

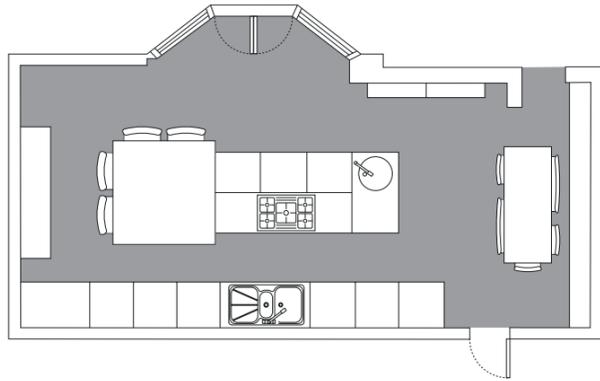
A photograph of a kitchen featuring a wooden countertop on a grey cabinet. A large blue pendant light hangs above the counter. On the counter, there is a vase with greenery, a white utensil holder, and a glass jar of oranges. A stainless steel sink and faucet are visible on the right side of the counter. The background shows blue kitchen cabinets and framed artwork on the wall.

Making a statement

The lower ground floor of this Wimbledon home has been transformed with a unique, characterful kitchen from Richard Baker Furniture

Words: **Felicity Borthwick** Photography: **Malcolm Menzies**

Previous page (p121): An additional sink set within a large slab of wood provides the perfect place for chopping vegetables and is thus referred to by the family as 'the vegetable sink'.



Amelia and James Harrison's home is a period property with bundles of charm, so the stark white kitchen that was here when they bought it never sat particularly well with them. It had been installed by a developer and felt completely soulless. Thus, when the time came to extend – to accommodate their growing family – they took the opportunity to put in something more suited to both their tastes and the architecture: a unique, handmade kitchen from Richard Baker Furniture with traditional-style units and plenty of personality.

"When the Harrisons came to see me they were very clear that they wanted something more in keeping with the house, but they also didn't want anything too 'kitcheny,'" recalls Richard Baker. "This is why we created the blue cabinet with mirrored panelling; it's a great statement piece and really softens the room when you walk in."

This is complemented by beautiful antique mirror on the splashback and inside the larder, which enhances the room's classic feel. "We have a splashback like this in our showroom and the couple just really liked it," remembers Richard. "Lots of people come in and comment how amazing it looks but don't end up choosing it. I'm really glad Amelia and James did, though, as it works perfectly in this space. Our Lansdowne kitchen also works really well in here as, with its bevel-framed doors and decorative cornice, it's ideal for period properties with high ceilings," he continues.

Another fabulous piece is the blue dresser on the adjacent wall. Amelia had seen something similar with bi-fold doors and wanted one for her own kitchen so Richard designed this model to match the rest of the cabinetry. "We placed it here because Amelia wanted the kids to be able to sit at the adjacent breakfast bar and get out their bits and pieces without having to enter the cook zone," explains Richard. "It offers plenty of storage and, again, has more of a furniture feel, which prevents the room from being overpowered with functional-looking fitted units."

The couple also didn't want too much work surface as they felt this would make it easier to keep the kitchen tidy. As such, there is just a large central island unit and another short worktop on the nearby wall. Both areas feature sinks and the one on the island is set into a thick wooden slab, which is ideal for chopping vegetables.

"We installed the second sink on the island so that there are two distinct but separate prep zones," explains Richard. "Often in kitchens with islands, several people can work at the same time, but they all end up being focussed in the same area. In here, they will be more spread out and less likely to get in each other's way."

As the kitchen is part of a large space that also incorporates a dining table and adjoining sitting room overlooking the garden, it was important to create a sense of cohesion throughout. Thus, the Harrisons decided to enlist the services of Debbie Beaumont from Beaumont ►



The hob and sink on the island are positioned so that the Harrisons can look out of the bay windows whilst they cook. There are also two pull-out bins beneath the sink so that waste can easily be disposed of as they prepare food.



