



IN BRIEF

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**LOCATION** Stoke Newington, London  
**TYPE OF PROPERTY** Terraced house  
**BEDROOMS** 3  
**PROJECT STARTED** January 2017  
**PROJECT FINISHED** December 2019  
**SIZE** 125sqm  
**COST** £110,000





# Levelling up

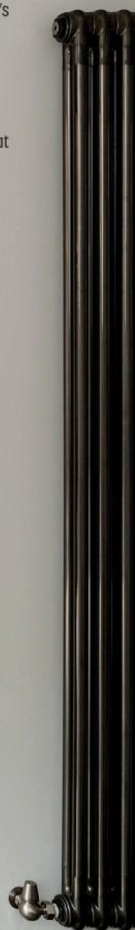
Four tonnes of plywood and some clever organisation has turned a modest terraced house into an ingeniously planned family home

WORDS ANNA WINSTON PHOTOGRAPHY FRENCH+TYE



Combining the kitchen and living space makes the most of the house's generous width

**OPPOSITE** A planning issue meant that Andrew and Beth's house was one of the few on their estate that couldn't add an extra level within permitted development rights





When Andrew Dainty and Beth Navin-Jones bought their home on an estate in Stoke Newington, north London, they had plans to make alterations. The house's location was ideal for them – close to good schools, near to a lively high street with coffee shops and pubs, and within easy reach of Beth's work as part of the sponsorships team at Tottenham Hotspur FC. As other houses on the estate had been extended upwards, the couple figured that gaining planning permission for something similar would be relatively straightforward, but they never imagined that a planning requirement would force them back to the drawing board again and again.

Andrew, 35, and Beth, 36, bought the two-storey, two-bedroom house in February 2016, aiming to renovate and extend in two phases, as this would give them time to raise the funds for each stage of the work. They wanted to combine the living room and kitchen to make the most of the property's 6m width, keep the garden intact and extend up a level to create an extra bedroom. 'The house hadn't been touched since 1972, which gave us a good opportunity to put our own stamp on it,' says Andrew, who works as a risk analyst.

The couple asked architect George Bradley, co-founder of Bradley Van Der Straten Architects, who lives on the same estate, to work with them on the project. He soon pointed out a potential problem with their plans: their home was one of two neighbouring properties that differed from the estate's other buildings. 'Most of the houses are long with a single pitch roof,' he explains. 'The longer the house, the taller the roof pitch.' But Andrew and Beth's home was shorter and has a lower roof line than others that had been extended upwards. The local authority would not permit building any higher than the tallest point >>





**LEFT** The textured Mortex render on the wall and 5m-long stainless-steel worksurface with welded-in sink give the scheme an industrial edge

**RIGHT** The cabinets feature bespoke fronts created by the contractor and finished with Farrow & Ball paint





**LEFT** In the interlocking upper levels, plywood has been used for both the structure and the furniture to make the design feel as seamless as possible

**RIGHT** A narrow console with hairpin legs, white metro wall tiles and a fitted bath increase the feeling of space in the bathroom

of the roof, which meant that a single-storey loft extension was completely out of the question.

A two-and-a-half-year back and forth with the planning department ensued, with various attempts at finding ways to work around the decision. Finally, they came up with the solution of reconfiguring the interior and using just the half floor-level space in the roof, so the project could be completed within the permitted development rules.

Remodelling the ground floor was relatively simple, with the dividing wall that separated the narrow kitchen from the more generous living space demolished. The new kitchen area runs along the right-hand wall and includes a 5m-long, custom-made, stainless-steel worksurface. The back exterior wall was knocked out and replaced with a set of sliding glass doors, each on its own track to enable independent movement. This allows the couple and their two children, George, three, and nine-month-old Max, to effectively double their living space in the summer by removing the barrier between the house and the garden. 'On summer afternoons, we sit at the table indoors and still eat in the sunshine, which is a pretty nice way to end the day,' says Andrew.

Two interlocking levels now occupy the area formerly taken up by the top floor and the roof space. The new top level contains George's bedroom, while the space below contains the main bedroom and en suite, a bathroom, and a second bedroom that is currently serving as a home office, but under normal circumstances would be a nursery for Max.

