

STYLE FOR SIZE

A colour scheme of mustard yellow and dark grey runs throughout this Victorian property, uniting the rooms and creating a feeling of space

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HALLWAY

Cole & Son's Chatterton Damask wallpaper in French Yellow and Ivory, from John Lewis & Partners, introduces a bold decorative pattern to the mustard colour scheme. Kamdean's Palio Clic flooring in Arezzo extends from the hallway into the kitchen-diner to give a cohesive feel

LIVING ROOM

Double doors separate the room from the rest of the downstairs to create an intimate space. Made's Margot Accent chair in Antique Gold and a brass floor lamp from French Connection add touches of elegance to the room ▶



HOME PROFILE

WHO LIVES HERE

Nicola Casperson, who works in brand marketing and is also an interior designer

THE PROPERTY

A two-bedroom Victorian terrace in West Dulwich, London

PRICE £450,000 in January 2015

MONEY SPENT £75,000

WHAT IT'S WORTH NOW

£660,000

KITCHEN

The handleless Bromley & Ellis units were installed six months after the main renovation work was finished due to budget constraints. Running the cupboards along one wall helps to elongate the space, and a Mr Robinson wall clock

by Newgate provides a

smart focal point at the end wall. A patterned monochrome rug from H&M Home helps to enliven the mostly neutral scheme

DINING AREA

Brick slips made from reclaimed London brick were

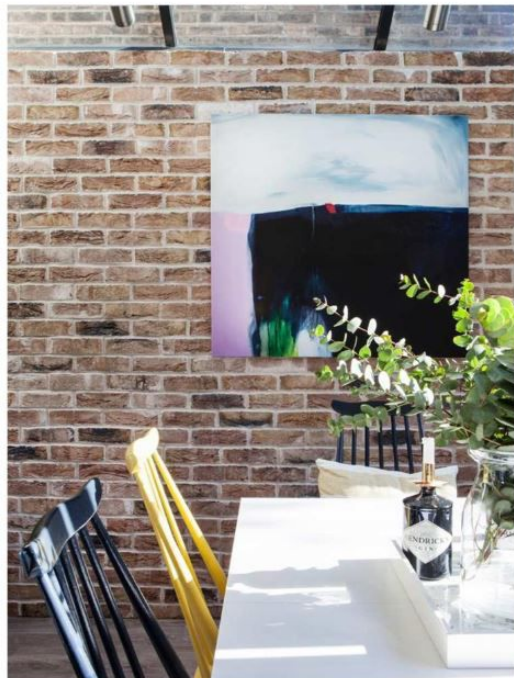
used for the wall in the new side extension. Hanging on it is an abstract canvas by artist Lola Donoghue. Nicola painted the Ercol Originals chairs, which she found on Ebay, in yellow and black to match her colour scheme. The dining table is from Ikea

ISLAND

A hob on the island faces into the room so Nicola can chat to guests as she cooks

LIVING ROOM

Beautiful cushions from Liberty London perk up a plain sofa. The nest of tables is from Rockett St George ▶



When Nicola Casperson first laid eyes on this dated and cramped Victorian terrace, she immediately imagined it as a chic and contemporary open-plan home – and couldn't wait to get started on the transformation. 'The downstairs rooms were small, and orange pine cladding zapped out the light and energy, so I wanted to pull it all apart and begin again,' Nicola explains. 'The biggest challenge was making the space look and feel big without spending lots of money.'

Originally a three-bedroom house, this property is one of a pair that many years ago would have been a single terraced house, so Nicola shares the main entrance and hallway with her neighbour. 'The front door opened into a tiny hall, leading directly into a separate dining room, living room, kitchen and bathroom. Straightaway, Nicola began fleshing out ideas to open out the staircase and knock the rooms together.'

'I could visualise an open-plan downstairs with a bright kitchen-diner leading onto the garden and, for contrast, double doors into a dark and cosy front living room,' she says. 'The biggest decision was sacrificing one of the three bedrooms to gain a new bathroom.' 'It made perfect sense,' Nicola continues, 'upstairs seemed unbalanced as the downstairs space isn't big enough to sustain a three-bedroom house.'

It would have been possible to extend into the garden, but Nicola had an eye on her budget, which also needed to cover new electrics, pipework and windows, as well as connecting to the gas and installing central heating. Instead, she opted for a smaller side extension to replace the kitchen lean-to. 'The garden isn't very big and I already had enough room for a table, so I didn't think a rear extension would add to the value of the house versus the cost of the work,' Nicola explains. 'Extending to the side has only given me an extra three square metres but, with its glass roof, it's made a massive difference to how the room feels.'