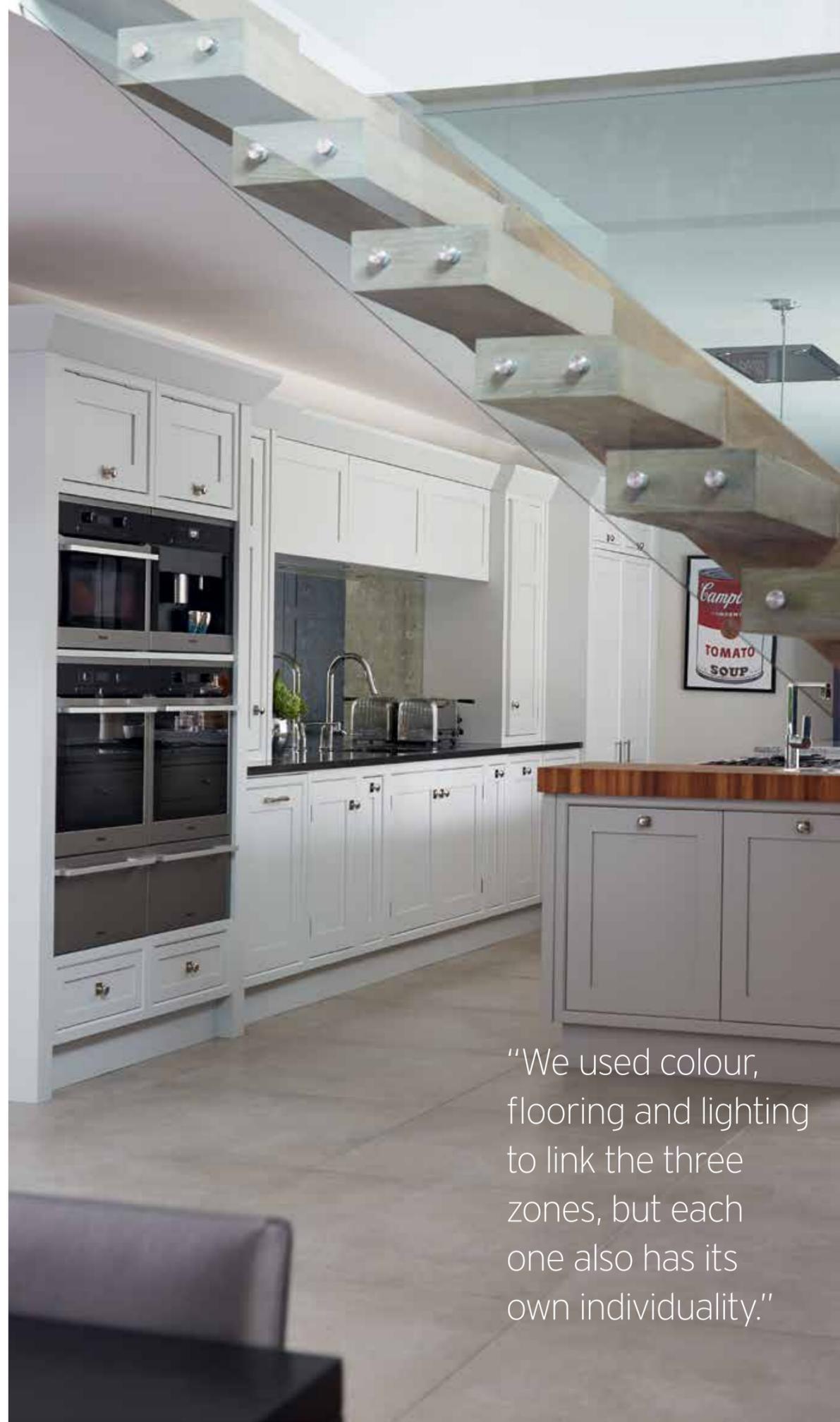
Above: “The granite worktop has been raised up at the end, as the couple wanted a defined breakfast bar where the children can sit and do their homework,” explains Richard. “This also helps create interest, as there’s the risk of it looking a bit bland if the stone is all on one level.”

Right: Although a staircase slices through the middle of the room, glass balustrades have been used to prevent the structure from blocking out light or detracting from the room’s open, airy feel.

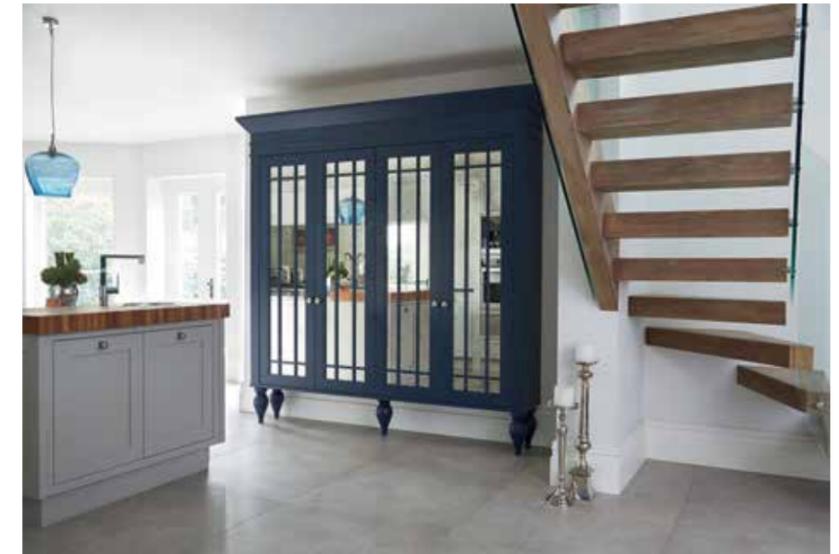
Interiors, who helped design the rest of the house to assist with these surrounding areas.

