

new addition

Sophie and Mark Anderson have added a contemporary extension, creating the perfect open plan living space for their growing family

EXTENSION AND REMODEL | OXFORDSHIRE
OCT 09 - JAN 10 | SIZE: 155m² | HOUSE COST: £340,000
BUILD COST: £68,000 | VALUE: £420,000

Eight years ago, when Sophie and Mark Anderson first purchased their detached 1920s home in the market town of Wallingford, Oxfordshire, there was just the two of them. The couple, who are both hospital doctors, went on to have two sons – Finlay, now six, and Hamish, four – and when Sophie became pregnant with daughter Iris in 2009, they decided it was time to extend the ground floor to create a more practical living space for their growing family.

“We hardly used the separate dining room to the front of the house, and the children were always following me into the kitchen. We wanted a more sociable, open plan layout where we could all gather around the table and entertain friends,” explains Sophie. Steps leading down from rear French doors were also difficult for the children to negotiate, and there was a distinct lack of connection between the interiors and the garden.

“An internet search came up with three local architects, and we chose Allister Godfrey because his portfolio included several similar projects and we really liked his contemporary designs,” continues Sophie. ▶

Modern Extension

The white-rendered extension (constructed in blockwork) forms a striking contrast to the original 1920s red-brick house – although the brick plinth helps tie the two together visually. The large overhang of the flat roof gives protection to the folding sliding doors below, meaning they can be opened up even in wet weather

It's well worth hiring an architect... they come up with ideas you wouldn't even think of yourself

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Allister set to creating plans for a new addition which would fall within Permitted Development, meaning the couple wouldn't require planning permission. As well as extending out, the wall between the existing living and dining rooms would be taken down to open up the space. The result is a new ground floor layout where the kitchen, family and dining spaces are integrated. The new TV/family area, complete with comfy sofas and bookshelves, lies to one side. To the other is the kitchen, which has remained in the same position but now steps down into the new single storey dining extension, where

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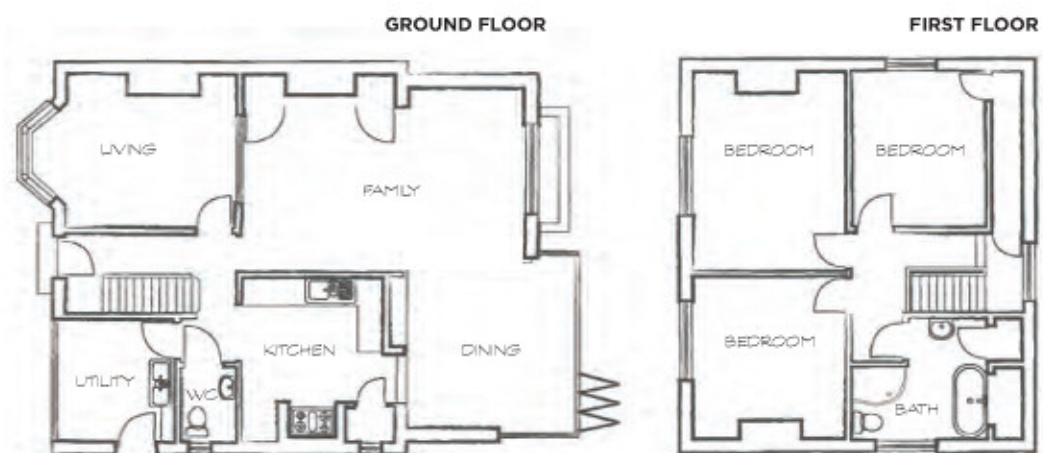
folding sliding glass doors in turn open on to an external south-facing deck.

"Upstairs was unchanged, so we were able to carry on living in the house during much of the project and only moved out for about four weeks when it got really messy," recalls Sophie. "Allister recommended a builder, who we decided to employ after getting a few quotes. He did everything for a fixed price, including the foundations, flat roofing and all the internal finishes."

The new extension was constructed with a brick plinth to tie in with the existing house, but the main walls have

Floorplans

The rendered extension creates two distinct areas within the three bedroom house — a new TV/family space, and a dining room which opens on to the deck through folding sliding doors. The new foundations were designed so that a first floor extension could be added above if required in the future.



Extending

Dining Area

A large rooflight, from M&S Aluminium, brings in natural light over the dining table — and provides an impressive feature at night, when the family and guests can quite literally dine beneath the stars. Folding sliding doors (from the same company) provide access to a large deck for alfresco dining in the summer



been finished externally in smooth, cream self-coloured render. Dark-grey aluminium windows and doors are complemented by an aluminium capping to the roof parapet, and a double-glazed rooflight has been set into the high ceiling directly above the table, bringing in natural light for colouring or painting during the day, while creating a sense of occasion when dining at night. Hardwood flooring in this area has also been laid in the same direction as the idigbo timber decking outside, creating a real feeling of connection between the two when the folding sliding doors are pushed open.

The entire project ran smoothly, although the skylight did need to be refitted at the end of the build when a leak was detected.

Most materials were sourced by architect Allister and the couple's builder. "But we kept our existing kitchen and moved the sink, which just meant buying a few new matching cupboards and extra granite worktops. The old utility room has also been given a complete makeover, and we changed the layout of the downstairs toilet too," Sophie explains.

"I was heavily pregnant and told the decorators they had to be finished before Iris was born. They worked over Christmas and into January — finishing on a Friday afternoon. That night I went into labour, so it was all timed to perfection." ■

Family Room

This extension and remodelling scheme has provided space for a more informal family/TV area, where Sophie and Mark can keep an eye on the children whilst they play. Large south-facing glazing means the space is warmed by the sun's heat (passive solar gain), but three striking feature radiators, specified to complement dark-grey window frames, provide a back-up in colder months

What We've Learned

Did anything surprise you about this project?

We worried that the open plan space might be cold or noisy, but this couldn't have been more wrong. The south-facing glass means that we've had the doors open in October.

What was your best buy?

We installed a new central heating boiler and some feature radiators, which were chosen to match the window colour and the grey supporting pillar in the kitchen. We found the three tall radiators on the internet and they're probably our favourite feature now.

What do you like most about this room?

The children found it difficult to negotiate the original steep steps down to the garden, but the new dining area is at garden level, with shallow steps down from the kitchen and family living areas, which makes it much more accessible.

Did you find anything surprisingly easy during the project?

We'd heard a number of horror stories so were pleasantly surprised that the builders managed to stick to their budget and schedule, but dealing with all the dust was a nightmare and it was still settling weeks after the work had finished.

What advice would you pass on to others?

It's well worth employing an architect, even for a small project like ours, because they come up with ideas you wouldn't even think of yourself. Our architect designed the levels in the house for easy access, and as a consequence we have unobstructed views from the kitchen over the dining table and out into the garden.

Sophie & Mark's Suppliers

Architect Allister Godfrey Architects 01793 710607
Builder Cantiere Developments 07970 413488
Kitchen Ikea ikea.com
Windows, folding sliding doors and rooflight
 M&S Aluminium Ltd 01491 680600
Idigbo decking timber Buildbase buildbase.co.uk
Timber flooring Upton Wood Flooring 01491 628765

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