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TOTALLY TRANSFORMED

Simon and Sophie Edwards have extended and dramatically remodelled their traditional 1930s house to create a stylish family home which is unrecognisable from the original.



The original detached four-bedroom house (above) was uninspiring, with dark brickwork and an arched porch. The front façade has been changed, with a side and front extension, a reshaped bay, new brick detailing, rendered walls and pretty replacement timber windows. A pitched roof has been added to the newly rendered 1970s rear extension.

“When we first bought this house 10 years ago there were only two of us, but having our children, Dulcie and Oscar, meant we needed more space,” explains Simon Edwards. “Instead of buying somewhere larger we decided to spend the money on extending and upgrading our existing home. It was such a dramatic transformation that virtually nothing was left untouched and some people thought we’d built a brand new house on the plot.”

Simon and his wife, Sophie, originally purchased the detached 1930s house because of its location and potential. The property has a large rear garden, backing

onto woodland, and is close to their business – a shop at an Elizabethan manor house, Narborough Hall, which stocks gifts, jewellery and home accessories.

“The house stands in a road we’d always liked and ticked every box except one – it really wasn’t a beautiful property,” admits Simon. “The dark brickwork was quite depressing and there was an ugly flat-roofed 1970s extension tacked on at the back. Of course we would have preferred a pretty double-fronted Victorian villa, but rather than being driven by our hearts we took the sensible option.”

The previous owners had lived in the house since the 1960s and the décor was dated. Simon and Sophie arranged for the property to be

rewired before redecorating, and introduced French doors onto the garden, which had previously been totally disconnected from the house. They also added a conservatory to the rear of the sitting room, which served as a playroom when the children were born.

“Once Dulcie and Oscar came along we didn’t have the time or money to spend on the house, but when Oscar started school we began to think about gaining more space,” Simon continues. “By this time we’d paid off our mortgage and could afford to either move up the property ladder or upgrade this house.”

Local architects and designers were consulted and the Edwards chose to work with Paul Day, a chartered architectural →



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Robust bamboo flooring has been laid throughout the house, and contrasts beautifully with the white walls. The glossy ex-display Italian kitchen came complete with appliances and green Corian worktops. An industrial feel has been introduced by using reclaimed brickwork for one feature wall.

technologist whose previous projects inspired the couple – including his own remodelled home, which significantly influenced their own design.

Paul spent several weeks refining a scheme which would extend the existing house to the front, side and rear. Sophie in particular was keen that the improvements should incorporate an exterior makeover to drastically improve the overall look of the building, and merge the new additions into one cohesive design.

“We did consider the idea of building a new house on the plot, especially as the VAT would be saved, but it felt rather like vandalism so we decided to work with what we had,” she says. “If we had designed something from scratch then this is the sort of house we may have come up with.”

Cream self-coloured render and bespoke replacement windows tie together new and old elements to the front, where attractive quoins and brick detailing have been introduced. Gone is the arched 1930s porch, which has been replaced by a slate-roofed entrance, extending across the newly-formed square bay window in what is now the sitting room.

A two-storey cavity wall extension wraps around the side and front elevations, replacing the original single

garage and projecting forward from the existing building to create an en suite bedroom for five-year-old Oscar upstairs, with a family room and utility downstairs incorporating masses of practical storage, which was high on the family’s list of priorities.

“We didn’t need five bedrooms, as from experience we knew that the two spare rooms would become dumping grounds for junk and ironing, so instead we combined two bedrooms to make a dual aspect master bedroom suite,” says Sophie. “It was inspired by contemporary boutique hotels and has a free-standing bath at one end, with a separate en suite shower complete with body jets. It makes the perfect ‘adults only’ retreat and means that we fully enjoy the space.”

A further single-storey brick and block addition to the rear ensures that the kitchen now has a part-vaulted ceiling and a glazed gable overlooking the garden. This rear elevation is far more contemporary than the front of the house, and the brick 1970s extension has been updated with a pitched roof, grey render and a glass balcony to the back bedroom – which is seven-year-old Dulcie’s pride and joy.

