

# Change of TUNE

*Inspired by a love of music, Hywel Jones and Aidan O'Rourke extended their London home to create space to play and entertain*

Words Debbie Jeffery Photography Andrew Beasley

**left** Light pours into the basement kitchen-dining space through the Crittall-style glazed wall; a tiled floor defines the dining zone

**below** The cinema room is an open-plan space with a panelled wall that conceals a staircase, bathroom and storage area

**H**ywel Jones' passion for chamber music was his motivation for radically extending and remodelling the traditional terraced house in which he's lived for more than 20 years.

'I play the viola and I loved the idea of having a music room where I could rehearse and invite other musicians to come and join in,' he explains. 'I'd already converted the loft into a bedroom several years earlier, so building upwards was no longer an option. This time, I decided to extend into the side return and under the house.'

The property has been completely remodelled to create the ultimate home for Hywel and his partner, Aidan. Excavating beneath the building produced a new storey, which now contains a guest bedroom/living area, a bathroom, an open-plan home cinema, a much-needed utility room and a spacious kitchen-dining zone that opens on to a small courtyard. This process freed up an existing double reception space on the ground floor to be used as a music room.

'We like the area, and had put down roots after living here for so long,' explains Hywel, a solicitor, who bought the property – in Clapham, south-west London – in 1992. 'Moving to a larger house in the capital would have been extremely costly, so adapting our existing home made sense – although we knew that digging out a basement beneath a mid-terraced house wasn't a low-budget option.'

Finding an experienced, local architecture practice was very important to Hywel, who met with several firms before selecting the award-winning Granit Architects. Its portfolio includes several hundred homes in London, throughout the UK and all over the world, from luxury one-off houses to basement conversions.

James Munro was the project architect, while the architectural assistant was Tom Vincent,' explains Hywel. 'They were always available to give advice, and they also →

## AT A GLANCE

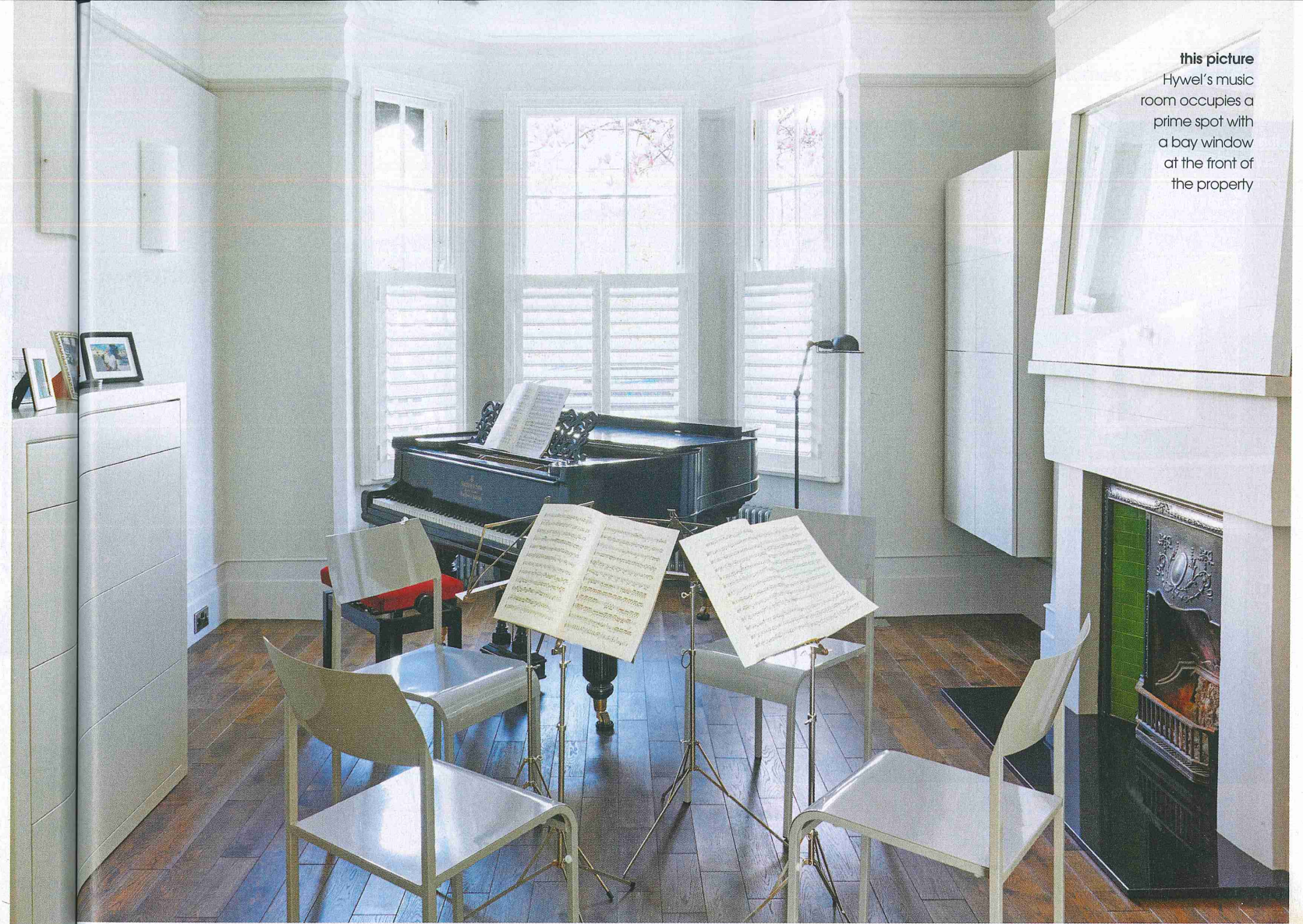
**Names** Hywel Jones and Aidan O'Rourke  
**Location** Clapham, south-west London  
**Property** Edwardian terraced house  
**Bedrooms** 4 **Bathrooms** 4  
**Project started** April 2013  
**Project finished** May 2014  
**Size of house** 350sqm  
**House cost** £197,000 (in 1992)  
**Build cost** £850,000







