

High hopes

A double-height apartment in a former schoolhouse in Bath is given a contemporary boost

Words: **Sophie Baylis** Photography: **Huntley Hedworth**





Above: A neutral backdrop in the living room allows the boldly coloured cocktail chairs to shine. The large rug adds extra warmth and comfort.

As a specialist in Georgian properties, it's no surprise that interior designer Sarah Latham was attracted to this apartment in a former school, built in the early 1800s and converted in 2001. A grade II-listed building, the exterior remains intact – think Bath stone, slate roof and wooden sash windows – but the conversion resulted in the loss of all original internal features. “However, it's still an interesting space with large high windows and double-height ceilings, which gave me the opportunity to be creative,” Sarah explains.

Purchased as a weekend getaway for her family – husband, Charlie, and eight-year-old son, Oscar – the renovation came with all the challenges you might expect from a listed building. For example, creating a mezzanine bedroom for Oscar meant that Sarah had to meet strict planning restrictions while making a space suitable for a growing child. Here, she explains how she approached the project...

How did you reconfigure the upstairs?

The apartment already had a mezzanine bedroom and a small mezzanine balcony on which the previous owners had put a desk and chair. We wanted to create space for a bedroom for Oscar, so we decided to

extend the balcony out and add a stud wall in place of the tired balustrade. We were able to create privacy and a more usable, practical space that would be safer for children.

We recognised that we needed to incorporate both light and ventilation into the room, so we proposed that the floor plate of Oscar's bedroom was altered to incorporate the upper half of the kitchen window. This is a Grade II-listed building so it was important that any internal changes couldn't be seen from the outside. As a specialist Georgian interior designer I am used to working with listed buildings and so took care to keep changes to a minimum and to ensure that they were sensitive to the original building. We set the floor back 200mm from the window, and a simple glass balustrade around the window keeps any visual impact to a minimum.

What changes did you make to the guest bedroom?

The ground-floor bedroom was formed by an internal stud wall and accessed via a double door. It was barely able to accommodate a double bed and the ceiling was of different heights: there was a very small area of double-height ceiling, while the rest of the bedroom

sat beneath the mezzanine floor above. We increased the space by moving the stud wall in line with the supporting pillar that sat just in front of the doorway and changing the door from a double to a single.

What are your top tips for furnishing a guest bathroom?

Always provide a shaver socket for charging toothbrushes and ensure there's a shelf or enough space around the basin for wash bags. Make a guest bathroom feel luxurious by using interesting and textured materials, such as the marble-effect porcelain tiles I've used. And finally, wall lights either side of a mirror are more flattering than overhead lights, so they make your guests look and feel good.

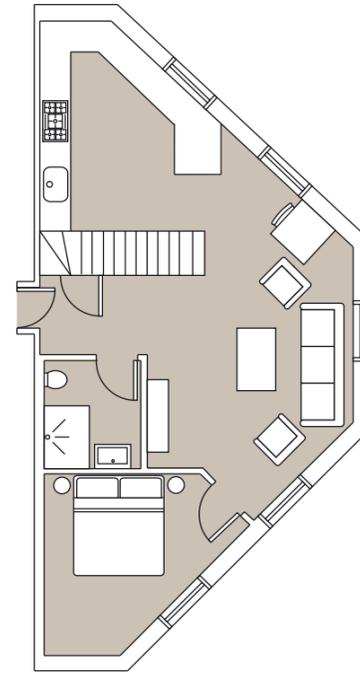
What was your vision for the kitchen?

We wanted a simple open space with a strong look. We achieved this by using only base units and returning the breakfast bar to create a peninsula between the kitchen and the living space. The use of a bold colour combined with the veined marble worktop and bronze details gives a striking look. This is balanced by the openness of the antique mirror glass splashback and LED strip lighting

Right: Pendants from Tom Dixon's Flask collection are clustered to create Sarah's favourite piece. The pendants are blown, cut and painted by hand for an individual look.

Bottom right: The original spiral staircase took up too much room, so Sarah replaced it with oak stairs and a glass balustrade. Oak parquet flooring runs throughout the ground floor, unifying the space.

Opening page (p127): The tall mirrors on the living room wall are actually glass-clad radiators, providing heat and accentuating the height of the ceiling.



