

THE MAGAZINE WITH THE MOST REAL HOMES NOVEMBER 2013 £3.90 | US \$8.99, AUS \$8.70, NZ \$12.95

# 25 BEAUTIFUL HOMES

## LIVING BEAUTIFULLY STYLISH IDEAS TO STEAL

**DESIGN TIPS**  
*Decorating advice  
& shopping for  
every room*

SAVE  
**20%**  
at  
THE DORMY  
HOUSE

### A HOME IN THE HIGHLANDS

CREATING THE MAXIMUM SPACE  
WITH THE MINIMUM SPEND

MODERN  
INTERIORS  
INDUSTRIAL  
NEW-BUILD  
TRANSFORMED  
1970s HOME  
A VICTORIAN  
VILLA UPDATED





# A CLEAN SWEEP

*Removing a chimney breast was the first step in the conversion of the Cotton family's period house into a smart contemporary home*

FEATURE BEVERLEY BYRNE | PHOTOGRAPHY COLIN POOLE



## DINING ROOM

The original fireplace, parquet flooring and elegant furniture provide a link between the traditional-style dining room and modern kitchen.

Maxalto Pathos table, from £2,862, B&B Italia. Alex found the 1980s Erling Torvits dining chairs on eBay. Rainbow sells similar Murano glass chandeliers, £2,200





REPLANNED

**HOME TRUTHS**

**THE PROPERTY** Semi-detached Edwardian house  
**LOCATION** London  
**ROOMS** Sitting room, dining room, kitchen-diner, utility room, playroom, five bedrooms, (two en-suite), two bathrooms  
**PURCHASED** 2007  
**PREVIOUS PROPERTY** 'We lived in a much smaller terraced house before moving here,' says Alex.



Embarking on a rebuilding project was not the Cotton family's intention when they bought their house. 'It all sounded straightforward,' says Alex, 'we'd just remove

the ground-floor chimney breast and then we'd be ready to go ahead and decorate.'

But then the architect pointed out just how many opportunities would be unleashed throughout the house when that chimney breast was gone. 'Before we knew it, we

were living in rented accommodation while the interior of the house was practically demolished and rebuilt,' says Alex. 'We chose the property because it had a large downstairs footprint – perfect for our vision of a sleek contemporary kitchen and dining area. But at that point, we didn't anticipate where it was all going to end.'

Alex and her husband Jonny lived in the house for two years with their children Jessie, 9, and Tom, 7, as they came up with a new design and waited for planning



**BEST BUY** 'Definitely the kitchen – getting our builders to make our units meant we could afford Gaggenau appliances'



**KITCHEN - DINER**

Reorganising the ground floor space has given the family an open-plan multipurpose area.

Units designed by Alex Cotton Interiors in collaboration with architect Imogen Planner and made by Fiske Interiors. Navarra Blue limestone floor tiles £56sq m, The Natural Tile Studio. Wall units painted in Downpipe and island in Manor House Gray estate eggshell, both £50 for 2.5 litres, Farrow & Ball

permission. With architect Imogen Planner, they realised they had a golden opportunity to create a tailor-made home from top to bottom. The intention was to move the master bedroom, originally at the front of the house, to the rear and create a new en-suite bathroom and dressing room, plus two guest rooms at the front of the house. A loft extension would provide the children's bedrooms, playroom and bathroom.

As the house is in a conservation area, compromises to the original designs for the loft extension had to be made before building ►



