

Leap of FAITH

Tackling the sensitive renovation of a historic house has been a challenging but rewarding journey for Alison and Daren Hall

FEATURE AND STYLING JANET MCMEEKIN | PHOTOGRAPHY ANDREAS VON EINSIEDEL



HOME TRUTHS

THE PROPERTY

Detached, Grade II*-listed house

ROOMS Sitting room, TV room, kitchen/dining room, boot room, cloakroom, study, five bedrooms, three bathrooms

LOCATION Somerset



SITTING ROOM

It is thought that the beautiful stained-glass panels depicting the four seasons date back to the Victorian era.

Cushions on sofa in Royal Oak, Lewis & Wood, and Ian Sanderson's Pasha Embroidery and Pomeroy Paisley. Flowers by Floristry at Poplars Farm Barns

HALLWAY

Alison was delighted when planning permission was granted to replace the pillars and corning in the hallway with wooden panelling.

Panelling in Drop Cloth; walls in Shadow White, both Farrow & Ball. Cushions, Timorous Beasties. Bench, Marchand Antiques



Embarking on a major renovation journey takes a special kind of couple, especially when it is a neglected property that many other house-hunters have walked away from. However, from the moment Alison and Daren Hall set foot in an unloved Jacobean house, they were determined to become its next custodians. 'Since the house is Grade II* listed, we didn't know whether planning permission would

be granted or not,' says Alison. 'Although it was a huge gamble, we just had to buy it.'

The couple had been scouring the UK for a suitable area to live with their daughters, Lilybet, 15, Clementine, 13, and Constance, 11, when Daren came across this neglected three-storey property in a Somerset village. Lured by the wealth of period features, he arranged a viewing. 'Behind the front door lay a spectacular

home with a labyrinth of rooms steeped in character,' Alison says. Built in 1653 for a successful wool merchant named John Horsman, it was extended on the north side in the 19th century and altered through the years, particularly during the 1970s.

Having secured the property and with the planning permission regulations to navigate, the Halls were thrilled when architect Simon Morray-Jones agreed to





**KITCHEN/
DINING ROOM**
‘Our kitchen maker really went the extra mile to research the history of our home and work with the unusual space to design a fantastic kitchen and dining area,’ says Alison. Kitchen cabinets, Joel Bugg Furniture & Spaces. Walls in

Pink Ground; cabinets in Railings, both Farrow & Ball

BOOT ROOM
The family’s Italian Spinone, Sid, is very much at home in this rural retreat.

Tongue-and-groove panelling in Inchyra Blue, Farrow & Ball. Wooden bench, the-saleroom.com





BATHROOM

To inject more character here, Alison sourced an antique chest. Bath, Cast Iron Bath Company

STAIRCASE

The space features an enchanting rope handrail. Pendant light, Pure White Lines Antiques & Interiors

BEDROOM

Determined that every one of the five bedrooms should have a very different feel, Alison felt this light-filled space called for a feminine and elegant look. Vintage crystal wall sconce, Fritz Fryer. Quilt, The White Company. Walls in Setting Plaster, Farrow & Ball



come on board. 'The house felt rather higgledy-piggledy and didn't flow well,' Alison says. 'Many viewers were put off by the fact that, rather than a spacious kitchen-diner, there was a small galley kitchen and cramped utility room.'

After many conversations with Simon and his colleague, Helen Carey, plans were drawn up to remove a stud wall to combine the two small rooms and create a spacious

dining room, complete with double doors leading out to the garden.

On the other side of the mullioned window dividing the spaces, the former dining room would become the kitchen. On the first floor, a Jack and Jill bathroom was to be repurposed as a study, while a child's bedroom and a dressing room would become two bathrooms. In the attic, the disused space was to become a bedroom.

Once planning permission was granted, building work began. At this point Alison started to think about the decor, taking inspiration for the colour scheme from some old wallpaper that was discovered when they bought the house. 'I felt the muted palette of blues and greens with splashes of pink and yellow in the wallpaper would work beautifully and pay homage to the house's past,' Alison says. To ensure the

'Dating back to the Jacobean period, the house is mentioned in the Domesday Book'



choices would be harmonious and the ideal background for the couple's artwork. Alison invited Joa Studholme from Farrow & Ball to visit. 'Joa was brilliant, lovely and her expert advice definitely helped to crystallise my thoughts,' says Alison.

With atmospheric colours selected, Alison approached Victoria Clark Interiors for help. 'Victoria came up with wonderful ideas for gorgeous fabrics and also made our

curtains, blinds and soft furnishings beautifully,' says Alison. The final result is a breathtaking home designed for modern-day living, while still retaining echoes of the past and a feeling of timeless escapism. 'It's a magical home,' says Alison, 'and we adore making memories here.'

Wool Merchant's House is available to book for holidays through Unique Homestays, uniquehomestays.com

ATTIC BEDROOM
'This fun space has been such a hit with our daughters and guests alike,' says Alison.
Roman blind fabric, Ada & Ina. Cushions, Barneby Gates. Trunks, the-saleroom.com

'It's a magical home – and we adore making memories here'

