

## Home tour: Inside an interior designer's fun and colourful Edwardian house in London

By Kissa Castañeda | Jul 04, 2023



**COVER** The accent cushions, Jindrich Halabala armchairs and Moroccan rug reference the hues on the stained-glass windows in the living room

**This eclectic abode in London celebrates its Edwardian period features while bravely embracing colour, texture, and a sense of adventure**

**F**or a profession built on expressing other people's tastes, it can be slightly confounding when the tables turn and the client is yourself. That was the situation that Richard Angel, CEO and co-founder of design firm [Angel O'Donnell](#), found himself in when he embarked on a major renovation of his family home.

Located in the leafy suburb of Streatham in south London, the handsome house was a real find when Angel discovered it 10 years ago. "My wife and I were looking for a home we could grow into and raise a family in. We were already living south of the river in a place called Balham, but the property is pricey so we cast our net a little wider. That's when we found Copley Park, a large and rather grand [Edwardian house](#)."

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**ABOVE** This fireplace was restored with new decorative tiles that allude to its historical origins



**ABOVE** Interior designer and homeowner Richard Angel

Even then, the house had plenty going for it including decorative mouldings, stained glass windows and ornately carved gables, not to mention a Grade II-listed garden with ancient cedars, cascading ponds and wild flower beds, deemed worthy of preservation. After living in it for a decade, Angel decided it was time to prepare it for a new chapter. “After raising children here and amassing a treasure trove of memories, it felt like the right time to refurbish it for another family to enjoy.”

Knowing the ins and outs of the house was a plus, but Angel’s intimate connection with the space sometimes posed a challenge. “When you’re working for a client, your ability to step back and see the bigger picture makes you an asset. But when the shoe is on the other foot—and you represent both client and studio—it’s harder to be objective. I really had to lean into my team for advice and take note whenever they thought I was overthinking the designs, which was quite often.” he shares.



**PHOTO 1 OF 4** Displayed above a sofa from Andrew Martin, the family’s playful collection of artworks brings character to the living room

It's understandable that designers would be hard on themselves—we are our own worst critics, after all—but a look at the finished product shows a polished yet personality-filled space. Most period homes tend to embrace a classic, conservative look, but Angel was able to imbue this Edwardian gem with a host of unconventional touches.

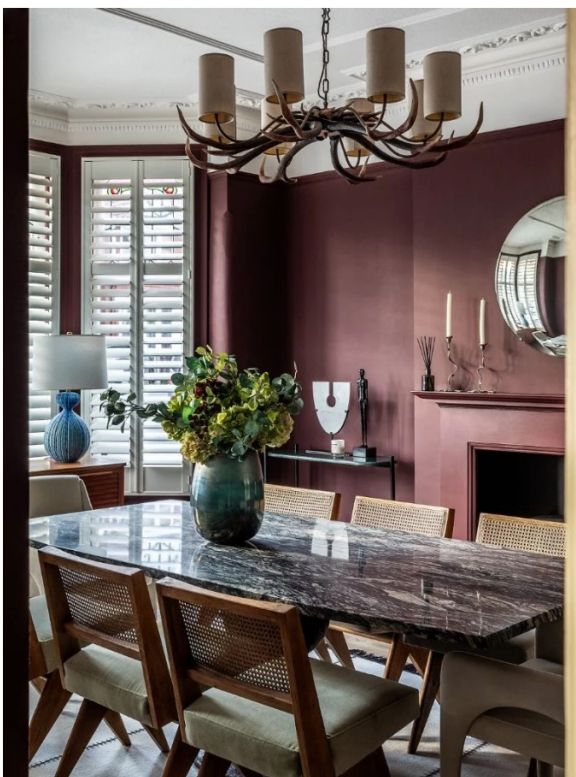
The journey began with the sensitive revitalisation of all the original elements, from the intricate mouldings to the character-filled stained glass windows. Of all the period details, Angel is especially proud of the stunning fireplaces. “The fireplaces were the most rewarding to restore. Bringing them back to life with fresh paints, new hearths and contemporary tiles was fantastically transformative. They're working fireplaces, which is a real treat in London with all the wet and chilly weather we get.”



**ABOVE** Green ceramic tiles lends a contemporary touch to the fireplace



**ABOVE** The decorations in the stairway are kept simple to draw attention to the original elements of this period house in London



**ABOVE** The burgundy red walls of the dining room impart both a dramatic flair and an intimate atmosphere to the social space



**ABOVE** The ensuite bathroom is clad in floor tiles from Fired Earth, matched with wall sconces from Pooky and a custom mirror and vanity designed by Angel O'Donnell

As with any renovation, the layout was one of the more challenging aspects, but Angel was able to tap into his own experience of what works best in each space to ensure it was reconfigured to suit modern life. Overall, he and his team looked at ways to increase storage, improve furniture layouts, and give each room a clear identity. They kept the kitchen and living areas separate, expanding the former given the importance many of us place on the heart of the home.

