

# OUTSIDE THE BOX

Alina and James Triggs took a creative approach to a tired Victorian property, building upwards and outwards to make the most of its proportions

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**REPLANNED**



**HOME TRUTHS**

**THE PROPERTY**

Victorian terrace

**LOCATION** North London

**ROOMS** Hall, double sitting room, kitchen-diner, study, cloakroom, four bedrooms (one en suite), two bathrooms

**PURCHASED** 2015

**PREVIOUS PROPERTY**

'We moved here from a flat in Tower Bridge,' says Alina.



**SITTING ROOM**

Soft hues make for a sophisticated scheme, while matt gold touches add a hint of luxury.

Stellar white marble coffee table, £399; Stirling drinks trolley, £279, both Atkin and Thyme. Melrose Grand sofa, £1,999, John Lewis



**SITTING ROOM**

A neon light installation is a great conversation piece and looks striking above the fireplace.

Neon light, price on application, Carousel Lights. Walls painted in Cornforth White estate emulsion, £43.50 for 2.5 litres, Farrow & Ball





**KITCHEN**  
 Large skylights create a bright linking corridor between here and the living area. Eiffel bar stools, £119 each, Dwell. Oriental Basalt tiles, £90sq m, J&R Marble, Island painted in Stiffkey Blue estate eggshell, £60 for 2.5 litres, Farrow & Ball



**DINING AREA**  
 'We love to entertain, so we chose a large table that's practical and stylish,' says Alina. Kenta dining table, £2,820, Lombok. Eiffel chair with beech legs, £59 each, Dwell. Sonora opal glass pendant light by Vico Magistretti, £393, Twentytwentyone



**W**hen Alina and James Triggs decided to swap their London apartment for a bigger property, they were certain that they didn't want to take on a project. But as is so often the case, when it comes to property hunting, their search unearthed quite the opposite of what they were looking for. Instead, they came across an unloved Victorian home that had been turned into two flats. 'We realised that if we wanted something to tick all the boxes, we might just have to take on a renovation,' says Alina. Fortunately, this laid-back couple were undaunted by the scope of work needed to turn the building back into a vibrant family home. With the help of architects Ursula Tucker and Melanie Whittington, they cooked up a thoughtful plan that would see the kitchen extended to the side and the rear, making full use of the plot's width, while a generous dormer loft extension would add a new floor to the property. Elsewhere, ingenious tweaks were planned to reconfigure

the upstairs space, allowing for a first-floor dressing room and luxurious master en suite in place of a former bedroom. 'I struggled visualising the structural changes,' says Alina, 'but fortunately James is great at managing projects and was able to work through the property's various challenges with no trouble. On the other hand, I had a good idea of the look and feel we were after and gathered inspiration from Pinterest, our travels and magazines to bring our vision to life. So our skills dovetailed perfectly.' A sense of flow and plenty of light were priorities for the couple, who worked hard with their architects to create a welcoming space flexible enough to accommodate family, friends and plenty of storage. 'The kitchen has really delivered for us,' says Alina. 'The architectural design means that it is filled with light, while the bifold doors make the garden feel as if it's a natural extension of the space. The scheme was inspired by the Underwoods' kitchen in *House of Cards* – although there's definitely been more partying than

**DECORATING ADVICE** 'We chose a spectrum of colours – from grey and lavender to pale pink – and used them throughout to provide a sense of unity'



**CLOAKROOM**  
Alina chose a bold print to make a statement. Hackney Empire wallpaper in Midnight Stripe, £165 per roll, House of Hackney



**BATHROOM**  
'Bathrooms are great places to have fun with decor,' says Alina. Flamboyance wallpaper in Off White/Lavender, £145 per roll, House of Hackney



**BATHROOM**  
Architects Ursula Tucker and Melanie Whittington came up with a new layout to make full use of the space. Cambridge roll-top bath in white, £699, Bathstore



**MASTER BEDROOM**  
A hint of Hollywood glamour is introduced thanks to black-and-white photography and monochrome fabrics. Walls painted in Peignoir estate emulsion, £43.50 for 2.5 litres, Farrow & Ball. Charlotte bedframe, £499, John Lewis, is similar



**GUEST BEDROOM**  
Full-length dusky pink curtains and a deep pile grey velvet carpet add a sumptuous feel to this airy space. Romo Milani fabric in Thistledown, £59m, Sue Whimster

plotting going on around this dining table,' she laughs. Taking centre stage is a generous-sized navy, marble-topped island, which is anchored by a trio of elegant pendants.

A sophisticated palette of pinks, lilacs, greys and lavenders underpin the main scheme throughout the house – inspired by the colours that punctuated the couple's wedding day. 'I've always been drawn to those feminine hues, while James prefers a pared-back approach,' explains Alina. 'So we found a middle road that marries our respective styles.' Elsewhere, treasured artwork and the occasional bold pop of colour add character and vibrancy. 'It's the small touches that have made a big difference,' says Alina of the unexpected elements such as the House of Hackney wallpaper in the cloakroom and the neon lips installation in the rear sitting room. 'We weren't reticent about sourcing pieces that reflect our personalities, which meant making some bold choices, but it's really

helped to put our own stamp on the interior. We've also gathered pieces over the years from our travels, so the house has become a dossier of happy memories.' Soft Art Deco touches in the master bedroom and bathroom introduce a subtle note of glamour. 'I wanted it to have a hint of Hollywood boudoir,' continues Alina, 'so we added old *Vogue* cover prints and stylish black-and-white photography coupled with mirrored bedside tables.'

Since the couple moved in, they have welcomed the arrival of baby Lawrence, now 9 months, and the house has adapted perfectly to their needs. 'It seems to just naturally evolve around us,' says Alina. 'We still have more to do, such as perfecting the guest bedrooms and possibly converting the cellar, but the best thing about this home is that it's a versatile space that allows us to reappraise its function as time goes by. We feel we've respected the bones of this building, while also giving it a new lease of life.' 25

**LESSONS LEARNT** 'Think practically about how you will use a space. It's frustrating that we forgot to add a showerhead in the bathroom – we should have spent more time thinking about functionality'