we see nature doing the same, with flowers and plants coming to life. When it comes to our homes, those cosier textures, darker colours and weightier fabrics that we love in winter don't feel right when the sun is shining.'

'There's no more positive a season than springtime,' agrees Anna Morley, style editor at *Real Homes*. 'The noticeable difference in the daylight brings a renewed energy and feeling of hope – it's THE time to embrace clearing out the old and bringing in the new.'

But of course, it's not all about a good declutter or spring clean. 'One of the joys of decorating or styling with the seasons is that it can give us a creative kick when it comes to our homes,' says Sara Bird, stylist at The CONTENTed Nest and author of *Home for the Soul*. And after a year where our homes have become the centre of our worlds, there's plenty to inspire even the smallest of transformations.

Naomi believes we'll see bolder colour coming through. 'We've had a decade of grey minimalism and the major trend we're seeing for the year ahead is a shift back to colour,' she explains. 'It could be a statement sofa, a lick of paint or a colourful throw or cushion. Having spent a much higher proportion of our time at home last year, we'll see householders gaining much more of an understanding of how the design of their home makes them feel. Colour and pattern are both tools we'll be using to inject joy into our daily lives.'

It's certainly a trend you can already see on the high street. John Lewis & Partners' Heritage Reimagined collection is maximalist to the max. 'Colour, pattern and detail are at the core. It's about being bold with your choices,' says Philippa Prinsloo, partner and head of product design, home, with the team exploring the brand's archives for authentic sources of inspiration.

After a year of little travel, thankfully the trend predictors have found global inspiration for spring. 'We'll see a lot of influences from all over Europe, South America and the Middle East as travel and escapism are brought into the home,' says Naomi. 'The brutalist architecture of Mexico will inform graphic, sculptural and contemporary designs, while the rich, layered patterns and materials of the Middle East will feed into a desire for abundance and joy.'

Scandi – and even its hybrid Japandi – remain key looks. 'Look for a "modern cabin" twist, based

on Nordic and Tundra influences, with warmer woods coming through,' says Sara. You'll also find Scandi still a key trend for John Lewis & Partners.

For Anna, seeing such trends keeps her ideas 'fresh and constantly moving forward,' she says. 'I actually fall in love with most trends, making it very difficult to commit to just one look – but I enjoy having choice and seeing how things move from fashion to home. Picking up on specific tones, textures and patterns is really interesting, and to see how people then use these in their homes is always delightful.'

While our experts all love the spring looks and the excitement they bring to the industry, they agree you shouldn't start from scratch each season. 'We are decorating more seasonally than ever before,' says Sara, 'but that doesn't mean we should

rush out and dismiss everything we already own. Small changes are far better. There are other ways of bringing spring into your home, – draw back curtains and blinds to let in light, open windows, even give them a little clean. It's not a new idea but still works a treat to brighten our homes. Scent, scenery and fresh air... perfect.'

Amy agrees: 'Changing our whole homes with the seasons is costly and an unsustainable way to live – but you could swap cushions and throws or even change those heavier scented candles for something with lighter, crisper notes.' And while Amy is influenced by trends, as a rule, they aren't a priority in her designs. 'I like to design schemes that aren't so of the moment you look back in a few years and wonder what on earth you were thinking – we all remember rag rolling!'

'People's reactions to seasonal trends are really interesting,' says Naomi. 'Householders are slowing down their purchasing habits and investing in pieces they love and want to have in their homes all year round. That said, a celebration of the seasons has become much more of a feature and I think this links to a need for gratitude and joy on a more regular basis. Instead of waiting for Halloween, why not celebrate autumn itself; why wait for Easter when you can style for spring? This not only offers added opportunities for refresh and styling updates but also creates a closer bond with nature as we track the seasons.'

5 INSPIRING STYLISTS TO FOLLOW FOR SEASONAL IDEAS



@EDITBYEMILY

From painted eggs to paper crafts, Emily's feed is full of ideas that'll keep the family busy.



@PIPPA_JANEY_STYLIST

Featuring flowers grown from her own plot, we love Pippa's feed for floral styling tips.



@SARITASTYLIST

Sarita's sophisticated room sets are a masterclass in how to pull a scheme together.



@HANBULLIVANT

Follow Hannah for tips on bringing nature into your home, with a focus on sustainable living.



@PEACOCKSANDFLAMINGOESLTD

For bold styling and intricate table settings, look no further than Réli's feed.

1930S SEMI RENOVATION

BRIGHT IDEAS

DESIGNER CHERYL'S RENOVATED HOME PROVIDES
THE PERFECT NEUTRAL BACKDROP FOR HER
CREATIVE UPCYCLING AND FUN POPS OF COLOUR





'I'm a big upcycling fan, running workshops and blogging about it, so my house reflects this interest,' says Cheryl. 'There are many bargains to be had by buying secondhand and adding your own twist to things. I mix it with high street and designer pieces for a personal look. Everything in your home should tell a story about why you love it and where it came from.'

Walls **painted** in French Dove Grey and Pale Grey, Laura Ashley.



Sofa. Sofa Workshop. **Cushions.** Sofa Workshop, Habitat and The Range. **Rug.** Wayfair. **Que Sera Sera print** by Muro Buro, Not on the High Street. **Movie Classics A-Z print** by 67 Inc Limited, Baltic Shop. **Curtains.** Ikea. **Suitcase.** Cheryl's great uncle's, covered with **map fabric** from John Lewis & Partners. **Spotty jug,** made by Cheryl. Rob Ryan **glasses,** Baltic Shop. **Tray,** Wayfair. **Candlesticks,** charity shop, **spray-painted** with Rust-Oleum's Gloss Finish Furniture Paint

The kitchen-diner features neutral colours and a statement brick wall, with Cheryl adding interesting touches to every corner. 'The kitchen clock was rescued from a friend's bin,' she says. 'I use old vinyl records – 50p from charity shops – for table mats.'

Kitchen, Hammonds, via Fenwick Newcastle. **Handles**, Homebase. **Table**, auction. Pedestal leg **painted** in White Pepper, M&L Paints. **Chairs**, junk shop find, also **painted** in White Pepper. Light up **EAT sign**, The Dotty House. **Cake stand** made by Cheryl at a Festival of Thrift workshop



Profile

THE OWNERS

Cheryl Lumley (@cheryl_lumley, allroundcreativejunkie.com) and her husband, Chris, both graphic designers at Copper Blue Creative, and their son, Ben

THE PROPERTY

A three-bedroom, 1930s semi in Gateshead



WORDS RICHARD WEBBER PHOTOGRAPHS COLIN POOLE



hen Cheryl and Chris saw this house advertised in an estate agent's window, they dismissed it because it was on a main road. 'Eventually we decided to view it and we're so pleased we did because we fell in love with the space it offered,' says Cheryl. 'Plus, it was in a great school catchment area for when we started our family. Moving from our two-bed flat to this three-bed house was a big step. We didn't think we'd fill it but we did in no time.'

The couple waited nine years before tackling any big jobs. 'We do all our own decorating, which saves money and gives us satisfaction because we really enjoy it,' says Cheryl. 'Also, we wanted to ensure all our favourite things we'd collected or found were incorporated into the design. I wanted a palette of warm grey with pops of colour everywhere that can be changed easily.'

In the kitchen, Cheryl and Chris replaced dark laminate flooring with solid oak, keeping the brick wall and going for painted wood cupboards that could be repainted in the future. 'As our home office is also in our kitchen space, we didn't want anything too clinical, so we opted for iroko worktops and warm grey cupboards,' says Cheryl. Having no wall units helps keep the room from looking too much like a kitchen: with the auction-bought dining table doubling as a meeting space, it needed to feel warm and welcoming.

In the living room, the couple needed new sofas after the old ones fell apart – literally. 'We wanted feather seats the same as our red Tetrad sofa, so we went to Sofa Workshop, who make everything to order,' explains Cheryl. In the bathroom the couple tried to keep to a small budget, buying a new bath, toilet and shower but making the sink cabinet from a Gumtree find and the windowsill from a school science lab bench. 'I like getting as much upcycling into my home as possible, not only to save money but to save things from landfill and to add my own twist,' Cheryl adds.

The oak flooring continues into the hallway, and the couple added colour on the banisters for easy changes in the future. 'I went for grey skirting and door frames because I find white skirting adds a big white stripe around your room, making it seem smaller.' When it came to bedrooms, they worked around their existing furniture, simply changing the colour of the walls and adding a few colourful accents.

