



# DESIGN IDEAS: Exteriors

*First impressions are crucial, and the way a building looks from the outside sets its tone and character. Emily Senior looks at five transformations and offers inspiration for improving the outside of your home*

**1** This panelled door is from The London Door Company's Regency range ([www.thelondondoor.co.uk](http://www.thelondondoor.co.uk)). **2** A picket fence and climbers soften a neoclassical-style, pedimented door casing. The door is in 'Brinjal' eggshell by Farrow & Ball ([www.farrow-ball.co.uk](http://www.farrow-ball.co.uk)). Try LASSCO ([www.lassco.co.uk](http://www.lassco.co.uk)) for similar antique door frames. **3** This combines a 'Rondo V E80' door in iroko with the 'Rondo V Side Panel and Over Panel' and 'Option 8' handle by Urban Front ([www.urbanfront.co.uk](http://www.urbanfront.co.uk)). **4** Lichen-covered stone is set off by this door in 'Blazer' gloss by Farrow & Ball. **5** Ivy frames the details of an elegant door. **6** This Regency door has classical mouldings and a decorative fanlight. **7** '2037' from The London Door Company's Victorian range. **8** A fawn door, with decorative arched fanlight, creates a grand entrance. >





Before

### Roof details

'This semi-detached Italianate villa had lost many of its original features, including the over-sailing gable roof and its decorative brackets. They'd been maintained at the back of the house, so we were able to duplicate them in hardwood for the front. You can use any remaining original features as a guide.'

### Windows

'We reinstated the windows to their original style, matching original profiles and mouldings where replacement was necessary. The building is not listed, but it is in a conservation area. We installed secondary glazing, which leaves an air gap between the outer and inner windows. This keeps out noise and keeps in heat, and allows the period windows to be retained unaltered. Although the window dressings inside the house are different in each room, we were careful to keep what would be seen from the outside uniform.'

### Vents and piping

'We took great care to conceal cluttering elements such as boiler and extractor vents, alarms and piping. We routed the drainage pipework internally in a riser, including some of the rainwater downpipes, which is safe when properly executed. To keep the front of your house neat, put cables behind rainwater downpipes and extractor vents in the eaves of the roof.'

### Doors

'As with many houses that were altered during the twentieth century, the porch of this house had been filled. We reinstated the original covered area, adding a little stone bench, a pendant light and a mirror. If possible, I think it is always preferable to have a covered area leading to your front door. Two simple lights from Davey Lighting ([www.davey-lighting.co.uk](http://www.davey-lighting.co.uk)) flank the portico. In most cases, it is best to keep it simple and avoid overly ornate lanterns.'

### Boundaries

'We restored the ironwork at the front of the house,

## VICTORIAN REINSTATEMENT

Due to its subtle rejuvenation, the extent of the improvements to this semi-detached Victorian house is not immediately obvious. Johnny Holland of Hackett Holland explains the changes



After

and cobbled the front drive in a fan pattern. The front steps were repaved in buff York stone - York and Portland make the best front steps - and flanked by a new capped wall. Don't be tempted to barricade yourself behind walls that are too tall: the house will end up feeling unfriendly. If you want privacy, it's better to opt for a mature hedge - a 1.5-metre yew hedge costs £200-300 a metre and is easy to keep nicely clipped. Lollipop-pruned hornbeam or box also offer privacy without looking dominant. Here, we pleached the trees on a horizontal plane, allowing them to grow together to form a living wall.' >





## TAKE NOTE



## DESIGN TIPS FOR plants and flowers

Garden editor Clare Foster gives tips for beautifying with greenery

## PLANTS FOR WINDOW BOXES

'For the ultimate in low-maintenance planting, intersperse small balls of box with a seasonal display of bulbs and summer bedding: tulips in spring, geraniums in summer and winter pansies in autumn - or almost any annuals that take your fancy.'

