

‘Our vibrant location inspired the interior’

The carefully planned renovation of Amanda and Colin Wilson’s Victorian property in East Sussex works perfectly as their children grow

Words **JANE CRITTENDEN** Styling **MARISHA TAYLOR** Photography **JAMES FRENCH**



Feature window

The oriel window in the kitchen offers picture-perfect views of the garden design beyond by Fern & Pine. Amanda chose the seat upholstery by Malthouse & Summer in Ian Mankin’s Bluebell Devon Stripe as a nod to Brighton beach deckchairs

Light-filled space →

Archangels designed the floor-to-ceiling glass to open up the kitchen, which creates an uninterrupted vista straight through from the family room at the front of the house. Above, roof glazing casts natural light down onto the prep area where it's needed most



Step inside...

Meet the owners

Amanda Wilson lives here with her husband Oliver, who works in finance, and their children Anna, 8 and Chloe, 5

House details

A five-bedroom, double-fronted Victorian semi over three floors in Brighton, East Sussex

When they bought it

2020



Upon buying a tired double-fronted Victorian semi in Brighton with bags of potential, little did Amanda and Oliver Wilson realise just how much its eclectic location and surroundings would dictate the look and feel of their new home's décor.

'Neither of us had undertaken a large renovation project before, and it took a little while to figure out how we wanted the interiors to express who we are,' explains Amanda. 'Working with Emma Capron at Bean Interiors, we soon realised that our home was all about our love for living in Brighton – it's where we met, had our children, and built our life. So with both the sea and the countryside around us, she suggested we take our design cues from here.'

The property was near to where the couple already lived, and as it had been empty for over two years, was also eligible for a tax reduction on the project, which was to massively help toward the renovation costs. 'It presented such a fantastic opportunity for us to create →



↑ Kitchen Designed by Bean Interiors and made by Square One, the clean, contemporary lines of the Shaker cabinetry offer a twist on the traditional, with cupboards painted in Little Greene's Juniper Ash to reflect the coastal location. Rather than continue the blue across the wall cupboards, Little Greene's Slaked Lime keeps the space feeling fresh and open, while oak shelves add warmth

WINTER HOMES



↑ **Zoned layout** Steps up from the kitchen create a large open-plan L-shape space with clearly divided areas for different family activities, while placing the fridge-freezer, undercounter bin and dishwasher at this end makes it ergonomically easier to clear up. The Minoli Storm White large-format tiles are from Master Tiles

our forever home,' recalls Amanda. 'However, Oliver and I had no experience of this scale of renovation, but like anything, if you don't know what you're doing, then you bring in a specialist.'

Their new neighbours recommended local architects Archangels, so the couple met with the team and explained how they wanted to create a bigger kitchen by connecting it with the current utility room at the back of the house. This space had a low roof so posed a few problems, and the couple also wanted to convert the loft, so the company suggested maximising the architectural effect of light and space with large amounts of glazing, which would in turn strengthen the connection with the newly designed garden. →



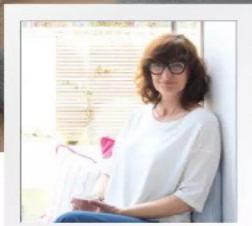
Family room

After removing the chimney breast to fit in the large sofa, Emma advised creating another focal point, so designed the media unit, made by Build My Home, with a contemporary fire that gives out a lovely glow

WINTER HOMES

Living room

This space was inspired by 'Chalk Paths', a limited edition print of the South Downs by Eric Ravilious. 'Oliver's grandfather was friends with artist Paul Nash, who taught Eric at the Royal College of Art, so the picture is a lovely connection,' says Amanda. The Bloomsbury linen sofa is by Love My Home



Amanda

“We wanted a layout that suits the here and now but will also work when our daughters become young adults”

‘The house was pretty big compared to our previous Victorian semi, and we didn’t really know how to make best use of the space,’ admits Amanda. ‘We needed hand-holding the entire way, which was why we decided to bring Emma Capron in, after seeing her work on Houzz.’