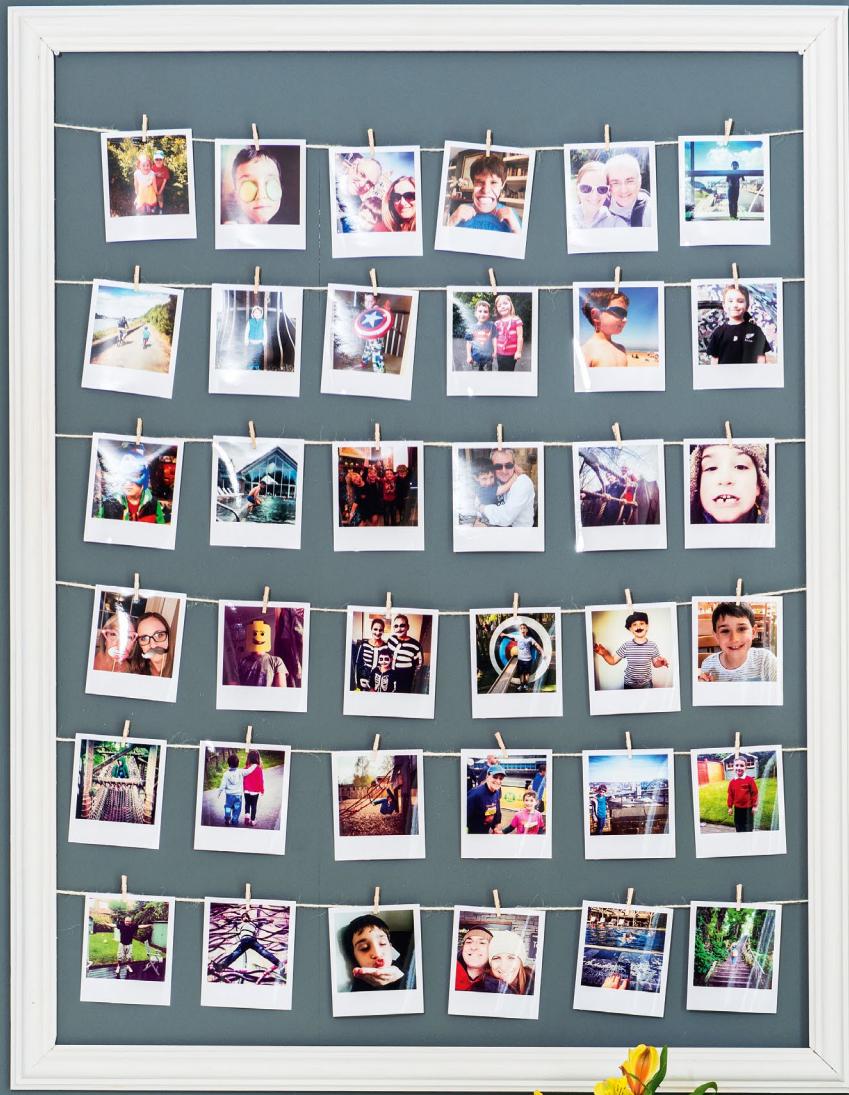
'I wanted the house to have a good flow with a colour scheme that worked throughout the house rather than in individual rooms,' says Cheryl. 'We saved up for the things we really wanted, and I've collected plenty of furniture and accessories over the years that I wanted to incorporate. The beauty of upcycling and painting furniture is that you can repaint things when your tastes change.'

Revamping the house has been a challenge. 'We run two businesses from home so trying to decorate, paint furniture and make things has meant many late nights and long weekends, but it's been worth the hard work,' says Cheryl. 'We shopped around to find the best deals. I always carry a tape measure and paint swatches with me and know the room measurements off by heart. That means when I find a piece of furniture or accessory, I know it'll work and can buy it straight away. You have to wait to find the right piece when upcycling.'

'The highlight for me is the living room. I love our sofas and the fact that almost everything else has been found secondhand or handmade by me. It makes it unique to us. Overall, I'm really happy with the makeover. The house feels calm with the greys while, hopefully, the pops of colour add a bit of fun.'

'The desk in the kitchen is made from trestle legs found in Ikea's bargain corner for £10, then a sheet of MDF cut to size for the top.'

Walls **painted** in Greyfriars, M&L Paints. Desktop **painted** in Cotton Satin Finish furniture paint, Rust-Oleum. **Chairs**, Ercol, found on a local selling group



'Don't be afraid to update old furniture, like I did with this 15-year-old leather table from Barker & Stonehouse,' says Cheryl. 'A new fabric top with velcro underneath allows me to wash it when needed.' A side table also received an upcycling treatment: Cheryl used masking tape to create the design, then painted with Duck Egg and Winter Grey Rust-Oleum Chalky Finish furniture paint.

Wall painted in Greyfriars, Marston & Langinger.
Sofa, old Tetrad



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The bedroom bears more of Cheryl's quirky ideas. 'Oversized scarves make a great alternative to a traditional throw,' she says. The couple bought the bedroom furniture from Barker & Stonehouse 18 years ago for their first home.

Wallpaper and **Dove Grey wall paint**, both Laura Ashley. For northern dialect **printed cushions**, try Samphire Bay, Not on the High Street



Contacts

Kitchen Hammonds,
hammonds-uk.com

Bathroom The Plumb
Centre (now Wolseley),
0191 4879535



Create instant space for a desk or den with a high-sleeper bed.

Bed, Wayfair, **painted** in Dove Gloss Finish furniture paint, Rust-Oleum. **Wall painted** in Nirvana, B&Q. **Chair**, Ikea

'Even my old rusty bin was upcycled with a spray of orange paint,' says Cheryl. 'The sink cabinet is a £10 Gumtree find. I removed the doors and mixed paints (Rust-Oleum Gloss Finish Furniture Paints in Dove and Liquorice) to find the right colours.'

Basin, secondhand.
Wall tiles, Topps Tiles. **Bath, toilet and tap**, The Plumb Centre. **Rubber floor tiles**, Dalhaus



Our handy how-to guide for painting furniture



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Featured Product: Moonstone Wooden Venetian Blind, blinds-2go.co.uk



PERIOD HOME RENOVATION

LIGHT WORK

After three years abroad, Lucy Rees was determined to make her mark on this Victorian Arts and Crafts house, where she can surround herself with family and friends

Lucy opted for wooden Shaker-style kitchen cabinets by Devol in the dramatic shade of Pantry Blue as the space is big enough to handle a bold colour. Two trios of industrial lighting, one over the kitchen island, from De Hasse, and another over the table, sourced on Ebay, help to define the double-height space.

White **worktops**, Carrara quartz from Marbles Ltd. Original **oak parquet**, restored by Nutwood Flooring. Vintage leather **club chairs**, Ebay



Before embarking on major renovations, most people take their time and live with the place to get a feel for what will work. That had been Lucy Rees' plan as she carefully masterminded her family's return to the UK from Germany. Somehow, though, she found herself camping on a mattress in her new house with just one weekend to make decisions on everything from the purpose of each room to its flooring, paint and curtains, 'I'm a natural procrastinator so it was hard making snap decisions,' she recalls. 'But, luckily, it all worked out.'

As the family approached the end of David's three-year stint in Frankfurt for work, their thoughts turned to finding a more permanent home. They opted for leafy Chislehurst because it's a short train journey into London for David, but also perfect for family walks and bike rides in the woods. While Lucy was viewing a smaller property on this beautiful wooded lane, the estate agent mentioned another house, which the owner planned to sell eventually. Lucy managed to arrange a viewing and was smitten: 'It was a great size, without being ostentatious, and I fell for the panelling, fireplaces and high ceilings.' She was willing to wait, but the owners, whose children had left for university, decided the house needed another family and everything fell into place.

I hadn't known that it might have been disastrous,' she says. A visiting Farrow & Ball consultant helped her to achieve a palette of mostly muted shades to complement each room. 'I've always stuck to white before, and I felt a bit daunted about choosing the right colours for this place.'

Returning to Germany for the summer, Lucy monitored the renovations via phone and Skype, with her mother and a friend representing her 'on the ground', although the delegation process didn't always work out. 'My mum wasn't convinced by the dramatic dark blue paint in the dining room and nearly persuaded us to halt the decorating, but we stuck to our guns!' she says.

Lucy and the children arrived for the autumn term at a new school, with David joining them in Kent in November. 'It was dusty and cold while all the work was happening, so we had to rely on the real fires for warmth.' She pulled out all the stops to have everything ready for David's arrival. 'The only downside to that was that he couldn't see what all the fuss had been about,' she adds.

Lucy knew that the small kitchen wasn't right for modern family life and decided that the vast double-height former billiards room with its minstrel's gallery would be the perfect place to cook, eat and relax. She timed the project to take

'MY STYLE IS A MIX OF OLD AND NEW, SOMETHING WITH SOUL AND HISTORY BUT ALSO A MODERN TWIST'

The previous owners had sensitively restored the whole house, which had been bomb-damaged during the war and then divided into two houses. So Lucy was pleased to think she was facing a mostly cosmetic job, although she realises now that she was a little naive about the scale of the undertaking. 'I thought it was just a case of doing the kitchen and making everything look pretty, but it's never that simple,' she laughs.

After buying the house, Lucy stayed in Germany because of her children's schooling. When the kids headed off to a school camp, she grabbed the chance to race to England for four short days. She used her time wisely and booked in a raft of expert helpers. Nutwood Flooring offered invaluable advice when the existing floorboards proved too patched and scrappy to save and advised her to get all the kitchen utilities in place before laying the hallway's engineered oak floors. 'If

place between hosting big family celebrations at Christmas and the following Easter. 'My style is a mixture of old and new, something with soul and history but also a modern twist.' Having chosen the Shaker-style cabinets, she opted for a dark blue finish that would have impact in such a large space.

