

# EXTENSIONS: *The Groundbreakers*

UK homeowners and their architects are leading the way when it comes to boundary-pushing extension design. **Claire Lloyd** looks at six of the finest, most innovative examples of the art

## A NEW DIMENSION

DESIGNER: ALISON BROOKS ARCHITECTS (ALISONBROOKSARCHITECTS.COM 0207 267 9777) | NORTH LONDON | SIZE: 70M<sup>2</sup> | COST: UNDISCLOSED

Replacing an old lean-to for new is one of the most popular home improvements, but on occasion it not only reaps additional accommodation but awe-inspiring results — as in this dynamic scheme by Alison Brooks Architects, who are no strangers to innovative design.

“The brief to the architects was wide open – we gave them a volume and budget – to replace a two storey rear bay extension and add an impressive side extension,” says the homeowner, who purchased the then-derelict 1860 property in 2007, and was involved in the project until its completion in August 2012.

The resulting multifaceted side extension – which is barely visible from the street (RIGHT) – provided space to include a home office, while a rear extension with

cantilevered projection above offered scope for an impressive double-height kitchen living space. Sliding doors here give direct access to the garden.

“In addition to a full structural renovation, opening up the semi-basement and creating a double-height living/kitchen space, the extensions were designed to draw in light from the sky, embrace the garden, and capture a precise view of the massive walnut tree near the house,” adds Alison Brooks.

Corian is a material more commonly associated with worktops, but here it has been used as cladding to dramatic effect. “The original design was for zinc,” explains the homeowner, “but this had a vulnerability if knocked.” Corian instead provides a nonporous, UV resistant, highly durable finish.

### **Bold and Beautiful**

The ‘folded’ concept is a classic Alison Brooks Architects motif. In the case of this North London extension, the structure is clad in Corian, deemed to be more durable than zinc



IMAGE: ANTHONY COLEMAN

## OPENING THE BOX

DESIGNER: BAYNES & CO. (01327 844927 BAYNESANDCO.COM) NORTHAMPTONSHIRE COST: UNDER £250,000

When Baynes and Co. were commissioned to design a scheme which would see a water tower converted into living quarters – freeing up the surrounding buildings for the sculptor-owner to use as an art gallery – one key dilemma was the lack of room for a staircase. And so, a side extension, designed to complement the unique building, would prove the ideal solution for housing it.

The final result is undoubtedly dramatic, with a galvanised steel-framed stone-clad façade hinged slightly ajar from the main structure. “The scheme was seen as a sculptural addition, a black monolith,” adds architect Adrian Baynes. The spiral staircase is flooded with daylight thanks to the rear elevation, constructed in four skins of translucent polycarbonate. It’s particularly impressive at night; with the lights switched on inside, this elevation appears to glow.

Finally, a meandering ‘water line’ has been carved in the black render down the length of the new addition; a fitting tribute to the tower’s former purpose.

IMAGES: JAKE FITZ-JONES FOR DUPONT



## Groundbreaking Extensions



### FARMHOUSE REINVENTED

DESIGNER: MOLE ARCHITECTS (01353 667068 MOLEARCHITECTS.CO.UK)  
EAST SUSSEX | SIZE: 107m<sup>2</sup> | COST: £220,000

When it comes to extending a period home, an extension which cleverly reinterprets the local vernacular to sensitive effect can produce very successful results. Such is the case here: this 107m<sup>2</sup> extension, designed by Mole Architects, is not only a fitting bedfellow to the 17th century farmhouse, but provides the additional space the homeowners required and that 21st century essential — a spacious kitchen diner with lots of glazing providing views over the landscaped lawn.

The new addition replaces a 1970s extension of little merit and yet, with the farmhouse's locale

within open countryside in an Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty, planning proved a sticking point. Fortunately, when Mole Architects took on the commission, research into the historic development of local farmyards followed suit; planning was subsequently awarded in summer 2009.

Set at an angle to the existing house, south-facing glazing bathes the kitchen diner in light and warmth, while a glazed link (the glass is from Romag) provides transparency between old and new. The main structure is clad in a palette of rich brick to complement the house, while its barrel-shaped terne-coated steel roof pays homage to vernacular agricultural buildings. "This form decreases the apparent scale of the extension, allowing greater prominence to the original farmhouse," add Mole Architects. Curved glulam, from InWood, provides instant character in the new first floor master en suite (FAR RIGHT and ABOVE).

This extension formed one aspect of an extensive programme of works, as part of which the homeowners also converted outbuildings on site into eco-friendly holiday cottages (hawthbushfarm.co.uk).



#### When New Meets Old

Mole Architects are pioneers in the use of next-generation timber techniques, and this extension is no exception, using curved glulam to construct the first floor master en suite. Downstairs is used as a kitchen diner with instant connection with the garden

## THE URBAN BEACH HOUSE

DESIGNER: HAYHURST & CO. (020 7247 7028 HAYHURSTAND.CO.UK)  
HAMPSTEAD | COST: UNDER £200,000

This four storey Victorian property was converted into two maisonettes in the 1970s, with the ground and first floor extended at the rear to provide additional accommodation. The result was a series of small rooms which lacked natural light. So when the current owners took on the property, a radical rehaul was a priority.

