

DESIGN DRAMA

With the interiors of this longed-for extension twelve years in the making, an architect's creative vision gave Karen Dimitriou's ideas the wow-factor she was seeking

Words: Jane Crittenden | Photography: Andrew Beasley



Eye-catching steel-framed glazing emphasises the asymmetrical feature roof and zones the room. A simple palette of materials and colours tone in with the rest of the house with a matt finish to the **microcement walls**, from Daila Mano, plus the oak **flooring** and Silestone **worktops**, supplied by GSB Building.

The FACTS

Who? Karen and Paul Dimitriou and their son, Ieger, nine.
What? Extending the ground floor of a detached four-bedroom 1930s house.
Where? South west London.
Cost? £275,000.
Time? Six months.



Sinking the living room adds volume to the space. The sofa, from Raft, is angled to look back through to the kitchen and outside. **Microcement**, Daila Mano; **radiators**, Bisque; **chandelier**, Soho Home.

After buying a detached 1930s house with good transport links to central London for their jobs, Karen Dimitriou, a children's clothes designer, and her trader husband, Paul, took their time before embarking on a large project that included an L-shaped single-storey rear extension. "The previous owners had added space on the side as well as a conservatory, but all the rooms were separated with low ceilings and lots of dark wood," Karen recalls. "We wanted to open everything up and go out to the back but not until we could afford to make a dramatic change." The couple temporarily painted the old kitchen light grey and over time decorated and brought the rest of the house up to date before starting the works on their generous rear extension. Karen explains how their journey began when they spoke to GSB Building...

Where did the project start?

"As a clothes designer, I love interiors too, so I'd been planning our kitchen extension for 12 years. I wanted a large entertaining space, with steel-framed glazing as the number one priority. By the time we were ready to start, I had moodboards and Paul's sister suggested we chat to GSB Building as they'd worked together previously. I showed them my ideas for inside and told them I didn't know exactly how I wanted the architecture to look, but I wanted something a bit different. They recommended Granit Architecture + Interiors, who we discovered had designed some amazing projects - we really liked the way they played with different materials and created interesting spaces. I thought our project might be too small for them but they were happy to take us on." >

What ideas were on your moodboards?

"I like the industrial look but I needed a softer take on this to complement the 1930s house. So rather than going battered and rustic, I was thinking along the lines of Soho Farmhouse, bringing in textures such as natural wood flooring and microcement walls to soften the harder elements of the framed glass and metal. Decoratively, the open-plan room had to flow with the rest of the house. This is made up of four neutrals, so I kept the palette tight with colour and materials and all the surfaces have a matt finish. Having this idea set in my mind so long ago, which I still love and is still relevant in interiors today, assures me it's a look that will last."

How did Granit respond to your brief?

"We wanted a sense of space and light and Granit came back with an asymmetric roof design, which we thought was brilliant – particularly as it complemented my idea of a sunken lounge. Here, the extension projects out further than the rest of the new building and gives us views of the garden on two sides. I love how the team put the framed glazing at the heart of the design, which follows the slope of the roof. The highest point is 3.5m – it's like a sculpture."

How did you decide where to buy the kitchen?

"We went to see a few companies but because some of the cupboards needed to be specific sizes – for example the bank of three with doors that slide back – quotes were extortionate. In the end, I drew the kitchen on Adobe Illustrator, designing shaker-style cupboards and planning out the shelves and compartments I needed inside. GSB worked out the sizing and built everything and this proved very cost effective."

Were there any challenges in the project?

"I wanted to make a feature of the structural steel beams, so that meant the range cooker had to be in a certain place for the extractor to fit and for cupboards to be symmetrical on either side. Recessing blinds into the sloping ceiling was the biggest headache, so they sit horizontally across the top of the doors and we've left the angled glass above uncovered. Apart from delays and difficulties with the window supplier, the build went smoothly and was done in six months, plus we were able to stay in the house throughout. GSB did a brilliant job – they made the kitchen come to life."

Any compromises?

