

The property
Edwardian terrace with a garden built in 1908.

Bedrooms Four.

Bathrooms Three.

Improvements made Re-wired, re-plumbed, re-plastered and decorated throughout. Restored coving and exposed original fireplaces and floors. Fitted new kitchen and bathrooms.

Buying price
£700,000 in 2009.

Renovations cost
£60,000.

Now worth
£875,000.

House fact file



A richly coloured rug injects a vibrant tone into the neutral scheme. The armchair and sofa were bought online at Sofa.com (0845 400 2222, sofa.com).



FAMILY FOCUS

Lisa and Andy Campana transformed a run-down property into a beautiful home

FEATURE KATHY HURST PHOTOGRAPHS BRETT CHARLES

Lisa and Andy Campana never thought they could afford to live in their chosen area of south London, so when they saw a run-down property on a street of elegant Victorian houses, they booked a viewing immediately. 'The place was almost derelict, with a leaking roof, water-stained walls and exposed wiring,' Lisa recalls. 'I was five months' pregnant at the time. The estate agent took one look at my bump and tried to convince us not to buy it!'

Indeed, the house, which hadn't been touched since the 1950s, was in a sorry state. The previous tenants were smokers so the wallpaper was covered in yellow tar, the kitchen was located in a tiny room at the rear of the property and every fireplace was boarded up.

'We had to strip the whole place back to its bare bones and start again – and with our baby due in a few months the pressure was really on,' says Lisa.

ELBOW GREASE

On taking possession of the property, the couple started work on the main structure, addressing the water damage to the internal walls and ripping out dated carpets and units. 'The whole place needed gutting so we essentially had a blank canvas to play with,' says Lisa. Fortunately Andy, who owns a number of bars and restaurants in the capital, had a team of known and trusted builders on speed dial who took on the re-wiring, plumbing and plastering. 'They certainly helped us get some way towards meeting our tight, »

DESIGN BRIEF 'We took our lead from the period the house was built – injecting modern style while being truthful to the age of the building and its wonderful original features.'



'This very much feels like a family home, which can grow with us'



ABOVE Lisa opted for a simple, Shaker-style kitchen from Green & Fay (0800 greenandfay kitchens.co.uk) and contemporary metro tiles in a contrasting shade. 'It's a lovely, airy room, which has always been full of natural light,' Lisa says.

RIGHT The Newgate clock from John Lewis (0845 604 9049, johnlewis.com) is a nod to Lisa's transatlantic connections.

INTERIOR INSPIRATION

'We took inspiration from the style of the house itself and wanted to renovate in a way that allowed the period features to remain centre stage. There is such a strong sense of style in the house itself that we haven't felt the need to introduce character. I love the fact that as soon as you walk through the front door, you're greeted by this amazing floor with its rich royal blue and biscuit tones. In most rooms, we've opted for understated, chalky paints, which create a light, airy feel and work well in a period context. Although I like modern design, I felt a contemporary look might have sat awkwardly. We have tried to modernise while remaining faithful to its Edwardian origins.'



four-month deadline,' says Lisa. However, the couple were actively involved in the project, with Andy taking on the majority of the work. 'Not only did we want to be in before Rosie (now 2) was born, but we were on a very restricted budget,' says Lisa. 'By taking the DIY route, we were able to keep costs down.' Wallpaper was stripped from crumbling walls, floorboards were sanded and refinished and the carpet in the hall was taken up to reveal exquisite Victorian mosaic tiles.

ALL HANDS ON DECK

Lisa, by this time heavily pregnant, even took on the job of sugar soaping the walls in preparation for painting. They also rewired, installed new plumbing and heating, and removed boarding from numerous fireplaces throughout the house. 'We had no idea what we'd find behind the boards so it was a real delight to uncover beautiful,

original cast-iron fireplaces, which we've now restored to their former glory.'

PERIOD CHARM

The property's elegant proportions and abundance of period features – the cornicing, dado rails and period French doors opening out on to the garden – were a driving factor in the Campanas' decision to buy the house. However, the cornicing in particular was in very poor repair. In the sitting room, vast portions were missing and the couple were quoted between £3,000 and £6,000 to have it professionally reinstated. On their tight budget, this was unaffordable so Andy bought a kit online for chemically removing the paint from the original cornicing and creating a mould. From this, he was able replicate sections of ornate plasterwork. 'It entailed hours and hours of work, but saved us thousands – in fact the kit and materials only cost about £300,' says Lisa. >>

'I sometimes find it hard to believe what Andy has achieved'



My favourite corner 'Rosie's nursery is definitely my favourite room. It's feminine without being too girly and has so many beautiful period features: the fireplace, the old-fashioned cast-iron radiator and coving. The vintage furniture also works brilliantly, particularly the upholstered rocking chair. I used to sit here to feed Rosie when she was a baby.'



