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# Transform ARCHITECTS

NO.9 NOVEMBER 2020

LUXURY RESIDENTIAL / DISABILITY ARCHITECTS



## SELF BUILD & DESIGN MAGAZINE FEATURE

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The transformation of older  
properties | 11



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# Totally transformed

INTERVIEW: DEBBIE JEFFERY

## Describe your childhood home

The first house I remember growing up in was a two-bedroom end terrace in Leeds, near the city centre. Our red brick ex-council house was small – however, there was only me and my mother, so it didn't feel too cramped. My mother was always at work, typically having two different forms of employment at the same time to enable her to pay the bills as a single parent. There was lots of scrub wasteland around the housing estate that I grew up on, which was pretty much all developed into affordable housing by the time we moved.

## What inspired you to become an architect?

When I was about seven years old, I woke up one day and told my mother that I wanted to be an architect. From memory, I didn't even know what an architect did, but I still wanted to be one. My mother told me that, from that day, I never said I wanted to do any other job and it was a few years later before I realised what an architect actually did.

As a child, I loved playing with Lego and used to lose myself in building anything, taking it apart and making something completely different with the same pieces. I would ask for new Lego sets whenever the opportunity arose and always had an idea for the next thing I wanted to build. My mother fed my passion for building in Lego and when money permitted she would reward me for hard work at school or around the house and we would go to Woolworths in Leeds city centre, which is where most of my Lego was purchased.



**Martin Bell** is the managing director of award-winning Yorkshire practice Transform Architects, which specialises in residential architecture, including new build homes, extensions, dramatic makeovers, and disability inclusive designs. Projects have featured widely in the national media and are located all over England, but predominantly in the north.





I liked my own company and was not the type of child to hang out with my friends in the garden or on the housing estate. I also loved drawing, especially buildings. When I was a little older, I would go out on my bicycle and take my sketchbook and just doodle. As I got older, I never wavered away from architecture, I still used to sketch buildings in Leeds city centre on the weekends with my Sony Walkman blasting out tunes.

Once I scraped through my GCSEs at school, I went to the Leeds College of Building to undertake a BTEC National Diploma in Construction, as I knew A-Levels and formal exams were not for me. The BTEC was my first real taste of construction-related study, and I excelled on the course. Naively, I only applied

**Pictures:**  
The ultimate modern revamp and extension to an executive home which has an enclosed courtyard

to Leeds University to study architecture and didn't even get an interview, despite my excellent grades.

I then went to Leeds Metropolitan University and undertook an HND in Building Studies to bridge the year towards reapplication for university, accepting a conditional offer from Kent Institute of Art & Design. From there I never looked back and progressed through to become a qualified architect.

#### **Tell us about Transform Architects**

In 2004, I started the practice, and we now undertake all manner of single residential projects, including extensions, conversions, and new builds, presenting all schemes using a 3D virtual walkthrough model.





An oak-frame glazed extension adds a dramatic dimension to this stone home.



Most tend to be full architectural service projects, from initial design to completion of the build. With 3D design, every member of the construction team can view a highly accurate 3D walkthrough of the project on a phone, tablet or desktop computer. There is such a massive gulf in quality when you see adaptations, extensions and self-builds that are poorly designed. Our clients have total input – my job is to open their minds to available options. It's a bit like buying a car; first they choose the model and then we provide the catalogue of options.

I first got involved with disability adaptations when a private residential client wanted an existing bungalow knocking down and replacing with an accessible new-build bungalow. What we do is more than just designing extensions or new houses for disabled clients, we change people's lives for the better when they have had adversity strike. Your home is your castle, yet for many disabled people it could also be their prison. We strive to achieve the opposite and designing homes that enhance our clients' lives in many ways is what drives us.

### Describe your own home

I live with my wife, son, and daughter in a detached, three-storey stone developer house, built in 2005. I spent 13 years designing my ultimate extension, and we completed building the contemporary, single-storey split-level rear extension earlier this year. There are handmade brick interior walls, a vaulted ceiling, black aluminium, stone, and cedar cladding. A full glass façade and sliding door look out onto the landscaped, low-maintenance south-facing garden, all designed by myself. You definitely know which one is mine when entering our cul-de-sac of five homes! Everyone is surprised when they enter my home because the space is not what you expect when looking from the outside – it's much bigger than it looks. The interiors are contemporary – luxury boutique style – with an open-plan kitchen/dining space, a split-level lounge, with a 3.5m-high vaulted ceiling and four roof lights letting in masses of light. Our eldest son will soon be off to university to hopefully study architecture, so the house is more than big enough for our needs and we have no plans to move.

