



SITTING ROOM

Modern, low-level furniture was selected for this pitched-roof space.

Design by Ursula Tucker Architects. Torres Wool Kilim rug, from £299, West Elm. Smithfield leather armchair, £1,400, Habitat

Up on the ROOF

Ursula and Alex Tucker took an unusual route to gaining additional living space in their compact city abode

FEATURE EMMA J PAGE | PHOTOGRAPHY RACHAEL SMITH



REPLANNED



HOME TRUTHS

THE PROPERTY

Mid-terrace townhouse

LOCATION North London

ROOMS Sitting room/study, kitchen-diner, three bedrooms, two bathrooms

PURCHASED 2000

PREVIOUS PROPERTY

'Before moving here, we lived in a Victorian flat in northwest London,' says Ursula.



DINING AREA
‘We splashed out on a marble
worktop for the floating sideboard,’
says Ursula. ‘It looks great against
the oak doors and white walls.’
Secto 4200 ceiling lights in black
laminated birch, £375 each, John Lewis.
Massello large oak dining table, £950;
and matching four-seater bench,
£295, both Habitat



FAVOURITE FEATURE ‘We love the new open staircase, because it feels totally
connected to the space above, plus it conceals plenty of useful storage underneath’



DESIGN TIP *‘Employ an architect for big projects, then decide where you want to spend – we splashed out a bit, and balanced that with cost-effective design solutions’*

When architects Ursula and Alex Tucker outgrew their townhouse in northwest London, they took some drastic action to create more space. ‘This used to be a five-bedroom house,’ says Ursula, ‘but it felt a little cramped and the garden was small, so it was never a brilliant family home.’

To make the existing layout more efficient for themselves and their children, Charlie, now 4, and William, 1, the couple decided to turn the ground floor into a self-contained flat to rent out. They would keep the top two floors, adding a new level for a sitting room and roof terrace.

The Tuckers rented nearby while the works were carried out and watched every floorboard come up as their home was transformed. ‘We realised that the small details were going to make all the difference, so we kept an eye on everything throughout and made improvements as we went along,’ explains Ursula. ‘Window openings were widened, soundproofing was added and we took our time choosing the balustrade

for the staircase. In the end we went for a glass one, which is visually lightweight.’

However, the new top-floor level is the property’s real talking point. ‘The planners took considerable convincing, but once we presented them with evidence of other successful local examples, we finally got the go-ahead,’ recalls Ursula. ‘We put in huge sliding glass doors between the living area and the roof terrace, and the day they arrived was a memorable one. Alex and I watched with bated breath as they were hoisted up on a crane, gently swaying in the breeze, but fortunately they were installed without a hitch.’

When it came to the interiors, the pair had quite different design ideas. Alex, who works on large-scale projects, such as train stations and airports, is drawn to glass and steel finishes. But Ursula, who specialises in residential properties, favours a more homely look. So the two met in the middle, opting for a neutral palette throughout, warmed with natural wood flooring, kitchen cabinetry and dining

furniture, with pops of colour and graphic pattern appearing in textiles and paintwork. Meanwhile, white-painted ceiling beams, stainless steel work surfaces and sleek built-in appliances introduced cool, industrial touches, while complementing the zinc roof.

Throughout the renovation, Ursula and Alex were particularly careful about deciding where to save money and when to splash out. They opted for affordable carcasses on the kitchen cupboards and bedroom wardrobes, for example, but splurged on expensive customisation in other areas, such as the striking bespoke cobalt blue door fronts in the kitchen.

By reconfiguring their home, the couple have added to the property’s overall square footage, and their own portion of it works far harder for them than it did before. ‘The key to its success was keeping hall space minimal and using every inch that we could in a practical way,’ says Ursula. ‘Plus, the roof terrace has given us a far better outdoor area than our previous garden. Now we have a home that finally feels just right.’



