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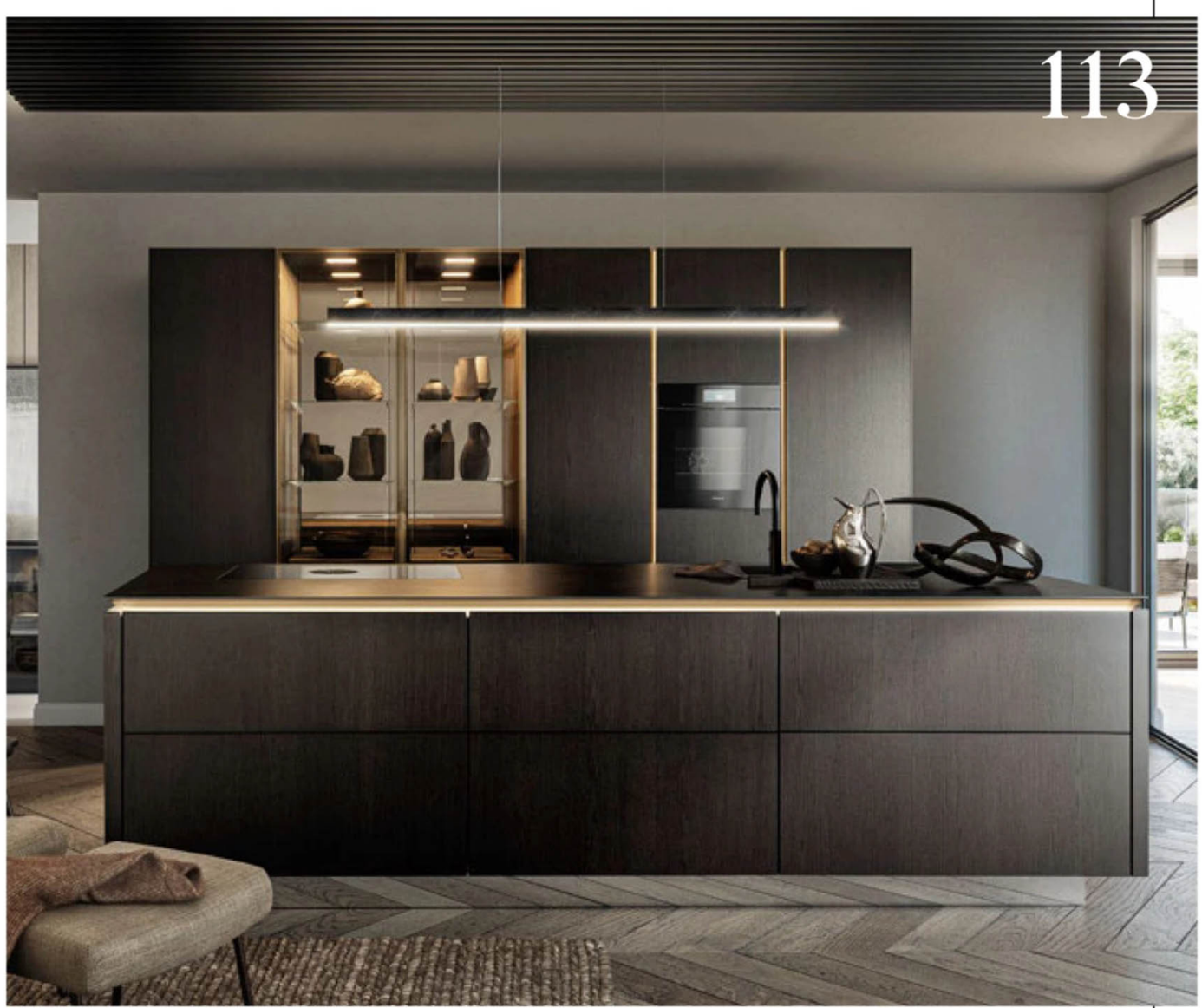

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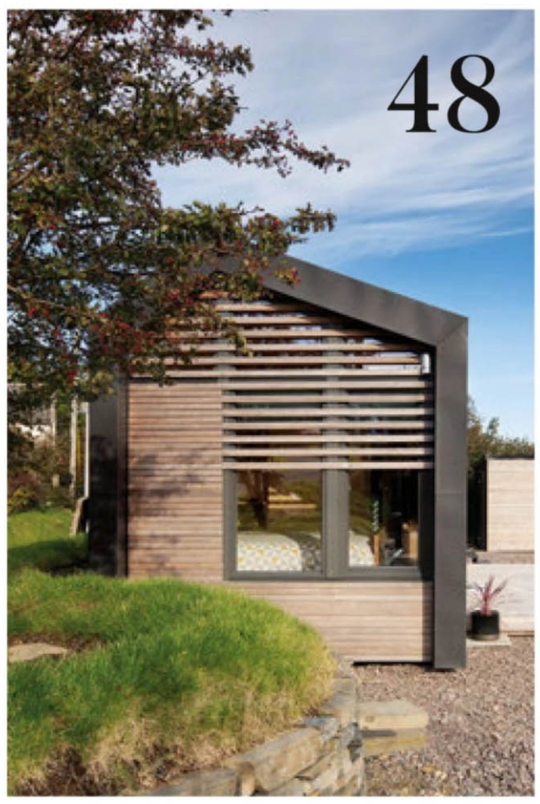

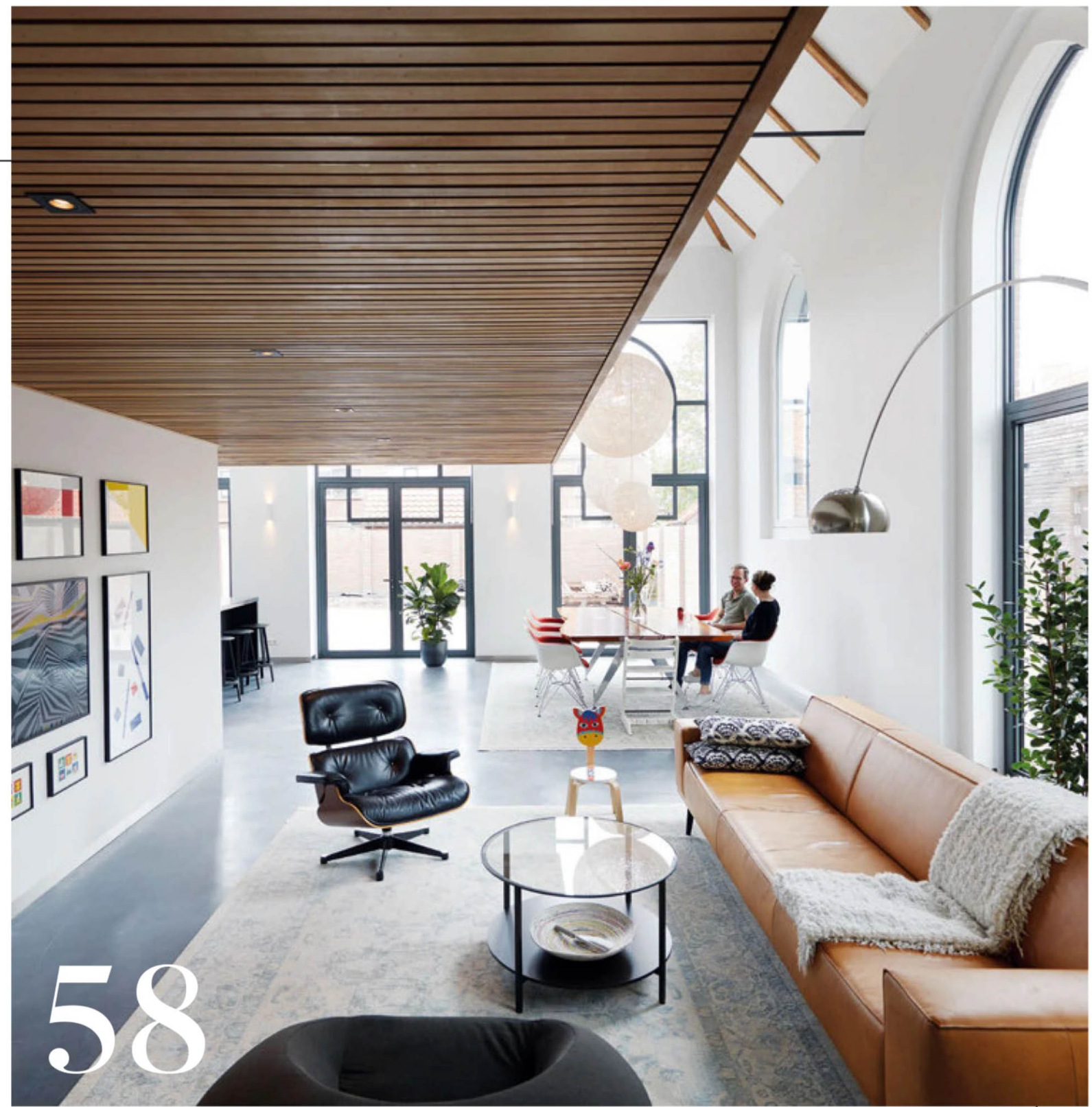

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In the February issue, my letter touched on ideas for improving indoor air quality – as research* had revealed the negligible effect that house plants have in removing volatile organic compounds (VOCs). More recently, the Royal College of Physicians and the Royal College of Paediatrics and Child Health released a 96-page joint report** that included recommendations aimed at preventing poor indoor air quality affecting the health and wellbeing of children.

More is known about the link between outdoor air pollution and respiratory and cardiovascular conditions, but evidence is emerging that what we're exposed to inside our homes can also have a detrimental effect on health. Sources of the problem include emissions from construction and decorating materials, furnishings and cleaning products. 'Some building materials are treated with chemical flame retardants, which have been found in house dust and can have harmful effects,' says the report.

Turn to page 24 for the full story of R2 Architects' timber-clad extension on an Edwardian semi-detached home

The study's authors also caution that the risk from the proliferation of chemicals has been compounded by the emphasis on homes having high levels of insulation and increased airtightness. 'Energy efficiency is important to reduce our use of fossil fuels, but without adequate ventilation it could inadvertently worsen indoor air quality and impact health.'

Urging the Government to take action and develop a national strategy to address the issue, the report calls for a revision to building regulations to 'set legally binding performance standards for indoor air quality that include ventilation rates, maximum concentration levels for specific pollutants, labelling materials and testing of appliances', and for 'air-quality tests when construction is complete and before the building is signed-off'.

Right now though, knowing which clean air materials, products and construction methods to use is not easy for those who are building, renovating or improving their own home to determine. If you know of a relevant directory or database, please get in touch by emailing info@granddesignsmagazine.com. And look out for more on this important subject in future editions of the magazine.

KAREN STYLIANIDES, EDITOR
@StylianidesK

COVER PHOTO
BEN BLOSSOM

PHOTOGRAPHY DANIEL SPENCER **ILLUSTRATION** R2 ARCHITECTS *JOURNAL OF EXPOSURE SCIENCE AND ENVIRONMENTAL EPIDEMIOLOGY BY BRYAN E CUMMINGS & MICHAEL S WARING
**THE INSIDE STORY: HEALTH EFFECTS OF INDOOR AIR QUALITY ON CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE

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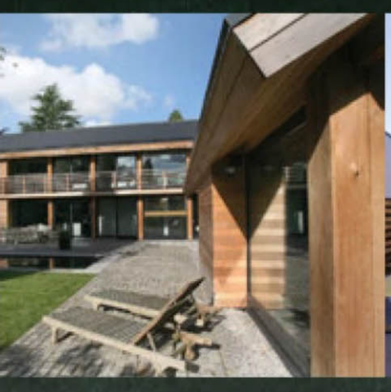
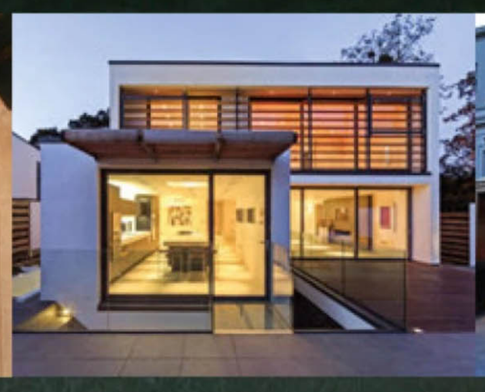
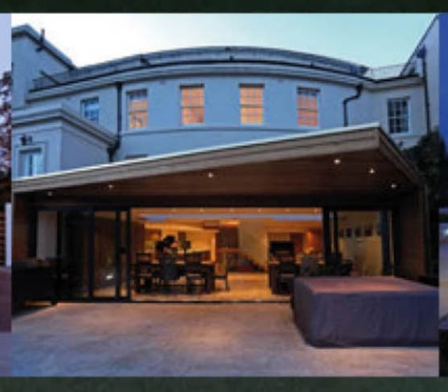




new builds **extensions** **conversions**

Architecture update

Original projects to inspire your own self-build or renovation

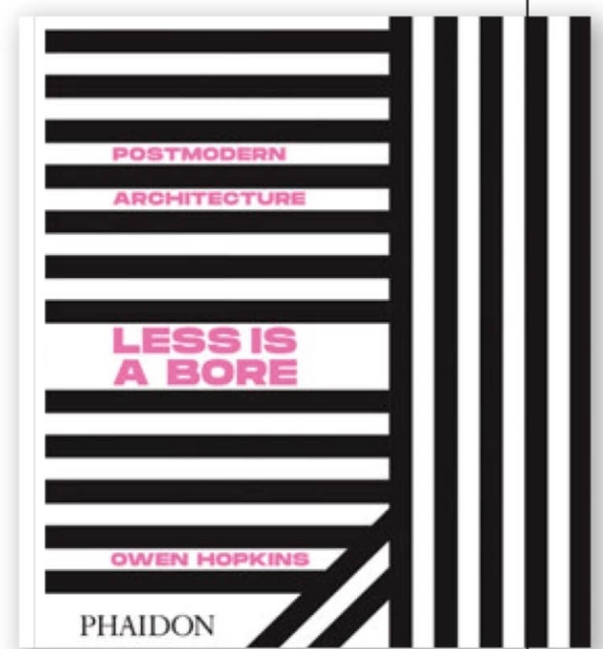
Prize-winning extension

This year marks the tenth anniversary of New London Architecture's Don't Move, Improve! competition (nla.london), which champions the capital's best extension projects. The overall winner for 2020 is Soffit House in Lambeth by Proctor & Shaw (proctorandshaw.com), a terraced-house updated with a rear extension that incorporates a previously dark alley into its floor plan. The infill gives improved views of the garden through a large glazed pivot door and clerestory window. 'It's a wonderful example of how space and light can be enhanced by good design,' says NLA chairman Peter Murray.

Green living

Sustainability is at the heart of Welcome to the Jungle House in Sydney, Australia, a triangular 90sqm urban oasis by architect CplusC. Flowers, fruit and vegetables are in abundance, hanging over window ledges. On the roof, steel planter beds have been installed, with soil irrigated by a fishpond that is used to cultivate fast-growing silver perch for consumption.

On the exterior, a bank of black photovoltaic panels contrast with rendered masonry, steel, timber and greenery. For a weathered appearance, window openings have been framed with pre-rusted steel. CplusC says that over the next 100 years homes must become 'a machine for sustaining life'. This is a good start. (cplusc.com.au)



Chaos and anarchy

Modernist architecture is restrained, with straight lines and 90-degree angles. Postmodernism, which was at its height from 1970 to the late 1990s, was its disobedient offspring – a stylistic freedom where colour, mischief and subversion ran riot. *Postmodern Architecture: Less Is A Bore* by Owen Hopkins (£29.95, Phaidon) presents more than 200 such buildings, including a German school that looks like a cat, a house in Tokyo inspired by toddlers' wooden building blocks and Grayson Perry's folly A House for Essex, described by the Turner Prize-winning artist as 'the Taj Mahal on the River Stour' (and available for holiday bookings). Like brutalism, postmodernism is now viewed through nostalgic eyes. Expect to see slap-in-the-face design flourishes popping up again around the world by a new generation of rule-defying architects. (phaidon.com) »

Architecture update

In perfect alignment

This issue's cover star is a steel and timber-frame articulated extension that has recently been completed in south London by Proctor & Shaw.

The Victorian home was reconfigured to create a suite of connected rooms from the front of the house to the back, offering various degrees of privacy for hectic family life, culminating in a large open-plan kitchen and dining space. Warm-toned London stock bricks, seen on the extension, exterior and interior, were chosen to match the house and to complement two types of timber floor: rustic parquet and wide-plank oak boards.

Aluminium-framed glazing and roof lights with solar-control glass, including the tall sliding doors, ensure a comfortable temperature in the new kitchen and dining area, while a sofa positioned adjacent to the patio gives views out to the garden. (proctorandshaw.com)

Homeowners in England have an 86% chance of planning-permission success, according to research carried out by wood floors and doors retailer A Wood Idea. The region that most often grants permission is the north-east (93%), while bottom is West London (76%). At 97%, the City of London, Carlisle and Halton, Cheshire, offer the best chance of project approval. (awoodidea.co.uk)

Rooms out of thin air

It's a familiar problem – children grow into teenagers and open-plan living no longer seems such a great idea, especially if adults also work from home. Ullmayer Sylvester Architects' solution for a family in Hackney, London, was to transform a small terraced property into a home spacious enough four people with an office. Using birch ply and timber, three new rooms have been created under a lattice roof, hence the project name, Three Rooms Under a New Roof.

High levels of insulation and re-use of fittings and materials impressed the Don't Move, Improve! judges (see page 13), who awarded the project its Environmental Leadership Prize. (ullmayersylvester.com)

WORDS LEE GALE PHOTOGRAPHY BEN BLOSSOM, AGNES ELVIN, MURRAY FREDERICKS, RADU PALICICA

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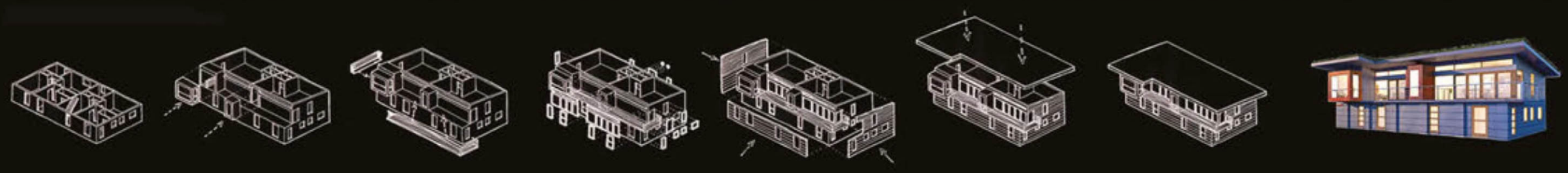

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Design matters

A selection of new products and ideas to complete your project

Modern luxury

For Habitat's spring/summer collection, in-house designer Matthew Long has introduced the Derwent four-poster. The solid-oak frame comes as a 135cm-wide double (£1,200) or 150cm king (£1,300), with veneered headboard/end panels, and four underbed storage drawers. For a matching suite, the Derwent range includes a bedside table (£180), chest of four drawers (£495), six-drawer tallboy (£450) and a wardrobe (£795). (habitat.co.uk)

Underwater world

Timorous Beasties has spent the past 30 years fascinating fans with its intricate illustrations that range across wallpapers, fabrics, rugs and soft furnishings. Its latest collection, Oceana, plunges into the depths, swimming among fiery coral reefs and elaborate seaweed fronds, encountering marine life such as dusky crabs, shimmering eels and lively lobsters, resulting in a sumptuous range of wallpapers, cushions and rugs. Seaweed column wallpaper, white, £140 per m. (timorousbeasties.com)

Rug refresh

To celebrate its 30-year anniversary of flatweave flooring, Roger Oates Design has gone back through its archive, reworking some classic wool rugs and runners from its collection. This includes Charleston, a design from the first collection, which has been relaunched in two of the original colourways – Turkey Red (top) and Catkin (bottom) – plus a new version, Fossil. Width 68cm, £132 per m. (rogeroates.com)

Sofa, so good

A new name has recently joined the home-furnishings market – Housecosy, which launched as an online furniture retailer in November. The focus is, in their words 'Scandi-modern-ethni-velvety-minimalist', summed up by their sumptuously stylish Camilla sofa, upholstered in rich turmeric-coloured velvet fabric. Two-seater version 164cm wide, £799. (housecosy.com) »

Design matters

New wave

Just out from Normann of Copenhagen are a number of vases waiting to be filled with spring blooms. The fluted glass Tide range is inspired by the North Sea: the dynamic shape is the waves, while the grooved surface is reminiscent of the ripples left in the sand after a departed tide. Available in clear, olive or blue. From £30. (normann-copenhagen.com)

Sustainable style

Richly coloured and highly lacquered, the Cliff coffee table and side table from Heal's are part of the store's commitment to increasing its range of eco-aware products. They are made from compacted offcuts of wood from other production in the same factory. Red coffee table, 40x53.5x33.4cm, £749; blue side table, 55x37x40cm, £725. (heals.com)

Windsor change

Another stalwart British brand celebrating its anniversary this year is Ercol, which is marking its centenary with, among other things, the re-launch of its Windsor sideboard. This piece first appeared in 1962 when it bucked the post-war trend for cheap plywood or chipboard furniture by being made of solid English elm. Turned legs, dovetail joints and sculpted handles set into elegant recesses declared the brand's values of quality, craftsmanship and timeless appeal. The updated version will be available in Ercol's current range of modern finishes, such as Whitened Ash, £2,495. (ercol.com)

Creative fusion

Fashion designer Kenzo Takada has expanded his empire to include a new luxury home and lifestyle brand KΞ, pronounced 'K3'. The collection will span furniture, textiles, bed linens, rugs and accessories. Like Kenzo's clothes, they are a fusion of oriental and western design with initial pieces drawing heavily on Japanese themes of nature, geishas and shogun rulers. This screen from the Maiko collection uses Japanese tissue paper and gold leaf on black lacquer frame and wooden structure. Height 200cm; width, two panels of 94 cm. £16,860. (k-3.com)

WORDS JESSICA CARGILL THOMPSON PHOTOGRAPHY K-3.COM

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Kevin McCloud

Do you know the total amount of water you use every day? It's more than you might think, says our editor-at-large

According to Statista (statista.com), which analysed domestic water bills from across the UK, the average person living alone in Britain uses a little less than 150 litres of water a day. That's good news in comparison to ten years ago, when figures were nearer 170 litres. But it's still bad in terms of the waste in energy, chemicals, processing and treatment of the healthy, clean and sterilised water from our taps because some of that 150 litres is flushed straight down the toilet.

Before the widespread introduction of piped water to Britain's cities, a civilised and ecological alternative to the water closet was the Victorian earth closet, a similar looking contraption with a large cistern behind the pan and a handle – only what was released to cover your doings was a measured dose of dry earth that you would have dug and prepared from your garden. This would cover the poo and form an insulating blanket to prevent smells from escaping. Meanwhile, the trillions of bacteria in the earth would go to work digesting the former contents of your intestine producing, in just a few days, a bucket of yet more sweet-smelling earth that could be returned to the veg garden. There it would grow more food, for you to turn into more poo to be returned, sanitised again, back to the ground to fertilise more veg growing. It is the very definition of a virtuous circle that required a few buckets and some sensible household management – and no water.

