

The Daily Telegraph
Homebuilding
& Renovating
AWARDS 2019

SHORTLISTED

A *sideways* move

Clare and Kieran Jay have taken a slither of unused space and cleverly used it to unlock the potential of their Victorian family home





PROJECT NOTES

HOMEOWNERS Clare and Kieran Jay

PROJECT Extension, renovation and remodel

SIZE 245m² (original size 216m²)

BUILD TIME One year

BUILD ROUTE

Project managed by designer

HOUSE COST £525,000 (2001)

BUILD COST £386,000

ESTIMATED VALUE £1.5million

CONSTRUCTION Brick and block extension

What do you do if you love the area you live in, but you've outgrown your home and it's just too expensive to trade up locally?

That was the situation facing Clare and Kieran Jay, who'd just had their third child. "We needed to either move a long way out of London, buy another house in a terrible state, or extend," remembers Clare. The only available extension space in their Victorian end-terrace (locally listed, and in a conservation area) was a tiny side passage, only 2m at its widest, and a mere 1m at its narrowest. But with one toddler still sleeping in the couple's bedroom, they badly needed a fourth bedroom, as well as more bathrooms, a home office and masses more storage space.

A lack of space wasn't the only issue. "We had to reach the front door by going up steps, and there was no real hallway once you were inside, so the front sitting room became a dumping ground," says Clare. Elsewhere, a previous glazed kitchen extension was in need of some renovation, as was an earlier loft conversion — and the whole house needed rewiring and refreshing.

Creating more useable space

"The problem was the house had too many living rooms," explains London-based designer Robert Rhodes, who designed plans for the extension and remodelling scheme and also acted as project manager for Clare and Kieran. "Having an entrance at raised ground floor meant an entire level was set aside for reception rooms that the family didn't use very often. And to reach the kitchen and garden at lower ground level, they had to come into the house at the raised ground level and then go down again."

The key to making the house work properly for the family is a slim, two-storey, brick-clad and glazed roof extension at ground and basement level, that brings the house's main entrance, hallway and service areas from the front to the side.

The original basement is now a light, bright, open-plan kitchen/dining/living room leading out to the garden. The fully glazed kitchen space, built in 2003, has also been overhauled.

With the heart of the home now at the lower level, the previously unused rooms on the upper ground floor could become private family spaces, with a new master en suite, dressing room and shower room. The suite is accessed through a hidden 'jib' door (one that's flush with the wall, and without door frames or furniture) in the fireplace alcove. The old front room, previously a dumping ground for family clutter, has taken on a new life as the home office, with a storage area also behind a jib door.

Building begins

With planning approved (the couple put in separate applications for the side extension and a dormer addition to the original loft conversion) and both sets of neighbours happy to sign their Party Wall Agreements, the building works could start. The family moved out during the year-long project,

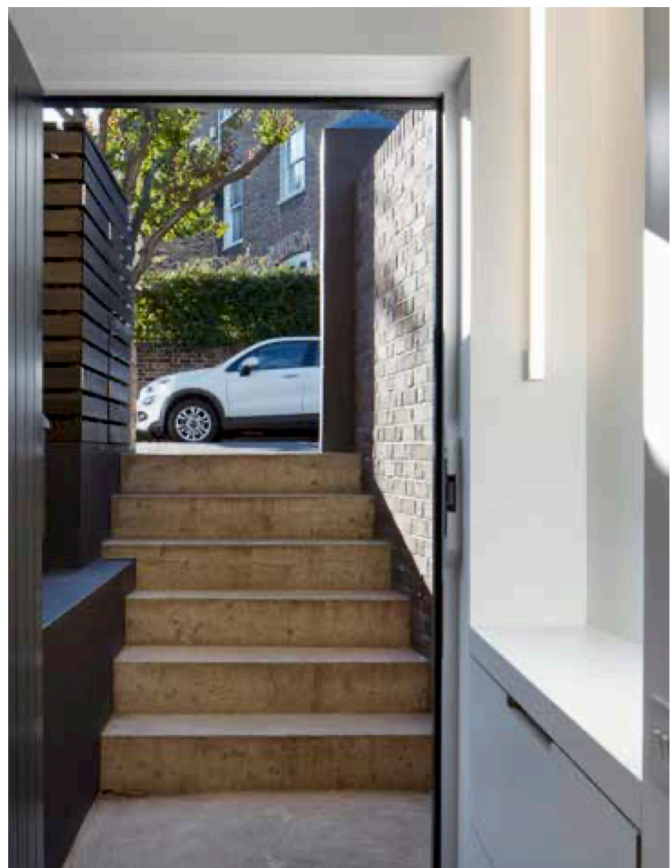


living in Clare's mother's house a few miles away ("that was a godsend", says Clare).

