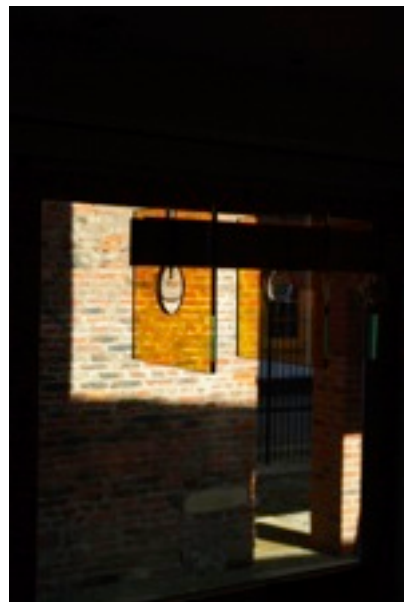
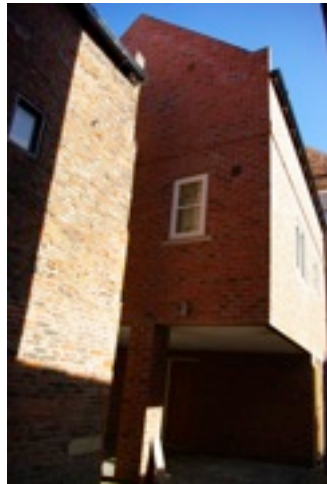
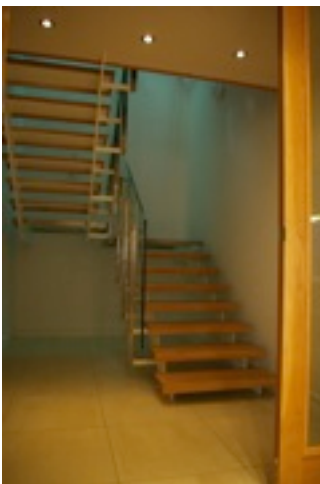


YORKSHIRE POST

Dreaming by the spires

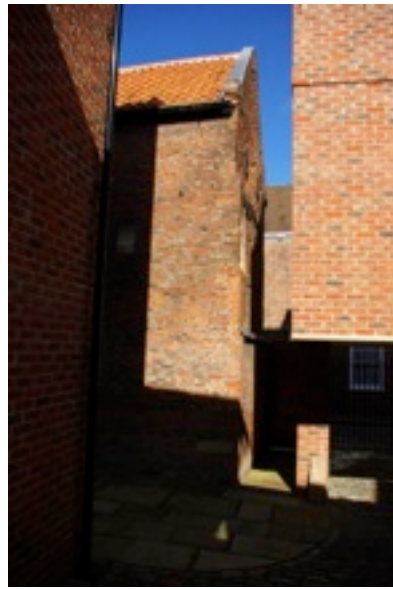
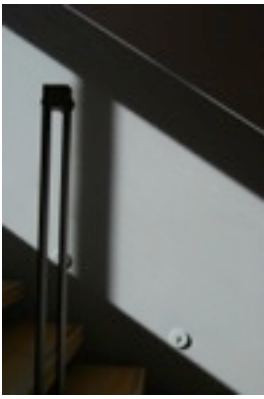
Article courtesy of Yorkshire Post

written by Sharon Dale



photos by
Gerard
Binks

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with additional images
by Nick@NMD

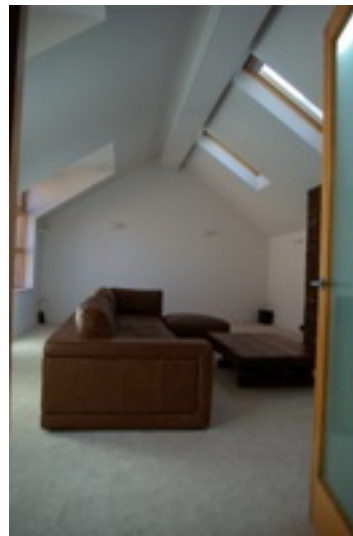


Stuart Lawton

When Stuart Lawton bought a small car park a stone's throw from York Minster, he had an audacious plan in mind. The tiny plot would be the perfect place for a new house, a 21st century addition to the historic heart of the city.

