

HOW TO...

MAKE YOUR HOME WORK HARDER



Kobod Euan's kitchen

EMILY MURRAY INVESTIGATES HOW SCOTTISH DESIGNERS ARE HELPING US SAVE SPACE IN OUR HOMES

Is your home doing your head in? Maybe you don't have enough room to hang your clothes so they're lying all over the floor? Perhaps your children's toys appear to be multiplying and are taking over every room? Or maybe your pad just feels dark and cramped and you long for light and air?

One man who knows how to make the most of even the smallest and most awkward of living spaces is Richard Murphy, the architect who designed the Murphy House, the Edinburgh home that won RIBA's prestigious House of the Year prize at the end of last year. Competition judge Philip Thorn says: "Although it's a small property, the Murphy House is deceptively large inside due to the clever use of space. Every room contains a surprise and the attention to detail is exceptional."

Built on an awkward plot at the end of a terrace in Edinburgh's New Town, Richard Murphy's house is described by RIBA President Jane Duncan as "part jigsaw puzzle, with its hidden and unexpected spaces, and part Wallace and Gromit, with its moving pieces and disappearing walls." The house includes a hidden bath in the master bedroom, a folding corner wall, and sliding bookshelf ladders that glide around the subterranean library, among many other unique, space-saving features.

While we might not have the design expertise (or spare plot of land) to create or transform our own homes in this way, we can certainly learn from Richard's innovative approach. And there are plenty of surprisingly affordable design solutions on hand right here in Scotland to help us use whatever space we have more effectively. Read on for more info...▶



Richard Murphy Architects, Murphy House, photo by Keith Hunter

SMART KITCHEN STORAGE

Euan Goodman, founder of new East Lothian kitchen and furniture design company Kobod (kobod.co.uk), is passionate about how smart, simple design can massively increase your kitchen storage and living space on a budget. The company uses solid birch plywood to form the cupboards, which take a mere three minutes each to make, thanks to a time- and cash-saving automated manufacturing process. This meant he could install a full, custom-made kitchen in his own home for around £8,000.