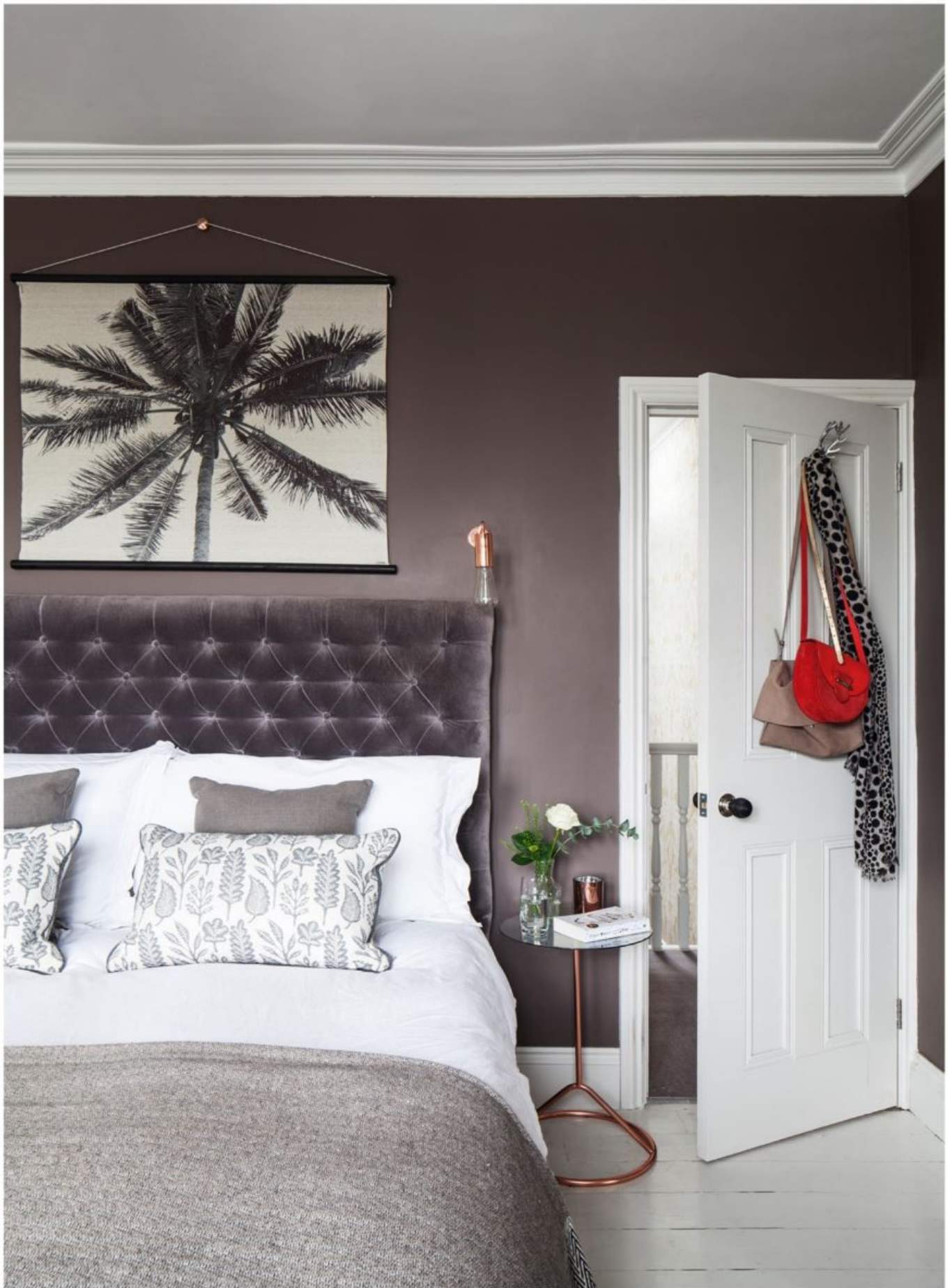
Nicola had her sketched layout turned into plans by an architectural designer so she could obtain a certificate of permitted development. When she took ownership of the house in January 2015, her builder, Adrian England, from England's Carpentry Services, was ready to start. 'Adrian did some work on my previous flat and knows his stuff,' says Nicola. 'He came and saw the house before I put in an offer to check I hadn't missed anything vital.'

Adrian worked methodically through the property in stages. With no side entrance, everything had to come through the house, including tons of soil to level out the garden. Once the bathroom and upstairs were finished, Nicola was able to move in while Adrian started on the downstairs. Keen to reinstate the period features, Nicola had a specialist install cornicing and Adrian built three faux chimney breasts where the originals would have been. 'The living room, entrance hall and my bedroom felt flat and featureless without a chimney breast,' says Nicola. 'And although the fireplaces take up space, putting them back ▶

MAIN BEDROOM

Farrow & Ball's cocooning London Clay shade was used on the walls. It's been brought to life with playful pops of vivid pink, such as the print of *The Shard* (left), from Etsy. The vintage chest of drawers below were an Ebay find. The

Zeus bench (top left) upholstered in Korla's Portia Steel, and the Valentin bed (right), upholstered in Granite Varese fabric to match the sofa downstairs, are both from sofa.com. Above the bed hangs a striking palm tree print from Holly's House





in has given me the opportunity to have built-in alcove storage, which makes the rooms feel bigger.'

To increase the sense of space, Nicola decorated the open-plan living area in white, adding texture with the side extension's exposed brick wall. A charcoal grey kitchen with mustard yellow chairs sets the contemporary colour scheme for the whole house. 'I was conscious each room needed to flow and connect to make the house feel bigger,' says Nicola. 'The grey and mustard combination has a modern feel, but still works well with the period features.'

Over the past few years, Nicola has gradually furnished her home with a mix of high-street buys and designer brands, including Vita's Eos white feather ceiling pendants in the bedrooms. Lighting, she says, has been a learning curve. 'I thought the kitchen ceiling would be too low to hang pendants over the table and island, but I see now it could have worked. Elsewhere, though, the lighting is far better than I had in my old flat – I'm finessing my ideas with each project.'

Nicola is already on to the next one – a holiday cottage in Cornwall – prompting her to set up an interior design and project management business, alongside her job as a brand marketing consultant. 'I'm really pleased I achieved what I set out to do,' she says. 'I love coming in through the front door and walking into a bright, open room and seeing the garden. The house feels bigger and is more balanced now – everything has its place.'

For more information, visit nicolacasperinteriors.co.uk



LANDING

The Searchlight chandelier from Lighting by Paul brings understated glamour to the space

GUEST BEDROOM

This simple pale yellow and light grey scheme, with cushions from H&M Home, echoes the rest of the

house. Nicola painted the side table, an Ebay find, in Farrow & Ball's Downpipe

BATHROOM

A luxurious tub from Victoria Plumbing is teamed with Crosswater's Belgravia nickel taps

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