



OLD MEETS NEW

A period property is a wonderful asset, but extending it can be daunting. This gorgeous arts and crafts property features a modern garden room which beautifully complements the existing period home

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Scotland's plethora of beautiful period properties are as wonderful to look at as they are to live in. From the quality of the build to the gorgeous

period details, an old property can be a joy. However, listed buildings are not without their challenges.

Adding an extension to a listed building can be a wonderful opportunity to contrast old and new, but there are quite a few hoops to jump through, which is why it's great to have an experienced architect on board.

The property in Inveresk is a lovely, B-listed house built in 1901 in the arts and crafts style. It has brick and stone facades, a slate roof and timber detailing to the verges and eaves. The house is more or less in its original condition and enjoys a lovely setting, with a very well-kept walled garden.

The East Lothian architecture practice Low Carbon Studio (LCS) was recently tasked with

building an extension onto the side of this classic period property, using an Alba Green Oak frame, with local builders, Walkers being drafted in to carry out the construction work.

The brief was to create a studio space with good natural lighting for home owner Becca Duncan, a garden designer at Blossoming Gardens. The extension would link to the existing kitchen and be used all year round for eating, entertaining and relaxing. In style, it was to be sympathetic to the existing house and its historic setting, and the clients also wanted to take full advantage of the good views out into the existing garden.

The studio is not overlooked by any neighbouring



houses and is enclosed with an existing stone boundary wall. This gave LCS lots of freedom with the design process, and they made the most of this privacy by creating large areas of glazing facing west into the rear garden.

A folding glazed screen and patio face south and are ideally positioned to maximise natural light. The seamless transition from outdoors to indoors was an important requirement so Becca opted to use the same flooring for both outdoors and in, meaning that when the doors are open the internal space flows beautifully out into the garden.

The gable facing the garden features an oak frame which is fully glazed with direct glazing, meaning in simple terms that there are no window frames. The frame was designed so as to reduce the bracing required, which means that there is an uninterrupted view out into the garden. The large areas of glazing meant that insulation needed to be increased to meet building standards. The



extension is designed and detailed to be low-energy with double and triple-glazed windows and doors and a new under-floor heating system.

“When designing I am careful to ensure that the appearance fits into the existing house and garden,” says Colin Campbell of LCS. “Linking things like new internal and external materials, matching the existing roof pitch, and being conscious of scale makes sure that, when completed, the garden room enhances the existing building. It’s always very important to make sure that the design is very carefully thought through. The Alba Green Oak frame is cut and prefabricated off site and when all the joints and angles are finished it can’t be adjusted on site. We always check dimensions several times and this was no different.”

The location of the garden room is set down below the garden, so Becca designed a clever series of facing brick terraces to retain the ground. The brickwork matches the existing house while the new planting - which is viewed at eye level from the room - will soften the appearance of the terracing as plants grow.

The green oak timber frame is exposed internally and adds texture, warmth, depth and character to the space. The natural material gives a strong link to the outdoors and beautifully complements the adjacent period building. The timber frame, with its pegged joints, is a traditional construction technique that has been around for centuries, making it a good fit for an extension to a period property. When combined with contemporary detailing and modern internal fixtures/lighting, it gives a pleasing contrast and an up-to-date feel.

