



SUMPTUOUS ELEGANCE

A VICTORIAN TOWNHOUSE IN PRIMROSE HILL HAS BEEN GUTTED, LOVINGLY RESTORED AND FILLED WITH RICH TEXTURES AND CLASSIC FURNITURE, BRINGING IT IN LINE WITH THE WAY PEOPLE WANT TO LIVE TODAY.

For one family who bought and renovated a traditional Victorian townhouse in Primrose Hill, London, it was essential to retain the strong sense of the late Victorian character and age of the house. Living there for six months before any work commenced, they knew with some certainty how they wanted to live, and how this could be achieved.

The house had been used as a rental property before it was purchased and lovingly restored, with clear signs of damp in the basement, and the layout had bedrooms on the top and bottom floors with the sitting room on the first floor. Although this layout accords with the history of the house, the scope of the work required provided an opportunity to modernise and reorganise the interiors in line with the way people like to live today.

Under the watchful eye of Kirsty McMorrone and Sophie Mills of Absolute Abode, the house was stripped back to its bare bones and huge holes knocked out of the back for an extension

incorporating a library and study. The kitchen was moved from the ground floor to the basement, creating a large family kitchen and dining room, opening out onto steps that climb up to the redesigned garden.

The owners love to entertain so an elegant double reception room was created on the ground floor, flooded with light from both sides of the house, with the cocktail lounge overlooking the garden making it a great place to gather before (and after) dinner. This space is very different throughout the seasons – in summer the large windows let the air stream through, but in winter the fire is lit and the oversized armchairs come into their own.

The design seamlessly intertwines traditional style with very modern sensibilities: clean and simple lines, minimal accessories, and advanced technology. Character has been introduced through art, photography and interesting books. First editions and collectors' books sit alongside an integrated audiovisual system throughout the house. To create a calm

and serene environment, soft colours have been selected using hues of pink, grey, brown and green.

Working with the beautiful early Victorian features in the Grade II listed townhouse, elegant furniture has been chosen from classic furniture makers such as William Yeoward and Andrew Martin to provide the desired sense of grandeur, yet with a modern twist. Upholstering with a range of textured plain and bold patterns in a few key colours enabled a build-up of layers of texture, further enhanced with sleek bespoke cabinetry featuring simple finishes and elegant detailing.

Oversized armchairs with dramatic Romo fabrics, together with a generous sized Andrew Martin lamp, bring a sense of drama to the cocktail lounge. To add a touch of glamour, a collection of vintage cocktail shakers and glassware was sourced for the bespoke cocktail cabinet, and for a sense of luxuriousness, full silk curtains were hung in both rooms, perfect for cosy evenings by the fire.



MEET THE DESIGNER

Architectural interior designer Kirsty McMorrone trained at the Inchbald School of Design in London. Previously working internationally in advertising, she relocated from Australia to London in 2001.

Absolute Abode comprises Kirsty, Sophie Mills, another architectural interior designer, and real estate expert Ruth Daniel, specialising in international property searches, interior design and everything in between. "We founded Absolute Abode for busy people; because it should be possible to offer an end-to-end service that finds the perfect property, deals with the lawyers, oversees building work, undertakes the interior style and hands over the keys."

GET THE LOOK

The double reception room has been adorned with sumptuous fabrics and traditional upholstered furniture, reflecting the age of the property.

- SOFAS AND ARMCHAIRS**, Andrew Martin, covered with fabric by Romo. www.andrewmartin.co.uk, www.romo.com
- OTTOMANS BY KINGCOME**, covered in fabric by Zoffany and Romo. www.kingcomesofas.co.uk, www.zoffany.com
- WALLPAPER** (cocktail room) Paint and Paper. www.paint-paper.co.uk
- Paint (sitting room) Stock by Little Greene Paint Co. www.littlegreene.com
- CABINETRY**, Gary Wild. 020 8961 4935
- LARGE LAMP** (cocktail lounge), Andrew Martin. www.andrewmartin.co.uk
- TABLE LAMPS** (sitting room), Louise Bradley. www.louisebradley.co.uk
- SIDE TABLE**, William Yeoward. www.williamyeoward.com
- CURTAINS**, Silk by Silk Weaves UK Ltd. 0116 269 5520