"Dream on" was the obvious reaction but

a determined Stuart battled to build his grand design and now, after 12 years and against all the odds, it is finally complete.

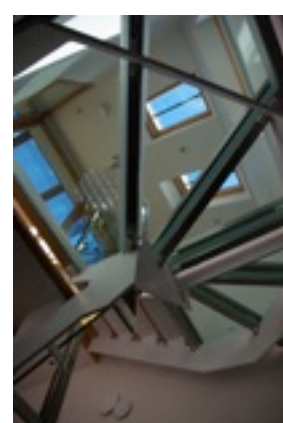
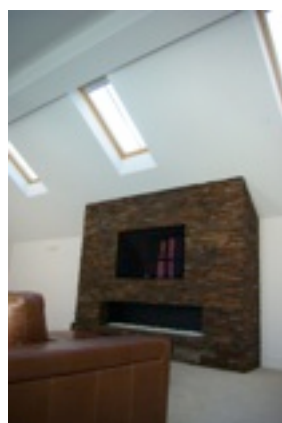


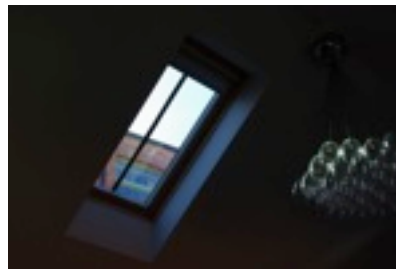
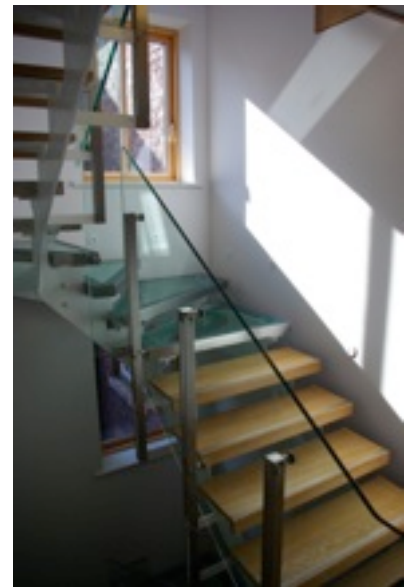
“I lived in the same cottage for 30 years but I’d always wanted to build my own home,” says Stuart, a commercial and residential developer. “But when I bought the car park I never imagined it would take as long as it did or cost as much.”

Meetings with the planning and conservation officers concluded that a well-designed house would look better than a car park on pretty Ogleforth. The officers may have

been positive about the plan but councillors on the planning committee were not.

It took a small fortune spent on planning consultants and an appeal to the Secretary of State to beat them and the pain and frustration still rankles. “They are amateurs with no planning or building knowledge. They don’t have to give a reason why. They can just say no. It’s a ridiculous system,” says Stuart.





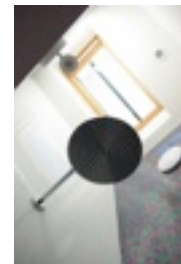
Other issues compounded the problem. The car park was tied up in a trust and it took four years and hefty lawyers' fees to iron out the legal complexities.

It took four years until the Secretary of State gave the go ahead. More time and money was spent on archaeological reports. Total fees for box ticking before a single brick was laid came to £65,000.

"The only positive was that it gave me time to think about how we were going to do it," says Stuart, who also bought the shop and flats above it next door and got permission to create a cottage adjoining that building.



The narrow street, the city centre location and the tight site was a challenge for builder Andrew Wiseman who could not bring skips or lorries to site.



