

EXTENSION 1

# 'EVERYDAY LIFE IS SO MUCH EASIER NOW'

Graham and Pamela McLean traded an impractical townhouse in Bath for a family-friendly property, which they transformed into a modern retreat



← **CLEAN LINES**

Sliding doors, floor-to-ceiling glazing and a brick terrace have given the back of this home a modern makeover, which the local planners were happy with

↑ **SMART LOOK**

Large floor tiles create the illusion of a bigger space in the new kitchen-diner, and a green splashback enlivens the room with a flash of vibrant colour



**STYLING TIP**

*In darker rooms, maximise the sunlight by purchasing glossy cabinets and floor tiles to help bounce the natural light around the room*

**CLEVER APPROACH**

Instead of a sink, the couple installed a hob on their large kitchen island. 'We wanted to avoid having dishes pile up in the middle of the room,' says Graham

EXTENSION DETAILS

**HOMEOWNERS**

Graham and Pamela McLean, both doctors

**AGES** Both 43

**FAMILY** Two boys, 21 and 10, and two girls, eight and four

**LOCATION**  
Bath

**PROPERTY**

Five-bedroom Sixties detached house

**COST OF NEW EXTENSION**

<b>Demolition</b>	£7,750
<b>Ground-floor glazing</b>	£16,000
<b>Kitchen</b>	£15,000
<b>New walls &amp; cladding</b>	£4,200
<b>Replacement windows</b>	£2,830
<b>Roof lights</b>	£3,020
<b>Professional fees</b>	£40,200
<b>Build cost</b>	£151,300

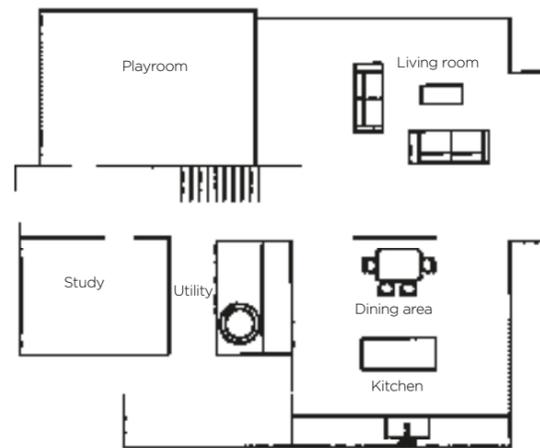
**TOTAL** £240,300

**PROJECT BRIEF**

To transform a Sixties house with a cluttered layout into a welcoming open-plan space with a better connection to the garden

→ **VIEW THE FLOORPLAN**

The house has been extended by 77sqm at the back and to the side to create a new kitchen-diner, an open-plan living room, and a covered terrace. The old kitchen has been turned into a utility room with storage, and a fifth guest bedroom has also been added on the first floor



**B**ath's townhouses look like dream homes from the outside, but it's a different story living in one, especially when you are raising young children. So Graham and Pamela McLean decided to buy a family house, a mile from the city centre, which would allow for more lateral living.

'It's divisive for a family living on multiple floors – everyone is always in different rooms – so we wanted to move to a house where we could all be involved with each other,' says Graham.

The house still needed work, but it had potential, with a good-sized garden, four bedrooms on the first floor, and all the living spaces on the ground floor.

'It was a bit of a mess to start with,' says Chris Mackenzie from Designscape Architects, who was hired to renovate the house. 'You had to go down steps from the living room and climb over a flower bed to get to the garden, or negotiate your way through a utility room ▶





← **SPACE DIVIDER**

Walls in the living room were removed to open up the downstairs area, but one partition was retained to section off the new kitchen-diner



↑ **COOL CONTRAST**

A timber-clad entrance has been added at the side of the house, which leads straight to the new kitchen and also incorporates a bike shed at the front

and downstairs WC. The rooms were also long and narrow, so it felt like walking through railway carriages.'

To rectify this, Chris added large sliding doors and a terrace at the back, and demolished a garage at the end of the driveway to extend the house up to the side boundary, where a new kitchen-diner now stands. The old kitchen has been turned into a utility room and storage, and walls surrounding the living room have been knocked through, so it feels more open. A new guest bedroom has also been added above the kitchen-diner for Graham's 21-year-old son, who visits regularly.

'The practicalities of everyday living are just so much easier now,' says Graham. 'The house feels more cohesive, and it's a lot lighter. And the kids love sliding on the wood floor and running round the space.'

In addition to the extension, the couple rewired the house and upgraded their heating, with an underfloor system and an improved set of pipes and radiators. They also installed solar panels on the roof to provide hot water and electricity.

'They've been one of our best investments,' says Graham. 'The solar electric panels produce more power

than we use, which we sell back to the National Grid for about £1,500 a year through the Government's Feed-in Tariff scheme. It means they will pay for themselves in the next eight to 10 years.'

Planning permission was granted for the extension without any objections, even though the house is in a conservation area, and a party-wall agreement was reached easily with the neighbours, though Chris Mackenzie advises others to act on this early and check [planningportal.gov.uk](http://planningportal.gov.uk) for more information. 'It can really affect your schedule if you don't notify your neighbours soon enough,' he says. 'If they object and you have to get a surveyor in, it holds things up, and then you might lose your window with your builder.'

Construction was completed in about seven months, and Graham and Pamela rented a house elsewhere during this time. The final cost was £240,300, though the couple finished off some of the decorating themselves afterwards, as more money became available.

'We moved in with just a concrete screed, and found a local company to do the flooring later, which worked out cheaper,' says Graham.

They also saved on the kitchen by designing it using Ikea cabinets, dressed up with a Silestone worktop, a green glass splashback and high-quality appliances.

For others planning an extension, his advice is simple: fix all prices in the building contract at the beginning, so you don't run into unexpected increases later on, and expect to spend your contingency budget early. 'Unforeseen problems are common when you start, such as asbestos removal or needing stronger foundations,' Graham says. 'Everybody said we would spend our contingency budget in the first month – and we did.'

*Things we love*

■ **Lots of light** was important to us, so we used glazed floor-to-ceiling windows to open up the space. It also makes the garden feel more like part of our home.

■ **Underfloor heating** is a fantastic addition, especially in an open plan where there aren't many walls for radiators.

■ **The kitchen layout** – we designed it ourselves to make the area as efficient as possible.

SHOPPING LIST

**FURNITURE** Vittorio grey sofa, £999; Ritchie two-seater sofa, £549; both Made.com **FLOORING** Engineered oak floorboards, approx £60 per sqm, Interior Harmony **KITCHEN** Metod cabinets, from £52 each; Ringhult door and drawer fronts in high-gloss white, from £15 per pair; Blankett handles, £5 per pair, all Ikea. Kitchen tiles, approx £60 per sqm, Porcelanosa. ESW6229 warming drawer, £1,049, Miele. Panasonic NR-B53V2 fridge-freezer, £1,599, John Lewis

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