Lucy's favoured mix of rustic, natural and modern is also seen in her furniture, sourced through antiques fairs and auctions. Husband David's minimalist tendencies prompted her to hold back on her fondness for too many 'trinkety bits'. Simple, industrial-style lighting gives each room an edgier element. Now the work is done, Lucy is looking forward to eventually being able to hold gatherings with extended family again. 'It's a great house for entertaining,' she says. 'Because Germany was temporary I couldn't indulge my passion for interiors. It's been lovely to put my stamp on this place.'

FARMHOUSE CHIC

A large kitchen table like Lucy's is the perfect spot for family to gather round



Brindle natural oak and painted extendable dining table, £599.99, Oak Furnitureland



Pantry kitchen table in Pale Grey, £1,245, Loaf



Ritz refectory table, £953, Sweetpea & Willow

The oak-topped island is where Lucy does most of her food prep. Her collection of vintage kitchenalia is artfully displayed on open shelving

Farmhouse **table**, **bench** and **dining chairs**. Ebay. **Bar stools**, Devol. For similar **cushions**, try French striped square cushion, Cox & Cox



TOP TIP

Recycle an old table or invest in a preloved one, worn by repeated scrubings after many meals, to add character to your kitchen





Left The contemporary sofa in dark grey, industrial-style coffee table and statement pendant shades create a contrast with the living room's period features – like the sumptuous wooden panelling and parquet floor.

Mortimer **sofa**, Made, For a **coffee table**, try Loaf. **Pendant shades**, Olive & the Fox

Above Converted into a garage during the 1950s, the music room was reinstated by the home's previous owners and returned to its original purpose, complete with grand piano. The floor lamp is a vintage Bullfinch roadworks light.

Trio of glass **pendant lights**, Olive & the Fox



Above The dining room is reserved for larger gatherings so the couple felt that they could afford to go for a bold colour, which provides a nice contrast with the deep tones of the 12-seater table and chairs – an Ebay bargain. The fireplace is original to the house.

Walls **painted** in Stiffkey Blue, Farrow & Ball

TOP TIP

Make the most of high ceilings with long pendant lights. Group together for drama, or over a feature like a table or piano





Left The previous owners had recently installed the bathroom, so Lucy simply updated it with a new colour scheme: bold pink accessories, and black paint for the radiator and freestanding bath.

Walls **painted** in Pavilion Gray, Farrow & Ball

Above There's a tranquil mood in the luxurious guest bedroom, with serene white and tactile throws and cushions on the bed. The decorative stars came from an antiques fair.

Oken bedside **tray table**, Habitat



Above Built in 1887, Lucy and David's home was bomb-damaged during the war and subsequently divided into two houses.

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PROJECT OF THE MONTH

THAT'S CAUGHT OUR EYE



KEEP IT CALM

Now isn't this a palette to soothe your tired eyes and calm your busy mind? There is so much to love about this side-return extension. The slatted effect you see on the new addition is actually traditional yellow stone brick, laid in a sawtooth bond to create a jutting, triangular pattern that adds textural interest with shadow play throughout the day – and if you look closely, you can see the effect mirrored with wood cladding inside. The earthy plaster pink finish on the original house frames the slightly widened French doors beautifully. And that pivot window must be a delight on a sunny spring day – imagine being able to perch on the sill and watch the garden slowly come back to life. Bliss! Project cost: around £200,000. YARD Architects, 020 7407 8303, yardarchitects.co.uk

KITCHEN & BATHROOM

NEWS

THE LATEST IDEAS, TRENDS AND ESSENTIAL BUYS

Clutter free

Our bathrooms are our sanctuaries, so give your bathroom storage the same amount of consideration and style as you would any other room. Wayfair's Askas range, including this tall design, is sleek and minimal, and in this soft mint hue with metallic gold finishes, we just can't resist. Complete your scheme with the matching cabinet and vanity unit, too. Askas bathroom cabinet, £151.99, Wayfair



HIGH TECH

Let us introduce you to Crosswater's latest innovation in shower technology: the Crossbox Push. The state-of-the-art push technology gives you maximum control of your water flow, temperature and the number of water outlets. Available in all of Crosswater's stylish finishes, from matt black or white to chrome and brushed brass, it's serious style and substance for any modern shower room. MPRO Crossbox Push 3 outlet Valve in Brushed Brass, £899, Crosswater



Light the way

These bathroom lights from Made are modern style at its best. The sleek shapes and metallic finishes will create that ambient living area feel in your bathroom.

INDUSTRIAL REVOLUTION

Silestone has launched a brand new collection of work surfaces inspired by industrial towns across the globe. Demand for industrial-inspired materials like rust, cement, steel and concrete continues to rise, making this a timely launch. Silestone has also developed a new, more sustainable production process, using recycled glass, water and 100 per cent renewable energy. Silestone Loft in Camden, from £450 per m², Cosentino

JOINING FORCES

Two of our favourite brands, Fired Earth and Bert & May, have joined forces to launch a beautiful tile collection together. These pretty Bolonia tiles are the first to be released. Inspired by an original design from Bert & May's archive, the designs have been reimagined by both teams in two contemporary colourways, navy and blush. Bert & May Bolonia tiles, £8.40 per tile, Fired Earth

LITTLE BLACK SINK

This sleek new black steel sink from Caple is the perfect centrepiece to a contemporary kitchen. Pair it with a matt black tap and contrast them against bright white marble worktops for a striking, modern hub of the home. Mode sink, £737; Harlo Puritti tap in black steel, £415, Caple



Textural healing

Bring calming natural patterns into your bathroom the easy way with panelled walls. These marble and concrete effect panels are high on hygiene, waterproof and impeccably finished with perfect rounded corners for a high-end look. Simply order your panels online, and either fit yourself or hire a tradesperson, just as you would for tiling. Elite panels in Ravello and Marmo Migliore, from £560, Mermaid Panels

If you're looking for a new food mixer, *Real Homes'* rigorous testers have tried out all the latest models, and the Sage by Heston Blumenthal Bakery Boss has come out on top.

SPECIFICATIONS

Best for: Best of the best

Capacity: 4.7ltrs

Power: 1200W

Accessories: Scraper, beater, dough hook, wire whisk

RRP: £399.95

REASONS TO BUY:

- + Range of attachments
- + Cuts mixing time by 60%
- + Built-in timer, so you can get on with other things while mixing

ANY DOWNSIDES:

- For baking only



REAL HOMES
★★★★★
AWARDS 2020
WINNER

Best food mixer

BATHROOM MAKEOVER

LUXE ON A BUDGET

Shopping around for bargains and using tiles left over from a friend's project gave the Houltons a smart shower room – on a shoestring

AS one of the smallest rooms in a house, a bathroom shouldn't cost the earth when it comes to renovating it. But if your budget is small, it can feel like a balancing act between keeping costs down and getting the look you want, despite the limited options.

If this is you, let Lucy's stunning bathroom be a reminder that a shoestring budget needn't mean a cheap-looking bathroom by any means. With a combination of smart planning, careful shopping and a dose of luck, she transformed her en suite in just two weeks for a little over £6,000, and despite the relatively low price tag, the result is super smart – and a real pleasure to use. We spoke to Lucy to get her top budget-cutting tips.



BEFORE

NEW BEGINNINGS

'When we moved here in 2012, we had plans to renovate the entire house, which meant stretching a modest budget a long way. Most of the rooms were liveable, but this shower room and the adjoining bedroom were by far the most neglected, having hosted various lodgers and the former owners' son over the 30 years they had lived here, so we tackled it first. The shower room is a slice of the original master bedroom, and is long and narrow. But it has a large window and decent floor space, so we knew it could be a really luxurious en suite.'



Profile

THE OWNERS

Lucy Houlton, a journalist, her husband, David, an accountant, their children Lola, 18, and Edie, 14, and Cavapoo, Ted

THE PROPERTY

A five-bedroom Edwardian terraced house in north London

TOTAL PROJECT COST

£6,172





LUCKY DIP

'With the underfloor heating going down, and as we were considering floor tiles, a friend called to say they'd mistakenly over-ordered encaustic floor tiles for their hallway – and offered the surplus to us free of charge. There were just enough to complete the shower room. I was particularly thrilled because we'd been considering a safe combination of white floor and wall tiles, and I was worried the room was going to look a little cold and very plain. We hadn't even seen the tiles before they arrived in the boot of our friend's car, but they were perfect for a slightly exotic, contemporary look for the room – we were delighted.'



STARTING POINT

'We ripped out the old fittings, including a long, shallow storage unit and dated panelling, both of which only made the room feel narrower and cramped. We did some of this work ourselves to save money, but luckily have a friend who is a plumber, so he came in and did the tricky bits. We considered installing a bath, but since we already have a main family bathroom, decided that a hotel-style wet room would be a better use of money and space. We didn't have the budget to create quite the look we wanted, so I spent many evenings shopping around online for fittings that would look the part until I came across Bathstore.'