Despite the apparent plentifulness of water in our country, it's sobering to think that we waste it now so wantonly. The water we buy via our utility bills is in fact free; we don't buy it at all. What we're paying for is the infrastructure, pumping and treatment costs and – arguably they are too cheap. If our water bills approached the cost of our gas and electricity bills, I'm guessing we'd all turn the tap off when brushing our teeth, stop taking baths, shower faster and flush less often.

> 'It's sobering to think that we waste water now so wantonly'

More sobering still to think that, according to the charity Toilet Twinning (toilettwinning.org), two billion people on the planet don't have access to a safe, clean toilet and 785 million people don't have clean water close to their home.

The World Health Organization (who.int) has identified that waterborne diarrhoeal diseases (found in sewage-laden waterways) are responsible for two million deaths a year, with most being children under the age of five, while billions more suffer illness.

Shockingly, the UN set a goal of 2020 for the eradication of this problem. This year will come and go with no appreciable change, although there is hope. Bill and Melinda Gates have poured hundreds of millions into a clean-water and sanitation »

A running tap uses six litres of water per minute; fitting an aerator will reduce this amount

programme for the developing world to provide resilient solutions for communities. Their most impressive invention came from Janicki Bioenergy, a company now known as Sedron Technologies (sedron.com), which developed a small and efficient plant in which sewage water, which is already collected in cans from homes in many third-world countries, can be heated to produce steam to generate electricity – that then heats the next batch of sewage water. This technology creates another virtuous circle; the fuel energy in the poo itself is greater than that needed for the process.

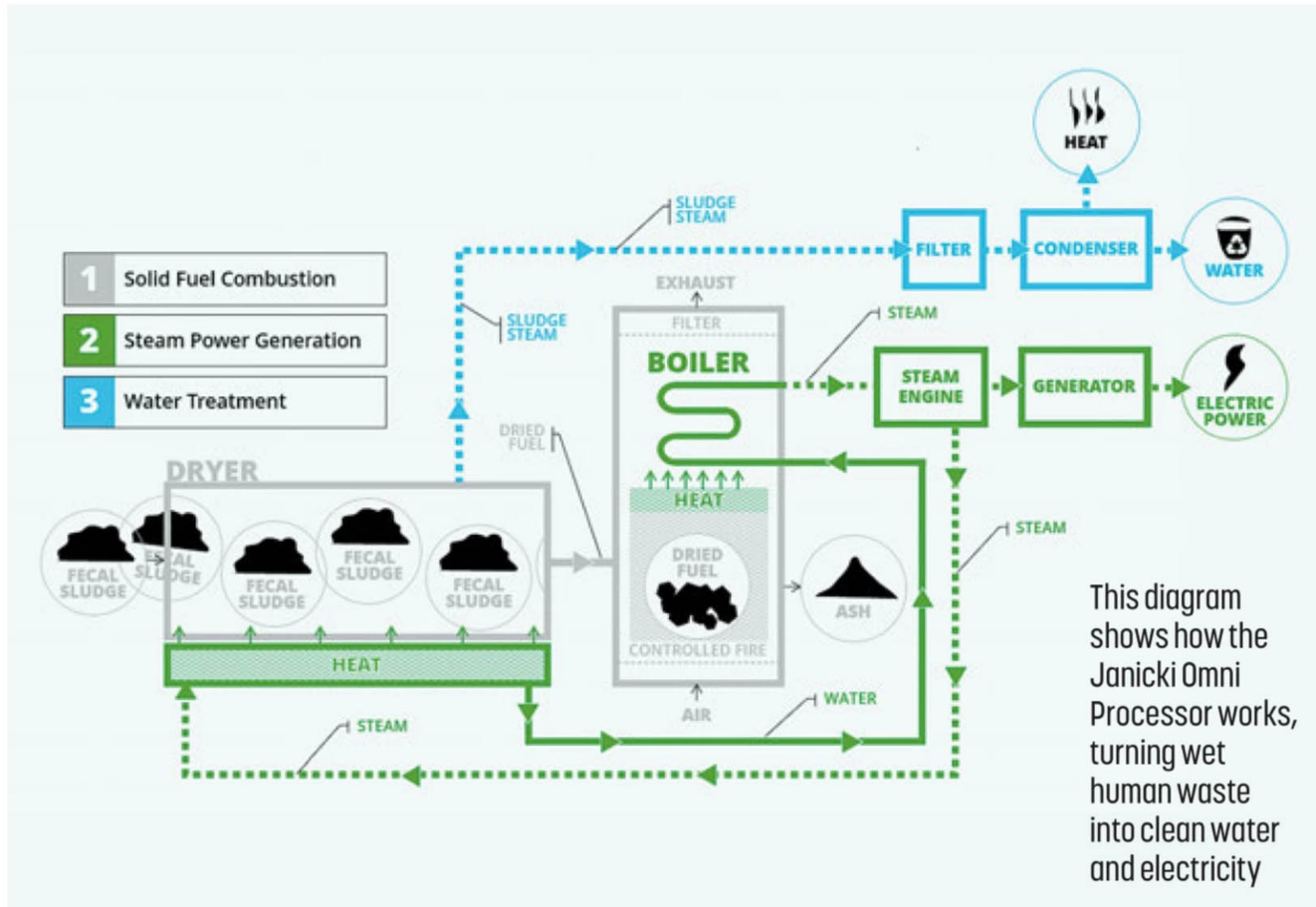
The plant can handle sewage from 100,000 people, produces no waste except ash that can be used as fertiliser, generates 250 kilowatts of spare electricity (enough to power a large community) and, most magically of all, will produce 86,000 litres of fresh water every day. If you don't believe me, watch the Netflix series about Bill Gates and see him drink the water.

If it's possible to be intelligent and use tech to solve the nastiest of third-world problems, what about using it to deal with the issue of Western consumption. Our water use is not the same as our total water footprint, which is a reflection of the amount needed to support our everyday lives and consumption – of food, clothing and even our transport.

A family of four in the UK will use about 400 litres of fresh water a day. Figures from Water Footprint Network (waterfootprint.org) suggest that the same household's consumption could be much higher. Suppose the family buy a kilo joint of beef for the weekend. That'll up their water footprint by 15,500 litres. A kilo of sugar will add 1,500 litres, 500 grams of olives will use 2,200 litres and a single cup of coffee 140 litres.

On the basis of just these modest items, that family's water footprint will, in a week, jump from 2,800 litres – usage from the tap at home – to a considerably greater figure if we also consider vegetables, rice, jeans (14,000 litres a pair), chocolate (4,800 litres for a 200g bar), cleaning products, running a car, corn or fizzy drinks (a two-litre bottle may use more than 1,000 litres of water to make it). I'm considering launching my own brown fizzy drink, which I'm going to call Bonkers.

Conservatively, it works out that my individual water footprint is around 1.2-1.3 million litres a year. That's roughly 3,500 litres a day. So, I can turn the tap off while brushing my teeth and save 10 litres or fix a leaky tap and save two litres a day. That doesn't seem like very much. I don't drink fizzy drinks but I do enjoy a beer – there's up to 170 litres of water used in agriculture to make one refreshing pint – and I'm beginning to think I might stop. That idea is almost unthinkable but so is the fact that by 2025, 1.8 billion people around the world will be facing water scarcity. GD



This diagram shows how the Janicki Omni Processor works, turning wet human waste into clean water and electricity

'I'm considering launching my own brown fizzy drink, which I'm going to call Bonkers'

Twin brothers Nik and Jon Daughtry built properties next to each other in Sheffield

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PHOTOGRAPHY FIONA WALKER ARNOTT

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From every angle

A two-storey extension has given one young family a way to enjoy their garden from both indoors and out

WORDS **JESSICA CARGILL THOMPSON**
PHOTOGRAPHY **ANDY STAGG**

THIS IMAGE AND ABOVE LEFT
The extension is in line with the gutter height of the house. It appears fairly narrow at the front, opening out at the rear

IN BRIEF

LOCATION Hither Green, London
TYPE OF PROPERTY Semi-detached home
BEDROOMS 4
PROJECT STARTED March 2018
PROJECT FINISHED September 2018
EXTENSION SIZE 40sqm
COST £2,400 per sqm

Adding a timber-framed, timber-clad, two-storey extension to their semi-detached Edwardian house in Hither Green, London, Oliver and Yujia Lewis gained an open-plan family room and an en-suite main bedroom. The house is also now better connected to its garden, with improved layout and light.

'It was a typical period house, with small rooms, low doors, no flow of natural light and a lack of views out in different directions,' says Oliver, who is a lawyer. 'It's not very big, and in terms of the space we added, the priority was to create somewhere that we could live comfortably without being on top of each other.'

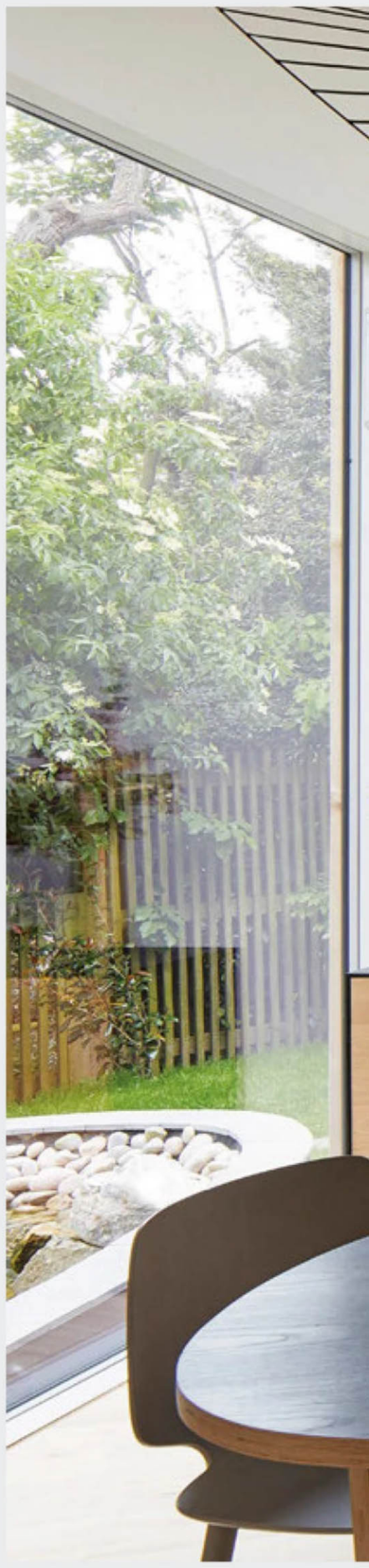
Their initial idea was to do this by adding a loft room and a single-storey ground-floor extension, until architect Frederik Rissom of R2 Studio suggested that consolidating everything as one two-storey side addition would be more efficient, avoiding the loss of bedroom space to loft access, and maintaining the symmetry of the roof across the two semi-detached houses. Limiting construction to one site would make it easier for Oliver and his retired architect father Gareth to manage the project themselves. And it would be more economical.

'If you're already building the foundations and roof for a single-storey extension, to make it two storeys, all you're adding is one floor, a bit more facade and a few more windows,' says Frederik.

The most dramatic change has been to the ground floor. Originally this was two long, narrow spaces at the rear of the house, used as a kitchen and a living/dining room, and a front living room, separated by a dark L-shaped corridor. A staircase dominated the hallway. In the remodelled floor plan, the two rear rooms have been incorporated into the extension as part of a family space, which connect to the front living room.

While the default for similar extensions is a rectilinear box, Oliver and Yujia, who is a dancer, were adamant they wanted something unique on the inside and »

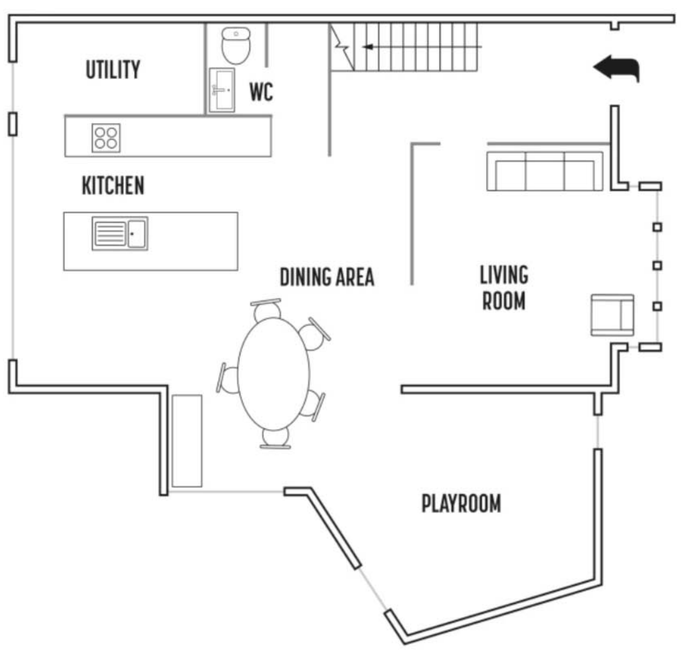
'The priority was to create somewhere that we could all live comfortably without being on top of each other'



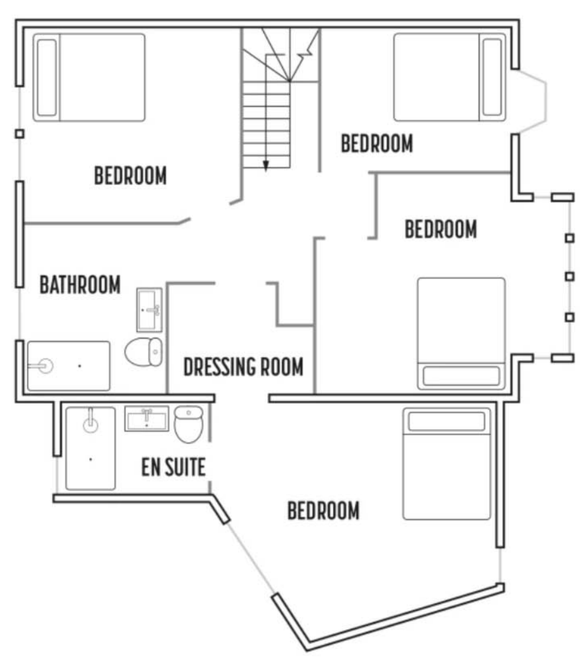
LEFT Battens of western cedar cladding cover the exterior of the extension and will weather to a silver colour

ABOVE The dining table sits across the old and new parts of the house

FLOOR PLANS



GROUND FLOOR



FIRST FLOOR

‘It’s nice to have an open space, to be able to see the kids playing while cooking and not to feel shut off anywhere’

less obtrusive to the neighbours on the outside. A series of more intimate zones for different activities – playing, eating, cooking, music making – would respect the spirit of the Edwardian home.

They also wanted to have a sense of connection with the sizeable garden down the side of the house, and the line of mature trees that mark the diminutive River Quaggy that runs along the edge of the triangular plot.

'The extension is essentially a landscape, with angles that focus on the views,' says Frederik. 'Through this we've tried to create a sense of generosity of space, even though the house isn't actually that big.'

'Our idea was that we could stand anywhere on the ground floor and get a different view of the garden,' adds Oliver. 'It's also nice to have an open space, to be able to see the kids playing while cooking and not to feel shut off anywhere.'

As part of the plan to open up the ground floor, the original staircase was removed and replaced with something slimmer and more space efficient, but no less of a statement. R2 conceived it as a stand-alone piece of furniture, a plywood box animated by a grid of holes.

By comparison, the alterations to the first floor are relatively minor – a cramped bedroom has been turned into a more spacious family bathroom for use by the couple's daughter Sylvie, aged three, and son Flynn, two, while »

LEFT The bespoke kitchen was designed by the architect. Oiled ash veneer has a strong grain that adds character

RIGHT Ash flooring, stained white, is aligned with the extension. Holes in the wall of the staircase vary in size, larger at the eye level of adults and toddlers

the extension provides Oliver and Yujia with a bedroom and en-suite bathroom, looking out into treetops.

A new skylight over the landing and 2.3 metre tall doorways bring more light into the heart of the house, while half-round timber battens send ripples of light along the curved wall of the couple's bedroom, concealing the door into the en suite.

Ample storage was non-negotiable. 'It's a particular bugbear of Yujia's; she doesn't like clutter,' says Oliver. 'But we have two kids, a third on the way, a dog, and a cat, so there's often stuff everywhere!'

In response, R2 have included storage under the window seat in the playroom, an entire wall of cabinets in the kitchen and cupboards tucked under the island, wardrobes concealed either side of the entrance to the main bedroom, and what Frederik estimates to be a total of 30 metres of shelving.

Ecological principles are behind the choice of timber frame for the extension structure, with just a couple of steels to support window openings. It's insulated with wood fibre, making the walls breathable, compostable, »

LEFT The new staircase is constructed from strong ash-veneered plywood, which boxes in the stairwell

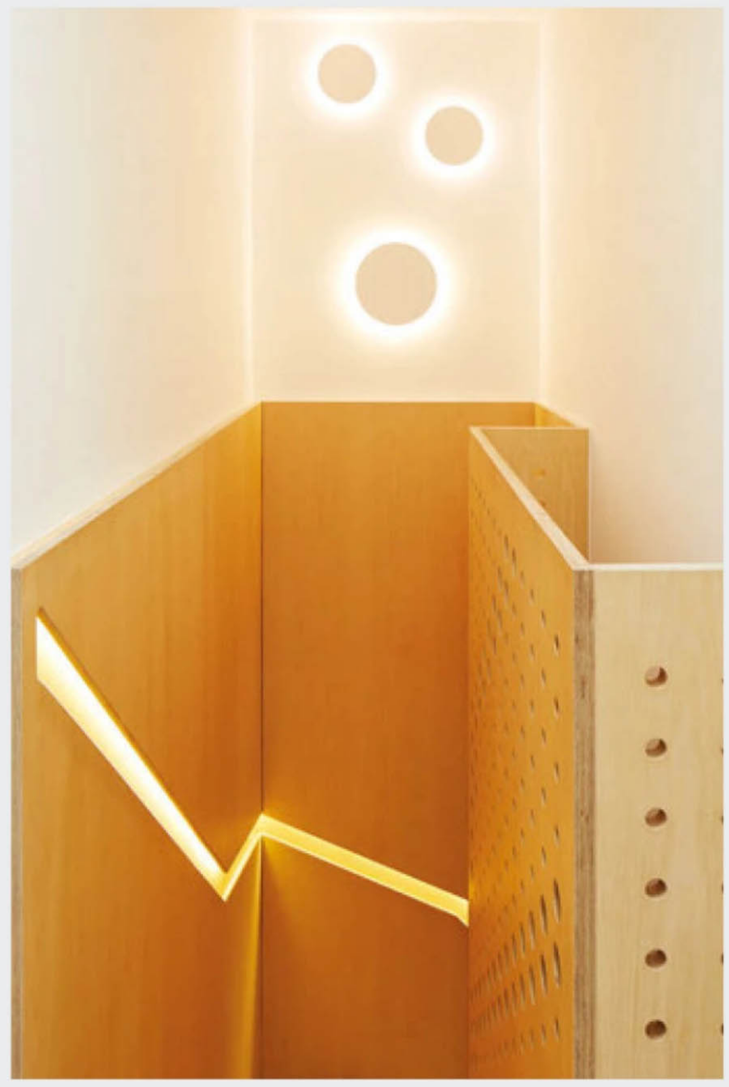
BELOW AND RIGHT The living room at the front of the house now links directly through to the family space

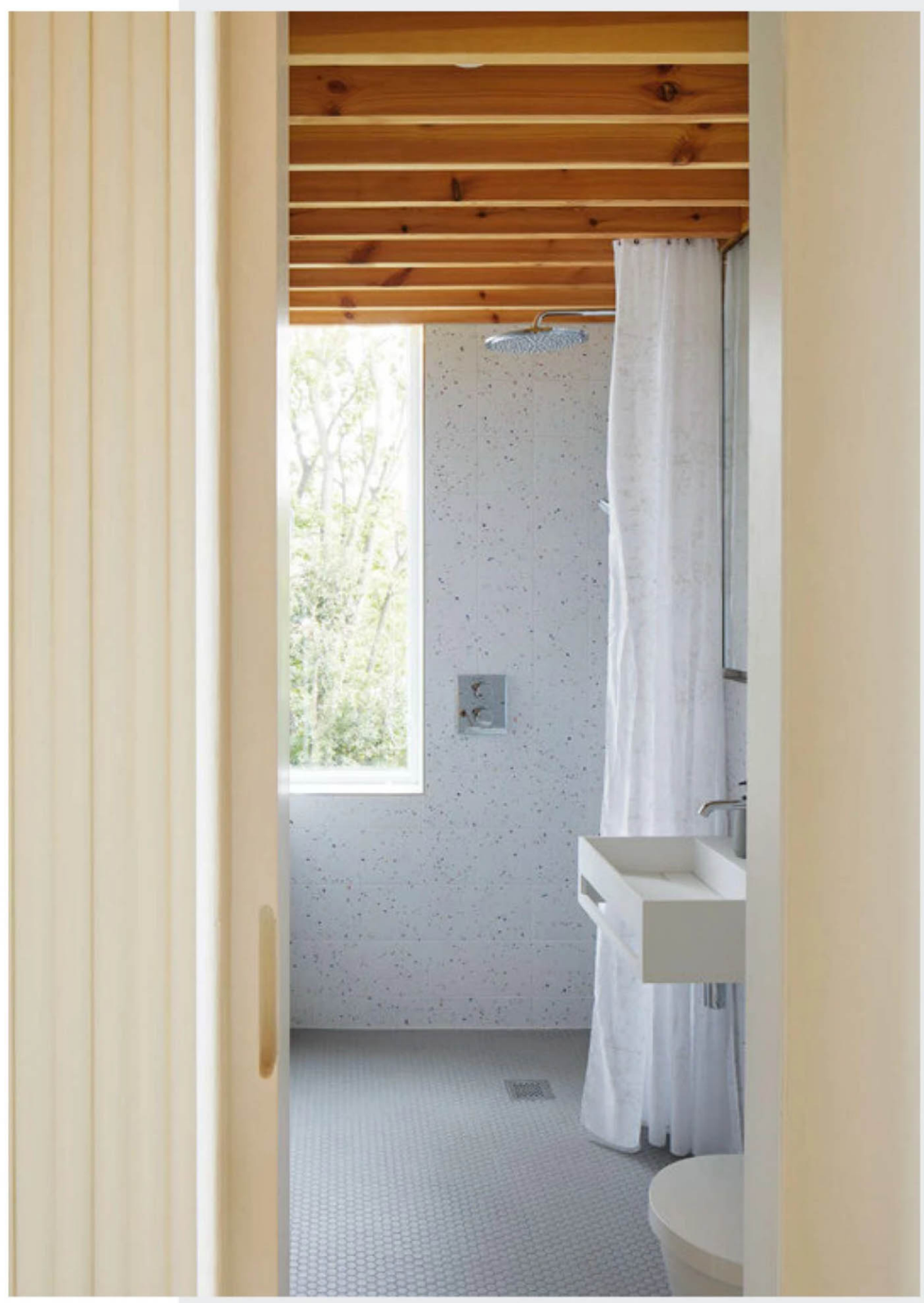
and requiring less energy to produce. This was also an opportunity to insulate the roof and ground floor of the house, making cold rooms cosy even in winter.

Getting neighbours on board from the outset was crucial to the success of the project. 'Obviously it's really important that you create a space that you can call home and that you enjoy living in, but you've also got to be respectful of the environment of the street you live on and how people feel about it,' says Oliver.

