

**SELF BUILD
DESIGN**
.....
*Case
study*



**As
featured
on TV**





In brief
PROJECT
 Extension & remodel
LOCATION Surrey
COST £750,000
SPENT £500,000
WORTH £1.7m+

Out of the woods

Extending and upcycling a 1960s dormer bungalow in a pretty woodland setting gave the Stoddart family a photogenic home fit for celebrities.

STORY: **DEBBIE JEFFERY** PICTURES: **NICK HUGGINS/THE MODERN HOUSE/KATE STODDART**



EXTERIOR
 Completed in 2019, Aylesford House maximises its bucolic setting.

Kate and Andy on the terrace of their home which has 50-mile panoramic views.

When the home you designed is chosen by a location scout as the perfect set for a star-studded contemporary ITV drama, you know you've created something special.

And for owner/architect Kate Stoddart it was the icing on the cake after the challenge of extending and remodelling Aylesford House over a number of years.

"We were ridiculously excited when we realised that our home would feature strongly in *Finding Alice*, a series which has a cast of celebrities including Keeley Hawes, Joanna Lumley and Nigel Havers," says Kate, of the six-part drama penned by writer Simon Nye, who also wrote hit series *The Durrells*. "The rooms were rebuilt at the studios and all the windows had to align exactly, with external filming done on location at the house."

Not only is Aylesford House spectacular but its expansive rural setting is equally incredible. Located near a Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) in Surrey, the detached five-bedroom secluded property is surrounded by pine woodland, Nesting herons, roaming deer and swooping kites share the woodland, creating a series of ever-changing tableaux, framed in each window. To the east are walking and biking trails through hundreds of acres of publicly accessible heathland, woodland and forest lakes.

Aylesford House is a contemporary adaptation of an existing 1960s bungalow and retains original brick walls on the ground floor. The cantilevered upper rooms maximise first-floor space, while also focusing the views out onto the valley below and the towering pine trees above.

The material palette of Norwegian Kebony timber, black brickwork, lead cladding and extensive glazing is sensitive to the woodland setting and links the inside and out.

Kate and her husband Andy, together with their two

HOMES EXTENSION & REMODEL

children – Tom, now 11, and Ava, nine, bought the dated dormer bungalow on a three-quarter-acre site back in the summer of 2015. They left their previous home in the same Surrey village, near Farnham, and moved into the bungalow following a three-month period of renting, caused by the sheer complexity of the purchase.

“The bungalow just didn’t respond to the setting, and our intention was to create a playful family house which would exploit the fabulous location and views,” explains Kate, a highly regarded residential architect with her own practice, specialising in bespoke new dwellings, extensions and refurbishments.

“As a lighting engineer, Andy enjoys managing building projects and completes most of the manual work himself, which meant we’d be living on site for years rather than months. It was a key factor in every decision we made.”

Kate’s design had to allow the family to remain in the house throughout the project, and describes Aylesford House as an upcycling project, utilising the existing structure as a launchpad for her contemporary reinterpretation. “As soon as we’d viewed the bungalow I went home and started scribbling madly, so the concept was born pretty quickly and then refined,” recalls Kate, who extended the existing building by 40 per cent to 256 sqm, which was acceptable to the planners.

“The previous owner allowed us to dig some trial pits so we could look at the ground conditions and existing footings. With such a large and stable ground floor we decided to retain most of the layout and use



Before



BUILD
The new timber-framed first floor is roofed in a single-ply membrane, with lead and Kebony cladding. The brickwork has been stained to complement the black windows.



