



A crumbling Scottish barn has been renovated into a modern home that integrates elements of the past with the present

Words: **Caroline Foster**

Rolling stones



Sophie and Harry Watson had always dreamed of finding a property that they could completely refurbish and turn into a unique family home for themselves and their two teenage sons. So, when a dilapidated barn came onto the market on the east coast of Scotland, they grabbed the opportunity with both hands.

Bringing Alison Howard, head of design for Christopher Howard, on board was key to the success of the project. "Sophie knew exactly what she wanted to do with the interiors and I became involved in the kitchen when the structural work was almost completed, which allowed the internal work to begin," recalls Alison. "The kitchen was to be located at the rear of the house and accessed through double doors as well as through the reception area and off the hallway."

Damp stone walls were taken down and the stone restored, before being rebuilt. "We then extended to form the kitchen-diner where the original wall now became internal. The extension also includes a laundry and boot room with access to the garden," Alison explains.

Sophie wanted a chic, calm and totally functional family space and had conducted many hours of research to produce a comprehensive brief and a wishlist that included a range cooker, French-door fridge-freezer and a large island that could comfortably seat a family of four. "I also specified a combination of timber and concrete worktops," Sophie says, "and utilised an existing dresser as the breakfast area."

As the electrics couldn't be chased into the stone walls, Alison opted for surface-run conduits to allow sockets and wall lights to be installed. "This brought an industrial element to the room so I further enhanced this by introducing brushed steel wall lights, which were positioned over the cooker and prep areas," Alison says. "We omitted one at the far end of the run, as Sophie had a tripod table lamp she wanted to include and we felt this was a good place for it."

Double doors at the kitchen end can be fully opened onto a patio and there is also access into the main garden from the dining area and adjoining living room. This allows the couple to take full

Opening page (p121): The original barn door was re-hung in the hallway to create a feature entrance into the kitchen.

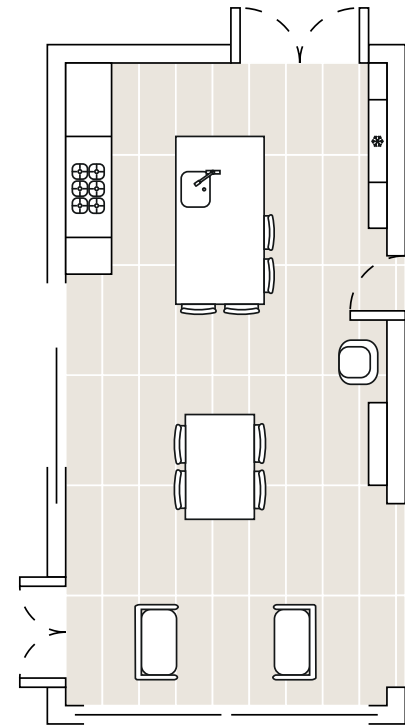
Above: Bespoke cabinetry in a two-tone palette picks up the grey and blue hues within the old external stone wall.

Top right: To complement the industrial feel, an undermounted stainless-steel sink and a concrete-coloured quartz worktop were fitted on the island.

Middle right: Two tall larder units were built to flank the fridge-freezer, which is conveniently positioned opposite the island preparation area.

Right: Exposing the electrics conduit and positioning steel wall lights above the units provides an industrial element.





Left: A tall unit accommodates the breakfast area and small appliances, which can be neatly hidden when not in use.

Opposite page: Not just a prep space, the large island also features a breakfast bar to accommodate the family of four.

advantage of outdoor eating at either end of the room, capturing the sun as it moves round during the day.

When it came to planning the cabinetry, Alison took inspiration from the building itself. "With the distinctive features of the stone wall and barn door, I felt that the cabinetry should be unfussy so it blended and complemented these elements," she elaborates. "Sophie wanted oak worktops and I felt a warm grey paint shade, as opposed to cool, would best contrast with the stone walls."

During the planning, it was decided to shelve the idea of a separate larder. "Originally, the floor plan had included a walk-in larder, but I felt it was really intrusive in the room and interrupted the line of the wall," Alison explains. "I suggested removing this, flushing the wall off and gaining access to it through the laundry room behind."

