

EXTREME TRANSFORMATIONS

5 makeover ideas to add value to your home

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* BARN CONVERSION * BASEMENT RENOVATION

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The extended first floor provided space for three bedrooms

BEFORE



The original house looked a bit like a large garage and had a tiny first floor with one bedroom, which wasn't enough for the couple

EXTREME TRANSFORMATION 1

'We nearly doubled the size of our house'

Adding a massive extension to the top of their home gave these owners space for their growing family

The owners of this Fifties house in Wallington, Hampshire were looking for a property with potential when they found this home in December 2006.

'Everything needed modernising,' says the owner. 'We fancied a challenge and we certainly found that with this house. People often described it as looking like a garage because it was so squat and boxy.' The property had a bedroom, bathroom, study, kitchen and dining room downstairs, but only one bedroom and a mezzanine landing upstairs, so the pair definitely wanted to extend.

EXPERT ADVICE Three years after moving in, the owners contacted Nigel Lewis of Space & Style Home Design (023 9252 5100; spaceandstyle.co.uk). The couple loved the modern designs that Nigel had produced for other clients and asked him to remodel their house, adding a massive first-floor extension under new mono-pitch roofs, which would create room for three bedrooms and two bathrooms upstairs. Planning permission was obtained and the couple employed MJ Byrne Builders (01329 662767; mjbyrne.co.uk), which began on site in March 2010. The owners moved into rented accommodation with their son, then seven months old, as work was also being done downstairs.

NEW LAYOUT The bathroom was converted into a study, with a new loo accessed from the hallway. Extending into the area behind the garage created space for a utility room, and internal walls were removed to combine the old study and kitchen into a big kitchen-diner, plus the couple had a modern staircase installed.

Externally, the property is barely recognisable thanks to its new roofs, powder-coated aluminium glazing and cedar cladding. The owners paid £239,000 for the property in 2006 and spent £170,000 remodelling it. The house is now valued at £495,000. They are delighted with their home, and its new layout is perfect for a young family – which is lucky as the couple have since had a new baby.

Trials & triumphs

■ What was the high point of the project?

'Moving in and living in a house which we'd spent so long imagining was the real high point. We were hoping for everything to be completed in time for our sons first birthday, which gave the builders six months to finish the work, and they managed it.'

■ Any low points?

'We upset the neighbours with all the delivery lorries that came and went, as well as the noise.'

■ Who or what was the project saviour?

'We were very lucky to have such a great designer and builder working as a team.'



The couple had walls removed to create a big kitchen-diner

BEFORE



The Fifties house had a large footprint but was cramped inside



The two-bedroom house has been extended into a five-bedroom property thanks to its new extension

EXTREME TRANSFORMATION 2

'We gave our Fifties house an eco makeover'

Vicki and Nick Wharton turned a fussy-looking Fifties house into a warm, bright family home

When Nick Wharton convinced his wife, Vicki, a teacher, that they should bid at auction for a run-down Fifties house in Bristol, she hoped they wouldn't get it. However, within two minutes of bidding, they had bought the ugly building, leaving Vicki concerned about their financial situation. 'We were paying rent and had a big mortgage to find for a house we weren't even living in,' she recalls. 'It was dingy, with just two bedrooms and a small kitchen. Its only redeeming feature was the large, south-facing garden.'

The couple, who have two children, hired Designscape Architects (01225 858500; dscape.co.uk) to come up with plans for a sustainable home with an open-plan kitchen-diner, as well as rooms to provide privacy and quiet. The architects presented designs that included a timber-framed rear extension, clad in render and cedar shingles. Planning permission was approved in October 2009 and the couple hired Moon Design + Build (0117 973 3284; moondesign andbuild.co.uk) to come up with working drawings and carry out the project.

ECOFRIENDLY INPUT Vicki and Nick also employed a consultant specialising in sustainability and renewable energy

to advise them. The result is that the new extension, which contains a kitchen-diner and three more bedrooms, is massively insulated, while solar thermal and photovoltaic panels are mounted on the roof. In the older part of the house, existing wall cavities and the loft space have been insulated, the exterior clad with insulating render and a slate roof and energy-efficient aluminium windows fitted.

FOREVER HOME The couple paid £490,000 for the original building and the build cost £275,000, with the property now valued at more than £850,000. 'I didn't really want to buy this house, but everything has turned out so much better than expected,' says Vicki. 'Now it's a warm, bright family home where we plan to stay.'



Trials & triumphs...

■ What was the high point of the project?