Since Emma is an interior architectural designer, the couple discovered that spacial planning was an important part of her strategy. ‘Emma has two grown-up children herself, and was able to share her experience of how the needs of a house change as they grow,’ explains Amanda. ‘It was such good advice – as we have a layout that suits the here and now, but will also work when the girls become young adults.’ →



Design details

The curved alcove joinery was designed to echo Brighton’s famous Victorian arches along the seafront promenade, while painting the woodwork to match the walls gives a seamless, more contemporary appearance



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← **Main bedroom**

Incorporating Adam's Eden Snowbird wallpaper by Lewis & Wood, a Henrietta bed and an Isabella blanket box, both from Love Your Home, the hotel-style décor is a nod to the refined chinoiserie style of rooms in Brighton's Royal Pavilion

↓ **Dressing room**

This interior space was designed by Bean Interiors and made by Forrest Bespoke with Xylocleaf decorative boards. The arched detail in the bronze framed mirror from West Elm ties in with the adjoining en suite



The architects and Emma worked closely together, working on bespoke storage configurations, plus walls to create more space in other rooms. The couple also wanted to fit a large corner sofa into the new family room, but the layout proved tricky. 'We didn't want to retain the original fireplace so Emma suggested we take out the chimney breast,' says Amanda. 'This also resolved a problem in our bedroom above, as I wanted our bed to face the door in case the children needed me in the night. So we now have a clear wall to place the headboard against.'

Changes were also made to the kitchen and dining-room layouts, where Emma proposed swapping the cooking and eating areas around

to create a better flow. 'Originally, the kitchen was between the family and dining room at the back, but it was a thoroughfare and too narrow for an island,' says Amanda. 'We can't believe how well it works now.'

The final design changes involved relocating the utility room to the first floor, which allowed the downstairs room to be rebuilt and extended to the side, creating a bigger open-plan kitchen. The architects also advised digging down to increase the head height of the space, bringing all the ceiling heights in line with each other. The team managed Amanda and Oliver's planning application as well, and recommended three building contractors. 'We went with a company called Build →



Family bathroom

With the Cast Iron Bath Company's La Rochelle bath painted in Farrow & Ball's Blue Ground, this shared space for the couple's daughters was reconfigured to allow for a laundry room next door. Original Style's White Lady mosaics in the alcove add a touch of glamour while the blind is made with the same print as Chloe's wallpaper in a green colourway



↑ **Anna's bedroom** The layout of both girls' rooms is set-up with plug sockets for double beds later on and bespoke shelving with underlighting. For now, Anna's bed configuration from Cuckooland sleeps five so is ideal for sleepovers with their cousins

