

# 1 Family room

Karen Flinn proved that a household of six and a stylish kitchen can be compatible



Kitchen must-haves for Karen included a large ladder to reach and a dedicated dish rack—essential items with four children in the family



## BEFORE

The kitchen was dingy, with a few tatty units and deep red walls. The plumbing and wiring also needed urgent attention.

Taking on a 500-year-old property is never easy, so when Karen Flinn and Paul Wallis moved into a timber-framed house in Essex, they decided to tackle one room at a time. With four children – Harvey, six, Josh, four, Archie, two, and four-month-old Holly – updating the kitchen was their first task.

The couple had very little to work with. 'There wasn't really a kitchen,' explains Karen. 'Just a



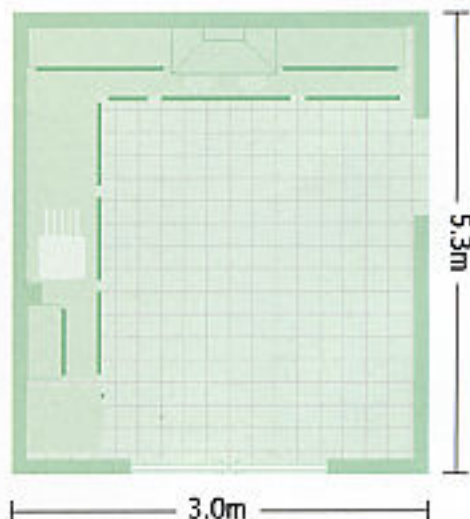
▲ Instead of tiles, the couple opted for decorative match boarding, which has a practical wipe-clean paint finish. Grooves in the iroko worksurface around the sink allow water to drain and give a seamless look

few old units, dark red walls and a dodgy socket. For a year we lived with a microwave and a portable gas ring, like the ones you take camping. It was really hard! However, starting from scratch had its advantages. 'We had a blank canvas so we could do what we liked, and we weren't influenced by what was there.'

They wanted a streamlined, uncluttered and, above all, functional kitchen. 'We both enjoy cooking, so a large range cooker was ►



Light green units make the most of the natural light, which floods the kitchen from a skylight and double doors that open onto the garden. Large units provide ample storage space



## WHAT IT COST

Units, worktops and wooden splashback	£13,500
Appliances	£1,835
Sink and tap	£250
Lighting	£109
Paint	£38

**TOTAL** £15,732



## Kitchen makeovers



Two willow baskets attached to sliding frames break up the line of solid units



Clever storage optimises space without compromising the overall look

essential, and with four children a dishwasher was a must,' says Karen. 'Plus it had to have large worksurfaces and plenty of storage space.'

Drawing her inspiration from magazines and with the help of a kitchen designer, Karen opted for simple Shaker-style units around the edges of the room and had them painted pale green. 'The structure of the room told us where the units had to go,' she says. 'It was mainly a case of brightening up the space using colour. It is amazing how much the dark red walls affected

the light in the room. Friends thought we'd added the skylight but it was always there – it was just that the dark walls cancelled it out.' They decided to stick with the existing quarry tile flooring, which is easy to clean and durable.

The kitchen took two months to complete but Karen says it was definitely well worth the effort. 'It was important to get it right,' she explains. 'So we took time to plan it and make it work for us. Now it has become an important part of our family life.' **HH**

The couple were keen to make the most of the listed building's original features, such as the wooden beams, which now divide the kitchen and dining areas



EDITOR'S CHOICE

## Toasters

Invest in the latest models and make breakfast a treat



Avanti Elite two-slice toaster, £39.99, Tefal

Kudos Digital toaster, £39.99, Russell Hobbs



Breville white toaster, £19.99, Argos



'Toast' toaster, £24.99, Russell Hobbs



Neo toaster, £24.99, Rowenta

## The details

Shaker-style units, from £650 for a 600mm base unit (includes hand-painting); Match boarding splashback, £120 per sq m; Iroko worksurface, £350 per sq m; P-50-20U stainless-steel sink, £200; all Specialised Woodwork, 7524 high-neck tap, £49.99; Screwfix, Baumatic BT 2450 SS range cooker, £649; B15B 9 SS splashback, £77; QF9 hood, £131; Whirlpool ADP 59966 dishwasher, £356; all Appliances Online. Fisher & Paykel E402B fridge-freezer, £699; rope lights, £109; both John Lewis. Units painted in Ball Green Eggshell, £10.49 per 750ml; walls painted in New White Estate Emulsion, £18.99 per 2.5ltr; both Farrow & Ball.