

FULL CIRCLE

This bijou London apartment has evolved into a home that feels spacious with clever use of shapes, storage and smart design



PHOTOGRAPHY VIGO JANSONS
WORDS EMMA J PAGE

LIVING ROOM

A mini office was created in one corner. The desk was positioned at an angle for a more relaxed look and to zone the space.

Desk, Roche Bobois. **Kramer stool** and **desk chair**, both Liang & Eimil. **Clarkson table lamp**, Visual Comfort & Co

DINING AREA

The round table is ideal as it allows for better movement around the open-plan living and dining room. 'We chose one whose colours and texture echo the decorative elements of the fireplace,' says designer Olga.

Wall object in Pacifica Blue, Eichholtz. **Step rug** by Olga Ashby and Riviere Rugs. Savile Row **chandelier**, Bella Figura. **Table**, Roche Bobois. **Chairs in** Dalie Papaveri Tulipani fabric, Dedar





LIVING ROOM

'We took as many opportunities as we could to reflect the light,' says Olga, who backed the alcoves with mirrored panels. She also put a framed mirror between two windows and added a light.

Mateo **chair**, Soho Home.

Side table, West Elm.

Wall light, Atelier

Alain Ellouz. **TV console** (just seen), Roche Bobois



LIVING ROOM

'We added panelling to the walls for an elegant Parisienne look,' says Olga. 'And I enjoy the tension created between linear and rounded shapes.'

Rug, Riviere Rugs. Kelly sofa, Eichholtz. Roman side table, Fiona Barratt-Campbell. Gong coffee table, Gallotti&Radice

The fact that interior designer Olga Ashby is ‘tuned into every possible shade of white’ is something that she attributes to a childhood spent in Siberia.

There, she grew used to the nuances of sunlight bouncing off snow on the coldest winter days, or the particular cool light of a crisp, clear morning. That, says the interior designer, was a useful skill when it came to lending this apartment a sense of understated airiness, with its off-whites and deep creams, underpinned by the occasional shot of blue or green.

Olga was given one instruction when she took on the project: ‘Don’t play it safe.’ And despite an easy-on-the-eye colour palette, the scheme uses texture and a touch of trickery to fulfil that brief. Created for a busy working mother of two and inspired by Parisian interiors, the apartment has been reworked to incorporate a host of intricate design details, from discreetly placed lighting to make the ceilings look taller to the entrance hall’s softly curved built-in storage created to stand proud of the wall rather than flush.

‘I knew the owner had a certain design confidence when she rejected my first suggestions for her bathroom,’ says Olga. ‘She told me it was too conventional and I needed to go back to the drawing board. That was music to my ears.’ The designer introduced a deep midnight blue to ground the scheme – one of the owner’s favourite colours – repeated in the electric blue convex artwork that hangs above the dining area’s fireplace. That set the tone for the renovation.

Key was navigating an awkward layout and maximising storage. ‘I love lateral living because it has the scope to feel really generous,’ says Olga. ‘But it can be challenging, too. Success lies in carving storage out of every inch and ensuring there are no dead ends. I try to make sure that apartments are based on

the principle of circular space – that way you trick the eye into thinking that the home is bigger than it is.’

Some creative tweaks to the layout were required to make it suitable for family life. ‘The owner wanted her children to have the biggest bedrooms, which meant being clever with storage in the smallest,’ says Olga. ‘It needed to incorporate a wardrobe and access to a small bathroom, previously reached from the hallway.’ Space was stolen from the adjoining kitchen to create built-in

cupboards, while a new mirror-fronted pocket door has turned the bathroom into an en suite. ‘Our solution to its diminutive size was to position the basin under the window, topped by a removable mirror incorporated into the window ledge.’

To increase flow and maximise light, Olga replaced two doors in the living room with metal-framed windows. ‘I always introduce black into a scheme,’ she says. ‘It’s the equivalent of adding eyeliner when applying make-up.’ Opposite, she added mirrors in between the windows to amplify scale. Built-in alcoves in the dining area mirror those in the sitting zone and a TV is nestled behind a painting. Softening touches prevail, including

bouclé sofas and suede panelling in the living area and silk-covered joinery in the main bedroom. ‘The schemes are fresh and sensory,’ Olga reflects. ‘We paid attention to absolutely everything.’ It’s these subtle but creative design details that make the whole of this elegant apartment so much greater than the sum of its parts.

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THE DESIGNER

Interior designer Olga Ashby renovated this apartment for a family of three.

The owner runs her own logistics business. She has a 13-year-old son and a six-year-old daughter.

THE PROPERTY

A west London apartment on the second floor of a 1930s building. It has an entrance hall, living-cum-dining room, kitchen, three bedrooms and two bathrooms.

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KITCHEN NOOK

Generous mirrors serve to create a feeling of space. The forest-green banquette provides an informal alternative to the main dining area and is now one of the owner's favourite spots.

Bespoke curved **sofa**, SM London. Telma **table**; Kramer **stool**, both Liang & Emil. Alberto **chandelier**, Visual Comfort & Co. Bespoke **mirror wall**, Brompton Glass



KITCHEN

'We stole a little of this room's space to introduce storage in the owner's bedroom, making it seem even longer and narrower,' says Olga. 'To counter that, we chose not to have wall-mounted cabinets, keeping the look light and fresh.'

Bespoke **kitchen**, Neil Norton Design. Clemente **wall lights**, Visual Comfort & Co. Livello **tap**, Lusso Stone

MAIN BEDROOM

'The idea was to get a cocooning feeling in this compact space,' says Olga. A wallpaper with a cascading willow design, velvet headboard and textural bedding do the job.

Willow **wallpaper**, Yana Svetlova Wallcoverings.



Custom-made **bed and headboard**, SM London. Tracy **side table**, Laskasas. Atacama **lamp**, Bella Figura. **Curtains** in Pyramides fabric by Nobilis; **custom-made by** Autumn Down

CHILDREN'S BATHROOM

Tall mirrors conceal additional storage, while a built-in niche accommodates towels. 'We also opted for a terrazzo-style wall finish for texture,' says Olga.

Volini **vanity unit**, Lusso Stone. Custom-made arched **mirror-storage**, Victorian Joinery. Crosswater **taps**, West One Bathroom. **Artwork** (seen in mirror), Bianca Smith



ENTRANCE HALL

To solve space constraints, Olga designed storage that protrudes slightly into the hall in order to gain valuable extra inches. 'We softened off the edges and liked the effect so much that we repeated it in the main bedroom.'

Kramer **bench**, Liang & Eimil. **Mirror**, The White Company. Claydon **wall lights**, Visual Comfort & Co. Custom **closet**, Victorian Joinery





DAUGHTER'S BEDROOM

A whimsical mural reminds Olga of a contemporary take on the tapestries found in English and Scottish castles. 'We chose a design that would work in teenage years, too,' says Olga.

Mythical Land **wallpaper**, Kit Kemp for Andrew Martin. Custom **bed**, Sueno Beds; headboard in a Dedar fabric. Mody **side table**, Andrew Martin. Aloanie **table lamp**, RV Astley. **Curtain** in a Jason D'Souza fabric