



Return to **SPLENDOUR**

*Louise Waight has thrown her heart
and soul into bringing this gracious
property in Kent back to life*

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DINING ROOM

This exquisite original 1920s Sanderson & Son mural dictated the room's colour scheme of gentle greys. The linen-covered French chairs feature nickel pulls to keep the pale fabric pristine.

Interior design. Louise Waight, 07887 525455. **Sanderson & Son murals, originals and hand-blocked copies,** from £1,080 for a copy, Georgia Horton, 01227 750461, georgiahorton.com.



KITCHEN

Although very little structural work was done, one of Louise's concessions was to knock a double doorway through from the dining room to the kitchen to improve the flow of space. ▶





KITCHEN

Louise (opposite) has a magpie-like eye for antiques, which has resulted in numerous interesting finds. This set of plates would have originally formed part of a service on a train.

Similar chairs. Swindon church chairs, £37.60 each, Pewcomer Woodworks, 01730 262690, pewcomerwoodworks.co.uk ▶





KITCHEN

The striking mid grey of the cabinets helps ground them within this large space, while textured travertine flooring looks as if it has been here forever.

Spitalfields kitchen, around £40,000, Plain English, 01449 774028, plainenglishdesign.co.uk

Cabinets in Lead 117, Intelligent Eggshell, £48 for 2.5 litres, Little Greene, 0845 880 5855, littlegreene.com.

Large Prismatic light, £143, Tinsmiths, 01531 632083, tinsmiths.co.uk

For years, Louise Waight had harboured a dream of owning a house that could accommodate a panoramic wallpaper, so when she first walked into this handsome Victorian property and spied the dining room, she knew she had found that place. “I remember instantly envisaging how it could look,” Louise says. “You need a certain room to carry off a grand scenic paper and this one had all the right proportions, as well as a wonderful high ceiling.”

Soon after the sale had been agreed, a stroke of serendipity led Louise, an interior designer, to a beautiful 1920s hand block-printed design by the iconic firm, Arthur Sanderson & Son. “I spotted an advert in an interiors magazine about a collection of vintage panoramic papers that had been acquired by the wallpaper designer Georgia Horton,” Louise recalls. “They included a striking mural of Kew Gardens. It was a nightmare to hang, but I never regretted buying it for one second.”

It was some time, however, before the decorators were able to grapple with the vintage

wallpaper. When Louise and her husband Duncan bought the property, which is situated in a small village near Tunbridge Wells, it needed “everything doing to it”, including re-plumbing, rewiring and re-plastering throughout. There was also the problem of the lower ground floor, which housed a Heath Robinson-esque array of Victorian pipework, as well as a sizeable colony of frogs. “Basically, we had a system of open drains, so when I used the washing machine, the water just flowed beneath the house,” Louise explains.

Thus began a four-year relationship with the builders, the first year of which the couple and their two young sons, Oscar and Toby, spent living off-site. While the slime-ridden lower ground floor seemed desperately unappealing, Louise realised that it could give the family 1,600 square feet of extra living space. “This floor alone was almost the size of our previous home in north London,” she notes. “Even though it entailed a huge amount of work, we didn’t need to excavate; the ceiling height was already there, as were the light wells. Reclaiming





MORNING ROOM

Accents of orange, Louise's favourite colour, sing out against the neutral hues of this light-filled space.

Brooke blockprint pillow in Orange, \$350, Madeline Weinrib, 001 212 414 5978, madelineweinrib.com. Antique framed moths and butterflies, Alex MacArthur Interiors, 01273 681 773, alexmacarthur.co.uk.

LIVING ROOM

The green palette that the previous owners had used throughout the house has crept back into various rooms. In the living area (opposite page), shades of olive and fern combine to create an inviting feel.

Large Haresfield sofa, from £1,432, Sofas & Stuff, 0808 178 3211, sofasandstuff.com. ▶





MAIN BEDROOM

A stay at The Carlyle Hotel in New York inspired this crisp, elegant space, where a peacock blue velvet headboard provides an unexpected jolt of colour among the gentle stone and smoke-grey hues.

Headboard in Gainsborough Velvet in Blue Smoke 64549, cotton, £199.80m, Schumacher at Turnell & Gigon, 020 7259 7280, turnellandgigon.com.

Petworth fitted cover large sofa in Stormoway linen, £1,003, Sofas & Stuff, 0808 178 3211, sofasandstuff.com.

this floor gave us a cinema room, music room, gym, pantry, boot room and laundry room.”

The entrance level is therefore made up of the main living spaces, and Louise was keen to keep their original layout. “When you have well-proportioned rooms, you don’t need to start knocking through all the walls; it would make the spaces cavernous,” she explains. Her only concessions were to knock a double doorway through from the dining room to the kitchen, and a doorway from the library into the morning room beyond, both relatively simple adjustments that have dramatically improved the way these spaces flow.

Louise describes how she painted 150 sheets of paper in different sample colours, stepping over the builders to tape them to the walls throughout the house. These swatches were then carefully studied in different lights, a painstaking process that has resulted in subtle schemes ranging from soft pebble greys to pale biscuit and almond colours. The gentle hues are punctuated with stronger shades, such as bursts of orange in the

morning room and a moody lead grey for the kitchen cabinets. “The kitchen is a big room with lots of light and I knew I had to be a bit bold and a bit brave in here,” she concedes.

Louise cut her interior design teeth working for a large firm that had its own soft furnishings workrooms, an experience that helped her develop an encyclopaedic knowledge of fabrics, as well as a honed eye for detail. Her passion for antiques also informs the schemes. “My parents taught me how to spot a well-made piece,” says Louise, who has filled the house with her finds, from a 19th-century gilded marble-topped table to a vintage collection of framed moths and butterflies.

One might expect that after four years with the builders, Louise would have been happy to wave them farewell. Instead, she has embarked on a new phase of the project. “I’m trying to recreate the gardens as they must have once been,” she says. “When we took on this property, it was desperately unloved. My mission is to bring a smile back to both the inside and the exterior of the house.” ■



BATHROOM

"I was determined I would have a huge bath in front of the window, so that I could look out over the gardens," says Louise.

Roman bath, around £5,868,
The Bath Works, 0844 870
7159, thebathworks.com.

Ottoman, from £750,
Louise Carlisle, 07887 525455,
oysterinteriors.com.