**this picture**  
Previously the first-floor kitchen, the new library includes a wood burner and cherrywood drinks cabinet



**this picture**  
Hywel's music room occupies a prime spot with a bay window at the front of the property



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## 'All the woodwork is beautifully finished and was incredible value'

against advice and stayed for about four months, until the services were cut off and we had no gas or electricity,' explains Hywel. 'Living on a building site wasn't ideal, although it did save money.'

Expanding what had previously been a narrow coal hole into a full-sized basement involved removing floorboards in the ground-floor rooms, shoring up the structure and hand-digging several hundred tons of clay. This spoil was transported out of the window via a conveyor belt, across the front garden and into a giant skip. An existing sewer in the rear garden dictated where the excavation work needed to end, and external stone steps were created from the new courtyard up to garden level.

'We were lucky to have extremely patient neighbours, who put up with a lot of noise and disruption while the underpinning and building work was going on,' says Hywel. 'The two-storey side-return extension was effectively built at the same time as the basement, and involved demolishing the original ground-floor kitchen wall along one side and excavating down.'

A substantial amount of structural steelwork was required for the construction, which involved casting reinforced concrete walls and floors in shuttering. Hywel was fascinated by the process, and could immediately envisage the space,

which now features a dramatic double-height section of glazing. 'There was a metal Crittall window in my previous kitchen, and this inspired the design for the large, steel-framed glazed wall, which is far more energy efficient than the original,' Hywel explains.

Echoing the style of this feature – and matching a new external staircase and handrail – an internal balustrade has been erected, above which a roof light has been positioned to create an open, light-filled space.

An existing boiler connected to a solar thermal panel on the roof provides heat and hot water for the ground floor and upwards, while the water and an underfloor heating system in the new basement are fuelled by a second boiler.

