

## Homes &amp; Property Architecture

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## Don't move — let the light come to you

This Chiswick couple dramatically changed their 'for now' house into a forever home.

**Deborah Collutt** says many others are transforming their family homes

**A**N INCREASING number of professionals, especially couples with grown-up children, are choosing to stay in London and renovate rather than move home. Onerous mortgage terms, job insecurity, falling pensions and children who are returning or staying longer in the family home, have all meant that architects' order books are full with people wanting to do up rather than sell up.

Chris Taylor and Lawrence Waterman turned their Chiswick semi from a "for now" house into a forever home. With the help of architect Sam Tisdall,

**'We didn't want to move... a new home was created out of the one we know and love'**

they transformed their beloved Twenties suburban villa from a conventional three-up, two-down into a striking, modern space with an exciting new socialising area.

"We knew that we wanted a change but we didn't really want to move," said Lawrence, 60, a health and safety executive. "Whenever we thought about living in a new house, it didn't seem right. So in the end we found Sam and he created a whole new home out of the one we know and love."

Set in a leafy conservation area backing on to Chiswick House Grounds, the couple's home, which they bought in 1992, is in one of the most sought-after roads in west London.

"The houses on our street hardly ever go on the market," said Chris, also 60. "As soon as someone in the road says they are moving, there are buyers waiting to make an offer. It was the same with us when we bought here. So we contemplated moving very reluctantly."

The front part of the house retains – albeit lovingly restored – the finest original features of the period, such as Art Deco banisters, doors and a coloured glass staircase window.

But on walking through into what used to be the small lounge – with its original parquet flooring – one is suddenly transported, with the addition of floor-to-ceiling sliding glass doors, right into the beautiful back garden.

From the former lounge, garage and an old air raid shelter Tisdall has created a wonderful new kitchen and large open reception area – with matching



parquet flooring – leading out on to a terrace with built-in barbecue area.

And that is only half the story. Above the kitchen, there is a master bedroom with an en suite bathroom, mirroring the same garden room feel with a huge sliding window, which allows the couple an outdoors view from the comfort of their bed.

Tisdall clad the extension in 120

**Happy home:** Chris Taylor and Lawrence Waterman (left) love their light and spacious house (above), which was modernised by Sam Tisdall

bespoke concrete panels – a technique which had only ever been used on commercial buildings before – in five different shades to give the effect that the building gets lighter towards the sky.

The upstairs extension is as impressive as the ground floor after Tisdall created a corridor to the master bedroom encased in glass. This glass box also acts as a solar collector to provide



**Rooms with views:** the lounge (left) and dining room (above) now have floor-to-ceiling windows with views of the lovely garden

heat to the rest of the house. A cleverly designed hall between the bedroom and bathroom provides discreet storage and built-in wardrobes. Off the en suite bathroom is a small terrace, with wooden bench seating.

Tisdall added a gas-effect fire in the chimney between the front dining room and the rear reception room, covered on both sides with glass, allowing shared light and heat.

But the pièce de résistance for the wine-collecting couple is a 10,000-bottle cellar which Tisdall sank into the kitchen floor. With the flick of a switch, a trap-door opens, James Bond-style, to reveal a staircase into the underground room. A floor-to-ceiling sliding door between the kitchen and reception, which recedes into the wall space, ensures that no unsuspecting guests disappear down the hole when wine stocks are being replenished.

With an extra 85 square metres of space, a lot of it downstairs, the couple, whose 18-year-old daughter recently left home, admit they have had some of their best parties since the extension was finished. "It's such an easy entertaining space," said Lawrence. "It makes having parties so much fun. We want to show off the house – why go out?"

The £600,000 project re-used as many of the materials and existing parts of the house as possible, and incorporated energy-saving features such as solar water heating, photovoltaic cells, heat recovery and recycled water. At the bottom of the garden is a shed faced with a stainless-steel mirror which gives the impression of a never-ending garden.

For Chris and Lawrence, their journey to find the house of their dreams ended... at their own home. It proves that with imagination, determination and the right architect, creating your perfect house does not have to mean a box extension – or selling up.

Photographs: David Butler

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