



*Real Homes*  
**AWARDS**

# BEST EXTENSION

After waiting for their dream property to go up for sale, Marika and James Frost created a clever contrast between old and new in a home they can now call their own ▶

WORDS **LINDSAY BLAIR** PHOTOGRAPHS **ADAM CARTER**



## CONTEMPORARY TRANSFORMATION

Above left and right With a dated bay window extension built in the 1970s and an old Victorian lean-to traditionally used to house the WC, the house was in need of modernisation to create the open-plan kitchen-diner Marika and James wanted. In contrast to the classic-style front façade, the extension, clad in Prelaq Nova sheet, brings a new, modern look to the property. Sliding doors Express Bi-Folding Doors





  
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### INDOOR-OUTDOOR LINK

Below The L-shaped, open-plan space features a central kitchen island with breakfast bar designed by joiner Paul Yates. The flooring is iconic white matt tiles from Minoli. Rooflights Vision Rooflights



### THE OWNERS

Marika Frost, a lecturer in art history, lives here with her husband James, a finance director, and their daughter, Alina, 10, and cats Coco and Hufflepuff

### THE PROPERTY

A six-bedroom Victorian semi-detached house built in 1901 in Abingdon

### MARIKA LOVES

Shopping at Skandium  
Designs by Alvar Aalto  
Visiting Italy  
Italian food  
The colours green and grey  
Scandi style  
Dancing

### TOTAL PROJECT COST

£484,000

aving lived in Oxfordshire for many years, Marika and James knew exactly where they wanted their forever home to be. So much so, they waited five years for a house on a street in Abingdon to come onto the market. 'We've always loved the area,' explains Marika. 'There are great schools and it's close to shops, and cafés, so we kept a close eye on this street as the beautiful houses have great character and so much potential.'

Luckily for the couple, this six-bedroom semi-detached property went up for sale and they moved quickly to buy it in September 2014, becoming the third owners since it was built in 1901. Wasting no time, plans for a renovation got underway the same month, including replumbing, rewiring, refurbishing fireplaces, cornice and skirting boards, redecorating and fitting a new bathroom. 'As we'd been waiting so long to buy a house here, we'd formed ideas of how we wanted it to look, plus we wanted to take on a project,' says Marika. 'We even visited with our builder, Jonathan Shorter, to see what was possible. I'm from Finland, where open-plan living is the norm, so I was keen to have a spacious kitchen-living-diner linking to the garden. James loves to cook, so I wanted to have an all-in-one entertaining space that's also practical for day-to-day use.'

With a clear brief, Marika and James worked with local architect Allister Godfrey, recommended by Jonathan, to design a single-storey, rear extension that would become the new kitchen-diner. Allister's scheme saw the removal of a small, bay window extension built in the 1970s and replaced it with a modern, Prelaq Nova sheet-clad square design, complete with large, sliding doors and a combination of clerestory windows and a rooflight to make the most of natural daylight. The existing narrow galley kitchen would become a playroom for the couple's daughter, Alina, a WC and store, while the old living room would be the kitchen, with a dining area, snug and utility in the extended space. Plus, a new porch was designed for the side of the property, creating a spacious hallway with a through-view to the garden. 'One part of the brief is that we wanted to open the front door and see straight into the garden, so we went with Allister's idea to build the rear >



## OPEN-PLAN KITCHEN

The bespoke **kitchen**, made by joiner Paul Yates, features tall painted tulipwood cabinetry and base cupboards and an **island** made from oak left unpainted to allow the beauty of the wood to become a focus. The island features a Yukon suede Silestone **worktop** and walnut surface by Paul Yates at the breakfast bar. **Handles**, Ged Kennett. **Bar stools**, Pinch. **Range cooker**, Lacanche. **Extractor**, Neff. **Fridge**, Liebherr. **Sink**, Franke. **Taps**, Hansgrohe and Citterio. **Pendant lights**, Diesel. The Benchmark **dining table** is made from elm and has patinated bronze legs. **Dining chairs**, De La Espada in London. **Clerestory windows** by Vision Rooflights ►



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'I adore the rear view of this extension with the metal cladding around the doors. It's a very elegant extension and the clever use of windows allows plenty of light to seep through. Clever design elements and stylish - I love it!'