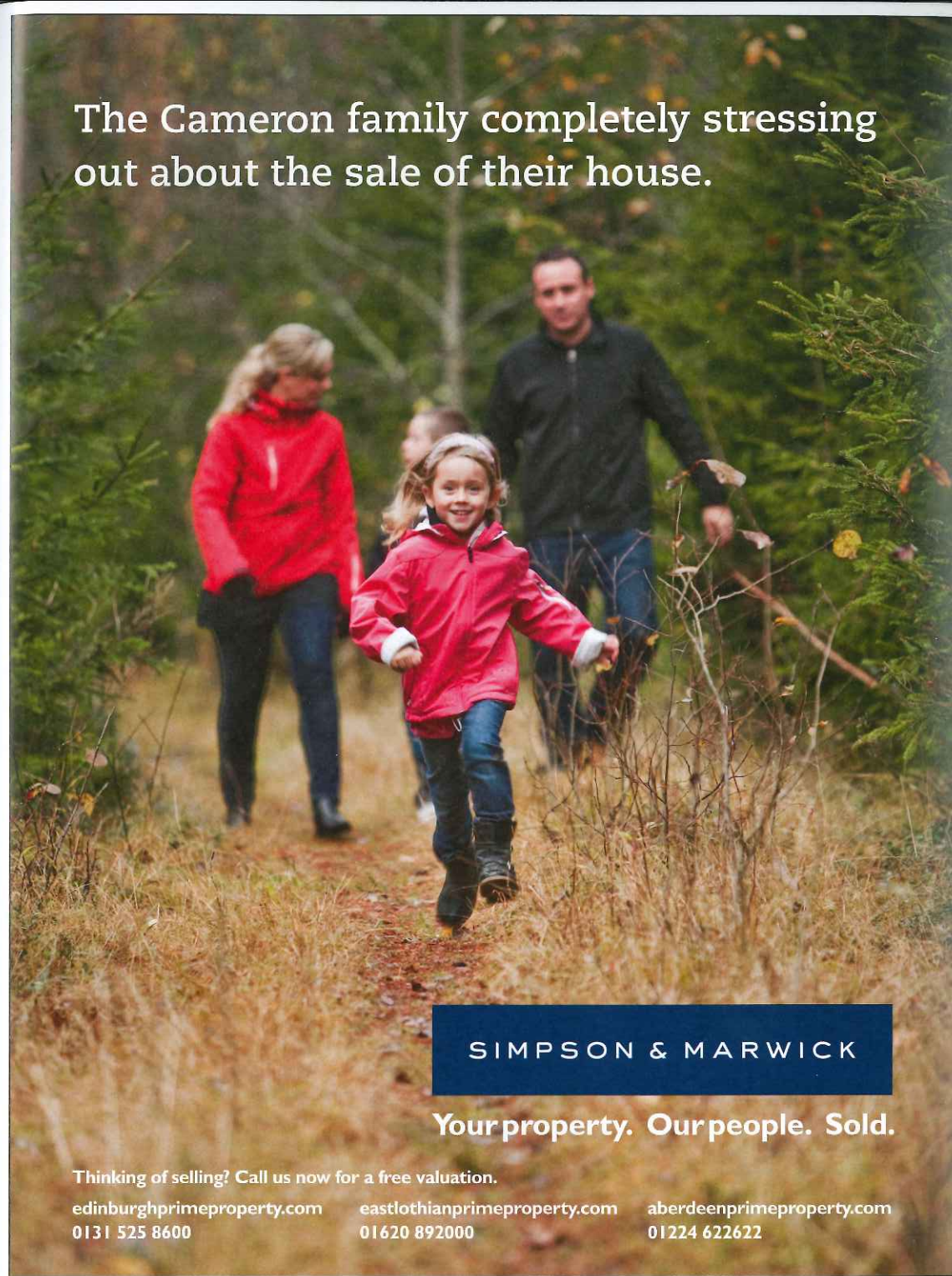
“We used to have an old farmhouse kitchen with rubbish wall cupboards and a narrow island,” says Goodman. “Since our renovation, we have four times as much storage space, and that’s without even adding any wall cupboards. Now when we have people round, instead

of them escaping to the dining room, they hang out in the kitchen as it’s much more inviting.”

How does Goodman create so much extra space? He puts it down to clever design software and storage drawers that maximize the space available. He’s a big fan of what he calls ‘pan drawers’, which are much deeper than standard drawers, meaning you can fit larger appliances such as blenders and large saucepans into them. As they are drawers instead of cupboards, it’s also easier to access the area at the back, so you utilize every inch of space. Another smart aspect of his design is the inclusion of open bookshelves, which give the space a softer, lived-in feel.

Kobod’s clever kitchen cupboards will be available to buy on their website in the summer, but if you’re desperate for extra kitchen storage now, contact euangoodman@kobod.co.uk for a bespoke quote. ▶

The Cameron family completely stressing out about the sale of their house.



