

Build It

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2017

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A MAN WITH A PLAN

Finding the perfect home in the UK capital is no mean feat, but **Andrew Overin** saw the potential to transform a dilapidated terraced house into a modern dwelling

WORDS **IFEOLUWA ADEDEJI**
PHOTOS **BRUCE HEMMING**



When Andrew Overin first viewed what he knew would become his future home, he didn't miss the fact that other prospective buyers were just walking in and straight back out. The house was a dated and fairly unremarkable mid-terraced dwelling, with carpet that still smelt like cats, but the high ceilings and large windows reeked of potential. It was a competitive housing market, so a property in such a good location was a lucky find. Plus, Andrew felt he had the skills to transform it into something special, after spending over 10 years updating his former abode. "I thought this house had real promise and I was trying to find a bargain," he says.



Most of the walls throughout the house are painted a neutral tone, which helps to create a bright and airy ambience

A clear vision

There were two key areas of the house that Andrew felt could benefit from a revamp – the unused attic and the small kitchen at the rear. For the former, a complete conversion would add another storey, and for the latter, a wraparound extension could transform the space into a multifunctional zone, ideal for entertaining. Plus, to avoid any areas of the large room becoming too dark, a set of rooflights would help to ensure the space was well-lit throughout the day.

While Andrew had a clear vision of what he was trying to achieve, he was keen to consult the professionals in order to piece together the plans. "I received several quotes for the work, but when I met with Build Team I felt like I was in safe hands, especially when I saw the other jobs the company had completed," he says.

The firm excelled when it came to advising on how far to extend, as Andrew was anxious not to have an oversized extension that would make the house look lopsided. "I was on a pretty tight budget

and therefore I didn't need someone to just come in and tell me to install great swathes of glazing, for instance," he adds.

A lot of Build Team's design plans were accessible on its website, so Andrew browsed through projects to see how other homeowners had transformed their living spaces. The firm drew up an initial concept for Andrew and his partner Chris to review. However, knowing that they would be spending a lot of time in the kitchen, Andrew was keen to make some modifications to the proposed rear extension. One change saw the hob moved to a breakfast bar rather than the sink. "We now call this area the kitchen of theatre because it's like being on a cooking show," explains Andrew. "When we have friends over, we all sit around while Chris cooks – it's quite sociable."

Although he knew it had potential, Andrew took a risk in buying a house without planning permission in place for the works he envisioned – there wasn't even a precedent set on the street with anything similar. "I was lucky that Build Team were able to deal with

Below: Andrew chose dark kitchen cabinets in a grey/blue hue, which at the time he thought risky, but the result is especially striking

OVERIN & WARNER FILE

NAMES Andrew Overin & Chris Warner

OCCUPATIONS Head of fundraising & theatre education consultant

LOCATION South east London

TYPE OF PROJECT Renovation, extension & loft conversion

STYLE Victorian terrace

CONSTRUCTION METHOD Timber & brick

PROPERTY COST £320,000

BOUGHT 2013

HOUSE SIZE 121m²

PROJECT COST £108,754

PROJECT COST PER M² £899

TOTAL COST £428,754

BUILDING WORK COMMENCED February 2015

BUILDING WORK TOOK 20 weeks

CURRENT VALUE £640,000

"I thought this house had real promise and I was trying to find a bargain"



WE LEARNED...

THE LONDON PROPERTY

MARKET is competitive, which makes it difficult to find a house, especially if you're on a tight budget. Being open to doing at least some work yourself to bring a building up to scratch could work in your favour. Getting hands-on can be really rewarding and cost-saving, too.

SOURCING PRODUCTS ONLINE

will help to keep costs down; I found a lot of our appliances via online manufacturers. Hone your negotiating skills when it comes to specifying – you could save a lot of money by the end of your scheme.

WHEN NARROWING DOWN

POTENTIAL BUILDERS, visit finished projects that have been completed by your shortlist of contractors before choosing a company to work with. Once you do pick a firm, always be as clear as possible with instructions – we found showing them pictures and drawings of what we wanted really helped.

GET EVERYTHING DONE at the same time. I knew I wanted to convert the loft and extend at the back, but was worried about it being too expensive to do in one go. I decided to go for it as I lived off site at the time. Looking back, I can't imagine working on the kitchen and then converting the loft further down the line – it would have been chaos.