The floorplan

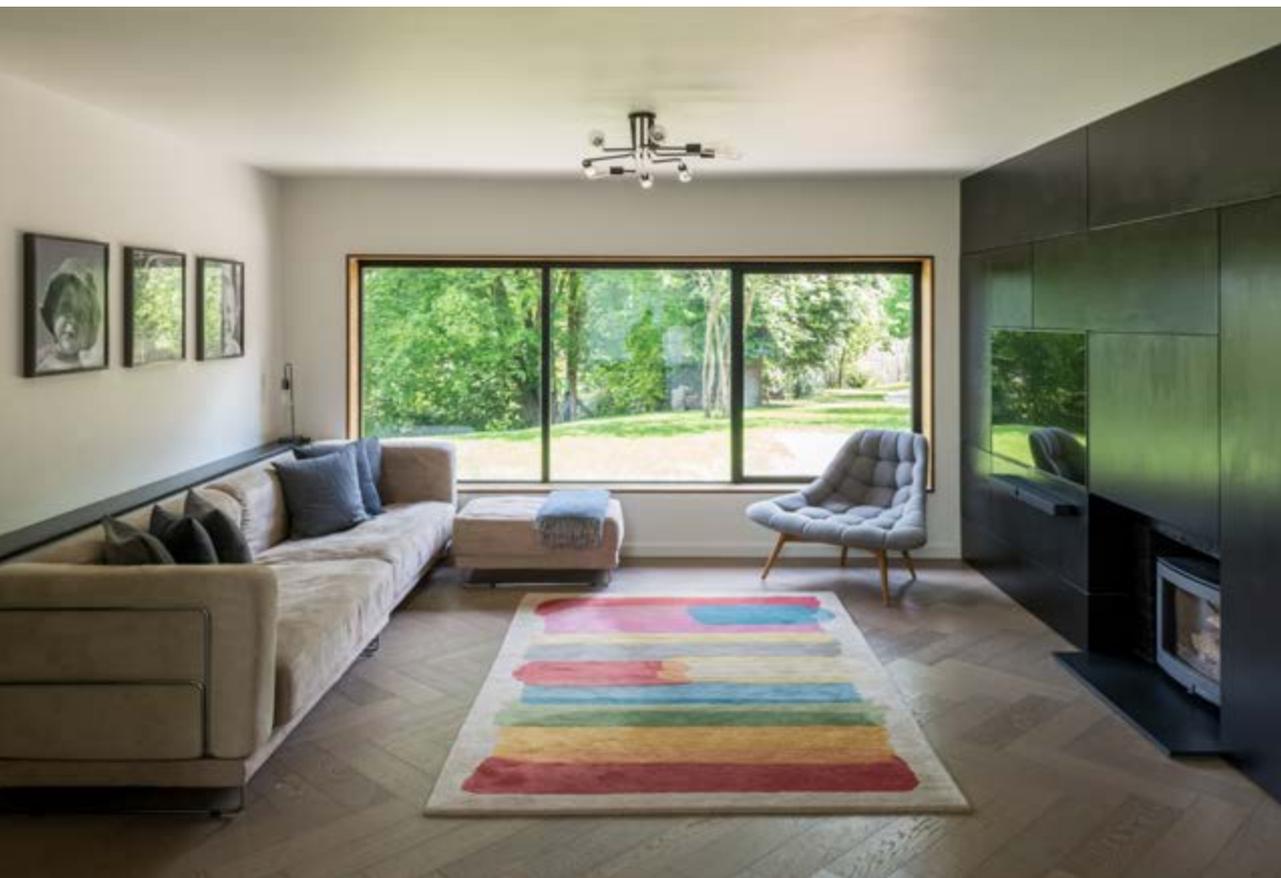
The ground floor has been extended with a single-storey kitchen/diner and roof terrace above. The old kitchen is now a family room and there is an office, boot room, WC, guest bedroom and en suite. On the new first floor there are four further bedrooms, a bathroom, shower room, master dressing room and en suite.