"We couldn't have underfloor heating because the boiler was in the utility room at the back of the old garage and not connected to the kitchen. Running the pipes would have meant taking up the original parquet, which would have been expensive, plus we didn't want to ruin the floor. Instead, we have chunky Bisque radiators made to a bespoke size so they do the job properly. We were going to paint the kitchen in Farrow & Ball's Railings, but colour-matched instead. Doing this means you'll never get precisely the same shade, but it worked in our favour. We're south-west facing and with all the glass we get a lot of light, which makes the kitchen look deep black or more of a charcoal grey depending on the time of day."

What's been the biggest success?

"It's a gutsy thing to add an unusual extension onto the back of your home, because there's always the worry that it might not appeal to other people if you sell. We've had nothing but positive comments from friends, as well as friends of friends. In fact, some have been inspired to be more creative in their own projects, which is testimony to Granit's design and GSB's attention to detail. The outcome is fabulous, we love it all. The room has added so much more to our lives." >



Bespoke cupboards reach the ceiling for a clean look without pelmets. **Doors**, GSB Building; **paint**, for similar, try Farrow & Ball.



The island is kept clutter free with drawers for cutlery and utensils across from the Mercury **range cooker** from Coopers Appliances. Cosentino's Silestone quartz **work surfaces** have a suede finish in the matt look Karen likes.



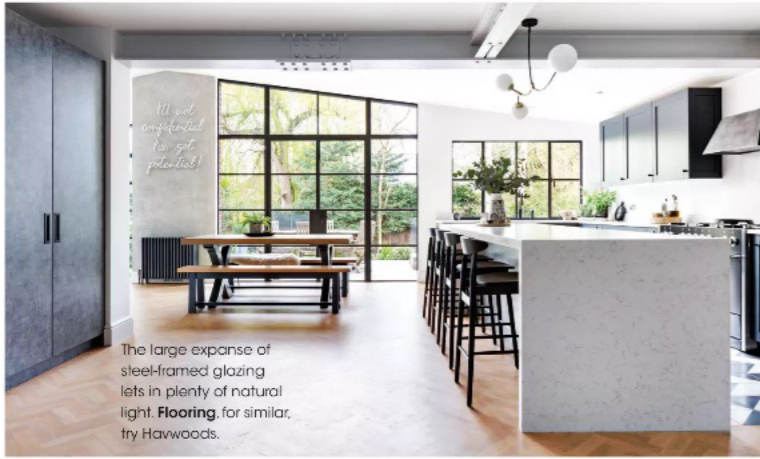
The island back panel, supplied and fitted by GSB, was inspired by the look of the cooker hood, from **Faber Barstools**. Viva Lagoon.

Karen's
WORDS OF WISDOM

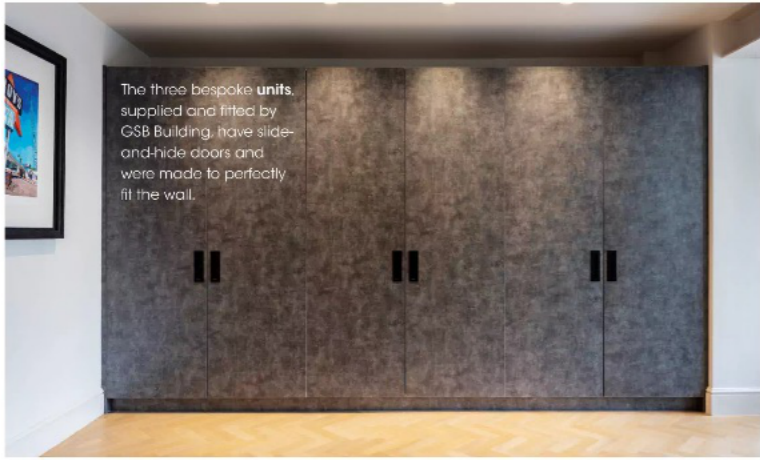
- Gather as many images as possible from magazines, Instagram and Pinterest. The architect and builder you work with are visual people and will understand what you want if you show them. Also include what you don't like.
- Get advice from Instagrammers. I loved the grey microcement wall on someone's page and cheekily asked if she could tell me which Farrow & Ball colour was the closest match. It meant I could be assured it was the right shade.
- Don't be afraid to change your mind. Although making all the decisions before you start means managing your budget better, if something doesn't feel right, then speak up straightaway.



