



REFLECTIVE SURFACES
The mirror, glass chandelier and metallic coffee table help to bounce light around the space

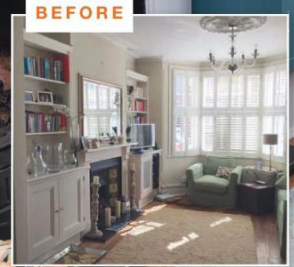
WALLS
A dark dramatic colour is contrasted with white plantation blinds and a white ceiling, which emphasises the height of the room

SMART STORAGE
A built-in cupboard hides clutter and cables. It has been painted the same colour as the wall to increase the sense of space

WINDOWS
As heavy curtains would have covered the window and curved wall, shutters were chosen instead to allow the lovely lines of the room to shine

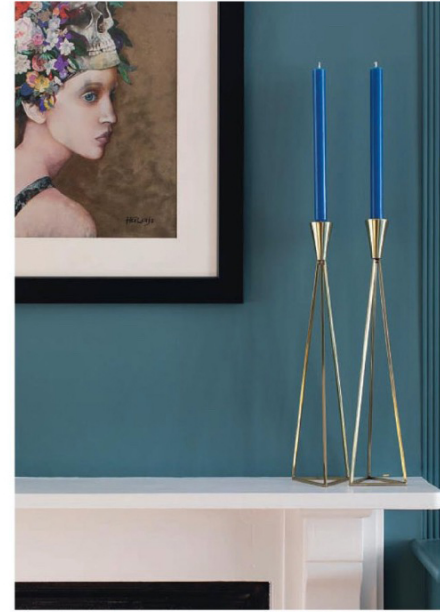
MULTITASKING FURNITURE
The pouffe doubles as an extra seat and a handy surface for a drink

DEFINED SPACE
The chaise-sofa and rug help delineate the separate areas, separating the relaxing end of the room from the work end



'NOW IT LOOKS SO COLOURFUL'

Colour, pattern and some quirky finds have turned a long, narrow living room into a multifunctional space



FIREPLACE The Minas Hilaj artwork *Floral Mind* and geometric candle holders add drama against the dark walls ▶



CHAIR
The themes and colours of Charlotte's room scheme are distilled into this single item – botanical prints, eclectic patterns and pops of tangerine and mellow yellow

FINISHING TOUCHES
Tassels are just one of the elements that add texture, along with velvets, satins, woolen weaves and bouclés



Charlotte White, a strategy partner, her husband Stephen, head of business development in the same advertising company, and children Martha, seven, Joel, nine, and Freddie, 15, wanted a space the whole family could enjoy

Tell us what prompted you to make changes

We moved here in 2010 and had done nothing with this dark and narrow room; we didn't really know where to start. Other rooms were a priority, so it was on the back burner. Also, as the kids were young, there didn't seem much point. When they passed the 'toys everywhere' stage, we decided to take it on. I work at home a lot, so one end of the space had a huge cluttered desk, which made it difficult to switch off in the evening. Another issue was seating – we could never get it right. At the weekends we wanted somewhere to sit together comfortably. With three children, our house is never going to be calm everywhere, but we needed one room that would be a complete retreat, at least for some part of the day.

Why did you enlist the help of an interior designer?
It was down to lack of inspiration! The shape of the room didn't lend



LIGHTING
A quirky globe light brings a retro feel

itself to what we wanted – a multifunctional family and work space, so we could never work out how best to achieve it. Kate Lovejoy, our designer, is a good friend of our next door neighbour so she came highly recommended and was great to work with. She asked us for three words to describe what we wanted. We said 'calm, elegant, interesting'. She listened to our ideas but also contributed others we'd never have thought of and gave us the confidence to follow our instincts when friends told us the strong wall colour wouldn't work.

There were challenges along the way...

Yes, particularly the narrowness of the room. Kate encouraged us to make the most of its height and natural features – it's got a beautiful curve in the wall. She suggested opting for accessories and furnishings with curves rather than angular lines. The room also had to fulfil two roles: a work area for me with space to put paperwork away; and a cosy area to make the most of family time. I had one 'must' too: my grandma's old wingback chair had to be a focal point!

What was your starting point?

Kate helped us pull together moodboards from magazines including House Beautiful, with rooms and accessories we liked. That way we distilled exactly what we wanted in terms of colour, theme and style. Early on in the process, she sourced fabric for the chair and we built much of the colour scheme from that. We also selected key artwork. Once work started, I project managed while Kate designed and sourced.

Was there any structural work?
The sash windows were repaired; I thought we needed replacements



PLANTS
Trailing plants will draw the eye to the full height of a room

OFFICE AREA
A cluttered desk is now a thing of the past – Charlotte can put away all of her work-related bits and pieces at the end of the day

at first but thankfully we were able to save them. The ceiling also had a crack from the children's over-enthusiastic jumping! That and the cornice needed fixing. We replaced the radiators too – the old ones were hanging off the walls. Kate recommended coloured ones, to match the scheme, which worked well. The decorating took two weeks and we also had an amazing handyman, Rob Pike, who installed the desk, hung the chandeliers, put up paintings and so on.

Describe your style

We both love colour and an eclectic look but knew we had to strip things back. We're not minimalist though! We love books and wanted to keep a fair selection. We've also been influenced by travel – a few years ago we had a memorable holiday at La Suvera, a historic hotel in Tuscany. We loved its sumptuous decor and quirky pieces.

What were the highs and lows?

At first, our new sofa wouldn't fit through the narrow hallway and we thought we'd have to send it back. It was bespoke so that would have been disastrous. A few more attempts though and we made it. The best bit was when Kate came to do the final styling with all the accessories. It brought our vision to life.

And what pleases you most?

The room works for everyone, so the whole family can be comfortable together. Also, there are so many different nooks and corners that I love – my grandma's chair for reading, the chaise end of the sofa for chilling out and the desk area for working. The rest of the house is still cluttered but at least we've one room where we can all just relax.



IN DETAIL MAKING PLANS

THE NEW LAYOUT

Making the most of the room's height and original features has created a sense of space. Colour and theme – botanical and floral – help to zone each area.

SHOPPING LIST

PAINT Burlington Arcade emulsion, £24/L, Mylands	ACCESSORIES Overmantel mirror, £350, Alison at Home.
FLOORING Lustre rug, £395, Modern Rugs	Ginkgo leaf sculpture, £25, John Lewis. Minas Hilaj <i>Floral Mind</i> print, £200, Saatchi Gallery. Ute Laum paintings, £1,560 for two, artfinder.com.
FURNITURE Eliza sofa in Teal velvet, £2,500; Eliza armchair in Teal, £810; both Love Your Home. Wall desk, £600, West Elm. Similar chair, the Kate, £307, Made in Design. Similar coffee table, Martini table, £159, West Elm. Wingback chair reupholstered in Omega Tango fabric, £84/m, Linwood	Plant trough, £25, West Elm
LIGHTING Glass orb chandelier, £400, The White Company. Copper ceiling globe (not seen), £255, Tom Dixon. Globe floor lamp, £205, Rose & Grey. Tassel lamp, £250, Wild Lamphshades. Palm light (not seen), £600, Rockett St George. Reading lamp, Plie from Oka is similar.	WHERE TO BUY PAGE
	WHAT IT COST
	Labour £6,500
	Paint £1,800
	Accessories £2,300
	Lighting £1,710
	Suite £3,552
	Total £15,862