



THINK OUTSIDE THE BOX

A private space at the bottom of the garden sounds more appealing than ever, and building your own is far cheaper than upsizing.
Hugh Graham finds eight sumptuous studios



The open-plan home is taking a toll on family relationships during lockdown: when there are no walls, there's no escape from each other, especially if you are WFH. Even before the restrictions came into effect,

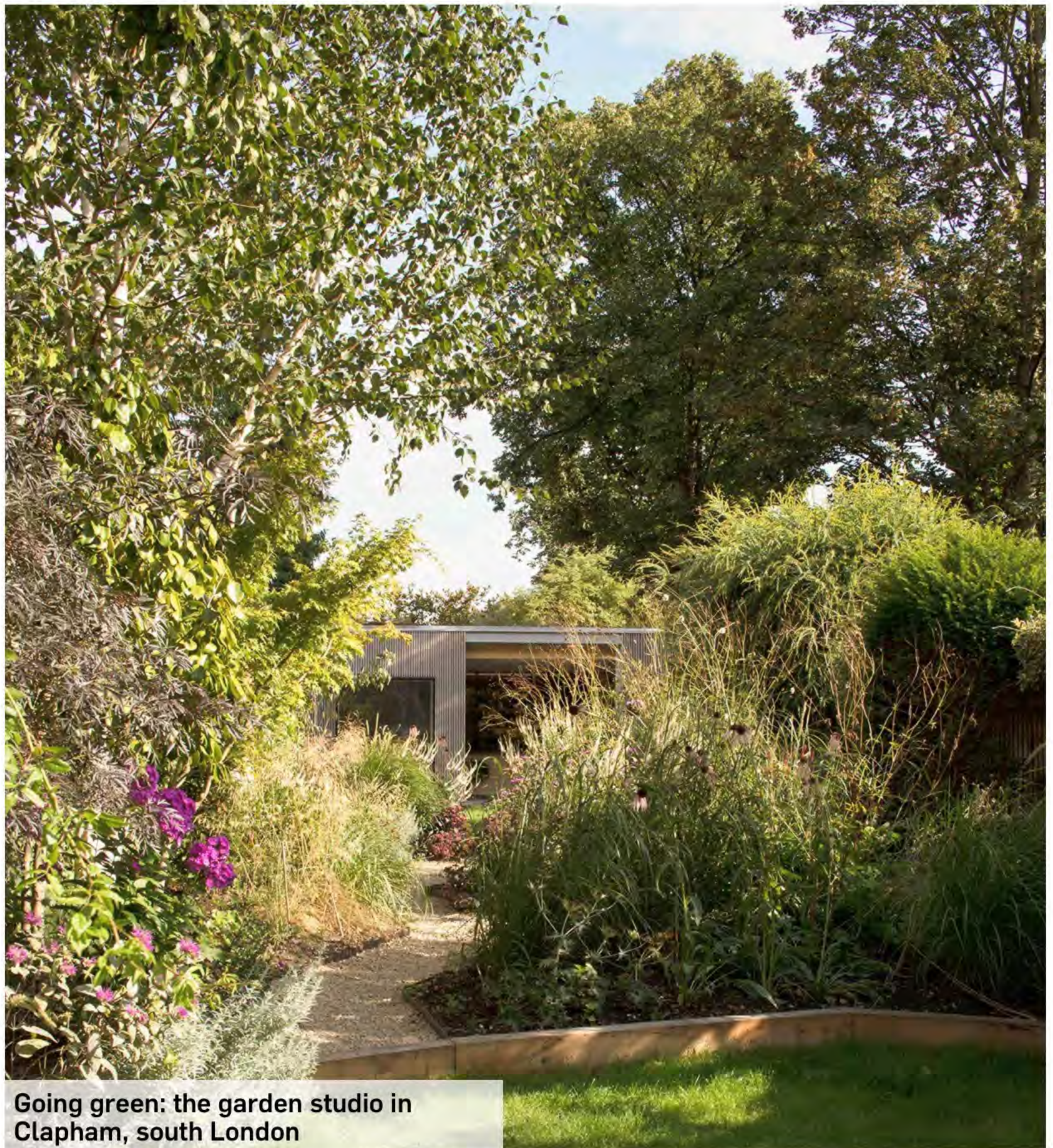
receiving a lot of calls about garden studios, and she believes the trend will take off after this period of cabin fever: "When you've got kids running rampant with their Nerf guns and Xboxes, it's all too much. You need a space to retreat to."

In the era of "don't move, improve", it makes financial sense. Most projects come in at £50,000-£70,000, which gives you an extra room for a lot less than you'd pay to move up the ladder.

