



**Exterior**  
The renovation of the existing 19th-Century gasworks began in 2011 and was completed in late 2014 as a writer's retreat overlooking open fields and woodland in the beautiful Cotswolds village of Upper Slaughter.



**[ Top tip ]**  
Find people who will communicate with you and tell you about any problems or additional costs as they happen, rather than springing things on you when it's too late. We had a fantastic team, which meant that the project ran very smoothly.

# INDUSTRIAL REVELATION

A redundant gasworks in rural Gloucestershire has been given a new lease of life and extended to create a most unusual home.

Story: **Debbie Jeffery** | Photography: **Strutt & Parker**

**W**hen Jonathan Evans and his partner purchased a former gasworks in an idyllic rural setting in the Cotswolds the stone property had already been granted planning permission for a unique extension. "At that time there was a bathroom in the cottage but no kitchen," explains Jonathan, a keen property renovator. "After employing local builders to install a kitchen we built a detached studio with a log-burner, which could be used as a writing room."  
Upper Slaughter is often described as a quintessential Cotswolds village, thanks to the typical vernacular stone

## [ In brief ]

**Project** Extension and conversion.  
**Location** Upper Slaughter  
**Cost** £820,000 in 2013  
**Spent** £2,600/sqm  
**Worth** £1.6m

buildings, surrounding countryside and the pretty River Eye nearby. The Gasworks stands in a private setting overlooking open fields and its own woodland copse. The previous owner of the cottage was well known author Jeanette Winterson, best known for her novel *Oranges Are Not The Only Fruit*, who had already started to restore the Grade II listed building, which she purchased as a derelict roofless ruin, and had been granted planning permission to build a single-storey extension clad in Corten steel.  
"We loved the design so much that we inherited the plans, her architect and builder, picking up where she left off," says Jonathan.





**“The new annexe was actually suggested, interestingly enough, by the conservation officer.”**

Chris Dyson Architects is an award-winning practice based in London, renowned for working with historic buildings, and was involved from the start, helping the previous owner to gain consent to resurrect the derelict 19th century stone building, which had once provided carbide gas to light the nearby Brassey Estate.

The modestly-sized stone cottage was preserved, rebuilt and given a new lease of life, but required additional living space, and this was designed in the form of a contemporary barn-like bedroom wing which forms a sheltered courtyard with the older property.

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### Hallway

A glass corridor connects the new and old structures, with seven consecutive glass doors forming an inverted bay window and providing access out onto the courtyard.

## The previous owner was author Jeanette Winterson, best known *Oranges Are Not The Only Fruit*.

architect Chris Dyson. “He thought it was a better idea that, rather than fill the old gasworks with an additional floor, we should build a new annex completely separately to preserve and enhance the integrity of the old building.”

Orientated to take in views of the surrounding countryside, the 120 sqm extension is highly glazed and culminates in a two-storey tower. Below ground was a large circular brick-lined pit, where materials would have been stored for the gas-making process, and the new tower was designed to echo this shape.

“We added the tower to contain study areas, and changed the internal layout, reducing the number of bedrooms in the annexe in order to make them larger, and creating a spacious master bedroom suite with a dressing room,” explains Jonathan, an investment manager. “Three of the bedrooms are in the new wing and the fourth in the older part of the house.”

A new planning submission was made for the drum-like addition and other amendments, which was approved without issue, and work started on site in autumn 2013, with the foundations and slab for the extension laid before the frame was erected over the winter. “It was essentially built by one master craftsman, who cut every piece of wood, which meant that this stage of the project did take quite a long time,” says Jonathan.

“The attention to detail was incredible, though, and was far more important to us than achieving a fast build. There was also the issue of bad weather to overcome, with gales, storms and flooding that particular winter, which meant trying to keep materials protected and covered.”



The Gasworks is on the market with The Modern House: [themodernhouse.com](http://themodernhouse.com) and Strutt & Parker: [struttandparker.com](http://struttandparker.com)

Chris Dyson Architects oversaw the 20-month build, taking on the role of project manager, and Jonathan divided his time between London and the Cotswolds.

“Using the same local builders who had been responsible for restoring the stone cottage ensured continuity,” he says. “Although I’ve gutted and renovated properties before this is the first time I’ve been involved with building a new structure, so it was reassuring to have such a competent team who were extremely easy to deal with. Our builders produced a tight costing and the architects continually updated us throughout.”

Reducing the impact on the environment was a key concern, and sustainably-sourced timber was used to construct the frame of the extension. This has been

### Kitchen

Located in the old stone gasworks, the vaulted and beamed kitchen features bespoke painted cabinets.



## HOMES

Extension

highly insulated using eco-friendly Warmcel insulation, which is manufactured from recycled waste paper.

Corten steel was then used to clad the new element, creating a weathered façade clearly distinct from the existing stone cottage, which plays homage to the site's industrial past.

