

Harmonious reno

# ‘Seeing our ideas come to life was so satisfying’

Taking on a dated 1930s semi, **Erica Burton** and her husband **Jim** reworked its layout to better suit their family and gave it an up-to-date twist, with pastels in every room

When Erica first viewed this 1930s semi, she envisioned how it could look straight away, despite its dated appearance. ‘I had a craving for a big family entertaining space at the back, and I knew we could do something with the layout to make this happen,’ she says. ‘I also had a number of ideas about how we could extend

upstairs to achieve more bedroom space.’ Erica and Jim moved here from their previous new-build, as they missed the quirks and character of a period property and needed more space for their two children. The house’s layout needed a complete rethink, though – the galley kitchen was separate from the dining room, with a damp conservatory



‘I bought the pink tiles early on, as I knew I wanted them to contrast with a dark blue kitchen,’ says Erica. The reeded glass pendants match the wall cupboards, and look pretty and understated



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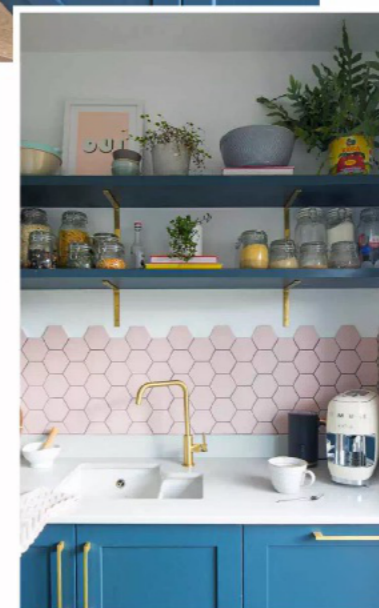
KITCHEN

‘We went to a local kitchen company recommended to us,’ says Erica. ‘The style is a standard design, but they were willing to do the bespoke reeded glass in the wall cupboards – it’s always worth asking!’

OUR MUST HAVES Veined Michelangelo 20mm quartz worktop, £2,900, Yes Granite. Aldana shaker cupboards in Marine, around £8,500, Heart Kitchens. Victoria metal stools, £89 each, Cult Furniture

between them, blocking views to the garden. Upstairs, the box bedroom was also a problem. ‘With the girls being so close in age, we didn’t think it would be fair for one of them to be squeezed in,’ says Erica. ‘We couldn’t afford to do a loft conversion as well as sort out the ground floor, so we focused on a design solution to fix both.’ Erica drew-up various layouts with Jim, who then got an idea of pricing from their builder friends. ‘We got three rough costs: a single-storey extension; a double-storey extension above the kitchen; and a wrap-around extension with a double storey on the side. We really wanted to do the third option, but it wasn’t financially viable, so we settled on option two.’

▶ ‘Shelves are great for styling as it’s easy to make updates when the mood takes,’ says Erica. ‘We bought the wood from a DIY shop and finished them with paint colour-matched to the cupboards’



COME ON IN...

WE ARE Erica Burton (@renovatingno53), 42, my husband, Jim, 43, and our children Amelie, eight, and Hattie, seven. Jim and I both work for a luxury carpet company, where I’m the marketing director and Jim manages the warehouse.

OUR HOME IS a three-bedroom, 1930s semi-detached house located in Market Harborough, Leicestershire.

MY BEST BARGAIN The dresser I found for free on Facebook Marketplace and I upcycled with paint and new handles.

GROUND FLOOR



FIRST FLOOR



Feature Jane Crittenden Styling Marisha Taylor Photos James French



**DINING AREA**

'I made the shelves with a sheet of MDF from a builders' merchant, which they cut to size,' says Erica. 'It's important to measure carefully as old walls can be wonky. I used primer and eggshell paint, then fitted with gold brackets'

**OUR MUST HAVES** Shelf painted in **Elle Decoration by Crown in Personal Touch**, £38 per 2.5L, Homebase. **House Doctor Apart brass brackets**, currently £16 for 2, Amazon. For similar chairs, try **Habitat Talia wooden chairs in Pink**, £199 for 2, Argos

**LIVING AREA**

Looking for a small dresser to fit this spot, Erica was thrilled to find this one for free on Facebook Marketplace. To make it her own, she added reeded moulding and painted it a soft peachy pink

**OUR MUST HAVES** Dresser painted in **Desert Rose architects' eggshell**, £32.50 per 750ml, Paint & Paper Library. For a similar lamp, try the **Tanner table lamp**, £28, Dunelm. **Mercury handles**, from £9.95 each, Plank Hardware. For similar moulding, try **Pine reeded moulding**, £6.97 per 2.4m length, B&Q

**A GREAT ADVENTURE**

The building work involved knocking down the old kitchen and conservatory and rebuilding on the same footprint. The box room became a walk-through wardrobe into the new main bedroom, and they also made changes to the living room. 'The adjoining wall to the dining room had been moved, leaving different ceiling heights, which looked odd,' says Erica. 'I also wanted to reinstate the picture rail, coving and fireplace.'

Renovations began in September 2019 and the family stayed put, setting up a makeshift kitchen in the living room and, later, upstairs. 'The kids thought it was a great adventure to sit on the mattress in our bedroom, watching TV,' says Erica. 'Our builders were brilliant and the kitchen extension was finished – minus the flooring – in time for Christmas.' Erica had her heart set on oak parquet and decided to wait until they'd saved up.