## PLANTS FOR FRONT GARDENS

'Hummocks of clipped lavender work well in a south-facing front garden. For small spaces, repeating shapes can be most effective. Try contrasting the lavender balls with taller plants such as alliums or verbasum in between. For shady front gardens, you can't go wrong with clipped box (*Buxus sempervirens*) or bay tree standards with hart's tongue ferns to create different shapes.'

## TERRACE TRANSFORMATION

This nineteenth-century London terrace had been the victim of poor twentieth-century updates. Pebble-dash render, uPVC windows and a concrete roof all helped to strip away its period charm. Johnny Holland reveals how he nursed it back to health

'In a terrace house there is always a tension between individuality and conformity. Perhaps it is a very British thing to want to show a smart public face, but I am inclined to think that restoring the concord of the street, by bringing the house back to its original state, is a more effective method of improving the look of the outside than making a property stand out on its own. In the second half of the twentieth century, many houses like this were badly altered, which ruined the harmony of their streets. Here, we wanted to reinstate the period details.'

## Upper windows

'The windows of a house are one of the most important things to get right. Original Victorian sash windows had slim glazing bars, rarely more than 2.1cm, creating a delicate division between panes. Modern building regulations can be an obstacle to achieving this delicate effect. They require heavier double-glazed units to be installed, often meaning ugly thick glazing bars to support them. You can get dispensation if you live in a listed building or conservation area, where single-glazed replicas can be reinstated. This is what we did here. Ventrolla ([www.ventrolla.co.uk](http://www.ventrolla.co.uk)) repairs original windows and provides authentic replacements. Where double glazing is mandatory or desired, new windows can be fitted with special thin, light-weight double glazing (try [www.slimliteglass.co.uk](http://www.slimliteglass.co.uk)). If this is beyond your budget, you can get the look of a nice slim glazing bar by applying it directly to the glass on both sides with a special adhesive. There are numerous joinery companies making authentic traditional sash windows, but they should be FENSA certified.'

## Bay window

'The front bay window of the house had been taken off to make room for a parking space. In houses of this period, decorative mouldings were mass-produced to a high standard, so the whole street would have been the same. To restore the window to its proper form, we got permission from the neighbours to let a stone specialist take a mould of theirs and had it reproduced in jesmonite, which is relatively cheap and durable.'

## The brickwork

'The front of the house had been rendered in pebble-dash, which traps moisture. This type of render can be a nightmare to remove; it is effectively glued to the surface beneath and can pull the fine face from the brickwork. My advice is to test a patch. Fortunately, here it had been badly applied, leaving the brick underneath relatively unscathed. We then cleaned it with a poultice - a process similar to waxing legs - and finally repointed it, filling the joints between the bricks with a lime mortar, which lets the brickwork breathe. Prevent your builder from repointing in hard grey cement. If you can't go back to the brick, there is still hope. I would recommend re-covering the house in a natural hydraulic lime render such as UNILIT, which has a more natural look and can be made to look like stone. This also lets the house breathe.'

## Guttering

'The guttering here was plastic, which we replaced with good-quality ironwork from the Tuscan Foundry ([www.tuscanfoundry.co.uk](http://www.tuscanfoundry.co.uk)). I also love J & J W Longbottom in Yorkshire ([www.longbottomfoundry.co.uk](http://www.longbottomfoundry.co.uk)), which makes wonderful authentic cast-iron rainwater goods, and many other items such as decorative grilles, in its traditional foundry. For a more affordable option, Alumasc ([www.alumasc.co.uk](http://www.alumasc.co.uk)) supplies the Heritage Cast Aluminium range, which looks very similar to cast iron and will last forever.'

## Roof

'Victorian houses have slim roof rafters, undersize by today's standards. So if the roof has been replaced with heavy concrete tiles - as this one had - over time, this can lead the roof to bow. For reslating listed buildings, genuine British slate is generally specified. However, if you can find a good supplier, a more cost-effective alternative is Spanish slate, which comes in at around £1 per tile as opposed to £5 for British. Chinese slate is even cheaper, but you do gamble with the quality; I would recommend staying within Europe.'