WORDS LUCY SEARLE PHOTOGRAPHS COLIN POOLE

PICK AND CHOOSE

'We chose a large walk-in cubicle but with a near flush-to-floor fitting and frameless glass so that we could enjoy a luxurious, spacious shower without making the room feel small. The fittings were budget buys, yet their style and proportions make the room look like an expensive wet room. I chose an Edwardian-style basin to match the architecture of the house – and because the shower is so plain, I felt the mix of old and new styles would work.'

Costs & contacts

Labour £4,000

Shower £1,346

Basin and loo £459

Shutters £237

Tiles £80

Lighting £50

Sanitaryware

Bathstore, bathstore.com

Shutters

California Shutters,
californiashutters.co.uk

Tiles B&Q, diy.com

FINISHING TOUCHES

'To keep things simple, we opted for subway-style tiles in a brickwork pattern for the walls around the shower, and painted the rest of the room white. To complement the contemporary feel we had gone for – and the window dressings in the bedroom – we DIY-fitted a white, full-height shutter at the window. The chair was originally from a set of two bought for the living room, but when they arrived they were smaller than they looked in the brochure so were no good for downstairs. However, they look great in the bathroom and this en suite!'



SHOPPING LIST

Shower, WC and basin set, Bathstore. **Shutters**, California Shutters. **Bevelled edge tiles**, B&Q. For similar encaustic tiles, try Fired Earth. **Towels** and **towel basket**, TK Maxx. For butterfly prints, try Over & Over at Not On The High Street. **Pedestal table** and **picture frames**, Ikea. **Toiletries**, Oliver Bonas. **Faux foliage**, Abigail Ahern. For a similar bathroom **duckboard**, try Design Project by John Lewis No.008. For a similar **chair**, try Homebase





Cut the cost of your **BATHROOM**

In need of a bathroom refresh? Our budget-savvy tips will help you get your dream space without breaking the bank



1

STICK WITH THE LAYOUT

If you can, keep the layout you have and you'll save cash. Moving the bath, basin, toilet or shower will involve altering the existing plumbing, costing you time as well as money. In some cases this is unavoidable – if you want to create a family bathroom, for example, practicality comes first – but if the layout still works for you, just update the suite.

3

WET ROOM STYLE

Like the look of a wet room, but don't love the cost? Create a similar effect by fitting a flush shower tray for a walk-in shower – the luxe, but still affordable, compromise between wet room and traditional cubicle. Check with an experienced installer before going ahead to make sure there's enough space for pipework and proper drainage.

WORDS: ELLEN FINCH * ACCORDING TO RESEARCH BY CONFUSED.COM

£3,340

THE AVERAGE SUM BRITS SPEND ON UPGRADING THEIR BATHROOM*

2

OFF THE WALL

Wall-hung basins and toilets are great for creating the illusion of space, but they usually cost significantly more than a floorstanding version, and you'll need to factor in the cost of concealing the cistern and frame, often in a stud wall, as well as the installation and any extra support needed. Of course, if you're working with a small space, you might decide to spend more money here – in which case, you can still make savings through the type of design you choose (see 'Keep it white').



4

MAKE UPGRADES

If fittings look perfectly fine but are a little lacklustre – whether that's a constantly wobbly toilet seat or a shower that's more of a dribble than a spray – then a few simple upgrades, rather than ripping everything out and starting again, will make for a more luxurious experience. A shower, in particular, is much improved with the new, smarter designs on offer today – including features like a choice of spray patterns or ways to limit the amount of water used (cutting the cost of your bills).



SPLURGE ON...

FANCY BASIN TAPS

Belgravia Crosshead cloakroom basin taps in unlacquered brass, £199, Crosswater

FIND MORE IDEAS AND ADVICE FOR YOUR BATHROOM MAKEOVER AT REALHOMES.COM/BATHROOM

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5

SPEND VS SAVE

There are certain parts of a bathroom makeover that you shouldn't scrimp on, but that doesn't mean you have to break the bank: work out what you need to prioritise when it comes to budgeting and make savings elsewhere. Here's where to spend and where to save on your project.

SPEND

> BATHROOM HARDWARE

A poor quality tap, for example, will need repairing or replacing much quicker than a higher-end version, and the latter will look infinitely better, too.

> SHOWER ENCLOSURES

A high-quality shower enclosure is less likely to crack thanks to its thicker glass, and will usually have precoated protection to make it easier to clean.

> FURNITURE

Built-in furniture, particularly storage, is worth spending a little more on to make sure it's good quality, long-lasting and won't date – after all, it's not something you'll want to replace a few years down the line.

SAVE

> SUITE

A bathroom suite on the lower end of the price scale isn't necessarily a bad thing, as long as you're investing in good quality hardware. Try ex-display or closing down sales for bargains, too – you don't need the fanciest design if you're sticking to something plain (see 'Keep it white').

> LIGHTING

As long as you're using bathroom-safe fixtures, you needn't spend hundreds on lighting. Fit a dimmer switch to change the mood from morning rush to post-work soak, and add lights either side of a mirror, or buy a mirror with lights built in.

> TILES

Go faux with your tiles and limit where you place them to save potentially hundreds of pounds (see 'Tile style' and 'Perfect match').

6

PERFECT MATCH

As much as we love natural materials like stone, marble and wood, they often aren't compatible with a tight budget – but that doesn't mean you have to give up the look. The best luxury vinyl tiles are hard to tell apart from their real wood, natural stone or tile alternatives, and they're often cheaper to install, too. Likewise, porcelain tiles will give the same appearance as luxe materials like marble for a fraction of the price – and are reasonably chip-resistant, too.



GO FAUX

Can't get the real wood or ceramic look? These copycat alternatives look just as good



7

IN POSITION

Think carefully about the position of things like shaver or electric toothbrush sockets in the planning stages of your project. The first fix of the electrics in a new or refitted bathroom involves running cables for lighting, including any wall lights around a mirror as well as for ceiling lights, and for any sockets you might want in the new layout. Want to move them later on? You'll have to redo the wall preparation and tiling that goes on top.



Right Urban Cashmere compact floorstanding vanity unit and close coupled toilet, £499.95, Victorian Plumbing



8

ACCESSORIES ARE EVERYTHING

The easiest and cheapest way to refresh a bathroom is by changing the accessories – a simpler task when the foundations of your space are neutral, which is why an all-white suite works well for longevity. Towels and bath mats add splashes of colour, while mirrors, soap dishes and toothbrush holders in metallic finishes like brushed brass have a luxe touch. And don't forget humidity-loving houseplants – you can never have too much greenery.

9

KEEP IT WHITE

Choosing plain sanitaryware means you can shop around for the best deal on each piece without the overall scheme looking mismatched. If that feels too clinical, invest in a statement piece, like the bath, in a stand-out finish. Desperate for colour? Use paint to colourblock walls or stencil on tiles for brightness on a budget.



BATHROOM STORAGE
Espa bamboo storage caddy, £39, Made



10

TILE STYLE

While a fully-tiled bathroom – especially with large-format designs – make for a spa-like space, sticking to the areas where you need water protection, like around the bath or basin and in the shower, will save on the cost of the tiles and of fitting them. For the rest of the room, opt for a bathroom-suitable paint, which you can switch up as you please.

ADVERTORIAL

Below Milano Windsor traditional four-column radiator in white, from £199.95; and traditional thermostatic radiator valves, £48.95 a pair



Above Milano Aruba vertical single panel designer radiator, £239.95

Right Milano Aruba designer radiator in dark blue, £309.95



REFRESH YOUR HABITAT WITH A HOT NEW LOOK

It's time to revamp your rooms with radiators that add warmth and style

With spring not too far away and with many of us still spending more time at home, it's more important than ever to make the most of your habitat and enjoy the surroundings you love.

If you have an ancient monolith radiator spoiling the look of your walls, now is the season for change. Whether you're tackling a full home reno or a small room revamp, upgrading your radiators is a much easier, quicker and more affordable task than you might think.

With exceptional quality design, our diverse range of designer radiators, electric radiators and heated towel rails can help you transform your habitat into a stylish sanctuary.

From luxury living spaces to large family bathrooms, we have a selection of modern, period style and space-saving heating options to add warmth

and style to your tranquil wetlands (bathroom or en suite), grazing grounds (kitchen) or living room lair.

CREATE A LAID BACK LOUNGE

Your living room radiator choice can make all the difference to your space. Since it's the room we do most of our relaxing in, it goes without saying that you want it to be a comfortable temperature and for each feature to complement your décor.

So don't let the clunky convector stand out for all the wrong reasons. Choose an attractive vertical or horizontal design from our range of styles and finishes to enhance your living room instantly.

