

By reconfiguring the layout of this mansion flat to create double-aspect rooms, Eamon McGurnaghan satisfied one family's desire for a light, welcoming home

Words: Amy Curtis Photography: Adelina Iliev

Bright and beautiful



No interior design project could be described as ordinary, but this London mansion flat offered more than the usual blank canvas. Steeped in history, the apartment has been host to luminaries such as HG Wells and Emmeline Pankhurst, so when architect and designer Eamon McGurnaghan was approached to help the Kuo family create a style of their own, he had a lot to live up to.

They were looking for something that suited all their needs but with a timeless feel that would remain comfortable and stylish in the years to come, and Eamon faced the challenge of giving each room its own identity while maintaining flow throughout. On top of this, the sheer scale of this unusually large property would have a bearing on how things were done. Here, Eamon tells us more about the project...

What was the overall brief from the client?

This is a huge, huge property and the idea we talked about was using the space to create that contemporary loft apartment feel. The family wanted to reconfigure the bedrooms and living space to make them larger and give them a dual aspect of the front and back of the property. The colour palette selection was quite masculine, but ultimately this would achieve that timeless feel they were looking for. Other initial requirements were carpets in all the bedrooms but timber in the living areas, which meant installing acoustic treatment to reduce sound, both to comply with the lease and respect the neighbours.

How did you choose the materials for the kitchen?

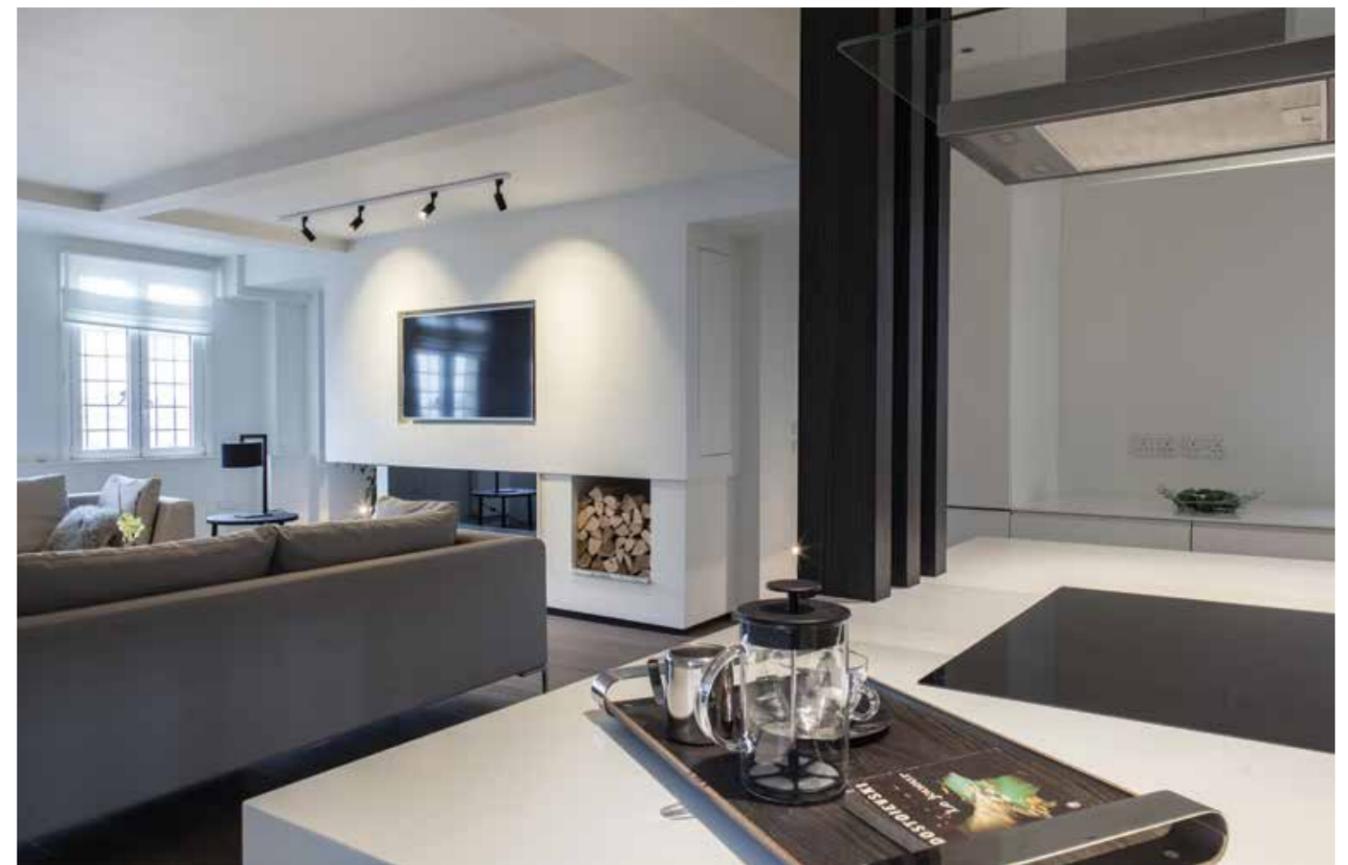
The kitchen is a big space. We wanted to keep it simple with a palette of dark wood and white, plus lots of mirrors for reflection and depth. I used a subtle white Corian for the surfaces and doors, which blends really nicely with the walls. The kitchen ▶

