



The original house looked a bit like a large garage and had a tiny first floor with one bedroom, which wasn't enough for the couple

'We nearly doubled the size of our house'

Adding a massive extension to the top of their home gave the Wilkinses space for their growing family

Trevor and Natalie Wilkins were looking for a property with potential when they found their Fifties house in Wallington, Hampshire, in December 2006. 'Everything needed modernising,' explains Trevor. 'We fancied a challenge and we certainly found that with this house. People often described it as looking like a garage because it was so squat and boxy.' The property had a bedroom, bathroom, study, kitchen and dining room downstairs, but only one bedroom and a mezzanine landing upstairs, so the pair definitely wanted to extend.

EXPERT ADVICE Three years after moving in, Trevor and Natalie contacted Nigel Lewis of Space & Style Home Design (023 9252 5100; spaceandstyle.co.uk). 'We needed someone to pull all our ideas together,' says Natalie. The couple loved the modern designs that Nigel had produced for other clients and asked him to remodel their house, adding a massive first-floor extension under new mono-pitch roofs, which would create room for three

bedrooms and two bathrooms upstairs. Planning permission was obtained and the couple employed MJ Byrne Builders (01329 662767; mjbyrne.co.uk), which began on site in March 2010. Trevor and Natalie moved into rented accommodation with their son, Joe, then seven months old, as work was also being done downstairs.

NEW LAYOUT The bathroom was converted into a study, with a new loo accessed from the hallway. Extending into the area behind the garage created space for a utility room, and internal walls were removed to combine the old study and kitchen into a big kitchen-diner, plus the couple had a modern staircase installed.

Externally, the property is barely recognisable thanks to its new roofs, powder-coated aluminium glazing and cedar cladding. Trevor and Natalie paid £239,000 for the property in 2006 and spent £170,000 remodelling it. The house is now valued at £495,000. The couple are delighted with their home, and its new layout is perfect for a young family - which is lucky as the couple have since had Eddie, now 20 months.



Trials & triumphs

■ What was the high point of the project?

'Moving in and living in a house which we'd spent so long imagining was the real high point. We were hoping for everything to be completed in time for Joe's first birthday, which gave the builders six months to finish the work, and they managed it.'

■ Any low points?

'We upset the neighbours with all the delivery lorries that came and went, as well as the noise.'

■ Who or what was the project saviour?

'We were very lucky to have such a great designer and builder working as a team.'