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A FINE BALANCE

Amid a happy blur of kids and dogs, designer Meghan Carter throws a few calming colours and unexpected curves into a blended family's classic home.



Extra-deep seating in the airy sunroom off the living room makes it a magnet for casual family gatherings. *Chairs, Structube; seat cushion upholstery fabric, Threadcount Textile & Design.*



Meghan placed a curvy, 10-foot-long sofa in the corner of the living room to soften the rectangular space and create multiple conversation areas. **Sofa design**, Meghan Carter Design; **sconces**, **swivel chair**, Elte; **blush armchairs**, LD Shoppe; **rug**, Allan Rug Co.; **wall colour**, Heron Plume (SW 6070), Sherwin-Williams.

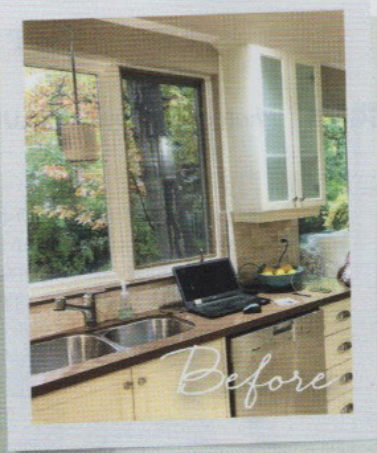


Homeowners Andrew and Suzanne relax in the living room.



RENOVATION IS AN ACT of optimism that requires trust, imagination and a million major and minor decisions ranging from the removal of a wall to the colour of a kickplate. Things get even more tricky when the homeowners have somewhat different tastes. “He has a sleek, contemporary aesthetic, while she’s drawn to a more classic, traditional look,” says designer Meghan Carter of her clients Suzanne Cowan and Andrew Clark. Suzanne is the president of the Liberal Party of Canada, and Andrew is an entrepreneur and founder of Triangle Capital Corporation, and their blended family includes Malcolm, 14, Grace, 14, Harriet, 11, Clara, 9, and their two dogs, Daisy and Sparky.

In 2018, Meghan took on the makeover of their dark and dated three-storey, five-bedroom, 4,500-square-foot

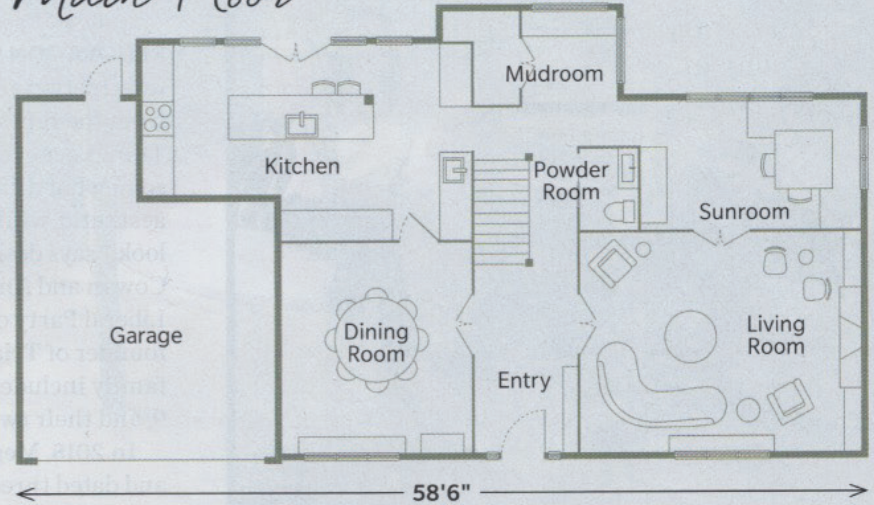


Integrated pulls on the cabinet doors add to the kitchen's sleek design, as does an island cleverly located to incorporate a structural post and dropped beam.
Wall ovens, fridge, Caplan's Appliances; cabinets, Colclo Custom Woodworking.



Designer
 Meghan Carter.

Main Floor



58'6" 30'8"

SEE SOURCE GUIDE

Photography by Meg Mulligan (Meghan's portrait)

Tudor-style house in Toronto, the couple's first home together. "The goal was to create a place where everyone felt at home," says Meghan. Buoyed by that idea, Suzanne and Andrew left all their former furniture behind. "This was an opportunity to have a fresh start, to really create a space that worked for us," says Suzanne.

They were both enthusiastic about incorporating one another's styles, so Meghan set out to design cheerful, family-friendly interiors that were a blend of

traditional detailing and more contemporary sensibilities. They envisioned a modern, light-filled kitchen with a casual, hub-of-the-home vibe. It was also important to Suzanne to preserve the architectural integrity of the house.

