

**FORMAL SITTING ROOM**  
Mid century-style furniture and bright pop art sit well in this chic period setting. Artwork, from a selection, Hidden Moves. Branagh three-seater Chesterfield, £1,099; Hooper coffee table, £179, both Made.com. Leola armchair, £449, Swoon



**KITCHEN-DINER**  
A combination of units in oak and pine plus stainless steel elements give this room a relaxed, informal feel. For a similar freestanding unit, try the Cotswold Co, from £699. Concrete-top table, £452, Woodpecker Interiors. Victory dining chairs, £99 each, Cult Furniture. Karla armchair, £649, Swoon



**SITTING ROOM DETAIL**  
Carefully curated collectables bring charm and character to a multitude of surfaces, including windowsills and shelves. Kitsch Kitchen Señor ceramic face vase, £39.99, Trouva. The vintage metal surveying rod, £31, Life Project at Etsy, is comparable. Sansevieria plant, £16.95, Bakker.com



**STUDY**  
The shelf unit was made by a local joiner using reclaimed wood crates for a one-off look. Crates from £18 each, Baileys. The Goodall desk in mango wood, £299, Swoon, is a match. Masters chair, £127, Philippe Starck for Kartell at John Lewis. Walls painted in Manor House Gray estate emulsion, £45 for 2.5L, Farrow & Ball

# ARTFUL BLEND

*Bold artwork and colourful furnishings stand out against a crisp, white backdrop in Kate Adams and husband James's spacious home*

FEATURE LIZ POTTER | PHOTOGRAPHY COLIN POOLE



**INSPIRING**

**HOME TRUTHS**  
**THE PROPERTY**  
Townhouse, built around 1900  
**LOCATION** Kent  
**ROOMS** Hall, formal sitting room, sitting room, dining room, kitchen-diner, study, cloakroom, two bedrooms, bathroom  
**PURCHASED** 2016  
**PREVIOUS PROPERTY**  
‘Before moving here, we lived in a semi in Beckenham,’ says Kate.



Victorian properties are often associated with draughty fireplaces, creaky floorboards and crumbling plasterwork, but that is definitely not the case with the home of Kate Adams and her husband James. Their bright, welcoming townhouse in Tunbridge Wells is filled with sunlight, quirky art and artefacts, and pops of colour that give it an unmistakably modern edge.

'I've always loved period houses,' says Kate. 'The classic sash windows, fireplaces and high ceilings are appealing, but ours is a bit different from the norm with its layout of three floors and two front doors. It could be a five-bedroom house, but as it's just the two of us, it makes sense to have more reception rooms instead.'

The couple share a love of eye-catching, unusual items. 'Ours is an eclectic style,' explains Kate. 'We like to mix things up so that each room looks as though it's taken time to evolve, rather than been created all in one go. We tend to avoid objects that match.' Hand-me-down furniture, imbued with history, helps set the scene –

including James's grandmother's dressing table and a Fifties part-glazed kitchen cabinet that Kate has painted to match their freestanding Ikea units. 'My mother-in-law downsized at the same time as we moved, so we inherited quite a few pieces,' says Kate. 'We also have James's grandmother's old china cabinet in the dining room – it fits nicely in the alcove.'

Kate and James have made canny use of eBay, too, finding four of their fireplaces on the site. 'It's best not to buy without measuring the opening of the fireplace first, though,' advises Kate. 'I made that mistake twice, but I've learned my lesson now.'

More characterful purchases include a pommel horse, serving as a coffee table in the sitting room, and a pair of old cinema seats. Other pieces – a set of Russian dolls, a lucky cat and a red silk cushion in the main bedroom – have been collected as souvenirs on travels to Russia and Hong Kong.

'There's a wide range of UK shops that we love to visit regularly, too,' says Kate. 'We tend to look for modern, mid-century items. Our favourite stores are England at

Home, InSpitalfields, Love Inc, Made.com and Swoon. We always keep an eye out for accessories with a sense of humour.'

Since the pair moved in, the townhouse has been transformed. 'I had just been made redundant so I had time to project-manage the renovation,' says Kate. 'I spent the whole eight months painting walls, doors, furniture and window frames.'

'At some point the property had been converted into two flats, which the previous owners had changed into a photographic studio,' she continues. 'Everything had been emulsioned white but we're gradually introducing colour – especially downstairs, where we've embraced the cosy nature of the basement room by painting the walls in dark moody hues.'

Upstairs not only the walls but the floors are white. 'We worried they would show every mark, but they're remarkably resilient.' Now, the sitting room sparkles on a sunny day, thanks to its double aspect and pale scheme. 'It's the perfect backdrop for our artwork and bright furniture,' says Kate. 'It's like having our own modern gallery.'



**DINING ROOM**

A fun neon sign lightens the mood in this dark, dramatic scheme. We Should Hang Something Cool Here LED neon sign, £499, Love Inc. Walls painted in Down Pipe estate emulsion, £45 for 2.5L, Farrow & Ball



**SITTING ROOM**

'When James and I bought the desk, we wanted something colourful to pop out against it and the orange chair was ideal,' says Kate. Edison desk, £369, Maisons du Monde. Jerry dining chair, £85, Habitat. Try the Red deer antler on skull, £380, Notonthehighstreet.com. Starkey light, £149, Made.com. Walls painted in Hague Blue estate emulsion, £45 for 2.5L, Farrow & Ball

**MAIN BEDROOM**

Accessories and artwork complement each other, creating a warm scheme that's full of personality. Radius oak double bed, £750, Habitat. Reproduction Anglepoise table lamps, from £95, John Lewis. Abstract painting, £120, Habitat. For cat cushions like these, have a look at Redbubble's selection, from £14.99



**BATHROOM**

A double vanity unit provides ample storage space for Kate and James. Duravit Starck One washbowls, £510 each, CP Hart. Duravit has comparable vanity units. Roll-top bath painted in Down Pipe full gloss, £25 for 750ml, Farrow & Ball



**LANDING**

A mirrored cupboard at the top of the stairs provides practical storage and reflects light onto the stairwell. Tom Raffield Skipper pendant light, £235, Heal's. Sheepskin rug, £35, John Lewis. Timmy the Sheep metal garden sculpture, £24.50, QVC. For a similar floor paint, try Diamond Hard White floor paint, £21.32 for 1L, Ronseal at Homebase

