

Big surprise awaits even before you set foot inside

By CAROLINE CULOT

It pleases me that architecture is so full of surprises and this is really evident with this property.

What you may think is a traditional Georgian townhouse is, in fact, behind the façade, a property which dates back to the 17th century.

Apsley House, 7 Saltgate in Beccles, looks like an archetypal Georgian property with its pretty pale yellow painted front and situated at the end of a little trio of similar properties, the other two painted pink and blue. Yet, in fact, these façades were put on in Georgian times and the properties behind were actually built in Elizabethan times.

Apsley House, 7 Saltgate, Beccles is for sale for £520,000 with Durrants.

Much has been done to the property since the owner moved in, bringing her experience in interior design, having previously worked on the Homes and Gardens magazine. This background really shows in the beautifully decorated rooms.

She also runs her own business, Suffolk Rocking Horses, making exquisite carved rocking horses, many of which provide lovely ornaments in various rooms.

When she and her husband moved in, they found many surprises in the property such as a gorgeous red brick inglenook fireplace which had been plastered up in the room in which you enter from the street.

She believes there is a replica one on the other side, in the study although she has not opened it up. Being a townhouse, you get steps up from the street to a marvellous front door and enter into the dining hall which leads into an inner hall off which is the study and access to a cellar, then a rear hall with a pretty cathedral-style window.

You can tell the owner's passion for interior design as there are lots of little corners which are well presented with a table or a hat poised on a statue.

It really adds to the ambience of the house which has been a happy family home.

At the back of the property is a kitchen, utility and a morning room with patio doors to the courtyard garden.

Upstairs, facing the street with large twin sash windows is a delightful formal drawing room,



which is a really lovely part of the house, with another inglenook fireplace.

It could be used as a bedroom but I think the owner is exactly right in making this a living space, contrasting with the more informal floor below. On this floor there is also a bedroom with views over the

River Waveney and the water meadows beyond, a dressing room and a bathroom.

Off a lower landing, there is another bedroom and off the top landing there are two further bedrooms.

Outside, there is a pretty patio garden and there is a single garage

and a parking space which come with the property. Being right in the town, it is perfect for walking to the shops. You feel you are right at the heart of the community.

■ **Apsley House, 7 Saltgate, Beccles, Suffolk is for sale for £520,000 with Durrants on 01502 712122.**

Don't cut corners when it comes to good design

In the first of a new series, Gabi Feingold, a chartered architect and member of the Norfolk Association of Architects (NAA) explains the added value of a grand design.

Architectural contribution and good design is too often thought to be an extravagance when considering undertaking a building project. Whether a large commercial scheme or the smallest of kitchen extensions, the added value of good design is often forgotten or ignored.

Architects are trained to understand your needs, wishes and sometimes even dreams. They can solve problems creatively when they are involved at the earliest planning stage. They can interpret

a client's requirements into a coherent brief while developing creative solutions, maximising your investment and proposing ways to reduce costs while increasing long-term value.

A RIBA (Royal Institute of British Architects) chartered architect will provide you with much more than just the drawings for your new home or alteration. You will be fully involved in creating a totally tailored solution for your living needs.

An architect has the experience to see your project safely through to completion, overseeing the design, the planning and building regulations, the builders and your budget.

You can hire an architect to manage any or all parts of the

design and construction process.

Only qualified architects registered with the Architects Registration Board (ARB) are entitled to call themselves "architects" in the UK and only registered architects who are members of RIBA and adhere to the RIBA code of professional conduct can be called "chartered architects".

To become a chartered practice, architect practices need to comply with strict criteria in an accreditation scheme that gives you, the client, a mark of quality. So, by choosing a RIBA chartered practice, you can expect a certain level of excellence in design and service.

Good advice has its price and the price of disregarding good design is

far higher. Design fees will usually comprise a portion of the total construction cost but they pale into insignificance when measured against the added value of a well designed scheme to a successfully completed building.

■ **The NAA is a group of professional representatives from all aspects of the construction industry. For more information or to find out about a series of public discussions contact the NAA's website www.norfolkarchitects.org.uk or the RIBA's website www.architecture.com.**

■ **Gabi Feingold is a chartered architect and a committee member on the NAA. She is a director at Terra Firma Homes.**

BARN ED AND SOLAR SIMON

Help make your home an eco-haven



Simon: I would like to make a statement. I know that Norfolk is not the most extravagant county in the UK but you should all start buying energy efficient bulbs because:

■ They will last up to 15 times longer than a normal light bulb. They use five times less electricity than a normal bulb.

■ They are stopping production of some tungsten bulbs this year and are going to gradually phase out completely tungsten lamps.

■ There is barely any shape bulb that you cannot replace with an energy efficient lamp.

■ They can even be dimmed now.

Ed: Being an electrician I thought your basic golden rule was to call them lamps as don't you plant bulbs in your garden? So what is the best way of obtaining efficiency with lighting? Being a user of these compact fluorescent lamps, I find they take a while to come to full brightness. I can see their use in corridors whereby if you are leaving a night light on for a child, but if you want instant light say in a cupboard what can you do? Also aren't they expensive?

Simon: LED lighting is a good, very efficient type of lighting but it is still very much developing and, at the moment, I would not try and light many rooms with it. It can be used for very good 'effect lighting' and I recently found a light which came with a remote control, this controlled the colour of the light so as your mood gets worse you can change your light to romantic red or calming green.

Ed: Or what about not so calming Canary yellow! But haven't building regulations changed to accommodate this?

Simon: Building regulations do say that 25pc of light should have fittings that will only accept energy-efficient lamps. It says it in a far more long-winded way though. Most developers seem to better that, but lighting manufacturers don't seem to have developed enough nice lights yet. They still seem to be aiming at the DIY market.

Ed: To me, apart from constructing a barn in a sympathetic and aesthetically pleasing manner by using traditional materials, lighting is one of the single factors that make a room or space.

Simon: Right then, lighting schemes. Kitchens need to have task lighting, good functional lighting where you are going to work and not too fussy as it will get dirty and need regular cleaning. Bathrooms are similar with the need for task lighting above basins etc. Bedrooms need accent lighting, nothing too bright or glary, wall lights or bedside lights perhaps. In the living room you probably need ambient lighting which is accent lighting to give an area a bit of feeling and some task lighting so you can read the paper in the evening.

Ed: So what is the cost and payback period with regards to lighting,?

Simon: A rule I follow is that you will see your money back inside a year if you purchase the cheaper tubular CFLs. If you buy the more expensive ones they will take a bit longer, but because they use less electricity and last longer they will save you money long term and cut your carbon emissions.

■ **If you have a question or dilemma over green issues to do with property, you can get in touch with Ed and Simon by e-mailing caroline.culot@archant.co.uk To contact Ed Masters at Barn Masters, ring 01986 781484 or visit www.barnmasters.co.uk For Simon, either pop into his shop on Church Street, Harleston, ring 01379 854840 or visit www.allthingsgreener.co.uk**