

VIEWING SPACE

A striking display wall and full-height glazing makes Veerusha Diah and Yogesh Bhoola's extension an uber-stylish space to hang out – with essential garden connection

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Profile

THE OWNERS

Veerusha Diah, a dentist, her husband, Yogesh Bhoola, an IT service manager, and their son, Hishal, eight

THE PROPERTY

An extended five-bedroom 1930s semi in Woodford Green, east London

PROJECT COST

£260,000

An industrial look suits the lofty extension that sits one-and-a-half metres lower than the rest of the house. A couple of steel supporting posts remain exposed with the other six hidden in the perimeter walls. Underfloor heating runs beneath the micro-cement floor and timber clads the ceiling. 'We didn't think we could afford to do this,' says Veerusha. 'Nasim sourced wider planks as we didn't need so many and they look just as good.'

Marine plywood **kitchen**. Harmony Joinery. Revolver **bar stools**. Coexistence. **Dining table and chairs**. John Lewis & Partners. TR Bulb **pendant light**. Menu. Lo-Carbon Revive 7 **extractor fan**. Vent Axia



Extending out to the side and incorporating the old garage into the house has created a utility and cloakroom stepped up behind the kitchen. The bank of cupboards behind the island has masses of storage and two fridge-freezers for keen cook Veerusha. 'I love the sunken design of the Italian hob – I bought it before we'd even got planning permission!'

Marine plywood **kitchen**, Harmony Joinery. White quartz **worktop**, The Marble Group. **Hob**, Barazza



Eye-catching shelves fill the entire wall across two rooms, displaying books, trinkets and mementoes. 'This is one of my favourite places to sit,' says Veerusha. 'They make the house feel like a proper family home.'

Carl Hansen Dapper **lounge chair** and CH72 **sofa**; Hans J. Wegner **sofa**; Pion S and L **lamps** (on shelf); Slit XL **coffee table**, all Coexistence. Bloomingville rose pink linen **cushion** (on chair), Hurn & Hurn. Large **terrarium**, Green Factory, (on shelf). Rosario **vases**, Anthropologie

AFTER 10 years of living in a flat without a garden near a busy road in north London, Veerusha Diah and her husband, Yogesh Bhoola, decided it was time to move to a quieter neighbourhood. The South African couple longed for a home with space and light for themselves and eight-year-old son Hishal, and found this dated 1930s semi-detached nearby that was ripe for renovation. The couple planned to extend and convert the loft, and a kitchen-dining-living extension with garden connection was a priority. Veerusha explains how they brought the wow factor to their ordinary semi.

STEP ONE

MAKING IT WORK

'South African homes are airy spaces with lots of light that link to huge gardens,' says Veerusha. 'I visualised a wall of glazing across the back of the house with unobstructed views all the way through from the front door. I wanted to be able to slide open the doors and step straight into the garden, but when we first came here, we weren't sure if it would be possible. Access was through a side kitchen door, down steep steps and around to the back – the level change was big, about 1.5m. Luckily, we discovered there was a basement and incorporated this into the kitchen-living-dining extension to make the new floor flush with a new terrace. We also extended to the side to fit in a utility.'

STEP TWO

DESIGN IDEAS

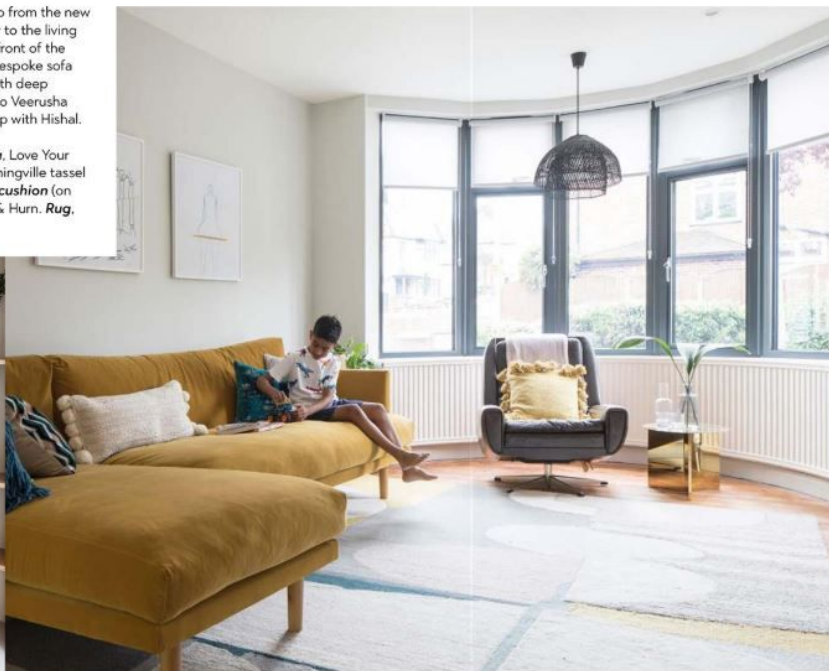
'I found our designer, Nasim Köerting, after a chance conversation with her as she's one of my patients! Yogesh and I looked at her work and thought her design approach was just brilliant. We told Nasim about our concept, and how we wanted to step down from the rest of the ground floor that remains at street level. Our biggest concern was that the drop in levels would make the extension feel too cavernous and empty. Nasim showed us a 3D visualisation of the room. We immediately loved the industrial feel – particularly the wood-clad ceiling and bespoke shelving that runs along the entire wall on one side of the house. It's such a clever idea and brings the whole of downstairs together.'





