

IN HARMONY

A modern classic aesthetic is perfectly in tune with both the period and contemporary features of Sarah and Rupert Davis' listed house

FEATURE JANE CRITTENDEN | PHOTOGRAPHY JAMES FRENCH | STYLING MARISHA TAYLOR

SITTING ROOM

This space is in the extension, which has a striking ceiling with long skylight.

Melrose Grand sofas in Sophie Storm, £1,999 each; Camford leather armchairs in Buffalo Antique, £1,099 each, all John Lewis & Partners. Carter coffee table, £625, Neptune





HOME TRUTHS

THE PROPERTY

Detached Georgian house built in 1836

LOCATION

Oxfordshire
ROOMS Sitting/dining room, kitchen, breakfast room, study, snug, utility room, cloakroom, three bedrooms (all en suite)

PURCHASED

2015
PREVIOUS PROPERTY
'We lived in a military house overseas,' says Sarah.

FAVOURITE ROOM 'Our sitting room is full of natural light, even on cloudy days, because of the wonderful glazed doors'



DINING AREA

Space was made for a table in the sitting room. 'We wanted a large table for entertaining,' says Sarah. Harrogate dining table in Fog, £1,740; Calverston chairs in Clara Parchment, £310 each, all Neptune



KITCHEN

The glazed decorative wall units are full of character and feel like an original feature. Suffolk glazed cabinet, from £1,410, Neptune

BREAKFAST ROOM

A local joiner made cupboards to hide the boiler and create storage. Doors in Smoke eggshell, £58 for 2.5ltr, Neptune



After over a decade of living in military housing, both here and abroad, Sarah and Rupert Davis were ready to put down roots for their daughter, Grace, now 10, and buy their first home. 'I served as an RAF officer for 21 years and military houses don't change much, wherever you live, so we'd had the same furniture for ages because everything fitted,' says Sarah. 'I wanted to get away from blank magnolia walls and I couldn't wait to apply my creative style in our own home.'

The couple had lived in Oxfordshire before but struggled to find the right property at the right price before moving to Cyprus for Sarah's overseas assignment. During a family visit back to the area a couple of years later, they took a detour off the motorway. 'We missed the scent of freshly cut grass and went the long way through

the Oxfordshire countryside,' Sarah recalls. 'A Grade II-listed Georgian house caught my eye and then I spotted it was for sale.'

Within 24 hours Sarah had flown back to Cyprus with Grace, but Rupert was able to stay and view the property. 'He showed me a video walk-through of lovely big rooms with high ceilings, sash windows and lots of natural light,' says Sarah. 'From the outside, the symmetrical appearance was like the doll's house I'd drawn as a child – it was exactly the home we wanted.'

The couple bought the house while Sarah was still abroad and she used the time before moving back to Oxfordshire to start the project. Formerly a farmhouse with outbuildings, the property had remained pretty much unchanged over time. The couple were keen to create a home with en-suite bedrooms and open-plan entertaining

DECORATING TIP *'Using a colour consultant was one of the best things we did as we picked the right colours for each room'*



MAIN BEDROOM
'My friend has this curtain fabric in maroon and I've always loved the print,' says Sarah. 'I bought the blue colourway and that inspired blue for the walls.'
Curtains in Botanical Bird in Natural Blue, £12.50m, John Lewis & Partners. Walls painted in Pitch Blue estate emulsion, £52 for 2.5ltr, Farrow & Ball

space – the sort of home they'd never had before. So plans were soon put in place for an extension that needed careful consideration for conservation planning approval. 'Architectural symmetry at the front is part of the listed status so we couldn't extend to the side,' Sarah explains. 'Our architect, Oliver Margison from Uchi – Soto, designed a glazed rear extension, accessed through a link hallway creating an architectural bridge between the old and new.'

Merging the two eras was an important part of Sarah's interior vision, too. 'I wanted a modern classic look that would work with the contemporary extension but still be sympathetic to the heritage of the house,' she says. 'With a military background in organisation, I was clear everything should have a place and purpose with a comfortable flow between all the rooms.'

Sarah was drawn to Neptune's Suffolk kitchen and furniture for the design simplicity and found blue sofas in John Lewis & Partners and Loaf. 'I was like a child in a sweet shop with all the different paint colours,' she adds. 'I wanted muted blues and greys, which the Farrow & Ball colour consultant helped me choose.'

Though after decorating the guest bedroom, Sarah had a change of heart. 'Our house is used for location shoots (houseonthegreen.com) and after seeing the photographs by Peagreen Locations, I realised the colour didn't contrast well with the oak furniture. I redecorated it in a wonderful shade of green by Farrow & Ball. 'After years of looking, we still can't believe we chanced upon this beautiful house and it became our first home, says Sarah. 'We pull up on the drive and feel very lucky to live here.' 5



MAIN EN SUITE
A modern bath was chosen to make a statement and the basin was picked for its traditional looks.

Duravit's Cape Cod bath, £2,250; Burlington Edwardian basin, £600, both UK Bathroom Warehouse. Ava glass pendant, £161, Jim Lawrence

GUEST BEDROOM
'Green was a popular Georgian decorating colour and looks lovely with the oak furniture,' says Sarah. Walls painted in Calke Green estate emulsion, £52 for 2.5ltr, Farrow & Ball