**SITTING ROOM**  
A vibrant sofa makes an impact against the room's muted tones.

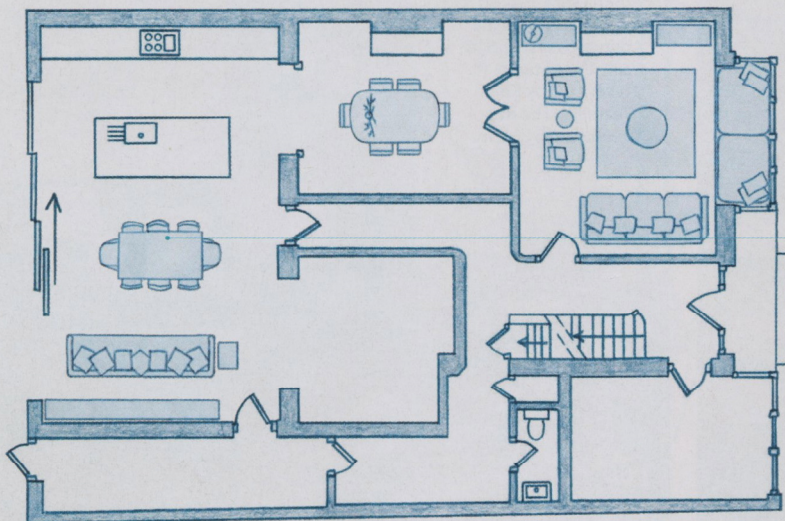
Lutetia sofa, £4,540, B&B Italia. Katakana Lounge chairs, £1,650 each, Dare Studio. Tracery rug by Kelly Wearstler, The Rug Company, £935sq m





AFTER

BEFORE

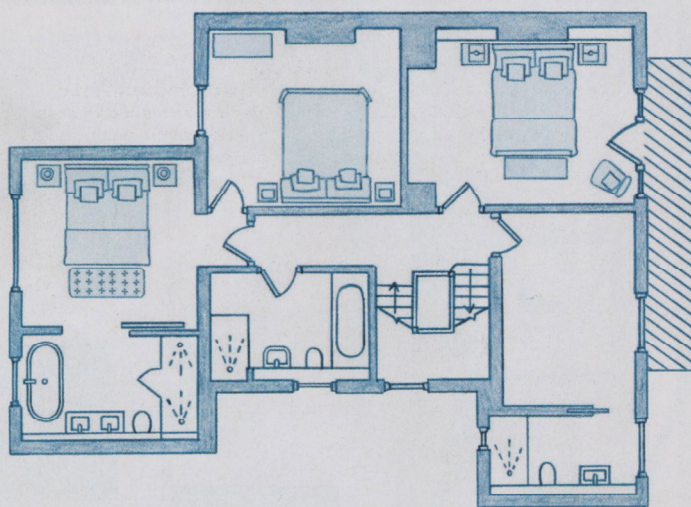
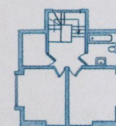
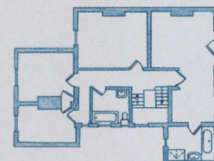
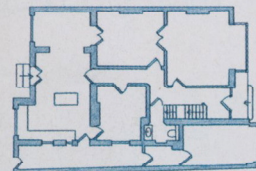


GROUND FLOOR

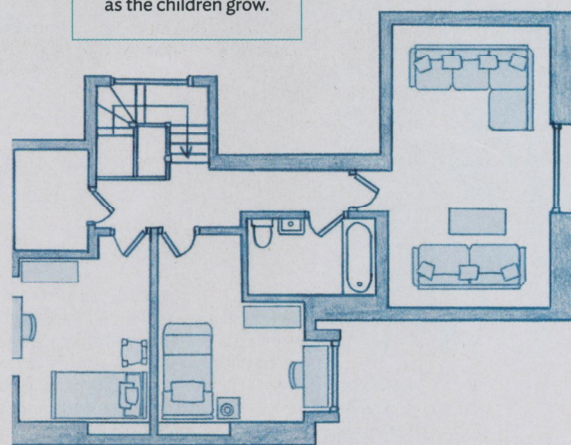


**FAMILY LIVING/DINING AREA**

By taking away the original chimney breast, Alex had the opportunity to create a kitchen, living and dining room with glass sliding doors. The family now find they spend more time together in the open-plan space, which has become the hub of their home. It's also flexible enough to be adapted as the children grow.



FIRST FLOOR



TOP FLOOR

work finally began in spring 2010. 'The builders were great,' Alex says, 'and I enjoyed collaborating with Imogen who project-managed the renovation. Although, I do remember wondering what we'd taken on when half the house was missing and what was left was propped up with steel.'

