



SERENE ROBUST &

Japanese serenity happily sits with the demands of young children in this London house

Words MARK KEBBLE

Yoko Kloeden, Director of Yoko Kloeden Design, has recently completed a major renovation of her three-story family home in Richmond. The project included demolishing the poorly done ground floor extension, gutting and stripping the entire house, rebuilding the rear extension to make a large family area, adding two rooms to the loft level as the second floor, and refurbishing the whole house including the garden.

With the help of Ampersand Architecture Ltd., the house was converted to a spacious four-bedroom, two-bathroom house with a large family area and a home office. The cool colour palettes were chosen to keep the mood (and the children) calm and serene, while robust and repairable natural material was chosen to withstand busy family life.

An entrance hallway sets the mood of the house and expectations of guests. Having searched for wall coverings that represent the house's low-key, yet elegant aesthetics, Kloeden chose clay plaster for its tactile texture, calm appearance, easy maintenance and environmental credentials. It also gives a nod to her Japanese background as the clay plastering has long been used in traditional houses in Japan. The hexagon floor

tiles are a contemporary take on traditional encaustic tiles and made of porcelain to withstand daily foot and buggy traffic.

The originally enclosed hallway was opened up and now leads to an open plan family area that accommodates a lounge, kitchen, dining and children's zone. Different shades of blue and green accent the room including Moroccan hand glazed tile cladding on the chimney breast.

When the family bought the house, the rear extension had polycarbonate roofing and they used to jump up from its noise level when a neighbour's cat had a visit. The extension had to be demolished and rebuilt. A large roof light was installed over the kitchen, flooding the room with natural light despite being in the middle of the house. The kitchen doors, drawers and cover panels with brass recess were designed by Kloeden to fit IKEA carcasses and crafted by her skilled joiner. A slab of Carrara marble was chosen for the splashback to glam up the kitchen and worktops are Silestone, chosen for its durability.

The original rear extension was in poor condition and was separated into three areas with the original exterior walls still in place. It was demolished and turned into one large open plan area with the



dining and children's zone at the back. The brick walled garden covered with ivy and an apple tree was there when the family bought the house. The black crittall style steel doors were chosen to be features by themselves while adding rhythm and impact in framing the garden view. The exterior is brought inside by extending the original brick wall indoors. 'I use natural materials wherever possible as I love how they age. The key to use natural materials in a tough environment (a.k.a. young children) is to embrace their imperfections and choose the ones that are easy to repair,' says Kloeden. The front room was closed off to create a home office. Black is used as a common thread throughout the house, while it is used here in a big expanse to a dramatic effect.

The master bedroom was

created in a newly built loft room. With the knowledge that rooflights provide three times more light than the same area of vertical glazing, Kloeden chose to have walls and floors painted in dark colours for a cocooning effect. Full height glazing screens off a section of the room to provide a walk in shower area. This allows the couple to

appreciate beautiful veins of marble used as wall tiles. It also makes the room feel bigger.

The children's rooms were designed around the concept of forest bathing – the Japanese practice of basically just being in the woods. The floorboards are original Victorian pine sanded back and white oiled by the contractor of the project.

Both children's rooms' chimney breasts were demolished to make the most of the space. The girl's room follows a forest theme and the colour palette was taken from the vintage rug bought in Istanbul's Grand Bazaar. Kloeden's work is often inspired by her travel. The pink is limited to paints so it can be easily repainted.

The bathroom layout was designed to maximise its floor space while ensuring a full size bath tub and a walk-in shower to accommodate the needs of young children as well as older children. Black Moroccan Zellige tiles are used to add a warm authentic feel to this monochrome palette. **R**

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