

CASE STUDY

GET DOWN AND PARTY

Photography ZAC and ZAC Words Gillian Welsh



[Left] A bronze wall sconce by Visual Comfort in the cinema room. Note how the beam of light picks out the antique brass ticks.
[Below] A Michael Allen pool table stands on a Dash & Albert rug made from recycled materials. A pair of Fisk Design chairs sit in the arched nook, alongside Andrew Martin petrified log side tables. The lighting is from Porta Romana, John Cullen Lighting and Vaughan. Ampersand designed the cushions and the shelving unit

BRIEF To turn three unwelcoming cellars into a suite of entertainment rooms – with seating areas, a bar, a cinema and a pool table.

WORKS REQUIRED The entire area was decorated. New furniture, much of it built in, was made to measure, and a new audio-visual system was installed.

INTERIOR DESIGN Ampersand Interiors, Edinburgh

Functional plus sophisticated can be a tricky combination to pull off, but this project – a basement that was firmly in the ‘lots of potential’ category – illustrates how it can be achieved through rigorous planning and co-ordination. The house, a historic property in south-west Edinburgh, had undergone major restoration work by Lorn Macneal Architects, who turned it into a striking dwelling for its owners to enjoy. The cellars, however, didn’t quite live up to the rest of the property. While the bar and pool table were well used, the owners felt the starkly white-painted vaulted rooms were not quite right and in need of proper design input from an expert. The brief for Edinburgh-based Ampersand Interiors was to give it a “significant boost” and turn it from a rather cavernous area into an inviting one-of-a-kind entertainment suite.

Getting the aesthetics and ambience right was crucial, but just as important was giving the space purpose and making it a pleasure to use. The owners hoped it would become not just a place to invite their friends for a party but one which they themselves would want to retreat to regularly to listen to music, watch movies and simply switch off.

The unusual configuration of the basement, coupled with its tight proportions, made it imperative that the design team went through a thorough and detailed planning process from the outset, since much of the furniture would be custom-made to fit. “We spent a lot of time at the start, investigating potential layouts and uses for each space, and from that the best arrangements were selected,” explains lead designer Jackie Fiskien.

This led her on to the decorative scheme, as she sought ways to make the cellars feel inviting. She has employed some clever techniques to imbue a sense of warmth and comfort. “We gave it a womb-like quality by painting the walls and ceilings in Farrow & Ball’s Tanners Brown,” she says. “It brings continuity and encourages an ease of flow from the cinema room to the bar and pool room, without any unnecessary dislocations between them.”

Artisan Copper paint by Craig & Rose was applied to the rear wall of the bar and to ►

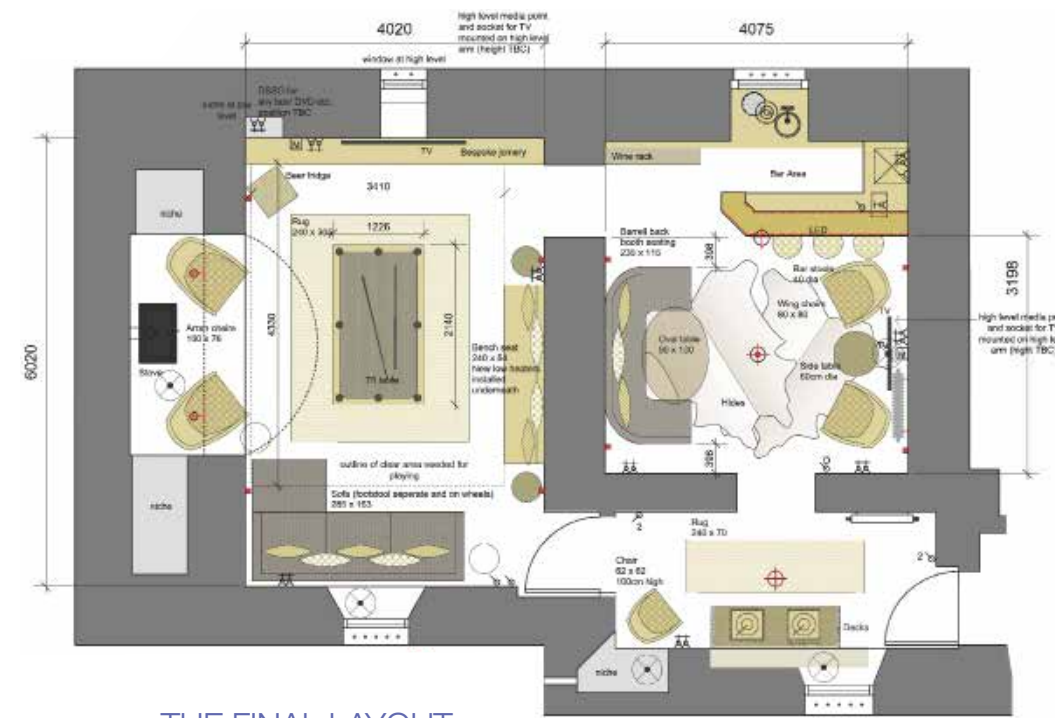


DETAILS

What The basement of a historic house, dating from around 1600
Where South-west Edinburgh
Design Jackie Fiskien, Ampersand Interiors



