

The Ryde of their Lives

**A Scandi-inspired home
in Hatfield**

By Frances Ambler

Photography Marcus Peel



You stand outside, thinking it's a tiny little studio, and then you walk in, and it's like walking into the Tardis!", says Jo Jenkins, perfectly capturing the reaction typical of first time visitors to her Cockaigne Housing Group property on The Ryde in Hatfield. And I admit I did exactly that. From the outside, these terraced bungalows – designed by Phippen Randall Parkes and completed in 1966 – are modest looking, slightly overshadowed even by the semis on the opposite side of the street. Open the door and you step straight into a light-filled hall, with a dramatic vista running through the length of the building and out to the garden at the back. Perhaps more amazing is that the house manages to pack in five bedrooms, two bathrooms, a study, a library and a dining room without feeling poky.

Jo, a client development manager at the creative agency StartJG, lives here with her partner Steve, designer and founder of StudioChard – a branding and design agency. They moved here three years ago, a familiar story of London residents who leave the city to afford their own outdoor space and front door. Jo grew up in a 1960s build in St Albans, and the couple began seeking out properties that shared that same aesthetic, including several Span houses.

While getting the look was, in some ways, relatively easy, the couple were also searching for something more elusive. Their Hackney block of flats had been especially sociable – hosting communal barbecues and film nights – and they wanted a similar community feel wherever they lived. Having heard about The Ryde through friends – who were the first new family to move onto the estate for a number of years – their search became even more focused.

However, with only 28 houses in the development, the opportunity to buy here came up rarely. They bid on one property that was then taken off the market; another required so much work it became unaffordable. However their friends heard of a house sale that had fallen through and the couple quickly arranged to visit.



Previous: external view from front.
Above: living room, Vitra Noguchi table; il Loft sofa; Melin Tregwynn cushions; Vitra Ball Clock by George Nelson; Georg Jensen Swing double candlestick holder; Tom Dixon Jack Lights.

'You just realise these houses are special'

