



# SEMI FINAL

Charlie Greig has pushed her London semi-detached home to the limits with a remarkable remodelling scheme

**Details** Contemporary remodel & extension, London, Feb 2006 – Mar 2007  
**Project Cost** £700,000 (£2,917/m<sup>2</sup>)  
**Designer** Inglis Badrashi Loddo Architects

**S**tanding in a road of unremarkable 1950s and 60s semis in north London is a distinctive, contemporary-looking property which – with its pristine white walls, expansive frameless glazing and immaculate entrance – appears to be newly built. To the rear the effect is even more radical, with three storeys of full-width folding sliding glass doors overlooking a heated swimming pool and tropical landscaping reminiscent of a Miami beach-side villa.

**1: A contemporary kitchen**  
 A far cry from the typical galley kitchen, this room features bountiful storage, and the open plan ground floor layout makes it feel spacious. Light enters through rooflights, bouncing off the mirrored splashback and glossy MFI units — which Charlie customised with new handles and a 100mm-thick Corian worktop



Words: Debbie Jeffery Photography: Ben Morgan

“The house was in a terrible state when I bought it, with ugly single-glazed windows which leaked,” recalls Charlie Greig. “But I planned to remodel it and build upwards to the rear — introducing a huge amount of glass to create a sleek contemporary look.” Charlie purchased the three bedroom semi with this radical makeover in mind — leaving behind her lavish 18th century ballroom apartment in Hertfordshire to embrace London life with her then 14-year-old daughter, Tatum.

The back of the house faces south-west, which was ideal for Charlie’s needs. The boxy nature of the two storey brick building also lent itself to extending upwards. There is now a second floor with a fourth bedroom with en suite for Tatum, and a small roof terrace — none of which are visible from the road.

Inspired by an angular villa she had seen on holiday in Ibiza, Charlie approached Patrick Inglis of award-winning architectural practice Inglis Badrashi Loddo Architects to design a workable solution. “I’d worked with Patrick in the past; the practice was an obvious choice,” explains Charlie, an interior designer.

The house had been poorly extended in the 1970s with a single

storey bedroom to the rear, and demolishing this, together with the front porch and side garage area, enabled Charlie to undertake the new alterations and extensions under Permitted Development rights.

“I was restricted at the front because the façade had to remain in keeping with the one next door,” explains Charlie, “but the back of the house is hidden from view, so I was able to lift the ridge height in the centre of the building to add another storey and make it far more dramatic and exciting.”

The side and rear external walls were taken down, the floors were taken out and the roof came off — leaving little of the original structure still standing. The ground floor was then excavated by one metre to increase ceiling heights and make the interiors feel open and airy. “There was virtually nothing left —

just the party wall and one other external wall. The house was completely gutted and scaffolded, with no windows — which made it feel totally exposed,” reflects Charlie, who project managed the transformation. Demolishing the garage area created access through into the rear garden for machinery, and the pool was then excavated.

“Fighting the [council’s] decision cost me £100,000”

**Above: Total transformation**  
 It’s hard to believe that this is the same house. Demolishing the porch, rendering the brickwork and replacing the leaky single-glazed windows with large sections of frameless double-glazed plate glass, from Cantifix, has totally transformed the front façade. The majority of both the external and interior walls were removed and the roof was lifted off, leaving a shell which Charlie and her builders reconstructed. A second storey en suite bedroom with terrace – invisible from the street view – has also been built to the rear

**The work was undertaken under Permitted Development (PD) rights.**  
 New rules regarding PD were introduced in October 2010 — to find out more on what you can do to your home under PD, see p.90



2



3



4

**2: Open plan ground floor**  
Large-format slate tiles, from Topps Tiles, have been laid throughout the open plan ground floor, lending continuity. The furniture arrangement and a change in lighting give definition to the living and dining areas

**3 & 4: Space to entertain**  
A wall serves as a partial room divide between the front of the house and a more formal dining area — yet it also allows light in while providing privacy. A drinks bar was made by customising kitchen cabinets and tiling the top with a large piece of broken mirror to reflect the glitter ball above

Charlie was on site virtually every day and was keen to get physically involved with the building work — tackling everything from tiling bathrooms and laying the floors, to helping dig out the pool. She and Tatum moved in before the interiors were completed and lived in the house while work continued.

