

INDUSTRIAL REVELATION



When Ruth Freedman and her husband bought their Victorian house, it was far from perfect – but a new kitchen extension, reclaimed antique pieces and industrial materials have brought it bang up to date

Words: **Debbie Jeffery** Photography: **Malcolm Menzies** Styling: **Sally Smith**



Far left: The Sebastian Cox Kitchen by deVOL is built from birch plywood carcasses with sustainable British-grown timber doors in an inky blue/black dye. It stains the material rather than laying on top like paint, allowing the wood's texture to stay visible and giving a tactile finish.

Left: Burnished copper worktops add colour to the kitchen. The surface is supposed to gather marks and patina over time, and should be washed using lemon with baking soda rather than chemical cleaning products.

Los ing out on their dream home led nuclear safety engineer Ruth Freedman and her husband Chris Wilson to embark on a major renovation project instead. “We’d set our hearts on another house, but the sale fell through and we were left hunting for somewhere else to live,” explains Ruth. “This house was far from perfect, but we decided we could completely redesign it and stamp our own identity on the rooms.”

The couple sold their one-bedroom flat and moved in with Ruth’s parents for 18 months while renovating and extending their new home. The semi-detached Victorian property in Tooting, south London had been virtually untouched since the 1970s and needed extensive work, including replacing the double-glazed timber sash windows, rewiring and plumbing.

“Chris’s brother knew our architect, Matthew Withers of RAW Architects, and we clicked with him immediately,” Ruth continues. “He told us we’d put together one of the most detailed briefs he’d ever seen – but he also made us think even harder about what we wanted and then came up with a fantastic design.”

Previously, the back of the house was a warren of tiny rooms, including a poky kitchen, a separate breakfast room, and a ramshackle lean-to conservatory. Combining these and extending out into the rear garden and across the side-return created one roomy kitchen-dining space, opening onto a terrace through full-height glass doors.

Ruth was determined not to install bi-fold doors in the kitchen. She preferred the look of Crittall-style steel doors instead, which are becoming increasingly popular. “Ruth loved the strong industrial look, and I designed the doors so that the glazing bars are off-centre and asymmetrical,” explains Matthew. “They meet at the corner. The roof then sails out above them to form a tapered cantilevered canopy, with the same shape echoed in the patio area.”

Planning permission was granted and work started in January 2016, when the rear and side walls were taken down and a new extension built using steelwork, blockwork, and reclaimed bricks. “The cantilevered canopy was the most challenging part of the design,” says Matthew. “A large steel frame was constructed, which allows the glass doors to meet in the corner without any support.”

Instead of building the extension right up to the sitting room window, a small courtyard – which brings in light and allows long views out to the garden – was formed. Meanwhile a new rooflight ensures every part of the kitchen is well lit. The steel doors create an industrial feel which is continued by a grey cement-based flooring covering the concrete subfloor and underfloor heating. Structural pillars have been clad with scaffold boards painted white for added texture.

“This was another of Matthew’s suggestions; he advised us throughout on fixtures and fittings,” says Ruth. “I had no idea an architect even did that! We worked with him by collecting our ideas for each room on Pinterest boards.” The kitchen layout was devised to accommodate an existing dining table and chairs, together with a large oak butcher’s block the couple found at a salvage fair. “It was the first thing we bought, before we even designed the kitchen,” says Ruth. Simple stained wooden cabinets were chosen for their rustic, industrial texture and handbuilt by deVOL.

Upstairs, the existing three bedrooms have remained in the same positions, although a new ensuite was created for the master bedroom. “We stripped back the floorboards in our room and finished them in a dark varnish,” says Ruth. “Everywhere has been re-plastered. We chose a deep blue paint for the bedroom walls, with wardrobes designed by our architect and new shelving I painted myself.”

