



**Left** The stone cottage, built over three storeys, required major refurbishment to recreate its original charming character

**Right** The couple's builders, Chappell & Dix, built the light and airy garden room. It is furnished with a classic-style sofa, armchair and stool from TR Hayes of Bath, while the twins' toy chest is from the Great Little Trading Co



**Above** Two extensions and a garden room have created extra space, while a new roof and stone cladding have transformed the exterior. Philippa (right) and her husband planned the changes over three years

## FACT FILE

### THE OWNERS

Philippa Ellis, who runs her own landscaping company, and her husband Simon, an architect, live here with their two-year-old twins Lucas and Sophie

### THE PROPERTY

A three-bedroom 17th-century former forge cottage

### THE LOCATION

Wotton-under-Edge, Gloucestershire

### WHAT THEY SPENT

The couple bought the property for £445,000 in 2006 and have spent around £250,000 renovating it. The cottage has recently been valued at around £700,000



# 17th-century

Drawing on Simon Ellis' architectural expertise, he and his wife Philippa have transformed a former forge into a practical, spacious home

WORDS VICTORIA JENKINS PHOTOGRAPHS WILLIAM GODDARD



# cottage renovation

In 2006, Philippa and Simon Ellis decided to exchange life in the bustling city centre of Bath for the Gloucestershire countryside.

'We'd always loved the Cotswolds and chose the village of Wotton-under-Edge for its lovely charming feel,' says Philippa.

When the couple first viewed the former forge, it had three bedrooms, with an upstairs living area; it was dark with inadequate lighting throughout, plus it needed to be rewired.

'The forge had been converted into

a village post office many years ago, but the current layout set over three storeys simply didn't suit the needs of a family home,' Philippa explains.

On completion of the sale, the couple moved in and lived with the cottage for



The couple wanted a larger kitchen and planned to replace the old conservatory

**BEFORE**



Right Simon and Philippa chose contemporary-style kitchen units with granite worktops from Woodchester Cabinet Makers. The limestone flooring is from Precious Stone



Left A cloakroom adjoining the kitchen was demolished to create more space and is now occupied by a large bespoke larder from Woodchester Cabinet Makers as well as a built-in Neff fridge-freezer

Below The dining space in the garden room enjoys pretty views. An oak dining table from Old Mother Hubbard in Nailsworth is teamed with handmade oak chairs from TR Hayes



three years while they planned the structural changes. They also took the opportunity to apply for the relevant planning permission, so they would be able to start work without any delays.

'We decided to add two extensions to create the space we needed,' says Philippa.

A two-storey extension – in place of old storage rooms – would house a ground



The bespoke kitchen units were painted in Pearl by Little Greene. The smart Grigio Argento granite worktops are from the Bristol Granite & Marble Company. A Mercury range cooker and a Neff cooker hood complete the look

**DESIGN TIP**  
 If you want to keep original brickwork as an interior finish, it will need to be sealed to prevent staining and make it easier to clean, especially in a kitchen environment. Water-based silicone and siloxane-type impregnators are best

**‘We decided to add two extensions to the cottage to create the extra space, which we desperately wanted’**

floor utility room and master en suite bedroom on the first floor. The other would be a single-storey extension, above the original kitchen, with a small study area –

and next to this a stairwell to a new second floor guest bedroom and en suite. The house also required extensive renovations to turn it into a more practical layout.

Work started in late 2009, which was when Philippa discovered that she was pregnant with the twins.

‘We decided to continue living on site ▶



## ‘The cottage lacked foundations – it was leaning against the stone-built retaining wall of the main village road’

during the build, so we could be on hand to deal with any problems,’ she explains.

The couple planned to redesign the three-storey layout to suit their own style. This included converting the large study on the ground floor into a hallway, as well as creating a spacious guest en suite bedroom on the second floor in place of two small, impractical bedrooms.

‘We knew that we would have to re-roof the cottage, using stone tiles instead of the mix of slate, stone and clay tiles already there,’ says Philippa. ‘We also had to replace the plumbing, install a damp-proof course and rewire the entire house.’

