## HONTIFUL SEAUTIFUL SEAUTIF



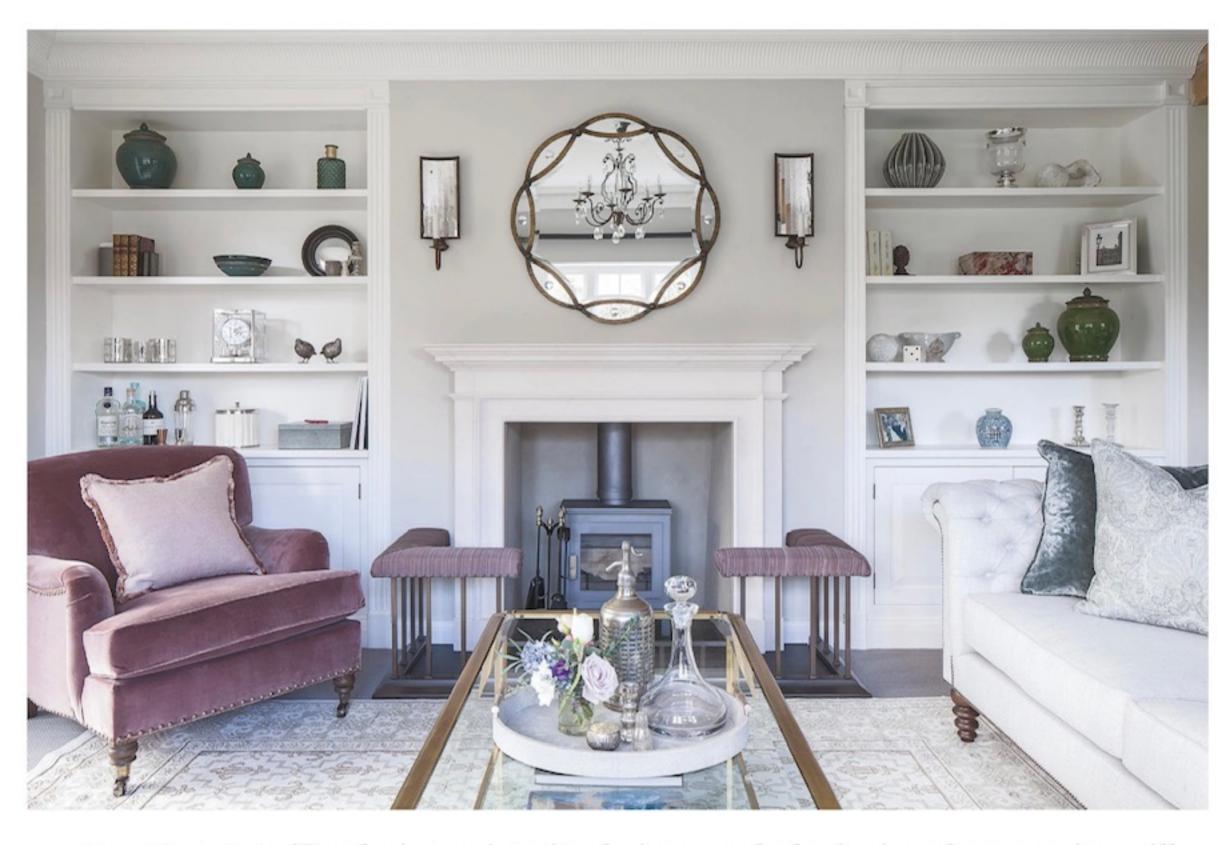




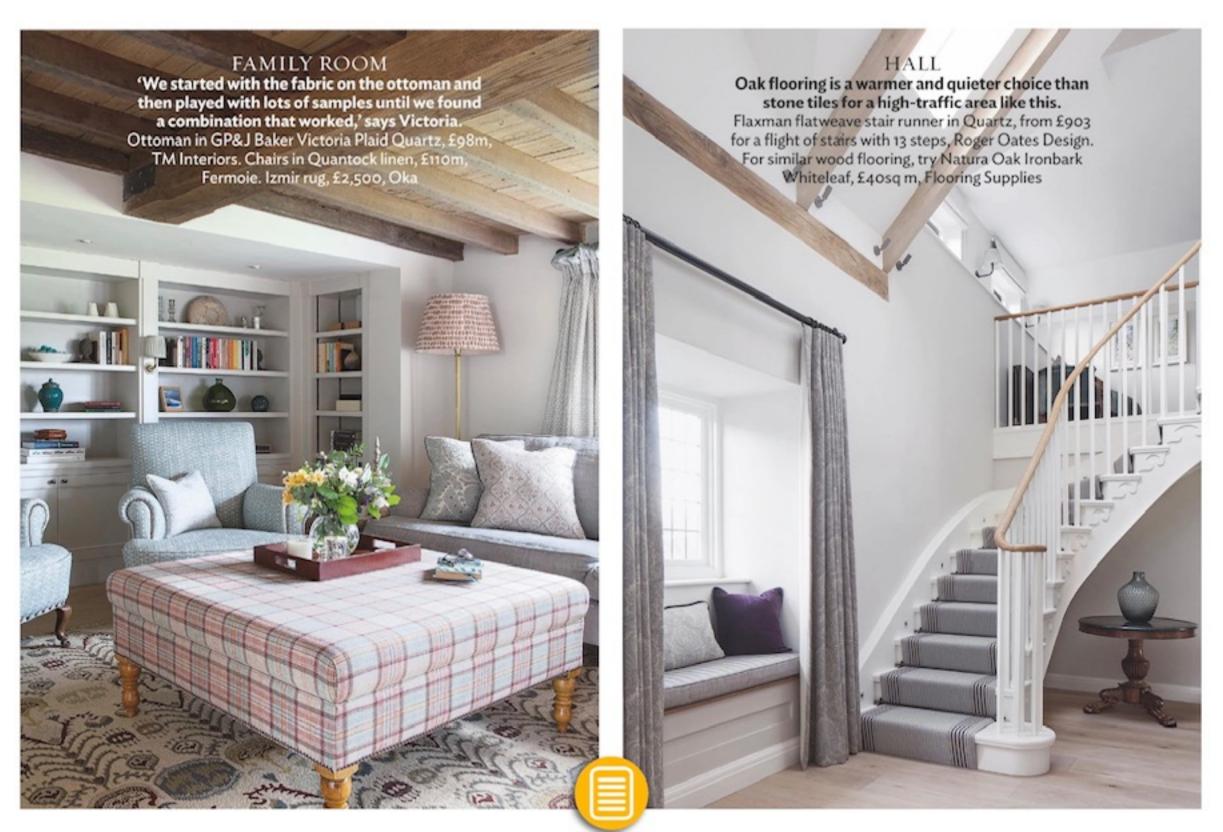


DECORATING TIP 'Classic designs in neutral colours will enhance the character