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DESIGNER

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A self-assured aesthetic combined with hand-picked furniture and vintage accessories casts this Victorian reception room in a new light

CAN YOU DESCRIBE THE PROJECT? This is the first-floor reception room of a central London town house, which I refurbished for a young family in conjunction with architects Michaelis Boyd Associates. When the clients bought the property, it had elements that gave it the feel of a Parisian apartment and this inspired the chevron flooring in untreated oak that runs throughout this level of the house.

DID YOU MAKE ANY ARCHITECTURAL CHANGES? It's a large room with high ceilings and striking original features so the existing fireplace, which was quite small, felt rather lost in the space. I replaced it with a modernist design in pale stone, adding a strong vertical element that gives definition to the space. For the window shown here, I recessed the blind into the ceiling for a discreet effect that doesn't vie with the main windows at the other end of the room.

WHAT WAS THE STARTING POINT FOR THE SCHEME? The sofa was the first piece of furniture we chose after considering several layout ideas. My clients did not want a formal layout, comprising two sofas facing each other on either side of the fireplace, as it would have felt awkward to them. Instead, we decided on this modular option, which looks great but is also comfortable.

HOW ABOUT THE OTHER KEY PIECES? I love classic Scandinavian design, hence the choice of a mid-century Danish sideboard and dining table in dark walnut, which look modern and sophisticated. Good lighting is hugely important, so we sourced some really exceptional pieces, including a large 1950s Italian chandelier with a graphic shape that holds the scheme together. The rug is a vintage Berber design and was the last item I chose for the room. I like rugs that are comfortable and don't overpower.

WHAT INSPIRED THE COLOUR PALETTE? I wanted the walls to be cool, elegant and simple, and this silvery grey shows off the ornate white cornicing beautifully. The sofa fabric is a dove-grey velvet that is warmer in tone and makes the large design feel inviting.

DID YOU USE A MOODBOARD TO SELECT THE DIFFERENT FABRICS? I don't create traditional moodboards. Instead, I gather lots of plastic envelopes filled with various fabric swatches, which I lay on a table and keep interchanging until the mix feels right. The mismatched cushions, which help to make the room feel like it has grown over time, gave us the opportunity to introduce different colours. □



FEATURE RACHEL LEEDHAM PHOTOGRAPHS ANTHONY CROLLA

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SOURCES

Similar modular sofa, Nils sofa in Cravache in Acier, from £11,010, Ligne Roset, 01494 545910, ligne-rosset.co.uk. For similar vintage furniture, try 1stdibs, 1stdibs.com. Italian 1970s chandelier, Seguso Vetri d'Arte, segusovetridarte.com. Yastik cushions, Rifat Ozbek, yastikbyrifatozbek.com.

Similar Atlas rug, £5,405, The Rug Company, 020 7243 7342, therugcompany.com. Natural oak chevron flooring, from £198sq m, Walking on Wood, 020 7352 7311, walkingonwood.co.uk. Architects, Michaelis Boyd Associates, 020 7221 1237, michaelisboyd.com.