In fact, it should give you more than one room if you design it for multiple uses, Finkernagel says. It can be a gym in the morning, a home office during the day, a kids' TV room in the evening and a guest room for weekend visitors. So it's worth including a bathroom, a kitchen, underfloor heating, storage and proper wiring for internet access.

If you opt for full glazing and don't want to feel you're in a goldfish bowl, install blinds; during evening dos, you can leave the lights on behind them to cast a theatrical glow in the garden.

clients build a studio after spending a



Going green: the garden studio in Clapham, south London

fortune on an extension that overlooks their ugly garden shed.

Garden studios can be built under permitted development rules. Generally the maximum eaves height is 2½ metres and they must be single-storey, with no full-time sleeping accommodation. No more than half of the land associated with the original house must be covered with additions or outbuildings. Anything else will require planning permission.

Either way, in the wake of

basement extensions and loft conversions, expect garden studios to become the new normal. Here are some ideas.

GOING GREEN

At the bottom of a long garden in Clapham, south London, this studio is a mammoth 650 sq ft — bigger than some two-bedroom flats — but you can hardly see it. It's covered with a sedum roof and surrounded by other gardens. "It feels as if you are in a park,"

He wanted the £90,000



studio to blend into the landscape, so eschewed full glazing in favour of larch, which has been oiled so it won't go grey. "We had no problem getting planning permission," Giles says. "The neighbours can't see it from above."

Yet it's not dark inside: there's a window seat that's glazed on four sides, giving a

180-degree view of the garden; a sliding glass door; and a mirrored wall that reflects the greenery outside. The brief was a games room for the clients' three children: it has ping-pong and football tables, and a TV area with a sofa. But the grown-ups use it too: there's a bar, a kitchen and a shower room, as well as space for a bed.

→ *Swipe to see more sumptuous studios* ■





WORK AND PLAY

This modernist dream isn't a garden studio, it's a "pavilion". The client, a solicitor from Barnes, southwest London, wanted an office and a private space for yoga and meditation — hence the clean lines and the enclosed courtyard with frosted glass. The limestone wall on the left reflects light into the studio, where oak joinery contains a fold-down desk and bed; at the back is a shower room. Budget £200,000 for a similar design.



HEART OF GLASS

Matching a modern extension to a red-brick Victorian house in Belsize Park, northwest London, this glass box is clad in Hi-Macs, a low-maintenance resin composite. It has a kitchen pod with an office to the left and a gym to the right — a great escape from their open-plan home for the parent owners. Electric blinds lend privacy and hide gym gear during garden parties. It cost a six-figure sum to build.



GARDEN VARIETY

This 215 sq ft studio in Wanstead, east London, doesn't face the house, to allow privacy. You enter it via a pebbled side courtyard; the log stack is part of a cedar garden shed. The studio plays several roles: morning gym (the wardrobe is full of weights); daytime office (they put in wi-fi boosters); home cinema by night; and guest room on weekends (there's a sofa bed, a tiny kitchen and a shower room). It cost £60,000.



ROOM WITH A VIEW

Studios aren't just for the bottom of the garden: this one is on the roof of a five-storey townhouse in Notting Hill, west London. The landscape designers FRLA planted grasses and shrubs outside; inside, glazed walls offer views of Mary Poppins-style chimney pots, parks and landmarks such as the Shard. You can see weather rolling in, sunsets and clouds through a skylight. It's a study, but how would you get any work done?



CHARACTER STUDY

A Room in the Garden is a flatpack studio that was built in 20 days from sustainable, recyclable materials for £28,500. Inspired by the Pineapple, an 18th-century folly at Dunmore Park in Falkirk, Scotland, it has an octagonal floor, a hexagonal roof, a skylight, double doors and an ornate green exterior. The desk looks out to a south London garden, a double bed folds out of a bench — and it's all portable.



THE WATER SHED

In rural Hampshire, at the foot of a garden, Forest Pond House cost about £15,000 and does what it says — it's in the woods, on a pond. Yet this is no rustic shack: its angular black form is sculptural, with a boomerang-shaped plan that is cantilevered over the water. Inside it's Zen, with light wood walls that start low and open up to high ceilings and a big water view. There's a built-in bench for lazy gazing — sounds ideal right now.



YOGA CONVERT

The owners of a terraced house in Peckham, southeast London, wanted a yoga studio, so they spent £25,000 on converting an ugly breeze-block shed into a black timber-clad beauty. They added a glass pocket door, a pine deck, a rubber floor with underfloor heating, sockets for music, a pitched roof (so the tall owner can stretch) and a skylight. Extra garden storage — the bits jutting out — takes it to 107 sq ft