

New beginnings



Faced with a large Victorian home in need of an update, interior designer Daniel Cook of Furnish Interior Design created three striking room schemes to bring the property into the modern day

Words: **Yvette Murrell** Photography: **Adam Carter**

After living in this large family home for almost six years, the owners decided it was time to bring it up to date before starting a family of their own. Although they wanted to apply more of their own personality and contemporary style to the house, the space had some distinct Victorian features that could not be overlooked. Interior designer Daniel Cook explains how he married old and new to create a perfectly harmonised home...

The design brief

"When the owners approached me, they were looking to revive their kitchen and dining spaces and create a more inviting, open-plan area to suit a family. A wall with double doors separated the kitchen and orangery, where the dining table sits, so you could move between the two – but it felt restrictive and the décor was outdated. The kitchen had traditional timber cabinets, a blue mosaic splashback, and even wallpaper on the ceiling. The orangery hadn't been decorated for quite some time either. The couple were keen to utilise the space more for entertaining friends and family and desperately wanted a much trendier look to reflect their own tastes. The space's unusual layout presented a challenge, thanks to an original chimneybreast in the middle of the kitchen with a central island attached. There was also a bedroom and a bathroom to be tackled after the kitchen-diner. ▶"



↑ Daniel specified reclaimed Victorian brick slips on the chimneybreast to bring an original feature of the house back to life.

→ Parquet flooring was used throughout the kitchen and the orangery area for a unified look in keeping with the new design's classic-contemporary style.



Factfile

Who lives here?
A young couple and their newborn baby.

What type of house is it?
A five-bedroom converted Victorian hospital in Gloucestershire.

What was the aim of the project?
To create a contemporary family home while still incorporating some of the property's classic features.

How much did it cost?
A similar project would cost around £235,000.

How long did it take?
Around 12 months.

→ While the kitchen's layout remained relatively the same, Daniel focused on how the space could be maximised to benefit the family.



Designing the space

The dividing wall and doors were one of the first things to go. But after playing around with different options, we soon decided the rest of the existing layout was still the most functional – so I turned my attention to how I could improve upon it.

I asked the couple to think about how much storage they actually need. It's always useful to know if existing cupboards are brimming full, or if they have lots of empty shelves. In this case we were actually able to reduce the amount of cabinetry, swapping the existing units for taller, slimmer ones. The couple showed me some initial ideas they liked, most of which were very contemporary and quite stark. They were keen to step away from their existing kitchen's style, but if we had gone ahead with such a pared-back look, the space would not have sat well within the rest of the house. The chimneybreast is such an interesting feature, it would have been a shame not to restore it. Instead, I took on board

their ideas and produced a fresh, modern design that still had a homely feel to blend in with the surroundings. Detailed moodboards, CAD drawings, and bringing samples to the home, allowed me to demonstrate how classic elements such as Shaker-style cabinetry and parquet flooring could still have a contemporary twist – and they immediately fell in love with my design.

When it came to the orangery, we wanted to make it to feel more like an extension of the kitchen rather than a separate room. But creating a cosy atmosphere was difficult with so much glass. There wasn't anywhere to hang art or set up mood lighting, so I came up with the idea of filling one of the walls in. With some careful planning and advice from our builder, we were able to completely transform the feel of the space.

The large bespoke L-shaped corner sofa on the newly cladded side was already in-situ, but was reupholstered in keeping with the new design. The same fabric was also used on the banquet seating, to link the different zones. Similarly, the

dining tables and loveseat mirror the style of the kitchen barstools, and the orangery wallpaper has a herringbone pattern echoing the parquet flooring. The pendant lights in the extended space are smaller versions of the Secto Design ones above the kitchen island, and the Tom Dixon wall lights have the same conical shape. These subtle touches help create a unified and cosy space.

The next stages

Not long after the kitchen was completed, the owners contacted me again with some exciting news – they were having a baby and needed to turn one of the bedrooms into a nursery. The couple were happy to leave the design up to me and only gave one stipulation: they didn't want a suite of furniture – nothing too matchy-matchy – but rather a cool, eclectic look. I came up with a creative concept that would grow with the child. The layout will work when the cot is replaced with a bed, and the neutral tones provide the perfect backdrop for changing soft furnishings

as the child gets older. One of my favourite aspects is the lighting: we hung colourful paper pendants off old mill bobbins stuck to the ceiling by winding the wiring around them. It is playful but would look good in a bedroom for any age. The curtains were made bespoke for the large sliding sash windows, using a vibrant Matthew Williamson fabric. Bringing the final look together was a fun but big task – luckily we managed it with about three days to spare.

Shortly afterwards, the owners asked me to redesign their ensuite too. By this time I had built up a good rapport and really understood their style. The narrow space, decorated in floor-to-ceiling travertine, looked dated, particularly in comparison to the two rooms we had transformed. Similar to the kitchen-diner-living area, the layout remained the same so there was no need to move pipes, so I focused on maximising the existing space and bringing it up to date. Removing the shower tray created a walk-in wet room area with a clear glass screen, and ▶

→ Previous owners had extended the kitchen from behind the chimneybreast, creating an interesting layout with dedicated cooking zone.

→ An existing electricity board could not be moved, but looked obstructive in the old kitchen. Daniel ensured the cabinetry was tall enough to encapsulate it while still making it accessible.





wall-hung units free up floor space. Patterned tiles run behind the vanity unit and shower, and on the other side floor tiles run up the shower walls. For a luxurious finish, we opted for gold brassware including a large shower rose. Building a cover around the toilet cistern and pipework created a cleaner look and a display shelf so we could dress the space with art and candles.

