

**Renovation of the 1936
family home of Architect
Mary Medd**

By Tom Rigden

Photography Marcus Peel

Queen of Herts



Above: external view from back.

When Heidi Lightfoot, co-founder of graphic design agency *Together Design*, and her husband Steve Gibbons, Head of User Experience and Design at the BBC, began the hunt for a mid-century house within easy reach of their London jobs, they never dreamed they'd find somewhere as special as the Grade II listed five bedroom family home in Hertfordshire that they finally bought. One year on, this stunning example of 1930s British architecture has been treated to a sympathetic but extensive renovation and now forms the backdrop to the family life they share with their two young children, Riley and Jackson.

Arriving at the house, you quickly spot its most striking features: the unusual monopitch roof, sloping up towards the rear of the property, and the neat row of ten windows that run along the first floor, like square portholes. And at the back, the roofline rises dramatically, creating a deep soffit with overhanging rafters. The house was designed by renowned public sector architect Mary Medd, one of the first women to graduate from the Architectural Association, for her parents in 1934 and built in 1936. She designed three houses on the generous plot, all of which survive. This was one of the few residential projects she worked on, her first commission in fact; she went on to make her name with her pioneering designs for schools. She was inspired by continental Modernism, in particular the 1930 Stockholm Exhibition of Arts and Crafts and Home Industries, which she visited just prior to designing the house, and it's only perhaps the later Ernö Goldfinger terrace of houses on London's Willow Road that bear any stylistic comparison. This may not be entirely coincidental, as Goldfinger and Medd collaborated on a number of projects.



Above: external view from front.
Right: dining room, black stained oak 'Bella' desk table by Hay; vintage 'Grand Prix' dining chairs by Arne

Jacobsen; Santa & Cole 'GT7' ceiling lamp; vintage Jens Risom side table; Murano glass lamp base with orange shade; Vitra Wooden Dolls by Alexander Girard.