Combining the separate bathroom and WC has created a spacious family bathroom, where the original floorboards have been painted white. Once again, an old butcher’s block, also found at a salvage fair, has been incorporated into the design by turning it into a custom rustic vanity unit for the rectangular reclaimed basin. By contrast, walls in the new ensuite wetroom – partitioned off from the master bedroom – have been covered in microcement, which has also been used for the floor in the shower area. A marine-ply washstand was coated in the same grey microcement finish.

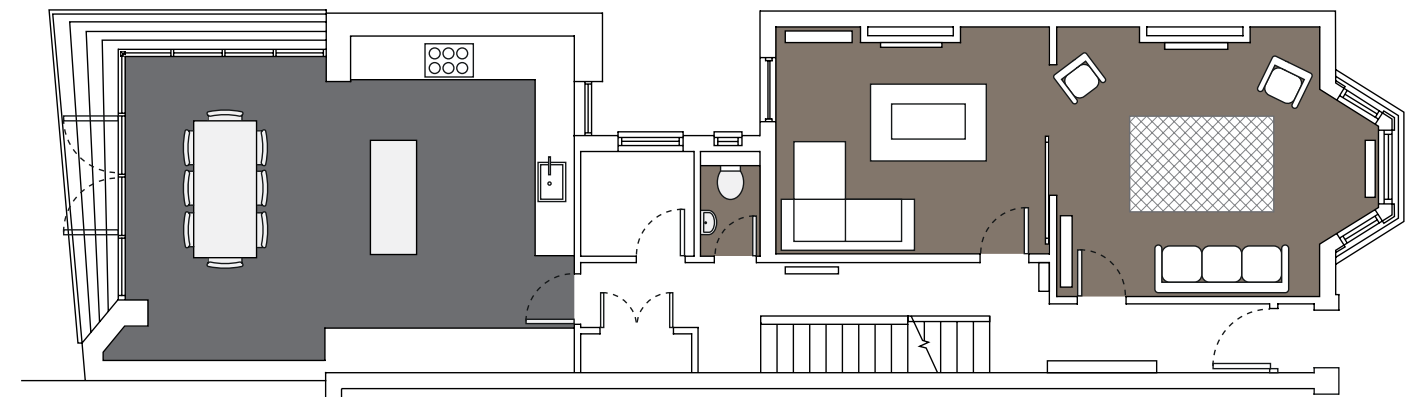
“We found out I was pregnant with our son Kit the week we moved into the house – so the third bedroom has become his nursery,” explains Ruth. “It’s been a huge renovation project, which affected every room, but now we have a fantastic family home designed to suit our lifestyle.”

KBB



Above: Like the oak butcher’s block below, Ruth and Chris found the pendant lights at a salvage fair and had them wired up by the electrician.

Far left: “We liked the textured rustic feel of the deVOL units, and the industrial edge of the copper handles,” says Ruth.





Above: Storage was a top priority for Ruth and Chris. To the right, the fridge-freezer has been inset into a whole wall of storage. The couple already owned the dining table and chairs, which came from a church and were found in an antiques shop.

Above, right: Extending the back of the house across the side-return has created a light-filled dining space with windows on two sides.

Right: The extractor above the hob was made using industrial ducting pipe. It works well with the professional-looking range cooker.

Opposite page: A niche was discovered in the ground floor cloakroom's wall, which has been highlighted with tiles found at a salvage fair.



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Below: In the front sitting room, the gas fire was removed and the fireplace opened up. London stock bricks were used to line the fireplace, and the surround was purchased from an antiques shop. Bespoke bookcases have been built into alcoves on either side.

Right: The wall between the two reception rooms has been taken down. Instead, a room divider made of vintage window shutters can be opened or closed as required. The tall steel window gives views out to the small courtyard area and the kitchen beyond.

Opposite page: A butcher's block and basin, both found at a salvage fair, have been combined to create a vanity in the family bathroom. The large basin also makes for an ideal baby bath.



Q&A

Homeowner Ruth Freedman says...



Any places you managed to save money?

We looked for deals, shopped around, and enjoyed going to salvage fairs. Our architect also tweaked the design to help us save money. For example, a simple copper pipe was made into a tap on our downstairs cloakroom and we used materials like painted scaffold boards on the kitchen pillars.