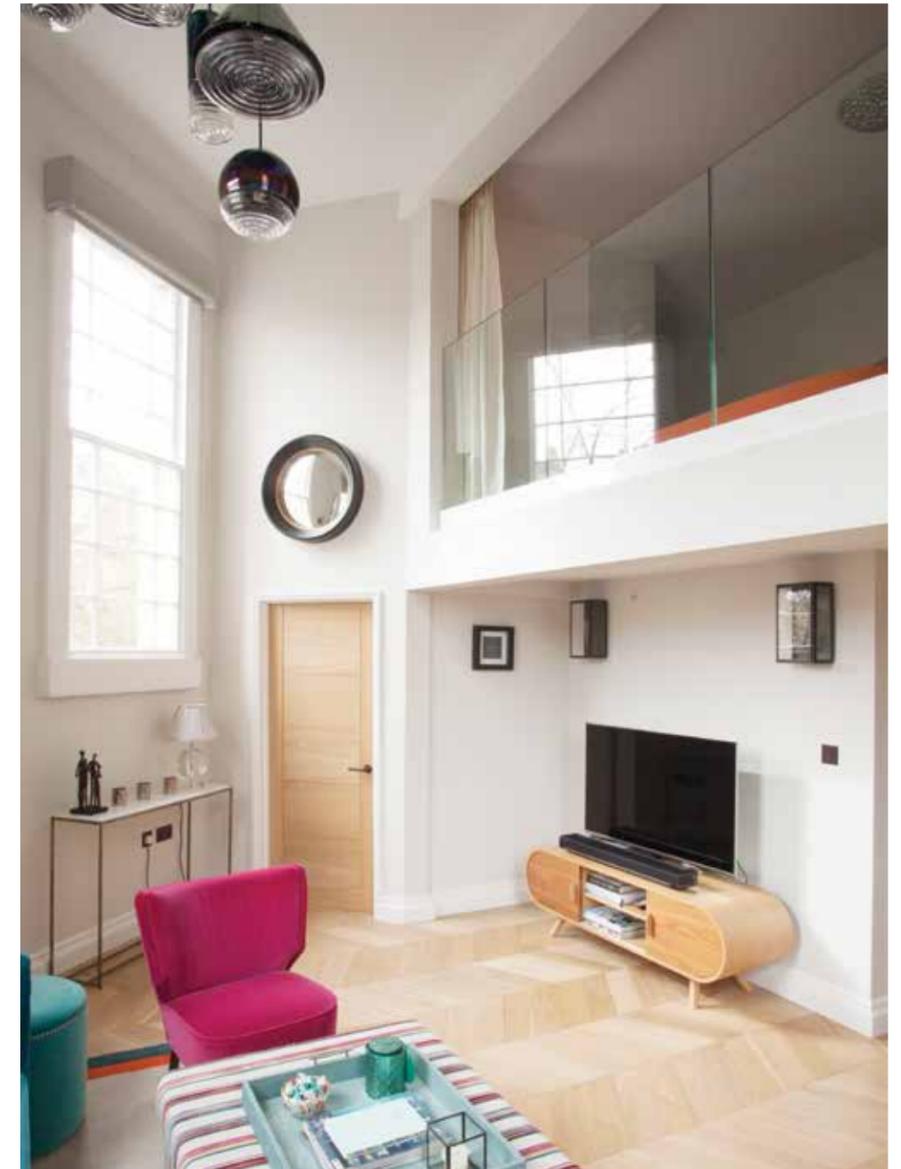
that changes colour and runs along the length of the mirror. We chose the mirror glass as it enhanced the feeling of space and makes the apartment feel bigger. The antique effect is in keeping with the bronze and marble finishes and is far less distracting than a splashback with no characteristics.

Why did you replace the existing spiral staircase?

The staircase wasn't original. It was installed as part of the conversion in 2001 and it encroached significantly on the kitchen area. We removed it, retaining the lovely curved wall that had been created to house it, and installed contemporary open-tread oak stairs with a glass balustrade. The new staircase is much less intrusive and doesn't detract from the character of the building.

Is there anything you wish you had done differently?

