

Tara, Ada and Nick inside the glazed link. The steps help to overcome the gradient between the two barns



Two into one

One couple linked together two disused barns with a glazed walkway, creating a spacious home with echoes of its agricultural past

WORDS JANE CRITTENDEN STYLING MARISHA TAYLOR
PHOTOGRAPHY JAMES FRENCH

IN BRIEF

LOCATION Tadley, Hampshire
TYPE OF PROPERTY Converted barns
BEDROOMS 4
PROJECT STARTED August 2018
PROJECT FINISHED April 2019
SIZE 225sqm
LAND COST £600,000
BUILD COST £1,300 per sqm

Finding two 1950s barns in a quiet rural setting was the beginning of an adventure for interior architect Nick Jordan, 38, and his wife Tara, 33, a teacher. Though the couple moved out of London in search of more space, they didn't intend to take on a project of quite such a scale, let alone live in a caravan on site for the duration of the build.

'Mindful of my commute into London, and that we needed to be close to family in Oxford and Bournemouth, we focused our search on an area around Basingstoke in Hampshire,' says Nick. 'None of the houses we viewed was quite right. But I was smitten with the barns straightaway as they offered us a unique opportunity.'

The 1.4-acre plot came with two disused single-storey farm buildings – one long and narrow, the other square – built in blockwork with steel-framed asbestos roofs. Planning permission was already in place for them to be clad in featherboard and connected to one another via a glazed corridor. From the outset, Nick wanted to push this design even further.

In October 2017, once the couple had put in an offer on the barns, Nick redrew the plans with guidance from architects he knew through work. He paid attention to the window placement and views as well as the layout.

'Tara and I wanted a contemporary look with lots of glass, and took our design cues for the black vertical »

The glazed link is a glass box with a flat roof. When the sun shines the polished concrete floor warms up, slowly releasing its heat during the evening





A steel A-frame marks the end of the kitchen and the beginning of the boot room and utility area, which is hidden behind a tall bank of cupboards



Finished in white Osmo oil, the bespoke plywood kitchen doors are fitted to off-the-shelf Ikea carcasses. Task lighting runs on a track above



Nick made the dining table by fitting hairpin legs to scaffolding boards. The flexes on the pendant lights were measured so they hang in a straight line, despite the sloping ceiling



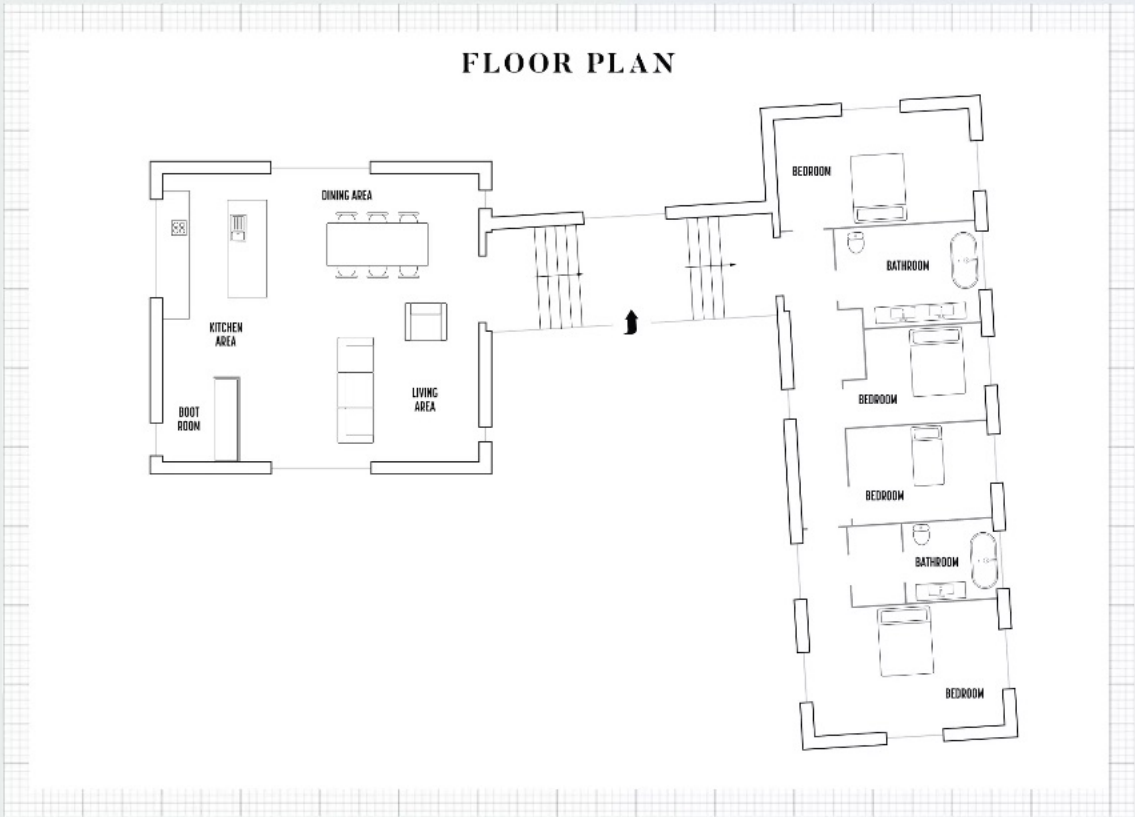
The living area is next to the glass link, which is wide enough to be used as another space to sit and relax

