

Eastern Daily Press

Homes

Friday, September 9, 2022

**'IT WAS QUITE
THE REVEAL'**

**HOW A CITY DESIGN STUDIO
CREATED A DREAM HOME FOR
A NEW NORWICH RESIDENT**

PROPERTY | LIFESTYLE | INTERIORS

Cover story

'I am astonished that people don't recognise WHAT A REALLY GREAT PLACE THIS IS'

Since relocating, William Rogers has become a 'huge fan' of Norwich – particularly after a city-based design studio helped him to create his dream home in a city apartment.

Finding the perfect home in a new-to-you city can be a tall order. You can look at property after property and just not find it – it needs work, it's not big enough, it isn't your style.

But there is a very real difference between a property and a home and after an impressive renovation project, new city resident William Rogers has found both.

Mr Rogers was born in Cornwall and lived in Devon before moving to London around 12 years ago. He enjoyed city life, he says, but over time London had started to deteriorate.

He "wanted to live somewhere where there was a sense of community, was small enough to feel a part of but big enough to enjoy all the things that a city can offer." Norwich, as it happened, offered exactly that.

He'd visited the city once before, on a day trip, but when his sister suggested the city as a place to move to, he booked a week-long stay to test it out. "I was immediately struck by the place and decided, almost straight away, that I'd move here."

He says his property search followed a kind of "go and see as many places as you can in a day" approach, and just as he began to think that he might need to add another day of viewings to his agenda, he found what he was looking for. "The very last place I visited felt great," he says. "It looked lovely and I felt like the place could make a lovely home for me. I made an offer the following day,



William Rogers recently relocated from London to Norwich and says he has become a huge fan of the city

Pictures: SUPPLIED BY WILLIAM ROGERS

it was accepted and the move was underway."

The property, situated in the Norwich Lanes, was well cared for, clean, tidy and well-loved, he says, and he enjoyed chatting to the previous owners, a couple he

“When I made my final visit to the collect the keys, it was quite the reveal

describes as a "joy to meet" - but it just didn't reflect his style.

He decided to completely redecorate and refurbish the property, but "what might have been a relatively small series of changes turned into a major project", and as he hadn't quite made the physical move, yet, and needed to be away for work, he enlisted some help.

"I decided to seek out someone who would not only be able to project manage it for me but also someone who would add a little of the flair I knew I didn't have and introduce me to some new styles, colours and refurbishment suggestions I had not previously encountered.

"I am a great believer in using



Paula Gundry and her team were given the keys to a city apartment after its owner William Rogers bought it and he's delighted with the results
Pictures: PAULA GUNDRY INTERIORS LTD





Paula Gundry, pictured a few years ago in her city home

Picture: ARCHANT

'local' wherever possible, so I sought out a locally-based interior design company – Paula Gundry Interiors – who would also utilise local tradesmen to complete the works as far as possible. Having had a chat to Paula, I was completely convinced that she, and her team, were right for me.”

Mr Rogers says that one of the interesting parts of the conversation about what he wanted from his property was around the 'feel' of it, and how the look, colours and atmosphere needed to be created to build that 'feeling' – but he says they also needed to acknowledge the history of the building.

“My personal preference is for something quite contemporary, but given this was a typical Georgian-style property, I also wanted to create something that took the contemporary style I liked whilst, at the same time, enhanced and took advantage of the high ceilings and roomy space the property had.”

The property was taken back to brick and renovated from there – in fact only one room, the guest bathroom, stayed as it was. “Literally everything else” was changed over the course of the project, which took over three months.

Mr Rogers didn't even live in the property before the renovations began. As soon as the sale was complete, the estate agent handed the keys over to Paula and her team. “I'll admit that I had some anxiety about handing everything over to the team to just get on and get it done,” he says. But as it turns out, he needn't have worried.

“The consultation was good, communication regular and tradesmen were simply excellent and clearly skilled,” says Mr Rogers. “The more you let them get on with it, once all the decisions and choices are made, the better.”

Paula Gundry, director of city-based firm Paula Gundry Interiors (paulagundryinteriors.co.uk), says it was a really lovely project to work on – helped by the trust and faith Mr Rogers placed in the team.

Speaking to Paula, it's clear to see that the scale of the project was huge. “He engaged us to design, supply, install and coordinate the whole project on his behalf,” she says. “In essence, that was everything from the design to building the furniture, sourcing it, doing all the electrical, decorative, flooring, building media rooms, bathroom, bedroom cabinetry, all of the carpets, furniture – everything.”

“We went to our normal process of gathering information and then presenting to him our ideas. There wasn't anything he didn't go ahead with. It's really lovely.”

Although there were a few complications to the project, due to the Covid pandemic and difficulties with the supply chain, Mr Rogers says it's surprising there was not more of a delay. Thankfully, the

building is in a “pretty good condition”, he says, so there weren't many construction issues, although they did have to reinforce a ceiling to support one of the new light fittings.

Over the course of the project, Mr Rogers says he popped into the property a few times, mostly towards the beginning of the renovation works, but during the last month or so, he didn't get the chance to visit his new home at all. “When I made my final visit to collect the keys and move in, it was quite the reveal,” he says.

“I was absolutely delighted and immediately felt that the project had delivered and the style, look and, indeed 'feel' of the place was exactly as I had hoped. I felt immediately at home.”

Two of his favourite features, he says, are the fabric headboard in the main bedroom, which takes up the entire wall, and the very contemporary shelving unit installed in the main living area, which he says has made “an enormous difference to the whole look of the room.” Both of these were suggestions from Paula and her team.

“The attention to detail is evident to me now I can see it all in situ,” says Mr Rogers. “Even things like the type of handles linking to colours elsewhere, or on the main light fittings. I simply would not have thought about some of those things and they make such a difference.”

Another of Mr Rogers' favourite features is the guest bedroom – so much so that he even considered moving into it instead of the main bedroom – and he says he loves the look and style of all the fitted ceiling lights.

The main living area, too, has been designed exactly as he envisioned, using different styles and colours to produce distinctive zones in an otherwise large and open-plan room.

“It's really delivered on the brief of maximising the height and size of the room to create a stylish but comfortable, homely and relaxed space,” he says, and he was so pleased with the results that Paula says he even sent the team personalised gifts as a thank-you.

Now that his home is complete, Mr Rogers is settling into life in Norwich.

“I have become such a huge fan of Norwich,” he says. “I am astonished that I have conversations with people who don't recognise what a really great place this is.”

“Is it without any issues? No, of course not. Like everywhere else, Norwich has its own challenges. But for a city, albeit a small one, it has a huge range of activities, lively social and cultural scene, a generally very friendly and upbeat bunch of people and, a sense of community that, until you live in a place that doesn't have it, is something to be really proud of.”