For the extension, Robert and his team opted for a brick and block construction with cavity wall insulation. "It's structurally independent from the original house, to allow for differential movements between the old and new structures," he explains.

The extended kitchen was fully refurbished, too, with new glazing throughout. "Two sides of the sliding doors needed to be replaced, as the sealed units were failing. Aesthetics and thermal efficiency had moved on, and the original door system was no longer on sale, so Clare and Kieran chose to replace all of the doors, rather than just two," says Robert. That cost £18,000 rather than £10,000 but was, he adds, "the right decision". Now only the kitchen's green roof, damaged when scaffolding was placed on it during the original loft conversion, remains to be repaired. Internally, the kitchen features intense blue kitchen cabinetry, a restored original resin floor and a new kitchen island.

The couple chose not to project manage for themselves, after the experience of their previous kitchen extension 16 years ago. "I tried to project





SIMPLE MODERN AESTHETIC

White hexagonal mosaic tiles, chosen for their simple modern feel, provide a cost-effective finish in the extension's cloakroom (right). Designer Robert explains: "A lot of the finishes were inexpensive, but still good quality, such as these tiles. They were very affordable, although we needed good tilers to get a perfect finish. Other materials were more expensive, such as the really lovely floor tiles from Italy."

TIMBER DETAILING

Slim timber larch slats (below) provide privacy for the new master en suite, which overlooks the rear garden. Externally, the slats are painted in the same Restol stain as the front of the house.



manage the extension then and it was a nightmare; we made lots of mistakes," says Clare. "People think that it's easy, but it's a massive job." Instead, Robert took on the role.

