



MIRROR MIRROR on the wall

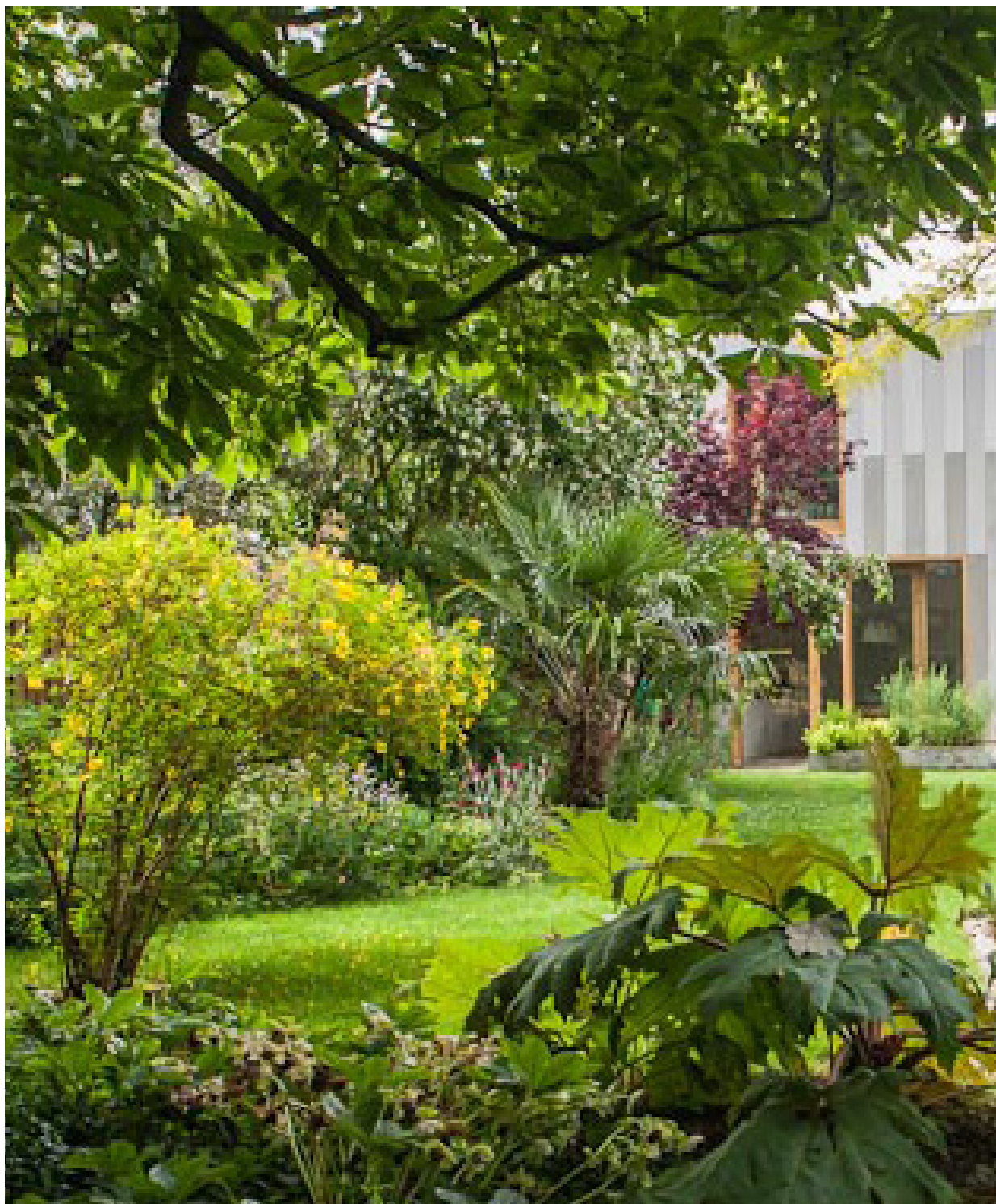
Chris Taylor and Lawrence Waterman's traditional 1920s house has been given an extreme makeover with a stunning extension clad in polished concrete panels.

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Polished thinking

Hidden behind a traditional West London house, the two-storey extension has been clad in striking vertical panels from Gray Concrete, mounted on extruded aluminium carriers, which act as a ventilated rainscreen and contrast with the white render of the main house. From the street just a glimpse of the new extension can be seen behind a high white wall to the side of the house.





Lawrence Waterman and his wife Chris Taylor had always known precisely where they wanted to live: in one of the sought-after houses which back onto the grounds of Chiswick House – a magnificent neo-Palladian villa set in beautiful historic gardens in West London. Twenty years ago they were fortunate enough to fulfil this ambition and purchased one of these 1920s homes for £250,000, which was the upper limit of their budget at that time.

"There were only about 10 houses which fitted the bill and this one was quite ramshackle, which meant that we could just about afford it," explains Chris, a voluntary sector consultant. "The largest room, which we used as the living room, was at the front and the kitchen at the back had a side window, so when we were indoors we could see our large garden."

