



GREY'S ANATOMY

Slate, charcoal, dove and silver tones work together to enrich this Edinburgh home

Photography Carley Kyle Words Judy Diamond

DETAILS

What An extended Edwardian house
Where Murrayfield, Edinburgh



The family room is an elegant space. The pale Kingcome sofa is covered in Larsen's Gordon fabric, while the charcoal Charlotte James sofa uses Larsen's Emi. The walls are papered in Casamance's Azuli, while the herringbone flooring elsewhere in the house is echoed here by GP&J Baker's Zig Zag rug and ready made chevron cushions sourced in France. The statement chandelier and lamps are by Heathfield. [Bottom left] Looking into the room from the hall, which has new panelling and Cole & Son's Rajapur paper on its walls.



The architects who designed Edinburgh's emerging suburbs a century ago knew what they were doing. They devised homes that were sturdy yet elegant, substantial yet graceful, perfectly adapted to family life, and still much sought-after today. A lot has changed in the past hundred years, though. No architect of the Edwardian era could have predicted the fundamental shifts that have taken place in the modern world – that the average British household would have a car and therefore want its own garage, or that the kitchen would become the central gathering place for the whole family rather than a corner off-limits to all but the cook. What they would have made of the concept of the home cinema or the home gym is anyone's guess.

The transformation that this house in Murrayfield has undergone is a perfect illustration of such changes. Built around 1912, it remained largely intact up until a year ago, when it was extended and renovated. Its owners had already lived there for a decade, happy with their home but aware that it needed an overhaul. They asked architects Yeoman McAllister to open up and extend it to the rear to give them a bright, airy kitchen and living space with a glass wall looking out to the garden. At the same time, a two-storey extension was added to the side of the house to accommodate a gym and garage, above which there is now a large bathroom and dressing room for the master bedroom. ►

Alongside the architects, they commissioned Ampersand Interiors to take care of the inside of the house – not just the new additions, but the whole thing. “Our brief was to create a calm, modern, pared-back and sophisticated space,” says Edinburgh interior designer Carley Kyle. “The clients wanted it to feel contemporary and stylish but also to retain the relaxing atmosphere of a family home. They engaged us to design and supply comprehensive decorative schemes, soft furnishings and furniture and to give specialist advice on flooring and architectural details such as ironmongery, panelling and fireplaces. Of most importance to them was that the whole property should flow with a cohesive design.”

The owners took the sensible option of moving out for a year as the construction work got underway. The Ampersand design team, meanwhile, got involved right from the start, as is their preference. “We believe it’s the most effective way of working as it allows us to help clients think about how they want their home to feel and work when everything is complete,” says Carley. “Having a clear idea of the end design nearly always prevents expensive mistakes being made during construction. It also avoids the kind of piecemeal approach that can result in things not flowing well or relating meaningfully.”

The other advantage of being involved from the beginning was that the team were able to establish a good working relationship with the project manager, Neal Jamieson, which went a long way to ensuring the build ran smoothly. With a lot of trades on site at any given time, it was vital that the work could progress at the right pace and in the right order. With Cornhill Building Services at the helm, Quattro Consult on board as structural engineers and KJ Tait as mechanical and electrical engineers, the project also had Stephen Ogilvie engaged as landscape designer and Kitchens International designing and installing the new kitchen in the freshly created space at the rear of the house.

The owners had requested a complete change to their old, rather traditional décor, and wanted their remodelled home to feel unified – a big ask, given the mixture of modern, Edwardian and Victorian-inspired parts. Carley was guided by their stipulation that the overall atmosphere should be relaxed and calm. “This led all the decisions on fabrics and paints,” she says. To achieve the desired pared-back style, she chose warm greys and soft tones to create a serene ambience.

“In the new kitchen extension, for example, the ceiling steps up towards a lovely large skylight. We spent a long time choosing the correct paint colour that could go up the walls and onto the ceiling to keep the airy feeling. We eventually selected Farrow & Ball’s Strong White, as it was light enough to continue onto the ceiling but had the right touch of grey to suit the fabrics. We then used the same colour on the woodwork to maintain the minimalist scheme.”

