

Living South

resident

Into the blue

Pool, park or Peckham – your guide to outdoor summer fun

The local home where modern meets retro



Keep it cool
South London's
best ice creams

August 2013

AUGUST 2013



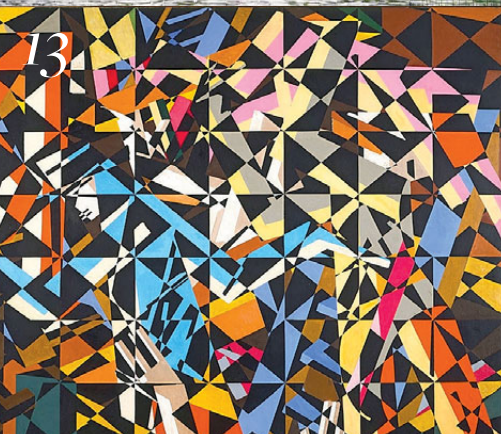
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Funky & fabulous

Crystal Palace resident and entrepreneur Claire Hunte built a house in her garden. Paige Cowan-Hall quizzes her on a new-found penchant for property development

Like its varied population, London architecture is a collision of contrasting yet complementing cultures and eras. Old meets new meets mid century... And then there are the listed buildings, where maintaining the original fabric and features of the building is key.

Crystal Palace husband-and-wife team Claire Hunte and Lindsay Gibbons are becoming well versed in the varying property styles of the area. Since having to make the most of their first one-bedroom flat in Catford 11 years ago – which set the ball rolling for a career in interior design and property development – the pair have taken the idea of cool, contemporary, yet functional, family living to a new level.

Most recently the couple finished a three-storey family home in the back garden of their 1960s townhouse in

Crystal Palace, which they have labelled their ‘garden house’. Although, as Claire points out, they were ‘bound by Croydon Council to build a property in keeping with the prominent architecture of the street’, they completely

The open and bright design of the house was about more than style, it was about suiting modern day family life

reconfigured the inside. Indeed, from the outside the garden house looks just like any other building on the street, yet the inside is another matter.

Claire and Lindsay’s goal was to create a modern yet warm, welcoming living space, a London townhouse that

suits the needs and desires of the every day family. Instead, of the closed and separated rooms that are characteristic of 60s townhouse architecture, the couple have opened up the entire downstairs floor into one large, bright family room. As the mother of two pointed out, the open, bright design of the house was about more than style, it was about suiting modern day family life where multi-tasking is essential.

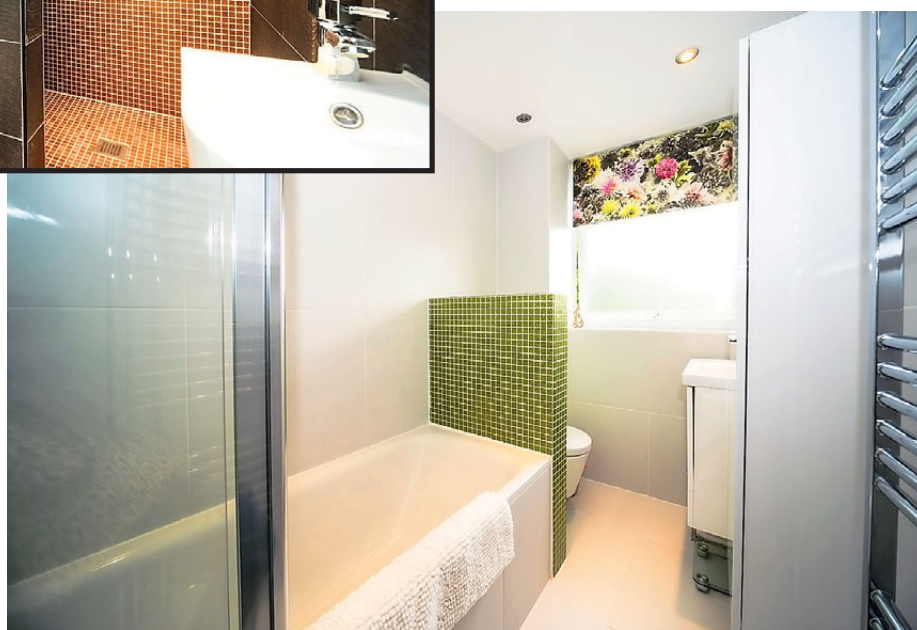
‘It really does allow us to live that kind of life,’ said Claire. ‘The kids are playing outside in the garden and Lindsay and I can watch them from the kitchen while we’re chopping away, through those huge bi-fold doors.’

The couple have pushed the boundaries environmentally as well, trying to be as ‘conscientious’ as possible and insulating every nook and cranny of the draughty townhouse. Claire even managed to make recycling



Retro meets contemporary: The lounge channels a midcentury vibe while the splashes of colour in the kitchen and bathrooms suit a vibrant family life

an asset to interior design, using old birthday presents as accessories. Getting the whole family involved, she even had their four-year-old son scribble his name on old pictures to give them an 'artisan' quality. The couple's eclectic taste can be seen everywhere – from the orange flooring in the kitchen (which initially elicited quite an adverse reaction from friends and family, but they have since revised their opinions to 'that's kind of fabulous'), to the Art Deco mirrors from Crystal Palace Antiques & Modern, their house is an amalgamation of modern concerns and stylish personality. ➡



Make the most of light and space with white walls and mirrored surfaces, warmed with splashes of vibrant colour



The couple also run the website livingfunky.co.uk, which specialises in made-to-measure blinds that come in an array of colours, prints and fabrics. This helps explain the flashes of colour threaded throughout the house. As Claire informs me, it's the small touches that allow her to create warm modern homes without them feeling sterile or brash.

Indeed, the couple love the new family home they have created so much that they have moved into it until their next renovation project is complete.

With Lindsay's background in property and plastering and Claire's in fashion, it seemed almost inevitable that when the two met 12 years ago they were destined for a career in property development – especially when they got their mitts on that somewhat shabby flat in Catford. And the time Claire spent organising rather than designing while working in the fashion industry made her realise how much she missed being creative. In light of this revelation, the pair 'took a

sledgehammer' to the flat, and so began a passion for putting their own stamp on properties.

The couple have already bought another property, a two-storey three-bedroom mid-century modern semi that they intend to transform into a contemporary five-bedroom home. If the garden house is anything to go by, with splashes of colours decorating the white walls like paint on a canvas, their new property will be a timeless masterpiece.

✦ livingfunky.co.uk

Get the look

Combine modern and retro touches with splashes of colour for a home bursting with character

Glove Corner Sofa, £1325

deluxdeco.co.uk; 0845 1283 456



Jean Arc Light, £179

livingitup.co.uk; 0116 269 5960



Eames DSR chairs, £217 each

johnlewis.com



Leaf embroidered cushion, £17

isme.com

Floral cushion, £6.50

Wilkinson, The Blenheim Centre, Penge High Street SE20 8RW; 020 8659 3939; wilko.com



1960s Rosewood Sideboard, £1450

theoldcinema.co.uk; 020 8995 4166