



Black sheep

Although Andrei and Siwan Saltykov's south London home bears little resemblance to the area's terraces, it's a sensitive and highly considered design that makes the most of its site **Words Sarah Baldwin Photography Will Pryce**

When asked what her neighbours think of her and architect-husband Andrei's modern home in south London, Siwan Saltykov's reply is 'maybe a curiosity! Well at least I hope that's what everyone calls it,' she laughs. 'I don't think that they expected anything like it. It's a traditional area, where people move for typical houses with sweet gardens, and then we come along with this black-clad geometric new-build. Andrei wanted to do it orange!'

Their house, nestling on a small lane at the end of a quiet cul-de-sac near Wimbledon Village, is certainly an architectural head-turner that stands out from the surrounding Thirties terraces. But contrast could be said to define this plot – although fairly homogenous residences are found on one of its sides, there's a dense industrial site and open park on the others. Rather than trying to tie in with any of these individually, this build takes its cue from all three,

and the resulting house feels very harmonious in its location. The site has a tricky history. The land originally belonged to one of the neighbouring properties, but was sold off to pay a tax bill, and it became a landlocked, lost space, for which application after application failed to win approval. Eventually, one scheme for a four-bedroom property did pass the planning stage, and it was with this design that Andrei and Siwan purchased the land; the previous owners defaulted on the mortgage and the couple bought it from a receiver at auction.

'It was literally a dumping ground and terribly overgrown,' explains Andrei. 'You had to fight your way through a mass of bushes to get on to the site,' he continues. The couple both admit to having doubts that any kind of project was possible on the awkward space – let alone the one that they had in mind for two properties, each with sun-filled gardens and no problems with overlooking. 'Our design certainly →

above The main living space is not huge, but it's been cleverly divided into distinct zones for living, dining and cooking to give a sense of space

right Built on a lane at the end of a cul-de-sac, the house has floor-to-ceiling windows to provide views across the park and flood the interior with light



right Andrei and Siwan have added interest to the white walls with sculptural storage solutions. They have since installed orange window blinds that block out the glare and cast a lovely glow on the interior. These were one detail the contractor failed to finish as they went bust shortly before the project was completed

below The orange kitchen cabinets inject a splash of colour to the predominantly white scheme. The woven bamboo flooring softens the minimal lines





didn't come just like that,' says Siwan. 'By working every single detail through, a solution eventually became clear,' continues Andrei. 'It was a eureka moment,' adds fellow architect Tom Lacey.

Although Tom was working in Milan at the time, he assisted Andrei on many of the design details, a collaboration that was so successful they have now set up their own practice. 'Tom takes no prisoners, so that helped,' laughs Andrei. The pair met while working on large projects for Richard Rogers. This big-building experience, as well as finding him a business partner, set Andrei up well to face the planners; he produced a dossier similar in magnitude to those submitted for public buildings. 'It addressed every single point,' adds Andrei. 'They just couldn't say no.'

The final design sees two houses – one four and one three bedroom – both with ample, sunny gardens. (Andrei and Siwan live in the former). They have a very similar look and feel, although the latter, because of its orientation, (it faces towards neighbouring houses rather than the lane and park), has few windows; instead it features a striking glazed roof that covers half the house.

They were built using prefabricated timber panels, with Andrei selecting a contractor he'd worked with on a mass-housing project. Although this method is usually lauded for speed and efficiency, the project was by no means quick out of the starting blocks. This was primarily due to the fact →

Plans: Edgar Hoffmann

The layout: 235sqm

LOWER-GROUND FLOOR



GROUND FLOOR



FIRST FLOOR



that the contractor's other jobs – which included the roof of the Olympic Velodrome and around 17 Sainsbury's stores nationwide – pushed the small house quite far down the list.

Problems on site weren't constrained to delays. The area has high ground water and clay soil, which meant that the strip foundations attempted by the contractor (and in spite of Andrei's fervent warnings) continuously caved in and had to be totally redesigned. The roof caused the biggest drama on site; 'the subcontractor was some kind of cowboy,' adds Andrei. The job was done so badly they are still having problems. 'Let's stop raking over bad memories!' laughs Tom.

In spite of this angst, the house looks unfussy, effortless almost. You enter through a minimal gate, and weave around a sculptural garden to the front door. Here, you're met by the open-plan, light-flooded living space, with floor-to-ceiling windows at one end and views across to the park. A central staircase leads down to the children's bedrooms and guest room on the lower floor; 'with the views, it made sense to have the living space elevated, and the bedrooms half-dug out of the ground to even out the sloping site,' says Andrei. On the upper level is the master suite and a small, sunny office.