I'm a little disappointed with the curtains on the mezzanine. They do the job in that they give us privacy when we have guests staying, but the fabric doesn't look as good as it did in the fabric book. I'd change them for something lined. KBB

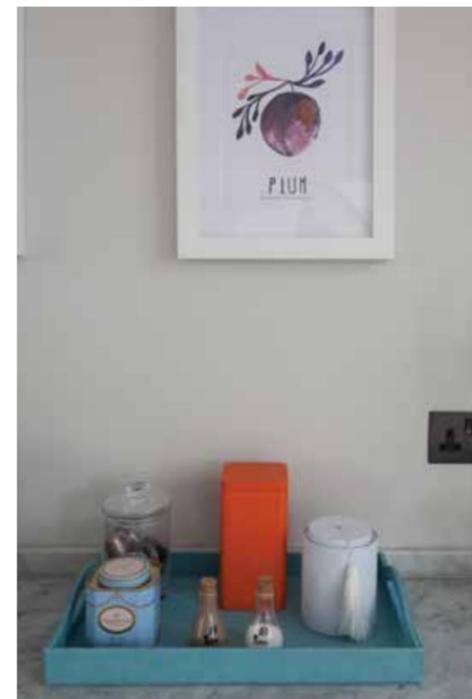




Above: Sarah extended the footprint of the old kitchen so that the new units run along the side and back wall. The peninsula provides enough space for a small breakfast bar, which is topped in timber to set it off from the marble worktops.

Right: The kitchen is a feast of varying décor, including cool marble worktops and the antique glass that ties in with the bronze finish of the mixer tap.

Opposite page, top: Deciding against wall-mounted cabinets is a smart design move in a narrow, low-ceilinged kitchen like this one.



Q&A

Homeowner and interior designer Sarah Latham says...

Where did you find your contractors?

We used a private building inspector who recommended an amazing builder, Mark Hardingham of MTH Joinery. A local contact recommended an electrician who also did an amazing job – Rob Ward of Almond Electrics. Regrettably, we had to sack the plumbing contractor, but then we met Chris Askew of Nook who saved the day at the eleventh hour.

Did you make any major U-turns during the project?

Initially, I was planning a gentlemen's club feel with dark blue walls, but as I got to know the property, I saw how light it was and I wanted to accentuate that. I used Farrow & Ball Ammonite, a grey-white, on the walls, and light oak wood on the floor. I then introduced punchy bright colours through the upholstery. I also incorporated lots of light fittings to create different ambiances and good light at night.

What was your biggest budget surprise?

The George Smith sofa – not a surprise but definitely a luxury!



