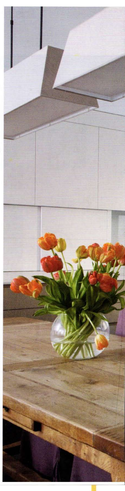
HIDDEN TREASURE

This stylish, cosy kitchen-living space is a far cry from the dark, dreary basement it once was

Report: **Felicity Borthwick** Photography: **Nicholas Yarsley**



Robert and Deborah Lawrence's Victorian home boasts a fabulous, central location and ample space, but when they moved in the interior was tired and lacklustre. Thus, they decided to strip it all back to the original brickwork and make it more exciting, at the same time installing a new staircase, electrics and lighting. Overhauling the dark, dingy basement was particularly important, as this is where the family tended to gravitate.

"The Lawrences' brief for the lower ground floor was basically to create a fun, open-plan kitchen-cum-family area where they could all comfortably spend time together," recalls Mark Howorth of design practice Callender Howorth, who masterminded the refurbishment. He created a modern, elegant kitchen towards the front of the room, which flows seamlessly into a dining and living area, then, at the rear, placed a built-in day bed on one side and a desk area on the other – both of which overlook the garden thanks to full-height glass doors. This way, the family can be using the computer, watching TV, lounging on the day bed or cooking whilst all still being together.

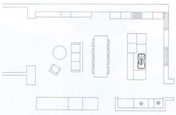
Being such an open-plan space, it was important that the kitchen was stylish but unobtrusive, which was achieved by using timeless, neutral finishes. The tall housing on the opposite wall, meanwhile, is sprayed in a metallic lacquer to tie in with the large stainless-steel fridge-freezer, which works beautifully with the white composite worktops ▶

Previous page (p139): All food items are conveniently stored in this floor-to-ceiling bank, which has been sprayed in a metallic lacquer to match the stainless-steel fridge-freezer for a uniform look.

Right: Streamlined handleless cabinetry blends into the background, focusing attention on the beautiful furniture and highlighting the room as a relaxing family space.

Above left: Large, deep drawers were specially created just below the worktop for easy access to the Lawrences' plates and bowls.

Above right: "The veneer that we used on the base units is called Alpi Acero Fraser 59. It's a very mellow, modern matt lacquer that brings interest to the design, because sometimes minimalist white joinery can look a bit bland," says Giorgia Vainutyte of Holloways of Ludlow.



and dark slate flooring. Once Mark had the basic concept and colour scheme planned out, he took his plans to Giorgia Vainutyte of Holloways of Ludlow to fine-tune the design and source a range of material samples.

"We have worked with Callender Howorth for a long time – it comes to us with a concept for the space and then we take it from there, working with the client directly to establish how they live and cook in the space," Giorgia elaborates. "So my job is to find the best layout for the joinery and what goes within it – for example where the dishwasher and warming drawer are placed for easier access, where the microwave hides, where the cereal is stored and breakfast plates gathered and so on."

As the Lawrence home illustrates, this is a very successful collaboration. There's a plethora of storage with units extending the entire length of one wall as well as around the island and across another bank of tall housing. Even the space beneath the staircase is fitted out with cabinetry, ensuring every spare inch is effectively utilised. "The smallest compartment, at the foot of the stairs, is used for storing dog food, while the next cupboard houses the children's toys, followed by a double cabinet concealing extensive racking for wine," explains Giorgia. "So there is a lot going on down here, but it's all very cleverly hidden away."

The same concept extends to the kitchen where a cupboard door next to the fridge slides back into a pocket, completely disappearing so that all breakfast items are on display and easily accessible throughout the morning. Similarly, sliding cabinetry behind the hob conceals much ▶

"Stylish pieces in natural, chalky hues recur throughout for a cohesive look that complements the kitchen finishes and infuses the space with a sense of calm."

Left: This inviting grey sofa works perfectly with the charcoal flooring, while the cushions tone in with the dining chairs. "I wanted everything to tie together and feel warm and welcoming, with a sofa that the family could sink into and relax on," says Mark.

Right: Mark suggested running a low stone shelf beneath the fireplace, adding visual impact to the room and signalling the transition from dining to living.

Below left: The base of the island features a set of dishwasher drawers and double sink cabinet. Grooves have been skilfully carved into the cupboard doors to make them appear like drawers, creating a clean, symmetrical look.

Below right: Giorgia created a breakfast cupboard next to the fridge, with a pocket door that slides back into a recess, leaving it completely open.

