

I want my home to be a reflection of me

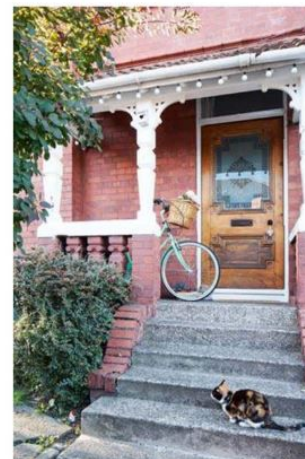
Blending a passion for fresh pastels and period details, Hayley Cairns has brought a feminine touch to her Victorian flat



Good idea!
Hayley has filled a hanging painted wooden pallet with plants and fairy lights to make a great decorative piece.

After a spell living back with her parents in The Wirral, Hayley Cairns couldn't wait to buy her own home again and went on the hunt for a period property in the local area. 'I tried looking at new houses but straight away I felt there was something missing,' she says. 'I knew I had to find somewhere with character and charm.'

A disappointing survey on one house she liked put Hayley in a dilemma and she half-heartedly came to see this ground floor flat in spring 2016. 'I walked around and was completely smitten with the high ceilings, original cornices and dado rails – the rooms were stunning,' she says. 'The cute back yard and front garden were a bonus and made the whole place feel more like a house than a flat.'



Together a pink fridge-freezer by Smeg and a painted pre-loved dresser create a retro vibe. 'Finding sturdy second-hand furniture is half the battle to a successful upcycling project,' says Hayley. 'I like Rust-Oleum's chalk paint – there's no priming and a good colour range.' Her IKEA table and chairs are second-hand buys

Curtains to replace water-damaged doors add to the Fifties feel. 'The tiny star-print fabric looks really cute in here,' says Hayley. Shelves display everyday food jars and the Wilko clock and Dunelm drainer add a copper colour accent

Things moved swiftly and soon Hayley had brought her belongings out of storage and settled in. She knew the bathroom – without a shower – and the tired kitchen would be her first projects. Luckily, the remaining rooms were inoffensively decorated in neutrals making it easy for her to bide her time and make plans before making any radical changes.

'I'm a homely sort of person – that's where my Instagram name, @homelyhazical, comes from,' she says. 'I knew I wanted to mix soft pastels with neutral tones for a feminine feel, and I didn't want anything to look too new.'

Soon her boyfriend, Adam, had moved in and then the following summer, the

COME ON IN...



I AM Hayley Cairns, a civil servant. I live with my two Yorkshire Terriers, Pixie and Betty, plus Princess the cat.

MY HOME Is a two-bedroom ground floor flat in a converted Victorian house, built in 1899. I live in Wallasey, The Wirral.

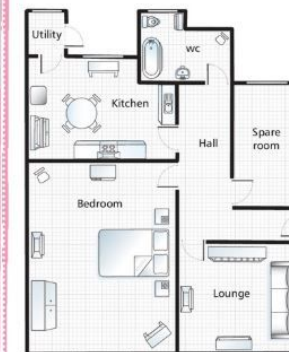
I LEARNT You don't need to spend a fortune on expensive paints. I used B&Q's all-purpose white paint to update my kitchen cupboards and it's worked really well.

SHOPS I LOVE Are IKEA for hacks and everyday pieces, Urban Outfitters Home, and Anthropologie for a splurge.

MY ADVICE Is to experiment. I was surprised how well Bedec's Multi Surface Paint covered the shiny terracotta kitchen splashback and how well it's lasted.

MY BIGGEST MISTAKE Was not getting a fixed price for fitting the bathroom. The project overrun by a week and cost twice as much as I was expecting.

TO RELAX I practise yoga. I also like to be creative around the house. My favourite place to enjoy a morning tea is on the bench in the kitchen – it's bright and warm by the window.



FLOORPLAN

For stockists see page 120



Hayley made the voile curtains to hang across the lower half of the window. The bench seating area is teamed with a rug from Dunelm along with cushions from IKEA and Urban Outfitters Home. The brick wallpaper is from B&Q

‘Hanging voile curtains across the lower half of the window in a café style means I’ve still got privacy but they don’t block out the light.’

◀ bathroom became too much to bear. ‘I hated not having a shower,’ she says. ‘Though on the flip side I was going to the gym all the time because I could shower there!’ she says. As soon as the bathroom was gutted back to bare bones Hayley discovered she couldn’t have the dark varnished floorboards she wanted because too many of them had been damaged or replaced over the years. Instead, she sourced patterned floor tiles. ‘I was disappointed at first but then I fell in love with these lovely blue and white tiles – it

was a better outcome in the end.’