[Below] The walls and vaulted ceiling of the bar are painted in Tanners Brown by Farrow & Ball, with the rear wall of the bar in Craig & Rose's Artisan Copper paint. Ampersand designed the display shelving, the cushions and the custom-made barrel seating and table. The bar stools are upholstered in a William Morris fabric, while the leather armchair is from IJL Brown. [Right] Record decks have turned the corridor into a DJ booth. The curtains are in Designers Guild and Guell Lamadrid fabrics, the Clock House armchair has a GP&J Baker fabric, and the Tribal shade and lamp are Vaughan



THE FINAL LAYOUT

the pool room's vaulted ceiling, and adds the right amount of pizzazz. "It was the ideal treatment to create a standout feature that worked with the curved surface," says Fischen. These metallic highlights pick out some of the more prosaic characteristics that could not be hidden (pipework, for example), allowing them to sing just a little.

The cinema's walls received an extra treatment to aid acoustic insulation and generate the atmosphere of a movie theatre: they've been covered in fabric. Detailing in the form of braiding and antique brass studs adorn the fabric in a careful arrangement that frames certain areas and picks out the beautiful up-and-

down cylindrical wall lamps. The lighting is on dimmers, with additional bulbs integrated into the sofa plinth, so a moody backdrop for heavy-duty movie-watching can be set to order.

In the bar, meanwhile, cowhide rugs and warm, tactile fabrics were combined to produce a convivial, stylish interior with flexible seating to suit one large party or several smaller groups. Ampersand designed the barrel seating and matching table specifically for this room, while illuminated shelving, which runs across the window, was made to give the bar a jewel-like feature.

The family's retro American pool table was replaced with a more classically influenced style to better suits the new ▶

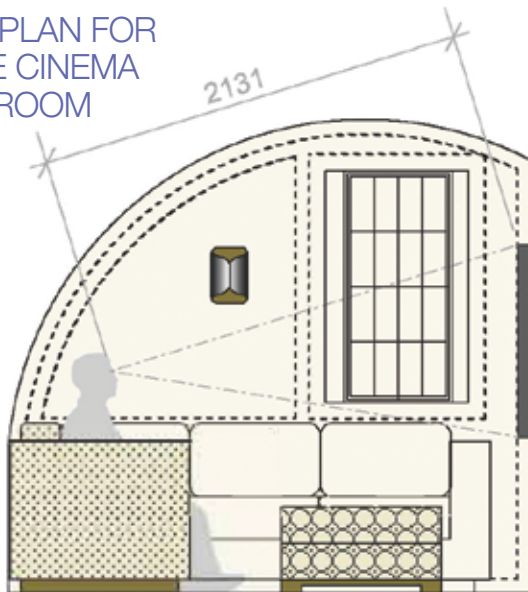




[Left] Andrew Martin fabric upholsters the bespoke Charlotte James sofa and footstool in the cinema room. The herringbone fabric on the walls (and blackout blind) is from Moon, accessorised with Houles braiding and antique brass studs. The rug by Unnatural Flooring is made from recycled materials. TV and internet connectivity is by James-Morrow. [Below] The splendid exterior



THE PLAN FOR THE CINEMA ROOM



surroundings. Its baize reflects the orangey tones of the rug, cushions, chairs and ceiling. Bespoke seating complements the layout to enhance the room's other function – watching sport on the large TV (Ampersand designed the shelving that holds the TV and family mementoes). The recess around the woodburner, meanwhile, is a cosy nook to retreat to. “It could have been created for these two beautiful Fisk Design Arran wing chairs,” smiles the designer. Every corner (even the corridor which doubles as a DJ booth with a pair of turntables) has been improved by the scheme.

As well as designing, manufacturing, supplying and installing all the components of this project, the Ampersand team also oversaw the various contractors involved in bringing the complicated entertainment suite to completion. “As well as working out timelines, schedules and instructions, we carried out regular site meetings to ensure the joiners, electricians, decorators and audio-visual teams came together to get the party started properly.” ■