

Sizing up

A step up the property ladder gave interior designer Elle Hooper the chance to apply her creative skills to her own project

FEATURE JANE CRITTENDEN | PHOTOGRAPHY ANNA STATHAKI



HOME TRUTHS THE PROPERTY

Victorian terrace

ROOMS

Sitting room, utility, WC, kitchen-diner, three bedrooms, two bathrooms

LOCATION

London

KITCHEN

'Neutral paint shades for units complement the emerald quartzite surfaces,' says Elle. Cabinetry in Off-White; cupboards (right) in Oxford Stone, both Farrow & Ball. Emerald quartzite, Paragon Stone Design



DINING AREA
 'Two pendants look more discreet than one dominating light,' says Elle. 'I love the contrast of the vintage table with the colourful seating.'
 Banquette design, Elle Hooper Design; covered in Hana in Seafoam, Rapture & Wright. The Crackle pendant lights, deVol



UTILITY
 'We used space from the old dining room to create the utility room, which is accessed from the hallway,' says Elle. Undersink curtain made with Scallop cotton print in Green, Tine & Smiths



HALLWAY
 'The grey-green tone is calming against the warmth of the walnut floor,' says Elle. Stairs and joinery in Card Room Green, Farrow & Ball

Like many couples living in a one-bedroom flat, space was the focus of the next move for interior designer Elle Hooper (@ellehooperinteriors) and her husband, who wanted to stay in Putney in south London.

'I grew up in a period property on the coast, and the dream was to buy a three-bedroom Victorian terrace near the river,' Elle recalls. 'The high ceilings, large windows and light were a great start – but we needed good imagination!'

The two-bed terrace had been rented out and the front door opened straight into the sitting room and dining room, with a barely functional tiny kitchen at the back. Elle could see the benefit of extending, reinstating the walls to create a comfy snug and converting the loft into a third bedroom.

'I wanted to create a family home for us and we were lucky to be given permission to extend and build dormers on the front and back to create a large loft space,' says Elle. 'I was excited to have room to host because we couldn't do that before in our little flat.'

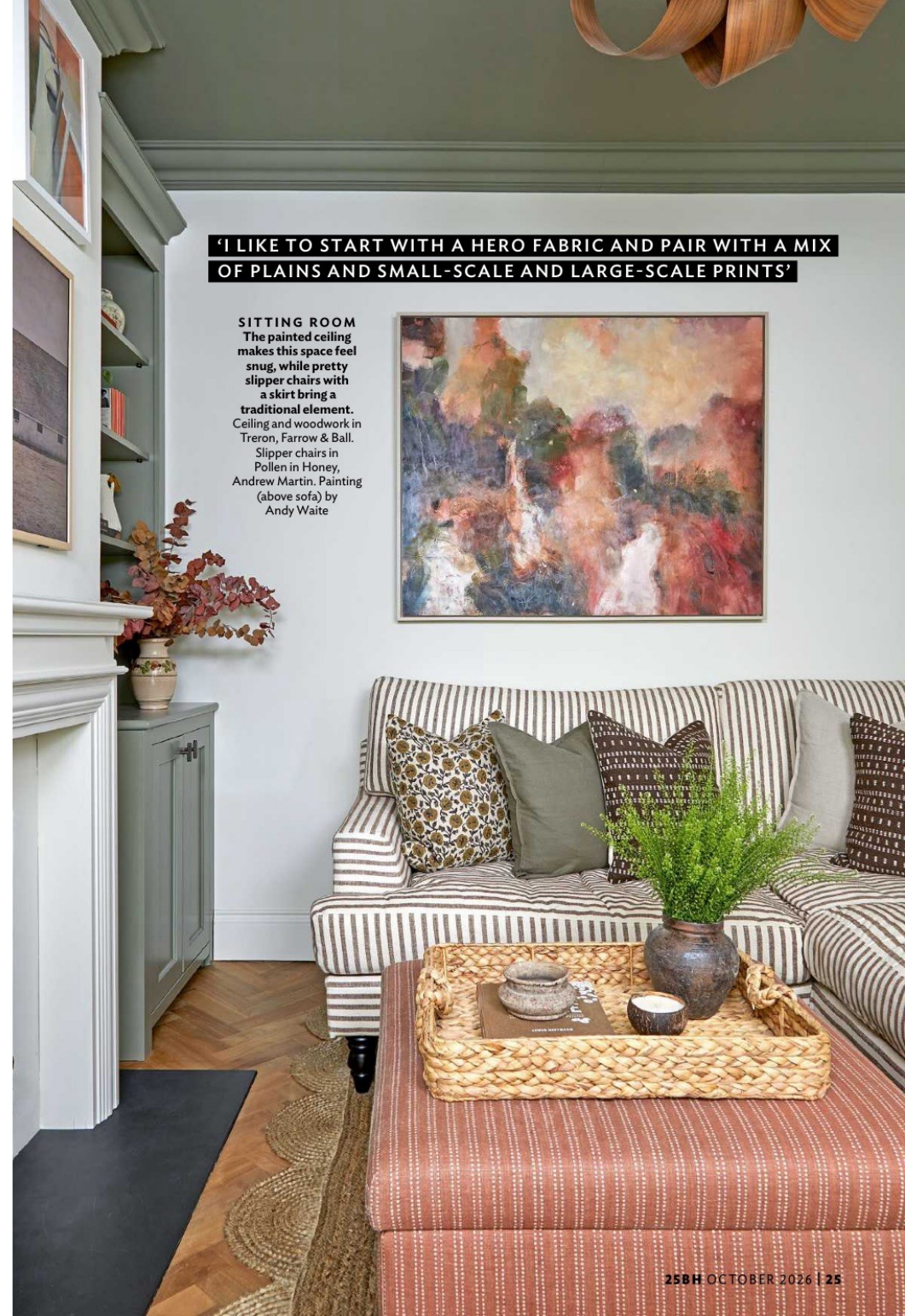
Elle hired architect Tim Tasker to help make the most of the footprint. Extending by nearly four metres allowed space for a downstairs loo and utility.

