

GLASS ACT

REPLACING A BAY WINDOW WITH A SPECTACULAR WALL OF GLASS HAS TRANSFORMED RACHEL AND DAVID GILBERT'S ONCE-TRADITIONAL HOME

FEATURE MAGGIE COLVIN | PHOTOGRAPHY ROBERT SANDERSON



DINING AREA
Vibrant artwork lines the walls of the dining area. The Natural Wood Floor Company sells similar parquet flooring, from £42sq m

SITTING AREA
The new glazed sitting room focuses on the garden. The Tuscany large sofa, £349, Leather Sofa World, is comparable. Debenhams sells a similar leather storage bench, £280

REPLANNED



HOME TRUTHS

THE PROPERTY
Edwardian semi-detached house
LOCATION North London
ROOMS Hall, sitting room, kitchen-diner/living area, utility room, office, four bedrooms (three en suite), bathroom
PURCHASED 1993
PREVIOUS PROPERTY
'We lived in a semi-detached house nearby,' says Rachel.

A pretty Edwardian façade and a perfectly preserved period hall give no indication of the radical space that unfolds as you step into Rachel and David Gilbert's north London home. 'This was once three separate rooms,' says Rachel, pointing out the dining room area. 'When we first moved in we knocked two rooms into one and installed a new kitchen but, more recently, we commissioned a major architectural alteration, which hadn't really been our

intention.' It all began when the couple discovered a leak in the flat roof above the first-floor bedroom. 'David had always wanted an office in the roof and the bathrooms also needed revamping, so we asked architect Robert Hirschfield to come up with proposals to develop the roof space and sort out the problem with dampness.' However, Robert's ideas far surpassed the couple's wildest imaginings. His plans included replacing the ground-floor rear bay window with a new glass sitting room. This ►



HALL
The panelling has been preserved as a reminder of the history of the house. Safavieh rug, £83.71, Overstock.com, is a good alternative

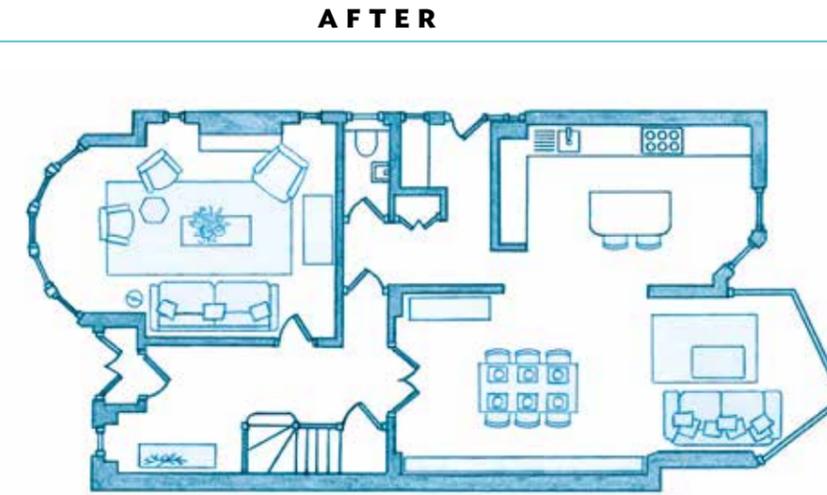


SITTING ROOM
Furniture in bold shapes and colours makes a strong visual impact. Soft Dream Flexform sofa, price on application, Chaplins. Sloane limestone fire surround, from £719, Acquisitions

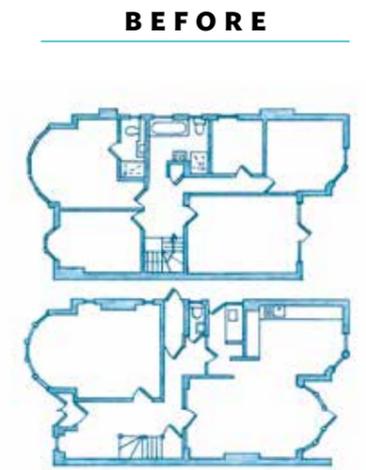
BEST BUY 'Our architect Robert Hirschfield suggested using a single piece of structural glass as a roof for the new extension which makes such a difference to the level of light'



