

Light work

Beyond the riot of tartan and shag pile, the Harts saw a Victorian townhouse that could become a home, writes **Fiona Reid**

Where other people saw an outdated, aesthetically challenged B&B, Beverley and Michael Hart saw the bare bones of a spacious and contemporary family home when they bought this five bedroom, mid-terrace Victorian townhouse at 28 Linkfield Road, Musselburgh back in July 2004. While the location was a major selling point, as the house has fantastic views (particularly from the main bedroom on the first floor) to Musselburgh racecourse and Musselburgh links – the world's oldest playing golf course – towards Fife beyond, internally, the house was a riot of shag pile and tartan carpeting.

Although the couple – who have two children, Sadie, seven, and Innes, four – now work together at the integrated communications agency Union, Michael originally trained and worked as an architect and had the vision to see that, once stripped back, this house presented a blank canvas. The period features were still intact, including working shutters, panelled doors, ornate cornicing, lovely

fireplaces and the original timber floors.

The Harts took their cue from the coastal light when choosing the mellow palette, including hues from Farrow & Ball and Fired Earth. The biggest change they made in terms of the functionality of the house is the open plan dining-kitchen to the rear, which was previously two rooms and is now a fabulous, light-filled family space overlooking the south-facing rear garden.

The remainder of the ground level also needed a rethink in terms of layout and use of space. Today's sitting room had previously been a bedroom but, as Beverley says: "It didn't make sense having the sitting room and kitchen on different floors." The en suite for this was redesigned as a very smart shower room accessed off the hallway instead, with iridescent mosaic tiles cladding the shower enclosure. The family bathroom upstairs was similarly transformed in terms of layout and fittings – including glass mosaics from The Original Tile Company – and the



shower room on the upper level was also redesigned.

The final task of decorating the stairwell was actually one of the most transformative parts of the refurbishment as the white walls here, combined with the light pouring in from the cupola above, have illuminated the core of the house. As Beverley says: "Our whole approach to this house was about simplifying it and making the most of the light."

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The kitchen/dining area, main; the exterior, left