

DRAWING BOARD

Neil Scroxton and Robert Ciuraru have created two interesting options for a spacious master bedroom in the loft space of a semi-detached Victorian family home

Words: **Jacky Parker**

THE CLIENTS

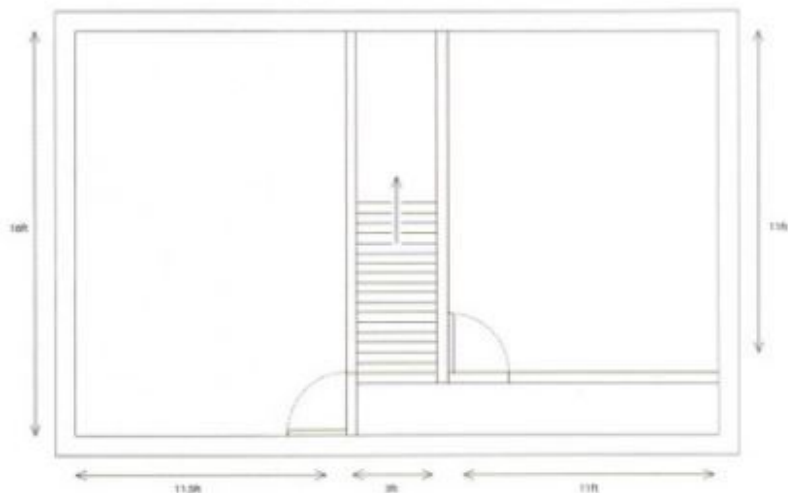
Ross and Claire Evans live in a semi-detached Victorian house dating back to 1877 in Leighton Buzzard, Bedfordshire. It is currently a two-bedroom property, but with two growing daughters they are looking to convert the loft into a new master bedroom. Ross runs his own doughnut business and Claire is a full-time mum.

THE BRIEF

The couple would like to access the new bedroom via a straight staircase, as opposed to a spiral, by utilising the length of the current master bedroom. "The pitch of the roof is very high (just over 15ft), and we would like to keep the height exposed, rather than it being boxed in," says Ross. "There are also two chimneybreasts (on the east side of the property), which we would like to keep exposed if possible. We're looking for as much storage as possible, to be sectioned off in the eaves, so that the remaining useable space could be dedicated to a king-size bed, dressing table and hopefully a computer/desk area. We are open to suggestions with regard to lighting." Claire and Ross would love to introduce natural light via Velux and/or dormer windows to the rear of the house, however they don't currently know what the Building Regulations are because of the age of the property.

THE SPACE

The property is north-facing to the rear and the loft space itself measures approximately 14.5ft-long x 26.5ft-wide. The current first-floor (plan below) master bedroom beneath measures 16 x 11.5ft, while the second bedroom measures approximately 10 x 11ft.



THE BUDGET

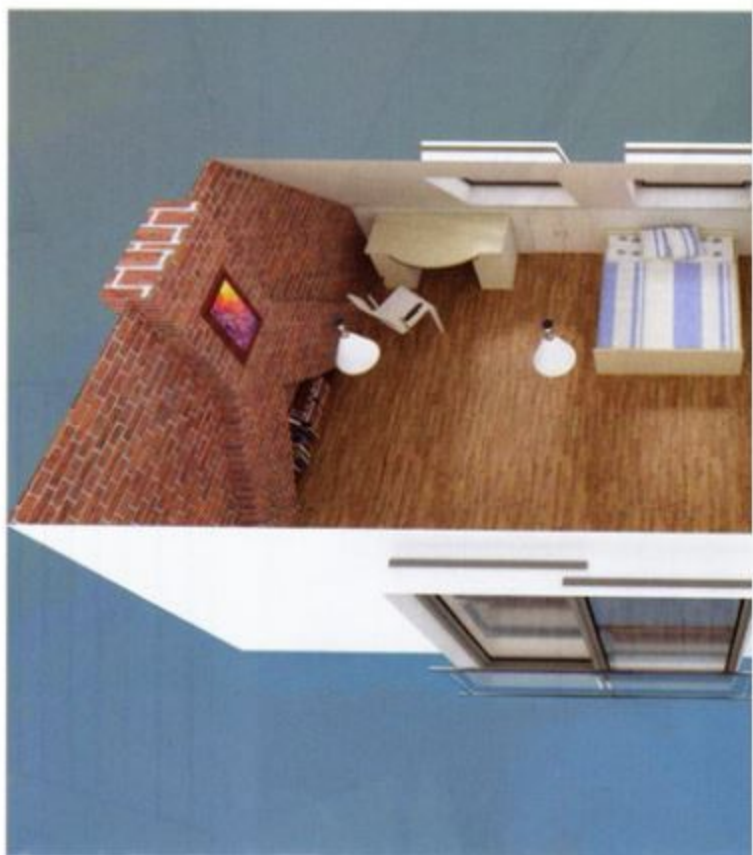
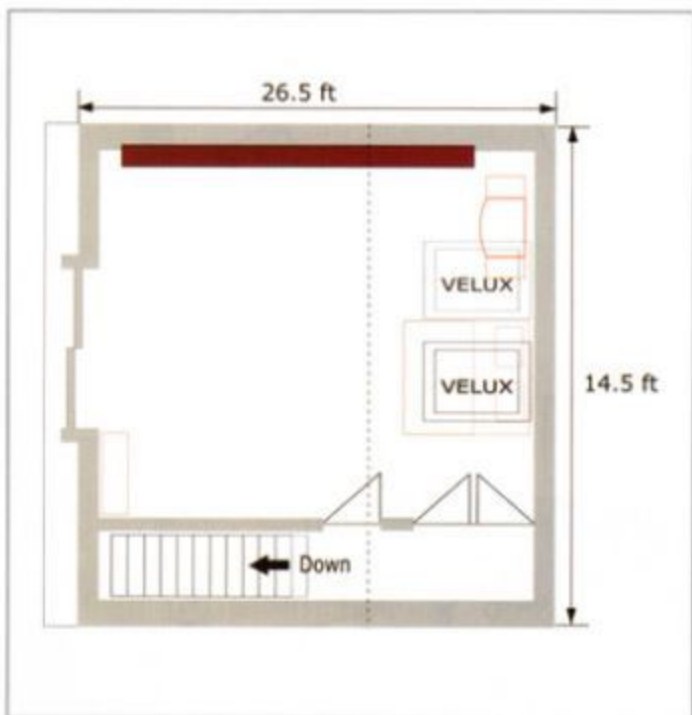
£35-40,000 including building work.