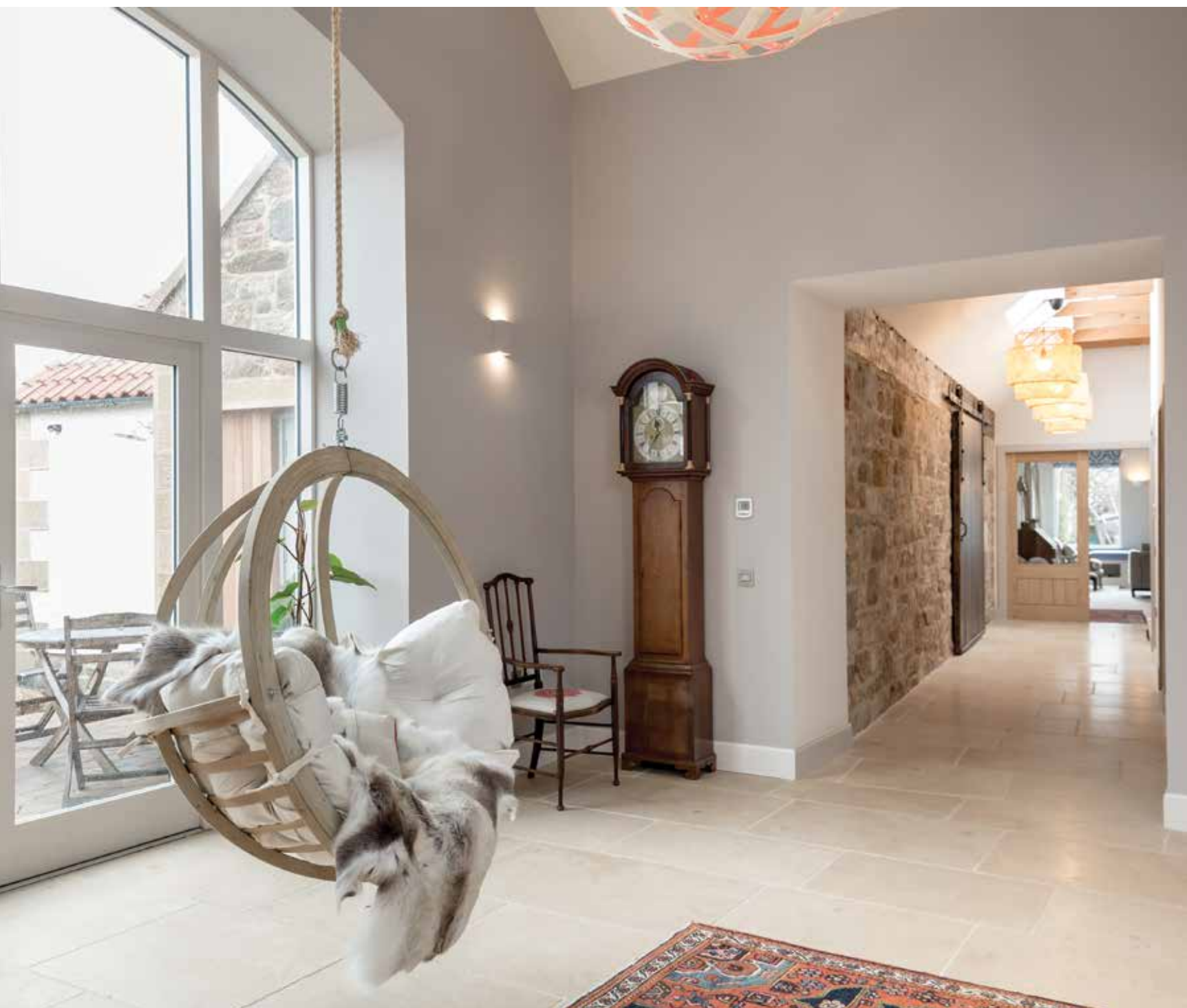
The completed kitchen has answered the Watsons' brief in full and produced a showpiece design that is the talking point of the barn conversion. "The colours and textures perfectly complement the space and features of the room, while the large island provides a comfortable and functional space for family or friends to gather around."

Also on the ground floor, and centrally located for easy access, is a new bathroom for family and guests, which was designed by Yvonne Souness of The North Berwick Bathroom & Tile Company. "The Watsons wanted a bathroom with quirky touches that would both surprise and delight their guests," Yvonne explains. "It also had to be easily accessible for a wheelchair or less-able user."

Sophie wanted to incorporate a rustic wooden countertop and include an urban look, although she didn't wish it to appear too industrial. "We came up with the idea of using the old steading steps as supports for the vanity, which works well," Yvonne says. "Sophie sourced the wooden top and the lighting that was chosen plays an important part in creating the contemporary feel that she desired."

To ensure the bathroom was functional for less-mobile users, Yvonne installed a wetroom rather than a shower enclosure. A wetroom panel protects the room from water spray whilst still allowing full access from the front. "The clients love the final result and the shower area works particularly well as it sits back in the room without being a main feature," Yvonne says. "The basin area gives the visual impact and talking point the Watsons wanted, whilst the limestone tiling has been successful in softening the room and giving it a welcoming feel." [KBB](#)





Q&A

Kitchen designer Alison Howard says...

Were there any places you managed to save money?

Shopping around for the best prices for appliances meant we had more budget to play with for the cabinetry.

What was the greatest challenge?

Our installers had a real challenge scribing the cabinetry and wooden worktop to the stone wall.

Were there any U-turns during the project?

The U-turn was suggesting that the newly built walk-in larder be demolished and the wall flushed off to make way for a more aesthetic and practical solution.

Any advice about employing a kitchen designer?

