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riverside retreat

Set beside the Thames, this newly extended 1930's house is now the Greens' dream home.





above Taking pride of place, the oval island sets the scene for cooking, eating and family get-togethers.

right Offering a sense of warmth and tactility, oak is an ideal choice for classic, enduring schemes.

Enticed by a 1930's house in Oxfordshire and its beautiful riverside location, Peter and Lindsay Green overlooked the bijou proportions of the kitchen when they moved in. A 'bottom heavy' property, it was obvious that extending would be necessary in order to create more space upstairs and the couple held off making any changes for five years. "We wanted a large cook zone, but it's because we needed much more area on the top level of the place that it actually ended up being this big!" explains Lindsay.

Not that they missed the kitchen they inherited. With just one set of units and range oven, it really needed some fundamental alterations, but it was also essential that the layout capitalised on the views of both the garden and the river – a factor that was lacking previously. So, with the structural plans underway, Peter and Lindsay spent lots of time browsing round the various kitchen companies but it wasn't until they entered the Griggs & Mackay showroom that they knew it had all been worth it – the search for their dream design was now over.

above right A concave end section allows for easy placement of a stool at which to perch with a coffee.

below right What entertaining enthusiast's home would be complete without various recipe books?

Immediately liking the skilled craftsmanship which went into every piece of furniture, they worked with designer John Griggs to find something that would be ageless and exude a relaxed aura. "This was an extension to a lovely house backing on to the Thames with wonderful views. It was a room that would be used not just for food prep but also for enjoying a coffee while choosing recipes," he says.

Having drawn up three different plans, there was one that really stood out, bringing together everything that the couple had envisaged; from the inclusion of the existing range oven to the generous proportions of the almost oval-shaped island. "Its positioning was important because we wanted to ensure the kitchen was kept quite tight with all essentials within reach. I didn't want to be walking all over the place. Instead, everything had to be easily accessible," continues Lindsay. "We also didn't ask for any wall units, preferring to maintain all the open space we now had. The only dilemma was whether, by avoiding this option, it would result in a diminished amount of storage," she explains.





above right A double bowl sink ensures food and
backery can be washed side-by-side if required.

above far right The existing Aga was kept in its
original setting and the cabinetry crafted around it.

right Stylish and innovative, the built-in oven is ideal
for quickly creating tasty treats when visitors arrive.

below Natural wooden elements complement the
ground Light paint shade to perfection.



kitchen profile

Successfully fulfilling a brief to create a timeless and elegant kitchen, Griggs & Mackay skilfully crafted an in-frame hardwood design, hand-painted in a cheery hue of Light Blue. The bright scheme has been given depth with tactile oak and Zimbabwe Black granite worktops while an original Aga and farmhouse-style furniture echo the classical charm.

Griggs & Mackay, 11 Church Road, Caversham, Reading, Berks RG4 7AA.

Tel: 0118 946 1440. www.griggsandmackay.com

Expect to pay from £18,000.



The island has proved to be a perfect addition. Having considered housing a sink or hob within it, the couple quickly established that the entire space could be put to better use by keeping it clear, utilising it purely as a workspace and entertaining area. But, it's the breakfast bar that gets the most attention, as the couple frequently relish the chance to settle down with a cup of tea and the papers while embracing the lovely views down to the river.

Storage is vital in the kitchen, especially for Lindsay who previously had to keep most of her items in a shed. However, it wasn't to overcrowd the room. John says, "I set to create somewhere that was light, very comfortable and spacious.

There's nothing worse than filling a room with furniture just because you have the wall space, so I kept the top cabinets to a minimum with just a larger cupboard sitting on the worktop and a concave corner piece to give a few extra inches."

In fact, it's now a hub that works from every angle, as Maisie, the owners' German Pointer puppy will attest. "She absolutely loves it because she uses the island as a race track before flopping down and snoozing in front of the Aga," laughs Peter. "We are really happy as well because it's functional and practical plus has that desired 'wow' factor too – we've noticed everyone gasps with amazement when they walk in," he concludes. ■



above Able to seat eight people in total comfort, the large dining table is a popular gathering spot.

left A major consideration of the development was to allow for endless opportunities to enjoy the views.



above Once having to store all her belongings in a shed, Lindsay now has space for those daily items.

below A bespoke rack keeps glassware safe and hung upside down, they collect much less dust.

useful information

Appliances

Oil fuelled **range oven**, around £7650, at Aga.
Tel: 0845 712 5207. www.aga-rayburn.co.uk

B1442 Series3 Circotherm **oven**, £768;
T1323S Series3 **hob**, around £488, at Neff.
Tel: 0844 892 9033. www.neff.co.uk

SGV46M43GB **dishwasher**, from £435, at Bosch.
Tel: 0844 892 8925. www.boschappliances.co.uk

Fixtures & furnishings

ISE45 **waste disposer**, £105, at In-Sink-Erator.
Tel: 0800 389 3715. www.insinkerator.co.uk

Oxida porcelain **floor**, £66 per sq. m., at Hyperion Tiles.
Tel: 01628 475888. www.hyperiontiles.com

J311F-06 Karuna **curtain fabric**, expect to pay around £42 per m., at Jane Churchill.
Tel: 020 8877 6400. www.janechurchill.com

Zimbabwe Black **granite worktop**, £400 per sq. m.; solid **oak worktop**, £300 per sq. m.; sandblasted satin glass **splashback**, made to order, at Griggs & Mackay. See kitchen profile for details.

Lincoln ceramic **sinks**, £158 each, at Astracast.
Tel: 01274 654700. www.astracast.co.uk

Atlas Monobloc **tap**, around £136, at Abode.
Tel: 01226 283434. www.abodedesigns.co.uk

Ringwold Ground Light oil eggshell **paint**, £38 per 2.5l.; White Tie **emulsion**, £30 per 2.5l.; Light Blue oil based eggshell **paint**, £38 per 2.5l., at Farrow & Ball. Tel: 01202 876141. www.farrow-ball.com

Bespoke **lighting**, prices on request, at John Cullen.
Tel: 020 7371 5400. www.johncullenlighting.co.uk

Similar **table**, Bramley, from £500, at Laura Ashley.
Tel: 0871 983 5999. www.lauraashley.com

