



## Sarah Jefferys creates Passive House in Brooklyn with dramatic cedar screen

Jenna McKnight | 27 October 2022

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American studio Sarah Jefferys Design has renovated a slender townhouse in [Brooklyn](#) with airy rooms and a cedar screen on the facade to meet [Passive House](#) standards.

Located in the Park Slope neighbourhood, the Passive House project involved the overhaul of a brick-faced, three-storey townhouse built in 1921 and owned by a family of four.

New York-based designer [Sarah Jefferys](#) sought to create a tranquil living atmosphere with elements that pay homage to the family's Indian and Danish roots.

Moreover, the team wanted the 3,000-square-foot (279-square-metre) building to align with [Passive House](#) standards for energy efficiency.



*Sarah Jefferys Design remodelled a Brooklyn townhouse into a passive house*

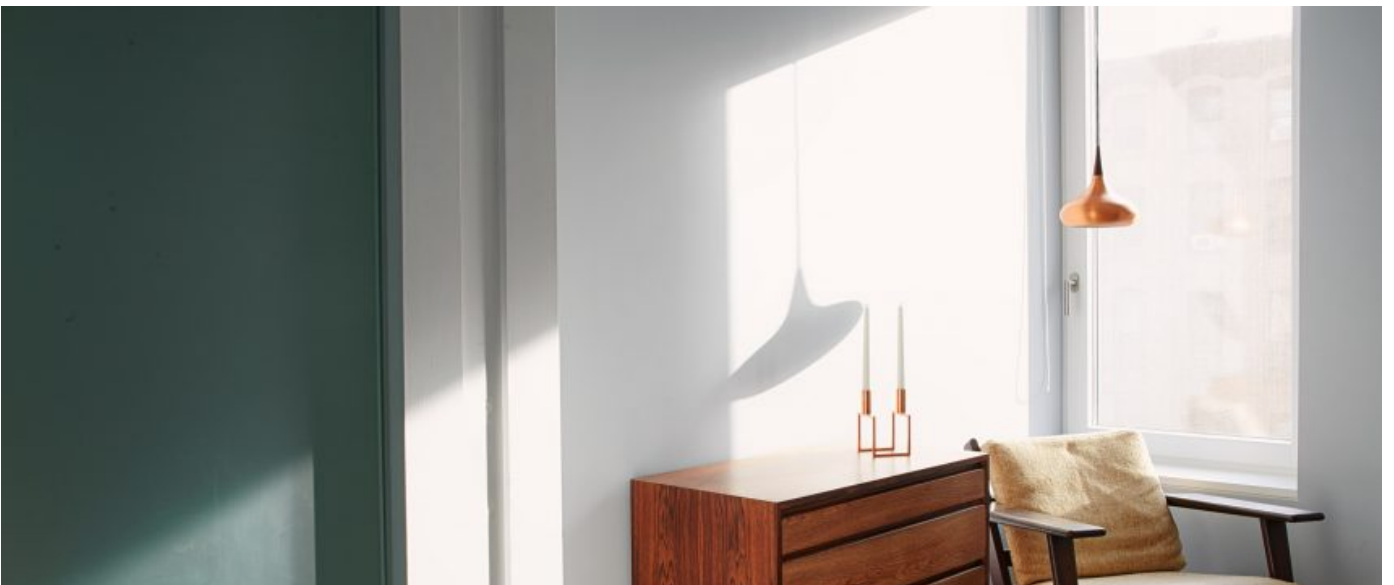


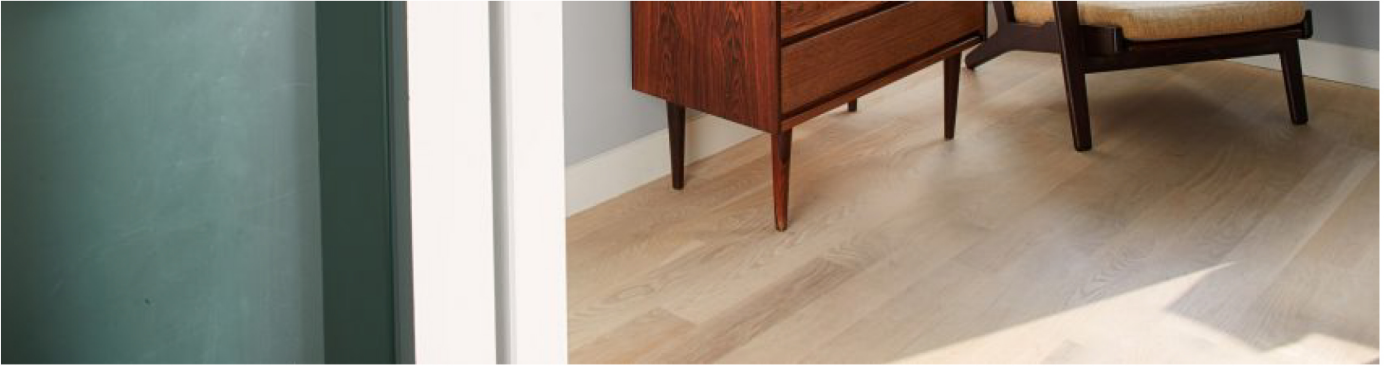
*High-quality windows were installed*

To significantly reduce heating and cooling needs, the team installed triple-pane [Zola](#) windows, which are often used in passive houses. Walls were reconstructed to create an airtight envelope, which included the addition of cellulose insulation.

The team also added an electric heat pump and an energy recovery ventilator, which helps purify the air.

The front facade was kept intact and refurbished, while the rear wall was redesigned to add ample glazing. To provide privacy and to modulate incoming daylight, the team added an artful [cedar](#) screen that acts as both "a sculpture and a veil".





*White oak was used to complement the bright colours*

Within the slender home, the team incorporated pops of colour and pale materials such as white oak.

"We strategically used light hues and reflective materials, and created an airy environment to offset the narrow footprint of the townhouse," the team said.

The ground level has an open plan and holds the communal spaces.



*Reflective and light materials helped the studio meet environmental standards*

Up front is the living room, where one finds a blue Living Divani sofa, rattan chairs from [Fritz Hansen](#) and a [Muuto](#) table.

