



RENOVATED GEORGIAN HOME

# CITY CHIC

*The owners of this beautiful house love to spend time out and about, enjoying the sights and sounds of the capital, before returning to the calm sophistication of their London base*

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## DRAWING ROOM

As the house is on a narrow street, all the front-facing windows have been fitted with shutters to create privacy without blocking out the natural light. Tryell rug in Ocean, £123sq m, Stark, starkcarpet.co.uk.





#### DRAWING ROOM

'This room (left) is quite small,' says interior designer Emma Sims Hilditch, 'but large artworks emphasise its elegant proportions and make it feel more spacious than it is.'

London six-piece map, from £3,114 framed, Trowbridge Gallery, [trowbridgegallery.com](http://trowbridgegallery.com).

#### DINING ROOM

Owners James and Sarah wanted comfortable seating so that they and their guests can linger over meals. The classic look of the chairs is given a twist with upholstery in two different fabrics. Chairs in Anafi in Denim, £92m, William Yeoward at Designers Guild, [designersguild.com](http://designersguild.com); and Woodblock in Umber, £90m, Mark Alexander, [markalexander.com](http://markalexander.com).





#### DINING ROOM

Matching pendant lights above the table help to define the dining area in this open-plan room (above), with a similar design in the drawing room providing visual continuity.

**Interior design**, Emma Sims Hilditch, [simshilditch.com](http://simshilditch.com). **Flower arrangements**, Yeomans Flowers, [yeomansflowers.com](http://yeomansflowers.com).

#### BASEMENT

Emma has replaced the fire escape – the building was at one time divided into apartments – with a light well (left) to create a bright, inviting spot for James's desk in the basement. The Churchills use the circular table (right) for quiet family meals. Emma also designed a useful laundry area at the far end of the room, which can be neatly concealed by concertina doors.

**Walls** in Heathered Linens in Black Denim, £129.20m, Phillip Jeffries, [phillipjeffries.com](http://phillipjeffries.com). **Chairs** in Simply in Polar, £71m, Mark Alexander, [markalexander.com](http://markalexander.com); and Chiltern CHIL-008, £96m, Fermoie, [fermoie.com](http://fermoie.com). **Piping** in Foss in Russett, £62m, Colefax and Fowler, [cofax.com](http://cofax.com).

#### SITTING ROOM

The lower-ground floor has the potential to be dark. To counter this, Emma has hung an oversized mirror (above right) to bounce the limited natural light around the space. **Periers coffee table**, €1,990, Flamant, [flamant.com](http://flamant.com).

Having moved from Cambridge to Great Malvern with his wife, Sarah, and their two daughters, James Churchill, who runs his own London-based business, exchanged his pied-à-terre in Pimlico for a Georgian house in Primrose Hill. A considered makeover has since made it both a practical work base for James and an elegant, comfortable home for the whole family to enjoy. We spoke to him to find out more.

**When do you use the house?** The commute from Great Malvern to London takes around four hours, so I stay here in the week and return to the country at the weekend. During the school holidays, however, Sarah and the girls decamp to London and we live here full time. Sarah and I love London; it is where we are originally from so we have lots of friends here. It is also a convenient place to meet up with friends from Cambridge. At the weekends, we often walk across Regent's Park into the centre of the city to shop, or to just be tourists. As the children get older, I imagine we will spend more and more time here.

**Why did you choose Primrose Hill?** We looked in Hampstead, which is where I grew up, and also Marylebone, but when we found this house we settled on Primrose Hill. It feels like a village, despite being close to central London.

**What attracted you to the house?** It is in a quiet cul-de-sac and is just the right size, not too big, but not so small that we are on top of one another. The layout works well. Having the kitchen, study and sitting room all on the lower ground floor





allows us to keep the dining room and drawing room tidy for guests. We liked the architecture and the tall windows, which make the house very light. However, there is an aspect that I cannot rationalise: when I first walked in, it just felt like home.

**Was the house in good condition?** It had not been taken particularly good care of, but the shell was fine with original features such as the beautiful cornices. The only major work was converting the back of the basement into a usable space.

**Why did you turn to interior designer Emma Sims Hilditch?** We have made enough decorating mistakes in the past to know the value of using an expert. Sarah, who has always read interiors magazines, started putting together images she liked. Her favourites all turned out to be examples of Emma's work. Fortunately, Sarah and I have very similar tastes.

**What did you want for the house?** Sarah and I like good design but we wanted something personal, not a show home. We were happy to start from scratch rather than reuse existing furniture as we felt this would enable Emma to do the best job possible. I am a very precise person, so it also had to be highly functional with exactly the right amount of storage.

**Do you have a favourite room?** I am very fond of the drawing room. The light is wonderful and I love the fireplace. Art is important to me and the set of framed maps, which Emma had recoloured for us, is very special. I feel she has gone the extra mile to give the house a magical touch.

#### KITCHEN

This timeless Shaker-style scheme (above left and left) has been given a contemporary twist with features such as floating shelves and carefully chosen accessories, including chrome knobs and metallic wall lights. **Suffolk kitchen** in Grey Oak, from around £20,000, Neptune, [neptune.com](http://neptune.com). **Honed Carrara marble worktops**, £594sq m, Artisans of Devises, [artisansofdevises.com](http://artisansofdevises.com).

#### GUEST BEDROOM

Emma was mindful of the awkward shape of this top-floor room (above). 'The colours of the ceiling and walls had to sit beautifully together,' she explains, so that the distinctive shape of the ceiling did not seem oppressive. **Cushions** in York Stripe L-034, £96m, Fermoie, [fermoie.com](http://fermoie.com).

#### MAIN BATHROOM

James asked for modern sanitaryware in the bathrooms, while a classic vanity unit (above right) provides a stylish contrast, anchoring the space and ensuring the room does not look clinical. A black-and-white image (right) by photographer Charlie Waite makes an engaging focal point. **Normal bath**, £7,288; **Normal washbasins**, £1,023 each; all Agape at West One Bathrooms, [westonebathrooms.com](http://westonebathrooms.com). **Avenue of Trees artwork**, from £519 framed, Trowbridge Gallery, [trowbridgegallery.com](http://trowbridgegallery.com).



#### MAIN BEDROOM

The recess created by the chimney breast is the perfect spot for a small dressing table. Emma has paired it with a tall mirror that emphasises the generous height of the ceilings. 'Fitted cupboards would have given the main bedroom an odd shape and hidden some of the original coving, so we commissioned a free-standing wardrobe (right) with double-hanging space,' says Emma. **Mirror** with 25mm frame in silver leaf finish with minimal distressing, £260sq m, Looking Glass of Bath, [lookingglassofbath.co.uk](http://lookingglassofbath.co.uk). **Chair** in Bolgheri in Jeans, around £196m, C&C Milano, [cec-milano.com](http://cec-milano.com). **Small oil painting** by Alice Ridley, AlicesArtHouse at Etsy, [etsy.com](http://etsy.com).