ABOVE Lisa and Andy didn't know they were expecting a girl so opted for a gender neutral palette. Once Rosie was born, she incorporated a pretty wall decal from Inke (inke.nl).



ABOVE The main bedroom provides a relaxing and elegant retreat. The bed is from Loaf (0845 459 9937, loaf.com), while the dressing table and mirror are from Feather and Black (01243 380600, featherandblack.com).

LEFT Lisa picked up the ornate overmantel mirror at auction, but Graham and Green (0845 130 6622, grahamandgreen.co.uk) stocks similar.

TRANSFORMATION

With internal repairs complete and Lisa's due date fast approaching, the Campanas turned their sights to the interior design. A hand-me-down cast-iron bath and period-style basin and WC from Andy's brother were installed in the family bathroom, along with distressed engineered oak flooring. Made-to-measure cupboards were fitted in the sitting room and the master bedroom, and the tiny kitchen at the rear of the property was given over to a laundry room. What was once the sitting room was transformed into a bright, welcoming kitchen with bespoke, hand-painted cabinetry and an American black walnut worktop. 'My inclination is towards more contemporary design, but we didn't feel it would have worked in this house. Instead, we opted for understated Shaker-style units, which

we paired with metro tiles for a laidback, timeless look,' says Lisa. Limestone floor tiles give the space an airy feel and light streams through the French doors, which, in summer, are left open, enabling Rosie to run in and out of the garden.

THRIFTY CHIC

When it came to furnishing the house, Andy scoured eBay and antiques markets – enlisting the help of Ursula Wesselingh of Room to Bloom (07590 403997, room-to-bloom.com). 'Ursula gave us a few pointers in terms of what to look for and then Andy and I would head off early in the morning to Newbury Antiques Market. We'd come back laden with all manner of treasures, such as the bow-fronted chest of drawers for Rosie's room,' says Lisa. 'It works brilliantly alongside her oval Stokke cot.' Despite being a recent »



‘Understanding the story of the house makes it even more special’

LEARNING CURVE

What lessons have you learnt from the experience?

‘Never underestimate how much you can achieve if you set your mind to it. I’m continually amazed at the skill with which Andy renovated this house. Doing things yourself takes a huge amount of time and effort, but it’s incredibly rewarding.’

What secrets have you uncovered about the house?

‘It has an incredible history. Shortly after we moved in, the previous owner’s son sent us a six-page letter, which explained that Sydney Carter, the hymn writer who penned *Lord of the Dance*, used to live here. You often buy a property knowing nothing of its past; understanding the story of the house makes it even more special.’



ABOVE LEFT Dark smoked oak boards from **Real Oak Floors** (0151 345 4344, realoakfloors.co.uk) and teal metro wall tiles make for a striking combination in the family bathroom.

ABOVE The new bathroom, with its decadent cast-iron tub, is a grown-up and luxurious space. Find a similar roll-top bath at **Bathstore** (0800 023 2323, bathstore.com).

convert to thrifty chic, Lisa admits that she has well and truly caught the bug. ‘We found a lovely 1950s school desk for Rosie’s room, which we painted green to match the walls, and tracked down a vintage upholstered rocking chair on eBay. It costs over £500 when new but was bright orange and needed recovering – I only paid £99,’ says Lisa. The design of the nursery, as with the rest of the property, takes its lead from the house itself. ‘When Ursula first came to look at the space, she found a fragment of faded wallpaper inside one of the cupboards. She used it as the inspiration for the palette of greens and pinks,’ explains Lisa. ‘It’s like a little window into the history of the house.’ Ursula also tracked down the quirky wall

decal, fashioned from scraps of vintage wallpaper. ‘It’s beautiful and is of a style that will grow with Rosie as she gets older. The only problem with it was that each individual leaf needed fixing in position – it was a real labour of love,’ Lisa recalls.

Lisa and Andy are understandably delighted with their renovated home and feel that all their hard work has paid off. ‘When I look around the house I sometimes find it hard to believe what Andy has achieved,’ says Lisa. ‘It’s very important to me that he’s been so involved; he’s tackled almost every job in every part of the house. This very much feels like a family home, which can grow with us – we’re certainly not intending to move any time soon.’ [GH](#)