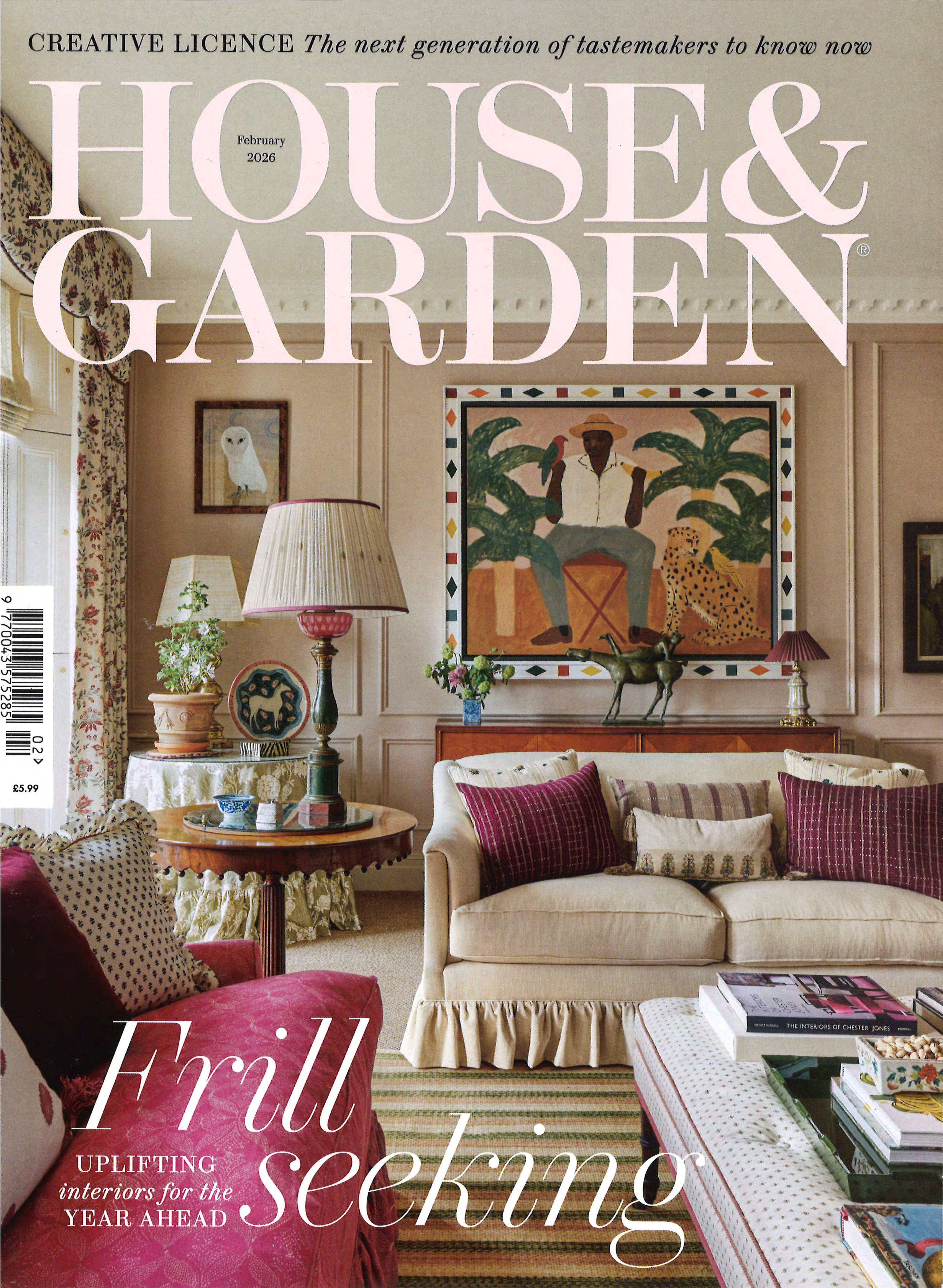


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# February



For inspiring views of stylish interiors, cast  
your eyes over an art-filled London house,  
a bolthole on the Norfolk coast, a renewed  
Victorian flat and a Notting Hill wunderkammer



After realising a dream to move permanently to the North Norfolk coast, interior designer Robert Moore relished the challenge of restoring this neglected Edwardian house

# Changing places

TEXT JENNIFER GOULDING | PHOTOGRAPHS MICHAEL SINCLAIR





**DINING ROOM** Curtains in Marvic Textiles' 'Misa Moiré Plain' tone with Iksel's 'Romantic Bosphorus' wallpaper. **ENTRANCE HALL** Walls in Farrow & Ball's 'Dutch Pink' showcase an Aubusson verdure tapestry from Joshua Lumley and an antique table from Brownrigg