“I’ve used the same team of builders for the past 15 years, so we have a great working relationship,” Charlie says. “We started at the rear with the deconstruction and digging out, before tackling the roof and the second floor extension for Tatum’s new bedroom.”

An expensive sprinkler system needed to be installed on the ground floor to meet fire regulations for what is now a three storey building with an open plan staircase. But adding the second floor was worth the expense, transforming the house inside and out — creating an angular Art Deco silhouette. ▶

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Builders DBB Construction Dimitire: 07973 696387  
Glazing, folding sliding doors, glass balconies Cantifix: 020 8203 6203  
Planning consultants Shire Consultancy: 01727 838455  
Air-source heat pump Nibe Energy Systems Ltd: 0845 095 1200  
Swimming pool installation H2O Servicing: 0161 303 1402  
Slate flooring Topps Tiles: 0800 023 4703  
Sound system Atlantic Electronic: 0208 208 6999  
Wireless lighting Rako: 07659 190802  
Platinum sink CP Hart: 0845 600 1950  
Heat pump installation Iso Energy: 01293 821345  
Kitchen MFI: [mfi.co.uk](http://mfi.co.uk)



Before



**Above: From dreary semi to light-filled luxury home**  
Concealed from the street, the rear elevation has seen the most dramatic transformation. Three sets of aluminium frame folding sliding doors — note the glass safety balustrades at first and second floor level — from Cantifix, take best advantage of the view of the heated swimming pool, and solar gain from this south-west aspect. The doors also open up this home, on warm days, to its garden. Slate flooring laid inside has been continued out into the garden, creating a seamless finish between inside and out. The pool is heated by an air-source heat pump



5

Dramatic monochrome colour schemes were chosen for the interiors, with white walls throughout and robust slate flooring extending through the open plan ground floor and out into the suntrap garden to form a terrace around the inviting swimming pool.

A mirrored splashback along the rear wall in the galley kitchen helps to create the impression of space, and Charlie customised the standard MFI kitchen units by raising them in height, changing the handles and fitting chunky 100mm-thick white Corian worktops on top. Rooflights have been added to this existing single storey space, ensuring that the room is filled with natural light.

“Sanitaryware was one of my biggest extravagances,” admits Charlie, who paid £28,000 for the black Italian free-standing bath in the master bedroom. “I also spent a big chunk of the budget on gadgets, including an integral multi-room music system and wireless lighting with mood settings.”

Introducing such large expanses of glass to the building was another expensive decision, but it has turned this once-drab 1960s house into a fabulous example of contemporary architecture. “This was previously a dark property, but now every room is incredibly bright,” says Charlie. “Sunlight reflects off the pool and creates a dappled effect on walls and ceilings. It really feels as if you could be living abroad.”

#### 5: Touch of lavish luxury

The sleek black free-standing bath was one of Charlie's biggest extravagances, costing £28,000. It creates 'wow' factor in the first floor master bedroom. Rich Jarrah wood flooring adds warmth to the monochrome decor. The vaulted ceiling with rooflights and frameless plate glazing makes this previously dark semi feel light and open

#### CHARLIE'S REMODEL & EXTENSION

**Construction** Brick house with steel, glass and blockwork additions

**Size** 240m<sup>2</sup>

**Build Time** Thirteen months

**Build Route** Building contractor and self-managed specialist subcontractors

**House Cost** £800,000

**Build Cost** £700,000

**Value on Completion** £1,500,000

#### The Pool

“I modelled this house on a stunning property I'd seen in Ibiza, which had a swimming pool,” explains Charlie. “The whole idea was to create a luxurious, holiday-style home, and although the heated pool was an indulgence it's also vital to the overall design.”

