

THIS PICTURE White walls, furniture and accessories suit the functional simplicity



Where do you source your fittings?

Everything has been 'found' – in salvage yards and so on. In summer, I work my way round a map of the *vides greniers* in France – sort of clearance sales – which last through to September. And there are some good car boot sales in this area, too – I know which ones to go to. The spiral staircase up to the sleeping platform came from eBay (it's an old external fire escape) and the green light fittings were a job lot, 15 or 20 of them, from a boot sale.

The glass-fronted wall cabinet in the kitchen was £25 from an auction. I have a horror of standardised units and all the kitchens and bathrooms I build are unfitted, made from individual pieces. The marble worktop came from a job where it was being thrown out, and I've cut down smaller pieces from Victorian washstands. I love using Paris roof zinc (from the city's scrapyards) for cupboard doors and end pieces: I use the underside, which is stained with interesting patterns from where the metal came into contact

with the timber. And at the moment I'm really enjoying working with tiles. I like to be able to see the signs of the repairs, where the size or thickness of the new tiles doesn't quite match the old.

How much work is left to do?

I don't get much done at a time, because my own work is physically hard, so it's tiring to come back here and start again. The grey paintwork that goes right up into the rafters isn't the colour I wanted – it's too blue. So I'll change that at some point. Some of the windows still don't open, and I dread to think how much the insulation will cost. But you can't get depressed about it – you need a sense of humour to take on a place like this. You just have to love it and accept it for what it is. I feel I'm a care worker for an inanimate object – although there's a sense that it's decaying faster than I can repair it... But I'm at home here. It's been revalued at about three times what I paid for it, and lots of people have asked for first refusal if I ever sell – but I won't.

CHURCHES & CHAPELS

● The Church of England website www.cofe.anglican.org has a list of redundant churches currently available for disposal (click on Church Commissioners on the home page), and individual dioceses have their own lists. Converting the buildings can be a contentious issue, however – churches need very sensitive, architecturally sympathetic handling because of their size and construction and, except in the case of tiny village chapels, conservation officers and planners tend to see domestic use as the worst option.

● Corrugated-iron churches are a slightly different category, because very few of them are listed for architectural interest, so on the whole there shouldn't be many conversion-related problems. There are at least 200 still standing in the UK, out of tens of thousands that were built. Many were exported across the Empire during the 19th century. ▷

SOURCEBOOK ● Kitchen units: Nick Kenny 01795 538898 ● Reclaimed fittings: similar from Retrouvius 020 8960 6060; www.retrouvius.com and Salvo 020 8400 6222; www.salvo.co.uk ● Interior paints: try Granada Green and Holiday Blues eggshell, Dulux 0870 444 1111; www.dulux.co.uk ● Exterior paint: try Opaline, Technical Paint Services 0845 230 1244; www.technicalpaintservices.com.