

open

Feature by **Amelia Thorpe**
Photography by **Darren Chung**

sesame

It may look traditional from the outside, but Alison and Mike Christieson's London home is a modern masterpiece within.





Take one tired and gloomy London house, built about 80 years ago, mix in a busy family and an architect with a reputation for elegant and contemporary house refurbishments, and what have you got? A stylish home, filled with light and sunshine, designed for modern family life.

The story of this property is one of dramatic transformation, as owner Alison Christieson explains. "When we bought it five years ago, it was a series of higgledy-piggledy, small, dark rooms, none of which had a good view of the garden," she says. "We began by freshening the house up with a lick of paint, but once we'd got started, the project grew from there," she adds.

On a visit to a friend's house nearby, Alison and husband, Mike, admired the extension, which had been designed by architect Gregory Phillips. It wasn't long before they picked up the telephone to dial Gregory's number. "Our brief was to open up the whole house and streamline the rooms, so that the spaces were larger and lighter," says Alison.

It was just the kind of challenge that Design Director Gregory, working with colleagues Gillian Martin, Project Architect, and Jay Salero, Joint Project Designer, totally relish. "It was a great opportunity to re-configure the entire layout to create fewer, but better, rooms," says Gregory.



above Create a chic, monochrome scheme and a sense of symmetry with white gloss cabinetry and a bank of four all-singing-all-dancing ovens.



above Organisation is key for a smart, clutter-free cook zone so ensure there's a place for everything, including specific shelves for delicate glassware.





left & right From the powerful induction hob and coffee machine to a stylish wet zone, those daily essentials and task areas need to be super-efficient.

below Being a sociable home, the owners chose three contemporary, comfy stools to be placed at the island, allowing easy conversation with guests.

below left Whether preparing a hearty feast or taking a casual breakfast, the must-see soaps or latest news can be enjoyed thanks to the inset TV.

“Even in winter, you can enjoy the view of plants swaying in the wind or snow falling.”



design profile

From its high gloss polyester Boffi kitchen to a glass-walled extension by Gregory Phillips Architects that creates a bright, spacious open-plan living and dining area, the ground floor of this family home is chic and unique. Upstairs, the modern appeal continues with a wet-room en suite and fresh family bathroom, all setting the scene for luxury city living.

**Gregory Phillips Architects, 66 Great Cumberland Place, London W1H 7TU.
Tel: 020 7724 3040. www.gregoryphillips.com**

Expect to pay from £250,000, excluding professional fees, per project.



left & above Cooking, dining and entertaining are now effortless and pleasurable experiences thanks to the new free-flowing, light-filled room.

below & right Sammy, the Havanese dog, is a big fan of the extension with its wall-to-wall glass doors that allow instant access to the large garden.

Their first step was to design the sleek glass-walled pavilion at the rear of the house, adding a very modern addition to the neo-classical property. Sliding doors plus windows around two sides of the space fill it with natural light. "You can appreciate the garden all year round from this room," says Gregory, gazing out over the palms growing in this sheltered spot. "Even in winter, you can enjoy the view of plants swaying in the wind or snow falling," he adds. Decking leads to a terrace to enhance the indoor-outdoor feel, while a pool completes the design. "Against the hard decking and stone – the water is a lovely addition," says Alison. "Sunlight reflects off its surface and then shimmers on the ceiling inside, creating the most beautiful effect," she adds.

The pavilion offers space for the living and dining area, and extends into the kitchen that can be concealed by a sliding door. "We now have lots of options as to how we use the room," says Alison. She and Mike have a daughter, Jessica, 17, and son, Robert, 13, plus Sammy, the Havanese dog, and regular visitors, so this is a very busy home.

"We enjoy entertaining, and sometimes have BBQs with all the doors open – it's amazing how many people will fit in here," laughs Alison. Three dining tables; one in the kitchen, one in the pavilion and another on the patio, provide flexible arrangements, especially since the first two are identical and can be joined together to create a perfect square, when Alison and Mike are hosting a large crowd.