'Making the house as energy efficient as possible, because our fuel bills are greatly reduced.'

■ Any low points?

'Buying the house in the first place was a bit of a low point, because so much needed doing, and we had to make quick decisions about what we wanted.'

■ Who or what was the project saviour?

'Employing Moon Design + Build to produce working drawings and carry out the build meant that we could relax, knowing that everything was being handled by one company that was based locally.'



The impressive double-height dining area

BEFORE



The Sixties house looked like an old bungalow



Replacing the pitched roof with a flat version and adding glazing has given the house a contemporary look and better views

EXTREME TRANSFORMATION 3

'We replaced our roof and built upwards'

Derek and Louise Middlemas swapped a pitched roof for a flat design to create more space for a loft bedroom

A love of sailing led Derek and Louise Middlemas to buy a Sixties house in need of renovation on the Isle of Wight. 'We wanted to be close to the Solent and Louise has family on the island,' says Derek. The house appeared to be one-storey from the front, but is positioned on a hillside, so it had a hidden lower-ground floor level at the rear. 'Nothing had been done to the house for many years and it needed rewiring,' says Louise. 'We wanted a more modern, open-plan layout, so we tackled the upgrade in two stages.'

FRESH UPDATES First of all, the couple concentrated on modernising the property, and moved into temporary accommodation while their home was gutted, redecorated and re-landscaped. Louise and Derek's long-term plan, however, was to build a main bedroom in the loft to take full advantage of the property's sea views.

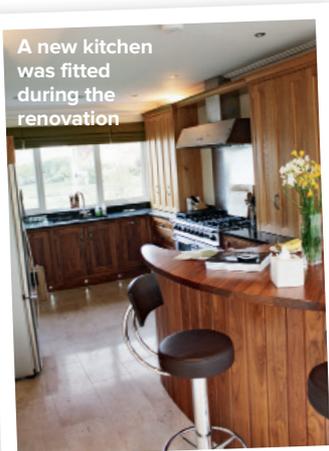
'We had several attempts at working with local architects, but creating enough space in the roof with a conventional dormer proved difficult and resulted in restricted head

height,' says Derek. Louise did an internet search and discovered Hampshire-based architectural practice Space & Style Home Design (023 9252 5100; spaceandstyle.co.uk).

Designer Nigel Lewis visited the couple's home and came up with an idea that incorporated flat roofs. 'It effectively gave us a whole new floor without affecting our neighbours' views,' says Louise. The island's planning authority initially refused the design on the grounds it would be 'out of character', however, the couple found several similar examples on the island and won an appeal.

ANOTHER LEVEL Work on the first floor began in June 2011 and the couple had to move into temporary accommodation once again, as the entire roof of the house needed to be removed. Strengthening work was also undertaken on the lower floors.

The couple paid £419,000 for the four-bedroom house in 2006 and spent around £220,000 in total across both phases of renovation work. The property is now worth around £720,000 and is virtually unrecognisable from its original form. 'Watching liners on the Solent from our new balcony is something special,' says Louise.



A new kitchen was fitted during the renovation



Trials & triumphs...

■ What was the high point of the project?

'It was when we could see the frame of the new structure taking shape. We stood on our new balcony and realised what a wonderful view we were going to have.'

■ Any low points?

'While the house had no roof, there were two days of torrential rain and water penetrated right through the building.'

■ Who or what was the project saviour?

'Nigel Lewis of Space & Style Home Design gave us the extra space and wow factor we wanted. We're very glad we decided to replace the pitched roof with a flat design and create a modern-looking home.'

BEFORE



Built in the 1860s, the barn was originally a grain store

The barn is now a spacious four-bedroom home with an open-plan kitchen, living and dining area on the ground floor



EXTREME TRANSFORMATION 4

‘I turned a grain store into a modern home’

Nicolas Tye converted an empty barn into a stunning home that’s packed with energy-saving technology

A combination of money-saving ideas and hi-tech, up-to-the-minute technology makes Nicolas Tye’s barn conversion totally unique. ‘The building came with detailed planning permission for a six-bedroom conversion, which was quite traditional with lots of very small windows,’ he says. ‘I spent a long time negotiating with planning and conservation officers before they agreed to my ideas.’

Fortunately, Nicolas is an architect (01525 406677; nicolastyearchitects.com), so he was well equipped to liaise with the planners. Having previously converted an old shoe factory, he wasn’t afraid to take on a large renovation, so when he discovered a derelict barn dating back to the 1860s, he took up the challenge of transforming it.

