2020 EDITION
TEN YEARS OF DON’T MOVE, IMPROVE!

FEATURING
113 INSPIRATIONAL HOME EXTENSIONS

PLUS
TIPS & ADVICE FOR TAKING ON YOUR OWN PROJECT
A DECADE OF DON’T MOVE, IMPROVE!

When the Don’t Move, Improve! awards were established our aim was to celebrate the creative and ingenious solutions Londoners were constructing to improve their homes. Over the past ten years we’ve seen some outstanding designs that have created beautiful homes at the top of waters towers (Shad Thames Water Tower by Form Studio), on the narrowest of plots (Slim House by alma-nac) and have taken daring risks in terms of materials and aesthetics. Our aims haven’t changed but the ambition and resourcefulness of the projects continues to grow year on year.

We’ve learnt much about what people want from their homes, and met a diverse range of families, professionals and architectural students who have all added to the character of London and carved themselves a sanctuary within this bustling capital. These homes demand more from every space and pay greater attention to the specific needs of the homeowners while being tailored to ever-increasing constraints and smaller budgets.

As we look ahead to the new decade, we’re excited to continue to shine a light on these innovative home improvement projects. Celebrating the incredibly talented architects creating the designs and the unique stories of the homeowners living in them. At the core, we want to encourage and support more people to take on these most personal of projects with confidence and character, to allow them to put their own mark on the city. As new challenges arise, and concerns for wellbeing and climate change take increasing priority, we’re keen to work together to develop solutions within the exciting test bed of domestic scale design — we’re sure there’ll be some surprises and wonders along the way.

This year we are delighted to share the 113 outstanding projects featured in Don’t Move, Improve! 2020, demonstrating an array of architectural and personal styles and provide high-quality homes fitting for this rich and vibrant city.

THE COMPETITION

The annual competition is open to practitioners and homeowners who have carried out extensions on top of, underneath and on the side or back of buildings, and/or interior insertions, conversions, and garden studios in Greater London in the past two years. This issue covers the period between September 2017–September 2019.

Projects featured in the awards demonstrate:

- Exceptional innovation, creativity and originality
- High quality design that improves liveability of space and quality of life
- Cost-effectiveness
- Environmental consideration for the materials, efficiency and longevity of the building
- Contextual design that adds to London’s character and the life of the surrounding neighborhood

PRIZES

As well as the Overall winner, this year we have awarded six special prizes that celebrate emerging trends and key challenges within home improvement projects. These are:

UNIQUE CHARACTER PRIZE
Awarded to the design that shows true originality and creates its own individual personality or style.

URBAN OASIS OF THE YEAR
Recognising innovative urban gardens, this prize celebrates the best outside oasis whether that be a courtyard, a rooftop, or a beautiful balcony space.

COMPACT DESIGN OF THE YEAR
Awarded to the project that demonstrates ingenuity and creativity in a design with tight space constraints.

BEST PROJECT UNDER £75K
Recognising great value, this prize is given to the best transformation under £75K.

ENVIRONMENTAL LEADERSHIP PRIZE
Awarded to the project that exhibits thought leadership for environmental considerations such as long-life design, sustainable materials and energy efficiency.

MATERIALITY AND CRAFTSMANSHIP PRIZE
Recognising craftsmanship and attention to detail, this prize will be awards to the project using materials with ingenuity and originality.

JURY

PETER MURRAY
Curator-in-chief, New London Architecture

ELLIE STATHAKI
Architecture Editor, Wallpaper*

TAMSIE THOMSON
Director, London Festival of Architecture

ANNA LIU
Founder and director, Tonkin Liu

ANNA WHITE
Property Journalist, Evening Standard, Daily Telegraph and The Developer

ANDY DONWY
Director, Elliott Wood

* Architecture Editor, Wallpaper

Photography by Richard Chivers
Photography by Agnese Sanvito

Slim House by alma-nac, winner of Don’t Move, Improve! 2013
OVERALL WINNER

SOFFIT HOUSE

OVAL, LAMBETH

LET THERE BE LIGHT — A refurbishment and ‘infill’ rear extension of a terraced house that created flexible living, dining, kitchen and study spaces while adding generous double-height volume and abundant light to a previously dank and dark interior.
When William’s bathroom collapsed, smashing through the ceiling below, he knew something had to be done. And now, one Don’t Move, Improve! project later he has a home filled with light and space rather than the dark, damp confusion over multiple levels he struggled with before.

