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£4.30 March 2017

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CASE STUDY

PROJECT DETAILS

Location Camden, north London

Style of property Georgian terraced house

Length of project Around 10 months

What they did

Updated and extended including a basement extension

Size 40sqm

Cost £216,000 for construction

Going below the surface

A basement extension gave this Georgian terraced house in London the additional living space it needed

A poor layout and not enough internal space meant the owners of this Georgian terraced house in London wanted to extend it. The house is Grade II listed, making the project more complicated because listed building consent was required in addition to planning permission. Their initial proposal was turned down by the local planning authority, so they started the project afresh with different architects.

Taking on the brief, Belsize Architects set about designing a new plan for the ground and lower ground areas that would increase the square meterage of the relatively

small house as well as the new additions complementing the original building.

'We managed to get permission for demolition of areas that were not part of the original building,' explains architect Shahriar Nasser of Belsize Architects (020 7482 4420; belsizearchitects.com). 'It was easy to prove that previous rear extensions were of no architectural value, but there were some areas where, without accessing historical information, we would not have been able to remove old additions and organise the new layout.'

A modestly sized glazed extension with a contemporary appearance



BEFORE

WORDS SARAH WARWICK



IN FOCUS

Clever ways to boost light

» Consider adding roof lights in walk-on structural glass in the room above or the garden (if the basement extends into it). IQ Glass has a version that's H100xW100cm and costs from £3,360. (01494 722 880; iqglassuk.com)

» Consider sacrificing space on the ground floor to make a double-height area in the basement so it's loftier and lighter.

» If you have space, include a sunken patio alongside. Bifold or sliding doors maximise the benefit. Bifolds from Origin cost from £1,200 per door leaf. (0808 149 6826; origin-global.com)

» Think about glazed balustrades or even a glass staircase. Balustrades from £960 per linear m; glass stairs from £18,000, both bespoke at Bisca (01439 771 702; bisca.co.uk)

» If the basement is partitioned, fit glazed doors and glass top lights to make it brighter.

above A double-height void between the lower ground level and the garden wall allows daylight in

left The basement glazing features copper mesh to help it blend in with the home's brickwork

below The basement conversion allowed for a dedicated space for an office area



that's nonetheless sympathetic to the original house at ground level was part of the answer to the owners' brief. It has introduced a new kitchen and dining area at ground level. However, to create the space the family wanted to have in the listed building, it was also necessary to expand downwards by creating a new basement extension.

The house already had a cellar, but it was a tiny space fit only for storage. The new basement – which was designed to create a high-spec family/cinema room plus an office space – was planned so it wouldn't feel dark or airless.

'We designed it so the basement has a good-sized patio with direct access, as well as a connection to the rear garden at higher level,' says Nasser. 'Leaving a reasonably large external area to the side, which allows access from the main house and the new basement directly to the outside, means there is always light coming through. We also added two glazed roofs using structural glass floor to the rear in the garden and in the kitchen, which allow more light into the new basement room.'

The secret of success with a basement conversion? 'Try to make sure that it does not feel like a basement,' advises Nasser. **GD**

