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Designing a modern family kitchen for a nineteenth-century home



Unchanged for 40 years, this flat in a Grade II listed Victorian terraced house was in need of refurbishment. The owner asked Robert Rhodes, director of Robert Rhodes Architecture & Interiors, to effect its transformation with an extension to turn it into a welcoming family home.

The brief

"The owner wanted an apartment that felt like a house and, inspired by Italian palazzi, an elegant 'grand salon' that was also a practical hard-working kitchen-diner. The kitchen was moved from its original location to a room with direct access to the garden and the old wooden conservatory leading off it was to be replaced by a glazed extension to admit more light. Crittall-style doors were a key part of the vision for this space. Listed Building Consent was required for the extension and other changes made to the internal layout."

Classic chic

"The space for the new kitchen had previously been occupied by a second sitting room with smaller areas partitioned off for storage and a cloakroom. These were removed to clear the way and the amenities replaced by building a smaller cloakroom and providing storage within the kitchen cabinets. The extension is part rendered-concrete and part glazed with wrap-around steel-frame D-windows which, very much in the Crittall style, increase the amount of light entering and the enjoyment of the garden.

"Originally the owners envisaged a sleek modern kitchen, but later changed their minds in favour of classic painted-wood cabinets. These were hand-built with traditional detailing such as beaded, framed doors and Shaker panelling. The colour, Farrow & Ball's Down Pipe, complements the steel glazing. Simple but effective, the double galley layout provides an expansive preparation area, space for appliances and plenty of storage. Natural materials were chosen with fumed oak chevron parquet flooring to allow underfloor heating and practical granite worktops.

"A tall vintage table from the previous home was substituted for the island that appeared on early drafts. It provides extra prep space but can be moved when friends gather and fits better with the idea of a kitchen that feels and looks more like a living space." ▶



ABOVE Traditional cabinetry, chevron parquet flooring and a vintage table combine to fulfil the client's wish for a feeling of elegance and grandeur.

LEFT The stainless steel Bertazzoni range cooker fits into an existing chimneybreast lined with lightly veined marble for a sense of glamour.

Case Study One



FAR LEFT The kitchen's northerly aspect allows the glazed doors and lantern roof to admit natural light whilst keeping the room at a comfortable temperature.

LEFT The flooring in the garden is the same level as that in the kitchen, ensuring both feel like one continuous living area in warm weather.