

Beyond boundaries

A new extension brings light and space to this once dark, cramped Dulwich home making way for a stunning kitchen-diner, while the efficient use of space above injects effortless style into areas of sanctuary

Report and styling: Melinda Tuza Photography: Rachael Smith

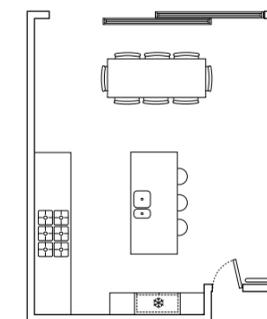
Caroline Hitchen has never shied away from the prospect of renovating her family home. Over the years, she has risen to the challenge time and time again and this experience has culminated in a newly transfigured home that is testament to her skill and insight. "It's something I've always done," explains Caroline, "and this time both the potential and resources for a huge change were in place so I just couldn't resist."

For Caroline, it was the diminutive kitchen that marred her 1920s semi-detached Dulwich home and inspired her to reconfigure the rear of the building. Suppressed by an adjacent dining room, she felt it was too dark and small so enlisted the expertise of architect Simon Whitehead to help her amend the structural and spatial shortcomings.

Together, the pair rejected the existing layout and implemented a generously proportioned extension that stretches more than three metres beyond the confines of the original property, across the rear of the house. On this new boundary, an immense folding glass door helps unite inside and outside with indulgent views of the garden, whilst up above a striking glazed skylight punctuates the ceiling to bathe the space in daylight. Enhancing the space with a generosity of light and open-plan fluidity facilitated the design of the kitchen-cum-family room that Caroline had hankered after for so long.

"Ever since we moved here, I have wanted this part of the house to be somewhere bright and roomy for my son Alex and I to chill out, work and eat together," Caroline smiles. "Luckily for us, Simon appreciated this from the outset of the project. He visualised exactly what we were hoping to achieve within the context of a minimalist but welcoming room. Subsequently, everything else flowed quite naturally from that point onwards." ▶

Left: Above the range cooker, Elica's stunning Mini Om extractor echoes the clean, streamlined lines of the kitchen design and draws the eye towards the centre of the space. The Corian work surface is cantilevered to extend over the island on one side creating a useful breakfast area





Top left: The backdrop has been kept neutral in line with the kitchen furniture to keep the look simple and timeless. The streamlined look is enhanced by the linear handles on the cabinetry **Left:** The Corian worktop extends seamlessly into the sink on the island to create a preparation area at the centre of the kitchen space **Above:** The walnut dining table has been specifically placed to allow guests to take in the views outdoors

The new interior is certainly testament to this vision. Each element is just as streamlined as the room it occupies and adheres to the minimalist aesthetic that dictated the architectural amendments. At the centre is a kitchen island that encourages versatility by defining a work area without isolating the surrounding room. Beyond it, the cooking area comprises an impressive ensemble of integrated appliances and expansive storage, flanked either side by an attractive and easily accessible arrangement of open shelving.

At the foot of the island, chic dining furniture and large-scale artwork denote the transition from work to play. "I took inspiration for

my ideas from magazines, trade shows and the internet," Caroline says, "so I was well informed about all the options that were available to me when the time eventually came to select the different appliances and surface finishes.

"With hindsight, I'd say it all went very smoothly, but that doesn't mean to say it felt like it all the time," she continues. "Alex and I had to decamp to the front room for four months, where we lived on microwave meals and toast. We had to wash our plates in the bathroom upstairs so it was a distinct relief when it all came to an end. Not that I begrudge a second of it – it was all worthwhile."

Even more commendable is Caroline's unflinching enthusiasm, given that she then proceeded to convert part of her loft into an ensuite for young Alex shortly after the kitchen had been completed. The original space was a very tight storage room, wedged beneath a low ceiling, and although Caroline admits the design was ultimately restricted by the confines of the space that it occupies, it is the pitched ceiling – in conjunction with the subtle lighting – that gives the room its distinct and inviting cave-like quality.