SOLUTION

ROBERT CIURARU, ROBERT'S 21ST CENTURY DESIGN



Robert Ciuraru is the founder of Robert's 21st Century Design, a design and build company based in Borehamwood, Hertfordshire.



“A loft conversion can be done in all types of houses and you can usually utilise around 70-80% of the first floor footprint as liveable space. The remainder, where you are restricted with height, often provides a number of alcoves for storage,” explains Robert. “It depends on the type of property, but generally the second staircase will compromise the first floor in some way.”

“On this project, if we site the staircase where Ross and Claire have requested, using the length of the current master bedroom, it will be in the middle of the loft room, and we feel this will compromise the liveable space. We would suggest they site the staircase on the other side using a metre of space from the second bedroom, where it meets the bathroom. This room could then be reconfigured and the space under the stairs could be used for storage or to create a small built-in wardrobe. It would also mean they could have a straight staircase with a small landing at the top, which will form the turn required.”

Robert has suggested building a dormer, with French doors and a Juliet balcony at the rear of the property, with three Velux windows at the front. “All plans will need local building control approval and can be adjusted to meet local requirements if required. A dormer will not only provide the benefit of extra floor space and head height but will bring in further natural

light,” he explains. “A loft room is often one of the brightest rooms in the home as it has the benefit of natural light from both the front and rear of the property.”

Robert has left the brick wall on the east side exposed (and sealed) as Ross and Claire requested, which leaves the eaves on the other side of the pitched roof for storage. “This perfectly utilises the dead space here and it allows the couple the flexibility to place the dressing table and desk area where it suits them best and to move the room around if they so wish at a later date,” explains Robert. “However, we would advise that they think about installing an ensuite, as this would increase the value of their property if they sell and bring added convenience whilst they’re living there.”

“With regard to lighting, we would be restricted in installing downlights, due to the ceiling insulation and fire regulations, so I would advise two pendants spaced evenly apart,” says Robert. “In addition, wall lights could provide a warm effect against the brickwork and would offer the added benefit of mood lighting.”

Robert's 21st Century Design 0800 756 6392
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Turn to page 74 for the specifications and verdict.





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SOLUTION



THE SPECIFICATIONS

Dormer	£12,000
Velux windows	£2500
Staircase	£2500
Design, planning and building works (inc decoration)	£23,000
Total	£40,000

THE VERDICT

"The full-height dormer in the loft is very appealing, providing extra headroom and abundant natural light," Ross says. "However, we worry what the external appearance would be like, especially as our home is nearly 150

years old. That said, Robert has dreamed up an amazing looking space which makes the most of the footprint and volume of the loft."

"This design is definitely more luxurious and far more spacious as a loft room, plus the fully exposed chimneybreast wall would look incredible," Clare enthuses. "My main concern, though, is with the stair access, which encroaches

on the current second bedroom floor space. I feel that this would become a box room – something we really wanted to avoid as we were hoping this would be a comfortable guest bedroom. So if we are thinking about our family (and not just as a beautiful retreat for me and Ross) and the house as a whole, the first solution just wins out."