One thing he does regret is not hiring a quantity surveyor. 'Due to the size of the project, the budget kind of ran away from us and we spent more than we anticipated, though we did end up doing all of the landscaping as well, which is not cheap and which we hadn't factored in. In the end we were 20-25 per cent over budget. Maybe more.'

And it's not just the family and the neighbours who are happy with the finished result. More than 400 people queued to look round on the last Open House weekend, and it was shortlisted in New London Architecture's 2020 Don't Move, Improve! awards as one of the most inspiring recent extensions in the capital. GD





ABOVE The recessed handrail has integrated lighting, while the wall lights above the stairs echo its distinctive pattern of holes

RIGHT Round timber battens on the wall of Oliver and Yujia's bedroom are painted white to accentuate the curve

LEFT A sliding door conceals the en-suite bathroom

The extension provides Oliver and Yujia with a bedroom and en-suite bathroom looking out onto treetops

One corner of the open-plan space is dedicated to play and music making. A window seat looks out over the newly landscaped Japanese garden

SUPPLIERS

PROJECT TEAM
Architect/interior designer R2 Studio Architects (r2studio.co.uk)
Structural engineer Paul Owen Associates (paulowen.co.uk)
Contractor Big Town Construction (020 8467 2999)
Building control Cook Brown (cookbrown.co.uk)
Party wall surveyors Benchmark (benchmarksurveyors.com)

STRUCTURE
Glazing Sky-Frame (sky-frame.com)
Casement windows Velfac (velfac.co.uk)
Insulation Pavatex (pavatex.com)
Kitchen, staircase joinery and box sash windows Big Town Construction (as before)
Timber flooring Junckers (junckers.co.uk)
Marmoleum flooring Forbo Flooring UK (forbo.co.uk)
Roofing Sika Sarnafil (gbr.sarnafil.sika.com)

FURNITURE & ACCESSORIES
Pendant light over dining table Petite Friture (petitefriture.com)
Light over kitchen island Wever & Ducré (weverducre.com)

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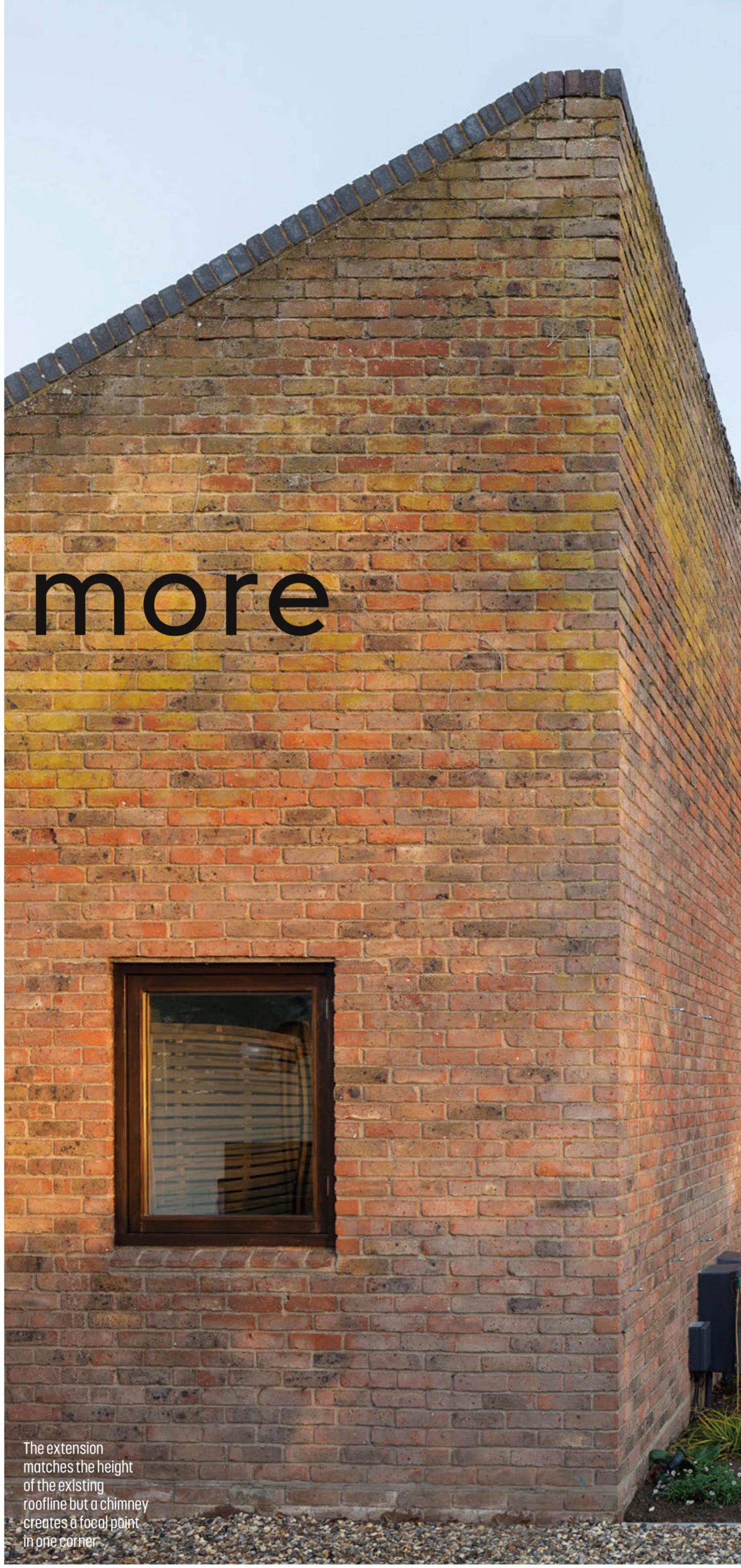
Less is more

Extending a 1970s bungalow allowed a family to downsize and begin a new phase of their lives

WORDS **AMY FREARSON**
PHOTOGRAPHY **MATTHEW WHITE**



The extension matches the height of the existing roofline but a chimney creates a focal point in one corner

IN BRIEF

LOCATION Stapleford, Cambridgeshire
TYPE OF PROPERTY Extension and renovation of a 1970s bungalow
BEDROOMS 3
PROJECT STARTED January 2018
PROJECT FINISHED August 2018
SIZE 240sqm
COST OF BUNGALOW £800,000
BUILD COST A similar project would be £2,500 per sqm for the extension and £1,500 per sqm for the refurb

Swapping their family home in south Buckinghamshire for a mid-century house near Cambridge marks a new chapter in the lives of Jenny Flynn, 48, husband Gavin, 47, and their 12-year-old daughter Olivia. It's allowed them to be closer to Jenny's Essex-based mother, who has dementia, and to downsize so that Gavin could give up his high-pressure job as a senior executive for an international hotels group in order to spend more time at home.

'This was all part of a grand plan, several years in the making,' explains Jenny. 'Gavin worked abroad for many weeks, which was not very conducive to family life. Part of the move was about freeing up funds to give us a more flexible lifestyle.'

In 2015, the couple found a bungalow they loved in the village of Stapleford, four miles to the south of Cambridge. The property was a simple L-shape, built in 1979 by architect Matthew Aitken Clark. Full-height windows wrapped the two inner facades so that the house looked in on itself, while the brick outer-facing walls were almost blank. The light-filled living space featured a central fireplace and exposed timber ceiling beams. There were also three small bedrooms and a pair of loft rooms tucked under the monopitch roof, reached by ladder. »

RIGHT The open-plan kitchen/diner is on the ground floor of the extension. Flos Aim pendant lights are suspended above an eight-seat dining table

BELOW A long strip window in the kitchen looks out onto the entrance courtyard

'Part of the move was about freeing up funds to give us a more flexible lifestyle'

At first, Jenny and Gavin worried that the 144 square metre bungalow would be too small for them. It wasn't until several months later that they put in an offer, realising that by adding an extension they could make it work.

Rather than move in straight away, they thought it would make sense to wait until Olivia started secondary school. They also knew they wouldn't be able to rent the house out in the interim as some work would be needed to bring it up to a lettable standard. 'We would have needed to spend money on refurbishment; we just said, let's put that towards our building budget instead,' says Jenny.

The delay ended up working in Jenny and Gavin's favour. As the house was unoccupied for two years before building work began, their VAT bill for the construction work was reduced to five per cent, rather than the usual 20. It also gave them and their architect, Richard Owers of NRAP, time to come up with a design for the extension that they were completely happy with.

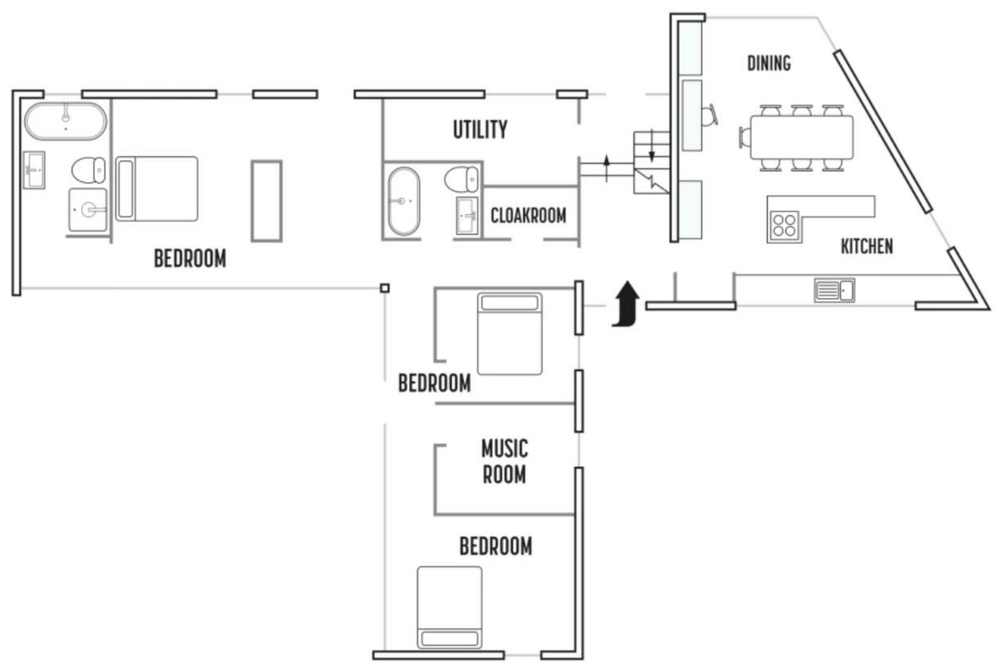
As the house was in the central portion of the site, and symmetrical, it could have been extended in a number »

‘It’s quite a quirky house. It took a fair bit of investigation to work out what the best solution might be’

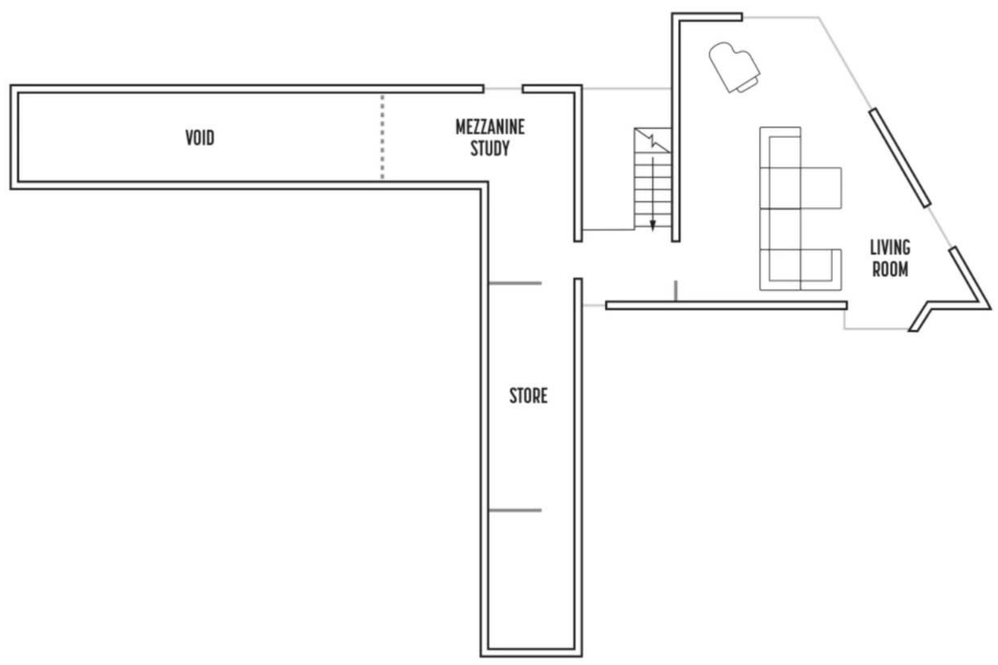
The new living room has an exposed Douglas-fir ceiling

FAR LEFT A stairwell separates the old and new parts of the house

FLOOR PLANS



GROUND FLOOR



FIRST FLOOR

The corner of the living room was the ideal place for the wood-burning stove

of directions. 'It's quite a quirky house,' says Richard. 'It took a fair bit of investigation to work out what the best solution might be.'

A two-storey extension to the east was settled on, turning the L-shaped plan into more of a T, with a diagonal edge that follows the site boundary. To take advantage of views over the adjacent fields – something that the original bungalow did poorly – a kitchen/dining room was created on the ground floor of the extension, with a spacious new living room on the floor above. The original ground-floor living and dining space has been converted into a bedroom with en-suite bathroom for Jenny and Gavin, and the old kitchen is now a utility room. A stairwell was added to link the old and new sections of the house, improving access to the loft rooms.

Having managed the renovation of their previous home, Jenny led the project, undaunted by an extension that almost doubled the size of the original house. The challenge, she says, was co-ordinating it from 70 miles away, while juggling part-time work as a lollipop lady and travelling to help her mother settle into a care home. But she made sure she was always on hand to discuss design details.

The colour choice for the insulated render facade went through several iterations. 'I was very conscious early on that I wanted an extension that looked new, but that complemented the bungalow and had a sense of something that was monolithic,' says Jenny. 'The nice thing about the grey is, if you go for a walk across the field and you look back, it doesn't sit in the landscape as a big hulking lump. It just blends away.'

Planning permission was granted without issue and building contractor Adams & Newman completed the project on time, meaning the family could move in during August 2018 as planned, a week before Olivia was due to start at her new school.

Downsizing meant Jenny and Gavin had to sell or give away a lot of their old furniture, but they found space for a few of their most prized objects, including a baby »

A sign bearing the name Monkey Roost came with them, having moved across various homes

grand piano that Gavin bought to celebrate Olivia's birth, and a few Scandinavian pieces, including a set of mid-century candlesticks and Jenny's treasured wooden Monkey by Danish silversmith and designer Kay Bojesen. A sign bearing the house name Monkey Roost also came with them, having moved with the family – and Monkey – across various homes.

Jenny says the move has given them time and space to focus on family life. She and Gavin have also found time to launch their own consulting and investment business. 'We're now in a phase of slow transition, just seeing what life brings,' she says. 'It is a very real privilege, living in a house that has been designed around the way you want to live.' GD

The old living room is now Jenny and Gavin's bedroom and, behind the partition wall, an en-suite bathroom

LEFT A dressing room lies beyond the fireplace wall at

A dark grey render was chosen for the exterior of the extension, complementing the window frames of the bungalow

SUPPLIERS

PROJECT TEAM
Architect NRAP Architects (nrap.co.uk)
Contractor Adams & Newman (adamsandnewman.co.uk)
Quantity surveyor Sherriff Tiplady Associates (sta-cambs.co.uk)

STRUCTURE
Facade Sto (sto.co.uk)
Roof Sika Sarnafil (gbr.sarnafil.sika.com)

FIXTURES & FITTINGS
Kitchen units, sink, taps and Corian worksurface
John Lewis & Partners (johnlewis.com)
Wall tiles CTC Tiles (ctc-tiles.co.uk)
Floor tiles Topps Tiles (toppstiles.co.uk)
Avebury wool carpet Cormar Carpet Co (cormarcarpets.co.uk)
Paint Dulux (dulux.co.uk)

FURNITURE & ACCESSORIES
Pendant lights Flos (flos.com)
Bed Made (made.com)
Storage Ikea (ikea.com)
Track lights Paulmann Licht (uk.paulmann.com)
Wall lights Holloways of Ludlow (holloweysofludlow.com)
Sofa and floor lights
John Lewis & Partners (as before)

Shelving String (stringfurniture.com)
Woodburner Stovax (stovax.com)
Table lamp Made (as before)
Kitchen bench/computer desk
Designed by Jenny; made by W Parker & Son (parkerandson-joinery.co.uk)
Utility room cabinets and sink
Howdens (howdens.com)

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Small wonder

This tiny house was the eco-friendly solution to building on difficult terrain and to a tight budget

WORDS **CAROLINE EDNIE**
PHOTOGRAPHY **DAVID BARBOUR**

IN BRIEF

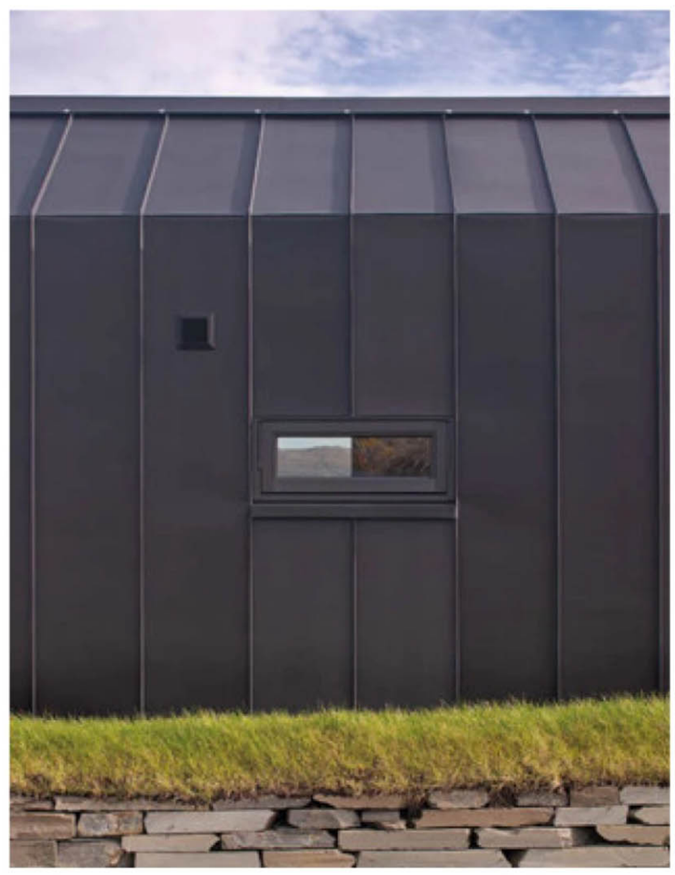
LOCATION Isle of Skye, Scotland
TYPE OF PROPERTY Steel-frame micro house
BEDROOMS 1
PROJECT STARTED September 2017
PROJECT FINISHED September 2019
SIZE 30sqm
LAND COST N/A (part of owner's land)
BUILD COST £90,000

Recycleable zinc panels are teamed with untreated Siberian larch boards on the exterior. The zinc cladding has an expected lifespan of 70 years.

Four years ago, Ali McLennan began planning to build a self-contained little house on the land around his home on the Isle of Skye. 'My son Liam is a marine engineer and had been talking about moving to the island,' explains Ali. 'A second property would provide somewhere for him to live and, later on, a retirement solution for me: I could make an income renting out my home while living in the small house.'

With the help of a friend, local joiner Michael Mackinnon, Ali, 50, sketched out some ideas for the project and gave them to architect Ann Nisbet of Glasgow-based Ann Nisbet Studio. Ann, who had lived on Skye for several years, created a design that took advantage of the site and its views to the north and west over the beautiful landscape and east to Broadford Bay and the small island of Pabay.

The plot is on a small plateau that falls away down a steep bank to Blackpark river below. The first inspection threw up some unfortunate findings. 'Structural engineers carried out ground investigations and discovered that some parts of the site contained ungraded demolition material from past works. It became clear, based on their advice, that the cost of required groundworks and the foundations needed to make good this problem would be more than Ali's total budget for the house. For a while we thought that the project had no future,' says Ann. »



ABOVE The side of the house that faces the road is mostly wall to maintain privacy. There is one small window; with the lights on, it looks welcoming, like a lantern shining in the darkness

RIGHT The building is insulated with a high-performance rigid insulation, allowing the depth of the walls to be kept to a minimum

'A second property would provide somewhere for my son to live and, later on, a retirement solution for me'

ABOVE A small stove is elevated off the floor and recessed into a wall of storage, which includes a log holder and three deep shelves

ABOVE RIGHT A mini kitchen is fitted into the deep wall storage

Not to be deterred, she came up with a solution. 'My practice had been researching the possibilities of an energy-efficient, low-cost mobile home for rural communities – an alternative to the static caravan,' says Ann. 'I suggested to Ali that he might consider a similar lightweight building. We went to an engineering firm with an initial proposal and worked with them to develop a design that could be constructed in a factory and transported to site on a flatbed trailer.' A system was developed that allowed the house to be bolted onto a shallow concrete foundation.

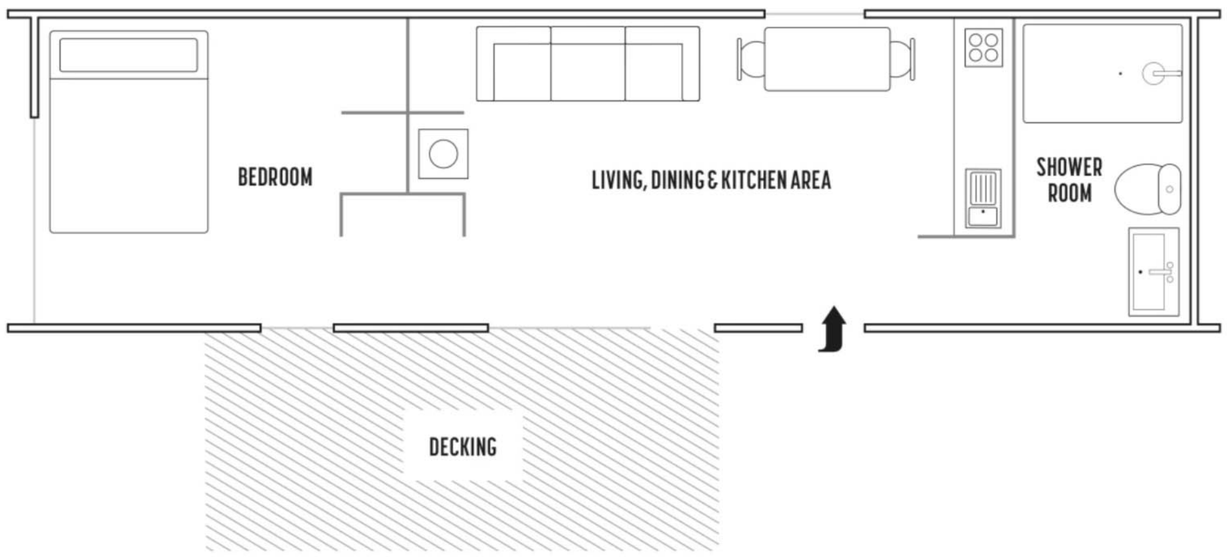
Planning in principle was already granted for a small house, so Ann had pre-planning discussions with the Highland planning department and building control to seek support for the design, which was later approved without objection.