Steps lead up from the new kitchen-diner to the living room at the front of the house. The bespoke sofa was made with deep dimensions so Veerusha can cuddle up with Hishal.

Mustard sofa, Love Your Home. Bloomingville tassle edge yellow cushion (on chair), Hurn & Hurn. Rug, West Elm



STEP THREE

STAYING ON TRACK

'It was tricky to find a company who could make the doors to the garden tall enough for the high ceilings so we could maximise the view. Yogesh found German-brand Schueco's slimline doors online and they put us in touch with UK suppliers – though quotes varied by up to £20,000! A structural engineer and architect put the detailed drawings together for planning and building regulations, but they were wary about us having such big doors. They wanted to put a supporting wall in the middle but this defeated the purpose of our design concept. We ended up having a lot of supporting steel and submitted our plans in June 2017. They were approved without question three months later.'

STEP FOUR

BUILD PHASE

'Soon after we moved into a one-bedroom flat nearby and stayed there for a year. Friends recommended a building contractor and they began the project from the bottom up. They had to get the extension structure in place before converting the loft. The builder project-managed as Yogesh and I work full-time. It was stressful at times – the micro-cement floor and cement patio were expensive, and the oak staircase isn't exactly the design I wanted. It was impossible to keep on top of everything when we were out at work all day, and we got to a point where we let things go because we just wanted the project finished. In hindsight, I should have asked Nasim to stay on to keep a close eye on the finishes.'

STEP FIVE

ZONING THE SPACE

'Nasim designed two kitchen layouts – one against the wall and this one with a large island facing the garden, which is ideal for me as I love cooking. I had a painted blue kitchen in mind at first and Nasim showed me visuals with contrasting plywood. I wasn't keen, but then began to see the clean simplicity of the finish, especially with a thin white quartz worktop. I sourced a kitchen cabinetmaker online, who we also commissioned to make Nasim's bespoke shelving wall. Now we're finished it's such a peaceful space to come home to and relax. We love entertaining, too. It's funny to see the slightly shocked look on people's faces when they first walk in – you'd never know how dramatically different our house looks from outside.'

Costs & contacts

Building work £160,000
Glazing £40,000
Kitchen £25,000
Professional fees £15,000
Bespoke shelves £10,000
Furniture £10,000
Total £260,000

Design Studio Köerting, studiokoerting.com
Builder Bass Studios, 020 8980 4725, bass-studios.com
Structural Engineer JC Midas Design, 07939 007617
Doors Bifold Door Factory, 0800 999 5575, bifolddoorfactory.co.uk

Above The brick used for the extension matches in with the front of the house to help unify old and new. The cement block patio is painted in grey outdoor paint.

Sliding doors, Bifold Door Factory

MY KITCHEN FAVOURITES

THE RADIO STATION I COOK TO

'Heart 80s on Alexa!'
Echo Dot smart speaker, £59.99, Amazon



FAVOURITE TV CHEF

'We love Nigella Lawson'
Nigella Bites by Nigella Lawson (£20, Chatto & Windus)

THE SPICES I LOVE COOKING WITH

'Chilli and garlic'
Spice bottle grinder in Moss Greens, £60, Nest



MY MUST-HAVE PRODUCT

'Our Franke 4-in-1 boiling water tap – it's amazing'
Omni 4-in-1 tap in copper, £1,646, Franke



THE FIRST MEAL I COOKED...

'A prawn and lobster curry. Hishal loves seafood'
Javi terrazzo serving board, £25, Habitat