The trick with the interior was to keep the palette simple – and fit plenty of storage to conceal clutter. The matt-black exterior continues inside in the chunky window frames →

right At the centre of the ground-floor living area, the modern staircase breaks up the open-plan space; it leads down to the children's bedrooms and up to the master suite and small office

below Daughter Gina's bedroom; the sloping site meant that the rooms on this side of the house were half-dug out of the ground – so the windows sit at the level of the garden, allowing for great views of the outside



White walls are a minimal backdrop for eye-catching shelving and large prints, with vibrant-orange details popping out



this picture The guest bedroom, on the lower-ground floor, is the only room that doesn't look out on to the garden. To make the most of its limited and awkward space, the shower room has a sliding screen for a door



right The compact shower room of the master suite on the upper floor, boasts plenty of small-space ideas, including round fittings and a skylight to let in natural light



and furniture, toning harmoniously with the dark-timber floor. White walls are a minimal backdrop for eye-catching shelving systems and large prints, with vibrant-orange details sporadically popping out; like the kitchen cabinets, dining-room chairs and bright bathroom tiles.

'I really appreciated having Siwan as the client,' says Andrei. He'd earned his stripes, so to speak, reconfiguring their previous flat in Fulham. 'When I presented things, Siwan knew that it wasn't going to be totally stupid, and she was still able to make the comments she needed to make – asking about details like where to put the pram. It really helped me to figure everything out,' he says.

'In terms of design, hand-on-heart there is nothing I would do differently,' Andrei continues. Here, Tom interjects. 'This home is very site specific. Another site would obviously be configured by its own constraints and context. That is the biggest thing in architecture.' This is a concise interpretation of what makes this house so successful; it's not only a lovely space to be in, but it's one that has made the most of its very-specific location. **GD**

Use eye-catching details with a colourful palette to bring a touch of Andrei and Siwan's style to your home, see p80





above A detailed layout allowed space for an office on the upper level, which Tom and Andrei worked out of when they first launched their private practice

left Its geometric design and jet-black cladding, create a stunning contrast against the night sky. The garden's lighting and sculptural planting softens the sharp edges of the house

Suppliers

PROJECT TEAM Architect

Lacey & Saltykov (020 7255 0525; laceysaltykov.com)

STRUCTURE Rainscreen cladding

Trespa (01952 290 707; trespa.com)

FIXTURES & FITTINGS Fridge,

oven and hob Neff (0844 892

8989; neff.co.uk) Extractor hood

Franke (0161 436 6280; franke.

com) Worktop and sink Glacier

white Corian by DuPont (01438

734 000; dupont.com) Kitchen

tap KB4 by Vola (01525 720 111;

vola.com) Bathroom tiles Domus

(020 8481 9500; domustiles.

co.uk) Bathroom sink and WC

Zero Tondo by Catalano (+39

0761 5661; catalano.it) Bathroom

sanitaryware White collection by

David Chipperfield at Ideal Standard

(01482 346 461; ideal-standard.

co.uk) Bathroom taps Hansgrohe

(01372 472 001; hansgrohe.

co.uk) Wooden flooring Uniclick

carbonised solid strand woven

bamboo flooring by The Bamboo

Flooring Company (0116 274 1050;

bambooflooringcompany.com)

External blinds Levolux (020 8863

9111; levolux.com) Underfloor

heating Terra Therma (01621 858

555; terratherma.co.uk)

FURNITURE & ACCESSORIES

Sofa Feng by Didier Gomez at

Ligne Roset (01494 545 910;

ligne-roset.co.uk) Wall-mounted

gas fire Fire Angel by CVO (01325

301 020; cvo.co.uk) Coffee table

Zero-In by Barber Osgerby for

Established & Sons (020 7608

0990; establishedandsons.

com) Shelving Bespoke design

by Lacey & Saltykov Architects

(as before) Dining chairs Polo

Chair by Robin Day at Loft (0113

225 1515; loft.co) Living-room

armchairs Kare Design (kare-

design.com) Rugs WovenGround

(020 7348 6957; wovenground.

com) Beds Warren Evans (020

7693 8988; warrenevans.com);

Habitat (0844 499 4686; habitat.

co.uk) Freestanding lights Republic

of Fritz Hansen (020 7637 5534;

fritzhanzen.com)