



# New and

Two sizeable extensions and a reworked floorplan have transformed the **Gardners'** dated 1970s house into a light-filled family home

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# IMPROVED

What was an uninspiring 1970s house has undergone a remarkable metamorphosis. It all started when Rachael and Dan Gardner connected with an innovative architect who was keen to push the boundaries of design. "Our home needed reorganising, updating and extending but we didn't want a standard structure plonked onto the back of the property," says Rachael. "We were keen for the whole dwelling to flow and feel redesigned like new."

## Room for improvement

The couple set about their search for the perfect house, their first together, back in 2009. Keen to purchase something equidistant from their respective places of work, Rachael went to view this

property in Winchester in spring that year. "Dan was in the army and stationed in Afghanistan at the time, so I came on my own," she says. "I loved the location because it's so quiet. The house overlooks the countryside. We put an offer in straight away, as I could really see us bringing up a family here, which is what we went on to do."

The pair were immediately drawn to the dwelling's living spaces and large garden. While they hadn't planned to take on a renovation scheme, it was obvious from the start that the property came with various problems that would need to be addressed. Featuring a series of poky and dated rooms, the downstairs floorplan lacked the flowing feel the couple craved. The dark dining room was enclosed by an unwelcoming conservatory, and there was little connection to the outside. Upstairs fared better, with a wide landing

## FACT FILE

**NAMES** Rachael & Dan Gardner  
**OCCUPATIONS** Finance professional & sales manager  
**LOCATION** Hampshire  
**TYPE OF PROJECT** Renovation & extension  
**STYLE** 1970s detached house with contemporary extension  
**CONSTRUCTION METHOD** Extension was built from steel frame and blockwork, with render finish. The porch has a glulam frame  
**PROJECT ROUTE**  
 Architect & builder  
**PROPERTY COST** £420,000  
**BOUGHT** August 2009  
**HOUSE SIZE** 210m<sup>2</sup>  
**PROJECT COST** £264,500  
**PROJECT COST PER M<sup>2</sup>** £1,260  
**TOTAL COST** £684,000  
**BUILDING WORK COMMENCED** November 2015  
**BUILDING WORK TOOK** Seven months  
**MOVED IN** June 2016  
**CURRENT VALUE** £795,000



The raw oak floor came from Andy Pool Flooring. It is laid in a herringbone pattern throughout the downstairs and is finished with a clear oil



Dekton's Aura 15 marble-effect quartz worktop is 50mm thick and strong enough to frame the island

The raised snug and half wall provides a cosy division of space from the rest of the kitchen



with views across the fields and four good-sized bedrooms in each corner of the house. From the outset, then, the couple knew they had a big job on their hands but they weren't ready to begin straightaway. About a year after they moved in, Rachael decided to make a start. "I'd lived in a nicely decorated house before and I couldn't stand that everything looked so dated," she says. "I was losing patience, so we decided to get going on the upstairs as we knew the changes wouldn't affect the bigger project on the ground floor later on."

On the upper storey, work revolved around the installation of two new bathrooms and redecorating. The main bathing zone and

separate WC were knocked together, while the window was repositioned to the centre of the space. In the master bedroom, Rachael and Dan transformed their ensuite into a wardrobe. They then created a new bathroom that linked to their bedroom by removing built-in wardrobes from the master and adjoining bedroom. But then work came to a halt.

**Next phase**

The years passed and Rachael and Dan's daughter, Eve, was born in early 2013. This prompted the pair to get on with revamping the downstairs, so they began the design process. However, with Dan's job taking him abroad and Rachael's demanding full-time work schedule, they remained relaxed about the project timeframe.

An open, bright extension was at the top of their wish list, to create flow between all the downstairs rooms and a strong connection to the garden. The pair wanted to enlarge the porch and increase the size

*“We took our time and spent a year finalising the design”*



The 1970s fireplace was replaced with a stylish new Rais woodburner



## WE LEARNED...

**HIRING** the right architect is essential. Olly understood exactly what we wanted and really focused on the detail. It ended up being the making of our project.