With such disparate decorating looks, there were bound to be a few design speed bumps along the way. For instance, Andrew liked the contemporary vibe of pale, wide-plank flooring, while Suzanne preferred the dark hardwood floors she was accustomed to.



Before



"I wanted the bar at the end of the kitchen to have its own distinct look," says Meghan, who painted the cabinets grey to create a visual transition to the dining space adjacent to the kitchen. **Sinks, faucets**, Roman Bath Centre; **linear light fixture**, Universal Lighting; **flooring**, Nadurra Wood; **bar cabinet colour**, Gray (2121-10), Benjamin Moore.



"We wanted to create a home where nothing is too precious and we could entertain a crowd," says Suzanne of her choice of a round, stain-resistant dining room table that can seat 10. **Chandelier**, Union Lighting and Furnishings; **dining table design**, Meghan Carter Design and Mary Ratcliffe Studio; **dining chairs**, Structube.





Before

TOP LEFT: The surprise of joyful wallpaper in the powder room makes the most of a tiny space. **Pendant**, Universal Lighting; **wallpaper**, Cole & Son; **sink**, Roman Bath Centre; **faucet**, New Canadians Lumber.

TOP RIGHT: Clara loved the idea of a swing in her bedroom but didn't want too much colour on her walls. Meghan disguised the bulkhead by painting it the ceiling colour. **Ceiling fixture**, Luminaire Authentik; **swing chair**, Jardin de Ville; **desk, chair**, Ikea; **ceiling colour**, Solitude (SW 6535), Sherwin-Williams.

BOTTOM RIGHT: "Clara's a little more punk in her style, so we used a lot of graphic black and white in her bedroom," says Meghan. **Duvet cover, nightstand**, Ikea; **sconce**, Triple Seven Home.

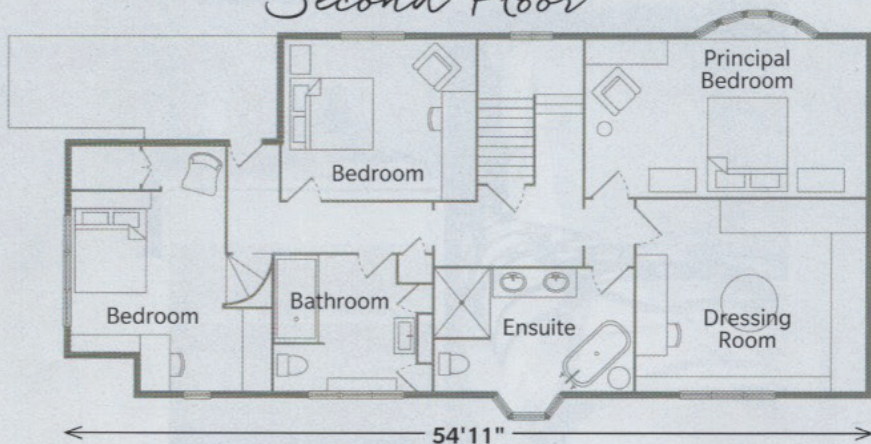


Meghan became an expert at finding the common ground between them. Once the eight-month-long renovation was done and the dust settled, it was clear that the result was a perfect balance of her yin and his yang.

Throughout the home, panelling was preserved but painted out to add a sense of space and light. On the front of the house, all the windows were replaced using traditional wood frames with proper muntins to maintain its historical Tudor character. In the formerly formal dining room, instead of a classic chandelier, a contemporary glass pendant now hovers over an unexpectedly round white table. And the original kitchen's awkward light-blocking back door entrance was replaced by a 16-foot-long wall of sliding glass doors and panels that give the space a sunnier disposition with a view to the leafy backyard.

But good design is all about your life, not a decorating style. "We wanted a home we could

Second Floor



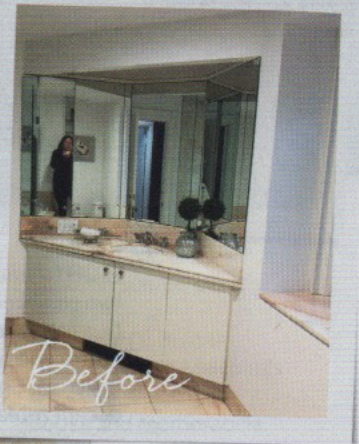


TOP LEFT: Part of the second-floor principal suite, the dressing room features grasscloth-clad closet doors and a custom radiator cover designed with built-in shoe storage. **Ceiling fixture**, Union Lighting and Furnishings; **ottoman**, Elte Mkt.

TOP RIGHT: "Harriet loves soft, quiet and cosy things, and we wanted her room to feel very feminine," says Meghan, who designed a fabric canopy for her bed that can easily be removed in the future. **Bed frame, duvet cover**, Ikea; **pendant**, EQ3.