Corten steel oxidises naturally over time, giving it a distinctive orange-brown colour and a rough texture which creates a dramatic effect. It has a high tensile strength and, in spite of its rusted appearance, is actually more resistant to damaging corrosion than standard forms of carbon steel – making it an ideal cladding material.

“We looked for a contrasting material which would create a strong patina with time, and steel is one of the most recycled building materials available,” explains Chris Dyson Architect's principal partner, Harry Whittaker. “Corrugated steel sheets form the walls and roof of the extension while the tower is clad in curving panels.”

**“Even though it was an industrial building it was very much on a domestic scale.”**

Seeing the tower being constructed and clad before finally being able to climb the new stairs to enjoy the views was a memorable experience, although this phase of the project proved particularly complex due to the curving shape of the structure.

The three en suite bedrooms in the annexe are connected to the cottage by a glazed corridor, and spectacular views of surrounding woodland can be enjoyed from each room, with large roof lights dropping in light from above.

The building is heated by an air source heat pump, connected to the underfloor heating system, with photovoltaic panels fitted to the roof to reduce the consumption of electricity. Passive ventilation and a rainwater harvesting system further decrease the environmental impact of the development.

### ↓ FLOORPLAN

The restored 19th century stone cottage contains a guest bedroom and bathroom, the kitchen, dining room and sitting room; with the master bedroom suite, two further en suite bedrooms, a triangular utility and the tower studios housed in the new extension.



### [ Contacts ]

#### PROJECT

**Architect** Chris Dyson Architects: [chrisdyson.co.uk](http://chrisdyson.co.uk)

**Builder** Bonner and Milner: [bonnerandmilner.co.uk](http://bonnerandmilner.co.uk)

#### STRUCTURE

**Timber frame, doors and windows** Shield

Woodworking Ltd: [shieldwoodworking.co.uk](http://shieldwoodworking.co.uk)

**Insulation** Warmcel: [warmcel.co.uk](http://warmcel.co.uk)

**Glazing** AD Glass: [adglass.co.uk](http://adglass.co.uk)

**Corten steel cladding** Hollywood Design: [hollywood-design.com](http://hollywood-design.com)

**Roof membrane** Tyvek: [dupont.co.uk](http://dupont.co.uk)

#### FIXTURES AND FITTINGS

**Kitchen** Shield Woodworking Ltd: [shieldwoodworking.co.uk](http://shieldwoodworking.co.uk)

**Sanitaryware** Duravit: [duravit.co.uk](http://duravit.co.uk)

**Stone flooring** Farmington Masonry: [farmington.co.uk](http://farmington.co.uk)

**Linoleum flooring** Forbo Flooring: [forbo.com](http://forbo.com)

**Heat pumps and Nordic inverter** Ice Energy: [iceenergy.co.uk](http://iceenergy.co.uk)

**Solar panels** EvoEnergy: [evoenergy.co.uk](http://evoenergy.co.uk)

### Living area

The older part of the building is primarily occupied by a high-ceilinged living room which leads to a kitchen on one side and a formal dining area on the other.

“This project has been fascinating in terms of tying together issues of sustainability, adapting and altering a historic industrial structure and building within an Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty in the heart of the Cotswolds,” says project architect Harry Whittaker.

“The scale of the existing building dictated the scale and volume of the new structure. Even though it was an industrial building it was very much on a domestic scale, it wasn't like we were converting a large warehouse. There were also contaminants on the site that we needed to deal with, because making the gas was quite a toxic process.”

The previously barren plot required landscaping, and a substantial garden wall was built to divide the property from neighbouring cottages, with paving laid in the courtyard area. Work was completed in time for Christmas 2014, and since then the design has received a number of prestigious architectural awards.

Internally, décor remains simple – enabling the





shapes and volumes of the rooms to speak for themselves. White painted walls provide a neutral backdrop to the vibrant green of the countryside viewed through expansive glazing.

"I don't think there's anything we would do differently in hindsight in terms of the build, because it worked pretty well for us," says Jonathan. "The building and spaces function beautifully, and I'm very happy with the design. I hate the word quirky, but that's the appeal – the things that make it an attractive, exciting building are also the things that some people may not like. For us though it's the perfect combination of old and new."

### Bedrooms

Accommodation includes four bedrooms, all of which have en suite bathrooms. The master bedroom suite is particularly notable, featuring a large picture window with far reaching rural views and a dressing room.



### [ The final word ]

#### What was the high point of the project?

Climbing up the scaffolding on the tower and seeing the views was literally the high point.

#### ...and the low point?

Sometimes progress seemed slow, mainly because we were on site so regularly that there were no big surprises or transformational moments.

#### Your best buy?

The glazing, and of course the distinctive Corten steel cladding to the extension.

#### Favourite feature?

It has to be the relaxing views – you can sit looking out at the countryside and see something different every time.