The build also went without a hitch thanks to help from Ali's friends and a local skills base. 'The steel frame was constructed in a welder's yard in Fort William, then a friend of mine put it on the back of his lorry and took it to an unused fish farm on Skye where the construction was completed,' says Ali, who works in the fishing industry. Apart from the zinc cladding, which cost a significant chunk of Ali's budget at £14,000, the house was built almost entirely with local materials by local tradespeople.

The black zinc and untreated Siberian-larch exterior were chosen to pay respect to the agricultural buildings of the area and ensure a long lifespan with minimal maintenance.

Transporting the finished house to site was the most challenging aspect of the entire project. »

FLOOR PLAN



SUPPLIERS

PROJECT TEAM
Architect Ann Nisbet Studio (annnisbet.com)
Engineer Stuart Burke & Kiloh Associates (burloh.com)
Contractor Mackinnon Joinery (07788 554 373)

Dry-stone wall
Shona McLeod (skye-stones.co.uk)

STRUCTURE
NTech windows and doors NorDan (nordan.co.uk)
Roof and cladding VMZinc (vmzinc.co.uk)

FIXTURES & FITTINGS
Rubber flooring The Colour Flooring Company (colourflooring.co.uk)
Hobbit stove Salamander Stoves (salamanderstoves.com)
Pendant lights Muuto (muuto.com); Tojo (tojodesign.com)

Original 1227 wall light Anglepoise (angelpoise.com)

FURNITURE & ACCESSORIES
Cushions Laura Spring (lauraspring.co.uk)
Sofa Made (made.com)
Birch-faced ply bed Made bespoke by joiner

'The skill of the crane operator on the flatbed lorry was unbelievable,' says Ali. 'Moving a 12-tonne house from the back of a truck using a remote control, then setting it down with precision over the steel fittings it was to be bolted to, was stressful but exciting. We had a wee party afterwards.'

Though designed to caravan dimensions, Ali's house feels light and open inside. Big areas of glazing face south, maximising solar gain and capturing the views over the rural landscape. The upper sections of glass are overclad with timber slats, which filter sunlight to reduce the risk of the interior getting too warm. And with the west-facing gable fully glazed, Ali can enjoy the afternoon and evening light and take in the views looking out from the bedroom.

The interior was inspired by caravan and boat design, with attention paid to making good use of the space. Birch-faced plywood is the material of choice: it lines the walls and ceilings and offcuts were used to make shelves. Rubber flooring runs through the house and contributes to the project's eco credentials as it can be lifted, re-used and recycled at the end of its life.

'The plywood absorbs sounds, which contributes to the house's unique qualities,' says Ali. 'It's small but feels spacious, cosy and modern. I'd say it is one of a kind.' GD

LEFT The double-aspect bedroom is bright and spacious, with a glazed gable capturing views to the west

BELOW A space-saving plywood sliding door closes the bedroom off from the living room

'The upper sections of glass are overclad with timber slats, which filter sunlight to reduce the risk of the interior getting too warm'

A dry-stone wall, topped with turf runs along the north of the site and forms a boundary with the road

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A new chapter

This converted 19th-century Dutch church has undergone a complete transformation to become an energy-efficient family home

WORDS **JULIET BENNING**
PHOTOGRAPHY **HERMAN VAN HEUSDEN/GAP INTERIORS**

The mezzanine bridge is supported by steel beams. Its glass balustrade provides views across both floors

LEFT The church's corner plot covers about 550sqm

IN BRIEF

LOCATION Edam, Netherlands
TYPE OF PROPERTY Converted church
BEDROOMS 4
PROJECT STARTED October 2016
FINISHED December 2018
SIZE 250sqm house; 36sqm garage
BUILD COST £686,000, plus £263,000 to buy the church

From the ouside, this unassuming canalside church in the small Dutch town of Edam reveals nothing of the amazing transformation within, yet immediately behind its freshly painted, solid-oak doors is an innovative and spacious home of glass, timber and concrete that's a hymn to modern design.

The conversion from church to family home was project-managed by its new owners, Arjan Hartong and Medina Alic-Hartong, both 36, who work in infrastructure management, and designed by Jos Hoope, a founding partner in Amsterdam's Hoope+Plevier Architects. 'Medina and I were living in a terraced house in the nearby village of Kwadijk but were eager to move to Edam,' says Arjan. 'We wanted the character of an old building, but not the problems it might bring, such as creaking doors and poor insulation.'

'We wanted the energy and character of an old building, but not the problems it might bring'

After a long search, the pair weren't able to find something suitable and finally settled for a canalside flat but it wasn't long after they moved in that the church came up for sale. 'The increasing secularisation of the Netherlands has led to many former religious buildings becoming available for architectural projects,' Jos explains. But before being allowed to buy the 1891 building, the couple, with Jos's help, had to come up with a plan that would win the approval of both the church and the city authorities – a plan that would see Jos also taking on the design of the house next door, which had been sold to a developer.

'Arjan and Medina offered a price that was accepted because our idea for the project paid respect to the church's architecture, changing little of the exterior,' says Jos.

Arjan spent the first year stripping the building back, helped by his dad, while waiting for the architectural drawings to be developed and approved. 'The church was like a dark box and it wasn't easy to imagine how it could become a light living space,' says Arjan. 'But we saw its possibilities. We wanted something out of the ordinary, but that made it difficult to choose a direction to go in.' »

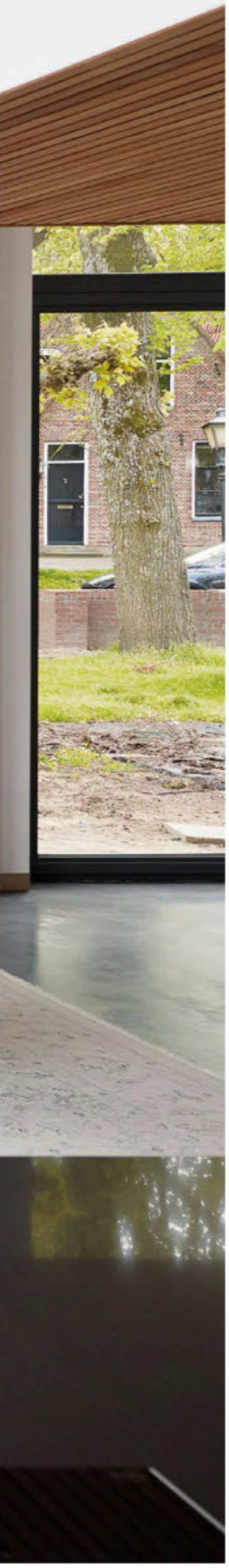
The low ceiling over the living room makes the space feel more cosy, while the lofty proportions of the rear of the church bring a sense of grandeur

They finally opted to construct a three-storey steel-framed structure in the darkest part of the building to house the bedrooms and bathrooms. The hallway and open-plan living and dining area take up the remaining floor space at ground level, while walkways and galleries on the upper floors create intimate nooks and an office, as well as a place to look out of the church windows – the sills of which, at 1.8 metres, are too high to see out of from the ground floor. Glass balustrades provide views into the main living area and up to the timber-beamed vaulted ceiling.

The rear wall of the building, just behind where the altar once stood, has been replaced with double-height glazing, and the wooden floor removed to make way for light-reflecting polished concrete.

As is typical in modern or renovated homes in the Netherlands, the concrete and steel posts for the new foundations had to go 18 metres deep to reach down to a firm layer of sand. At the same time, a state-of-the-art geothermal pump with brine-water pipes going 150 metres below ground was installed outside the building. It feeds the underfloor and inwall heating, which also cools the house in summer. This innovative system, working in tandem with the solar panels on the garage roof, means the house is able to produce all its own energy. To ensure high levels of energy-efficiency, the walls and roof are well-insulated and secondary glazing allows the original church windows to be preserved, while improving their thermal performance.

To carry out the building work, Medina and Arjan chose a trusted contractor who had previously worked for Arjan's parents. The agreed payment schedule was based on an hourly fee and included a percentage of »



LEFT A rug and three Moooi pendant lights help to define the dining space, and draw attention to the large table, which seats eight, that the couple bought at auction

RIGHT The black kitchen stands out against the white walls. Push-to-open cabinet doors have a semi-matte finish that doesn't show up any fingermarks

The couple worried that their mostly white scheme was too conservative so made the internal window recess a bright shade of yellow

RIGHT The long first-floor landing creates an axis through the building opening up views from front to rear

the material price and subcontractors. With an experienced and skilled team on board, the project was completed on time and within the couple's budget.

During the conversion work, Medina, Arjan and their new son Armin, now three, remained living in their flat a few hundred metres away, allowing Arjan to visit the site every morning before his working day began. 'There were challenges with the logistics; in getting heavy vehicles carrying materials down the narrow streets of Edam but on the whole everything ran smoothly,' says Arjan.

Inspired by Scandinavian mid-century design, the couple have filled their light and contemporary home with design classics such as the Eames chairs and Flos light fittings. There's also a nod to modern Dutch design, as the impressive light fitting above the kitchen/dining area is by Marcel Wanders.

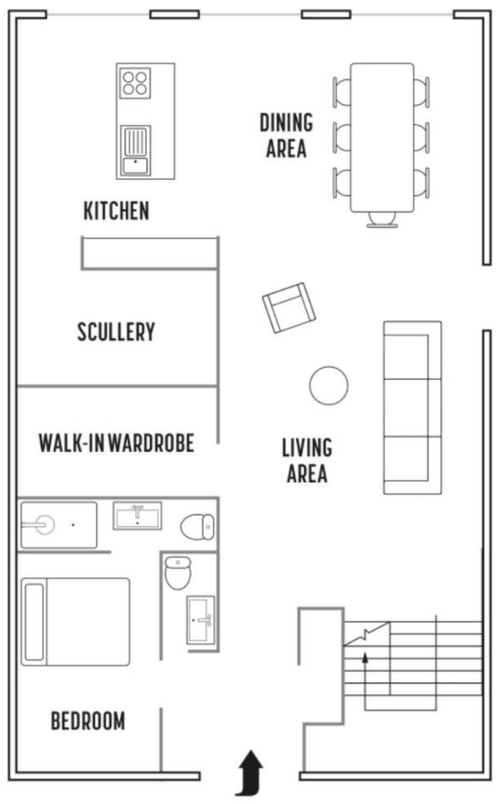
'We felt comfortable as soon as we moved in, which seemed a little strange. Although, I was so familiar with every inch of the building by then that living in it felt utterly natural,' Arjan says. GD

‘It wasn’t easy to imagine how it could become a light living space. But it was full of possibilities’

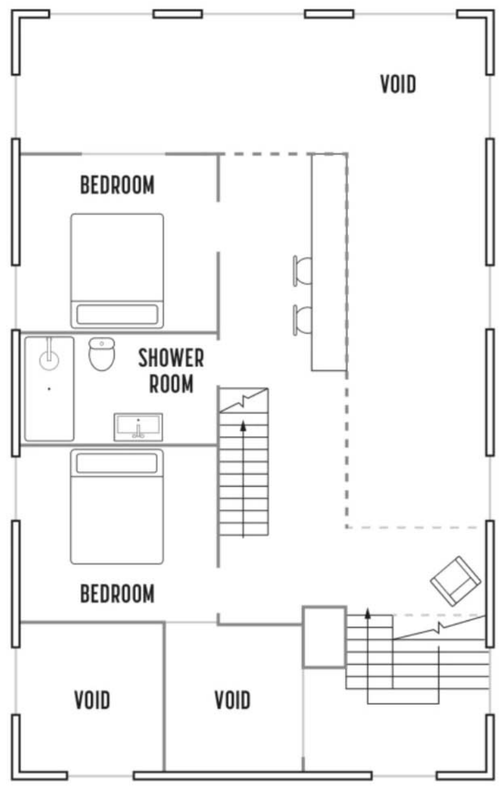
In Arjan and Medina’s bedroom, the internal box structure forms a headboard with recessed shelf. It also houses a toilet, shower room and wardrobes

The rose window is fitted with a concealed blind that offers privacy without distracting from the beauty of the glazing

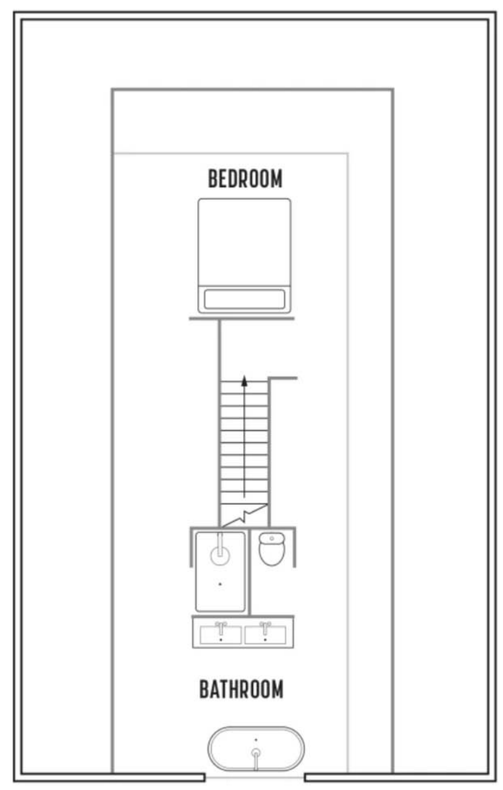
FLOOR PLANS



GROUND FLOOR



FIRST FLOOR



SECOND FLOOR

Later this year, Arjan and Medina plan to landscape the outdoor space where a community hall once stood

SUPPLIERS

PROJECT TEAM
Architect Hoope+Plevier Architects (hoopeplevier.nl)
Structural engineer A Harder (harderadvies.nl)
Contractor Dave Steur Bouw (+31 6219 16950)
Project developer
Clausen Projectontwikkeling (+31 6554 88257)

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Linoleum flooring Forbo (forbo.com)
Steel supplier Siem Steur Staalconstructies (siemsteur.nl)
Brine/water heat pump Eco Forest (ecoforest.es)

FIXTURES & FITTINGS
Kitchen fittings Sterkeukens (sterkeukens.nl)
Hob and oven Siemens StudioLine (siemens-home.bsh-group.com)
Refrigerator Inventum (inventum.com)

Sink and taps Caressi (caressi.nl)
Built-in fireplace Brunner (brunner.eu)
Electric blinds Luxaflex (luxaflex.co.uk)

FURNITURE & ACCESSORIES
Kitchen light Marcel Wanders for Flos (flos.com)
Dining-area pendant lights Moooi (moooi.com)
Lounge and dining chairs Vitra (vitra.com)
Bedroom wall lights Artemide (artemide.com)
Landing light Seletti (seletti.it)
Landing chair Moroso (moroso.it)

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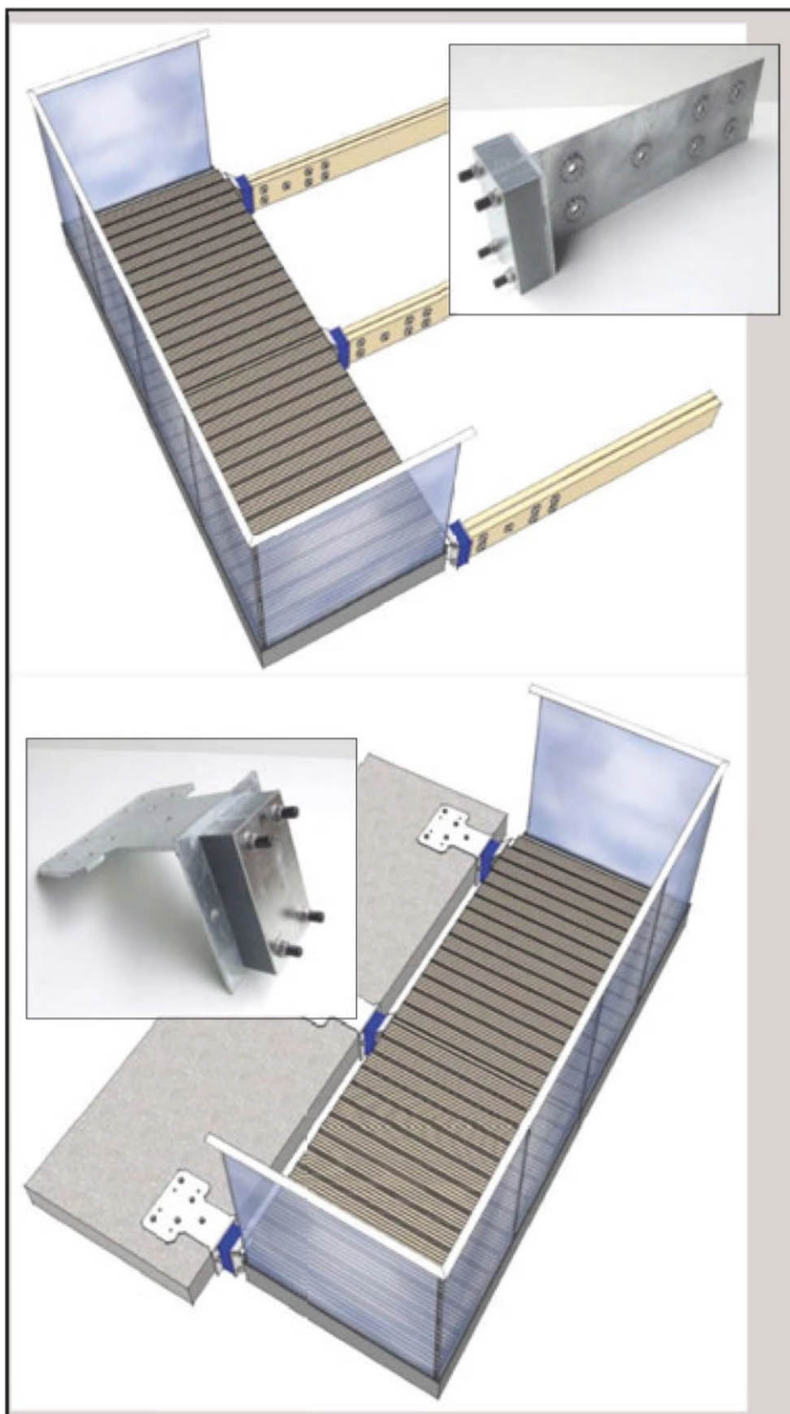

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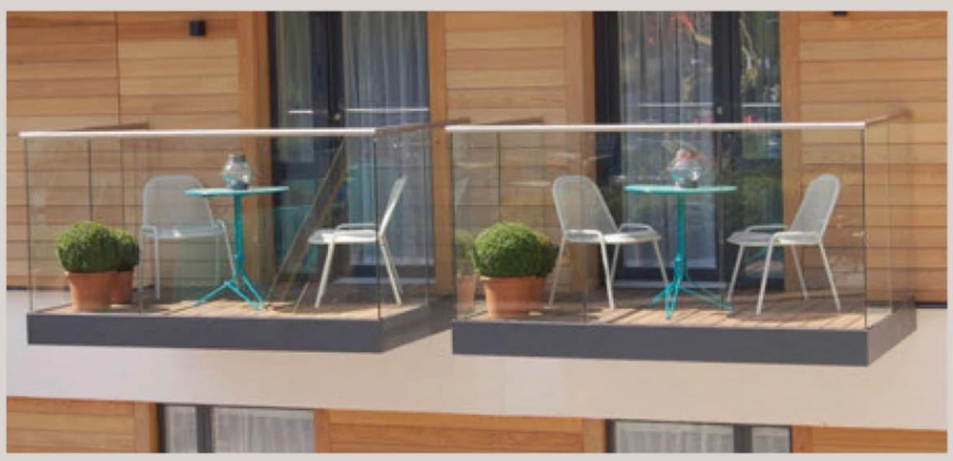

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GRANDDESIGNS PROJECTS

An Cala by architect Mary Arnold-Forster overlooks Loch Nedd in the Highlands. For more picture-perfect country homes, go to page 88 (maryarnold-forster.co.uk)

PHOTOGRAPHY DAVID BARBOUR

Renovation diary: part nine 75

Guide to building regulations 81

Ten terrific country houses 88

Staircase design options 97

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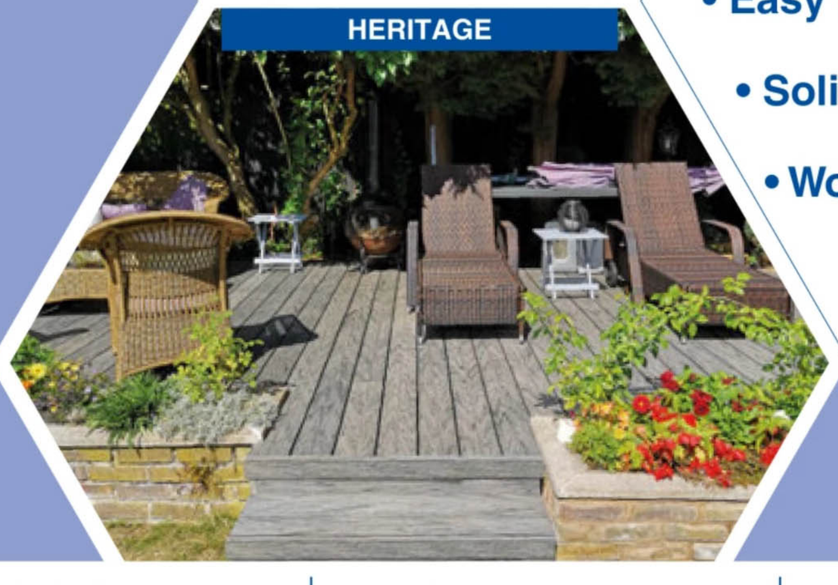

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Three large glazed sliding doors are being fitted in place. These will let light flood into the open-plan living area

Reena Simon, 36, interior stylist and blogger (hyggeforhome.com), lives in Cardiff with her husband, Matt, 40, and their three young daughters. Follow the family's progress each month as they convert a 1960s bungalow into a two-storey home

The end of the build is in sight

As the scaffolding comes down, Reena and Matt get a sense of the progress that's been made in recent weeks

This month has seen the most dramatic developments of our renovation project so far. And it's been really great to see the transformation on site; the pace of the work has definitely picked up and it has been an action-packed few weeks.

Much of the house is watertight; the corrugated steel roof is on, many of the windows are fitted and all of them have arrived »

The original 1960s bungalow was drab but its size had the potential to create open-plan living

The larch cladding has been weatherproofed by charring the surface

on site, and the exterior cladding is almost finished. An even bigger milestone is that the scaffolding has come down. When it was removed, Matt and I were able to see the reality of what we've achieved so far, and how it will all finally come together in just a few months from now.

The change from the run-down bungalow, which we bought back in October 2018, to the contemporary two-storey family home we have now, is truly dramatic. We're over the moon with how the house looks. And our concerns that the design was compromised due to the restrictions imposed by the local

It has taken nine months, but the build is a metamorphosis

RENOVATION PROJECT PLANNING GUIDE

1 FINDING A PLOT OR RUN-DOWN PROPERTY
Search via land and property websites, contact local estate agents and get on the mailing lists for upcoming property auctions.

2 SEEK PLANNING PERMISSION
It's required before you start any work, apart from changes completed under permitted development rules.

