



'I wanted a relaxed, cosy Sunday afternoon feel in the drawing room,' says Natasha. 'I found the rug locally and the colour scheme came from all its wonderful tones.' The Japanese Imari Blossom table lamps from Vaughan Designs pick out the blues and oranges. The pink cushions are made in Pierre Frey's Parbat Sultan fabric.



**ABOVE** Natasha's love of modern art hints at the interior crossover between old and new; this piece, hung in the entrance hall, is from Prince & Pilgrim. The stairs lead to a small office.

**BELOW** A separate side entrance ensures the lower-ground floor can become a self-contained space in the future. The new features echo those of the Georgian floor above.



# Refined COMFORT

Doubling the size of their Georgian apartment gave Natasha and Daniel Kennedy a two-storey home sympathetic to its strong architectural bones and with a balanced and welcoming decor

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*'The most fascinating part of this apartment was the panelled kitchen, which had been a ballroom during the war years'*

Natasha and Daniel Kennedy were happily living in their period home with their four teenage children when the property next door unexpectedly came up for sale following the death of their neighbour. 'We'd been great friends with her and had always admired her ground-floor Georgian apartment, with its generously proportioned rooms, high ceilings and original features,' explains Natasha, who is a lawyer. 'Most fascinating was the panelled kitchen, which had been a ballroom during the war years.'

Spacious and full of character, the three-bedroom ground-floor flat formed part of a double-fronted, 19th-century townhouse that had been divided into

two flats some years earlier. To accommodate everyone, the family temporarily converted a reception room and office into bedrooms, while the large open-plan kitchen became the heart of family life.

Natasha and Daniel, a psychiatrist, developed a long-term plan to renovate the apartment and double its size by digging down to create a lower-ground-floor level. When the time came to get started, they enlisted an architect, who designed an upside-down layout with three en-suite bedrooms, a family bathroom and a large principal suite below. 'Although the children are young adults now, we wanted them to have a comfortable place to live until they could afford homes of their own,' explains Natasha. 'It made sense to put the bedrooms downstairs, with the flexibility to make the whole floor self-contained later on.'

**ABOVE** 'Farrow & Ball's Inchyra Blue powers the kitchen,' says Natasha. The Counter stools are from Cox & Cox and the Shaftesbury glass pendant lights are by Neptune.

**OPPOSITE TOP** A Yiran lamp base in Dijon Yellow from OKA, topped with a Penny Morrison shade, grounds the mix of fabrics in the kitchen seating area. The Countess mirror is from Julian Chichester.

**ABOVE RIGHT** 'The herringbone floor made sense because straight planks in either direction would have made the room look too long or too wide,' says Natasha. The tablecloth is from George Clark Stockbridge.

**ABOVE FAR RIGHT** Painted in Farrow & Ball's Off Black, the pocket door to the utility room slides away for space-saving access.

The building work was an enormous upheaval for the family, but ultimately transformed the property into a stunning two-storey home. Knocking the kitchen through to one of the bedrooms created an open-plan living space running across the back of the building, while the reception rooms were restored to their original use. A boot room and cloakroom, which also doubles as a shower room, were added to complete the layout.

Impressive in both size and scale, the lower-ground floor offered plenty of potential, but as the work drew to a close, Natasha realised she needed expert guidance to bring the rooms to life. 'With both of us working full-time, the project was much more stressful than Daniel and I had envisaged, and I really needed someone I could trust with the interiors,' she says.

Hampshire-based interior designer Charlotte Stuart came highly recommended, and the pair had frank conversations from the outset. 'She really understood my goal of creating a home that felt like a home – cohesive and welcoming, but not overly decorated. I liked Charlotte's honesty and, quite quickly, we became a great team,' she adds.

Natasha talked through her ideas for a relaxed, country-house-style interior, with preserving the property's period character a key priority. 'My taste is a mix of modern and traditional, and I definitely didn't want our home to feel stuffy,' she says. 'Charlotte and I talked about how we'd use the rooms – gathering together in the sunny kitchen in summer and snuggling up in the front drawing room on a wintry Sunday afternoon – and decided on relaxed, ▶



A shower has been added in the cloakroom, where Farrow & Ball's Sulking Room Pink with Lewis & Wood's Citadel wallpaper bring colour and character to the space.

*'I love the layered light pinks, greens and yellows – it's a bright modern look in our Georgian home'*

**ABOVE LEFT** The new side entrance connects with the ground floor as well as the staircase to the floor below. Vintage Star floor tiles from The London Tile Company add a jaunty note to the practical area.

-muted bedrooms and a bolder contemporary country feel in the upstairs living spaces.'

Charlotte also provided input into the lower-ground floor layout. A stud wall in the principal suite separates the bedroom from the walk-in wardrobe. When plans to create a gym and wellness room were put on hold, she suggested another approach. 'We didn't have the budget to kit out the gym and I wasn't keen on the connecting narrow corridor,' says Natasha. 'Charlotte proposed we leave the room open for now, with the option to reinstate the gym later or create a sitting room as part of a self-contained apartment.'

The scale of the rooms on both floors gives the home real presence, enhanced by reinstated period features upstairs and complementary details in the newly created rooms below. Charlotte was keen to stress the importance of layering. 'When you work with large spaces, rooms can feel cold and furniture gets lost,' she explains. 'To bring in a warm, friendly and inviting feeling, I layered a variety of fabrics, rugs, pleated lampshades and cushions.'

Soft neutrals infuse the rooms, with the exception of a punch of dark blue in the kitchen and classic Georgian blue in the formal drawing room. In the latter, a fringed ottoman makes a striking statement in front of the fireplace, its pinky reds, burnt orange and ochre bringing a more contemporary note to the room. 'When Charlotte suggested this wonderful fabric, she really pushed me out of my comfort zone,' admits Natasha. 'But now? It was absolutely the right choice. It's the highlight of this room.' ▶



'I had a random collection of art from our previous home and Charlotte suggested we curate the pieces here,' says Natasha of the artwork in the lower sitting room. The walls are painted in Farrow & Ball's Strong White and the table lamps and shades are from George Clark Stockbridge.



*'My goal was to create a home that felt like a home – cohesive and welcoming, but not overly decorated'*

**ABOVE LEFT & LEFT**

In the principal bedroom, a stud wall covered in Colefax and Fowler's Hatteras wallpaper conceals a walk-in wardrobe. The vintage chest of drawers was a find from Kempton Antiques Fair, while the chair came from Zara Home.

**ABOVE RIGHT**  
'Charlotte suggested we reupholster this chair with a pretty skirt,' says Natasha. 'It makes a pleasing contrast with the modern bath in our en suite.'

Natasha and Charlotte browsed antique fairs for furniture and homeware, keen to celebrate antiques and invest in quality rather than buying everything new. Natasha was also eager to add to the art collection she and Daniel had been building for many years. She visited local galleries, followed recommendations from friends and went to Revival Jewels and Antiques with Charlotte. 'I was delighted that Charlotte was as passionate about art as I was – we really sparked off each other when choosing pieces,' says Natasha. 'I like lively modern works that tell a story, perhaps because they're so different from the character of our Georgian home. But I'm also drawn to the stories behind old landscapes. It's where they're placed in the home that's important, and Charlotte was great at directing me.'

The project has been transformative for Natasha and Daniel's family. 'Doubling the footprint has given us a fantastic, grand home,' she says. 'We love that it doesn't feel overly formal or overwhelmingly modern; it's calm and cohesive – our shoulders simply relax every time we walk through the door.'

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