

In the know

The latest news, advice and information for period homeowners

BY KAREN THOMAS

PL PROPERTY INSIGHT



Interior designer Antonia Stewart shares her advice on:

...the current trends in home interiors:

'People are focusing on buying essential items that will allow them to live more comfortably while personalising their home. There has been a return to classic designs – which will fit into any scheme and will not date. Likewise there has been a shift to purchasing good quality products that will look better and last longer than poorer quality versions. The environmental impact of the goods we buy is also very much in our minds at the moment. Never has there been a better time to buy British – there are so many great UK designers to choose from that whatever your requirements or price bracket, there should be something to suit you.'

...the key features to look for when buying a period home:

'A good survey will highlight any items of concern, so read this carefully before buying a period home. A new owner could face large bills in addition to the purchase price if major works are required. Check also to see if the house is listed as to make changes to a listed property is more difficult than usual. With this in mind ensure that not too many of the original features have been destroyed.'

...what's worth investing in for your house:

'The best money you can invest in your house is on the building itself. If, in the first instance, you can get the space right followed by the architectural details: skirting/architraves, fireplaces and flooring – you can then let the contents of the house evolve over time. Refurbishment and repairs should be done in accordance with the history and fabric of the building – an owner of a period home has a responsibility to preserve it for future generations.'

...what's worth spending on:

'Things that can come with you. Beautiful furniture, art, a fabulous cushion or rug. It doesn't matter what it is but if you buy something that is made



well and looks good, you will always want to have it in your house. Fresh flowers are also a favourite, as are lots of pictures, books and photographs; a house feels so much more alive when it is filled with the character of the people that live in it.'

...what's worth saving on:

'Equipment that is difficult to work. With little enough time in the day, complicated equipment ultimately just becomes redundant. Manufacturers have realised that simplicity is the key and that people would rather be able to use their common sense to achieve a task than spend hours reading small print about functions that they will never use.'

Antonia Stewart (antoniastewart.com)

LIVE IN PART OF A FORMER ABBEY

4 St Scholastica's Abbey in Teignmouth, Devon, is part of a former abbey built between 1859 and 1863 for the Benedictine Nuns of Dunkirk on land given by a local benefactress. The property, which is Grade II listed, is constructed in the Gothic revival style. It was sympathetically converted in the mid 1990s and provides accommodation on a grand scale. The bright and airy rooms are enhanced by the changing light through the stained glass windows. The property has four double bedrooms and three en-suite bathrooms. Period features include marble and gilded columns, two ornate iron chapel screens and an intricately decorated and painted dome ceiling in the dining hall. The property is for sale priced at £750,000. For more details visit wilkinsongrant.co.uk.



PEOPLE PLAY IT SAFE WHEN CHOOSING INTERIOR SCHEMES

Many Britons are influenced by their parents' 1970s style ethic when it comes to their decorating choices, a new study has found. The poll of 3,000 households across the UK by Crown Decorating Centres has revealed that almost six out of every 10 British homes (57%) are painted either white, cream or magnolia inside. Virtually the same number (51%) admit that their childhood or family homes were painted in exactly the same off-white colour. The study also found that when we do get around to redecorating, our walls can remain untouched for up to 10 or more years – a third of those polled say they haven't repainted any of their interior walls for around five years, while one in 10 Britons repaints their interior walls just once every decade. ➔