

GRAND DESIGNS



Magazi

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UP ON THE

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ROOF

TORN BETWEEN THEIR CITY LIFE AND A CRAVING FOR THE COUNTRY, GARY ROWLANDS AND OLIVIA POMP HAVE BUILT A FLAT ON TOP OF THEIR OFFICE BLOCK SO THEY CAN ENJOY THE BEST OF BOTH WORLDS



From the balcony of this top floor urban apartment and its playful roof terrace, there are breathtaking 360 degree views of London's skyline



HOME House #1 Hoxton flat

who Graphic designer Gary and fashion stylist Olivia with their daughters May, 8, and Grace, 5

what A contemporary pied-à-terre built on top of a three-floor office space

where Hoxton, once run-down but now London's coolest quarter

how long Three years

budget £300,000

high point 'When the doors went in,' says Olivia. 'They are the only colour on the structure, and we love the shade of blue. They immediately lifted the flat and gave it a personality'

low point 'Having to compromise on some design details which affected the way things worked,' says Gary. 'The end result is about how a space performs as well as how it looks'

tip Make a 3D cardboard model of what you're going to build. 'It helps you understand some aspects in a way a plan can't,' says Gary. 'You can get an idea of how much light a window will let in'



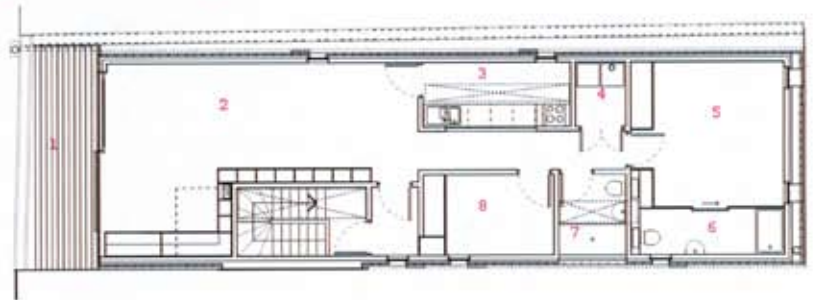
From the start, the couple had a very strong vision of exactly what they wanted the flat to be – which was something very different from their 16th-century cottage. With a rectangular space of 1,000sqft, their goal was to achieve a clean modern design in keeping with the rest of the building and the area itself. ‘We wanted a cool space with controlled use of air and light which reflected our vision and taste,’ says Olivia. ‘It’s not designed as a family home. The kids are rarely here, and we wanted to use the living area for client meetings, so we needed to be able to section the sleeping areas off from that.’

The living area takes up over a third of the flat, containing within it a table which doubles for dining and meetings. Exquisite black and white photographs are dotted around the walls – both pictures from Olivia’s shoots and presents from photographers the couple have worked with over the years. The most striking aspect is the huge sliding oak and glass door that takes up half of one wall. Translucent rather than transparent, when closed the door allows plenty of diffused light into the room while insulating the flat from outdoor noise. Open, it reveals a patio area large enough to take a table and chairs comfortably. Tall metal planters form the walls of the balcony and mask the noise of the road below, while the scent of the rosemary they contain overpowers any traffic fumes.

Adjoining the other end of the living room, and spanning half its width, is the kitchen. Oak worktops from their local timber merchant in

plan

- | | |
|---------------|----------------------|
| 1 balcony | 5 master bedroom |
| 2 living room | 6 ensuite |
| 3 kitchen | 7 bathroom |
| 4 box room | 8 children’s bedroom |



Norfolk are teamed with simple Ikea units running along one side of the room. The room is long and thin – basically shaped like the corridor that runs along the other side of it – but a huge glazed panel between the two gives the impression that the room is far more spacious. Olivia’s collection of Scandinavian glassware from the Fifties and Sixties is arranged in front of the indoor window, so although they are in the kitchen, their colours are the first thing you see as you enter the flat.