First floor

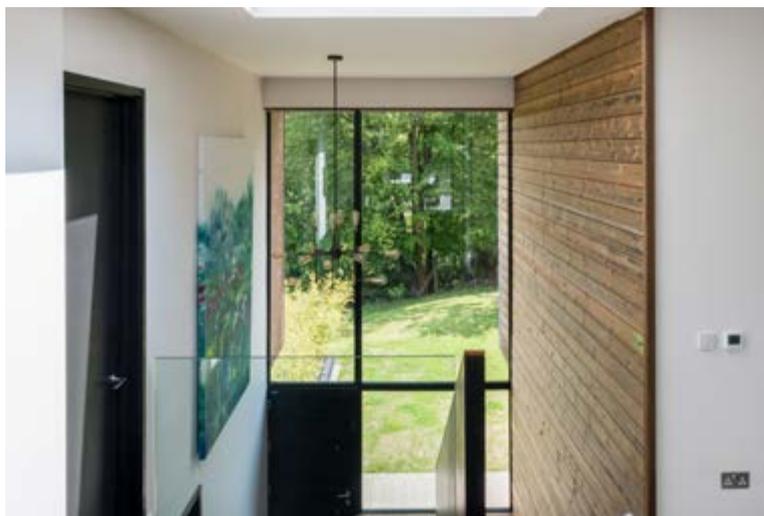


Ground floor



SITTING ROOM
 Located in the original bungalow, the ground-floor sitting room has a parquet floor, with a wood-burner in the existing chimney surrounded by plywood storage made by Andy.

ENTRANCE
 The glazed double-height entrance features a timber-clad wall running up behind the staircase, which aligns perfectly with the external Kebony cladding and is washed by light from a strip of LEDs. Windows throughout the house are also lined with Kebony offcuts to bring warmth to the white interiors.



In detail

PROJECT

Architect Kate Stoddart:
 katestoddart.co.uk
Structural engineer
 Brox Consultancy: brox.co.uk

STRUCTURE

Timber frame contractor
 Aveley Building and Construction:
 aveleybuildingandconstruction.co.uk
Roofer Arford Roofing: 01420 472030
Windows High Quality Joinery
 and Aluminium Services:
 highqualityjoinery.co.uk
Roof lights Skylight International
 Limited: skylight.co.uk
Front door Kloeber: kloeber.co.uk
Underfloor heating Continal: ufh.co.uk
Balustrades FH Brundle: fhbrundle.co.uk

Kebony timber cladding
 Brooks Bros: brookstimmer.com

FIXTURES & FITTINGS

Kitchen DIY Kitchens:
 diy-kitchens.com
Hot tub Urban Cedar:
 urbancedarhottubs.co.uk
Contura wood-burning stove
 Focus Stoves: focusstoves.co.uk
Sanitaryware Victoria Plum:
 victoriaplum.com
Electric blinds Somfy: somfy.co.uk
Electric gate motor Gate Motors:
 gatemotors.co.uk
External paving Love Stone:
 lovestoneuk.com
Planting Vanarnhem Nursery:
 vanarnhem-nursery.co.uk

that as a base from which to build a new lightweight first floor, with cantilevers maximising the size. The kitchen was then a new addition to the rear.”

Kate’s design presents a modern, hybrid form in an angular, almost modular silhouette. Orientating the spaces on the upper floors in response to the landscape and the view, she has allowed the ground



“Our intention was to create a playful family house which would exploit the fabulous location and views.”



floor to stretch out laterally in an open plan, towards the forest and expansive private gardens.

“A huge scaffold roof was constructed over the bungalow and we all lived in just the downstairs rooms,” she recalls. The roof and first floor were completely removed and a lightweight timber-framed first floor with a flat roof, built by a team of carpenters, cantilevered over the ground floor walls to optimise bedrooms. The kitchen extension was added, with floor-to-ceiling glass, and the first floor was made habitable before work could then begin on the ground-floor spaces.

The design maximises the 50-mile views, which are framed by huge windows. From the roof terrace buzzards and kites hover at eye level over the neighbouring stables, with other wildlife such as badgers, bats and deer frequently visiting the site.

The specification is high, with new floor and cavity wall insulation to the existing brick bungalow, and underfloor heating laid throughout the ground floor beneath new screed. The timber-framed first floor is also packed with insulation to achieve a high thermal performance, and smart heating controls show that



KITCHEN

A blockwork kitchen extension required deep foundations to one side of the hill, with a web of steels supporting the roof terrace, roof light, and hot tub above. The kitchen was customised by Andy, who created a corner drinks bar with sliding doors and glass shelves.



DINING AREA

The open-plan dining area looks out onto the terrace through walls of sliding glass.

the house loses barely one degree overnight.