“The house already had substantial formal entertaining rooms on the floors above, but the couple wanted the kitchen space to be elegant enough for informal entertaining when required and for the lower ground floor to flow,” recalls Debbie. “So we used colour, flooring and lighting to link the three zones, but each one also has its own individuality, helped by the division of a stunning glass staircase.”

Indeed, with stylish accessories dotted throughout the room – including Porta Romana table lamps and a large metal wall clock – combined with the exquisite kitchen furniture, the Harrisons’ kitchen is now anything but stark or soulless. “The aim was to move away from anything too ‘kitcheny’ or functional-looking, with low- and high-level units, and I think we have achieved this,” concludes Richard. “I would always recommend trying to get a feature piece in if you can too, as it gives your kitchen personality and stops it from looking like a showroom.” [KBB]



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Above: Designer Richard Baker suggests introducing a statement piece into your kitchen to give it character and this blue cabinet with mirror panelling is the perfect example.

Left: Antique mirror has been used for the splashback as it helps make the room feel wider. It also adds a nice vintage touch and works well with the cabinetry in giving the kitchen some period-style charm, just as the couple wanted.



Q&A

Designer Richard Baker says...

What was the biggest challenge with this project?

The Harrisons wanted some big appliances in here, but the room is quite narrow so fitting these in whilst still leaving plenty of room to work in was a bit of a challenge.

Is there anything that you think works particularly well in here?

Yes, the feature cupboard – it looks great but also provides so much storage, eliminating the need for wall units.

Do you have any tips for people embarking on a similar project?

I think really try not to overcrowd your kitchen and, again, get a feature piece in there. Also, ensure that several people can work in there at the same time without it feeling cramped, which can happen with an island sometimes.

Is there anywhere you managed to save money?

I guess just having less cabinetry and not overdoing it. Some people keep a lot of stuff they don’t even use, so you should look at what you actually need or use before you pay for storage for it.”





Above: "I took Amelia and James to the stoneyard to choose some stone for their worktops and they fell in love with this Super White granite," recalls Richard. "It brings a bit more movement and character to the kitchen."

Left: The staircase acts as a natural divide between the kitchen and dining area, where an elegant table and a run of low-level cupboards, again created by Richard Baker, sit. Some stylish accessories such as the table lamps and wall clock also help make this area feel more like a dining space rather than just a corner of the kitchen.



SourceBook

DESIGN

Kitchen Richard Baker of Richard Baker Furniture (020 8336 1777 or www.richardbakerfurniture.co.uk)

KITCHEN

Cabinetry Painted MDF with walnut interiors, Lansdowne Kitchen by Richard Baker Furniture, as before

Worktops Granite in Super White, Richard Baker Furniture, as before

Splashback Antique mirror, Richard Baker Furniture, as before

Appliances Ovens, microwave, hob, dishwasher, warming drawers, fridge, freezer, wine storage unit and coffee machine, all Miele (0330 160 6600 or www.miele.co.uk); Vario fridge, Gaggenau (0844

892 8988 or www.gaggenau.com/gb); Cooling drawer, Fisher & Paykel (0800 088 6600 or www.fisherpaykel.com/uk)

Sinks Kohler (0844 571 0048 or www.kohler.co.uk)

Taps (at main sink) Hansgrohe (01372 472001 or www.hansgrohe.co.uk) and Quooker (0808 102 0677 or www.quooker.co.uk); (at vegetable sink) Abode (01226 283434 or www.abodedesigns.co.uk)

Flooring Porcelain Dylan tiles in light grey, supplied by Style Ideas (020 8543 7587 or www.style-ideas.co.uk)

Dining table Bespoke design by Beaumont Interiors (www.beaumontinteriorslondon.com), made by Tablemakers (020 7223 2075 or www.tablemakers.co.uk)

Chairs Two Burwood carver chairs, two Burwood dining chairs and two Grosvenor benches, designed and made by Beaumont Interiors, as before

Clock The Richard Harvey Collection (01608 662168 or www.rhcollection.co.uk)

Table lamps Lamelles de Miroir from Porta Romana (01420 23005 or www.portaromana.co.uk)

Pendant lights Curiosa & Curiosa (01629 826284 or www.curiosaandcuriosa.co.uk)

Barstools Griffin barstools from Beaumont Interiors, as before

COST

Kitchens from Richard Baker Furniture cost around £30,000 excluding worktops and appliances