

'Clever research saved us thousands on our renovation'

By shopping around for the best deals, Fiona and Craig Deaves have transformed their home and kept within their planned budget

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EXTERIOR

Left The Deaves family lives on the top two floors of a large Victorian townhouse, with their own entrance hall on the ground floor. The rest of the ground floor is split into two flats

FACT FILE

THE OWNERS

Fiona Deaves (left) and her husband Craig, who works in the oil industry, live here with their children Cameron, 14, and Cori, 11. Their elder children, Lewis, 21, and Stephanie, 24, also come to stay regularly

THE PROPERTY

A three-storey Victorian apartment

THE LOCATION

Murrayfield, Edinburgh, Scotland

WHAT THEY SPENT

The couple bought the apartment for £500,000 in 2011 and have spent around £60,000 on renovations. It has recently been valued at around £650,000



DESIGN TIP

Where wall space is in short supply, consider alternatives to panel radiators, such as trench, skirting or tall feature column radiators, convection heaters concealed behind the plinth under units, or underfloor heating

KITCHEN

Above The units in this space, which used to be a bedroom, are from Kitchens International. The island worktop is Corian and the other is granite that Fiona bought in Egypt. A mirrored splashback adds to the sense of space, and a mural of Fausto Coppi, Raphaël Géminiani and Hugo Koblet on the 1951 Tour de France, from Surface View, makes a statement. The ovens and hob are all by Siemens

After almost 20 years living overseas for work purposes, the Deaves family were ready to return to Edinburgh and put down some proper roots. 'My husband Craig's work in the oil industry has taken us all over the world,' explains Fiona. 'His employers always supplied the accommodation, so we've never had the chance to do any renovation work or put our own stamp on a property.'

Fiona and Craig had kept a home in Edinburgh while they were away, but Fiona admits that each time they returned, they seemed to have outgrown the house a little more. When a property came on the market in Edinburgh's Murrayfield area,

it had all the space the family needed, but it was also rather neglected. For Fiona, however, this was exactly the sort of challenge she was looking for.

The townhouse had originally been a single dwelling, but was converted into two separate, albeit large, apartments in the 1960s, with the ground-floor apartment split again into two flats about four years ago. The apartment that the Deaves were interested in had its own front door and cellar, with a staircase leading to the top two storeys of the house, which formed the main living accommodation.

Although the apartment had plenty of space, the configuration of the rooms

wasn't to the couple's taste, and it was this that Fiona decided to remedy as soon as they bought the property in November 2011. As the family planned to live in a rented property for the duration of the project, the work transforming the space into a more practical layout was able to get underway by the end of the month.

'My main idea was perhaps slightly unconventional, but I wanted to turn the old master bedroom into the kitchen,' explains Fiona. 'The property is very close to the neighbouring one, and, as a result, the master bedroom didn't benefit from much natural light. I thought that a great solution was to knock down the wall

between that bedroom and the adjoining living room, which would not only create a fantastic open-plan kitchen/living area, but would also bring extra light into the rear of the space, where we would position the new kitchen. Although Craig wasn't keen initially, I was convinced that it would make a brilliant living space.'

Fiona's other idea was not to employ an architect to oversee the work, and instead she enlisted the help of Ian Murray at SI Construction. 'I had a good rapport with him instantly and we agreed that there was no need for an architect, as we had already agreed the design for the space between us,' she explains. The wall that ►

BEFORE



LIVING SPACE

Top, above left and above right The décor in the living room looked dull and dated when the family moved in, but original features remained,

including the wooden panelling around the bay windows and the cornicing. The large windows also meant that plenty of natural light could flow into the space

Right French oak flooring from UK Flooring Direct has been fitted in the living room and kitchen, which both feature tall radiators from Stelrad and

pendant lights from Ikea. The sofas are from DFS and the hide over the table is from Cairo. The stool was bought at the Edinburgh Festival



DESIGN TIP

When removing walls and expanding one room into another, using the same floor finish throughout, plus the same colour and decorative scheme, will help the layout to flow and make it feel more spacious



SEATING AREA

Left Most of the walls in the living room are painted in Cornforth White by Farrow & Ball, but a feature has been created using Natives wallpaper by Elitis. Although the fireplace is original, the surround and tiles have all been painted. The purple chaise longue was brought back from Cairo, where Fiona also found the antique chest

needed to be removed between the living room and bedroom turned out to be load-bearing, so taking it out involved more work than Fiona had anticipated. 'It was worth it, though, as it has made a massive difference to both rooms,' she adds.