The kitchen extension was designed as a single-storey side structure, to avoid overlooking the neighbours, and



Sun-pipes drop natural light down into the landing and hallway below.

planning permission for the proposed alterations was approved within eight weeks. "There's a mixture of houses in the road – Victorian villas, terraces and 1930s detached properties," says Simon. "The front of our house was designed to fit in with the streetscape, although the back is far more modern."

Paul Day recommended building contractor Garry Black, whose Leicester-based company, Blackstone Building Contracts, was nominated for the Master Builder of the Year award in 2010. The company project-managed the Edwards' build, which was to be completed in the space of six months. →



The sitting room was relocated to the front of the house, where a fireplace has been installed and a new square bay window was created as a more practical alternative to the previous semi-circular bay. Double doors connect this room to the neighbouring dining room.

"Work began in February 2011 and we moved in with Sophie's parents," explains Simon, who enjoyed occasionally helping out on site. "Garry was easy to work with and came up with some great suggestions for the house, including the grey render for the existing 1970s extension, which breaks up the rear elevation and avoids having three different types of brick at the back. It helped to turn a total eyesore into a feature."

The garage was demolished and foundations dug for the extensions. Existing roof slates were stripped and re-used to the front of the house, with matching reclaimed slates purchased for the rest of the roof. This created more work for the roofers, who needed to sort, re-drill and size the slates, but the result is a uniform finish which further blurs the distinction between new and old.

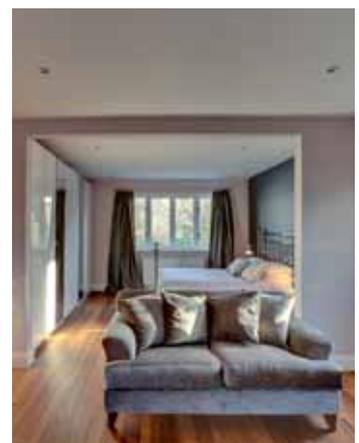
In addition, reclaimed bricks have been used internally for one kitchen wall, which was left exposed. "We wanted to give this part of the room a slightly industrial feel, and chose lighting and furniture to suit," says Sophie, who was heavily involved in the design of the house, including the selection of the bespoke timber windows and doors.

Building the side extension meant blocking up an existing window, and the Edwards were concerned that their hallway

and landing would be dark. This problem was solved by introducing two sun-pipes, and the couple are amazed at the levels of natural light which these bring into the house. "Even at night the moonlight gives the landing an ethereal glow," says Simon. "It makes such a difference, and we've also used a sun-pipe in Dulcie's bathroom."

Budget was an important consideration, and the couple worked hard to find bargains – including their ex-display kitchen and the hard-wearing bamboo flooring, which has been laid throughout the house and was less expensive than oak. They also chose not to install underfloor heating as the cost would have been prohibitive in the living and dining rooms, which have suspended floors, but have new central heating with column-style radiators in the majority of rooms and electric underfloor heating in the three bathrooms.

The family moved back into the house in August 2011 and are thoroughly enjoying life in their updated home. "We hardly use the dining room now because we want to show off our kitchen, where we spend most of our time," laughs Simon. "It looks and feels like a totally new house, and people have even knocked on the door to ask if they can take a look around. We don't mind at all – we're so pleased with how everything's turned out." →



