



IN THE SPIRIT

The owners of this Lutyens-designed house wanted to pay homage to its creator while avoiding pastiche, which they and their designer achieved with handmade wooden furniture, a muted palette and a smattering of Arts and Crafts-inspired pattern

TEXT **CHARLOTTE MACKANESS** | PHOTOGRAPHS **SIMON UPTON**

Designers dream of houses abounding in architectural heritage and of brave, open-minded clients. With Alex and Peter Ferrari's Lutyens-designed Warwickshire home, Caroline Paterson found both. Together, designer and clients have captured the spirit of the Arts and Crafts Movement, both aesthetically and in their commitment to traditional workmanship and the finest natural materials.

The house, commissioned by Lord Wimborne for his agent in the first decade of the twentieth century, has an elegant symmetry and common-sense solidity. 'When I walked through the door 17 years ago, I knew it was for me because of the way everything flows,' says Alex. 'It is practical and easy to live in, with no cold corridors or out-of-the-way rooms.'

In 100 years the layout has changed very little. There are five well-proportioned rooms downstairs, along with a pantry-turned-snug. A sitting room occupies the space vacated when the dining room moved to what was a substantial but increasingly redundant hall at the house's heart. Upstairs, five bedrooms mirror the arrangement below. In 1999, Alex and Peter employed the late architect and Lutyens enthusiast Roderick Gradidge to extend the kitchen, which was enlarged by incorporating a scullery and coal bunker, and pushing out an existing wall.

Caroline Paterson's initial brief to decorate solely the drawing and sitting rooms soon expanded to take in the entire house and an

adjoining guest cottage. 'The work was phased gradually over eight years; it's been very progressive,' she says. 'It's all too easy to create a pastiche with a house like this, but our aim was to be sympathetic to Lutyens without being slavish.'

The palette of predominantly off-whites, browns and mustards peppered with blues and crimsons balances a clean, modern look with a subtle nod to the Arts and Crafts Movement. The large windows are dressed simply with blinds and curtains, hung from wooden poles, made from fabrics whose motifs also echo the house's heritage: circular patterns and floral outlines are a recurring theme.

Such references have been assembled from diverse sources and periods. For instance, an arresting quilt made of World War I uniforms hangs halfway up the stairs, close to a black-and-white Thomas Lee oil from the Sixties. 'For me, the house works because of this eclecticism and quirkiness,' says Caroline. 'Lutyens was visual and forward thinking, as are Alex and Peter. This gave me a wonderful free rein.'

Throughout the house, the attention to detail is striking but inconspicuous and has been applied with a deft hand, often with bespoke commissions. The specially made cream, purple and green rug in the main bedroom, for example, was inspired by a book of black-and-white Fifties prints belonging to Caroline. Similarly, the

ABOVE FROM LEFT There is a large pond in the gardens of Alex and Peter Ferrari's Lutyens-designed house. The gardens were landscaped by Lutyens's great-great nephew Mark. They feature eye-catchers, such as two huge slate spheres by Joe Smith. OPPOSITE Above the chimneypiece in the study is a painting by Bianca Smith



staircase and landing carpet was woven from Welsh woollen yarn hand-picked to reflect the varied hues of the interior.

Wood is pivotal in this house, its importance underlined by the grand hall staircase, sourced by Lutyens and thought to be Jacobean. Architect Clive Butcher's careful research and cabinetmaker Jonny Abraham's handiwork have resulted in exquisite turned-wood radiator covers, a splendid serpentine loo seat and copious beautifully crafted storage spaces.

Their work – and meticulousness – is most apparent in the study, the room with the most Arts and Crafts allusions. These include panelling, a sturdy desk and fitted furniture, such as a bookcase complete with handmade wavy glass panels.

The garden has also been the subject of thoughtful attention. Little had been made of the outside space by previous owners so the work was a major undertaking for designer Mark Lutyens, a great-great nephew of the architect, and Penny Smith, who did the planting.

It is punctuated with paths, topiary, herbaceous borders and eye-catchers, such as a bronze horse's head by Nic Fiddian-Green and two vast slate spheres by Joe Smith. 'They come into their own at this time of year. When it snows, they look like giant Christmas puddings,' says Alex. No doubt Lutyens, a man of whimsical humour, would approve □

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THIS PAGE The chair in the study is by Massant; the oak desk, bookcase and radiator cover were designed by Clive Butcher. OPPOSITE CLOCKWISE FROM TOP LEFT The house, which dates from the early twentieth century, has an elegant symmetry. The chestnut television cabinet in the sitting room is by William Yeoward. Roderick Gradidge designed the kitchen. In the main bedroom, the rug is by Jacaranda Carpets; the 'Elka' stool is by William Yeoward. The mirror above the basin outside the study is by Birgit Israel. The staircase is thought to be Jacobean. In the drawing room, a metalwork owl by Curtis Jere sits on an oak table from Soane