While Ian and his team got on with the building work, Fiona started shopping for all her fixtures and fittings. Choosing a company to provide the kitchen proved to be no easy task, as even though Fiona was determined to stick to her budget, she didn't want to compromise on the overall look of the space. 'I never realised that designing and buying a kitchen could take so long,' she says. 'It didn't help that before we came home to live in Scotland again, I bought granite in Cairo for the worktops.

It's so much cheaper there and I knew that eventually we would be buying a house and fitting a kitchen, so it made financial sense. However, when I started speaking to kitchen companies, most of them wouldn't incorporate my granite into their designs. Thankfully, when I approached Kitchens International they said they would find a way to make it work, and I'm really pleased with the overall look.'

Fiona bought her kitchen in the January sale, a decision that she says saved her around 50 per cent. Having already created sketches of her preferred layout, including where she wanted to place appliances such as the fridge, Fiona met with kitchen designer Louisa Forsyth from Kitchens International. 'Initially her design was for

a large island, with the hob to the rear of the space and the sink at the front, but we swapped these around and placed the hob in the island so that I could see family and friends while cooking,' says Fiona. 'I also suggested making the island narrower at one end, as I thought that one big block would overwhelm the room. Ultimately, maximising storage was the most crucial thing for me, so this was planned so exactly that even recycling bins were built in. Louisa was great and incredibly patient; she totally understood my desire to have the kitchen exactly how I wanted it.'

When it came to the aesthetics of the design, Fiona chose white furniture offset with aluminium and, of course, the granite worktops from Cairo. 'Craig was a bit



STAIRCASE

Above Changing the original Burgundy-coloured carpet for a neutral design from Carpetright has visually opened up the hallway. The pendants are bespoke from Cairo and the walls are painted in Farrow & Ball's Cornforth White

DINING ROOM

Right Past & Present Flooring sanded and whitewashed the floorboards. The table was bought locally and the chairs are secondhand from Cairo. The Banksy Balloon Girl wall sticker is from Abode Wall Art



DESIGN TIP

Rather than fit a mirror over a fully tiled bathroom wall, make a template based on the tile format and have a bespoke mirror cut, allowing for a grout joint. Tile around the template, fit the mirror flush and grout in



MASTER BEDROOM

Behind the bed from And So To Bed, the wall hanging is from Made.com. The handmade pendant is from Cairo (find similar at Moroccan Bazaar), while the bedside tables were both made bespoke in Vietnam



MUSIC ROOM

Left Previously a kitchen, this space features artwork from the couple's travels on the walls, which are painted in Elephant's Breath by Farrow & Ball. The same carpet has been used here as in the hallway, and absorbs the sound from the guitars. The Habitat sofa was bought in a closing-down sale

BATHROOM

Right A lot of work was needed in the first-floor bathroom as it was damp and rotten. All the tiles are from Porcelanosa and the basin is from Victor Paris. The bath and waterfall-style taps are from Better Bathrooms and the unit is from Bathstore



unsure about going for white units, but it was another way to maximise the light in this space and once they were installed, he agreed that it worked really well.'

In addition to the new kitchen, there was a great deal more work to do throughout the apartment, including rewiring and re-plumbing, plus re-plastering the walls. 'We had money put aside for the work, but we also had a contingency fund,' says Fiona. 'Once we started stripping back the apartment, other things cropped up, such as the emergency roof repairs – there was quite a big leak into the bathroom, which needed immediate attention. Fortunately, the builder was able to deal with it swiftly and ensure that everything had dried out properly before continuing with fitting out this space. For that reason, I'm glad we were sensible and had a contingency fund in place.'

