

Family

PLANNING

Trevor and Natalie Wilkins remodelled their 1950s split-level bungalow and created enough space for a family.

STORY: ELEANOR WILDE PICTURES: STEVE TAYLOR



People often described our house as looking like a garage or a glorified shed because it was so squat and boxy,” recalls Trevor Wilkins. “Most of the accommodation was on the ground floor, with just one bedroom upstairs, and it was in dire need of modernisation – which was the main reason we bought it.”

Trevor and his wife, Natalie, had previously been living in a 200-year-old cottage in a Hampshire village, but wanted to find a property which would offer more open-plan living. “We fancied a new challenge and we certainly found that with this house,” laughs Trevor.

The couple bought the quirky 1950s property in 2005, married in 2006 and lived in the house until 2008 before contacting several designers and architects to discuss upgrading and enlarging the accommodation.

Parts of the original building were roofed with industrial corrugated sheeting, and large amounts of poor quality glazing meant that the house was well lit but also extremely cold. A garage had been added in the 1980s, with a wasted pocket of outdoor space left between this and the kitchen.

“The main bathroom was downstairs, and it was always our plan to extend upwards to add more bedrooms and a bathroom upstairs,” says Natalie. “We needed someone to pull all our ideas together and come up with a far more contemporary design, but we had no definite thoughts about how the outside of the house should look.”

Meeting with local building designer Nigel Lewis proved to be a genuinely life-changing experience for the couple. Until this point Trevor and Natalie had been convinced that they were not going to have children in the foreseeable future, but Nigel’s questions about their lifestyle and plans made them think more deeply on the subject.

“To be honest we blame Nigel for what happened next,” jokes Trevor. “He asked if we were sure we wouldn’t be having children, which got us talking, and three years later we have our two boys.”



New look

The original 1950s house was predominantly single-storey and had been likened to a garage because of its squat and boxy shape.

Totally transformed

Remodelling the split-level bungalow has created a contemporary family home. Extending upwards, and introducing glazing and cedar cladding transformed the external appearance of the property. The gardens have been professionally landscaped and made into modern, child-friendly outdoor spaces.

“We fancied a new challenge and we certainly found that with this house.”



Striking wallpaper

Feature wallpaper was chosen for the raised sitting room, which opens onto a rear decked area through folding/sliding glass doors. A Sonos music system has been installed throughout the house.



Made to measure staircase

The new staircase was made to Trevor and Natalie's design with toughened glass risers. Built-in storage and book shelves create a useful reading area on the landing. Internal doors are oak veneered.

The Wilkins admired some of the modern designs which Nigel had produced for other clients, and commissioned him to remodel their house with a contemporary first floor extension under new mono-pitch roofs – which almost doubles the existing floor area.

The design involved removing the roof from the chalet bungalow and building a complete first floor in timber framing, fabricated on site, before re-pitching new roofs with vaulted ceilings to shallow angles.

“Other than adding an entrance extension, I worked with the existing footprint and extended by going upwards – adding multiple slopes of shallow mono-pitched roofs, with Velux windows to throw light deep into the house,” Nigel Lewis explains.

Three bedrooms are located on the first floor, built up above the flat-roofed areas, with an en suite to the principal bedroom and a Jack-and-Jill-style family bathroom for bedrooms two and three. The ground floor was opened up and the bathroom converted into a study, with a new

ground floor WC accessed from the hallway. Extending into the void behind the garage has formed a utility room, and internal walls were removed to combine the former study and L-shaped kitchen into one practical 5m x 6m kitchen/dining space.

“Reading 2D floorplans was fairly easy for me because I have a building background,” says Trevor, “but Natalie found it more difficult to envisage how the exterior would look, so Nigel produced a 3D model which really helped.”

Externally the house is barely recognisable, thanks to the new roof formation, powder-coated aluminium glazing and cedar cladding, but despite the radical design (and the fact that the property stands in a road of primarily traditional houses) obtaining planning permission for the extension proved relatively straightforward and was granted in early 2009. The project was put on hold, however, because by then Natalie was pregnant with the couple's first child.

“Discovering that Natalie was expecting a baby didn't dramatically alter our plans for the house, although we did



make one or two tweaks to the design,” says Trevor. “Joe was due in the August, and I tried to convince Natalie that we should finish the building work before he arrived, but in the end we waited until he was born and then moved into a rented house a couple of miles up the road.”

Trevor’s own building company was too busy to undertake the project so Nigel Lewis introduced a number of local builders to the couple, who also sourced their own quotes independently. They chose to employ Martin Byrne, who had worked with Nigel before, and who began on site in March 2010.

“There were very few walls left standing and the house was totally gutted,” Natalie recalls. “We were hoping for everything to be finished in time for Joe’s first birthday, so we had a definite completion date to aim for, which dictated a six month build.”

Within 10 weeks the house had been gutted, the new timber frame built and everything was watertight. The entire first floor was designed as an on-site fabricated timber





Extended kitchen

The kitchen was extended into a former study to create a spacious kitchen/dining room with white cabinets from In2 Kitchens, Corian worktops and soft grey Amtico flooring laid over underfloor heating, which extends throughout the ground floor.





“This was the largest build we’ve ever tackled.”

frame incorporating 200mm of wall insulation, with roofs supported internally on exposed glulam beams, which add interest to the vaulted ceilings. Concrete roof tiles were chosen which would be suitable for the 17 degree pitch, with 150mm of insulation.

