

# 'We replaced our conservatory with a bold extension'

Julie and Howard Taylor revamped their existing kitchen and built a new family room to create a sociable space

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## BEFORE



### KITCHEN SPACE

Left Julie and Howard liked the original layout, so kept it as it was. The pendant is the Frisbi light by Flos

### ORIGINAL DESIGN

Above The traditional conservatory was only used part of the year, so the family wanted a more practical space

### MODERN ADDITION

Right The cantilevered roof of the extension, clad in western red cedar, sits flush with the kitchen roofline



### UPDATED UNITS

Left The cabinets are painted in Farrow & Ball's Hardwick White, with accents in Dark Lead by Little Greene. Leaving some of the beech drawer fronts unpainted has created a design feature. The resin flooring is from Chasing Space and the cooker is by Britannia

## FACT FILE

### THE OWNERS

Julie Taylor (pictured far right), a paramedic, and her husband Howard, a pilot, live here with their two sons, Ben, 16, and Matt, 15

### THE PROPERTY

A five-bedroom 1930s detached house with a family-room extension

### THE LOCATION

East Barnet, London

### WHAT THEY SPENT

The couple's kitchen and extension project cost around £50,000

When we moved into our house in 2004, it had already been extended at the rear by previous owners to create a spacious kitchen-diner,' explains Julie. 'This was connected to a large conservatory, which looked good but was only usable for four months of the year as it was too cold in winter and too hot in summer. It wasn't functioning as we wanted it to, so was essentially dead space.'

'We decided to replace the conservatory with a more modern extension housing a family room, and to update the existing kitchen-diner. Howard and I both wanted a contemporary look throughout the space.'

The couple didn't need much more additional room than the 20-square-metre

conservatory previously offered, so focused on making the existing areas more practical for the family to use year-round.

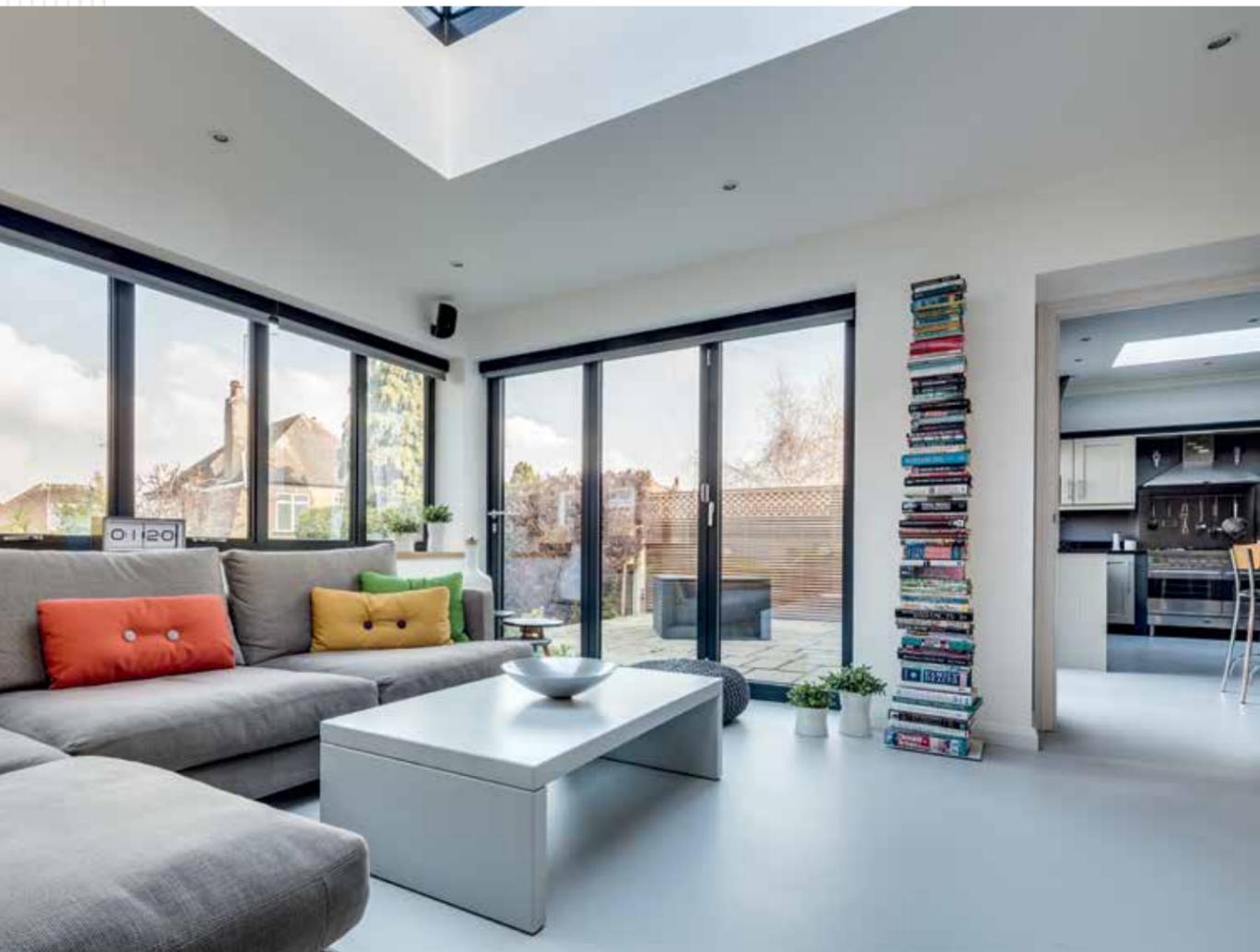
Howard has a keen interest in design and architecture, and created a mood board to show what they wanted. 'We were very specific, so the architects had a fairly narrow brief,' he says. 'We'd already decided on a metal roof, Anthracite windows and western red cedar cladding, because we loved how they looked, so we had those three elements that we knew we were going to use.'