BOTTOM RIGHT: Tucked into a corner of the sunlit principal bathroom, a freestanding tub makes a sculptural statement. **Tub, tub filler**, Roman Bath Centre; **art** by Kate Loudoun-Shand.

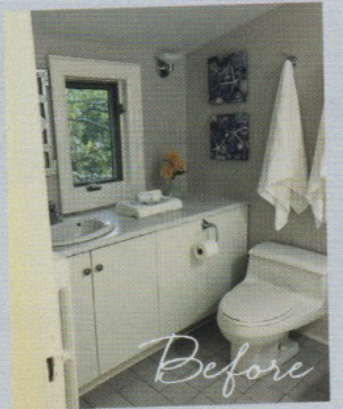
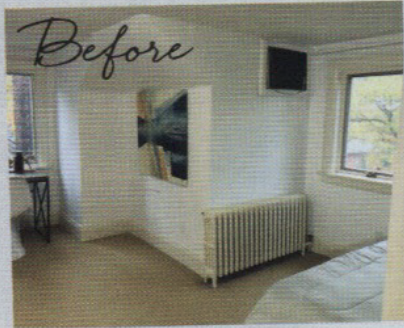
OPPOSITE: Since the principal bedroom is long and narrow, maximizing space and keeping clutter to a minimum was key to creating a calm, relaxing vibe. **Pendants, throw**, Elte; **art** by Rob Cummins.





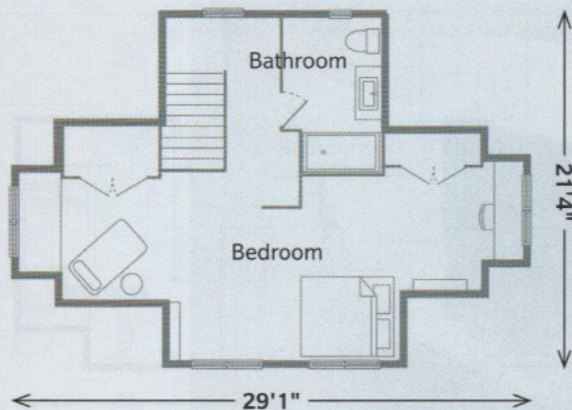
Grace's third-floor bedroom includes a casual hang-out space at one end and a work zone with built-in desk at the other. **Duvet cover**, West Elm; **table lamps** (above bed), Structube.

BELOW: Matte grey honeycomb tile adds a graphic, grown-up look to the third-floor bathroom. **Sconce**, Luminaire Authentik; **tile**, Centura Tile.



RIGHT: Grace's bedroom was originally two small rooms. A wall was removed to create one light-filled space with a mirror and built-in barre for the budding ballerina. **Chaise longue**, Home Société; **accent table**, EQ3; **mirror**, CB2.

Third Floor





really live in,” says Suzanne, as one of the dogs stands in the kitchen and happily shakes off the remains of a mud puddle. So, to keep the home practical and carefree, all the paint on the walls and woodwork is washable, almost all the upholstery fabrics are stain-resistant, the white kitchen cabinets have a fingerprint-proof finish, and Meghan swapped the predictable white kickplates for a more durable light bronze metal that doesn’t show scuffs.

The couple also had a common goal that focused on the kids. “They wanted each of the kid’s rooms to uniquely reflect who they are, and they wanted places where the family could relax together and others where the kids could just hang with their friends,” says Meghan. Malcolm, Grace, Harriet and Clara all have distinct bedrooms, each with its own hang-out zone. Now that both Suzanne and Andrew are working at home and the kids are remote-schooling, this has proved to be a prescient use of space.

The outcome is a family home tailor-made to balance togetherness with privacy. For instance, Suzanne and Andrew’s second-floor suite is a calm retreat removed from the daily chaos of kids and dogs via a pocket door and a small

vestibule. “I love it,” says Suzanne. “It’s right in the middle of everything, but you can just close the door and have your own space.”

Even though the reno is complete, there are a few lingering items on the couple’s wish list. “There’s been lots of debate about what to do out there,” says Suzanne with a smile, her gaze fixed on the backyard’s tree-lined space. “There’s talk of a hot tub, pool and firepit.” The truism is familiar to anyone who’s ever taken on a reno: a home makeover is never quite done. **H&H**

TOP LEFT: In Malcolm’s basement bedroom, an entire wall (and electrical panel) clad in cork creates an ever-changing personal art gallery. **Desk**, Ikea; **chair**, Structube; **desk lamp**, EQ3.

TOP RIGHT: Built-in shelves next to Malcolm’s desk add space for books and memorabilia.

Lower Level