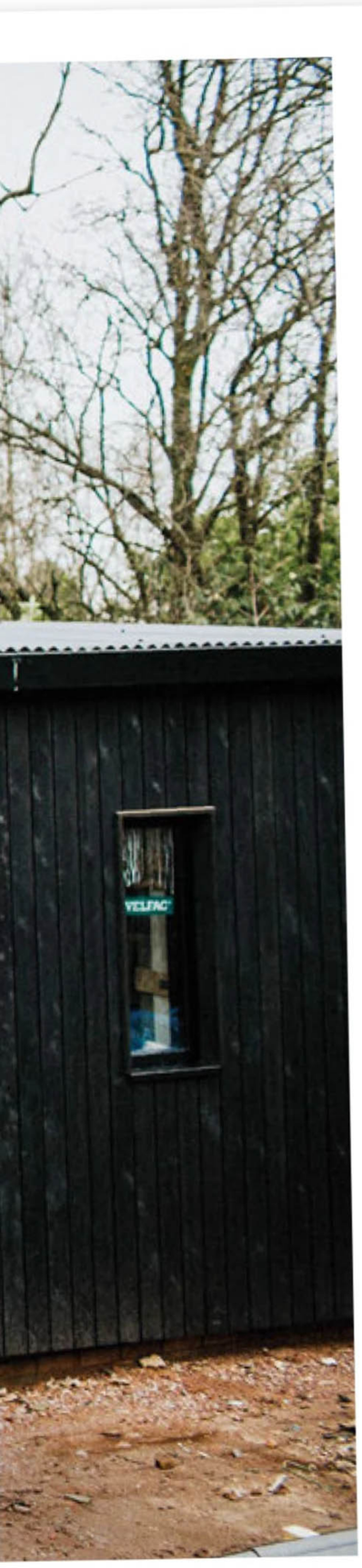
3 SET A BUDGET AND HIRE YOUR TEAM
Work out a budget and then secure funds as a priority. Seek recommendations for architects and builders. Visit their completed projects.

4 MANAGE THE PROJECT
Give your team a clear brief for the build. Set a schedule of works and make sure that the legally binding construction contract is ready.

5 MAKE REGULAR INSPECTIONS
Visit the site to ensure that everything is in order and the work is progressing as planned. Address any issues as they arise.

6 SIGN OFF THE PROJECT
Take a tour of the finished work with your build team and note down any snags that need to be corrected before signing off on the renovation project.

PHOTOGRAPHY MARIE PALBOM PHOTOGRAPHY **ILLUSTRATION** CAROLYN MERRIFIELD



planning department have finally been put to rest.

Our vision was to maximise the connection between the interior of the house, the garden and beyond. The addition of a first floor and the glazing was a key part of this aim. There are two walls of almost floor-to-ceiling glazing at the back of the open-plan living area and our bedroom. Both spaces are at the rear of the house and look out on a stream and paddock.

One of the challenges for the glazing design, which is made up of square panes, was ensuring that the framing bars appear to line up on the ground and first floors. You'd need a keen eye to notice that the panes upstairs are slightly bigger than those on the floor below. This deliberate attention to detail gives a seamless effect and a slightly more open view on the first floor.

We also chose glazed sliding doors for the ground floor, rather than bi-folding doors, because we felt they would give us the most unhindered views. It will be lovely to sit back, relax and watch the three horses that live in the field grazing and wandering down to the stream for a drink.

Another area that was carefully planned to take full advantage of our outdoor space is the window seat in the kitchen. As the builder was working on it, I spotted an opportunity to mirror it with a seat on the outside, which will further blur the boundary between the interior and exterior spaces. We're going to build a canopy above this corner of the terrace and plant it up to create a roof garden that will attract wildlife and soften the black cladding. It's a good solution, whether your home is south-facing and you want to have shade or, like us, north-facing and need a place to shelter from the rain.

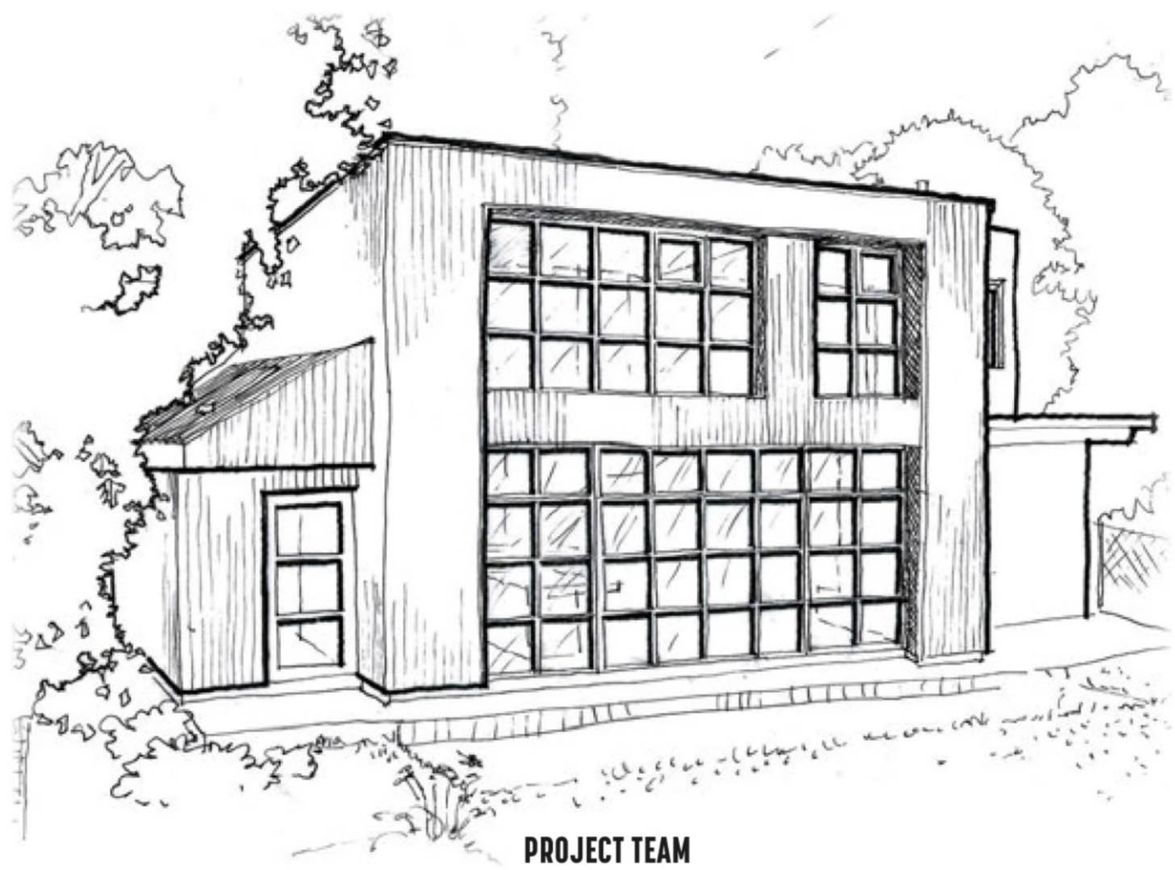
> 'Our vision was to maximise the connection between the interior, the garden and beyond'

Talking of the cladding, there were three ways in which Matt and I could have the black exterior we wanted: painting, staining or scorching timber boards. To avoid having to carry out any maintenance on the cladding in the future, which would come at a cost, we went with the scorching option.

The timber is Siberian larch and what's really special is that the charring makes the wood rot- weather- and fireproof, and resistant to mould and insects. It will look good for up to 100 years with no maintenance. Called *shou sugi ban*, the technique dates back centuries and originated in Japan. It may be old but it's one of the most contemporary aspects of the house's design and makes it stand out. GD

● ***Next month: It's time to look at the interiors***

This is carpenter Russell Jones, who Reena desribes as a 'legend', working on the reveals for the windows



PROJECT TEAM

Architect Downs Merrifield Architects (downsmerrifield.com)
Planning consultant LRM Planning (lrmplanning.com) **Interior architecture** Alex Nikjoo (nikjoo.co.uk)
Landscape architect Victoria Wade Landscape Architecture (victoriawade.co.uk)
Builder REG Construction (07791 143 017) **Corrugated steel sheeting** Cladco Profiles (cladco.co.uk)
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ABOVE Large glazed doors connect the open-plan kitchen and dining space to the patio and garden

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Highfield View, a three-bedroom house in Yorkshire, had seen better days. Its 1970s architectural features, outdated decor, and two ground-floor extensions failed to make the most of the large garden and stunning views of the surrounding countryside.

After purchasing the property from an elderly couple, the new owners saw great potential in this large corner plot. They planned a huge front-to-back renovation that would bring the two existing extensions together in one large open-plan space, while building a second storey on top of the side extension to accommodate a master bedroom and en-suite bathroom.

At the same time, they took the opportunity to modernise the home from top to bottom, bringing

Huge XP Slide Panoramic doors span almost 10m across the back of the house

BELOW The building work of the extension was carried out by Express's in-house team

ABOVE A Sky Line roof lantern is a standout feature of the kitchen, bringing in lots of natural light from above – ideal for food prep

it into the 21st century. An extensive raised patio connects the new kitchen and dining area to the large garden outside.

Express drew on its extensive product range to supply individually tailored glazing solutions for each space. Huge XP Slide Panoramic doors in the living/dining area open onto the patio for a seamless transition from indoors to outdoors and allow wide views across the countryside.

Windows have the luxurious touch of slim aluminium frames and solar-panelled integral blinds. A Sky Line roof lantern brings extra light down into the kitchen while a modern, solid Linora door with adjacent sidelights has created a statement entrance.

The impact of the steel corner posts that support the first-floor extension has been minimised with bespoke insulating cladding, giving the illusion that the bedroom is floating above the glazing. This and other contemporary touches have thoroughly updated the entire home and given it a modernist feel.

Renovation of Highfield View took five months and cost around £200,000, but the house has since been valued at £700,000, which is more than double the original purchase price.

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This East Sussex house by Penton Architects is insulated beyond building regulations standard and is triple glazed throughout (pentonarchitects.co.uk)

Complying with building regulations

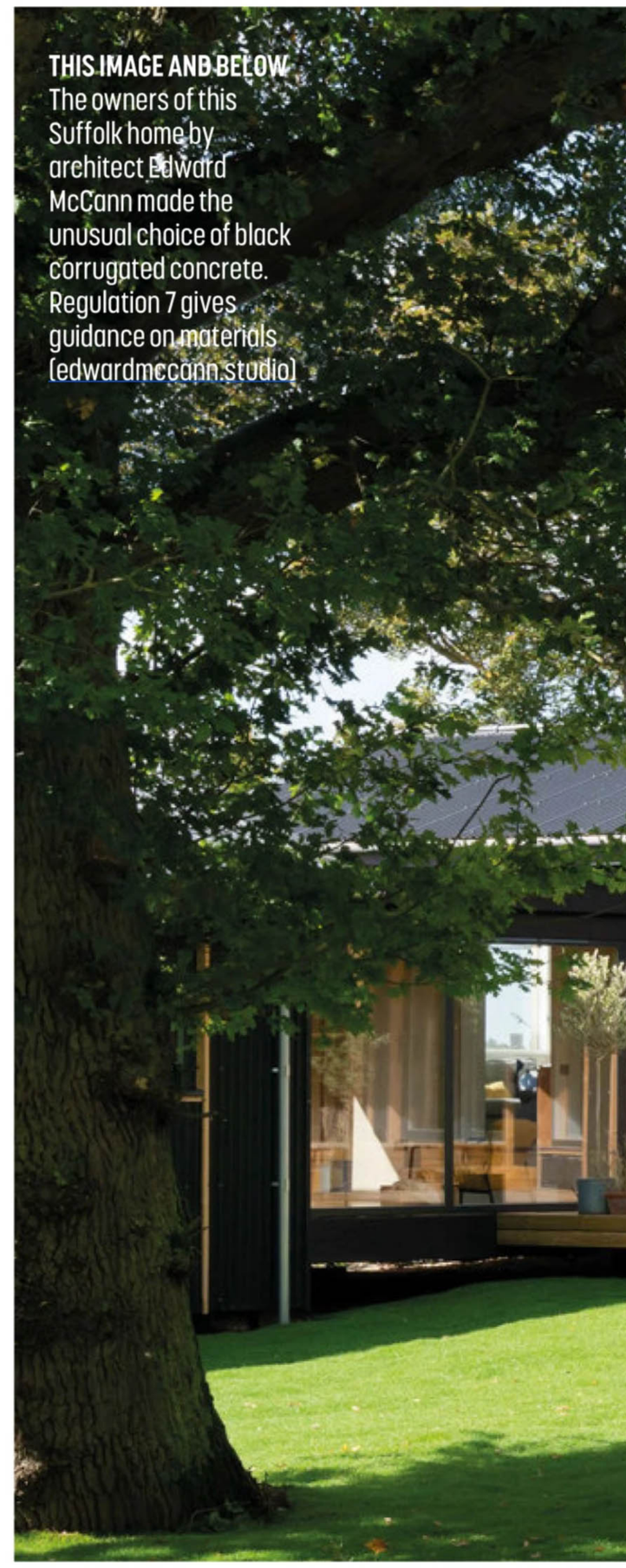
Make sure you follow minimum standards for design, construction and renovations

Building regulations ensure that your self-build or renovation is safe and comfortable to live in. They exist alongside planning permission or permitted development rights and it is absolutely essential to ensure your project complies with them. Local authority building control (LABC) teams or independent approved inspectors assist you in achieving compliance by giving feedback on your plans and making site inspections.

How it works

The regulations industry underwent a major shake-up in the 1980s. This was partly as a result of public-sector industrial action, which led to long waits for building projects to be handled. As a result, as well as LABC teams, there are now at least 100 registered »

Regulations state that replacement windows or doors must meet thermal performance standards. This early 20th-century infill house in Hackney, London, was renovated by Alexander Martin Architects (amarchitects.co.uk)



THIS IMAGE AND BELOW The owners of this Suffolk home by architect Edward McCann made the unusual choice of black corrugated concrete. Regulation 7 gives guidance on materials (edwardmccann.studio)

independent approved inspectors in England and Wales. An independent inspector is not subcontracted to your local council, and can handle your project from start to finish.

In Scotland, building regulations are called building standards, and are still administered and enforced by local authorities only.

Going independent

Engaging an independent inspector may cost a little more than using the council – LABC fees cost between one and two per cent of the overall cost of a build – but they can be much more involved and hands-on with your project than a typically overstretched LABC inspector.

However, only LABC has powers of enforcement. An independent inspector must hand the project over to the council department if there are problems that can't be resolved informally.

Early intervention

The popularity of big, open-plan spaces makes it of greater importance to work with someone who is able to come on board at an early stage.

'Modern houses now have clear spans that were typical of commercial spaces 30 years ago,' says chartered structural engineer John Staves, managing director of Michael Aubrey Partnership (mapl.co.uk) and vice-president of the Institution of Structural Engineers

If you do not conform to building regulations, the work will not be legal. You could face a fine of up to £5,000

(istructe.org). 'The engineering solution, which must be in accordance with regulations, requires greater consideration from earlier on in the process.'

Acting in your interest

Competent person schemes allow some trades, such as window fitters, gas installers and electricians, to apply for building regulations for their work on your behalf. A competent person can deal with any inspection and sign-off and will issue you with the relevant certificates.

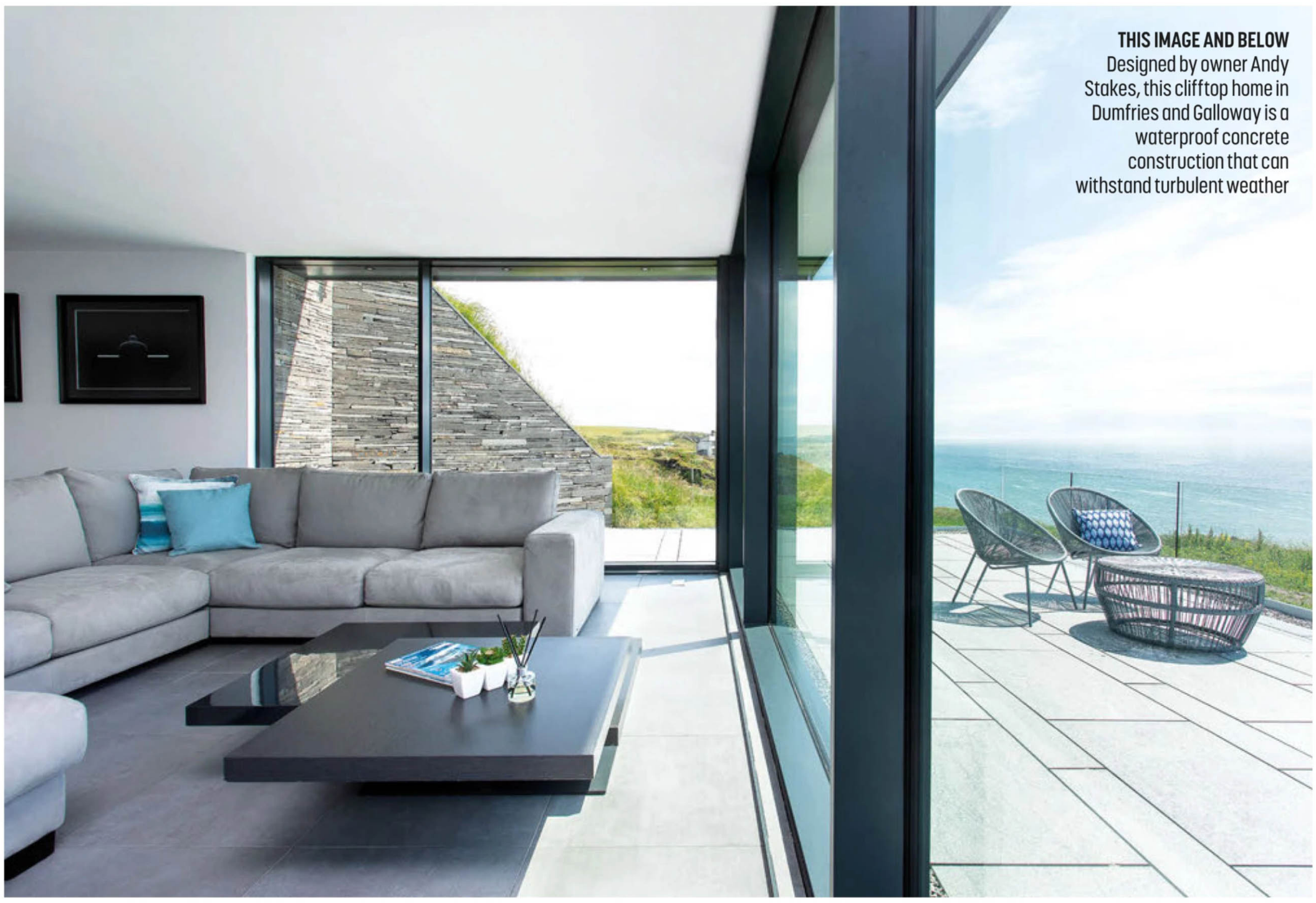
Why you must comply

If you do not conform to building regulations, the work will not be legal. You could be prosecuted and face a fine of up to £5,000. Crucially, the project may not be safe and could cause health problems, injury or death. It may also not meet energy efficiency standards. Should the work prove to be faulty, your local authority could insist you put it right.

If the project has not been notified to a building control »

A CLOSER EXAMINATION OF THE RULES

- Building regulations are the legal standards that ensure structural integrity, fire-protection, accessibility, effective energy performance, acoustic performance, protection against falls, and electrical and gas safety.
- Following the Grenfell Tower tragedy in 2017, serious modifications have been made to building regulations in order to improve fire safety.
- Standards for drains, ventilation, the ingress of water and issues of contamination, including methane and radon gas, are included.
- Heating, plumbing and air-conditioning systems, windows and doors, roof coverings and the installation of solid-fuel burners and renewables must all comply.



THIS IMAGE AND BELOW Designed by owner Andy Stakes, this clifftop home in Dumfries and Galloway is a waterproof concrete construction that can withstand turbulent weather

THE SELF-BUILD SAFETY PROCESS

The stages that must be checked to ensure compliance, outlined by **Jeremy Wiggins**, technical director at **Gpad London** (gpadlondonltd.com)

- The foundation depth will be inspected during your home's excavation to make sure you've hit a suitable bedding.
- All the calculations for the loadings of the sub-base and super structure - walls and roof - will be checked.
- During the build, periodic inspections will be carried out to ensure that everything is built in accordance with the submitted drawings.
- Inspections also make sure that a structure is suitably fire protected and meets other safety and environmental standards.
- When the project is finished, and if all is in order, a certificate of completion will be issued.

body or carried out by a competent person scheme-registered installer, the local authority will have no record that the work complies. Having official records will be important when you come to sell your home as you will be asked to provide evidence of compliance.

Your buyer's mortgage company will want to see the certificate of building regulations completion. But if any paperwork is missing, it is possible to buy indemnity insurance. This is designed to protect the new homeowner – and subsequent owners – against legal action if the local authority was to serve a building-regulation enforcement notice. Sometimes the seller pays, sometimes the buyer, or the cost – which will vary depending on the scale of the work undertaken – is split between both parties. A conveyancing solicitor will be able to find a suitable provider.

Changes on the horizon

Consultation took place recently over proposed changes by the Ministry of Housing, Communities & Local Government to Part L of the building regulations, those governing minimum energy performance standards for new homes in England, and Part F, addressing ventilation. This would see the introduction of a Future Homes Standard that puts the emphasis on the overall carbon footprint of a house, rather than its energy efficiency, as is currently the case. If approved, this would be introduced in 2025. GD

WORDS JAYNE DOWLE PHOTOGRAPHY RICHARD CHIVERS, DOUGLAS GIBB, HUNTLEY HEDWORTH, JEFFERSON SMITH

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10 homes in the countryside

Inspiring examples of rural homes that treat their spectacular sites as a challenge and an opportunity

WORDS **ANNA WINSTON**

A dramatic landscape or rural setting can come with fierce planning restrictions, but it can also inspire radical architectural solutions. Many of these homes set out to minimise their impact without compromising on ideas. Some bring new life to heritage buildings, others use the local vernacular as a starting point to create a contemporary space that's in-keeping with its neighbours. There are those that make a statement and others that recede, hugging the landscape, reflecting it or incorporating it into the construction materials. Some owners endeavour to touch the ground as lightly as possible, using prefabs, generating their own energy or even going completely off grid.

1 INCOMPLETE HUNTING LODGE A limited budget can sometimes inspire the most striking design solutions. Architecture practice Rever & Drage created the 1/3 Hus in Norway for a couple who had limited funds and wanted a design that was romantic, cosy and practical, with space to store hunting equipment and the potential for future expansion. Living spaces are arranged over two floors but only take up a third of the 193 square metre structure. The roof extends out over the rest of the site, supported by a wooden shell that frames dramatic views of the landscape and provides the basic structure for future additions. For now, this space is used for storage, dining and outdoor work, as well as for butchering deer after a hunt. The budget was £215,000, with the owners keeping costs down by doing some of the work themselves. (reverdrage.no) »

2 RURAL CO-HOUSING Hof Ter Beemt, a protected 17th-century Flemish farmhouse in Zingem, Belgium, was bought jointly by seven families with the aim of creating a series of sustainable, connected homes with shared amenities while preserving a historic building for future generations. Re-use and conservation specialists Anno Architecten (annoarchitecten.be) divided the farm building into circulation areas, shared spaces and private quarters reflecting the previous uses of each part of the building.

For the joinery, a range of timbers have been used to help define the new spaces and create different atmospheres. Two new Corten-steel dormers give the inner courtyard a fresh, contemporary feel while introducing more daylight to the attic spaces; these are offset by traditional white render and a clay-tile roof.