**BUTLER'S PANTRY** Mandarin Stone's 'Di Scacchi Tumbled Marble' **floor tiles** and a Shaws of Darwen **sink** create a classic look. **KITCHEN Cabinetry** in Farrow & Ball's 'Stony Ground' displays antique china and copperware, with The Conran Shop's 'Manila' chairs adding texture













**DRAWING ROOM** Antique armchairs stand beside the chimneypiece with its Rafael Tur Costa **artwork**, 1969. **EXTERIOR** The Edwardian house is set in a secluded garden. **LIBRARY** Walls are in Farrow & Ball's 'Bancha'. **SUN ROOM** Pale blinds pick up on the cane furniture





**For a long time**, a boat on the Norfolk Broads provided enough of a reprieve from London for the interior designer Robert Moore and his partner Jonathan Beak. The big skies and abundant wildlife offered a welcome contrast to their city lives and a chance to live in the country without the commitment. Gradually, though, their friends began to have families and to move out of the capital.

‘We felt a bit like the last men standing,’ says Robert, who launched Moore Design – known for its smart, meticulously detailed projects – 15 years ago, after almost a decade spent working for Paolo Moschino for Nicholas Haslam. He and Jonathan made a five-year exit plan to leave London, but kept pushing it back. Five years became 20, then Covid forced their hand. The aim was to relocate to the North Norfolk coast – they wanted to be near the sea and to continue to use the boat.

However, they kept the search area fairly wide. ‘The most important thing was to find the right house,’ Robert says, explaining that a Georgian rectory was what they had envisaged. ‘I certainly never imagined that we’d buy something with pebble dash.’ However, this handsome Edwardian house, with its Arts and Crafts instincts, won them over instantly: ‘The light and sense of space are amazing. We loved the building’s architecture and the layout with its central entrance hall, which the footprint of the entire house is based around. It also feels hidden away. We later found out that people who have lived here for a long time didn’t know it was there.’

Built in 1911, when the area was a holiday destination, the house was commissioned as a country home by Malcolm Mackenzie Douglas, a Victorian gentleman who’d recently returned from India. During the Second World War, it was requisitioned for the 6th Battalion, Royal Norfolk Regiment and, in 1940, it received a visit from the then prime minister, Winston Churchill.

Despite these glamorous beginnings, the house fell into disrepair. The previous owners, who had brought up six daughters there, were in their nineties and became too frail to carry out the basic upkeep required. ‘A couple of ceilings had come down and had just been swept up with a dustpan and brush,’ says Robert. The sash windows were rotten, the electrics and plumbing were not fit for purpose and the garden was overgrown.

Nevertheless, Robert and Jonathan moved in for a year while Robert worked on a redesign. It is not a period they look back on with great fondness, particularly during the winter. ‘I definitely do not miss having to turn on the oil heater 40 minutes before taking a bath in a room with dangerous, exposed wiring,’ recalls Robert.

His priority was to respect the integrity of the building by preserving original features and replacing the later additions – such as the low, tiled 1950s chimneypieces that ruined the proportions of the rooms – with Edwardian examples. Likewise, the wooden panelling in the drawing room and library, which was mapped out assiduously by Robert, is now in a style that is more appropriate to the era. Just as with all his projects, Robert was fanatical about the details, something he learned from his background in furniture and product design.

Structural changes were modest. An old linen cupboard was integrated into the family bathroom to make space for both a shower and a bathtub, and the central wall between two small former maids’ bedrooms was removed to create an office. Another bedroom was repurposed as an en-suite bathroom for the main bedroom.

Robert wanted the interiors to feel considered and timeless: ‘It looks designed – I’ve used lots of antiques, but in a way that perhaps feels rather less traditional,’ he explains. It is great testament to his skill that a large proportion of the furniture and curtains come from the couple’s previous house. ‘I was mindful of resources but, also, these items have a sentimental value. Some pieces might be a bit grand, but that’s what we had.’

The ground floor – from the dramatic formal dining room to the gentle elegance of the sun room – is geared to socialising. ‘We like peace, but see our friends more than ever. There seems to be a dinner party every weekend.’

At the front of the house, the beds surrounding the lawn have been replanted, and the patchy leylandii hedge replaced with one of holm oak. Robert added a parterre and plans to move on next to the rear garden, which is currently overrun by deer and pheasants. He confesses he is slightly reluctant to tackle it. Sometimes, in the country, it is good to have a little pocket of wildness □

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*Moore Design: [mooredesign.info](http://mooredesign.info)*



BATHROOM A 'Senator' bath from BC Designs and The Water Monopoly's 'Paris' basin add Edwardian style. MAIN BEDROOM Half-tester curtains in 'Renishaw' from Marvic Textiles set off a headboard and valance in Nicole Fabre's 'Chambord' linen in turquoise

