

25 BEAUTIFUL HOMES

ART OF COLOUR

Rich pattern in a Tudor farmhouse
Seaside villa transformed by pastels
Victorian terrace with bold accents

CONVERTED CHAPEL

Inspired reinvention
of a unique space

THE SOURCE

Clever design ideas
and brilliant buys

Signature style

HOMES WITH PERSONALITY AND FLAIR

REPLANNED



HOME TRUTHS

THE PROPERTY

Detached 16th-century house

LOCATION Berkshire

ROOMS Hall, sitting room, kitchen-diner, family room, dining room, garden room, study, playroom, cloakroom, boot room, loggia, utility, six bedrooms (two en suite), dressing area, two bathrooms, laundry room

PURCHASED 2016

PREVIOUS PROPERTY

'We lived in a 17th-century Grade II-listed cottage in a nearby village,' says Victoria.

GARDEN ROOM

'Our interior designer Fiona Parke suggested we replace the old conservatory with this room,' says Victoria. 'I love being in here and use it all year.'

Balmoral round dining table, from £1,630, Neptune. Painted antique chairs, £465 each; metal and wood coffee table, £1,250, all Horsch Interiors. Large lattice pendant light, £6,600, Jamb

PERFECT BLEND

Victoria and John Hemmings' remodelled period house is a masterclass in mixing historical features with modern flair

FEATURE JANE CRITTENDEN | PHOTOGRAPHY JAMES FRENCH





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

KITCHEN

Exposing the underside of the upstairs floor during the renovations introduced a striking antique timber aesthetic to this space.
Toaster table, £895, Loaf. Ercol Originals Windsor dining chairs in black, £390 each, Heal's





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

FAMILY ROOM

'We started with the fabric on the ottoman and then played with lots of samples until we found a combination that worked,' says Victoria. Ottoman in GP&J Baker Victoria Plaid Quartz, £98m, TM Interiors. Chairs in Quantock linen, £110m, Fermoie. Izmir rug, £2,500, Oka



HALL

Oak flooring is a warmer and quieter choice than stone tiles for a high-traffic area like this. Flaxman flatweave stair runner in Quartz, from £903 for a flight of stairs with 13 steps, Roger Oates Design. For similar wood flooring, try Natura Oak Ironbark Whiteleaf, £40sq m, Flooring Supplies



The 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.' 25

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



GEORGE'S BEDROOM

'The vintage bedside table is covered in an aeroplane wallpaper,' says Victoria.

Bedside table, £895, Bryonie Porter. Mini Gaston lamps, £65 each, Loaf. Contrasting Stars cotton bedspreads, £79.99 each, Zara Home



MAIN BEDROOM

A navy velvet upholstered headboard helps ground the silvery-blue colour scheme.

Sienna bed, £1,199, Feather & Black. For similar headboard fabric, try Osborne & Little Abacus velvet in Blue, £79m, TM Interiors. Curtains in Small Paisley Parma Grey fabric, £38m, Volga Linen



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



MAIN EN SUITE

A bespoke vanity unit makes the most of the space.

Custom vanity drawer unit and double basin, £3,375, Porter Bathroom. Walls painted in Plummett estate eggshell, £60 for 2.5L, Farrow & Ball. East Hampton hexagon mosaic marble tiles, £165sq m, Fired Earth



GUEST BEDROOM

Blue and white create a clean, crisp look.

Hawa Mahal rug in Coin Grey with navy outline, £195, From Jaipur With Love. Artur table lamp in stone crackle glaze with straight Empire 30cm shade in green block-printed cotton, £160, Pooky

