



Brick-clad homes

While the humble brick makes the ideal material for walls and floors, both inside and out, exposed brickwork can add instant character to a home of any age, as these projects from throughout the UK demonstrate...

A whiter shade of pale

Named after the rolling white cliffs that line the Kent coastline, Chalk is a newly built single-storey house composed of a striking palette of white glazed bricks and oak cladding. Standing on Broadstairs' coveted North Foreland Estate, the house's design was inspired by California Modernism and is arranged around a wonderfully private garden.

Teresa and Anthony Ralph, of TG Designer Homes (www.tgdesignerhomes.com), employed a bricklayer to construct the brick-and-block house on concrete strip foundations. Selecting the white external bricks was crucial, and the Ralphs realised that a matt finish could end up appearing yellow. They also wanted to avoid having to paint the house in future, but finding a pure white glazed brick without variations took time.

"The bricks needed a final acid wash to remove any mortar streaks or marks, which was quite labour intensive for the bricklayers," says Teresa. "The result is well worth the effort, though, as they reflect the light and cast amazing shadows."





Perfectly formed

“Our Victorian terraced house was cramped and badly connected to the garden, but extending into the side return wasn’t practical,” explains architect Matthew Wood of MW Architects (www.mwarchitects.co.uk). “Instead, we decided to build a small extension, popping out from the rear to create a new kitchen diner.”

The simple 7m² extension was designed to wrap around the kitchen, with an ultra-thin roof, brick detailing and reclaimed chain downpipes adding interest to the exterior. Materials were chosen to develop character and patina over time. The robust but attractive Staffordshire Blue engineering bricks contrast in colour and texture to the existing house and are smooth enough for inside walls and out on the patio.

“We wanted to add visual interest by framing the rain chain with perpendicular header bricks, which also shield the wall against inevitable splashing,” explains Matthew. “This idea was continued with external brick ledges to hold lanterns and candles, and internally to create shelf brackets.”





“It is important to think about brick patterns to avoid too many cuts, so the extension was sized to be built using a specific number of whole bricks.”
MATTHEW WOOD, MW ARCHITECTS



Ahead of the curve

The Round House in west London was built on the challenging narrow site of a former MoT centre by renowned architect, Alex Michaelis (www.michaelisboyd.com) for his own large family. “We designed the ground floor level to occupy the full width and depth of the site, and the first and second floors are located in two organic forms connected by an enclosed bridge,” he explains of the unusual building.

Externally, brickwork was chosen for the walls to complement the architectural vernacular of the area, but in a lighter, softer tone. The home’s rounded walls also allow sunlight to enter from all sides throughout the day, and each tower has a roof terrace and garden. “I design quite curvy architecture anyway and wanted it to be soft with no hard edges,” says Alex. “From slides and the pool, to hidden areas and a fireman’s pole connecting the ground and first floors, there are plenty of playful details.”





Another brick in the wall

A derelict dental surgery in south London has been replaced with a unique two-storey brick house, tucked behind an original restored boundary wall on a quiet residential street. From the pavement, the house appears as a single-storey pavilion to fit in with the surroundings, but a piled basement level contains bedrooms, while living space is situated on the masonry ground floor, with specialist brick detailing to horizontal banding.

“The paler yellow colouring offers a gentle contrast with the darker brick of the older listed buildings to either side,” explains Brendan Tracey, director of Phillips Tracey Architects (www.phillipstracey.com), who chose a yellow-toned brick to blend with the neighbouring Georgian buildings in the conservation area setting.

Designed with privacy in mind, the contemporary brick house features simple glazed openings with black aluminium frames. Internal floors are polished concrete, with ceilings and walls plastered and whitewashed.



“The concept is that of a simple brick box, incorporating deep punched window openings, subtle soldier courses and brick parapets. We specified a new yellow stock brick (Danehill Yellow) with a lime rich mortar, while original boundaries were rebuilt using reclaimed brick.”

**BRENDAN TRACEY,
PHILLIPS TRACEY
ARCHITECTS**





Steeped in tradition

This elegant new-build house was constructed in a secluded spot on the beautiful Wiltshire Downs by Stonewood Builders (www.stonewoodbuilders.co.uk), using traditional materials coupled with classic design detailing to give the appearance of a period property, while incorporating modern systems and technologies to provide all the benefits expected from a new-build home.

The house was constructed using handmade bricks, with ashlar stone quoins and detailing around window and door openings, all under a natural slate roof. Bespoke timber joinery was manufactured from traditional patterns, but with double-glazed units and weather seals fitted to meet modern building standards.

Hot water and underfloor heating needs are met by an air source heat pump system which, in addition to enhancing the energy efficiency of the property, is ideally suited to the remote location of the site.

IMAGES: TOBY CARTER



It's a wrap

Named House-Within-a-House, a modest 1950s London property has been extended upwards and outwards, then wrapped in a grey brick skin. The award-winning building was designed by architects Alma-nac (www.alma-nac.com), who were commissioned to create a home for a couple with five sons between them. "We were excited by the challenge of transforming this ugly duckling into a striking contemporary piece of architecture that sits comfortably with its neighbours," says Alma-nac's director, Tristan Wigfall.

Once the roof was removed and a new storey constructed in timber, the exterior was predominantly clad in pale grey brickwork to complement the London stock bricks of neighbouring properties. A new single-storey side extension forms a covered walkway to the front door, leading past the exposed brick wall of the original house — emphasising the house-within-a-house effect. To the rear, another extension contains the open-plan living space. **H**



"The versatility of brick allows the design to be sympathetic to the context (a conservation area) while providing creative freedom."
TRISTAN WIGFALL, ALMA-NAC