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**Kitchen trends
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What you can
build without
permission

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- New Building
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- Letting light in
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- Pros & cons of
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Welcome

The summer is fast approaching; and our attention is turning to spending time outside and enjoying our gardens. If the weather is good, there is nothing better than lounging on the patio, spending time with friends and of course, indulging in a barbecue! With the importance of attractive and practical outside space in mind, it's unfortunate that so many self builders leave their landscaping plans out of their initial budget. This often results in otherwise pristine and gorgeous new homes being overshadowed by the swathes of mud that surround them. To ensure this doesn't happen to you, make sure you have plans (and finances) set for your garden from the outset of your project – read our expert advice on [page 86](#).

A great way to connect your home and garden is with glazed doors. The ability to push them open and link the interiors to the outdoors is a joy in the summer months, not to mention being a great way to add to your living space. But with the thousands of options available in terms of configuration, materials and glazing specification, it's not an easy choice. We answer your questions on the topic on [page 77](#) to help you pick the right product.

If you are thinking about undertaking a home improvement project over the warmer months, and don't want to be hampered by the delays of the planning system, we have a solution for you. Increase your space at home using your property's permitted development rights ([page 100](#)). With some careful consideration and creative design, you can build something that totally transforms your property – such as a rear or side extension. One extremely popular option is to create an open plan zone on the ground floor and integrate this with an addition to the back of your property to house a welcoming kitchen. We've got some great ideas on how you can furnish the zone and outline some space-efficient arrangements on [page 72](#).



Anna-Marie

ANNA-MARIE DESOUZA, EDITOR

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Design the perfect kitchen

Innovative trends, quality finishes and a practical layout that fits with your lifestyle are key to creating a new, functional kitchen, says Caroline Ferguson



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MEET THE TEAM



CHRIS BATES

is *Build It's* deputy editor. Amongst other things, he's turned his hand to plumbing, tiling and furniture making. This month he looks at the UK's most popular build system, brick and block ([page 90](#)) to help you decide whether it's right for your project



IFEOLUWA ADEDEJI

is *Build It's* assistant editor. With a keen interest in architecture, she's got an eye for the latest interior styles and emerging trends. Take a look at her interiors gallery ([page 15](#)) and her pick of some of *Build It's* best affordable homes ([page 16](#)).



MIKE HARDWICK

is a consultant and project management specialist. He has first-hand experience of self build and helps to deliver a course at Swindon's NSBRC. Turn to [page 110](#) for his expert advice on how to get your site connected to the essential utilities.



OPINDER LIDDAR

is a director at lapd architects and specialises in self build and renovation. He was awarded the title of Best Self Build Architect at the 2012 *Build It Awards*. This month Opinder looks at what you can build without planning permission, and the best ways to increase space at home ([page 100](#)).



MIKE DADE

is a planning specialist, and *Build It's* plot guru. He's the author of several must-read books on plots and planning. This month he looks at the importance of, and how to get, pre-app planning permission advice from your local council ([page 116](#)).



JULIAN OWEN

is *Build It's* design doctor and architecture expert. He is a self build architect and the chairman of the Association of Self Build Architects. This month, he finishes his tour of the UK looking at geology and its bearing on vernacular design ([page 104](#)).



ALAN TIERNEY

is a historic building consultant and conservation specialist. He runs Picketts Historic Building Conservation, offering hands on advice to period property owners. Don't miss his series, on [page 96](#), which follows the process of renovating a run down home in the Peak District.



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June 2014 issue

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READERS' HOMES

COVER STORY

Dreams & echoes

Having lived in their run-down riverside home for nearly a decade, Bill and Angie Jenkins built a New England-style house in its place that does justice to the gorgeous setting

Trojan spirit

It was hard to track down the perfect plot within the M25, and harder to get a mortgage, but the Mintons' sustainable prefabricated home was worth the extra effort

Slow & steady

The Thundercliffes' hand-crafted barn conversion benefits from their thrifty approach to using reclaimed materials

Location is everything

Packed with hi-tech features but still built on a budget, Stephen Read's steel-framed house has been designed to fit on to a tight plot while making the most of its estuary views

Hidden depths

The perfect old-meets-new home: Alastair Garnett renovated a listed Georgian cottage on a Scottish estate, then built a cleverly hidden extension behind it

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COVER STORY

Design the perfect kitchen

Planning tips, top trends and new products – the latest design options for creating a beautifully functional space

COVER STORY

Glazed doors FAQ

We put your questions to the experts to help you choose sliding or bi-fold doors that will bring the outside in

How to self build: materials

Source and buy building products like a pro with our guide

Choosing a green deal assessor

Discover what an experienced expert can offer your project

Hard landscaping

From fencing to patios, here's how to make your new home blend in stylishly with its surroundings

Building with brick and block

The pros and cons of traditional masonry construction

The period house project

Alan Tierney's team focus on the historic plasterwork

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10 of the best
budget builds
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EXPERT HELP

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No planning required 100

What can you build without planning consent? Opinder Liddar explains how to add space with minimum hassle

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Read the last of architect Julian Owen's series exploring the link between geology and traditional house design

Gold standards 106

Project consultant Mike Hardwick explains why Building Regulations matter, and your options for getting approval

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Meet the new targets 108

The Regs regarding measuring the energy efficiency of new homes have changed: stay up to speed with this quick guide

Plot watch: the national plan 114

The Lukes want to use the government's recent push for more self builds to create a new home on a garden plot

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Should you consult your local authority prior to submitting a planning application? Mike Dade explains pre-app advice

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SUPERIOR



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inspiration



A true reflection

This grade II listed Georgian townhouse is set in a popular west London location. The property has been injected with a host of contemporary features that have transformed it into a modern family home.

Dos Architects opened up and extended the four-bedroom house to create a large kitchen-dining area. They achieved this by knocking through and merging the ground floor and semi-basement area.

The architects also designed the bespoke kitchen, which has sliding white cabinets doors that are internally

lit and follow clean straight lines. The theme of uniformity continues with the large format floor tiles that stretch through to the outside patio area. These features help the stunning double-height space to flow seamlessly via the beamless bi-fold door out to the garden.

A glass ceiling was placed over the rear extension to form a first floor terrace to offer further outdoor space. Inside, a single glazed wall panel links to the impressive glass balustrade in the hallway. This feature helps to keep the space looking light and feeling spacious.

For more details call 020 7253 8222 or visit www.dosarchitects.com

PROJECT OF THE MONTH

Wedge House by Soup Architects

Soup Architects designed this award-winning contemporary family home on an irregularly-shaped garden plot in Surrey. The size and location of the site encouraged the team to work inventively to meet what's becoming a common brief; a home to suit three generations of family.

The resulting house is an energy efficient five-bedroom property constructed using steel and a highly insulated, in-filled timber frame. The design team incorporated large recessed external walls that help avoid overlooking issues. A private south-west-facing first floor balcony wraps around a significant section of the upper storey.

The comfy snug area on the ground floor has been designed with future use in mind; should the family need to employ it as a sixth bedroom space, the WC and shower room next door will make sure that access won't be an issue in years to come.

Natural light is directed into the hub of the home via triangular-shaped rooflights that illuminate the space. Large triple sliding doors lead out to a small decked patio area, which opens onto a manicured lawn.

For more details call 020 7354 1729 or visit souparchitects.com



PICS: ANDY MATTHEWS



What's on?

BUILD IT READER EVENT WITH FRAME WISE 7TH JUN 2014

A must-visit, information-packed day designed to help you self build successfully.
POWYS, WALES
self-build.co.uk/reader-event-frame-wise

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EVENT!**

LOG BUILDING 26TH MAY - 6TH JUN £1,776 SHROPSHIRE britishlogcabins.com

FESTIVAL OF ARCHITECTURE 1-30TH JUN FREE LONDON londonfestivalofarchitecture.co.uk

ART & ANTIQUES 5TH - 15TH JUN £20 OLYMPIA, LONDON olympia-art-antiques.com

ASK AN ARCHITECT 14TH JUN FREE NSBRC, SWINDON nsbrc.co.uk

OAKWRIGHTS OPEN DAY 14TH JUN FREE KENT oakwrights.co.uk

BASIC SKILLS: ELECTRICS 15TH JUN £165 LONDON thegoodlifecentre.co.uk

TIMBER REPAIRS 16TH - 17TH JUN £310 WEALD & DOWN www.wealddown.co.uk

BIG HOME IMPROVEMENT SHOW 20TH - 22ND JUN FREE NSBRC, SWINDON nsbrc.co.uk

HOW TO START YOUR BUILD 27TH JUN £75 NSBRC, SWINDON selfbuildacademy.co.uk

THE ROOFING SQUARE 2ND JUL £110 WEALD & DOWN OPEN AIR MUSEUM www.wealddown.co.uk

Frame Wise invites readers on tour

Build It magazine is relaunching its popular Reader Events to offer you the chance to gain the advice you need to complete a successful self build project. Our first event takes place on 7th June in association with Frame Wise at its showroom in Powys, Wales. This informative and inspirational day will give you the tools you need to move forward with your self build project. There will be a wealth of seminars and activities to attend. For more information visit: self-build.co.uk/reader-event-frame-wise

Self build firms to help council

Wokingham Borough Council is seeking experienced self build enablers to help aspiring homeowners create their own houses. The council's first self build scheme aims to: "find suitable locations and explore the appetite for such a programme, which we believe will be substantial, within the community before the end of the summer," says councillor John Kaser.

£150m
of funding has been allocated
by the government to support
the self and custom build sector

Three-dimensional house printing

The world's first 3D printed house is now under construction in Amsterdam. Dus Architects are using a custom made printer that produces a bio-plastic material 10 times thicker than normal print outputs.

Future printed house will be designed to meet personal tastes. A big selling-point is that the method reduces waste. "If you print in plastic you can recycle the materials," says co-founder and director, Martine de Wit.

industry news

We need to create 'a living countryside'

I was delighted to read that the Princess Royal recently spoke up in support of one of my pet subjects; promoting incremental development in rural villages rather than creating large settlements on the edge of towns, or potentially, in the middle of the countryside. Speaking at a housing conference in Cheltenham in February, she questioned, as do I, the need for developments of up to 15,000 houses to meet the estimated shortfall of 240,000 affordable homes in the UK, when small scale projects of six to 12 houses spread around existing villages could do the same and keep rural Britain alive.

The trouble is that large developments need infrastructure to support them – new schools, shops, community centres plus road and rail links. It is this sort of radical expansion that leads to anger and resentment as existing communities are faced with massive upheaval and change, which they often feel powerless to stop. That said, the new 'Garden City' recently announced for Ebbsfleet in Kent appears to have some local support, (although strictly, planning consent for it has been in place for years). It requires a complete regeneration, so a large-scale development is welcome. But I can't think of anywhere else in the south of England where a 15,000 home development could be parachuted in without massive opposition.

The answer could lie in the organic development of rural areas through self building. Existing villages struggle to support the traditional format of shop, pub and school as house prices push out the younger residents to cheaper accommodation in the towns. The remaining population age gracefully in a lovely village preserved in aspic. Older residents won't be producing children to populate the school, and affluent householders drive to the supermarket every week rather than using the local shop. They're rarely seen dropping in for a casual pint at the pub. Villages need a regular injection of new blood to live, thrive and survive, so let's encourage young families to stay by allowing a few affordable houses to be built at the edges of them, as well as the occasional bespoke family home.

Perhaps the biggest obstacle to incremental rural development is the fear that by permitting a few individual homes, many more will inevitably follow. This is where community-led planning through the nascent neighbourhood plans (created under the Localism Act) comes into its own. Let the residents decide where or what to build, and use the planning process to approve housing that each area needs and supports. I don't always agree with the Campaign to Protect Rural England (CPRE), but to quote the chief executive: "We want a living countryside not a countryside of commuter villages or retirement ghettos."

MIKE HARDWICK

is a self build consultant and project management specialist. He helps to deliver a three day self build course at the National Self Build and Renovation Centre in Swindon. Follow Mike's blog online at self-build.co.uk/blog/mike-hardwick



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If you're hoping to create a clean and uniform looking roof then why not specify these Barkham brown tiles? They're ideal for new builds and refurbishments, as they're very simple to lay and will achieve an attractive finish. andersonroofingsupplies.co.uk

product news

Great shopping ideas for your custom home project



IN THE FRAME

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Aluminium doors, from £200, blackmillwork.co.uk



SMOOTH THINGS OVER

Establish good decorative order from the outset using this versatile and eco-friendly plaster. Once dry there's no need to paint as the 'through colour' element helps to produce an on-trend and rustic finish. **Argilus plaster, £15 per m², ecomerchant.co.uk**



VANITY FAIR

Handmade by skilled master craftsmen using high quality British design, this bespoke vanity unit can be integrated into your bathroom to generate practical and stylish storage space. **£4,630, williamgarvey.co.uk**



A NEAT TRIM

If you're dreading venturing out to mow an overgrown lawn, this clever gardening tool will make the job much easier. It has been designed to precision trim tall blades of grass and cut over small turfed areas. **Black & Decker Cordless 3-in-1 Strimmer, £139.99, diy.com**



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1 HST insulated sliding door from £1,695 hormann.co.uk



2 Carteck GSW40 door from £2,500, chamberlaindoors.co.uk



3 Curved oak garage door from £6,000, rundum.co.uk

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It's never too early to start looking for the finishing touches for your self build



2



3



5



4



Shopping list

- 1** Add some colour to your living space with this modern table set. Mix and match shades or pick the equally appealing clear glass option **Nest of three tables**, £615, barkerandstonehouse.co.uk
- 2** Give your decor an industrial edge with this cleverly-designed contemporary light fitting **Cowley pendant** with braided cable & ceiling rose, £75, jim-lawrence.co.uk
- 3** This bespoke covering is the perfect statement piece for your kitchen. It's handmade using glass fused with enamel **Splashback**, from £756 (600mm x 600mm), steverobinsonsglass.com
- 4** Every home deserves a sofa that's made-to-measure and designed to fit the space. This one also has an array of colours to choose from **Freestyle couch**, £1,244.99, hellosofas.com
- 5** Decorate your home with these eco-friendly tiles. They're easy to install and will create a great feature wall **Bee Apis wood tiles**, £28 for three, monoculodesign.com



of the best affordable self build homes

We've picked a selection of stylish readers' homes that were all achieved on a modest budget



MIKE BLACK

← CRAFTY SOLUTIONS

Designers Greig and Kathleen Munro created the nautically themed Driftwood Cottage on a tiny plot in a Scottish conservation area. This compact, cost-effective home by the sea is highly insulated; this, together with the aid of a beautiful woodburning stove, means their house stays warm and bills are kept low. However, the construction of the cottage wasn't all plain sailing: Greig and Kathleen discovered that they required more space than they'd allowed for the heating pipes. Their innovative solution was to hire a boat-builder to bend marine ply into curved rafters, creating room for the pipes to run in between.

