

Remodelled

INSIDE AND OUT

When the Warners couldn't find their ideal house, they took drastic action to create it

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From pebble-dashed 1940s...



...to crisp white New England style

BEFORE



AFTER



The original property

Built in the early 1940s, it had a small hall, lounge, kitchen, dining room and outdoor lavatory. Upstairs there were two bedrooms, a box room and bathroom.

The new home

A New England-style house with four large bedrooms, ensuite, family bathroom, dressing room, playroom, study, wet room, kitchen/family room, garden room, utility room and pantry.

How much it cost

The house was bought in 2010 for £480K. The remodelling including painting/decorating, flooring, under-floor heating and carpets, up to the final finish including VAT and fees, came to around £350K.

Alexia Warner, 43, who works part-time at an estate agent's, lives in Farnham, Surrey, with her husband Steve, 43, a human resources director, and their two sons, Archie, nine, and Josh, five

Our dream was to build our own house, but finding a plot of land in my home town of Farnham was almost impossible, so we started to look at houses that needed a 'facelift'. As the boys were getting older, we liked the idea of finding something with a bigger garden, a little more rural and definitely more private.

When we found this house, it was pebble-dashed and dated. But it stands in approximately a quarter of an acre, backing onto woodland, and we fell in love with the

garden. We immediately offered the asking price, but the sale went to sealed bids and when we heard this our hearts sank, as we'd already lost several properties this way. Apparently there had been 25 offers, but this time we were lucky.

The house is close to open countryside with wonderful views over Farnham and the surrounding area. It's in a perfect spot for us, and we lived in it for a year before transforming it.

Originally we thought we would just remodel the house

inside and out, as I didn't want to knock down a property that was in reasonable condition. Then we realised the potential cost of a remodelling project so we considered demolishing and rebuilding from scratch, and several architects suggested we do this. But when we priced up both options, the costs for a new house were higher despite the zero VAT on new builds.

We drew up a plan of what we wanted the house to look like from the front, and also several internal plans with measurements and dimensions of every room, and once we

had a clear vision, we searched for an architect. After interviewing four or five contenders, we chose Nigel from Space and Style Home Design. His designs were granted planning permission and have given us a house that has everything in it that we could possibly have asked for.

There's something about a white, wooden clad and rendered house that I just love – it looks really clean and fresh – so that's what we decided on for the exterior. I took inspiration from American films, websites and magazines,

and spent months researching products and getting quotes. I was lucky that I'm at home a few days a week, but I'd recommend that anyone working full-time takes up so much time.

Inside, the idea was to have a light and spacious family room with a sofa, large table and modern Shaker-style kitchen so that we could all do different things but be in the same room. We also planned a study, playroom, good-sized hall for all the football and rugby boots, utility room, wet room and a larder, while upstairs we wanted

four bedrooms, one ensuite, a family bathroom, dressing area and a laundry chute leading to the utility room.

We asked the architect to draw up plans for a small L-shaped room on the back of the house, which would be a garden room/lounge, that we could add on at a later date. Fortunately everything worked out and we were able to have the room without having to wait. It has a woodburner and is a cosy retreat for adults to relax in.

Building work began in May 2011 and luckily for us, we had a fabulous, long summer. It

took six months to complete, but the builders were ahead of schedule and finished slightly earlier than anticipated.

We stayed in the house until the roof came off in June 2011, when we decided it was best to be in rented accommodation close by. Despite all the work and although every room was affected, our builder was amazingly tidy and the mess was manageable.

The house is now more than double its original size and is a perfect family home with great space for entertaining. We

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