

Autumn Home Feature

# Changing Rooms

As more of us are being urged to move rather than improve, our TV screens are awash with renovation, decoration and make-over programmes, each one packed with OTT 'experts' offering their opinions on everything from cushions to cornices. Back in the real world where make-overs take more than '60 Minutes' and 'Grand Designs' might mean installing a new toilet seat, most of us just want the same thing – to create functional, comfortable homes, that 'work' for ourselves and our families, ideally with an element of style thrown in.

In this our Autumn edition of View Homes, we have been given access to a 'real' changing rooms couple, Catherine and Ash Alam, who handed over their hopes, dreams – and their kitchen to a group of local experts in the hope of creating something quite spectacular. The 'Dream Team' consisted of leading local Architect team, Sally and Stephen Bromilow; award winning kitchen designers, James James Kitchens, and master builder, Robbie Thomas.

*This is their story...*

## A Room with a View

As we enjoy our first glimpses of Autumn, thoughts turn towards making the most of what is left of our lighter evenings, maximising space and ultimately opening up our homes to make more effective use of our gardens all year round.

What would be lovelier than bringing some of those warm Autumn rays and garden scents into the home too. Well that's exactly what Catherine and Ash Alam wanted to do when they decided to transform their Edwardian house in West Kirby into a contemporary, family focussed home.

The first thing they did was to call the experts in. Sally and Stephen of Bromilow Architects Ltd in West Kirby are experienced in helping clients achieve breathtaking transformations of their properties.

"We are asked quite often by clients to help them gain more space and bring more light into their homes" says Sally, "The Alam's house is quite typical of a period property in that the areas towards the rear where the kitchen and garden is, are quite dark and small in comparison to the usually lighter grander spaces at the front of these properties.

The original occupants of these houses spent their time at the front, and the kitchen and garden areas were where the washing and cooking – the functional activities were carried out, and hence were not spaces to spend time in or linger unnecessarily."

Nowadays, we live differently. The kitchen is now the centre of our homes, and the open plan kitchen diner is one that savvy homeowners crave – all the better if links to the garden can be achieved too.

Catherine and Ash felt that their small existing kitchen was not practical for the needs of their young active family, and that Ash particularly, who loves to create in the kitchen, felt cut off from the rest of the house, and from dinner guests when cooking.

Secondary to these needs, but still important for them to achieve, were the lack of light and missing views to their lovely garden where they often have family meals.

We wanted to maximise the amount of natural daylight coming into their new kitchen space, and this meant introducing lots of glass. The glass roof over the extension was

key to achieving this, and the French doors meant that they can really experience bringing the outside in – even when the doors are closed, the light still floods in and the views of the garden still remain. A word of warning though – the use of glass is governed by building regulations that you are required by law to comply with. The calculations for the amount of glass that you can use are very complex so its worth seeking the advice of a professional if you want to maximise the amount of glass that you can use and still comply with building regulations.

Now..... a fantastic space calls for a fantastic kitchen installation, and that's why



Sally suggested that Catherine and Ash go and have a look around the showroom of James James Kitchens of West Kirby.

“We often recommend James James kitchens to our clients, as we know that their range is very practical and robust as well as beautifully made and the endless combinations of colours, materials and cabinet designs are second to none!”

The key thing is, James James Kitchens are true designers.

They are passionate about design and totally driven by the desire to create functional kitchen spaces that also stand-alone as works of innovation. Their personal approach means they spend much time as it takes with their clients to ensuring they understand the brief and that, ultimately the design works perfectly for the individuals concerned.

#### Building on Success

This was definitely the case with the Alams. Their chosen design was a complete triumph, working in perfect harmony with the new space

created by the Bromilows.

The whole transformation was underpinned by the experienced, quality lead approach of Robbie Thomas and his team. With outstanding levels of craftsmanship and expertise, the renovation work was conducted with the minimum of fuss, on budget, on time and in keeping with the overall vision.

And the results speak for themselves...

As our stunning pictures show, our ‘Dream Team’ of Wirral craftspeople, designers and professionals have created a space fit to grace the swankiest of make-over shows, and more importantly, a home the Alams can be proud of.



## james james *kitchens*



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