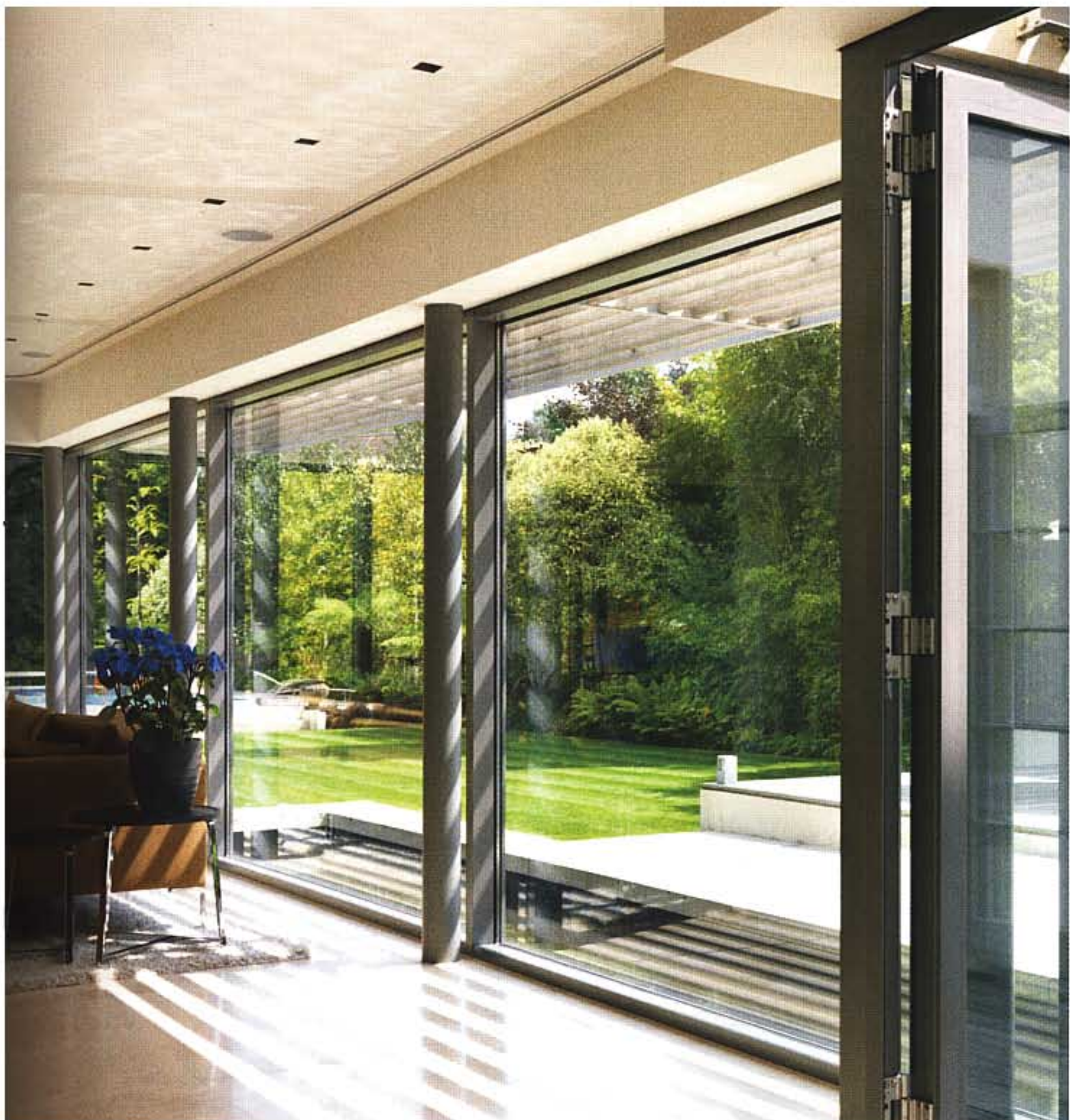
The focus of the cool white Boffi kitchen, supplied by Alternative Plans to Gregory's design, is the steel topped island. "It's not only ideal for preparing food at, but is also a place to pull up a stool and have breakfast or coffee with friends," says Gregory, who explains that he's a fan of kitchens which are both elegant and practical. "I like to create multi-use rooms which have all the equipment needed for cooking and feeding a family, but also include elements to make them more than just a 'mechanical' place," he explains. The tailor-made walnut recess, designed as a display area, is one of those elements, the opaque glass cabinets above which currently house delicate glassware, the other.





above Beautiful both inside and out, this impressive property includes a decked pool area that leads the eye to a manicured lawn and second patio beyond.

below What better way to spend a lazy Sunday afternoon than catching up with friends whilst sipping a glass, or two, of refreshing Pimm's?



