

COME ON IN

With a limited budget but clever design ideas, a plain living space has become an inviting place to be

FEATURE JANE CRITTENDEN | PHOTOGRAPHY RICHARD KIELY



PROJECT DETAILS

DESIGNER

Athina Bluff, founder of Topology Interiors (@topologyinteriors)

PROPERTY

A Victorian terrace house over three floors

WORK

Part of the interior design for the open-plan lower ground floor

LOCATION

Southwest London

A Brazilian couple, who had recently relocated to London with their two boys, came to Athina Bluff for design inspiration and project management. ‘Our focus was to put energy back into the featureless sitting room with simple but effective changes,’ she says.

1 STARTING OUT

The sitting room is on the lower ground floor and part of an open-plan space. The decor was in good condition, including bespoke joinery and a relatively new kitchen. ‘We needed to find solutions for the lack of character, bland scheme and limited light,’ Athina explains.

2 ADDING WARMTH

With a modest budget, there wasn’t scope to update the stark white kitchen but colour could be brought into the adjoining seating area. Dark mahogany joinery had potential but the tone looked oppressive in the narrow room. ‘Our clients love greens and blues so we painted the cupboards in Farrow & Ball’s Railings and added panelling in Coat’s Park Life paint,’ says Athina. ‘We did the same in the dining area and added a green tone kitchen splashback to tie the three spaces together.’

3 KEEPING IT LIGHT

There were only windows at either end of the long open-plan room. Athina worked with the budget to make use of existing sockets and layer lighting with table and floor lamps. ‘Little Greene’s Portland Stone Pale on the walls makes a difference, too,’ she adds. ‘It’s a bright, fail-safe neutral with yellow and grey undertones that’s neither too warm nor too cold.’

4 ARRANGING FURNITURE

Finding a modular three-seater sofa to fit comfortably in the narrow space – as well as accessible down the tight staircase – was resolved with Arlo & Jacob’s Ryder model. ‘A cosy blue loveseat fits perfectly in the bay window while the clients’ vintage armchairs add a lovely contrast.’ New shelves unify the room. ‘We styled them with plants, vintage vases and their treasured objects to give the sitting room the final touch of personality needed to make it their own.’ 25

HAPPY SPACE

‘Our client was inspired by the joyful blues and greens in the lively floral oil painting,’ says Athina. ‘Painted panelling and joinery with new shelving brings the room to life.’ Panelling in Park Life eggshell, Coat. Cupboards in Railings estate eggshell, Farrow & Ball. Walls in Portland Stone Pale Intelligent matt emulsion, Little Greene. Isla loveseat in Portland Blue Brushstroke, Sofa.com. Round grey marble coffee table CMS Furniture, is similar. Cotswold Herringbone rug, The Rug Seller, has this look. Jute natural pouffe, Dunelm, is comparable