

THE GAME CHANGER

Susan and Mark Regan have updated a tired Bristol property with a 'life-changing' contemporary extension

Words **Victoria Jenkins** Photography **William Goddard**



Breakfast Bar

The new kitchen island provides usable workspace, along with the undermounted sink, and a breakfast bar with space for the family to dine.

When Sue and Mark Regan bought their 1950s, four bedroom detached home in March 2007, they already had their hearts set on extending.

"The kitchen and dining room were at the back with a single-skin utility room of some 2.5m x 1.5m tacked onto the end of the kitchen," begins Sue. "As our garden is about 24m long there was easily enough space to extend further into it. Not only did we have three growing children to accommodate, we also needed somewhere to entertain. Although we have a large garden, every get-together organised in it was spoiled by bad weather. So we wanted as big a space as possible indoors."

However, the recession hit the following year and so the couple had to put their plans on hold. It wasn't until 2016 that they decided to go ahead. "I'd met architect Elke Ditrlich through friends, and after looking at her website we asked her to design an extension," says Sue.

"She studied the plot and then drew up three different configurations for the space. The one we wanted measures just under 8m x 4m with two sets of glazed bifold doors, one fixed unit and a roof lantern. She also suggested we have another glazed panel put into what was left of the original external wall."

Elke Ditrlich explains her thought process: "The extension is almost full width, but we were advised to set it back by about a metre to minimise the impact on the neighbours. I thought this extra glazed panel would bring in lots of light to the existing house."

Sound Foundations

In the eight weeks it took the couple to get planning permission, the structural engineers, Morgan Structural, who came recommended by Elke, assessed the land. What they discovered was a lot of made ground (artificial ground, typically consisting of rubble) in the upper half of the garden. This meant the groundworkers had to go 2.3m below existing ground level to reach natural clay. They then had to dig another 2m into the clay to establish the level for the foundations — much deeper than 'standard' foundations.



The builders began work on demolishing the utility room and then spent a month digging the foundations. They then removed a wall between the kitchen and breakfast room to create one big open plan area. The extension covers some 31m² to accommodate the sitting area, while the newly fitted kitchen and dining area are sited within the original house.

"We had to raise the floor of the extension to be level with the rest of the house," adds Sue. "Previously there was one step down from the utility room into the garden and two big steps down from the dining room. We also had a 'sunken' patio so there were another couple of steps down to that, too."

To achieve a reasonable ceiling height, the extension has a flat roof. (The apex of a pitched roof would have reached above the first floor window level.)

"It's a single-ply roof with a parapet of aluminium coping and rubber membrane," says main contractor Craig Hall of Elite Design and Build.

"The extension is built of concrete blocks with a render finish and Thermolite blocks internally, plus a solid screed floor of 85mm, with 100mm insulation and under-floor heating on a wet system." ▶

The homeowners

Susan and Mark Regan

Location Bristol

The project

Extension

Build time

June - November 2016

Extension size 31m²

House cost

£600,000 (in 2007)

Build cost £81,600

Value £900,000



“Having so much glass makes you feel connected to the greenery outside”



On the Level

The expanse of bifold doors (above) offers views over the garden and fills the open plan kitchen diner with light. This space also opens out onto level decking, timber decking was specified to match the matt lacquered oak flooring laid inside. The Smart Systems double glazing is from New Age Windows and framed in Graphite Grey aluminium. The glazing, including the rooflight, cost £12,000.

The Final Product

The building work took 14 weeks and, apart from a delay regarding delivery of the steelwork, everything went smoothly.

The family remained living in the property for the duration of the work, but being without a kitchen for much of the build wasn't always easy. "The kitchen was inaccessible so the builders rigged up a microwave and a dishwasher in the hall while the washing machine was plumbed into the garage," says Sue. "But I had no sink or cooker for months and the only way I could rinse our crockery or fill the kettle was by using a hose which led from a tap in the garage to outside our front door! It was manageable in the summer but not as autumn crept on. Luckily we have two takeaway places and a pub nearby."

Mark spent a lot of time designing the layout of their space, using Google Sketch-Up, so the couple had a good idea of the

end results. "He also worked out where the light fittings and wiring for the speakers and internet should go as he wanted cinema surround sound," says Sue. "He sourced some of the remote-control electrical sockets and put in some of the wiring himself while the roof and walls were still accessible. He also designed and built the wall-shelving unit which has remote lighting fitted into it."

Sue adds: "Having so much glass really makes you feel connected to the greenery outside — previously we just had a couple of French doors in the dining room and you didn't have much of a view until you stepped outside. We wanted a space in which to entertain and now with the doors open in summer and the decking on the same level, the room exactly fits the bill."

"We live in this room all the time now. It wouldn't be going too far to say it's been life-changing." **1**

The Kitchen

The Masterclass kitchen was supplied by Nailsea Electricals of Bristol and fitted by Elite Design and Build. The kitchen units and granite worktops cost £15,397, excluding the Bosch and Neff appliances. The coloured glass splashback behind the cooker was from Marmobello and cost £450.



PROJECT NOTES

Build Timeline

House purchased
Mar 2007
Planning application
Mar 2016
Planning consent granted
May 2016
Start on site **Jun 2016**
Foundations completed
Jul 2016
Watertight shell completed
Sep 2016
First fix **Sep 2016**
Second fix **Oct 2016**
Final decoration **Nov 2016**
Work completed **Nov 2016**

Suppliers

Architect Elke Dittrich,
DHV Architects: 0117 914
8317; dhva.co.uk

Builder Elite Design and
Build: 07810 125207

Structural engineers
Morgan Structural Ltd:
morganstructural.co.uk

Kitchen
Nailsea Electrical:
nailseaelectricalonline.
co.uk

Flooring Cameron Lee:
cameronlee.co.uk

New Age Windows
(Smart System bifold
doors and glazing)

New Age Windows:
newagewindows.co.uk

Glazing supplied by
Trade Windows:
tradewindowsbristol.com

Lighting AB Electrics:
electricsandlighting.co.uk;

House of Fraser:
houseoffraser.co.uk;

John Lewis: johnlewis.com

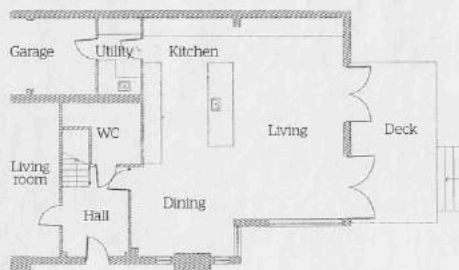
Paints Little Greene
Paint Company:
littlegreene.co.uk



The Floorplan

The existing dining room and kitchen have been knocked through and extended to create one spacious kitchen/dining/living area. This space opens directly onto a raised deck.

Extension plans



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