



Stretch downwards

Who would have thought that this spacious room is actually a basement?



Clever building work can transform a home from underneath



WHO: Linda Hayden, her husband Paul and children Laura Jane, 20, and Haydn, 16.

WHERE: West London.

THE STRETCH: A basement dug out under the whole house.

THE COST: £300,000.

Linda Hayden had a substantial basement built under her home. It was never a matter of outgrowing the place, but Linda wanted an area that was less traditional than the

other rooms. As a Grade II-listed building in a conservation area, a loft extension would have proved complicated by regulations and, although she still had to get council permission for a basement, it was straightforward.

"Some friends had had one done, which we liked, so we checked the possibility of putting in a basement where none existed, and the cost," explains Linda. "We also saw other basements that had been done."

It was a massive undertaking, but all the earth was dug out and channelled through the garden – the house from ground floor level up was undisturbed. "We could have turned the space into one big room but we wanted a living area, an office that could be turned into a bedroom, a loo, shower room and a utility room. However, we also wanted open areas, not a rabbit warren," says Linda.

"The actual digging took six months, and in total the job took nine months. There were absolutely no problems, although they had to get rid of a lot of water, as the house is built on wet clay."

Linda says they do see the basement as an investment, as it has added immeasurably to the value of the home – about 20 to 30 per cent more – but they have no plans to move, and currently just enjoy it.

Linda used The London Basement Company, (020) 8847 9449, www.tlbc.co.uk. w&h