

ACID HOUSE

With its bright citrus shades and hot punchy colours, it's hard to believe that this welcoming family home was once a gloomy, claustrophobic warren no one wanted to live in

Words **Fiona Reid** Photography **Liz Lees**



DETAILS

What A Victorian semi-detached house

Where Edinburgh's Grange area

BEST BIT

"The way the house flows now, when we have friends round, from the kitchen into the drawing room, and then into the dining room for dinner"



The Porcelanosa kitchen sits in the new zinc-clad extension. Its sleek, contemporary lines are enhanced by the smooth Corian work surface and the sharp green walls. Access to the garden is much improved too



"I DON'T KNOW WHERE MY WALLPAPERS ARE FROM; I'M NOT HUNG UP ABOUT SPECIFIC PAINTS. IT'S NOT ABOUT WHERE THINGS ARE FROM: IT'S ABOUT WHAT THEY LOOK LIKE"



When Hazel and Ewan Anderson bought their semi-detached period property five years ago, they could never have imagined that fully four years would pass before work could even begin on reconfiguring and refurbishing the house. As the saying goes, though, good things come to those who wait – but at times it felt like a very long wait indeed.

Having previously lived in modern houses, the couple, who have two school-age children, were ready for a complete change of aesthetic when moving here. "We wanted to change the look of everything we had," says Hazel.

Rather than choosing traditional furniture for a modern home, as they'd done before, the Andersons wanted to embrace contemporary design within a period house – and, for the first time, tackle a major renovation project.

They turned to their friend, Elizabeth Roxburgh, of Roxburgh McEwan Architects. "Liz always said that we had to live in the house for a year before doing anything, to give us a chance to figure out how we wanted to live in it," says Hazel.

This was easier said than done, however. "The day we got the keys, I was in tears at the thought of spending a year here ►



"THE DAY WE GOT THE KEYS, I WAS IN TEARS AT THE THOUGHT OF HAVING TO STAY HERE FOR A YEAR WITHOUT BEING ABLE TO CHANGE ANYTHING"



without being able to change anything," Hazel admits, describing a gloomy interior filled with patterned wallpapers and colourful carpeting. The day they moved in, the couple arranged for a tradesman and a decorator to give the interior a quick, inexpensive makeover, transforming the walls with neutral tones, painting the orange pine kitchen cream, and replacing the carpeting in the bathroom with lino.

Those first 12 months weren't easy. It wasn't just the aesthetics: the boiler was located in a decrepit outbuilding, so the house was cold, and it was oppressively gloomy. The original layout was very insular. On the ground floor, a corridor separated the drawing room and study at the front of the house from the family room and guest bedroom at the rear, while the kitchen was in a rear outshoot, with a utility room accessed off the hallway. One of the selling points of this house had been its fine mature garden, but other than the back door from the kitchen, there was no connection with this outdoor space.

Upstairs, things were no better. There were three bedrooms and a bathroom, all separated by an internal corridor. "It was like going back to live in Victorian days," Hazel recalls.

A year on, the couple began working on the redesign with Elizabeth. The initial concept was for two extensions, both clad in reflective glass, with one housing the new kitchen to the rear and a second, at first-floor level, extended over the guest bedroom and study below, forming a new master suite, as a contemporary take on the traditional first-floor Victorian conservatory. After two years of arguing their case with the local planning department, the second concept had to be scrapped and the couple moved on to plan B: today's reconfigured floor plan and kitchen extension. ▶

These striking Brick Bhutan wall tiles from Porcelanosa separate the dining area from the family room. The dining table and chairs are by Zinc, while the family room has striped wallpaper and curtains by Osborne & Little. The shelves were made to measure



INTERIOR STYLE

A smart, contemporary interior in a period shell, filled with glamorous touches from lighting to accessories, with gorgeously tactile finishes and a rich, warm palette

"WE WANTED THE PALETTE TO BE RICH BUT NOT SOMBRE. IT'S A FAMILY HOME; THOSE PUNCHES OF COLOUR MAKE THE CHILDREN FEEL IT'S FOR THEM TOO"



[Left] The drawing room chandelier is by Franklite, while the Duresta sofa and armchairs are from Sterling Furniture. Wallcoverings are by Today Interiors. [Above] Another view of the family room, which also has a sofa by Sterling

Work began last January, and the family moved into a rented property. "We chose Braidwood Building Contractors to do the job as we liked the sharpness of their finish," Hazel explains, and indeed the finish on this project is immaculate. "It has been difficult to bring the old features up to that standard," she admits.

She and Ewan would return to check progress at weekends. "Having endured it for four years, we had no attachment to this interior whatsoever," she declares, and seeing it stripped back to the bone was "a great joy".

Today's interior has everything the earlier version lacked: light, cohesion, flow and style. As well as their architect, the Andersons called on the talents of Joanne McDonald of Luma Interiors. While they knew what they wanted in terms of furniture – settling on a mix of pieces by the likes of Ligne Roset and Duresta, much of it sourced from Sterling Furniture – Joanne made great impact with the palette of paints and wallcoverings. She also took care of the lighting, rugs and window treatments, including lighting by Porta Romana and Franklite and wallcoverings by Zoffany, Casamance and Osborne & Little.

