

DESIGNER DELIGHT

Justine Hodgson-Barker elevated her period home out of the ordinary using her unique signature style

FEATURE AMY MAYNARD
PHOTOGRAPHY RICHARD GADSBY



INSPIRING

HOME TRUTHS
THE PROPERTY Semi-detached house, built in 1890
LOCATION Kent
ROOMS Hall, kitchen-diner, sitting room, three bedrooms, two bathrooms
PURCHASED 2010
PREVIOUS PROPERTY 'Before moving here, we lived in a farmer's cottage in Uxbridge,' says Justine.



1 & 2 SITTING ROOM
 Colourful accessories stand out against the soft-grey painted walls and woodwork. Eames chair and ottoman, £5,800, Heal's. Try Earl Grey corner sofa, £2,246, Love Your Home. Original Sputnik chandelier, price on request, The Old Yard

3 HALL
 An artfully displayed collection of mid-century and vintage finds creates an interesting focal point. Sideboard, price on request, Mustard Vintage. Gilt frame with lettering, £75, The Duck Shed

The thorny issue of schools was what prompted Justine Hodgson-Barker and her husband James to move from their west London cottage to Kent. 'As soon as our first daughter, Grace, now nine, was born, our previous house began to feel too small,' says Justine, an interior designer. 'So, in 2010, when Grace was two, we began to look for somewhere suitable in terms of being commutable, because our clients were in London, close to good schools and with more space.'

train. They researched the streets they needed to look at in order to secure the right school for Grace – and it was there that they found a semi-detached Victorian villa that was ripe for a revamp. 'The house hadn't been decorated since the early Nineties,' says Justine. 'Everything was mustard coloured – the curtains, carpets, walls, exterior... I love the colour, but it was everywhere – from floor to ceiling!'

In the summer of 2010, the purchase went through without a hitch. The family stayed in Uxbridge while work was undertaken on the new house. Within four months they were in – and the interior was





1 & 2 KITCHEN

The couple decided against an extension, instead adding French doors leading to the garden. Concrete worktop, price on request, Lowinfo. Try the Cuisine wire sign, £40, ECP Design Limited

