

# ALL CHANGE

It's hard to believe this beautiful sitting room infused with character was once a dark and dreary garage

WORDS JANE CRITTENDEN | PHOTOGRAPHY SARAH GRIGGS



## PROJECT DETAILS

**DESIGNER**  
Claire Totman  
([clairetotmandesigns.co.uk](http://clairetotmandesigns.co.uk))

**PROPERTY**  
A five-bedroom house built in 2012

**WORK** A double garage conversion

**LOCATION**  
Surrey



Louise and Ben bought a new build in 2012 and, having made no changes in 12 years, they wanted to refresh rooms with the help of Claire Totman. 'I saw scope in the integral double garage,' she says. 'We went on to convert this space into their new sitting room.'

## 1 SPACE PLANNING

Louise and Ben used the 30sq m double garage for sports storage. Claire suggested relocating the equipment to a new lock-up along the side of the house. 'It meant we could absorb the original living room into the new kitchen-diner at the back and relocate the formal sitting room to here at the front,' she says. 'The house benefits from a double-fronted look too.'

## 2 CHARACTER BUILDING

The couple brought Claire on board for her classic design approach. The sitting room was fitted with a faux chimney breast and fireplace with period features, including wall panelling. The old single door became double floor-to-ceiling glazed doors. 'We believe in getting the bones of a room right before we bring in the furniture,' says Claire.

## 3 DESIGN SOLUTIONS

Windows replaced the two garage doors but since the floor space was split into three, the sitting room shares a window with the adjoining plant room. 'Bespoke shelving had to work around the window position,' says Claire. 'There wasn't room for a TV so it's mounted on the chimney breast but looks like a mirror when it's switched off.'

## 4 DECORATING DETAILS

Warm neutrals set the tone for the quiet retreat away from the busy open-plan kitchen. Sofas are sized to work with the opening double doors and step in for a cosy fireside feel. Wall lighting fixed to the shelves have timeless appeal while the glass chandelier makes an elegant statement. 'The sitting room makes a strong focal point as you come into the house now,' says Claire. 'The project has been transformative.' 5

## A CALMING INFLUENCE

The formal front sitting room is a tranquil spot away from the hubbub of family life where a whole new feature wall adds character to the former garage space. 'Colour drenching down over the skirting adds height to the room,' says Claire.

Walls and woodwork in Slaked Lime Deep; shelving in Slaked Lime Dark, both Little Greene. Ceiling in All White, Farrow & Ball. Bluebell sofa in Chantilly is similar; [Sofa.com](http://Sofa.com). Savannah coffee table; Areca cushion cover in Seafoam; set of four Seaweed prints in Blue, all Oka. Cagney wall lights; Apollo lantern, all Pooky. MirrorTV; [PictureFrame.TV](http://PictureFrame.TV)