

Stoke Newington Victorian terrace renovation: top-to-bottom transformation cost £480k — but achieved £1.9m sale price

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Renovating a house is one thing. What architects Maya Carni and Ran Ankory did to their Victorian terrace home was more like a disembowelment.

They stripped their run-down property back to basics, leaving just its front and side walls standing, then they rebuilt it from the ground up to the roof.

The fortysomething couple spent £480,000 – much more than most of us could dream of having in the renovation/decoration kitty.

But their expertise in adding value to a property and creating more flexible living space can give the rest of us ideas for upgrading our own homes - on a more modest scale and far more cheaply.

Maya and Ran wanted a modern family home for bringing up their sons, Romi, 11, and Leo, eight.

In 2015 they paid £1 million for the four-bedroom house in Stoke Newington but despite its price tag it was in a sad condition, with uPVC windows and threadbare carpets, a dark basement kitchen and not enough bathrooms.

Over eight months during 2015 and 2016 they remodelled the house completely – and as co-founders of Scenario Architecture they were at least able to save on architect fees.

The biggest structural change was lowering the basement floor and replacing the ceiling above it with a steel-supported floating mezzanine, creating a dramatic, light-filled kitchen with a new glass wall overlooking the garden; a living space on the gallery above, plus new stairs connecting the two spaces.

A neat workstation for the boys has been tucked beneath the mezzanine steps – a desk and bench seat which slide away beneath the stairs when not in use.



A neat workstation can be hidden away under the stairs when not in use (Matt Clayton) Built-in cupboards were fitted along the hall to boost storage, while upstairs the half-landing was enlarged and lined with bookshelves.

The main bedroom suite, plus a bedroom for the boys - complete with climbing wall - a guest room and a study are all found upstairs.

The project, while expensive, only increased the size of the house by 50sq ft. The couple admit they were worried they were spending themselves into negative equity and would never make back the money.

But they have proved that great design is a valuable commodity. Despite Brexit and coronavirus, Maya and Ran are celebrating after selling the house for £1.9 million this month to the first person who viewed it.

How to renovate your own Victorian terrace house and steal the design tricks

1. Use the apex

Many Victorian houses with pitched roof have an unused void space above bay windows. Often ignored during loft extension projects, these spaces can be opened out. At Ran and Maya's house the apex is used as a meditation corner but could also be used as space for a small en suite bathroom or a walk-in wardrobe.

How much would that cost?

About £1,000 would open out the space. Budget £8,000-plus if you want to squeeze in a shower room.

2. Say goodbye to traditional banisters

Swapping wooden balusters and handrails for slim metal rods not only makes staircases look larger and more modern, but will maximise the amount of daylight in your hall.

Cost: £800 - £2,400 per flight of stairs.



The architect couple installed a new glass wall overlooking the garden (Matt Clayton)

3. Under-stairs workspace

People tend to use space under the stairs as storage or, if it's big enough, for a cloakroom. But in these days of working from home, adding a simple pull-out table, plus drawers and storage, might be a better way to use it.

Cost: between £5,000 and £7,000 depending on size and finish.

4. Window dressing

Everyone needs more storage and Ran and Maya's house has a smart inside/outside window seat between the dining room and the garden, with built-in storage. It was created when their kitchen was extended. But most period houses have bay windows

with the potential to accommodate indoor window seats with useful integrated cupboards.

Cost: £1,000 to £3,000, depending on size and finish.

5. Reimagine your fireplace

A Victorian fireplace can be bulky and rarely used. Maya and Ran put in a modern gas fire from Bespoke Fire which is integrated within a curved feature wall with space for the TV and a storage unit. But reusing the chimney breast can give a similarly streamlined effect.

Cost: a simple smokeless fuel fire would cost around £1,500. The feature wall and fire at Maya and Ran's home came in at £12,000.