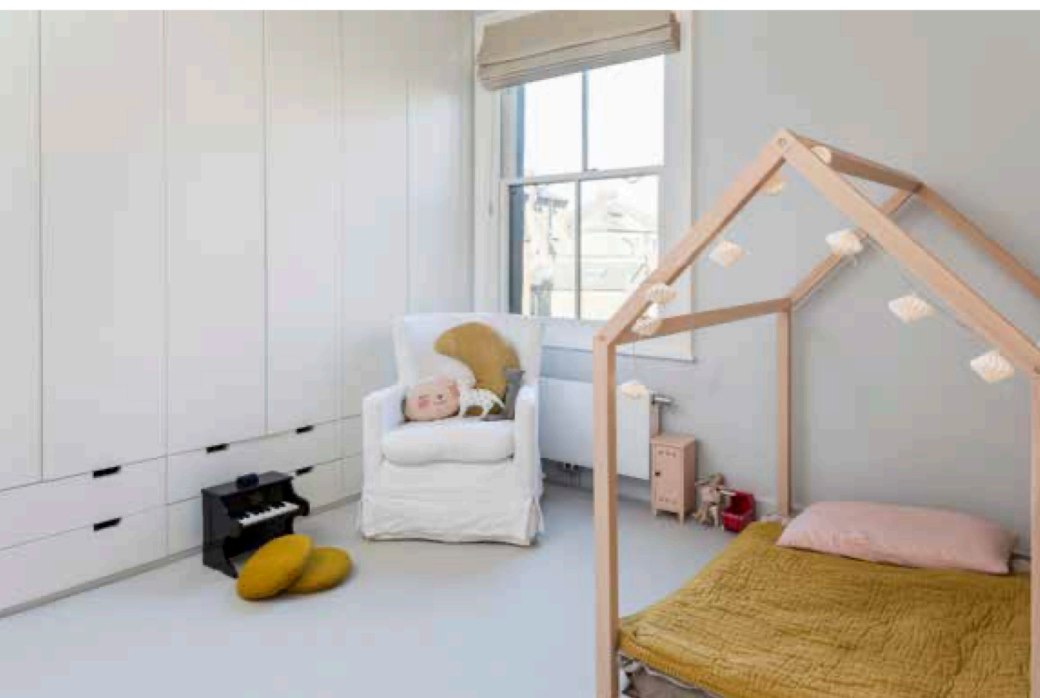
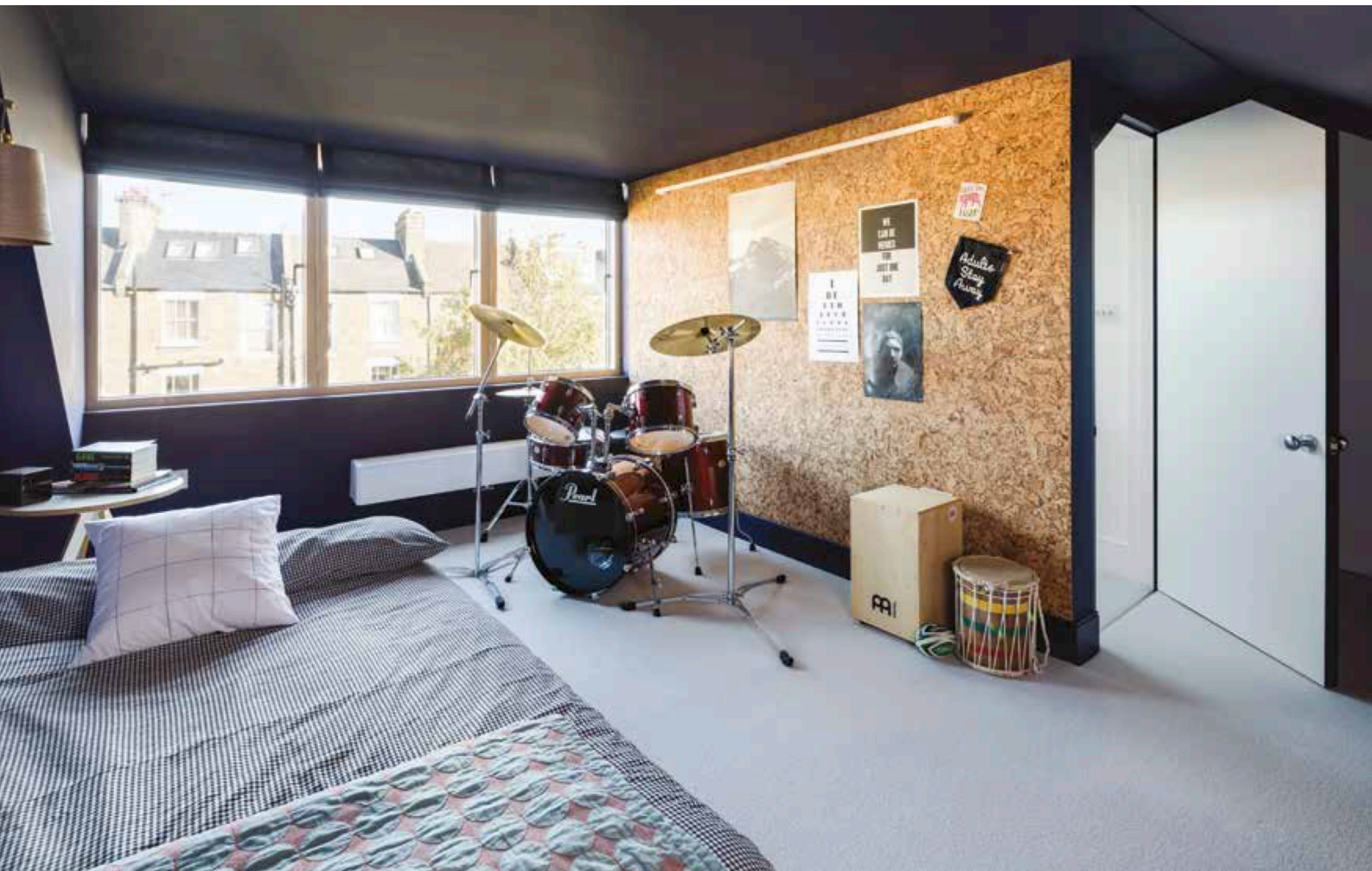
Even now, she says, there were a few aspects that she'd do differently. "Read the details of the building contract thoroughly," she says. "Whatever you don't understand, ask the project manager or builder. I'd also underestimated what a massive job rewiring was — it was the dirtiest and hardest part of the project. We had the ceilings down, we had to pull out the wires and re-plaster everything."

A HOME SUITABLE FOR FAMILY LIFE

"The house functions much better now," says Clare. "There was so much dead space before. Even in our kitchen, which was massive, we had a tiny workspace and now we have an island."

Putting a sink by the new front door, and moving the washing machine into the family bathroom, so that the bathroom doubles as a laundry, was another revelation — it means that the family's washing no longer has to be hauled up and down stairs. More than anything, Clare and Kieran enjoy having a proper hallway (Kieran is delighted with his 'dad shelf' for keys, wallet and the like). "You can close the door on it if you want, so it can be a proper messy family hallway," says Clare.

"When we stood in the original alley we even wondered if the extension was ever going to be possible — it was a tiny slither of space. But it's amazing the way it completely changes this house. It's a very clever design. We love it here; we can close the door and it's a really lovely space." **H**



DORMER EXTENSION

The original loft conversion has taken on a new lease of life, with a new zinc-clad dormer extension (shown top) finished in an intense blue paintwork. "I knew I only wanted three colours in the house, including the dark blue, which is in the kitchen and one of my son's rooms; off white, which is in most of the house; and a very pale blue for the girls' bedrooms," says Clare.

