

# *Best of* BRITISH

A modern kitchen with a white island, light blue chairs, and a stainless steel refrigerator. The kitchen features white cabinetry, a stainless steel refrigerator, and a white countertop. A glass fruit bowl sits on the island. The room has a high ceiling with a skylight and modern pendant lights. The floor is made of light-colored wood.

This Edwardian house in north London has been refurbished and extended to create a timeless and contemporary family home with a focus on quality materials and craftsmanship

Words: **Fiona Reid** Photography: **Graham Gaunt**

**Previous page (p137):** Handleless cabinets enhance the streamlined appeal of this kitchen and two slightly different tones of white were used for the base and tall cabinets to create subtle variations.

**Right:** The kitchen was designed to be crisp and minimal with a focus on light and space. The cabinetry is handcrafted, so, while contemporary, it has the look and feel of fine furniture.

**N**igel and Christine Ritchie understood the scale of the project that awaited them when they purchased this Edwardian terraced house in north London's Fortis Green. "We bought the house as a project and then renovated it from top to toe," Nigel says. "We also enlarged the house from around 1300sq ft to 2000sq ft."

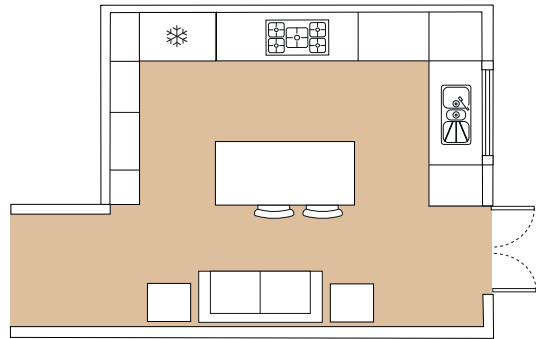
The house had been altered prior to the family's arrival, but some of the changes were inappropriate for the age of the building, so the couple decided to retain some of the original features that had survived intact while creating a new and contemporary interior. As Nigel comments, "It's effectively like a new house within the old skin."

The couple turned to the architectural practice Studio Mark Ruthven, and worked with project architect Moji Mobasheri-Puckett. As a designer himself, Nigel could visualise the potential from this house and gave the architects a clearly detailed brief, as he explains. "From the front, we wanted the house to be a smart and sensitive renovation of the existing façade, and we retained and refurbished the old staircase and the ceiling detailing in the lounge and the shape of that room, but beyond that everything gets more contemporary as you move through the house. We wanted the property to feel smart but homely," he adds, "without too much over-decoration, and with a simple colour palette and natural wood finishes."

The kitchen is positioned to the rear within the extension, "As a British designer myself, I wanted to buy British," Nigel says, "but a lot of companies here make more traditional kitchens, whereas we wanted a modern kitchen made by British craftsmen." This desire for craftsmanship and quality – as Nigel was very clear that, with an understated kitchen, every surface and detail counts – led the Ritchies to Roundhouse, which designed made the bespoke cabinetry.

And this kitchen certainly is beautifully understated with finely crafted details. The timber cabinet fronts have been painted with a silky matt finish in Farrow & Ball's Cornforth White, the palest of soft grey-toned whites, while RAL 9003 creates subtle variation on the tall cabinets, combined with slender Silestone worktops in Kensho. ▶





The wall cabinet in walnut adds warmth to the palette, and walnut is also used inside the cabinets. "It's proper handcrafted British furniture, which I love," Nigel says.

There are clever touches, including a hidden walnut utensil drawer – a detail Christine wanted – and a concealed bin store. Notably, the Siemens ovens are tucked in the island opposite the hob, so you only see them when in the cooking zone. "I didn't want to see appliances when I walked into the space," Nigel says, other than the fridge-freezer. "An integrated fridge was too complex so we went for a smart Fisher & Paykel design."

Nigel and Christine's evident appreciation of materials flows on through the interior of the rest of the house. There are three bathrooms: a family bathroom, the master ensuite, and the shower room on the first floor, which Nigel had envisaged as being his space – only the rest of the family now love it as well! Studio Mark Ruthven designed the shower room – and the master ensuite – as part of the overall project, and recommended the palette of materials that would complement those used elsewhere.

