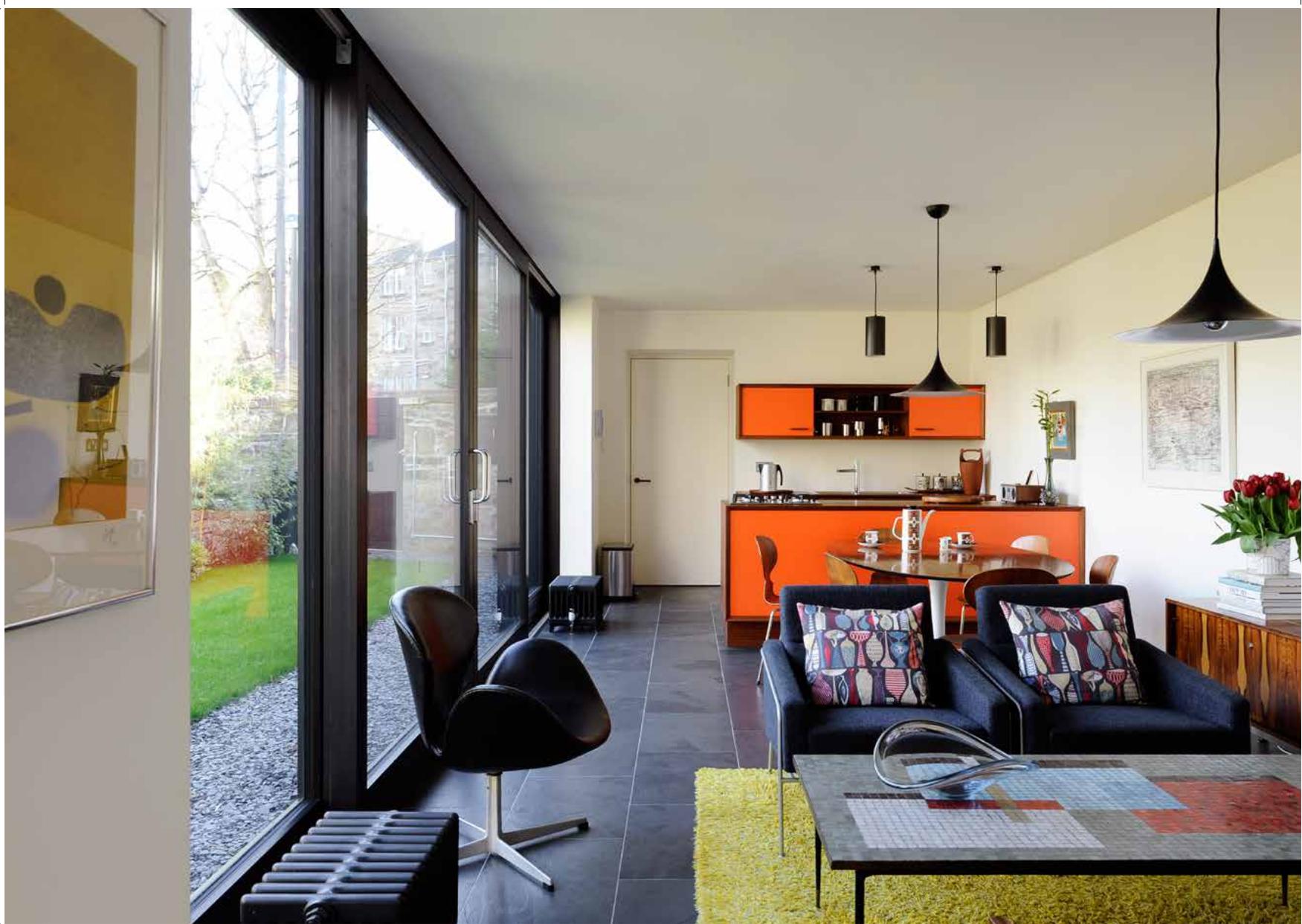


**A Danish Coastal House in  
Victorian Edinburgh**

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Photography  
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# Midlothian Modern



It was a combination of good luck and hard graft that enabled social worker Rachel Green and furniture dealer Andrew Fletcher to bring their very own piece of Scandinavian Modernism to the heart of Edinburgh's West End. Having long thought about building their own house, in 2010 the couple were presented with an opportunity to combine design ideas taken from rural Danish coastal dwellings and an urban British-Victorian aesthetic with the latest in eco technology.