The project cost £149,800.

MODEL LOOKS →

Local councillor Bryan Stuart built a contemporary timber kit home, which he's christened the Model D house, over a period of four years. Bryan wanted to create affordable housing that was also sustainable, durable and low maintenance – a prototype kit home that his Aberdeenshire constituents would be able to purchase. The design is perfect for the countryside due to its low visual impact, so much so that he had no problem gaining planning consent. A steep pitched roof with overhanging eaves protects the larch cladding from the elements, as does the rain screen. The latter design feature is also "good for growing plants," says Bryan. The project cost £185,000.



DOUGLAS SINCLAIR



JEREMY PHILLIPS

NEW BEGINNINGS ↑

Building their Herefordshire home on a former funeral parlour could have turned into a nightmare project, especially when Merry and Ben Albright discovered that the plot they'd purchased was too small to house the oak frame cottage they'd already ordered. The couple managed to turn things around by acquiring additional land from the neighbours and now have a picture-perfect property, complete with exposed beams and a bespoke handmade kitchen. The project cost £138,500.



MARGARET SINCLAIR

← NORTHERN SIGHTS

Margaret and Douglas Sinclair inherited a family summerhouse set on an idyllic archipelago in the Shetlands. They chose to knock it down and self build something that would reflect the local vernacular and also withstand the harsh weather. Starting from scratch also permitted them to claim back VAT on materials. Although the local council restricted the scale of the proposed house to that of the existing structure, they have still achieved an open plan, light-filled Scandinavian – style home that is spacious and airy. The couple's aim to build sustainably meant using lots of wood – even the kitchen was manufactured using recycled timber. The project cost £159,000.

A STEP UP →

Hannah Jones and Theo Hadnett's dream of owning a home was made possible by a Shropshire council's 'build your own' scheme. Their local authority lifted planning restrictions in the area to boost the creation of affordable housing, increasing the number of low-cost properties in the area – and giving the couple the opportunity to follow the self build route. To stick to their already low budget, the couple got as hands on as they possibly could, with Theo doing all of the joinery work himself. This enabled them to spend money in other areas, such as the installation of a ground-source heat pump, which links to an underfloor heating system. **The project cost £122,500.**



JEREMY PHILLIPS

VALUE IN DESIGN ↓

When the Adam and Therese Toleman bought a 19th-century manse in Falkirk, they soon realised that they had the potential to self build on the considerably large plot without needing to demolish the historic dwelling. They initially opted for a timber frame build, but locating a manufacturer proved difficult due to the complexity of their design. In the end they used aerated blocks – which drove up costs, but didn't stop them from achieving the thermal performance they wanted. **The project cost £200,000.**



DOUGLAS GIBB

← PRIVATE HIDEAWAY

Two years into their search for a private and peaceful retreat, Petrea and Rick Middleton found a derelict bungalow in north Cornwall that would become their self build project. Although the plot came with planning permission, the design needed to be reworked to meet their requirements. Things ran smoothly because the couple made every effort to ensure that neighbours and planners approved of their proposal for a green oak frame building. To keep costs down, however, they opted for uniform-sized windows and installed a low cost ex-display kitchen from John Lewis. Their lime-rendered walls have been left unpainted and the softwood flooring has been finished using environmentally friendly products. **The project cost £207,000.**



ALEX PRAIT

FINDING INSPIRATION →

Architects Iain and Suzanne Malcolmson say that project managing their own build helped them appreciate what their clients go through. The pair first set out to create a holiday home in Scotland, but were so pleased with what they'd created they made it their permanent residence. Their thermally efficient home was built using structural insulated panels (SIPs); its design was inspired by local croft housing, and the discovery of Viking longhouses in the area. **The project cost £205,000.**



JO SHELDRAKE



DOUGLAS GIBB

MODERN TRIALS ↑

When architect Simon Corbett and his wife Nicky moved back to the UK from Hong Kong, they were ready to build their family home. Finding a plot in an area of outstanding natural beauty in Somerset was always going to be a challenge, but when Simon received a call from a local estate agent, he wasted no time in viewing the parcel of land and then purchasing it. Being keen on experimentation – and not-so-keen on timber frame builds – Simon used insulating concrete formwork (ICF) to construct the traditional-looking home. Once the exterior met with the planners' approval, the couple designed a very contemporary interior to suit their tastes. There are no internal supporting walls in this home, which employs clever design elements, such as the staircase and suspended dual-facing fire, to divide the spaces and define separate zones. **The project cost £186,000.**

A LOGICAL ROUTE ↓

Although their Yorkshire plot already had outline planning permission, the fact that it was situated in an area of archaeological interest meant that Mike and Sue Housley needed to have a special survey completed before works could proceed. After receiving expensive quotes for a brick-and-block build they decided to explore other methods, eventually settling on insulating concrete formwork (ICF) from specialists Logix. To save money on the construction of their contemporary-style villa, the couple enrolled on a course to learn how put the blocks in place in preparation for the concrete infill. "Doing it all yourself, you are slower but more precise," says Mike: the blocks took them just four weeks to put in place in the end, and saved them thousands in labour costs. **The project cost £91,588.**



MIKE BLACK



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THE WOODS' Renovation diary

NAMES George & Rosie Woods
LOCATION North London
PROJECT Renovation of a large Victorian property to convert it into a single residence (was previously flats)
HOUSE SIZE 214m² (2,303 ft²)
PROJECT COST £400,000
WORK COMMENCED October 2013
TIME ON SITE 24 weeks



George and Rosie Woods face countless decisions as they battle to keep their renovation on track

The flecks of grey in our hair suggest we've grown older since our last progress report. The closer we get to our move-in date the longer it seems to be taking. It feels like time has slowed down. Fortunately, the house is most definitely not standing still.

Decisions are being made each and every minute and our home is constantly evolving. We've been choosing lighting fixtures, WCs, the height of shower heads, ovens, fridges, taps, radiators, window locks, stair carpets, flooring and more! Even when we're not there, decisions are being made. Sometimes this is a good thing, as it enables the build to continue according to schedule. But at other times we have to ask for unexpected design surprises to be undone. Everyone who is working on this project is treading a fine line, but so far, we're all still on the right side of it. We do feel some sympathy for our builder – if he asked us to take a decision on everything, we'd never get the project finished on time.

New features

In the last few weeks we've seen all the glazing fitted, which means we're finally watertight (apart from the folding sliding doors on the back of the house). All of the rooflights are in and they make upstairs feel light and airy. We also have a largely completed chimney, which will be the focal point of the

finished house. It's all looking amazing. We're excited about the new floor in the front room, which is made up of a beam-and-block base, a layer of 100mm insulation board, underfloor heating, and concrete screed on top.

Solid wall insulation has been applied to the entire building



The external wall insulation (EWI) has been a big headache. The workmanship cannot be faulted, but with the government reducing grant availability under the Energy Company Obligation scheme (ECO) – the funding we were accessing to pay for the insulation of our solid brick wall house and roof – we had to get the work completed before the money started tailing off.

Our application went in just before the grants started to diminish, and we weren't the only homeowners looking to fit their EWI before the cut. This meant that our insulation installer was hugely overworked coming up to the deadline. Getting the company to prioritise our property has been difficult. With a £13,500 grant riding on it, we pushed them hard. We're still scratching our heads about why the government reduced the grants – if houses are

well insulated they'll use much less energy, which will mean less strain on energy supplies. Isn't that what the government wants?

One of the main challenges has been around scaffolding: our builder needs it taken down in order to move on to the next phase of the project, but the insulation installers need it up to be able to apply the final render coat. This could ultimately delay our project by a week or two, and also cost us money.



A tradesman lays Celotex floor insulation, which will be in-filled using Rockwool

Having witnessed the fitting of the solid board insulation, we are learning that it's a precise art. The level of craftsmanship involved from the builders can require a change in approach from tradesmen who are less familiar with green construction techniques, and it can sometimes be difficult to get this message across. We have been insisting that small gaps between the boards are in-filled with Rockwool or expanding foam insulation in order to try to achieve the insulation performance we want.

Air tightness is another big reason why we need to be so vigilant when sealing the gaps between boards. We realised we

made a mistake with our air-tightness strategy at the start of our project. We removed the roof entirely, and at the time we should have applied a membrane to the top of the external wall, running under the eaves and up the inside of the roof, before installing a layer of sterling board internally. This would have guaranteed a fully air-tight covering. Having missed the opportunity to apply the membrane before the roof went back on, we've just got the sterling board; it will still be effective, just not as much.

We're still hoping that we can get the insulation and air tightness right, as we've invested in a new mechanical ventilation and heat recovery system (MVHR), and the three components all work together. Weaknesses in one area reduce the performance of the others. We have an air-tightness test booked in soon, so we're holding our breaths in anticipation.

Money matters

Elsewhere we are making good progress. We have been reconnected to the gas grid and the council has created the pavement crossover. The latter is a vitally important step to making the house usable since parking on our street can be very busy. We don't want to unload our family supermarket shop from way down the road, so we're very happy this has been completed.

We are also choosing our kitchen, and we have to be very budget-focused here; we're still working out what we can afford. On the other hand, we have found some budget-busting lights that we both love for the top of the house and are debating whether or not to forgo the patio in order to



have them. This build is making us both slightly irrational.

We are roughly 5% over budget, which is more than we would like, but it's better than it could have been – so we're grateful to all involved for keeping us on track.

Above: The new mechanical ventilation and heat recovery system

Quick decisions

The plumber and the electricians have worked hard over the past two weeks and it was remarkable how quickly they finished their jobs. It's been a bit unnerving having just a couple of days to make decisions about where all the sockets and TV/ telephone points go, especially in the kitchen, which we've not yet designed. It all seems a bit upside down, and without an architect it's like we are shooting in the dark, which isn't a nice feeling.

Emotionally, the project is taking its toll, too. We understood that a renovation is a gruelling experience, but neither of us had quite grasped how it would take over our lives. The constant decisions mean that life has been hijacked by 'the house'. We go to bed discussing decisions, then wake up in the morning and talk through our options. Normal life has been on the back-burner for the best part of six months now.

Living in rented accommodation while paying a mortgage means that any disposable income goes towards the project. I think we'll both be happy when we can reclaim our life of children, family and friends. It'll all be worthwhile when we move in to our finished home in early July... we hope!

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WIN! One of three Mira tap & shower sets



Updating a tired bathroom can be a very exciting process – especially when it comes to selecting the finishes. With so many fittings to choose from, however, it can ultimately become a little daunting.

That's why we've teamed up with bathroom specialist Mira Showers to offer three *Build It* readers the opportunity to win a Mira Evolve tap set, which includes the sink monobloc and bath filler, plus a stunning Mira Agile ERD shower set.

Part of the new and highly efficient Aspects tap collection, the Evolve has been

designed using clean lines to create a trendy geometric look. The sleek lever is simple to operate and contemporary in style. The faucet is suitable for use at all typical domestic water pressures. The elegant slimline body and spout have integrated aerators that help to prevent limescale build-up.

The Evolve is not just a beautiful addition to your bathroom, it's durable to boot – the turn cartridges have been tested to over half a million cycles. So you can expect a long-lasting product that not only looks good for longer but performs well, too.

Bundled with each winner's set will be Mira's two-headed Agile ERD shower. The fitting offers three times more flow than similar mixers and its twin shower heads feature rub-clean nozzles, making maintenance that much easier.

