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GRAND BUILD GUIDE

FIND THE BEST PLOT FOR YOUR NEW HOME

The addition of an EnviroMat sedum blanket roof, costing approx £123 per sqm including installation, softens the aspect of the exterior in this scheme by Dittich Hudson Vassalli Architects (0117 944 8347; dhva.co.uk)

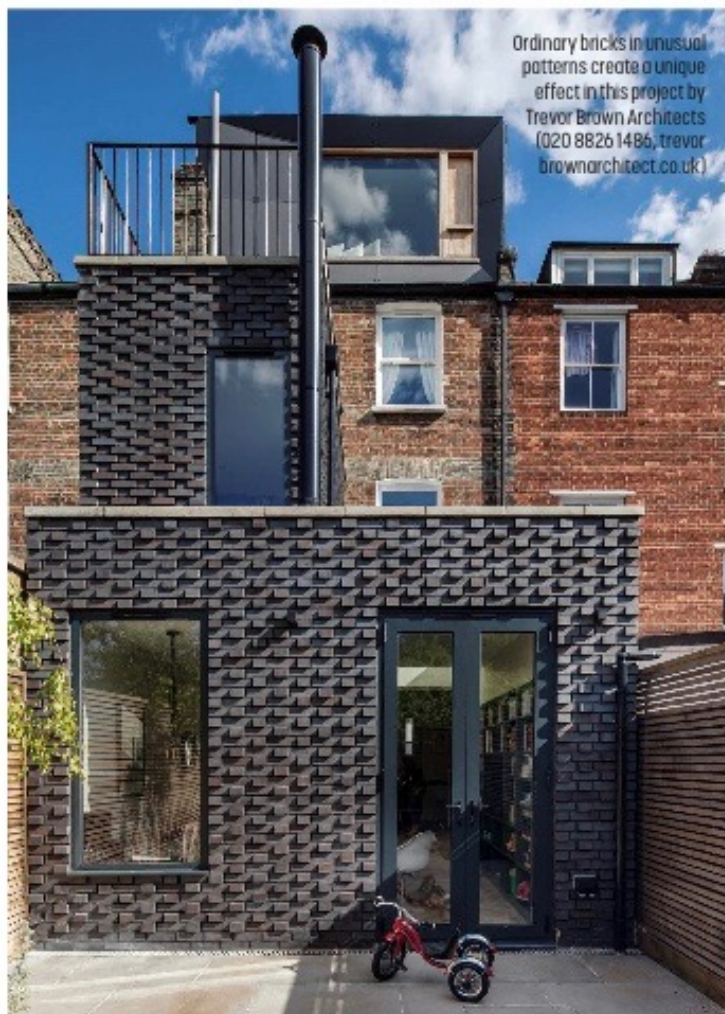


Transform your home's exterior

Turn a tired facade into a standout feature with these refurbishment and renovation ideas

WORDS KUNLE BARKER

Painting, cladding, rendering and reconditioning brickwork are just a few of the options to consider when giving your home a new outlook. With plenty of choices available it takes careful planning to select the right materials and decide on improvements that will enhance your property's appearance and add value. »



Ordinary bricks in unusual patterns create a unique effect in this project by Trevor Brown Architects (020 8826 1486, trevorbrownarchitect.co.uk)

Local influence

Before starting any work, seek advice from a design professional or a builder and make sure you have a clear idea of what you want. Bear in mind that external works may call for planning consent. 'If it's a listed building you will have to work under Listed Building Consent, or if you are in a conservation area you will need a discretionary grant from your local planning authority (LPA) to carry out external works,' says Kevin Hyde of Flagship Construction (020 3935 4255; flagship.uk.com). If you are uncertain of the requirements, speak to your local council, as projects carried out without the proper permissions can be subject to enforcement notices compelling you to correct unauthorised works.