What they hadn’t realised was that the house lacked foundations – in fact, it was leaning against the stone-built retaining

wall of the main village road that runs at the level of the first floor. The builders had to create new foundations for the two-storey extension by building a reinforced concrete floor and linking it to the retaining wall of the cottage, which was also reinforced with concrete.

Once the two extensions were complete, the couple created more living space with



**Left** The first floor living room is furnished stylishly with two sofas by Duresta and a coffee table, all from TR Hayes. The couple bought the Persian Ziegler rug on holiday. A mirror from Old Mother Hubbard sits above the original feature fireplace

**Above and below** The once-dark snug is now a bright space with its white-painted walls. An eco-friendly Coalbrookdale wood-burning stove creates a cosy focal point and supplies heat for the radiators upstairs. An old bench, which was picked up at an antiques fair, adds to the country feel

a stunning new garden room, to help bring in extra light and open up the space.

'Downstairs we installed underfloor heating and laid limestone flooring above it to replace the mix of quarry tiles and stone flags, which had been laid directly onto the earth,' says Philippa.

The original timber flooring in the snug and first floor living room was taken up, repaired and re-laid after the builders added steel RSJs to reinforce the living room floor.

'We replaced the wooden frame windows, which had gone rotten, and all the external and internal doors,' says Philippa. 'We also ▶



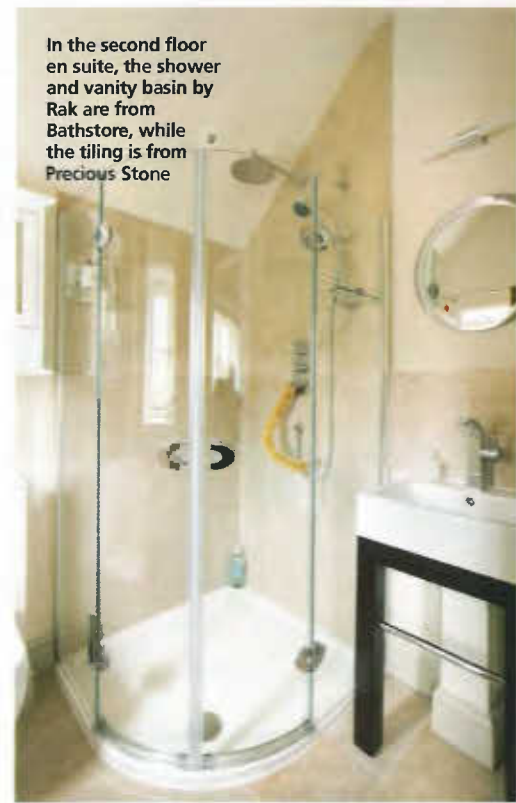
**Right** The elegant master bedroom in the new two-storey extension has a Vi-Spring bed with a headboard covered in Romo suedette fabric. The curtains and blind fabrics are also by Romo



**Below** The bedroom on the second floor was originally two small bedrooms with an internal staircase. Simon moved the stairs and turned one bedroom into an en suite. The bed, from TR Hayes, is made from reclaimed pine



In the second floor en suite, the shower and vanity basin by Rak are from Bathstore, while the tiling is from Precious Stone



## ‘We’ve created a master bedroom in the new two-storey extension – but it retains the country feel of the cottage’

installed a wood-burning stove in the snug to supply hot water for the radiators upstairs.’

Simon was keen to introduce as much natural light as possible into the dark snug, so he knocked through the dividing wall to

create three eye-catching arches facing the walkway, running parallel with the garden room to flood the space with light.

A cloakroom adjoining the kitchen was also demolished, allowing Philippa and

Simon to push the wall back by 2.5m into the now vacant space and create a much larger, practical kitchen.

