

| IDEAS HOME |

# Calm AND collected

COHESIVE SCHEMES IN SHADES OF CREAM, BEIGE AND GREEN HAVE GIVEN ATHINA THE SOOTHING SANCTUARY SHE CRAVES AFTER A HECTIC WORKING DAY



“

After years of being an interior designer,

I'm so **HAPPY** to finally have our own home and the **FREEDOM** to decorate exactly as we wanted

”

ATHINA BLUFF,  
HOMEOWNER



## Living room

'This is my favourite room. I love the high ceilings and the period details we were able to bring back into play,' says Athina.

### BUY THE KEY PIECES

Walls in Portland Stone Pale absolute matt emulsion, £59 for 2.5ltr, Little Greene. Lovett bouclé armchair, £895, Soho Home. Zigzag round stool, £80, Amara. Agatha sofa in Dried Herb velvet, £3,245, Arlo & Jacob



## HOME NOTES

### WHO LIVES HERE?

Athina Bluff, an interior designer and founder of Topology Interiors, lives here with her partner Theo McInnes, a photographer.

### THE PROPERTY

A one-bedroom ground-floor flat in a converted Victorian terrace in Brixton, South London.



or Athina Bluff and her partner Theo McInnes, an upside to not going out during lockdown was that they were able to make the final push to save for a deposit and buy their first home.

### WHAT KIND OF PROPERTY WERE YOU LOOKING FOR?

We'd been renting a one-bed in London and wanted to stay close to the centre, but also live within a nice community. We saw the flat listing online and liked the idea of living in a converted Victorian house because of its character. The property was empty when we looked around and very run-down. Immediately, I could see us living here, in a beautiful home with high ceilings and gorgeous period details.

### WHAT MADE THIS FLAT STAND OUT FROM THE OTHERS YOU LOOKED AT?

I'm an interior designer at Topology Interiors (topologyinteriors.com), and we provide space planning as one of our services. I could see potential in repurposing the draughty lean-to into a home office and I also decided to knock down the wall between the kitchen and living room. Open-plan living is a good way to add value to a property as well as creating a feeling of space in a small flat. Being on the ground floor was a bonus too as we have a small courtyard that's perfect for our dog.

### HOW DID THE BUILDING WORK GO?

I was lucky to be able to use my build team, who spent six months fitting in my project around work for my clients. We had a major damp problem in the bedroom, which had to be resolved quickly to satisfy the mortgage lender. We also replaced the kitchen and bathroom, stripped back all the walls and re-did all the electrics. A local estate agent told us the home office has added the most value because lots of one-bedroom buyers also need somewhere to be able to work from home.

### IS THERE A CROSSOVER WITH YOUR INTERIORS AT HOME AND AT WORK?

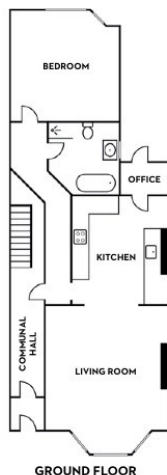
Yes, one constant is my love of muted, earthy, relaxed neutrals. Everyone who visits says our flat is very Soho Home – lots of rich fabrics and textures, mixing old and new, but still calm and pared back. It's a look many clients are drawn to.

### WHAT'S BEEN THE BEST OUTCOME?

Owning the flat with Theo means I'm no longer frustrated and limited on what I can do. It's been such a privilege to do this project, and I love our home. I don't feel the need to swap furniture out or move things around like I might have done previously. We feel very settled here.

## THE LAYOUT

The main door opens onto a communal corridor with the front door to the flat on the right. Inside, there's a small hallway and an original arched opening that leads into the kitchen on the left, which is open to the living room on the right. Just off the kitchen is the new home office with a door to the courtyard. Back in the hallway, a corridor to the left leads to the bathroom and onto the bedroom.



### PERFECT HUE

Little Greene's Portland Stone Pale is Athina's go-to colour as the yellow and grey undertones are neither too warm nor too cool

### Kitchen

'I doubled the storage by knocking into the chimney breast and adding a sink run. The cabinet carcasses are Howden and our builder made the doors.'

### BUY THE KEY PIECES

Venice matt black kitchen sink mixer is similar, £139.95, Victorian Plumbing. Harper T-bar handles, £14 each, Corston Architectural Detail. Jacobson walnut shelves are similar, £185 each, La Redoute



**LAYER LIGHTING**  
Add a ceiling pendant,  
plus LEDs for task lighting  
and to uplight shelves  
and recesses

## Kitchen

'The newly open kitchen and living room needed to blend together, so I used the same wall paint colour, ceiling lights and flooring.'