As in the kitchen, there's a play between light and dark in both bathrooms. In the shower room, bronze-toned tiling by Mosa wraps down the wall inside the shower area, across the floor, and up the opposite wall, and the rooflight above the shower enhances the subtle tones. "The pattern of these tiles was planned meticulously, although it looks random," Nigel says. In addition, the Bette shower tray was specified to match the tiling.

In the master ensuite, Christine chose the large Bette bath, and this is enclosed in beautiful hand-cut marble for a tactile and elegant finish, with cream tiling on the floor and walls and cabinetry in oak. The same marble was used for the vanity unit countertop. The furniture was designed by the architects and made bespoke, again continuing the theme of craftsmanship.

The finished spaces have a timeless quality and, while contemporary, the sympathetic use of materials enables these modern elements to sit easily within this period shell. As Nigel says, "We let the materials and finishes do their thing, and kept everything understated." **KBB**

**Left:** Horizontal book-matched walnut was used for the wall unit, adding warmth alongside the soft grey cabinetry.

**Right:** The island contains two single ovens and a pull-out bin, although these elements are not visible from the seating area – a decision that adds to the serene feel of this hard-working space.



**Left:** Deep drawers were chosen for their functionality. Walnut was used inside the cabinets in a play of dark alongside light finishes.

**Below left:** The cutlery and utensil drawer is positioned below the hob – a very functional touch.

**Below:** A magic corner unit ensures that there is no dead space within this kitchen.





## Q&A

### Owner Nigel Ritchie says...

#### What did you find the most useful research tool when starting this project?

We bought lots of magazines and we put together a mood board and some initial ideas before meeting the architect to discuss our project.

#### What was your biggest budget surprise?

Nothing was a surprise – the things we couldn't afford we didn't have. The marble was expensive, but our architect sourced a wonderful piece which was very good value in the end. The whole process was meticulously planned to enable very strict budget control but not to compromise on quality.

#### Any advice for someone embarking on a similar project?

Plan carefully, budget with care and have a vision for what you want to achieve. Build in a time and financial contingency and listen to and respect the professionals you have hired to design and build your project – the good ones really do care about delivering a great job on time and on budget.

#### Anywhere you managed to save money?

Meticulous planning enabled us to save money as it allowed time to source from the best value suppliers and get comparative prices where necessary.

“We wanted the property to feel smart but homely, without too much over-decoration, and with a simple colour palette and natural wood finishes.”

