

Where once there was a collapsed staircase, bare brick and dry rot, there now stands an elegant home of neutral colours making the most of the large rooms refurbished by **Helen and John Davidson** in Bearsden

Words **Jennifer Harper**  
Photographs **Robert Perry**

**H**ELEN and John Davidson never intended to take on a major renovation project but their desire to return to Glasgow's Bearsden – somewhere they had lived earlier – sealed their purchase of 3 Colquhoun Drive three years ago. While they could see that the four-bedroom, late-Victorian semi needed upgrading, the couple hadn't banked on 18 months of refurbishment.

As well as needing a new roof, and the plumbing and electrics updated, there was damp and dry rot, and no central heating.

However, while work was being carried out the couple were able to reconfigure the kitchen, blocking up a door that opened into the dining room and removing another door that led to a small back hall. They incorporated this space into the kitchen, allowing more light in at the same time. They also removed a downstairs shower and turned this room into a utility with WC.

"We had done improvements to previous properties but not to this extent," says Helen. "At one point we came in and the floor was down to the foundations and the stairs had collapsed. It was horrendous. We had to take the whole house down to the foundations and take every wall back to the brick. Every wall and ceiling had to be replastered."

She adds: "We had workmen here for 18 months and we had to stay with our daughter in Edinburgh while the work was done – we just came back and forth to check on progress."

Walking into this elegant home today you are greeted by a delicious palette of neutral Farrow & Ball paint colours and wallpapers which make the most of these big and bright rooms. The entrance hall – in which the staircase had indeed collapsed – is now a warm and



# Bright & beautiful

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## Open House

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welcoming space, with the original wooden balustrades back in place.

The lounge is on the right, where a new Stonecraft stone and black marble fireplace takes centre stage. The cornicing in this room was painstakingly repaired, though the ceiling rose had to be replaced. While Helen prefers neutral wall tones, she likes to add drama through key accessories – the overmantel mirror came from their former cottage in East Lothian, but Helen painted it to tone with the fireplace, while the stylish cream painted chandelier was bought from Chalon in Edinburgh.

Another Chalon ceiling light features in the formal dining room where an antique red Chesterfield sofa in the bay window tones with the leather-back dining chairs. Next door is Helen's pride and joy, her Neptune Kitchen. The Farrow & Ball Joas White painted walls, Travertine floor and marble worktops blend beautifully with the Limestone hand-painted units, ordered from Richard F Mackay in Edinburgh, who also supplied a round table and chairs painted to tone with the units. Helen removed an electric Aga – putting a useful butcher's block table in the space – in favour of a five-ring hob. She replaced the wooden top of the butcher's block with marble to tie in with the worktops.

"Everything was bespoke to what we wanted," smiles Helen. "At first I was not sure about the double Belfast sink but I now think they are great sinks. I carried a piece of the marble around with me when choosing the wall tiles in here so that I got my toning right."

A sisal carpet was laid throughout the house – "I got fed up with wool carpets so went for the sisal right through as I like things flowing," Helen says – and leads up to the three-quarter landing, one of the four bedrooms and family bathroom, then up to the first floor and the remaining three bedrooms.

The family bathroom is a sumptuous affair thanks to the large textured wall tiles, over-sized wall-hung Duravit sink, Acova heated towel rail and free-standing bath.

"I have always had a roll-top bath," laughs ➔



Clockwise from main: the lounge now has a stone and black marble fireplace; a dramatic light fitting in one of the guest bedrooms; Helen and John Davidson; the master bedroom with cream-painted settle and sleigh bed



## Open House



**Clockwise from top left: the reconfigured kitchen now enjoys great natural light; a marble-topped butcher's block ties in with the bespoke units; the roll-top bath**

◀ Helen. "I just can't give up on them - it's a must for us. I painted the bath to match the radiator. We tiled the bathroom from top to bottom - even though the tiles were £50 each."

The master bedroom further displays Helen's eye for detail - on a day trip to Dumfries she saw a cream-painted settle in a shop window that has taken pride of place in the bay window ever since, and matches the sleigh bed, bedside tables and dressing table.

Having put heart and soul into the house the couple are now selling as they hope to move closer to their daughter and grandchildren who live in Edinburgh. "I love my house but I am really missing my grandchildren," says Helen. "I love this location as we are away from the traffic but are just around the corner from a Marks & Spencer Food store, the library and all the other shops, plus we are on the bus route in to Central Station in the centre of Glasgow."

"When we lived in Bearsden before, our bedroom window looked up Colquhoun Drive - I always admired this street so was delighted when we bought this house." \*

3 Colquhoun Drive, Bearsden, Glasgow is for sale at offers over £650,000 through Corum (0141-942 5888, [www.corumproperty.co.uk](http://www.corumproperty.co.uk))



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