



**Rear extension**  
A contemporary metal box extension was designed for the rear, with large amounts of glazing linking inside to out, and stairs leading from the roof terrace down to the garden.

# ADDED SPACE

Caroline and Alistair Farrant have dramatically extended their 1950s house – upwards, sideways, down and back – transforming it into a striking and contemporary family home.

Story: Debbie Jeffery | Photography: Marc Wilmot



## [ In brief ]

**Project** Extension and remodel of a 1950s house.  
**Location** Sheffield  
**Paid** £395,000 in 2005  
**Spent** £1,154/m<sup>2</sup>  
**Worth** £750,000+

Caroline and Alistair Farrant have taken an unremarkable 1950s house in Sheffield and totally reinvented it with imaginative extensions: building up into the loft, out into the back garden, to one side and even down into the basement. Instead of moving house they chose to spend their budget on updating and modernising the existing detached brick property, so that every room has been completely transformed, and the couple now have ample enviable living space for themselves and their daughters Annabel, 10 and Flora, six.

“We’d been living in the property for around 10 years, and always knew that we wanted to change the layout,” explains Alistair. “The people who’d lived here previously had extended by building a kitchen and an extra bedroom, but everything felt very disjointed. The worst thing was how difficult it was to reach the back garden, which wasn’t ideal with two young children.”

The basement had low head height and was mainly used for storage, with a garage and compartmentalised living spaces on the ground floor. Upstairs were four bedrooms, all sharing one bathroom, with one of the bedrooms only accessible by walking through another.

“The space just wasn’t laid out in the best way, and we did consider selling up and moving somewhere else, but we enjoy living in this quiet cul-de-sac, which is just 10 minutes from town and five minutes from the Peak District,” says Caroline, an orthodontist.

“Over the years we’d had the house rewired, installed a new central heating system and generally updated the rooms, but as Annabel and Flora grew up we realised something more dramatic was needed. We envied friends who had open-plan living spaces with bifold doors straight onto the garden.”

Some years previously the couple had approached an architect to try to improve the room configuration and access outside. After obtaining plans and builders’ quotes the project was put on hold, and

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## Frontage

A new extension above the garage created a dressing room and en suite for the master bedroom, and has been matched to the older part of the house.





[ Top tips ]

Discuss the architect's plans with friends before you start. We changed our layout significantly following some friends' advice - even though it meant going back in for planning a second time.



then in 2015 they decided to contact another local architectural practice Alistair had met through work.

"We only gave Coda Bespoke a very short wish-list, because we wanted to allow them the freedom to be creative," says Alistair, managing director of GDA, a design and marketing agency. "Employing an architect should mean trusting their expertise rather than stifling them by imposing your own ideas, and Coda has a reputation for taking bland houses and making them extraordinary."

Enlarging the children's bedrooms was a priority, and converting the wasted loft space into a bedroom for Annabel freed up her tiny old room to contain the new stairs and her dressing room. Flora also has a dressing room beside her bedroom, with access to the family bathroom on this floor.

To the rear of the house an existing conservatory would be demolished to make way for a new extension, connecting the basement level to the floor above and enabling direct access to the garden. This would contain a guest suite and a playroom/TV den where everyone could congregate.

In addition, a new dining space on the ground floor would lead out onto a roof terrace above the guest suite, with metal steps down to the garden, ensuring that the rear of the house connects fully to the outdoor space. Huge panels of glazing, roof lights and glass doors were designed to bring natural light in at every level.

"Previously we couldn't see or hear the children playing in the garden, and if we wanted to have a barbecue it was just too much effort trekking outside, so we loved Coda's design, which gave us everything we needed and more," says Caroline.

Visually, the front of the house would be improved with new grey aluminium windows and a contemporary entrance door, but the real transformation has taken place at the rear, where the two-storey extension is

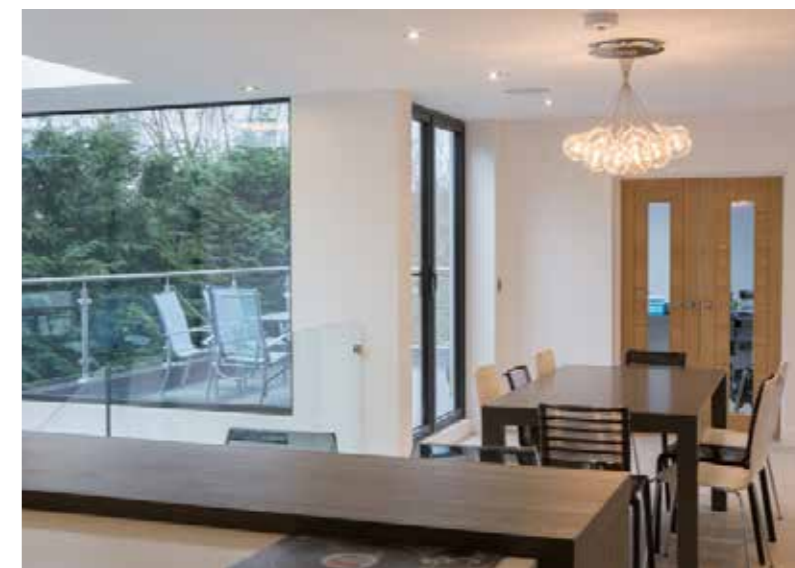


clad in dramatic steel panels, which create a standing seam effect. These dark grey matt panels are more usually seen on commercial buildings, but offer an unusual alternative to zinc and a fast installation time.

"We'd seen other properties in the area, designed by Coda, which feature this type of powder-coated steel cladding," says Alistair. "It suited the low maintenance, contemporary feel we were looking for and really gives the house a wow factor."