Larch proved integral to Hayhurst & Co.'s design scheme — providing cohesion between the house and its garden, with the timber cladding the exterior, extending out into landscaping and featuring in the interiors too; the new larch kitchen was even designed by the practice.

"There's a fairly large brick façade in close proximity to this property, and so the whitewashed cladding provided a light counterpoint to this," adds architect Nick Hayhurst. Larch window shutters are a playful addition which lend to the beach aesthetic, but also serve a practical function; there's no requirement for curtains in the contemporary interiors.

The 1970s rear extension was taken down and a new structure built in brick and block. Only 15m<sup>2</sup> of additional space has been added here and yet the new extension feels vastly different to the original. The interiors are light-filled thanks to an expansive rear pivot door. Natural light also pours into a ply-lined office (RIGHT) courtesy of a large rooflight above, and internal glazing. The garden too feels like a 'room outdoors' with the flooring flowing out from the interiors into this space. ▶

IMAGES: KILIAN O'SULLIVAN



### Opening Out

This Victorian terraced home in London has been transformed thanks to a bold design scheme which features plenty of light (thanks to a huge pivot door set which connects it seamlessly to the garden) and contemporary larch cladding



## Using the Garden

The addition of a loggia, a covered outdoor space that is part of the house's structure, enables the garden to be enjoyed all year round



## MODERNIST LIVING

DESIGNER: AR DESIGN STUDIO (01962 864641 ARDESIGNSTUDIO.CO.UK)  
HAMPSHIRE | NOV 2011 - JUL 2012

**Like many homes of its period, this 1950s property benefitted from space and an attractive garden,** but the interiors didn't quite match up with the requirements of modern family life.

"The client's brief was to create a sense of space and calm in the tight and complicated layout," explains Andy Ramus of AR Design Studio. "By extending at the rear we enlarged the living areas and liberated space to create a dramatic new double-height entrance and stairs leading to a wide, functional landing, a new family bathroom and bedrooms."

But what inspired the bold, simple, boxy, Modernist design? "To be contextual, we decided to extend the 1950s house in a style that draws its inspiration from its era," says Andy. This approach was supported by the planners too, who granted permission for the near 100m<sup>2</sup> addition.

The palette of grey and white is continued throughout the interior scheme, particularly in the open plan kitchen diner. Indeed, key to

the brief was creating cohesion between inside and outside. Two large sliding doors open up to an impressive loggia with a 20m<sup>2</sup> glazed roof, which provides a sheltered place to enjoy the garden even during a wet British summer.

A local, family-run building firm were hired to undertake the nine-month build project, which included a steel frame construction infilled with blockwork at ground floor level. "A light-weight timber frame construction was used for the first floor to reduce steel sizes and cost," adds Andy Ramus.

Updating the façade of the existing house also gave opportunity to bring insulation levels up to modern standards. "The whole building was wrapped in 50mm polystyrene; this was glued and mechanically fixed to the surface of the walls. A reinforced mesh was then fixed to the surface which takes silicon render in two coats," explains Andy. New double-glazed aluminium windows were specified to emulate the original single-glazed Crittall windows. ▶



## NATURALLY INSPIRED

DESIGNER: HAYHURST & CO. (020 7247 7028 HAYHURSTAND.CO.UK)  
WEST LONDON | BUILD TIME: 2011-2012

**When the homeowners of this late Victorian end-of-terrace wanted to add an extension** to house a larger kitchen and family room, they commissioned Hayhurst & Co. to design a scheme which would respond to the challenges of their awkward urban plot. "The brief was also to create an extension which was contemporary but unique," adds architect Nick Hayhurst.

One concern was the resulting loss of green space. The response: a wild flower green roof would be introduced to reduce the ecological footprint of the new addition and lessen its impact from the first floor windows. "There is some additional structural support required with a green roof, but not as much as many people imagine," adds Nick.

Natural materials follow suit through the choice of cladding. "We took inspiration from the materials which were already there," says Nick. The extension is

clad predominantly in Welsh slate – laid in staggered courses to give a slightly weathered and informal aesthetic – reflecting the slate roof of the existing house. This natural material overhangs expansive glazing and iroko cladding beneath. "Iroko is a durable and stable timber which weathers well. There's a deep, rich warmth to this timber too," adds Nick.

Excavation allowed for tall ceiling heights to be achieved inside the extension, mirroring those within the existing Victorian house. As well as offering views flush with the garden from internal window seats, this also allowed a sheltered courtyard patio to be added to one side, accessed by peeling back a large sliding doors. Inside, the interiors are equally sleek, with iroko used for the walls and kitchen – a sculptural island (garethlandgon.com) crafted in the timber is the central focus. ■



### **Synergy of Materials**

Iroko is a key theme of the impressive single storey extension, used for the external cladding as well as interior walls and kitchen

