

## **INTERIORS**









Awkward spaces, uneven walls and sloping floors presented no problems when Alison and John Hill renovated their home in Greenwich, southeast London. To accommodate the idiosyncrasies of their Regency-style house as well as their lifestyle, the furnishings and fittings have been largely made by hand and finished and fitted precisely, like an haute couture suit. "It took time and money," says Alison, "but now I couldn't imagine living in any other way."

Alison, who recently became head of the creative team for homewares at Debenhams, has a background in textile design, and has worked for the Conran group, Habitat and Burberry, so she had a good idea of what she wanted. But when she first moved into the five-storey, 1840s house, she didn't anticipate such a radical refit.

"We had lived in a Victorian house in the same road for ten years, but heard that this house was going on the market. It was a property we admired, and we liked the simplicity of its structure so we seized the opportunity to buy. We then sold

our house to a couple who became good friends, and when we moved into our respective new homes we exchanged tradesmen's particulars. They told us about Domus, a design company run by Tim Newbold that specialises in contemporary cabinetry.

"We got Tim to build a cupboard to conceal a hot water tank and he did a sympathetic job. A year or so later we asked him back to advise us on some cupboards and units we needed on the top floor, and he devised a cupboard with individual spaces for my Pantone books, fabric swatches and office 'staples'. That was four years ago and since then Tim has worked here on and off, doing something in almost every room and floor by floor."

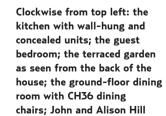
The house is tall and narrow, so the couple have built interesting stop-off points and storage space on each floor. For example, in the front half of the first-floor living room is a wall-hung unit for glasses, "so we don't have to carry trays up and down stairs from the kitchen when we have friends here for pre-dinner drinks", says Alison. In the rear part of the living room Newbold built a unit for John's computer-controlled music system.

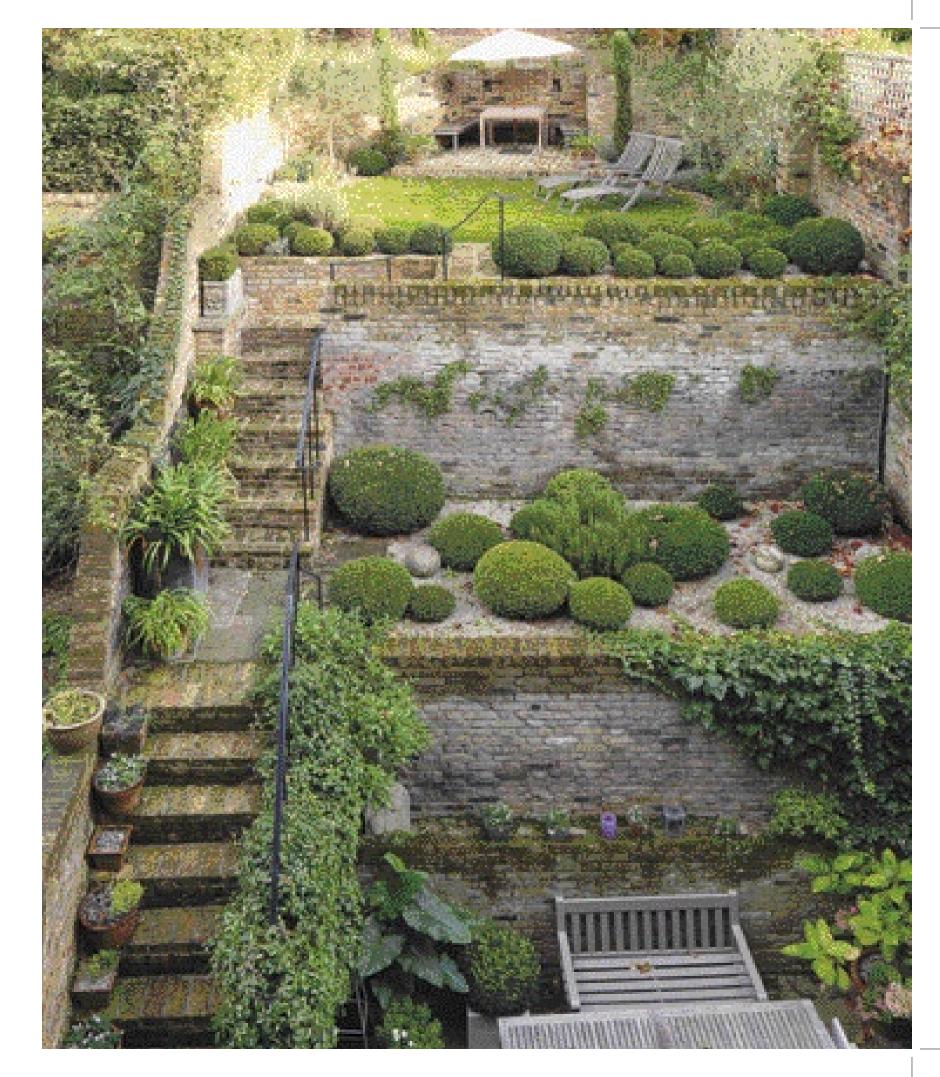
In the bathroom, next to the second-floor main bedroom, a special frame was needed to support a pair of stone handbasins, and Newbold used the false depth of the supporting wall to make a recessed cupboard that contains all the accessories that might otherwise clutter up the basin surround.