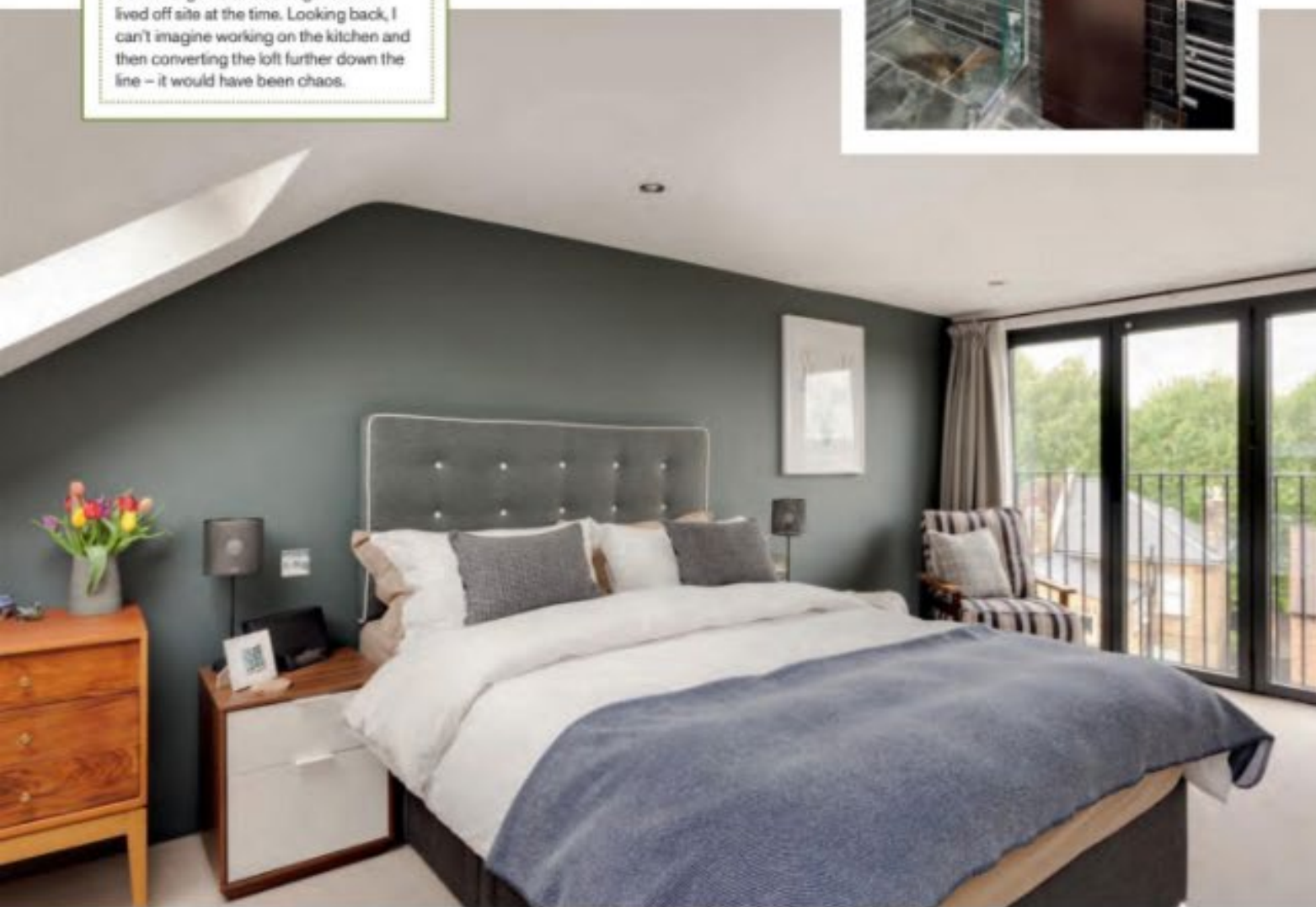
that aspect of the process for me, which was actually one of the main things that appealed to me about working with them," he says. In any case, the wraparound extension and loft conversion came under the property's permitted development rights.

On the up

The loft was to be transformed into a bedroom and ensuite, but Andrew hadn't realised how much floor-to-ceiling height would be lost after insulation was added. With this in mind, one of his top priorities was to maximise every inch of space, so he managed to convince Build Team that having a long wetroom, rather than an L-shaped bedroom with a larger ensuite, would work better.

This means that the master suite is a regular rectangular shape with no awkward corners; while the ensuite features a walk-in shower and WC. "I'm only 5'9, so

Right: A small master ensuite has been created that does not take away too much floor space from the main bedroom and features a compact walk-in shower. Below: Rooflights work alongside the bifolds to allow light to flood into the loft room



I'm fine with it, but anybody over 6' tall might end up knocking their head on the sloping ceiling," he says.

Copious amounts of light filter into the top storey through floor-to-ceiling bifolds on one side and rooflights opposite. "I wanted to replicate the same look as the doors in the kitchen. The scheme has worked out perfectly; I love how the evening sun pours into the bedroom," says Andrew. He chose to keep wooden sash windows throughout the rest of the property to achieve a uniform finish.

Andrew is currently studying interior design and has been able to put those skills to good use, but it was his negotiating and DIY prowess that helped to save money. "I wanted to have two sets of cupboards under the eaves, but my budget only allowed for one," he says. "So I persuaded the team to install the cupboards, but leave the doors off so that I could fit them myself and in turn save some extra pennies." In fact, his tight rein on finances saw the entire project become a sort of custom-finish job. While he used local tradesmen to fit the kitchen units, tile the ensuite and install the plumbing, he took on all the decorating and more, including painting, laying the wooden floor and completing carpentry.