Years passed and the couple's daughter grew up and left home. Lawrence and Chris began to discuss the idea of building a modest rear extension to create a new living space with garden access. Their brief was primarily to open up the small-scale segregated rooms to the garden while also preserving some of the charm of the existing building.

"We were keen that the original 1920s house should retain its character and the new part should be distinct and modern," explains Lawrence, a health and safety executive. "Two architects were recommended to us and came up with very different designs. The first didn't listen to our brief and positioned the kitchen in the middle of the ground floor, but Sam Tisdall and Ramses Frederickx visited the house together and collaborated to produce a design which was exciting and creative."

In response to the brief Sam and Ramses developed a very modern rear and side addition. Internally, a new kitchen and extended sitting room form a spacious 'S' shaped living space, where large triple sliding doors open onto a decked area with a concrete barbecue alongside.

Extension



The old and the new ...

A new kitchen from Underwoods was constructed where the former garage previously stood and features a floor of yellow, white and grey tiles in a bespoke tessellated pattern, which hide the electric hatch to the wine cellar below.



Can you keep a secret ...

On the first floor the extension adds a principal bedroom with a dressing area and shower room looking out onto a secret timber-clad terrace.

Upstairs, a frameless glass box floods the circulation corridor with light and links to a new master bedroom, dressing room and bathroom with its own timber-clad secret terrace. To the rear these form a striking new element, while from the street just a glimpse can be seen behind a high white wall to the side of the house. The bold design significantly increases the living space and reconfigures the layout to take advantage of the rear garden.

Some alterations were made to the size and height of the two-storey extension following discussions with neighbours, planners and conservation officers, and planning permission was then granted for the contemporary scheme. The only planning condition specified frosted glass for a bedroom window which faces towards a neighbour's garden.

New rear elements are clad externally with glass-reinforced concrete panels, which are lightweight and may be manufactured to specific colours and sizes. "The type of exterior cladding was specified later, and was subject to approval by the planners," Chris recalls. "We met up with Sam and Ramses one morning and walked around East London to look at various buildings, including one clad in concrete.

"Our product is usually only used for commercial buildings, but we loved the effect. The company delivered panels in seven shades of grey, and we chose the combination that we wanted and showed this to the planning officer." Over 120 panels have been fixed in a vertical pattern, becoming lighter in colour

towards the sky, and are carefully arranged to fit with the bespoke European oak windows and sliding doors.

"We always knew we would need to move out during the build because the work was so major, so we took the opportunity to take a flat in Brighton, romantically where we had first met," Lawrence recalls. "Sam managed the overall project for us and kept in constant contact, with us visiting about every four weeks."

Initial tenders for the project had proved too expensive, but Sam identified an additional contractor, revised certain details and negotiated until the costs were acceptable. "Our builders were excellent and even the neighbours commented on how great they were," says Chris. "They were the ones who had to live through the noise and disruption when we moved out, so it was good to hear such positive feedback."

The rear half of the house was partially demolished and covered with protective tarpaulin, while the new two-storey rear extension was constructed with a blockwork ground floor and a timber-framed upper storey. In addition, a basement has been excavated and a front extension was built over the driveway to accommodate a garage with the private terrace above.

"An existing air-raid shelter in the garden previously made the perfect wine cellar, but would have impinged on our new living room and needed to be taken out," says Chris. "We didn't want to lose the wine store though, so a new cellar was excavated under the kitchen floor and is reached by a hatch and staircase."

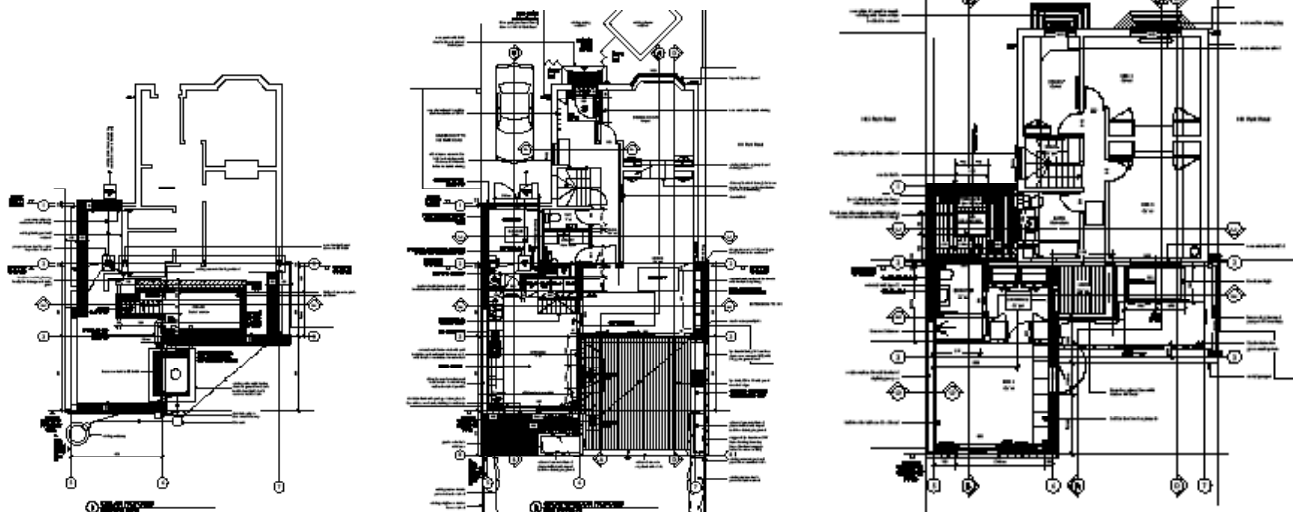




Light-minded

Slender-framed full-height sliding glass doors maximise the views to the garden and open onto a decked area framed by a timber-clad boundary wall and concrete barbecue block. New parquet flooring has been laid which echoes the flooring in the older part of the house.