Mira products are available to buy at plumber's and builder's merchants, DIY stores and bathroom showrooms nationwide. For more information call 0844 571 0005 or visit www.mirashowers.co.uk

HOW TO ENTER THE COMPETITION



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Terms and conditions

Three readers will win a Mira tap and shower set worth £800 each, comprising a Mira Evolve tap set and a Mira Agile ERD shower set. The prize includes delivery, but not installation. No cash alternative will be offered. Entry is only open to consumers who are aged 18 years or over and who are resident in mainland UK. Castle Media and other companies involved in the competition may use your details to let you know about other products and services we think may be of interest to you. Occasionally we make names and addresses known to vetted companies. Please state clearly on your entry if you would NOT like your details passed on by ticking the checkbox on the online entry form. Castle Media will use your information for administration and analysis. Please state clearly on your entry if you would NOT like to be contacted by ticking the checkbox on the online entry form. All winners will be picked at random. Names and counties of winners from all the competitions in this issue are available by sending a SAE to: Winners June 2014, Build It, Castle Media, 4th Floor, Earls Court Centre, Warwick Road, SW5 9TA. The competition closes on 1 June 2014. If you enter after the advertised closing date you will not be entered into the competition.

your views:

Got a funny story, a gripe or some superb self build advice? Write to us at buildit@castlemedia.co.uk or the address below for your chance to win a prize



star letter

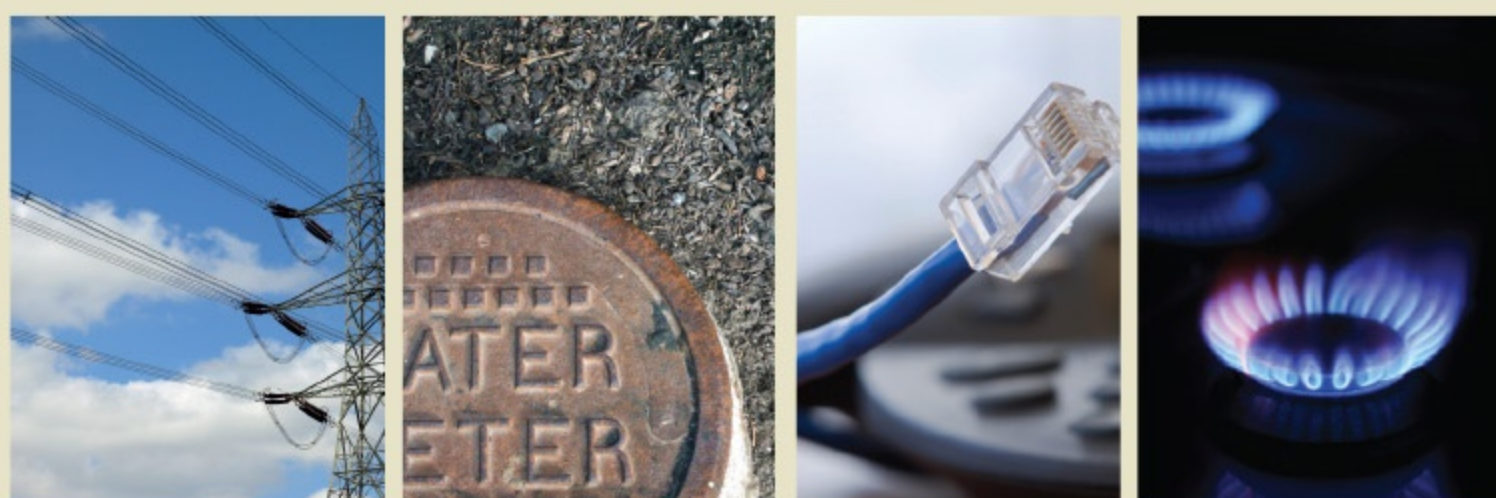
The right connection

The star letter writer wins an Einhell cordless drill & vacuum worth £149.99

My husband and I have just completed our build in Wales. While it all went relatively smoothly, one particular aspect of the project that we wish we'd had more advice on was the services, which extended the duration of our build by at least 10 weeks. We had to fill in forms and send them off to the relevant departments, who subsequently lost them. This meant we then had to start the process all over again. We'd also severely underestimated the price of connecting to mains gas, as well as having to negotiate our sewers access on a neighbouring farm, which the owner then had to sign off on, leading to more legal charge.

Viv Gill by telephone

Editor's reply: *Services can be a tricky area, especially if complications creep in as they seem to have done on your project. The 'Get Connected' article in our May issue focussed on this aspect of a build and included advice on when to start contacting providers – although unfortunately it didn't come round in time for you, hopefully it will help others! In the article, our self build consultant Mike Hardwick suggested you should do it as soon as you are granted planning permission. You can now read his in-depth feature online at www.self-build.co.uk/services-on-site*



Claiming back VAT

We've recently completed and moved into our new home and are at a stage where we're ready to start looking at claiming back our VAT. An article in your November 2012 issue mentions that there is a form called 431NB that we have to fill in. I've looked everywhere for it on the HMRC website, but I can't seem to find it anywhere. Can you offer any advice on where to locate it?

Terence, by telephone



Editor's reply:

Congratulations on the completion of your self build. If you've kept all your VAT receipts then the next stage of filling out the reclaim form should be fairly straightforward. You can access it via the HMRC website at: www.hmrc.gov.uk/forms/vat431nb.pdf

Let's build together

Many self build dreams have been squashed by the realities of land prices, so I would like to appeal to any individuals or families interested in homebuilding north of Aberdeen, in Dyce.

My idea is that we should group together to buy a large plot. If, for example, four families did this, the land would become more affordable and we could then divide it between us to build on.

Of course there are other factors to take into account, but all-in-all if people worked together to acquire the site, then each person would have the opportunity to create their dream home.

The problem that I'm finding is that either the plots are too expensive or that the location is too far from work. I believe that the answer is for people to use their collective purchasing

power. If anyone is interested, contact me via email: gatu.kaakunga@stork.com

Editor's reply:

There's been a huge increase the number of people considering self build opportunities in the UK and we agree that group building can be a great option. Check out the Custom Build Register at www.custombuildregister.co.uk – it's a great place to start your plot search.

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Readers' homes

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Bill and Angie Jenkins had found their perfect spot on the Thames, but their run-down house was far from ideal. In its place they've built a handsome New England-style home

37 TROJAN SPIRIT

The Mintons wanted to self build within the M25. Having finally bagged an infill plot in Purley, they constructed a sustainable prefabricated house that's traditional on the outside, but modern within

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With a philosophy to do it once, and do it well, the Thundercliffes' barn conversion took a decade to complete, but oozes period charm thanks to its hand-crafted elements and use of reclaimed materials

55 LOCATION IS EVERYTHING

Stephen Read bought the house next door to knock it down and replace it with a gadget-packed steel-framed home that capitalises on some great views

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From the approach, you'd never know that Alastair Garnett's Georgian cottage has a smart contemporary extension



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Dreams & echoes

Bill and Angie Jenkins

knocked down a crumbling 'shed' to create a stunning eco home in an idyllic waterside location

WORDS JANET MCMEEKIN

PHOTOS PHIL RABY



THE JENKINS FILE

NAMES Bill & Angie Jenkins

OCCUPATIONS Company director
& school bursar

LOCATION Thorpe, Surrey

TYPE OF BUILD New build

STYLE Contemporary

CONSTRUCTION METHOD

Timber frame & SIPs

PLOT SIZE 630m²

HOUSE SIZE 188m² (2,024ft²)

LAND COST £285,000
(including old house)

BOUGHT January 2002

BUILD COST £253,262

COST PER M² £1,347 (£125 per ft²)

TOTAL COST £538,262

VAT RECLAIM £17,000

BUILDING WORK COMMENCED

March 2010

BUILDING WORK TOOK

26 weeks

CURRENT VALUE

£1,000,000

When Bill Jenkins brings his 40-foot motorboat alongside the private mooring that's right next to his stunning contemporary home on the Thames, he almost has to pinch himself. "I feel so incredibly lucky," he says. "After years of working hard and saving, we've finally built a house that we absolutely adore, and have the perfect lifestyle so we can enjoy every day to the full."

In 2002, when Bill and his wife Angie were house hunting, they snapped up a modest two-bedroom property in the village of Thorpe, near Staines in Surrey. "We're boating people so, although the house was basically three shed-like buildings knocked together, the location was amazing, and that's what really appealed," says Bill. "At the back of our minds, I guess, we secretly aspired to the dream of building a fabulous home here but, at the time, that was definitely a bridge too far. We moved in and decided to see how life would pan out before committing to any future plans."

Eight years later, having built up a successful business, the couple began to take stock. Realising that retirement was creeping up and their house was gradually rotting away, they knew that drastic action

The bamboo flooring is a good match for the underfloor heating, which is powered by air-source heat pump



would need to be taken soon. “We had three choices,” says Bill. “Either we sold, renovated or knocked down and started again – the latter being the most appealing and exciting option.”

Buoyed by the possibility of self building, the Jenkins, who’d managed to amass £50,000 in savings, sensibly decided to explore whether they would be able to get a mortgage or not. “This proved to be a major hurdle that took an unbelievable 16 months,” says Bill. “Unfortunately, lenders were not at all helpful or interested. During our tentative research into the prospect of building a kit home, we came across Potton, which put us in touch with BuildStore. They in turn suggested contacting the Bath Building Society and, thankfully, they agreed to lend us the extra £200,000 required to top up our existing mortgage.”

Clean and contemporary

With finances in place, Bill and Angie began their self build journey and started seriously considering the style of home that they felt would best suit both their riverside plot and their lifestyle. “We fancied a contemporary home with clean lines that would be open plan and easy to maintain,” says Bill. The wish-list continued: “The house needed to be energy-efficient, have large windows



The Jenkins adapted Potton's New England-style Dartmoor design for their SIPs-built home



“If you have the vision and belief that you can build your own home, you will do it”



White gloss units give a clean, spacious look in the kitchen. The hub of the room is an island with hob and breakfast bar; the perfect sociable space where friends and family can gather

and the principal rooms had to make the most of the breathtaking views along the river."

Inspired by one of Potton's standard designs, a New England-style bungalow called Dartmoor, the couple started to liaise with the firm's architects. Soon, plans were drawn up for a maintenance-free home made from timber frame and fibre-cement board structural insulated panels (SIPs), in a style that the couple believed would blend easily into their watery surroundings. "While researching kit homes, we were very aware that access to our property is very restricted," says Bill. "One of the reasons that Potton particularly appealed was the flexibility in the size of their SIPs. We knew that there was no way a large lorry carrying big panels could ever get down the leafy lane leading to the house."

Having finalised the smaller details of their new home's design, plans were submitted and, 16 weeks later, the Jenkins were delighted when they heard that they'd been approved. "With Potton, we paid a fixed fee to submit the plans and gain planning consent," says Bill. "It transpired that there were no problems in getting permission, but this approach definitely gave us peace of mind. Since the plot is right on the river Thames, an additional planning permission requirement was a flood risk assessment, which we had to arrange ourselves. This went through without a hitch."

Grand development

In March 2012, the Jenkins moved out of their house to stay rent-free with their kind next-door neighbours for the duration of the build. "Watching our house being demolished proved to be an emotional day," says Bill. "On the one hand, the house that we'd lived happily in for 10 years was being knocked down, which was sad, but on the other hand, this was the beginning of something new and very exciting – like a rebirth. The speed of the demolition was incredible; within a couple of days the undeniably flimsy sheds had been razed to the ground."

Unfortunately, while the new foundations were being laid, the UK began to experience the start of what would turn out to be one of the wettest summers since records began. "At times, the slab looked like a swimming pool," says Bill. "It was frustrating since the continual rain held the project back by at least three weeks."

When the weather improved slightly, Potton's team was able to erect the wooden frame. "It was terrific," says Bill. "The frame went up very quickly. An added bonus was the fact that we were able to make design tweaks without any hassle, such as shifting the position of a couple of interior doors and some walls in the dressing room."

Right from the start of their project, the couple played a hands-on role. Bill got involved in dismantling the old house, helping to clear the site and dig out the foundations. When Potton left the site, he took on the mantle of project manager as well as tackling numerous jobs, such as fitting the bathrooms.

Angie got stuck in too, helping with the insulation and laying the bamboo flooring; she was also in charge of many smaller yet significant design aspects and details that would create that all-important quality finish for the build. "We worked evenings and weekends and, at the end of each day, we'd have a look at our spreadsheet to ensure finances were on track. It was extremely tough but we thoroughly enjoyed it," says Bill.

Hard at work

Bill has no doubt that being on site every day – and working alongside tradesmen that he describes as "excellent" – was key to the success of this project, which took just 26 weeks to complete. "They were all fabulous to work with. We were very blessed," he says. "Our association with Potton led us to a top team."



This pic and above: The Jenkins wanted clean lines and contemporary style, summed up by simple, high-quality detailing such as the glass and timber staircase

WE LEARNED...

FINANCIAL PLANNING is critical. We were very careful about the budget so that things didn't spiral out of control.

BE PREPARED to live, eat and breathe your project from the outset. It's bound to take over your life, but if you fully embrace it, eventually you'll reap the rewards. Being on site practically every day was essential.

TRY NOT to get too frustrated if bad weather holds things up. Just work with it and try not get too stressed – which is easier said than done!

IF YOU THINK that tradesmen aren't doing as good a job as you'd expected, don't simply ignore it and hope for the best. Chances are your instincts will be right, and the quicker you put a stop to any shoddy workmanship, the better.



Extensive decking, accessible from the master bedroom as well as the living room, fulfils the Jenkins' original brief for a house that made the most of its waterside location





The house is 1.5 storeys, with a study and bedroom plus ensuite upstairs. Clever fitted joinery makes good use of the tricky eaves spaces



One slight hiccup, which occurred during the first-fix plumbing, was very swiftly sorted out. Another problem, which arose when it was discovered that the measurements for the bespoke staircase were wrong, was also tackled without a fuss. “We made a few adjustments to a wall and, with the help of four men and a lot of pushing, eventually managed to fit the staircase properly,” says Bill.