‘We then created two en suite shower rooms, one in the two-storey extension to

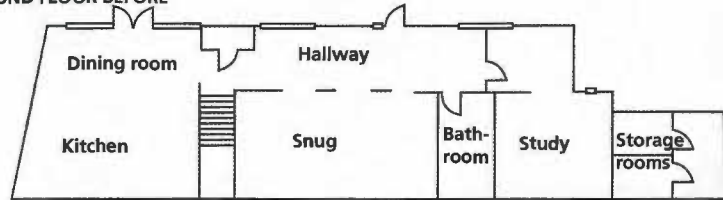
**COSTS**

Building work, including two extensions and a garden room	£82,000
Rewiring and replumbing	£30,000
Joinery, including stairs, window frames, doors etc	£30,000
New roofing	£20,000
Flooring	£20,000
Kitchen units, worktops, range cooker and appliances	£20,000
Central heating	£20,000
Bathrooms	£10,000
Underfloor heating	£10,000
Decorating	£8,000

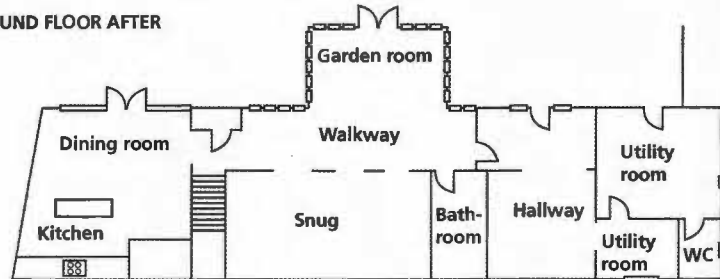
**TOTAL £250,000**

**PLANS**

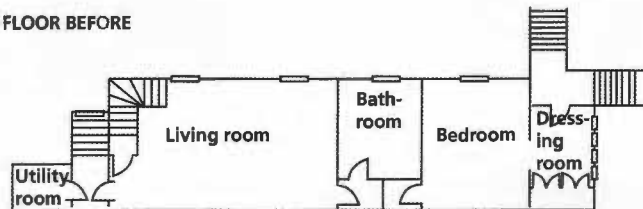
GROUND FLOOR BEFORE



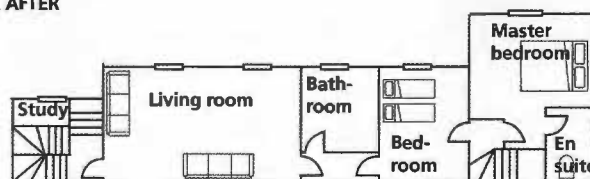
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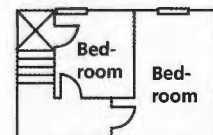
FIRST FLOOR BEFORE



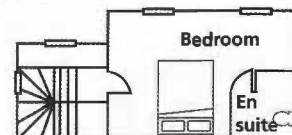
FIRST FLOOR AFTER



SECOND FLOOR BEFORE



SECOND FLOOR AFTER



A single-storey extension above the kitchen has created a small study area, next to which there is a stairwell leading to the new second floor guest bedroom. The staircase to the first floor bedroom was relocated. A two-storey extension has created a ground floor utility room and a guest bedroom on the first floor. At the front of the house there is a new garden room extension, and a cloakroom was demolished to make way for a more spacious kitchen. The study on the ground floor was knocked through to create a larger hallway

A simple towel rail has been teamed with a circular mirror, both from Bathstore, to create a stylish look in the second floor en suite



serve the master bedroom and the other on the second floor in the new guest en suite bedroom,' says Philippa. 'We refurbished the ground floor bathroom too.'

The couple continued living on site until early 2010, when they moved into a neighbour's spare room before Philippa was admitted to hospital to give birth to the twins. Philippa and the babies remained in hospital for a further 12 weeks before

they were allowed to go home to the newly renovated property.

Their builders, Chappell & Dix, carried on with the renovations and, by the time the family moved back to the house, most of the building work was finished and the couple could concentrate on decorating and furnishing the cottage.

Philippa and Simon decided to maintain its character and create a country-style

home with a neutral colour scheme acting as a backdrop to statement pieces.

'We brought a lot of our furniture from our previous home, but we invested in additional pieces to suit our new family lifestyle,' Philippa explains. 'We think it works very well.'

'The project was a challenge, but we now have a bigger, brighter home that's perfect for our new family,' she adds. ■