



Refined vision

When a client decided to improve rather than move, designer Michelle Sellers elevated room schemes to suit her needs

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HOME TRUTHS

THE PROPERTY
A detached house built around 2010

ROOMS Sitting room, kitchen-living-dining area, office, utility, pantry, cloakroom, five bedrooms with en suites, two dressing rooms, outdoor kitchen and external garden room

LOCATION Surrey

KITCHEN
‘Plenty of casual seating was a high priority, so I had an island custom-made with a curved banquette,’ says Michelle. Kitchen, Thomas Ford & Sons. Island in Hornblende, Paint & Paper Library. Dolce Vita marble, Cullifords. Ovalise bar stools, Oka. Holden ceiling lights, Porta Romana. Carlos cane dining chairs, Oka

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'BIOETHANOL FIREPLACES USE RENEWABLE PLANT-BASED LIQUID FUEL TO PRODUCE REAL DANCING FLAMES'

LIVING AREA
'The family love congregating to watch movies. To create a cosy sense of gathering, we installed a bioethanol fireplace,' says Michelle. Hampton coffee table; sofa upholstered in Villa Nova's Ria Elm, both Robert Langford. Ferris swivel armchair in Baker Lifestyle's Folly Green with Romo's Linara Spinach piping. Boot room floor tiles, Urban Callizo, Fired Earth

HOW DID YOU COME TO BE INVOLVED IN THIS PROJECT?
My client's friend recommended me and I was brought on board just a couple of months before building work began. There was an eight-week window to turn the project around.
WHAT WAS YOUR CLIENT'S BRIEF? Rooms felt disjointed and didn't work for family life with two children in their early teens. The family were originally planning to move and my client showed me

the brochure of the house they liked. The warm neutrals, green accents and classic kitchen style became the foundation for this project, with the aim to make rooms look visually more cohesive. Later, we designed and built a bespoke outdoor kitchen and a games room in an outbuilding.
WHAT CHANGES DID YOU MAKE TO THE LAYOUT? Although the house offered plenty of space, it wasn't functioning effectively for the demands of a

busy family. The playroom became a bootility room and we turned the front dining room into an office. The top priority was to transform the kitchen and living areas to better suit my clients' love of entertaining. The most significant change was removing the wall between the kitchen and living room, creating an open-plan layout that flows seamlessly into the garden. With tight timings, I worked collaboratively with Rory Aitkenhead at ra.architects and his

team on the lighting scheme, joinery, wall panelling and adjustments to allow for pocket doors.
WHERE DID YOU FIND INSPIRATION? We both loved the idea of bringing the outside in but without rooms having the same look and feel. I steered my client towards fabrics and colours in creamy whites, warmer neutrals and earthy tones like rusts, greens and browns. The palette is soothing and relaxing.

DINING AREA
'With all the glazing there's a real sense of being connected to the garden,' says Michelle. 'Pendant lighting above the table is simple so as not to detract from the view.' Walls in Stone II, Paint & Paper Library. Pyramid dining table and Scarlett dining chairs, both Robert Langford. Basden extra large linear chandelier, Visual Comfort. Baylee portable lamps, Soho Home



MAIN BEDROOM
'The headboard is scaled for the high ceiling and in the same fabric as the valance.' Bespoke headboard and valance made with Driftwood Rope, Andrew Martin



HALLWAY
Michelle and Rory designed different styles of panelling to add character to walls
Stair runner, Hart Carpets and Flooring

CLOAKROOM
'I wanted guests to go "wow". This marble absolutely does that,' says Michelle.
Calacatta Viola marble, Cullifords. Eloise mirror, Sweetpea & Willow

WITH LIMITED TIME, HOW DID YOU FAST TRACK DECISION-MAKING? My client was committed to making quick decisions, which was brilliant. I took her to the Design Centre Chelsea Harbour – there's over a hundred showrooms and brands – to establish what she liked. The luxury furniture brand, Robert Langford, were great and could deliver to our deadline. Bringing big boxes of samples to my client for us to go through also helped.

HOW DID YOUR CLIENT REACT WHEN SHE SAW THE FINISHED RESULTS? She loved it! Rory and I only made small reconfigurations to the layout, but with bespoke joinery and furniture, they enjoy the spaces so much more. My client has impeccable taste and was a delight to work for. We were so pleased she trusted us to transform her family home. 
Designer Michelle Sellers at Denlee Property & Interiors, denlee.co.uk. Architect Rory Aitkenhead at ra-1.com