After that rude bathroom intervention he acted quickly, calling in Proctor and Shaw to look a little more generally to help transform his terraced house in Oval, Lambeth, perhaps rework its higgledy-piggledy layout and, well, give it some love.

“It was all a bit of a warren,” he says of his home before the architects got involved. “It felt as if it could benefit from being opened up; it had the opportunity but just needed some kind of reintegrating scheme that would deal with that.”

He had got recommendations of architects from some of his contacts but none cut the mustard, so Google became his friend, and, after contacting Proctor and Shaw, Mike Shaw came round for the first meeting.

“I thought it was a very interesting project,” says Shaw. “It felt like there was an opportunity to turn it around, particularly in the back of the house, the old rear return external space that was a very dark and damp useless external space. By bringing that into the house we really enjoyed something of real volume that looked onto the garden at the back.”

The dank rear external alley space was brought into the house with the addition of a double-height infill glazed extension to create a light-filled living room connecting new dining, kitchen
and study spaces, while allowing views through the house to gardens front and back. The name of the scheme ‘The Soffit House’ comes from a timber soffit finished in warm oak battens that matches the rich material qualities of the scheme’s floor and sweeps upwards where a frameless glass opening lets in more daylight into the heart of the house.

Dealing with the levels was complicated, but William now has the sense of a more ‘integrated’ way of living, allowing him to work in his elegant front study room but now without feeling so removed from activities elsewhere. ‘It’s nice also to use the kitchen as well and have that flow between the two rooms’, he says.

The living space now feels ‘at one’ with the garden and feels ‘semi-outside’, with a project that never felt ‘overbearing’ and was improved through sometimes challenging dialogue between architect and client. ‘Mike didn’t just dismiss my ideas out of hand’, says William, ‘but it was interesting that we did end up with the original idea formulated at the start.’

**SIZE:** 159 SQM  
**AREA ADDED:** 9 SQM  
**AREA REFURBISHED:** 150 SQM  
**ARCHITECT:** PROCTOR AND SHAW  
**CONTRACTOR:** ROBERTO NUNEZ & DANNY NUNEZ  
**BUILDING CONTROL:** QUADRANT APPROVED  
**PHOTOGRAPHY:** RADU PALICICA  

**JUDGES’ COMMENTS**

Soffit House is a wonderful example of how the space and light in a terraced house can be enhanced by good design. The judges enjoyed how this simple addition transformed the sense of space and connected the areas of the house with each other and the garden. A beautifully understated and generous home!
**FAMILY-FRIENDLY**

PLAYFUL SPACES THAT UNITE THE FAMILY — inclusive for all ages and adaptive to a variety of needs, these designs are personal and practical, from dedicated playrooms, to charming design details and pet-friendly features.

**FEATUERED PROJECTS**

**DYNEVOR ROAD**

STROKE NEWINGTON, LONDON — having expanded to take in three children, a car and a puppy, the family’s low ground and ground floor maisonette was turning at the rooms. When the upper maisonette came up for sale they decided to purchase and re-partition the property, reorientating the building as a single-family home. As the upper maisonette was considerably sized, the project focused on adding a new floor over the main space, formed from timber as a material inside and out. Starting provides an open plan, light-filled addition perfect for perching above and observing the family area by a tropical fish tank, which plays a layer to the evolution of the house. The extension lets natural light flood in. All three levels of the house are connected by a double-height void above the kitchen, bringing light down through the roof to the living room. It's playful, tactile, mischievously-looped and threaded through the house uninterrupted.

**HUTCH HOUSE**

BERMONDSEY, SOUTHWARK — A framework roof onto a rear addition for an Edwardian terrace house in a Conservation Area, which met the needs of both the homeowners and their pets. The addition was inspired by the architect’s history of the original development, defined by branching pitch roofs in clay-red tiles, the south pitch down to a smaller external detail. The addition was inspired by the architecture of the original development, defined by branching pitch roofs in clay-red tiles, the south pitch down to a smaller external frame that could allow for a dramatic change and kitchen space. The ground floor is opened up and arches between different spaces created soft thresholds. Consideration of the restraint and addition was key by the architect proposed a continuous datum above floor level. A small bath within the rear wall goes the rabbit across.

