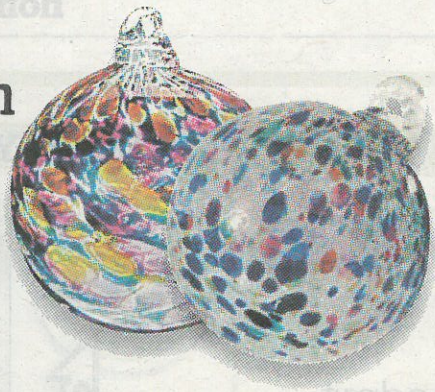


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# Homes & Property

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## Make a statement

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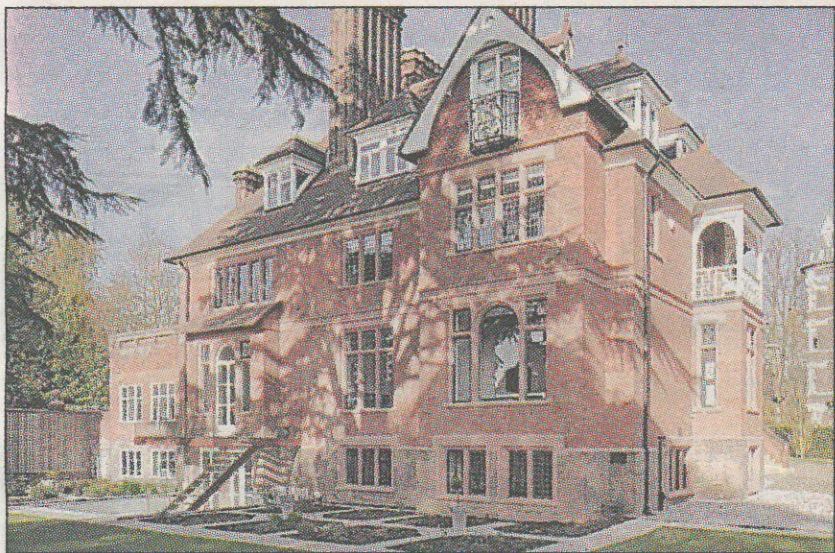


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## Homes & Property Architecture

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**T**HERE was a time when, if you wanted to live in London, you bought a flat – of which there was an abundant supply. After the Second World War, from Fulham to Fitzrovia, fine Victorian and Edwardian houses, with servants' quarters and large gardens, fell into disrepair and were split into flats, while by the 1990s, new-homes building in London consisted almost entirely of apartment blocks with gyms, pools and 24-hour concierge services.

But now there seems to be a shift back to house dwelling, particularly in the sought-after boroughs of Westminster

and Camden. "Many Londoners, unlike people who live in European cities, yearn to live in a house," explains Shahriar Nasser, founder of Belsize Architects. "They want their own front door and a private garden."

In Westminster there has been a sharp rise since 2007 in the number of planning applications for house conversions that involve turning blocks of flats back into single homes.

In Camden, particularly Hampstead, there is a similar picture emerging of investors acquiring a number of flats – sometimes their neighbours' properties over a period of years – until they own an entire building.

But not all these projects need to be on a grand scale. Here we look at three entirely different family home conversions.

**Restored:** an all-glass balcony and a new library block (below) are the discreet additions at Klippan House

## Inspiring ideas

# WHEN YOU BUILD IT MAKE A STATEMENT

Be bold and creative when you are redesigning your family home, says **Deborah Colcutt**



### A LIBRARY IN THE SIDE RETURN KLIPPAN HOUSE, NW3

**OUTSTANDING FEATURE:** AN OUTBUILDING and exterior passageway were converted into an extra room and library with a glazed roof, costing £184,000.

**What it was:** a Grade II-listed house built in 1881, designed and lived in by Ewan Christian, the architect who created the National Portrait Gallery. Split into three flats.

**What it is:** the current owners, a couple with two children, bought the two-storey garden flat in 2008. Extensive work was needed on the roof so the couple made their neighbours (who lived in flats above them) an offer and they all agreed to sell.