Think well ahead in terms of the overall feel you'd like to achieve and consult an experienced designer who can produce 3D perspectives of your space.

Above: The couple turned the hallway into a light-filled space to relax in, from which the original barn wall can be seen.



Above: Utilising the old barn's steading steps as the washstand supports is a nod to the building's past in the downstairs guest bathroom, while the lighting adds an industrial element.

Left: Extra-wide oak doors and a wetroom-style shower were installed to make the bathroom accessible for wheelchair or less-able users.

Q&A

Bathroom designer Yvonne Souness says...

Any places you managed to save money?

The basin was ex-display and this really helped keep the costs down.

Biggest challenge with the project?

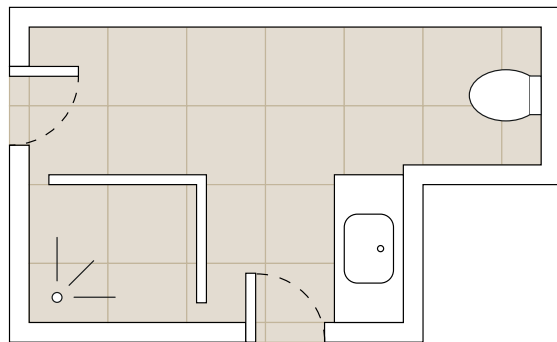
Making sure the room flowed and didn't look disjointed, as there are two access doors.

What advice do you give clients on finding contractors?

The contractors were already in place, but the couple had done their homework and had got them through recommendation. They also went to view previous projects by the contractor so could see the standard of work.

Any tips for people embarking on a similar project?

Keep an eye on the overall look to be achieved and choose good-quality materials from local retailers as then you have good input and support.



SourceBook

DESIGN

Kitchen designer Alison Howard of Christopher Howard (01620 842741 or www.christopherhoward.com)

Bathroom designer Yvonne Souness of The North Berwick Bathroom & Tile Company (01620 850435 or www.northberwickbathrooms.com)

KITCHEN

Cabinetry Bespoke, Christopher Howard, as before

Worktops Oak and quartz, Christopher Howard, as before

Appliances Range cooker, Everhot (01453 890018 or www.everhot.co.uk); Fridge-freezer, Samsung (0330 726 7864 or www.samsung.com/uk); DishDrawer dishwasher, Fisher & Paykel (0800 088 6605 or www.fisherpaykel.com/uk)

Sink and taps Kubus undermounted stainless-steel sink and Fuji tap with pull-out nozzle, both from Franke (0161 436 6280 or www.franke.com); Boiling-water tap, Quooker (0345 833 3555 or www.quooker.co.uk)

Flooring Neranjo tumbled limestone tiles from Ca' Pietra (0844 915 0002 or www.capietra.com)

Lighting (island) Lise pendant lights, Cox & Cox (0844 858 0744 or www.coxandcox.co.uk); (over table) Bulb Attack suspension light, from Achica (www.achica.com); (wall lights) St Ives Eye Down light from Garden Trading (0845 608 4448 or www.gardentrading.co.uk)

Dining table For similar try the Bailey eight-seat table from Benchmark (01488 608020 or www.benchmarkfurniture.com)

Dining chairs Covered in Saphia Ocean fabric by William Yeoward (020 7349 7828 or www.williamyeoward.com). For similar try chairs from Hemswell Antique Centres (01427 668389 or

www.hemswell-antiques.com)

Side chairs Cult Furniture (020 8185 6960 or www.cultfurniture.com) with Icelandic sheepskin from Achica, as before

Cane chairs For similar try the Sorsele high-back armchair from Ikea (020 3645 0000 or www.ikea.com/gb)

BATHROOM

Walls and flooring Neranjo tumbled limestone tiles from Ca' Pietra, as before

Countertop Oak. For similar try The Wood Place (01501 785460 or www.thewoodplace.com)

Mirror and light fittings Achica, as before

Basin Natural stone Clearwater Santuoso basin, Victorian Plumbing (0800 862 0878 or www.victorianplumbing.co.uk)

Brassware Wall-mounted Wisp two-hole mixer tap, Crosswater (0845 873 8840 or www.crosswater.co.uk); Aqua4MA wetroom shower system, Kudos (01539 564040 or www.kudosshowers.co.uk); Rainsdance Select ShowerTablet shower mixer, Hansgrohe (01372 472001 or www.hansgrohe.co.uk)

Shower screen Wetroom panel from Ultimate 2 range, Kudos, as before
WC Pro wall-hung WC, Laufen (01530 510007 or www.uk.laufen.com); Concealed wall-hung WC frame with Bolero dual flush plate, Geberit (0800 077 8365 or www.geberit.co.uk)

COST

A similar kitchen would start from around £28,000 and a similar bathroom from around £14,000 (including installation)



Left: A wetroom panel was installed to protect the rest of the bathroom from splashes and allows full access from the front of the shower.