**DONT BE** too rigid with the budget. It was hard to commit extra money to our scheme, but we kept reminding ourselves we were only going to do this once. We wanted an innovative design and now it's complete, we have no regrets.

**STICK TO** your guns. I wanted a flush ceiling in the extension, but the builders weren't sure if they could fit the beam high enough. I pushed them to find a solution and they did.

**RESEARCH** fixtures and fittings as much as you can – it pays off. We spent time visiting kitchen showrooms to get ideas. Houzz was amazing for inspiration and helped shape the bespoke joinery features, such as the staircase and doors.



Right: The WC and family bathroom were knocked together soon after the Gardners moved in and painted in Farrow & Ball's Bone. The Villeroy & Boch sanitaryware is from Little John Bathroom Design. Below: The nursery features a subtle wall mural, following the neutral decor featured throughout the home

of the entrance hall, as well as improve the appearance of the front facade. New cladding on the upper floor, along with replacement windows with a slimmer aluminium profile, would give the house a facelift. On a practical level, the Gardners were keen to allow space in the floorplan for a study, downstairs WC and utility, plus a spot for the piano. "We wanted to rejuvenate our home," says Rachael. "I didn't want to step out of the new part and feel like I was walking back into the same old house."

Rachael spoke to some local architects but didn't feel inspired until she met Olly Bray from OB Architecture. "Olly produced a range of innovative ideas that showed he had a good understanding of every single component that was important to us," she says. "We took our time with the process and spent nearly a year finalising the design."

The couple settled on a generous 38m<sup>2</sup> rear kitchen-diner extension, with a raised snug area and a separate study. A double-storey glazed porch adds a modern flourish to the exterior of the house, while the bespoke new timber staircase and glass sliding doors in the kitchen have revitalised the interiors.

"What we liked was Olly's 3D visualisation of the open space downstairs, but with different zones," says Rachael. "He showed us how having the raised snug would feel cosy, and when I sit at the desk in the study I have a direct view into the garden."

## Getting started on site

The proposal needed consent for the alterations at the front of the house. It was submitted to planning in January 2015 and approval arrived a month later, so the process to find a builder began.

Olly put the tender package together, which went out to three builders. By the summer, Samuel Property Development had been selected. Groundworks began in November. Almost straight away an issue cropped up when the builders uncovered soakaways



beneath the soil. These had to be reinforced using steel cages filled with concrete. "They were fairly big chambers and were likely part of the military camp that had been here years before," says Rachael.

In January 2016, the building team were ready to start inside, so the family decamped to a rented bungalow just a 10-minute walk away. "It was perfect as I was on maternity leave with Bella, our second daughter, and able to focus on the project," says Rachael. "I liaised with the joiner on design decisions, answered questions from the builders and spent time sourcing the kitchen and flooring."

The reconfiguration of downstairs began with the transformation of the old utility room into a study. In turn, part of what was previously the dining room became the new utility. The kitchen and dining area were opened out into the extension, which now also features the raised family snug. The front living room remains in the same position, however, the ugly 1970s fireplace has been replaced with a stylish woodburner. The door was also moved down the hall and new fenestration has been fitted. "I always thought the windows were too boxy and high," says Rachael. "But we decided it wasn't worth spending the money to change the shape

of the openings. We fitted models with slim aluminium frames, which let in more light. They've made the spaces feel quite different."

Outside, the old cladding was taken off and the entire upper floor was insulated. The couple chose Cedral Lap white weatherboarding, a low-maintenance wood-effect cement composite.

During construction, another problem arose when the builders fitted the structural beam to link the extension with the existing house. "To have a flush ceiling in the new space, the support needed to connect into the upstairs bathroom. But the floor above was too low," says Rachael. "The team did a great job by changing the way the bathroom waste ran so they could push the beam into place."