cladding and corrugated roofing from local agricultural buildings,' he explains. 'We liked the glazed link in principle, but increased the width to 3.2m so it was less of a corridor and more of a useful living space.'

Nick kept the bedrooms and bathrooms arranged side by side down the long barn, moving the main bathroom closer to the glazed link. But the couple didn't like that the original plans had separated the square barn into several rooms with a mezzanine above. 'The best thing about this building is its high ceiling, so we decided to keep it as one large, open-plan kitchen, dining and living space,' Nick says. 'This way we can properly appreciate its structure.'

Another issue with the original design was its small windows. 'The barn has uninterrupted views and is not overlooked, so we felt big windows and doors would tie the buildings to the landscape,' says Nick. 'Glazing was also a way to create a visual connection between the living spaces. The narrow vertical window in the living area allows us to see across the courtyard to the long barn. Without it the house would feel quite different.'

Nick called on his friend John McSweeney, a structural engineer, and was pleased to hear that the barns were in good shape, with solid blockwork walls, concrete floors »



Concealed LEDs emphasise the angled ceiling in the family bathroom. Nick made the vanity unit from plywood

ABOVE LEFT Vertical grooves were routed into the door of the family bathroom, echoing the pattern of the external cladding



At one end of the long barn the main bedroom features a restful palette of warm whites and pale greys



and footings built into strong, stable chalk ground. The front wall of the long barn needed reinforcing with a steel beam and two supporting blockwork walls inside, while new steel-framed roofs replaced the old.

By the time the sale was complete in March 2018, the couple were ready to submit their planning application, which was approved without a hitch in July. Work began the following month, with a project manager taking charge after Nick struggled to find a suitable building contractor.

Once the building was watertight, Nick and Tara decided to take over the project management themselves as they weren't entirely happy with the standard of work already completed. 'The conversion was a big deal for us,' explains Nick. 'We wanted enthusiastic workers and a high-quality finish.'

By then the couple's daughter, Ada, aged two, had been born, and life with a baby in a caravan during winter

had become stressful. Luckily, some kind neighbours suggested they made a temporary move into their annexe.

But finding good trades was still a problem. Nick discovered the battens for the external cladding hadn't been attached straight and the work had to be redone. 'The cladding was a huge part of the design,' he says. 'I'd spent hours working out the spacing of the timbers and I needed the plan to be followed precisely. A family friend came on board with a colleague and they did a brilliant job.'

Inside the barns, a palette of natural materials and neutral colours, along with polished concrete flooring and a creative use of plywood, allow the high ceilings and countryside views to take centre stage. 'We like having a glass of wine in the glazed link or a cup of coffee on the window seat in the living area,' says Nick. 'These moments allow us to see the house from a different perspective and appreciate it all over again.' **GO**

ABOVE Windows on three sides of the bedroom give views of the countryside, while a doorway by the bed leads to a dressing room and en suite

SUPPLIERS

PROJECT TEAM

Design Nick Jordan (studio-jordan.com)
Structural engineer Michael Alexander (maengineers.com)

STRUCTURE

All steelwork Able Steelwork and Metalwork (ablesteelandmetal.com)
Timber cladding Millworks (millworks.co.uk)

Roofing Cladco Roofing (cladco.co.uk)
Bi-fold doors and windows Idealcombi (idealcombi.com)

FIXTURES AND FITTINGS

Kitchen cupboard doors Croftons Interiors (croftoninteriors.com)
Kitchen cupboard handles Buster + Punch (busterandpunch.com)

Worksurface Houseworks London (houseworkslondon.com)
Bathrooms Lusso Stone (lussostone.com)

Tiles and shower tray Parkside (parkside.co.uk)
Lighting Wever & Ducre (weverducre.com), Ikea (ikea.co.uk)

Etsy (etsy.co.uk),
Pooky (pooky.com)

FURNITURE AND ACCESSORIES

Sofas West Elm (westelm.co.uk),
eBay (ebay.co.uk)
Cushions Sourced by Holly (sourcedbyholly.co.uk)

As in the rest of the house, a shadow gap runs along the base of the walls in Ada's bedroom in place of skirting boards

