

With a roof lantern above, the kitchen is light even on a dull day.



SEEING THE LIGHT

The dark kitchen of a pretty Victorian villa has been transformed into a light and modern space with a cool industrial vibe

Words: Amy Maynard Photography: Richard Gadsby

Set back from the fume-choked main roads running through Peckham, southeast London, are a series of picturesque streets lined by stunning Georgian and Victorian housing stock. It was here, in 2013, that Chloë and Stuart Williams found their detached villa built in 1873. The couple, who both work in publishing, didn't have any major renovation plans when they bought the house, but rather settled in to enjoy its rustic charm. However, when Chloë was on maternity leave after the birth of their son Rex, now three, she realised she wanted to make a few changes.

"When we bought the house, it had a fitted country-style kitchen. But it only had two small windows and some French doors, and as I spent more time at home I realised how dark it was," remembers Chloë. So the couple set about finding an architect and began discussing plans for an impressive extension. "Our brief was that we wanted a really light kitchen that brought the garden inside, and to have fluidity between the house and garden throughout the year. I also wanted a utility room," says Chloë. Planning permission went without a hitch and the couple's architect, Cross Harris, helped ►



↑ Wanting to achieve a timeless look that wasn't too on trend, Chloë and Stuart opted for classic, Shaker-style cupboards.

← With space for barstools, the island is the perfect place for friends and family to gather.

them find good contractors. By December 2015, they were set up with a makeshift kitchen – including a fridge, dishwasher and sink – in the living room at the front of the house, and work began.

Fast forward eight months and the kitchen had been extended by 8m, with two walls of black-framed sliding doors leading out into the garden. Gone were the dated, pale blue units, replaced by dark teal bespoke cabinetry. Enhanced by a new exposed brick wall along one side, a dining space with a vaulted ceiling, skylights, and a huge concrete table creates a stylish industrial-inspired look. An internal corridor, with pretty pink encaustic tiles underfoot, links the kitchen-dining room to the rest of the house. A utility room, cloakroom, and store room have been added off the corridor.

Chloë and Stuart were on the same page when it came to making decisions, with one exception. "The only thing my husband and I came to an impasse over was that he wanted a concrete floor. But I felt that, with two walls of glass doors and the brick wall, it would feel too severe and cold. So we compromised with a concrete table," she laughs. After giving up on the idea of a concrete floor, Stuart took it upon himself to find the perfect wooden alternative. Inspired by the floors at West London's Saatchi Gallery, he plumped for a Dinesen pale Douglas fir wide floorboard. "It's a living floor – so if it dents, you pour water on it and the mark pretty much disappears before your eyes," says Chloë.

When it came to the kitchen design, an island and a pantry cupboard were high up on their list of

priorities. Chloë had family-friendly touches at the forefront of her mind when it came to the layout. "We have low cupboards with easy-grab handles on one side of the island, so Rex can help play the table for breakfast," she says. "We wanted the kitchen to look modern but timeless; something that wouldn't date."

The aluminium-framed doors give the room a real wow factor. "We got them from Germany, and they were the single biggest expense. We had a big deliberation about whether we should go for Crittall, but then we decided we wanted a sliding version. We are really pleased with them," says Chloë.

However, the doors did bring their fair share of drama. "They turned up and they were grey, so I assumed they would be painting them black on site. Then we realised they were the wrong colour," Chloë says. "The problem was resolved, but it put the project back by about two months. Everything was put on hold because the builders couldn't continue with the interiors without them," says Chloë, who became pregnant with daughter Stella, now one, just before work began. After the delays, the project was finished just two days before she gave birth.

Despite the stress, Chloë says, it has all definitely been worth it. "While lots of people talk about moving out of London to the countryside, this project has given us a sense of permanence and makes us feel like we've put down roots. It was absolutely not about adding value to the property, but about how we live." ▶



← The dining area features a bespoke concrete table, which adds an industrial feel reinforced by the bare brick wall and black-framed doors.

↓ The pantry cupboard is perfect for stashing spices and store-cupboard staples.



"If your current kitchen lacks storage, then you will want to make sure the new design accommodates everything you and your family need. At the planning stage, it's a good idea to measure the height and width of all your favourite casserole dishes, pans, bottles, and jars to ensure you will have room for them in your new kitchen cabinets."

Ruth Bell, Editor



Q&A

Homeowner Chloë Williams says...

Did you make any major U-turns during the project?

When we first drew up the plans, we were going to go for a concrete floor and wooden corridor – but then we went for wood in the kitchen and colourful tiles in the hallway, because I was worried about how cold the space would feel with an expanse of concrete.

What was your biggest expense or budget surprise?

The aluminium doors were our biggest expense, especially because we wanted to achieve a floating effect with no visible pillars – but they were totally worth it.

Anywhere you managed to save money?

Every single time I placed an order, I asked for a discount or about any upcoming promotions; in the majority of cases, I got some money off. It's always worth asking.

Any advice for someone embarking on a similar project?

