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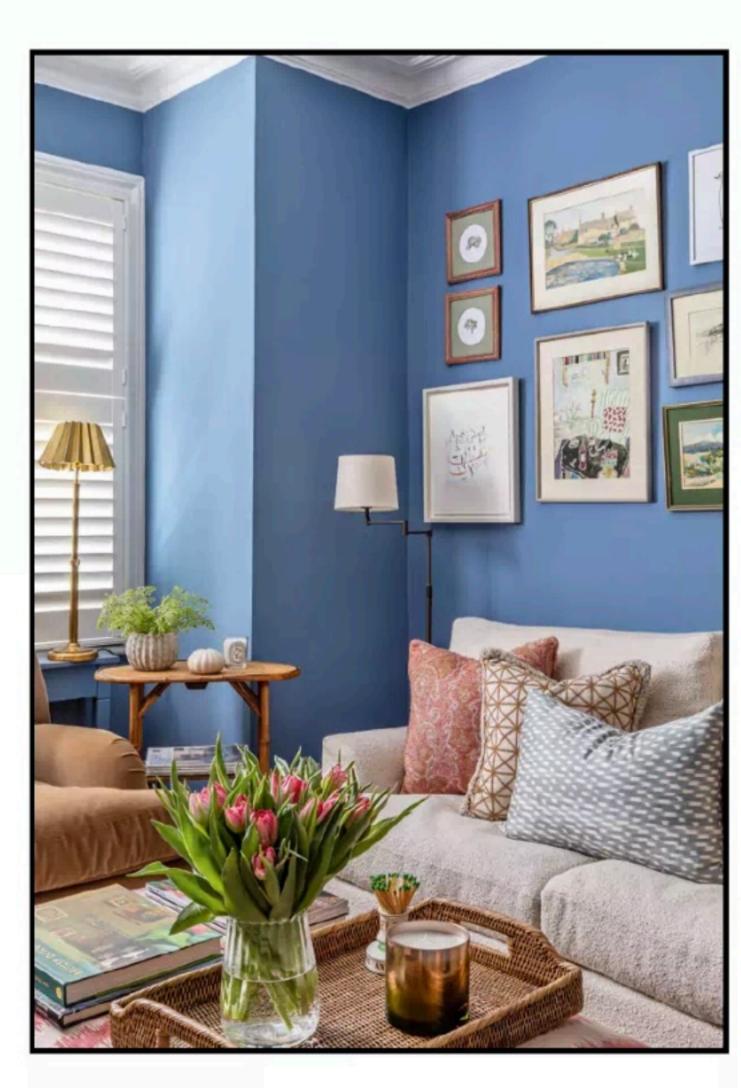
Period maisonette Imost every first-time buyer has to contend with space issues and less than inspiring schemes, but interior designer Marina Byers turned those challenges on their head with a clever application of colour and pattern, an inventive approach to storage and a hearty dose of playfulness. 'I wanted to make sure that our home imbued a sense of warmth from the moment you step across the threshold,' says Marina, who shares this apartment with partner Archie.

Though the apartment is compact, it's blessed with a generous sized sitting room, which the couple wanted to take full advantage of. 'We knew that with a clever furniture layout we could accommodate six or seven friends at a time for drinks or weekend lunches,' says Marina, who incorporated easy-to-move stools for useful occasional seating, as well as a slimline desk for home-working. 'Before introducing decorative details, we thought carefully about how to maximise the space,' says Marina. 'That involved commissioning plenty of joinery throughout, such as alcove storage, a banquette in the kitchen-diner and space in the bathroom for a concealed tumble dryer.'

Practicalities dovetail with visual appeal in this home: in the sitting room, the cupboards either side of the fireplace







SITTING ROOM Soft pinks, sands and brass elements are anchored by a blue backdrop. Pink cushion in Isabella fabric in Marble, de Le

Cuona. Brass lamp base; shade, both Matilda Goad & Co. Ottoman in Apsley, Jane Churchill