

EXTENSION 1

'THE LAYOUT WAS CHANGED'

Jelena and Ben Cousins have turned a warren of poky rooms into a bright, open-plan space that's ideal for modern living

AFTER



← OLD & NEW

Although it's much more contemporary in style, the side-return extension echoes the architecture of the original Victorian house, due to its matching pitched roof design

→ SLEEK SOLUTION

Teaming handleless white units with matching worktops ensures the kitchen doesn't dominate the space, and open shelving is a great way to display crockery



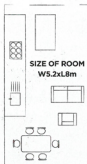
BEFORE



EXTENSION DETAILS

HOMEOWNERS Jelena and Ben Cousins, both architects for their own firm, Cousins & Cousins
FAMILY Sophia, 12, Isabella, 9, and Imogen, 7
PROPERTY Four-bedroom, Victorian terrace
LOCATION North London

COST OF NEW EXTENSION
Build cost £120,000
Glazing £32,640
Kitchen and worktops £10,000
Appliances £3,000
TOTAL **£165,640**





STYLING TIP

Plan the placement of furniture in order to create different zones within an open-plan layout

PROJECT BRIEF

To completely renovate the house from top to bottom, as well as redesign the ground floor to make it more open plan, adding a side-return extension to create extra space



When it came to renovating their dated Victorian family home, which included designing a ground-floor extension, architects Jelena and Ben

Cousins were in for a very different experience. 'It was a massive change for us to be the client,' says Jelena, 'but it really helped us see more clearly and better understand what big projects are like for homeowners.'

With fond memories of his childhood in north London, Ben was keen on raising his daughters here, so when he had the chance to buy and transform an old property in the area where he had grown up, it was too good an opportunity to miss. 'Many people had been put off by the state of the house,' explains Jelena. 'It had been in the same family since the 1930s and very little had been done to it – there was even an outside WC.'

With their design background, the couple knew they could turn it into a home fit for 21st-century living, so ▶



'Open shelves inject more life into the kitchen, so it feels less cold and clinical'

they embarked on an eight-month project that saw the house stripped back to the brickwork before they replaced everything, from the roof and windows to the electrics and plumbing. The plan for the downstairs was to reconfigure the layout to get rid of a warren of poky rooms, so internal walls were removed and a modern glazed structure was built to expand the space out as far as the neighbouring wall.

Because the rear of the property faces north, bringing in extra light was key. 'Often, when houses like this are extended into the side return, the middle reception area can become quite dark,' explains Jelena. 'So we opted for a frameless glass roof, with a triangular panel to add height and to allow more light to flood in.'

The couple wanted a clear separation between old and new, but it was important to them that the modern construction should complement the original house. 'Extensions can look alien,' Jelena says. 'To ensure ours would sit happily, we replicated the form of the pitched

roof.' A hinged door leading out to the garden and a frameless picture window further increase the light, while a bespoke cabinet underneath acts as a cosy seat with the added bonus of storage.

The couple knew they wanted handleless, white kitchen units, so they opted for a sleek designer solution from Bulthaup, teamed with white worktops. 'Wall cabinets would have enclosed the space, so we chose to have open shelves,' says Jelena. 'It stops the area from feeling too cold and clinical.'

With room for a living area under the glazed roof and a separate dining space, the house is now the family-friendly home the couple had always envisaged. 'Not long after the work was completed, four women knocked on the door and asked if they could look round,' says Jelena. 'They explained they'd been born in the house and were fascinated to see what we'd done. It felt wonderful to show them how the building has evolved into the perfect place for another generation.'

↑ SPACE DIVIDER

The structural post in the centre of the living space helps to define the different areas for cooking, eating and relaxing

✓ MAX HEADROOM

To create additional height in the extension, Jelena and Ben had the floor lowered so that it now sits two steps below the front part of the house

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Shopping list

KITCHEN Units and worktops, £90,000, Bulthaup **FLOORING** Oak engineered timber, £60 per sq m, Gravity Flooring **APPLIANCES** For a similar cooker hood, try the Falmec Plane Parete, £549.78, Arredatutto.com. For a similar oven, try the Miele H6760B ContourLine electric oven, £836, John Lewis. **LIGHTING** E27 pendant light in yellow, £52, by Muuto at Twentytwentyone. Foscarini Twiggy floor lamp in white, £996, Aram **FURNITURE** Joyce cabinet in red, £6,500, Pinch Design. For a similar sofa and armchair, try the Smithfield range in black leather, from £1,200 for an armchair, Habitat. Sax coffee table, from £570, by Terence Woodgate at SCP. Uppsala teal rug, £850, Designers Guild. For a similar dining chair, try the Radius oak dining chair, £170, Habitat