MASTER BEDROOM
A simple, streamlined look gives a calm feel. Teak bed, £1,200, Adventures in Furniture. Sashi Bed Linen Riviera embroidered quilt bedspread in duck-egg blue, £170, Linens Limited, is similar

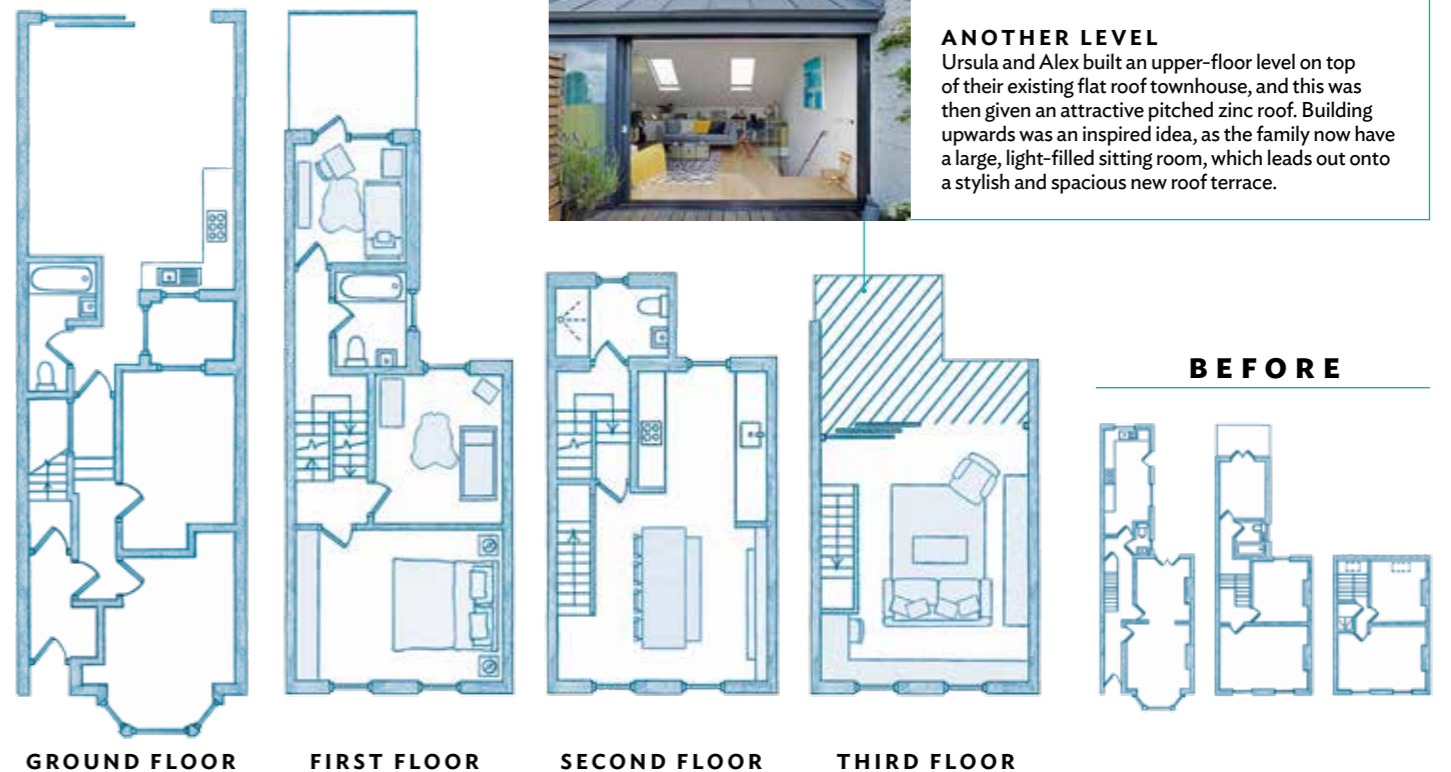


BATHROOM
Clean lines create a fresh look in here. Unglazed Pearl wall tiles, £77.64sq m, Waxman Ceramics. Take a look at the 6mm straight shower bath screen, £119, VictoriaPlumb.com



CHARLIE'S BEDROOM
Box shelves are ideal for books and favourite toys. Chalky chalkboard table and stool (not shown) set, £148, Sum of All Parts. Muuto Restore felt basket, £67, Made In Design

AFTER



ANOTHER LEVEL
Ursula and Alex built an upper-floor level on top of their existing flat roof townhouse, and this was then given an attractive pitched zinc roof. Building upwards was an inspired idea, as the family now have a large, light-filled sitting room, which leads out onto a stylish and spacious new roof terrace.

BEFORE