Having spent £10,000 to have the water and electricity mains moved, a process that was carried out glitch-free, Bill was shocked by the length of time it took BT to move the telephone line. After a frustrating four months in which nothing happened, he took matters into his own hands and wrote to the head of the company, which had the desired effect. “All of a sudden, the problem was resolved within 24 hours,” he says.

Endless decisions

Mindful of reducing energy bills, the couple installed an air-source heat pump, underfloor heating and energy-efficient lighting (including dimmable LEDs and passive infrared detectors). Other sustainable choices include bamboo flooring and roof tiles made from recycled slate powder. Bill says: “There were so many decisions to be made throughout, from the colour of products to their exact positioning, but we knew it was important to choose carefully.

“Being involved at every stage and watching our home become a reality was fabulous. I feel we’ve achieved our aim of embracing our very special environment. The only minor change we’d make would be to install larger pipes for the waterfall tap in our bath so that it doesn’t take 20 minutes to fill.”

Walking into this genial couple’s new three-bedroom house, there’s no doubt that, as well as exuding wow factor, it is so

welcoming and comfortable that visitors, friends and family can’t help but feel instantly at ease.

Unfortunately, Bill was diagnosed and treated for prostate cancer during the build. But now that he’s recovered, it makes the creation of the house – which has been christened Echoes – seem like even more of a triumph over adversity. A little wooden ‘Living The Dream’ sign hangs casually in the couple’s open plan living room, an extremely poignant touch.

Bill and Angie feel that their high level of commitment to the project is what led to their success. “Building our own home, especially in these circumstances, has been an exceptionally rewarding experience,” says Bill. “There were times when the going did get rough – digging out the foundations in constant rain wasn’t much fun, for example. However, we’ve learnt that if you have the vision and belief that you can build your own home, you will do it.

“We love this house and feel as if we’re on holiday every day. The process has given us the confidence and knowledge that we can do whatever we put our minds to. We consider Echoes to be our home for the rest of our days but, if circumstances ever change and we happen to build again, it would definitely be another Potton home.”

closer look

Design elements of this house...

After some debate, Bill and Angie decided to lay strand-woven bamboo flooring (from the Bamboo Flooring Company) instead of carpet in the sunroom, open plan living room/kitchen and the ground-floor master bedroom. The couple feel that it was not just an eco-friendly and more practical choice but that it gives a more seamless feel to the downstairs of their new home. Bill says: "We're so thrilled with the floor. It really does radiate warmth and beauty."



Bamboo flooring

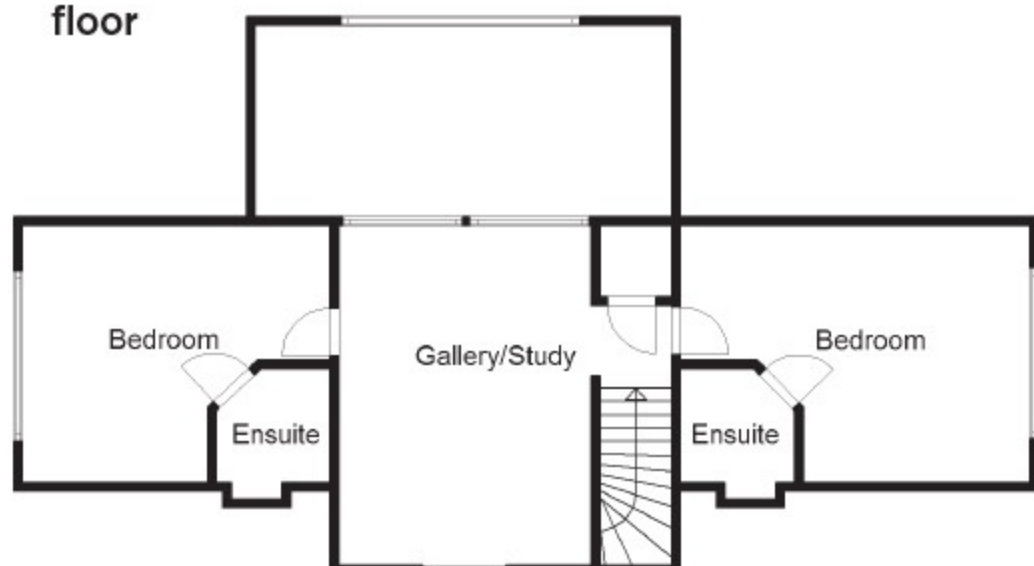


Floor plans

Ground floor



First floor



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Knock down	£46	3%	£8,680
Foundations & resources	£99	7%	£18,600
Heat pump & underfloor heating	£75	6%	£14,093
Roof	£72	5%	£13,579
Windows	£23	2%	£4,250
Cladding	£30	2%	£5,656
Labouring	£46	3%	£8,661
Kitchen	£99	7%	£18,700
Electrics	£43	3%	£8,101
Bathrooms	£67	5%	£12,556
Joinery/other materials	£34	2%	£6,328
Flooring	£44	3%	£8,300
Decorating	£30	2%	£5,565
Drylining	£30	2%	£5,600
Screeding & insulation	£57	4%	£10,800
Landscaping	£60	4%	£11,252
Misc	£3	> 1%	£600
Grand total			£253,262

Useful contacts

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TROJAN SPIRIT

Courage, determination and a sunny disposition were key to the success of **Drew and Connie Minton's** self build. They overcame a host of obstacles to realise their dream of creating a sustainable family home

WORDS **ANNA-MARIE DESOUZA** PHOTOS **RICHARD GADSBY**





The open plan kitchen, dining and living area opens up through patio doors to a large deck in the garden. The Mintons specified a stainless steel kitchen to contrast with the amount of timber used

You may think that self building a home in the capital is an unrealistic dream; there's a huge shortage of plots for a start. If you are lucky enough to find one, but then discover it's in a conservation area, you may well feel that the journey is all but over. However, when faced with this scenario – not to mention a plethora of other obstacles – Connie and Drew Minton battled on. Their new home is testament to the couple's tenacity and enthusiasm for creating a sustainable family dwelling for their two young boys. "I like the old saying 'you only fail when you stop trying'. It's very apt to how we have achieved this house," says Drew.

The family were leasing a flat in Clapham. They hadn't thought about self building until they started looking for a house to buy in London; and quickly realised they couldn't afford something of the size they wanted. "The possibility of building our own came to me when talking to Drew's brother. He had a property in Wales and was looking to add a contemporary extension," says Connie. "I was researching on the internet and came across Stommel Haus, a prefabricated timber frame firm, which had done an eco extension project I thought he'd like. I spoke to Drew about the houses they built, too, and said if we ever get a chance to create our own home,

THE MINTON FILE

NAMES Connie & Drew Minton**OCCUPATIONS** Doctor & company director**LOCATION** Purley**TYPE OF BUILD** New build**STYLE** Mock-tudor exterior & contemporary interior**CONSTRUCTION METHOD** Timber frame**PLOT SIZE** 0.42 acres**HOUSE SIZE** 240m² (2,583ft²)**LAND COST** £300,000**BOUGHT** 2012**BUILD COST** £587,000**COST PER M²** £2,446 (£227 per ft²)**TOTAL COST** £887,000**VAT RECLAIM** £11,600**BUILDING WORK COMMENCED** November 2012**BUILDING WORK TOOK** Seven months**CURRENT VALUE** £950,000

the company had an ethos and designs I loved. So, after we dismissed the idea of buying a house, we started looking for plots, and knew we would use Stommel to help us.”

The search

Drew spent a good deal of time researching land on the internet and visiting various sites, but nothing came to fruition. After a promising site in New Malden fell through, the couple had started to feel disheartened, until they came across another plot near to Gatwick. “We don’t own a car and we cycle everywhere, so we took the bikes

and the boys on the train to do a viewing,” says Drew. “It was a miserable day and we rode up in the cold – and instantly hated it. It looked nothing like it did on the internet.

“We were hugely dismayed and got back to the station to discover we had to wait an hour for the next train back to Clapham. But there was a train to London Bridge in a few minutes, so we decided to get on that instead and have a day out. I was looking on the RightMove app on my phone and found a plot in Purley – and said to Connie ‘where is Purley?’ just as an announcement was made that it was the next stop. So we got off and cycled up to see it.”

WE LEARNED...

WHEN HIRING your own team, ask them for recommendations for the follow-on trades they would like to work with. The various contractors we used had all worked together previously – so they helped each other finish certain jobs. The only problems we had were with the team that came in for the roof, who hadn't worked with the others before and weren't quite so willing to muck in.

WE SPENT a long time trying to sort out our electrics. We made the mistake of thinking that because we had our connection this would mean we could use the electricity. We hadn't been advised that we needed to pick a supplier and get them to install a meter before we could progress, which itself took six more weeks.

The couple immediately thought the plot looked great and called the estate agent to put in an offer – noting that he didn't seem happy to receive the bid. After hearing nothing back for a few days, and another 'unhelpful' conversation with the agent, the Mintons did a little detective work. "We found out who the owner was through the building application, and called to ask if they had received our offer – the answer was no," recalls Connie. "It turns out that the estate agent had a friend who was a small-scale developer and was holding the plot for him. So Harry – the owner – threatened him with the ombudsman, as he was happy to sell it to us."

At this point the couple didn't have a mortgage and were waiting to secure the plot as soon as the money came through. "We were about to put in a planning application and then Harry got in touch to tell us the sad news that we had been gazumped," says Drew. "He had been really patient with us. We'd had a lot of difficulty securing suitable finance, mainly down to the build system. With a standard self build product, you draw down cash in stages – but with the Stommel system, we needed 40% up front to pay for the materials and work in the factory. At the time, there were few mortgage products in the UK to cater for such a large initial sum."



The Mintons sourced the antique oak flooring, which is used throughout the ground floor, from a company in Bristol. The contrast between this and the light-toned wall panelling adds depth and character to the interior scheme

The lost letter

Just as the couple were thinking about giving up, they decided to take a leaf out of a friend's book. He had enjoyed great success in purchasing properties by finding a street he liked and posting letters through doors to see if anyone was interested in selling to him. "At this point we knew we wanted a plot on this road in Purley – the street had a lot of infills so there was potential," says Drew. "We wrote a letter expressing our wishes and posted to houses that we thought had land to sell. One letter went to the house next door to where we now live – this was in March 2012. In June I got a call from Rob – who is now our neighbour. Quite tentatively, he revealed that he had planning to build a five-bedroom house."

Rob had received the letter in March, and had instantly thrown it in the recycling bin. The night before it was due to be collected, he was taking the rubbish out and the letter fell on the floor – he re-read it and put it into his desk drawer just in case he changed his mind. After he and his wife came to the realisation they may not be able to finance the project themselves, he called Drew.

"We went to Rob with an offer, which took us quite some time to finally agree due to the emotions involved – it had been their dream

to do it themselves for a long while," says Drew. "We came to an arrangement that was suitable for us all."

Finding funds

As first-time buyers looking to fund this type of self build, the Mintons faced a series of closed doors. In desperation Drew called a contact he had through work – Steve Pateman, who's head of UK banking at Santander.

"The main problem was we wanted to finance something you can't see as it's being made in a factory," explains Drew. "I phoned Steve as a cry for help and said 'what do I do?' He told me that they don't have a retail (traditional mortgage) product they could give us. There were regulatory issues about lending us the amount we wanted up front. However, he instantly recognised the low risk element of the build and the fact that the bank would end up with a high quality asset – he wanted to pilot our scheme to create a new product for Santander. He suggested that we borrow the money for the house from the commercial side of the bank, where up front payments are not uncommon. To do this we would have to set up an SPV – a special purpose vehicle – which is essentially a limited company.



The stylish open tread staircase links the home's three floors. The metal balustrades add an unusual and contemporary finish



Steve said that the commercial side of the bank would only lend to the SPV if the retail side agreed to give us a mortgage to the value of the commercial loan once the build was complete.”

This was good news, but the Minton's still needed to agree the terms. After many negotiations throughout the project, Santander lent at 85% loan to value (LTV), assessing the worth of the house as £850,000 on completion. “Our pilot scheme confirmed that this was a great way to build highly sustainable, premium-quality houses,” says Drew. “We understand that Santander is now in the process of creating a mortgage product to finance this type of package build to suit the growing market, all based on the success of our project.”

The build

Connie and Drew used the existing plans, which had been drawn up by the neighbours, as the skeleton of what they wanted to build. They were under time pressure to get going on site and didn't want to cause delays with a new application. “We put in a small amendment for the layout. Originally there was a series of rooms inside, and a traditional exterior to match. We applied to extend the utility room and make the lower level open plan,” says Connie. “We call it the Trojan house as it looks like a Tudor property outside, which is completely different to the ultra-contemporary interior.”

Stommel Haus takes all its projects to watertight stage, beyond which you can choose additional levels of service – full turnkey if required. “We went to the fitting meeting in Germany, which consists of three intense days where you literally specify everything from waste flows to doorknobs,” says Connie. “They looked after the main structure and we took charge of the finishings. Barbara Fischer-Clark was our main point of contact there. She is amazing – she really cares about the homes and the owners.”