When they bought it, the property comprised a two-storey 'B' Listed Victorian annex on a secluded mews lane, which had been separated from the grand crescent house to which it had originally been attached thirty years earlier. Andrew explains "The annex had a 1980s conservatory attached to the front facade, and a garage had been built within the garden. We demolished both and built a single storey extension onto the front of the annex". This houses an open-plan kitchen/dining/living space, and a glass link connects the extension to the original annex, which contains two bedrooms, a bathroom and a shower room. "We re-modelled the site, to create a proper living space without losing the character of what was there."

Rachel outlines how they came to find the plot. "The property came online on a Monday morning and I happened to be at home that day and noticed it.

I booked an appointment to view it immediately and as soon as I walked through the gate, I knew this was what I'd been waiting for. It seemed too good to be true; the place just screamed renovation project. By 2pm that afternoon I'd put in an offer."

I asked Andrew whether they had been looking for a specific style of property. "We have lived in a variety of places in Edinburgh, from classical Georgian to Art Deco, but we have always wanted to build something of our own. A plot in the centre of Edinburgh is not easy to come by and getting planning permission to build something contemporary was never guaranteed, but we knew we had to do it."

Demolition started in February 2012 and the couple rented a studio flat in a converted garage down the road so they could be on site every day. Rachel tells me "Project Managing was really hard work, and we did quite a lot of labouring ourselves too."

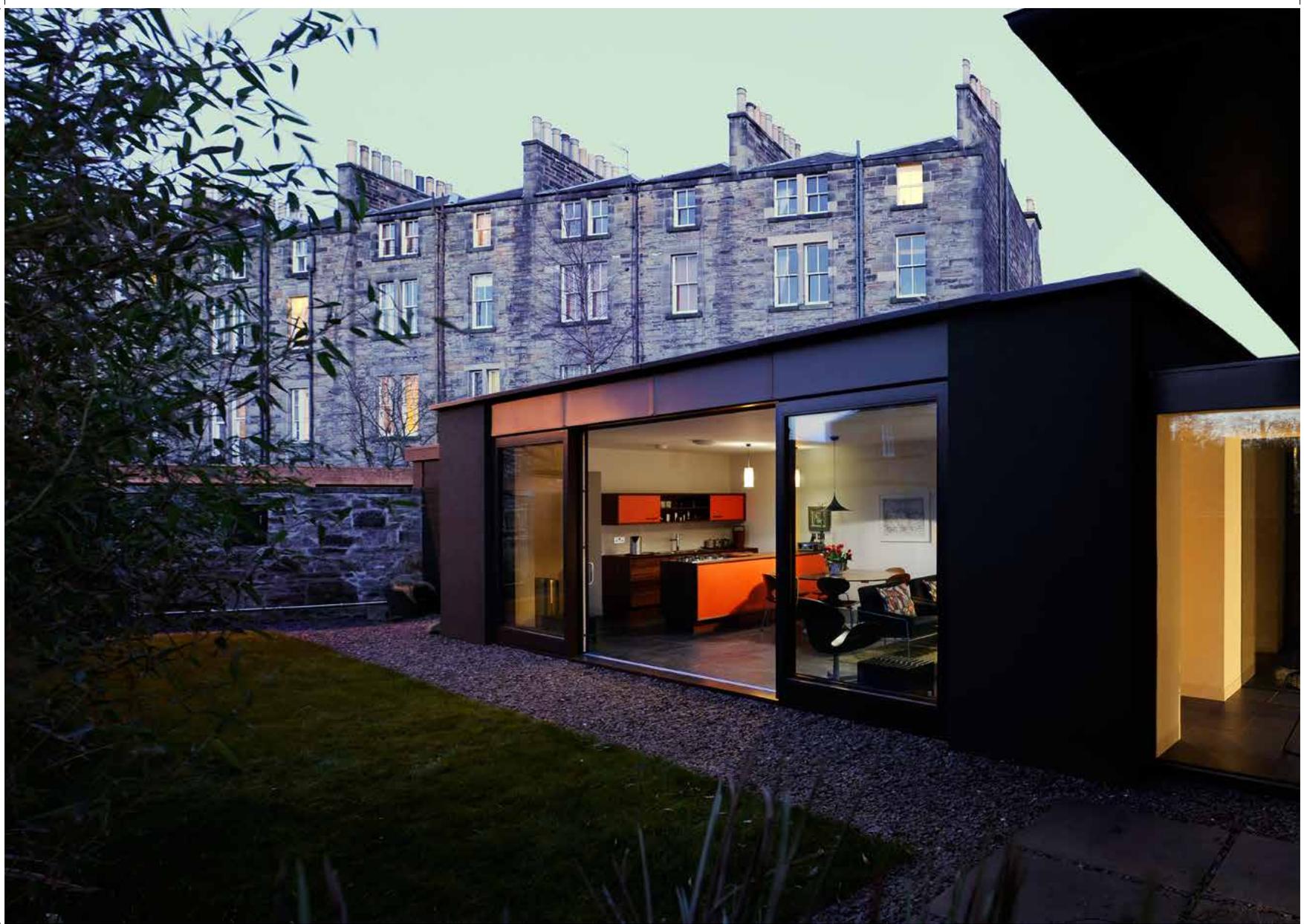
I was intrigued to find out how they came up with the design. "It was the result of 20 years of research", says Andrew, "Research is a big part of what I do in buying and selling mid-century furniture and I drew on everything I'd learnt over the years for this project."