Andrew and Stuart, who project managed the build, coped by using a small trailer on the back of a 4x4 to take spoil from the site and to deliver materials. To preserve the historic ground, the foundations are piles topped with a thin slab, like a table on legs. They cost £56,000, five times more than a conventional base.

It took a year to build and longer to fit out and



decorate the slim, elegant house that is a tribute to Stuart's tenacity and to architect Nick Midgley's design skills. It is set back and largely hidden from view on a street that is packed with listed buildings. The only clue that there's something different is the contemporary Iroko wood gate into the courtyard.

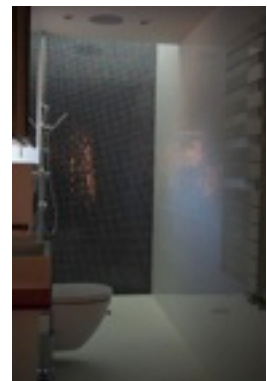
While the exterior is traditional brick that blends with the vernacular, you can see through the glazed sliding doors that modernity is the dominant theme inside the home.

"It had to be traditional outside but we fought to have modern Danish windows rather than Georgian-style, because we were keen to make the property energy efficient," says Nick, who created 3,500 sq ft of space over four floors.

The ground floor houses the £60,000 kitchen and a dining area, while a glass and stainless steel stairway takes you to the rest of the house. On the first floor are two bedrooms and bathrooms plus a sitting room with a Valencian slate fireplace.

It was late arriving because the manufacturers had been busy fitting an identical version on Roman Abramovich's yacht.

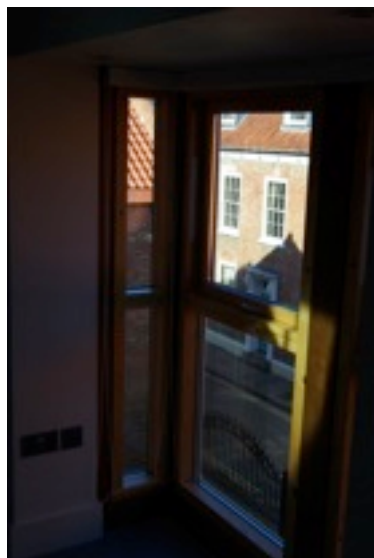
The second floor houses the master bedroom suite, which has two en-suites and the third floor has a glazed studio with views of York's red roof tops and a glimpse of the nearby Minster. No expense has been spared. The sanitary ware is Keuco (one tap cost £970). The lighting is all from Spain and Italy.



In the courtyard, the extravagance and the turntable other way making it

His new sound and enormous pleasure technology.

"This house was for through hoops and



turned. The sanitary ware is £970). The lighting is all from

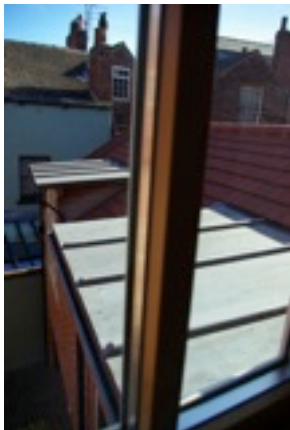
turntable parking is a practical Stuart's party piece. "I drive in whips the car round to face the easy to drive back out."

lighting system also gives him as does his smart house

me. That's the reason I jumped went well over on the budget. I

also want perfection and that's why the fit-out took so long. The painting took ages because every wall has been painted with a brush rather than a roller. The skirtings are bespoke and all the internal floors have sound insulation," says Stuart, who has just put the house on the market.

"When I bought this site, my son was seven and my daughter was four. They are grown up now. Our lives have moved on but I love the house and I'll always be proud of what Nick and I have achieved."



Ogleforth House is for sale for offers over £1m with Carter Jonas

Useful contacts

Architect: Nick Midgley, www.nickmidgelydesign.co.uk, tel 01422 255 818 077
Builder: Andrew Wiseman, Brandsby, tel: 01347 888 194.
Stairs by James Rhodes, www.rhoco.co.uk