Charlie's builders completed the excavation for the pool and ensured that it was structurally reinforced. A specialist pool company was then employed for the pump room installation and another company was responsible for putting in the air-source heat pump. The latter has proved to be a cost-effective solution, and is connected to the underfloor heating and hot water for the house in addition to heating the pool.

Excavating the 15ft by 26ft swimming pool did take up a lot of space, and cost Charlie around £90,000 to construct, but the combination of water and glass produces shadows and ripple effects indoors as well as bouncing natural light into the rooms.

The work was undertaken under Permitted Development (PD) volume limitation (note, the rules regarding PD have since changed, in October 2010). “I knew that the original planning application should have been acceptable under PD rights, and started to build, but part way through the council issued an enforcement notice to stop work, which put everything on hold for several weeks,” says Charlie. ▶



“They decided that the dig out for the pool would count towards the overall volume of the house, which took it 40m<sup>3</sup> over the PD limit. An underground structure should never have been included in this calculation – which was proved when I won at the appeal – but fighting the decision cost me £100,000 and a lot of sleepless nights.”

### Building with Glass

Walls of glass have transformed the previously dark semi into a unique and glamorous villa bathed in light. Existing front and rear extensions were demolished and structural steelwork has been introduced to reinforce walls, ready to support the enormous panes. Frameless glass panes to the front of the house each weighed 1.5 tons and needed to be craned into position, which proved extremely nerve-racking. These were produced by structural glazing specialist Cantifix, who also supplied the folding sliding doors and glass balconies to the rear.

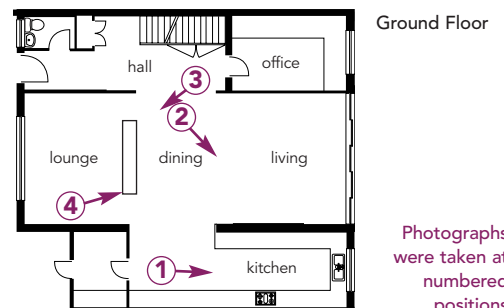
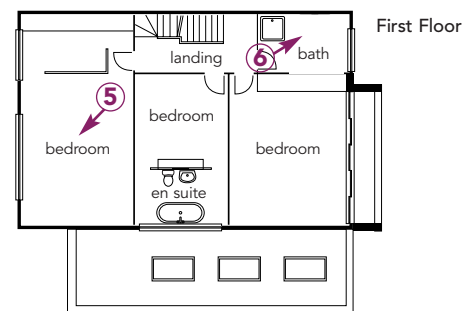
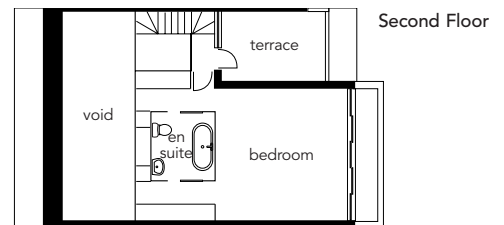
“There are no real issues with privacy, although a planning condition did insist that obscure film should be applied to half of the top bedroom window,” explains Charlie. The folding sliding doors cost £30,000, the glass balustrades were £3,700 and the plate glass windows to the front elevation cost £12,500. Masses of insulation, coupled with argon-filled double glazing, ensure that the remodelled house is now far more energy efficient than before. 🏠

## Boutique Chic

An open plan living/dining room overlooks the swimming pool and rear garden through folding sliding glass doors, with the office, utility and kitchen spaces built into the corners of the floorplan. Three lavish bedrooms – two of which enjoy boutique-style en suites – and a family bathroom have been positioned on the first floor — all bedrooms enjoy magnificent views through walls of glass. A new second storey has been added, creating a fabulous fourth en suite bedroom with its own roof terrace.

### 6: Adding drama to the family bathroom

The platinum Hayon basin with mirror and matching wall-mounted lamp, from CP Hart, are the centrepiece of the bathroom — carrying off the plainer items of sanitaryware. They also add drama in an otherwise neutral room



Photographs were taken at numbered positions