

**DINING/SITTING AREA**  
 A new flat-roof extension replaced the old conservatory, creating one large, open-plan space.  
 Suffolk table, £1,310; Wardley chairs, £270 each, all Neptune. Armchairs, price on application, Robert Langford. Armchair backs upholstered in Zelda Blue, £104m, Jane Churchill; sides covered in Chambray Denim, £22m, Warwick Fabrics. Bespoke cushions, Istana Interior Design. Build undertaken by Kochini Developments



**HOME TRUTHS**  
**THE PROPERTY**  
 Detached house, built in the Fifties  
**LOCATION** Kent  
**ROOMS** Hall, sitting room, kitchen-diner/sitting area, TV room, study, utility room, cloakroom, five bedrooms (two en suite), two bathrooms  
**PURCHASED** 2012  
**PREVIOUS PROPERTY**  
 'We lived in Hong Kong for seven years,' says Louise.

# MOODY BLUES

Using shades of her favourite colour, Louise Maconachie reworked a mid-century home, updating it for modern living

FEATURE EMMA J PAGE | PHOTOGRAPHY RACHAEL SMITH

For interior designer Louise Maconachie, the secret to turning a house into a home lies in effective spatial planning. When she and her husband Mark spotted a Fifties detached property in Kent on returning from a long stint in Hong Kong, the pair had no initial plans to make any improvements. It was only after living in the house for four years that Louise could see how some simple but significant tweaks to the footprint would make all the difference. The process of turning this house from workable to 'wow' began when Louise and Mark decided to knock down the wall

between the old dining room and playroom and install a log burner. 'But that small tweak created a domino effect,' says Louise. 'We realised we had nowhere to put the dining table and yet the house as a whole seemed to harbour a lot of wasted space, including a conservatory that was always too hot in summer.' So the pair turned to ADM Architects and spent a year working on plans that would allow this house to reach its full potential. The staircase was moved to the middle of the property to allow a better flow on the ground floor, while the kitchen was squared off to create one large, open-plan kitchen-diner and sitting area. A cosy

**KITCHEN-DINER**  
Louise eschewed wall-mounted cupboards in favour of artwork for a more informal, eclectic look. Island painted in Evening Dove, £65 for 3.79L, Benjamin Moore. Ava triple pendant, £441, Jim Lawrence. Baltic oak herringbone flooring, £52sq m, Boen



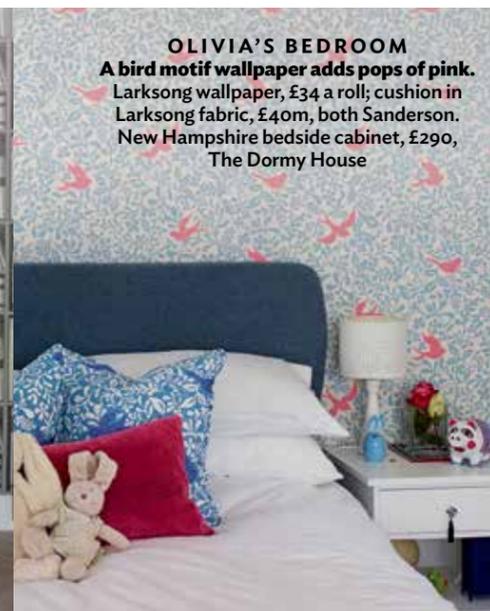
**SITTING ROOM**  
A deep-purple footstool and bold cushions add vibrancy to this otherwise neutral scheme. Plymouth ottoman in Elderberry, £299, Swoon Editions, is comparable. Union round mirror, £507, Robert Langford. Curtains made in Zeta Ice, £42m, Villa Nova at John Lewis



**TV ROOM**  
A painting that Louise bought for Mark's birthday inspired this vivid colour palette. Chairs, price on request, Robert Langford; covered in Linara in Beetroot, £37.50m, Romo



**STUDY**  
Wallpaper featuring a faux library of books creates an interesting feature. Ex Libris wallpaper, £105 a roll, Cole & Son. Sonoma desk, £499, Marks & Spencer



**OLIVIA'S BEDROOM**  
A bird motif wallpaper adds pops of pink. Larksong wallpaper, £34 a roll; cushion in Larksong fabric, £40m, both Sanderson. New Hampshire bedside cabinet, £290, The Dormy House



**MAIN BEDROOM**  
Shots of navy lend a dramatic touch. Walls painted in Portland Gray, £65 for 3.79L, Benjamin Moore. Lucia chandelier, £295, John Lewis. Vivienne Smoke lamps, price on application, Heathfield & Co

TV room was also created off the main space, separated by simple sliding doors, and the pitch of the original roof was raised to accommodate a new loft floor incorporating Louise's studio and a guest suite. 'I learnt that you don't need to extend significantly to make a space work harder,' reflects Louise. 'You just need to use what you have in a much more efficient manner. Changing our home's layout has given us a brilliant open-plan sitting area where each element works cohesively as well as individually.'

Colour and texture play a crucial part in helping the newly configured property to achieve a sense of flow. 'I'm particularly

fond of blue and various shades of it were always going to anchor the open-plan space,' says Louise. 'It took a long time to find exactly the right shade for the kitchen island, which really pops against a largely white background. We matched the colour to the wallpaper in both the TV room and the dining area to link the three spaces together. I also decided not to install wall units, opting instead for artwork either side of the extractor fan for a less kitchen-like feel.'

Upstairs, the first floor was reworked to accommodate bedrooms and a generous bathroom for daughters Olivia, nine, and Holly, seven. 'I teamed pink, Olivia's favourite colour, with denim

blue to introduce a grown-up element,' says Louise, 'while in Holly's room I used a palette of purple, grey and yellow, with playful pompoms to add a fun feel, as well as a bubble chair.'

Blue reappears in the main bedroom too, with navy accents introducing a masculine note. 'I wanted to be bold with colour as it is so impactful,' says Louise. 'I prefer classically shaped furniture, using colour to introduce a contemporary element.' This approach is evident in the TV room, where elegant armchairs have been upholstered in a deep beetroot, while in the open-plan sitting area plain blue chairs have been given patterned backs. However,

according to Louise, the biggest challenge was convincing Mark. 'Initially, he couldn't visualise how beneficial these improvements would be,' she says. 'Fortunately, he trusted my vision and has fully embraced the new space. Now we spend so much time here as a family. A favoured spot is the window seat in the sitting area looking out onto the little courtyard and garden beyond.'

Louise's advice to those looking to take the plunge? 'Plan, plan and plan some more,' she says. 'The more time you spend nailing the details early on, the better the results will be. By making some considered changes, we've created our ideal family home.' 5