



LET THE LIGHT IN

This beautifully bright Arts and Crafts house was transformed by interior designer Anne-Marie Leigh using a carefully curated palette of off-whites

FEATURE KAREN JENSEN-JONES | **PHOTOGRAPHY** NICK SMITH

As an interior designer and a former colour consultant for Farrow & Ball, Anne-Marie Leigh is used to transforming other people's houses but admits it's much more challenging when it comes to renovating your own. 'Finding our house was difficult as the market is so competitive in the area and it took two years and a sealed bid before we could finally call it our own,' remembers Anne-Marie, who now runs Anne-Marie Leigh Interior Design. 'The house was the perfect renovation project as it hadn't been touched for 40 years and

we were able to start from scratch with our architects Beckmann Architecture. We decided to live in the house for a year before starting the renovation to see how the light and space worked and this is something I always advise my clients to do if possible.'

The period features were particularly appealing for Anne-Marie. 'It's such a beautiful 1930s Arts and Crafts house and I could see that the bones and history of the property are what make it special,' she explains. To make it more suitable for themselves and their children, Louis, 14, and Max, 12, they sympathetically



KITCHEN

A dated conservatory was knocked down to make way for this wonderfully light space.

Walls in School House White estate emulsion, £49.50 for 2.5ltr Farrow & Ball. Pendant lights, £331 each, Jim Lawrence. Handmade cabinetry, price on request, Handmade Kitchens of Christchurch. Bar stools, £145 each, Fusion Living. Dining table, £2,000; chairs, £250 each, all at No 44 Furniture & Fine Things

SNUG

Anne-Marie has enhanced the off-white space by adding soft pink to draw the eye.

Sofa, £1,500, Sofa.com. Magritte mirror, £1,495, Oka. Coffee table, £780, Robert Langford

SITTING ROOM

The Arts and Crafts windows have been discreetly dressed in plain fabric so they remain the focus of attention.

Walls in Elephant's Breath estate emulsion, £49.50 for 2.5ltr, Farrow & Ball. Try Snooze sofa in Grape, from £2,699 for a three-seater, Heal's. Coffee table, £445, Perch & Parrow, has a similar look



DESIGN TIP *'Using a warm white and dimmers for lighting will create a much softer atmosphere in neutral schemes'*



HOME TRUTHS

THE PROPERTY An Arts and Crafts house dating from the 1930s

LOCATION Surrey

ROOMS Sitting room, kitchen/dining room with snug, cloakroom, study area, four bedrooms (two en suite), bathroom

PURCHASED 2018

PREVIOUS PROPERTY

'We lived in a converted mews house nearby,' says Anne-Marie.



FAVOURITE ROOM *'Our spacious bedroom – it has a wonderful vaulted ceiling with original oak beams and is flooded with natural light'*

MAIN BEDROOM
The majestic headboard is the focal point here and it brings subtle colour to the calm scheme.
 Walls in Skimming Stone modern emulsion, £53 for 2.5ltr, Farrow & Ball. Bespoke headboard; bedside cabinets, price on request, Anne-Marie Leigh Interior Design



MAIN EN SUITE
A pink vanity is the standout piece.
 For a pink vanity unit, from £1,171.38, see UK Bathrooms. Bevelled mirror, £135, Graham and Green



refigured the living space and knocked down an old 1980s conservatory and replaced it with a much brighter and more spacious kitchen arrangement with sliding doors to the garden. 'We spent a lot of time trying to match the brick and tiles and even the corning is bespoke to match the original,' says Anne-Marie.

The Arts and Crafts movement began in the late 19th century and is clearly still relevant today with its focus on natural materials and well-designed craftsmanship – something Anne-Marie appreciates. 'I'm an advocate for good quality and for spending money on things that you won't want to change, such as great flooring, quality sanitary and brassware, and beautiful lighting. I always try to introduce layers of light in a home – it helps to create a soft atmosphere and different moods. Lighting design is so important and is often overlooked but it makes a huge difference. I would also add that you don't need to spend a fortune on a designer kitchen if you're thoughtful in your choice of materials. We worked with Handmade Kitchens of Christchurch who supplied

our painted Shaker-style kitchen and then added a light quartz worktop and bronze handles for a stylish yet understated look.'

Anne-Marie's expertise in colour is evident throughout with a muted palette of off-white hues creating a refined backdrop for more colourful fabrics and accessories. 'Every room is a different colour but they all work beautifully together,' she says. She has also been careful to make sure the rooms flow effortlessly, without anything that jars and creates discourse. 'The pink vanity unit in the en suite is a bold statement piece,' she says, 'but because there are many variations of pink in the house, it works really well.'

The French oak beams in the main bedroom emphasise the height and create drama, while tasteful arrangements of decorative objects add personality to the renovation of this lovely home. The project took 18 months to complete and Anne-Marie is clearly delighted with the final outcome. 'When our friends come over and we open the doors to the garden and enjoy a glass of wine together, there's absolutely no doubt it was all worth it.' 25