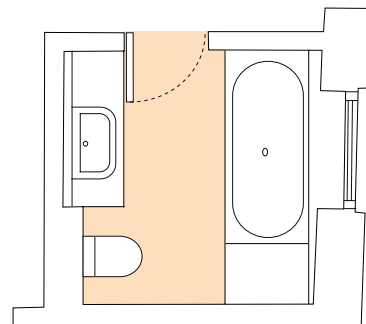
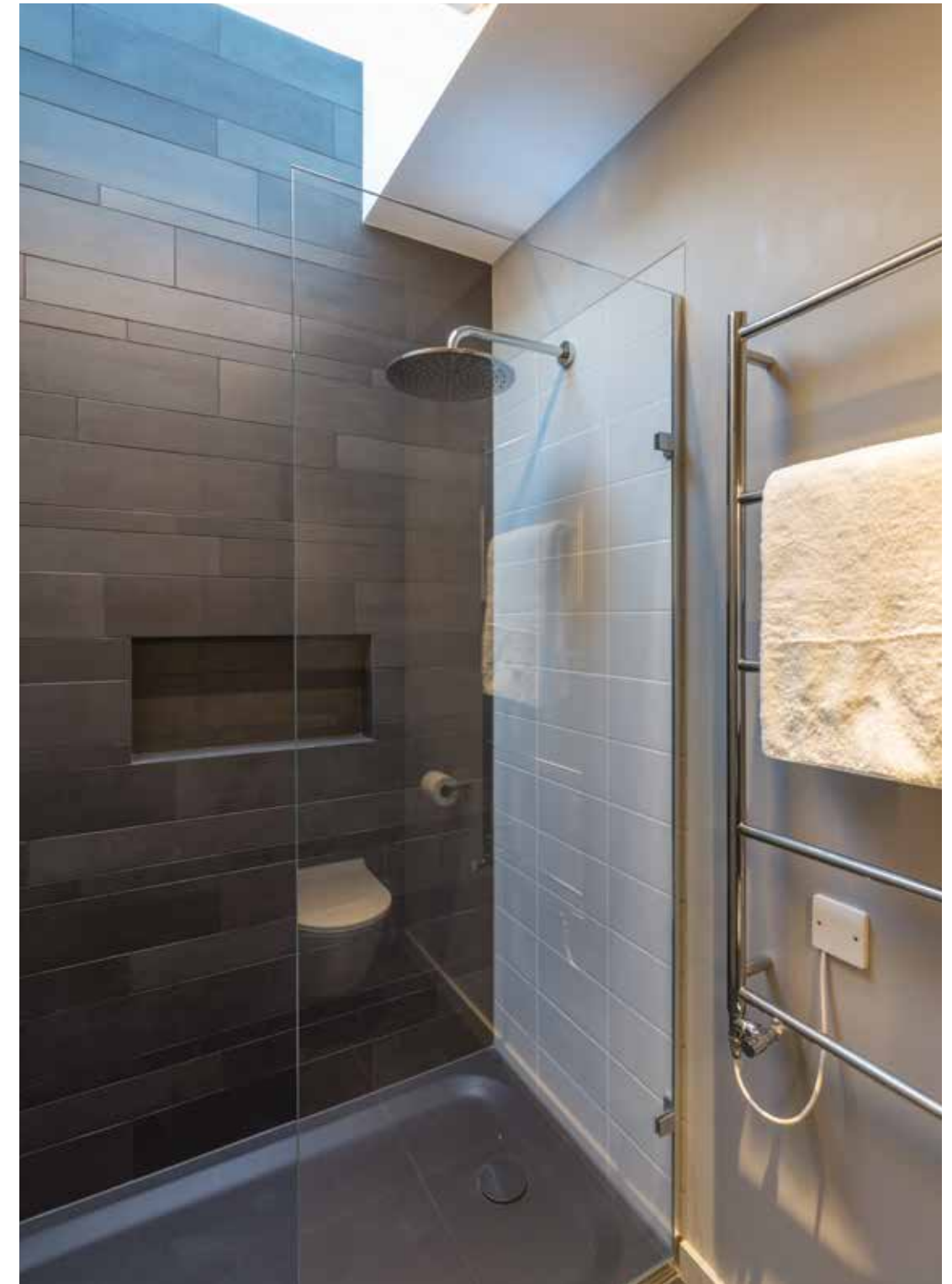


**Above left:** The same flooring throughout the ground floor unites the kitchen, dining and living areas.

**Above right:** As part of the renovation, Studio Mark Ruthven created a long view through the house as you come into the hallway. Sliding pocket doors allow the spaces to be left open or closed off.

**Left:** These stunning pendant lights create an intimate atmosphere in the dining room.

**Opposite page:** Tall larders were set into the wall, utilising the void that had been the original doorway into the rear garden.

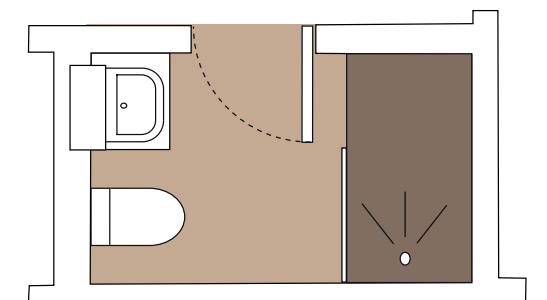


**Above:** The bespoke oak vanity unit echoes the detailing found downstairs, where the wall cabinet becomes an integral piece of furniture within the space.

**Right:** The dark bronze-toned mosaic tiles wrap down a wall, across the floor, and up the opposite wall. This tone was chosen to reference the walnut used in the kitchen.

