



# CASE STUDY

## DARK MATTER

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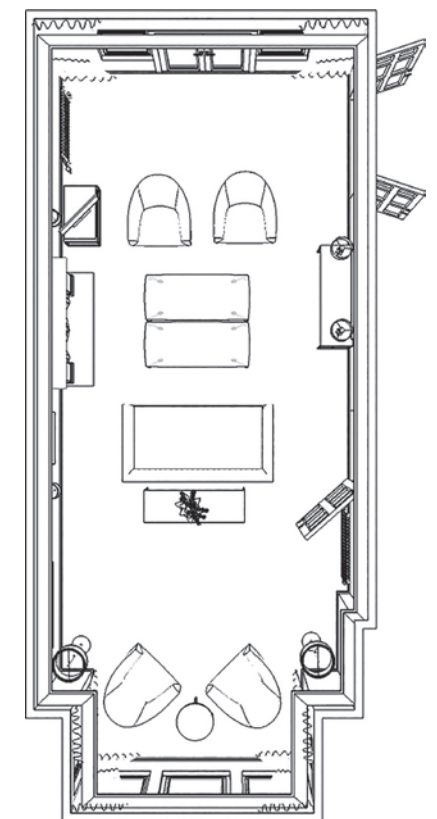
**There is always one sticking point**, one room that even the most avid interiors fans can't quite get right. For the owners of this home in Edinburgh, it was the living room. It was supposed to be the grown-ups' space (the kids have their own den); they freshened it up with neutral paint and tried to make it feel inviting with a new fireplace, but they struggled to deal with the proportions of the room and its many windows.

They turned to Jeffreys Interiors for help. "Our design process always starts with listening," says designer Georgina Fraser. "It was clear that the owners had some great ideas but they were apprehensive about executing them. We identified certain points to address and drew up a wish list, then they left it with me to join the dots." She was tasked with bringing out the clients' personality and character, creating an atmospheric space and, perhaps most excitingly, investigating their wish for dark walls. The owners' sense of style and taste in art (particularly abstract pieces by Suzanne Taylor) became the main inspiration behind the design.

There was plenty of space to work with, but this was actually part of the problem: "The generous proportions were wonderful, but the original layout inhibited conversation and made the room feel too sparse," says Georgina. "It needed a rethink." There were also several substantial obstacles: three entrance ▶



[Left] The living room is now a zoned, light-filled space that embraces dark tones. [Below] Artwork by Suzanne Taylor provided inspiration for the accessories



FLOOR PLAN

**BRIEF** To create an atmospheric, 'grown-up' living room that makes good use of the available space and reflects the owners' personality and style.

**WORKS REQUIRED** A complete overhaul - the only existing features remaining are the fireplace and the carpet, which was in good condition. Retaining it meant the budget could be allocated elsewhere.

**BIGGEST CHALLENGE** Working with the space and planning how best to use it, making the large room feel snug when used by just two people but also work when the house is full.

**BUDGET** The final cost of the room was £28,800, with the furniture being the most expensive element.

**DESIGNER** Georgina Fraser at Jeffreys Interiors. [www.jeffreys-interiors.co.uk](http://www.jeffreys-interiors.co.uk)

**COFFEE TABLES**

Doubling up on this gave a platform to layer natural textures and display inspiring books



points, two walls of windows and a fireplace. To try to overcome these, Georgina made multiple copies of the floor plan, on which she quickly sketched different layouts before settling on the one that would work best both in terms of functionality and aesthetics.

The winning arrangement sees the room split into two sections. In the absence of rugs to create zones (the room is carpeted), a console table positioned behind the sofa becomes the boundary between two areas, along with taller accessories to act as a screen. In the main sitting area, the bespoke furniture by Charlotte James and John Sankey is upholstered in the same fabrics to emphasise the separation.

The room had to feel unified, however, so the window treatments and ceiling lights at each end mirror each other, and the green tweed of the armchairs is pulled through to the stools below the console table. The orange and green accessories take their cue from the artwork.

It has resulted in a balanced, well-structured room that feels opulent but not overdone, standing out for its polished design but working well with the rest of the house. "I think we certainly achieved understated luxury with a Scottish twist," says Georgina.

The owners also got their dark walls. Using Farrow & Ball's Railings on the walls was a bold choice – the owners' reaction to the paintwork was Georgina's most nail-biting moment – but the gamble paid off: "I was so relieved when I got the call to say they loved it!" ■



### LIGHTING

- Luxurious lighting is used throughout: there is a ceiling light by Heathfield & Co ("splurge items") in each zone; wall lights and table lamps by Barbara Barry appear on either side of the main seating area, creating an atmospheric glow; and floor lamps by Aerin on either side of the bay window offer balance.

### CORNICING

- The house was a recent build and didn't have any cornicing. Ogilvies of Haddington was tasked with fitting it, along with other decorative finishes. As well as being aesthetically pleasing, the cornicing has a function – hiding the curtain rails to keep the look clean and tidy.

### MATERIALS

- Romo linen was used to make the curtains at both ends of the room.
- The upholstery and cushions are a mix of Designers Guild (the main sitting area), Olivia Bard (the backs of the chairs in the sitting area) and Abraham Moon & Sons (the green tweed chairs at the window and the stools).



[Right and above] Fabric has been used to distinguish the zones, with all the furniture in the main seating area upholstered in the same designs, with green tweed used for the chairs and stools.

### THE DESIGNER'S NOTEBOOK

**Georgina Fraser of Jeffreys Interiors discusses the extensive preparation that goes into a complete overhaul**

- The process begins by us listening to the clients' ideas and then drawing up a wish list with points to address.
- Moodboards are a valuable tool throughout the project, not just as a presentation aid. I tend to start with digital inspiration boards to collate ideas, which become a visual representation of the brief. From this you can easily highlight recurring themes or colours, and narrow down the sourcing process of fabrics, furniture and lighting.

- Following on from this, there is the creation of a 'loose' moodboard, which is a bundle of scribbles, sketches, fabric samples, paint chips and timber finishes.
- Finally, these elements are brought together along with Photoshop and 3D drawings to create a presentation for the client showcasing the final idea. To me, this is of paramount importance when you're communicating ideas to the client – if you were to ask everyone to imagine an orange vase, each one would be different! This keeps us all on the same page.

### PLANS

Working out how to use the space was a crucial step in the design process



### MOODBOARDS

Important visual prep – part of the design process, helping to relay the look to the client