Is there anything you would do differently?

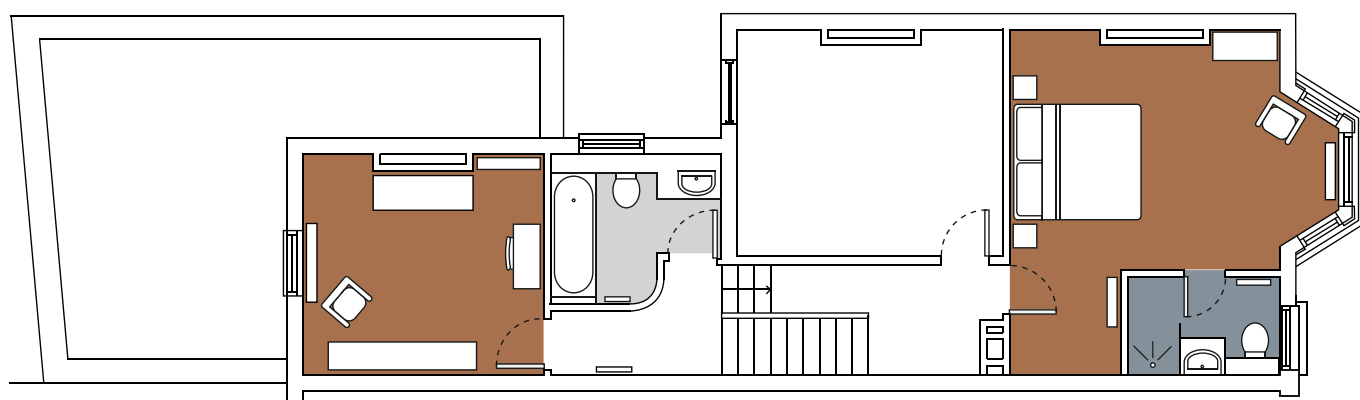
I don't think the shower flooring in the ensuite is going to last very long, so we probably wouldn't use the microcement in that area – although it looks great on the walls. Also, I would have preferred a whitewash rather than paint for the sitting room floorboards, which would have given a soft, bleached finish.

What lessons did you learn from taking on the project?

Communication is key – don't always assume someone has understood what you mean. We spent hours on Pinterest and shared our boards with the builder and architect. The main hiccup was probably the kitchen floor, which was laid after the kitchen had been installed when ideally it should have been done first.

Advice for someone embarking on a similar project?

Invest in a good architect – it's really worth the money and gave us peace of mind. At the start we wondered if we even needed an architect, but Matthew's design and input went above and beyond anything we'd imagined.



Above: The master bedroom at the front of the house has a bay window and varnished original floorboards contrasting with the deep blue-painted walls.

Above right: Simple mid-century style furniture keeps the look of the bedroom uncluttered.

Right: The new master ensuite features walls finished in grey microcement, which has also been used to clad the shower.

Kit's nursery has been inexpensively furnished with customised pieces, many of which were purchased from Ikea and painted by Ruth.



SourceBook

DESIGN

Architect Matthew Withers, RAW Architects (020 3603 1510 or rawarchitects.co.uk)

KITCHEN

Cabinetry The Sebastian Cox Kitchen by deVOL (01509 261000 or devolkitchens.co.uk)

Worktop Copper, Tipfords (01932 882211 or tipfords.com)

Butcher's block Salvo Ltd (01227 500485 or salvofair.com)

Floor Cement-based Pandomo finish by Ardex UK (01440 714939 or ardex-pandomo.com), applied by Caementa (020 3151 0041 or caementa.co.uk)

Glazing The Steel Window Company (01903 718808 or fabcosanctuary.com)

Rooflight glazing Vision (01379 658300 or glazingvision.co.uk)

Tap 3N1 mixer and boiling-water tap in brushed steel, Insinkerator (01923 297880 or insinkerator.co.uk)

