



# EASY ELEGANCE

Interior designer Sidika Owen d'Hauteville reimagined every room scheme of this family home to imbue it with a sense of cosiness and charm

FEATURE EMMA J PAGE | PHOTOGRAPHY TOM FALLON



## SITTING ROOM

A chaise was designed to fit into the bay window, framed by delicate sheers. 'It's a striking piece in a pared-back scheme,' says Sidika. Lulu chaise longue, £1,680, Sweetpea & Willow; in Siege in 0342, Aldeco. Bespoke curtains, Studio Sidika. Pedrera coffee table, £604, Gubi. Custom Namir rug, Stark Carpet



With its classic-meets-contemporary interiors, soft colour palette and light-filled rooms, this Victorian terrace is a beautiful home, yet Charlotte and Henry McAlister almost ducked out of viewing it when it came up for sale. The couple, who work in law and finance respectively, were looking for a property with a south-facing garden, having spent some time renting a basement flat nearby that received little natural light. Though this one didn't tick that box, seeing the sun-drenched

rear extension proved to be a game-changer. 'The sloped glass roof makes all the difference,' explains Charlotte. 'It floods the space with daylight and so we realised that the house could provide us with everything we needed.'

The house had a glass-topped, exposed brick kitchen-diner extension and converted loft space already in situ, which meant the family, including daughters Jennifer, 13, and Lucy, 10, didn't need to undertake any radical changes, but decoratively, they wanted to make their mark. Having spent stints living in the





## HOME TRUTHS

### THE PROPERTY

Victorian terrace

**LOCATION** North London

**ROOMS** Sitting room, kitchen-diner, cloakroom, four bedrooms, two bathrooms

**PURCHASED** 2016

### PREVIOUS PROPERTY

'We moved here from a lower ground floor flat in Maida Vale,' says Charlotte.



USA before renting in London, they had never had the opportunity to invest in forever pieces, or the know-how to put room schemes together. 'Initially, we thought that we wouldn't update much, but of course one thing led to another,' explains Charlotte. 'Replacing flooring led to choosing different paint colours; new walls led to selecting light switches and before long we were undertaking a full refit.'

Fortunately, Charlotte asked interior designer and friend Sidika Owen d'Hauteville to come on board. Part-Turkish,

part-British, born in Brazil and brought up in Provence, the interior designer has an eye for eclectic but pared-back schemes, with an emphasis on materiality, from metals and strong silhouettes to soft rattans and relaxed linens. 'The house had great dimensions, beautiful architectural detailing and a good sense of flow,' she says. 'My aim was to emphasise these features and bring in charm and cosiness through furniture, colours, textures and art. It was also important that the rooms aligned with the Victorian heritage of the house. We wanted it to feel



#### KITCHEN - DINER

The family retained the existing kitchen, embracing its sleek lines. 'We're not ones to systematically demolish and renovate, because so much can be done with existing features,' says Charlotte.

Deco opal glass pendant lights, from £120 each, Holloways of Ludlow. Dining table designed and sourced by Studio Sidika. About a Chair dining chairs, £194 each, Hay at Skandium

elegant yet not too formal.' Together with the couple, the designer infused these rooms with flair and cohesion.

In the sitting room, a chaise longue upholstered in a raspberry velvet adds a colour pop, complemented by a series of framed prints by local artist Kiran Aswani above the sofa. Graphic touches such as the black trim of the freestanding lamps are echoed in the frame of the mirror over the fireplace and in the fire surround framing the woodburning stove, which was treated to a bold silhouette thanks to a coat of Farrow &

Ball's Off-Black paint. In the kitchen, a long, narrower-than-standard bespoke dining table follows the line of the glass roof, easily accommodating the family, plus guests. Made from reclaimed scaffolding boards and featuring a steel base, it chimes with the softly industrial feel of the brick walls. Multicoloured dining chairs from Hay add a touch of playfulness.

There were challenges, too: the building's north-facing orientation resulted in a darker than average sitting room and the lack of light was an issue. 'Adding extra electric points was





**MAIN BEDROOM**  
Geometric cushions and an orange throw inject pattern and colour into this otherwise neutral space.

Tray side table, £165, Hay at Skandium. Bespoke Roman blind, Studio Sidika. Walls in Shaded White estate emulsion, £52 for 2.5ltr, Farrow & Ball

**JENNIFER'S BEDROOM**  
A streamlined white desk and comfy chair make this an ideal spot for homework.

Micke desk, £80, Ikea. Walls in Wimborne White estate emulsion, £52 for 2.5ltr, Farrow & Ball

tricky due to having to chase cables and potentially damage the original plaster corning,' explains Sidika. 'I had the idea of adding LED strip lighting to the back of the oak shelves. This added a soft glow to the scheme and injects warmth. It's also a great way of highlighting the books and objets d'art that Charlotte and Henry have collected from their travels to Asia.'

Upstairs in the main bedroom, a set of built-in wardrobes was transformed with a green-infused neutral paint finish and new ironmongery, while the children's bedrooms combine

practicality, in the form of sleek desks and task lighting, with a playful edge, including freestanding and wall-mounted shelves laden with colourful books and favourite toys.

'At first, we were not sure of our style and we had to feel our way,' reflects Charlotte. 'Now I look around and I see that we have created a practical family home that's infused with warmth. There's nothing better than sitting in front of the fireplace on a winter's night, or eating with friends around the dining table. Our home finally tells our story.' 25