### BUY THE KEY PIECES

Cupboards in LickPro Max Beige 04 eggshell emulsion, £55 for 2.5ltr, Screwfix. Boyd pendant, £62, Habitat. Brooklyn glass dome wall light is similar, £89, Industville. Try Blair jute rug, £149, Dunelm

## FOCUS ON... NEUTRAL DECOR

Follow Athina's tips on how to make the neutral look work for instant relaxation when you walk through the door

### FIND YOUR PALETTE

Layer paint with a tonal family of darks and lights - taupe, beige, stone, creams. Or use graduating shades of the same colour, like those in Little Greene's paint range - Athina's go-to for walls is Portland Stone Pale. Pick the right undertone for light and mood - yellow adds warmth, lilac and blues are cool. Lick highlights this in its colour charts.

green bed, and Lick's Beige 04 for its sophisticated warmth on the kitchen units.

### MATERIALS AND TEXTURES

Layer in small furniture and furnishings in a mix of rustic wood, smooth metal, cool marble, reeded glass, rough jute, relaxed linen, soft velvet, to give neutral schemes a dynamic look.

### PLANTS

**KEEP IT SIMPLE**  
To hold onto that calm, pared-back feeling in a room, pick one statement piece with colour. Stick to soft tones and small patterns to keep the mood cohesive. Athina chose a pale green velvet sofa, a minty

A weave of leafy tonal greens brings a neutral backdrop to life. Go for a mix of large pot plants for a big burst of colour with table-top plants for height and depth. Choose real or faux, but make sure they look authentic.

“My home **OFFICE** has been the biggest **WIN** for adding floor space, **LIGHT** and value to the property”

## Kitchen

'I'm at my happiest in here because the colour is calming, everything has its place and isn't crowded with wall cupboards. I fitted a cold-water tap on this side of the room to make it easier to fill pans on the hob.'

### BUY THE KEY PIECES

Elysian pot filler tap in Gunmetal has a similar look, £213.99, ABI Interiors. Try Blend 7 brick slips, £76sq m, The Brick Tile Company

### DECORATIVE DETAILS

Like the original corning, brick slips, wall lights and a walnut shelf add character to a large blank wall

“My whole HOME is decorated in BEIGES, CREAMS and soft GREENS because ‘I can’t live with strong colours’”



## Home office

'We renovated the lean-to by replacing the plastic roof with an amazing glass one and putting in insulation. Slatted wall cladding adds interest. The space leads onto our courtyard garden.'

### BUY THE KEY PIECES

Opal glass globe wall light is similar, £190, Industville. Kimpel desk chair, £182.99, Wayfair. Acupanel oak wood slat panel is similar, from £51, B&Q

## Bedroom

'I start every room with a statement piece and build the scheme up from there. I love the shape and the minty blue velvet on the headboard, which ties in with the green panelling'

### BUY THE KEY PIECES

Dazzler headboard, £1,495, Loaf. Panelling in Baluster intelligent eggshell, £40 for 1ltr, Little Greene. Walls in Safe Play emulsion, £58 for 2.5ltr, Coat

**RELAXING GREENS**  
Emotionally calming and ideal for rooms where you need to unwind

“I'd been saving 'dream home' IDEAS, but being IMMERSED in interiors it was hard to choose for MYSELF sometimes”

FEATURE JANE COTTENDEN PHOTOGRAPHY RICHARD KIELY PLANS PAULA JARDINE



## Bathroom

'The glossy green tiles look glam with the black fixtures.'

### BUY THE KEY PIECES

Zellica tiles in Forest Green, £1.28 each, Topps Tiles. Arezzo hinged bath screen in Matt Black has a similar feel, £219.95, Victorian Plumbing

## Bedroom

'I really love the Hoxton Hotel, and this became the style inspiration for the boutique look with vintage furniture and designed lighting.'

### BUY THE KEY PIECES

Lottie chest of drawers is similar, £895, Graham & Green. Ardini rattan table lamp, £159, Lights & Lamps



## STYLE MUST-HAVES

INSPIRED BY ATHINA AND THEO'S HOME



**SMOOTH METAL**  
Riseborough shelving unit, £635.85, Shelved



**RELAXED LINEN**  
Abstract yellow cushion, £70, Raj Tent Club

**LEAFY SOFTNESS**  
Faux fiddle-leaf fig tree, £1999, Homescapes Online



**TEXTURED FLOORING**  
Natural jute tile rug, from £75, The Braided Rug Company

**TEXTURED RATTAN**  
Ensia table lamp, £139, lights&lamps



**GREEN ACCENT**  
Jackson chaise large corner sofa in Sage Aquaclean Oxford, £3,699, Cotswold Company