Previous pages (p118-119): A huge mirror in the dining area adds a feeling of depth and bounces more natural light around the apartment.

Above: Mirrors were also used either side of the appliance bank to make the space appear even larger.

Opposite page, top: The kitchen island is a great practical feature, keeping the layout roomy, but it also serves to mark where the living room stops, without disrupting the flow of the property.

Bottom: The veneer flooring flows throughout the property, from the living room, through the kitchen, and beyond, giving continuity to the overall design.





is actually symmetrical, which creates a calmer, sophisticated feel and the classic plain timber and wood veneers for the floor tied in with those used in the living room and entrance, just to link the overall scheme together.

What was the main idea behind the master ensuite design?

As we had such a big space to work with, I was able to create something that felt more like a ladies' powder room than just a bathroom – somewhere to sit and get ready and take your time, rather than just a washroom. Again, the wood veneer and mirrors tie in with the theme throughout the flat, but no room in this house suffers from developer blandness; each has been designed individually. I already had in mind which bath I wanted to use and chose the basin and fittings from the same company. It was very much my idea to use marble in here and combining it with the rich fabric of the seat and dark wood vanity unit has achieved a luxurious look that won't ever date.

What were your main considerations for the master bedroom?

Apart from the stipulation for carpet in all the bedrooms, the master bedroom was a blank canvas. I wanted to create something a bit special so added a bespoke ceiling-hung wall with a fireplace underneath. Lighting is always critical and each bedroom has a minimum of two different circuits and styles, but the master actually has three. Lighting is key in all projects that I do; it's so important to be able to create exactly the right ambience.