If you're lured in by clean, minimal design, our contemporary Milano Alpha, Aruba and Capri collections will speak to your Scandi sensibilities with

their flat panel and soft curved details. If you're hooked on the elegance and character of period properties, highlight original features with the charming steel-columned Milano Windsor and real cast-iron Milano Alice, Beatrix and Tamara beauties.

COSY UP THE DEN

Make a cosy den unique to your 'cubs' with our range of rainbow-coloured designer radiators and accessories.

Whatever colours your little ones love, our collection has been designed to help you play with your interiors and create vibrant spaces that spark their imaginations and sense of fun.

From bright red and yellow, to pink, blue, green or purple, add that perfect finish to your child's habitat.

If radiator hunting is totally new to you, head over to the BestHeating Advice Centre and use our handy BTU calculator to discover the best radiators and towel rails to enhance the look of any room and make warm and inviting living spaces. Transform your home with aspirational heating from BestHeating.com

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Accounts to follow on Instagram

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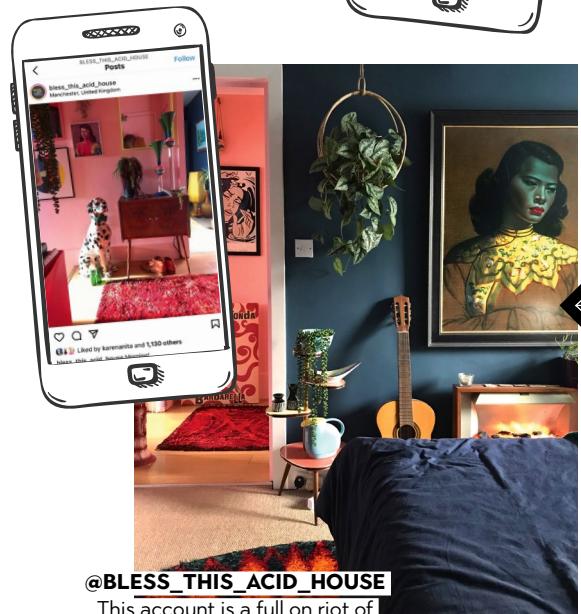
Rental homes can be tricky to make your own, but Amara's feed is full of creative ways to add colour and pattern to any property without risking that deposit – she's pure genius.

Ellen Finch, deputy editor



These gorgeous grids are inspiring us to embrace the rainbow

1
2
3
4
5



@BLESS_THIS_ACID_HOUSE

This account is a full on riot of colour and gorgeously groovy styling. Quirky art, neon pops and unashamedly '70s accessories, it oozes fun – all of which is achievable with some clever creativity, tins of paint plus a large dash of bravado. Stuart

Eminson, I salute you.

Anna Morley, style editor



@53HOUSEPLANTSANDME

What do you get if you mix a rainbow of pastel tones and an impressive collection of house plants? The answer: Catherine's beautiful account. This fun, colourful retreat is a perfect example of how, when done well, colour can turn a property into a home. If you need me, I'll be painting my dark walls a sunny shade of yellow...

Emily Smith, senior art editor



@709 DESIGN

Graphic designer Phil's artistic eye shows through as he makes over a traditional 1930s semi. The first-time buyer has swept bland beiges away with intense blues, greys and even a black ceiling, throwing in curve balls like a wall covered in exotic birds. His stop-motion film of a wall magically getting painted Hicks Blue is 20 seconds of pure joy.

Alison Jones, assistant editor



@HOMEONKNIGHTSHILL

I can't get enough of creative paint ideas and this account is right up there for unique designs. This bedroom mural was painted using old tester pots, making this stunning, calming statement completely free. What could be better than that?

Amelia Smith, deputy style editor



KITCHEN EXTENSION

DO ONCE, DO WELL

Isobel and Jeremy Thomson-Cook overcame bad weather and budgetary woes to create a timeless kitchen for the years to come

IT'S probably just as well Isobel and Jeremy Thomson-Cook didn't realise how challenging their kitchen project – part of a whole house renovation – would be. If they had, they might have chosen an easier alternative – and that would've been a compromise too far. The couple knew they wanted to stay in East Dulwich, where they'd been living, but needed a bigger house and garden. Having looked at properties both pre and post renovation, nothing quite suited until they viewed this Victorian mid-terrace. Despite the fact it lacked the very thing Isobel was after – a spacious kitchen area for entertaining – she saw the huge potential it offered. She explains how they created their colourful space.



WORDS MANDI MILLAR PHOTOGRAPHS AND STYLING FIONA WALKER ARNOTT

'The width of the side return perfectly accommodates our long, slim dining table. Lit from above with rooflights, it's a lovely place for lunch. And with candles on the table at night, the glazing reflects the flames and makes the space cosy.'

For a similar **dining table**, try the Winglefield from Oka. Wegner-style **wishbone chairs**, Swivel UK. Roddy **wall lights**, Pooky



Profile

THE OWNERS

Isobel Thomson-Cook, a behavioural research consultant, and her husband, Jeremy, a chief economist, plus rescue kittens, Bennie and Jet

THE PROPERTY

A five-bedroom, mid-terraced house in East Dulwich, dating from around 1890

PROJECT COST

£145,090



Left and right 'We enjoy entertaining but if your hob faces the wall you end up with your back to guests,' says Isobel. 'By placing it on the island you can be in the middle of everything.' Fitting shelves on the back of a unit door maximises storage for small items

Belfast sink, Quooker tap and Silestone worktop, Herringbone Kitchens. **Bloomingville ceiling lights**, Beaumonde. For similar stools, try the Golden Ochre curved back velvet stool, Rockett St George



STEP ONE

THE VISION

'The original kitchen was cramped and dark with strip lights on the ceiling, very little storage and only room for one person,' says Isobel. 'We wanted a bright open-plan space where we could entertain and be simultaneously cooking and relaxing. Somewhere we could use day and night, and something that worked for us now and in the future. We achieved this by extending into the back garden and the side return. Rooflights flood the space with light and the back wall has been replaced with floor-to-ceiling bi-folds. Now we have a multifunctional kitchen, dining and relaxing space that has become the heart of our home – it's where we spend most of our time.'

STEP TWO

THE TEAM

'We wanted an architect based locally and open to a more collaborative process, so we could incorporate our ideas. Our architect introduced us to our builders and handled the planning side. Jeremy was on site each day and took on much of the project management, but there were many late night and pre-work visits to the house, hours spent on the laptop planning and placing orders and lots of frantic phone calls during the day. My parents live close by so we stayed there throughout the renovations, which started in early July 2019. We finally moved in on Christmas Eve!'

STEP THREE

THE COMPROMISES

'Our ethos throughout was to do things well once, rather than doing them on the cheap and having to re-do them. We focused on key elements, such as reinstating the windows from uPVC to wooden sashes. We did compromise on increasing their size as it would've meant more steel, and thus expense.'

'The British weather was challenging. Our polished concrete floor had to be poured before we had the bi-folds and the glass roof in place. The builders put up tarp but it rained constantly for days, causing it to fail and water to deluge onto our freshly poured concrete floor. Cue stressful hours with a phone torch trying to mop up the mess while not making it worse.'

'We wanted a garden feel to the seating area, bringing the outside in,' says Isobel. 'Because they're not solid, the light flows through these rattan chairs while the bi-fold doors can be opened right back in summer – so you might as well be outside!'

Bermuda rattan **chair**,
The Rattan Company.
Qaia coffee table,
Ceraudo. **Knighthly sofa**, Arlo & Jacob



4

STEP FOUR

THE BUDGET

'Budget was a major issue. We had an original budget with a contingency, but we had to allocate that and more within the build's first couple of weeks. This was due to a combination of things discovered in the demolition phase that hadn't been anticipated and the top floor being ripped out. This wasn't scheduled to happen until much later but had costing implications on a lot of the kitchen work, adding up to a very expensive unanticipated cost. We took on the decorating ourselves to free up money elsewhere. We also realised that our kitchen budget wouldn't allow for us to do any work on the top floor or in the garden, so introduced a phased plan for the renovations.'