Build your scheme

It's important to take time to consider materials and how they will impact your project. Tackle the front and rear elevations as separate entities, as it's sometimes easier to be more adventurous at the rear of a property than at the front. 'For inspiration, walk along your street and take a good look at the other properties,' says interior designer Joanna Beavan (020 8242 4145; aubeinteriors.com). 'What do you like

'Fibre cement weatherboard or medite tricoya, for soffits and fascias, is an excellent low-maintenance alternative to softwood or UPVC'

ALEXANDRA HULL, MD, BACK TO FRONT EXTERIOR DESIGN (01252 820 984; BACKTOFRONTEXTERIORDSIGN.COM)



This home was transformed by Back To Front Exterior Design (01252 820 984; backtofrontexteriordesign.com) with new windows, brickwork, render, cedar cladding, a zinc roof and a new extension



The use of the same colour on materials in this project by Gundry & Ducker Architecture (020 3417 4895; gundryducker.com) adds depth and texture. Larch cladding, from £25 per sqm. (01558 685 108; talleysawmill.co.uk)

MATERIAL IDEAS

● **Brick** Professional chemical cleaning will return bricks to their original splendour, and repointing (replacing the cement between the bricks) can improve the look of walls and make them more resistant to damp and leaks. Brick slips are thin sections of brick that are easy to install and maintain. They can be mounted on insulation board, improving thermal and acoustic properties. Quality Fast Facades (0161 764 5291; qffacades.co.uk) supply and fit brick slips, from £130 per sqm, and brick slips on insulated board, from £180 per sqm.

● **Paint** A new coat of exterior paint is a relatively easy and inexpensive way to revamp a facade. Colour adds character and will instantly make a big difference to the overall look of the property. Use experienced exterior decorators, as the skills, materials and processes are specialist, and poor quality painting will deteriorate after just one winter.

● **Render** Pebble-dashing made the whole idea of render particularly unfashionable, but smooth render is making a comeback. Some new versions come pre-painted and only require a wash down to clean. Try The Rendering Company (07527 044 986; therenderingcompany.co.uk), with prices starting from £50 per sqm.

● **Cladding** Options include wood cladding, available in a choice of timbers, including larch and Western red cedar, and metals such as zinc. Contemporary cladding can be teamed with period exteriors and there's no need to clad an entire property. For something more exotic try shou sugi ban, a cladding made from charred wood.

● **Doors** Replacement doors need not require expensive and time-consuming structural changes. Get sleek bespoke designs made to fit the width of an existing opening. And consider removing the brickwork below a window to create an opening for a feature door. 'Try sourcing affordable and stylish doors from suppliers such as Smart Systems Aluminium Windows and Doors (01934 876 100; smartsystems.co.uk), which are available in a choice of finishes, glazing patterns and colours,' says Jeremy Foster of J Foster Architects (07974 662 637; jfosterarchitects.co.uk).

about them? What don't you like? See if there is a particular design theme you might like to follow.'

A considered choice of materials, used effectively, will bring a new dimension to your home's appearance, while complementing its architecture and even that of the street. 'Give yourself time and get plenty of samples ordered,' says architect Paul Thomas of Thomas & Spiers (020 7043 0727; thomasandspiers.com). 'It's perhaps not that different to choosing what to wear, albeit more permanent. Certain materials will clash or create an awkward relationship. If unsure, create a sample or moodboard.'

Original features

Try to retain or reinstate period details where possible. Though expensive, installing reproduction-timber sash windows with double-glazed units, for instance, adds value and improves thermal efficiency. Expect to pay from around £1,450 per sash. Try Woodstock Joinery (020 8443 2207; woodstockjoinerylondon.co.uk). >>



Extend windows down to make space for a feature door. Supply and fit of door, from £2,500 (jfosterarchitects.co.uk)

Replacement timber sash windows will enhance the look, thermal efficiency and value of a period property



HEALTHY LIVING

Alex Jobber,
director at

Studio 31 (01371 856 819;
designstudio31.co.uk),
provides tips on landscaping

- Green walls and roofs bring nature closer to your home and blur the boundary with the surrounding landscape. Contact a professional installer for retrofitting advice.
- Natural, sustainable materials tend to have a much softer aesthetic than man-made options, and often come with better eco-friendly credentials. Clay, for instance, is one of the most sustainable materials available and its malleability means it suits a variety of applications. It's reusable and recyclable with excellent insulation properties, and can be used as external cladding.
- Many of the latest smart home technologies aimed at improving health and wellbeing are inspired by the natural processes of plants. If you have space in your garden, tilia and beech trees are capable of removing more airborne particles than many other tree species.

