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Part of the family

New life was welcomed during a project that transformed a terraced home from top to bottom



WORDS **REBECCA FOSTER**
PHOTOGRAPHY **FRENCH + TYE**

IN BRIEF

LOCATION Walthamstow,
east London

TYPE OF PROPERTY Extended
and renovated terraced house

BEDROOMS 4

PROJECT STARTED March 2018

PROJECT FINISHED

December 2020

SIZE 170sqm

PROPERTY COST £610,000

BUILD COST £450,000



The charred timber cladding on the extension contrasts with the original London stock brickwork

LEFT Jane relaxes in the garden. When the back of the house was demolished, the bricks were saved, cleaned and used to build the wall to the right



ABOVE To complement the cross-laminated timber walls, the couple chose a textural mix of finishes for the kitchen, including granite worksurfaces, concrete floors and wall panels, plus porcelain wall tiles



By the time they'd agreed on a design for extending their new home, Mark and Jane Dolan had already been living in the house for almost two years. During this time they got married and their daughter Amélie was born. And this was just the start of their home-improvement adventure.

TV producer Mark, 53, and Jane, 46, a marketing consultant and university lecturer, had sold their flat in Kensal Green, north-west London, as they planned to start a family and needed a bigger home. When friends moved east to Walthamstow, Mark and Jane realised their budget would stretch further if they did the same.

The couple bought a three-bedroom house with a good-sized garden in the middle of a terrace. Though the rooms were draughty and the décor dated, they were »



At the centre of the house a void reaches up from the ground floor to the first floor, providing a view from the kitchen to the landing above

GD HOMES EAST LONDON

A concrete plinth and wall panel runs along one side of the living room. Black timber cladding helps to disguise the TV screen





The new staircase was made by Mark's brother John using birch plywood to contrast with the bare brick wall

When friends moved to Walthamstow, the couple realised their budget would stretch further if they did the same

prepared to face the work ahead. 'It was always in our minds that we might end up doing a project,' says Mark.

The couple contemplated having a side-return extension, but a more ambitious scheme emerged during their discussions with architect Tom Gresford. 'The plans evolved into rebuilding the back of the house,' says Tom. 'Mark and Jane were open-minded about everything put forward.'

Tom proposed a two-storey extension built from cross-laminated timber (CLT), with a kitchen-diner on the ground floor, plus a guest room and bathroom above. A roof extension with dormer window, also made of CLT, would create space for a bedroom with an ensuite bathroom in the loft. 'It was a very exciting prospect, and we loved the idea of using sustainable timber,' says Jane. But then there was a pause in proceedings.

'Everything with CLT has to be carefully modelled,' Mark explains. 'Jane and I also made »



‘It was a very exciting prospect, and we loved the idea of using sustainable timber’

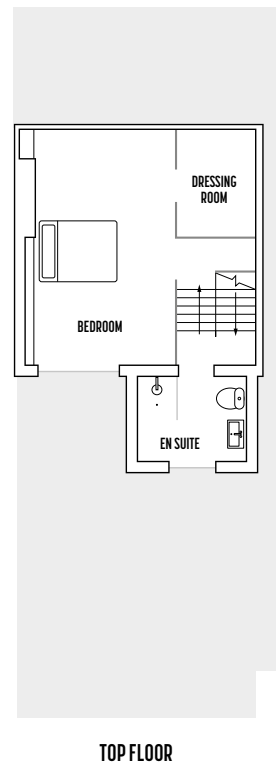
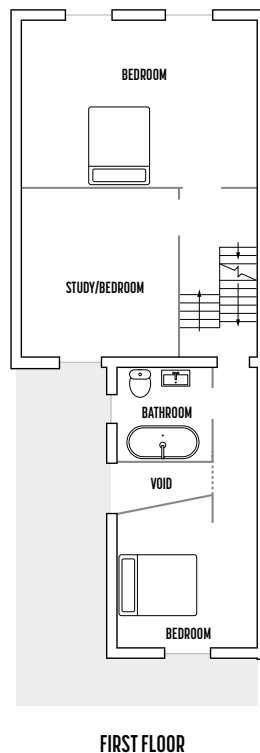
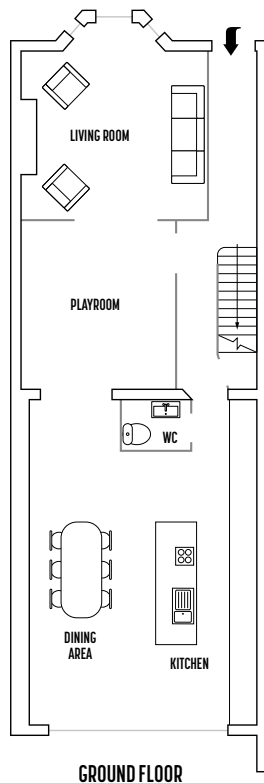
quite a few revisions throughout the design process to keep things within our budget.’