Off the corridor is a small bedroom for May and Grace to use when they come to London. Hand-made wooden bunks face a wardrobe with a sliding metal door which the girls have decorated with brightly coloured magnets. Next door, the bathroom is dominated by a substantial Bette bath, above which the entire wall is frosted glass. Opposite is a box room for laundry and storage.

The master bedroom is at the far end of the flat, its white walls offset by occasional dark timber

ARE YOU ALLOWED TO BUILD UP?

The type of covenant under which you own your house can affect your options when it comes to making changes.

If you buy the freehold of a property, like Gary did, you own both your home and the ground it stands on. This means that, taking into account planning permission and building regulations, it’s up to you what alterations you make.

But most flats and some houses are sold leasehold. This means you own your home for the period of the lease (which can be hundreds of years long) but you have to pay ground rent to the freeholder. The lease lists the rights and responsibilities of both the free and leaseholder and usually limits the changes which can be made to the property without the freeholder’s consent.

‘Never make assumptions,’ says Anthony Essien of the Leaseholder’s Advisory Service. ‘Examine your covenants to make sure what you plan to do does not contravene them.’

You have the right to buy the freehold of your property if you have held a long lease (21+ years) for more than two years. It’s best to get legal advice. You will have to pay the price of the freehold, the landlord’s costs and a share of the increase of value from joining free- and leaseholds together.

this picture Olivia’s Scandinavian glass collection brightens the oak kitchen units, and the colours can be enjoyed from the corridor through a glass window left in the large living space, the table doubles as a dining area and a place to hold meetings



HOME

House #1

Hoxton flat

touches. The silk bedspread, a find from a Miami flea market, looks like it's covered in thousands of tiny petals. 'I think it's Amish,' Olivia says. 'It's hand-stitched from 10,000 pieces of silk.'

Though the couple's touch is light and their taste restrained, their imprint is everywhere in the flat. They prize simplicity and clarity, and believe the genius is in the detail – which is evident as much on the exterior as the interior.

Though the office is built in reclaimed London stock brick, the couple had no desire to mimic this in the cladding of their pied-à-terre. Their search for something a little different led them to a glass rain screen called Reglit which gave them the clean

modern look they craved while also being low maintenance – the rain cleans it for them.

If the apartment is the icing on the cake for Gary and Olivia, there is a cherry on top. Reached by a ladder through the kitchen's skylight, the entire roof of the flat has been turned into an urban roof terrace. Painted an acidic shade of lemon yellow, it is decorated only with a couple of sunloungers and a collection of plastic owls intended to scare away the pigeons. The pigeons haven't been put off, but who can blame them? With this gorgeous city-centre pad to offset their country residence, you'd be forgiven for thinking Gary and Olivia are having their cake and eating it too. ★

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SUPPLIERS

Architect

MAE Architects

(020 7704 6060; mae-llp.co.uk)

Contractors and timber structural frame suppliers

Turner Castle Associates

(020 7703 4716; turnercastle.co.uk)

Wood for floors and frames

Robert Wilden

(01359 221 055)

Table and chairs

SCP

(020 7739 1869; scp.co.uk)

Lampshades

Atomic

(0115 941 5577;

atomicinteriors.co.uk)

Storage units

Vitsoe

(020 7935 4968; vitsoe.com)

Bathroom cabinets

City Plumbing

(0800 783 5667;

cityplumbing.co.uk)

Rain screen glass cladding

Reglit

(0141 613 6060; reglit.com)

Sub rain screen cladding

Marley Eternit

(01763 264 600;

marleyeternit.co.uk)

Aluminum double glazed windows

Visoline from Smart Systems

(01934 876 100;

smartsystems.co.uk)

Kitchen units

Faktum from IKEA

(0845 355 1141; ikea.com)

Internal door ironmongery

Gatcliff Enterprises

(01474 566 660)

left The bedspread, a flea market find, is made from 10,000 pieces of silk, hand-stitched together