I'm glad we had a contingency fund as the roof repairs needed immediate attention

In order to keep to her strict budget of between £55,000 and £60,000 for the whole project, Fiona once again put her budget shopping skills to good use when sourcing the fittings for both bathrooms, producing impressive results. 'I made a huge saving by going to the Porcelanosa warehouse sale,' she says. 'The only problem was that we had just bought the apartment and I didn't really know

what sizes the bathrooms were. I took a trolley and went round the warehouse, buying core pieces for both bathrooms, plus all the tiles. I think I managed to get most of it half-price. When it came to tiling the bathrooms, however, I was short of one box of tiles. Thankfully, I was able to find a really close match, and we fitted them behind the bath so that it's not obvious.'

Elsewhere in the apartment, the couple were keen to remove some of the property's ►

BEFORE



GUEST ROOM

Right A fireplace in an alcove (above) has been removed and the top of the chest in its place covered with metallic paint. The bed from Ikea has been painted and the wall hanging is from Habitat



more bizarre previous alterations, such as in the space that is now used as a music room. 'This used to be our kitchen and I thought it was just really dark because of the décor,' says Fiona. 'Once the builder started work, however, we discovered that the ceiling had been lowered three times!' Ian's team pulled down the false ceilings, reinstated it to its original height and put in new cornicing. 'You'd never know that it's not the original ceiling,' Fiona adds.

There was a dressing room at the entrance to an upstairs bedroom, now the master bedroom, with wardrobes inside, but there wasn't enough space to open any of the doors properly. 'It didn't work as a space, so we removed the dividing wall and turned it back into one room,' explains

Fiona. 'Initially I also thought about knocking into the home office next door and turning that into an en suite for the master bedroom, but budget restraints meant it wasn't possible. I now use that space as the utility room, and it's really practical to have it upstairs alongside the bedrooms. With hindsight, I'm glad I didn't make it an en suite.'

In addition to being on site every day and buying all the fixtures and fittings, Fiona was very hands on with the decorating. 'Even the professionals were amazed at how many layers of wallpaper there were in this apartment,' she says. 'Craig and I did a lot of the wallpaper stripping and redecorating ourselves, and it just seemed to go on forever. I think we

both completely underestimated how long it would take and how exhausting this part of the project would be.'

Keeping within a strict budget can be challenging on renovation projects, and while Fiona admits that there are still many things she'd like to do, including adding the finishing touches, such as new blinds and curtains, and replacing the garage doors, in essence she has achieved everything that she set out to achieve in her original plan. 'I sometimes found the three-month project very stressful, especially with Craig away overseas at times, but I really enjoyed it. It's not an architect's or a designer's work – it's mine, so when Craig and the kids told me they loved it, I knew I had done a good job. It made it all worthwhile.' ■



CORI'S ROOM

Above The alcove is painted in Cinder Rose and the rest of the walls in Calamine, both by Farrow & Ball. A TV now sits where a fireplace used to be. The light fitting was a leaving present from friends in Cairo. The beds are from Ikea, where the colourful storage boxes are also from



CAMERON'S ROOM

Left By removing the fireplace, there is now space for a study area in the alcove, with a desk from Egypt. The walls are painted in Farrow & Ball's Skylight

THE COSTS

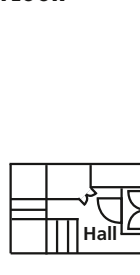
Building work	£35,000
Kitchen	£17,500
Kitchen appliances, including taps	£3,500
Carpet	£2,000
Bathrooms	£2,000
TOTAL	£60,000

THE CONTACTS

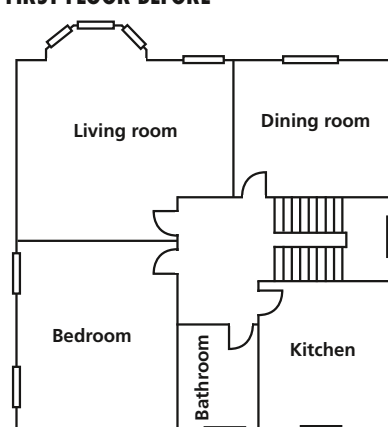
Construction SI Construction, 0131 332 1002, Siconstruction.co.uk
Kitchen Kitchens International
Appliances Siemens
Flooring Carpetright, UK Flooring Direct, Tiles Porcelanosa
Bathroom fittings Bathstore, Better Bathrooms, Victor Paris

