

Four local companies were involved in Neil and Jan's charming cottage extension. This was no ordinary extension however. In fact it was to feature on Channel 4's property series 'Best Laid Plans' with Charlie Luxton. **Duncan Sherwood** explains.

# How to Channel

Photography by Hayley Watkins

**W**hen you live in a Grade 2 listed property, extending your home is difficult. Jan and Neil's cottage dates back 400 years and nestles among similar character full properties just off Long Crendon High Street. It's a great location. The family loved their current home and didn't want to move. But they needed a solution for their listed property, that would make it work for modern busy family life providing more space and more light, but still preserving the stunning features that they loved. What do you do? You call architect Lynn Palmer.

Arguably, the most important building work for this project wasn't the bricks and mortar kind. It was building the team of people that Jan could trust to do a good job.

**Lynn Palmer Architects** was the perfect starting point. Here is a business that is building quite a reputation for finding solutions to tricky property problems.

Firstly, planning consent was required. Lynn Palmer Architects worked closely with Aylesbury Vale District Council Conservation Team. The plans proposed were passed in just eight weeks. The reason? Lynn explains.

"The key is to work with what you have. Produce a creative solution that doesn't dominate the original structure but frames it." She says. "Many of our designs incorporate natural materials that complement the original building and its surroundings, such as grass roofs, cedar shingles and modern thatching materials but use them in a different way. We have used glass structures that form a clear distinction between the old and new parts of the building, flooding the space with light and framing the original house behind it." She adds.

This Long Crendon project really was a challenging space to work in.

"Not only was the property listed and thatched, it also had that extra challenge of being on a steeply sloping site. The front elevation of the cottage is raised approximately a metre above the pavement level, with the rear garden rising a further two metres, before levelling out," says Lynn.

The original cottage accommodated two bedrooms, a bathroom, a single open plan living space and a small kitchen. As a family of five, with three children, the two older boys slept in the outbuilding. Lynn's brief was to create a sense of arrival, this included a proper entrance hall, large family living space, larger kitchen, and two additional bedrooms. Most of all, the client wanted to view and access the 200ft long, tiered gardens from inside the property.

A more practical challenge was the rear garden being the same height as the underside of the thatch. This meant there was no visual connection from the cottage to the beautiful rear gardens.



*"An ambitious design its wonderful I love it"* **Charlie Luxton**

# 4 talents



*The original cottage rear elevation*



The design solution was to place the bedroom accommodation on the lower floor within the extension, and the living space on the upper level, so you can view the rear gardens. We have created the upper living space within a glass-ended tube. Looking at the house from the garden, you can see right through the contemporary extension, through to the stunning original cottage. The curvature of the new living space roof, sympathetically reflects the shape and form of the original thatched cottage. The new addition to the property blends in perfectly within its surroundings. It features rosemary roof tiles and crisp white rendered walls.

Every element of this build was a challenge, from the ground works, the curved roof through to finding a window supplier to supply curved glazed units. Fortunately Lynn's main contractors are as passionate about their work as she is.

**TGC Building and Property Maintenance Ltd** are based in Monks Risborough. This is an established business with more than 30 years of experience in the building trade. They carry out all types of building work, from new builds to barn conversions.

Jan's extension was a particularly complex project. TGC had to fulfil Jan's dream for her home and overcome the many challenges set by Architect Lynn.

By working closely with and listening to both Lynn and Jan, TGC brought their considerable knowledge and skills to the task. TGC was able to complete a unique build, to a very tight deadline.

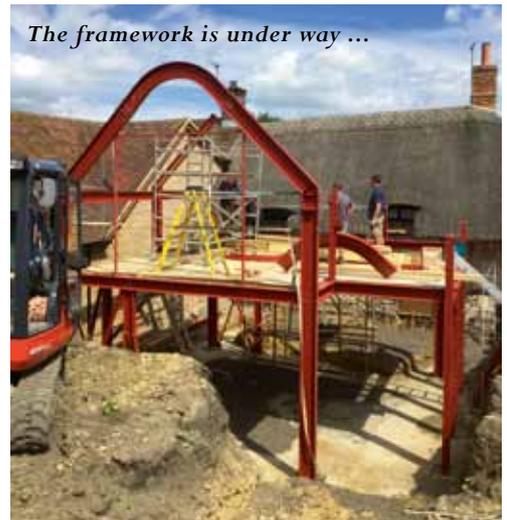
Every little detail was bespoke, nothing was standard. All details had to be worked through and adjusted to fit the unique shape of the building.

As Jan said, "We cannot imagine having done this build with any other company. It was completely unique and bespoke and without the care and attention to detail that TGC put into everything it could have turned into a very stressful build. TGC put their heart and soul into building us a dream home and we consider ourselves very privileged to have employed them."

TGC took every challenge in their stride, the attention to detail is evident wherever you look.

As for the interiors, Janice herself is responsible for all the interiors from mixing up the paint colour for the Kitchen units, choosing and sourcing the striking bar stools around the kitchen island. The unusual wood addition to the kitchen work surface is Jan's idea - a unique touch.

Jan has her own company '**Vintage Reloved**'. Based at home in Long Crendon, she restores and hand paints furniture. The house is a showcase for her talents.



*The framework is under way ...*



*... followed by the stunning curved roof*

Jan welcomed the challenge of showcasing her furniture and passion for interior design, within a tight filming deadline. She was responsible for all the decorating and furnishings throughout.

*Sumptuous interiors*



*The neatly hidden extractor*



Jan loved a framed kitchen in the corner of the showroom and asked for a quote.

Jan really loved the quality of the kitchens and the fact that she could have any colour - as an artist herself and always working with colour - she wanted to have some input into the final choice of colour. In the end she chose Little Green French Grey 113. Kingsey's paint supplier matched the colour that Jan had mixed herself and had used to paint a cupboard in the kitchen. This was to be the paint colour to be used on the island.

Jan chose Latona Tristone as a worktop for her kitchen. This is an acrylic solid surface material that combines practicality, durability, and elegance.

Storage is always an important part of any kitchen, in this case (with the shape of the build) it was not possible to put in wall units - however Kingsey designed a cupboard for the end of the worktop run that had folding doors. However it still had to be shaped at the back to take account of the curve of the building.

Fay Branch's team are masters of designing bespoke kitchens (and more) to fit any buildings shape. Two children's bunk beds were designed and built by Kingsey Furniture.

One final challenge was the extraction fan for the SMEG range - there was no way Jan could have a ceiling extractor or a wall extractor so the only solution was a down-draft retractable extractor and an easy to clean induction hob. Jan is now a convert from gas to induction.

Neil and Jan love their new extended family home. As did Channel 4 TV it seems.

Her husband Neil landscaped and showcased the gardens to compliment the amazing build.

Last but not least, our fourth expert supplier was **Kingsey Kitchens and Interiors**. The sumptuous kitchen was supplied and fitted by Kingsey

In January 2017, Jan popped into their showroom, she had visited quite a number of kitchen showrooms and had not really seen what she wanted and certainly not at the price she wanted to pay.



*Charlie Luxton with Lynn Palmer*

Channel 4's Charlie Luxton visited the project several times throughout the process as a presenter. He is also an Architectural Designer with a practice in Oxfordshire (with projects in Long Crendon) so he was particularly interested in Lynn's project.



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