Monochrome **floor tiles**, from Bert & May, have a reclaimed, worn look that's forgiving in the high traffic area.



The large expanse of steel-framed glazing lets in plenty of natural light. **Flooring**, for similar, try Hawwoods.



The three bespoke units, supplied and fitted by GSB Building, have slide-and-hide doors and were made to perfectly fit the wall.



The formal dining room leads off the sunken living room. Darker decorations in Farrow & Ball's Railings is a deliberate contrast to the lighter new space yet ties in with the kitchen. **Table and chairs**, for similar, try Vinterior.

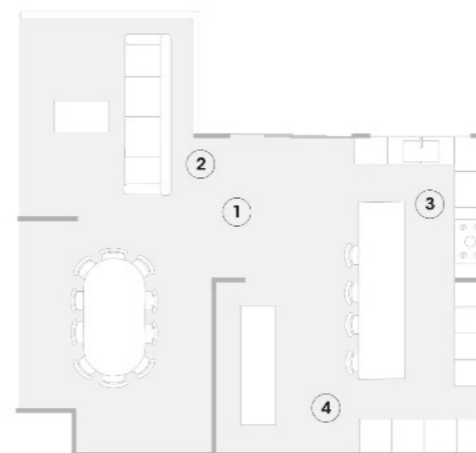
left Karen designed the cupboards to have dedicated functions. The first serves as a breakfast pantry and for housing small appliances. The second is a gin bar and wine rack, and the third houses a TV and AV equipment.



SOURCEBOOK

DESIGN Granit Architecture + Interiors 020 7924 4555 granit.co.uk
Building work, joinery, oak flooring, kitchen, worktops GSB Building gsb-building.co.uk
Handles Buster + Punch 020 7407 0888 busterandpunch.com
Microcement Dalla Mano 07802 758651 dallamano.co.uk
Appliances Coopers Appliances 020 8876 1246 coopersappliances.com
Floor tiles Ben & May 020 7352 490 benandmay.com
Lighting Soho Home 020 3819 8199 sohohome.com, Holloways of Ludlow 020 7605 0660 hollowaysoftuldlow.com
 For full stockist information, see page 142. Search for more suppliers at thesothworkrooms.com/directory

left The new red brickwork and black zinc roofing complement the house. The staggered extension leads seamlessly onto a raised terrace with planting that can be enjoyed inside and out. **Design:** Granit Architecture + Interiors, **build:** GSB Building.



The PLANS

The owners extended their detached four-bedroom 1930s house to open up rooms and connect spaces on the ground floor.

- 1 Flow** Steel framed internal glazing connects the formal dining room and kitchen on one side and opens to an extension with the sunken living room on the other.
- 2 L-shaped layout** Lowering the living room by about 40cm separates the relaxing space from the busy cooking and eating zones. The staggered layout creates different angles and viewpoints to the garden and kitchen for drama and interest.
- 3 Working triangle** The kitchen arrangement remains largely the same, with an extended section making provision for extra storage and worktop space. The sink has been pushed out to the new window, the range cooker moved to the extended wall, while the fridge-freezer remains in the same place.
- 4 Cupboard trio** As the room lacked storage, Karen decided to use every inch of space and had three double units made to perfectly fit the wall.



The staggered extension design creates a comfortable outdoor seating area, ideal for entertaining in summer.

1

2

3

SHOP THE LOOK

4

1 Teebah two-light opal ceiling pendant, £129, Lights & Lamps, lightsandlamps.com 2 Goodrich raw oak engineered flooring, £113 per sq m, Woodpecker, woodpeckerflooring.co.uk 3 Dodie paint, £52 for 2.5 litres, Coat, coatpaints.com 4 Retromix Cube medium tiles, £49.75 per sq m, London Tile Co. londontile.co.uk