

PERIOD RENOVATION

# One of a kind

A well-thought-out reconfiguration of rooms has maximised light and space in Lisa and Jonathan's unusual period property in the heart of East London

'We enjoy the space and gallery feel of downstairs and how unconventional it is,' says Lisa. 'I love the simplicity and robustness of the materials used. It's a great space to entertain and perfect for Cillian

to wheel round on his scooter.'

For prints, try Juniqe. Cushions, made from House of Hackney fabric. Armchair, vintage. Chaise, antique, covered in Barbeline Home fabric.







When Lisa O'Hagan and her husband, Jonathan, stumbled across their now home in the heart of East London back in 2018, it was the quirky shape and unconventional layout that caught their eye.

The couple were living in a large flat a few minutes down the road and were casually searching for a property that presented a challenge, at an affordable price. 'We looked around a few other areas but kept coming back to Hackney,' says Lisa. 'It has a vibrant community with marshlands, canals and the River Lea a short walk away; there's an energy you can't help falling in love with!'

This end-of-terrace property used to be a Georgian coach house, which had been converted into a large, ground-floor garage and studio, with a two-bedroom property spanning the two floors above. 'We were drawn to its unconventional feel, and it seemed to offer more than the average house, with three different outside spaces - a cobbled courtyard, roof terrace and a back garden,' says Lisa. 'The end-of-terrace plot was wedge-shaped, narrowing almost to a point at the end of the garden. This gave the layout a unique charm. Rather than extending, we saw the potential to create something very special.'

The couple bought the property, and 18 months later, after discovering they were pregnant with their first child, renovation work finally began. 'Living in the house gave us time to think how to make it work best for us,' says Lisa. 'Jon's good at designing unconventional spaces, and between us, we came up with designs that embraced the asymmetrical shape of the house.' The obvious thing for the couple to do was to move the first-floor kitchen and living rooms downstairs, and reconfigure the upstairs rooms into two more bedrooms, with a guest and family bathroom on each floor. The large garage and studio space lent itself to being a multifunctional, open-plan room; the ceilings were high and by opening up the hallway and the stairs, the room has a real sense of scale.

'Jon and I love the creative process and feeling of achievement we get when we complete tasks without help,' says Lisa. 'Our starting point with any project is deciding if we need to pay a contractor, or whether we can do the work ourselves. Invariably, we end up getting stuck in!' Over the next five months, and in the lead-up to the birth of their son, Cillian, Lisa and Jon did the majority of the dirty work, pulling down walls, exposing the brickwork, stripping away interior fittings and creating a blank canvas for the new layout.

An important part of the couple's design was to bring more light into the property. With no windows between the old garage doors at the front and the back of the house, downstairs felt dark and oppressive. The front of the house was opened up, and bespoke floor-to-ceiling glass and steel doors were fitted, which flood the space with light and link to the front courtyard. The industrial feel continues with a polished heated concrete floor in the living area, and Jon, a skilled carpenter, built steps up to the kitchen area, along with birch room dividers to define the spaces. 'We love simple, honest materials and we have tried to apply a simple, robust aesthetic to each area of the house,' says Lisa.

The couple wanted the kitchen to have a utilitarian feel, so Jon designed a single run of fitted units made from the same birch ply with clean lines that make the most of the unusual angles in the room. 'Terrazzo and cork tiles on the wall and floor add warmth and texture, and a table made from salvaged roof timbers completes the space,' says Lisa. 'It has a beautiful, rustic feel, which contrasts with the simple palette of the kitchen.'

Upstairs, space has been taken from the two top rooms to make a modern bathroom, with a skylight and a walk-in shower. Rooms have been redecorated in a relaxed style and an office/work space has been created in the old first-floor living room for Lisa's vintage fashion business, @thehackneywardrobe. 'Luckily, we share a very similar aesthetic and people often remark that it's a "very Lisa and Jon house", which we take as a compliment.'

The house has been furnished with furniture and fabrics that reflect the pair's love of mid-century design and complement the simple, timeless materials used throughout the renovation. 'Most of it is vintage,' says

Lisa. 'It's important to us that finding furniture for our home is an organic process - rather than go out and buy a new sofa or a rug, we like to find interesting pieces when we least expect to.' Lisa and Jon have made design decisions that embrace the quirky space and have created a functional and characterful home. 'It's been hard work, but our unique family home fills us with pride - we're delighted with it!'

**Right** The bottom floor was designed to be very open plan and to attract as much light as possible, with statement floor-to-ceiling steel doors. The polished concrete floor is softened with a jute rug that centres the room.

