

£160,000 Project



ABOVE: Oak Extension

The oak frame extension was constructed and designed under the guidance of oak specialists Westwind.

CHANGE OF PLAN

While extending their stone cottage, Steve and Alison Smith discovered that it takes a lot of time and patience to create a dream home.

Words Clive Fewins Pictures Gez Hughes



Project Profile

Owners: Steve and Alison Smith

Professions: Estate Agent and Civil Servant

Project: Extension to stone Victorian cottage

Lived in house: Six years

Build route: Main contractor

Build Dates: April '05 - April '06

Cost of project: £160,000

Original valuation: £350,000

New valuation: £600,000

Added value: £90,000



Alison Smith could not believe her eyes when the house she and husband Steve had always dreamed of living in, was put up for sale. The stone mid-Victorian cottage lies in an acre of woodland in a rural location seven miles south-west of Bristol. "It's the perfect setting for us," says Alison. "There's plenty of land and seeing as we both ride horses and would like to keep some ourselves, it was ideal."

The price was affordable, although the property had been let for several years and was rather run-down. The only problem as far as Alison and Steve could see, was that the two bedroom property, which was structurally sound, was too small and would need extending at some point.

The purchase went through smoothly, but extending it has been quite the reverse. The entire

£ Project Costs

Main contract (extension and remodelling of rear of existing house)	£107,000
Surveys and fees	£7,500
Oak frame	£35,000
Staircase	£2,500
Miscellaneous	£8,000
Total Cost	£160,000

ABOVE: Design Details
The iron bed from Strawberry Steel is just one example of great attention to detail.

process took three years with the design and planning stages taking up two thirds of this time.

All went well at first. Having decided that an oak-framed extension would be highly suitable for a house in such a wooded setting, Steve and Alison called in oak framer, Rupert Newman, whose company – →





ABOVE: Accent Colours

The ceiling has been painted white for a sense of space but splashes of colour were added.

OAK FRAMES

Oak framed buildings are extremely popular in this country because, with its splits and imperfections, it can add great character to a house. Oak also has a timeless quality, having been used for years in construction and yet still creates a contemporary look today.

As well as being immensely strong and durable, oak is also a sustainable material with low embodied energy. When sourcing materials or an oak frame specialist be sure to look out for the FSC (Forestry Stewardship Council) logo and if possible opt for suppliers in your local area.

Although oak frames are, in effect, prefabricated as they are constructed in a framing yard away from site, you should expect to pay up to 30 per cent more per square metre for an oak framed extension than a masonry or softwood timber frame. This is not only because of the cost of materials, but because of the labour and variety of finishes that have to be used to counteract shrinkage in the early years of the building's life.

Westwind Oak – is based only four miles away. "When we went to see Rupert and visited some of his previous projects they blew us away. He was definitely the man for us," says Steve.

Before long Rupert's favoured architect, Wilf Burton, had arrived on the scene. He surprised the Smiths by doing away with several of their previous ideas and placing the master en suite bedroom downstairs and the new sitting room upstairs. This way, he

explained, they would gain maximum views during daylight hours of both the woodland and the inside of the magnificent cruck-framed roof — now the most striking feature in the remodelled house.

"We went along with this and when we first approached the local planners it looked as though they were going to approve the concept," said Steve. "However, there was a change of personnel and this is where our problems began. There was a real



STEVE AND ALISON'S ADDRESS BOOK

Architect Wilf Burton: 01458 831 124 **Main Contractor** Stuart Jones, Brockley Building Conservation: 01275 472 707 **Structural engineer** Clive Jackson: 0117 942 3752 **Oak frame** Westwind: 01934 877 317 **Stone flooring** Core and Ore: 0117 904 2408 **Stairs, external doors and windows:** Geoff Uren: 0781 388 7565 **Internal oak doors and oak flooring:** JAT: 01761 492 906 **Hand forged architectural ironmongery:** Colin Cornie, Strawberry Steel: 01275 340982 **Copper guttering** Good Directions: 01489 797 773 **Lighting** Clarity: 0870 116 1033 **Log burning stove** Clearview: 01584 878 100

“If there’s one thing we’ve learnt it’s that with a job like this you must be prepared to take your time.”

absolutely delighted with it despite the extra work. “It’s a really unusual feature but we had to work very hard and stretch the combined abilities of our architect, builder and oak framer to achieve the end result.”