Finishing touches

Although I worked on each room separately, they all have a similar aesthetic. From a designer's point of view, it can be difficult to create concepts for one space at a time, rather than the house as a whole, but I managed to make each of these rooms feel connected through varying blue hues and similar lighting throughout. Fortunately, when the kitchen and the ensuite were installed, the owners were able to go on holiday, leaving us to get on with the tasks at hand. It also meant they returned to a finished project they were very pleased with, and now have the perfect home for their new family set up." ▶



↑ An open-plan, flowing space was the main aim of this kitchen project. Now, the owners are able to enjoy views of the luscious garden all the way from the kitchen island.

← An inner window was left to help with the flow and incorporate some glass into the new structure. Next to it stands a large statement cabinet containing dinner party essentials – the family's crockery collection and a fully stocked bar.



↑ Part of the orangery was clad, reducing the amount of glazing to create a cosier snug area perfect for relaxing.

↓ The barstools around the island are bespoke. The spindles were painted in the same colour as the cabinetry – Farrow & Ball's Mole's Breath – with leather seat cushions secured by wooden toggles.





↑ One request the homeowners had for the new nursery was for it to feel creative and eclectic. Daniel achieved this by opting for a variety of freestanding furniture, storage baskets, and brightly coloured curtains.



← These simple cubic shelves create a fun feature to house books and toys.

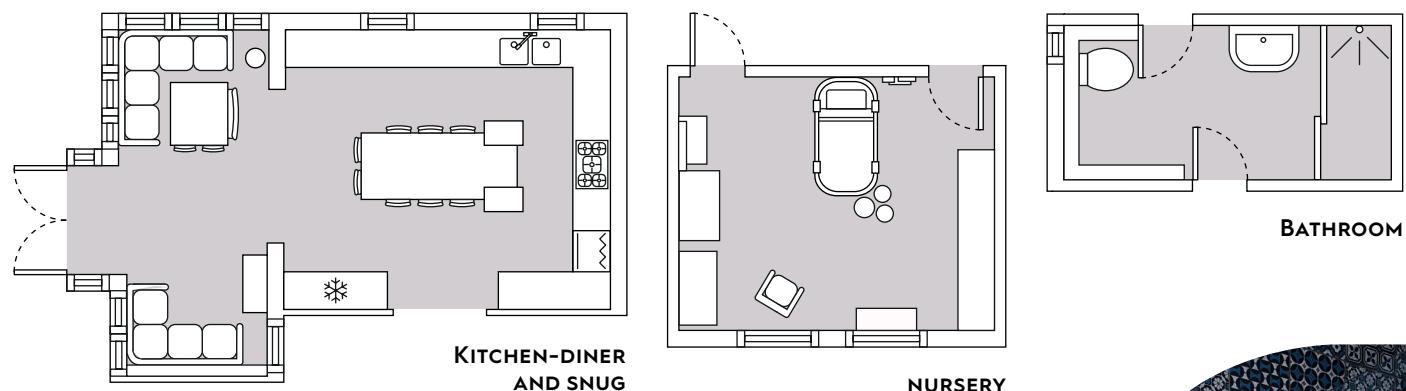
→ The nursery space was designed to grow with the child, both in terms of layout and look. ▶





THE PLANS

Knocking rooms together has created a flowing open-plan space downstairs. Upstairs, the bedrooms and bathroom have had a makeover.



SOURCE BOOK

DESIGN

Interior design Daniel Cook, Furnish Interior Design (01242 323828 or furnishinteriordesign.co.uk)

KITCHEN

Cabinetry Tom Howley (0161 848 1200 or tomhowley.co.uk), painted in Mole's Breath by Farrow & Ball (01202 876141 or farrow-ball.com), with handles from Buster + Punch (020 7407 0888 or busterandpunch.com)

Worktops Caesarstone (0800 158 8088 or caesarstone.co.uk)

Appliances Miele (0300 160 6600 or miele.co.uk)

Extractor Bespoke, Westin (01484 421585 or westin.co.uk)

Splashback Fired Earth (0113 243 0748 or firedearth.com)

Sink and tap For similar, try Perrin & Rowe (01708 526361 or perrinandrowe.co.uk)

Flooring Mandarin Stone (01600 715444 or mandarinstone.com)

Brickslip For similar, try Slimbrick (0115 853 1983 or slimbrick.co.uk)

Barstools Bespoke by Furnish Interior Design, as before

Lighting Secto Design 020 7751 5801 or sigmarlondon.com)

CONSERVATORY

Pendant lights Secto Design, as before

Wall lights Tom Dixon (020 3696 4950 or tomdixon.net)

Dining table and chairs Ercol (01844 271800 or visit ercol.com)

Sofa Daniel Keenan Interiors (01242 226882 or danielkeenaninteriors.co.uk)

Cabinet Julian Chichester (020 7622 2928 or julianchichester.com)

Wallpaper Newmor (01938 552671 or newmor.com)



NURSERY

Wardrobes Maisons du Monde (0808 234 2172 or maisonsdumonde.com)

Chest of drawers Graham & Brown (0800 168 3795 or grahambrown.com)

Cot Nubie (01825 724160 or nubie.co.uk)

Lighting Etsy (etsy.com)

Curtains Bespoke, Matthew Williamson (020 7491 6220 or matthewwilliamson.com)

ENSUITE

Tiles Mandarin Stone, as before

Vanity unit

Burlington Bathrooms (01322 473222 or burlingtonbathrooms.com)

Brassware Gold Tap Store (020 8166 5941 or goldtapstore.co.uk)

Lighting Mullan Lighting (020 3488 2868 or mullanlighting.com)

Mirror Illuminated Mirrors (01225 560101 or illuminated-mirrors.uk.com)

COST

A similar project would cost around £235,000 for all three spaces.