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RECALL: 04/05/11



# CLEAR VISION

*With its new expansive windows and sweeping spaces, the Victorian home of Kirsty and Tom Jones is full of ingenious design ideas*

WORDS RACHEL LEEDHAM | PHOTOGRAPHS DAVID GILES

## LOWER-GROUND FLOOR

*The feature window of the kitchen-dining room extension curves around a pear tree and provides the perfect spot to sit.*

**Noguchi coffee table**, from £1,130, Twentytwentyone, 020 7837 1900, Twentytwentyone.com. **Wave sideboard**, £1,630, Russell Pinch at The Conran Shop, 0844 848 4000, conranshop.co.uk. **Homegrown Green rug**, from £600sq m Edward Barber and Jay Osgerby at The Rug Company, 020 7229 5148, therugcompany.info.



## KITCHEN-DINING ROOM

*An unusual chandelier, which Kirsty brought back from Hong Kong, softens the lines of the oak and glass staircase.*

**Architect.** Shahriar Nasser at Belsize Architects, 020-7482 4420, belsizearchitects.com.

**Bibliothèque dining table.** £3,775; **Manilla chairs,** from

£210 each; all The Conran Shop,

0844 848 4000, conranshop.co.uk.

**Limestone floor.** Aged Khandesh tiles, from £78sq m, Martin Moore Stone, 01372 478955, martinmoorestone.com.

**Faux hydrangeas.** £30 for five stems, Peony, 0844 557 4959, peony.co.uk.





## H&G CONTEMPORARY HOUSE

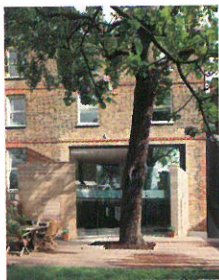


### KITCHEN-DINING ROOM

*Kirsty chose a bright-red Aga to add a splash of colour to the neutral scheme.*



*"We realised that, with a blank canvas like this, we had the potential to create something really special"*



Kirsty Jones's most vivid memory of her first viewing of her family home was the sight of the centenarian pear tree that towered over the property. "I remember turning to my husband Tom and asking him what on earth we would do with that huge tree," she recalls. "It seemed so out of proportion for a London garden, but as it came with a preservation order, we knew we would have to live with it."

Arboreal issues, however, were not Kirsty and Tom's only worry: the Victorian house had been divided into five bedsits, with a kitchen and bathroom on every floor. What is more, the couple and their three young children, Finlay, Callum and Isla, were then still based in Hong Kong, where Tom was working as a lawyer and Kirsty was running her own pilates studio. "Buying the house demanded a big leap of faith," Kirsty admits. "But its location – just a sneeze from Hampstead Heath – was absolutely perfect for us, and we realised that, with a blank canvas like this, we had the potential to create something really special."

Having made that decision, the couple started making plans to prepare the house for their return to Britain. It was while searching online that Kirsty came across Shahriar Nasser, of Belsize Architects, and when she arranged to meet him on her next trip over to London, she was inspired. "I had talked to other architects and felt that their ideas didn't bring the house back to life," she recalls. "Shahriar seemed to understand completely what we wanted. When he emailed over the drawings, Tom and I instantly knew that he was the man for the job."

The plans for the living spaces entailed a new extension to the

### LIVING ROOM

*Low, clean-lined furniture ensures an uninterrupted view across the terrace to the 100-year-old pear tree.*

**Similar sofa,** Andersen Line sofa, from £5,200, Minotti, 020 7323 3233, [minottilondon.com](http://minottilondon.com).

**Similar patterned cushions,** Clifton Interiors, 020 7586 5533, [cliftoninteriors.com](http://cliftoninteriors.com). **Vigo sun loungers,** £1,499 each, Gloster, 01454 631950, [gloster.com](http://gloster.com).











## MAIN BEDROOM

*The simple Chinese chests in Kirsty and Tom's bedroom reflect their love of Eastern-inspired design.*

**Chinese bedside trunks.** £289 each, Oka, 0844 815 7380; okadirect.com. **Fabric on headboard,** Hortense, £95m, William Yeoward at

Designers Guild, 020 7351 5775, designersguild.com.

**Savoy bedlinen,** from £25 for a pillowcase, The White Company, 0845 678 8150, thewhitecompany.com.

**Similar lamp base,** Harlequin Retro, £80, John Lewis, 0845 604 9049, johnlewis.com.

## BATHROOM

*Antique Venetian mirrors above twin basins add an ornamental touch.*

**Similar basins,** Foster wash bowl, £226, Duravit, 0845 500 7787, duravit.co.uk.

**Limestone tiles,** Aged Muscat, from £66sq m, Martin Moore Stone, 01372 478955, martinmoorestone.com.

**Faux orchids,** £148 each, Peony, 0844 557 4959, peony.co.uk.







kitchen-dining room on the lower ground floor. The outer wall of this was glazed and curved itself around the trunk of the old pear tree, while the roof of the extension became a terrace leading out from the living room on the floor above. On either side of the glazed facade at garden level, the solid wall was clad with cedar slats, to match those used to create a decking area outside, which helped to blend the house with the outdoor space.

The major structural work began while the family was still in Hong Kong but, despite this, Kirsty "lived and breathed" the project, marking out exactly how each space would work in her home in Asia. While she respected Shahriar's architectural vision, she was not always in agreement with him about certain details. "We had endless battles," she admits. "Shahriar thought the floor in the family room should be brick, but I disagreed. And he was horrified when I told him I wanted an Aga. I grew up in Wales where all my friends' families had Agas and, for me, they epitomise what a home should be. It only made it worse when I said it had to be red."

But then, by using pieces such as the pillar-box red Aga as an accent device, Kirsty has been able to add colour throughout the otherwise neutral scheme of pale limestone, off-white walls and honey-toned timber. The overall effect is incredibly restful, with abundant light and leafy views that make the house feel wonderfully calm. "When one of my best friends first walked through the door, she described the place as monastic, and it feels so serene that I think she's absolutely right," Kirsty says.

The same friend – novelist Freya North – was so taken by the story of the great pear tree that it inspired the plot for her latest book. "I was tickled that it played a key role in a romantic novel," Kirsty admits. "I wouldn't say that seeing the tree was love at first sight for me, but I can't imagine life without it now." ■

## BEDROOM

*Kirsty has indulged daughter Isla's penchant for pink in her room.*

**Kaspar wallpaper**, £49 for a 10m roll, Sandberg, [sandbergab.se/en](http://sandbergab.se/en).

**Anastasia bed**, £300, Aspace, 0845 872 2400, [aspace.co.uk](http://aspace.co.uk).

**Lazzari storage unit**, £130, Great Little Trading Co, 0844 848 6000, [gltc.co.uk](http://gltc.co.uk).



## CHILDREN'S BATHROOM

*Mosaic tiles in various shades of green provide freshness and fun.*

**Similar tiles**, Misty Green Mix mosaic, £22.35sq m, Topps Tiles, 0800 783 6262, [toppstiles.co.uk](http://toppstiles.co.uk).

**Similar basin**, Vero, £299, Duravit, 0845 500 7787 [duravit.co.uk](http://duravit.co.uk).