Even living in a compact rented house proved to be a positive experience. 'As space was restricted, we ruthlessly threw away or sold any old furnishings we didn't want. This meant I could concentrate on buying

things more suited to the new configuration.' Alex envisaged a smart, contemporary family-friendly interior. 'I love the clean lines of Italian and Scandinavian design,' she says. 'Much of the artwork and accessories have been inspired by our trips abroad, particularly to Scandinavia. We often visit family in Helsinki and I'm a great admirer of the functional yet beautiful Finnish design ethos, which inspired the look of our kitchen.'

One of the couple's artworks provided inspiration for the overall colour scheme. 'It's

a mix of greys, olive greens and deep purples,' she says. 'I was also keen to use bold wallpaper patterns, which work particularly well in the children's rooms.'

'Ultimately, this renovation gave us the chance to create a bespoke home for our family,' reflects Alex. 'And, although it turned out to be far more dramatic than we'd anticipated, we all appreciate the fresh, flexible space that we now have. Doing away with that chimney breast really was the best thing we ever did.' 25





**TOM'S ROOM**

'Tom loves the sea,' says Alex, 'and the wave-motif wallpaper pattern looks fantastic in here.'  
Great Wave wallpaper, £72 per roll, Cole & Son. The Charterhouse Sleepover bed, £695, Aspace, would work well in this scheme

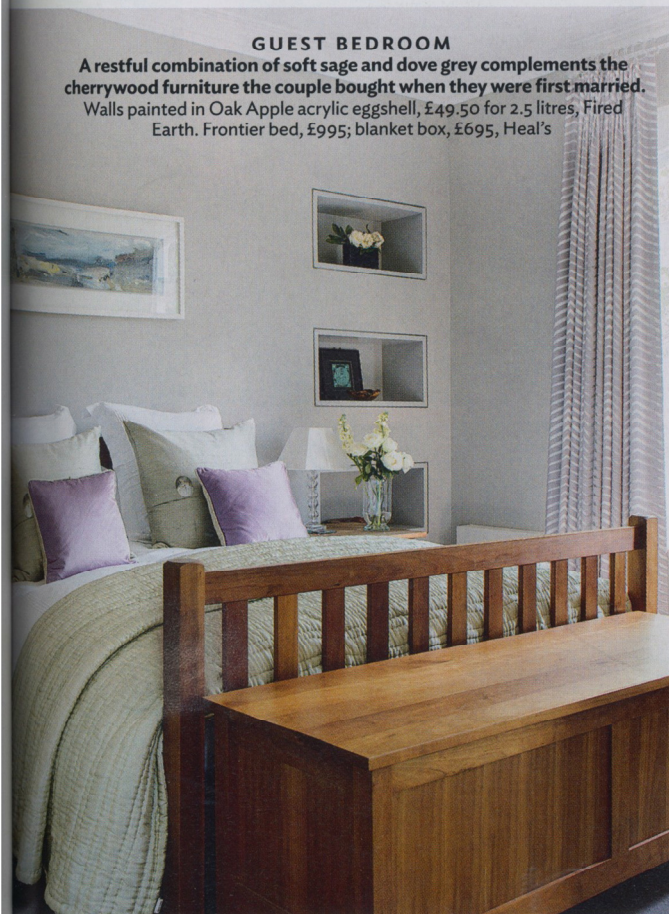


**FAVOURITE ITEM**

*'Our Savoir bed was the most expensive item in the house but when I sink into it, I'm reminded it was money well spent'*

**MASTER BEDROOM**

Alex chose a subtle blend of silver and metallic grey shades to create a haven of tranquillity.  
Savoir No 2 kingsize bed, £13,025, Savoir at Harrods. For a similar ottoman, take a look at Rossini, £1,162, The Sofa & Chair Company



**GUEST BEDROOM**

A restful combination of soft sage and dove grey complements the cherrywood furniture the couple bought when they were first married.  
Walls painted in Oak Apple acrylic eggshell, £49.50 for 2.5 litres, Fired Earth. Frontier bed, £995; blanket box, £695, Heal's



**BATHROOM**

This suspended sink unit has been designed to appear almost weightless. The iridescent grey-green tiles add an air of calmness.  
Suspended sink counter-top unit designed by Alex Cotton Interiors. Glass Elements tiles in Oak Apple, £2.98 per tile, Fired Earth