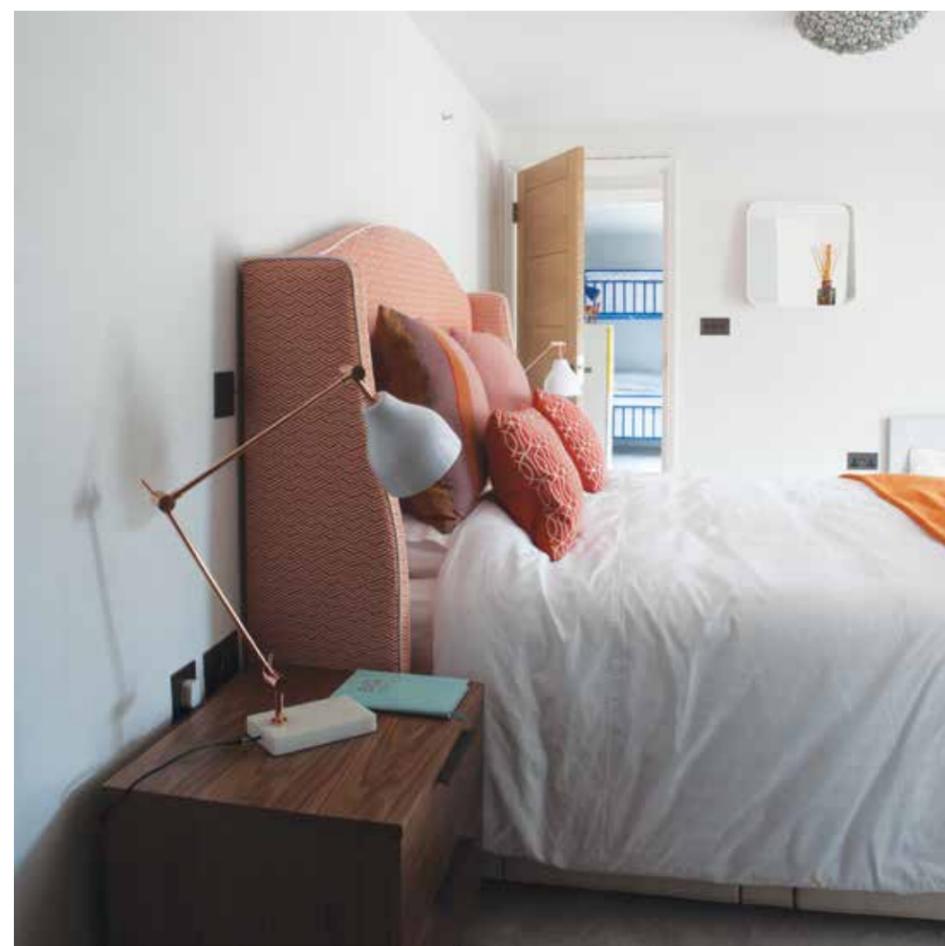


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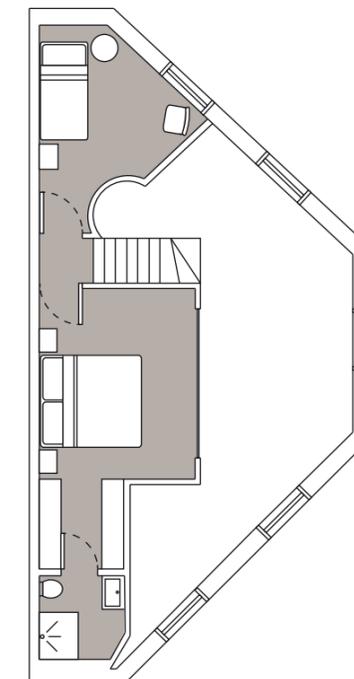
Left: The lighting of a bathroom mirror can make or break a design. In the guest bathroom, a pair of chrome and glass wall lights from Astro Lighting flank the mirror and cross-light the face.

Below: The ground-floor bedroom was previously barely big enough to accommodate a standard double bed. To solve the problem, Sarah moved the existing stud wall to create more space.

Opposite page, top: The mezzanine master bedroom features a reinforced glass balustrade and a curtain for privacy when required. The narrow corridor that leads from the bedroom to the ensuite bathroom has been put to good use with open storage.



Left: In a small bedroom such as this, it makes sense to maximise storage space with a simple divan featuring built-in drawers. Sarah has teamed the bed with an upholstered headboard customised in Pierre Frey fabric to make the whole piece a feature.





Above: Sarah extended the existing mezzanine balcony to make space for a bedroom for her son Oscar.

SourceBook

DESIGN

Interior designer Sarah Latham, Latham Interiors (01225 420279 or www.lathaminteriors.co.uk)

KITCHEN

Cabinetry Bespoke cabinets by Boxhill Joinery (07515 364259), spray-painted in Dulux paint (0333 222 7171 or www.dulux.co.uk)

Worktops Marble and oak, Boxhill Joinery, as before

Splashback 4mm toughened antique mirror glass. For similar try Made 2 Measure (01507 472600 or www.made2measure.co.uk)

Appliances Oven, integrated slimline dishwasher and induction hob, all Bosch (0344 892 8979 or www.bosch-home.co.uk); Undercounter fridge-freezer, Siemens (0344 892 8999 or www.siemens-home.bsh-group.com/uk); Integrated washer-dryer, Hoover (0344 499 5599 or www.hoover.co.uk)

Tap Fairfield two-hole kitchen mixer in Country Bronze, Samuel Heath (0121 766 4200 or www.samuel-heath.co.uk)

Flooring Cheville Chevron oak parquet, Cheville Parquet (020 7183 6352 or www.cheville.co.uk)

Wall and ceiling paint Farrow & Ball (01202 876141 or www.farrow-ball.com)

LIVING ROOM

Sofa George Smith (020 7384 1004 or www.georgesmith.co.uk)

Chairs Duke and Fitz cocktail chairs, Swoon Editions (020 3389 7550 or www.swooneditions.com)

Ottoman Castellini velvet ottoman, Oka (0844 815 7380 or www.oka.com)

