

The couple didn't want an all-white kitchen, so chose Leicht Carrè FS matte lacquer **units** in Petrol combined with Ceres **laminata** in Platinum from Connaught Kitchens.

# HEADING OUTSIDE

By adding a dining-garden room extension, Sam and Vanessa Cooper have improved the flow in their duplex apartment and unlocked the potential of their tricky kitchen – with the added bonus of creating an indoor-outdoor feel ▶

Words: **Karen Wilson** Photography: **Darren Chung** Stylist: **Emma Fishman**

## THE FACTS

**Who?** Sam and Vanessa Cooper and their four-year-old twins Ruby and Jasmine

**What?** Full renovation including a rear dining-garden room extension

**Where?** Hackney, east London

**Cost?** Around £150,000

**Time?** Six months

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The new extension features a bespoke built-in **seat** made by Harpers Construction with hidden storage and a Milano Aruba space-saving vertical **radiator** by Gunning Heating underneath. Electric **blinds** by Waverley Blinds control the glare. **Pendant lights**, Terence Woodgate; **table**, for simiar, try Danetti.



← Country-grade limed oak **flooring** from Reeve Wood runs throughout the ground floor, creating a unified flow from the living room through to the kitchen. **Gimbal lights**, Lumen Pulse; **induction hob**, Siemens; **splashback**, for similar, try Topps Tiles; **worktop**, CRL Quartz, via Connaught Kitchens.

→ To break up one wall, the couple opted for staggered open shelving units above the sink. “The architect in me would’ve done one long run of **wall cupboards** but my wife didn’t like that level of minimalism,” says Sam. **Bespoke Noyer walnut laminate shelving**, Connaught Kitchens; **sink and tap**, Franke.



Going against the grain, Sam, the director at E2 Architecture, and Vanessa Cooper, head of strategic fundraising at Mind, moved further into London to get more space – albeit only by a few streets. They found a ground and first-floor three-bedroom flat in a large Victorian semi-detached house in Hackney. The location was perfect – an area they knew, halfway between their families – plus it had a south-facing garden, big windows, and high ceilings. But Sam wasn’t looking for a large project at the time, as he spends all day doing that for clients – so the family were happy to live in the home for a couple of years before making any major changes. Here, he explains how the project got going...

#### What was the brief?

The key area I wanted to tackle was the tired laminate kitchen with Formica tops and knackered sliding doors, plus a wide chimneybreast with a dining table in front. A full-width extension would’ve meant losing the ground-floor bedroom and devaluing the property, so a dining-garden room rear design was a better idea – plus this would expand the views and improve flow, as there was a high step up from the kitchen onto the terrace and one down into the garden. I like the juxtaposition of old and new, so I was after a “contextual contemporary” look.

#### How did you create the space?

Vanessa and I had baby twins at the time, so rented a flat for six months while Harpers Construction carried out the work and I assisted with project management. The house is on a crescent with a tapered garden, so the ground-floor bedroom projects out at a slight angle ▶



↑ Opting for a glazed corner with **glass** by Compass Glass means the dining area really feels like part of the garden. **Deck chairs**, John Lewis & Partners.



**Philip Ozorio and Imogen Cotterill,  
Connaught Kitchens:**  
project lowdown

"Sam and Vanessa's galley kitchen dictated how the layout evolved. The brief's most challenging part was incorporating the freestanding washing machine and tumble dryer, which we concealed by customising the width of the doors and the depth of the worktop. It's difficult getting fully integrated tumble dryers these days, as freestanding designs give you more flexibility with capacities and can be easily swapped out. What makes this kitchen really work is the brave choice of colours and textures – Petrol Blue mixed with Platinum wall units and geometric wall tiles. Our favourite part is the custom shelf in Noyer dark laminate over the sink. It was Sam's idea to stagger it so it tapers upward. Although it was a challenge to design this out of panels for on-site assembly, it adds so much to the overall design."

DESIGN  
EDIT



**1** Caravaggio P1 pendant light in matt black by Fritz Hansen Lighting, £215, Cloudberry Living. [cloudberryliving.co.uk](http://cloudberryliving.co.uk) **2** Hexa-Cube 3D tiles, £33.95 per sq m, Walls and Floors. [wallsandfloors.co.uk](http://wallsandfloors.co.uk) **3** Pendant cushion in Burnt Orange by Kirkby Design, £95, Sweetpea & Willow. [sweetpeaandwillow.com](http://sweetpeaandwillow.com) **4** Slow Collection Raffia table lamp, £135, Abode Living. [abodeliving.co.uk](http://abodeliving.co.uk) **5** Florence chalk paint, £19.95 for 1 litre, Annie Sloan. [anniesloan.com](http://anniesloan.com)

and the terrace is laid at 45 degrees. A 12sq m extension with a glazed corner and cantilevered roof evened out the existing awkward angles in the kitchen while opening up garden views. I'm a big advocate of sliding doors over bi-folds. You get much bigger panes of glass and thinner frames and they give much better sightlines. The terrace is now level with the extension, but inside two steps lead up to the kitchen so you can see right down into the garden, plus we solved the layout issue by taking out the chimneybreast. The space is too small for an island, so Vanessa and I opted for a wide galley with deeper-than-standard worktops – all from Connaught Kitchens, who I have worked with on a number of other projects for clients. The long wall has the main work surface with sink, hob, and dishwasher, while the short wall has full-height units with the ovens, pull-out pantry, and fridge-freezer – great for accessibility, as all the food is in one place.