of a period house without making it look too traditional or fussy'





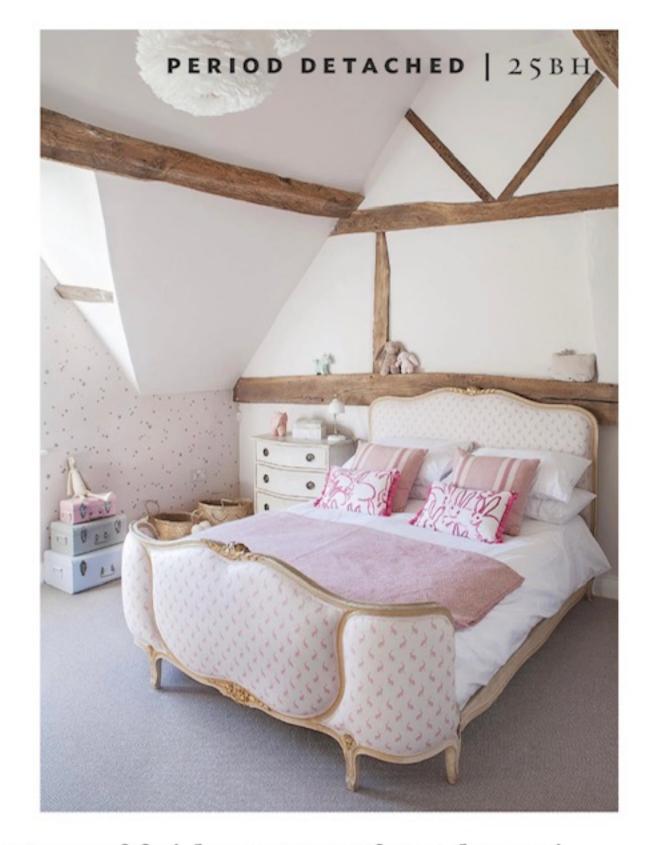
DESIGN TIP Employing an interior designer at the beginning of your project will