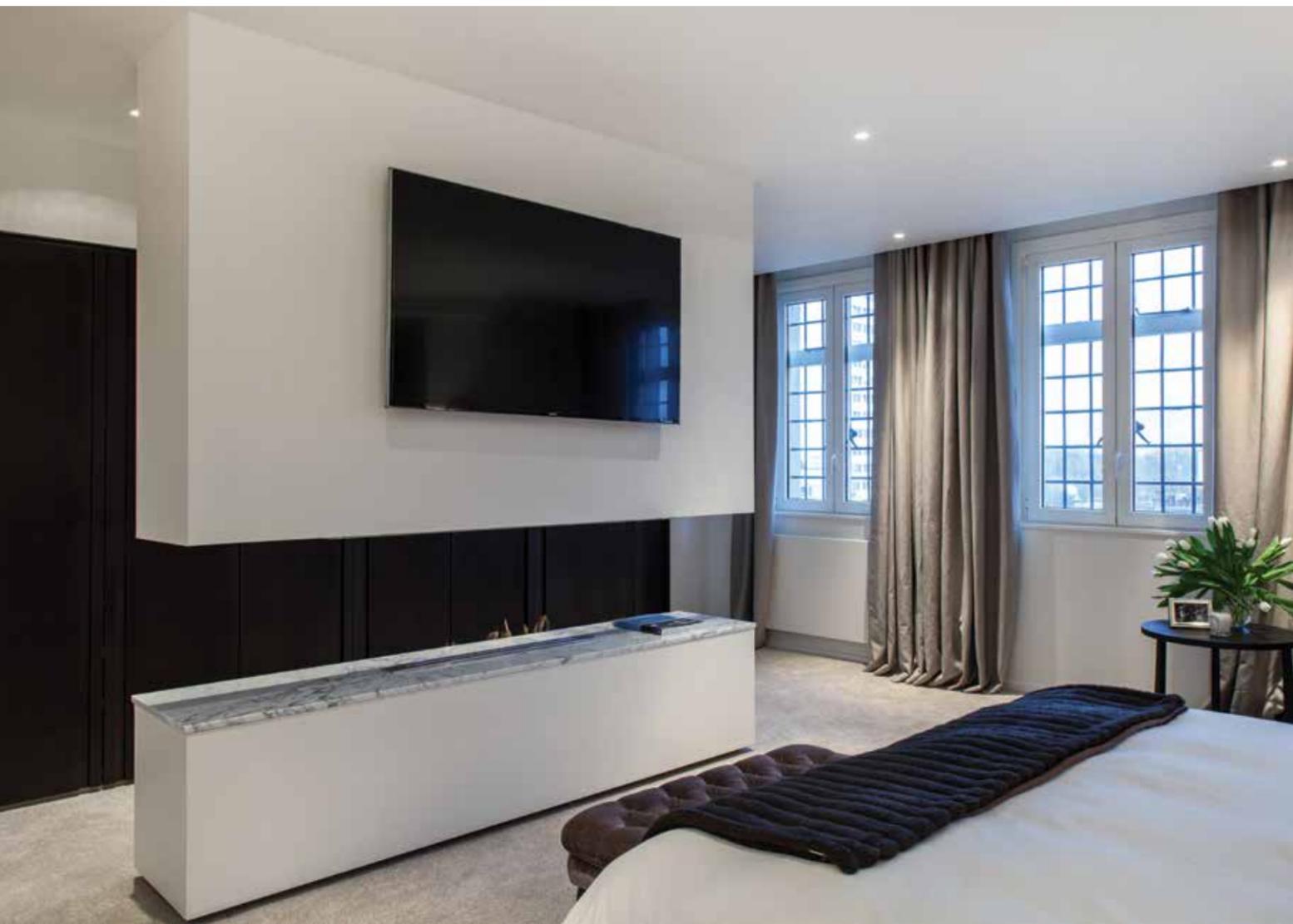
The overall scheme is monochrome: what did you use to stop it feeling clinical or cold?

Furnishings. I worked closely with the Kuo family on all the furnishings to make sure everything fitted with the colour scheme. The final decision was, of course, with them and thank goodness they have good taste! The fabrics and veneers chosen are not dull or dark – we used espresso colours and silver in the timbers to lift the whole look. We also used rich green, gold and silver for the headboards in the bedrooms so it didn't become too monochrome or masculine and just felt really elegant. KBB

Above: "Light is key in everything that I do," says Eamon. The living room is a good example, combining overhead spots and table lamps to create different moods as desired.

Opposite page: Dark wood is everywhere in this home and, as with this rich espresso-coloured dining table, offers a luxurious feel.





Above: Eamon describes this feature as a 'ceiling-hung wall' and he installed a fireplace in the space below it for added luxury in the master bedroom.

Right: Eamon really pushed to include the marble floor and walls, but the Kuos love them and they tie in nicely with the marble top of the fireplace in the bedroom.

Opposite page, top: Upholstered seating creates a decadent feel, while the use of rich brown upholstery fabric complements the bedside cabinets.

Bottom: Eamon knew from the beginning that he wanted to incorporate this bath into the master ensuite – he was able to choose something quite large as space was definitely not a problem in this huge room.



Q&A

Architect Eamon McGurnaghan says...



What took up the majority of the budget?
Partitioning and plasterwork.