They approached three architects before hiring Tim Palmer from Turquoise Noise, who suggested several unique touches to the design. 'He introduced us to the idea of a cantilevered overhang on the roof. It's

not something we would have thought of, but that's what you pay an architect for – to add those bits of interest,' says Howard.

As it was greater in height than the conservatory that it replaced, the extension fell outside of permitted development, so the couple had to apply for planning permission. To their delight, the application went straight through. 'We were a bit concerned that there would be an issue, as the design looks so different from more traditional extensions,' explains Julie. 'The house was built in 1928 and so we made a conscious decision for it not to blend in – that's the whole point of the design.'

They also needed to submit plans for Building Control approval. 'Conservatories



are often considered temporary structures that, separated from the main house with external doors, don't have to comply with the building regulations,' says Julie. 'However, we wanted the new space to be completely integrated with the rest of the house; although it was the more expensive option, we knew that an extension would add more value.'

The build began on site in April 2013, with Julie and Howard acting as project managers and hiring local firm Touchwood Build to carry out the work.

'The builders were fantastic,' says Julie. 'They came recommended to us and completely got what we wanted to do.'

'We chose them because we could tell how much the details mattered to them; for example, the western red cedar cladding is an integral part of the design, so it had to complement the render perfectly,' she

**'We wanted the new space to be completely integrated with the rest of the house'**

adds. 'The team had a really good eye for that sort of thing, which has paid off in the end as we got the sleek finish we wanted.'

Not every detail was achieved so smoothly, however. When the two large matching roof lanterns that had been ordered for the kitchen and family room arrived,

the couple faced a challenge to bring them on site. 'We were building the side wall of the extension the day they were delivered and realised that the roof lanterns didn't fit down

the side access path,' recalls Howard. 'We had to remove two rows of breezeblocks to allow just enough space to take the glass to the back of the house.'

Following a visit from the building inspector, the builders also had to dig the foundations a metre deeper due to a line of trees alongside the property.