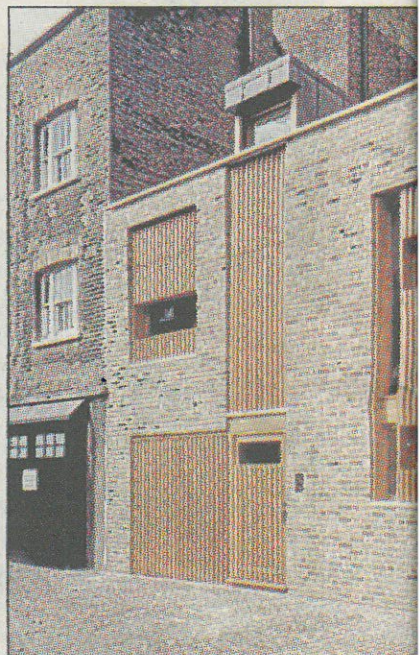
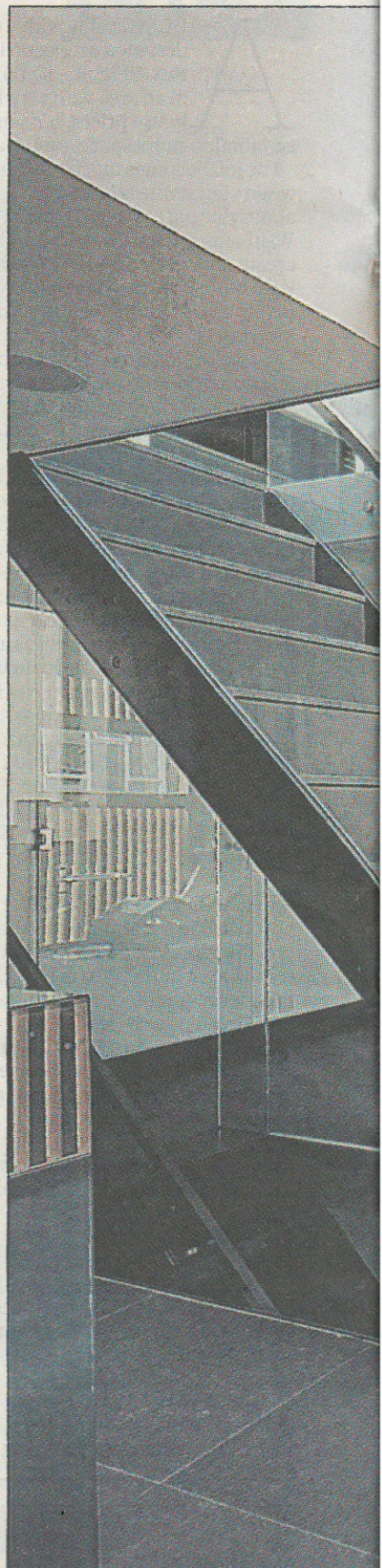
**The brief:** to recreate a house equal to its former glory; modern improvements included bring much more light into the home.

**The approach:** with the addition of a library block with skylights, a glass balcony on one side of the house and the careful part-removal of some dividing walls, Shahriar Nasser, of Belsize Architects, gave the house a fresh feeling of space while respecting the building's listed status.

**The result:** Klippan House's glory has been restored but with a modern twist. Lots of small rooms, pantries and cupboards have been cleverly attached to main rooms as dressing rooms or bathrooms, giving the house a more modern feel, as does the use of marble, Portland stone and glass.

#### WHAT IT COST

■ The library with new glazed roof was the biggest expenditure at £184,000. **TOTAL CONVERSION COST: £3.7 million**







## HUG-A-TREE HOUSE

NASSINGTON ROAD, NW3

### OUTSTANDING FEATURE:

A FAMILY room extension at the rear designed to make a focal point of an old pear tree, £91,000.

**What it was:** a Victorian semi converted into three flats.

**What it is:** a couple who had been living in Hong Kong wanted a four-bedroom home for themselves and their two children with a self-contained suite in the attic for a nanny.

**The brief:** to create more light and space while embracing a large pear tree in the garden within the house. This created a focal point around which Shahriar Nasser built a family room extension with a terrace above.

**The approach:** Nasser raised the height of the gloomy basement. He built a glass balustrade around the staircase and installed extended-height sliding doors.

**The result:** the basement is an airy family room with direct access to the garden. In some rooms, poor original cornicing was removed to create a more modern feel.

### WHAT IT COST

■ A full-height window showing the tree from the hallway and large sliding windows leading to the terrace, £25,000.

TOTAL CONVERSION COST: £850,000

## SPACE BEHIND THE SHUTTERS

PARK SQUARE MEWS,

### OUTSTANDING FEATURE:

FULL-HEIGHT windows in an open-plan living space "hidden" behind Douglas Fir exterior shutters, costing £14,000.

**What it was:** a Fifties building with two garages and a small flat above – but surrounded by listed houses.

**What it is:** a two-bedroom mews house with open-plan living area.

**The brief:** to create a three-storey, three-bedroom mews home with large windows, light and space.

**The approach:** planning permission for a third storey and an additional bedroom was refused so Shahriar Nasser used half the existing pitched roof to create a gallery and master bedroom suite.

One of the garages was converted into a bedroom and the first-floor flat was opened up to create a kitchen/

dining/living space. Permission was refused for prominent full-height windows but, in fact, the mews does have them – only they are hidden behind slatted wooden shutters.

**The result:** the mews is something of a Tardis – from the outside it looks narrow and dark but inside it is anything but. Light pours through the vertical slats – yet from the outside the glass on show conforms to council regulations. The skylights, open staircase and lack of boxed-off rooms lend a flow to the house. Neighbours who were initially against the conversion now love it.

### WHAT IT COST

■ Steel staircase with Basaltina (volcanic) stone treads, £27,000.

TOTAL CONVERSION COST: £380,000

