

Homes & Property | Loft extension



Best of old and new: in a period flat, Conor Hardy and wife Kate recreated the modern warehouse-style living they loved



Retaining the charm: tiles and fittings in a Victorian-style bathroom preserve character



White, wood and glass: a clear balustrade maximises light in the Clapham flat



Success story: the mansard loft extension is finished with white walls and neutral bespoke fittings, to open up the space and capitalise on the light

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Let us entertain you

Perfect for parties, this loft extension is a light-filled modern surprise in a period conversion flat, says **Ifeoluwa Adedeji**

Photographs:
Build Team
and **Robin Bell**

Chic neutrals: an elegant living space done in easy-on-the-eye shades, with accents provided by the period fireplace and cushions in subtle colours

CONOR and Kate Hardy wanted to replicate the warehouse-style living they'd loved so much in their twenties. "Our first rental flat together was a light and spacious two-bedroom penthouse in a modern converted office building," says Kate.

"We loved the open-plan layout, perfect for entertaining. We had floor-to-ceiling glass and a wraparound balcony where we would sit and watch the sunrise over the city."

When they started searching for a place to buy and came across this two-storey conversion in 2017, just a stone's throw from Clapham High Street, the first thing that stood out was the double-fronted bay windows, which gave it instant kerb appeal. But the really exciting part was the hidden gem of a loft, which spanned the entire length of the house.

The lack of outdoor space was an issue but the house next door had a roof terrace, so the Hardys thought gaining consent to install one of their own would be straightforward. "We

saw this as an opportunity to combine the best of old and new, maintaining the period charm on the first and second floor while delivering something surprising and modern in the loft," says Conor.

With space in London at a premium, they also knew they could increase the value of the property. "We wanted to extend with a mansard loft instead of a dormer and chose a local design and build company called Build Team. The architect at Build Team advised us to submit the planning applications as two separate projects – one for the loft and one for the terrace," says Conor. If the roof terrace plans were rejected, they'd still be able to move forward with the loft project.

This proved to be sage advice. The loft application was accepted, as long as they maintained the sloping roofline, but the roof terrace was

rejected. To the couple's surprise, the council felt it wasn't in keeping with the local vernacular.

Converting the Victorian part of the building threw up challenges. "We realised quite quickly that we would need to level part of the floor, and then discovered much of the existing wood was rotten and needed to be replaced," says Kate. "When it came time to strip the wallpaper, nearly all of the plaster came off with it."

They then went to appeal over the roof terrace. It took nine months to get approval, by which time they had overspent their budget by at least 25 per cent. And though on the whole the couple had prepared well for their project, there were issues they had never thought about. "We'd done our research, but with the project being a flat we had three party wall processes to go through," says Conor. "Each property appointed a surveyor and we paid for everything."

The flat is a success story, with the original first and second floors retaining period fireplaces and mouldings, and with Victorian-style bathroom fittings and tiling. "We wanted to preserve the character look and feel downstairs, so we just did the essentials – we rewired, re-plastered, and re-plumbed new radiators," says Kate. "In the loft we wanted the open-plan space where we could entertain like we had done in our first rental, which is why we've installed so many rooflights and Velux windows."

They chose white walls and neutral bespoke kitchen fittings to open up the space and capitalise on the light.

They have achieved their vision of creating an uplifting, spacious entertaining area within a grand period property.



NOTEBOOK

Costs: flat bought for £750,000; a total £200,000 spent on works; estimated value of the flat today, £1.1 million
Design and build company: Build Team (buildteam.com)

Kitchen supplier: Harry Colby at Alon Interiors (aloninteriors.co.uk)

Kitchen: Häcker (haecker-kuechen.de)
Interior design: Yohan May Interiors (yohanmay.com)

Carpet: carpetright.co.uk

Floor: directwoodflooring.co.uk

Worktops and backsplash: 12mm Neolith Calacatta (neolith.com)

Oven: neff-home.com

Bathroom: wickes.co.uk

Rooflights: velux.co.uk

French doors: Avesta (avestadoorsand-windows.co.uk)