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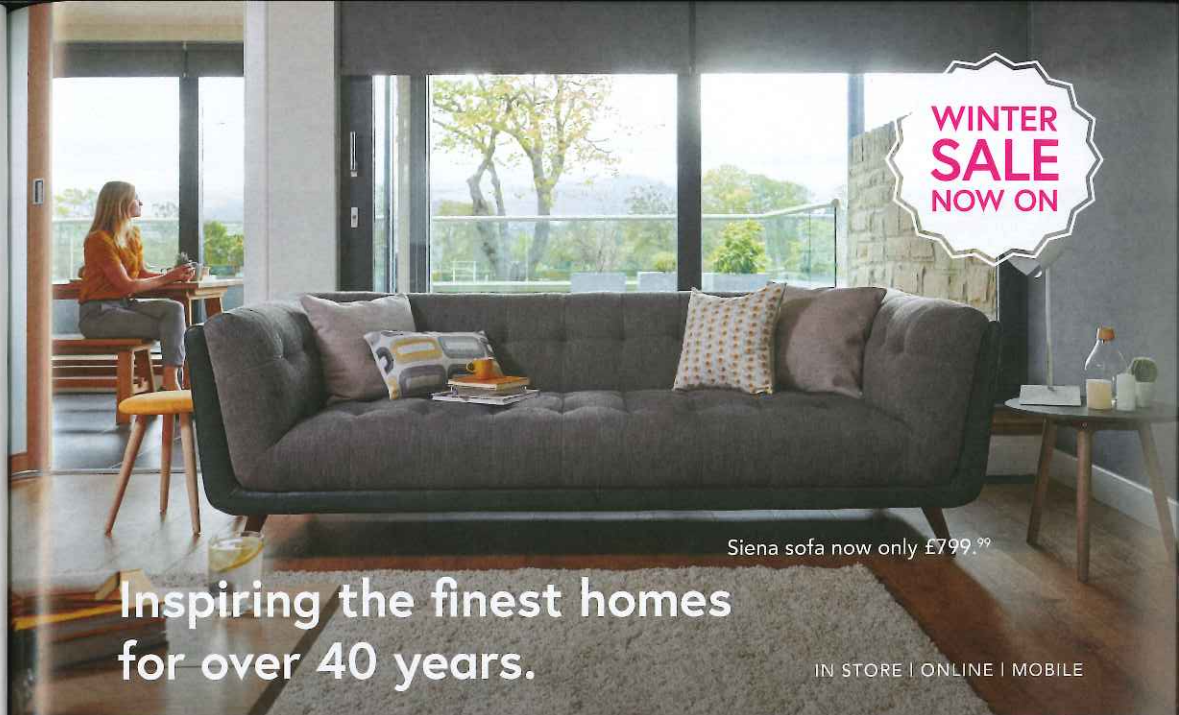
Crew Architects extension, photo by Dapple Photography

THINK OUTSIDE THE BOX

Extensions nowadays can be so much more than a one-design-fits-all box tacked onto the back of a house. The extensions that are most cost- and space-effective are in fact the ones that incorporate more than a little ingenuity.

A great example of this is a small ground floor extension housing a master bedroom, designed by Edinburgh-based Crew Architects (crewarchitects.com) for a home in the capital's Southside. Although it had to be narrow, the new extension feels wider due to extensive use of glass, which helps give a sense of openness. There's plenty of wardrobe storage for the owner's clothes, but this is concealed, so the bedroom feels spacious and uncluttered. The ultimate use-every-square-inch design sees even the extension's stair treads open to reveal secret storage compartments.

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THE HOME OF INSPIRATION



JML garden room

And while extensions can be costly, rest assured that even if you do sell your home, your efforts will add up to a good investment. As TV property expert Phil Spencer says, adding an extension can add 11 per cent to the value of your property.

THINK OUTSIDE THE HOUSE

It's not just your home that can be reworked to give you more space – your garden can be a big part of the solution too. Creating more space is the ultimate goal with a garden room, which – done properly – is a relatively easy way to extend your home, as the good ones are quick to erect and usually don't require planning permission.

"For our clients, it's been about finally being able to reclaim the spare room," says John Langley from JML Garden Rooms in Perthshire. "A garden room can happily

house that makeshift spare room gym: running machine, weights, yoga mat and all. Or it can become an art studio, a study, or even a teenage games room, liberating the sitting room from piles of computer games and DVDs. Whatever it becomes lightens the load on the main house, freeing up space for other uses." And again, there's the extra advantage of adding value to your home when and if you sell. As Langley puts it: "As more and more people are working from home, our clients have seen their garden room investment increase the value of their home significantly as so many buyers are now really attracted to the idea of an outside, usable space." Not to mention the fact that working in a separate building means you can't hear the kids' light saber battles. Working in a space that doesn't resemble the Death Star? Priceless. ●

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