**FAMILY ROOM**

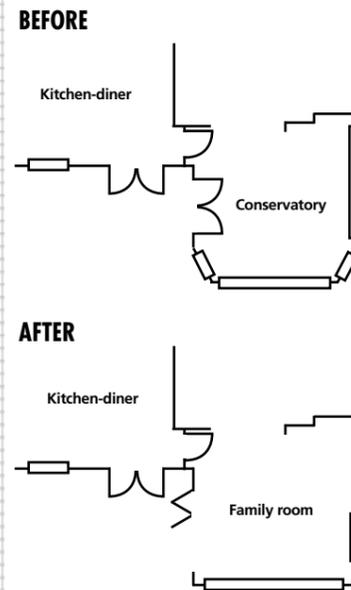
**Above** The new space opens to the garden through bi-fold doors by Schüco. Camerich supplied the corner sofa, and the colourful cushions are from Hay. A coffee table from Geoffrey Drayton adds an industrial feel to the room

Glazing and foundation issues aside, the project was plain sailing, for which Julie and Howard credit the builders. 'They produced a schedule of works that meant that the extension came in on time and on budget,' says Julie. 'It also helped that we project-managed, as we could take decisions when they were necessary.'

With the build completed in August, the couple turned their attention to the interior design. They knew from the start that they wanted white resin flooring throughout the kitchen and extension to tie the rooms together, with underfloor heating beneath.

Instead of replacing the beech Shaker kitchen units, the couple painted them, as they had allocated most of their budget to the extension. In line with the modern theme, they went for varying shades of grey, which, set against the crisp white floor, sit perfectly with the family room.

**THE PLANS**



The kitchen-diner was extended by the former owners, and leads to the family room, which replaces the conservatory

**THE COSTS**

Building work	£29,300
Glazing (including roof lanterns)	£8,103
Cantilevered roof and kitchen roof	£6,992
Resin flooring	£4,026
Architects and professional fees	£3,595
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>£52,016</b>

**THE CONTACTS**

**Architect** Tim Palmer, Turquoise Noise, 01438 712958, turquoise.noise.com  
**Construction** Touchwood Build, 07532 140598, touchwoodbuild.co.uk  
**Roof suppliers** ABC Roofing, 020 8895 2055, abcroofingandguttering.com  
**Resin flooring** Chasing Space, 020 8265 2855, chasing.space.co.uk  
**Glazing** Schüco  
**Rooflights** Reflex

The new extension works well for the couple and their children, offering them the ideal place to relax. 'We love it so much that our living area has become the "forgotten room" and we're planning to redecorate in there next,' says Julie.

'We use the space all the time. It's that new family dynamic of having supper in the kitchen and then being able to spill out into the family area that really works for us.' 🏠



**Project notes**

Julie Taylor shares her top tips to help you with your own extension

**What I've learnt**

'It's really important to do as much planning and preparation as possible before you actually start the project. The more you plan, the quicker and easier the project will run. We created mood boards before we met with any architects, so that they would see exactly what look we were after. In addition, hiring people that you trust is vital - we had complete faith in the build team and they did an excellent job.'

**My key advice**

'You can save a lot of money by researching the various products on the market. We travelled to four or five different showrooms looking for the right windows. You can see lots of options at exhibitions such as the *Homebuilding & Renovating Show*, but you also need to take the time to visit the companies so that you can see everything on offer. We did a lot of footwork until we made our final decisions.'

**My best buy**

'This was probably the underfloor heating under the resin flooring. It helps to keep the whole space a lovely even temperature, so it was definitely worth going for.'

**My go-to stores**

'When it comes to interior design, we always get inspired when we look at Heal's, Made.com and Swiveluk.'

**My recommended book**

'George Clarke's *Home Bible* has some great practical information and offers advice on all aspects of building projects.'

**My favourite spot**

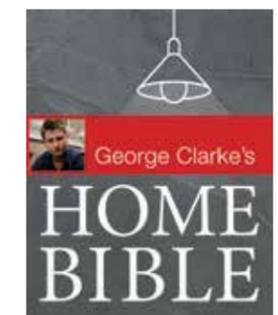
'There are actually two. The first is at the bottom of the garden, looking back at the extension; we just love how it has enhanced the house. The other is simply sitting on the sofa, relaxing and enjoying this fantastic, practical family space.' 🏠



**Above** The Taylors spotted a similar sign outside a café in central London, so they decided to re-create it in their kitchen



**Right** Slimline rooflights from Reflex give the family space a sunroom feel



**Left** The couple found that George Clarke's *Home Bible* (£20.40, W&N) offered a wealth of practical advice