



WHEN ARCHITECT William Tunnell and his wife Juliette, a university lecturer, bought their three-storey C-listed terraced house in South Queensferry six years ago, they didn't envisage staying as long as they have. "We're effectively living in Edinburgh but we're not," says William – a 15-minute train journey takes you into the city centre after all. "So, rather than moving as our family got bigger and looking for somewhere else that would tick all the same boxes, we tried to make the most of the opportunities we had." William has since dramatically reconfigured the house, as it had previously been split into two properties.

For William, who set up his own practice four years ago and has a wide range of domestic projects in the pipeline, that meant creating space for an office outwith the busy environs of the family home.

The couple have two young daughters, so a tranquil homeworking zone was not a valid option.

The main benefit of the site is the view, which sweeps across the Forth, with the Road Bridge on the left and the Rail on the right. Few home offices boast such a stunning panorama. William made the most of it in his design, which incorporates an expanse of glazing along one wall, enabling him to enjoy the vista from his desk.

The concept for the building "was to get as much usable space as possible without losing too much from the garden", he says. The office is on a relatively small ledge and nestled up against the existing retaining wall. The area required a lot of digging, having been built up over the years. The ledge was extended slightly, with stilts support-

ing the front edge of the building – you can't see these today, as the space below is now used for storage. "We carved out this area and then slotted the building into place," explains William. The process may sound straightforward, but it actually involved weeks of backbreaking work.

The design takes the form of a simple box, which sits low when viewed from the lane, with its profile barely peeking above the retaining wall. "A lot of people enjoy the views, so I had to be sensitive to that," says William. Rather than masonry or timber, the building is clad in zinc panelling with Douglas fir detailing. "I wanted something crisp and sharp that would feel quite lightweight, and I wanted that sense of this being a crafted box, which it gains from the panelling," says William.

The internal space is just as crisp and serene, with an oak floor, white walls, built-in storage and a desktop elongated along one wall. There's also a shower room to one side. This is not only a practical consideration, as it doubles up the future use of the space – it could also work as guest quarters. "What's interesting about this building is that interface of work and domestic use," observes William. "That flexibility was important."

Meanwhile the palette is black and white, with a glossy black 'Detroit' lacquer cabinet from Habitat providing extra storage and a very non-office-like polished edge. "I'm not normally a black-and-white person," admits William – a fact his home attests to. "So it's been nice to play games here with this palette. And there's a whole world of colour outside in the landscape after all." □

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