'After living in the flat, I really appreciated good storage,' Elle explains. 'Tim also reduced the family bathroom by a metre to make our son's nursery a little bigger, creating enough space room for built-in wardrobes.'

The house purchase coincided with Elle finishing her interior design studies at the KLC School of Design, following a career change from the sports industry. They



WC
 'I chose a wallpaper with a leaf pattern,' says Elle. Lucky Leaf wallpaper, Common Room



'I LIKE TO START WITH A HERO FABRIC AND PAIR WITH A MIX OF PLAINS AND SMALL-SCALE AND LARGE-SCALE PRINTS'

SITTING ROOM

The painted ceiling makes this space feel snug, while pretty slipper chairs with a skirt bring a traditional element. Ceiling and woodwork in Treron, Farrow & Ball. Slipper chairs in Pollen in Honey, Andrew Martin. Painting (above sofa) by Andy Waite



MAIN BEDROOM
'I wanted a sanctuary that felt elegant,' says Elle.
 Cushions made with Pome linen in Dusky Pink, Ceraudo. Wardrobes painted in Pink 02, Lick



MAIN EN SUITE
'This room appears minimal but is not visually uninteresting,' says Elle.
 Piero footstool in Grenadine, Maison Flaneur. Marrakech
 Terracotta tiles, Baked Tiles

rented during the building work and she planned the interior while working at a London interior design firm.

'I love colour but it was about finding a balance,' Elle says. 'I considered the changing light in rooms throughout the day and took inspiration from the natural world. I played around with fabric and colour sample combinations.'

Touches of pale blue-greens thread through the kitchen, which receives the morning light. Earthy tones permeate the sitting room where the couple retreat to in the evenings. The loft bedroom is a romantic layering of tonal pinks.

'In every room, one piece became the springboard – fabric, art or wallpaper,' says Elle. 'A common thread is the green in the kitchen quartzite that connects with the sitting room cabinetry and runs through the hallway up to more neutral bedrooms,' she says. 'Although, in our bedroom, I had a bit of fun with colour, silhouettes and patterns – my mum and I made the pleated curtains for the wardrobes.'

Elle loves the relaxed feel of Fermeie and Christopher Farr Cloth fabrics, favouring natural cotton and linen. 'The kitchen banquette is upholstered in a small leopard-like print to hide marks,' she explains. And they needed more furniture, which Elle gradually acquired while pottering around Ardingly and Kempton antiques fairs.

'Living in a house with more space has been transformative to our lives,' says Elle. 'We love cosying up in the sitting room and hosting family and friends. I really enjoyed doing the project – we've created a beautiful family home.' ²⁵

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