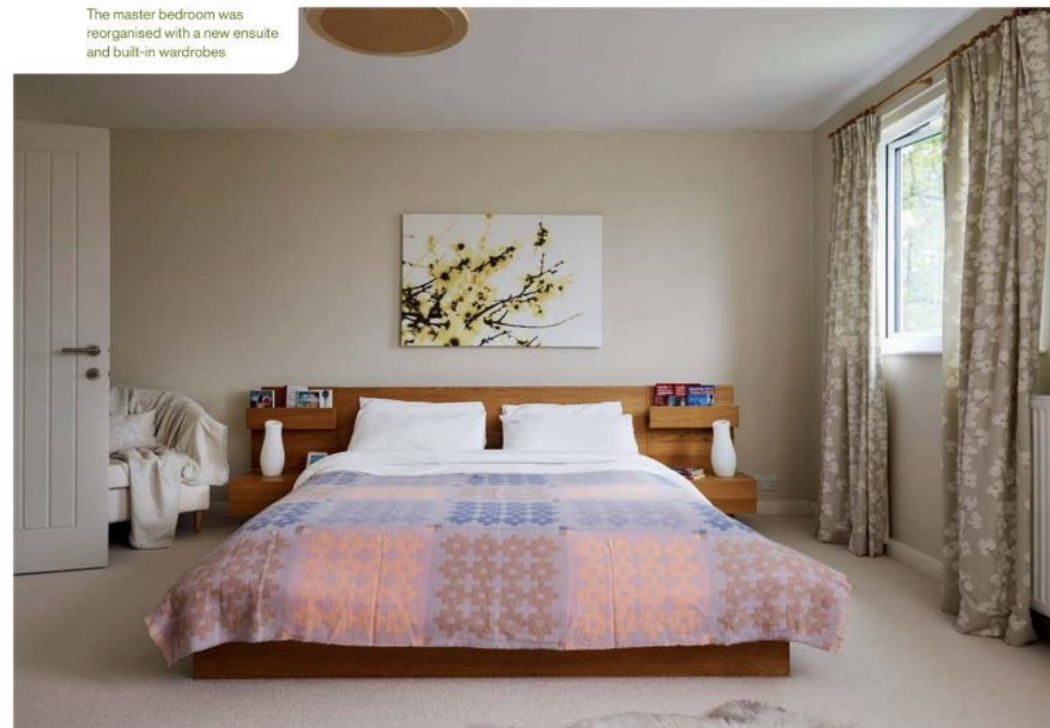
Another question mark arose regarding the support for the original corner wall adjoining the snug. "Building control came and ran some checks and decided we needed a supporting pillar," says Rachael. "It sticks out a bit, but it isn't the end of the world."

Olly put together the kitchen layout and specialist company, Controlled Interiors, finalised the plan. At their suggestion, the Gardners have an invisible pivot door within the bank of cupboards, which opens into the utility room and downstairs WC. When the kitchen suite arrived, however, rather than all the cupboards being a stone colour, part of the order was white. Not wanting to delay moving back in, the couple accepted the compensation offered. In fact, Rachael says the colour contrast has ended up working well.

## Pleasing result

The couple's home features a simple palette of white, pale grey and light wood, echoing the understated appeal of Scandinavian aesthetics. This allows the detail of the herringbone oak floor and bespoke joinery to take centre stage. "Olly's ideas were really simple

The master bedroom was reorganised with a new ensuite and built-in wardrobes



but turned our ordinary house into a space that feels original," says Rachael. "We ended up more than doubling our budget because we upgraded the specification on the doors, chose oak frame windows for the porch, and decided to replace the entire staircase. However, this was a one-time project and it was definitely money well spent." That's reflected in the value of the finished house, which is worth a cool £100,000 more than the property cost to buy and update.

Seven months after starting work on site, the family were able to move back in and they're delighted with the outcome. "Olly's done a great job of transforming our home into a visual design statement," says Rachael. "The light and connection between all the rooms and the garden is amazing. Views we didn't have before keep appearing – like the tree in the front garden coming into blossom, which we can see from our dining table. Our whole house is just lovely now."