**Far left:** The generous Bette bath creates a luxurious spa-like bathing zone in the master ensuite.

**Left:** As in the kitchen, the couple chose minimal yet tactile finishes and created a feature of the bath using Savanna Grey marble in a honed finish.



## SourceBook

### DESIGN

**Architect** Studio Mark Ruthven (020 7485 0050 or [www.studiomr.co.uk](http://www.studiomr.co.uk))

**Kitchen** Craig Matson at Roundhouse (020 7297 6220 or [www.roundhousedesign.com](http://www.roundhousedesign.com))

### KITCHEN

**Cabinetry** Urbo by Roundhouse, as before

**Worktop** 20mm Silestone Kensho composite (01256 761229 or [www.silestone.co.uk](http://www.silestone.co.uk))

**Splashback** 6mm glass, Roundhouse, as before

**Tap and sink** Franke (01246 450255 or [www.franke.com](http://www.franke.com))

**Appliances** Dishwasher, multifunction ovens and hob, all Siemens (0344 892 8999 or [www.siemens-home.co.uk](http://www.siemens-home.co.uk)); Extractor, Westin (01484 421585 or [www.westin.co.uk](http://www.westin.co.uk)); Fridge-freezer, Fisher & Paykel (0800 088 6605 or [www.fisherpaykel.com/uk](http://www.fisherpaykel.com/uk))

**Flooring** Engineered wide-plank whitened Scandinavian oak, Hawwoods (01524 737000 or [www.hawwoods.co.uk](http://www.hawwoods.co.uk))

**Barstools** Vitra Hal barstools by Jasper Morrison, Heal's (020 7896 7451 or [www.heals.co.uk](http://www.heals.co.uk))

**Sofa** Aspen, Content by Conran, The Conran Shop (0844 848 4000 or [www.conranshop.co.uk](http://www.conranshop.co.uk))

**Pendant lights** Beat tall pendant lights, Tom Dixon (020 3696 4950 or [www.tomdixon.net](http://www.tomdixon.net))

### DINING ROOM

**Dining chairs and table** For similar try Habitat (0344 499 4686 or [www.habitat.co.uk](http://www.habitat.co.uk))

**Pendant lights** For similar try a bespoke design from Cue & Co of London (020 7731 4728 or [www.cueandco.com](http://www.cueandco.com))

### SHOWER ROOM

**Shower tray** Bette (0844 800 0547 or [www.bette.co.uk](http://www.bette.co.uk))

**Shower screen** Monaco, Majestic (0844 800 1500 or [www.majesticshowers.com](http://www.majesticshowers.com))

**Shower** Arm and shower valve, Crosswater (0845 873 8840 or [www.crosswater.co.uk](http://www.crosswater.co.uk)); Hand shower, Axor by Hansgrohe (01372 472001 or [www.hansgrohe.co.uk](http://www.hansgrohe.co.uk))

**Basin and WC** Catalano ([www.catalano.co.uk](http://www.catalano.co.uk))

**Basin tap** Kai Lever, Crosswater, as before

**Tiles** Mosa (020 7490 0484 or [www.mosa.nl](http://www.mosa.nl))

### MASTER ENSUITE

**Bath** BetteStarlet, Bette, as above

**Bath filler and basin tap** Crosswater, as before

**Brassware** Axor by Hansgrohe, as before

**Tiles** Mosa, as before

**Basin and WC** Catalano, as before

**Basin tap** Crosswater, as before

**Vanity unit** Bespoke cabinetry by Studio Mark Ruthven, as before

**Marble cladding** Savanna Grey marble, Unique Marble (020 8807 1026 or [www.uniquemarble.co.uk](http://www.uniquemarble.co.uk))

**Wall lights** Kyoto, Astro Lighting (01279 427001 or [www.astrolighting.co.uk](http://www.astrolighting.co.uk))

### COST

Roundhouse kitchens start from £35,000, while a similar bathroom or shower room would each cost around £10,000



**Above:** Rather than open up the kitchen to the garden with bi-fold doors, Nigel and Christine opted for large windows and a glazed double door – a look they felt was more in keeping with the style of the house while ensuring an indoor-outdoor connection with lots of light.