

ON ANOTHER
LEVEL

A sensitive restructuring of a Victorian home, involving a compelling floating element, has modernised and enriched the architectural design

Words Emma Foale Photography Ben Blossom





“THE RICH, WARM
TIMBER OF THE
‘POD’ REFERENCES
THE ORIGINAL
FLOORBOARDS”

Revealing the truth in the saying that there is often more than meets the eye, this project involves layers and fine points that will only be discovered on closer inspection. The couple who reside here, with their young children, took an approach that was more akin to a Listed building, as they worked closely and collaboratively with architects John Proctor and Mike Shaw of Proctor & Shaw. The full-house refurbishment and extension was focused around the challenge of retaining the first floor bathroom, while removing the structure below in order to create a large, kitchen-dining space that would lead out onto the garden. Consequentially, this led to the existing two-storey rear return being demolished and rebuilt, with the question of how the bathroom might hang in the space below being solved by the distinctive timber-clad ‘pod’ that can be seen from the garden. A seamless merging of the old and new brought with it its own challenges, however the architects also managed this ambitious project on a constrained budget. “Finishes and detailing to the new extension were carefully chosen with reference to the existing house,” explains John Proctor. “For example, the small amount of brickwork to the extension flank walls was re-used brick from the house with matching lime mortar. The cladding to the ‘pod’, which houses the bathroom in the two-storey rear extension, has a tonally rich finish (similar to the aged pine on old floorboards) and is detailed in pin-stripe batten and board design which displays craft.” And so, by using the original house as a material palette for what was being created, the highly contemporary new interior sits comfortably with what was built over a century before.

Underneath the 'pod' is the ground floor kitchen and dining space "that mediated how the house addressed the garden," say the architects. "Access to and enjoyment of the outdoors was a key influence in the design and renovation as the clients have a love of gardening." A power float concrete floor creates a seamless flow from inside to outside, while the glass sliding doors allow easy access to the garden



"THE MATERIAL USED FOR THE POD IS A PRODUCT CALLED 'THERMOWOOD' WHICH IS A BAKED TIMBER"

HOME PROFILE

PROPERTY DESCRIPTION

A double-fronted Victorian home near Dulwich Village, South London. In an unusual fashion, the house has three storeys to the rear and two to the front. The original house was traditional in style and layout with service rooms, such as a scullery. The period style, proportions and detailing (where structural work permitted) have been kept and restored where possible to work with the new layout.

LOCATION

Dulwich, South London

ARCHITECTURAL BRIEF

The brief was to extend and reinvent the ground floor to suit modern family life, complete with a luxurious master en suite and extra loft space. The solution came to shape with the idea for a part-two storey rear extension with a hanging timber clad 'pod' forming the dramatic centrepiece to the ground floor kitchen/dining area.



The 'pod' is clad in a batten and board Thermowood product by Metsawood, a baked timber that requires no finishing and minimal maintenance. It is very stable and will look the same inside and out for many years to come. The kitchen cabinetry was designed and built by the client with local joiners using Fenix NTM laminates on oak-edged panels finished with an Osmo Cognac stain



Creating a striking talking point in the kitchen, the hanging timber-clad pod is supported with mirror-clad beams with a perimeter roof light all around. Its design makes it appear as if it's floating above the Bleu de Savoie marble-covered island

“EVEN THOUGH THE ARCHITECTURE INCLUDES LARGE EXPANSES OF GLASS AND DRAMATIC VOLUMES, THE DESIGN IS NOT STARKLY MODERN”



Each bedroom in the loft is split level with its own staircase. The master bedroom with en suite (pictured below) straddles the front of the house through a series of enfilade spaces



PROJECT NOTES

ARCHITECT

Proctor & Shaw
0208 244 6110
proctorandshaw.com

CONTRACTOR

Orchestrate Ltd
orchestrateltd.com

ENGINEER

Engineeria Ltd
engineeria.com

ALUMINIUM

SLIDING DOORS
Architectural Vision/
Cortizo avsglass.co.uk

CONCRETE FLOOR

Steyson Granolithic
steysonconcrete
floors.co.uk

TIMBER CLADDING

MetsaWood
metsawood.com

MEET THE ARCHITECTS

South London-based architects, John Proctor and Mike Shaw, enjoy designing architecture that is rich in detail. The Pod House required them to work closely with the clients and come up with a modern solution that is sympathetic to the original Victorian detailing of the house.

What was most important to get right with the design?

The key element was 'the pod' and how this was detailed in order that the structure, finishes, glass work and services (bathroom above) were all co-ordinated to deliver on the design concept of a dramatic floating element. The 'pod' developed in quite a rational way. The bathroom had to be retained yet we wanted to remove all structure below (ground floor) to create a large kitchen dining space that mediated how the house addressed the garden.

What informed your material palette?

The existing house finishes were the biggest influence here. The pod timber is a product called "thermowood" which is a baked timber. It was perfect for this application - it's maintenance free, will look the same inside and outside over time, was available in different sections (to achieve the batten and board design) and is a rich warm timber that was a good reference to the original floor boards which were exposed and restored throughout the house. Once this was chosen a darker tone to the concrete floor made sense and then colours became easier to choose once these core elements had been selected.

What has the client's feedback been?

This project was one of the most collaborative we, as a practice, have been involved in. The client proved to be very capable of sourcing suppliers for client direct pieces of joinery and self-built many of them himself, using our conceptual or detailed design input as required. This was quite a feat for a busy family but their energy for the project never wavered. I think this approach has no doubt endeared them more to their new home that they love.