



ROOM TO MANOEUVRE

Relocating the kitchen initiated a whole house decor refresh in Lara Cross and Dan Sanders' home

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DINING ROOM

The pale pink for the walls was inspired by the oil painting, which is one of Lara's favourite pieces. Walls in Light Peachblossom absolute matt emulsion, £52 for 2.5ltr, Little Greene. Monkey Paradise tablecloth, £300, Ardmore at lamfy. Atessa chandelier, £320, Abigail Ahern, is a good alternative. Nguni cowhide rug, £220, Sicklebush, is similar

DESIGN TIP *'We didn't need to extend to get spaces that work for us – we just changed the function of some rooms'*



HOME TRUTHS

THE PROPERTY

Victorian terrace

LOCATION London

ROOMS Sitting room, dining room, kitchen/living area/snug, cloakroom, seven bedrooms (one en suite), two bathrooms

PURCHASED 2010

PREVIOUS PROPERTY

'We lived in another Victorian terrace in London,' says Lara.

KITCHEN
The units were made by Lara's builders to fit the space perfectly. Painting them the same colour as the walls has helped them to blend into the background – ideal for a cook space that is a main living space, too.
Cupboards in Inchyra Blue estate eggshell, £70 for 2.5ltr, Farrow & Ball. Provence Valette rectangle tiles, £2.57 each, Fired Earth



SITTING ROOM
‘I added lighter accents of cream and pale grey to the teal decoration in here,’ says Lara.

Large Octopus print in Teal, £595, James Nunn. Viviana Sapphire blue velvet pouffe, £430, Ruma, is similar. Green Chevron Sari lampshade £70, Hill & May



YASMIN'S BEDROOM

Lara's daughter is a fan of boho style, prompting the macramé hanging and folk-style cushion. Similar wall hanging, £60.23, Olivet Co at Etsy



1 SITTING ROOM
Lettering adds a playful touch to this art display and the bike even looks like art. Green Monstera Leaf cushion, £30, Not on the High Street, is similar. Find a similar Danish tan leather sofa at Vinterior

2&3 MAIN EN SUITE
‘This space is gorgeous, like a luxurious hotel bathroom,’ says Lara. Scintilla Black Star floor tiles, £21.95sq m, Tiles Direct. Brooklyn Dome pendant light, £169, Industville. Deco Ellington matte stone freestanding cast iron bath, £1,895, Lusso, has this look. Walls in Messel No. 39 marble matt emulsion, £55 for 2.5ltr, Mylands. Hexagon grey matt tiles, £4.99 per sheet, Tiles Direct. Arezzo mirror, £149.95, Victorian Plumbing, is similar

4 CHARLIE'S BEDROOM
A larger bed and a decoration refresh in shades of blue gave Charlie's bedroom a grown-up feel more suited to a teenager. Walls in Blue's Blue pure flat emulsion, £54 for 2.5ltr, Paint & Paper Library. Smoke bed, from £1,095, Loaf, is a close match. The Bobby steel desk lamp, £28, Habitat, is similar

Like for many people, staying at home during lockdown was the driving force that prompted this house refurbishment. ‘We became more aware of how little of the downstairs space we actually used, even though it's big,’ says Lara, an interiors stylist, who lives here with her husband, Dan Sanders, and her children, Yasmin, 19, Charlie, 17 and Mia, 14. ‘The sitting room felt too formal and the kids had outgrown the playroom.’

Although the previous owners had created plenty of living space, Lara was frustrated by the small, poorly designed kitchen to the side. ‘We used to huddle around the breakfast bar and not really use the rest of the room,’ she says. ‘Together we created a new layout, moving the sofa and table so we could have a big central island.’

During the work, the old kitchen was turned into a snug with a bar, rejuvenating

the adjoining former playroom into a dining area in the process. The downstairs rooms – including the new kitchen – were painted in rich teal. ‘I liked the idea of using a bold colour block and I've always loved that teal is neither blue nor green,’ says Lara. ‘It's become a neutral of sorts because I've used it in three rooms, changing it up with different hues in furnishings and art.’

The saturated schemes were inspired by Lara's childhood home on a farmstead in South Africa where her mother always decorated with strong colours. ‘Going moody and dark works over there because there's so much natural light, but here I was nervous the look might suck out the light,’ she says. ‘Farrow & Ball's Inchyra Blue proved the opposite. I hang a picture, switch on a light and the tone changes – it's gorgeous.’

Initially, Lara only had plans to revamp the ground floor. But it had been more than

10 years since she'd last decorated. As the work came to an end, the contrast between the two floors became apparent. The whole of the upstairs was painted, too, and Lara updated the main en suite with advice from their builder, MULTIServe.

With the whole house feeling new, Lara was inspired to change around furniture and furnishings putting a fresh focus back on her South African treasures made from raw organic materials, such as the coconut bead lampshade, animal heads and cowhide. Now restrictions have lifted, the house is often used for location shoots through Location Creation, or rented out on Airbnb.

‘I love knowing that people enjoy our home as much as we do,’ says Lara. ‘When we did the big reveal to friends after lockdown, no one could believe we'd had no structural work done – it's like we live in a different house. We're all much happier here now.’

FAVOURITE FEATURE ‘I love the teal colours we've used – you switch on a light and the tone of the colours change beautifully’