**YELLOW STEEL HOUSE**

HAMPSTEAD, LONDON, NW3 — the client wanted a solution included replicating the two-storey house volume and offering it from the existing house, adding significant space while allowing the original house to dominate at the front and the new at the back. The main living space overlooks the old and new parts of the building, further accentuated by a step in floor level down to the garden. This creates a close connection to the outside while structuring the internal spaces into distinctive areas. Upstairs, the ceilings were removed, and the trusses exposed to become part of the rooms. As a result, the rooms feel spacious despite their narrow width.

**EXTENSION FOR A FAMILY**

WIMEBLEDON, WIMBLEDON — A response to a family need for more space, the extension provides an open plan, light-filled addition perfect for a suburban semi, and is a celebration of timber as a material inside and out. Starting with the idea of a single lighter material could be adapted to suit the family’s needs over time, the design is modular, and from the ground floor into the upper with the addition of a level, and allowing the homeowners to use the house uninterrupted.

**HOUSE IN DALSTON**

CROUCH END, HARINGEY — The house’s original floor extension in existing property is a response to a family need for more space, the extension provides an open plan, light-filled addition perfect for a suburban semi, and is a celebration of timber as a material inside and out. Starting with the idea of a single lighter material could be adapted to suit the family’s needs over time, the design is modular, and from the ground floor into the upper with the addition of a level, and allowing the homeowners to use the house uninterrupted.

**A HOUSE WITH A SLIDE**

DUNDREARY, WEXFORD — a house with a slide is a home designed with the playful and practicality in mind to provide a playroom, a bright kitchen dining space blurring timber slats and a large skylight create a bright kitchen dining space blurring.

**HOUSE 2.7**

REDFIELD AND HIGHLAND CONSERVATION AREA, CARDIFF — House 2.7 is a remodelling of an existing Victorian semi-detached property in a conservation area in London. Architectural work includes refurbishment, rear extension and a basement extension with clear 2.7m head height. The new floor space that has been added to the house. The project overcame three challenges: 1) the building is listed, its conservation policy, a coordination of multiple building contracts, and client desire to live on site during construction. The family stayed on site for five months throughout these works. The family engaged a work that the architect was removed, forming a mezzanine over the main space, forming a mezzanine.

**STAMP HOUSE**

CROYDON, SURREY — Stamp house is a building designed with the playful and practicality in mind to provide a playroom, a bright kitchen dining space blurring.

**OFFSET HOUSE**

CRYSTAL PALACE, CROYDON — a response to the architect’s history of the original development, defined by branching pitch roofs in clay-red tiles, the south pitch down to a smaller external detail.
With a young daughter and another on the way the owners saw this house as a stepping stone to a larger property in the area. However, by virtue of its position at the end of terrace, there was a possibility of building a larger extension than expected that would provide a third bedroom and give the house greater longevity for the growing family. By sinking the lower storey to create a stepped section and carefully shaping the external envelope, a two storey extension was possible. Consideration of impact on neighbours, particularly with regard to avoiding overshadowing, was key to the proposal’s success. Carefully placed rooflights and a glazed link between old and new elements brought light into the previously dark cottage. The bespoke feature stair allows light to permeate into the heart of the house and two spaces together, resolving the issue of an otherwise subdivided plan.

Adding an additional floor transformed a modest dwelling in Greenwich into a functional, flexible and characterful modern home which responds to the changing needs of a growing family and establishes a new identity within its surrounding context. Seeking to minimise cost, existing openings were maintained, and new brickwork was kept simple. The ground floor opens out onto a private west facing courtyard, with a 10m long joinery wall concealing a utility room, larder and lots of storage. A dual aspect, light filled, flexible top floor space provides a second lounge, study or guest room with a full width covered terrace with views across the London skyline. Externally the metal window reveals unify the architectural language, while the hooded roof is a contemporary take on the traditional mansard and dormer window.

SIZE: 137 SQM
AREA ADDED: 25 SQM
AREA REFURBISHED: 112 SQM
TOTAL COST: £247,500

ARCHITECT: THREEFOLD ARCHITECTS
STRUCTURAL ENGINEERS: ENTUITIVE STRUCTURAL ENGINEERS
CONTRACTOR: GOOD PROJECTS & ENTERPRISES LTD
SPECIALIST METAL FABRICATORS OF ROOF, ENTRANCE AND FRONT GATES: Q-METALS LTD
EXTERNAL WINDOWS AND DOORS: VELFAC
TILES: SOLUS CERAMICS
KITCHEN: IKEA WITH BESPOKE FRONTS
SECURITY SYSTEM: NEUTRON LTD
PHOTOGRAPHY: CHARLES HOSEA