



EXTREME Transformation 2

Weatherboarding in a tranquil blue gives the house a New England feel



BEFORE

The bungalow was built in 1900 and had been extended



Adding a timber-framed first floor has made space for three new bedrooms and two bathrooms upstairs

AFTER

'Our bungalow became a house'

Clare and Jim Mansell transformed their bland West Sussex property into a large, New England-style home

After years spent living in military accommodation, both in the UK and abroad, Clare and Jim Mansell decided to put down roots and create a family home for themselves and their son, Theo, now three. The property they bought – a squat, 100-year-old bungalow in West Sussex – couldn't have been less appealing at first glance, but its location near Clare's family, and its lovely views across Chichester harbour to the Isle of Wight, were enough to convince them and they moved in straightaway. 'We called it "the ugly bungalow"', but we knew we could turn it into something far more exciting,' says Clare, who is a home and lifestyle blogger on her site Maybush Studio (maybushstudio.com). **DEMOLITION PLANS** 'My family lives in the next village and this is an area that Jim and I both know very well, so we never really considered buying anywhere else,' Clare explains. 'Originally, we applied to demolish it and build a new house on the site, but when we looked closely at the costs, we decided that revamping what was already here was a better option. However, the loft was too cramped to

convert it and the garden isn't huge, so building upwards was the obvious solution.'

The couple approached Nigel Lewis, whose Hampshire-based company, Space & Style Home Design (023 9252 5100; spaceandstyle.co.uk), specialises in extension and remodelling projects. 'When Nigel visited us, he was so enthusiastic about the house that we knew immediately we'd found the right person for the job,' says Clare. **COMPLETE TRANSFORMATION** Nigel's plan was to transform the exterior of the existing bungalow, which had no redeeming features worth saving. The entire roof would be removed and the building extended upwards to form a timber-framed, first-floor structure with pretty dormer windows. A new veranda would be built to shelter the front door, and several windows relocated and replaced. To tie the old and new together, and to cover up the original brickwork, the whole house would be covered with pale render and coloured weatherboarding. Internally, the new first floor was designed to contain a main bedroom with en-suite bathroom and walk-in wardrobe, a bedroom for →



■ **What was the high point of the project?**

'Everything changed so quickly – we were able to enjoy a new milestone each week.'

■ **Any low points?**

'We were often trapped in the kitchen trying to entertain Theo while builders worked around us.'

■ **What was the project saviour?**

'Using composite slate roof tiles instead of the old ones – it's made such a difference.'



By knocking the old main bedroom and living room into one, the Mansells have created a large living space with a contemporary feel



A new dormer window provides a handy spot to sit and enjoy the view



'We called it the "ugly bungalow", but we knew we could turn it into something far more exciting'

Theo, a guest bedroom and a main bathroom. Downstairs, a wall between the old main bedroom and living room would be removed to create a large space, with a study and guest bedroom with en-suite bathroom on the opposite side of the hallway. **GETTING THE WORK DONE** The couple chose a family team of builders recommended by Clare's father and sister to carry out the work, which started in March 2014. Scaffolding was erected around the building, then wrapped in plastic to form a weatherproof shell. 'There was no way that we could have carried on living full time in the house once the roof and ceilings came down, but our budget was really tight, so we decided against renting another property,' says Jim. 'Instead, once the planning application had been approved, we bought an insulated garden cabin to use as a bedroom. This meant that we could remain on site throughout the whole of the five-month project.' Fortunately, the existing foundations and brick walls required no reinforcement, and once the timber-framed first floor and roof structure had been constructed – after just two weeks – the family could

already get a sense of the size and layout of their new home and start making decisions about the decorating with the help of Clare's Pinterest boards. The property is situated within an Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty, so all materials needed to be approved by Chichester Council, including the low-maintenance, fibre-cement weatherboarding, which is finished in a blue-grey shade and attached horizontally to the exterior of the building. 'We also replaced the old concrete roof tiles with composite slate ones,' explains Jim. 'It makes an enormous difference to the overall look.' **SOUND INVESTMENT** Clare and Jim paid £335,000 for the bungalow in 2009, and spent £170,000 extending and fitting out the property. It is now valued at around £850,000. 'Building upwards allowed us to almost double our living space, so our advice would be not to overlook bungalows just because they're not attractive – they've got masses of potential,' says Clare. 'We've made a great investment – but beyond that, we've created a family home that we simply couldn't have afforded to buy in its finished state, and in an area that we love.'

▲ Engineered-oak flooring teamed with wood furniture gives the new living area a natural, rustic look, while the contemporary wood-burning stove makes a great feature