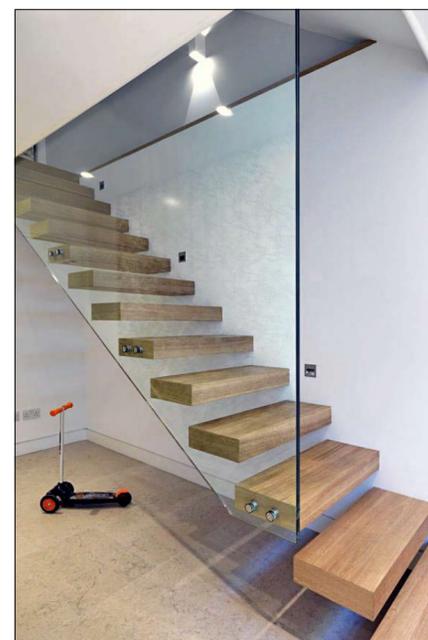




Roof with a view: the terrace has a sink and coffee machine, which encourages alfresco breakfasts

IT'S THE ONE WE ALL WANT

A ramshackle Victorian terrace became a sumptuous, highly considered space with interior finishes, colours and fabrics to die for, discovers **Philippa Stockley**



BAYSWATER, a village crossed with a white-stucco wedding cake, has the power to surprise and delight. Its secret back streets, with their tucked-away gardens, lead in sleepy crescents and plaster curlicues towards the design shops and restaurants of Westbourne Grove.

Here, in 2010, lawyer Miranda Yeung and her partner Jeremy Wrigley, an accountant, went to see a house they'd spotted in a local magazine. Jeremy was divorced, with five sons – now aged between 11 and 19 – from the marriage and the boys all loved visiting in a pack, so the couple wanted to find a house flexible enough to fit everyone in when required. Jeremy knew Notting Hill well, so they started their search between there and Marylebone.

The house they'd noticed was a flaking Victorian terrace that had a fourth floor added, plus an extra bit tacked on to one side, and a conservatory built on the back.

When Miranda and Jeremy walked in, the staircase sailed right up the middle with a row of small rooms squashed into the side extension. Little had been done to it since the Sixties but the house had a happy, rather hippyish feel, including a spiral staircase leading to a flat roof with beehives.

"I'm pretty instinctive," said Miranda. "Either you go in and like it, or you don't. I liked it but live by a simple rule: a home should have room shapes that are regular with plenty of light. You can then add the rest later with fabrics and textures – which you can change when you get bored."

On their second visit, the couple took architect Luke Tozer of Pitman Tozer, who had worked on Miranda's previous flat. To get those regular shapes and more light, Luke suggested pushing the staircase right over to one side, making a very wide space with room for a sumptuous drawing room running front to back, and a huge kitchen below.

"That advice was worth its weight in gold," Miranda said, "because it's hard to find houses in London that offer the width we wanted."

Moving the stairs was just the beginning. The house is in a conservation area, but not listed, so while they preserved the now immaculately painted front, the rest was all change, into a high-spec, smoothly modern, beautifully finished family house, with a floor for the boys, and a top floor given over to a master bedroom, with a bathroom and a walk-in dressing room.

An important aspect of working with a trusted team is that Luke, the quantity surveyor and, later, the contractor, made sure that their figures stacked up. Going over budget in a job with major structural work can be punitively costly. "And if



Light box: full-width sliding doors lead out to the courtyard (above), flood the kitchen with light and make the most of the outdoor space

Room outdoors: Miranda (left) can now sit back and enjoy the fruits of her labour in a garden designed to provide a year-round show

On the up: moving the staircase (far left) provided enough space for a sumptuous drawing room and the huge kitchen

Photographs: Charles Hosea

you have to tell your contractor every single detail, there will be no end to your project," Miranda added.

As well as moving the staircase, the couple demolished the conservatory and extended the house at the back at basement level, with full-height, full-width sliding glass doors that go softly into a pocket at one side. In the big, fresh room, the pale oak dining table is top-lit with a sliver of rooflight, and five beautiful suspended lamps. The kitchen, soft grey, with two islands and a big bank of cooking equipment down one side, still has a comfortable feel because of a pair of sofas that Jeremy brought with him, plus paintings (including some by Miranda), and a mustard-yellow accent wall.

The extension also creates a stylish decked terrace outside the drawing room, with steps made of Kebony – a hardened timber – leading gently to the garden.

Last, they replaced the shaky spiral stair to the roof with a strong straight one, opening to a large terrace with romantic chimney views and, very cleverly, a sink and coffee machine, because, said Miranda, "that gets us up here, for breakfast, and drinks, otherwise we'd probably stay downstairs."

Two things stand out in this house. The first is its design – both in terms of the highly considered layout, but also in features such as the glass balustrade on the basement stair and the terrace, a wrap-around window in Jeremy's study, and the crisp cornering in the drawing room, recast from the tired original version.

Secondly, there are the interior finishes, which display Miranda's acute sense of colour and fabric. Choosing elegant, muted tones from Farrow & Ball ranging from greys to duck-egg blue, offset with similarly subtle fabric-textured wallpapers, all the rooms blend elegance with comfort, with highlight colours provided by silk cushions, glassware, and paintings. Personal touches include the huge Bampton Design sofa that can take five sprawling boys at once, and the sliding cover for

the vast television, "because I hate to see a big TV in a room if you're not watching it". Attention to detail includes different fittings – all from CP Hart – in each bathroom, from a plain Duravit basin downstairs to the curvy, rather deco glass-topped double basin in the master bathroom.

The garden is equally transformed. Set between the house and a new garden room at one end – which holds a multi-functional space, bathroom and sleeping platform for guests – it shows what a good designer can do with an overgrown wilderness. Emma Griffin used a mix of pale stone paving with designed-in planters, and planted seasonally, so that each month the view changes from a phalanx of black Queen of the Night tulips in spring, to swathes of Agapanthus in June.

It isn't easy to mix an ultra-stylish house with a family home, but Miranda and Jeremy have pulled it off.

MIRANDA'S TIPS:

- With a big job that includes structural work, get a fixed-price contract and however well you know anyone, put them under competitive pricing. But don't automatically choose the cheapest people, choose the best for your job.
- Create clean lines. They are easier to work with, then you can put anything in the interior.

WHERE TO BUY

- Architect: Luke Tozer (pitmantozzer.com)
- Contractor: J&Z Construction (jandzconstruction.co.uk)
- Quantity surveyor: Andrew Ohl (andrewohlassociates.com)
- Garden designer: Emma Griffin (emmagriffingardens.com)
- Bathroom fitting: cphart.co.uk
- Bespoke sofa and kitchen table: bamptondesign.co.uk
- Paint: farrow-ball.com
- Sliding glass doors by Skyframe from cantiflex.co.uk
- Garden decking and stairs: kebonny.com



Artful design: the sleek kitchen (top) has two large islands but assorted paintings ensure it retains a homely feel

Couched in luxury: the huge red sofas (above centre) are big enough to fit the whole family of five sprawling boys at once

Bathing beauty: Miranda's attention to detail comes to the fore in the bathrooms (above), each of which has different fittings