

# COMMUNITY

*spirit*

Carol and David Strickland have converted a former vicarage and community centre into a stunning family home overlooking the River Thames.



Externally the property has remained relatively unchanged, with new Georgian-style windows fitted in existing openings. A larger balcony allows river views to be enjoyed close up.

“I love living in such a vibrant, urban neighbourhood right beside the river,” says Carol Strickland. “There’s always something going on, and we have a community of houseboats just outside our door.”

It was this location which convinced Carol and David Strickland and their three daughters to leave their previous home near Richmond and cross over the Thames to live north of the river in Hammersmith, within walking distance of the girls’ school.

“We were fed up with sitting in traffic all the time, so three years ago we decided to relocate and began looking at a number of possible houses closer to public transport,” explains Carol, who was born in New York.

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“Since moving here we’ve managed to reduce our driving so much that we’ve been able to get rid of our second car.”

The three-storey detached house the family eventually chose is located in a Conservation Area on a bend in the River Thames, with spectacular views towards Hammersmith Bridge. Previously used as a vicarage and community centre, the interiors were basic and had become worn and dated. The shabby ground floor contained a community hall, the remnants of a catering kitchen and a crude timber and glass lean-to at the rear, with living accommodation upstairs.

“The front of the house was lovely, but inside it was set up for the vicar and his work, including a kitchen attached to the building behind us, which is a charity for people affected by HIV

STORY: **Eleanor Wilde**

PICTURES: **Bruce Hemming Photography, [www.bhphoto.biz](http://www.bhphoto.biz)**

and AIDS,” continues Carol. “We loved the river views, and the idea of having so much space, but knew that the property would need to be completely gutted and remodelled.”

Before buying the house Carol invited interior designer Tina Wilkinson to give her opinion on the building. Tina had worked on the family’s previous home, and was excited by the potential of the sprawling Hammersmith vicarage – recommending Form Design Architecture to Carol and David as architects for the project.

“Everyone sat down together and shared ideas,” explains Carol. “We wanted something fairly modern inside without being ultra contemporary. It had to be practical and really work for a family rather than being a show home.” →

A ground floor rear extension facing the courtyard made space for a bedroom, bathroom and study where the old catering kitchen and lean-to conservatory had been.



TOP: Dark timber has been used for flooring and stair treads to tie together the different spaces.

TOP LEFT: The first floor dining area is positioned to one end of the sitting room.

ABOVE AND LEFT: The newly fitted kitchen has a poured resin floor, with coloured glass forming a practical splashback.

Project architect Mike Neale designed a contemporary ground floor extension to the rear, facing the courtyard garden, creating space for a bedroom, bathroom and study where the old catering kitchen and lean-to conservatory had been. This enabled a new rear balcony and decked outdoor entertaining space to be formed outside the first floor kitchen, with direct access down to the garden.

"These were in some ways the most radical changes, and for me the most successful, as they bring the house and garden together and help everything to flow," says Mike, who obtained planning permission for the rear alterations without difficulty.

The new extension has a grey aluminium glazing system incorporating louvres, with a hidden door behind to allow



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secure natural ventilation when windows are closed. From the study a glass door opens onto a vibrant yellow walled Japanese-style courtyard, introducing a splash of colour and making a feature of a wasted outdoor corner.

A contemporary glass and timber porch was also added to the rear, clad in lead on the side facing the listed building next door, which attracted thieves to the site during the build. A window was broken, builders' tools were taken and lead cladding was ripped off the porch. "They actually called a cab as a getaway vehicle and were caught immediately," Carol explains. "They even used their last police arrest report as ID."

At the front, facing the river, a larger balcony was introduced to the first floor living room (for which planning consent was

eventually won at appeal) with the rest of the brick façade remaining largely unaltered. "We couldn't even fit a table or chairs out on the old balcony but now we use it all the time," says Carol.

Previously, a complicated route was necessary to reach the back door. "You had to go up the stairs, turn left at the landing and then go down another set of stairs, so this was rationalised," says Carol. "We were really pleased with Mike's idea to position the back entrance to the house on the first floor. Now we can carry groceries from the car straight into the kitchen, which is very practical."

The principal bedroom was another triumph, and has been created by combining two smaller bedrooms on the second floor. The space has been cleverly partitioned, with bespoke

An informal TV room has been positioned to the front of the house on the ground floor, with alcoves of built-in bookcases and shutters fitted to the windows.



Two smaller bedrooms were combined to create a spacious main suite, with wardrobes dividing the sleeping area from the en suite shower. The WC is located separately behind a mirrored door.

wardrobes acting as a free-standing screen between the bedroom and en suite shower, with clean lines, plenty of storage and natural light making this Carol's favourite room in the house.

Due to the radical nature of the project the family decided to continue living in their previous home until everything was completed. The shell of the 1980s-built mock Georgian house was in good condition, and the existing roof and brickwork have been retained. New double-glazed windows were installed, the structure has been insulated and underfloor heating laid throughout, with a contemporary wood-burning stove fitted in the first-floor living/dining room.

"It was like building a brand new modern house inside the existing building," says Carol. "Everything was gutted and we held meetings in the empty echoing shell, wearing gloves and drinking coffee. Our last house was always cold, so making this one warm and energy efficient was a top priority, especially as it's so close to the water."

Security was another important issue as the house is located in an urban area, next to a park and with few neighbours.



Carol asked the local police to visit at the planning stages and point out areas of vulnerability, and the family acted on most of their suggestions – including installing a video intercom, high quality doors and windows and a remote controlled sliding gate to the driveway. There are motion detectors and panic buttons on each floor, as well as an alarm system.