'Choose timber from sustainable sources and make sure it has the FSC label (fsc-uk.org)'

AMOS GOLDBREICH, AMOS GOLDBREICH ARCHITECTURE
(020 7272 6592; AGARCHITECTURE.NET)

Similarly, decorative mouldings can be expensive to replace. Consider replicas to match with existing details for a seamless finish. At UK Home Interiors (0121 449 8525; ukhomeinteriors.co.uk) a reproduction exterior cornice starts from £11 per linear metre.

Green spaces

A beautiful, well-kept garden can add up to 20 per cent to the value of a property, but it's important to be realistic about the level of maintenance you can manage, and choose plants accordingly. Garden centres can offer advice on suitable plants for your garden's soil conditions and aspect, and they also offer a planting service – try Boma (020 7284 4999; bomagardencentre.co.uk). Artificial turf is an option and products have improved a lot in recent years. It looks good all year round, is low-maintenance and is particularly useful for areas with limited light. >>

● Turn to p110 to read the exterior upgrade case study

Complementary colours and materials can unify a scheme. London mix brick pavers, from £70 per sqm. (01277 219 634; chelmervalley.co.uk)





PROJECT
PROFILE

LOCATION Nunhead, south London
TYPE OF PROPERTY Victorian terrace
DURATION OF BUILD 12 weeks
THE BRIEF Open up the rear and
improve indoor/outdoor connection
COST Approx. £60,000



The change in level outside
is repeated in the kitchen



Design touches like this
triangular window and the
exterior a series of steps



Mixing colours and patterns
gives exterior flooring a lift and
creates a unique outdoor space



New tradition

A stylish combination of geometric shapes creates an eye-catching scheme

Husband and wife, Andrew and Emma Boyd, who are both doctors, had been looking for inspiration to help them figure out the finer details of how to update the rear facade of their three-bedroom home. Quite by chance, they got chatting to architect Rebecca Muirhead, who was sitting at the table next to them in a local pub, and outlined their issues.

Muirhead works for A Small Studio practice (020 8133 5675; asmallstudio.co.uk), which the couple went on to commission for the work. 'The initial discussion was very productive and I was confident that we would have a good working relationship,' says Helena Rivera, founder of A Small Studio.

Emma and Andrew were clear on what they wanted for the exterior renovation, which was a key factor in keeping to a reasonable budget. 'The best way to get maximum value for money is to stay focussed on the specific

areas that need work. That way you can keep to a single portion of works and achieve dramatic improvements,' says Rivera. 'Emma and Andrew were very clear that they wanted to improve their home's exterior without compromising on the internal volume.'

The design team worked closely with the couple from the outset. 'We were impressed by the level of detail – everything was meticulously planned,' explains Andrew. As a testament to their confidence in Rivera and the team, the couple handed over the keys and allowed them to manage the work while they went off on their honeymoon.

The ground floor elevation has been completely transformed. The alterations included extending and redesigning the kitchen window to project out from the rear wall, which added extra interior space and brought in a greater amount of natural

New soffits hide
the gutters, while
matching the colour with
window frames creates
a coordinated effect



light. The deep frame also provided a place to sit without encroaching on valuable floor space. Although the window seat didn't require additional structural work to the opening, it was still subject to planning consent. In addition, a special bracket was required to support the projection, which was designed by a structural engineer.

All the new doors, windows and soffits are made of powder-coated aluminium and provide an interesting contrast to the render and traditional London brick of the first floor. Traditionally, period properties have very functional rear elevations so new additions can create personality. 'The triangular window light above the back doors is a seemingly small detail, but it really gives our home a unique feel,' says Emma.

Ugly guttering is hidden by the new soffits and, combined with the render, give the property a sleek, modern look while complementing the original elements. 'Well-detailed render can be a beautiful addition,' says Rivera. 'It's the MDF of exterior renovation; cost-effective, versatile, quick to install and great for creating quirky and innovative shapes.'

The flooring also played a big part in the project. 'It was important to have continuity from inside to out, linking the two spaces to make the terrace seem larger,' explains Rivera. She chose ceramic tiles from the Illustrate collection by Solus, available in a variety of designs. 'The floor is continuous and we love the pattern,' says Andrew. 'Overall, the work has transformed our little house. It's lighter, more spacious and great for entertaining – we absolutely love it.' GD

● Look out for next month's Projects feature on loft conversions