This distinctive blend of practical and elegant was specified by Alison and Mike for their en suite and for the family bathroom. "We all tend to shower, and it's probably only the dog that likes a bath," smiles Alison, adding that the freestanding tub still has yet to be used. So powerful showers in frameless enclosures were the main requirement, creating a wet-room style. Under-floor heating beneath the honed slate adds comfort, while minimalist chrome fittings ensure a smart, contemporary look.

The result? A home that may, from the front, look exactly as it did before. "But come inside and it's surprisingly modern," says Alison. "The house just works so much better," she concludes. ■



"Our brief was to open up the whole house and streamline the rooms, so that the spaces were larger and lighter."

left & above With its warm tones, wet-room design, his 'n' hers wash zones plus under-floor heating, the luxury en suite is an inviting place to both soothe and invigorate mind, body and soul.

above right & right Rainforest-inspired artwork injects organic colour into the crisp white family bathroom – when filled with bubbles, its big tub ensures that ideal spot to lay back and unwind.



useful information

Landscape **garden design**, quotes available on application, at Clare Jones Garden Design. **Tel: 01628 478833. www.cjgardendesign.co.uk**

Kitchen

Boffi WK6/LT **cabinetry**, £25,000, at Alternative Plans. **Tel: 020 7243 9747. www.alternative-plans.co.uk**

Appliances

H4430BP **ovens**, £1499 each; H4020BM **combi microwave**, £1398; KM499 **hob**, £1547; F623Ui-2 **freezer**, £509; G653SCViPlus **dishwashers**, £898 each, at Miele. **Tel: 01235 554455. www.miele.co.uk**

IK300-254 **fridge freezer**, from £7637, at Gaggenau. **Tel: 0870 125 4500. www.gaggenau.com**

Gutmann BlancoEstar 30 **extractor hood**, £2139, at Blanco. **Tel: 020 8452 3399. www.blanco.co.uk**

Fixtures & furnishings

Newform 2415 **tap**, £372, at Sterling Distribution. **Tel: 01684 299555. www.sterlingdistribution.co.uk**

Glacier White **Corian® worktop**, £5500; **steel worktop**, from £3300, at Alternative Plans. **Details as before.**

Walnut and steel **tables, recess and sideboard**, made and priced to order, at Gregory Phillips Architects. **See design profile for details.**

Charles Large **sofas** in Lebeccio fabric, £2818 each; Charles **cushions**, £275 per set; Cab **dining chairs**, £600 each; Lem **stools**, £500 each, at Coexistence. **Tel: 020 7354 8817. www.coexistence.co.uk**

Flexform **side tables**, price to order, Campbell Watson. **Tel: 0121 733 1004. www.campbellwatson.com**

Travertine Aspendos **floor tiles**, from £40 per sq. m., at Stonell. **Tel: 0800 083 2283. www.stonell.co.uk**

Barcelona **chairs**, £225 each; Barcelona **table**, £495; Riviera **parasol**, £295, at Westminster Teak. **Tel: 01825 764222. www.westminsterteak.co.uk**

En suite

Vola 111 **basin taps**, £526 each; Duravit Starck1 **basins**, £353 each; **shower screen**, £1057; Axor Terrano **shower**, £281; Aktiva **hand-shower**, £267; Hansgrohe 27412 **shower arm**, £39; Hansgrohe Uno **thermostat**, £523; Architect **towel rail**, £83, at C.P. Hart. **Tel: 0845 600 1950. www.cphart.co.uk**

St Quentin honed limestone **tiles**, priced around £76 per sq. m.; French Chocolate Shell limestone **floor and counter top**, priced around £117 per sq. m., at Stonell. **Details as before.**

Ullswater **towels** in vibrant stripes with decorative stitching, from around £12 each, at Designers Guild. **Tel: 020 7351 5775. www.designersguild.com**

Family bathroom

Similar **bath**, Duravit Starck2, around £5340; Hansgrohe Citterio 39400 **bath shower mixer**, around £631; Hansgrohe Citterio Uno 38850 **hand-shower**, around £115; Zone **basin**, around £605; Hansgrohe Citterio 39010 **basin mixer**, around £369, at C.P. Hart. **Details as before.**

Riverstone honed slate **flooring and counter top**, priced to order, at Stonell. **Details as before.**

Similar **wall tiles**, Domus Brick, expect to pay around £37 per sq. m., at Surface Tiles. **Tel: 020 7819 2300. www.surface-tiles.com**

Similar green **glasses**, around £4 each, at Muji. **Tel: 020 7437 7503. www.muji.co.uk**