## Final touches

'We replaced the cast-iron railings with a low masonry wall, a yew hedge and a timber picket fence, which is affordable and can be painted in attractive colours. As a final touch we trained a wisteria over the front door, using a stainless-steel vine-eye.' ▷



Before

After



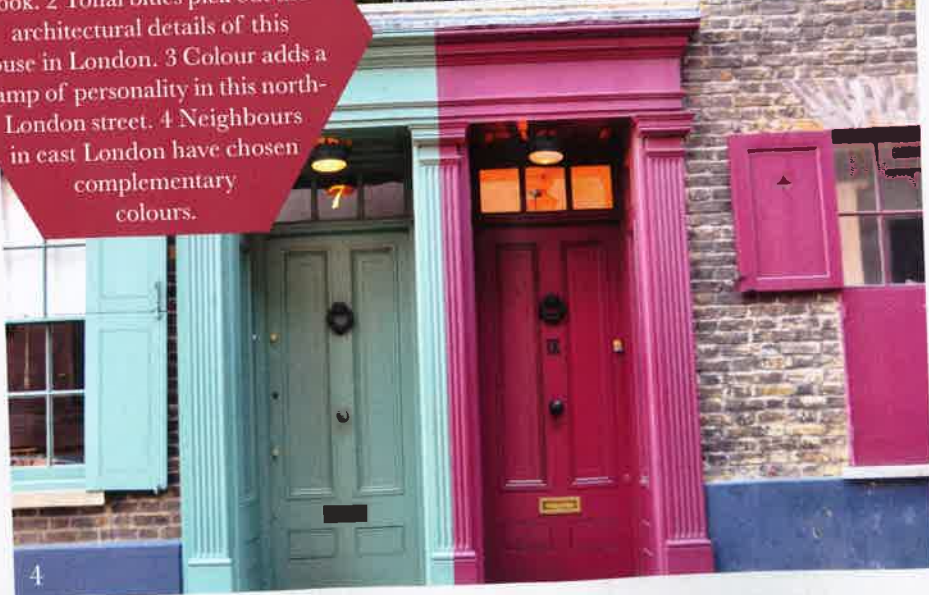


PAINT EFFECTS

Bring out the best in your house with clever use of colour



1 Bright white is contrasted with black window frames to create a sophisticated, contemporary look. 2 Tonal blues pick out the architectural details of this house in London. 3 Colour adds a stamp of personality in this north-London street. 4 Neighbours in east London have chosen complementary colours.



TAKE NOTE



DESIGN TIPS FOR exterior colours

Johnny Holland recommends his favourite colours and explains why these tried-and-tested paints work so well when used on the outside of a house



“Lichen” (pictured) and “French Gray” by Farrow & Ball ([www.farrow-ball.com](http://www.farrow-ball.com)) are sage greens that look good against golden stone. They can be painted on all exterior woodwork.’



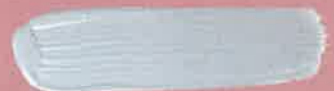
Farrow and Ball’s “Railings” (pictured), “Off Black” and “Blue Black” in full gloss are smart choices for a dark front door. “Hague Blue” is a wonderful deep dark blue.’



“Chocolate” by Little Greene ([www.littlegreene.com](http://www.littlegreene.com)) makes for an interesting and authentic early-Georgian door colour.’



‘Papers and Paints in Park Walk, SW10 ([www.papers-paints.co.uk](http://www.papers-paints.co.uk)) can provide excellent advice and the “correct” colours for any period building. “Sèvres Green” is shown here.’



‘For a contemporary approach, use grey. “Graphite Grey” is perfectly balanced and “Pearl Grey” (pictured) is a prettier, very pale colour, both by Marston & Langinger ([www.marston-and-langinger.com](http://www.marston-and-langinger.com))’ □