

LOOKING UP



The cramped galley kitchen of an otherwise spacious Edwardian home has been extended, remodelled and flooded with natural light.

STORY: LOUISE PARKIN
PHOTOGRAPHY: WILL SCOTT



Isabella and Russell Smith had lived in their semi-detached home in Ealing for 16 years before embarking on the extensive remodelling of the small galley kitchen to create a spacious, open-plan kitchen/diner/living area.

The Edwardian house had already been extended from four to six bedrooms several years ago, with a loft conversion that also provided bathrooms and a TV and chill-out area, and the couple always knew that the kitchen was too small for a house of its size.

“We took out a wall and moved the kitchen to make it slightly bigger, but that was a long time ago and the cabinets and fittings were looking very dated,” explains Isabella, who works in the derivatives industry. “We thought about it for a year before going ahead, considering whether to paint the cabinets and change the handles, or replace the kitchen in its current location, or remove the wall and remodel the existing space. In the end, we decided that if we were going to have upheaval we might as well go for the big project.”

Isabella and Russell, a chartered surveyor, have introduced a contemporary theme throughout the interior, restoring period features that had been covered up. Original doors had been boarded over with plasterboard, and the staircase spindles were

concealed too. The period black and white tiled floor was damaged by carpet adhesive, but this did not deter Isabella and Russell from exposing it.

A colleague recommended architect Lee Whiteman, who instantly impressed the Smiths. “He listened to us carefully, with no arrogance. He is very easy to work with,” says Isabella. By extending to the rear, a large unified space has been formed that is flanked by a bank of glazed sliding doors and a partially glazed pitched roof. Isabella says: “We had seen other house extensions so we knew what was possible, but what Lee produced goes beyond what we expected.”

The new layout incorporates a small existing side extension which now wraps around the rear of the property, with a new pitched slate roof with five roof lights replacing the existing extension roof. A cranked beam follows the profile of the roof, with all steels hidden, and there is no need for intrusive visible vertical supports.

The internal face of a new section of wall has been left exposed to show off the London stock



bricks, while the wall cavity is highly insulated to comply with Building Regulations. A key element of the design is the large bespoke roof light at the rear which allows natural light to flood the space.

Lee recommended Motacus Construction to undertake the building work, and after obtaining three quotes, all of which were similar, Isabella and Russell opted for Motacus. “They were the most engaged, and knew what they were talking about, which gave us a lot of confidence,” says Isabella. “They were really respectful to our neighbours while on site too, and kept noise to a minimum, especially when arriving early.”

Isabella and Russell had strong ideas about what they wanted from the kitchen, which was to be light and unfussy, with marble-effect work surfaces, and a large island incorporating the hob so that the cook can look out into the room, watch TV and chat with others. A bank of tall cupboards is positioned against the back wall, and a drop ceiling conceals the extractor hood.

WINDOWS

Large sliding doors with slim sightlines were chosen to offer uninterrupted views of the garden.

“We decided that if we were going to have upheaval we might as well go for a big project.”

Calculating glazing ratio

To work out how much new glazing is allowed under Building Regulations, measure the total floor area of the room. Up to 25 per cent of this figure is the permitted area of glazing. Existing glazing can then be added to this figure.

Total floor area of open-plan room including snug	80 sqm
25 per cent of total floor area	20 sqm
Existing openings	16.2 sqm
Total allowable glazing	36.2 sqm

In detail

PROJECT

Architect Lee Whiteman:
whitemanarchitects.com

Structural engineer Articlus Design Consultants

Builder Motacus Construction:
motacus.co.uk

Kitchen Halcyon Kitchens:
halcyon-interiors.co.uk

Worktop Caesarstone:
caesarstone.co.uk

Windows PCW:
perfectcrystal.co.uk

Oak floor Trunk Flooring:
trunksurfaces.com



“I am quite indecisive and I looked into almost every kitchen company in London,” Isabella recalls. “In fact we changed kitchen companies part way through, even though that meant losing our deposit, because they were difficult to work with and it was all about the money. Eventually we found Halcyon Kitchens and they were so easy to work with. They also came up with some really great ideas.”

An extendable dining table has been placed

next to the kitchen island, and the living area, complete with gas stove, has been positioned in front of the sliding doors, which open up to the garden with level decking beyond.

The couple moved out to live with friends during the four-month project, which Isabella recalls was a pretty stressful time. “We visited the site quite a bit, but as we weren’t actually living there, it wasn’t too bad.”

THE FLOORPLAN

A front sitting room is the only part of the ground floor to remain unchanged. Now a large dining/living/kitchen area dominates, with a separate snug providing a more intimate space.





OPEN SPACE
All vertical beams were concealed so that the entire room could be open with no visible pillars.



BATHROOM
An upstairs bathroom was refurbished at the same time as the floor was taken up to allow for steel beams for the work below.

“The new layout means the kitchen is better suited to the size of the house.”

One of the bathrooms upstairs was disrupted by the installation of steel beams, and so the decision was made to remodel that room at the same time. A downstairs toilet was also created, as was a separate snug which acts as a cinema room.

“The new layout means that the kitchen is better suited to the size of the house, and is a far more livable space. We love it, and our children, who work in Bristol and Portsmouth, often come home for the weekend and bring their friends. It’s a great space for entertaining!” says Isabella.



SNUG
Designed as a cinema room, the separate snug is next door to the open-plan living area.