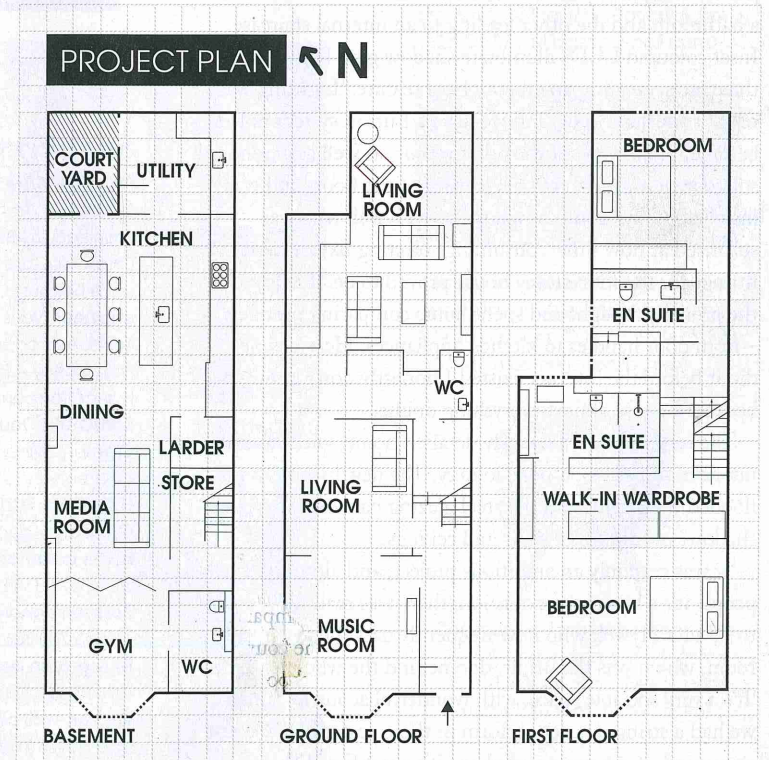
Hywel knew of a joinery company in Hungary that had completed work for friends, and decided to offer the firm the entire package of bespoke cabinetry for a fixed price. This included building the kitchen cabinets and island, panelling, doors, shelving, the dining table, a bed and even a stylish, mirror-backed cherrywood cocktail cabinet for the new library on the first floor.

'The company made all of the woodwork, and not only is it beautifully finished but it was also incredible value for money,' says Hywel. 'The architect's drawings were sent over to Budapest, and we worked together discussing →

kept in touch about the day-to-day management of the contract, which was really reassuring.'

Gaining planning permission for the new basement and side-return extension proved straightforward, with no objections, despite the couple needing to obtain party-wall agreements with the neighbours. Building contractor Chalk Hill Construction was the chosen one following a tender process during which one company dropped out and another's quote was over the couple's budget, leaving two contenders from which to choose.

Work began on site in May 2013, when the top floor of the house was turned into a bed-sit so that Aidan and Hywel could continue living there for as long as possible. 'We went





this picture A walk-in wardrobe links the master bedroom with an en-suite bathroom



*'Lighting was really important... I spent hours comparing products online'*

this picture  
The cherrywood bed was made in Hungary

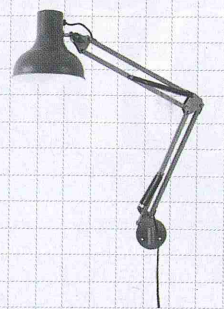


above Full-height glazing and a large roof light ensure that the basement and side-return extension are bright and airy

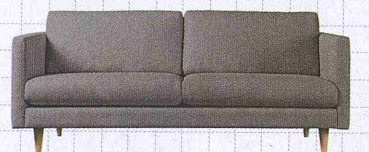
below Aside from the just-visible solar thermal panels on the roof, the traditional bay-fronted exterior offers no hints to the modern home beyond

## STYLE FINDER

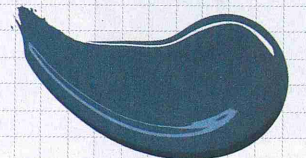
Choose Fifties-inspired shapes to copy Hywel and Aidan's look  
Compiled by Charlotte Luxford



