

ELLE
DECORATION

SPACE*plus*

HOW TO ADD LIGHT AND SPACE TO YOUR HOME

EXTENSION IDEAS: GO UP, BACK OR SIDeways
SMALL SPACE SOLUTIONS • DREAM LOFTS • SPACE-SAVING KIT
GORGEOUS GARDEN ROOMS • ARCHITECTS' TOP TIPS

INSPIRED IDEAS

GARDEN SPACES

Increasing the light and space in your home isn't just about altering things indoors. Why not have a radical rethink and look outside for clever ways to boost your living space?



CASE STUDY 1

A 21st-century annex hidden beneath the garden

Who? Edgley Design created this flat for a private client.

Where? Camden, London.

Why we love it... This self-contained flat submerged beneath a garden is equipped with a glass-sided courtyard that brings in natural light. The £250,000 project is an innovative way to create new space without massively altering the appearance of your home or sacrificing the garden. The sunken courtyard and skylights introduce enough natural light to prevent the flat from feeling dark, while the open-plan layout, light-reflecting glossy surfaces and sliding doors help to further maximise the sense of space.

edgleydesign.co.uk

MATCH MATERIALS AND FURNITURE INDOORS AND OUT

The external timber decking mirrors the bespoke walnut door and window frames and the zebrawood veneer on the internal sliding doors, while both the kitchen and outdoor seating has straight angular lines. This makes the entire apartment feel larger as the outdoor space appears to be an extension of the interior.



PRIVACY MATTERS

The layout of the flat faces the rear of the garden so that it is not overlooked by the main house. The space is therefore peaceful and private. A 20cm substrate on the roof allows grass to grow, making the flat as inconspicuous as possible.



GLASS IS NOT JUST FOR WINDOWS

In this project, seamless glass is used for the stair banisters, skylights and as a safety barrier around the sunken courtyard. Light can penetrate through the glass meaning views of the garden from the main house remain unobstructed.

INSPIRED IDEAS

ARCHITECTS' TOP TIPS

We asked the UK's top architects, 'If you could do one thing to add more light and space to property what would it be and why? Here are their creative, clever and inspirational responses'



Portobello Road project by Pitman Tozer architects

'The most dramatic thing you could do to add light and space to a property is also the most obvious – put in a window. The location is crucial, as a window's position in relation to the axis of the sun will give you different light in a room: north-facing for even, gentle light; south-facing for dramatic shadows; or on the east/west axis if you want the sun to visit the room for a few hours each day. A window also connects the room with the rest of the world, so two things must be considered: what the view is outside, and the reverse, how visible you will be when viewed through the window. Once the position has been chosen, you must also consider the way surfaces will reflect or absorb light, how shutters and fabrics will control the views and the way colours and textures will intensify the mood. All these elements will build on the primary structure in the space – the window.'

Groves Natcheva Architects
(grovesnatcheva.com)

'Go higher – through the roof. Most houses inherit poorly insulated roofs and under-used loft spaces. Rather than a traditional loft conversion, look at moving the living spaces to the top of the house and enjoy living in the sunlight.'

Luke Tozer, Pitman Tozer (pitmantozet.com)

'While there are always structural things you can do to add light and space, often easier non-structural solutions are forgotten. Make the most of what you already have: ensure window treatments don't block any of the light or view; make your curtains and rails wider than the window so when open they don't cover it; and paint the ceiling white to reflect light into the rest of the room. You can also create the illusion that a room has double the amount of windows by putting up a large mirror that reflects the glass. Outside the windows, plant pale-coloured shrubs and paint any visible walls a light colour. If it's a north-facing window, painting or adding a mirror to an outside wall will reflect sunshine back into the room.'

Rick Mather, Rick Mather Architects
(rickmather.com)

'It's all about white and light. White walls create a sense of calm and provide a blank canvas for form and colour, which can be introduced through artwork or sculpture. Timber floors and sheer translucent fabrics add warmth and softness to a white backdrop. Additional lighting is critical as this softens the brightness of white walls during the darker hours of the day.'

Vyshali Sardesai, BPS (bps.co.uk)



Maximise your windows to bring in more light

'While it seems obvious, the best way to get more light into your house is to maximise your windows. Opaque glass, net curtains and even regular curtains all obscure the amount of light that can come into your rooms. If it's possible to install larger, well-insulated windows that's ideal. Many period homes have small windows, which may be impossible to change on the street front, but there is often more flexibility at the back. One word of caution: all glass extensions can suffer from the opposite problem and become overheated in warmer summer months so we often look to create great views through large windows, but within a structure that has a roof.'

James Spence, Project Orange
(projectorange.com)

'Introduce skylights wherever possible. The quality of light and sense of space you get from a window in the roof is so much stronger and more dramatic than a window in a wall. Even the most ordinary of rooms can become something extraordinary with a well-positioned skylight.'

Christopher Jones, Jones Associates Architects (jonesassociatesarchitects.com)

'Harmonise artificial and natural light by removing all ceiling lights and pendants, and installing concealed indirect lighting around windows to wash the walls and/or ceiling. It's a simple move that creates consistency in a room's lighting. Varying the intensity and colour of lighting can also evoke subtle mood changes between spaces.'

To increase the sense of space, create visual links to the garden or any external space by building an extension or increasing the size of a window. An extension with floor-to-ceiling glass will seamlessly connect with the garden. If possible continue the flooring out to the terrace. Or add skylights – the best natural light is that from above and the most tranquil views are of the sky.'

Chris Barker-Lee, Studio Otago
(otago.co.uk)

'The brief for one of our recent projects asked for abundant light and the colour shift of the sun to continually redefine the space. To achieve this no colour was used inside the apartment and skylights were carefully carved into the ceilings to connect the interior to the movement of the sun throughout the day.'

Paul Williams, Stanton Williams Architects (stantonwilliams.com)