Side tables Wooden tray tables, Alison at Home (020 7087 2900 or www.alisonathome.com)

Footstool Footstools & More (0113 345 7526 or www.footstoolsandmore.co.uk)

Console table Mylas, Libra (01223 895074 or www.theibragallery.co.uk)

TV unit Fonteyn, Made (0344 257 1888 or www.made.com)

Flooring Cheville Chevron oak parquet, Cheville Parquet, as before

Rug Bespoke rug designed by Latham Interiors, as before

Radiators iRad, Feature Radiators (01274 567789 or www.featureradiators.co.uk)

Lighting Flask Bowl, Flask Long and Flask Wide pendants from Tom Dixon (020 7183 9737 or www.tomdixon.net); Greenwich wall light in bronze, Best & Lloyd (020 3410 2031 or www.bestandlloyd.com)

Staircase Bespoke timber staircase, StairBox (01782 832555 or www.stairbox.com)

MASTER BEDROOM

Headboard Cadley headboard, The Headboard Workshop (01291 628216 or www.theheadboardworkshop.co.uk)

Mattress and divan Hypnos Beds (01844 348200 or www.hypnosbeds.com)

Bedside tables Made, as before

Bedside lamps For similar try Cox & Cox (0330 333 2123 or www.coxandcox.co.uk)

Ceiling light Pearl 30 wall light (also suitable for the ceiling), Best & Lloyd, as before

Carpet Chablis, ITC Natural Luxury Flooring (+31 383861160 or www.itcnaturalluxuryflooring.com)

Curtains Kaya Rice Paper, Romo (0845 644 4400 or www.romo.com)

Walls Glaze wallpaper, Zimmer+Rohde (020 7351 7115 or www.zimmer-rohde.com)

Ceiling Wevet, Farrow & Ball, as before

GUEST BEDROOM

Bed Five-foot zip-and-link bed, Linx Beds (01924 566403 or www.linxbeds.co.uk)

Bedside tables Swoon Editions, as before

Lighting Altea lamp base in turquoise, India Jane (020 8799 7166 or www.indiajane.co.uk); Grey pleated shade, Oka, as before; Linear

Plaster wall light, Tomado (020 8788 2324 or www.tomado.co.uk)

Wallpaper Free Fall, Juliet Travers (020 7924 3883 or www.juliettravers.com)

Walls and woodwork Blackened, Farrow & Ball, as before

Carpet Chablis, ITC Natural Luxury Flooring, as before

CHILD'S BEDROOM

Bunk beds For similar try Happy Beds (0333 444 0180 or www.happybeds.co.uk)

Chair CH24 Wishbone chair by Carl Hansen, Skandium (020 7584 2066 or www.skandium.com)

Bedside table Stockholm, Ikea (020 3645 0000 or www.ikea.com/gb)

Carpet Chablis, ITC Natural Luxury Flooring, as before

GUEST BATHROOM

Vanity unit Celeste single-drawer vanity unit in antique walnut and Celeste basin, Bauhaus (0345 873 8840 or www.crosswater.co.uk)

Basin tap Style Moderne three-hole basin mixer, Samuel Heath, as before

Shower enclosure Matki (01454 322888 or www.matki.co.uk)

Shower brassware Style Moderne thermostatic shower, Samuel Heath, as before

WC Duravit (0845 500 7787 or www.duravit.co.uk)

Walls and floors Mimica Venato matt porcelain (floor) and Bologna white porcelain (wall), both from Mandarin Stone (01600 715444 or www.mandarinstone.com)

Wall lights Monza Plus 400, Astro Lighting (01279 427001 or www.astrolighting.com)

COST

A similar refurbishment, including installation, would cost around £100,000 for all fixtures, fittings, furniture and accessories

GET THE LOOK

Below: Castellini ottoman from Oka upholstered in velvet and edged in oversized chrome studs, £195. (0844 815 7380 or www.oka.com)



Left: Monza Plus 400 wall light by Astro Lighting featuring a polished chrome finish and a white opal glass diffuser, around £180. (01279 427001 or www.astrolighting.com)

Below: '60s-style Fonteyn oak media unit, £499, Made. (0344 257 1888 or www.made.com)



Above: '50s-inspired Duke cocktail chair in pink, £299, Swoon Editions. (020 3389 7550 or www.swooneditions.com)