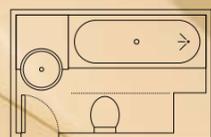
"I was determined to squeeze it all in," she says. "Quite evidently, I didn't have much room for manoeuvre but all good things come in small packages and they

certainly don't come much smaller than this." To enhance the sense of space, Caroline has employed a palette of light reflective materials and other appropriately proportioned elements.

Much less compact but certainly no less captivating is Caroline's own bedroom where delicate, tailored layers of textural and tonal variation have been enveloped over a neutral backdrop of period features. Contemporary furniture and abstract artwork acknowledge the modern influence that has characterised the other rooms in the house but this space is a much softer, feminine one. "It's where I like to relax and unwind after a long day at work," Caroline smiles. KBB



Top left: Tucked under the pitched ceiling of a confined loft space, clever planning ensures the bathroom feels light and spacious. **Above:** Carefully selected elements add a design edge into the bathroom. The conical basin is positioned offset to prevent it encroaching on the space, while the mirror above bounces light across the room. **Bottom left:** Simple wall-mounted brassware helps to create the illusion of space in this bijou bathroom. **Below:** The spacious Kaldewei bath is accommodated along one wall away from the sloping ceiling, and is overlooked by a showerhead. The controls are sited in the boxed panel beside to keep the look sleek and uncomplicated.



“Good things come in small packages and they certainly don’t come much smaller than this”



In Caroline’s beautiful bedroom a palette of silken ivory, bronze and fuchsia create a restful retreat with a warm, welcoming undertone.



Above: Contemporary artworks and furniture combine with period features in the bedroom

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DESIGN

Simon Whitehead Architects
(020 7183 1063 or
www.simonwhitehead.com)

Building work Brent
Morgan of BJM Design and
Build (020 8699 5214 or
www.bjm-design.com)

KITCHEN

Cabinetry Hanak at BPM
Bathrooms (020 7738 9475)

Worktop Corian
(0800 962116 or
www.corian.co.uk)

Range cooker Rangemaster
(www.rangemaster.co.uk)
from Trade Appliances
(0870 094 9500 or
www.trade-appliances.co.uk)

Extractor Elica (www.elica.co.uk)
from Trade Appliances, as before
Integrated dishwasher
Neff (0844 892 9033

or www.neff.co.uk)
Fridge-freezer LG
(0870 873 5454 or

www.lge.co.uk)
Brassware Rangemaster from
Trade Appliances, as before
Glass splashback London
Toughening (020 7252 1040 or
www.londontoughening.com)

Glass skylight Glazing
Vision (01842 815581 or
www.visiongroup.co.uk)
Painted hardwood windows
Silver Lake Windows
(01553 630563 or
www.silverlakewindows.co.uk)

Radiators MHS Radiators
(01268 546700 or
www.mhsradiators.com)
Flooring Solid walnut, for
similar try The Ultimate Floor
Company (020 8948 5611 or
www.theultimateflooring.com)

Dining chairs Lattice-back
chair, Dwell (0845 675 9090
or www.dwell.co.uk)

Artwork John Monks through
Long and Ryle (020 7834 1434
or www.longandryle.com)

BEDROOM

Cabinetry bespoke by Joe
Runcak Property Maintenance
(07960 427220)

Radiators B&Q
(0845 850 0175 or www.diy.com)

BATHROOM

Bath Kaldewei (0870 777 2223
or www.kaldewei.com)

WC & basin Arke range,
Saneux available from Boundary
Bathrooms (0845 009 9545 or
www.boundarybathrooms.co.uk)

Loft conversion Outlook
Lofts (0800 093 1469 or
www.outlooklofts.co.uk)

COST

A similar kitchen including
appliances, splashbacks
and worktops would cost
around £17,000. A similar
bathroom including tiling
would cost around £3200 and
remodelling a similar bedroom
would cost around £2500