3 STAIRS

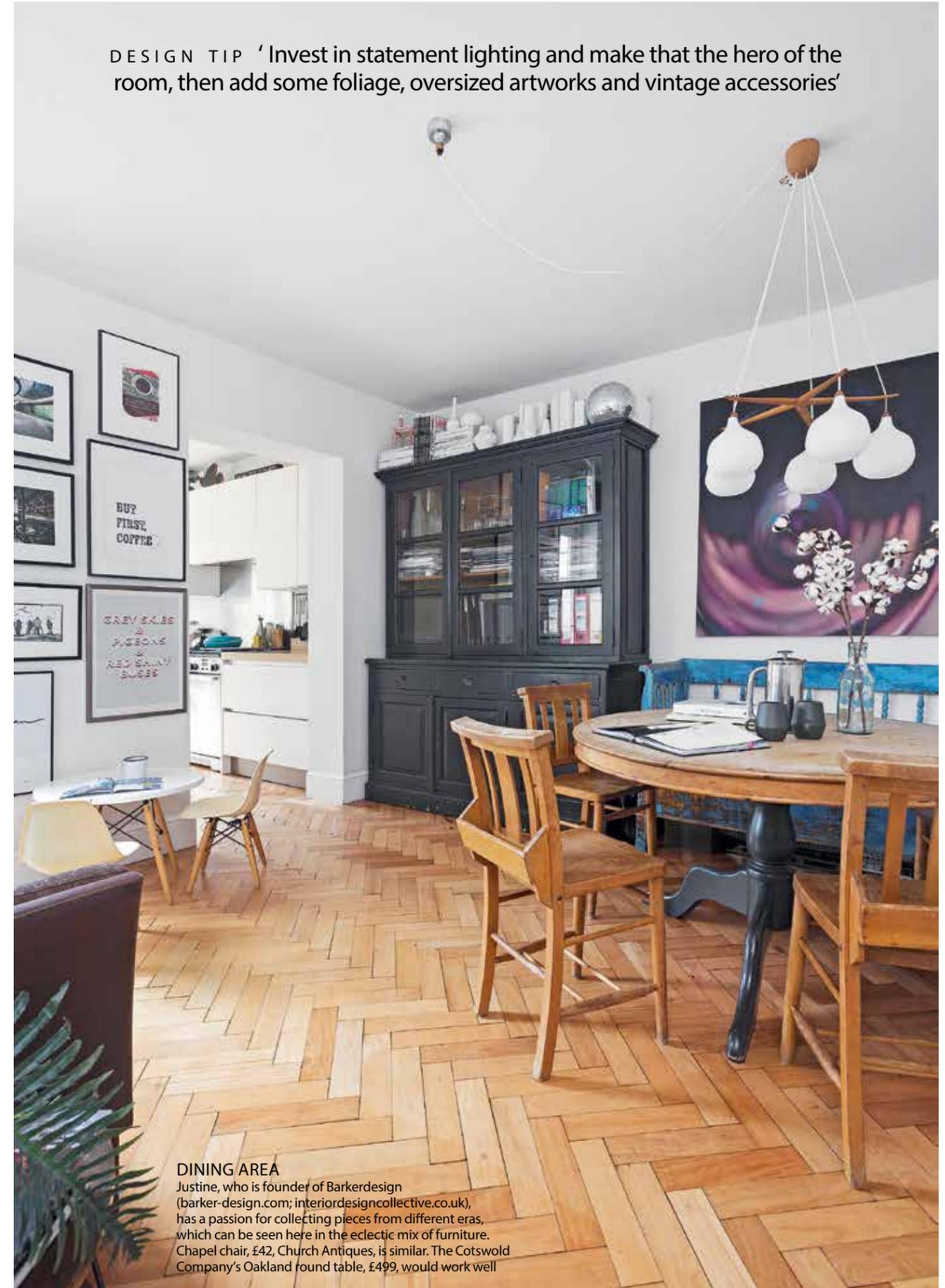
Quirky, retro-style prints in punchy primary colours make a big impact in this small space. See the Champagne Liébart-Régnier advertising poster, £372, Limited Runs. Beech reclaimed parquet blocks, £22sq m, Parquet Parquet, are a good match



virtually unrecognisable. The couple created a bathroom and corridor upstairs, taking space from one of the bedrooms. Downstairs, in the kitchen, they swapped dated cabinets for sleek white ones and replaced a small window with large French doors. 'Originally, I drew up plans for an extension, put it through planning and got it all approved,' Justine says. 'Then I assembled a schedule of works, got it all costed and realised it wasn't worth it. Unfortunately, the expense of the extension didn't warrant the investment. And a good designer should always keep their eye on return investment.' So, instead, the pair added the doors in the kitchen

and increased the width of the steps up to the garden to give the illusion of space. Justine and James have also laid beautiful reclaimed parquet blocks, sourced from a gym in Birmingham, throughout the ground floor. 'Because I'm originally from the Midlands, I just had to have them,' says Justine. The yellow theme has all but gone, save for in the downstairs bathroom, where Justine took the bold decision to leave the mustard tiles in place. She simply added a dark-grey floor, new sink and antique mirrored glass panel on the bath. 'I like Art Deco mixed with mid-century pieces,' she says. 'I always go for original items or

DESIGN TIP 'Invest in statement lighting and make that the hero of the room, then add some foliage, oversized artworks and vintage accessories'



DINING AREA

Justine, who is founder of Barkerdesign (barker-design.com; interiordesigncollective.co.uk), has a passion for collecting pieces from different eras, which can be seen here in the eclectic mix of furniture. Chapel chair, £42, Church Antiques, is similar. The Cotswold Company's Oakland round table, £499, would work well