### What do you do in your spare time?

I live and breathe what I do as an architect and love designing buildings, working out those awkward junctions and keeping the proportions in check. I also try to keep fit in the gym on a regular basis, as it is good stress relief from the demands of running a business. Kickboxing is my developing passion.



Left and below: A tired red brick house is given the Transform architecture treatment, with the addition of modern windows, a canopy entrance and timber and render cladding.



Right and above: A dramatic remodel of a 70s house.



### Martin's top tips for selfbuilders

**Always design from the inside out,** room by room, and then bring it all together. Understand what you really want from the space and never let aesthetics dominate practicality. Create a brief, then challenge and develop that brief, but stick to it to make sure you are achieving your goals. Don't extend for the sake of it. I have been in some really big houses where people only use around 10 to 20 per cent of the space most of the time.

**Never forget human scale when creating spaces.** Would you want

to sit on a toilet in a room the size of your lounge? Would that feel comfortable? Bigger is not always better. Scale and proportion are so important: larger, open-plan spaces should have a slightly higher ceiling relative to the size of the room.

**Always challenge your architect** and push them to get the best design possible, based on site constraints and budget. Do not rush to get to planning – the design is the single most important stage of any project. [transformarchitects.com](http://transformarchitects.com)





"GOOD DESIGN IS LIKE A REFRIGERATOR — WHEN IT WORKS, NO ONE NOTICES, BUT WHEN IT DOESN'T, IT SURE STINKS."

— IRENE AU

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# Awards 2020



**LABC** | Building Excellence   
**AWARDS 2020**

West Yorkshire Region

**Winner**

BEST EXTENSION OR ALTERATION TO AN EXISTING DWELLING

**Grove House | Walton | Wakefield**

For building excellence in the delivery of outstanding construction and workmanship

Oak By Design | TRANSFORM ARCHITECTS | Alan Otley

Local Authority Building Control Team  
Wakefield Metropolitan District Council

Sponsors

     

**LABC** | Building Excellence   
**AWARDS 2020**

West Yorkshire Region

**Finalist**

BEST EXTENSION OR ALTERATION TO AN EXISTING DWELLING

**Saddleworth | Greetland | Halifax**

For building excellence in the delivery of outstanding construction and workmanship

Whitshaw Builders Ltd | TRANSFORM ARCHITECTS | Dale Pateman

Local Authority Building Control Team  
Calderdale Metropolitan Borough Council

Sponsors

     

**LABC** | Building Excellence   
**AWARDS 2020**

West Yorkshire Region

**Finalist**

BEST EXTENSION OR ALTERATION TO AN EXISTING DWELLING

**Pinfold Lane | Mirfield**

For building excellence in the delivery of outstanding construction and workmanship

Moore & Waller Building & Roofing | TRANSFORM ARCHITECTS | Andy Moorehouse

Local Authority Building Control Team  
Kirklees Council

Sponsors

     

**LABC** | Building Excellence   
**AWARDS 2020**

West Yorkshire Region

**Finalist**

BEST INDIVIDUAL NEW HOME

**Oakenshaw | Walton | Wakefield**

For building excellence in the delivery of outstanding construction and workmanship

Sanderson Building Services | TRANSFORM ARCHITECTS | Frank Marsh

Local Authority Building Control Team  
Wakefield Metropolitan District Council

Sponsors

     

**LABC** | Building Excellence   
**AWARDS 2020**

West Yorkshire Region

**Finalist**

BEST EXTENSION OR ALTERATION TO AN EXISTING DWELLING

**Moorland | Menston | Ilkley**

For building excellence in the delivery of outstanding construction and workmanship

Milner Richards Building Contractors | TRANSFORM ARCHITECTS | Lucy Burns

Local Authority Building Control Team  
City of Bradford Metropolitan District Council

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**"DESIGN IS NOT JUST  
WHAT IT LOOKS LIKE  
AND FEELS LIKE. DESIGN  
IS HOW IT WORKS."**

**- STEVE JOBS**



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# Follow us on Instagram

- Over 50,000+ followers and counting:
- One new project post at 8pm daily
- Two new story updates daily



Press me



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**"CREATIVITY IS  
NOTHING BUT A MIND  
SET FREE."**

**- TORRIE T. ASAI**



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TRANSFORMED

# Before & Afters

A selection of before and after transformation projects:

There is no average cost as all the projects are totally different, some have lots of extension work, others taken back to brickwork and internally brought up to specification.

Our projects typically start at £175k upwards subject to what the clients are looking to do. The bulk of the projects on our Instagram are £250k plus vat, excluding kitchens and bathrooms.