A creative use of materials, including a hidden steel frame that supports the change in the roof profile, helped to exploit every millimetre. The ceiling of the existing second bedroom is encased in a plywood box that creates a platform for George's bed in the room above, and this built-in furniture creates the illusion of a taller space. The architects also added a 1.5m-tall storage space accessed via double doors from the landing, which Beth jokes is her favourite room.

An internal window on the landing allows Andrew and Beth to keep an eye on George and lets natural light into the hallway. 'If we are downstairs we can pop up to the landing and quickly check if he is OK up there,' says Andrew, who explains that getting the »

Two interlocking levels now occupy the area formerly taken up by the top floor and the roof space







**LEFT** The plywood theme continues in the bedroom furniture, which helps to create a sense of continuity throughout the different areas of the house

design of the extension right was a balancing act. 'It was like a jigsaw puzzle. If we increased the size of George's room, we had to take space away from the landing. Every decision was a trade-off.'

Four tonnes of plywood have been distributed throughout the house, covering the walls, and used for seating, storage, a bed platform and stairs. The timber creates a continuity that helps the house feel significantly bigger than it is. It's a tactile surface that has another unexpected benefit. 'Everyone says it smells good,' says Andrew. Finished with a matt lacquer, it does require some maintenance to keep the plywood looking fresh, but the couple feel the effort is more than worthwhile.

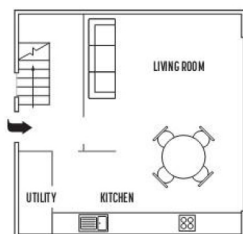
After so much time spent trying to make it happen, the second stage of the project, with the reconfiguration and extension of the upper levels, only took nine months – and with a relatively modest budget of £110,000. Andrew and Beth feel the planning stage delays were worthwhile. 'It's OK now because of what's been achieved,' says Andrew. 'If we'd built just another dormer, the house would not have had a special feel to it. And we appreciate it even more because of what we've been through.' GD

**LEFT** Although it's currently a home office, the second bedroom will one day become Max's nursery. Its ceiling is encased in a plywood box that creates a platform for George's bed in the room above

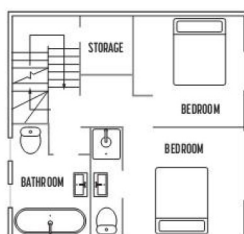
**RIGHT** In the main bedroom, leaving the structural elements of the ceiling exposed and adding new roof lights provides a much greater sense of space



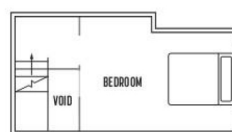
## FLOOR PLANS



GROUND FLOOR



FIRST FLOOR



SECOND FLOOR





A big interior window in George's room brings light into the triple-height stairwell and the hallway

**BELOW** George's bed sits on a plinth that doubles up as the ceiling structure for the bedroom below



## SUPPLIERS

### PROJECT TEAM

**Architect** Bradley Van Der Straeten Architects  
(b-vds.co.uk)

**Structural engineer** Constant Structural Design  
(constantsd.com)

**Contractor** Gregos Builders and Decorators  
(07427 332 883)

### STRUCTURE

**Plywood** James Latham (lathamtimber.co.uk)

**Windows** Velfac (velfac.co.uk)

**Roof lights** Roof Maker (roof-maker.co.uk)

**Roofing membrane** Sika Sarnafil  
(gbr.sarnafil.sika.com)

**Insulation** Kingspan (kingspan.com/group)

**Sliding glass doors** Maxlight (maxlight.co.uk)

**Mortex kitchen wall render**  
Beal (bealinternational.com)

### FIXTURES & FITTINGS

**Light switches** Astra (astra247.com)

**Timber finish** Bona (bona.com)

**Kitchen counter** Cavendish Equipment  
(cavendishequipment.co.uk)

**Kitchen cabinet carcasses** Howdens (howdens.com)  
**Paint** Farrow & Ball (farrow-ball.com)

### FURNITURE & ACCESSORIES

**Lighting** OAZQA (oazqa.nl)

**Kitchen table and chairs** Maisons du Monde  
(maisonsdumonde.com)

**Vintage Ladderax storage shelving**  
Diagonal Furniture (diagonalfurniture.com)