

A *fresh* start

Having inherited a period family home with a traditional appearance, a young couple have stamped their own personality on the space with a bold and brave redesign

Report: Juliet Bawden Photography: Neil Hurley



The wheels on the island are design features that mirror those on the dining table. The island is in fact the prep zone and features a sink area, which means it must be fixed in position

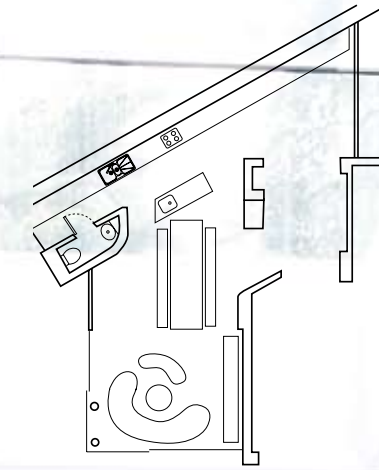


Caroline designed the table so that it could be wheeled out onto the outdoor terrace easily. There is a fusion between inside and outside in this space and the furniture is a response to it



The kitchen units are a combination of white gloss, wenge and stainless steel. With the long length of wall units, this arrangement breaks up the uniformity of the design

“Keeping the cupboards along the complete width of the back wall provides heaps of storage”



Above: Caroline wanted to add some quirky artefacts within this space. The moose’s head and the giant foot were intentionally oversized so that they could be easily seen from the front door. The splashback is made from slate tiles that are used to create an unusual three-dimensional effect

Top right: The seating area lies to one side of the kitchen space, backed by a storage wall, which is designed as a contemporary take on the old dresser than once stood in the room

This traditional Victorian semi-detached property in London’s Balham has been part of Sarah Smith’s family for 50 years. She and husband Sam were obviously attached to the heritage of the house, yet as young professionals both yearned to stamp their own modern taste on the interior. Hence, four years ago Sarah and Sam, an acupuncturist and print business owner respectively, took the decision to renovate the house. However, this was to be no subtle tweak to the interior – the couple’s plans included gutting the entire house, while building a contemporary glass extension to the side of the building to make way for their dream design.

Despite the Smiths’ enthusiasm though, a transformation of this magnitude required design expertise and the couple wisely turned to renowned interior designer Caroline Wood to oversee the project. Having long admired its work, Caroline

recommended Volume Three Architects for construction of the stunning glass extension that now stands in place of the original garages and incorporates a narrow passage and outdoor area that once ran at the back of the house. And it is here that a striking open-plan living space is located with the kitchen at its heart.

Accentuated by the slate wall tiles, a strong architectural axis now runs along the back of the space and provides a stunning backdrop to the linear kitchen, which is supplemented by a freestanding island unit perched on wheels. “The galley kitchen with its island sink unit was a practical solution, but keeping the cupboards along the complete width of the back wall provides heaps of storage and allows the space to remain very open and flexible,” Caroline explains. As such, wenge-finished base units surround a central range cooker, while above storage cubes contrasting high-gloss white with wenge doors create a pattern of architectural interest. ▶



Above: In an ingenious touch, a period dresser, which used to reside in the old dining room of the house, now sits against the papered wall with towel radiators to each side. The wallpaper is the same as used in the bedroom, while the chair brings style and comfort to the space

Right: Opposite the bath is a working fireplace. The basin area sits lotus-style on a vanity top to one side of the original chimneybreast



The sink area is placed on the funky island – where once again wenge surrounds high-gloss white drawers – and, from here, a huge dining table sprawls into the living zone. A sense of fun can be seen at this dining table, as rather than employ conventional seating Caroline has provided ‘pig’ benches that give the space a quirky, fresh vibe.

Simon and Sarah are very keen on entertaining so part of their brief was for a sociable space both indoors and out. As such, the glass extension opens up completely to allow the large table to be wheeled out onto the decking for stylish alfresco dining.

As the old part of the house already has a formal lounge, the extension was ideal for modern, curvaceous casual seating. The area by the fireplace – which forms part of a dividing wall – is a snug place to sit, tucked away from the wall of glass. The chimneybreast was the only structure that Sarah wanted to keep as she has fond memories of sitting by it as a child.

Consequently, the architects have worked their magic; remodelling it to become a central fireplace that is pivotal to the entire space.

The facing wall moreover, with all its eccentric arrangement of display boxes and hidden cupboard doors, was a modern take on the old-fashioned dresser that it replaced. The beauty of this design feature is testament to Caroline’s impressive skills and this couple’s trust in her, as are the quirky touches that make this home really special – a huge black foot, for instance, sits by the chill-out area, which is overlooked by a wall-hung moose head in a modern design. The overall effect leaves you wanting to search every aspect of the space to see what is revealed next.

The renovation of the house included the redecoration of a more formal lounge, and an office on the ground floor, while a single bedroom and a master ensuite with dressing room now reside on the first floor with guest rooms and bathrooms on a floor

above. The resultant redesign is a sanctuary lavishly laid out almost entirely on one floor, with three original bedrooms making way for luxury living. “The design concept for these three spaces was to treat them as one,” Caroline explains. “The curtain fabric, wallpaper, wall and floor paint are repeated throughout to complement the dark antiques that are now in the bedroom and the bathroom.”

This is now a space of grown-up glamour where sumptuous furnishings and period pieces blend beautifully into the warmth of a chocolate palette resting against painted white floorboards. You can enter the ensuite bathroom through openings on either each side of the bed. The bath is centred in the room next to a partial dividing wall that separates it from the wet area, while an open shower space, defined solely by a contemporary showerhead, juts from sleek glass-fronted cabinetry on the wall.