5

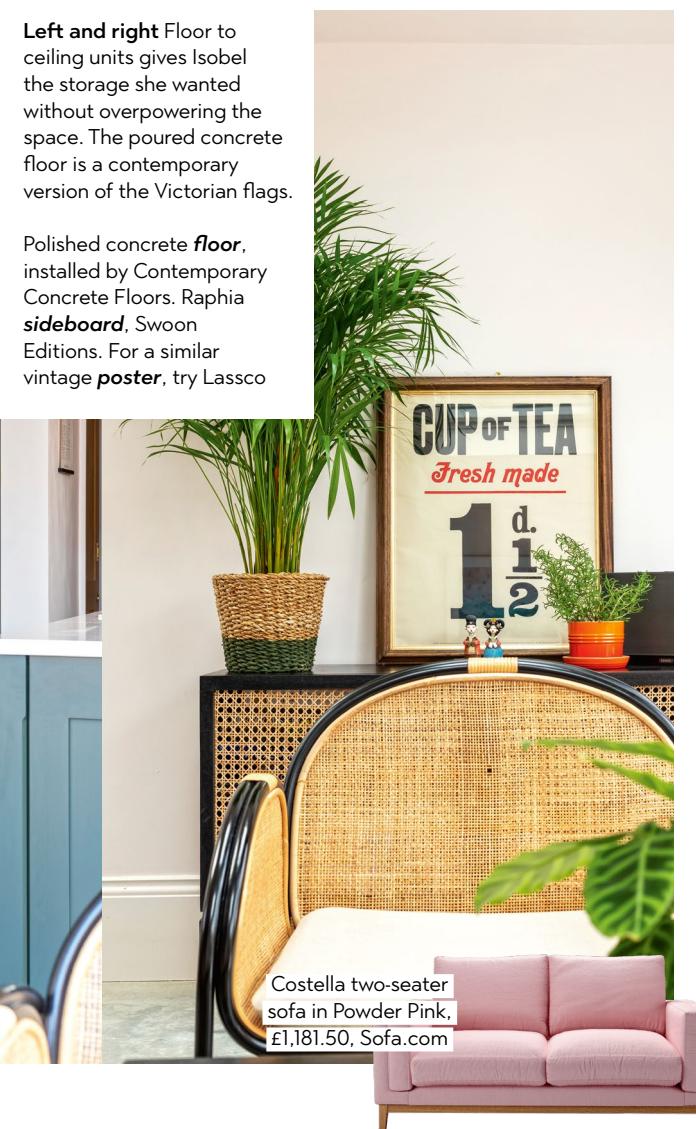
STEP FIVE

DESIGNS AND FINISHES

'I wanted the kitchen to be in keeping with the Victorian house we bought, but with a healthy dash of colour and personality and all the mod cons a modern family needs – hence the Shaker-style doors in a fabulous period green, set against the glazed display dresser picked out in bright yellow, which complements the contemporary yellow stools at the island and the poured concrete floor underfoot. We've worked hard to get here but it's been a labour of love. Now we just relish being able to finally enjoy it – knowing we've created a kitchen that truly reflects who we really are!'

Left and right Floor to ceiling units gives Isobel the storage she wanted without overpowering the space. The poured concrete floor is a contemporary version of the Victorian flags.

Polished concrete **floor**, installed by Contemporary Concrete Floors. **Raphia sideboard**, Swoon Editions. For a similar vintage **poster**, try Lassco



MY KITCHEN IN

5

1

FIRST MEAL COOKED IN NEW KITCHEN

'Christmas lunch for eight by an exhausted Jeremy.'

2

FAVOURITE HOUSE PLANT

'Areca Palm. It looks great and we love some greenery, plus it's non-toxic to cats – which is handy as ours seem to love it!'



Large Areca palm, £261, Sweetpea & Willow

3

MY GO-TO PLAYLIST FOR SUNDAY MORNING BRUNCH

'If Jeremy is in charge of the Sonos it's normally BBC Six Music, or something by The National.'

4

MY BEST TRIED AND TRUSTED RECIPE

'My favourite this year for us has been the Jerk Fish Tacos with Fiery Mango Salsa from *Table Manners: The Cookbook*. They are amazing.'

5

MY FAVOURITE SPOT FOR A CUPPA

'On the pink sofa with the late afternoon sun streaming in, looking back at the kitchen.'

Costs & contacts

Build cost £65,000

Kitchen £55,000

Glazing £18,230

Flooring £6,860

Architect Model Projects, 020 7095 8833, modelprojects.co.uk

Kitchen designer and supplier Herringbone Kitchens, 01227 638066, herringbonekitchens.com

Builder Balham Builders, 07446 881 479, balhambuildersltd.com

Glass roof Euro Windows UK, 020 8838 5277, eurowindowsuk.co.uk

Concrete floor Contemporary Concrete Floors, 01634 907 021, contemporaryconcretefloors.co.uk

Internal steel doors Black Steel Doors, 020 8908 0006, blacksteeldors.co.uk

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PHOTOGRAPH KATIE LEE

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Plus! Style tips, latest trends and buying guides

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SPOTLIGHT ON

ANTI KITCHENS

Create a kitchen you can live in with open-plan layouts boasting comfortable, warm elements and hidden functionality



TABLE TOP

By ditching the classic kitchen island in favour of a wooden, table-inspired design, your kitchen will instantly feel more like a sociable hub. Integrate your hob or even sink into the design for a space that's sleek, refined and secretly functional. Highgate kitchen, from £25,000, Naked Kitchens



SPACE TO BREATHE

Choose low cabinets and keep your walls free to create an airy and comfortable living space. By aligning your units along two walls, your kitchen blends in seamlessly for a barely-there design. Remo kitchen in matt porcelain and gloss graphite, from £10,000, Second Nature



TACTILE TEXTURES

Bring soft materials like velvets, leathers and cottons into your scheme for a comfy, cosy feel. Choose cushioned bar stools, textured curtains, and chunky rugs. Infinity Plus Autograph Elements kitchen in Concrete Oak matt and China Blue, £3,244 for all fully built-in units shown, Wren

FIVE THINGS...

you need to know to create a kitchen that functions as so much more than just a cooking space

ONE

Before you begin planning your design, consider how you want to use your space.

Do you want the focus to be on dining, relaxing, cooking or socialising?

Do you want your layout to match perfectly, or do you want clear separate zones?

Let the function of your space dictate your plans.

TWO

When combining cooking and living areas, don't forget about noise.

Choose a cooker hood and dishwasher with low decibel ratings. If working from your kitchen, consider a hot water tap, rather than a kettle. Also, soft laminate flooring and rugs will produce quieter footsteps than wood.

THREE

For a sleek finish, go for integrated appliances. You will need to plan these in from the start of the design

process, and consider choosing colourways that blend in with your kitchen for a camouflage effect. Integrating a hob or sink into a freestanding island or table may be more complex, but worth it.

FOUR

Spending time in airy rooms with natural sunlight can make us feel happier, so it's important to maximise space and light.

Position the area you use most, be it the dining table or the kitchen, beneath roof lights or windows. A well-lit space will beckon you to spend time there throughout the day.

FIVE

Open shelving is an increasingly popular kitchen feature for two key reasons. When used in place of closed shelving, this works to make your space feel larger. It also lets you bring more of your personality into the room by displaying trinkets, ceramics and books.



WORK FROM HOME

Our kitchens are often our largest and brightest rooms, so they're the ideal place to incorporate a home office. Factor a built-in desk and office storage into your kitchen design and your tea breaks will become more seamless. Tiverton kitchen in sage, price on application, Wickes



EXTEND OUTWARDS

Continuing your kitchen unit style out into other rooms really blurs the lines between your kitchen and living spaces – this could be a matching sideboard in your living area, or a wall-hung design in your hallway. Oak veneer kitchen from the Major range, from £10,000, Schmidt



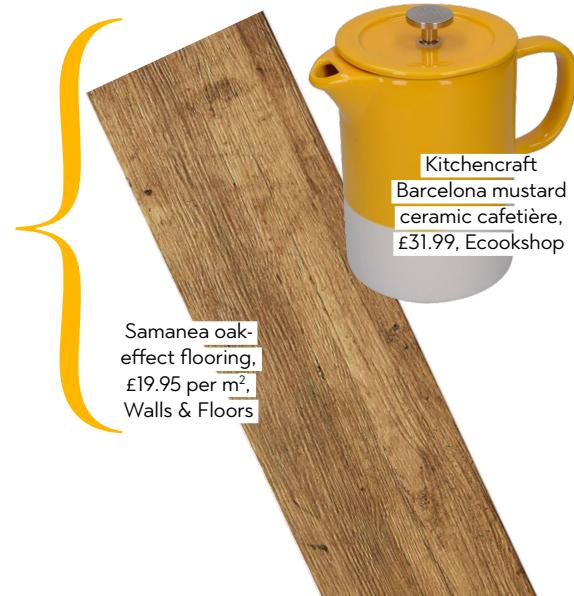
KEEP IT PLAYFUL

Incorporating open shelving into your island can be practical and fun. Display your kids' most stylish toys and you can watch them play while you make dinner, giving your space a function for everyone. Bath kitchen from £8,000, British Standard by Plain English



TRICK OF THE EYE

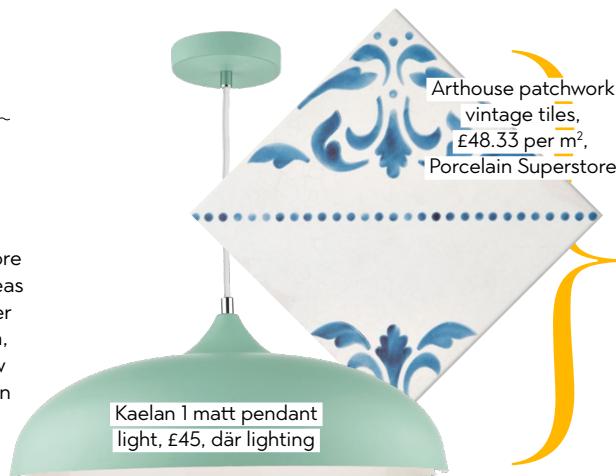
Our eyes are drawn to light and bright colours, so choosing dark, matt black kitchen cabinets will let your kitchen fade into the background, while your eating area takes centre stage. Choose light-coloured seating to highlight social spaces. Kitchen, £15,000, Pluck



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Did you know?