> In the main bedroom the headboard was made with integral backlights that shine through the glass shelves on either side of the bed something of a feature in an otherwise minimally decorated room. "And the interiors of the wardrobes are specifically designed to cope with our volume

and assortment of shirts and suits," says Alison.

A floating cupboard by the front window in >>





## **INTERIORS**



\*< the ground-floor dining room was built to hold overcoats and shoes and has a special "charging" drawer in which all mobile phones and gadgets can be placed and plugged into a concealed socket. "Before, we used to leave phones and BlackBerries trailing over the stairs in the hall with wires running all over the place," says Alison.

A matching unit on the far side of the fireplace holds a television that can be concealed behind a panel, and in the adjacent kitchen the layout was designed to give maximum work surface without interrupting the flow of light, or the view from the floor-to-ceiling window.

"The house has just two windows at the front and one at the back on each floor, so we wanted to make the most of the natural light and the views of the rear, terraced garden," says Alison, who is adamant that although the kitchen looks like a showcase it is practical and much used.

"I needed surfaces on which to roll out pastry and to chop and mix. I love cooking and wanted to be able to spread out and use plenty of bowls and dishes." So as well as the long central unit, with its Nero Marquina marble, Newbold built a wall-hung side unit and on the opposite wall a series of panels that conceal the fridge and freezer, a pantry cupboard and the washing machine and drier. There is also a "coffee" drawer for all the gadgets and paraphernalia that John uses to brew up at the weekend.

"We haven't added up the cost of having the storage and kitchen especially made, firstly because it was spread over four years and the projects were done a floor at a time, and secondly because we did it for a house that we both love," says Alison.

"After a while it felt normal to ring Tim and say we had an idea and were ready to embark on another project, instead of trying to track down a cupboard that might fit or making do with a compromise. People think that we're very tidy, but we're not really – it is just that Tim has made us so. There is somewhere to put everything so it is as easy to put it back where it belongs as to leave it hanging about."

Domus: 0800 0931043; www.domusfurniture.co.uk CH36 dining chairs from www.twentytwentyone.com

The bathroom next to the main bedroom has wall-hung stone basins and recessed cabinets



All process before a military incidence, the bit character proceeding on while a high and dominated when you constrained in the control plan behavior 21 forces are not a process and a process and 2 forces are not a process and 2 forces are not a process and 2 forces are not a process and 3 forces are not a process and 4 forces and 4 forces are not a process and 4 forces are not a constitution.

MAINSTREAM