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[INTERIORS]

# Home IMPROVEMENT

If you're considering refurbishing your home, Clara Bee delivers

You may remember *The Journal's* article last year, when we spoke with home refurbishment specialists Claire and Trevor Burrage about their Interior Design and Project Management business, Clara Bee. Trevor left his job in the City to grow the Project Management side of the business, along with his wife Claire. One year on, and Clara Bee is clearly striking the right note with their busy client base, providing a one-stop shop for home improvement.

*The Journal* caught up with Trevor when he recently completed a building project for one of his clients on Lavender Hill. Alex and Amber, the homeowners of the property, say: "We were interested in Clara Bee for Project Management, their range of services was of interest and they also have a well-established network of good trade contacts in south-west London. We were also impressed with Trevor's knowledge of the process and attention to detail." Alex and Amber

needed someone they could trust and who could make decisions on their behalf, as although their base is in Clapham, they both travel a lot with work.

The refurbishment project was to create a side return extension and then reconfigure the ground floor around the newly created footprint. "We always wanted an open-plan space for socialising. We both used to live in San Francisco, so this certainly influenced

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our ideas of an industrial feel for our new kitchen area." The Clara Bee team worked with Alex and Amber initially to help them develop the full scope of the project, including ideas for changes to the patio garden to complement the

design inside, and they also helped find a suitable contractor. "Once the building work had begun, and delivery was in Trevor's capable hands, more design opportunities were highlighted by Trevor as the building work progressed." Alex, Amber and Trevor also collaborated on design ideas using Pinterest boards, so they could share ideas through images, which was especially useful when the couple were overseas with work.

Some of the stand-out features on Alex and Amber's industrial theme include: a polished concrete floor; restoring the original brick for feature walls and columns; and keeping the steel beam supporting the floors above exposed, rather than boxed in. Alex even went to the trouble of creating his own kitchen light fittings for use above the new kitchen island and extension. "They were made out of some old plumbing fittings and Kilner jars."

The finished kitchen – which certainly has the wow-factor – is impressive and wonderfully different. It's clear that it's been well thought out from concept to completion. When asked what the clients' highlights were of the finished kitchen, they said: "It's hard to choose our favourite, but we love the concrete floor and brick column."

All in all, what was it that Alex and Amber liked most about the process? "The great thing about using a Project Manager was that it was hassle-free. Clara Bee made what could have been a stressful project into an enjoyable experience, and we now have the kitchen we've always wanted," Alex comments. Trevor was also pleased with the outcome, saying: "Alex and Amber were great to work with, they had a clear plan from the outset and were open with me about what design elements they were confident with and the areas where they needed help. As the project started to come together, it's the finishing touches of colour and furnishings that make the difference. For me, what makes this type of work more enjoyable than my old job in the City is seeing a client's vision explored to the full and then making it happen for them – and in terms of job satisfaction, you can't get better than that." ♦



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