Floorplan

The entire floorplan has been revised, with a newly positioned front door and larger entrance hallway. The former garage is now a kitchen and the living room has been extended to the rear, with a new garage constructed to the front of the house. Upstairs, a frameless glass box floods the circulation corridor with light and links to a new master bedroom, dressing room and bathroom with its own secret terrace.

Sam and Ramses proposed an environmental strategy for the project, significantly increasing the energy efficiency of the house. Insulation was specified to be more than 20 per cent above that required for Building Regulations, and the glass box contributes by acting as a solar collector with hot air distributed to other rooms by a heat recovery system.

Solar water heating and photovoltaic panels were installed on the newly tiled roof, and a recycled water tank placed in the old air-raid shelter provides water for the garden. "Our bills have definitely reduced even though the house has grown in size," says Chris. Materials were recycled wherever possible, including retaining the existing quarry tiles in the new utility room and WC, which had previously been the kitchen. At the bottom of the garden is an intriguing shed which is faced with polished stainless steel to reflect the greenery and was built from roof joists, partition studs and old roof boards that would otherwise have been thrown away.

"There were things which we took out to try to keep costs down, such as the fireplace between the living room and dining room, but then we changed our minds at the very last minute and decided to put it in anyway," says Chris, who admits that the couple now rarely use the dining room – preferring to eat

in their new kitchen facing the garden.

The floor of the kitchen is covered with yellow, white and grey porcelain tiles in a bespoke tessellated pattern, hiding an electric hatch opening to the wine cellar below, and is a particular feature which visitors always comment on. In the living room the existing pine parquet floor was retained, with new parquet laid in the extension. Underfloor heating was installed here and in the kitchen, with a new multi-room hi-fi system controlled by iPad.

"Moving back into the house in February 2011 felt very strange, because suddenly we were aliens in our own home and needed to re-learn how everything operated, right down to the heating and kitchen taps," says Chris. "We soon settled in though, and love the amount of light, the glass and the huge windows. We've lived here for 20 years, and some rooms are still familiar, but there's also a whole new dimension which makes it feel fresh and exciting."

The bottom line

Lawrence and Chris paid £250,000 for the semi-detached house in 1992 and spent £600,000 extending and remodelling the property, which is currently valued at in excess of £1.5m.

Contacts

PROJECT

Architect Sam Tisdall Architects: www.samtisdall.co.uk

Design Ramses Frederickx: www.ramsesfrederickx.com

Main contractor John Perkins Projects: www.johnperkinsprojects.co.uk

Structural engineer Form Structural Design: www.form-sd.com

M&E consultant Peter Deer and Associates: www.peterdeer.co.uk

Building inspector Assent Building Control: www.assentbc.co.uk

STRUCTURE

Bespoke glass reinforced concrete cladding panels Gray Concrete: www.grayconcrete.co.uk

Multifoil insulation (walls) Actis: www.actis-isolation.com

Aluminium sliding doors Sky-Frame: www.sky-frame.com

Bespoke oak sliding doors and windows JMF Joinery: 020 7619 9121

Glass box Glass Tech Facades: www.glasstechfacades.co.uk

Tanking to wine cellar Cetco: www.cetco.com

FIXTURES AND FITTINGS

Solar water heating, boiler and cylinder Vaillant: www.vaillant.co.uk

Heat recovery system Vent Axia: www.vent-axia.com

Kitchen and wardrobes Underwood: www.underwood-kitchens.co.uk

Electric hatch Cellar Access: www.cellaraccess.co.uk

Tessellated kitchen floor tiles Zenith tiles: www.zenithmosaicandtiles.com and Strata: www.stratatiles.co.uk

Home truths

What was the high point of the project?

It felt like a real milestone when the blue tarpaulin came off and the windows and glass went in.

...and the low point?

It snowed in November during the week that the glass was meant to be delivered from Germany, with the cladding arriving from Glasgow. This meant that the builders couldn't complete the shell of the house before Christmas as planned, but we were only delayed by two weeks overall.

Is there anything you would change?

We chose white and pale grey acrylic cabinets for the kitchen, and in hindsight should perhaps have been bolder and picked something with more definition. The devil is always in the detail: a deeper heating drawer below the oven is a real, but ultimately trivial, example.

What was your biggest extravagance?

The wine cellar and cladding were probably the most extravagant, but they also give us a great deal of pleasure.