The pair employed architect friend Akiko Kobayashi to help them channel their love of the Scandinavian Modern style into a homely, contemporary space

**Previous page:** Interior view of living area, Swan chair by Arne Jacobsen, 1963; Contemporary Model 3300 lounge chairs by Arne Jacobsen, originally designed for the SAS Royal Hotel, Copenhagen in 1956; 1950s tile coffee table by unknown designer; Contemporary 'Pedreira' pendant lamps over kitchen and pendant lamps over dining and sitting areas manufactured by Gubi.

**Far right:** Glass hall linking the extension to the annex, Diamond chair by Harry Bertola, Right: Bathroom, Brazilian black slate tiles; Arkana side tables, 1960s.







## 'Research is a big part of what I do in buying and selling mid-century furniture'

that would allow them to display mid-century furniture for Andrew's business. Of most influence were two mid-century coastal houses situated on the Oresund strait, 22 kilometres north of Copenhagen: that of Hanne and Poul Kjaerholm, designed in 1962, and that of Halldor Gunnlogsson, from 1958. Plus Le Corbusier's Cabanon, his beachside log cabin in Cap Martin, just along the coast from Nice, which Andrew describes as being "the best place on earth!"

He explains "We knew that we wanted the house to sit quietly in the landscape around it. The dark grey render outside ties in with the slate roofs of the neighbouring buildings". The house, juxtaposed with the surrounding

period properties, definitely holds its own, while a 'living' sedum green roof helps to minimise the visual impact of the extension from above, an aspect seen from many of the neighbouring houses. The pair even went as far as retaining the garage door frontage on the mews lane, although now actually a dummy, so as not to disturb the look of the street.

"We took care to create a visual link between old and new. From the kitchen, at one end, you can see all the way down into the old annex – we didn't want to break up the space with doors and in doing this we maximised the light", says Andrew. The north-facing living area gains a great deal of light through the glass sliding doors along its length and the view is maximised further in the link space, as the glass has been recessed directly into the stonework. There is no need for curtains or blinds here, as due to careful planning, the interior is not overlooked. Andrew and Rachel even increased the height and width of the doors in the annex to make the original 'wing' lighter and to better marry the two parts of the house.

Accessed via the mews lane at the back of the crescent, the entrance vestibule sets the tone: clad in cedar, it has a warm log-cabin feel. Rachel admits "Although it's the smallest room in the building, it's my favourite. The smell of cedar hits you as you walk in". And the log burning stove at the far end of the

**Previous page:**  
Exterior view of the extension.  
Left: Ground-floor bedroom, 1950s Danish rosewood desk with rosewood 'Ant' chair by Arne Jacobsen.

**Right: First-floor bedroom, Contemporary Ercol 'Chiltern' bed; DA sofa by Ernest Race, 1950; Stag C Range oak chest of drawers by John and Sylvia Reid, 1950s; Bedside tables with black marble tops by Eero Saarinen for Knoll.**

