



Savings: The extension adds valuable space, while improvements have made the house more energy efficient

How our extension shrank our bills...

For one south-London family, remodelling their Victorian terrace has meant huge savings, says **Oliver Stallwood**

EXTENSIONS can add value to your home, but can make money in more ways than one – as one family has found out renovating their Victorian terrace. Guy Walkinshaw and his wife Fiona upgraded from a Balham flat to this Streatham Hill family house in December 2008 just after the financial crash. The house was priced to sell, with a lot of light and well-proportioned rooms. However, while liveable, its layout left it both cramped inside and extremely draughty and cold in the winter. The answer would be to tackle both problems at once.

The Walkinshaws decided to add a side return extension on the property to bring together a small kitchen and less used dining room into one living space so he could capitalise on that and the garden. This would create a multi-use family environment, eating, entertaining, homework and lounge

area. At the same time the house would be made as efficient as possible, saving money and energy in the long run.

'The boiler we inherited was old and inefficient and we were burning money heating the house in winter,' Guy explains. 'We were keen to reduce our gas bills and make sure the house retained heat in winter.' The poor insulation and old boiler were hard to ignore – the couple were spending £600 a month heating the property.

The first job was to replace the boiler with a more efficient model, then the old front windows on both floors were replaced with solid wood double-glazed windows still in keeping with the original style.

Then Build Team (buildteam.com), a specialist in side return extensions on Victorian properties across London, was brought in to increase the living space and further improve energy efficiency. The structural engineering was complex – the brief

was for all beams to be recessed in to the floor and ceiling, so they were not visible. 'The biggest obstacle was visualising what we wanted done, translating that into practicality and affordability and overcoming unforeseen issues,' says Guy, who had a strict budget of £190,000. 'It was daunting when the walls started coming down but exciting when the steel beams arrived and were slotted in place.'

One key element was the flooring. The couple knew they wanted good wooden-effect tiles so that efficient underfloor heating could be installed. 'We spent many hours hunting through different tile shops and finally found our Marazzi Treverk Teak tiles from World's End Tiles in Battersea.'

The search paid off both aesthetically and financially – while in keeping with the clean-cut look of the interior,



Eco-friendly: Wooden-effect tiles allowed underfloor heating to be installed



Spacious: The extension brings together the kitchen and dining room



Draughty: Before the extension



Quirky: The bike saddle kitchen stools

the underfloor heating is graded as 20 per cent more efficient than conventional radiators. The insulation to the floor exceeded building regulations with an extra layer of 25ml insulation above the required 100ml. The team also upgraded the insulation to the walls and ceiling. The Velux skylights are double glazed and the gap is argon-filled to guarantee good thermal insulation, while LED lights were installed to save energy costs. Additional elements included a new designer kitchen by Espresso Design in St John's Hill and extensive improvements to the garden.

A family friend, Francesca Haque, via her company Green Eye Garden Design, designed the outside terrace and garden area so the Walkinshaw's son can play and run around. A new terrace, planters and artificial grass lawn were all added. The internal style is modern, but in harmony with the original lines of the

building. 'We have wanted to keep it simple, minimal and contemporary,' says Guy. 'We tried to be true to the period of the house but exercised some restraint in the kitchen and dining area, which we wanted to be quite modern. The kitchen units are handleless for a clean look, while our sofa from Made.com fits perfectly into the space around our fire. We wanted a real fire in the room and opted for a modern log burner.'

The quirky bike saddle stools were a gift from his parents who bought them from a trendy designer furniture shop in Soho more than 25 years ago. 'They'd been sitting in their loft so they are glad to see them being used again,' he adds.

The extension has paid off. The budget was kept intact and the prices in Streatham have seen a healthy rise – other houses in the street have recently marketed at £1.1million to £1.2million. And the heating bill is now £190 a month – less than a third of what it was five years ago. Not many people can say that.

EASY WAYS TO CUT BACK

MARK Todd is co-founder of energy switching site energyhelpline.com. Here's his beginner's guide to saving money at home

- When doing the laundry always wait until you have a full load and wash at 30 degrees – you will consume less energy.
- Use energy saving bulbs – they cut your usage exponentially.
- Save energy when cooking with your oven by cooking a number of meals at the same time.
- Keeping your freezer full means it uses less energy.
- Turn your heating down one degree – this can save a considerable amount of money a year.



Pleased: Guy Walkinshaw and his wife Fiona