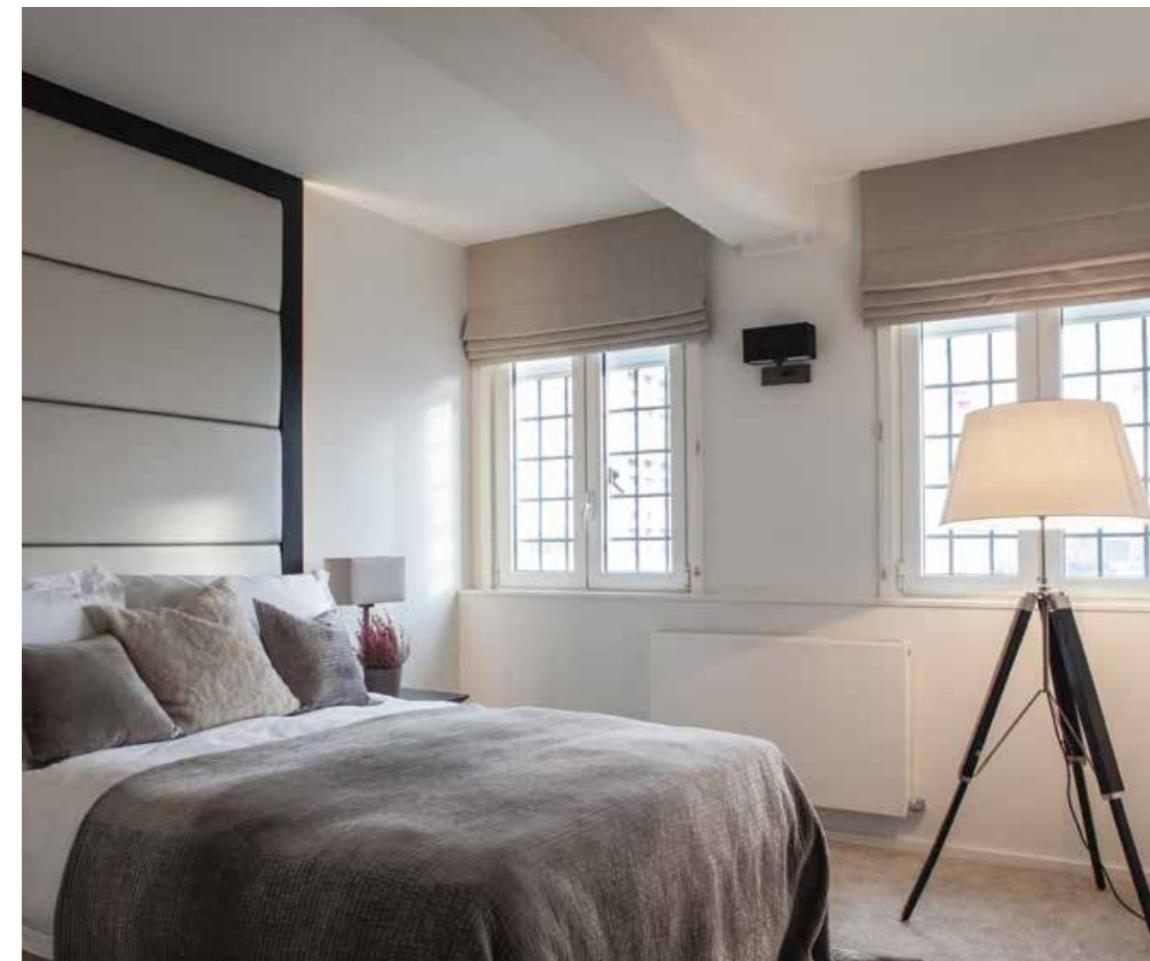
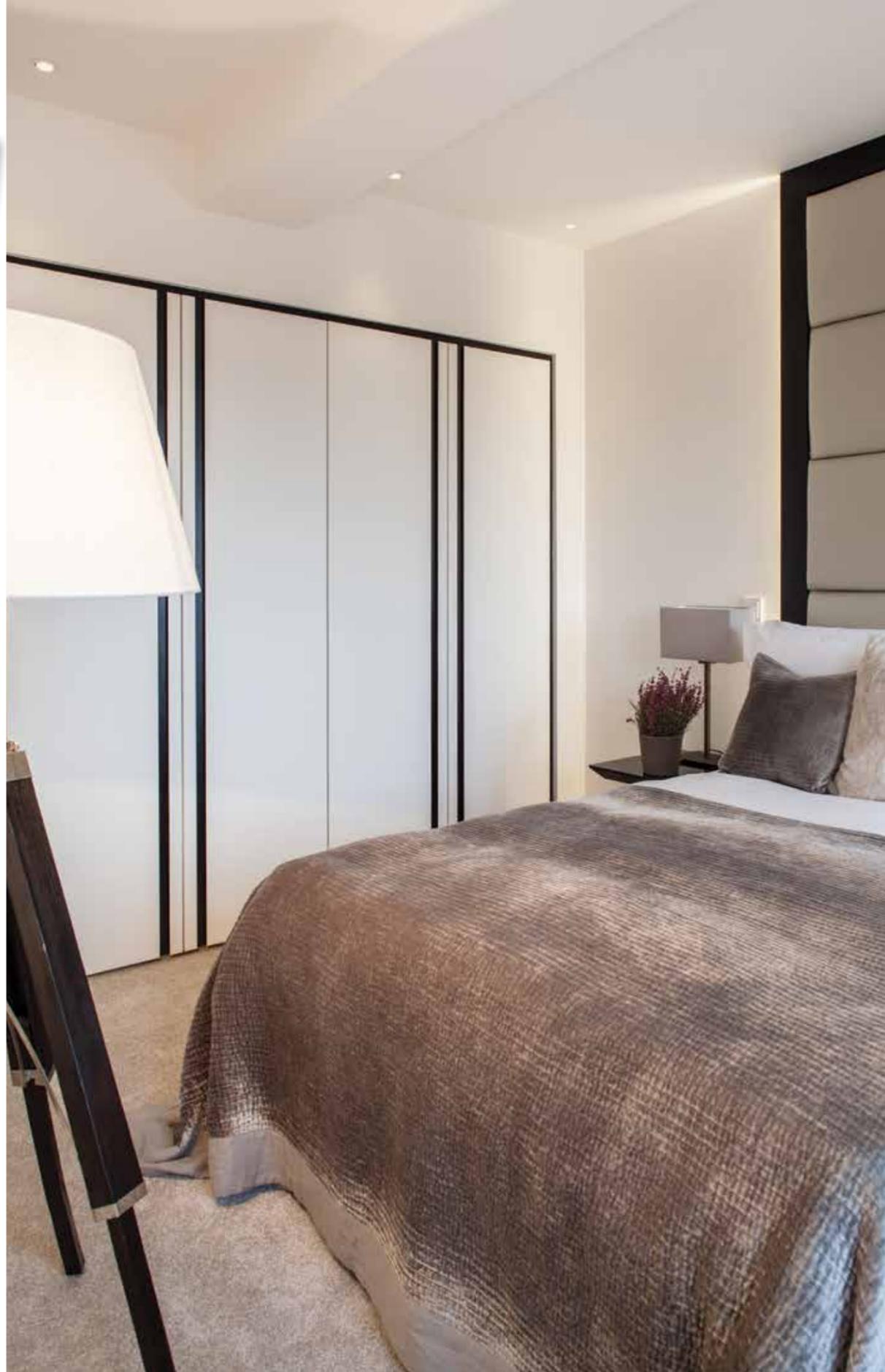
Were there any U-turns during the project?
No. I have a very hands-on approach with every project I tackle, so before anything is done I draw up all the rooms so the client can see the position of everything in every room, from light switches to paint colour, what's fabric, what's stone and so on. It helps make sure we achieve exactly what they want first time.