Gent-based sustainable building expert Martens Van Caimere Architecten (mvc-architecten.be) boosted the eco credentials of the project by including a collective heat network and communal pellet stove. »

3 TRADITIONAL COTTAGE REJUVENATED

The 200-year-old Island Cottage in West Sussex had suffered unfortunate extensions and remodellings before being bought by a couple relocating from London. They asked Paul Cashin Architects to perform a partial restoration and create a new identity for the house that would connect it visually to nearby Pagham Harbour nature reserve.

Stripping away previous additions, reorganising the interior, reinstating the library and adding a guest room, the architects worked closely with the clients, who directed the build. Local materials such as flint and timber were reintroduced and reclaimed materials used where possible for the interior.

The larch-clad rear extension has irregular windows and loggias that are placed to maximise views and create sightlines through the building. Steep stairs lead up to the flat roof, where a grass terrace overlooks the nature reserve. (paulcashinarchitects.co.uk)

4 EXPERIMENTAL HEMP FARMHOUSE

Run by TV and film director Steve Barron and partner Fawnda Denham, Margent Farm in Cambridgeshire is part 20-acre hemp farm, part bioplastic research project. The duo asked London-based Practice Architecture to create a new farmhouse, converting an industrial barn into a ground-breaking prototype.

The main structural walls of the three-bedroom house are made from prefabricated panels developed by the architects using hempcrete – hemp mixed with lime and water – packed into large timber frames. These are clad in a corrugated material made by combining hemp-stalk fibres and resin made from agricultural waste. A conservatory and double-height living room with timber joinery offer views over the surrounding hemp fields. Following the success of the project, the materials are now being developed for commercial use. (practicearchitecture.co.uk)

5

CONTEMPORARY ISLAND HOME Riverside House overlooks the River Aros on the Isle of Mull. Although the client wanted a modern home, the plot followed on from a row of conventional white cottages and was in an area subject to a lot of development restrictions. To overcome this challenge, architects Will Thorne and Jenny Wyness of Thorne Wyness Architects created a 220 square metre house in three sections. The front volume, facing the road and river, takes the outward form of a traditional cottage; sitting behind are two darker connected but independently defined pitched-roof blocks, one clad in corrugated steel, the other Siberian larch. A glazed hall runs between the three.

Inside, the cross-laminated timber walls have been left bare giving a warmth to the living areas, while the underside of the soaring rooflines help define the individual spaces. As building costs on the Scottish islands can be higher than central London due to material prices, the budget of £550,000 was relatively conservative, including private water supply and Klargester BioDisc sewage treatment plant. (thornewyness.co.uk) »

Although the client wanted a modern home, the plot followed on from a row of conventional white cottages and was in an area subject to development restrictions

6 SENSITIVE WOODLAND SITE

This 250 square metre home in the South Downs National Park in Hampshire had a hard battle with the planners, eventually winning on appeal. It replaces a collection of run-down buildings, including what was once a herdsman's cottage, in an Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty.

Lead architect Design Engine (designengine.co.uk) used brick cladding to reference the previous structures on the site and used cantilevers and cutaways to help break up the rectangular form. This is further interrupted by the step up from one to two storeys at one end. The interior is a combination of open-plan and split-level. The central living space features glazed walls on either side and a variety of window sizes are positioned to make the most of the setting.

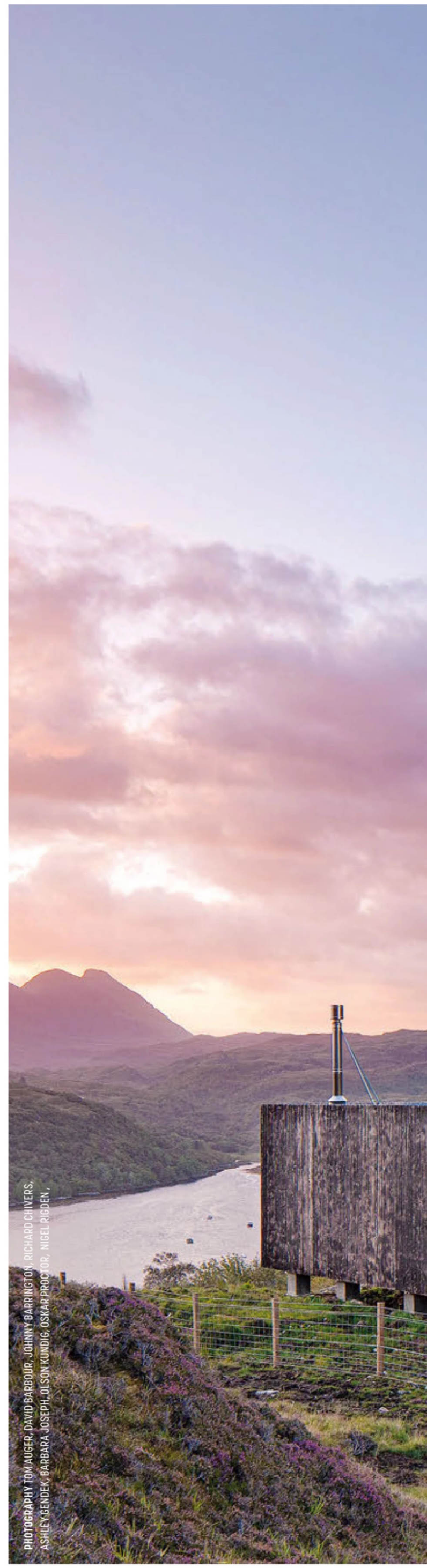
The building was delivered in collaboration with Paul Cashin Architects (paulcashinarchitects.co.uk) for £3,100 per square metre.

7 INVISIBLE LOCHSIDE HOUSE

Invited to replace a derelict stone bothy on the Isle of Skye, architect Rural Design realised that the building had become a key reference point in the landscape and advised the clients to instead restore it and build a completely new house on a separate site with dramatic panoramic views over Loch Dunvegan. Hoping to leave the area as unaltered as possible, the architect sought to hide the building while the clients were keen to incorporate some form of reflectivity. To achieve both goals, the 160 square metre house is clad in 300x600-millimetre marine-grade polished stainless steel shingles, which act like an invisibility cloak by reflecting the surrounding landscape. A timber-clad, turf-roofed box houses an unobtrusive entrance hall, tucked away at the rear, while a soaring monopitch roof slopes down over the living spaces towards the loch. Overhanging eaves shade the large expanses of glazing and a steel-clad terrace juts out from under the roof towards the loch. (ruraldesign.co.uk)

8

OFF-GRID MOUNTAIN RETREAT Nestled in the Tehachapi Mountains of California's Mojave Desert, the 315 square metre Sawmill is five miles from the nearest road. The client, an engineer, wanted a house that was as low-maintenance and self-sufficient as possible, while able to withstand the harsh climate. Created by US architect firm Olson Kundig, the initial idea is inspired by tents around a campfire, manifest as an arrangement of three wings and a patio around a central hearth. An eight metre long glazed wall slides open by turning a large metal wheel, enhancing the connection between the raw materials of the interior and the roughness of the landscape. The site was chosen to maximise natural heating and cooling, and the building kept as low-tech as possible, with power supplied by photovoltaic panels and water sourced from underground and recycled. (olsokundig.com) »



9 BUNGALOW REPLACEMENT RX Architects demolished an unloved 1920s bungalow to build Watcombe House, a 146 square metre, three-bedroom, timber-frame house clad in cedar planks and shingles that backs onto the Flatropers Wood Nature Reserve in Sussex. Despite being in an Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty, the timber-frame project sailed through planning, aided by thoughtful details like the use of British cedar instead of American. This will weather from a warm brown to a soft silver that will help bed it into the landscape.

A non-linear floor plan and changing roof heights is intended to break down the mass and evoke higgledy-piggledy clusters of agricultural buildings, while making the most of the triangular plot. The single-storey wing houses the kitchen, dining and living spaces, while the two-storey section has the bedrooms and bathrooms. Build cost was £330,000. (rxarchitects.com)

Despite being in an Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty, the timber-frame project sailed through planning

PHOTOGRAPHY TOM AUGER, DAVID BARBOUR, JOHNNY BARRINGTON, RICHARD CHIVERS, ASHLEY GENDEK, BARBARA JOSEPH, OLSON KUNDIG, OSKAR PROCTOR, NIGEL RIGDEN ,

10

MODULAR ECO HOUSE An Cala (the haven) is defined by its rocky, moorland site. Architect Mary Arnold-Forster (maryarnold-forster.co.uk) helped the clients select a location in the Scottish Highlands positioned between two outcrops, where they could build a home with minimal long-term impact, avoiding breaking any rocks or introducing a ground slab. Clad in charred larch, the house is constructed from a series of cross-laminated timber modules, insulated with wood fibre, that were built off-site by Carbon Dynamic (carbondynamic.com).

The dimensions of each module were determined by the size of the lorry that could access the remote site. The living areas are arranged in three pods, connected by a long, glass-roofed corridor that forms the backbone of the house, with a glazed wall at the north end to make the most of the long views out over Loch Nedd. A deck to the south connects the living room and bedrooms. The 117 square metre house cost £320,000, roughly the same as for a more conventional build in such a location. GD

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As part of architect De Rosee Sa's renovation for a Victorian mews house, this bespoke design with open oak treads was built in situ. Its stringers form the support for the whole stair. The house has no windows at the rear so open treads bring light down from the roof light. It cost around £14,400-£18,000 (deroseesa.com)

Step to it

With a range of designs and materials to choose from, your staircase can become a showstopping focal point

WORDS **CAROLINE RODRIGUES**

A staircase can have a huge impact on your home, setting out a design statement and affecting the way everyone moves around the house. It's also one of the most complex elements to design and construct, so seek advice from an architect or specialist company at the planning stage of your self-build or renovation. 'An experienced designer will create something that is in keeping with the building,' says Richard McLane, design director at staircase manufacturer Bisca (bisca.co.uk).

What is permitted?

Everything about the staircase must meet stringent building regulations. This includes the height and depth of each step, the permissible gap between open treads, the rake, or angle, the headroom – usually two metres – and the requirements for a handrail. When replacing older stairs that might not satisfy modern regulations, find a solution that meets current standards. But there is an exception to this rule. 'If the space is restricted, such as in a mews or cottage, then it is permissible to replace like with like,' says Richard.

RIGHT Arquitetura Nacional transformed a flat in Porto Alegre, Brazil, with a helical staircase. Positioned in the centre of the room, it leads to a mezzanine bedroom. The design, supported by the steel structure for the upper floor, doesn't touch the floor (arquiteturanacional.com.br)

A spiral staircase, winding around a central support pole, could be the answer for a limited space such as a mezzanine area

Design choices

A straight flight is the simplest and most cost-effective option. Fitted to the wall, this design has the advantage of providing room for under-stair cupboards. Prices for a kit with balustrade start from around £400. Add winders, which are angled tapered treads, to negotiate turns in direction. By contrast, you could spend upwards of £20,000 on a luxurious bespoke design.

For an open, contemporary look, a cantilevered stair with open or closed treads can be fixed into the wall at one side, appearing to float at the other. A helical design winds around a central void. This will take up a fair bit of space but is an impressive architectural highlight.

A spiral staircase, winding around a central support pole, could be the answer for a limited space such as a mezzanine area. Another efficient design option is to have compact alternating treads.

LEFT This bespoke staircase is oak, with blackened steel spindles topped with an oak handrail. Jarrods Staircases included several turns in the design. The kite-shaped treads create an eye-catching feature when seen from above (jarrodsstaircases.co.uk)

PHOTOGRAPHY ALEXANDER JAMES PHOTOGRAPHY, CHRISTIANO BAUCE, MATT CANT, WILL PRYCE, LUKE WHITE

In this alteration project by Mulroy Architects, the stair spirals to the top of the house. It was built with standard components but templates were taken of the original spindles and newel posts to create bespoke copies. The work cost around £6,000 (mulroyarchitects.com)

What's it made of?

Timber can be used for all elements of the stair, and for both simple modern forms or more elaborate designs. Classic turned wood spindles, a polished handrail and a shapely newel post are supremely elegant. Less-expensive woods can be painted, while hardwoods can be oiled or polished. Steel is a durable and contemporary option. Strong, yet with a lightweight look, it can be fitted with wood or glass treads. A cast concrete staircase will lend an industrial edge to a scheme and can also be clad in timber or stone.

For a truly grand impression, a sweeping cantilevered stone stair is hard to beat. Glass offers a streamlined look, bringing natural light to dark areas.

Go for an upgrade

Not simply a practical safety measure, the balustrade is one way to update a standard staircase if you're on a budget. 'Forged, formed or ornate uprights add drama and make the stair look unique,' says Richard McLane. It's worth spending as much as you can afford on glass balustrading. 'You will get a much better, cleaner look if you can stretch to a fully bespoke version without visible fixings,' he says.

LEFT Beautifully worn stone is the prime feature of this basement flight of steps of a garden flat in north London. The property had been left untouched for 40 years before Robert Rhodes Architecture and Interiors restored and sealed the stone (robertrhodes.co.uk)

FLOATING FREE

The magic of cantilevered staircases by **Jarrod Matthews**, managing director of **Jarrods Staircases** (jarrodsstaircases.co.uk)

- This type of staircase appears to float as it is only fixed on one side by means of an anchoring plate set within the wall. Treads - which can be open or closed - are supported by load-bearing steel bars attached to the anchoring plate.
- The wall is used as the main support in the vast majority of cases. Generally, it must be solid, although we have worked with light block walls. A floating impression can also be achieved by setting the treads between glass panels, in which case they can be supported by the glass rather than a load-bearing wall.
- A similar effect can also be achieved by creating a cantilever staircase suspended by steel bars anchored into the ceiling.
- Turns can be incorporated, as long as the supporting walls on each side are capable of anchoring the treads effectively. Quarter turn landings are also possible and would not add considerably to the cost.
- For a retrofit, we take the staircase out and the new load-bearing steel bars sit in the existing recesses. This is no more difficult than a new-build.
- There is no additional challenge in meeting building regulations compared with a standard staircase.
- A balustrade is necessary to meet building regulations, although it could be made from glass to maintain an open design. The staircase width dictates whether a balustrade is needed on both sides.
- Cantilevered staircases usually cost around 30 per cent more than a standard installation.

Turn to p101 to read the case study on a standout staircase »

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The flight from the ground to first floor was repaired and given a lick of paint

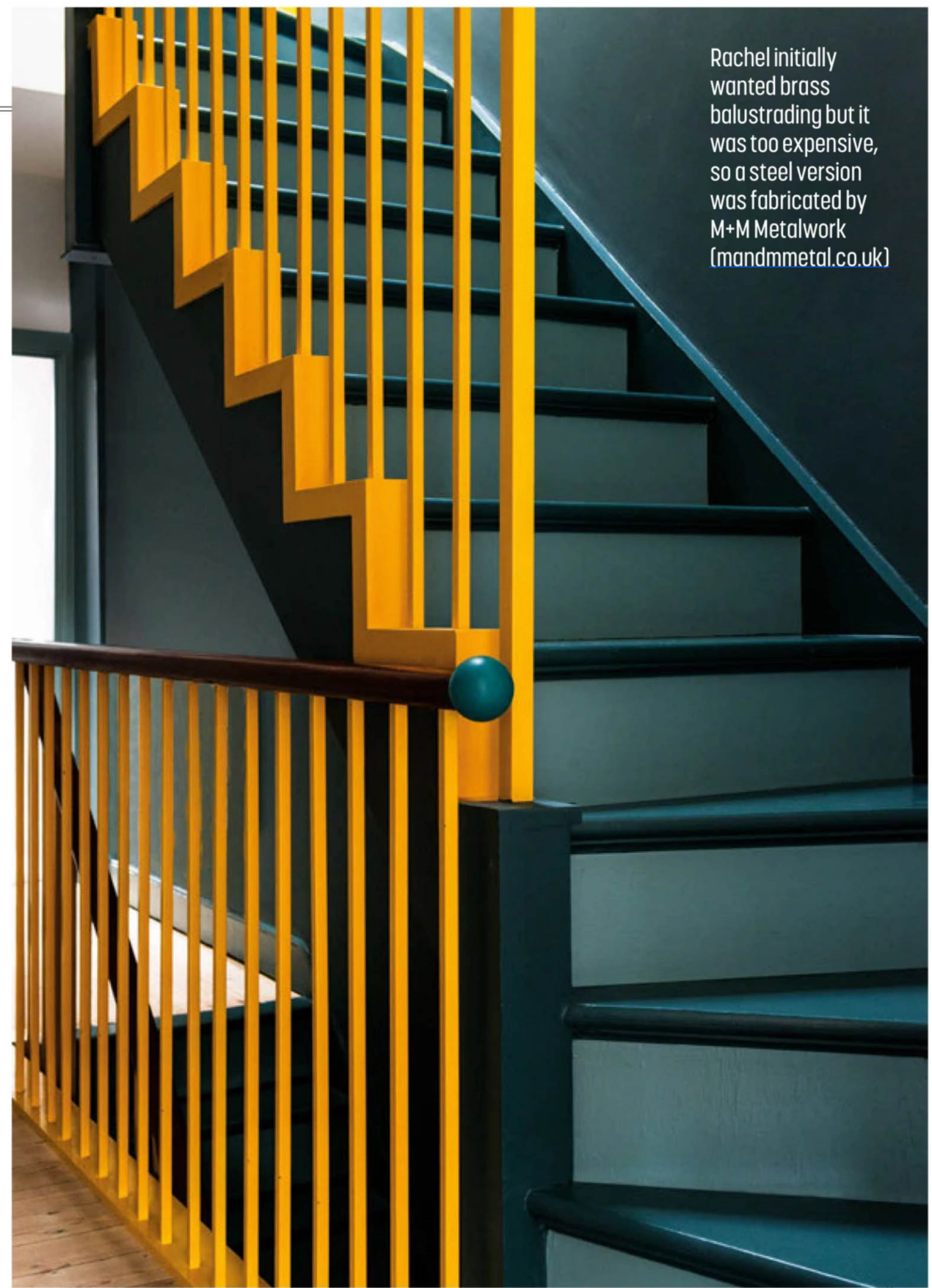
PROJECT PROFILE

LOCATION West London
STYLE OF PROPERTY Victorian terraced house
DURATION OF BUILD 9 months
SIZE 150sqm
PRICE OF NEW STAIRCASE £12,222

A bold move

Reconfiguring the staircase was integral to the success of a Victorian home renovation

WORDS **CAROLINE RODRIGUES** PHOTOGRAPHY **FRENCH+TYE**



Rachel initially wanted brass balustrading but it was too expensive, so a steel version was fabricated by M+M Metalwork (mandmmetal.co.uk)

Open the door to the home of Rachel and Chris Roberts and the first thing to strike you is the quirky staircase rising up through the house to the loft, its yellow balustrade picked out by a skylight.

After seven years in their three-bedroom Victorian house in west London, Rachel, 36, an obstetrician and gynaecologist, Chris, 37, a financial analyst, and their four children, Vesper, eight, Celeste, six, Taylor, six, and Clara, two, needed more space. Downstairs, the task was to improve the layout, extend to alleviate the pressure on space and solve the problem of the small hallway. Upstairs, a loft conversion was needed. Plans

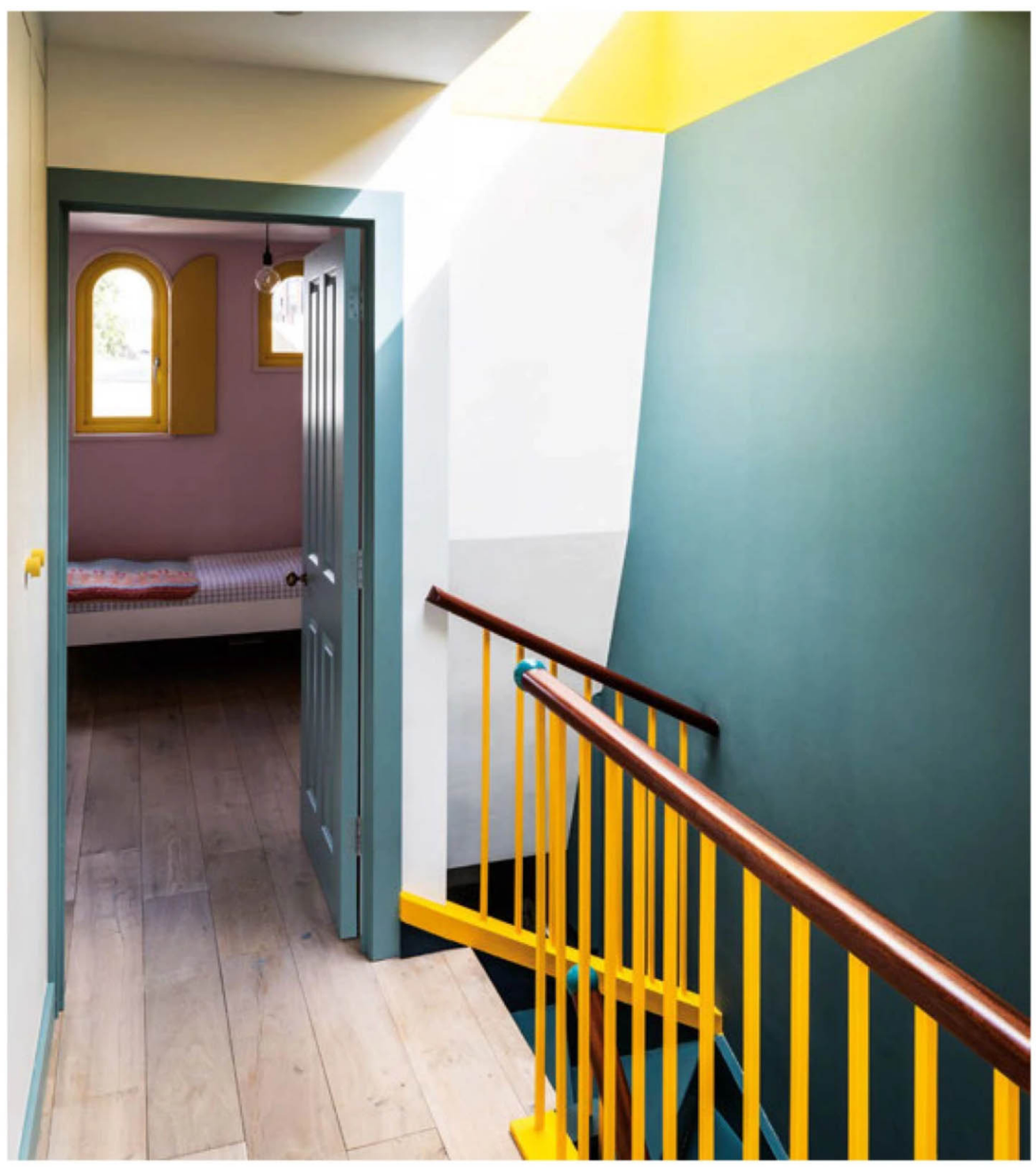
> 'It was a challenge to fit the stair in such a narrow space. It's the steepest design building regulations would allow'

for a new staircase were a crucial aspect of the project. In the couple's search for advice, an old friend, who is an architect, recommended a few firms. 'We contacted three that seemed a good fit, and Hugh McEwen and Catrina Stewart at Office S&M (officesandm.com) were the most impressive,' says Rachel. 'They pushed us to take more risks with materials and colours.'