**Steel doors.** Clement Windows. **Velvet sofa,** vintage Toothill. **Staub leather sofa,** Two Columbia Road of Hackney. For a similar **coffee table,** try Vinterior. Try the Hempy XL. La Redoute, for a jute **rug.** **Pendant,** Made



## Profile

### THE OWNERS

Lisa O'Hagan, a senior development manager and owner of vintage clothes company @thehackneywardrobe, lives here with her husband, Jonathan Bishop, an aerospace engineer, and their son, Cillian.

### THE PROPERTY

A four-bed Georgian coach house, built in 1890, in Clapton, East London.

### PROJECT COST

£102,000





**Right and below**

The couple designed the kitchen in its simplest form – with steps leading up to a length of birch ply cabinets and open shelving, all made and fitted

by Jon. 'The cork floor is something we definitely wanted,' says Lisa. 'I love its warmth, how sustainable it is as a material, and how quiet it is underfoot – which is important in an

open-plan space.' The terrazzo tiles were left over from the bathroom, and there was just the right amount.

**Cork floor tiles,** Haro. **Terrazzo wall tiles,** Otto Tiles



**Right** The kitchen was long enough for a big vintage table from McCally and Crane Art & Interiors, with mismatched vintage chairs. 'The table was a great find,' says Lisa. 'We knew the minute we saw it that it'd bring the kitchen to life.'

**Left** Jon has matched the spindles in the room divider with the spindles on the stairs – a lovely design feature that creates continuity and some symmetry in the space.



## Costs & contacts

**Main building work** £38,000

**Glazing** £15,000

**Building materials** £10,000

**Concrete floor** £9,000

**Furnishing and finishes** £8,000

**Kitchen and fitting** £5,000

**Kitchen appliances** £4,000

**Bathroom tiling and fittings** £4,000

**Painting** £3,000

**Professional fees** £3,000

**Decking** £3,000

**Builders** GB Construction  
**Concrete floors** Woody's Concrete  
Company, 0118 3343896,  
[woodyconcretecompany.com](http://woodyconcretecompany.com)  
**Steel windows** Clement Windows,  
01428 643393, [clementwindows.co.uk](http://clementwindows.co.uk)



**Left** A reed glass door fits with the bathroom's mid-century style. The vanity is a vintage sideboard from @vintiquelondon. A skylight floods

the room with light, giving a view of the sky when showering

**Door,** Agata Luxury Showers. **Terrazzo wall tiles,** Otto Tiles

**Below** The stylish star spindles are a safety feature that creates separation without impacting the light, open-plan feel of the living area.



**Above** A simple pine cot and armchair furnish Cillian's nursery, while a bright green feature wall and vintage aeroplane shelf add

interest to the smallest room of the house.

**Cot and armchair,** Ikea. **Jute rug,** La Redoute

**BOUGHT FIRST FLAT**  
January 2014

**STARTED RENO**  
November 2019

**PLY KITCHEN UNITS  
MADE BY JON**  
July/August 2020

**BRICK WALL EXPOSED  
AND HOUSE DECORATED**  
December 2020

## PROJECT TIMELINE

**MOVED TO NEW HOME**  
January 2018 - 'We bought the house in a record eight weeks!'

**MAIN BUILD FINISHED**  
March 2020

**DOWNSTAIRS LIVING AREA  
AND KITCHEN COMPLETED**  
October 2020



Left and below A studio/office for Lisa's clothing business, @thehackneywardrobe, occupies what was the old front room.

Desk, birch ply with hairpin legs from Hartleys Direct. Queen poster, Tiny Riot. For a rattan clothes rail, try BTFFY



## OFFICE SPACE

Mix style with comfort and practicality when you're working from home



Margot one-drawer desk, £150, Habitat



Zuiver Bundy pegboard, £109, Cuckooland



Surf Blue Kafe desk lamp, £81.95, The House Office



Lottie office chair, orange velvet & chrome, £189, Cult Furniture



**Amelia's  
top tip**

Don't be afraid to mix and match your woods, especially if you're opting for a mid-century design. The trick is to keep the other elements in the room simple – like a clear colour scheme and matching metallic accents.

The bedroom leads to the sun terrace. The floral print of the William Morris duvet feels nostalgic and is a nod to the textile designer's East London roots, says Lisa.

Walls painted in Hague Blue, Farrow & Ball. Bed, Berneons. Bench seat, vintage. Bedside lamps, Cox & Cox. Pendant, John Lewis & Partners.