

HOME PROFILE

WHO LIVES HERE

Teresa Ralph, 47, her husband Anthony, 41, who together run TG Designer Homes, and their children, Zac, 11, and Scarlet, 10

THE PROPERTY

A new-build four-bedroom, detached home in Botany Bay, near Broadstairs, Kent

PRICE £287,000

MONEY SPENT £520,000

WHAT IT'S WORTH

NOW £1.2m

EXTERIOR

The timber-framed property, which was hand built by Turners Carpentry, has a sandblasted larch exterior ▶



GOING FULL CIRCLE

Teresa and Anthony Ralph's search for
their forever family home took them back to
where they first began their property journey

WORDS CAROLINE FOSTER **PHOTOGRAPHY** CHRIS SNOOK



‘Pendant lights help to define each zone, as well as adding texture and character’





LIVING AREA

A large patterned kilim from West Elm helps to define the seating area in the open-plan space, while green velvet sofas bring welcoming colour to the neutral scheme. The Giant Skipper pendant light in oak by Tom Raffield is from John Lewis ►

As owners of a property company, Teresa and Anthony Ralph are no strangers to moving home, as they have developed houses together many times over the years. 'We've relocated from one renovation to another on a regular basis,' says Teresa. 'It's always exciting to complete a project, but after so many moves we both decided it was time to put down some roots.'

Finding a forever home was never going to be easy, but an unexpected call from an old friend brought the couple back to familiar ground. 'Fourteen years ago we bought a house to renovate in a lovely street close to beautiful Botany Bay near Broadstairs. A couple bought the plot next door and we have been firm friends since,' Teresa explains. 'They'd kept an eye open for any other local renovation projects, as they wanted me and Anthony to move back to the area, and called to let us know that a building plot had just come on the market.'

Acting on their friends' tip-off, the Ralphs visited their old road to view the plot. Finding it surrounded by a high wall, the couple were curious as to what lay behind. 'Anthony lifted me up so I could peer over the top and I was surprised to see a beautifully maintained croquet lawn,' Teresa says. 'The land was surrounded by trees and we could hear the sea. It was the flattest plot we'd ever seen and just magical.'

Having made an offer through a sealed bid, the couple received a phone call the day before they were due to go on holiday informing them that their bid had been successful. 'Although we were thrilled, it threw us completely, as we were in holiday mode and had to start thinking about planning permission, builders and everything else that goes with a house build,' Teresa laughs. 'Fortunately, we had a great team of builders that we've worked with for years and were able to design the house ourselves – we used architects On Architecture to draw up formal plans for the planning stage.'

Inspired by modern structures with clean lines and the iconic buildings by Swiss-French architect Le Corbusier, the Ralphs ►

DINING AREA

Teresa and Anthony enjoy entertaining so they had this bespoke, oversized table made to accommodate guests. Random styles of dining chairs were collected over the years and give the dining zone great character. The white and green Eames-style chairs are from Amazon, and the rug and the Vita pendant shades are from Graham & Green





KITCHEN

Teresa opted for a Next NX620 kitchen by Schuller from Smallbone Interiors. Its veneered oak finish adds an organic and warm feel to the space. The Dekton worktop was chosen for its durability. Max pendants from Marks & Spencer illuminate the island



‘Large glazing panels allow you to feel connected with the outside, which is quite special’



PATIO
Family and friends naturally gravitate to the patio and sunken firepit during the summer. ‘There are lots of separate seating and dining pockets in and around the house for people to relax and socialise in,’ says Teresa ▶



designed a striking contemporary structure made up of a series of pods. 'Large glazing panels link the pods within the property, but also allow you to feel connected with the outside, which is quite special,' Teresa explains. 'Each building has a timber frame and is clad in planks, with a sandblasted larch wood exterior. The sandblasting gives the larch a scorched effect that adds interest and texture.'

With the plot being located in the middle of a quiet residential street, the couple's plans came up against concerns from neighbours, who were worried about a potentially lengthy and disruptive build. 'With this in mind, Anthony aimed to complete the project within 16 weeks,' says Teresa. 'The site was cleared at the end of 2015 and the builders arrived on 11 January 2016 to dig the foundations. The pace of the construction was incredibly fast and we moved into the completed house on 7 May, which was a total build time of just 17 weeks.'

In contrast to the blackened exterior, the open-plan interior has a light and airy feel with neutral walls throughout. 'We wanted industrial-style durability, but to also add texture and warmth. Functional is fine, but a home has to have heart and soul,' Teresa says. 'The polished concrete floor in the open-plan family space is tough enough to withstand my son's skateboard, but the look has been softened by the inclusion of oak cabinets throughout.' To avoid a cavernous feel, the kitchen was located in the centre of the space and a pod was built behind it. 'The pod introduces a natural divide and houses our utility room,' Teresa says. 'Another trick to making a large space feel cosy is to include oversized furniture. Pendant lights also help to define each zone, as well as adding texture and character.'

Entertaining spaces – both inside and out – were high on the family's wishlist when designing their home. In addition to the large



interior dining space, there are outdoor dining and seating areas, and a sunken firepit. Also in the garden is a playhouse for Zac and Scarlet. ‘The children got involved with the concept and design,’ says Teresa, ‘as it was important for them to have some input.’

The Ralphs are now fully settled into their family home and are adamant that they’ll never move again. ‘Having spent so many years renovating and building properties to sell to other people, I feel this house is the culmination of all our wishlists and design influences,’ Teresa explains. ‘Our children revel in having friends to stay and they’ve spent many happy evenings toasting marshmallows around the firepit or hanging out in the playhouse. The sea is just a few minutes walk away and we’ve all taken up paddleboarding. We pinch ourselves every day to check we’re not dreaming.’

FOR STORE DETAILS SEE **WHERE TO BUY** PAGE

MAIN BEDROOM

Mid-century-inspired furniture combines with contemporary design, while a freestanding bath provides a sanctuary-style feel. The upholstered Smoke bed is from Loaf and the bedside pendants are from West Elm. The central pendant is from Ikea and the rug from John Lewis. A mustard throw, which Teresa bought on holiday, adds a splash of bold colour and texture

ENSUITE BATHROOM

Geometric oak and blue glazed tiles from Mandarin Stone create a striking and unusual feature wall in the walk-in shower area. The Drench shower tray, showerhead, and wall-hung basin were sourced through Smallbone Interiors. Oak flooring from Wingham Timber has been laid in a chevron pattern, continuing the angle theme and making the space feel larger