he 16th-century origins of this large country house appealed to Victoria and John Hemmings, but the historical additions had resulted in an elongated floor plan, raising questions about how they would use the space. 'We loved the low ceilings and beams but weren't sure about the layout,' says Victoria. 'The rooms ran into one another without a corridor. Our children, George, six, and Lily, three, are still young so we wanted to get the spaces right for both now and years to come.'

Hives Architects and interior designer Fiona Parke from Johnston Parke Interiors were enlisted to help with the renovation. 'We wanted to retain the character of the house but not make it feel old-fashioned,' says Victoria. 'When we met Fiona, she really understood what we were trying to achieve.' Fiona worked closely with the couple's architect to enhance the property's historical elements but also improve the flow and light. She suggested removing the ceilings in the children's bedrooms to expose the rafters and gain head height, as well as putting a laundry room on the first floor.

Builders worked carefully and systematically to remove anything that wasn't in keeping with the old property such as gas fires, modern radiators and lighting. Walls were taken down to open up the family room to the breakfast room and kitchen, and the shared 16th-century chimney breast was knocked through and fitted with a new double-sided



## help you to pin down costs and choose the types of finishes you want for each room'

woodburner. The dark entrance hall needed attention and was remodelled with a double-height ceiling and rooflights.

Fiona worked on the decor with Victoria and John. 'I wanted a classic look and prefer clean design, so the muted colours and soft, tactile materials work well,' says Victoria. Tumbled limestone and whitened oak flooring with neutral walls set a contemporary tone, connecting the downstairs rooms and allowing the oak beams and brickwork to remain prominent. Antique furniture is a nod to the building's origins, modernised with patterned fabrics in shades of blue and green, and an underlying warmth of stone and taupe.

The continuity in the decor and revised layout give shape and purpose to each space. Formal furniture draws the garden room into the house, and the doors between here and the sitting room are kept open for a seamless link. The loggia — once an external walkway — is the passage to reach the garden and utility room but is also a place to relax in. 'I love that there's a reason to use every room and we can still appreciate the wonky walls and old beams,' says Victoria. 'The layout works well for us now as we don't have any wasted space.'

## SITTING ROOM

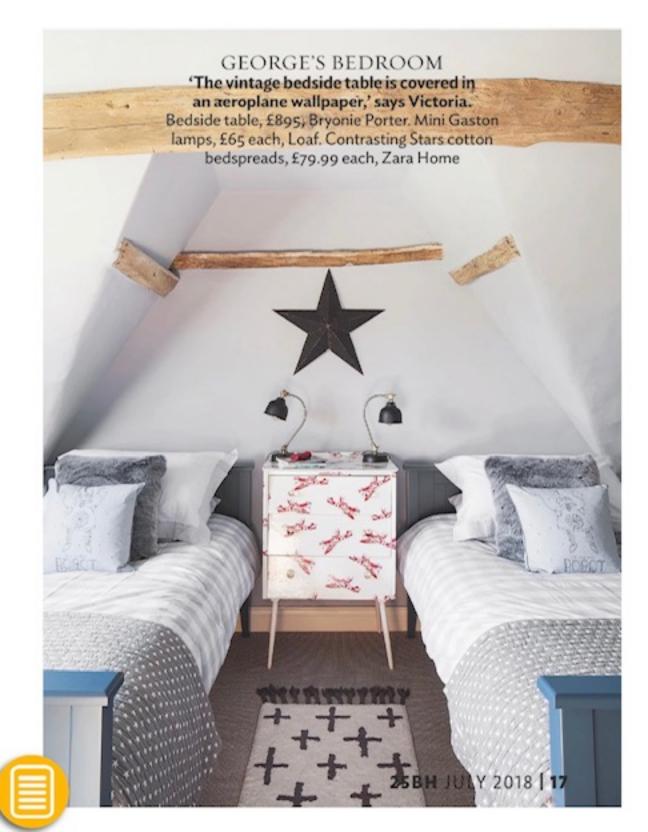
'I like the shape of the Howard armchair and the velvet upholstery is amazingly soft,' says Victoria.

