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HOW TO GET
**Planning
permission**

10

WAYS TO
IMPROVE YOUR
HOME, INSIDE
AND OUT

YOUR
GUIDE TO
EXTENDING



EXPERT ADVICE

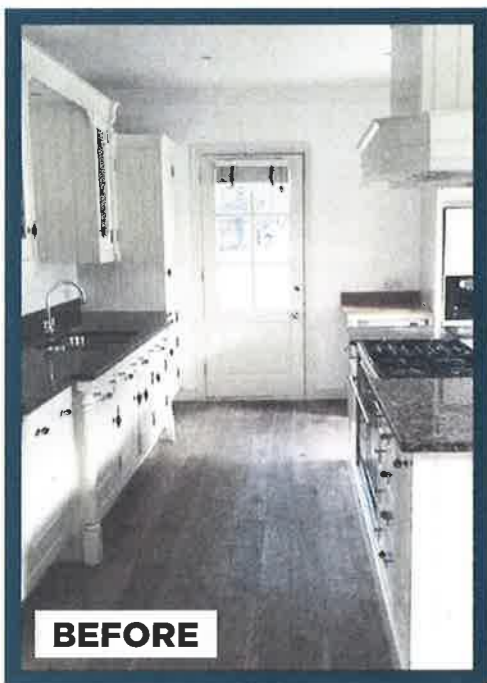
How to
tackle your
renovations

**BEFORE
+ AFTER**

30 pages of
amazing
transformations

In association with

origin
DOORS AND WINDOWS



BEFORE

OLD LOOK

Above Three houses had been created in the former mansion, but they were not finished to a standard befitting the surroundings

LUXURY MAKEOVER OF LISTED HOME

Contemporary styling and period features have been combined to create this lavish home

Cherie Lee certainly didn't start small with her first commission as an interior design consultant. She was hired to turn part of a Grade II-listed mansion into a lavish house for a couple, that was also somewhere they could raise a family in the future. 'I was a freelance stylist before I became an interior designer,' explains Cherie. 'I had renovated my own property in the lead up to this, but this was my first big project.'

The mansion in Hertfordshire had been used for commercial purposes before a developer bought it and turned it into three individual homes.

'The developer made it suitable for residential living but it wasn't done to a very good standard,' she says.



FINE DINING

A glazed divider by Clement Windows creates a broken-plan kitchen-dining space. Messalina pendant lights by Contardi. Kitchen units, Roundhouse. Dining table, Roche Bobois. Dining chairs, Marcel Wanders for Marks & Spencer.

THE PROPERTY

A five-bedroom home in a Grade II-listed mansion in Hertfordshire was designed by Cherie Lee (pictured)

TOTAL PROJECT COST
£560,000



'There was very little left in the way of exterior features and, from the inside at least, you wouldn't realise you were in a Georgian home. We took it right back to the brick.'

The couple who bought the five-bedroom home had previously lived in a two-bedroom property in Chelsea, so were upsizing considerably. Cherie was recommended to them by a builder she had worked with and who they approached about the renovation.

'My brief was to retain or restore period features and give the property back its sense of age,' she says. 'But while it was important to them that their home had impact, they wanted it to be comfortable. They didn't want guests to feel they couldn't sit on a sofa or relax.'

'My clients have quite urban tastes so it was a question of mixing that with a Georgian home. It was a collaboration between all of us, me, them and their architect, who is retired but a family friend.'

Rooms in the house were reconfigured so they were more suited to the couple's needs.

'Originally it had six bedrooms,' reveals Cherie. 'We knocked two of them together to create a master suite with large dressing room and his and her en suites.'

'That left four other bedrooms, one of which is being used as a kind of games room/man-cave. They do have plans for a family but there's just the two of them at the moment. It's a house they are going to be in for a while.'

'The fifth bedroom is in the attic. We made it open plan with a living area, bedroom, roll-top bath with views over the countryside, separate toilet and a walk-in wardrobe. It's perfect for a teenager or perhaps a nanny.'

On the ground floor, the room dimensions are equally generous. The kitchen was opened up to what had previously been a family room/snug and is now an elegant dining room. Crittall glass defines the spaces while allowing light to flow between them.

The large living room has been divided up into zones without separating it out. 'We didn't want to ruin the proportions of it because, at some point, it was probably a ballroom or something within the house,' says Cherie. 'We created a TV space and a formal end of the room. The idea was Sunday papers in front of the fire at one end and a media end with cinema screen at the other.'

The house's original sash windows were repaired, cornicing was restored, fireplaces were sourced for the main rooms of the kind that were likely to have been there when it was built, and an antique oak floor was put down.

'We traipsed round a lot of reclamation yards,' says Cherie. 'The oak floor was from France. I hadn't worked with it before and getting it laid was a labour of love.' ►

BRICK BACKDROP

Below An exposed brick wall is the backdrop to the bed. At La Maison. Walton beside tables, Lux Deco

**BATHING BEAUTY**

Right Bateau copper bath, William Holland. Taps, Samuel Heath. Shelves, Marks & Spencer



The renovation took 11 months from the planning stages to getting the work completed at the start of 2016. 'With listed buildings things crop up that you hadn't anticipated, and until you get into the fabric of the building, you don't really know what's there,' says Cherie. 'At one stage, the brief included plans for a two-sided fireplace between the kitchen and dining room. When we opened up the wall, there was the largest steel beam we'd ever seen, which meant that idea had to go. We were lucky that the clients were happy to adapt as we went along. We put in a tall fireplace with contemporary fire, and by the time it was finished, it didn't feel like a compromise at all.'

The use of polished plaster, and a sleek and modern kitchen satisfied the clients' desires for an urban edge, while still fitting with the period surroundings. 'I didn't want it to feel cold,' says Cherie. 'The antique oak flooring gave it warmth, and we also went with a nice decorative cornicing. The kitchen also features marble, which is a very luxurious material, but a traditional one that was used in old pastry larders.'

The renovation helped to bring light into spaces that had originally been gloomy. Planning permission was secured to turn one of the sash windows in the house into a door to the courtyard. It was done very discreetly and without really looking, you wouldn't know it wasn't a window. 'When we started the kitchen was so dark,' says Cherie. 'The same goes for the hallway. Other than in the

living room, the property didn't have a great flow of light, which was crazy in somewhere with such big windows. The hallway was terribly narrow and incredibly dark so we took out a toilet that was there, and the glass partition from the living room has also helped the flow of light.'

'We were going to put a rooflight above the staircase but had major concerns about whether the light would actually filter down and give the effect we wanted. So we bought a light box - the type of thing that goes behind advertising boards - with a piece of frosted glass in front. It is set on a timer so comes on in daylight and goes off in the evening. It looks brilliant and is really cost-effective.'

The clients followed every step of the renovation. 'They were really proud of the result and thrilled with the finishing,' says Cherie. 'Immediately after they had a big family party to show it off, which was great to hear.'

WORDS ALISON JONES PHOTOGRAPHS RAY MAIN

LUXURY LIVING

The period-style fireplace was made bespoke. Dorchester console table, LuxDeco. Profile sofas, Roche Bobois. Arctic Pear chandelier and celestial pebble wall light, both Ochre

**THE COSTS AND CONTACTS**

Building work
£400,000
Furnishing
£100,000
Kitchen
£60,000

TOTAL
£560,000
Interior design Cherie Lee
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