When it came to the décor, Erica says: 'I wanted the bones of the house to have a period feel and to add a modern twist with colour. I combine rich, soft tones with warm, pale pinks – which I view as a neutral – and I like how they complement each other.' In the kitchen she chose pink hexagon wall tiles and Shaker-style cupboards in blue-green, then

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**CUSHION INSPIRATION**

Find a patterned fabric you love and use this to establish a room's colour palette. Pick out the colours in the walls, furniture and furnishings for a confident blended scheme



Erica sourced brick tiles for the hearth and a 1930s fireplace from eBay. 'I used a hot gun to strip off the old paint and painted it the same tone as the walls to blend into the small room,' she says

**LIVING ROOM**

After reinstating period details, the walls were painted in a warm blue-green shade and Erica brought in a luxe feel with jewel-toned velvet sofas and cushions

**OUR MUST HAVES** LPD DX 1930s Edwardian unfinished oak internal door, from £125, Door Superstore. Walls in **Teal 03 matt**, £45 per 2.5L, Lick. For a similar sofa, try the **Baron three-seater sofa in Navy Blue**, £769, SLF24. For a similar cushion, try the **Clara cotton velvet cushion in Butterscotch**, £14, Dunelm

**HALLWAY**

Erica made these handy shelves and added baskets to hide the clutter. Blue woodwork has the modern yet traditional feel Erica was after, as does the floor. 'I've always been in love with parquet and I wouldn't compromise, so we saved up,' she says. 'Laying the flooring was one of the last things we did'

**OUR MUST HAVES** V4 Deco parquet herringbone flooring in **Frozen Umber**, £72.86 per sq m, Fenston Carter. **Sheridan Steampunk pendant lights**, £20 each, Iconic Lights





**'It's been a long slog as we've had to save as we go, but I really love the space we've created. The colours we've used are warm, balanced and just right for our family home'**

carried the pink tones through to the dining room. 'I wanted a cohesive feel, so the living room ceiling is pale pink and the walls are teal blue; upstairs I kept the pink, but shifted to tranquil greens,' Erica explains.

**PERFECT BALANCE**

Upcycling is a firm feature throughout the house. Hattie's green tallboy had previously been in their old bathroom, unpainted, and Erica made her desk and alcove shelves, as well other shelves around the house. 'I upcycle bargains from eBay and Facebook Marketplace, and I don't like to get rid of furniture with life left in it,' she says. 'We brought the dining table with us, the chairs came from Jim's father, and the kitchen corner sofa was made for our previous home. It's important to find a way to make things work.'

The couple decorated downstairs first, then upstairs, with their bedroom the last project to finish. 'There's always a doubt that it might not work, so when the whole house came together I was really pleased,' says Erica. 'It's been a long slog as we've had to save as we go, but I really love the space we've created. The colours we've used are warm, balanced and just right for our family home.'

► The old box bedroom is kitted out with affordable IKEA Boaxel wardrobes and tall shoe shelves to create the walk-through dressing room into the main bedroom

**MAIN BEDROOM**

**Paneling conceals the wall light wiring and creates a ledge for displaying art. 'I was going to paint it the same as the walls, but I'm glad I changed my mind,' says Erica. 'I really like the contrast of the darker tone**

**OUR MUST HAVES** Paneling painted in **Beige 06 matt**, £45 per 2.5L, Lick. For similar lights, try the **Elements Koppla plug-in wall light in White**, £22, Dunelm. **Ercol Teramo king-size bed**, £1,500, Barker & Stonehouse. For a similar star try, the **St Helens natural wicker hollow star**, £11.99, Robert Dyas



Erica upcycled the £20 dressing table from Facebook Marketplace with paint and handles. 'This was the last room we did, so to save money I bought an £8 stool from B&M, sprayed the legs gold and upholstered the seat with a bouclé cushion cover'



**HATTIE'S BEDROOM**

Erica began by choosing chalky matt pink for the walls and a strong green for the furniture. 'The space needed another colour, and mustard works really well in the bedding,' she says

**OUR MUST HAVES** Walls painted in **Potted Shrimp estate emulsion**, £54.50 per 2.5L; tall boy painted in **Caulk Green modern eggshell**, £34 per 750ml, both Farrow & Ball. **Yellow spotted single duvet cover set**, £24.99, H&M Home. **Issac desk lamp in Ochre**, £12, Dunelm

**BATHROOM**

'Without the luxury of an ensuite in our home, the double basin has been a lifesaver,' says Erica. 'I was really drawn to the fluted, wall-mounted design, which gives the room a feeling of space'

**OUR MUST HAVES** Empire pink wall-hung double vanity, £499.97, Better Bathrooms. **JTP Brushed Brass basin mixer tap**, £197.93, Victorian Plumbing. **Discotheque Ultravox tiles**, £42 per sq m, Claybrook Studio



**AMELIE'S BEDROOM**

'The dado rail was already here, so I took the opportunity to decorate with two different colours,' says Erica. Her mum made the curtains in a matching pink

**OUR MUST HAVES** For similar curtains, try the **Luna Brushed Blush blackout pencil-pleat curtains**, from £40, Dunelm. Upper walls painted in **Pink Ground estate emulsion**, £54.50 per 2.5L, Farrow & Ball. Lower walls in **Green 02 matt**, £45 per 2.5L, Lick. For a similar light, try the **Glow feather lampshade in Pink**, £25, Matalan



**RAINBOW CURVES**

Create perfect curves using a pencil on string, pinned to the wall. Hold the pencil taut, then draw down the wall at a 90-degree angle. Shorten the string and repeat. Fill the outlines with colourful paint



▲ The rainbow adds a fun touch to Hattie's desk area. 'I didn't want to use primary colours,' says Erica, 'so I dipped into leftover paint and tester pots, while the spotty pattern was inspired by a design on Instagram'