

# Open house

A contemporary new build blurs indoor-outdoor boundaries and maximises the views

Report and styling: Jane Stacey Photography: Huntley Hedworth

A short drive down a steep hill in a leafy suburb in Bath, an unexpected sight greets you – a series of largely glass boxes configured into a wonderful family home with uninterrupted views across the valley to woods beyond.

This is where Nichola and Ian Kennedy live on the site of a 1970s house that they pulled down. “We were originally going to leave the back of the property and rebuild the front but, because we wanted something more radical than we’d ever lived in before, a new build made more sense,” recalls Nichola. “The brief was to push the contemporary design limits but still fit in with the neighbouring houses. We wanted to capture the view and be able to walk out of every room either onto a deck or into the garden.”

Nichola and Ian specified the dimensions for the kitchen-diner from the outset. “It had to be a large space, something we were used to because our previous home was a cavernous barn conversion,” explains Nichola. “Ian is very particular about light and lighting so we wanted a double aspect. We got a lighting expert in to help, and the room now looks equally good by day and by night.”

The Kennedys didn’t need to look around for a kitchen designer because they went straight back to Stephen Jacobson, who had designed the kitchen in their barn for them ten years before. “That was a country-style oak kitchen, but this time we asked him to come up with a design that was cool and minimalist. We wanted everything hidden or integral with as few appliances visible as possible so as not to detract from the view,” says Nichola. “Steve is so good because he turns a design into reality with the minimum of fuss and keeps a careful eye on the budget, sourcing everything as cheaply as possible.” ▶

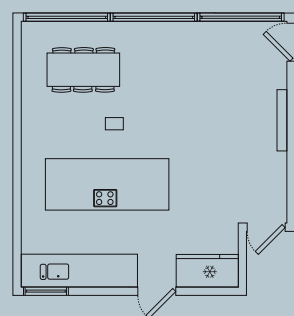


**Top left:** The oak dining table and chairs were specially made for the Kennedys for their previous kitchen. They dictated the choice of oak floor and doors so that the furniture would work in its new home as well. **Bottom left:** Designer Stephen Jacobson was so excited about incorporating a pop-up plug stack in the island that he not only persuaded the Kennedys to go for it but insisted that he didn't want to charge them extra. **Above:** The coffee machine is another appliance that was a must-have for Nichola. Under it is the drinks cooler that Ian and the Kennedys' sons Alex and James wanted as part of the bargaining. **Below:** The walk-in wardrobe has a smoky plastic sliding door, which keeps the look of the room light but obscures any mess behind. Segregating Nichola's bulging wardrobe from the rest of the bedroom is the perfect solution.

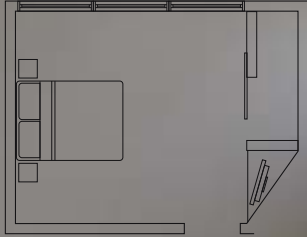


*"We wanted everything hidden or integral so as not to detract from the view"*

The concept of a fuss-free interior making the most of the views drove decisions about the configurations of the bedrooms and bathrooms too. The bath is perfectly positioned to take advantage of the floor-to-ceiling windows. "It's a great place to relax and being able to see the huge vistas makes you take a deep breath, think what a tiny speck you are and really put things in perspective," says Nichola. Keeping the bathroom uncluttered with simple, white, contemporary sanitaryware set against dark slate floors leaves the outside to bring all the colour and warmth into the room. ▶



# BATH HOME



The oak bed was specially made for the room. The stripey rug is Strib from Ikea