Once on site, Glatthaar, which works closely with Stommel, took the lead on the foundations. They were able to do these precisely to

the millimetre-perfect requirements of the frame. “Stommel only commits to building once everything’s in place – the slab has to be accepted, the fitting meeting completed, etc,” explains Connie. “But, due to our finance arrangement, we had to have them commit to a firm start date prior to this. In the end they wrote us a letter of intent, stating that, if we do have all these things in place, they would build it for us on a certain date in March. This was a bit of a stretch for their very exacting standards but, to their credit, they agreed.”

All went according to plan and the frame arrived to site on schedule. “It was quite emotional seeing it go up – exciting and nerve-racking at the same time,” Connie remembers. “It took about 10 days for the shell to be erected, but then there was a huge unexpected delay with the roof.”

Although the Mintons didn’t technically need an architect for their project, they hired a specialist who was also a planning consultant to oversee works. “Our architect didn’t notice that Rob had already put in discharge of planning when he did the original application. Rob had been required to take sample roof tiles to the council, who specified that they had to be rosemary brindle plain clay – it was very specific,” says Connie. “When I went to Germany for the fitting meeting, I specified concrete pantiles. When they arrived here, Rob called and said that we had the wrong thing.”

The Mintons were in a quandary. They could either proceed with the wrong tiles and put in an amendment retrospectively – and potentially face having to remove them if not approved – or send the tiles back and start from scratch. “In the end, we decided we had to return them. We used Shiply – an online service where people bid for haulage jobs – to deliver them to Germany. The website is great and we managed to find a lorry that was driving back there empty so it only cost us £1,000. It could have been a lot more. Stommel was fine about it and gave us a full refund for the tiles and roofing work not carried out. What’s more, despite this delay, they still finished the house a week ahead of schedule.”

A family home

Inside, the house is bright and airy. The polar spruce walls dominate the interior and fill it with a natural warmth. “We chose to have an exposed steel beam in the living area, in addition to a steel kitchen. This breaks up the wood and creates a more balanced interior,” says Connie.

The couple saved money on some of the interior finishings by sourcing elements, such as the wood flooring and tiles, outside of the Stommel contract. However, they employed one of the company’s contractors to do the fitting. “He came and stayed with us for two weeks and completed the tiles and other flooring surfaces to an extremely high standard,” says Connie.

The open plan kitchen, dining and living area leads out through bi-fold doors on to an outdoor deck and a glorious garden beyond. Towards the back of the patio the family has created a unique, and much loved, feature. “We uncovered an air raid shelter in the garden during groundworks and thought it would be a shame not to use it, so we have turned it into a wine cellar. Anderson shelters are quite rare now, and reusing it feels like we are preserving a little bit of history,” says Connie. “Living here has really changed our lives. We can have family and friends here. We had 13 people over for Christmas and everyone had their own space; it was just wonderful.”

“You can just relax in this place, and you can really smell the wood, so it’s very therapeutic,” adds Drew. “Barbara sent us an article about the therapeutic qualities of this species of timber – it’s free of toxins and allergens. We sit here and think how lucky we are that this wonderful place is ours.”



The master bedroom is essentially in the loft and, along with the ensuite, covers the whole floor. Dormer windows to the rear add natural light and are an attractive feature

closer look

Design elements of this house...

Stommel Haus uses polar spruce to make its homes, taking timber from the heartwood, and sourcing it from a sustainable forest. The 340mm-thick 'Elementar' wall sections are filled with layers of Fermacell and Knauf Ecosse insulation, with 50mm of solid timber on either side. A typical Stommel House wall has a U-value of just 0.17 W/m²K, a huge improvement on Building Regs. The timber is seasoned for durability rather than treated, so it's free from chemicals and VOCs. All the materials used are natural and breathable, which helps to keep the interiors in good condition and provides a healthy atmosphere. The Minton's house has an EPC rating of 92 (A).

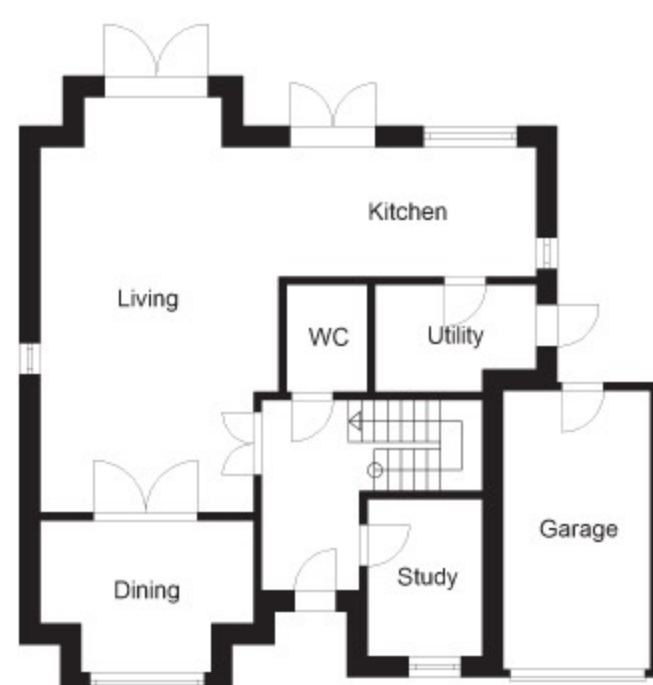


Polar spruce

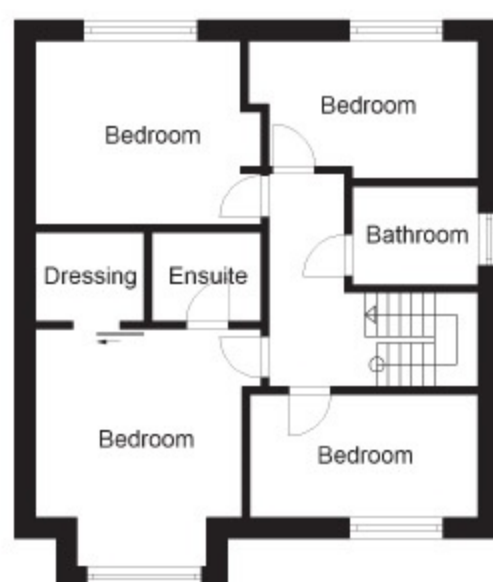


Floor plans

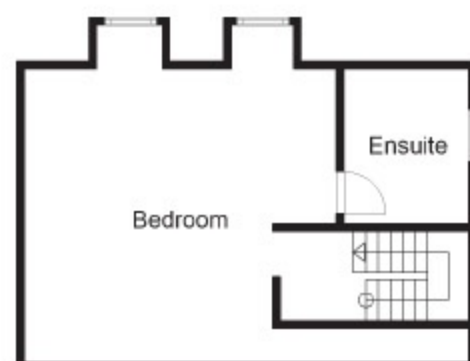
Ground floor



First floor



Second floor



House plans re-created using ARCON 3D Home Design Software. www.3darchitect.co.uk
Tel: 01252 267788 Email: arconsales@eleco.com



TOTAL BUILD COST BREAKDOWN

Elements	Cost m ²	Cost %	Total cost
Main structure	£1,572	64%	£377,300
Groundworks & foundations	£290	12%	£69,820
Utilities	£22	1%	£5,310
Rendering & scaffolding	£73	3%	£17,590
Retaining wall & decking	£54	2%	£12,960
Landscaping, tree surgeon & driveway	£53	2%	£12,750
PV panels	£26	1%	£6,350
Tiling & floors	£30	1%	£7,200
Kitchen & bathroom	£72	3%	£17,380
Decorating	£81	3%	£19,500
Surveys & fees	£12	<1%	£2,870
Insurance	£14	<1%	£3,470
Stamp duty	£144	6%	£34,500
Grand total			£587,000

Useful contacts



CONCRETE SLAB Glatthaar 01932 344454 www.glatthaar.co.uk
DOORS & WINDOWS Niveau www.niveau.de **GROUNDWORKS** Danny Galvin Site Preparations 01753 549402 www.dgsp.co.uk **FLOORING** Hicraft www.hicraft.co.uk **STRUCTURAL SHELL** Stommel Haus 0800 068 1611 www.stommel-haus.co.uk **KITCHEN** SDS Kitchens 020 7228 1184 www.sdsinteriors.co.uk **PV PANELS** Emotion Energy 0800 032 5080 www.emotionenergy.co.uk **TILES Walls & floors** 01536 314730 www.wallsandfloors.co.uk **COURIER SERVICE** Shiply 020 3137 2454 www.shiply.com



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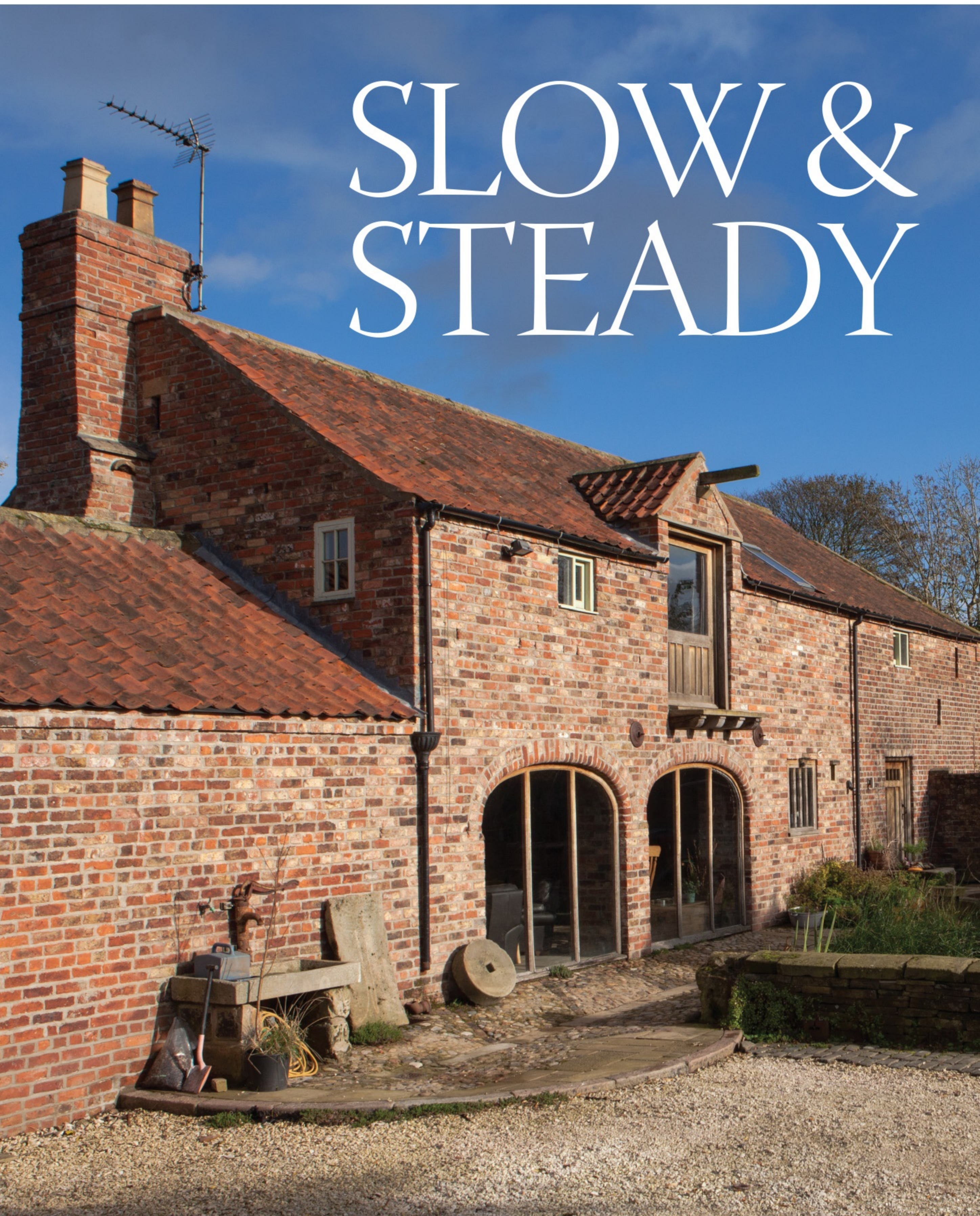
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Although it was years in the making, the old barn that **Albert and Jane Thundercliffe** have remodelled and restored is now a unique country home

WORDS **HEATHER DIXON** PHOTOS **DAVE BURTON**



Look closely at the intricate roof structure of the Thundercliffes' coastal home and you might recognise the graceful arc of a ship's bow, or get a sense of the horizon's curve where sea and sky merge into one.

It's by no means accidental. Albert Thundercliffe, whose grandfather of the same name lived and died on the Hull trawlers, continued his family's strong connections to the sea by choosing a career in boat-building. As time went by, his passion for craftsmanship, and working with wood, steered him towards designing and making furniture, as well as renovating buildings – mostly with reclaimed materials.

So when he had the chance to create a house for himself on the site of his family home near Bridlington on the Yorkshire coast, he didn't hesitate. Albert, his wife Jane and their four sons were already living in a cottage in the coastal village where he has spent most of his life. The cottage was becoming too small for their growing family and Albert's mother owned an old barn nearby, which was ripe for conversion. The family saw the potential to turn it into a five-bedroom house, but there was no access to the back of the barn and only a shared courtyard at the front. To make the project viable, Albert negotiated with a local farmer to buy a 15m strip of land to the back of the property to create independent access and a driveway. So began a project that took over 10 years to complete.

