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KITCHEN

The combination of rough plaster walls, copper cladding, marble worktops and warm wood creates a pleasingly tactile scheme, while the arches and brick ceiling are inspired by Grand Central Station in New York. The four serigraphs by Andy Warhol (above right), inherited from

Jimmy's grandparents, bring colour and a note of cool irreverence to the room. **Architect.** Liederbach & Graham Architects, liederbachandgraham.com. **Dakota table bases** in matt antique nickel, from £1,836, Julian Chichester, julianchichester.com.



CHICAGO NEW-BUILD

Breaking the rules

In this creative reimagining of Georgian style, a surprising mix of materials, punchy colour and architectural flourishes brings striking personality to this modern home

WORDS JENNIFER GOULDING
PHOTOGRAPHS ERIC PIASECKI



LIBRARY

“Unexpected, with complex colours” is how interior designer Steven Gambrel describes the rich blue and salmon pink décor of this room, which naturally doubles as a study. Cushions in Granada (gilded) on Turner silk velvet in Turquoise, £1,093m. Sabina Fay Braxton at Alton-Brooke, alton-brooke.co.uk.



SITTING ROOM

“We call this the magic room because it has a psychedelic Sixties vibe,” says Jennifer. “It is a really cosy, intimate space where we like to relax and watch television.”



Building a house from scratch demands a certain audacity, a willingness to be bold and make a statement. Building a successful home, however, requires something more nuanced, a vision not just of how the finished article should look, but of how it should function. Happily, Jennifer and Jimmy Oppenheimer, who commissioned this 10,000 square foot house in Chicago, understood this absolutely.

“I had already spent ten years collecting images from magazines and ideas for materials before we began the process. We had also carefully considered how we live so the house could be tailored to our family’s needs,” says Jennifer. “I’m a wardrobe stylist and personal shopper, so I’m creative and particular about what I like. My husband is also very sure about how things should work.”

A STROKE OF LUCK

The opportunity to build their dream home arose in 2009, when a pair of adjacent houses became available in the affluent, family-friendly area of Lincoln Park, where they were already living in a 1920s brownstone. “Double lots are very rare,” says Jennifer. The Oppenheimers seized the chance and, having secured the purchase and personally reassured their neighbours that they were not developers, began the search for an architect who could replace the existing undistinguished, wooden-framed houses with their vision of one perfect family home.

They contacted Phillip Liederbach after seeing a house by noted 20th-century Chicago architect David Adler that he had helped to restore. “That house was our jumping-off point,” says Phillip. “The intention was to create something with a classical façade, which would blend in with the rest of the street.”

Inside, the architecture has a faintly English Georgian flavour, which is particularly evident in the grand entrance hall. As Phillip points out, however: “It’s not slavish to the period style; we played by the rules, and then we broke them.” This is clearly seen in the layout, which is not only simpler than that of a similarly sized period property, but answers the brief perfectly. “Instead of putting in lots of rooms that would never be used, we created a layout that comprises a small number of multifunctional spaces.”

DARING DECORATION

The greatest departure from tradition, however, is the decoration by interior designer Steven Gambrel. “I love the amazing way Steven uses colour, and his designs are always warm and layered,” says Jennifer. “In our house, there is no single type of furniture and nothing trendy, so it has the timeless feel I was after.”

“The obvious thing would have been to decorate the house in a style to match the architecture,” says Steven. “However, Jennifer pictured something personal and memorable, a look that felt fresher, punchier and less serious.”

“Although the house is sophisticated,” adds Jennifer, “it doesn’t say ‘Don’t touch’. It feels warm, inviting and lived in, which makes it really hard when we have to go away.”

ENTRANCE HALL

“I wanted a big, welcoming entrance hall,” says Jennifer. A grand sweeping staircase (above left), complete with red carpet, and a dramatic black and white floor ensure it is also an arresting design statement. Suffolk pendant light, \$13,608, The Urban Electric Co, urbanelectricco.com.

CHILDREN’S STUDY

The bay window (left) lends itself to a symmetrical scheme, which features two identical desks and a generous window seat. Walls in Burnish in Gilt, £89 a roll, GP&J Baker, gpjbaker.com. Pelmet in Karsa Flamestitch in Fall, £325m, Lee Jofa, leejofa.com.

DINING ROOM

This multifunctional space is used as a sitting room for games and a venue for casual and formal meals. The marble fireplace gives the scheme a distinctly English focal point, while the warm shades of apricot and cream look particularly beautiful by candlelight. Lincoln fireplace in white marble, £7,800; Grove register grate in brass, £3,480; both Jamb, jamb.co.uk.



JENNIFER'S DRESSING ROOM

The dressing table sits in a mirrored alcove, which creates the illusion of a much larger space. The chandelier is a 1950s design sourced from New York: "I love the way Steven uses new and vintage fittings instead of recessed lights," says Jennifer.

Walls in Amalfi Silk in Bamba Cream, around £147.90sq m, Phillip Jeffries, phillipjefferies.com.



BATHROOM

A double shower provides the link between the couple's bathrooms, a companionable design feature that does not compromise privacy.

Audrey flush mount ceiling light in gild with frosted glass, \$798, Circa Lighting, circalighting.com.





MAIN BEDROOM

"I wanted a black bedroom," says Jennifer. The soft dark grey chosen by Steven serves as an ideal foil for the photograph by Cathleen Naundorf (above left), while the richly patterned Sienna marble fireplace (left) and metallic accents offer lively contrasts to the moody hue. **Interior design**, SR Gambrel, srgambrel.com. **For a similar vintage Grosfeld House chest of drawers**, try 1stdibs.com. **Leyland wall sconce** in antique brass with Natural paper shade, \$420, Circa Lighting, circalighting.com. **Wye carpet** in Grey, £192sq m, Stark, starkcarpet.com.

JIMMY'S DRESSING ROOM

This space, which is also used as a study and sitting room (above), features a masculine palette of blues and browns with a patterned wallcovering on the ceiling that alludes to the silk lining of a suit. A vintage Sixties desk completes the smart look. **Ceiling** in Chain Link in Metallic Gold on Black Sateen Club, Phillip Jeffries, phillipjeffries.com. **Aspect small articulating wall sconce** in Bronze with Ivory linen shade, \$420, Circa Lighting, circalighting.com.