1 BATHROOM

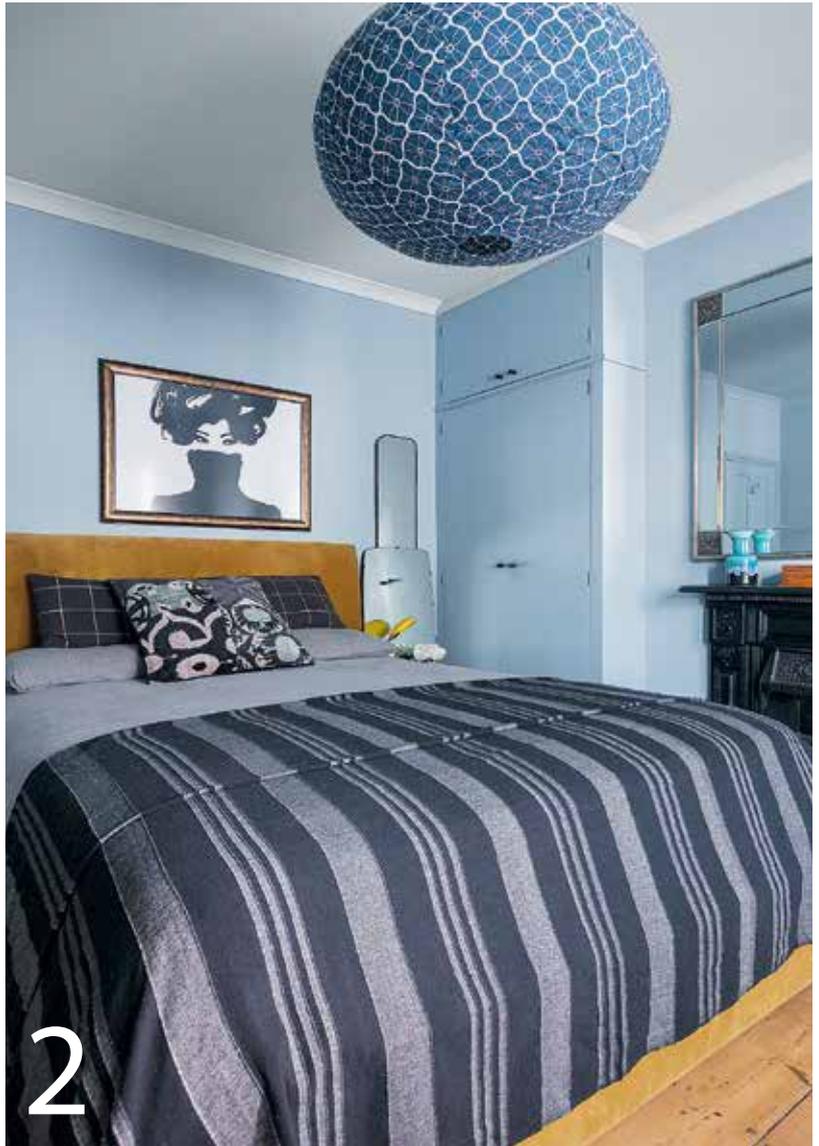
A khaki painted feature wall adds contrast and depth. Invisible Green intelligent matt emulsion, £47 for 2.5L, Little Greene, is similar. PS 2014 pendant light, £59, Ikea

2 MAIN BEDROOM

Patterned fabrics create a bold and dramatic effect. Try Abode Living's oval lantern shade in Black Rice, £55

3 GRACE'S BEDROOM

An iron bed and vintage stool lend an industrial edge. Benni rug, from £330, Plantation Rug Company



pieces by new designers, rather than replicas.' Understandably, given her role as an interior designer, Justine has a talent for effortlessly combining decorative objects and furniture from different eras. 'Because I was renovating our home while working on projects for clients, I sometimes feel like it's a mishmash of styles, but the various elements work well together. I make sure the pieces complement each other but try to make it look completely uncontrived. Although, behind the scenes, that "effortlessness" is quite planned,' she says.

Justine has opted for mainly muted tones on the walls. 'Because I deal with so many

colours at work, I try to keep it pretty neutral for myself, except in the bathrooms, where I go a bit more crazy,' she says. With the house complete, the couple settled in to their new lives in Kent with Grace, joined latterly by daughter Megan, three. It was then that the replanned first floor really came into its own.

Masterminding an interiors overhaul doesn't come naturally to everyone, so what advice would Justine give to those who are not confident about design-making decisions? 'Pinterest is a great resource,' she says. 'Also, take a look at your favourite hotels, restaurants and cafés, and you will see a common style emerge. Buy what you love.' 25