

'This old cottage is super-modern, too'

Stephen Nash and Miranda May have the best of both worlds – a cosy period cottage with a light and spacious contemporary extension



Old meets new

This space used to be the rear reception room, but now leads into the new extension. Poured concrete flooring unites the two areas, with concrete cladding giving the original chimney breast a modern update.

BUY THE KEY PIECES

Mags soft lounge modular sofa, £744, Hay range, Clippings

Welcome to my home



Stephen Nash, who runs interior design studio All & Nxthing, lives here with Miranda May, managing director of an events, travel and lifestyle agency.

THE PROPERTY
An extended late-Victorian three-bedroom cottage in north London.

THE VALUE Similar properties in the area go on the market for around £1.5m.

“When we first bought this house, it had the feel of a murder scene! But we knew what it could become”

When we first picked up the keys to this house, we brought some of our family round for a look, and they said, “What on earth have you done? You spent how much on this place?”, recalls Miranda. ‘For the price we’d paid, they’d expected to see a mansion, but instead, it was a dark, dingy dump.’

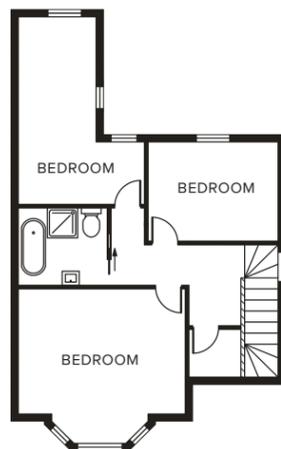
Although neither Miranda nor her partner Stephen are native Londoners – he was brought up in the West Midlands while she hails from the West Country – they had spent years working in the capital, and were familiar with the property market. ‘I was genuinely surprised that someone had been living here,’ Stephen says, ‘as it obviously hadn’t been touched in decades.’ They set about removing tons of rubble and weeds from the garden and stripping back the interior to make some of the rooms habitable. ‘Although it was gruesome living here for the six months it took to finalise the planning, it meant we could imagine how we wanted to live in the house and get everything as near to perfect as possible,’ says Miranda.

The couple planned to move the bathroom upstairs (the old tub had been housed in a scullery-cum-coal shed next to the kitchen) without losing a bedroom and without converting the loft, which was against planning regulations in their conservation area. ‘We were doubtful about shaving off a bit of a bedroom to create it, thinking it might be awful, but now it’s everyone’s favourite space,’ says Stephen. They also reworked the rear of the house with a new extension, topped by a huge light well above the dining area. ‘We went into detail when planning and tweaked it four or five times,’ says Stephen. ‘As the extension took three months to build, we had the time to get it just right.’

Take a quick tour...



GROUND FLOOR



FIRST FLOOR

“The front of the house is more traditional, but the back is an ode to modern design”

Love STEPHEN'S STYLE?
Turn to page 75 to shop the look

Vintage collection

The couple's mid-century furniture gives the white-painted dining area colour and character. ‘When we first met, Stephen would drag me around furniture fairs,’ says Miranda. ‘I used to dread it, but now it’s rubbed off on me.’

BUY THE KEY PIECES

Vintage Ercol table and chairs, price on request, Everything But The Dog. For a G-Plan sideboard, try eBay

FRAMED TEA TOWEL
A low-cost artwork option





SUSPENDED SHELF
A space-savvy way to add storage

Light and dark

The south-facing rear kitchen is bathed in light, so the couple could get away with painting the units dark. The worktop is made of restored parquet. 'We spent hours scraping bitumen off the blocks, then it took two days to assemble, sand and oil them,' says Stephen.

BUY THE KEY PIECES

Units painted in Hague Blue estate eggshell, £62 for 2.5L, Farrow & Ball. Reclaimed parquet, £900, The Architectural Forum

Character item

'We picked up this Welsh dresser for £100 at an auction, but for a long time it looked as though it might end up as kindling,' says Stephen. 'We've become quite attached to it, though.'

BUY THE KEY PIECES

For similar, try the Shanklin display cabinet, £1,179, Wayfair



IDEAL HOME loves

Whitewashed brick
Skip the plaster and create a simple backdrop for a modern country or industrial look



MANTEL-FREE FIREPLACE
Simple, modern, and less likely to date

Seamless shelves

The built-in shelving is an exact match in style with the kitchen cabinetry, connecting the contemporary extension at the rear to the original part of the house at the front.

BUY THE KEY PIECES

Børge Mogensen armchair, £610, Everything But The Dog. Round oak mirror, £275, Cox & Cox



Mellow colour mix

The couple made the front room a cosier space, with warm blue walls and a rust-coloured sofa. 'This room is Miranda's sanctuary,' says Stephen, 'but the artwork is mine.'

BUY THE KEY PIECES

Walls painted in Livid absolute matt emulsion, £45 for 2.5L, Little Greene. Chiltern sofa, £2,764, The Conran Shop

GLASS-TOP TABLE
Doesn't block sight lines in a small room



PAINT EFFECT
Adds interest and warmth to a featureless space



Built-in dressing table

To keep the main bedroom looking streamlined and uncluttered, Stephen designed a wall of storage, including a shut-away dressing table for Miranda. 'Because I'm inherently messy, the plan was to keep all my stuff tucked away, out of sight!' says Miranda.

BUY THE KEY PIECES

Woodwork painted in Cotton V architect's eggshell, £68 for 2.5L, Paint & Paper Library. Frosta stool, £9.50, Ikea



HANGING BASKETS
Soften the industrial look of the concrete

Rustic touches

'We went for more of a beach-house feel in our bedroom,' says Miranda. Scuffed, painted floorboards and a traditional-style wooden bedstead give the room worn, rustic character, with vintage mid-century storage adding a little retro cool.

BUY THE KEY PIECES

Landing doors and walls painted in Pure Brilliant White matt, £16.66 for 2.5L, Dulux, and Setting Plaster estate emulsion, £46 for 2.5L, Farrow & Ball. For a similar bed, try the Margot double, £945, Loaf



WHAT I'VE LEARNED

“It was right to move into the house before any work was done on it, even though it hadn't been touched in decades, because we would have made mistakes with the way we configured the space if we hadn't. Now, I advise my clients to do the same”

FEATURE STEVEN EESTATHIOU, VANESSA RICHMOND
PHOTOGRAPHS ANNA STATHAKI PLANS AGENCY SERVICE

Rough-luxe surfaces

In the bathroom, the couple have combined the original brick, painted white, with a polished concrete feature wall and glam marble flooring and matt-gold taps.

BUY THE KEY PIECES

Alps modern roll-top bath, £999.95, Victorian Plumbing. Towel rack, £210, Plank & Pipe