

Hat trick

Isabella Blow, the eccentric fashion promoter famous for her flamboyant hats, has asked Azman Owens Architects to design a two-storey extension.

Blow, who helped launch some of the UK's biggest fashion names, such as clothes designer Alexander McQueen and hat designer Philip Treacey, owns a one-up, two-down Victorian house in a grade II-listed area near London's Waterloo station.

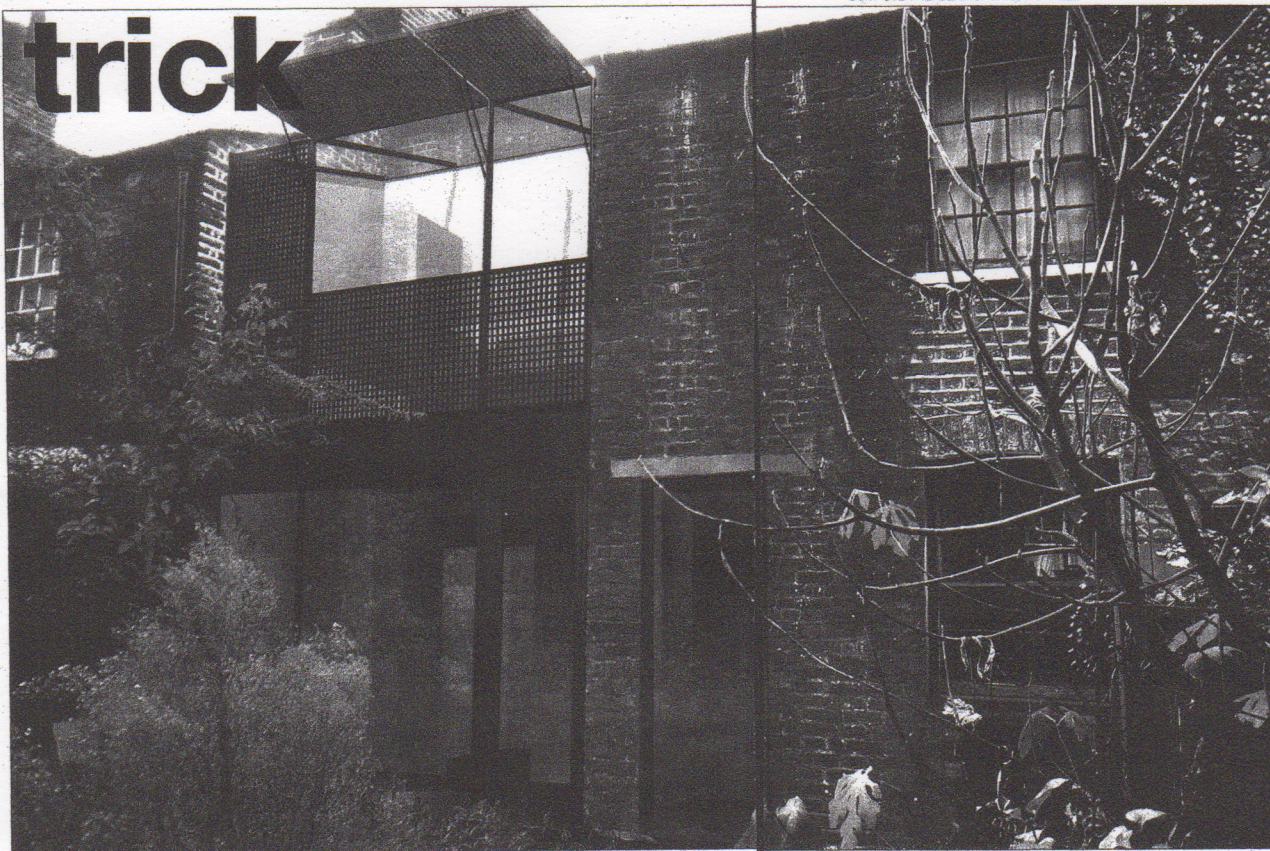
Detmar Blow, her husband, bears the same name as his grandfather, an arts and crafts architect and friend of Edwin Lutyens, who built the family's country estate in Gloucestershire. Isabella says that weekending in that house has made them 'knowledgeable and proud' clients.

The area near Waterloo already boasts two projects by Azman Owens – Konditor & Cook, a chic local bakery, and a one-storey glass extension for the home of its owner (*RIBA*J, Feb 1997, pp34-35). Blow uses the shop and has visited the house. She was impressed and hired the architect.

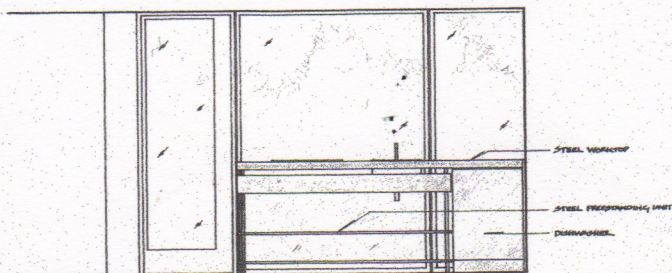
The existing house retains almost all original features so Azman Owens has left it well alone. But a ramshackle shack at the back will be replaced with a pristine, two-storey glass extension for a kitchen and bathroom.

But an equally important element will be new cupboards for her hats – Blow has just ordered another five.

John Welsh

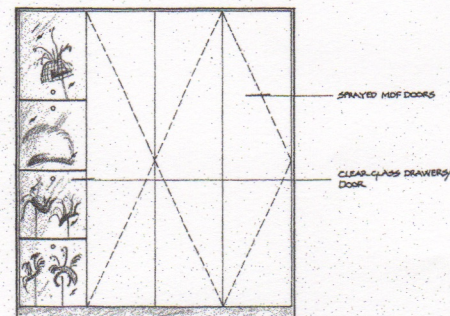


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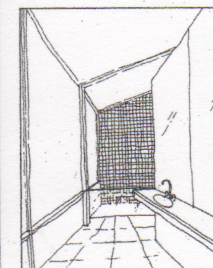
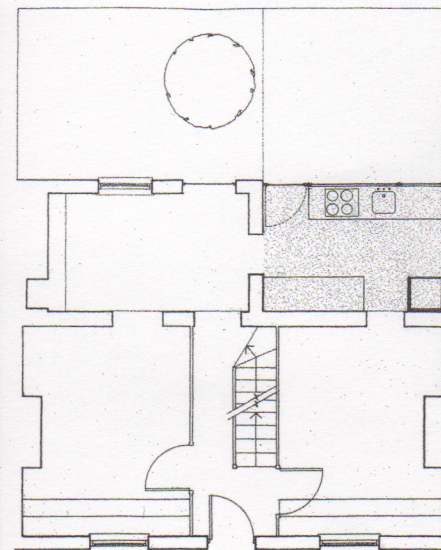


Who wants to see the back of kitchen units?

The kitchen is organised so that the cooker and sink back on to the glazed garden wall. To avoid a hideous view from the garden, the architect has designed the units in horizontal strips – which also allows a view into the garden.



New glass cabinets in the dressing room will keep hats free of dust but, appropriately, clearly visible, like objects in a gallery.



No longer a shack

The ground-floor (above) and first-floor plans (below) indicate an all-glass extension replacing a former shed. The structure will be made of steel sections and W20 glazing with moveable steel mesh shutters, to provide privacy in such areas as the bathroom (left). Both the planners and English Heritage are happy with the proposed extension as an example of adding new to old.