SUPPLIERS

ARCHITECTURE Robert Rhodes

Architecture + Interiors:

www.robertrhodes.co.uk

CONTRACTOR Projects Ten:

www.projectsten.com

STRUCTURAL ENGINEER QED Structures:

www.qedstructures.co.uk

GLAZING Maxlight

(kitchen doors and glass strip):

www.maxlight.co.uk; Velfac (back

door and dormer windows):

www.velfac.co.uk

TIMBER FLOORING Jordan Andrews:

www.jordanandrews.com

SANITARYWARE Vola: en.vola.com;

Duravit: www.duravit.co.uk;

Geberit: www.geberit.co.uk

SANITARYWARE SUPPLIER The Showroom:

www.theshowroomltd.co.uk

PARTY WALL SURVEYOR AJG

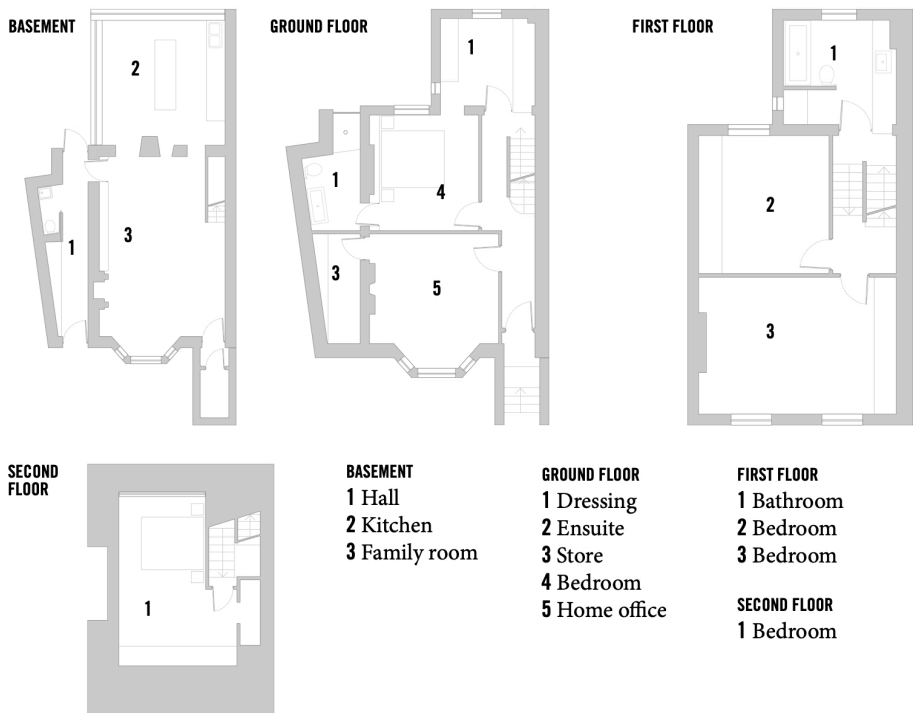
Grantchester: 07764 211128

SELECTED COSTS

ARCHITECTURE FEES	£47,000
GLAZING (MAXLIGHT)	£34,540
GLAZING (VELFAC)	£3,880
SANITARYWARE	£10,197
FLOOR TILES	£2,440

THE FLOORPLAN

Using an original side passage, the tiny two-storey extension connects the lower level to the street and offers the family a practical hallway, circulation and copious storage space. That in turn has allowed the ground floor to be remodelled and renovated to provide a new master ensuite and home office. The lower level of the Victorian house is now a light-filled open plan kitchen/dining/living room that leads out to the garden, while at the top level, a new dormer with zinc-clad roof opens up an earlier loft conversion.



THE KNOWLEDGE

Choosing materials in a conservation area

Like any extension, the project had to meet Building Regs' standards, including those for thermal efficiency. In addition, as a condition of planning approval, the extension had to be clad in bricks that "matched the existing", a common requirement for houses in conservation areas such as this one.

"However, this was simply not possible," says Robert Rhodes. "The bricks of these houses have 100-plus years of pollution on them and brand new London stock bricks would be bright yellow. We didn't think it would be appropriate to wait decades for them to weather in, and the clients were also very unhappy with the idea of a bright yellow extension. So we had a conversation with the planning officer about what the requirement actually meant." After discussion with the planners, it was agreed that the bricks could maintain the same level of authenticity without having to be an exact match, giving the homeowners and Robert an opportunity to choose their materials based on aesthetic considerations as well as planning grounds.

"We wanted the extension to be a quiet and a subtle element next to the main building, so we chose a hand-made red clinker brick, where the bricks are over-fired. This gives an almost burnt effect, with a depth of colour and a beautiful texture," explains Robert.

The bricks are the same imperial size as the originals (slightly larger than today's metric dimensions, at 228x110x68mm) and were laid with the vertical joints aligning the originals in an authentic Flemish bond pattern — in these respects, they're a perfect match with the Victorian brickwork.



THE BUILD...

1. Before works begin 2. The extension takes shape 3. The loft is extended 4. The opening in the alcove for the jib door.