THE PLANS

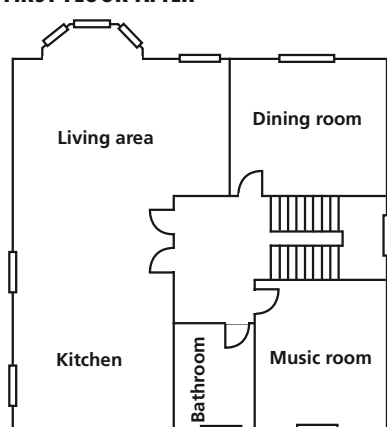
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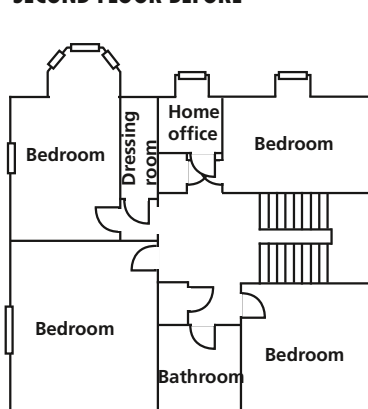
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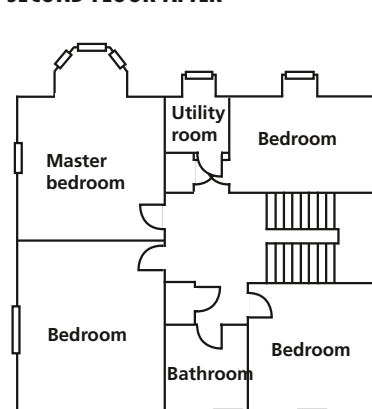
FIRST FLOOR AFTER



SECOND FLOOR BEFORE



SECOND FLOOR AFTER



Removing a load-bearing wall on the first floor has created an open-plan kitchen and living room, with an old bedroom turned into the kitchen. The old kitchen space has become a music room. Upstairs, a cramped dressing room has been removed to enlarge an existing bedroom, and a home office is now a convenient utility room

In the know

Find a bargain

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Great for appliances

John Lewis Home Outlet

Located in Swindon, the John Lewis home clearance shop features a large selection of furniture, appliances and home accessories, most of which are imperfect or have been returned. Stock changes rapidly and items can be found at a fraction of the high-street price. All reduced electrical items still maintain a 12-month guarantee. For opening times and further information, visit JohnLewis.com/our-shops/swindon-outlet.



Great for designer finds

Ercol Factory Outlet

For iconic designs at great prices and a large choice of ex-display, seconds or returned pieces, the Ercol Factory Outlet is a must-visit. It is located in Princes Risborough, Buckinghamshire, but available items and prices can be viewed at Ercol.com/efolist or on eBay at Stores.ebay.co.uk. Sign up for regular stock updates on Twitter and 'like' the store on Facebook to see photos of new pieces added. Many items are reduced by up to half the recommended retail price.

Great for tiles

Fired Earth Factory Shop

Whether you are looking for paint, wall or floor tiles or new kitchen or bathroom fittings, you can get beautiful styles at 70 per cent less from the Fired Earth factory shop in Adderbury, near Banbury, Oxfordshire. With end-of-line ranges, discontinued lines and ex-display stock, it is well worth a visit. For more details, go to Firedearth.com.



Great for furniture

Sofa Workshop

If you're looking for a new sofa, armchair or matching footstool, the Sofa Workshop clearance is a great place to source quality furnishings for less. The stock includes ex-display items and prototypes of the previous season's styles. All items listed at Sofaworkshop.com/clearance are available to buy immediately and can either be collected from the store at Battersea Park Road in London or delivered the next day.

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Whether you want to update your carpet or add warmth with a new rug, the Axminster Carpets shops and showrooms in Devon are full of genuine Axminster carpet seconds, remnants and end-of-line stock at reduced prices. Choose from traditional patterned designs, plain styles, sheepskins and underlay, and for more details go to Axminstershop.co.uk. ■