A SPECIAL LOCATION Positioned on top of one of the highest hills in Bedfordshire, the oak-framed barn provides panoramic views of the surrounding countryside. The barn’s original walls were built from red bricks and timber cladding, and elm trusses had been used to support the roof.

‘It was a great big cathedral-like space,’ says Nicolas. ‘I wanted to keep all that was possible of the existing framework, which meant sacrificing two potential bedrooms, but the layout opens up the living areas into one open-plan space.’

The ground floor was excavated and a first floor was built at one end, leaving a double-

height living area at the other end. ‘The entire building was stripped back to its frame and new brick-and-block cavity walls were built,’ says Nicolas. ‘A slate roof was constructed like a hat over the whole thing.’

Nicolas’s builder went bankrupt at the start of the project, prompting Nicolas to leave his job and work on site full time. ‘What started out as a catastrophe had a silver lining, as I was able to learn so much about the construction process,’ he says.

NEW TECHNOLOGY Having incorporated vacuum, ventilation and heat-recovery systems into the fabric of the barn, Nicolas saved money by using affordable materials elsewhere – for example, a metal staircase and plywood kitchen units.

Nicolas paid £245,000 for the derelict barn and spent £242,000 on the conversion. It is now valued at more than £1 million. ‘It really is a wonderful setting living so high up,’ says Nicolas. ‘I enjoy fantastic views and panoramic sunsets.’



Trials & triumphs...

- **What was the high point of the project?** ‘Finally getting planning permission after so much negotiation, and seeing the barn take shape.’
- **Any low points?** ‘When my first builder went bankrupt at the start of the project.’
- **Who or what was the project saviour?** ‘Taking over so much of the work myself meant I was able to finish everything as I’d planned.’



A full-height glass wall adds dramatic impact



The metal stairs appear to float behind a wall of Perspex

FEATURE: DEBBIE JEFFERY; PHOTOGRAPHS: PHILIP BIER/NICOLAS TYE ARCHITECTS; HENRIETTA WILLIAMS PLANS PERSONAID



BEFORE

The garage was old, too small for a car and hardly used



The old garage is now a glazed garden room linked to the main house by underground rooms

EXTREME TRANSFORMATION 5



‘We built more rooms underneath our garden’

Helen and Dominic Rayner needed more space, so they dug out the garden and created a glam basement

After several years living in their Grade II-listed London townhouse, Helen and Dominic Rayner and their two children, Josh, now 13, and Scarlett, 11, were fast outgrowing the space. They were seriously considering moving, when they saw an article about architectural firm Paul Archer Design (020 3668 2668; paularcherdesign.co.uk). ‘The projects looked amazing, so we got in touch,’ says Helen. ‘Our architect there, Richard Gill, was very enthusiastic and came up with a fantastic idea.’

GOING UNDERGROUND Underneath the back garden were some low, vaulted spaces, which had been converted by previous owners into a bathroom. There was also a disused garage at the far end of the garden, which Richard suggested turning into an extension, connected to the main house by a living area underneath the garden.

Working with the local planning department and listed-buildings officer, Richard drew up plans to achieve this, partly by using the original vaults and partly by digging a new linking tunnel. The builders, Design 2 Build (020 8467 1201; design2build.uk.com), then spent three months

excavating the garden. ‘They carefully dug out the space in stages – underpinning the vaults as they went,’ explains Helen. ‘The whole project took about nine months, but we were able to carry on living in the house and had no problem at all with dust.’

Now a chic garden room with three sliding glass doors, the old garage has retained its basic shape and size. Below it is a guest bedroom and shower room. There’s also plenty of space for the children to play, complete with an indoor swing.

BRIGHTEN UP Four flush, walk-on rooflights, made from nonslip glass with a dot print for privacy, were installed to let natural light flood in. In the new garden room, another skylight sits over the stairwell, allowing even more light in.

The original house was valued at £800,000 before work began and the project cost £310,000. The property is currently valued at around £2 million. ‘From the road, it still looks like we have a standard garage, so people are stunned when they see what we’ve created underneath the garden. It’s been the perfect way to add an extension without losing any outdoor space.’

Trials & triumphs...

■ What was the high point of the project?

‘Seeing our low-vaulted cellar enlarged to become an amazing living space.’

■ Any low points?

‘Not many – one glass skylight did crack when it was installed, but that was quickly replaced.’

■ Who or what was the project saviour?

‘The architect and builder made everything run smoothly because they had such good eyes for detail.’

The new basement has four walk-on roof lights