Agonising over the minute differences between various shades of white paint might seem like taking things to extremes, but Carley knew that this kind of intense attention to detail was required if the reduced palette was going to work. If it’s not done right, she points out, “There is a danger with this kind of minimalism that you can end up with something a little uninspired. The rooms risk looking sterile and impersonal.” Chosen without precision, what colour there is would look flat and lifeless. But by working to the house’s strengths, calculating where the light fell and where the shadows gathered, allowed her to select tones that feel rich and three-dimensional.

This depth and warmth has been augmented by an equally astute use of surface texture and subtle pattern, through the addition of indulgent rugs, shimmering velvets and tactile finishes. There’s a hint of woven cloth in the Casamance wallpaper in the family room, and it’s even more pronounced in the Textures Vegetalis paper by Elitis in the hall. The kitchen has a lot of smooth surfaces – white gloss cabinetry, large-profile porcelain floor tiles and a hefty slab of ceramic as a work surface – but even here personality and natural warmth can be found in the addition of timber elements to the island and on the wall behind the TV. It’s all cleverly done, so much so that you almost don’t notice it – but take these ►

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The dining table is Julian Chichester’s Dakota, while the Wychwood chairs have been upholstered with Mulberry’s Magic Carpet fabric



[This page and opposite] All the details, from the curtains to the porch tiles, contribute to the overall scheme: "We worked hard to ensure the soft tones of warm greys and neutrals remained consistent throughout so the house has continuity to its personality as you walk through it," says Carley. There are four bathrooms (two en-suites, a family bathroom and a cloakroom) – fitting these out was one of the most expensive parts of the renovation



elements away and this room would feel chilly and austere.

Carley has shown an equally delicate touch in the task of creating a sense of flow and continuity. Here, though, she was aided by the house itself. Generous swathes of daylight are not the sole preserve of the new kitchen; the original bay windows in the public rooms to the front provide these spaces with plenty of natural light. Even the hall is a really inviting space and more than just a thoroughfare thanks to a large window on the stair landing. And there is a fantastic open view from the hall all the way through the kitchen, with its huge corner window, to the garden. Equally, there are no jarring leaps in proportion and scale with these rooms – the originals are large, with lovely high ceilings, just as in the new additions.

There are, of course, still distinct differences between the old and the new, but it's much less obvious than it might have been. Here, too, Carley had a helping hand, this time by the clients' desire to modernise. "They wanted to remove the old fireplace and panelling in the entrance to update it," she says. "It was down to us to replace it – and it was crucial that we got the configuration, scale and proportions of these replacements right."

Up stepped Ampersand's in-house interior architecture service. "We produced detailed drawings of the panelling so that it successfully trod the fine line between being traditional enough to suit the Edwardian age of the house but clean-lined enough to suit the new contemporary interiors," says Susanne Barnes, ►



who runs the architecture studio. “The result was a great success, so much so that we followed the same tactic with all the doors, panelling, architraves and skirtings.”

In a similar vein, the flooring, a herringbone parquet from GL Flooring, was laid in most of the ground floor. And when there was a switch to a new material, great care was taken to minimise the visual disruption. “The large ivory-coloured porcelain slabs in the kitchen were butted perfectly against the timber floor using an ultra-slim bronze threshold bar that’s just 3mm thick,” says Carley. “When a design is this pared-back, it’s the details that make the difference – and this small but important item contributed to the seamless flow between the two floor finishes.” Needless to say in a scheme of such precision, bronze wasn’t a random choice – it tied in perfectly with the large Joseph Giles doorknobs in the entrance hall.

“It was all part of our determination to avoid cluttering the space,” says Carley. “It let us maintain a fluent and natural journey from area to area, with clean lines softened by carefully chosen furnishings and with interest coming from texture and pattern rather than colour.”

It’s her opinion that this house works because of its owners. “They held true to their initial convictions throughout the property, right down to the accessories,” she concludes. “They had a clear idea of what they did and didn’t want from each room, which was a great launch pad for us; we were able to run with this, sourcing (and, in some cases, making) exactly the right furnishings and fabrics to ensure our initial designs were successfully translated to the finished rooms.” ■



[This page] The bathrooms are contemporary in their design, with clean lines, cutting-edge fittings and large tiles in neutral tones to suit the rest of the interior. “The lovely venetian blinds with tapes add a further hint of luxury,” says Carley