

TRUE ROMANCE

Leah Lane's Grade II-listed farmhouse is as beguiling as the period dramas that inspired its interiors

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HOME TRUTHS

THE PROPERTY
Georgian farmhouse
LOCATION Surrey
ROOMS Sitting room, snug, kitchen-diner, playroom, boot room, utility room, five bedrooms (all en suite), dressing room
PURCHASED 2015
PREVIOUS PROPERTY
'We lived in a maisonette in London before moving here,' says Leah.



DRAWING ROOM

Classic blues and neutrals set a smart tone to the formal drawing room with reproduction and original Georgian sofas brought together with the same off-white upholstery fabric. Ushak rug in light blue is similar, £1,600, The Rugs Warehouse. Take a look at the Fenghuang table lamp, £395, Oka. Two-tier gold coffee table, £1,439, Ruth & Joanna



INSPIRATION *'I love the way interior designer Ben Pentreath creates a timeless look, warmth and depth by mixing stripes with chintz florals'*



Set on the edge of a market town in the Surrey countryside, this Grade II-listed Georgian house wouldn't look out of place in a scene from a period drama, thanks to its handsome exterior and extensive grounds. Perhaps Leah Lane had this in mind when she moved from London with her husband, Rupert.

'I am a hopeless romantic and grew up watching period dramas,' she says. 'I loved the idea of living in a Georgian house – the symmetry, high ceilings and beautiful

detailing – and I was definitely not going to settle for anything else.'

The couple fell in love with the perfect mix of rooms in the property, including the huge kitchen and grand drawing room with beams and corner fireplace. The only major structural change required was to create a walk-in dressing room and en suite to the main bedroom. 'Overall, the interiors lacked charm with modern faux wood flooring and sockets dotting the walls,' says Leah. 'I gradually reinstated period features

and furnished with antiques and vintage furniture, knick-knacks and art to make the house feel more comfortable and lived-in.'

Leah collated pictures of Georgian houses on Pinterest. She also took prompts from her beloved period dramas – the Georgian sofas in the drawing room are similar in style to those she had seen in a production of *Sense and Sensibility*. Paint colours reflect the era, too.

'I didn't want the decoration to look too fresh or too new; I took inspiration from

KITCHEN

Leah's made small changes such as adding a hanging rail and a faux marble splashback. The Bokhara Red runner, £225, The Rugs Warehouse, would work

DINING AREA
'I went looking for a long pine Victorian dining table formed of three continuous wood planks,' says Leah.

Narrow Pleat porcelain light, £240, deVOL

SNUG

'I took inspiration from Georgian wood-panelled rooms for the design,' says Leah. The framed prints are pages from an old botanical book. Similar Victorian botanical prints, £249 for four, Artisanati. Try Clandon sofa in Grey Ticking Stripe, £1,248, Rowen & Wren



LAST WORD *'For me, an English country house should look slightly worn, with a few rough edges, yet classic and elegant at the same time'*

HALLWAY
The staircase is not original but still has period details. Poppy Field rug is similar, £195 for XL, French Connection

EN SUITE
'The vanity is made from burr walnut, which has a beautiful tone,' says Leah. Similar antique chest, £2,100, Pamono.

o8 unacquered wal-mounted brass taps, £745, Studio Ore. Carousel wall light is an alternative, £148, Spark & Bell

MAIN BEDROOM
A triangular chimney runs up through the middle of the house creating the angled wall. Versailles bed, £1,799, Feather & Black. Bonington table lamp in Jade is similar, £395, Oka

Georgian colours, such as sage green in the main bedroom, beige pink for the snug and added blues and pinks in furnishings and fabrics as the thread between rooms,' she says. Antiques play a role in achieving this ambition, too. 'Having old things around me with bumps and cracks are part of who I am. I bought my first antique when I was eight – an antique pram for my teddies – and have loved old things ever since.'

Walnut furniture and bergère cane seating are favourites of Leah's, taking pride

of place in the main bedroom and in various other spots around the house along with Victorian side tables, chinoiserie lamps and antique rugs. Some pieces came from her mother, as well as gifts from her mother-in-law, Rupert or friends, otherwise Leah went searching online.

Leah is enjoying the process of rolling back time as much as she enjoys family life in the house with her children Raef, five, and India, two. A bigger change is still to come – an orangery across the back of the

house. Out front, overgrown wisteria climbers have been scaled back to proportions that complement the old property, which now has Georgian-style pillars around the front door.

'Period dramas were a wonderful source of inspiration and I am really pleased with the outcome,' says Leah. 'It's hard to believe when we first came here we walked through grass up to our knees into a house that had been empty for three years – now we would not want to live anywhere else.'