

## SITTING ROOM

Texture – including sisal flooring and the wool-on-canvas art – is a key element in the scheme.

**Chandelier**, Margit Wittig.  
**Fig chair**, Julian Chichester;  
**upholstered in** Fresco,  
Christopher Farr Cloth.  
**Bespoke footstool in**  
Teal leather, Style range,  
Yarwood Leather. **Fender**  
**covered in** horsehair by  
John Boyd Textiles. **Textile**  
**artwork**, Kanica. **Rug**,  
Alternative Flooring



# ARTS & CRAFTS

A passion for handmade pieces and colourful artwork informed the renovation of this house

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**LIBRARY**

The balance between adventurous and timeless is wonderful here, with classic pieces sitting comfortably with playful designs like the rug.

**Joinery in** Little Greene's Harley Green. **Scalloped rug,** Jennifer Manners. **Beetle chairs,** Gubi. **Wantage floor lamp,** Vaughan. **Modernist Gemma chandelier,** Etsy

**T**houghtful is an apt appraisal of the gentle renovation of this Victorian home, from the carefully sourced art and handcrafted furniture that populate the space to the green accents, chosen in part to reflect the Irish heritage of its occupants.

When its owners, Lucy and Conor Fitzgerald, came across this house, they were in search of a forever home that would see them through to retirement. With three young boys ranging from eight to 12, that prospect is still many years off and the challenge was to create schemes that could withstand the boisterous antics of a young family, while paying homage to a wealth of original features.

‘We weren’t looking for a top-to-bottom refurbishment, but we wanted to improve flow and eliminate dead space,’ says Lucy. So architects Fraher & Findlay were brought on board to rework the loft, which involved the daunting challenge of removing the roof. The reconfiguration allowed for two en-suite bedrooms for two of the children, plus a large roof deck with views of the west London skyline.

Once those improvements had been made, the couple turned their attention to decor. ‘I love colour and pattern, but I suspect I would have ended up with any number of clashes without someone to help refine my ideas,’ says Lucy. Through her friend, rug designer Jennifer Manners, she was introduced to Alice Leigh, whose creative eye helped bring the interiors to life. ‘We wanted to be adventurous in our design choices, while creating schemes that were both practical and timeless,’ says Alice. ‘Very quickly, we knew that meant championing handcrafted pieces, beautiful but sturdy fabrics, standout lighting and bold silhouettes.’ With the children variously playing the piano, guitar, trumpet and oboe, a music

room, adjoining the sitting room, was a natural choice. Chunky sisal flooring and thick linen curtains improve acoustics, and the semi-open plan layout of the ground floor means that Lucy often finds herself preparing suppers to a live music soundtrack.

In the library, conceived as a space where Conor can work from home, a scalloped rug creates a playful contrast to cossetting deep green walls, a colour picked up in the cabinetry in the adjoining kitchen. Another contemporary note is the couple’s choice of lighting, evident in the jewel-like resin chandeliers made by artist-sculptor Margit Wittig in the sitting room and music room.

Texture also plays an important part throughout, from the wool-on-canvas artwork in the sitting room to the grasscloth wallcovering in the main bedroom. ‘It means that although the house contains neutral elements, there is always a sense of interest and warmth to be found,’ says Alice.

The hardworking aspects of this house are largely unseen: a generous utility area runs behind the kitchen; an understairs space stows multiple shoes and coats; sofas and cushions are upholstered in indoor-outdoor fabric and rugs are Scotchgarded. ‘It’s important to us that this isn’t a show home,’ says Lucy. ‘I want to be able to use everything, every day.’

Of all the pieces in a house, it’s often an unexpected item that resonates the most. ‘Our three boys like to congregate on the wood-framed sofa in the kitchen overlooking the garden,’ says Lucy. ‘We’ve always wanted our home to feel relaxed and informal. Now we’ve found a place where we can offer an ‘open door’ policy to friends and family and that makes us immensely happy.’ 📧

■ Alice Leigh Design, [aliceleigh.co.uk](http://aliceleigh.co.uk)

“THERE ARE ‘PAUSE POINTS’ THROUGHOUT, FROM THE UPHOLSTERED BENCH ON THE FIRST FLOOR LANDING THAT ENCOURAGES LINGERING TO A COMFORTABLE CHAISE IN THE MUSIC ROOM”



## KITCHEN

The family updated the existing Mark Wilkinson kitchen by painting the cabinetry and adding a herringbone tiled splashback.

Island in Harley Green, Little Greene. **Cabinetry** in Slate II, Paint & Paper Library. Raku Tokyo **tiles** (splashback), Claybrook

## SEATING AREA

Bespoke furnishings, such as the bench, ensure a one-of-a-kind look. The oil painting, called *Rapeseed*, is by Lucy du Sautoy.

Chagal **sofa** by Julian Chichester; upholstered in Orchestra, Christopher Farr Cloth. Bespoke **bench/coffee table**, Galvin Brothers. Scalloped mini jute **rug**, Tate & Darby





## MAIN BEDROOM

Subtle textures, including grasscloth wallpaper, lift the neutral palette. The bold silhouettes of the mirror by Rupert Bevan and the lamps provide a final decorative flourish. ABA's Sequin wallpaper, Altfield. Bedside tables, Chelsea Textiles. Bespoke throw, de le Cuona. Curtains in Kemble linen in Portland by Lewis & Wood with velvet border in Dolphin by Rose Uniacke

## MAIN EN SUITE

The couple's dressing area leads into a bathroom, where a single artisan stool breaks the serene tone.

Black ash (Perfectly) Imperfect stool, Galvin Brothers. Blind in Kemble linen in Portland by Lewis & Wood with Avalon trim, Samuel & Sons. Beaton double-ended bath, Lefroy Brooks



## MEET THE DESIGNER

Alice offers us her design and lifestyle tips

**SECRET ADDRESS** Rue Vintage 74 in Madrid has a curated collection of antiques, contemporary furniture, lighting, ceramics and textiles – if you can't get there, they do ship to the UK.

## SMALL CHANGE, BIG IMPACT

Commissioning pieces direct from makers, whether a vase or a piece of furniture, brings so much joy, as well as giving a scheme a unique edge.

**FAVOURITE BUILDING** Fulham Palace, once home to the Bishops of London.

**DESIGN HERO** I always circle back to the spaces designed by Steven Gambrel or Veere Grenney.

**DESCRIBE YOUR STYLE IN THREE WORDS** Timeless, elegant, adaptable.

**LAST PODCAST DOWNLOADED** I listen to every podcast by *The Modern House* - it's like *Desert Island Discs* for interiors addicts.