The decadent silver dressing table at the window, meanwhile,

reflects the same level of glamour as the chaise longue in the bay to the master bedroom (both are framed by heavy drapes in a gorgeous stripe), and the whole colour scheme for the suite evolved from the wallpaper – seen in both bedroom and bathroom – which both Sarah and Caroline adore. As in the living space, ‘unexpected’ pieces make the room something very special. An old-style dresser sits in the bathroom between two towel ladders. The glass cabinetry displays toiletries in a fashion similar to those seen in an old apothecary store, and a modern fabric chair sits close by, which in turn nestles beside the original Victorian fireplace.

The whole house is a heady mix of modern design, quirky individual pieces and furniture that make a reverent nod to the history of the house. What Caroline doesn’t explain is just how much of an achievement this design is, and one which Sarah and Sam will no doubt enjoy for many years to come. **KBB**



The ensuite was large enough to take a central feature bath, which sits beside a dividing wall where a wetroom area has been created, defined by a solitary showerhead above. The glass wall was a practical solution in a wet zone, as was the stone floor that runs along the centre of the space



Above: The ensuite is accessed by 'his and hers' openings to each side of the bed, while white painted floorboards run throughout

Right: The master bedroom has been designed to incorporate the owners' antique furniture. The bed, with its silver fabric upholstered headboard picks up the silver of the flower motif on the wallpaper, while a chaise provides an idyllic resting place within the bay window



SourceBook

DESIGN

Interior Designer Caroline Wood Interior Design (07740 485156 or www.carolinewooddesign.co.uk)
Architecture and Project Management Volume Three Architects (www.volumethree.com)
Construction Dalriva (020 7736 7066 or www.dalriva.co.uk)
Re-upholstery Bruce Upholstery and Furniture Rescue Ltd (anne-marie.bruce@gateway.net)
Soft Furnishings Chris Hutchings Curtains and Soft Furnishings (chrishutchings@btconnect.com)

KITCHEN-LIVING SPACE

Cabinetry Ikea (0845 358 3364 or www.ikea.co.uk)
Island unit Bespoke, designed by Ademir, made by David Jones Carpentry (01293 536343)
Orange unit Thesis, Tisetanta (020 7491 2044 or www.tisetanta.co.uk)
Dining table Designed by Caroline Wood, as before, made by Max Friedheim (maxfriedheim@yahoo.co.uk)
Benches Pig, Benchmark Furniture (01488 658184 or www.benchmarkfurniture.com)
Tub chairs White leather,

John Tanous (020 7384 9000)
Footstool Cowhide, Ikea, as before
Curved sofas Formentera, Roche-Bobois (020 7431 1411 or www.royce-bobois.com)
Upholstery Designers Guild (020 7893 7400 or www.designersguild.com)
Green rug Kasthall, Sinclair Till (020 7720 0031 or www.sinclairtill.co.uk)
Accessories Giant Foot, B&B Italia (020 7591 8111 or www.london.bebitalia.com); Moose's Head, Graham and Green (0845 130 6622 or www.grahamandgreen.co.uk)
Tiles Feature wall, Mandarin Stone (01600 715444 or www.mandarinstone.com);
Floor Rogers Ceramics (01293 612057 or www.rogers-ceramics.co.uk)

MASTER BEDROOM SUITE AND DRESSING AREA

Bed John Lewis (0845 604 9049 or www.johnlewis.com)
Bed linen The White Company (0845 678 8150 or www.thewhitecompany.com)
Headboard and base upholstery Made by Anne Bruce Upholstery and Furniture

Rescue Ltd, as before
Chaise longue Clients' own piece, re-upholstered in Suki Alpine, Romo (01623 756699 or www.romofabrics.com) by Anne Bruce, as before
Cushion Designers Guild, as before, with glass bead trim by Osborne & Little (020 7352 1456 or www.osborneandlittle.com)
Dressing table Silver wrap carved console, Brissi (020 7727 2159 or www.brissi.co.uk)
Dressing table chair John Tanous, as before
Bathroom armchair Johnathan, Ligne Roset (020 7323 1248 or www.ligne-roset.co.uk)
Curtains and blinds Made from Miya Alpine, Romo, as before, with a beaded cord trim, Chambord, Nina Campbell (www.ninacampbell.com) from Osborne & Little, as before
Rug Habitat (0844 499 1111 or www.habitat.co.uk)
Pendant light Birdie by Ingo Maurer, Few & Far (020 7225 7070 or www.fewandfar.net)
Walls and floor Painted in Georgian 21, Dulux Heritage (0870 444 1111 or www.dulux.co.uk)
Wallpaper Kiku, Romo, as before

Ceilings and picture rail

All White, Farrow & Ball (01202 876141 or www.farrow-ball.com)
Stone floor and dwarf partition wall to bathroom Surface (020 7819 2300 or www.surfacetiles.com)
Glass wall Tough Coat (0844 800 9260 or www.toughcoat.co.uk)
Mantelpiece to existing fire surround Chesney's (020 7627 1410 or www.chesneys.co.uk)

BATHROOM

Basin Colony, CP Hart (0845 600 1950 or www.cphart.co.uk)
Bath, handshower, WC and bidet Philippe Starck, CP Hart, as before
Shower rose Hansgrohe, from CP Hart, as before
Taps Vola (www.vola.com), from CP Hart, as before
Linear floor drainage for wet area Dallmer Ltd (01787 248244)

COST

A similar kitchen would cost around £42,000, a similar bedroom and dressing room around £16,000, and a similar bathroom around £37,500