The narrow plan meant that the house was dark and cramped. 'We had to be creative with the space,' explains Catrina. 'We reconfigured the staircase and included a light well to bring light to the ground floor.' There was a rudimentary staircase up to the loft, put in by a previous owner. 'It was basic, steep and would not have complied with building regulations,' says Rachel. Office S&M decided to reverse its direction so that the entire staircase would snake up through the house. 'We matched the new design to the Victorian original on the ground and first floor,' says Catrina, who designed the powder-coated steel yellow balustrade, a cherry-wood handrail, teal knobs and a marble sphere for the hall.

To comply with fire regulations, the bespoke staircase for the upper storey needed to be isolated from the rest of the house with fire doors opening onto it. 'It was a challenge to fit the stair in such a narrow space, while also fitting a light well; it's the steepest design building regulations would allow,' says Catrina.

The family moved out during renovation, keeping costs down by staying with friends and renting a tiny flat. Now settled back they can appreciate how well their home works. 'The staircase is central to that,' says Rachel. 'With the lightwell surround painted yellow, it brightens up the area; we rarely need lights on.' GD



● ***Look out for next month's guide to garden landscaping***

LEFT The loft skylight allows light to spill into the house. The new flight links the first floor with the converted attic. Teal-coloured knobs tone with the wall colour, which contrast with the bright yellow balustrade

Tongue and groove softwood fencing has been painted in a pale, neutral shade to increase a sense of space in a small garden. New rendered block walls include an integrated bench seat. Project by Harrington Porter (harringtonporter.com)

FOCUS ON

Garden walls and fences

A striking boundary will protect your home and enhance its style credentials

WORDS **ANDREA MANLEY**

Timber fences, metal screens and stone walls ensure privacy, reduce noise and act as a wind break. Selecting the right design will enhance the look of your outdoor space and may add value to your home.

You will need to seek planning permission for any boundary more than two metres high or a metre high when adjacent to a highway. And walls higher than 1.2 metres should be specified by a structural engineer. »

CREATE A SOUND BARRIER

If your garden is next to a noisy road, school or shopping area, acoustic fencing will help reduce sound levels. There are two main types to choose from: dense timber boards with no gaps between them, which act as a barrier to deflect noise; or absorption panels that have a central core filled with mineral wool covered with a geotextile membrane. Use either one in combination with dense planting for the most effective result.

> If your garden is next to a road, school or shopping area, acoustic fencing will help reduce sound levels

Garden designers Harrington Porter used slatted horizontal iroko hardwood panels to form a textural backdrop for pleached trees, with woven branches and leaves, in a revamped London home (harringtonporter.com)

WOOD'S GOOD

Good quality timber fences will last for a decade or more and suit a wide variety of garden styles. Pressure-treated softwood panels are a budget option, while oak and western red cedar are the most durable. Look for labelling that indicates the timber is responsibly sourced.

Solid board or panel designs offer complete privacy and greater noise reduction than more decorative options. Horizontal slatted styles create bands of light and shade and are useful when fitted on top of solid walls, where they offer privacy without blocking out the sunlight.

Traditional picket-style fencing and panels with vertical slats are beneficial for sites that are buffeted by strong winds, as they allow the air to flow through and decrease the strain on the fence when gusts blow. Whichever style you choose, the posts and frames must also be robust enough to withstand all conditions.

Fences made from composite materials, which can include a mix of wood, sawdust and reclaimed plastics, aim to give a realistic timber effect while being exceptionally durable. Composites also require little maintenance.

Reclaimed granite setts have a character developed over years of weathering. From £146 per tonne, CED Stone (cedstone.co.uk)

TAKE IT TO THE WALL

The size and height of the wall you need, and your budget, will influence your choice of material, whether brick, natural stone, reconstituted stone, rendered blockwork or poured concrete.

New or reclaimed natural stone, such as sandstone and limestone, may be expensive, costing from around £250 per square metre, but it's also durable, low maintenance and can be laid dry or with mortar for a range of design options. Less pricey, slate or sandstone slips or veneers can be fitted to blocks for a more economical way to achieve a similar effect.

Gabion walls, where steel mesh cages are filled with rocks, concrete or sand and soil, are quicker and cheaper to construct than solid styles. This option makes for a good retaining wall.

Reconstituted stone can be made from cement mixes formulated and finished to look similar to the real thing. Less expensive than natural stone, you can pay less than £100 per square metre.

DECORATIVE METAL

A patterned, laser-cut metal screen is ideal when privacy isn't an issue or opt for plain panels made from a metal that will weather to a beautiful patina and create an unusual boundary while maintaining privacy. Made from powder-coated aluminium or Corten steel, the decorative screens can be backlit for extra dramatic effect. »

These patterned Corten steel panels are made from recycled material. Use to screen an area of the garden or as a boundary wall. Drift laser-cut panel, 119x178x0.3cm, £390 each, not including the cost of posts and fittings, Stark & Greensmith (starkandgreensmith.com)

A GREEN BARRIER

Advice on living walls from garden designer **Adolfo Harrison** (adolfoharrison.com)

- Usually created using a modular system fixed to a wall, living walls can be soil-based or hydroponic, which is a water and fertiliser growing medium.
- The selection of plants must be carefully chosen to suit the wall's aspect and the local climate.
- Walls don't have to be flat. Consider using undulated surfaces to mimic a living wall in nature and create an eye-catching feature.
- Harvested rainwater from the roof can be used to irrigate the planting.
- Accept that there will always be patches where plants die off, so be prepared to make replacements.

RURAL CRAFTS

Woven willow or hazel hurdles, or sweet chestnut post-and-rail fences are crafted from sustainable sources and give a charming rustic look. They can be curved to fit unusual-shaped gardens.

For a robust boundary, rather than a purely decorative screen, seek advice from a specialist supplier who will create a long-lasting bespoke solution for your garden. Some companies, such as Natural Fencing (naturalfencing.com), grow their own willow to be made into hurdles. Log walls are another sustainable option. 'They bring another layer of texture to the scheme and provide a habitat for insects,' says garden designer Barbara Samitier (barbarasamitiergardens.co.uk). GD

ABOVE This 20 metre long, 1.2-1.8 metre high woven willow boundary by The Woven Fence was crafted on site, taking four days to complete. A similar design would cost around £3,000 (thewovenfence.com)

LEFT Garden designer Barbara Samitier sourced logs from a tree surgeon for this feature wall in a country garden (barbarasamitier gardens.co.uk)

PHOTOGRAPHY JOANNA KOSSAK

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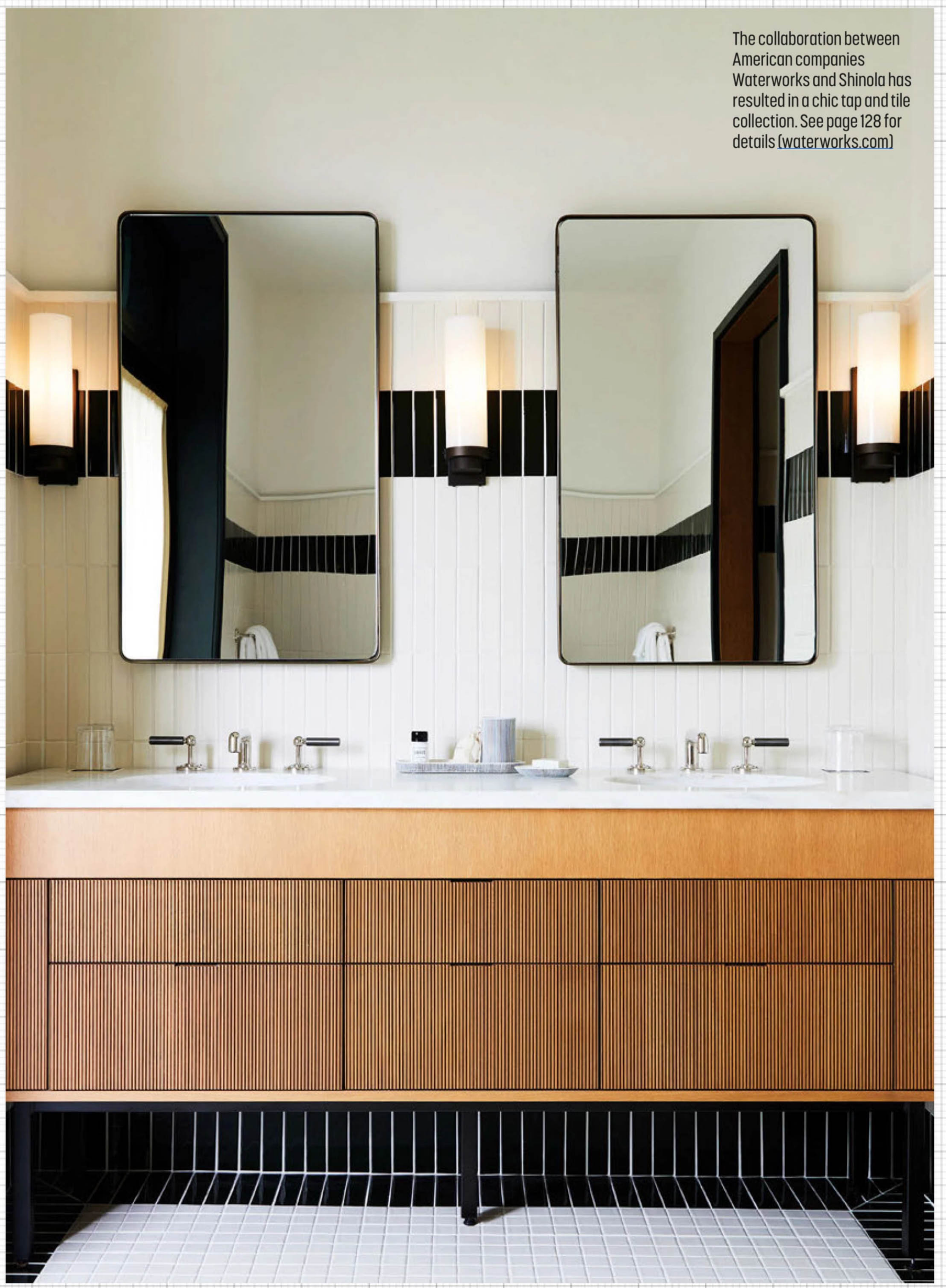
KITCHENS & BATHROOMS



The collaboration between American companies Waterworks and Shinola has resulted in a chic tap and tile collection. See page 128 for details (waterworks.com)

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KITCHEN UPGRADE

Just an illusion

SieMatic was a winner at the Iconic Awards 2020, an architecture and interiors competition arranged by the German Design Council, for its latest kitchen – the SLX Pure. The handle-free design is defined by clean lines and an elegant worksurface that's just 6.5mm deep. Strip lighting is integrated into the shadow gap of the recessed handles, which creates the impression that the worksurface is floating. £POA. (siematic.com)

Unique character

A recent addition at online homestore Ingredients LDN Homewares is a selection of beautiful stoneware bowls. Handmade in small batches by potter Sarah Kersten and her team in California, no two bowls are exactly the same. Available in various sizes and in Fig or Straw colourways, the bowls have a semi-matte glaze that is dishwasher and microwave safe. From £26. (ingredientsldn.com)

Bubble-maker

Franke's new swivel tap Hestia is available in chrome, with the option of a J-spout or U-spout design. It features a built-in perlator, which gives a water-saving flow and is suitable for high-pressure systems. The J-Spout stands 358mm high and has a single flow with a reach of 181mm, while the U-Spout has a height of 318mm and reach of 197mm. Both are £150. (franke.com)

Refuse management

Waste has never been so well-organised thanks to Masterclass Kitchens' new VelaBin range. Available across all the company's kitchens, in a range of sizes and configurations, the integrated bins offer generous storage capacity, with the biggest holding 70kg. The system enables plastic, food and general rubbish to be sorted and includes space for bin liners and cleaning products. Finished in Portland Oak, Tuscan Oak or Anthracite Linen. Kitchens from £12,000. (masterclasskitchens.co.uk) »

Leading lights

Batch.works (batch.works), a 3-D printing company, and lighting designers Plumen (plumen.com) have joined forces to produce a range of 3-D printed lampshades. Made from recycled plastic bottles, each can be returned to Batch.works for reprocessing at the end of their lifetime. Neo, £149, and Ribbon, above, £199. Available online at Batch.works and Plumen.

Go with the faux

The Infinity Plus kitchen range from Wren has been updated with new finishes, including this Milano Elements in Metallic Night. The made-to-order handleless design features glossy concrete-effect fronts and a dramatic gold profile, teamed with veined Bellagio quartz worksurfaces. The kitchen shown costs £5,377. The customisable Infinity Plus collection has 22 cabinet designs, 78 colour options and a wide range of worksurfaces. (wrenkitchens.com)

Above and beyond

If you want an unobtrusive extractor, the ceiling-mounted Novy Cloud 232 is a contemporary option that now comes in black (white was launched last year). It's a recirculating model, which negates the need for ducted ventilation, making installation a breeze. Features include auto-stop, varying speeds and adjustable lighting that can be controlled remotely or linked to the Novy InTouch hob. Measuring 1,100x600x44mm, it costs £2,500. (novy.co.uk)

Country classic

Ladderback chairs date back to the middle ages and the design has become a staple of many kitchens. This new version from Loaf, called Hobnob, is made from oak, has a traditional woven seat and comes in four colours: Earthy Red, Pale Grey, Heritage Blue or Blonde Oak. £370 per pair. (loaf.com)

WORDS PAULA WOODS

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To top it all

There are solid reasons for making the worksurface a priority in your new kitchen

WORDS **PAULA WOODS**

Your choice of worksurface can make or break your kitchen. Get it right and your entire scheme will be enhanced and everyday practicalities such as food preparation and cleaning will be easy and efficient. There are three main factors to consider when making a selection. Will the practical benefits of a surface's material suit your needs? Will it look great as part of the project? And is it within your budget?

Non-porous sintered surfaces can be extended beyond cabinet bases to create a tabletop. Dekton Vera, from £450 per sqm, Cosentino UK (cosentino.com)

LEFT A concrete-effect sintered surface can be used for splashbacks and cabinet fronts as well as horizontal surfaces. Dekton Orix, from £450 per sqm, Cosentino UK (cosentino.com)

BELOW Solid-surface Corian is made from minerals and acrylic. It can be moulded into any shape and has a seam-free finish. Dune Prima worksurface, from £310 per linear m (corian.uk)

What is it made of?

Take time to investigate the performance advantages, aesthetic possibilities and the cost of different materials.

Sintered stone or porcelain is created by pressure heating minerals and stone particles. Thanks to digital-printing techniques, it can be manufactured in a wide range of patterns and colours, including natural stone and wood. It's priced from around £400 per square metre.

For a seamless finish that's easy to maintain, hi-tech materials such as quartz and solid-surface composites look sleek and are non-porous. They are made from stone, minerals and resin mixes, which vary depending on the brand, and cost from around £300-500 per square metre.

Sealed granite is a resilient all-rounder that's water and heat resistant. Prices start from around £250 per square metre, rising to more than £450. Colour tones range from black, brown or »

green to paler creamy shades, while the veining patterns vary from bold to subtle. Marble is a softer and more expensive stone, costing from £300-700 per square metre. It can look stunning and is prized for its cool surface, which is ideal for kneading dough or rolling out pastry, but it's more liable to scratch and stain than granite.

Terrazzo is made with embedded stone or glass chippings, which creates a vast array of colour combinations and patterns. Try Resilica (resilica.com) for surfaces made from glass waste, priced at £420 per square metre.

Responsibly-sourced timber is eco-friendly and relatively affordable at around £100 per square metre. There are several species to choose from, such as the blonde-coloured ash, mid-tone oak and beech or dark-hued walnut. The way the wood is cut and

RIGHT Striking Paonazzo marble provides a bold design feature in this London home. Bespoke kitchens, from £45,000, Blakes London (blakeslondon.com)

Caesarstone includes more than 90 per cent natural quartz. Primordia worksurface, in rough concrete finish, from £550 per sqm (caesarstone.co.uk)

Copper acquires a beautifully aged patina over time. The timber units are stained in the Clerkenwell Blue shade. Sebastian Cox kitchen, from £15,000, DeVol (devolkitchens.co.uk)

For a seamless finish that's easy to maintain, materials such as quartz and solid-surface composites look sleek and are non-porous

finished creates surfaces that have subtle grain patterns or boldly knotty and rustic. Bamboo and reclaimed timber are equally versatile eco-friendly options. Wood requires regular sealing to prevent staining and water penetration.

Laminate offers a more affordable faux look. For extra durability, choose versions where the composite layers are fused together under high pressure (HPL). HPL costs from £35 per metre.

For an industrial appearance, stainless steel or copper surfaces are hygienic and cost around £250 per square metre. Matt finishes make scratches and marks less noticeable.

Concrete can be cast to order for a durable surface but it needs to be sealed to prevent water absorption. Expect to pay £500 per metre. »

RIGHT Reclaimed scaffolding boards make excellent worksurfaces. This rustic kitchen highlights their textural grain by teaming with pared-back units. Cabinets from £8,000, supply only, British Standard by Plain English (britishstandardcupboards.co.uk)

Hidden extras

If you want integrated gadgetry, an increasing number of innovations are making this possible. There are invisible induction hobs and wireless device charging ports, and the Krion K-Life (krion.com) even improves air quality. Its surface reacts to sunlight creating a photocatalytic effect that neutralises nitrogen oxide, sulphur dioxide and volatile organic compounds (VOCs).

Clever storage solutions make staying clutter-free easier and brands such as Boffi (boffi.com) have designs that are dependant on the surface to achieve this. Its K2.2 hideaway kitchen is an all-in-one workstation with a surface that slides back, creating a tabletop, and revealing a sink and hob.

Ideas on a smaller scale can be just as useful. 'We have a compartment concealed beneath a hinged section of the worksurface with space to hold a rolling pin, kitchen-roll holder, magnetic knife rack and chopping board,' says Fabiana Scavolini, CEO of Scavolini (scavolini.com).

Or consider an integrated trough, which can be used for keeping drinks chilled or as a place to grow herbs. A version by Papilio Bespoke Kitchens (wearepapilio.co.uk) has energy-efficient LED lighting and drainage. »

If you want integrated gadgetry, an increasing number of innovations are making this possible

The award-winning K series, designed by Norbert Wangen, includes a full-length sliding worksurface that conceals the working area when not in use. Stainless steel K6+6, £POA, Boffi (boffi.com)

LEFT An induction hob is incorporated within this worksurface. Heat is only produced when a pan is on the hob. TPB induction worksurface, from £8,000, Sola Kitchens (solakitchens.com)

ONGOING SUPPORT

Plan ahead for the best result, suggests **Gianluca Dessena**, installation manager at **Sustainable Kitchens** (sustainablekitch-

- As well as aesthetics, durability and cost, think about how the surface will look after a few years of use and what maintenance is needed to keep it in great condition. Are you happy to choose something that needs upkeep or would you prefer to have an easy-care option?
- Most bespoke kitchen companies will take care of the design, sourcing of materials, measuring up and the installation. But it's a good idea to visit surface suppliers before making a final decision. Collect a variety of samples so you can see how each one works within the space.
- Establish the level of support a kitchen manufacturer offers: will they supply and fit the surface or work with suppliers on your behalf? Either way, a kitchen company should always be on-site to oversee the templating and installation.
- Worksurfaces are fitted after all the cabinets are in place. A timber surface will arrive on site slightly oversized to be scribed for a perfect fit and can be installed within days. Stone, quartz and solid composites require templating, and metals, such as stainless steel and copper, are manufactured to specification. Allow an additional one to two weeks prior to fitting. A temporary worksurface can be put in place so the kitchen is usable in the meantime.

ABOVE Lightweight porcelain offers uniformity in design. It comes in big formats and bookmatch options. Calacatta Extreme ceramic surfaces, from £400 per sqm, Ceralsio (ceralsio.co.uk)

LEFT This surface lifts to reveal a storage compartment beneath. MIA kitchen, from £15,000, Scavolini (scavolini.com)

See opposite for a case study on terrazzo worksurfaces »

PHOTOGRAPHY 82mmPHOTOGRAPHY

The terrazzo-topped island in a kitchen design by Witlof is mounted on wheels. It's moved around the room to make the best use of the space for different activities (witlof.co.uk)

PROJECT PROFILE

LOCATION South London
STYLE OF PROPERTY Victorian terrace
DURATION OF BUILD 6 months
SIZE 32sqm
COST £52,000 (excluding renovation work)

Centre of attention

A bespoke worksurface is the colourful focal point of this multipurpose room

WORDS **PAULA WOODS**
PHOTOGRAPHY **PETER KOCIHA**

The demands of family life drove Melanie and Graham Branning, both 53, to make major changes to their Victorian home, including relocating the kitchen. 'We wanted a much larger multipurpose space,' says Melanie.

Removing walls and reconfiguring the ground-floor layout resulted in the kitchen moving to the front of the house. This meant it would also become the main entrance, so Melanie, who is a media consultant, and Graham, a project manager, were keen to downplay the room's functional aspects.

> 'I'd heard of terrazzo but to me it meant tube stations and supermarket floors, and I would never have thought of it for our kitchen'

They chose bespoke cabinetmakers Witlof (witlof.co.uk) to create the colourful scheme they wanted and placed a particular emphasis on the importance of the island unit. 'The space had to work equally well for Graham and me, and our daughter, Esme, who is ten. We needed somewhere for playing games, crafting and homework, as well as dinner parties and family gatherings,' says Melanie.

Witlof's solution was an impressive 2.6-metre island, finished in ash wood and perforated steel, and fitted with wheels to ensure the space could be easily rearranged. To satisfy the couple's love of colour, the island is topped with a terrazzo worksurface.

'I'd heard of terrazzo but to me it meant tube stations and supermarket floors, and I would never have thought of it for our kitchen,' says Melanie. But after visiting specialist supplier Diespeker & Co (diespeker.co.uk) with Witlof's director Fiona Ginnet, the couple decided to go with it.

'My one reservation was that the colour might be a little quiet for us but any doubts were dispelled as soon as I saw the samples,' says Melanie. In fact, the couple chose to stain and powder coat sections of the island using shades taken from the bespoke marble and glass mix, and specified matching terrazzo handles.

Elsewhere, the cabinets and worksurfaces are more discreet. Units are mounted on a steel frame and the doors are painted in pale grey and white to blend with the wall colour. 'Details such as the recessed ash door pulls and the less colourful terrazzo surfaces help everything to tie in with the island,' says Fiona.