Above: The couple had previously had an AGA so opted for an extra-large-capacity Miele oven with a deep worktop area surrounding the hob.

of the worktop along the wall, meaning that cooking oils, bottles and the microwave are hidden away but always close to hand and ready to use. Indeed, the entire room is meticulously designed in this way, providing myriad functions and storage solutions while appearing deceptively simple.

"The biggest challenge with this project was that Callender Howorth suggested having an entire wall of joinery, which looks very modern and minimalist, but there were two chimney breasts to work around, one where the hob is and the other where the fireplace is," explains Giorgia. "They also wanted a low stone shelf protruding from this wall to add visual impact and highlight the linear design, which was quite tricky to get in between the joinery."

She has, however, executed this all beautifully. The joins in the shelf (which were necessary being such a long piece) match up perfectly with the door lines for a clean, symmetrical look, while the chimney breast challenge was overcome by creating a mix of shallow and deep units behind the uniform wall, along with some panelling behind the TV. There are also dedicated shelves for DVDs and books in addition to a flap panel to hide the AV equipment below the TV. As Giorgia remarks, "There is a place for absolutely everything."

Despite the multiple zones – cooking, dining, relaxing and working – the entire space pulls together effortlessly thanks to Mark's selection of furniture and furnishings. Stylish pieces in natural, chalky hues recur throughout for a cohesive look that complements the kitchen finishes and infuses the space with a sense of calm. The overall look is elegant yet relaxed and one that is unlikely to date. "Our aim was not to do anything too faddish," confirms Mark. "It's much better to think carefully about materials and what will stand the test of time – especially with kitchens." KBB

Mark's brief was to transform a dark, depressing basement into a comfortable and beautiful family space. He achieved this with stylish furniture, relaxing colours and sumptuous fabrics.

Above: The space beneath the staircase has been very effectively used, housing a wealth of storage for pet food, children's toys and the couple's wine collection.

SourceBook

DESIGN

Interior design Callender Howorth (020 7336 8560 or www.callenderhhoworth.com)

Kitchen Holloways of Ludlow (020 8487 9422 or www.hollowayskitchens.com)

KITCHEN

Cabinetry (base units along wall) Alpi Acero Fraser 59 veneer in vertical grain; (fridge housing) spray lacquered in RAL 7048 Metallic colour; (island and wall units) spray lacquered in Dulux 40YY 74/ 056 matt colour (off white); all by Holloways of Ludlow, as before

Worktops Caesarstone in Misty Cilmera, by Holloways of Ludlow, as before

Appliances Single oven and induction hob, Miele (0845 365 6600 or www.miele.co.uk); Dish Drawers, Fisher & Paykel (0845 066 2200 or www.fisherpaykel.co.uk); Extractor, De Dietrich (01256 308045 or www.dedietrich.co.uk); Fridge-freezer, Amana (0844 499 0101 or www.amana.com); integrated fridge-freezer, Siemens (0844 892 9044 or www.siemens-home.co.uk)

Taps Quooker boiling-water tap (020 7923 3355 or www.quooker.co.uk) and Tara Classic tap and spray by Dornbracht (024 7671 7129 or www.dornbracht.com)

Flooring Black slate tiles from World's End Tiles (020 7819 2100 or www.worldsendtiles.co.uk)

Sink Franke Kubus (0161 436 6280 or www.franke.com)

Barstools Lam by Lapalma (www.lapalma.it), available from Nest (0114 243 3000 or www.nest.co.uk)

Dining table Vintage. For similar try Loft dining table from Wharfside (020 7253 3206 or www.wharfside.co.uk)

Dining chairs Pedro by B&B Italia (020 7591 8111 or www.bebitalia.com)

Lights above table Hinoutimire by Stéphane Davidts (www.davidts.com), distributed by Mr Light (020 7352 7525 or www.mrlight.co.uk)

Sofa Long Island by Flexform (www.flexform.it)

Coffee table Custom made. For similar try Mac & Mac Interiors (01252 717777 or www.macandmacinteriors.co.uk)

Chair Kalos by Metalfis, distributed by Geoffrey Drayton (020 7387 5840 or www.geoffrey-drayton.co.uk)

Rug Form 2 by Tom Dixon for The Rug Company (020 7259 5148 or www.therugcompany.com)

Day bed Custom made by Holloways of Ludlow, as before, and upholstered in Canaletto by Osborne & Little (020 7352 1456 or www.osborneandlittle.com)

Side table Dakota by Julian Chichester (020 7622 2928 or www.julianchichester.co.uk)

COST

Bespoke kitchens from Holloways of Ludlow start from £25,000