



EXTEND WITH A TOWER

What do you do if your dining room is half buried in the basement, with a view of a drain, and the only bathroom sits in a dank 1980s extension a floor and a half below the bedrooms? Think of San Gimignano, of course. The tall, thin towers in the Italian hilltop town inspired Dominic McKenzie Architects' transformation of this grade II listed terrace in Islington, north London. The upper part of his tower contains the new bathroom, now handy for the two bedrooms; beneath it, a 1½-storey space with an 11ft sash window adds drama and light to the dining area. The garden was dug out and landscaped to improve the view. The £250,000 project, for a couple with two grown sons, was named best historic intervention in the Don't Move, Improve! awards. dominicmckenzie.co.uk

SPACE

An imaginative architect can take the humble terrace into another dimension. *Martina Lees* finds six designs to inspire a makeover



CONTRAST MATERIALS

Structural timber fins rest on top of an exposed brick storage wall in this north London side extension. The £200,000 project in Finsbury Park, completed last year, "transformed a narrow kitchen into the space where we spend most of our time", says the owner, Michael, 37. "It shows you don't need a multimillion-pound budget or masses of space to create a unique home," adds Amos Goldreich, the architect. Natural materials echo the London stock brick of the existing house, yet contrast with the primary colours on the opposite wall. Here, a red splashback and sleek blue custom fronts turn Ikea cabinets into a statement (plykea.com). A large bespoke kitchen island, with timber aged by an artist, includes the house's original butler sink. "We tried to do something a bit unusual," says Michael, who shares the five-bedroom terrace with Sarah, 36, and their eight-week-old daughter. Daylight pours in through a large roof light and picture window, with a built-in seat. "Sarah uses that all the time with the baby." agarchitecture.net

EXPLORERS



BRADLEY VAN DER STRAETEN

TURN WINDOWS INTO DOORS

You don't always need to extend. Because their two-bedroom Georgian townhouse in Stepney, east London, is in a conservation area, Francis Saul, 38, and Emily Hamilton, 34, were not even allowed to. So they took out entrance-hall walls and joined the living and dining rooms with bright yellow steels to create an open-plan ground floor. "Where there's a window, there's a way," says George Bradley, of Bradley Van Der Straeten Architects. In this case, a sash in the dining room became arched glazed doors to the garden. In the narrow galley kitchen, they widened the window to span the entire wall above the sink and removed one of the three internal doorways to add cupboard space on both sides. Green and pink concrete worktops bring a pop of colour. The £102,000 project took five months last year, and was completed before the birth of the couple's first child. The result? A more-is-more fusion of art deco, steampunk and Bauhaus. b-vds.co.uk



SIOBHAN DORAN

BUILD A STORAGE ISLAND

What started out as an attempt to make better use of the cellar turned into a £750,000 top-to-bottom makeover of this six-bedroom terrace in Hammersmith, west London. "The whole house breathes better," says Helene De Witte, 42, who shares it with her husband, Nicolas, 49, and their three children. Black accents tie the period front rooms to the pale limed oak of the minimalist kitchen extension. The rear facade is clad in sweet chestnut, which continues round to become the fence. Industrial steel glazing frames a wall of green planting near the house, with a path to a patio further away. "People think they want space, but what you use most is the view," says De Witte, who designed the garden herself (helenedewitte.com). To add light to the new basement staircase, the Vawdrey House infilled the original panelling with fire rated glass. This leads down to a sleek lobby, where a tall central island cleverly conceals the laundry area and acres of storage. On one side is the nanny's bedroom; on the other, a new family den. thevawdreyhouse.com



LOGAN MCDUGALL

TAKE OUT A FLOOR

Luke Charlesworth didn't just add floor space to his Victorian home in Putney, southwest London — he also removed some. The house had a higgledy-piggledy layout, with the kitchen on the half-submerged lower ground floor, the living space on the raised ground floor and four bedrooms above it. An existing two-storey extension added a dining room and a bedroom off the half levels. The £550,000 solution? Giles & Pike Architects kept the old rear envelope, which eased planning permission and saved building costs. But they removed the extension's ground floor and dug down 10ft beneath it, transforming the lower ground floor into a double-height space that stretches into the garden. A roof light over the new mezzanine stairway and full-width clerestory glazing add a cascade of light and tree-canopy views. "Enjoyment and value can be added through dramatic use of space," says Matt Giles, who built a model to show his client the merits of his design. Charlesworth, 39, who shares the house with his girlfriend, Rejane Lima, agrees: "It's a completely different house." gilespike.com



FRENCH + TYE

WRAP IT IN RUBBER

When Janice Turner, 47, and Mike Blackwell, 51, bought this north London terrace three years ago, it would have made a perfect set "if EastEnders wanted to film a squat, with fireplaces daubed in gold stickers and psychedelic paint", Janice recalls. Now it has drama of a different kind: a £110,000 extension sprayed with rubber meant for oil rigs, inspired by a rubber house Janice had visited in Dungeness, Kent. It was "daunting to coat the cube of wood", she says, with plastic sheets required to shield neighbours' homes — but it certainly saved money, says Hugh McEwen, of Office S&M architects. Instead of expensive bricks and bricklaying, the rubber is installed for £65 a sq metre, instantly waterproof and guaranteed for 30 years (esw.company). Making the most of the nightmare downstairs bathroom, a diagonal wall now separates this from the kitchen, so both rooms can look out on the garden. The thickened wall also contains storage and a larder. officesandm.com