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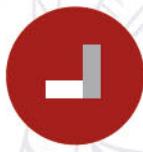
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Icons with borders are standard features. Ones without borders are options.

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A GUIDE TO

Front doors

Keep your home safe, warm, and add kerb appeal with a new front door. Here's what you need to know when choosing yours

Many of us inherit a front door when we buy our homes, and don't consider changing it. But swap this feature and you can make the exterior of your place a whole lot more appealing, enhancing its kerb appeal. You might also like to consider a new front door to better complement your home's architecture, if a previous owner has chosen a design that doesn't fit the home's age or character. It could contribute to better home insulation as you swap to a more thermally efficient door, too. A new door also offers the chance to boost your home security and, fitted with a smart lock, make access more convenient with keys a thing of the past (see Q&A) – if you prefer it that way.

Front doors come in a variety of materials each with their own benefits, and costs. There's a whole host of styles, too, including classic and contemporary designs, along with a huge colour choice – from the subtle to the standout. Use our guide to get front door savvy, and be inspired by the range of attractive doors on offer.

WHICH STYLES CAN I CHOOSE FROM?

First, you'll need to decide if you want a front door with a modern look or a traditional design. If you opt for modern, your door will have sleek lines, but other than that there's huge choice, including styles with glazing in small or large proportions and solid doors.

Contemporary doors can be understated in appearance, but the opportunity is there to choose a version with modern decorative

Thermo65 in Decograin dark oak with side elements, price on application, Hörmann



detail, or a striking colour or finish. If a classic design is more to your taste, go for a door with panels and moulding. You can pick a design that reproduces the style of a particular historical period, such as Victorian. Alternatively, you might go for a panelled design that looks traditional without strictly adhering to the style of a particular era.

For a simple, traditional finish, the vertical tongue and groove of a cottage-style door is hard to beat. As with contemporary doors, you can pick from solid doors, or those featuring glazed panels.

Don't forget that if the entrance to your home has the right proportions, you can complement the front door with one or two sidelights and/or a top light. These can bring more natural light into your hallway, and the glass can be obscure if necessary to protect your privacy.

Below Aluminium door with CO04 panel from Sandringham range in Anthracite Gray, from £2,160, Origin



Left Milano composite door, price on application, Safestyle



Below Atris aluminium door, from around £3,500, Weru UK



Above Crystal six-panel frosted glazed composite LH door set in navy blue, £597, B&Q

WHAT MATERIALS ARE FRONT DOORS MADE OF?

There are a variety of front door materials to select from when you're exchanging yours.

> **UPVC DOORS** match windows made from the same material. While white is ubiquitous, consider other shades as a stylish alternative. You don't have to pick a colour, though, as there are wood-grain effects available, too. A high quality uPVC front door has a good lifespan, is secure, and can provide good insulation. It is also a very low maintenance option. A uPVC door can be a good budget option with prices starting from around £300.

> **WOODEN EXTERIOR DOORS** have a long pedigree. Today's timber doors may be made from softwood, which is a budget option, or denser and more hard-wearing hardwoods. Wooden doors are frequently chosen for period

London Hardwood four-panel engineered hardwood door, from £187.20 for 1981x762mm untreated, Benchmark



JCI Ultimate Oslo external oak veneer composite door, £575, Wickes

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homes, but you can get modern timber doors as well. When it comes to colour, they can be painted or stained to create the look you love. Wood is inherently characterful and durable, but you will need to maintain a timber door so that it lasts – repainting or staining periodically. Wood is a good insulator, so they're an energy-efficient option. Look out for timber that's sustainably sourced when you're buying.

Timber doors may be made from solid wood or use engineered wood, where the layers run in different directions for stability. Some manufacturers reinforce wooden doors with steel for security. A further option if you like the look of timber is to get a door made from other materials, but with a real wood veneer. Expect to pay from around £100 for a softwood front door; hardwood doors start from around £500.

> COMPOSITE DOORS have become a popular option. They're made – as you might guess – from a selection of materials to reap the benefits of each, and have an insulating core and an outer skin. Composite doors are strong, and thermally efficient to keep your home warmer. They're made in both traditional and contemporary styles, and have the appearance of hardwood doors. They don't need the maintenance wood does, though, and a quality version will have a good lifespan. When it comes to the cost, you're looking at prices starting from around £550.

> ALUMINIUM DOORS are another great option for a front door that's strong and secure but sleek. One of these can be made to larger dimensions than a door in other materials to create an imposing and light-filled entrance to your home. Modern high-quality aluminium front doors are also energy efficient to keep the inside of your home snug. Another big plus point is that they're low maintenance: you won't need to do anything other than clean yours as necessary. You can choose from a vast range of colours, too, to get the look you really love. The downside of aluminium is that it is a more costly option. Expect to pay from around £2,200 for one of these.

HOW CAN I CHECK THE DOOR'S INSULATION?

Your supplier should provide information on the thermal efficiency of the door you're interested in. You can compare the different U-values



Left Apeer 70 Oak composite door, from £1,250, Thames Valley Window Company



Below Tigris Glazed Extreme door with composite core, Medite Tricoya Extreme face, and wooden frame, around £485, JB Kind



FunkyFront Westfalia engineered timber door panel in RAL 2001 Red Orange with frame 9, from £3,168 for door and frame, Klöeber



Left Plaza composite door in Cornish Blue, price on application, Everest

of front doors – the lower the number, the better as it shows how much heat is transferred through it. Note that the maximum allowed by the Building Regulations is $1.8W/(m^2K)$. Alternatively, the BFRC (British Fenestration Rating Council) has a labelling system that looks like the one you're used to seeing when you buy an appliance, with ratings from A++ to E. Visit bfrc.org to find approved manufacturers.

TELL ME ABOUT FRONT DOOR SECURITY

As well as the material of the door, think about the lock that it will be supplied with. Front doors should have PAS 24 accreditation. Look out too for Secured by Design (the official police security initiative) accreditation.

REAL HOMES.COM

Want more front door design ideas?
Head this way



Q & A

YOU ASK, WE ANSWER

'Are smart locks really safe?'

'Although smart locks are still relatively new compared to more traditional locks that have been around for hundreds of years, they are still able to pass security testing standards,' says Anthony Neary, managing director of Safe.co.uk. 'For example, the Yale Conexis L1 is British Kitemark approved to TS621:2018 standard for door security.'

'Smart locks allow access to the property without needing to use a key. In many instances, your smartphone is the key and by simply swiping your phone over the lock reader, you are conveniently granted access. Other forms of access include pressing a button on a smartphone app and key tags or key cards that need to be swiped across the lock reader. Generally, smart locks are fitted with one form of back up so that you're not locked out, including external battery contacts, pin code or even a manual key override. You will always receive plenty of warning that batteries are running low, giving you enough time to change them.'

'Many smart locks that include a pin code for access include a decoy code feature, which allows you to enter random digits at the beginning of your code, making it difficult for someone to know your code by watching over your shoulder.'

'Most smart locks work offline and don't need access to the internet so there is no chance of hacking the Wi-Fi to gain information about the lock. Everything is controlled via a smartphone that it's paired with.'

'Full control is generally provided by a smartphone app. From there, you can control who has access and for how long. If security is compromised, it is also possible to remove users, pin codes, tags and cards via the app.'

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FOCUS ON

Curtains

A fall of fabric at your windows can keep the warmth in, the light out and be a colourful or subtle expression of style

BEST FOR COLOUR ↓

Sometimes more can be more. The many colours in these floor-length curtains pull in the rest of the hues from this boldly decorated room. The painterly pattern in pink, sage green and bluey mauve echoes the walls, chairs and rug, while the watercolour effect contrasts with the geometrics of the blind, giving a modern edge to the traditional print. The result is strong, vivid and playful. The curtains are cotton and blackout lining is available. *Saskia Fuchsia* curtains from £221 for a 127x137cm drop, *Hillarys*



BEST FOR A LUXE LOOK ←

Animal print too OTT for curtains? We don't think so! It gives your home a super luxury look... and just a hint of the exotic. Made from polyester with a premium lining, these curtains are temptingly textural with an embossed velvet feel, while the deep moody tones bring a little drama to your living space. *Jovan* lined ready-made eyelet curtains in slate, grey or plaster, from £52.99, *Terrys*

BEST FOR A CALMING FEEL →

Celebrate the power of neutrals and their ability to help us relax. Pale, restrained shades turn a bedroom into that now-all-too-important restful retreat at home. Pale linen-mix curtains offer subtle style, enhanced by layers of comforting throws. These have a light-filtering lining as standard, plus optional blackout upgrade. *Wave Bijou Linen Vintage Pink* curtains, from £35.95 made-to-measure, *Curtains2Go*



THREE TOP TIPS

Consider linings, size and hanging style to get the curtains that are perfect for you

HANG OUT

How the curtain is hung affects how the material drops. Pleats are attached to a rail by curtain hooks. Pencil and pinch pleats appear tighter at the top for a classic look that works well on smaller windows. Duo or goblet pleats look more defined and tailored. Modern tab or eyelet curtains are held by the pole slotting through tabs or reinforced holes at the top.