What was the biggest challenge with the project?

It's a mansion flat within a large complex so waste removal was tricky, plus we had to make sure we kept other residents informed of progress.

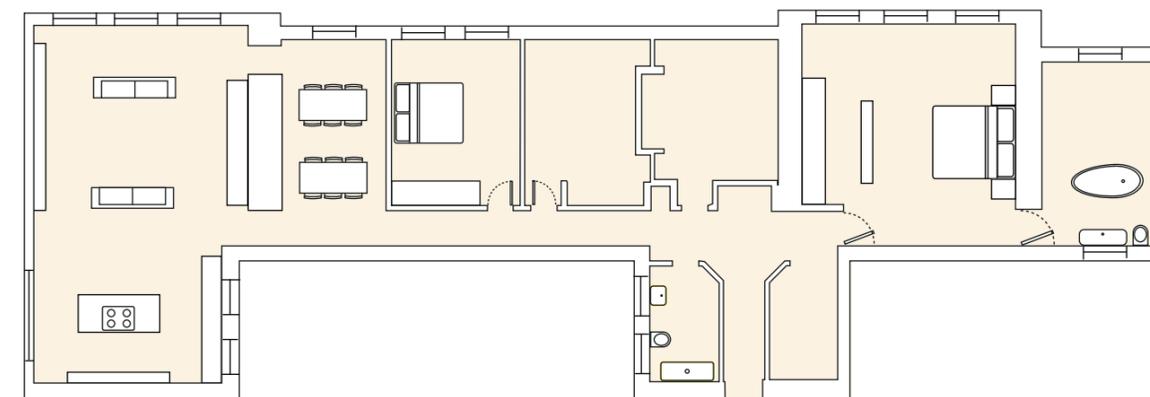
What advice would you give people embarking on a similar project?

Your relationship with architect and designer is pivotal so employ one person from concept to completion. And take your time planning – it's easy to rip up a piece of paper with a drawing on it but not so easy to move a wall.



Right: The guest bedroom isn't large but has been thoughtfully designed in taupes, creams and silver, so it looks smart yet cosy.

Opposite page: The impressive headboard in a subtle off-white is the outstanding feature of the room, running all the way up to the ceiling, and is backlit for great effect.



Right: The guest bathroom is slightly smaller, but it is still roomy enough to easily incorporate this beautiful full-length bath as well as a luxuriously wide basin.



GET THE LOOK

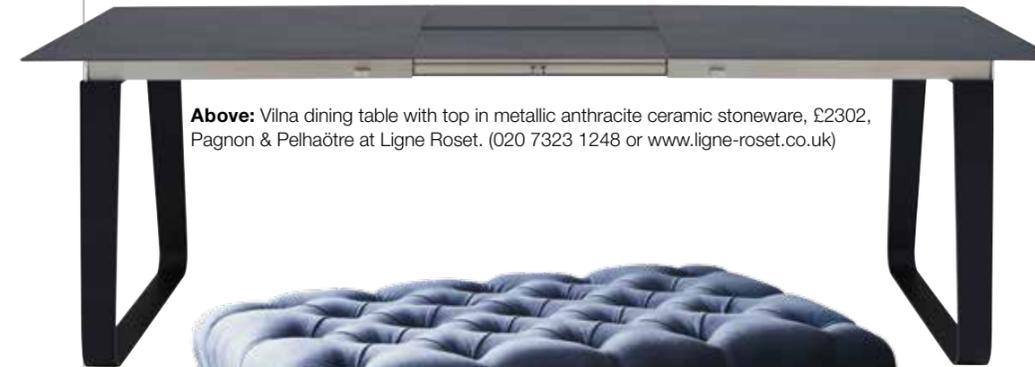
Below: Furia Odyssey medium Aredo sofa in white, John Lewis. (0345 604 9049 or www.johnlewis.com)



Above: Calvin Klein Acacia sequin cushion cover, £70, House of Fraser. (0345 602 1073 or www.houseoffraser.co.uk)



Ellison dining chair, £179 for a pair, Made. (0344 257 1888 or www.made.com)



Above: Vilna dining table with top in metallic anthracite ceramic stoneware, £2302, Pagnon & Pelhaötre at Ligne Roset. (020 7323 1248 or www.ligne-rosset.co.uk)



Above: Elbert footstool, £388, Rowen & Wren. (01276 451077 or www.rowenandwren.co.uk)



