



KITCHEN-DINER
Rejigging the layout and removing walls has created the wonderful open-plan space the couple yearned for. Bespoke kitchen units, £27,000, Daulby and Tickle. Walls painted in Strong White estate emulsion, £38 for 2.5 litres, Farrow & Ball. Dining chairs sourced through Julia Blunt Interiors, covered in Mezzola lime fabric, £45m, Designers Guild



SITTING ROOM
'Julia Blunt Interiors gave me confidence to go for bold splashes of pink here,' says Jo. Walls in Cornforth White estate emulsion, £38 for 2.5 litres, Farrow & Ball. Nickel Manhattan lamp, £2,130, with fuchsia satin shade, £328, Porta Romana. Sofa covered in Karina taupe fabric, £16m, Clarke & Clarke



INSPIRING

HOME TRUTHS

THE PROPERTY A three-bedroom Victorian-style terraced house built in the 1970s
LOCATION London
ROOMS Hall, sitting room, drawing room/study, kitchen-diner, cloakroom, courtyard garden, three bedrooms (all en suite)
PURCHASED 2011
PREVIOUS PROPERTY 'Before living here, we lived in a large terrace opposite Battersea Park,' says Jo.

BRIGHT & BEAUTIFUL

Jo and Nathan Birtle took on a dated terrace, determined to remodel it into a family home full of style, elegance and colour

FEATURE JANET McMEEKIN | PHOTOGRAPHY ANDREAS VON EINSIEDEL



After their son moved out, Jo and Nathan Birtle found they were using barely half the rooms in their large terraced property. This was brought home to the couple one day when Nathan happened

to say: 'Well, we appear to have carved out a lovely one-bedroom flat from our five-bedroom house!'

When the couple bought their south London home in 2001, they were thrilled it had so much space for themselves, their son Hugo, now 18, and an au pair. 'But when I stopped working and Hugo went to boarding school at 14, we ended up using only one of the bedrooms, one bathroom and the kitchen-diner, which, with its TV and sofa, doubled up as a living room,' says Jo.

Having decided to downsize, the couple began researching the property market. 'I didn't actually want to move any further than the next road,' says Jo. After biding her time for several months, they widened the search by half a mile. Interesting homes began to catch their eye, including the house they ended up buying. 'Although it was a maze of small, boxy rooms, it had a cheerful feel and had the potential to be an even brighter space,' recalls Jo. 'We also found out that the house was built in the 1970s after being bombed in World War II, and therefore not listed, which meant not jumping through any planning hoops.'

The Birtles contacted an architect, who suggested moving the staircase from the middle of the house to one side, removing some of the walls and repositioning others to create an open-plan layout and better flow. In 2011, the pair found rented accommodation while the builders worked on site for a year. 'It was astonishing,' says Jo. 'At one point during the build, we could stand on the ground floor and look up four storeys to the sky.'

As the house took shape, Jo liaised with Julia Blunt Interiors to create mood boards for every room. 'I felt nervous about taking on such a large project myself,' says Jo. 'The girls at Julia Blunt had helped with the house that we'd lived in before and I wanted them to have carte blanche here to create a welcoming family home with a classic contemporary edge. They encouraged me to make the bolder choices that, in my heart of hearts, I really wanted.' After deciding on a subtle backdrop of grey and taupe, Jo's favourite shades of fuchsia, purple, blue and green were then cleverly incorporated into the room schemes. 'The pops of colour are fresh, vibrant and really help bring the space to life,' she says.

The result is a home that oozes understated elegance. 'It may be smaller than our last place, but it's beautifully formed,' says Jo. 'This new layout means it's not just more practical but also a wonderful, light-filled house that we all adore.'



SITTING ROOM
Replacing windows with elegant doors has enhanced the feeling of symmetry. Harome console table, £3,132, Rebecca Scott. Flamingo cushions on chairs, £30 each, Secondavita Upcycled Cushions.



GUEST BEDROOM
A palette of blue and taupe creates a restful feel in this space, which also doubles as Nathan's study. Hemnes white day-bed frame with three drawers, £260, Ikea. The Romo gold-leaf convex mirror would suit this scheme, £625, Omelo.

FOR STOCKIST DETAILS GO TO PAGE 141



HUGO'S BEDROOM
'I wanted this to be a comfortable space that our son wouldn't outgrow,' says Jo. Nickel medium leaf table lamps, £125 each, Heathfield & Co. Walls painted in Elephant's Breath estate emulsion, £8 for 2.5 litres, Farrow & Ball. The Lexington star bedspread has this look, £200, John Lewis.

DESIGN TIP *'It's worth investing in good lighting and, if you're renovating or building a home, make sure you plan where they will go in advance'*



MASTER BEDROOM
The oversized velvet headboard injects an extra touch of luxury. Headboard covered in Kariba fabric in Zinc, £86m, Today Interiors. The Honeycomb Column lamp uses a comparable to this one, price on request, Porta Romana.



MASTER EN SUITE
The couple's bathroom is a sleek, uncluttered space. Zone Verso rectangular basin, £960, Zone two-drawer unit in walnut finish, £752, both CP Hart.

