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The bright living room has two large stone mullioned windows from which white gloss paint was carefully removed to reveal the original stone. Walls in Farrow & Ball's Shaded White complement the

period features. The sofa from Sofas & Stuff is teamed with cushions from Susie Watson Designs. The armchair, bought at auction, has been recovered in Issoria fabric from Designers Guild. The pendant is from Next

A labour of love

Nichola and Richard Keeble sensitively renovated this 17th-century property in the Cotswolds, restoring period features and uncovering hidden history along the way

FEATURE AND STYLING PIPPA BLENKINSOP | PHOTOGRAPHS KASIA FISZER





Relocating to the Cotswolds from a Victorian home in Lincolnshire, seasoned renovators Nichola and Richard Keeble decided they wanted a project, but didn't anticipate some of the discoveries they'd make peeling back the layers of their home's 400 years of history. Having holidayed in the area for years, they were searching for a quintessential Cotswold home and found the perfect property in the small town of Painswick. The exterior had all the charm of classic Cotswold architecture, featuring gables, a slate roof and stone mullioned windows. Inside, the property required updating but was full of potential. 'There's something about this house; it flows nicely, and for the large size there are relatively few rooms, which gives the feeling of space,' says Nichola.

When the couple viewed the property, they approached it via the garden, which captured their imagination. 'It felt like a secret garden,' says Nichola. The house had been in the same family since 1964 and its elderly resident had been living in only a few rooms. 'Everything was run down. All the work was typical of the 1960s and 1970s, with exposed pipework and surface-mounted wiring.'

They moved in during December 2020 and immediately set to work on their renovation plans. They needed listed building consent and planning permission but with a local draughtsman helping with the plans, the application went smoothly. In the meantime they 'camped' in the house. 'We had the electrical system checked, as everything switched off if we had more than three things running,' says Nichola. 'The kitchen looked like the one in *The Tiger Who Came To Tea*, and had a dangerous oven so we got a small stand-alone cooker. The hallway roof leaked but we had to just collect the rainwater in buckets and bide our time until we could get it reroofed.'

The pandemic had caused delays and Nichola and Richard struggled to find builders to do the work, but in January 2021 the renovation was finally underway and the family moved into their rental property next door. Among the first jobs were replacing that leaky roof and adding metal-framed double doors in the dining room to replace a single uPVC door. The electrics were updated, a new bathroom and two en suites were fitted, and a new boiler and radiators were installed.

To create extra headroom, the kitchen and utility floor level was excavated and lowered, and the old



tiles were replaced with limestone flagstones from a local quarry, complete with underfloor heating. 'To our surprise, the builders found a 10-metre deep well in the utility room, covered with rusty corrugated iron and concrete,' says Nichola. The well was topped with glass and made into a unique feature.

With the help of local craftsmen, Nichola and Richard have taken care at every stage to preserve original features. The oak beams were stripped and original beams were uncovered behind plaster in the kitchen. 'It was lovely to discover the beams, but some of the joists were rotten so needed repairing,' adds Nichola. Downstairs, black-painted wooden floors were stripped and varnished, and thick gloss paint was removed from the windows to reveal the original stone. 'Old, neglected houses will always have issues that catch you unawares,' says Richard. 'One of the nicer surprises was finding a builder had recorded the date he worked on one of the beams - April 10, 1769. Elsewhere, a plumber had noted his work behind a sink in 1960.'

To let the period features shine, Nichola has decorated with neutrals to complement the wood and stone, adding colour and pattern through her handmade curtains, artwork and collectables. She loves visiting antiques auctions and flea markets, and has gathered many characterful pieces over the years. 'I like old things, they have personality and a story to tell,' she says.

Now that their daughter has left home, Richard and Nichola are looking to downsize, keen to take on another restoration. 'We are proud of what we have achieved,' says Nichola. 'We've given the house love and attention, making it ready for the future.'

Nichola and Richard made the kitchen feel as light as possible, opting for a neutral palette and wall shelving over cabinets to keep the space feeling open. A white cooker and metal tiles from Mandarin Stone also brighten the space. The tulips are from Smith & Munson



THE STORY

PROPERTY A Grade II-listed, five-bedroom Cotswold home in a conservation area in Painswick, Gloucestershire. The property dates back to the 17th century with 18th and 19th-century additions

OWNERS Nichola Keeble, a textile artist, lives here with her husband Richard, an IT consultant

WHAT THEY DID Sections of the roof were replaced, part of the exterior was repointed and double metal-framed doors were fitted to the rear of the property. A new heating system was also installed and the house was completely rewired. The kitchen was replaced, and a family bathroom and two en suites were created. Original beams, floors and stone walls were professionally restored

oucestershire Home

The kitchen was extremely dated with 1960s units and dangerous old appliances. The old terracotta floor was excavated, lowered and replaced with limecrete and light limestone flagstones. Nichola and Richard

had a traditional handmade Shaker-style kitchen made by Woodchester Cabinet Makers with oak worktops. The walls are painted in School House White by Farrow & Ball and the cabinet doors are in Drop Cloth



The snug is connected to the dining room via a stone archway. Previously painted black, pine flooring was professionally stripped to showcase the beauty of the timber. The snug features a beautiful stone fireplace carved with a lily of the valley design



A single door was replaced with double metal-framed doors from Mike Honout Windows. They have lightened the dining space, says Nichola. She found the dining table and chairs on eBay and had the carver chairs recovered in purple fabric

Old carpet was removed from the dining room staircase and the sides were painted with Farrow & Ball's Shaded White, ready for a stair runner



Walls in Farrow & Ball's Shaded White provide a calming backdrop in the main bedroom. The upholstered bed and bedside tables are from Feather & Black, the trunk and wall sconces were antique finds. Wool insulation was laid under all of the wooden floorboards on the first floor



The original roof beams make a stunning feature in the attic guest bedroom; all the beams were sandblasted and finished by hand. Local carpenter Richard Cleaver created the built-in storage to make the most of the awkward angles in the space



Originally two rooms with plasterboard ceilings, the dividing wall was removed to create a large bathroom. The ceiling was also opened up to reveal beautiful original beams. The floor tiles bring a modern twist and the bath rack is from Baileys Home