Dylan ash wood table lamp with fabric shade, £70, Habitat. (0344 499 4686 or www.habitat.co.uk)

SourceBook

DESIGN

Architect Eamon McGurnaghan of EMGa Limited (07974 393481 or www.emgalimited.com)

KITCHEN

Cabinetry Bespoke design in timber and Corian. For similar try Higham Furniture (020 7381 0488 or www.higham.co.uk)

Worktops Corian (0800 962116 or www.corian.co.uk)

Appliances Ovens, hob and extractor, Miele (0330 160 6600 or www.miele.co.uk)

Sink and tap Franke (0161 436 6280 or www.franke.com)

Shutters Plantation Shutters (020 8871 9222 or www.plantation-shutters.co.uk)

DINING ROOM

Table B&B Italia (020 7591 8111 or www.bebitalia.com/en)

Chairs For similar try Chaplins (020 8421 1779 or www.chaplins.co.uk)

Pendant lights Tom Dixon (020 7400 0500 or www.tomdixon.net)

Flooring The Natural Wood Floor Company (020 8871 9771 or www.naturalwoodfloor.co.uk)

LIVING ROOM

Sofas For similar try B&B Italia, as before

Side tables and coffee table Camerich (020 7372 9887 or www.camerich.co.uk)

Cushions For similar try Marks & Spencer (0333 014 8000 or www.marksandspencer.com)

Lighting Overhead track lighting, Mr Resistor (020 8874 2234 or www.mr-resistor.co.uk); Lamps, for similar try Heathfield & Co (01732 350450 or www.heathfield.co.uk)

Rug For similar try The Rug Company (020 7908 9999 or www.therugcompany.com)

GUEST BEDROOM

Bed For similar try Savoir Beds (020 8838 4838 or www.savoirbeds.co.uk)

Headboard For similar try a bespoke design from Headboards (020 8863 7006 or www.headboards.ltd.uk)

Throw For similar try House of Fraser (0345 602 1073 or www.houseoffraser.co.uk)

Floor lamp For similar try Yves from Habitat (0344 499 4686 or www.habitat.co.uk)

Carpet For similar try JAB Anstoetz (020 7348 6620 or www.jab-uk.co.uk)

Blinds For similar try made-to-measure Roman blinds from Laura Ashley (0333 200 8009 or www.lauraashley.com)

MASTER BEDROOM

Bed For similar try Savoir Beds, as before

Headboard For similar try a bespoke design from Headboards, as before

Lamps For similar try Christopher Wray (020 7013 0180 or www.christopherwray.com)

Footstool For similar try a bespoke design from The Footstool Workshop (01443 831981 or www.thefootstoolworkshop.co.uk)

Throw For similar try The White Company (020 3758 9222 or www.thewhitecompany.com)

Cushions For similar try LuxDeco (020 3586 1536 or www.luxdeco.com)

Carpet For similar try JAB Anstoetz, as before

Chair Camerich, as before

TV Panasonic (0334 844 3899 or www.panasonic.co.uk)

MASTER ENSUITE

Brassware Crosswater (0345 873 8840 or www.crosswater.co.uk)

Bath and basin Lusso Stone (020 3370 4057 or www.lussostone.com)

Towel warmer CP Hart (0845 873 1121 or www.cphart.co.uk)

Vanity unit Bespoke. For similar try a bespoke design from EDK (020 8245 5986 or www.edk-carpentry-joinery.co.uk)

WC Happy D by Duravit (0845 500 7787 or www.duravit.co.uk)

Seat For similar try a bespoke design from The Sofa & Chair Company (020 8993 4415 or www.thesofaandchair.co.uk)

Flooring and cladding behind bath Marble. For similar try Mandarin Stone (01600 715444 or www.mandarinstone.com)

GUEST BATHROOM

Bath and basin Lusso Stone, as before

Brassware Crosswater, as before

WC Duravit, as before

Floor and wall tiles Domus (020 8481 9500 or www.domustiles.co.uk)

Pendant light Mr Resistor, as before

COST

A similar kitchen would cost around £30,000, and Ripples could create a similar master bathroom, starting from around £12,000