Taking time

"The barn was originally a grain store and a dairy so the stalls were still in situ and rigged up for milking," recalls Albert. "There were no issues with planning, because we were converting an existing building and keeping its character. In fact, we were putting character back into it and probably saving it from rack and ruin. But we were doing this in our spare time. Work is always busy so we had to snatch weekends and evenings where we could. There was no rush, so we did it piecemeal – but it ended up taking several years."

Albert lives by his mantra that if a job is worth doing, it's worth doing well, so he had no intention of trying to fast-track the project. They had a roof over their heads and the barn was still





The floor was originally bare earth. It was dug out to leave enough room for insulation and underfloor heating, before stone slabs were laid on top



The staircase uses a variety of salvaged materials, including a curved handrail from an old farmhouse

owned by family, so he had plenty of time to source materials and gradually develop the site as he wanted. "We were very keen to preserve the character of the place, so old bricks, stone and reclaimed beams were always going to be key features of the house," says Albert. In particular, the family wanted to keep the barn's small windows, cart arches and chalk walls, and also retain the original timbers and masonry. "Anything we couldn't salvage, we bought reclaimed, right down to the door hinges" he says. "We found beams from an old cotton mill in Lancashire, which we used throughout the building. The longest was cut into three pieces so we could include every bit of it. Nothing went to waste."

Reclaimed and reused

The original floors were bare earth, so Albert dug them out by 400mm to allow room for underfloor heating pipes, Kingspan insulation and a damp-proof course, all topped with stone slabs.

Albert employed some local bricklayers to rebuild the walls and reconstructed the roof with the help of his brother Philip, a specialist woodworker. Some of the original roof structure was left as it was built, including scissor trusses that would have originally accommodated the corn store, although one section was rebuilt with reclaimed elm. "We created a warm roof, where the Kingspan insulation is on top of the rafters, so there's no cold void," says Albert. Internal walls were built, creating a corridor of bedrooms for the boys.

"I like to keep everything as original and true to its history as possible," says Albert. "Anything new was built using traditional methods – so, for example, the trusses are pegged together, and we didn't use angle beads for the plastering; it was all done to make it look as old as possible."



THE THUNDERCLIFFE FILE

NAMES Albert & Jane Thundercliffe

OCCUPATIONS Designer/builder & teaching assistant

LOCATION Bridlington, East Yorkshire

TYPE OF BUILD Renovation & conversion

STYLE Traditional barn

MATERIALS

Reclaimed brick, stone & timber

HOUSE COST £50,000

BOUGHT 1996

HOUSE SIZE 296m² (3,186ft²)

PROJECT COST £124,100

COST PER M² £419 (£39 per ft²)

TOTAL COST £174,100

BUILDING WORK COMMENCED
August 2001

BUILDING WORK TOOK 10 years

CURRENT VALUE £500,000



Leather sofas and a bright contemporary paint contrast with the rustic look of the beams and stonework

WE LEARNED...

IT'S VERY EASY to let time slip by when you are not under pressure to complete a job. Next time we embark on a renovation for ourselves – if there is a next time – I will set myself stricter deadlines so that it won't drag on so long.

IF YOU HAVE the skills, take a hands-on approach to your build. But don't attempt more than you are capable of, as you'll end up having to get the professionals in to remedy any mistakes – and these extra costs will use up the money you hoped to save in the first place.



Albert used reclaimed timber wherever he could, as well as making furniture and window frames himself. This sympathetic use of authentic materials makes them look like they've always been a part of the house



All the oak window frames – each one a different size and shape, and some with glazing bars to make them look more authentic – were hand made in Albert's workshop. He also built the arched windows to show as much of the original brickwork as possible, while the staircase – which looks as though it's been there for centuries – features kerb stones, aged cobbles, oak treads made from timber salvaged from Hull docks, and curved handrails reclaimed from a Yorkshire farmhouse.

"I had been saving old bricks for years, which came in useful when we extended the barn to create an open plan kitchen and living area," says Albert. "We didn't want anyone to be able to tell where the original build ended and the newer section began. I also collected stone slabs and reclaimed wood, storing them all in the workshop until such time as they would come in useful. If I was unsure about a window design or the way a door should look, I just studied similar examples until I understood how they needed to be done."



This image & bottom right: The vaulted master bedroom features an open bathing area with a Victorian stone bath – which had to be hoisted into the house with a JCB. A stove keeps the room cosy

Albert doesn't miss a trick when it comes to antique building materials. Although his passion is reclaimed wood, he also collects "anything that might come in useful." For example, corn rollers were incorporated into the staircase, which Albert had rescued from underneath a hedge where they had lain for years. A stone trough in the yard has been fitted with an antique water pump to create an interesting feature, and random pieces of ash, oak and elm were salvaged from trees that were being felled on the land.

Design and detailing

Albert's involvement didn't end with the building's structure. He also made the kitchen and much of the timber furniture that features throughout the property. "I've noticed a drift back towards a more traditional style in many homes," he says. "People like the timeless look and durability of hand crafted units."

The kitchen in Albert and Jane's house is made from seasoned pieces of reclaimed wood and off-cuts, with an oak worktop that came from the courtyard of a country estate. Albert also designed and built the large open fireplace in the sitting room, created the mezzanine bedroom and made key pieces of furniture that complement the age and proportions of the converted building. The Victorian bath, which sits in the main bedroom and is made of 100mm-thick stone, came out of an old cottage that was being refurbished by Albert. The tub was so heavy and cumbersome that a window had to be removed in the cottage to get it out, before it was hoisted into the house using a JCB.



There are concessions to modern materials. Albert has used Velux rooflights as he loves the extra light they bring in, and also included an efficient built-in vacuum system for house cleaning.

Because they lived close by, Jane and Albert could work on the conversion at their own pace – until two of their sons decided they were too old to be sharing a room, and chose to move into the half-completed house. “That forced our hand a bit,” chuckles Albert. “We had been working on the barn for a number of years as and when we could, but this gave us the incentive to get it finished.”

Although the majority of the project was completed by 2010, so the family could finally settle in properly, there are still a few areas that need to be looked at. “Work is ongoing,” says Albert. “With an old place like this the renovation is never really finished because you are always adding, repairing and improving. If we renovated a property again we would probably do things very differently. It has taken so long that our tastes have changed since we started out, so although we would still have a traditional look we would probably make it a bit more streamlined. We would still use reclaimed materials, but perhaps not have quite so many exposed beams as they can look quite heavy and dark. I would also take some time off work and put all my time and energy into the one project. By doing it ourselves we saved a lot of money – but detail takes time.”

closer look

The oak beams that give this home so much character are one of Jane and Albert's favourite features; some are original to the barn, but others are reclaimed.



Reclaimed beams

If you want to create a home that's both unique and sustainable, giving old materials a new lease of life is a great way to achieve this. As well as timber beams, some of the most common objects you might find at your local salvage yard include bricks, slates, tiles, radiators, fireplaces, doors and window frames – but you might also discover large, show-stopping architectural features such as staircases and garden buildings. Visit salvage website Salvo (www.salvo.co.uk) to find a reclamation firm near you or search for items for sale. If you're lucky, you might even be able to source pieces directly from local demolition sites (old schools or churches, for example).



New travertine tiles clad the bathroom, and make a good match for the reclaimed flooring



TOTAL BUILD COST BREAKDOWN

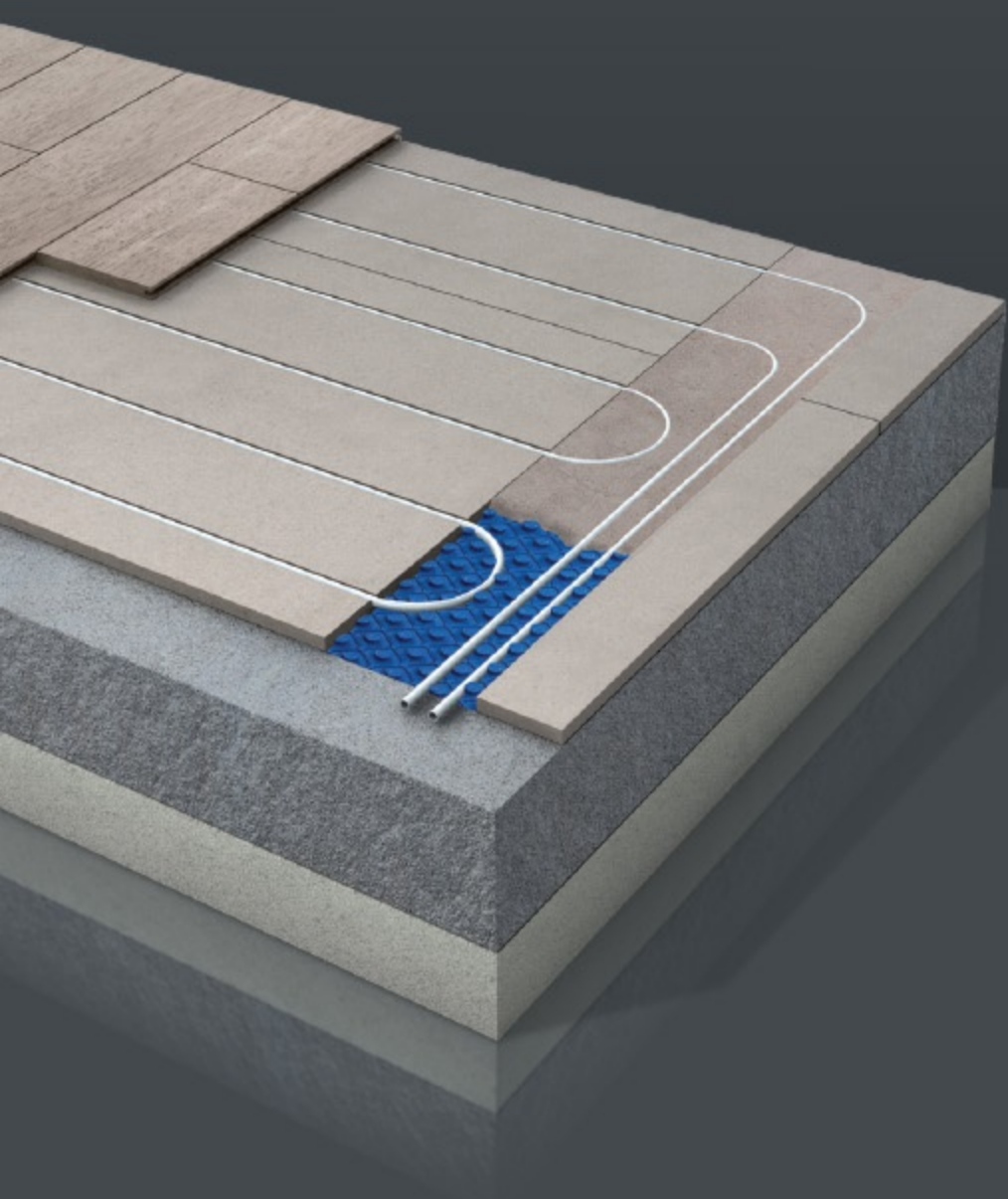
Elements	Cost m ²	Cost %	Total cost
Preliminaries	£7	2%	£2,000
Block & brick shell	£101	24%	£30,000
Doors, windows & roof	£24	6%	£7,000
Fireplace	£41	10%	£12,000
Flagstones	£20	5%	£6,000
Timber	£17	4%	£5,000
Other materials	£101	24%	£30,000
Oak front door	£3	1%	£1,000
Kitchen	£34	8%	£10,000
Bathrooms	£14	3%	£4,000
Electrics & plumbing	£54	13%	£16,000
Central vacuum system	£4	1%	£1,100
Grand total			£124,100

Useful contacts



BUILD, RECLAIMED MATERIALS, FURNITURE Albert Thundercliffe 07803 189405 **UNDERFLOOR HEATING AND BUILDING MATERIALS** MKM 01482 345678 www.mkmb.co.uk **PLUMBING** Dennis Woodmansey 01262 470356 **BRICKLAYING** Bryan Brown & Son 01262 674974 **LIGHTING AND TRAVERTINE TILES** West Building Supplies 01262 674784 www.westbs.co.uk

