

HUGH STRANGE ARCHITECTS LOWER CLAPTON HOUSE

Our project for a family in Lower Clapton, east London, completely transforms an existing two-bedroom house so that while the exterior appears either new or old, inside is a rich combination of the two, *writes Hugh Strange*.

The clients' original brief was to provide an additional bedroom and bathroom to accommodate an expanding family. The existing building was double-fronted, but shallow in depth and with little garden space to the rear. An initial feasibility study suggested the possibility of a larger scheme. By moving bedrooms to the ground floor, and placing the kitchen/living/dining room on the first floor, two additional bedrooms could be provided, as well as allowing better natural light to the living spaces. Planning approval was gained for this scheme and the client committed to the resulting budget uplift.

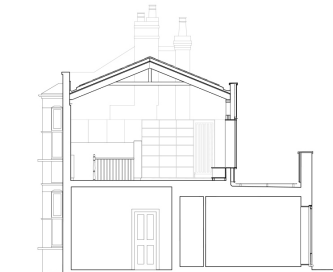
However, structural investigations revealed the property had suffered significant damage from a nearby bomb during the second world war, and had not been properly repaired, with the floor joists and roof trusses in particularly poor condition. This information led to a reconsideration

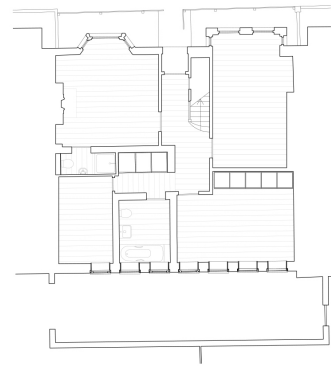
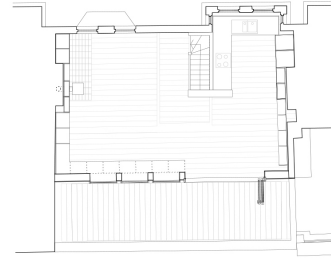
of what could be retained, and it was decided to remove and reconstruct the roof, the upper floors, and the entire rear elevation, retaining only the front elevation and the front two rooms of the ground floor, while still working within the existing party walls.

From the front the completed house appears unchanged, its street elevation presenting a similar Edwardian facade to its neighbours. In contrast, the rear appears as a completely new building. Its simple masonry walls seem appropriate for its yard setting, while timber and steel cladding to the upper floor suggests the presence of something distinct within.

Inside the house, the relationship between the host structure and the remodelling works is decidedly more complex, each space a careful negotiation between old and new. The ground floor now provides four bedrooms, a shared bathroom and an en-suite. The walls, ceilings and floors here subtly distinguish old from new. ▶

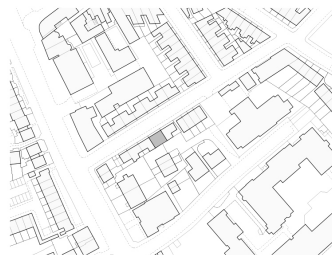
▷ First-floor living/dining/kitchen space (all phs: David Grandorge).
◁ Rebuilt rear elevation and new first-floor terrace, facing onto a yard
▽ Cross-section through the extended, reroofed Edwardian house.





To the rear is a small courtyard garden, enclosed by new brick walls. The existing staircase was retained and leads up to the large open-plan living, kitchen and dining space. The building's double-fronted character, and the ability to open the roof structure, allowed a scale to this space that is unusual in London terrace houses.

Here the play between old and new is more richly articulated. The limited budget was embraced, and a clear construction strategy employed whereby off-the-shelf timber trusses and cheap plywood lining are used unaltered at high level for the roof construction, their standardised nature giving a robust character to the space. Below, Douglas fir joinery provides built-in furniture that lines the space, its rich tones giving the room a warm character. Steelwork, with standard primer finish, stiffens the existing front wall and supports the front edge of the roof, while Douglas fir inlays within the floor describe the historic room divisions. □



- ▲ Deep cill to windows onto terrace; ground and first floor plans.
- ▲ Location plan.
- ▷ Axonometric of roof construction, which uses off-the-shelf trusses.
- Architect Hugh Strange Architects structural engineer Price & Myers main contractor Hanover joinery client private
- Brick Freshfield Lane Selected Dark roof tiles Marley Eternit rooflight Velux rainwater goods Lindab wall insulation Kingspan Kooltherm K8 timber Douglas fir Thiboard by Tilly storage carcasses IKEA radiators Steira bathroom fittings Ideal Standard
- Form of contract JCT Minor Works

