

Totally TRANSFORMED

Carolyn Valder turned a typical London townhouse into a hard-working family home, with help of a cleverly designed mezzanine floor

FEATURE KAREN JENSEN-JONES | PHOTOGRAPHY NICK SMITH



MEZZANINE SITTING ROOM

The clever design of the mezzanine has given the basement extra light, as Carolyn wanted to avoid having a dark kitchen. Hudson leather tub

Carolyn Valder's excitement was tinged with some reservation when she first viewed the property that would become her next home, along with husband Dominic, an investment manager, and eventually their children Isabella, 5, and Benjamin, 3.

'Dominic takes a keen interest in property and is always looking at what's on the market,' explains Carolyn, a Communications Director. 'Eight years ago,

he noticed a rather tired looking Victorian terrace for sale close to where we were living in West London. We hadn't been seriously looking to move and we didn't view anything else because he was so confident that he'd found something special.'

But Carolyn admits that the property wasn't quite what she was expecting when she first saw it. 'My heart sank when I walked in because we'd refurbished our last home and I wasn't too keen on going through that again.'

The property had been converted into two flats and needed a significant amount of work. 'But we knew we could turn it into a lovely family home so we decided to spruce it up, install a new kitchen and bathroom and live there while we saved and planned for the major refurbishment,' explains Carolyn.

When they were ready, the couple enlisted the help of Felix von Bechtolsheim of Collado Collins Architects and interior designer Clare Gaskin to bring their vision to



DINING AREA - Secto wall and pendant lights complement the streamlined kitchen.

Saga table, from £4,180; Saga sideboard from £4,840; Saga chairs, from £940, all Roche Bobois. Secto 4231 wall lights, £285 each; Secto Kontro 6000 Pendant light, £587, Twentytwentyone



HOME TRUTHS

THE PROPERTY Victorian terrace built around 1860
LOCATION West London
ROOMS Sitting room/study, mezzanine, kitchen/diner, playroom, utility room, cloakroom, four bedrooms (one en suite), dressing area, two bathrooms
PURCHASED 2007
PREVIOUS PROPERTY 'Before moving here, we lived in a mews house nearby,' says Carolyn.



KITCHEN
The walnut base on the kitchen island adds a warm feature to this uncluttered space. Kitchen units and island, price on application, Eggersmann Kitchens. Pendant Lights in brass, copper and steel, £195 each, Tom Dixon. For a similar metal letter, from £10, try Notonthehighstreet. Wooden fruit bowl, £35, John Lewis



PLAYROOM
Having the children's playroom near to the kitchen was crucial to the design of the basement. Roman blind in Butterfly Parade, £98 per metre, Designers Guild. Alphabet foam tiles, £20 each, Mothercare. Storage units, price on application, Clare Gaskin Interiors. Animal table and chair set, £145, Kid's



STUDY
'I wanted to use a neutral wall colour throughout the house to integrate the rooms and used vibrant fabric for the curtains to add some panache.' Amazonas Weavas curtain fabric in Rosario, £98 per sq/m, Nina Campbell. Antique chair, from

DESIGN TIP 'If you are knocking down walls, check the size of the steel beams when they're going into your house. Make sure they're integrated into the walls and not protruding as the effect is much more pleasing to the eye'



life. The house was transformed beyond recognition with an airy kitchen/diner in the basement leading up to a mezzanine sitting room and study and two further floors above. 'We couldn't quite decide how to lay out the living space at first, but we knew we wanted a good size kitchen and dining space for entertaining,' says Carolyn. 'We visited quite a few houses in the street to see how people had worked their space but it was

Felix who came up with the idea of a mezzanine floor to allow the light to flood into the basement. The double-height glazing up to the mezzanine affords us wonderful natural light.' Floor-to-ceiling doors into the garden and white kitchen units with soft wood trimmings also add to the overall brightness of the lower ground floor. 'I wanted the house to have a natural flow and for the rooms to

integrate seamlessly,' reflects Carolyn. 'So Clare suggested painting all the rooms in the same neutral base colour. We also used natural wood to link the mezzanine with the kitchen because we didn't want the spaces to feel too separate.' Parquet flooring in the living room and wooden handrails provide a neat visual link to the kitchen, whose island features a beautiful walnut base. 'I'm not too keen on



1



2



3



MASTER BEDROOM
 Carolyn added a glamorous feel to the master bedroom with her favourite Romo wallpaper. 'I never tire of it,' she says.
 Juliette headboard, £499, Feather & Black.
 Hanging Lamp, £175, Graham & Green. Blind in Linen Rice Paper fabric, £34.50 per square metre, Romo. Blind border in Mezzola Nougat, £45 per metre, Designers Guild. Mikado Nickel wallpaper, £53.50 per roll, Romo



BENJAMIN'S BEDROOM
 Bright rugs and interesting fabrics add character to Benjamin's bedroom. Blind fabric in Parade Multi, price on application, Schumacher

4

everything matching but it is important that the rooms have a subtle cohesion,' reflects Carolyn.

Upstairs the bedrooms are equally bright. The master bedroom and dressing room is one of Carolyn's favourite spaces. 'It wasn't crucial to carve out the dressing space but I did want somewhere to put everything in its place,' she says. 'We considered lots of ideas for storage but this solution combined function and style.' The addition of a fireplace in the bedroom has

added character while wallpaper and fabrics add a sumptuous and elegant element edge.

'After such a long time, it's extremely rewarding to have a home we absolutely love and where the children are happy too,' says Carolyn. 'I look back and I did have doubts about our plans, especially during the major work in the basement when there was nothing to see but a gaping hole in the wall, but it turns out that Dominic's initial instincts were spot on.'



1 ISABELLA'S BEDROOM
 Pretty fabrics and rugs are used to enhance an otherwise muted palette in Isabella's bedroom.

Beatrice Light Blue blind, price on application, Sandberg. Walls painted in Slate II, £36 per 2.5 litres, Paint & Paper Library. The Daisy Chain rug, £124, Great Little Trading Company, is comparable

2 GUEST BEDROOM
 'I love how the strong greens and vibrant blue work so well with black which is not necessarily an obvious choice in a guest