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CASE STUDY

STUNNING SIDE-RETURN EXTENSION

A single-storey addition has allowed Mel and Alex Walker to expand their terraced home >

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LINKED ZONES
Large bi-fold doors from Reynaers connect the garden with the bright new kitchen-diner. The floor tiles, from Topps Tiles, were chosen to create a seamless link with the flagstone patio outside



BEFORE

ORIGINAL EXTERIOR

Above Mel and Alex had a generous side return but had no wall separating their garden from the neighbour's. A brick wall was built and left exposed internally

BRIGHT SPACE

Right Natural light streams in through bi-fold doors and Velux windows. The task lights over the breakfast bar were a gift; try Skinflint Design for similar



ROOM TO READ

Left The kitchen-diner has a corner where the family can sit and relax on armchairs from Swoon. The bespoke shelves have been made from reclaimed scaffold boards then set against the backdrop of the newly built brick wall

THE OWNERS

Alex Walker, a filmmaker, and wife Mel, a fashion designer, live here with their six-month-old son, Otis (pictured with Mel)

THE PROPERTY

A three-bedroom Edwardian terraced house in Peckham

MEL LOVES

Travelling Summer barbecues
Alex's film *Fossil*
Oxfordshire
Red wine
Roast dinners
Entertaining

TOTAL PROJECT COST

£95,720

Mel and Alex knew that this three-bedroom house in south-east London had bags of potential when they bought it in 2012. They weren't set on a particular location, but Alex's sister had moved to Peckham the year before, so they got to know the area well. 'We were originally looking a bit further away,' says Alex. 'We tried to buy a house that was much more expensive than this, but we were beaten to it by somebody else, which was lucky, as it was much smaller than what we have now.' Although the Edwardian terrace was still at the top end of their budget, they felt it was worth it. They put in an offer in the September, spending their first New Year here in 2013.

While the couple couldn't afford to start work on the house immediately, they realised the generous side return would present them with a promising opportunity to extend out, transforming the narrow kitchen into a space perfect for hosting family and friends. 'The kitchen was long and thin, and it didn't have that much light,' explains Mel. 'We'd always wanted to open it up because we enjoy having people

round and entertaining, so it was important for us to have more room.' Alex sought help for the project from an architect who worked in the studio below his office in east London. 'I invited him to come and look at the flat,' says Alex. 'He was the one that suggested we include a utility room with WC and shower room.' The plans also included a dining area next to the kitchen and, although the couple had originally thought they would keep the extension roof flat, he persuaded them to have it pitched; that way they could incorporate the Velux windows, which, together with the bi-fold doors, would bring in copious amounts of light.

Mel and Alex used their architect's plans, and looked online for someone to construct the extension, receiving several quotes. 'We met with Build Team and clicked with them straight away,' says Alex. 'During the project they were the ones thinking ahead, and they'd be like, "Right guys, we need to know when you're getting the radiators in". They do offer an architectural service, but we were happy with what we had worked on with the original architect, so they didn't change the plans.' >



COOKING AREA

Left The couple decided to go for durable natural stone worktops from Stone Building. The Falcon range cooker was given to them as a gift by a close friend, and became the starting point for the Magnet kitchen that was built around it

OPEN-PLAN DESIGN

Below The breakfast bar separates the kitchen from the rest of the extension, but keeps the space sociable. The texture and colour of the exposed brick contrasts with the clean white lines of the rest of the scheme

Mel found out that she was pregnant just as work got underway – and Otis arrived just after the project had finished. ‘It was all perfect timing, really,’ she says. ‘We bought the house as we were organising our wedding and managed to get planning permission then, but we decided to wait before making any changes.’ The planning process went smoothly; the couple extended out by 8 metres and 2.5 metres to the side, which wasn’t contentious.

Mel and Alex lived upstairs during the works. ‘It was hectic towards the end. However, the great thing about it was we could answer the builders’ questions quickly and see everything progress,’ says Alex. Living on site also meant that when issues cropped up, such as a problem with the drains, they could sit down with the team to discuss it. ‘Our house is the hub for the whole street and all the pipes came together at a junction in the middle of the kitchen,’ explains Alex. ‘We needed to shift this junction outside the new extension. In order to do that, we had to place huge steels over each of their pipes so they wouldn’t get crushed. This set our schedule back by a month.’

It also added a couple of thousand pounds to the couple’s budget, but they managed to claw back some money with the help of generous family members and friends. ‘We’ve been given a lot of things, such as the range cooker and Liebherr fridge; they’re practically new,’ says Alex. ‘The kitchen was planned around them.’

Mel initially needed persuading that the space should include a breakfast bar. After she agreed, she did insist on having a stone worktop. ‘Alex initially asked for wood, but I wanted something more durable,’ she says. ‘We went for a composite stone made from offcuts, so the splashback is slightly different to the breakfast bar and the other work surface, which brought the cost down.’

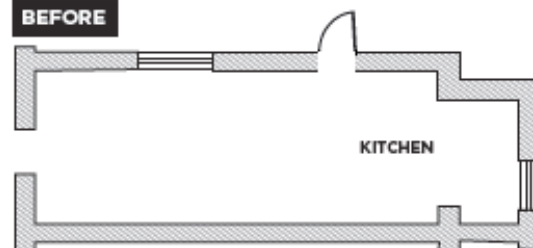
The space also features a newly built exposed brick wall, which helps unify the minimalist kitchen and rustic influences. ‘It’s one of my favourite things because I think it contrasts well with the cleanliness of the rest of the kitchen,’ adds Mel. ‘I’m also really glad that we went for these bi-fold doors, which can be completely pulled back in the summer to create a great flow with the garden.’

Since the Walkers moved in, several friends have also relocated to the area. ‘We’ve got two sets of cousins down here, and three other sets of friends,’ says Mel. ‘It’s got a real community vibe, which we love, and I can see us living here for a really long time.’ ●

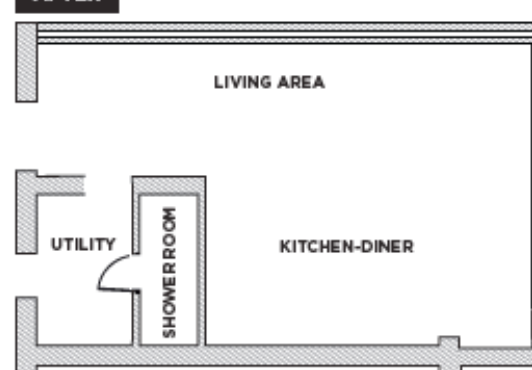
FLOORPLAN

Alex and Mel commissioned an architect to design plans, which included extending out by 8m and 2.5m to the side, adding a utility, WC and shower room, plus a new dining area and changing the flat roof for a pitched version

BEFORE



AFTER



FOR STOCKIST INFORMATION SEE PAGE 159



THE COSTS AND CONTACTS

Building work, bi-fold doors and windows
£75,000

Kitchen units
£11,000

Kitchen worktops
£3,000

Carpentry
£3,000

Flooring
£2,000

Paint and decorating
£1,000

Appliances
£600

Lighting
£120

TOTAL
£95,720

Design and Construction
Build Team, 020 7495
6561, buildteam.com
Kitchen Magnet
Worktops Stone Building
Bi-fold doors Reynaers