

# HOUSE & GARDEN<sup>®</sup>

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When Thomas Noel was looking for an interior designer to help him plan alterations to his new apartment in Lennox Gardens, he sought someone who would be adaptable to his suggestions and, ideally, capable of dealing with the structural side of the work, too. Juliette Byrne fulfilled all these roles. With her contractor, Alexander Maltby, she was able to start work at once on the flat, which did not appear to have been touched for around half a century and needed entirely rewiring. 'It was like walking into a time warp,' she says. 'The old faded, shabby sofas were still there, and the wallpaper was hanging off the walls.'

With the aid of informal sketches by William Pounds, Juliette Byrne and her client planned the structural alterations. The flat had contained two

# NEW FOR OLD

Juliette Byrne employed modern means to reinstate a feeling of age in her client's London flat, as Lavinia Bolton reports. Photographs by Mark Fiennes

**1-3** Rich ochre walls, sponged and glazed to produce an aged effect, set the scene for evening entertaining in the drawing-room. The buttoned ottoman is upholstered in 'Gascogne' velvet from Lelièvre. The antique marble chimneypiece (3) is surrounded by an iron club fender made by Fiona Cottrell. Family portraits flank a convex mirror and a Regency rosewood chiffonier (2).



long, thin bedrooms, of which one now forms the dining-room. The remaining bedroom was shortened so that a dressing-room could be incorporated. Bathroom and dressing-room are linked to the bedroom by an attractive arch, and another arch leads through a lobby into the hall. The effect is one of a self-contained suite of rooms.

'The atmosphere we were seeking was one of comfort and tradition,' says Juliette Byrne. 'So, to that end, we tried to reinstate the original period feel of the flat. We put back cornices and a chimneypiece, chose fabrics that reminded my client of his visits to Italy, and used a number of specialist paint effects to give an aged feel.'

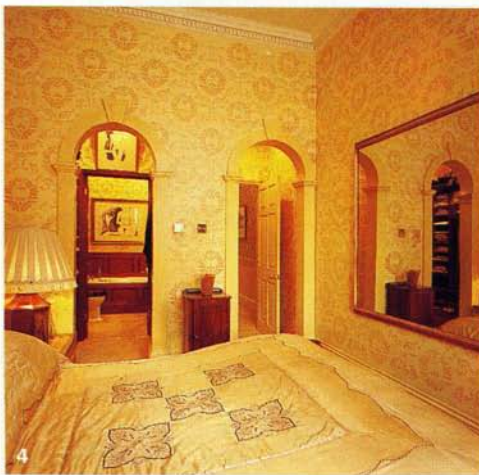
The drawing-room was well-proportioned, with a central







*‘The atmosphere we were seeking was one of comfort and tradition . . . something that reminded my client of his visits to Italy’*



**1-2** A mahogany table was specially made for the long, narrow dining-room. With removable leaves, it can seat up to fourteen guests. A rectangular gilt-framed mirror (1) successfully counters the narrow shape of the room. A fleur-de-lis wallpaper from Watts of Westminster evokes a grand yet intimate atmosphere. The fretwork candle shades are from Vaughan.

**3-5** A bathroom (3) and dressing-room are linked to the bedroom (5) by the left-hand arch (4). The right-hand arch leads through a lobby into the hall. Walls in both the bedroom and the mahogany-panelled bathroom were stencilled by Jonathan Clive, who based the design on the Fortuny damask curtains. Nudes by Alex Sinclair hang in both rooms.

chimney and recesses either side. In view of the height of the room, it was decided to commission new bookcases rather than look for free-standing antique ones. These were constructed in MDF, then painted and glazed with a convincing wood-grain finish by Jonathan Clive. The same effect has been applied to the dado, panelling between the windows and the radiator grilles. Aiming for 'a warm, night room', the walls were sponged in a deep ochre and then glazed for an aged effect. The fringing around the swags and tails of the Gainsborough silk curtains was specially dyed by Wendy Cushing to echo the deep sienna colour seen in the rug from Charlotte Ed-

wards. A Louis XV grey marble chimneypiece is complemented by a cast-iron club fender covered in Alcantara 'suede', and an Italian mirror, framed in metal and glass. The yellow walls make a striking backdrop for gilt-framed family portraits, which contribute to the traditional feel.

The narrow shape of the dining-room is successfully countered by a large, rectangular, gilt-framed mirror, which doubles the apparent width of the room. Here, an imposing yet intimate atmosphere is established with a gold fleur-de-lis motif wallpaper from Watts of Westminster, and curtains in a rich satin and moiré stripe from Claremont, topped by an antique

carved pelmet. The expanding dining-table can, if required, seat fourteen. Though designed primarily for entertaining, the room can double as a study, with an eighteenth-century desk placed at the window.

The kitchen is fitted with traditional-style units with white wooden doors. White walls, tiles and a white blind add to the room's airy feel. A small fold-down table makes skilful use of space, and two black bentwood chairs echo the black frames of a set of limited-edition lithographs.

The walls in the bedroom, dressing-room and bathroom have all been stencilled by Jonathan Clive, using subtle variations of a fabric pattern.

'The design evolved from the wonderful Fortuny damask which we have used in both the bedroom and bathroom,' says Juliette Byrne. 'It is rich and evocative of great houses of the past.' The stencilling uses shades of terracotta on a yellow background, and has been varnished to give an antique effect reminiscent of faded Italian frescos.

The paintwork in the bedroom has also been glazed with a soft creamy wash, whilst the bathroom is panelled in warm-toned mahogany. A silk bed-cover, studded Moroccan chests and tôle tea-caddy lamps topped by cream slub silk shades make their contribution to a restful and romantic room □