Crucially, the ground-floor plan was opened up. The internal corridor was removed, as was the wall between the old family room and guest bedroom, creating a new dining room and family room. These spaces are separated by a partition wall strikingly clad in Porcelanosa Brick Bhutan tiles on the dining side (a concept the couple spotted and loved in the Dakota Hotel) and featuring a contemporary DRU Metro 130 Tunnel ►

BEST MOMENT

"I fell in love with the house when I first saw it at its most stripped-out stage – the creepiness had gone"



Cosmos floor and wall tiles give the bathroom an air of luxury. [Right, top] The master suite's bed and bedside tables are from A&M Robinson, with wallcoverings by Tektura and wall-mounted Porta Romana lights

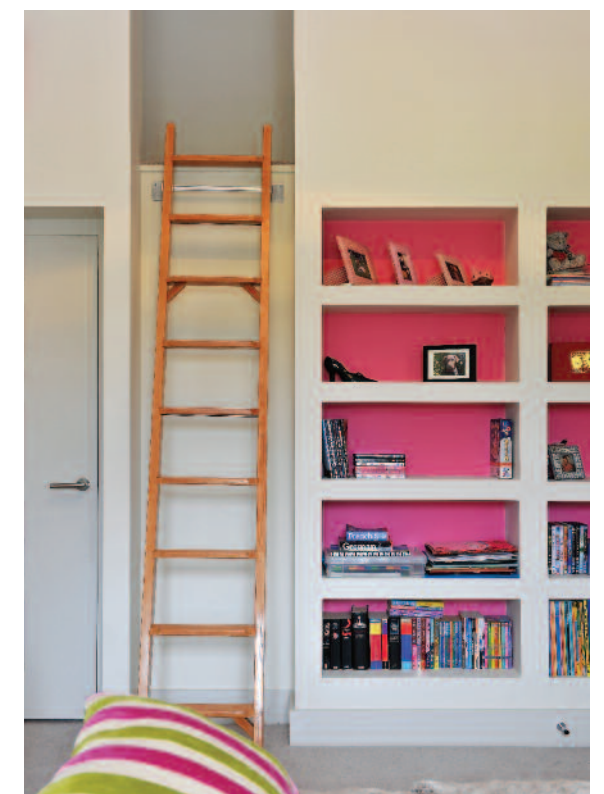


fire. A new opening was formed into the drawing room, with an opaque glass door sliding open between the dining and drawing rooms. "Seeing this opened up for the first time, with the light streaming through, was fantastic," Hazel recalls. "Before, there was a huge T-shape of the house that was never used. Liz always emphasised that this house was big enough; we didn't have to extend – it was about using what we had more efficiently."

The old kitchen outshoot has been replaced by today's striking zinc-clad kitchen extension – yes, an extension, but only enlarging the existing footprint to create a bigger family kitchen, with sliding doors opening on to the new terraced area, and with a study space at the end.

When considering how to approach the decor, Hazel and Ewan created mood boards, both for their own benefit and as guidance for Elizabeth and Joanne. "We had years'-worth of magazine cuttings that we then had to refine on to A1 sheets," says Hazel. "But it helped us to be clear in our minds about what we wanted."

When designing the kitchen and the family bathroom upstairs, the couple chose all the fittings from Porcelanosa. "They had everything we wanted under one roof: the high-end finish and all the materials that appealed to us," Hazel explains. The kitchen features door finishes in G500 Gloss Black and Sepia Lacquer, with wenge veneer, and with 20mm Corian worktop ▶





The striped runner on the hall stairs is by Hartley & Tissier. [Below] The wall-mounted basin and tap in the ground-floor WC are by Porcelanosa, while the Best in Show wallpaper is by Osborne & Little

PHOTOGRAPH: JOANNE McDONALD



to the island in Pearl Grey, creating a contemporary yet timeless aesthetic. This side of the house faces north, yet this space and the dining area are now bathed in light, with lovely views to the garden.

The family bathroom features Cosmos 60x60cm wall and floor tiles with a Gamadecor Basico unit with box basins and a glass worktop, a Systempool Imagine glass and Krion bath and Systempool Ares shower column. The finished effect is both luxurious and sleek.

Space was 'borrowed' from their daughter's bedroom to create the en-suite dressing area for the master bedroom, and, in turn, a mezzanine sleeping platform was built into the girl's room. "There was much discussion with the architects and Joanne about how we fitted this dressing area into our room," Hazel recalls. In the end, it was tucked behind a partition wall, which doubles as a backdrop for the bed.

In a luxurious touch, this wall is clad in leather-effect Tektura wallpaper, with striking wall-mounted Porta Romana lamps. Again, it's a typically ingenious approach within a stunning home that balances functionality with confident style in equal measure. ■