In addition to this, the planning officer queried the size of the extension, which is 87m² and almost doubled the size of the previous house. To gain this percentage increase in addition to their permitted development rights the Smiths had to show that the previous extension at the rear - a lean-to that incorporated the existing kitchen and bathroom - was built before 1948.

The eventual scheme that was passed was smaller than the original plan. However, one good thing that emerged from the uncompromising approach of the planners was the decision to place glazed dormers on either side of the upstairs room. These were an addition at the insistence of the planning officer, and their purpose was to make the new roof look smaller. “They added to the overall cost of the project not

least in design charges, as the plans had to be amended several times,” recalls Alison. “However, they make the upstairs room lighter and larger inside, and give us views from the east and west sides, as well as the south-facing glazed gable end.”

In addition to this there were changes as the build progressed. The main one was on the west side of the new hallway, where, when work started, it was realised that the ground level was too high to allow the glass panels envisaged for the wall to run right down to the ground. Instead a dwarf wall was built beneath the glazing, and the oak frame sill beam had to be adapted accordingly.

“It was on occasions like this, when there were some very tricky levels to contend with, that we came to understand the value of having a team of architect, oak framer and builder that were used to working together,” said Steve. “We feel this made a big difference to the completed job, which, despite our problems with the planners, we feel is

issue with the height of the new roof, which surprised us as the house stands on its own in woodland and there are no immediate neighbours. The usual solution if the roof height is sensitive would be to lower the pitch, but we thought this would be a great shame as it is the pitch that gives the character to the building and also matches the roof pitch of the original house.”

After discussing various possibilities Steve, Alison, Wilf and Rupert settled on a design

that sliced off the top to give a barrel-vaulted finish to the roof. “This threw all the onus onto Stuart Jones, the builder,” explains Steve. “The structure was very complicated and Stuart had to absorb the cost of the extra work into the fixed price contract he had agreed with us at the start of the project.”

Stuart and his team proved more than up to the task, and now the upstairs room with its gently-curved boarded ceiling is complete, Steve and Alison are



IF THEY'D MOVED...

Steve and Alison were lucky to find such a great property in need of some work and therefore at such a good price. A well presented cottage, on the market with Robin King, in a similar rural location is currently on the market for £525,000.

Solicitor's Fees for Sale and Purchase:£1,175
 Estate Agent's Fees:£3,500
 Surveyor's Fees:£600
 Stamp Duty Land Tax: ..£20,000
 Removals:£500

POTENTIAL MOVING TOTAL: ..
£550,775
TOTAL SAVED BY IMPROVING:
£40,775

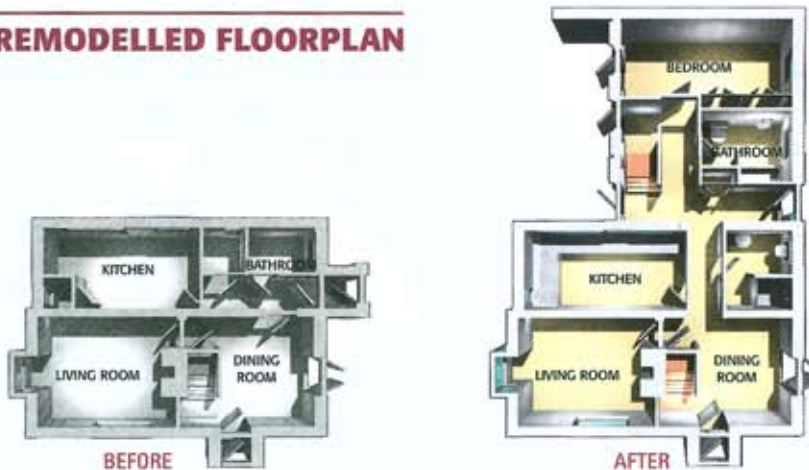
LEFT: Mix and Match

The bathroom has a traditional but contemporary feel with tumbled wall and floor tiles.

something really special. We are thrilled to bits with the finished job but it all took a long time. If there's one thing we've learnt it's that with a one-off job like this you must be prepared to take your time. Only then is it possible to make changes as you go along and so achieve what you really want." **Mol**

GROUND

THE REMODELLED FLOORPLAN



The oak extension has been joined to the original building via a long hallway. The original bathroom is now a smaller shower room which allows for a new corridor leading into the extension. On the ground floor this houses a new, larger bathroom next to a third bedroom above which is the living room with fantastic views.