The free-standing roll-top bath was Hayley’s must-have item, but with a lack of space for a separate shower enclosure, she sourced a design that could be used with an overhead shower. Next, Hayley turned her attention to the kitchen but without a meaningful budget she decided to temporarily update the room. After a period of saving, she splurged on a pink Smeg fridge-freezer, and the kitchen sprung up around it. ‘I’ve wanted a pink Smeg for years,’ she says. ‘The pastel



◀ The living room has pretty period detailing and tall windows that Hayley dressed in a plain voile. IKEA plants bring in fresh greenery and frame the eye-catching second-hand sofa which tones with the Wayfair Persian rug. For a similar sofa, try the dark pink Metro Lane Chesterfield, also by Wayfair

▶ Hayley gave her unappealing back yard a makeover with white paint, circular paving stones and decorative gravel, all from B&Q TradePoint. ‘This gravel is cheaper and I prefer the colourful look,’ says Hayley. The wood-burning stove was saved from a friend’s skip



Good idea!
For an affordable solution to dressing over-sized windows, hang two sets of matching off-the-shelf curtains.

◀ The gold hostess trolley is a genuine vintage piece sourced locally. ‘I like to change up the shelves,’ says Hayley. ‘Next, I’m planning to display a pretty tea set here.’ The green round cushion is from Anthropologie

colour and the retro style is iconic – and reflects my look perfectly!’

Hayley kept the low-level kitchen cupboards and painted the doors but replaced the wall cupboards with open shelving to increase the feeling of space. She decorated the room white and added a brick-patterned wallpaper to emphasise the big window.

She already owned the Welsh dresser and was about to buy a new table when one she liked popped up on Facebook Marketplace. ‘I find lots of bargains there, as well as on Gumtree, eBay and especially in charity shops, which are a great place for one-off pieces while supporting a good cause at the same time,’ says Hayley. ‘The round table is perfect and finishes everything off ▶



The wardrobe fits neatly into the alcove and to the right Hayley has hung a selection of bags and hats on the chimney breast. 'I like them on display so I can grab what I need as I go out,' she says



'Finding sturdy second-hand furniture is half the battle to a successful upcycling project.'



Hayley's elegant furniture works in harmony with the classic period interiors. 'I love the timeless style and they're good-quality investment pieces.' Find similar French-style furniture at Homes Direct 365 and curtains and chandelier pendants at Dunelm

◀ - I love my kitchen now and won't need to change it for a while.'

Another lucky second was the pink velvet Chesterfield sofa in the living room. 'I only paid £150 and I love the shape and button details,' she says. 'It's a gorgeous raspberry pink velvet and makes a real feature in the room.'

Light floods through tall double-aspect windows and Hayley has added to the height with lofty potted ferns and a tall shelving unit. She customised the shelves with D-C-Fix's self-adhesive leather-

The dressing table was Hayley's first upcycle project. 'I placed it by the window because of the natural light,' she says. The stool is a charity shop find that Hayley upcycled with gold spray paint and faux fur. For a similar stool, try Maisons du Monde



effect film and sprayed the frame gold. In the back yard, she applied her creative skills too – an old wood pallet makes an outdoor plant shelf, plus she has painted a second-hand chair and rescued a working wood-burning chiminea from a skip.

Hayley's bedroom is the final – and ongoing – project, prolonged by a damp problem that still needs resolving. 'However, I've been lucky as the flocked wallpaper happens to go well with my French-style bed and wardrobe,' she says. 'As soon as I saw the period details, I knew these pieces would look amazing in here.'

Hayley's proud of her progress so far. 'It's lovely owning a home again and having all my things around me,' she says. 'I love the look and feel of the rooms as they've made my flat much more inviting. I can't wait to finish my bedroom – I want a blush-pink fireplace and picture rail to go with a rug and cushion I bought in the sales.'

▶ Pretty floor tiles from Tile Mountain add interest to the white bathroom. 'I like the patterns and the way they're laid randomly,' says Hayley. The upcycled cupboard is painted in Rust-Oleum's Mustard chalk paint. Faux marble B&M shelves make ideal props for IKEA faux foliage



Good idea!

If keeping plants alive is not your forte, why not fill your shelves with faux ones. They look just as good, and will last much longer!

▶ 'I love an old chain mirror,' says Hayley. 'This one is from a charity shop and the bevelled edges are just gorgeous.' The Winchester basin is from Victoria Plum and the white Metro tiles are from Tile Mountain

▶ Hayley maxed out the small space – the Dulwich free-standing bath from Victoria Plum has a straight end that fits neatly into the corner of the room and accommodates the shower too



6 IDEAS TO STEAL



For a delicate feel in the bedroom, pick an elegant wardrobe with pretty details and curves like Hayley has.

Toulouse silver double wardrobe, £399, Dunelm

A gorgeous velvet sofa looks even more inviting in soft pink.



Orson three-seater in vintage pink velvet, £749, Made



Decorate your kitchen shelves with colourful glasses you'll want to use every day.

Coloured pressed glass tumblers, £7 each, Primrose and Plum

A realistic faux pot plant will stay looking fresh forever – no effort required!



Floor tree in pot, £28.99, Wayfair

Add a pop of colour and a retro twist to your kitchen with this fridge-freezer.

Swan Retro fridge-freezer, £899.95, Robert Dyas



A plain wooden bench is a versatile piece that works in every room.



Norraker bench, £40, IKEA