**LUCY ALEXANDER, TV PRESENTER**



extension wider than the original side wall and include a glazed door from the porch with tall windows in the extension to frame the view. 'We were open to design ideas from Allister, but we knew we wanted the extension to be a light-filled, modern space with as much glass in the design as possible. I also wanted to maintain a Scandi-style interior,' explains Marika.

Located in a Conservation Area, the design of the porch had to be in keeping with the property's era, so features a pitched roof and classic lintels, but the couple had more scope when it came to the back of the house, meaning a contemporary, contrasting style was allowed. 'I really like that the front and rear are so different in style - it was a deliberate choice,' says Marika. Planning approved, six months after buying, work to extend the property began. Creating the new space involved lowering the floor level to create a step down from the sympathetic, classic style of the rooms at the front of the property, increase head height and boost light. The extension also features a stepped ceiling and wider footprint where clerestory windows are fitted, offering a space to sit and enjoy the view to outside. The couple retained the wall between the new space and where the old kitchen was located, providing a playroom and cloakroom, creating an L-shape layout for the kitchen-diner and snug.

With simple, Scandi style at the heart of the design, the choice of kitchen and furniture were kept fairly neutral with wooden finishes to contrast with the grey-framed glazing and metal cladding. Joiner Paul Yates made all of the units and island, which features a wooden worktop at the breakfast bar, contrasting the rest of the surfaces. The couple chose to paint the tall units, but keep the rest of the cabinetry bare, coordinating with the dining table and chairs.

By August 2015, the family had moved in and final decorating touches were completed. After years of waiting for this house to be their home, more than a year of planning and building, plus hundreds of design decisions and daily site visits, the result is a contemporary space that perfectly reflects its owners. 'The new kitchen-diner exactly how we imaged it would be,' says Marika. 🏡

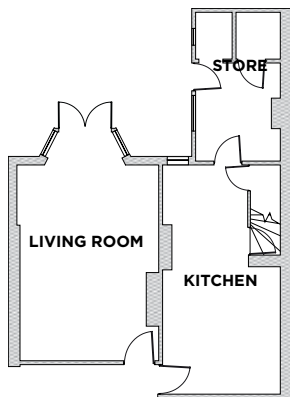
### SYMPATHETIC DESIGN

As the property is in a Conservation Area, the porch extension, is in keeping with the original, Victorian design, which contrasts with the modern extension to the rear



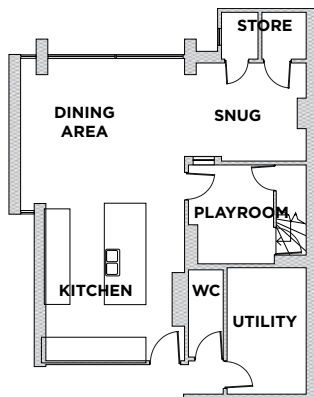
#### BEFORE

#### GROUND FLOOR



#### AFTER

#### GROUND FLOOR



#### RECONFIGURED LAYOUT

**Above** A porch was added to the front and a modern, single storey rear extension replaced a dated 1970s addition. Internal dividing walls between the hallway and playroom were kept in place, creating an L-shape space, complete with a snug

#### THE COSTS AND CONTACTS

Renovation of existing house  
**£200,000**

Extension building works including porch  
**£140,000**

Landscaping  
**£55,000**

Kitchen, appliances and worktops  
**£30,000**

Decorating  
**£15,000**

Glazing  
**£14,000**

Furniture  
**£20,000**

Professional fees  
**£10,000**

TOTAL  
**£484,000**

Purchase cost in 2014  
**£920,000**

Valued at  
**£1,500,000**

**Architect** Allister Godfrey,  
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**Builder** Jonathan Shorter,  
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