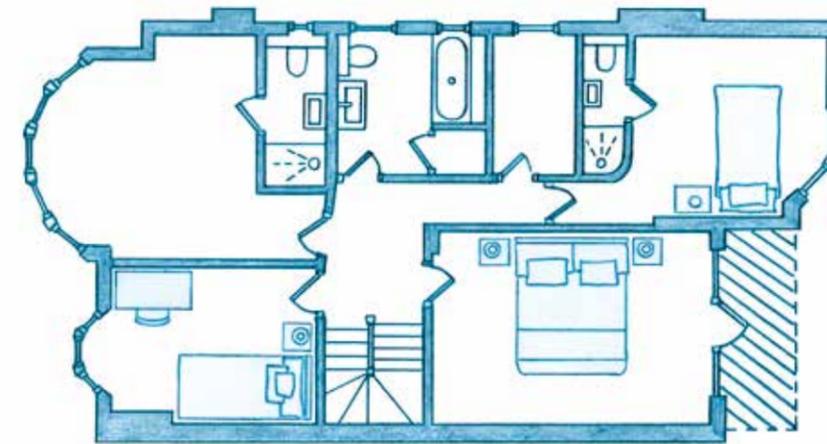
KITCHEN
The original room was redesigned to make space for a utility. New units were made in stainless steel. Rosanna Aubergine kitchen units, price on application, Barget. Stainless-steel units, price on application, Barazza



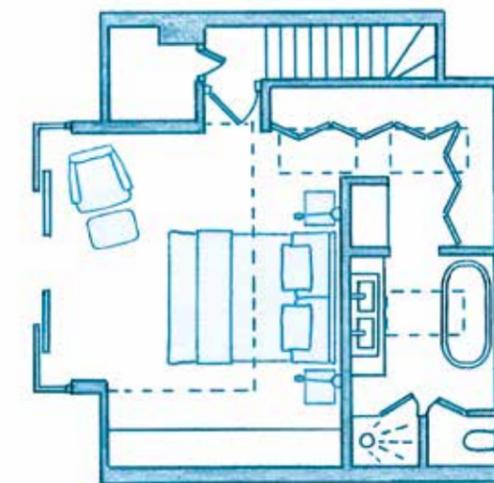
GROUND FLOOR



BEFORE



FIRST FLOOR



SECOND FLOOR



EXTERIOR
Rachel and David's architect Robert Hirschfield came up with the ambitious idea to replace the ground-floor rear bay window with a cutting-edge glass sitting-room extension. This uses structural glass more often found in commercial projects. The full-height glass panels allow the couple uninterrupted views of the garden. To match this, the roof extension was designed using similar materials, and achieves a light and spacious feel, while balancing the old and new elements of the house.



MASTER BEDROOM
This is Rachel's self-styled hotel room. 'It feels as if we're living in the treetops,' she says. Eames lounge and ottoman, £6,769, The Conran Shop, is a close match

extension would project out into the garden, providing a sleek, modern contrast to the building's period detail. 'With its structural glass walls and ceiling, this has become our out-and-out favourite space in the house,' says Rachel.

For the roof space, Robert designed an equally imaginative glazed extension to match the style of the ground floor, and it soon became obvious that it deserved star billing. 'Thankfully David gave up his claim to the new space and we decided

to use this as our bedroom floor,' explains Rachel. 'It's large enough for a dressing room and a bathroom which is concealed behind a freestanding wall. We converted a first-floor bedroom into an office for David instead.'

To achieve the serene look Rachel wanted in the master bedroom, she used boutique-hotel style as her inspiration. 'The room is predominantly white, which is very calming,' she says. Elsewhere, Rachel has indulged her passion for colour and, although David is inclined to be more of

a monochrome minimalist, the pair have found common ground in their love of art.

Rachel and David also share a passion for entertaining, rekindled by the new open-plan space. 'It's great for parties,' enthuses Rachel. 'The furniture also does a good job of defining zones when lots of people are here.'

The couple are certainly enjoying the benefits of the replanned layout. 'This house has been reworked from a relatively standard home to an architectural one-off,' she says. 'We're so glad we took the plunge.' 🍷



MASTER EN SUITE
The bathroom is divided off from the master bedroom with a wall lined with double basins. Trend freestanding bath, from £679, Bathstore, is similar. Catalona basins, £526 each, Alternative Bathrooms



GUEST BEDROOM
Bold spots and stripes stand out in an otherwise all-white scheme. Linen duvet cover, £35; pillowcases, £15 each, all Homesense