**"CREATIVITY IS  
NOTHING BUT THE  
WAY TO SOLVE NEW  
PROBLEMS."**

# Disability Inclusive Design

## Principles of good adaptation design:

- Incorporating the views of the disabled user and the family.
- Having fully inclusive communication involving the disabled person, occupational therapist, designer, and housing providers.
- Giving a clear specification to meet the needs of the user.
- Promoting independence, privacy and safety through good environmental design.
- Offering options through innovative design, within financial constraints.
- Efficiency and effectiveness – the design should have a positive outcome for the user and be achieved rapidly and cost effectively.
- It is often a requirement for your needs to be assessed by an occupational therapist.

## Key design criteria:

- Being functional.
- Being affordable.
- Look good.
- In keeping with current accessible design practice.

## Measures of success:

- Improved independence in daily living activities.
- Enhanced levels of safety.
- Maintaining links with family, friends and neighbours.
- Improved sense of security.
- Reduction of physical effort by carers.
- Enhanced privacy and dignity.





**"MAKE IT SIMPLE,  
BUT SIGNIFICANT."**

**- DON DRAPER**

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# Staircase Design Ideas

- 01: Open up an enclosed staircase.
- 02: Think about a staircase design which creates a welcoming entrance feature.
- 03: Think about decorating the staircase with architectural features, such as extending the balustrades down beyond the staircase string to clad a feature below.
- 04: Blending old and new features on a staircase.
- 05: Be creative with a staircase in a small area by incorporating storage within the design.
- 06: Use metal to create an industrial look to the staircase.
- 07: Incorporate an exposed brick wall to give the staircase extra character.
- 08: Restore and transform your existing staircase with glass or oak detailing.
- 09: Add lighting to your staircase, whether it is in the wall, the handrail or the treads.
- 10: Achieve a timeless look with a solid oak and glass staircase.
- 11: Finish a staircase in various materials including, wood, carpet or another flooring material.
- 12: Brighten up an enclosed staircase with a roof light above the staircase.
- 13: Over clad an existing staircase or just paint it and add a carpet runner to the middle section.





**"RECOGNIZING THE  
NEED IS THE  
PRIMARY CONDITION  
FOR DESIGN"**

**- CHARLES EAMES**

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**MARTIN BELL**  
RIBA Chartered Architect  
Managing Director

Martin designs all the schemes and oversees all aspects of Transform Architects ensuring consistent design and delivery on every project.

[Click For C.V.](#)

### Luxury Residential / Disability Architects.

Transform Architects is an RIBA Chartered Practice that specialises in contemporary self builds / extensions / disability adaptations and makeovers.

Family run and established in 2004, we enable our clients to recognize

what they want, visualise what it will look like, understand the costs, make Important design / specification decisions and oversee the contractual work until the project is completed.

Working with us is like having a sole practitioner with a great support team, ensuring consistent design and delivery on every project.



# Covid 19 & Construction Projects

## 01: Having Work In Your Home

- Plumbers, electricians and other traders can still come to your house to carry out repairs - as long as they don't have any symptoms of coronavirus. They should try to stay 2 metres away from you and avoid any vulnerable people.
- If the work you are having done isn't an emergency, you should think about doing it another time.
- If you're self-isolating or someone in your home is at risk, traders should only come if it's an emergency.

## 02: Rules For Construction projects

### Quick Guide:

- Works in people's homes can continue if they count as essential repairs and maintenance.
- Trades can continue to work providing they are well and have no symptoms.
- Regular hand washing and the 2m social distancing rule must be observed.
- Working areas (including vehicles and machinery) should be kept well-ventilated.
- No work should be carried out in households that are isolating or where an individual is being shielded, unless that work is to remedy a direct safety risk.
- You should limit your site to as a few workers as possible.
- Materials should be handled in a way that reduces touch points between workers.

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# USEFUL

## LINKS TO USEFUL RESOURCES OR HELPFUL INFORMATION

While we do our best to provide you with helpful, trustworthy resources.

Transform Architects cannot endorse, approve, or guarantee information, products, services, or recommendations provided at a third-party websites if you click on the links provided.

### Planning portal:

[www.planningportal.co.uk](http://www.planningportal.co.uk)

### Find a planning consultant:

<https://www.rtpiconsultants.co.uk>

### Find a builder:

<https://www.fmb.org.uk/>

### Find an ecologist:

<https://cieem.net/>

### Guide to building regulations:

<https://www.labc.co.uk/homeowners/getting-started-your-building-project>

### Find inspiration and ideas your project and save them to a scrapbook:

<https://www.pinterest.co.uk/>  
<https://www.houzz.co.uk/>

### House projects visual reference:

<https://homeadore.com/>  
<https://www.archdaily.com/>



THANK YOU FOR  
TAKING THE TIME  
TO READ ME.



FEEL FREE TO SHARE ME WITH  
FRIENDS AND FAMILY...  
NEXT ISSUE OUT DECEMBER 01 2020

