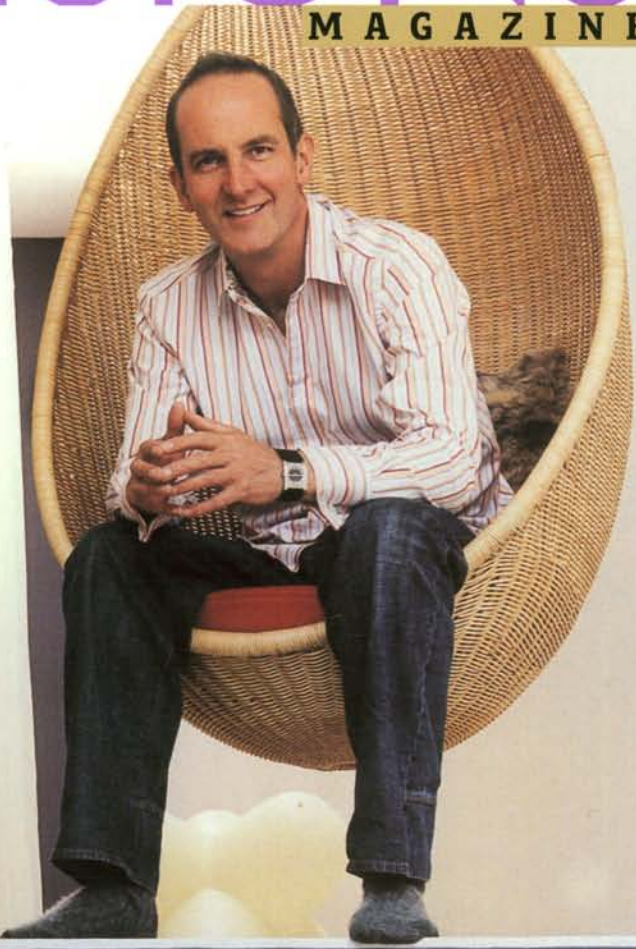




GRANDDESIGNS

MAGAZINE



LESS IS MORE FUN

Kevin McCloud on a modern masterpiece

WIN A
£20,000
KITCHEN

MIGHTY OAK

A 30-page guide to our best-loved wood

CROSS EXAMINATION

TV's cruciform house revisited

LIVING IN A BOX

Shipping containers to come home to

WHAT'S COOKING?

Kitchen planning made easy



SHOPPING GARDEN FURNITURE, DESKS TO WRITE HOME ABOUT



Sarah was looking around here for some time, constantly ringing up the Land Registry Office to find out who owned some derelict shack, always keeping an eye out for an opportunity. The plot for her house was a chance find, and one she puts down to bad marketing. On the high street, the building was for sale as a shop, whereas at the back it was advertised as residential. Because it wasn't advertised as both, it was completely missing its market and had been on sale for ages. 'I wasn't expecting to find it was linked all the way through. There was the shop, an extension, and then single- and two-storey sheds used as workshops. There was no light – you couldn't see the wood for the trees,' she says. Sarah wasn't impressed. It was only later that she returned to thinking about the space and started doing a sketch, which made her realise that it could work. She went back, and thanks to the marketing hiccup it was still for sale. She pounced. What was more, it turned out she could afford to go solo.

It's a clever house, and Sarah's hit on a design that's proved so successful she's responsible for three similar schemes down the street – the word is out. She transformed the terraced house into a four-storey building designed around a small courtyard, now filled with big jungle-style plants. All the rooms face on to this open space. The jackpot is two-fold: she's not overlooked by nosy neighbours and because of this she's been able to whack in huge windows, meaning every room in the house is light and breezy. 'It's like a buffer to the street,' says Sarah. 'I loathe not being able to have my own private space but I didn't want a house in the country.' The design of the house is Sarah's attempt to create her own little piece of calm in the city – to have the best of both worlds.

But Sarah's house doesn't turn its back on the street. It's an issue that concerned her. She considered pulling down that crummy brick wall and making the whole entrance much more open, but it would have seemed odd; all the doors along the street open straight out on to the cobbles. There's no pavement, no grand entrance. Just doors, plain and simple. This might have seemed restrictive but, like all good designers, Sarah turned the constraint to her advantage by making the simple door the threshold to a series of surprises.

Beyond the front door, a passageway extends to the open courtyard at ▶



this page, the kitchen,
 with stairs concealing a
 toilet and storage space.
 opposite page from top,
 the spare bedroom has
 views of Sarah's bedroom
 below the kitchen and
 living spaces; giant ferns
 fill the courtyard; the elm
 bridge by Dominic Ash
 crosses the living room to
 an outdoor patio, and the
 pebbles set in resin conceal
 underfloor heating



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 SPACE BUT I DIDN'T WANT A HOUSE IN THE COUNTRY.'
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 LITTLE PIECE OF CALM IN THE CITY