

Colourful Perspective

Sophie and Freddie Naylor-Leyland have revitalised this 19th-century London townhouse with an uplifting, playful feel to create a welcoming family home

FEATURE CHARLOTTE DUNFORD
PHOTOGRAPHY ASTRID TEMPLIER

The existing kitchen cabinets have been painted in Farrow & Ball's Sudbury Yellow, which sings against walls in Paint & Paper Library's Stone I. A pair of Hector Finch's Lucia pendants provide essential task lighting above the island. Cheery finishing touches include a *Cosmopolitan Please* print and butter dish, both Tatiana Alida, coloured tins from Hay and a scalloped planter from MG&CO.



ABOVE The newly installed fireplace in the library is covered in Mandarin Stone tiles which shimmer in the natural light. A Hugo armchair, by Recoire, upholstered in Casse-noisette fabric by Décors Barbares sits beautifully with an antique table. The Zurich lantern is by Vaughan.

LEFT Sophie perched on a fender from Norfolk Fender Seats, upholstered in Robert Kime's Herat fabric, in the sitting room.

When Sophie and Freddie Naylor-Leyland first spotted this Victorian townhouse online, they were dubious. The existing decor, often a difficult thing to look beyond, and the tricky layout nearly deterred them, yet, despite their apprehension they arranged a viewing and ended up changing their minds almost immediately. 'The moment we stepped inside, literally walking through the door, we both knew that it was the one,' remembers Sophie. It was in September 2022 that the couple, with hopes of soon growing their family, started searching for a new home. 'We were living in a flat with a garden, but only two bedrooms. It was sort of my husband's bachelor pad too, so we were ready for a more family-style house,' says Sophie. With four bedrooms and bathrooms spread across four floors – the top floor installed by the previous owners, who had extended the property in 2014 – the west London townhouse fulfilled their brief.

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The move turned out to come at just the right time for the couple, who discovered they were expecting the first of their soon-to-be two children, but this added pressure meant they required assistance with the renovation. 'I needed someone to help with the project management. Being pregnant, I was going to a lot of appointments and rushing around,' Sophie explains. 'We also had loads of ideas, but we needed someone to channel them effectively.' That someone turned out to be interior designer Sapphie Chichester, who Sophie knew through her sister-in-law. After discovering their joint love of playful interiors filled with colour, Sapphie was brought onto the project from the very beginning to work alongside Ian Wylie Architects.

After acquiring the house in February 2023, Sophie and Freddie set about updating the tricky layout. 'Originally it was split into two flats, so the first floor was one long living area, a bedroom and a kitchen,' Sophie says. 'We ripped out the kitchen, put a wall in to make a nursery and made the rest of the floor into our bedroom and a good-sized bathroom.' On the ground floor, an unused side room was transformed into a study for Freddie and an extra fireplace was installed in the reception rooms. 'We had a working fireplace on one side, so we put in a decorative one on the other end to make it symmetrical.' When the building work was complete, Sophie and Freddie finally settled into their new home. But, their joy was short-lived. Two weeks after moving in, a burst

ABOVE A Tate & Darby rug grounds the sitting room. The sofa, upholstered in Colefax and Fowler's Byram, and chairs, covered in Fermeio's Sicily, are both from Recoire. The walls are in Edward Bulmer Natural Paints' Jonquil in the 20 per cent shade. Visit sapphiechichester.com to see more of Sapphie's work.



Farrow & Ball's Mortar Pink, a shade with strong yellow undercurrents, brings warmth to the principal bedroom. The headboard, made by Taylors Upholstery, is covered in Christopher Farr Cloth's Carnival for a bold touch of pattern. The Avalon three-drawer chest is from Trove by Studio Duggan. The painting was sourced from Auctionet.

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ABOVE LEFT In the principal bathroom, a blind in Nicky Haslam's Baclony Stripe fabric, and an accent chair, sourced from Chairman Interiors and covered in Penny Morrison's Zanzibar fabric, bring a sense of softness.

ABOVE RIGHT Norfolk bathroom wall lights by Vaughan, topped with Nut Brown Papple shades by Fermoie, flank a Tarsile rattan mirror from La Redoute. The La Chapelle basin is from Lefroy Brooks.

pipe resulted in the ground floor being flooded. 'The ceiling in the downstairs loo collapsed and in Freddie's study we had water coming through the light. We had to get the builders back in and do a lot of work to put it all back together,' says Sophie.

With foundations firmly back in place, attention turned to decoration. 'I liked that Sapphie didn't just agree with all my ideas. She was very good at making alternative suggestions that always ended up working better than what I'd originally suggested,' says Sophie, whose inspirations spanned far and wide. Trawling through Instagram and Pinterest helped her pinpoint what style she wanted, as did looking to favoured tastemakers, a key figure being Hannah Weiland, founder of fashion brand Shrimps, whose home is filled with bright, yet calming tones and characterful one-of-a-kind vintage finds. 'I love her interior style and think that everything she does is incredible.'

Originally, the house had been enveloped in dark, moody tones but Sophie was keen to give it a fresh

look. Now, playful palettes and a well-curated mix of old and new lend the interiors a warm, welcoming feel. 'I think the mix of antiques and traditional furniture with the more modern, colourful fabrics and wallpapers works really well,' she says.

Indeed, the creative use of colour and pattern is undeniably what makes this transformation so successful. From the pale pink of the sitting room and the peachy-orange of the principal bedroom to the dazzling turquoise of the children's bathroom and the soft blues of the study, each room takes on its own individual character. 'I wanted it to be as colourful as possible but still make sure that everything fitted together so it wasn't too much of a mishmash,' Sophie adds. 'But since doing this project, I've realised that you don't need to worry too much. It all comes together in the end.'

Of course, there is also the beautifully bold yellow kitchen, although plans are currently being drawn up with Sapphie to renovate the space this year. 'We ▶



BELOW Walls in Paint & Paper Library's Deep Water Green, a blind in Sibyl Colefax & John Fowler's Squiggle and Pleated Tamarind lampshades by Rosi de Ruig, which top a pair of Pooky Swan Neck wall lights, nod to a playful underwater theme in the children's bathroom.



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‘Freddie and I both walked past it at an art fair in Islington a few years ago and, because it was so bright, we both stopped and looked at it and agreed immediately that we loved it, which is quite rare,’ says Sophie. ‘We bought it straight away and amazingly it fitted perfectly in that space.’ ■

ABOVE LEFT Atomic Trellis wallpaper from Ottoline Devries pairs with woodwork painted in Paint & Paper Library's Library Bluebird for a classic yet fresh palette in the study. The artwork above the desk was inherited.

LEFT The nursery has a storybook feel to it with Common Room's Curious Creatures wallpaper. Layered lighting has been introduced via a pendant light from Maison Flâneur and an Abacus floor lamp from Birdie Fortescue. The blind is in Volga Linen's Light Weight Plain Linen in Teal.