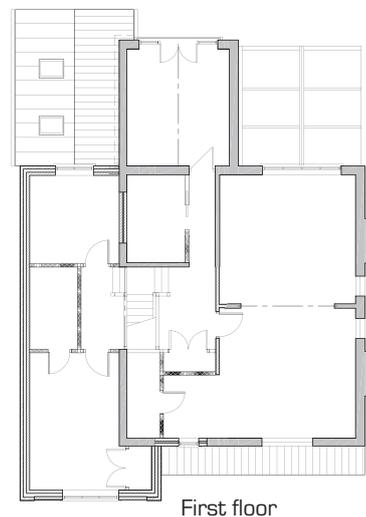
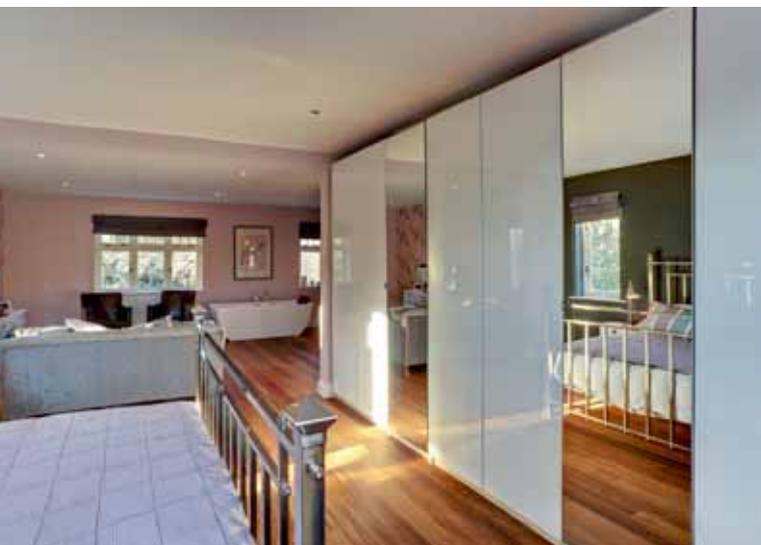
THE BOTTOM LINE

Sophie and Simon paid £170,000 for the original house in 2002 (valued at £300,000 when work began in 2011) and spent £130,000 plus VAT extending and remodelling the property, which is currently worth in excess of £460,000.

EXTENSION REMODEL

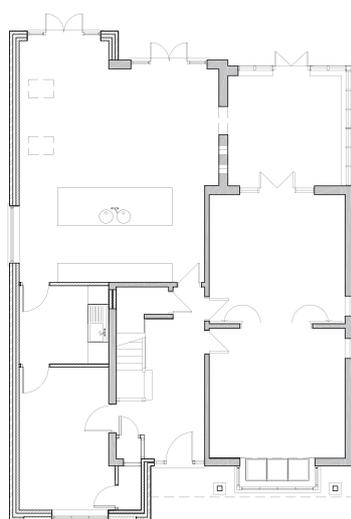


The main bedroom has been formed by combining two smaller rooms, and is reminiscent of a hotel suite with its free-standing bath.



Ground floor

First floor



THE FLOORPLAN

The two-storey side and front extension adds a family room and utility room downstairs, with a guest bedroom and a bedroom and ensuite for Oscar above. The kitchen has also been extended with a vaulted single-storey side extension which projects out into the rear garden. The sitting room was moved to the front of the house and connects to a separate dining room by double doors. Upstairs, two bedrooms were combined to create the fabulous master bedroom suite, and Dulcie's room has a Juliet balcony overlooking the rear garden.

SIMON AND SOPHIE'S TOP TIP

"Use a building contractor to manage the project but make sure you are on the site regularly to answer any questions and keep an eye on progress."

CONTACTS

Building contractor Blackstone Building Contracts: www.blackstonebuildingcontracts.co.uk
Furniture and accessories (leather sofa, clock, pictures etc) Narborough Hall: www.narboroughhall.co.uk
Designer PD Architecture: www.pd-architecture.co.uk
Ex display kitchen KitchenSynch: www.kitchensynch.co.uk
Boiling water tap Quooker: www.quooker.com
Kitchen and landing lights Dwell: www.dwell.co.uk
Paint Dulux: www.dulux.co.uk
Shower wall panels Wetwall: www.wetwall.com
Bamboo flooring The Bamboo Flooring Company: www.bambooflooringcompany.com
Floor fitter CTR Flooring: 07900 247441

FINAL THOUGHTS

What was the high point of the project?

Seeing the self-coloured render going on in a day was a high point as it made an instant improvement to the outside of the house.

...And the low point? It was quite stressful having so much work done at the same time, and everything seemed to happen extremely quickly with lots of decisions to be made.

...What was your biggest extravagance? Knocking two bedrooms into one to make our bedroom suite was an extravagance, but we didn't need a second guest room and love having such a luxurious and relaxing space.

...and your best buy?

The ex-display kitchen was £10,000, including appliances and Corian worktops – around one third of the price it would have cost to buy new. It was great to be able to see everything in situ before we bought it, although we did need to store it fully built in the dining room until it was needed.

