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5 ROCK THE LOOK

Chimneybreasts in homes constructed of stone or flint look stunning when pared back to their original state and the glow of flames enhance the stone's natural hues. If you're adding on to an existing interior, consider stones of a different size to the original to create a dramatic sense of scale. You could also add a stripped-back beam as a mantelpiece for candles and decorative items.

6 DOUBLE EXPOSURE

If building work involves removing internal walls, consider retaining the chimneybreast and opening it up into the two rooms. Install an eye-catching fire basket and enjoy the warmth it will give both spaces. An inset reclaimed railway sleeper or timber beam makes a stunning rustic fire surround and, when combined with a shelf, makes a great mantelpiece, too.

7 WHITE HOT

Highlight a simple cottage chimneybreast with paint in a pale shade. Charlotte Crosby, Head of Creative, Farrow & Ball, says, 'Painting a fireplace is a quick way to create a focal point. Opt for a soft white, such as Wimborne White, and pair it with warm neutral walls to enhance the natural hues of antique iron, wood and stone.' Whitewash a beam as a mantel for a pretty country feel, too.