Planning permission was granted for the numerous alterations, but then Alistair and Caroline decided to make some extra changes by extending above the single-storey garage to create a master dressing room and en suite. This extension has also resulted in a more symmetrical-looking façade, but required a second planning application.

"There were no problems with the planners, and our architect then recommended Whitshaw Builders to complete the work," Alistair explains. "We stayed living in the house for the first couple of months while foundations were dug, and the builders were superb and made sure that we were disturbed as little as possible."



**Living space**

The double-height extension creates volume and connects the lower ground floor rooms to the kitchen/dining space above, with underfloor heating laid throughout these levels. Taking down an internal wall created the open-plan kitchen. The dining area now opens onto a new roof terrace.



## HOMES

Remodel & extension

The most expensive and ambitious element of the project involved excavating the existing basement with a mini digger to increase head height and form the new living spaces. After this, the family moved out of the house and rented a two-bedroom flat nearby, storing their furniture in Alistair's office.

"It wasn't ideal," he says. "Every day I'd load up the car with our possessions and drive off to work, where we had boxes piled high."

The new timber-framed rear extension is highly insulated, with a flat roof, and the back of the existing house has been rendered white to cover existing poor quality brickwork and contrast with the dark grey of the metal cladding. Grey aluminium windows and doors, installed throughout, replace dated uPVC units and tie everything together.

Roof tiles salvaged from the rear of the house were re-used for the timber-framed extension above the garage, and a new dormer window in the dressing room has been copied to match the existing, creating a unified appearance.

"We put so much trust in Whitshaw Builders that we didn't do that much research ourselves, which saved a huge amount of time and stress," says Alistair. "They came up with ideas and samples, and we were happy to let them take charge and effectively project manage the build on our behalf. Nothing was too much trouble and they made the whole experience a pleasure."

Internally the house is now unrecognisable. A wall was taken down between the kitchen and dining room to form a large open-plan space looking out onto the garden and the raised terrace. Bespoke wooden stairs lead down to the basement level indoors, with a double-height void adding drama, and glass balustrades allowing light to access all areas.

Six months after work began on site the revamped property was ready for the family to move back



### [ Contacts ]

#### PROJECT

**Architect** Coda Bespoke: [codastudios.co.uk](http://codastudios.co.uk)

**Builder** Whitshaw Builders: [whitshawbuilders.co.uk](http://whitshawbuilders.co.uk)

**Structural engineer** Henry Freeman, CoDA structures: 0114 279 4933, [constructiondesign.co.uk](http://constructiondesign.co.uk)

#### STRUCTURE

**Steel cladding** Colorcoat Urban: [colorcoat-online.com](http://colorcoat-online.com)

**Timber frame** Howarth Timber & Building Supplies: [howarth-timber.co.uk](http://howarth-timber.co.uk)

**Rooflight** Roof Maker Ltd: [roof-maker.co.uk](http://roof-maker.co.uk)

**Flat roof covering** Alwittra VSK: [alwittra.de](http://alwittra.de)

**External staircase and balustrade** Chrisand Fabrications Ltd: [chrisandfabrications.co.uk](http://chrisandfabrications.co.uk)

**Built in speakers and sound system** Sonos: [sonos.com](http://sonos.com)

#### FIXTURES AND FITTINGS

**Kitchen** Karl Benz: [karlbenz.co.uk](http://karlbenz.co.uk)

**Sanitaryware** AC Bathrooms & Heating: [acbathroomsandheating.com](http://acbathroomsandheating.com)

**Tiles** The Tile Store, Sheffield: [the-tilestore.co.uk](http://the-tilestore.co.uk)

**Light fittings** John Lewis: [johnlewis.com](http://johnlewis.com)

**Stairs** Ibos Interiors: [ibosinteriors.co.uk](http://ibosinteriors.co.uk)

**Windows** Mayfayre Aluminium Systems Ltd: [mayfayrealuminium.co.uk](http://mayfayrealuminium.co.uk)

**Wardrobes and study** Toffs Bedrooms: [toffsbedrooms.co.uk](http://toffsbedrooms.co.uk)

#### ← FLOORPLAN

Excavating the basement has created a dramatic double-height playroom/TV lounge and a guest suite. The kitchen/dining area opens onto a raised terrace, and there are now three spacious bedrooms on the upper two floors, each with their own dressing room.

#### Upstairs

Each of the three family bedrooms now has its own dressing room. Velux windows were added in the converted loft, which is Annabel's room, and CAT-6 cabling has been installed throughout. The master bedroom benefits from its own en suite and there is also a family bathroom on the first floor.



into – just in time for Christmas 2015. "It's taken time to get used to living in an open-plan house, because it's not what we've been used to, but now I can be cooking in the kitchen and still chat to people in the dining room," says Caroline.

"The layout makes entertaining much more enjoyable, and having a terrace at the same level as the kitchen is fantastic. We've gone from being trapped indoors to having a home which connects beautifully to the garden. It really does feel like a completely different house."

#### [ Ask the owners ]

##### What was the high point of the project?

We can't speak too highly of our builders, who hit the deadline, came in on budget and guided us through every stage. We both work full-time, so it made life far easier knowing they were in control.

##### ...and the low point?

There weren't really any low points, although boxing up and moving all our belongings into my office was chaotic.

##### Your best buy?

The tiles were a great buy. The Tile Store in Sheffield recommended Nepal Blanco floor tiles and they look stunning, plus having them on the lower ground floor means that we can go in and out to the garden without worrying about dirty shoes.

##### ...and the biggest extravagance?

We hadn't budgeted to render the outside of the house, but it makes a huge difference to the overall look, and contrasts well with the dark grey steel cladding.