FORM Design Architecture worked with interior designer Tina Wilkinson on the specification of internal finishes and



window dressings. The palette of high quality materials is calm, contemporary: stone and ceramic tiles, resin flooring, Zodiaq worktops, and factory acrylic-sprayed joinery. Dark timber has been used for flooring, stair treads and opening linings to tie together the different spaces.

Shutters were made for the front windows, which perfectly suit the style of the house, and tall double doors have been fitted between the hallway, kitchen and living room on the first floor. A lighting designer was consulted to ensure that every space is imaginatively lit, and an audio visual system has been installed. "We brought quite a lot of furniture from our last house, and re-covered a sofa, but about 50 per cent was bought new to suit the spaces," says Carol.

"The whole family enjoys living in Hammersmith and we feel really connected to the area. Our view of the river is outstanding, and now we have more than enough space. Most importantly, the house is really practical – whether the girls are having parties or we just want to relax and watch

TV. We've been really fortunate to have such a great team of people who made the project work. Without them we'd never have considered taking on such an unusual building."

### THE BOTTOM LINE

Carol and David paid £1.8m for the existing property and have spent £750,000 on the project, including furniture. The house is currently valued at approximately £3.2m. →

ABOVE: A contemporary wood-burner forms a focal point in the first floor living/dining room, which opens onto the new balcony through glazed doors and enjoys fabulous river views. TOP LEFT: The newly formed office to the rear of the ground floor opens into a Japanese courtyard through a glazed door. LEFT: The hallway is large enough to accommodate a piano.

## RENOVATION



Ground floor

First floor

Second floor

### THE FLOORPLAN

The three-storey building had previously been used as a vicarage on the upper two storeys, with a community centre on the ground floor. The layout has been successfully redesigned to create a practical four-bedroom family home, with a new bedroom, bathroom and study to the rear of the ground floor and open-plan living accommodation on the first floor, which opens onto a central hallway. The main bedroom on the second floor was formed by combining two smaller bedrooms.

### FINAL THOUGHTS

**What was the high point of the project?** Our bedroom turned out much better than we'd envisaged, with a real sense of space, thanks to the clever design of the wardrobe.

**...And the low point?**

This kind of project didn't come naturally to me, and I don't enjoy shopping so sometimes all of the decisions could be tedious.

**What was your best buy?**

Probably the tiles in the downstairs bathroom in terms of cost.

**...And your biggest extravagance?**

Gadgets like the induction hob and boiling water tap in the kitchen. I didn't think I'd get on with the hob but it's fantastic.

**Do you have a top tip?**

Get some good help. We were delighted with the team of people who worked on the house.

### CONTACTS

**Architects** FORM Design Architecture:  
www.form-architecture.co.uk

**Window dressings, interior design**  
Tina Wilkinson Design: 020 8789 0461

**Quantity surveyors (initial stage)**  
KMCS: 020 7490 0400

**Quantity surveyors (site stage)**  
CCS: 01491 413514

**Structural engineer**  
Structure Workshop: 020 7701 2616

**Building control** Butler & Young Approved  
Inspectors: 020 3384 7730

**Party wall surveyor** Masterman Davies:  
020 8785 7200

**Lighting consultant** John Cullen:  
020 7371 5400

**Demolition, strip out and extension  
build** Tekk CBS Ltd: 01689 870847

**Fit out** Paul Robert Designs:  
01628 488330

**Kitchen** Krailler Ltd: 020 8675 8500

**Joinery** Martin Haswell Ltd:  
0845 539 0201

**Windows** Ayrton Windows:  
020 8877 8920

**Rooflight** Xtralite: 01670 354157

**Porch glazing** Compass Glass Ltd:  
020 8946 8080

**Audio visual system** Lasy!:  
020 8876 7632

**Lighting (recessed downlights, floor  
uplights, wall lights, LED linear lights)**  
John Cullen: 020 7371 5400

**Lighting** The Light Corporation:  
01442 216200

**Recessed downlights** Aurora:  
01707 351820

**Exterior lighting** Wimbledon Lighting:  
020 8542 2828

**Lighting (exterior lights)** National  
Lighting: 0845 634 1515

**Timber flooring** Walkers of Stokesley:  
01642 713117

**Floor tiles (hall, ground floor  
bathroom)** Royal Mosa: 0800 077 89 81

**Limestone floor tiles** Stonell:  
01892 833500

**Marte ceramic floor tiles** Ceramique  
International: 0113 231 0218

**Marazzi 'Steppa' ceramic wall tiles**  
Ceramique International: 0113 231 0218

**'Sextans' ceramic wall tiles**  
Johnson Tiles: 01782 575575

**Window shutters** The New England  
Shutter Co: 020 8675 1099

**Fire and flue** Nature's Warmth:  
0845 224 0026

**Sliding gate** Rundum Meir:  
0151 280 6626

**Ironmongery** Strada: 0808 178 6007  
**Balcony deck** Staco Redman:  
01634 723372

**Carpet** Bowloom Ltd: 020 7622 0500

**Shower room counter**  
DuPont Corian: 0800 962 116

**White Silver sanitaryware** Ideal  
Standard: 01543 490253

**Bath** Bette: 01509 672303

**Shower fittings** Bathstore: 0800  
232323; Hansgrohe: 01372 465655

**Shower doors** Glasstrends:  
020 7223 4017

**Kitchen sink** Caple: 0117 938 1900

**Boiling water tap** Quooker:  
020 7923 3355

**Kitchen extractor** Westin:  
01484 421585

**Kitchen worktop** DuPont Zodiac:  
0800 962116

**Paint** Dulux Trade: 0870 242 1100

**Underfloor heating** David Robbens:  
01777 711621  
**Cavity trays** Timloc: 01405 765567  
**Balcony connectors** Halfen:  
01582 470365  
**Insulation** Xtratherm: 0371 222 1033