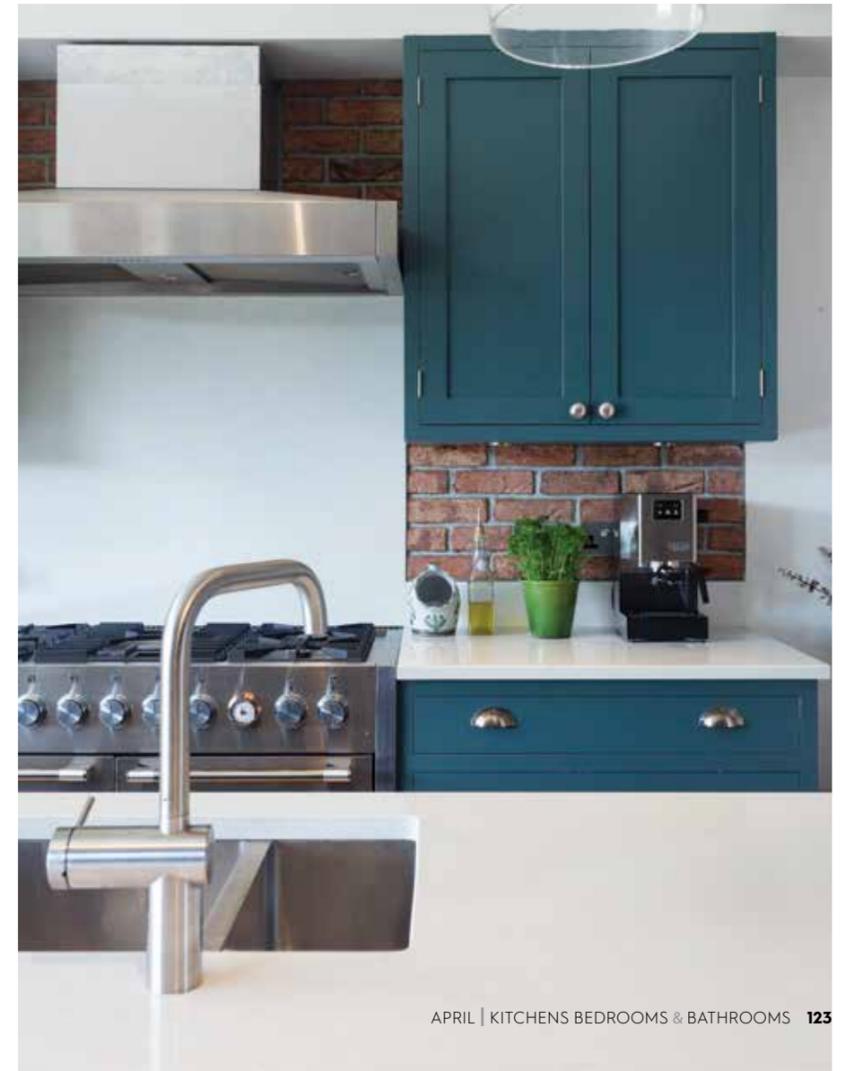
A friend told us to have a big board on the wall with the architect's plans pinned to it, so we could be reminded of what we were working towards and to help us deal with living in chaos!

“The only thing my husband and I came to an impasse over was that he wanted a concrete floor. But I felt that with two walls of glass doors and the brick wall it would feel too severe and cold. So we compromised with a concrete table!”

→ Placed behind the island, the range cooker is safely away from the room's living area.

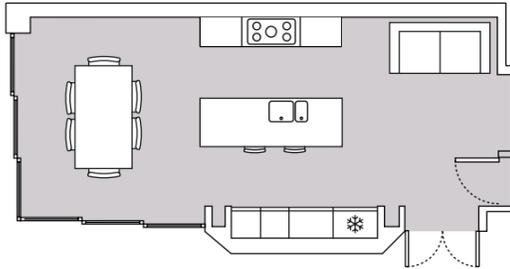
↓ Chloë and Stuart chose a wide-plank floorboard, making the space feel even larger.

↘ The worktop is a hardwearing quartz composite - perfect for a preparation area.



THE PLANS

The couple chose a large extension, housing the dining area, to bring light into their formerly rather dark kitchen.



SOURCE BOOK

DESIGN

Architect Cross Harris Architects (020 7580 9713 or crossharris.com)

Contractors Urban Living Constructions (020 7622 6600 or urbanlivingservices.co.uk)

KITCHEN

Cabinetry Bespoke, painted in Inchyra Blue and Railings by Farrow & Ball (farrow-ball.com), Folde Systems (020 8568 4662 or foldesystems.co.uk)

Sink Undermount stainless steel, Rangemaster (0800 804 6261 or rangemaster.co.uk)

Taps KWC Livello single lever mono sink mixer with swivel spout, Tapwarehouse (01202 556655 or tapwarehouse.com); Boiling-water tap, Quooker (0345 833 3555 or quooker.co.uk)

Appliances Range cooker, Mercury (0800 804 6261 or mercuryappliances.co.uk); Fridge-freezer, Fisher & Paykel (0800 088 6605 or fisherpaykel.com)

Worktop Compac quartz, MKW Surfaces (020 3078 8912 or mkwsurfaces.co.uk)

Pendant lights For similar try Pooky (020 7351 3003 or pooky.com)

Stools From a selection, Retrouvius (020 8960 6060 or retrouvius.com)

Door furniture From a selection, A&H Brass (020 7402 1854 or ahbrass.com)

DINING AREA

Doors Aluminium, Reynaers (0121 421 1999 or reynaers.co.uk)

Table Bespoke, Hartland & Hartland (07917 224154 or concretetable.co.uk)

Chairs For similar try Dwell (0345 675 9090 or dwell.co.uk)

Sideboard For similar try eBay (ebay.co.uk)

Pendant lights Farrier's Cage multi bulb, Made By The Forge (01473 487118 or madebytheforge.co.uk)

Wall lights From a selection, Fritz Fryer (01989 567416 or fritzfryer.co.uk)

SNUG AREA AND CORRIDOR

Sofa Brunel four seater, Heal's (0333 212 1915 or heals.com)

Wall light John Lewis (0345 604 9049 or johnlewis.com)

Rug Checker, Loaf (0845 468 0698 or loaf.com)

Tiles Pradena, Bert & May (020 3744 0776 or bertandmay.com)

COST

A similar kitchen would be priced from £14,000

KBB



The impressive extension was created to unite the house with the garden.