



An unloved 1980s house has been extended in two directions to become the perfect family home

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HOME PROFILE

WHO LIVES HERE

Lynlea West, an interior designer, her husband Garath, who works in private banking, and their boys, Lucas, nine, and Alec, five, plus cat Tomasina

THE PROPERTY

A four-bedroom 1980s house built on a former lane/garage plot in East Dulwich, London

PRICE £430,000

MONEY SPENT £175,000

WHAT IT'S WORTH NOW

£1,100,000

'I prefer clean lines and simplicity, but it's also about the details and textures'

KITCHEN

The walls are painted in Farrow & Ball's Comforth White and provide a neutral base for the wooden and white gloss units from Rotpunkt. Navy leather bar stools from French Connection match the symmetry of the Habitat pendants above. A mirrored splashback is a clever addition, reflecting the garden back into the space ▶





Finding a good primary school was the impetus behind the West family's house search. Australian-born interior designer Lynlea was living in West Dulwich, south London, with her husband Gareth and son Lucas when the thorny issue of primary schools arose. 'We were surrounded by many outstanding primary schools, but fell just outside of the catchment areas. Then we went to a summer fair at a school in East Dulwich and I loved the feel of the area, so we began looking at properties there,' says Lynlea.

They had viewed almost 50 houses when they came across an unloved 1980s 'infill'. 'There's a story that, during the Second World War, a V-2 rocket shot up the road and into the lane where our house now stands and damaged the property next door,' Lynlea explains. 'At some point a garage was built on the plot, which was then demolished and a house was built in its place.'

Despite the property's tired state, the potential was immediately obvious to the couple. 'Although the bedrooms were smaller than those in a Victorian house, we were pretty sure we would be able to extend downstairs and into the loft, and the garden was much bigger than usual for the area,' Lynlea says.

Thankfully, the purchase went through without a hitch and, in September 2011, the family moved in. They had intended to convert the house from a three- to a four-bedroom home with a large kitchen extension, but circumstances dictated that work began a little sooner than anticipated. 'I became pregnant soon after moving in, so extending into the loft quickly became a priority,' says Lynlea. 'We had to apply for planning permission because we wanted to raise the roofline. Originally, we had a lot more glazing in the plans but, as we were the first people in the immediate area to convert the loft, some of the neighbours had concerns about us being able to look down on them.'

Having major building work done while expecting a baby obviously wasn't an ideal situation, but Lynlea didn't let it hold her back. 'I remember that while I was heavily pregnant, the builders would describe certain aspects of the build to me, but I'd always insist on climbing up a ladder to see for myself,' she laughs. 'Baby Alec arrived about a month before it was completed and everywhere was covered in dust.'

The couple lived with the downstairs layout for a few more years before starting work on the kitchen extension. 'Building began in early summer 2015 and it took about four months,' ►

EXTERIOR

The front door and gate are painted in Farrow & Ball's Manor House Gray.

KITCHEN/DINER

Huge patio doors and a skylight were installed to ensure the extension is flooded with natural light. A glass-topped table and rattan chairs add to the bright, airy feel.

LIVING ROOM

A built-in shelving unit makes use of the space above the sofa. The bronze figure is by local artist Catherine Macleod and the white penguin is by Gert-Jan Vlamming from Phing-Thing. The side table is from Andrew Martin and the framed artworks came from a gallery in St Ives.



'I love using plain linen fabrics, but then I might add sequinned cushions or a patterned velvet'



Lynlea says. Again, the family decided to stay put while the work was being carried out. 'The builders set up a temporary kitchen in our living room with an electric cooker and some worktops. The kids really loved it because we told them it would be like being on a camping holiday,' she adds. At the same time, the couple also redecorated throughout the house and replaced the family bathroom.

The interior is finished in a neutral palette with modern luxe touches. 'I've always loved contemporary styling, but I've never liked things to be too minimalist. Clean lines and simplicity work best for me, but it's also about the details and textures. For example, I love using plain linen fabrics, but then I might add sequinned cushions or a patterned velvet,' explains Lynlea.

Downstairs, the open-plan kitchen-dining room features pale walls with units in both white lacquer and natural timber finishes. Copper lights and navy leather bar stools bring the kitchen island to life, while the glass-topped dining table and rattan chairs are a successful juxtaposition. Huge sliding doors lead to the garden, with its pale walls and horizontal fencing. 'I feel as though my garden is a little nod to Australia. People often say they feel like they're on holiday when sitting out there,' Lynlea says.

Upstairs, there are two bedrooms, the spare bedroom/office and a family bathroom. The latter had a challenging layout so, rather than installing a standard bathtub, Lynlea explored other options. 'I came across a Japanese-style tub that two adults can properly fit in and enjoy a soak together, and we've had up to four children in there,' she laughs.

On the top floor, meanwhile, the loft extension houses the main bedroom and an ensuite bathroom. Here, the mirrored wardrobes give the illusion of space and Lynlea has used teal accessories to add drama to the pale walls.

Lynlea worked on large-scale hotel projects before opening her own residential interior design company. In fact, she says, finding bargains has never been easier. 'I like shopping at The White Company and French Connection. I also take pride in being able to spot accessory gems from Zara Home and H&M Home,' she says. 'You can find amazing things on the high street if you know where to look.'

• To find out more about Lynlea's interior projects, visit lynleaweststudio.com

FOR STORE DETAILS SEE **WHERE TO BUY** PAGE

MAIN BEDROOM

Lynlea and Gareth converted the loft to create a bedroom with ensuite bathroom. The mirror is from Haviland Designs, with the edge of the frame painted in Little Greene's Lead Colour. The wall is painted in Farrow & Ball's Cornforth White. For a similar lamp, try The White Company

BATHROOM

Floor space was limited, so the couple opted for a deep Japanese-style soaking tub from Omnitub

LANDING

A vintage console table creates an elegant focal point. The woodcut print by Anita Klein was a present from Gareth's mother when Lucas was born