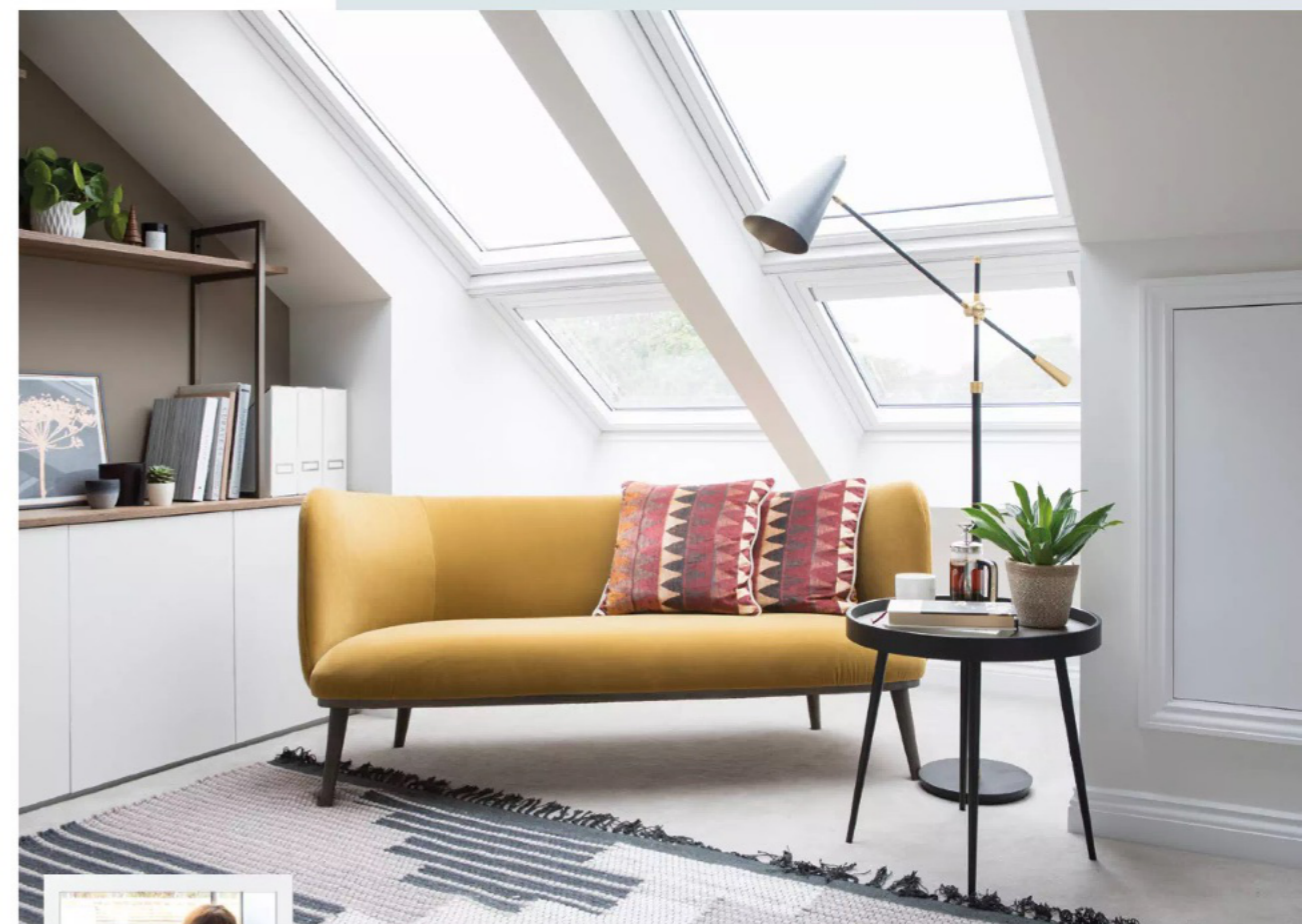
← **Chloe's bedroom** 'Chloe loves pinks and purples, so Osborne & Little's Zagazoo Butterfly Meadow wallpaper was perfect,' says Amanda. The shelves and window seat were made by Build My Home with Ian Mankin's Pink Devon Stripe seat upholstery by Malthouse & Summer



My Home as we really liked the owner, Michael Ford,' says Amanda. 'He understood our design concept, and when we went with Emma to look at their previous work, the finished quality was really high.'

During the build process, the couple went through their decorating ideas with Emma, with a goal of working towards buying new artwork and furniture to give their rooms a contemporary look. 'Using Emma's style prompts helped us to unlock our love for living in Brighton, which became the hook for the whole house,' says Amanda.

The concept is shaped by strong architectural details, plus a modern aesthetic with a nod to Victorian pastels, as well as references to the coast and countryside. A simple base of neutral walls and floors run throughout, infused with furnishings and accessories in tonal sky blues, sea and silvery blue-greens with pops of pink. Repeats in lighting. →



Amanda

↑ **Oliver's office** The Isaac bench in Dijon velvet and cushions in Ladder Brick fabric by Andrew Martin provide a splash of colour in this masculine room in the loft. 'We went to Love Your Home's showroom where Oliver spotted the sofa and cushion, and immediately knew he wanted it for his work space,' says Amanda. The Mo floor lamp is from Pooky

“ Emma's style prompts completely unlocked what we couldn't articulate – our love for living in Brighton, and that became the hook ”

wood hues and fabric draw the three floors together for a cohesive look. 'One of my favourite things is the Ian Mankin striped fabric that's like a fun deckchair print,' says Amanda. 'It's used in the window seats in the kitchen, family room and the girls' bedrooms, and although the pink, blue and mint colourways are different, I really like how the pattern co-ordinates the different rooms in the house.'

'The family moved into their forever home 15 months after the project began, and are just waiting on one final addition – a piece of bespoke art for the family room. 'We wanted something from a local artist that was special to us,' says Amanda. 'Helen Jewell incorporates pieces of our own fabric into her Brighton-based work, and I can't wait to see it. It really will complete our home.' 📍