



## LET THERE BE LIGHT

An extension with a glazed roof became the starting point for Helen and Jonny Brown's home, topped off with a thoughtfully designed loft space

FEATURE JANE CRITTENDEN | PHOTOGRAPHY ALISTAIR NICHOLLS



### KITCHEN-DINER

The extension draws the eye towards the picture window while the structural glass roof introduces the ambient light that Helen craved. Hex Ice Crystal floor tiles, £80sq m, Fired Earth. Victoria metal bar stools in solid elm, £89 each, Cult Furniture





## HOME TRUTHS

**THE PROPERTY**  
Victorian mid-terrace house  
**LOCATION** Southeast London  
**ROOMS** Sitting room, kitchen-diner, snug, cloakroom, four bedrooms (one en suite), bathroom  
**PURCHASED** 2009  
**PREVIOUS PROPERTY**  
'Before, we rented flats in Brixton and Clapham,' says Helen.

After five years of living in their Victorian property, Helen and Jonny Brown were ready to reinvent the house with a rear extension. Minds made up, the couple set out to find the right architect.

'We didn't want a standard, boxy extension, but a well-designed space with beautiful finishes that we could retreat to after a busy day at work,' says Helen. 'We met with three architects and Darren Oldfield stood out. We liked the contemporary look of his designs and he had great vision, but most importantly he really understood what we wanted to achieve.'

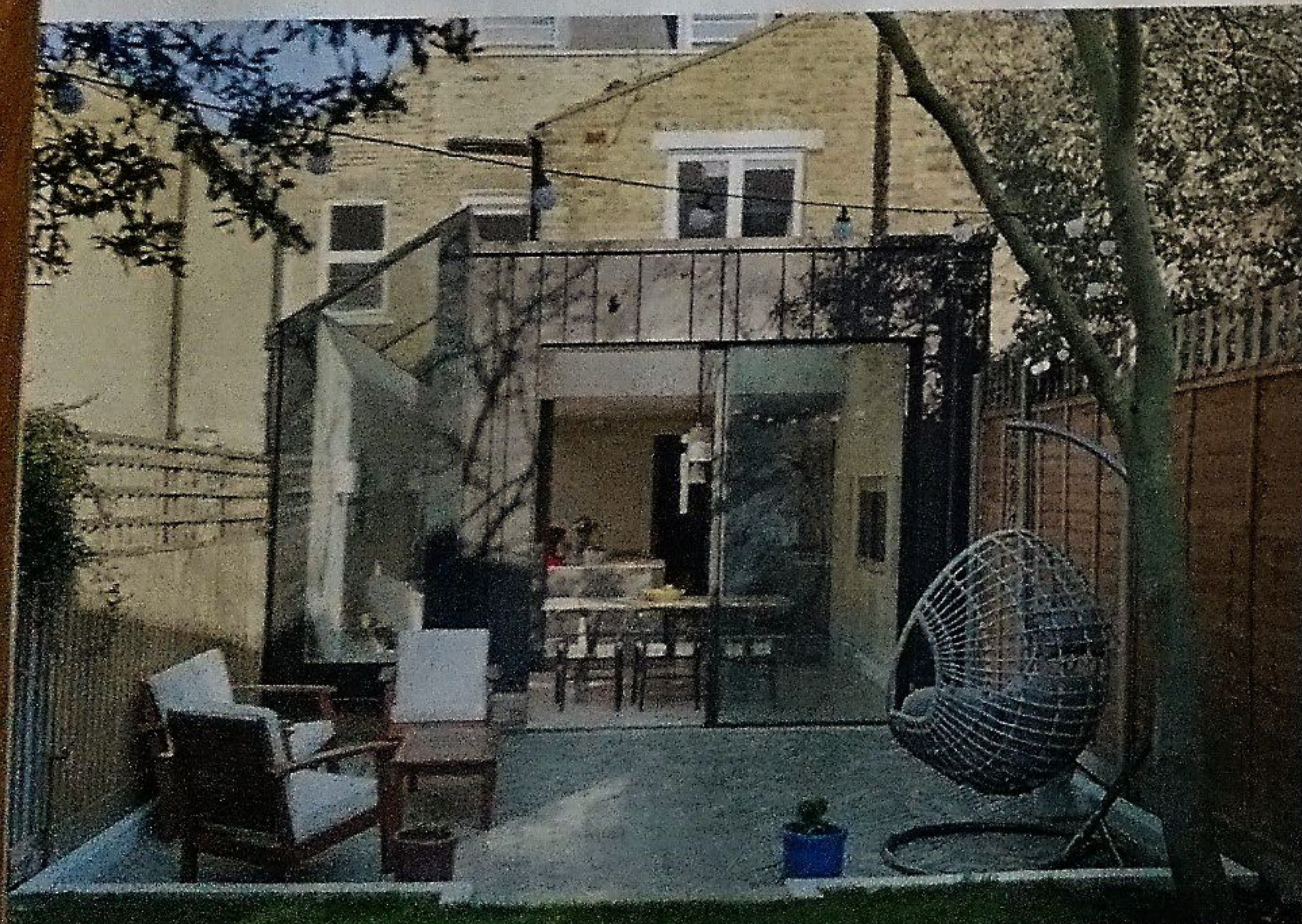
Helen was keen to raise the low kitchen ceiling, which made the room feel cramped and oppressive. She also wanted to create a snug for the couple's children, Finlay, now eight, and Lochie, five, and their toys, which were beginning to overrun the ground floor. The couple knew the council had a tough

