



BEFORE

REAR EXTERIOR

The house had never been lived in and was an ideal blank canvas for the couple to bring their plans to life



FACT FILE

THE OWNERS

Lorraine Kerr, a stay-at-home mum, lives here with her husband David, who jointly owns an IT business, and their daughter Leah, two

THE PROPERTY

A detached five-bedroom house built in 2008

THE LOCATION

Glasgow, Scotland

WHAT THEY SPENT

The couple bought the house for £350,000 in 2010 and have spent around £285,000 on extending it. It has recently been valued at £635,000.

NEW FACADE

A specialist company hired through the builders rendered the house using K Rend. The new accoya timber panelling is from Russwood and is framed in zinc



‘Extending up and out has transformed our property’

Lorraine and David Kerr have turned an ordinary new-build house into a modern home with individual style and character

WORDS MAIRI MACDONALD PHOTOGRAPHS DOUGLAS GIBB

While looking for their future family home, Lorraine and David Kerr came across a house built by a local builder two years earlier, which had never been sold or lived in. ‘The house didn’t grab my attention when I saw it on the internet, but the size and location made it worth a look,’ says Lorraine. ‘When we went to view it, we immediately loved the feeling of space inside. It had a large, light double-height hallway, five double bedrooms, a kitchen, a large open-plan family room, a formal living room, a double garage and a garden, with plenty of potential to be improved.’

As the house had already been on the market for two years, the builder was happy for Lorraine and David to buy it for a slightly reduced price. ‘As soon as we had started looking for a house, we’d put our two-bedroom flat, which we had lived in for three years, on the market,’ recalls Lorraine. ‘But as a result of the economic downturn, the property market in Glasgow was very slow, and we had a decision to make. Did we wait until the flat had sold and risk losing the house, or did we stretch ourselves and have mortgages on two properties? As chance would



REAR GARDEN

Clerestory windows around the top of the extension make a design statement and flood the space with light. These windows and the bi-fold doors to the extension and the loft are all from Duration Windows. Earth Angels landscaped the garden to work well with the new open-plan space. Red seat cushions and a shade from B&Q give old outdoor furniture an update

OLD KITCHEN

Right Although the existing kitchen was new and unused, Lorraine and David felt that it was too small for the size of the house

BEFORE



OLD DINING ROOM

Below The décor needed a refresh to work with the new open-plan kitchen space. The couple also decided to create a doorway in the wall between the living room and dining/family area, to link the spaces better



SEATING AREA

Below Pedralbes porcelain floor tiles in Gris, from Porcelanosa, provide a neutral backdrop to the bold sofa from Instyle Sofas and Maze wallpaper by Harlequin from Gilding the Lily. The Boda pendants are from Pagazzi and the blinds were made to measure by Shades



OPEN-PLAN KITCHEN

A large island breakfast bar is the focal point of the space. The Royal Oak island and base units and the Yeso wall units are all from Porcelanosa, which also supplied the Corian worktops and Siemens appliances

DESIGN TIP

A suspended ceiling panel can be a great device to bridge two areas with different ceiling heights, linking them together to improve the flow of space, while also providing a level surface for task lighting

have it, we only had to wait one month until the flat was sold.'

Although Lorraine and David loved their new home, they knew from the day they bought it that there were several issues that they wanted to address. The kitchen felt too small in proportion to the rest of the house, the flow of the downstairs rooms needed addressing and the loft was an enormous, undeveloped space with lots of potential but no proper access. Added to this, the exterior rendering was poorly finished and the iron balconies on the outside of the house were not to their taste.

With fate playing a timely hand, David sold a portion of his IT company to an American firm and the couple were then able to turn their vague plans for the house

into reality. 'We had employed the services of Glasgow architect Karen Parry, but we were waiting for the sale of the company to go through before we committed to the builders,' explains Lorraine. 'As soon as we were in a position to go ahead with the work, I also discovered that I was pregnant. Suddenly, time wasn't on our side and we needed to get going with the project.'

As soon as planning permission had been granted without any problems, the builders set to work. By this time, Lorraine was four months pregnant and the projected timescale for the completion of the job was six months. Knowing that the new baby was going to come home to a building site, Lorraine and David arranged for the builders to convert the loft first. The

intention was to have the loft ready in time for the baby's arrival, so that it could be used as a main living room away from the building work in the rest of the house.

With no access to the loft from inside the property other than a small hatch on the landing, the builders knocked a hole through the outside wall at loft level. Scaffolding was erected and a ladder was put up and taken down daily for the builders to have access from outside. This meant that they could complete the work in the loft without having to go through the main house. Access to the loft from inside the house was left until last, and involved installing a staircase leading up from the fifth bedroom. 'We felt that we could sacrifice a bedroom on the middle

floor for the new staircase up to the loft as we were gaining a room upstairs,' says Lorraine. 'The rest of the space in the fifth bedroom works well as a home office area.'