Appliances Oven, Professional Deluxe 90, Rangemaster (0800 8046261 or rangemaster.co.uk); Fridge-freezer, RF9000, Samsung (0330 726 7864 or samsung.com); Dishwasher, ActiveWater 60cm, Bosch (0344 892 8979 or bosch-home.co.uk)

Wall and ceiling paint Milk Bottle kitchen paint, Crown (0330 024 0281 or crownpaints.co.uk)

Pendant lights For similar try Skinflint (01326 376893 or skinflintdesign.com)

Dining table and chairs For similar try Ebay (ebay.co.uk)

SITTING ROOM

Wood-burning stove Debdale 9104, Burley (01572 756956 or burley.co.uk)

Lighting Rota concrete pendant light, Clippings.com (020 3808 9449 or clippings.com)

Sofa Sofas & Stuff (0808 178 3211 or sofasandstuff.com)

Coffee table Unto This Last (020 7613 0882 or untothislast.co.uk)

Bespoke shelving and cupboards Harley Scott (07941 738635 or harleyscott100@gmail.com)

Curtains Cubis Antler, Romo (0845 644 4400 or romo.com)

Blind Artemis Magnesium, Romo, as before

Rug Tekouma Berber hand-woven wool rug, La Redoute (0844 842 2222 or laredoute.co.uk)

Floor paint Rust-Oleum Chalky Finish in Chalk White, B&Q (0333 014 3098 or diy.com)

Radiators Cast Iron Radiators 4 U (023 9316 2168 or castironradiators4u.co.uk)

MASTER BEDROOM

Bed Pak Shalstone bed frame, Ercol for John Lewis, (0345 604 9049 or johnlewis.com)

Bedside lamps, Matt Brass Linea Directional Wall Light, Rockett St George (01444 253391 or rockettstgeorge.co.uk)

Curtains Anthropology Collection, Medina Stone, Warwick Fabrics (01451 822383 or warwick.co.uk)

Shelves Shelfbar (0845 054 2793 or shelfbar.co.uk)

Wardrobe, bespoke cupboards and shelving Harley Scott, as before

Wall paint Scrooge's Nightmare, Valspar (0344 736 9174 or valsparpaint.co.uk)

NURSERY

Cot, changing table, storage unit, rug, rocking chair and lampshade Ikea (020 3645 0000 or ikea.com)

Curtains, Stars Orange Clarke & Clarke (01706 242010 or clarke-clarke.com)

Wall stickers Birch tree wall decal, Happy Wallz (happywallz.co.uk)

Wall paint Aged Parchment, Valspar, as before

FAMILY BATHROOM

Basin and vanity Butcher's block from Ardingly International Antiques & Collectors Fair (01636 702 326 or iacf.co.uk)

WC Saneux Bathrooms (020 8686 5100 or saneux.com)

Shower bath Bette Ocean (0844 800 0547 or bette.co.uk)

Brassware Bathrooms At Source (020 8870 0066 or bathroomsatsource.com)



Shower screen Merlyn (0808 101 1429 or merlynshowering.com)

Lights Hector Finch (020 7731 8886 or hectorfinch.com)

ENSUITE

Brassware Brushed stainless steel, Crosswater (0345 873 8840 or crosswater.co.uk)

Wall finish Microcement, The Flooring Co (020 8462 4050 or flooringco.co.uk)

Floor tiles Classic Casablanca Black Base Hexagonal, Mandarin Stone (01600 715444 or mandarin.com)

Basin Grosseto ceramic rectangular countertop basin, Click Basin (01772 671354 or clickbasin.co.uk)

Pull-up blind Bottom Up Blinds (0800 381 1378 or bottomupblinds.co.uk)

CLOAKROOM

Towel and toilet roll holders Ferm Living (045 7022 7523 or fermiliving.co.uk)

Wall paint Sooty Lashes, Valspar, as before

Basin Gela countertop basin, Click Basin, as before

WC Saneux Bathrooms, as before

COST

The cost for the whole house project was £250,000; the kitchen cost around £17,000