The island's worksurface is key to the success of the family's new room. 'It gives me a huge amount of pleasure every day,' explains Melanie. 'I love seeing other people's reactions to the island and its vibrant, colourful terrazzo. The project has transformed how we use our home.' GD

Chips of blue, green and coral marble and orange glass make up the brightly coloured terrazzo, which costs from £400 per sqm, Diespeker (diespeker.co.uk)

The run of base cabinets is topped with a more understated terrazzo, bringing an element of contrast to the scheme

● ***Look out for next month's feature on indoor/outdoor design ideas***

Handles on the island are powder-coated steel and cast terrazzo to match the worksurface

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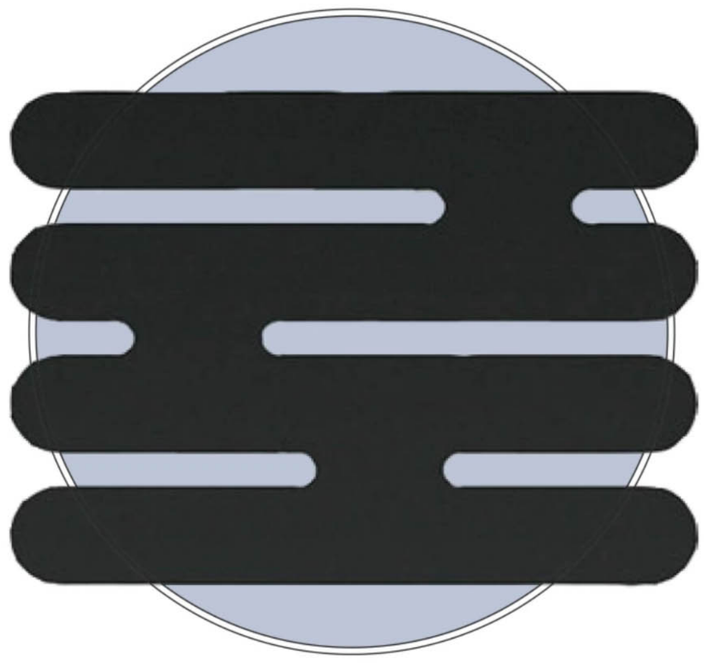
BATHROOM EDIT

Simple pleasures

Ideal for a small space, the Tomo basin unit from Gamadecor, part of the Porcelanosa Group, includes a wood veneer cabinet with two drawers and is set on a single slim leg. The 60cm-wide seamless countertop basin is made from solid surface Krion, which is composed of natural minerals and resins. It's warm to the touch and hard-wearing. £1,228. (porcelanosa.com)



Off the rails

This distinctively shaped towel warmer, called Fog, is bold and practical. Keep towels toasty by hanging them from the horizontal niches and choose from a matt black or matt white finish to contrast or blend in with your scheme. Available in two sizes, Fog is suitable for closed heating systems and costs from £604. (aestus.co.uk)

Space capsule

For a generous shower area that takes up little floor space, Aqata has introduced a new curved quadrant enclosure. The DS660 measures 1,200x900mm, has a hinged panel that opens inwards and is suitable for use in a wetroom or with a 550mm radius quadrant tray. From £1,494. (aqata.co.uk)

Forward thinking

Founded 147 years ago, US-based Kohler produced its first bathtub in 1883 and one-piece built-in tub in 1911. The company's most recent UK launch is the ModernLife collection, which has simple, elegant lines and a CleanCoat finish that prevents bacteria, mildew and mineral deposits from sticking to the surface. ModernLife 924mm vanity top basin, £400, with Avid single lever monobloc basin mixer, £240. (kohler.co.uk) »

A hint of colour

British manufacturer BC Designs' freestanding Casini bath is made from Cian, the company's solid-surface material. There are eight contemporary shades to choose from in the ColourKast collection, including this new pale pink Satin Rose hue. Or you can opt for white. The tub measures 1,680x750x570mm and costs £3,500. (bcdesigns.co.uk)

Future-proof solution

The award-winning Tuck-Type is a wall-mounted shower seat by industrial designers Gianni Arduini and Marco Frigerio. The innovative soft polyurethane foldaway structure provides support and comfort. When not in use, it hangs as a flat panel on the wall and can be raised by simply lifting the lower end. Tuck-Type measures 369x828mm, has a maximum load capacity of 150kg and costs around £500. (everlifedesign.it)

Deeply glossy

Meld is the latest design from Domus. The ultra-glossy, glazed-porcelain brick-shaped wall tile replicates the beauty of handmade majolica – tin-glazed pottery – and is characterised by variations in colour and surface detail. A dense glaze and minor surface flaws make every tile unique, but an exceptionally straight edge allows for an almost joint-free finish. £84 per sqm. (domusgroup.com)

American dream

American bathroom and kitchen brand Waterworks has partnered with US luxury goods company Shinola to create a range of bathroom fittings and tiles. Created for Shinola's first hotel, in Detroit, the brassware collection includes plated nickel and 'Shinola Steel' handles for a two-tone effect. The base is modelled on the distinctive case back of a Shinola Runwell watch. Ludlow Shinola Edition lavatory faucet with two-tone lever handles, £1,086; Cottage Shinola Edition field tile, from £8.40 each. (waterworks.com)

WORDS PAULA WOODS

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Family values

How to achieve an effortlessly hardworking room that performs under pressure

WORDS **PAULA WOODS**

Durable ceramic tiles combine pattern with practicality. Kensington Square Decor tile; Rectangular Decor Faux Mosaic tile. Both £3.50 each, The London Tile Co (londontile.co.uk)

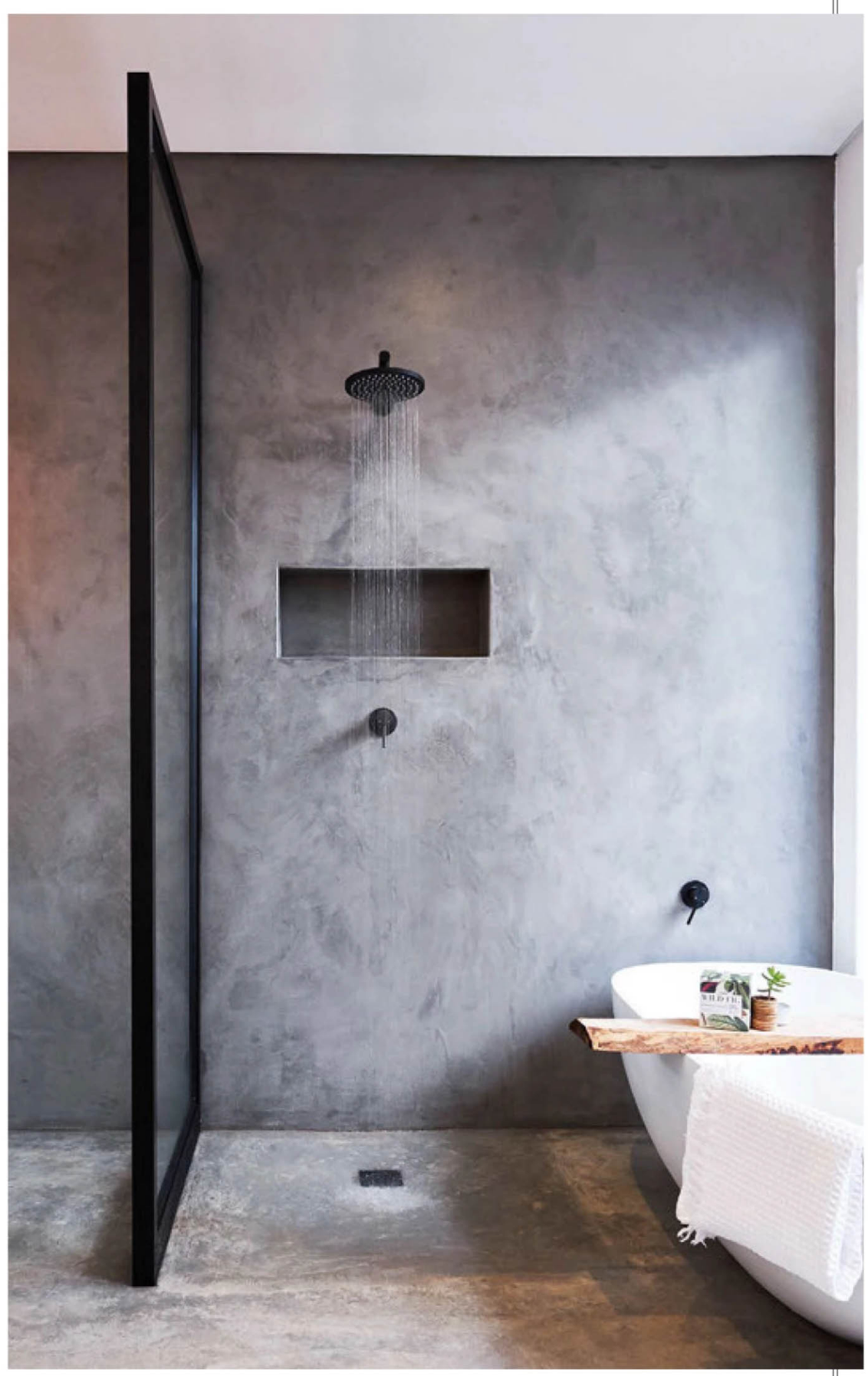
Successfully designing a family bathroom involves meeting the requirements of several users of different ages, heights and sizes. It needs to function efficiently, be able to cope with some tough treatment while still looking good for several years.

Find the perfect fit

With the British family bathroom often measuring in at under five square metres, planning a space-enhancing scheme is a priority. It's also worth investigating the possibility of renovating to gain even an extra metre or two of room, as this may also add a little more value to your home.

To be able to move easily around the bath, basin and shower, allow 60-70 centimetres of clear space between each one and, for comfort, choose the biggest designs you can while taking this into account. Selecting designs with rounded edges and curved lines will reduce the chance of banged limbs on angular corners.

From a practical perspective, it can help to place the basin and loo near the door, as these are the most frequently used pieces. »



ABOVE A tanked wet room area allows for both separate bathing and showering without compromising on space. Matte black showerhead, £259; matte black wall mixer £169; and square floor grate shower drain, £69, Meir (meirblack.co.uk)

Bath and shower ideas

A bath is a must for young families and a curved, double-ended design looks great and offers ergonomic space for bathing two children at the same time. 'Freestanding tubs work for the whole family and, if space is tight, there are smaller versions available,' says Barrie Cutchie, design director at BC Designs (bcdesigns.co.uk). 'Placing the taps in a central position will avoid any arguments about who gets the tap end.'

If you don't have the room for a small freestanding bath, back-to-wall and built-in designs take up the least amount of floor area.

RIGHT Interior architecture and design company Day True squeezed more into this small room by fitting a built-in bath and shower beneath the window - shielding it with a privacy panel. Bespoke bathrooms from £8,000 (daytrue.com)

This neat back-to-wall tub has the curve-appeal of a freestanding design. Meisterstück Centro Duo 1 bath with easy-clean finish, from £5,573; Centro wall-hung basin with easy-clean finish, from £795; Superplan Plus shower surface, from £956, Kaldewei (kaldewei.co.uk)

Where there's room for a shower, opt for a walk-in or sliding door design that offers easy access for all – including helpers.

'Flat, floor-level surfaces reduce the chances of tripping up and create a modern, streamlined look,' says Adam Teal, head of sales at Kaldewei UK (kaldewei.co.uk).

For safety, choose an anti-slip surface, toughened glass screens with rounded edges and an easy-clean coating.

In a tiny room, a spacious bath or shower-bath with an overhead shower will be more comfortable to use than the smallest enclosure. »

ABOVE A small bath leaves room for a shower and vanity unit in this space by Valentine Interiors (valentineinteriors.com.au). Vetralla bath, £2,250; Napoli 57 basin, £500, V&A Baths (vandabaths.com)

Simple wall-mounted adjustable shelving keeps essentials to hand and can be tailored to storage requirements. String pocket shelves in Oiled Teak, £185, available at Utility (utilitydesign.co.uk)

Storage options

Address problems associated with an awkward layout or lack of space with bespoke or modular fitted furniture. Wall-hung vanity units are an excellent choice for keeping products out of sight. 'A design with compartmentalised drawers that pull-out fully, so that nothing is lost at the back, are preferable,' says Vittorio Naldi, branch manager at Scavolini (scavolini.com).
A dual-purpose mirrored cabinet, with a useful charging socket for toothbrushes or shavers, keeps toiletries away from curious fingers, and a lockable version provides another layer of safety.

When you're renovating or building from scratch, stud walls with built-in recesses provide practical shower storage. Remember to ensure that bath surrounds are wide enough to hold essentials. You may also want to fit a dual fuel or electric-heated rail, so stacks of warm towels are available all year round.

RIGHT Otherwise wasted space within a stud wall can be used as a handy bath-side shelf and clad using easy-clean porcelain tiles. South Beach porcelain tiles in Townsend, £80 per sqm, Fired Earth (firedearth.com)

Doubling up on basins and storage will help keep busy bathrooms running smoothly. Duravit Luv double drawer unit, £2,688; walnut top, £1,426; 600mm basins, £570 each; Cielo oval mirror cabinets, £1,449; Urquiola Zeppo wall lights, £30, CP Hart (cphart.co.uk)

LITTLE HELPERS

Child-friendly ideas from **Dena Kirby**, designer at bathroom specialist **Ripples** (ripplesbathrooms.com)

- Soft closing doors, drawers and toilet seats protect little fingers.
- Look for thermostatic bath fillers and shower controls with a safety stop button to prevent water ever getting too hot.
- Supplement a fixed overhead shower with a riser rail - its height can be adjusted as children grow. An additional hand shower is great for a quick hair wash, when there's no time for an all-over drenching.
- Alternatively, a bath-shower mixer in the tub provides for a quick hose down and lets you clean the bath with ease.
- Adequate storage helps ensure bath toys can be neatly stowed away and not pose a trip hazard.

ABOVE Infrared touchless-tap technology offers independence to children who may be prone to leaving the tap running. Bau Cosmopolitan E tap range, from £263, Grohe (grohe.co.uk)

Basin and loo solutions

Replacing a space-hungry close-coupled toilet and pedestal basin with wall-hung versions will free up precious floor area. Fitting twin basins speeds things up during the morning rush and allows for sufficient countertop space around them to keep toothbrushes and soap close at hand, with room to manoeuvre.

A single oversized basin with a generous ledge for toiletries will serve almost as well and take up less room. A sturdy stool can be stored beneath the basin for children who have trouble reaching the taps.

Streamlined designs, such as integrated countertop basins and enclosed cisterns, have fewer surfaces to keep clean, while specialist coatings and materials do a lot of the work for you. Roca's Evershine brassware (roca.com) repels dirt, CeramicPlus by Villeroy & Boch (villeroy-boch.co.uk) resists germs and rimless loos have a flush that washes water around the entire bowl. »

This walk-in shower features 8mm panels with a durable anodised matt-black finish and Stayclear coating which makes it easy to clean. Black-framed squared shower walls, £1,019 per panel, Merlyn Showering (merlynshowering.com)

'Porcelain replica woods and marbles are an excellent alternative to the real thing. Choose a textured design or one with a non-slip coating'

Walls and floors

When it comes to design possibilities, tiles are an ideal combination of hard-wearing, practical and incredibly versatile. 'Porcelain replica woods and marbles are an excellent alternative to the real thing,' says Colin Roby-Welford, creative director at Fired Earth (firedearth.com). Large formats and panels will reduce grout lines for smooth, easy-to-clean surfaces. 'Choose a textured design or one with a non-slip coating,' Colin continues.

Luxury vinyl tile (LVT) and linoleum are also highly practical options that are warm and soft underfoot.

LEFT Low-maintenance luxury vinyl tiles offer a soft, warm, non-slip surface underfoot and can be used to replicate more luxurious finishes. Form Silt in Herringbone laying pattern, 305x610mm tiles, from £55 per sqm, Amtico (amtico.com)

PHOTOGRAPHY LOIC LE GUILLY PHOTOGRAPHY

Advanced intelligence

With an emphasis on water safety and efficiency, thermostatic brassware and digital controls make regulating the water temperature very easy and you can pre-programme settings to personal preferences. Infrared taps, activated by the wave of a hand, are hygienic and ensure water is never left running by accident. Hi-tech shower toilets, such as Geberit's AquaClean Sela (geberit.co.uk), are easy to use for all ages and do away with the need for loo paper.

With smart home technology, almost everything can be controlled via an app or home assistant. Different family members' preferences can be saved so everyone can have a customised shower and their baths filled automatically, while music and lighting settings transform spaces into relaxing retreats. GD

● ***Look out for next month's feature on loft-room bathrooms***

RIGHT A digital shower can reduce the risk of scalding as temperatures can be set to suit. This Classic 1910 dual-outlet digital thermostatic shower set, from £1,222, also has the option of an additional remote control, £208, Pure Bathroom Collection (purebathroomcollection.co.uk)

The new Croma range from Hansgrohe is easy to operate and won't give unexpected temperature increases, thanks to CoolTouch and SafetyStop tech. Croma E shower pipe 208 1 jet with bath thermostat, £858 (hansgrohe.co.uk)

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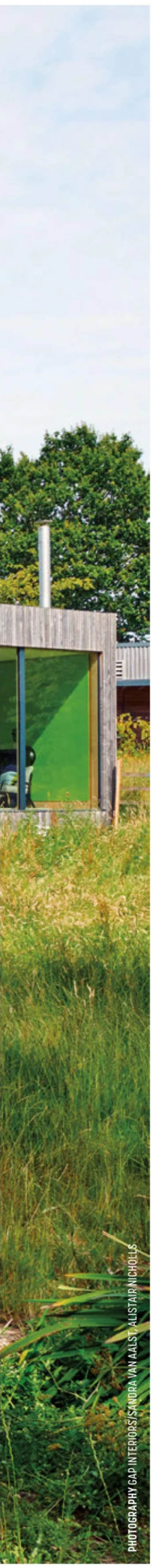

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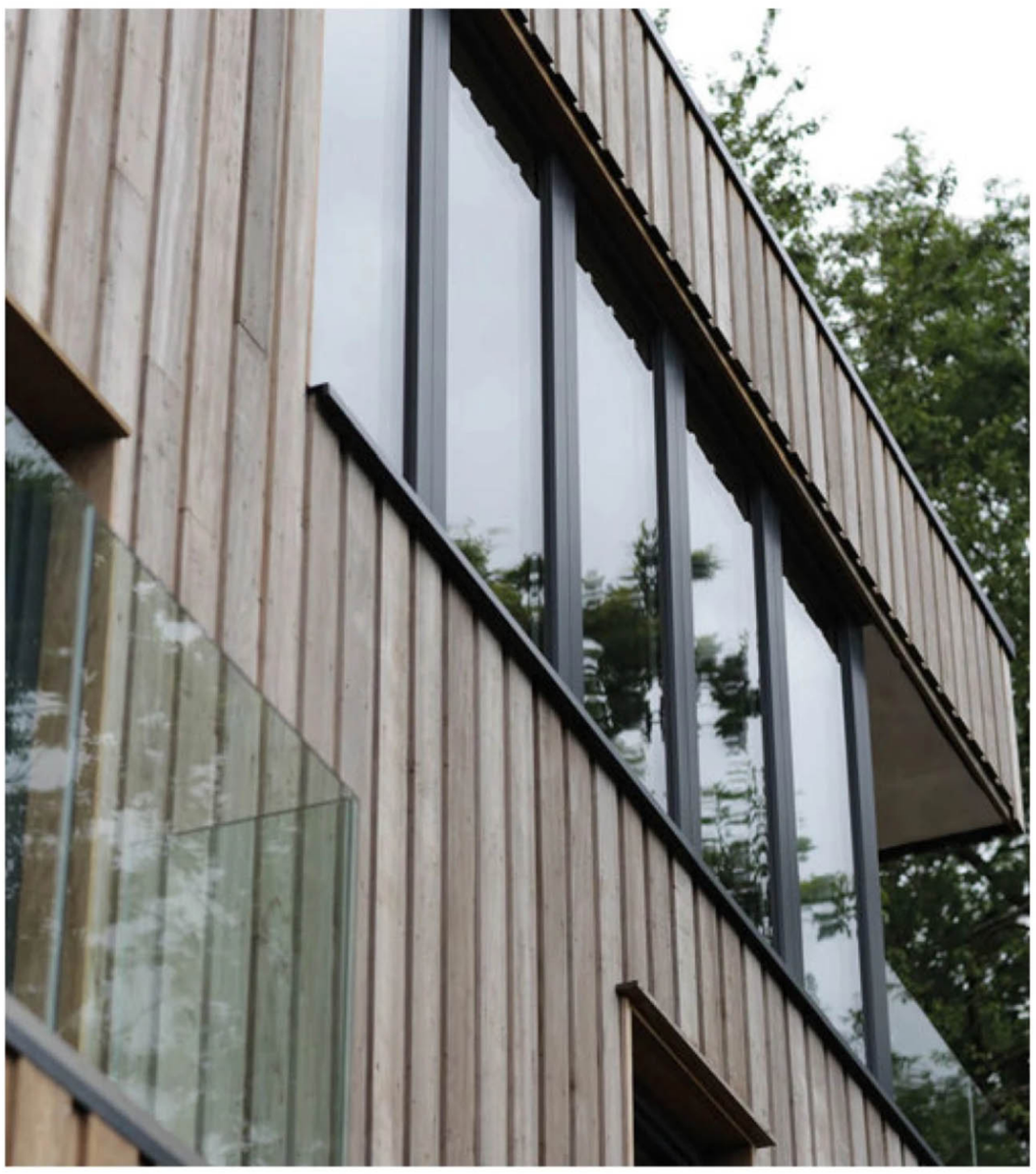

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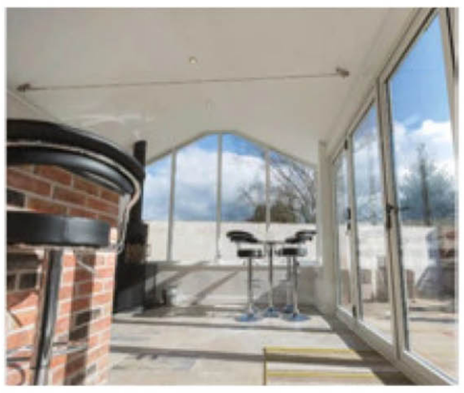

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MY GRAND IDEA

Architect Sean Ronnie Hill tells how he exploited permitted development rights in this transformation of a 1930s home

This was a whole house renovation...
'Yes – the only elements remaining were the front and side masonry walls. Everything else was replaced.'

— Describe your strategy for planning permission
'It was to work within permitted development rights (PDR) so that we could gain as much extra space as possible without applying for planning permission. As such, it was important to submit a number of bite-size applications to the local planning authority, which could be considered via prior approval and householder planning. The project involved a ground-floor kitchen extension at the back of the house, with a new utility room and bathroom, a reconfigured first floor with bigger bathroom and an expanded loft bedroom suite.'

— How did it go?
'The design for the alterations pushed the prior approval policy to its limits, particularly in regard to the oriel windows in the ground-floor rear extension and the dormer on the second floor. Initially, these applications were turned down as the planners could not get their heads around how we had interpreted the PDR rules. But they were subsequently approved after discussions with the team leader of planning for the area. All the windows on the side elevation were permitted through householder planning.'

— Was this time-consuming?
'Yes, but it was the only way to win approval for the proposals. This part of the project took five months, and the build was completed in 12.'

— How did your client feel?
'They were very understanding and patient. They fell in love with the design and wanted to try every avenue to gain approval.'

— Did you add a considerable amount of extra space?
'About 75 square metres in total.'

— Would you take this approach again?
'If the client is willing, understanding and has a sense of adventure!'

— Which aspects are you most pleased with?
'It wasn't until the project was completed that I could fully appreciate the peaceful harmony of what we'd created. The house was designed from the inside out and the journey through the spaces is a real delight. There's a continuity of detailing with subtle differences in each room and great views out to the lush greenery of the garden and copse beyond.' GD

Rise Design Studio (risedesignstudio.co.uk)

ABOVE All the windows and doors at the back of the house were angled towards the backland copse behind the garden

LEFT Wide timber floorboards add subtle pattern to the interior. The total cost of the project was £450,000

INTERVIEW KAREN STYLIANIDES **PHOTOGRAPHY** EDMUND SUMNER

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