**Flexible fitting** Retro Clerkenwell angle wall light in steel in charcoal (H26xW20xD54cm), £60.95, The Farthing (thefarthing.co.uk)



**Mid-century style** Tivoli sofa in birch and house weave in dune grey (H64xW175xD85cm), £499, Swoon Editions (020 3137 2464; swooneditions.com)



**Moody hue** Stiffkey blue estate emulsion, £38 for 2.5L, Farrow & Ball (01202 876 141; farrow-ball.com)



**Distressed finish** Metal-effect tiles in porcelain in steel (H60xW120cm), £49.95 per sqm, Original Style (01392 473 004; originalstyle.com)



**Cool curves** Fonteyn bedside table in oak and walnut veneer (H55xW50xD40cm), £199, Made.com (0344 257 1888; made.com)

the required finishes. Everything was then shipped over and installed by a local company.'

Next to the basement kitchen-dining room, the home cinema features a panelled wall made by the Hungarian joinery company, which conceals two doorways – one into a bathroom and the other leading to an internal staircase. Inset coloured LEDs illuminate shadow gaps between the panels, creating an eye-catching feature. 'Lighting was really important to us, and we have a Lutron system in the basement and some of the other rooms, as well as a Sonos sound system, which connects three of the floors and was installed by the same company,' says Hywel, who was surprised at how time-consuming selecting fixtures and fittings for the four-storey house proved to be. 'I enjoyed the process, though, and spent hours comparing products – from door handles to kitchen appliances. How people did it before the internet existed I honestly don't know, because I chose almost everything online.'

The result is a meticulously detailed home, with stunning interiors and sleek bespoke joinery. The new basement is flooded with light, and the steel glazing bars cast attractive shadows on the white walls and ceilings.

'It was certainly an ambitious project, and although I tell people it's a basement extension, there was really a lot more to it,' says Hywel, who now frequently uses the new music room, which was the inspiration behind the whole scheme. 'It's a very sociable space, with wonderful acoustics. In fact, we had a string quartet perform in there yesterday. We just sit around, drink wine and play – it's great fun.' **GD**

## Suppliers

**PROJECT TEAM** Architect Granit Chartered Architects (020 7924 4555; granit.co.uk) **Building contractor** Chalk Hill Construction (01483 300 230; chalkhillconstruction.co.uk) **Structural engineer** Lyons O'Neill (020 7223 7222; lyonsonelli.co.uk) **Party wall surveyor** Ivan Coffey Associates (020 7828 4333; ivancoffey.com) **STRUCTURE** Double-height window Clement Windows (01428 643 393; clementwindows.co.uk) **FIXTURES & FITTINGS** Cabinetry Geppetto (geppetto.hu) **Audio and home automation** The Hi-End UK (020 8876 3355; hi-end.co.uk) **Polished concrete floor** Lazenby (01935 700 306; lazenby.co.uk) **Dining-area porcelain tiles** Stoneworks (01335 361 111; stone-works Ltd.co.uk) **Kitchen-wall ceramic tiles** Walls and Floors (01536 314 730;

wallsandfloors.co.uk) **Smoked oak flooring** Wooden Floor Shop (0845 450 0019; woodenfloorshop.co.uk) **Wood-burning stove** Envirostoves (01749 345 369; envirostoves.co.uk) **Bathroom radiator** Warm Rooms (01452 883 828; warmrooms.co.uk) **Towel radiators** SMR Bathrooms (0844 358 1995; smrbathrooms.co.uk) **Bedroom radiators** Knightsbridge range at Traderadiators (0141 225 0430; traderadiators.com) **Window shutters** Shutterly Fabulous (0808 250 3689; shutterlyfabulous.com) **Lighting system** Lutron (lutron.com) **FURNITURE & ACCESSORIES** Kitchen table, bed, music chest, radiator covers, bathroom cabinets Geppetto (as before) **Lamp above kitchen island** Gras No 302 factory lighting by Holloways of Ludlow (020 7602 5757; hollowaysofludlow.com)



this picture Handmade shelves and dark reflective tiles feature in the master bathroom