MEASURE UP

Get your measurements right. The pole or rail should be 15-20cm above the window, and protrude around 15-20cm either side. Decide how long a drop you want – 1cm above the sill, 15cm below it or 1cm from the floor for full length. A pair of curtains with a total width double that of the window gives a full look; try one and half times for a more relaxed one.

LINE UP

Unlined curtains are usually less expensive than lined curtains, but having a backing of cotton or polycotton will make the curtains harder wearing, resistant to fading and more insulating. To prevent draughts, thermal-lined curtains are a good option, particularly over doors. If you're disturbed by light, a blackout lining will keep the room comfortably dark.

BEST FOR PLANT LOVERS ↓

Our cultivation of our indoor 'gardens' has reached peak plant. It seems every room and any surface can be improved by the addition of a little green friend or 20. So take that plant love to your window dressings and introduce a botanical feel to your space. These fern silhouettes are printed on cotton sateen and are fully lined for indoor warmth with an outdoorsy feel. Clarissa Hulse Costa Rica Fern lined eyelet curtains, £110, Dunelm



→ BEST FOR ICONIC PATTERN

Orla Kiely's stem print design is instantly recognisable. The bold retro pattern was created 20 years ago, and follows the shape of a rowan tree stem and its leaves. We love how it's been reimaged here as a subtle line print, the ochre and grey of the leaves pulling the outside in. Orla Kiely Trio Stem ready-made lined cotton curtains by Ashley Wilde, from £54, available exclusively at Next



BEST FOR ← HOLIDAY VIBES

Dreaming of distant shores? Tropical prints transport us back to holidays we've had or ones we hope to take. With lush colours and large-scale fronds, these curtains are inspired by Hawaii's laid-back lifestyle. A contemporary twist on a floral design, it perfectly frames garden views – or makes a focal point if you don't have them. The Waikiki Moonstone cotton curtains are part of the Maui Collection, £21.36 per m, Prestigious Textiles

FINISHING TOUCHES

It's all in the details. Hang your curtains from stylish poles and finials



GOTHIC TWIST

Have a decorative end to your drapes with this matt black iron pole with striking twisted cage design. Prestine Cage, from £25, JYSK



WOVEN WONDER

This unusual finial has a basket-like design and a natural look. Try it in a laidback boho scheme. Camargue curtain finial, £48.99, Wayfair



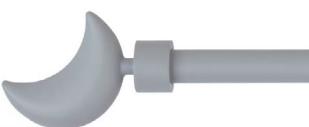
BEST OF BRASS

Add a classic touch and glamorous shimmer with a brass eyelet curtain pole. Neo style spun brass mosaic ball, from £45.56, Poles Direct



ON THE BALL

This ceramic finial makes a smooth stopper for curtains. GoodHome Athens brushed nickel effect ceramic and metal ball, £6.50, B&Q



HANG THE MOON

This charming celestial touch shows it's time for sleep – ideal in a little one's bedroom. Moon extendable curtain pole, £12, Argos



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THE EDIT

Coffee machines

Start your day off in the best way possible with a comforting cup of coffee from a barista-style machine

①



REAL HOMES
AWARDS 2020
WINNER

②



BEST FOR LATTES

③



BEST FOR STYLE

④



⑤



BEST FOR ESPRESSOS

⑥



⑦



⑧



1 Mini barista coffee machine, £299, Breville

2 My Way coffee machine, £139.99, Tassimo

3 Smeg ECF01 coffee machine in pink, £319.95, John Lewis & Partners

4 De'Longhi Magnifica S automatic bean to cup coffee machine, £365, Amazon

5 Espresso machine, £119.99, Morphy Richards

6 Swan retro coffee machine, £99, ao.com

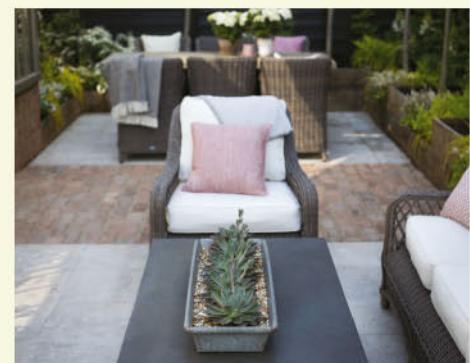
7 Jolie coffee machine in red, £79, Lavazza

8 Cup drip coffee maker, £119, KitchenAid

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THE EDIT

Modern baths

Go contemporary with a statement shape or vibrant colour and let your tub become a sleek focal point



1 Milano Nero black modern slipper bath, £629.99, Big Bathroom Shop
2 Artist Collection Totally Turquoise cast-iron bath, £1,999, Victoria Plum
3 Cooke & Lewis rectangular freestanding bath, £560, B&Q
4 Trojan Winton slipper bath, £876.36, UK Bathrooms
5 Waterbury bathtub, £814.30, Wayfair
6 The Dualelle bath with burnt copper painted skirt, £1,375, Utopia
7 Stream freestanding bath in mustard, from £1,795, Waters Baths of Ashbourne
8 Bryn freestanding bath, £1,201, Easy Bathrooms



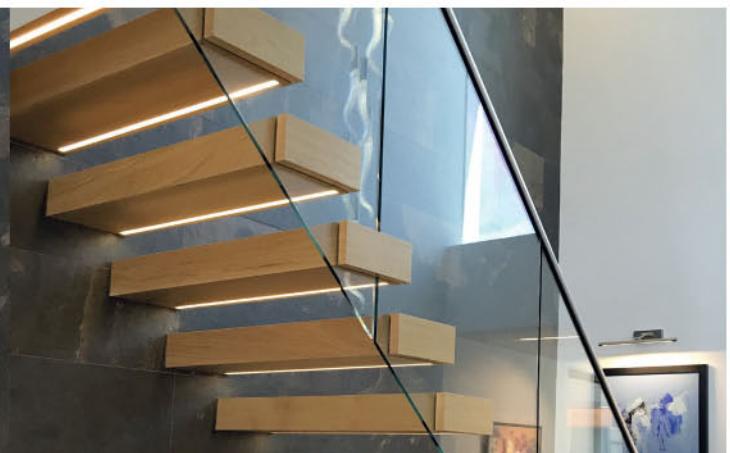
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PLANTERNS

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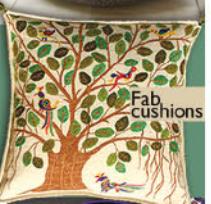
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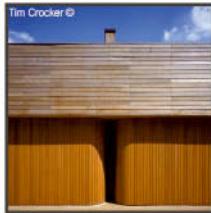
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Photography by Paul Craig

Oak Aged Parquet Ebony Oiled

SUNDAY

Stuck for ideas this weekend? Get your DIY fix and delve right in with our quick and easy ways to update your home for less

project

DIY fluted desk

As more of us than ever before are working from home, we're carving out mini home offices left right and centre, but we don't necessarily want to spend a fortune on them. Fluted shapes and curved edges are having a moment in the interiors sphere, so this genius DIY desk idea by Olivia Edwards-Silk (@lustliving) grabbed our attention. This seriously chic, on-trend desk has a high-end look, but it'll set you back less than £100! We've chatted to Olivia to share how she created this home office set-up of dreams.



FIND PLENTY MORE INSPIRATION FOR YOUR WEEKEND DIY PROJECTS AT REALHOMES.COM/DIY

Cardboard tubes,
Ebay. Pine half
dowel moulding,
B&Q. Linnmon
table top, Ikea

YOU'LL NEED:

- Table top
- Heavy duty cardboard tubes or duct pipe
- Moulding strips
- Tape measure
- Gorilla glue/wood glue
- Saw
- Nail gun
- Paint
- Six angled brackets or corner braces
- Wood filler
- Sandpaper

WHAT TO DO:

- 1 Take two heavy-duty cardboard tubes, with lids on the bottom, and cut to your perfect desk height. These are the legs.
- 2 Get enough moulding strips to cover the circumference of both tubes. Cut to the same length as the tubes.
- 3 Use a spirit level and attach the first moulding with wood glue and a nail gun for extra security.
- 4 Repeat this until the two tubes are covered all the way around.
- 5 Tie string around each leg to keep in place and allow to dry overnight.
- 6 Fill any imperfections with wood filler and sand them down.
- 7 Paint in your colour of choice. Olivia used an eggshell paint so she can wipe the legs clean.
- 8 Secure three brackets/braces to the inside of each leg, evenly spaced.
- 9 Fill the legs at least a third full of sand for a sturdy, less top-heavy desk.
- 10 Secure the tops of the brackets to the underside of the table top.
- 11 Et voila!



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