A wood-burning fireplace, an element not often found in passive homes, sits between the living and dining areas.

To curb emissions from the hearth, the designers added a triple-pane glass enclosure and an

extraction fan with an insulated cap. Still, because of the fireplace, the home does not fully meet the [PHIUS](#) certification requirements, the designers said.

The all-white dining room is furnished with Ant chairs by [Arne Jacobsen](#) and a PH50 pendant by [Poul Henningsen](#). Just beyond is the "showpiece kitchen", which is framed with an LED light cove.



*The staircase has a skylight above*

"The light cove acts as a separation point – an outline – and provides an atmospheric glow throughout the kitchen," the team said.

In addition to the special lighting, the kitchen features slatted wooden cabinetry, yellow pendants by [Louis Poulsen](#), and an island topped with [Glassos](#) crystallized glass.

Part of the island consists of a live-sawn slab of white oak, which is lined with bar stools.



*The living room features a [Muuto](#) table*

"The beautiful juxtaposition between [Glassos](#) and white oak exemplifies the nature of the kitchen as both a practical work area and a leisurely lounge space for entertaining," the team said.

A sky-lit staircase leads to the upper levels. The first floor holds the main bedroom and bathroom, along with an office – all of which are arrayed along a corridor lined with frosted glass.

The main bedroom features a [BoConcept](#) bed, sconces by Robert Dudley Best for [Bestlite](#) and a graphic blanket by Pia Wallén for [HAY](#). The bathroom is adorned with matte glass and penny-round tiles from [Ann Sacks](#).

The office is infused with a "touch of nostalgia". Pieces include a [Hans Wegner](#) armchair, a teak Danish dresser and a 1962 copper pendant by [Jo Hammerborg](#).



*Bright colours were used throughout*

The top level contains a den and two additional bedrooms. The house also has a cellar.

Other Brooklyn townhouses include a house by Space4Architecture that has a skylit staircase and minimalist decor, and the [family home of architects Fanny and Matthew Mueller](#), which features floating steps and a wood-and-steel bridge.

*The photography is by Morten Smidt.*

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