He adds: “People’s tastes and work-life dynamics have evolved dramatically over the past few years. Broken-plan living has made a comeback, especially among parents who work from home two or three days a week. We’ve relearnt the value of having separate rooms, of not seeing the mess of daily life—toys, paperwork, the washing up—all in one place.”



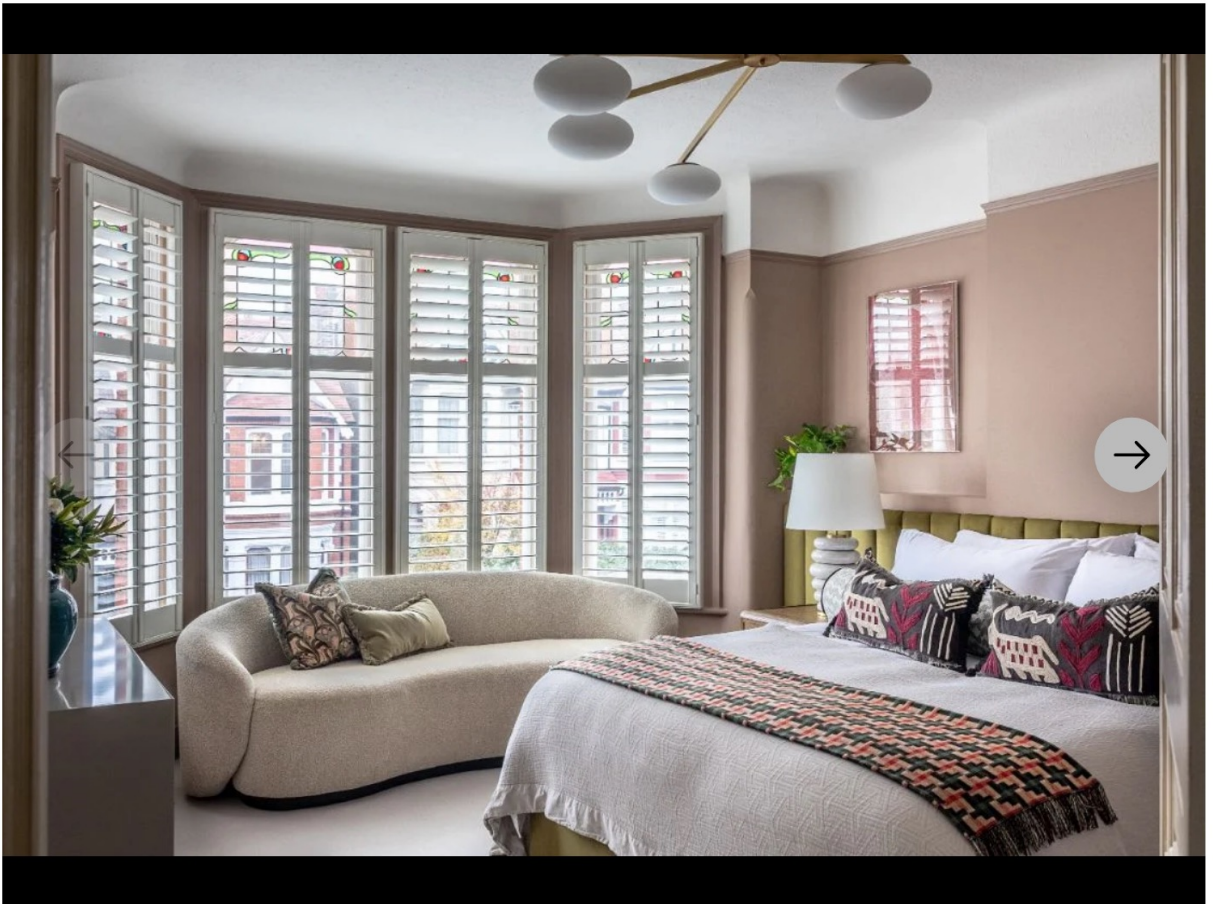
**ABOVE** The door and window frames in the kitchen are painted a soft olive green, in contrast to the off-white hue applied to the walls and shelves. Taking pride of place here is a dog portrait by Catherine Reed



**ABOVE** The daughter’s old curtains were jazzed up with a multicoloured crewelwork fabric along the bottom

By doing away with an old-fashioned drying room, the kitchen now has more space for worktops and cupboards, plus an extra south-facing window that lets in lots of natural light.

