



**KITCHEN**  
 'Our client wanted a neutral, calming kitchen,' says Claire. 'Walls and joinery are painted the same colour and the couple's desire for an oak veneer on the island brings in a beautiful warmth.'  
 Joinery by Claire Totman Designs. Walls and joinery in Strong White, Farrow & Ball



**UTILITY ROOM**  
 'Colour lifts neutral spaces and Emily was keen to have pink,' says Claire. The tiles add personality. Cupboards in Clay, Little Greene. Rosalina honed marble herringbone mosaic tiles, Mandarin Stone



**DINING AREA**  
 Emily wanted to keep the dresser from their previous kitchen. 'She painted it and added lighting and new handles,' says Claire. Dresser in Dead Salmon, Farrow & Ball. Sycamore handle in antique brass, Corston Architectural Detail

# Character STUDY

*The goal for this 1970s home was for it to have classic style and architect and designer Claire Totman achieved just that*

FEATURE JANE CRITTENDEN | PHOTOGRAPHY SARAH GRIGGS

## HOME TRUTHS

**THE PROPERTY**  
 A detached 1970s house

**ROOMS** Sitting room, playroom, kitchen-diner/living area, utility room, cloakroom, main bedroom suite with dressing room, five bedrooms, two bathrooms

**LOCATION** Surrey



**LIVING AREA**  
 'The space flows from the kitchen and dining area with the same decoration and details,' says Claire. Joinery in Little Greene's Portland Stone. Aftas jute rug, La Redoute, is similar. Joinery, Claire Totman Designs



**MAIN EN SUITE**  
 Marble herringbone tiles add character and depth to the large walk-in shower. Calacatta honed marble herringbone mosaic tiles, Mandarin Stone



**MAIN BEDROOM**  
 'Here, the panelling gives the illusion of a large headboard,' says Claire. Cookie bed in Roasted Peaches brushed cotton, Loaf. Stork wall light, Pooky. Cushion, John Lewis & Partners



**WHAT DID THE CLIENT LOVE ABOUT THE HOUSE? WHAT DID THEY WANT TO CHANGE?**

The detached home is on a big plot with south-facing garden but it was dated. Our clients, Emily and Jig Ramji weren't excited about their original architect's plans for a contemporary rear extension.

**HOW DID YOU COME TO BE INVOLVED?**

Emily searched for design inspiration with a more traditional feel and liked our work on Instagram. For me, the obvious solution was to build the extension to the side - there was plenty of space and they wouldn't lose too much of their garden.

**WOULD YOU SAY YOU HAVE A SIGNATURE STYLE?** Our style leans towards the traditional as we believe classic design is timeless and long-lasting. That said, although our

projects sprout from the same seed, the results are quite different. We work with clients to find the best materials and schemes to suit their home and design all bespoke joinery for a personal touch.

**WHAT WAS THE CLIENTS' BRIEF TO YOU?**

Emily and Jig wanted a beautiful home with character that they could comfortably live in with their two young children and dog. A big priority was a large open-plan kitchen-dining-living room and a main bedroom with a large bathroom and walk-in dressing room.

**HOW DID YOU ACHIEVE THIS?** We're an architecture, interior design and project management studio so we took the project from conception to completion. Our design focused on a traditional exterior and a better flow to the floor plan. The double-storey side extension is 6.5m wide with dormer windows. Set

**'HARD-WEARING FINISHES, SUCH AS SPRAY-PAINTED JOINERY AND PORCELAIN TILES, LOOK GOOD AND CAN WITHSTAND HEAVY USE'**

back from the house, it looks like part of the original architecture. The new kitchen here flows into eating and relaxing areas while upstairs is now a beautiful main suite with vaulted ceilings.

**HOW DID YOU INTRODUCE A CLASSIC STYLE TO THE 1970S HOUSE?**

We added decorative cornices, profiled architraves, skirtings and ceiling roses as well as bespoke panelling and joinery. Emily had a clear vision and chose a colour palette based on a family of neutrals for a subtle yet elegant and

smart finish. She also added pops of colour pink and green shades.

**WHAT WAS THE MOST SATISFYING PART OF THE PROJECT?**

I love the different ideas our clients brought to the table and working with them to find the right fit for their home. Here, we worked with Emily and Jig to create a timeless look with all the practicalities needed for a busy family life without compromising on style. They're really happy in their new home. [clairetotmandesigns.co.uk](http://clairetotmandesigns.co.uk)