### Why did you go for this look?

I'm a big fan of handleless kitchens and we picked Petrol Blue – which I'd used on a dresser for a client and loved – as an accent on the base units. Having a dark colour in a room with little natural light may seem strange, but it works well and contrasts the bright dining area. Vanessa picked the geometric tiles and we considered coloured grout, but didn't want it to date quickly so went for grey. To break up one wall, we fitted staggered open shelving above the sink. The architect in me would've done one long run of wall cupboards, but Vanessa didn't like that level of minimalism. All appliances are from Siemens, which seemed like a good balance between quality and value, but we kept the existing tumble dryer and washing machine as they were fairly new. I was very particular about the lighting and used specialist LED gimballs more commonly found in retail spaces – they are ideal task illumination. Downlight pendants over the dining table, an LED strip above the built-in seat, and a spotlight directed at the artwork complete the scheme.

### What else did you do as part of the project?

We added white insulated render and new grey windows to a previous two-storey rear extension where the ground-floor bedroom and first-floor bathroom – which also had a makeover – are located. The layout is still the same, but it has new fixtures and turquoise tiles Vanessa picked, while the mirror across one wall makes it feel much bigger. We also put in a shallow suspended ceiling below the original lath and plaster ones on the ground floor, to create a void for new lighting and soundproof it.

### Tell us about the finishing touches...

Having previously decorated the master bedroom with an oriental feel, influenced by family heirlooms collected over the years, it's a nice contrast to have some big, bold colours in there. For the nursery we went for a neutral backdrop we can change when our daughters get older. I'm so glad we moved out when the works were going on, as the builders were able to get on easier without us in the way – and it was better for our mental health, too. Although we may end up moving when the twins start secondary school and need separate rooms, the space works brilliantly for us now. In summer we love rolling back the glass to eat at the dining table, and the girls can enjoy breakfast while watching the squirrels and birds. Its lovely – you really feel like you're in the garden.



Vibrant New Wave and Glassenbury tiles, from Grestec, frame the Classic Duo 105 bath by Kaldewei. Mixer tap and shower attachment, Crosswater. WC, Catalano; floor tiles, for similar, try Walls and Floors..



← The couple opted for a neutral backdrop with walls painted in Cornforth White by Farrow & Ball in the twins' room as it can easily be changed as they grow. Sam also lightened the floor with a white tint to tie everything together.

Rug, John Lewis & Partners; cot, for similar, try Mamas & Papas; art print, Print Club London; teepee, for similar, try Etsy.



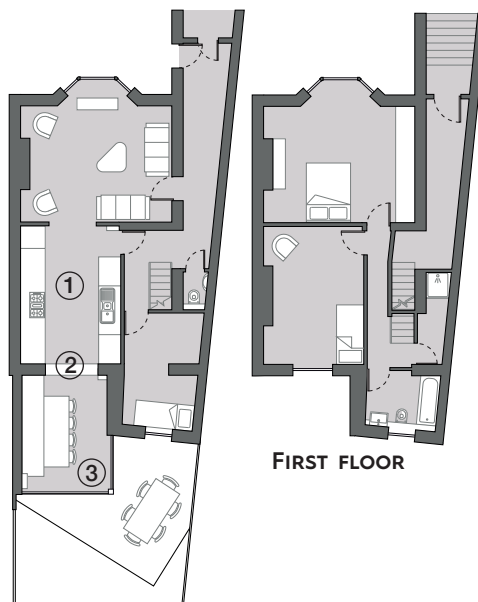
The master bedroom features pine flooring laid by the previous owners and has an oriental feel which was influenced by family heirlooms. "It's a nice contrast to have some big, bold colours in here," says Sam. **Wall paint**, for similar, try Valspar; **bed**, Warren Evans; **Vietnamese silk lanterns**, for similar, try Ebay.

## THE PLANS

Sam and Vanessa created more space for their kitchen-diner by building a 12sq m garden-dining room extension housing their eating area.

- 1 Kitchen layout** Instead of including an island – which would not fit into the compact space – Sam and Vanessa decided on a wide galley scheme with deeper-than-standard worktops.
- 2 Skylight** A roof lantern just before the threshold between the new dining-garden room extension and the old kitchen helps zone the space and throws light deep into the room.
- 3 Garden connection** One of the sliding doors disappears entirely into the wall, thanks to a pocket recess, while the other one opens halfway across.

### GROUND FLOOR



## SOURCE BOOK

- Architect** E2 Architecture 020 7183 2285, e2architecture.com
  - Builders** Harpers Construction 01322 294994, gaharpers.com
  - Kitchen** Connaught Kitchens 020 7706 2210, connaughtkitchens.co.uk
  - Glazing** Compass Glass 020 8946 8080, compassglass.co.uk
  - Rooflights** Glazing Vision 01379 658300, glazingvision.co.uk
  - Radiators** Gunning Heating 01268 545154, gunningheating.co.uk
  - Lighting** Lumen Pulse via Lite Ltd 0845 873 2601, lumenpulse.com
  - Appliances** Siemens 0344 892 8999, siemens-home.bsh-group.com
  - Flooring** Reeve Wood 01553 776835, reevewood.com
- For full stockist information, see page 140 **KBB**