They also turned an under utilised reception area into a dining room; its west-facing aspect offers the owners the pleasure of sitting down to dinner as the sun sets and bathes the room in a golden glow. Upstairs, two guest rooms were converted into a study and a dressing room to showcase the versatility of the home.



**PHOTO 1 OF 3** The master bedroom features a ceiling light from Eichholtz, paired with curvy bedside lamps from Visual Comfort and a bespoke padded headboard in a moss-green velvet fabric

While the firm had to follow the stringent rules that accompany dealing with a period property, Angel didn't let that limit his imagination when it came to decoration. There is a palpable sense of boldness in the interiors, from the daring colour choices to the playful prints and patterns. Each room is characterised by its own colour palette, like an arresting burgundy red in the dining room and the soothing putty pink principal bedroom. "We decided to colour-block the interiors so that each room could evoke a different mood. The pale-biscuit entrance hall, living room and stairwell are cosily inviting, while the off-white kitchen is cool and refreshing. Our paint choices have been really impactful," shares Angel.

Another way they achieved an effortless look was through sourcing a mix of contemporary and vintage pieces as well as upcycling, a signature move of the studio. Notable finds include a pillowy Andrew Martin sofa, as well as a pair of 1930s armchairs with bentwood arms. The sculptural armchairs are a classic Jindrich Halabala design that was updated by the magic of new upholstery: moss-green velvet on the seats and backs, plus an embroidered fabric on the side panels. "There's an authenticity to these pieces, a provenance and craftsmanship that feels deeply reassuring. Much like the house itself, they will live on for another hundred years at least," he says.



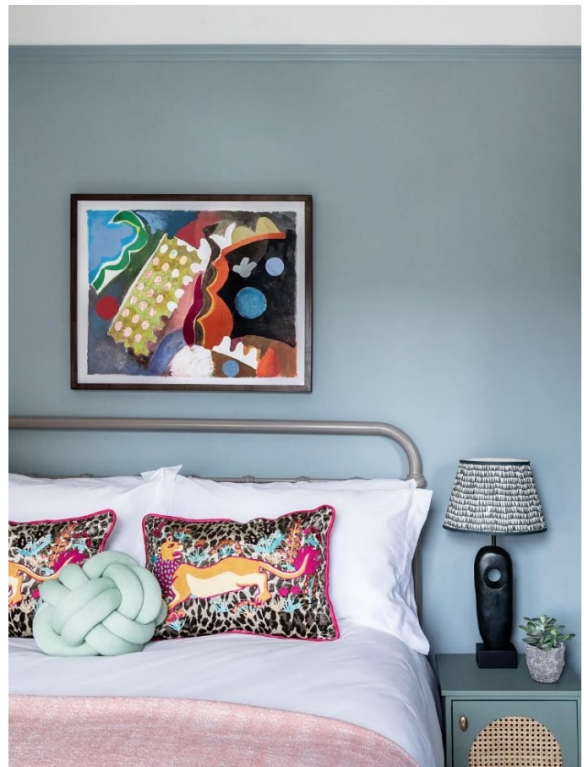
**ABOVE** The rainbow-shaped headboard is matched with furnishings sporting fun patterns



**ABOVE** A cosy pale green study features a striking red armchair from Vitra



**ABOVE** Another view of the living space



**ABOVE** An eclectic mix of accent cushions and wall decorations enlivens this pale-blue guest room

Angel and his team's brave colour choices and creativity in giving pieces a new lease of life elevate this home above other period properties. "Our manifesto was 'eclectic not uniform, considered not conspicuously designed.' It was about achieving a timeless elegance," he stresses.

Though he and his family are moving on, Angel is basking in the improvements he has made over the past decade, and is especially satisfied with his most recent work. He loves the transformation of the kitchen and dining room, which are both light-filled, better-configured and well-proportioned spaces.



**ABOVE** The blush-pink walls mark a soothing contrast to the wood furnishings and the olive-green bed and headboard



**ABOVE** The mint-green pouf is a welcome addition to this airy room on the attic floor

Most of all, however, the small details are what he feels most triumphant about. “If I were to settle on one treasured design detail, it would have to be the half-height upholstered wall in the principal bedroom. It stretches the full length of the room, covers a redundant chimney breast, amplifies the dimensions of the space, and provides a sumptuous backdrop for a super king with large bedsides and lamps. It’s a simple design that achieves so much.”



## Credits

*Photography* Taran Wilkhu