



## Out of the dark

A dingy north-facing kitchen in Croydon is transformed into a light-filled room of generous proportions

Report and styling: Marcia Morgan Photography: Rachael Smith



Simon Whitehead's clients, James and Penny Gray, had lived in their large 1900s-built property for 15 years before finally deciding to remodel the kitchen. It had grand reception and living rooms and a mature landscaped garden – everything worked but this one area. The kitchen they had inherited was consummate with a home of this age when, at the turn of the century, the design focus was on reception rooms. Consequently, the original space allocated was disproportionate to the size of the house, making the kitchen appear small and dingy.

The original layout stopped where an island now stands and featured a separate small washroom, behind which the only access through to the garden was via the kitchen and washroom door. The room had only one window in a side return and so needed a massive injection of light.

As Penny stayed at home, a lot of her time was devoted to cooking and entertaining and she desperately required lots of surface space for food preparation. Storage was also a priority for the new design – like many people, over the years she had amassed a vast amount of cookware and kitchen paraphernalia that couldn't just be thrown away. This meant the new space needed to be a lot bigger to house the overspill that had previously sat in boxes in the washroom.

The brief given to architect Simon included making the outside garden, which had a lot of time and money invested in it, more accessible and relatable to the house, and the couple wanted modern, clean lines with lots of light. ▶

**Left:** The combination of white tall units and black double oven creates a storage feature with a monochrome theme **Above:** Cabinetry was selected in a subtle grey hue – a strong yet neutral colour that allows the architecture within the space to come to the fore **Opposite page:** The island is the focus of this light-filled kitchen extension and the geometry of its design is highlighted by daylight that spills into the room from above



**Above:** The hob creates a central feature on the back wall, which is highlighted by the elevated position of the wall cabinet above  
**Top right:** An Evoline pop-up power point is used in the island providing a flexible work area  
**Bottom right:** The new kitchen design provides storage for even the smallest items including herbs and spices  
**Opposite page, top:** The Silestone worktops offered James and Penny the look and durability of natural stone without maintenance issues  
**Bottom:** The kitchen sits to one side of the space allowing roof lights to lead the eye towards the patio doors and out to the garden



## CROYDON HOME

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### SourceBook

#### DESIGN

**Architect** Simon Whitehead Architects (020 7183 1063 or [www.simonwhitehead.com](http://www.simonwhitehead.com))

#### KITCHEN

**Cabinetry** Finesse Kitchens (020 8335 3333)

**Appliances** Miele (01235 554455 or [www.miele.co.uk](http://www.miele.co.uk))

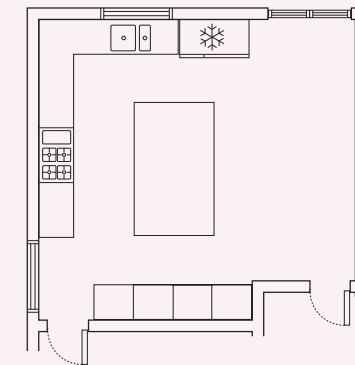
**Work surface** Blanco Capri, Silestone from Cargo Granite (01234 853439 or [www.cargogranite.co.uk](http://www.cargogranite.co.uk))

**Pop-up socket** Evoline from Worktop Power (01603 871055 or [www.worktoppower.co.uk](http://www.worktoppower.co.uk))

**Floor tiles** Savana marble tile, Original Style (01392 473000 or [www.originalstyle.com](http://www.originalstyle.com))

#### COST

A similar kitchen would cost around £45,000 (excluding extension and build works)



**Right:** Brushed stainless-steel handles make a style statement against the grey oak veneered door fronts



Alongside the island is a stainless-steel double-door fridge. This masks a structural pier, which is a more cost-effective way of incorporating a central support column. Removing it would have meant installing a more expensive sliding door system with extra support beams.

Overall, the look is clean and streamlined. A wall of white lacquered units housing a pull-out larder and food storage punctuated

with a black double oven merges into the scheme with minimal effort. "We didn't want the unit to become too dominant a feature and this couple didn't want too many stainless-steel appliances because of the issue of maintenance. That's why we opted for the black oven and white doors to blend in as much as possible," explains Simon.

The final element that gives the Grays exactly what they desired is the provision

of light – not an easy task for a north-facing room. As such, Simon incorporated a tunnel of roof lights into the scheme that turn the room into a daylight-filled atrium. And it is this element of the design that makes the space so spectacular: as light spills into the area, shadows stretch across the space highlighting the geometry of the island and the architectural details that are so important to the overall aesthetic of this room. [KBB](#)

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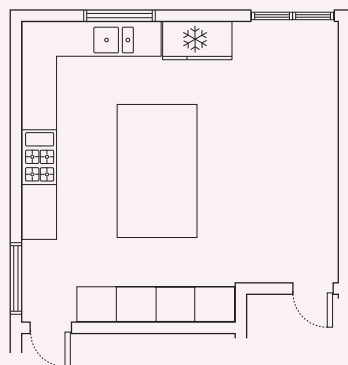
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