

Properly Home and garden Tudor with a twist

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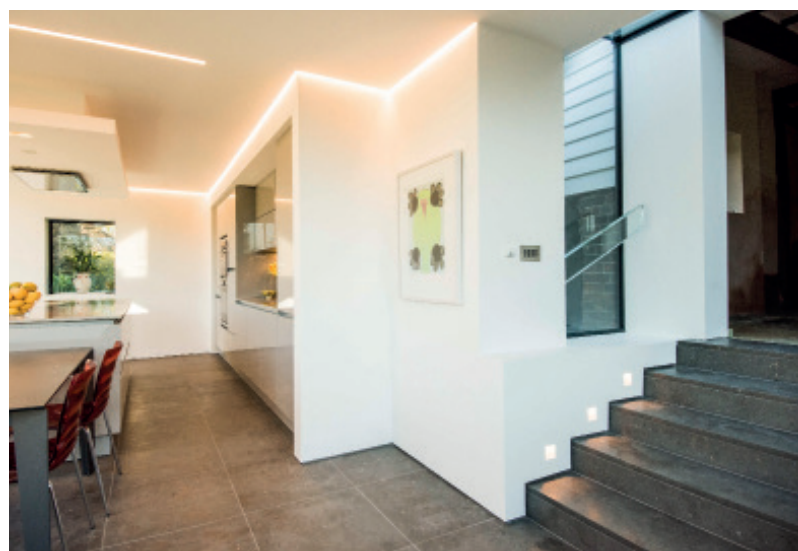
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an extension to the property as a continuation of the traditional solid, enclosing garden wall from the front and side elevations, contrasted by a lightweight glazed façade facing the rear garden. The new extension provides a bespoke open-plan kitchen which allows an area of the existing house to return to its original state. A dining space opens out onto the new terrace and garden beyond.

“The link through from the existing building is in an area where previous work had been undertaken. This was evident from the mix of brick and mortar where a former doorway had been bricked up. The glazed link forms a direct break between the old and the new – when walking through the link, it’s possible to look up and see the existing rear façade. Stepping down into the new extension, the existing stone floor of what was once the kitchen meets seamlessly with new, wide limestone steps, which flow into the new limestone tiled floor.

“Externally, the use of red brickwork echoes the existing property and the garden walls, the zinc roof cappings reference the lead flashings to the existing house, and the slim dark frames to the sliding doors provides a visual link to the black leaded windows of the original house.”

When you undertake a building project like this, a huge amount of work goes into it. You need a measured survey, the involvement of the conservation consultant, the architects, the planners – and that’s all before you start thinking about the build.

“From our first thoughts to the building work actually starting took over a year,” says Helen. “It can take a lot longer than that if you don’t get planning approved first time. We’ve ended up with pretty much what we and the architect sketched out within twenty minutes of arriving at the house. We’ve got a glazed link between the old build and the new build, and the new building attached to but distinct from the original house. It’s not a pastiche of a Tudor building, either; it’s very contemporary, very different. We think it works beautifully, although it is not going to be everyone’s cup of tea.

“We were very open-minded about the design. We wanted a space that overlooked the garden that we could relax in. We wanted it to be an informal living space because our house is quite formal; after that, it was down to the architects’ vision.

“Once we had full planning and detailed drawings, our quantity surveyor tendered it out to a number of builders. I met three or four of them, but Lee Fletcher of L.J Fletcher Builders Ltd was recommended by our quantity surveyor. I met Lee and really liked him; he was quietly confident and very professional – and he came in at the right price, so we decided to go with him.

“Obviously, having builders in your house is disruptive but Lee and his team were brilliant. We couldn’t have had a better team of builders; the site was always so clean and tidy. For them, it’s a building site but for you, it’s a home and Lee and his team never lost sight of that.

For Lee Fletcher, this was his first project of this design,

although he had used a number of the different elements involved on previous builds.

Says Lee: “The job was to construct a new, single-storey contemporary extension to form a kitchen/diner to the rear of this 14th-century, Grade II-listed house. The work included structurally-engineered foundations and a steel framework, with in-filled brickwork and vertical glazing.

“Due to the size of the glass units and access to the property to off-load them, it was very tricky and required a lot of patience and nail biting. The main challenge was the construction being completed to the drawings provided by the glaziers, as there were no on-site measurements once openings and walls were formed. However, this actually helped bring the programme forward by nine weeks. In all, it took about 28 weeks.

“The build process was fairly straightforward, thanks to the early planning by the client and the architects.”



Image Ben Ludlow

Helen and Marc are delighted with the result. “My husband thinks it’s turned out exactly as we thought it would, but I think it’s better!,” says Helen.

“I can totally understand that not everybody likes very contemporary buildings. True, it doesn’t match the house (even my five-year-old granddaughter commented that it didn’t match), but that was the point of it. Conservation Officers want it to stand out as an example of a 21st-century building, not as an example of a 15th-century building, because that isn’t what it is. It needs to speak for itself.

“It has completely revolutionised the way we live. We spend a huge amount of our time in the extension. In fact, people ask us if we use the rest of the house any more! It’s very much the centre of our home and the fact that we can sit in there, relax, look at the garden, enjoy meals, supper and dinner parties makes it even more perfect.”



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