

# Joined-up thinking

A period house altered and divided over the decades has been remodelled into a spacious single home

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## IN BRIEF

**LOCATION** Skelmersdale, Lancashire

**TYPE OF PROPERTY** Victorian end-of-terrace house

**BEDROOMS** 4

**PROJECT STARTED** November 2019

**PROJECT FINISHED** November 2020

**SIZE** 235sqm

**BUILD COST** £535 per sqm

Linking the ground-floor rooms together, the kitchen is central to the new floor plan designed with the help of RJG Architectural Design Services ([rjgarchitecture.co.uk](http://rjgarchitecture.co.uk))



## GD HOMES TWO IN ONE

**T**he key to creating more living space can sometimes be found very close to home. For nine years Mark Hurst, 33, a golf greenkeeper, and his wife Jo, 31, a bank manager, lived in a two-bedroom extension to a Victorian house in Skelmersdale, Lancashire. But when the chance arose to join the two buildings together, Mark and Jo used the opportunity to create a bigger home for themselves and their daughters Grace, 12, and Olivia, two.

Mark's grandparents bought the double-fronted property in the 1950s. 'My great aunt and uncle had four children, so they lived in the house and my grandparents moved into a side extension, which was built in the 1970s,' says Mark. 'After my grandparents passed away in 2008, Jo and I moved into the extension.'

Mark's mother inherited both buildings and talked about turning them into one home. 'When my great aunt moved into a care home in 2018, the timing happened to be right,' says Mark. 'Jo and I needed more space and had been considering building a home in the garden.'



**ABOVE** The stained-glass window above the kitchen door was upcycled from Mark's grandmother's house, where the family stayed during the renovations



### When the chance arose to join the two buildings together, Mark and Jo seized the opportunity

The Victorian house had three bedrooms and two reception rooms. By contrast, Mark and Jo's home in the side extension had only two bedrooms – one of which sat within the footprint of the main house, as did the living room.

'I worked on a plan for the new layout as both houses were very familiar to me,' explains Mark, who then appointed architect Richard Gallagher of RJG Architectural Design Services to help turn his ideas into a scaled drawing.

Mark created a main bedroom, complete with a bathroom and dressing room, by using space from the side extension and its landing. Downstairs, the couple turned their old kitchen into a utility room. 'The original kitchen was too small, so we knocked through to the wash house and added a rear extension that went out 4.5m,' says Mark. The extension was earmarked for »

**ABOVE** A generously sized family room leads off from the kitchen. White-washed herringbone vinyl flooring from Plusfloor ([plusfloor.com](https://www.plusfloor.com)) runs throughout the ground floor

**LEFT** Apex glazing and rooflights bring light into the room. The main contractor was Craig Holmes of Lathom Joinery & Construction ([lathomjoineryandconstruction.co.uk](https://www.lathomjoineryandconstruction.co.uk))





LEFT AND RIGHT  
Rachael Marsh of  
Feather and Paint  
([featherandpaint.co.uk](http://featherandpaint.co.uk)) created the  
interior schemes.  
The living room  
walls are painted  
in Mole's Breath and  
Purbeck Stone  
from Farrow & Ball  
([farrow-ball.com](http://farrow-ball.com))







An arched fireplace in the dining room was uncovered during the renovations and fitted with a contemporary gas stove from Green Man Stoves ([greenmanstoves.co.uk](http://greenmanstoves.co.uk))

a big family room opening on to the garden. 'Extending ensured the kitchen became central to the floor plan, linking the downstairs rooms together,' says Mark.

Grace and Olivia have a playroom – previously the hallway in Mark and Jo's old house – and Richard even found space for a cloakroom. 'He used part of the old stairwell and cleverly angled the new utility room door to create enough space for it to swing open,' Mark explains.

Since the two buildings were never legally separated, joining them together didn't require planning approval. Instead, the couple obtained a lawful development certificate for the new extension, which showed the project fell within permitted development rights, and approval for a pitched roof on their old home.

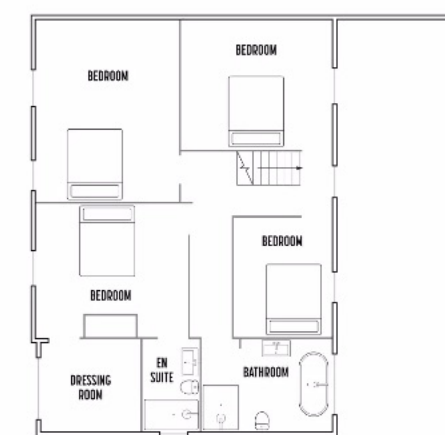
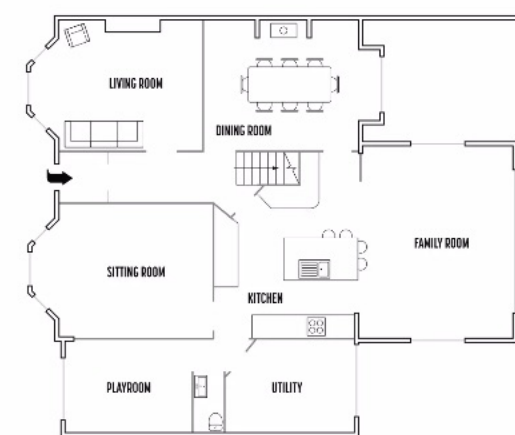
Mark gutted the houses ready for his builder friend Craig Holmes to bring in his team and start the renovations in November 2019. A couple of months later, the family relocated while the bulk of the work took place. 'Craig managed the job with me heavily involved,' says Mark. Craig had lots of contacts, but Mark was also good friends with a plumber and a decorator, and they all worked well together.

For the first five months, the project team was on target to meet the June 2020 deadline. But at the end of March, Covid-19 hit just as the kitchen was about >>



ABOVE A Frosted Bubble chandelier from Dowsing & Reynolds ([dowsingandreynolds.com](http://dowsingandreynolds.com)) provides a modern contrast with the original staircase, which was sanded and painted

## FLOOR PLANS





## GD HOMES TWO IN ONE

to be ordered and the plastering was already midway through. Plaster supplies were impossible to source as the main manufacturer shut down.

'We had to do what we could under the circumstances, so Chris began decorating the rooms that we'd already finished,' says Mark. 'The kitchen company gave us a £1,000 discount as we placed the order by phone and took delivery during lockdown.'

Delays for materials meant trades disappeared to work on other jobs, but Mark stayed upbeat, focusing on the fact he was still working and saving money. 'By the time we finished we were £7,000 under budget,' he says. 'We saved £2,000 on skips as I got rid of rubbish in my trailer.'

At this point, Mark called on another friend of his, interior designer Rachael Marsh, asking her to work with the restored period features, but to keep the overall scheme light and modern.

Although the majority of the building work was finished in autumn 2020, the family held back on moving in until all the rooms were furnished. 'I wanted the satisfaction of moving into a new home that we know we'll live in forever,' says Mark. 'The amount of space is a huge contrast to what we had before but, at the same time, every room feels familiar.' **GD**



**ABOVE** Having a step down to the dressing room but no door makes Mark and Jo's bedroom feel bigger. The dressing table is by Pro-Fit Bedrooms ([pro-fitbedrooms.com](http://pro-fitbedrooms.com))



The couple kept the bathroom from the extension, changing the position of the door so it opens onto the landing of the main house. The plumbing work was by Tom Berry (07809 120262)



Wall panelling adds a sense of grandeur in the couple's bedroom, framing the Chesterfield bed from Sueno ([sueno.co.uk](http://sueno.co.uk))