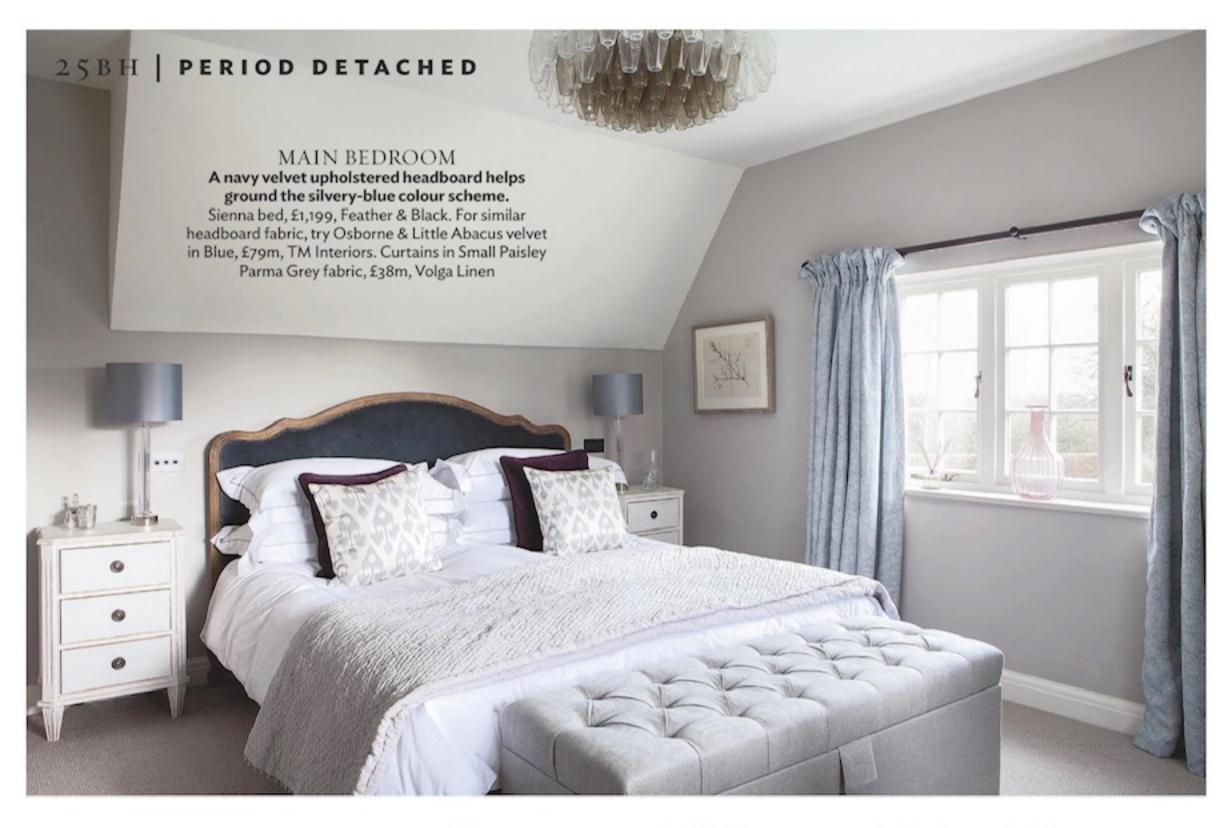
Chair, £1,710, Bray Design Upholstery. Primrose & Plum's pale gold flower wall mirror, £150, is similar. Antique glass and brass coffee table, £1,320, Norfolk Decorative Antiques

## LILY'S BEDROOM

An antique French bed reupholstered in pretty fabric takes centre stage here.

Bed in Mini Hares Pink Icing on Ivory, £64m, Peony & Sage. Cole & Son Whimsical Stars wallpaper, £80 a roll, Houseology. Try Groundworks Bunny Hutch cushions in Pink, from £62 each, SewSusieDesigns at Etsy





DECORATING TIP 'Layer patterned fabrics successfully by sticking with a common thread of colour to tie them together'