approach to residential development and would not allow a wraparound extension or a loft conversion. So Helen and Jonny began working with Darren on a design of separate side and rear extensions that they could build within permitted development. Then, a few months into the process, Darren brought some exciting news to the table.

'The council were consulting on relaxing the planning rules,' says Helen. 'We were pleased, as it looked like we could have the house we really wanted, but it meant putting our project on hold until the new legislation came into force.'

Darren went back to the drawing board and produced a wraparound extension that would be flooded with light through a structural glazed roof. In the process, he also designed a new master suite in the loft. Helen believes the best idea to come out of the changes was the full-height picture window in the kitchen-diner, located where

**FAVOURITE FEATURE** 'The dining area window seat was an unexpected design choice, but it's become a place where I love to sit and relax'



**KITCHEN-DINER**  
Helen and Jonny chose sliding doors with a narrow profile for a seamless appearance. Doors, £4,500, Architectural Vision Systems. Oak Calico floor planks, price on request, Waxed Floors. Hooked 3.0 Mix pendant in stone/brass, £634, Buster + Punch

**GARDEN**  
The doors to the new extension open onto this stylish space, which is ideal for summer entertaining. Warm white LED connectable festoon lights, £30 for ten, Lights4Fun. The indoor/outdoor hanging chair, £375, Cox & Cox, is a match

**SITTING ROOM**  
'This grey textured rug works much better in here than the colourful ones that I first looked at,' says Helen. Small Bobble rug in grey, £195; Parker coffee table, £325; for a similar sofa try the Berlin small sofa in Thatch house fabric, £995, all Loaf







**DECORATING TIP** 'If you're unsure of what palette to use, call in a colour consultant. Our Farrow & Ball expert made such a difference to the look and feel of our interior'

#### GUEST BEDROOM

Helen likes how the floral motif on the curtains gives this space a fresh, spring feel all year round.

Try Lina Leaf thermal pencil pleat curtains, from £50, John Lewis & Partners, for similar. Walls painted in Pavilion Gray estate emulsion, £46.50 for 2.5L, Farrow & Ball

#### EN SUITE

'We bought the patterned grey floor tiles first and worked our scheme around the tones,' says Helen. Betongreys Anna Cold Marrakech tiles, £46.80sq m, European Heritage Tiles. Walls painted in Cornforth White estate emulsion, £45 for 2.5L, Farrow & Ball

the two extensions now join. 'We didn't want full-width glass doors across the back,' she says. 'We preferred something with more architectural interest and Darren achieved that with the window seat.'

Helen and Jonny put Darren in charge of managing the building work and the family moved into a nearby flat belonging to Helen's sister, who was away travelling. As work progressed, Darren encouraged the couple to make early decisions about the finishing touches. Following his guidance on where to source quality sanitaryware, they bought the en suite and kitchen taps, tiles and cabinetry. After seeing a photo on Pinterest, Helen had her heart set on a dark grey kitchen with a light-coloured worktop. However, she was unsure which colour to paint the walls and brought in a Farrow & Ball colour consultant to help.

'The consultant recommended Shaded White, which looks much warmer than a stark white and has a nice relaxed feel,' says Helen. 'She advised us on colours for all the

new spaces, and we decorated throughout in Farrow & Ball shades, although I picked a true navy blue from Little Greene for our bedroom, to offset the expanse of white in the pitched ceiling.'

Downstairs, wide oak floor planks laid in a chevron pattern bring interest to the kitchen-diner, along with eye-catching pendants above the table. Later, the couple decided to fit an integrated lighting and AV system by John Cullen. 'It was an investment, but has transformed the space at night,' says Helen. 'We placed uplighters near the doors and downlighters around the TV to work with the ambient and task lighting we have in the kitchen area.'

Now that the project is complete, Helen says she is delighted with the house. 'There's a tranquillity to living here and when we come home now, we feel like we've escaped the outside world,' she says. 'I love the design detail and the quality of the finishes. Achieving the perfect home for our family was more than worth the wait.' 5



#### MAIN BEDROOM

The sharp, contemporary architecture of this new space is softened by the traditional upholstered bed.

Charlotte king-size bed in Chalk White, £1,499, The French Bedroom Company, is similar. Walls painted in Royal Navy absolute matt emulsion, £43.50 for 2.5L, Little Greene. Black Madison console table, £449, Atkin and Thyme. Flos IC S2 pendant in brass, £364, Clippings