



## Built to fit

Many of us dream of having a large, open plan kitchen and living space. But just because your home doesn't have one now it doesn't mean you have to give up dreaming or move house. With a clever extension, **Chloe and Rob Birkett** created the perfect ground floor space for their family



For many young families, buying a house in South West London can be a difficult decision to make. Still, rather than waiting to find the 'perfect' house outright, it's often easier to buy a property within your budget then make changes to the house to suit your lifestyle.

That's exactly what Chloe and Rob Birkett did to their 1930s, semi-detached house in Hampton less than one year after moving in.

"We bought the house knowing we'd do it up," said Chloe. "When we moved in we had a galley kitchen that was quite small and an outside toilet that we didn't need."

With one young daughter and another baby on the way, Chloe wanted a ground floor utility room and a toilet and also knew that one large kitchen and living space would be a more convenient way for the family to spend time together.

### Quick progress

The Birketts spoke with an architect to draw up the plans for the changes to the downstairs and then got quotes from various different building companies in the area. "L&E (Lofts & Extensions) looked at our plans and came back to us within a couple of days. Their quotes were very competitive," said Chloe.

But what really stood out was that L&E (Lofts & Extensions) was keen to complete the whole build. "Other builders could complete the extension but not fit the kitchen. If we had gone with other builders we would have had to semi-

project manage the build and find different teams to fit the kitchen and find an electrician etc.," explains Chloe. "We wanted everything completed before the baby arrived and L&E (Lofts & Extensions) was by far the most convenient."

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True to their promises, the build began efficiently. With the architectural plans drawn up in September 2009 and L&E (Lofts & Extensions) contacted in October, the build began in early November. "Being such a large company L&E (Lofts & Extensions) had teams ready to go," said Chloe.

Once on site, the building team tried to minimize disruption as much as possible. A boiler was fitted in quickly so that the Birketts would not be without hot water and the kitchen was kept in use for as long as possible.

"The team just got on with the work each day," Chloe said. "They came around the side of the house to the extension at the back and started working each morning at 7:30am. Some nights they stayed until 10pm to get the job done."

### Finishing touches

Chloe also explains that communication and project management was clear throughout the build. "If there was anything we were worried

about they fixed it straight away. When one of our windows had a leak, they were quick to tell us and were on it immediately."

The finishing touches were also implemented with the same thoroughness as the rest of the build. "The walls were very old and so the team plastered them. However they still had cracks showing on them so they put up lining paper too," said Chloe. "They were always very good at advising us what to do."

So how has the extension changed the Birkett's family life? "It's been amazing. The main thing is that we have the open living and kitchen room that we also wanted and we can have friends over for dinner and not have to worry about being in different rooms when preparing meals," said Chloe. "We wouldn't have been able to buy a house with this level of finish and large rooms but now we have it."

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The Birketts are so confident recommending the L&E (Lofts & Extensions) that they are even happy to show you round their new home. Contact them via the L&E (Lofts & Extensions) to arrange a viewing.