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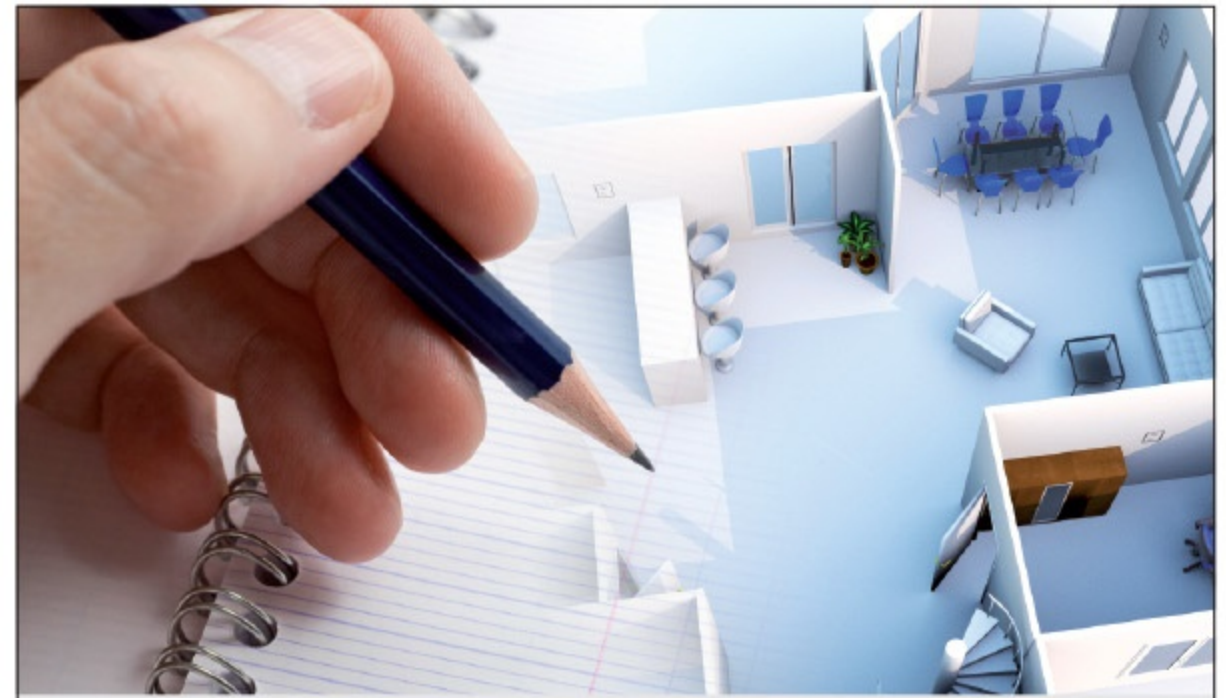
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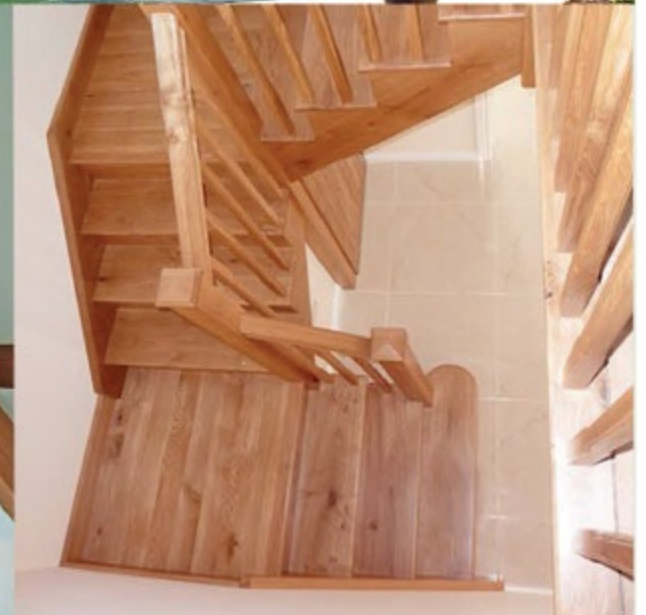
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Location is everything

Though he was determined to self build, **Stephen Read** struggled find a plot that could deliver better views than his existing terraced house – until an ideal opportunity cropped up close to home

WORDS & PHOTOS **ANDREW DEE**

Stephen Read had been dreaming of building a new home for years. Although he already had some experience of small-scale property development, the right plot for his own scheme was proving elusive. His troubles were partly down to the fact that nothing seemed to match up to his existing home's wonderful location: he was living in a small red-



THE READ FILE

NAME Stephen Read

OCCUPATION Property developer

LOCATION Maldon, Essex

TYPE OF BUILD New build

STYLE Contemporary

CONSTRUCTION METHOD

Steel frame with blockwork
cavity walls

PLOT SIZE 160m² (1,722ft²)

LAND COST £220,000

BOUGHT 2008

HOUSE SIZE 180m² (1,938ft²)

BUILD COST £288,000

COST PER M² £1,738 (£161 per ft²)

TOTAL COST £508,000

VAT RECLAIM £57,000

BUILDING WORK COMMENCED

November 2010

BUILDING WORK TOOK

42 weeks

CURRENT VALUE

£895,000





The kitchen units and appliances are set flush into the wall, a design trick that creates a minimal, seamless look. They are complemented by an island with slate worktop, which was so heavy that it had to be craned into place

brick Victorian house in the charming riverside market town of Maldon in Essex. His end-of-terrace property was perched right next to an historic quay, giving him spectacular views over the water.

With his search for an equally picturesque plot proving fruitless, Stephen wasn't sure how to take the first step towards his self build dream – until, as luck would have it, the detached house next door came on to the market. “The property was built in the 1970s, and I wanted to knock it down and use the site for a new development, so initially I wasn't sure whether to go ahead,” he says. “This part of Maldon is a conservation area, so demolition and new works can be difficult to implement – and on top of that, I wanted a contemporary home.”



Sensitive design

Stephen commissioned a local architect to help turn his ideas into a reality. “He did a great job of integrating my requirements into a workable plan,” says Stephen. The new house would be in a very similar position on the plot, set back from the road and the neighbouring terrace, which was also due to be expanded as part of another development. While the planned property would share a similar footprint with the original (albeit with an attached garage), including a habitable loft would increase the amount of living space.

To avoid issues with overlooking, and to maximise views of the estuary, the majority of the new house's windows were to be formed by a part-glazed gable at the side elevation. The only sources of natural light were to be a ground-floor glazed porch (leading to a small courtyard garden), a thin strip of high-level windows and two

rooflights. To offset these contemporary elements, and help win over the conservation officers, the structural shell would be clad in black weatherboarding – offering a strong juxtaposition to the brick terrace, yet blending in beautifully with the nearby quayside buildings. “Planning permission was granted to demolish the existing house and to start on the exciting new build in 2010 – although only after we had gone to appeal,” says Stephen.

With an initial budget of £250,000, plus a 10% contingency, the funding was pretty tight for what was a substantial build – a four-bedroom detached contemporary home with three bathrooms, plus a host of high-tech gadgets. So Stephen, who secured all of the finance through bank loans, knew that he'd have to stick to the original plans if he was to stand any chance of bringing the project in on time and at a price he could afford.

WE LEARNED...

ENSURE party wall agreements are in place before your project starts, and if any disputes arise, appoint a suitably-qualified surveyor to deal with them. Delays will be inevitable should you encounter problems, so it's worth hiring a professional.

REMEMBER to apply for any road closure agreements in the preliminary stages of your planning, and also have your services connected at the early stage of construction, to avoid delays.

CONTACT your local authority as soon as possible to arrange for parking permits if restrictions apply around your plot. It may also help if you can introduce yourself to the local traffic wardens!





Firm foundations

Stephen picked his main contractor, First Choice Construction, on his architect's recommendation, and work got underway in November 2010. The demolition was a pretty straightforward process, and was completed in a matter of weeks, but the following stages were much more complicated. "Getting the foundations in place on the sloping site was never going to be easy," says Stephen. "But even before this could begin, we had to construct a contiguous bored pile retaining wall around the perimeter of the property.

Above: The master bedroom is spacious enough to incorporate an extra nook for a sofa. Right: Oak staircases and flooring tie all the spaces together



Overlooking the living room below, the master bedroom occupies an airy space in the eaves. The artwork above the bed is actually part of the air-conditioning system – its glass-fronted design allows personal images to be mounted inside

This was required to support the neighbouring land and properties, as well as the earth around my own development, so it involved some serious feats of engineering."

This meticulous work took months to complete, and once the cement of the retaining wall was set, another 1,500 tonnes of earth had to be excavated to allow for the foundations to be laid. With heavy snow forecast, the pace picked up on site. "When the foundation piling was completed in February 2011, it was very rewarding," says Stephen. "It had been an anxious period, but finally the awe-inspiring steel frame could be erected and the building started to take on the shape I'd imagined."

The steel structure was infilled with blockwork cavity walls, fitted with high-quality insulation. This combination of heavyweight materials and excellent thermal protection makes for low running costs. To improve performance even further, Stephen opted for high-spec, aluminium-framed windows and doors. These are powder-coated in a contemporary mid-grey finish to contrast with the black-stained hardwood timber cladding – both of which provide excellent resistance against the harsh winter conditions across the open estuary.

While most of the elements within his control progressed well, not everything went according to plan. "Utilities were a

nightmare," says Stephen. "For one reason or another I left the connections until far too late in the project, and the suppliers kept pushing the dates back, exacerbating the problem. We ended up doing the finishing and decorating while we were waiting for the services to be put in. It was a big mistake, but luckily it was the only one that actually hindered the project."

Bright ideas

Steel frame isn't a particularly common choice among self builders, but its ability to create large open spans was perfect for delivering the light-filled new home that Stephen wanted. It enabled a number of clever features, including the 10m-high glazed gable, which incorporates a cantilevered section. Here there are stylish corner bi-fold doors, which lead on to a first-floor deck, helping to give the house its modern aesthetic. "If you're inside with the doors open, it feels as though this storey is suspended in mid-air, which really brings the outside in," says Stephen. With little space for a private garden, the decked area was an essential part of the build; its elevated position offers gorgeous views, as well as carving out space for the generous double carport below it.

Inside the house, there's something of an upside-down living arrangement. The ground floor contains three guest bedrooms, two of which have ensembles. There's also a large wetroom that features a freestanding bath, plus a flatscreen television fitted seamlessly into the tiled wall – setting the tone for the high-tech details Stephen planned into the project. "I wanted a wetroom that actually worked properly," he says. "Having used a few in the past that didn't drain well, I decided to install a full-length, flush-mounted draining bar, which can cope with up to 10 times the flow level of a standard system."

The main living zone is on the first floor. "I wanted an open plan area with a vaulted ceiling to create a sense of space and volume," says Stephen. "I love the way the kitchen, living and dining areas all seem separate yet merge together seamlessly. Instead of fitting conventional freestanding units in the kitchen, I decided to have the appliances built into a wall to give the impression that they're really integrated into the structure. The chunky slate worktop is a great feature, but it was so heavy and awkward that it had to be craned into place before the roof was finished."

The loft-level mezzanine is accessed via a contemporary oak staircase that 'hangs' off the main structural wall, giving the illusion that the treads are floating. Industrial-style LED lighting underpins the effect, while the glazed balustrade – which also runs into the galleried landing – gives a clean modern look and complements the naturally bright interiors. The master bedroom is open plan, looking out over the living space below and offering glorious views out to the estuary.

"Living adjacent to the site while all the building work was carried out gave me the ability to make decisions on the project as and when necessary – as well as allowing me to get involved in a more hands-on way," says Stephen. "I have learnt that, above all, determination is the key to realising your dream home. Every time I wake in the morning and look out through the glazed gable, it makes me smile at what I have achieved."



This pic and inset: The glamorous bathroom includes a wetroom area

closer look

An intelligent home...

The ground-floor utility room acts as the nerve centre of Stephen's house, hosting an Evolution power and processor unit that manages not only the Nu-Heat underfloor heating and the lighting system, but also music and internet access. All of these can be operated via wireless controls, which are strategically positioned throughout the property, as well as via an iPad. Other high-tech features include a touchscreen intercom system from DoorKnox.

Ventilation and cooling were also key to the home's design, and a comfortable atmosphere is ensured thanks to the state-of-the-art LG Inverter V air conditioning system. The unit's internal Art Cool emitters blend in with the decor thanks to their glass panel design, which can be provided complete with your own choice of print to give them a personal touch – a feature that Stephen has incorporated into the upstairs master bedroom.



Wireless tech controls

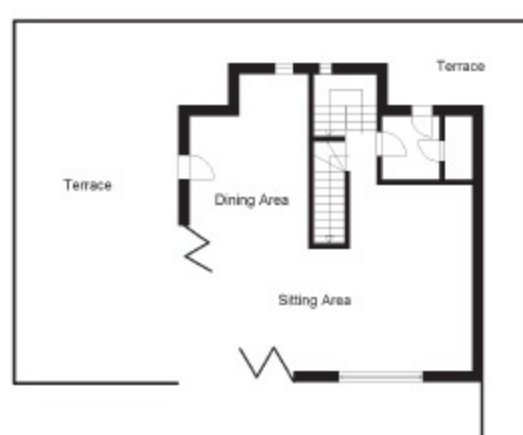


Floor plans

Ground floor



First floor



Mezzanine



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TOTAL BUILD COST BREAKDOWN

Elements	Cost m ²	Cost %	Total cost
Preliminaries	£113	7%	£20,400
Foundations, DPC & drainage	£271	17%	£48,780
Metal frame	£103	6%	£18,440
External walls & windows	£211	13%	£38,045
Structural glazing	£67	4%	£12,000
Roof structure & covering	£123	8%	£22,100
Internal walls	£16	1%	£2,800
Floor, wall & ceiling finishes	£67	4%	£12,110
Plumbing and heating (inc renewable energy)	£90	6%	£16,280
Electrics, lighting & media	£156	10%	£28,000
Kitchen & bathroom sanitaryware	£171	11%	£30,800
Alarm & sprinkler systems	£21	1%	£3,745
Decorating	£33	2%	£6,000
Fees	£11	1%	£2,000
External works (inc scaffold)	£147	9%	£26,500
Grand total			£288,000

Useful contacts

Stephen is tackling a new self build project, so his home is on the market for £895,000. For details call Savills on 01 245 293295

STRUCTURAL ENGINEER Essex Structural Surveys 01621 741219 www.essexstructuralsurveys.co.uk **MAIN CONTRACTOR** First Choice Construction 01268 783233 **ELECTRICAL CONTRACTOR** Tech Electrical & Mechanical 01702 558222 www.techeandm.com **UNDERFLOOR HEATING** Nu-Heat 0800 731 1976 www.nu-heat.co.uk **WINDOWS AND BI-FOLD DOORS** New Look Homes 01268 514516 www.newlook-homes.co.uk **STAIRS** Leigh Stairways 01702 469066 www.leighstairways.co.uk **STEEL FRAME DETAIL** Stephen Ladner 01702 307162 **MATERIALS** The Canvey Supply Company 01268 696666 www.canveysupply.co.uk **KITCHEN** Stateline Kitchens 01702 342913 www.statelinekitchens.co.uk



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Hidden depths

Alastair Garnett renovated a listed Georgian cottage and added a hidden contemporary extension that, from the house's approach, you would never know even existed

WORDS **JENNY MCBAIN**
PHOTOS **MARGARET SORAYA**



Alastair Garnett's experience is testimony to the fact that an architect's drawings can always be tweaked and modified. Even when a house is bought with planning permission already in place, as was the case with his home, the proposed design need not necessarily be the final one.

