



MINIFIE ARCHITECTS

Press Release
14 June 2021

‘BEHIND THE VALE’

Minifie Architects transforms a family home in Blackheath Vale, London, with unusual design features to maximise space and delight.





After living in the same small house for 16 years, watching their children grow into teenagers, and bringing a new family member – Luna, the Cockapoo - into the home, Gary and Kate Westlake desperately needed more space.

Having looked for bigger houses further afield, nothing caught their eye, and they decided they couldn't beat the location of their end of terrace house in Blackheath.

Cue Gary's brother-in-law and architect, Ben Minifie, director at Minifie Architects.

The architectural brief was to reimagine the homeowners' existing house, maximising every opportunity to gain as much space as possible with design flare and credibility. With 1152sqft of space and being in a conservation area, the proposals needed to be sensitive but inventive, to utilise every inch of space in the most practical and dynamic ways.

Minifie Architects started by exploiting dead space in the garden, adding a side return which now houses the kitchen diner, with a 7.5 metre glass roof, flooding the space with natural light. After living with a galley style kitchen, the new kitchen has had an instant impact, giving the family room for a dining table, providing a place to entertain and true hub of the house.



A narrow, 1.5 metre, two storey extension has also provided an abundance of space, allowing the interiors to be completely reconfigured. The existing bathroom has been moved to create a snug room, a single bedroom, and another double bedroom. A dramatic sunken bath with floral jungle ceramic panels adorning the walls has created a spa-like hideaway in the house, and a talking point with visitors!

The new, three square metre snug has been enhanced with a frameless oriel window, wrapping over the roof to provide as much natural light as possible, with a cantilevered window seat inside. Lined with birch ply, it features two hidden retractable screens in the walls to close off the window for privacy or keep the sunlight out for movie afternoons. A wall-to-wall sofa with a pop out double bed transforms the space into a guest bedroom when required.



Upstairs, the loft has been converted to create an additional mezzanine level bedroom with a dormer window looking out over the Heath. The bed sits on the original loft level floor with an upholstered headboard that slides open with a hidden cupboard behind it. Complete with a vanity unit and Hollywood style mirror, the room has been beautifully converted into split-level space for the homeowners' daughter.

Outside, a new garden room creates a chill-out space complete with bar, TV and decks for long summer day BBQs and converts into a home office during the week. Reducing the footprint of green space meant it was important to landscape the garden and replant mature plants to get instant impact. The cedar cladding the back of the house flows on into the garden fences and is reflected in the glass of the garden room. Combined with the light design in the garden, it connects everything together, creating one seamless space.

The homeowners said: "We have high creative expectations and were probably Minifie Architects' most difficult clients! During COVID with home life becoming a place of work and home schooling the new house and increased space is helping us get through these challenging times together. Sometimes, the most restrictive and challenging briefs can result in breaking convention with amazing results. Thank you, Minifie Architects, as we live our lives in completely different way."

THE DOUBLE UNIT PUBLICISTS

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Notes to editors:

Project Data

Start on site	April 2019
Completion date	April 2020
Floor areas	Ground GIA: 95sqm Garden GIA 71 sqm First GIA 49 sqm Mezz GIA 6 sqm
Contract	Design and build
Construction cost	Private
Architect	Minifie Architects
Client	Kate and Gary Westlake
Structural engineer	Neil Smith Associates
Landscape consultant	Minifie Architects
Building inspector	Stroma
Main contractor	BBK Trade
CAD software used	Autocad/ Sketchup

About Minifie Architects

Minifie Architects is a London based studio established by Ben Minifie in 2012. Since then, the studio has taken on a healthy creative impetus, attracting like-minded professionals brought together by a unified attitude, producing innovative and exceptional architecture.

www.minifiearchitects.co.uk