Communication is key

Andrew found that one of the main challenges when you have such a clear vision for a property remodel is that not everyone else involved necessarily has the same perspective. "People can't read your mind; even if you think something is obvious, you could end up coming back two days later to find it's been done completely differently to what you expected." Andrew soon realised he had to be extremely clear and found that by drawing where he wanted things to be placed on the walls, he made sure that there was no doubt about what he was trying to achieve. But it was a challenge trying to keep on top of this and working full time. "The great thing about using a company like Build Team is that if I did have any issues with the labourers, I could tell the project manager and they would fix it,

so I didn't need to get my hands dirty."

When the electrician asked Andrew where he wanted the lights placed, rather handily, he had just completed the lighting section on his interior design course, so was able to draw up a plan that would work effectively. Recessed fittings were placed specifically to brighten the edges of the kitchen worktops. "When I came back to check on the project a



couple of days later, I found my plan stuck on the wall for the team to follow; their lighting designer hadn't made any changes to it," he says.

Looking forward

While the property is located on a relatively quiet street in south east London, there can be some residual traffic noise. But since the works have been carried out, Andrew and Chris get to enjoy peace

EXTENDING INTO THE ATTIC

A loft conversion is an internal change that should not require planning permission, as long as it doesn't alter the appearance of the roof or extend past the existing roofline. However, people living in designated areas will require consent. When extending, there is a volume allowance of 40m³ additional roof space for terraced houses and 50m³ for detached properties. Before work starts it's best to determine how much headroom you'll be left with after incorporating stairs and insulation. Bear in mind that you will be losing storage space, too, so you may need to accommodate for this elsewhere. Rooflights are a popular glazing option that suits the sloping ceiling, but ensuring that your windows don't overlook any other houses is a must. Dormer windows are a popular alternative and can help increase headroom.

and quiet in both new zones. "The extension protrudes into the garden, so it has no neighbouring walls, but I still feel cut off from the hustle and bustle of London," says Andrew. He thoroughly enjoyed working on this renovation, so much so that he believes he'll get itchy feet and want to start another project in a few years' time. "But for now I'm looking forward to relaxing in my new home and to spend some time gardening," he says.

Compact units in the main bathroom allow space for both a bathtub and a standalone shower



closer look

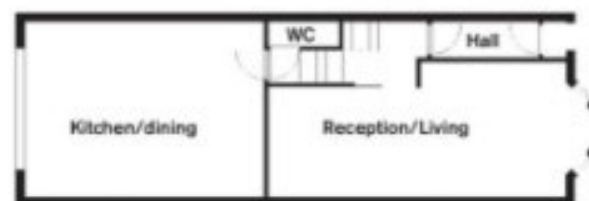
Extending into the side return...

Making use of the area between your house and its boundary wall is a no-brainer when it comes to maximising living space in terraced and semi-detached homes, but it needs careful planning to be a success. Making sure the zone benefits from natural light is a must, which is why so many extensions like this feature overhead glazing. Andrew has included three rooflights that ensure the side return and adjacent kitchen zone are filled with lots of sunshine. Another common feature is raised ceiling heights, which also features in this project to allow a suitable angle for the Velux windows.



Overhead windows

Floor plans



Ground floor



First floor



Second floor

Build It
HOME DESIGNER

House plans re-created using
Build It 3D Home Designer software.
www.buildit.co.uk/3dsoftware

£ TOTAL BUILD COST BREAKDOWN

Elements	Cost m ²	Cost %	Total cost
Preliminary works	£50	6%	£6,100
Demolition strip down & groundworks	£61	7%	£7,400
Structural works	£54	6%	£6,500
Windows & cladding	£79	9%	£9,550
Steel & structural work	£80	9%	£9,680
Side return shell core	£100	11%	£12,170
Side extension roof	£77	9%	£9,275
Internal walls	£29	3%	£3,500
Electrics	£70	8%	£8,500
Carpentry	£41	5%	£4,950
Kitchen & installation	£74	8%	£8,992
Flooring	£6	< 1%	£793
Plumbing & heating	£21	2%	£2,500
Radiators	£5	< 1%	£600
Drainage	£25	3%	£3,000
Ensuite	£25	3%	£3,000
Ensuite bathroom fittings	£8	< 1%	£1,000
Downstairs WC	£30	3%	£3,600
Decking	£14	2%	£1,650
Fees	£50	6%	£5,994
Grand total			£108,754

Useful contacts

MAIN CONTRACTOR, WINDOWS & DOORS **Build Team** 020 7495 6561 www.buildteam.com ROOFLIGHTS **Velux** 01 592 778225 www.velux.co.uk KITCHEN **The Shaker Kitchen Company** 0333 444 5666 www.theshakerkitchen.co TILES **Tons of Tiles** 01752 785623 www.tonsof tiles.co.uk RADIATORS **Cast Iron Radiators** 01 723 321000 www.castironradiators.ltd.uk FLOORING **Wood N Beyond** 020 3869 0900 www.woodandbeyond.com BATHROOM **Victorian Plumbing** 0345 882 2878 www.victorianplumbing.co.uk **Soak.com** 0333 004 6333 www.soak.com BATHROOM **Bathroom Takeaway** 0333 305 8200 www.bathroomtakeaway.co.uk