

# ORIGIN STORY

Previously converted into bedsits, this Edwardian property has been restored to its former glory, creating a home with customised spaces for all the family

WORDS & STYLING KAY PRESTNEY | PHOTOGRAPHY BRENT DARBY



## HOME PROFILE

**WHO LIVES HERE**  
Miriam and Declan, and their three-year-old son Cillian  
**THE PROPERTY**  
A four-storey, five-bedroom Edwardian townhouse in south west London

## KITCHEN

A new extension has given the family a large open-plan cooking and dining space, which opens through wide Crittall doors into a courtyard garden →





**PINK FOR LEGIBILITY**

**COURTYARD GARDEN**

A small play area for Cillian sits on the lower terrace, while the upper space has been raised for an outdoor dining area. Two mature olive trees in teal pots add a Mediterranean feel



**DINING AREA**

Exposed brick is a textured contrast to the soft-pink, custom-made bench by Stuart Scott, which provides comfy seating at the dining table. Above, hand-blown glass pendant lights add a mellow glow in the evenings

**KITCHEN**

Original period features, such as fireplaces, were discovered daily during the renovation. Striking teal cupboards and a sociable island set the atmosphere for the parties the couple love to host

**W**hen Miriam and Declan found this Putney townhouse in the autumn of 2014, they were keen to put their mark on it. 'It was love at first sight for me,' says Miriam. 'I could see the beauty of its bones and the potential, but it took me a while to convince Declan, as it was operating as six

separate bedsits and was in a poor state of repair; one of the rooms even had a plastic bag where the window should have been.'

However, all their ideas had to be put on hold when an unexpected three-year work-related move took them to Chicago. 'It was hard to leave when we had just found our forever home, but we were excited to embrace a new adventure, and were able to pick up design ideas and influences on our travels,' recalls Miriam. On their return to the UK in 2018, the arrival of their son Cillian also brought a new perspective to their design considerations.

A big task lay ahead: although the house itself had great bones, after years of being divided into multiple rental spaces it was in dire need of renovating and reconfiguring. 'We hadn't considered a fixer-upper, as neither of us had ever done a renovation before, but we just couldn't resist the challenge,' says Miriam, 'and it's definitely been that!'

With busy working lives and a young baby, the couple struggled to find the time to make all the design decisions needed with such a big project. 'I had an image of what I wanted for each stage of the design, but I didn't have the time to source the items or discuss what was possible with the builders, which is critical when renovating an old home as there are all kinds of quirky obstacles,' explains Miriam.

The couple quickly realised that they would need to call in help if they were to keep their vision on track and turned to interior

designer Yoko Kloeden, a move Miriam describes as a 'game changer'. 'I was able to design the house the way I wanted without losing all our evenings and weekends to the renovation,' she says. 'It significantly reduced our stress levels and improved the pace of the project. It also meant we avoided heated "debates" about smaller decisions involving light sockets or skirting boards.'

As work began, the builders made exciting daily discoveries; hidden behind the poor-quality bedsit additions were original period features, such as floorboards and fireplaces in each room, stained-glass windows and decorative ceiling mouldings. Yoko worked alongside Miriam and Declan to design a new double-storey extension giving the party-loving family a large open-plan communal cooking and dining space, opening through wide Crittall doors (a nod to London's industrial heritage) into a courtyard garden, where the couple love to entertain in the summer months.

With five bedrooms ranged across the two upper storeys, the house offers plenty of space for visiting family and friends, while the original smaller rooms downstairs at the front of the property have been cleverly transformed into separate 'his' and 'hers' hideaways, where Miriam and Declan can wind down from their busy careers and family life at the end of the day. Each of them had a very distinct idea of how they wanted their space to look. 'I think how I would describe my style and how my husband would describe it would be two different things!' says Miriam, who intended to create a serene and feminine space, while Declan had a vision of a club-style den housing his oriental finds.

Keen to restore as many original architectural features as possible, and to incorporate the antique mirrors, lighting and furniture the couple had collected over the years, Yoko had the challenge of editing it all into a cohesive home. 'Miriam and Declan had many different →





I could see the *BEAUTY* of the *HOUSE'S BONES*'

**MIRIAM'S SANCTUARY**

A bespoke pale blue sofa and marbled rug were commissioned from Julian Chichester. Above, a vintage glass chandelier draws the eye up to the restored ceiling rose and decorative moulding



design influences in their pieces, from gentlemen's cigar club-style armchairs to lacquered antique cabinets from China,' she says. The end result is a great success, from the Parisian salon-inspired calm sanctuary of Miriam's space, where she loves to share a glass of wine with friends or curl up in front of the fire in winter, to the contrasting look of Declan's self-declared 'man cave' with its leather Chesterfield armchairs, antique map and antler lamps. By giving each room its own identity to suit the use of the space, yet maintaining a thread of natural materials such as exposed brickwork, wooden flooring and marble throughout the house, Yoko has ensured that the eclectic pieces all work in harmony.

Sustainability has also played an important role in this project, with bricks salvaged from the original building reused to form the half wall at the rear of the raised garden eating area. The couple love to spend time immersed in nature, so dried flowers, grasses and plants have also been used throughout to add texture and a link to the natural world beyond. The result is a unique reflection of the travels, life and loves of its owners, where Edwardian character sits in harmony alongside contemporary pieces, and for all there is a 'room of one's own'.

Find out more about Yoko Kloeden Design at [yokokloeden.com](http://yokokloeden.com) →

**'HER' ROOM**

**Above** The smaller rooms at the front of the house have been transformed into separate 'his' and 'hers' hideaways. Miriam's Parisian salon-inspired space is an elegant and calm retreat

**'HIS' ROOM**

**Above right, and right** A wall-mounted horned skull and leather sofa bring a hunting-lodge vibe to Declan's hideaway, while a leather trunk has been repurposed into a James Bond-style secret drinks cabinet







## BATHROOM

Carrara marble in soft grey shades is teamed with antique-style hand-made lighting and a vintage mirror

## GUEST ROOM

Long, soft-pink curtains hung at ceiling height make the

room seem taller. A decorative corbel is part of an arch that leads to the ensuite

## NURSERY

Favourite toys, such as the vintage-style car, have been chosen for their aesthetic as well as their fun factor **HB**