## Useful contacts

ARCHITECT **OB Architecture** 01962 865344 [www.obarchitecture.co.uk](http://www.obarchitecture.co.uk)  
 BUILDING CONTRACTOR **Samuel Property Development** 01962 334116 [www.samuelpd.co.uk](http://www.samuelpd.co.uk) PORCH GLULAM FRAME **Glulam Beams** 023 8049720 [www.glulambeams.co.uk](http://www.glulambeams.co.uk) FRONT DOOR, PORCH GLAZING, STAIRCASE & SHOWER DOOR GLAZING **Shayne Ferguson at Ferguson Joinery** 01722 716565 FIBRE CEMENT CLADDING **Cedral** 01283 501555 [www.cedral.co.uk](http://www.cedral.co.uk) SLIDING DOORS **Fineline Aluminium** 01934 429922 [www.finelinealuminium.co.uk](http://www.finelinealuminium.co.uk) WINDOWS **Salisbury Glass** 01379 328985 [www.salisburyglass.com](http://www.salisburyglass.com) ROOFLIGHTS **Glazing Vision** 01379 658300 [www.glazingvision.co.uk](http://www.glazingvision.co.uk) FLOORING **Andy Pool Flooring** 01980 610118 [www.andy-pool-flooring.co.uk](http://www.andy-pool-flooring.co.uk) CONTROLLED INTERIORS **Controlled Interiors** 01329 825932 [www.controlled-interiors.co.uk](http://www.controlled-interiors.co.uk) BATHROOM **Little John Bathroom Design** 01739 201050 [www.littlejohn.co.uk](http://www.littlejohn.co.uk) SANITARYWARE **Villeroy & Boch** [www.villeroy-boch.co.uk](http://www.villeroy-boch.co.uk) GARAGE DOOR **Freelance Entry Solutions** 01722 711200 [www.freelanceentrysolutions.co.uk](http://www.freelanceentrysolutions.co.uk) WOODBURNER **Kingsworthy Foundry** 01562 889970 [www.kingsworthyfoundry.co.uk](http://www.kingsworthyfoundry.co.uk)

## closer look

## Tailor-made details...

Bespoke joinery was at the heart of architect Olly Bray's design concept to transform the Gardners' 1970s house. A striking double-storey spruce and oak glazed porch extends the hallway and brings a contemporary look to the property. A sliding plywood door acts as a moveable, gliding wall that separates the kitchen from the hallway. The new staircase is made with tulipwood and oak. "We were going to paint the balustrades white but we loved the chamfered edges and have instead chosen an oiled finish," says Rachael. "The tailor-made elements have lifted the design of our whole house to a different level."



Striking entrance



### Floor plans

#### Ground floor



#### First floor



### TOTAL BUILD COST BREAKDOWN

Elements	Cost m <sup>2</sup>	Cost %	Total cost
Building work	£381	30%	£80,000
Porch	£73	6%	£15,300
Front door	£18	1%	£3,700
Cladding & insulation	£59	5%	£12,500
Staircase	£49	4%	£10,200
Sliding plywood door	£17	1%	£3,500
Glazed living room door	£7	1%	£1,500
Windows	£60	5%	£12,700
Rooflights	£52	4%	£11,000
Sliding doors	£88	7%	£18,500
Internal doors upstairs	£5	< 1%	£1,000
Flooring	£57	5%	£12,000
Kitchen	£176	14%	£37,000
Utility room	£18	1%	£3,800
Toilet & basin	£5	< 1%	£1,000
Plumbing	£81	6%	£17,000
Electrics	£36	3%	£7,500
Woodburner & hearth	£19	2%	£3,900
Decorating	£24	2%	£5,000
Garage door	£9	1%	£1,900
Landscaping	£26	2%	£5,500
<b>Grand total</b>			<b>£264,500</b>

Note: The costs shown here reflect the original prices for materials, labour and services at the time this project was undertaken. As a general guide, inflation in the construction market runs at about 3%-4% per annum.