“There’s no actual loft space but we have several storage areas, including a small mezzanine above the second bedroom and another above our en suite,” says Trevor. “We decided to de-clutter before we moved back in as we wanted to keep the spaces as simple and contemporary as possible.”

Aluminium windows were installed throughout, with glazed doors opening from Joe’s bedroom and the family bathroom onto Juliet balconies at the front. A new entrance porch was created to the side of the house, with hardwood steps leading to a solid contemporary door surrounded by panels of clear glazing. Glass makes up virtually the entire front façade, and folding/sliding glass doors from the sitting room open onto a newly formed deck to the rear.

“We liked the fact that the original house featured so much glass, but we also wanted the building to be as energy

efficient as possible which meant choosing high performance, argon-filled glazing,” says Trevor. “Fortunately we look onto open fields to the front and we aren’t overlooked at the rear, so privacy wasn’t an issue.”

Cedar boarding, finished with a clear matt woodstain to ensure that it retains its original rich golden colour, has been used to clad the exterior, while a slim cedar panel forms a detail on the glazed front façade which breaks up the expanse of aluminium framing.

Internally the entire house was re-plastered after walls and doors were repositioned, and a contemporary staircase with a glass balustrade and risers was fitted, together with a sleek new kitchen and bathrooms.

“This was the largest building project we’ve ever tackled for ourselves, and we felt quite drained by the end of it because it absorbed so much of our time, but it’s definitely given us the bug to do another project,” says Trevor, who is already contemplating a new build scheme for the future.

The family were able to move back into their remodelled home just in time for Joe’s first birthday party, as they had

Child’s play

The design of the house has been tailored for the Wilkins’ two children.

Remodel

Contacts

PROJECT

Designer Space and Style Home Design:
www.spaceandstyle.co.uk
Builder MJ Byrne Builders Ltd: www.mjbyrne.co.uk
Landscaping The Landscape Architect:
www.thelandscapearchitect.net

STRUCTURE

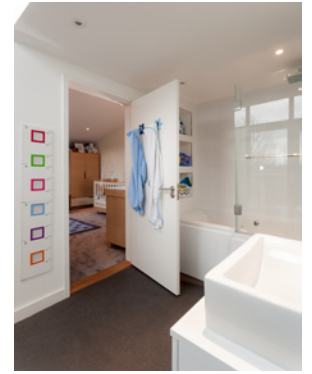
Aluminium doors and windows DWP Glazing
Systems Ltd: www.dwpglazing.co.uk
Cedar Naked Wood preservative
Dulux: www.dulux.com
Roof tiles Marley Eternit: www.marley.co.uk
Glulam beams Glulam Supplies Ltd:
www.glulambeams.co.uk

FIXTURES AND FITTINGS

Kitchen In2 Kitchens, Hampshire: 07710 856700
Worktops Corian: www.corian.co.uk
Kitchen flooring Amtico: www.amtico.com
Staircase Jubilee Joinery: 07970 687717
Music system Sonos: www.sonos.com
Media system Sound & Vision: 0800 292 2925
Glass balcony New Balcony Company:
www.newbalcony.com

The bottom line

Trevor and Natalie paid £239,000 for the one-bedroom property in 2005 and spent £170,000 extending and remodelling the 200 sq m house, which is currently valued at £495,000.



Hotel-style

The existing main bedroom was extended to create a six-metre-long hotel-style suite with built-in wardrobes.

planned, and Trevor and Natalie went on to have a second son, Eddie, who is now one.

“We feel that the layout works extremely well for a young family, and the kitchen is definitely the hub of the home,” says Trevor. “Two doors can be slid back into pockets which creates the perfect scooter track between the kitchen and the hall – an added bonus for the boys which we hadn’t really considered at the design stage!”

Home truths

What was the high point of the project?

Moving in and living in a house which we’d spent so long imagining was the real high point.

...and the low point?

We upset the neighbours with all the delivery lorries which came and went, as well as the noise.

Is there anything you would change?

Yes, Natalie would love a larger utility room, otherwise we are happy with what we’ve got.

Your biggest extravagance?

We love the staircase. We spent a lot of time amending the design and materials to ensure it tied all the surrounding elements together.

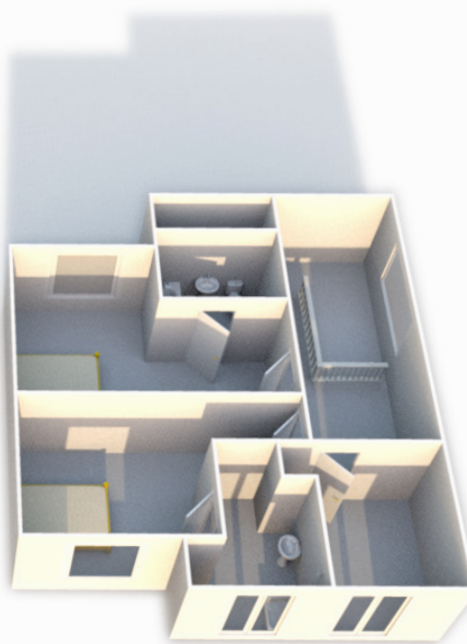
... and your best buy?

The walk-in shower in our en suite is open-ended with a single large sheet of glass as a screen. I can look up and out at the sky while taking a shower.

GROUND FLOOR



FIRST FLOOR



Floorplan

The existing 1950s split-level home had been extended a couple of times in the past, but the layout only provided one bedroom at first floor level, with a ground floor bathroom. The house has been extended upwards virtually doubling its size. The former bathroom is a study, with the old study incorporated into the new kitchen.