

'We swapped a conservatory for a glass box'

Fed up with their cramped kitchen, the Jones' decided to sacrifice their redundant conservatory and put the space to better use

When Jane and Simon bought the property nine years ago, they knew they would have to extend it. 'The kitchen was small, dark and dingy, and had a lean-to conservatory attached to it,' says Jane. 'We ate at a small kitchen table or in the dining room, which was too formal for everyday meals.'

PROJECT PLANNING When the couple were ready to tackle the problem, they contacted Elke Dittrich of Dittrich Hudson Vasetti Architects (dhva.co.uk) for advice. 'We wanted to make the most of the views, so Elke set about designing a glass extension.' As the family live in a conservation and green belt area, securing planning permission wasn't going to be straightforward, but Elke designed the extension so that it wouldn't detract from the stone of the original barn and the plans were approved in three months.

SUSTAINABLE DESIGN Builders demolished the old conservatory and built a 21sq m single-storey extension in its place, with a larger footprint. The old kitchen and new extension were combined to create one big, 43sq m family room. 'Before, we had a horrible ramshackle conservatory, but now we have a stylish extension with clean lines and sparkling glass,' says Jane. 'Whatever the weather, the room is a joy to spend time in. We feel very lucky to have such a lovely space in which to cook, eat, entertain and relax.'



BEFORE

The dated conservatory was hardly used



AFTER

The new extension has given the family space for a 43sq m kitchen-diner

Welcome to my home



Jane Jones, a freelance marketing consultant, lives here with her husband Simon, the MD of a design company, and their sons Harry, 21 and Charlie, 19.

THE PROPERTY

A four-bedroom detached barn conversion (originally built 100 years ago) in a village near Bath, Somerset.

Professional fees.....£6,000
Kitchen.....£40,000
Glazing.....£25,000
Flooring.....£5,000
Landscaping.....£5,000
TOTAL.....£141,000

THE VALUE

Bought in 2011 for £790,000; now worth £1.4m

WHAT IT COST

Building work.....£60,000

“Opening up the back of the house to make the most of the view has changed the way we live”

BEFORE & AFTER



Double doors were fitted connecting the dining room to the new space



A wall of sliding glass doors across the width of the new extension gives the family unobstructed views of the garden beyond

5 THINGS YOU NEED TO KNOW ABOUT...

SLIDING GLASS DOORS

Bruce Moore, sales manager of Renka gives us the lowdown

1 YOU CAN SUPERSIZE THEM

Sliding glass doors can be installed in wide panels up to four metres.

2 THEY HAVE SMALLER FRAMES THAN BIFOLDS

The narrower frames on sliding glass doors offer slim sightlines, allowing more light in.

3 THEY HAVE NEATER CORNER OPTIONS

You can choose open corners (two sets of doors that meet at right angles without the need for a corner post) as well as pocket doors (that retract into a compartment in a hidden adjacent wall).

4 THERE ARE A VARIETY OF GLAZING OPTIONS TO CHOOSE FROM

You can go for acoustic glass to reduce exterior noise, tinted glass for added privacy and even solar control glazing to reduce heat.

5 THEY CAN BE AUTOMATED

If installed with a motorised system, you can open and close the windows with just the touch of a button for ultimate convenience.

The new bespoke kitchen was made from sustainable wood



WHAT I'VE LEARNED

“There are other options than bifolds, which have heavy frames that block the view. I saw these sliding doors at a home-building exhibition”