The conversion of the enormous 85-square-metre loft took more than four months to complete, with large amounts of insulation added to ensure it was a comfortable living space. At one end of the space is a bathroom with a large drench shower and Jacuzzi bath, WC and twin sinks. A built-in dressing room sits between the en suite and large bedroom, and there is a living room with an integrated cinema system at the other end. The six existing rooflights were replaced with 16 larger designs to bring in more light, so the roof had to be strengthened significantly to

DINING ROOM

Right Pocket doors slide into the wall so that the kitchen and dining/family room can become one big space – try Eclipse for a similar design. Harlequin Flint wallpaper frames the doorway. Warm wood finishes create a cosy feel, with flooring from Howdens and a table and chairs from Sterling Furniture. The bookcase from Oak Furniture Land divides the room into two separate spaces

DESIGN TIP

Informal room dividers, such as open shelving units or a double-sided wood-burning stove and log store, are ideal for separating two different functions, such as dining and living, within an open-plan space



LIVING ROOM

Below A palette of primary colours teamed with white gives a modern look to the space. The far wall is painted in Steel Symphony by Dulux. For similar leather sofas and a rug, try Harveys. The coffee table is from Sterling Furniture. A mirror from Pagazzi sits above the fireplace from The Fireplace Company



allow for these extra openings. At the gable end, double bi-fold doors with integrated blinds were fitted in the hole that had originally been made to allow the builders access from outside, offering views over the back garden.

With the loft conversion complete, the builders then set to work on extending the kitchen with a modern single-storey structure designed by architect Karen Parry. Made from rendered brick, with a zinc roof, the extension has windows on both sides in addition to clerestory windows to maximise the internal light. Folding-sliding doors allow easy access to and from the garden.

As the kitchen space was now more than double its original size, Lorraine and David chose large contemporary-style units to fill it. 'There is already a dining room directly off the kitchen, so we didn't feel the need to have another table in the space. Instead, we chose a large island with a breakfast bar down one side. Together with the L-shaped sofa at one

OLD LOFT SPACE

Right The loft was a large area with lots of potential and existing rooflights, but there was no proper access from the main house

BEFORE



LOFT BEDROOM

A high ceiling gives the bedroom a spacious feel. The bed is from The Living Room and the floral feature wallpaper is from B&Q



HOME CINEMA

Above Half-walls divide up the converted loft. An audio/visual system from Activate Audio Visual has been fitted throughout the house, with a home cinema in the loft. The new rooflights are from Velux and the carpet is from Jem Carpets. Try Harveys for a similar sofa. The coffee table is from The Living Room

LIGHT-FILLED SPACE

Left Walls painted in Rum Caramel 5 by Dulux create a calming feel and visually link the different areas of the loft. The chests are from The Living Room



DESIGN TIP

Stripe patterns or textures can help change the apparent proportions of a room and help to balance them out. Narrow stripes on the floor running the shortest width of a room make the space look wider and shorter

end of the room, it makes for a very sociable space,' says Lorraine.

To prevent the large rectangular island from making the room look long and narrow, the Kerrs chose floating kitchen units in two different shades to extend the perception of floor space. LED lighting both below the floating units and above the island canopy help add to the effect. 'We also wallpapered the original kitchen area to bring a bit of texture and interest to the room, and painted the rest white to maximise the light,' says Lorraine. 'The

white Corian worktops and light floor tiles also help with this.'

With Leah born just as the kitchen was being installed, the builders were under huge pressure to finish the work. 'In hindsight, we should have moved out while the work was being done, but at the time we thought we could manage,' admits Lorraine. 'It did mean I was there to oversee the builders and make decisions, but it was a dirty, messy job, when all I really wanted to do at the time was enjoy the countdown to my baby arriving.'

Leah spent the first few months of her life living between the bedrooms and the loft space, which had become a comfortable and warm makeshift living room away from the noise and dust, with a sofa, television, microwave and fridge.

When the loft conversion and kitchen were nearly completed, all that was left to do inside the house was to create a double doorway between the family area and living room. 'David and I wanted a better flow throughout the downstairs rooms, so we asked the builders to fit pocket doors,

which slide away into the wall, between the kitchen and the dining room and between the living areas,' explains Lorraine. 'In effect, this creates one large living space.'

The décor throughout the house is simple and contemporary, with most rooms decorated in neutral colours and accessorised with strong, brightly coloured statement pieces. In the hallway and kitchen, Lorraine has chosen to decorate feature walls in fun, up-to-date wallpaper. 'When we moved the furniture from our old two-bedroom flat into the house, we



ended up with lots of rooms and space to fill, so we started with almost a blank canvas. A couple of pieces – such as the dining room table, chairs and wall unit – came with us from the flat, but we bought most of it to suit this house,’ she says.

With the aim of de-cluttering the rooms of audio/visual (AV) equipment, David had it all moved to a central AV unit housed in one of the upstairs cupboards. Home network and AV cabling was established throughout the building, which enable the couple to control the equipment from any room in the house.

To complete the contemporary style and blend in the kitchen extension with the rest of the house, Lorraine and David had the exterior re-rendered with a finer, lighter render. They fitted new glass balustrades to the front and rear of the main property and also substituted the existing weathered wooden panel facings with a more durable and attractive wooden panel framed in zinc. ‘The removal of the old rendering was one of the worst parts of the renovation,’ recalls Lorraine. ‘The drilling started at 8am and finished at 5pm, and lasted for two weeks. It was so noisy that two-month-old Leah and I had to leave the house and spend our time visiting friends and family.’

