

'A mix of natural materials adds character to our new extension'

Jo and Gary Durden remodelled the ground floor to create the sociable kitchen-diner they craved

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BEFORE



ORIGINAL KITCHEN

Left Before they extended into the side return, Jo and Gary found the kitchen too cramped to use as a family space



DESIGN DETAILS

Left The handsome larder unit along one wall is painted in Pavilion Gray by Farrow & Ball, and houses appliances and lots of shelving so that work surfaces are kept clutter-free

BREAKFAST BAR

Right A mix of Tolix stools from Made in Design, oak stools from Cox & Cox and a Mercury 1000 range cooker from John Lewis add an industrial aesthetic to the new space

FACT FILE

THE OWNERS

Jo Durden (right) and her husband Gary, a property developer, live here with their two sons, Henry, 13 and Freddie, 11

THE PROPERTY

A five-bedroom Victorian mid-terraced house

THE LOCATION

Chiswick, west London

WHAT THEY SPENT

The couple's kitchen extension project cost around £78,000



We moved to our terraced house in Chiswick 12 years ago, when our first son was still a baby,' recalls Jo. 'Since then, we have updated the property as our two boys have grown and our needs have changed. 'In 2013, we decided to entirely remodel the ground floor. The boys were constantly coming home with muddy rugby kits, and we desperately needed a utility room, so we took the decision to block off the narrow end of the living room to create a utility space and a larger cloakroom,' she explains. 'In order to compensate for having a smaller living

room, it made sense to make better use of the back of the house and create a larger family kitchen and dining space.'

Gary's work as a property developer meant that he had an architect on hand to draw up plans for the new design, which entailed extending into the side return as well as lengthening the room by taking a metre from the garden. Both Jo and Gary had a very clear idea of what they wanted the new room to be like. 'We were keen to have high ceilings, which involved digging down to lower the floor,' says Jo. 'I also wanted the glazed doors to the garden to have minimal frames, so that they wouldn't interrupt the view to the outside.'

When the couple discovered that their neighbours were planning a similar home extension, they agreed to join forces to source a builder. 'We thought that it made sense to bring in one team for both sets of works, and it was also useful having two parties looking for the right contractor,' Jo explains. 'We obtained a number of quotes before choosing a fantastic builder, John Shopland.'

The contractor was able to start on the neighbours' extension first, while Jo and Gary finalised their plans. Their previous kitchen, installed soon after they bought the property, had been a glossy white design, but this time Jo wanted to source simple Shaker units that she could team

WORK SPACE

Right The kitchen design by LIFE Style features simple Shaker-style units from Neptune, painted in Basalt by Little Greene. The composite stone worktops are by Caesarstone, with a sink from Villeroy & Boch and taps by Lefroy Brooks. The exposed brick wall adds extra warmth to the scheme, and is sealed so it can be wiped clean



OUTDOOR CONNECTION

Left The new extension connects the house to the garden, with simple aluminium slide and pivot doors from Sunseeker Doors. Two rooflights bring further light into the hub of the space



DINING AREA

Right Jo chose clear glass pendant lights from Urban Cottage Industries so as not to interrupt sightlines. A table from The Old Cinema adds vintage style, as do the church chairs from UK Architectural Antiques



with industrial features for a contemporary edge. A pared-back Suffolk design by Neptune provided the look she was after.

While Jo was eager to hunt down many of the fittings herself, she also felt that she needed some guidance, so called in Nicola Pratt of LIFE Style as a project manager. 'I'd seen some of Nicola's projects and really liked her style,' says Jo. 'She was brilliant at interpreting my ideas and helping me to create the look I wanted.'

The building work started in July 2013 and took just over five months, during which the family lived in the first and second floors of the house. 'At first we didn't have a kitchen at all, but once the new utility was created, we were able to have a makeshift cooking area in there,' Jo recalls. 'The builders were great, but even

so, it was quite a challenge. The upside, though, was that I was on site every day and able to make decisions quickly.'

The couple's old kitchen was a U-shape, and Nicola proposed a similar layout, but making use of the new, wider dimensions, ensuring an unobstructed passage from the doorway through to the garden, while one end forms a sociable breakfast bar, dividing the kitchen and dining space.

Along the opposite wall is a bank of tall cupboards housing larder units and the fridge-freezer. 'I specified a lot of storage,' says Jo, 'and I now have so much that some of the cupboards are still empty!'

Jo admits to favouring a monochrome palette: 'I don't really go for bright colours!' So, to prevent the space becoming cold, Nicola suggested natural materials, such as

brick, timber, concrete and glass. 'The brick wall adds character, and stops it from becoming a pale grey box,' says Jo. 'The worktops are composite stone but look exactly like Carrara marble – plus they're easier to maintain than the real thing.'

The bank of cupboards is the same warm grey as the walls, while the other units, in a smart dark navy, provide contrast. The polished concrete floor, with underfloor heating, adds to the palette of subtle greys – its smooth surface proving popular with the couple's sons for skateboard practice.

Light-filled and spacious, the new kitchen is now a multifunctional room the whole family uses. 'I must admit that with my new range cooker, I enjoy cooking more,' Jo adds. 'With a space like this, it somehow makes it a lot easier.' 🏠

THE PLANS

BEFORE



AFTER



Extending into the side return and one metre into the garden has created a spacious kitchen/dining area with breakfast bar, with slide and pivot doors for a seamless connection to the garden

THE CONTACTS

Interior design and project management LIFE Style, 020 8348 3644, lifestyle-llp.com
Construction John Shopland Building Services, 01932 223232, jshopland.com
Kitchen Ray Munn Kitchens 020 8487 5774, raymunnkitchens.co.uk
Slide and pivot doors Sunseeker Doors

THE COSTS

Building work	£38,500
Kitchen cabinetry and installation	£22,000
Slide and pivot doors	£6,000
Appliances	£4,140
Work surfaces	£3,000
Flooring	£2,400
Lighting	£1,200
Sinks and taps	£650
TOTAL	£77,890



Project notes

Follow Jo Durden's advice for redesigning your kitchen

My top tip

'I went through stacks of interiors magazines to create a folder of tear sheets that gave me ideas for the style of the space. This really helped me to show Nicola from LIFE Style the look I wanted to create.'

Design idea

'As the new underfloor heating was so efficient, we realised that we wouldn't get much use out of the planned wood-burning stove. Instead, we decided to fill the chimneybreast with decorative logs from the Little Log Company (right). Like the exposed brick wall, this brings texture to the scheme and contrasts really well with the poured polished concrete floor, supplied by Skim Coat.'

My go-to website

'Urban Cottage Industries has an excellent range of industrial-style lighting, and you can customise lamps with different fittings – the choice of flex alone is astonishing. We chose the Factorylux "Made for You" Simple pendant lights (above).'

I particularly love...

'...the fact that this is now a much more sociable room. Having a bigger space means that it's easier to entertain friends. I'm also cooking a lot more – and I think I've actually become better at it!'

My best buy

'I did a lot of research to find the thin-framed aluminium slide and pivot doors (right). They were expensive but worth it, as they let in lots of light and don't obscure the view of the garden.'

If I could do it again...

'...I would try to live off site during the work. Being without the extra space for nearly six months was quite a challenge!' 🏠