Externally, the building is clad in Kebony timber, fixed both vertically and horizontally, which Andy fitted over several months. Developed in Norway, the Kebony technology is an environmentally friendly process which enhances the properties of sustainable softwood with a bio-based liquid, permanently modifying the cell walls of the timber. This gives the chemical make-up of hardwood and makes it rot resistant.

“We used Kebony for our previous house and like the way it fades very evenly,” says Kate. “Existing brickwork was stained with watered-down paint, after trying a number of samples, and we chose dramatic black window frames for the big openings.”

Aylesford House is situated at the end of a private, gated driveway. The front elevation is glazed, with the canopy clad in lead, to allow light to flood the hallways and staircase. Most of this floor is finished with grey-washed engineered oak parquet.

To the left of the entrance is a living room, with built-in modular storage units and a modern wood-burning stove, a guest bedroom with en suite bathroom, and a boot room, providing access to the rear of the house. A former ground-floor bedroom is now an office and the old kitchen is a family room/playroom.

The open-plan kitchen and dining room are arguably the most impressive spaces. The kitchen itself has Corian worktops, and porcelain floor tiles run through to the dining room, where two expansive sections of glazing join at a right angle. Sliding doors open out onto a patio and outdoor dining area, offering an uninterrupted panorama of the Hampshire countryside towards the Chiltern Hills.

The first floor is occupied by three large double





“Our son’s obsession with Minecraft houses inspired the idea of a rooftop hot tub.”

bedrooms, a family bathroom, and a principal bedroom with en suite bathroom and dressing room, which benefits most from the cantilever above the ground floor below. This provides elevated views of the countryside and horses grazing in nearby fields. The cut of the land beneath, and the woodland to either side, give the impression of sleeping in the treetops.

A roof terrace is accessed on this floor, and seating has been set up with further elevated views across countryside. A hot tub and outdoor hot shower have also been installed, screened by surrounding woodland. “Our son’s obsession with designing Minecraft video game houses with swimming pools inspired the idea of a rooftop hot tub,” says Kate, who also designed a large double garage and a further gym/office outbuilding, with storage space for bikes and garden equipment.

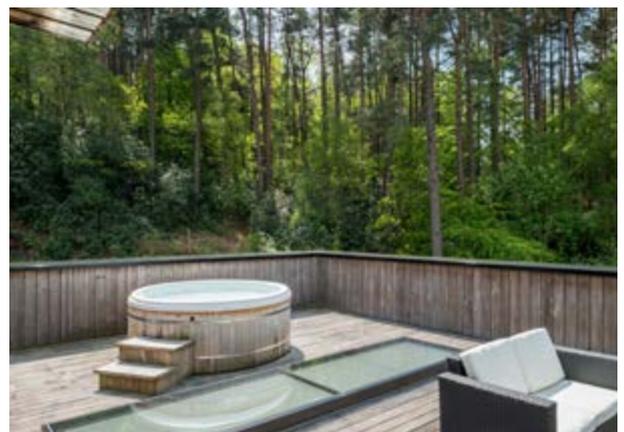
“It’s definitely a playful home, with swings in the children’s rooms, a zip-line in the garden, and the hot tub on the roof,” Kate continues. “The sloping garden also makes an ideal sledging hill and waterslide, and now we can enjoy watching the house on TV in the new series, which makes it even more special.”



UPSTAIRS
Ceilings on the new timber-framed first floor are all 2.9m high, with oversized internal laminated plywood doors made by hand by Andy.



ROOF TERRACE
Above the new kitchen extension, a decked roof terrace provides for reaching views, with a hot tub for sheer indulgent relaxation.



Final word

What was the high point of the project?

When the first-floor timber frame went up and we could get an idea of the spaces and views of the trees.

...and the low points?

We had issues with our water supply, which was originally connected to a neighbour’s hosepipe!

Your best buy?

Our kitchen extractor came from our previous home and was upcycled by cladding it in mirrors, so that it almost disappears into the ceiling.



And your biggest extravagance?

Our electric blinds, glass roof terrace balustrades, and of course the hot tub!

What is your top tip?

Find a good carpenter who can produce bespoke details, such as built-in storage.