‘Despite it being an extremely stressful nine-month project, it has been worthwhile,’ she continues. ‘Our house is exactly how we want it now, so all we need to do is enjoy it as a family. When Leah grows up, she will be none the wiser about the chaos during the first few months of her life!’

EN SUITE

Above Also within the loft space, the master en suite includes feature panels covered in Venis Pietra Slate tiles and Natal Marfil floor and wall tiles. Krypton basins add contemporary style and Gamadecor Tokyo Wenge vanity units soften the look. All the fixtures and fittings are from Porcelanosa

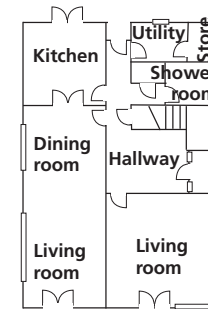
SHOWER AREA

Right A slimline pillar separates the wet room-style shower area from the rest of the en suite. The shower and WC are from Porcelanosa

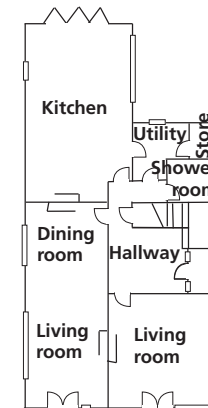


THE PLANS

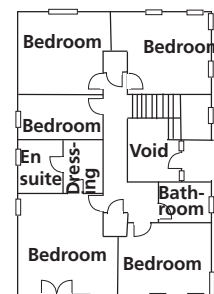
GROUND FLOOR BEFORE



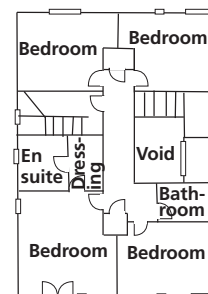
GROUND FLOOR AFTER



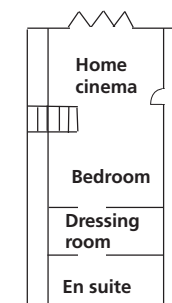
FIRST FLOOR BEFORE



FIRST FLOOR AFTER



SECOND FLOOR AFTER



The house was a new-build when the couple bought it, but they wanted to re-organise the layout to suit them and add space. The loft has been converted into a master suite and cinema room, the kitchen has been extended and new doors have made the ground floor more open-plan

THE COSTS

Building work	£130,000
Kitchen	£42,000
Rendering of garage and house	£30,000
Audio/visual system	£20,000
Garden	£20,000
Furniture and decoration	£13,000
Bathroom	£12,000
Wardrobes	£12,000
Architectural fees	£6,000
TOTAL	£285,000

THE CONTACTS

Architect Karen Parry Architects, 0141 561 5694, Karenparryarchitect.com
Garden design and maintenance Earth Angels, 0141 357 6308, E-angels.co.uk
Windows and bi-fold doors Duration Windows
Audio/visual system Activate Audio Visual
Kitchen, bathrooms and tiles Porcelanosa
Flooring Howdens, Jem Carpets

5-POINT PLAN

PLANNING A LOFT CONVERSION

Starting a project? Follow this useful guide from consumer expert **Jennifer Newton**

1 Builder, architect or loft company?

A specialist company can give a free quote, with advice on how to use the space, from adding stairs to plumbing issues, before you pay for drawings. For less complex conversions,

a builder may provide a plans drawing service from a structural engineer – try Fmb.org.uk, Ratedpeople.com or Mybuilder.com. Depending on your design, you may have to see an architect (Architecture.com). This will be costly, but will mean state-of-the-art design.

2 Best use of space?

A full conversion with a luxurious bedroom and en suite is a great way to add value, but including a bathroom will be more expensive. With many

homeowners now working from home, and adult children living at home for longer, converting the space into a home office, bedroom or more living space could be more cost-effective.

3 Red tape issues

Most loft conversions are possible using permitted development rights, but there are restrictions – see Planningportal.gov.uk for the full list. The work will also need to comply with building regulations. A loft company or builder can organise this, but make sure that you receive the

completion certificate. If you own a semi-detached or terraced house, or a flat, then you will need a party wall agreement, which can be as easy as asking your neighbours to sign a letter approving the work (Gov.uk details what it should state and what to do if refused). If they don't agree, it may mean paying for a surveyor.

4 Practical considerations

Plumbing is important – will your central heating system cope? If you have a tank in the loft, your system may need to be changed. You may have to upgrade your

boiler to add an en suite. Also think about how much space to sacrifice for the staircase. Finally, a cost-effective conversion is possible if there is enough head-height, but planning permission is usually needed for box dormers.

5 The costs

You will need around £15,000 to £40,000. Loft company Econoloft says a Velux conversion starts from £18,000 and a dormer conversion from £26,000, but prices vary with size

and complexity. A home-improvement or personal loan is an easy, quick way to raise funds, but it will usually be cheaper to add the cost to your mortgage. Check with your lender or a mortgage broker. 🏠