One of Tom’s challenges was to keep the new boundary wall shared with a neighbouring house as low as possible, while maximising the space in the extension. ‘We gained the generous ceiling height in the kitchen by lowering the floor,’ he explains. A steeply pitched CLT roof also helped.

After gaining planning consent, things really got going when Mark and Jane moved into a rented house while the work began. The project team was joined by Mark’s brother John, who became the main contractor. Then Amélie, five, became a big sister when baby Sonny arrived two months into the build.

The flat-pack CLT structure was constructed in a factory in Austria, but on the day it was due to arrive on site there was a setback. ‘The lorry driver went to another street with the same name, in Yorkshire,’ recalls Mark. >>

FLOOR PLANS



The CLT structure has also been left exposed in the family bathroom. Traditional cast iron radiators heat the upper floors

LEFT A first-floor guest bedroom at the back of the house doubles as Jane's office





'We'd arranged for our road to be closed for five days while the sheets of CLT were unloaded and erected, but the error left only four days. The pressure was on.'

Watching the panels being manoeuvred into place was a high point for the couple. 'It was pretty epic to see a crane lift them across our house and lower them down at the back ready to be bolted together,' says Jane.

John took the lead on the renovation work. 'He was my eyes and ears, especially when our rental agreement was cut short and we had to move to Newcastle for three months to live with Jane's parents,' says Mark. 'John helped us push the design limits further and is responsible for some of the bolder elements including the concrete walls,' Jane adds.

Watching the CLT panels being manoeuvred into place was a high point for the couple. 'It was pretty epic,' says Jane

Some internal walls were knocked down to reconfigure the layout, and the house was stripped back to bare brick so it could be re-insulated, re-plumbed and re-wired.

The family moved back in before everything was finished. 'There was another pause while we raised more



LEFT In the couple's new top-floor bedroom the ceiling joists have been left exposed for maximum head height

BELOW Pocket doors, such as the one at the bottom of the staircase, have been incorporated throughout the house to save space



funds for the remaining work,' says Jane. 'It made the process very long and drawn-out. A lot had already been done, but the finishing line still felt a long way off.'

Mark and Jane had to make the best of it. Their new kitchen wasn't fitted, so Mark tracked down secondhand freestanding units as a temporary measure. Though the wait was frustrating, they took the opportunity to fine-tune the layout and position of appliances so that when the proper kitchen was installed a year later they could be sure that it was perfect.

Though the work took longer than expected, the couple have no regrets. 'We held out for the best quality we could afford,' says Jane. 'Spending time on these decisions allowed us to stay true to our vision.' GD



Matt black fittings contrast with pale Iso tiles from Pentagon in Mark and Jane's en-suite bathroom

SUPPLIERS

PROJECT TEAM

Architect Gresford Architects
(gresfordarchitects.co.uk)

Structural engineer Structure Workshop
(structureworkshop.co.uk)

Main contractor John Dolan, Form Design and Build
(formdesignandbuild.co.uk)

Supply and installation of CLT extension
Konstrukt CLT (konstruktclt.com)

Additional construction work
Acme Construction
(acmeconstructionltd.co.uk)

Garden construction

Garden Dwarfs (07442 282865)

STRUCTURE

Windows Global Doors & Windows
(globaldoorsandwindows.com)

Shou sugi ban cladding Exterior Solutions
(exterior.supplies)

FIXTURES AND FITTINGS

Bespoke birch plywood and Valchromat kitchen
Simon Tipper, Tipper Joinery (tipperjoinery.co.uk)
Bathroom fittings Meirblack (meirblack.co.uk)

Bathroom tiles Pentagon (pentagontiles.com)

Sanitaryware Gilesgate Plumbing
(gilesgateplumbing.com)

Engineered wood flooring Reeve Wood
(reevewood.com)

Polished concrete floor Steysons
(steysonconcretefloors.co.uk)

FURNITURE AND ACCESSORIES

Kitchen chandelier light bulbs Tala (tala.co.uk)

Kitchen chandelier cables Muuto (muuto.com)

Living room sofa Ikea (ikea.com)