Alastair first saw his Scottish B-listed cottage, which is located in the Wardhouse Estate in rural Aberdeenshire, in an estate agent's window. The property belonged to architect Douglas Forrest, who with his colleagues at his practice, Acanthus DF, had drawn up a fairly detailed proposal outlining how the old house could be completely renovated and extended.

One of the conditions of sale was that the client would use the services of Acanthus DF and modify the property in line with the team's ideas. However, the design didn't quite suit Alastair's requirements, and it took a degree of confidence and competence for him to communicate assertively with the architects to come to a

resolution. Fortunately Alastair, who is a retired engineer, was quite comfortable interpreting two-dimensional technical drawings. And as luck would have it, he already knew the practice – it had helped him to design his previous home, a fairly traditional new-build.

"If you are purchasing something with the planning permission already in place, and it doesn't quite match the home you want, you really need to scrutinise the plans," says Alastair. "Get into the nitty-gritty of each room and consider how you are going to live in the house. For example, think about where the storage is and where you are going to put things."

Evolving design

Alastair worked with the architects to devise a home more precisely suited to his needs, and came up with something that combines historic interest and character with the comfort and convenience of contemporary design and technology. The old part of the house has



With its similar roofline, the extension echoes the simple outline of the original house. A light-filled glazed link bridges the gap between the old house and the new build

THE GARNETT FILE

NAME Alastair Garnett**OCCUPATION** Retired engineer**LOCATION** Inch, Aberdeenshire**TYPE OF BUILD** Renovation & extension of a derelict cottage**STYLE** Georgian cottage with contemporary extension**CONSTRUCTION METHOD**

Stone & timber frame

PLOT SIZE 0.55 acres**HOUSE SIZE** 175m² (1,884ft²) comprising 73m² (786ft²) cottage and 102m² (1,098ft²) extension**PURCHASE COST** £165,000**BOUGHT** 2008**PROJECT COST** £314,700**COST PER M²** £1,798 (£167 per ft²)**TOTAL COST** £479,704**BUILDING WORK COMMENCED**

September 2009 (renovation phase); May 2010 (new build phase)

BUILDING WORK TOOK

17 months



Left: From the side, the full view of the new extension, which is completely hidden from the road, is revealed. The porch leading to the boot room is a newer addition, built by Alastair himself

two bedrooms on the ground floor and a third bedroom sited upstairs alongside an office. At the rear of the cottage, the new extension houses a spacious kitchen, a beautifully appointed living room with extensive glazing, a soapstone stove and engineered oak flooring. The two parts of the house are connected by a walkway, which is studded with large windows and accommodates a bathroom and an additional seating area.

The original cottage was built in the 18th century for the estate's gamekeeper and had been known as Keeper's Cottage ever since. Because it is a listed building, the plans had to be approved by Historic Scotland, the official building conservation body, as well as the local planning department.

The idea of a contemporary timber extension was considered acceptable so long as it could be discreetly hidden behind the original cottage, but dealing with two separate bodies proved to be quite taxing. There were effectively two sets of rules to get to grips with, which were sometimes contradictory. For example, the local authority intimated that they might allow double glazing throughout the property, but Historic Scotland insisted that single glazing be used in the old house.

Alastair was aware that he had to be sensitive to the professionals' concerns. "I went through the plans and altered the internal space, but I did not propose any changes to the extension's actual footprint," he says. "The main reason for avoiding that approach was that it would have caused lengthy delays while the respective authorities considered a new design."

In the original drawings for the extension, a door led directly into an open plan living/kitchen and utility space. Alastair wanted to have a boot room as a buffer zone between the outside and the inside of the house, so this was put in place. Next to it is a small lavatory. In

the space where the door was originally to be put, there is now a window, affording a clear outlook from the elevated site across the open landscape towards distant hills.

The window in question, and the one perpendicular to it, bring lots of daylight into the kitchen, and Alastair is glad that he pushed to have these modifications made. "You've got to have vision," he says. "I visited the house before a single turf was cut. I could see where the view was and insisted on my point of view."

The other change he insisted upon was to include a partition wall between the kitchen and the living room. "I wanted a wall so I would not hear the appliances clanking away in the kitchen when I was relaxing in the living room," says Alastair. "Also, the wall gives me more places for storage in the kitchen as well as valuable hanging space for artwork in the living room."

Weather proofing

Alastair had first hand experience of the ferocious nature of the winter weather in the region, and designed the house accordingly. The soapstone stove has the flue running out of the back rather than on top, so it can have food heated on it in the event of a power cut, for example. Mounted on glass rather than slate or a slab, the stove has a discreet presence in the room, ensuring that the attractive engineered oak flooring takes centre stage.

The original architectural drawings included six timber trusses that stretched across the whole width of the kitchen and living room, but given the area's heavy winters, Alastair reckoned that seven trusses would be a safer bet. "We get considerable snowfall here, but added to that stress on the roof is the fact that the snow often thaws and refreezes, becoming icier and heavier," he says. "The weather also impacts on schedules – basically, the winter

WE LEARNED...

WORK OUT exactly where the TV, the power sockets, light switches, stove and pieces of furniture are going to go. I did that early on and it worked out well.

PICK durable fenestration. My windows have aluminium surrounds, which make them easy to maintain.

SELECT interesting features. I have a piece of stained glass, for which a window was especially designed. When the sun shines through it, colours are cast across the room – it's unique.

USE engineered oak flooring instead of solid oak. Not only is it significantly cheaper, but there's less chance of it shifting or changing size over time.

IT'S BETTER to have just one major task in hand at any one time, so don't try to juggle things. At one point there were two sets of builders on site at once, and that led to a bit of a battle for space.

Below: The kitchen is housed in the new extension. Timber trusses hold up the roof; Alastair changed the plans to include an extra one, for additional support in heavy snow

months are no-build periods. The track to the house quickly becomes inaccessible and the trucks cannot get up the drive because of impacted ice on the road."

The construction process was straightforward, but as Alastair had predicted, workers had to down tools for three months because of adverse weather. Angela Dow from Acanthus DF took on the role of project manager, with Alastair making regular site visits to check on progress; he also attended monthly meetings so he could see that everything was proceeding according to plan.

Restoring the old house

In the original part of the house, the entire layout has been reconfigured. The internal walls had to be tanked and insulated, as did the floor, which was covered in concrete afterwards. One of the house's gable ends also required concrete reinforcement, and the roof had to be completely redone.

There was a problem with regards to the application of the traditional lime harling on the exterior wall: it was put on hurriedly just before the winter onslaught and did not have time to dry out and set properly. Consequently it froze and fell off, so the builders had to return and redo the job six months later.

After much deliberation, Alastair decided to install a conventional oil-fuelled boiler to power the central heating system. His energy costs, including electricity bills, are currently





Engineered oak flooring complements the window frames, which are timber on the inside but aluminium outside



around £1,300 year, but he is open to the idea of installing solar panels at a later date to help reduce his costs further.

Every little helps

Alastair did not confine his scrutiny to the realms of structure and layout. He went through the projected costings line by line and down-rated certain items, thereby knocking around £20,000 off the final costs. For example, the original drawings proposed that the garage door was built to the same spec as the back door to the extension. Alastair considered that this was unnecessary, so a cheaper one was used. The original plans had also included outdoor lighting bollards that would have been expensive – doing without them translated into further savings.

With regards to the garage, Alastair wanted to have a grand 1.5-storey structure, but soon realised that would be controversial

in planning terms. Instead he settled for a double garage with a small lean-to, which complied fully with existing regulations.

“You have to decide when to stick your heels in and contest planning, which can risk delaying the project,” says Alastair. “Sometimes you can simply find a way around a problem.” And if you want to save money, one way to do it is to roll up your sleeves and tackle some of the work yourself. Alastair decided that he



would take on the final painting and decorating tasks himself. He also undertook some of the tiling work and has built the new porch that leads into the boot room.

Alastair has been hands-on with the landscaping work, too. Some of his DIY efforts are ongoing, so any immediate plans have been

put on hold until the house is complete. Meanwhile he is content to have taken on this particular challenge at the beginning of his retirement. "I like to have privacy and this house is perfect for me," he says. "It is light and airy, yet secluded. It is also really warm and has great views. I plan to live here as long as I possibly can."

closer look

Where old meets new...

From the front of this house you would never guess that it is anything other than a traditional cottage – the extensive contemporary timber extension to the rear is a brilliant surprise, partly because it is so carefully concealed from the angle of approach. The house successfully illustrates that modern design need not detract from the historic interest of a property, and that there is no need to pretend that an extension is old when it is not. Creating a clear, imaginative distinction between the two parts of the house – in this case a glazed link that bridges the gap between the traditionally rendered old cottage and the timber-clad modern extension – is key to satisfying planners and making the design work.

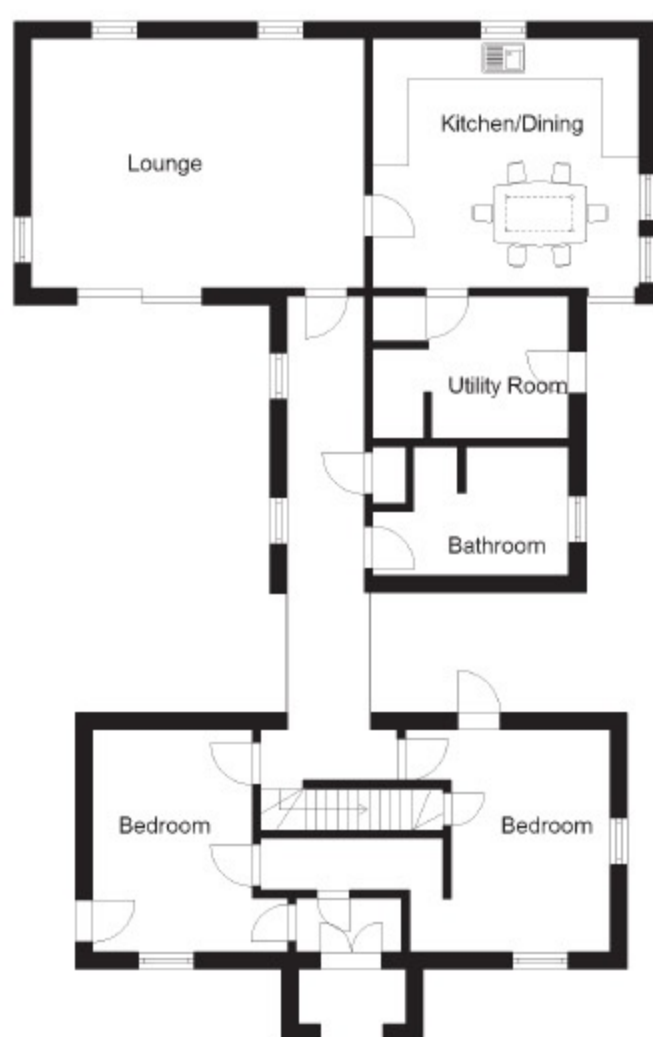


The glass link



Floor plans

Ground floor



First floor



House plans re-created using ARCON 3D Home Design Software. www.3darchitect.co.uk
Tel: 01252 267788 Email: arconsales@eleco.com



TOTAL BUILD COST BREAKDOWN

Elements	Cost m ²	Cost %	Total cost
Specialist masonry repairs & cottage roof	£349	19%	£60,920
Preliminaries	£57	3%	£10,000
Building work	£328	18%	£57,350
Joinery	£565	31%	£98,850
Roofing	£52	3%	£9,025
Plumbing & heating	£140	8%	£24,460
Electrics	£59	3%	£10,320
Decorating	£45	2%	£7,805
Prime costs	£65	3%	£11,310
Fees (architects, QS, engineer)	£141	8%	£24,660
Grand total			£314,700

Useful contacts

ARCHITECT Acanthus DF 01466 793400 www.aadf.co.uk **STRUCTURAL ENGINEERS** Cameron & Ross 01224 642400 www.cameronross.co.uk
CONTRACTORS Neil Donald 07870 517781 www.neildonald.co.uk **MASONRY** Laing Traditional Masonry 01330 833941 www.traditionalmasonry.co.uk

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Design the perfect kitchen

Innovative trends, quality finishes and a practical layout that fits in with your lifestyle are key to creating a smart, functional kitchen, says **Caroline Rodrigues**

Above: This kitchen has a semi-industrial look; the stainless steel and brick are softened with oak for a practical yet beautiful bespoke kitchen. **From £30,000 Roundhouse**

The kitchen has become the most important room in our homes – no longer just a functional cooking space, it's now a hub for entertaining friends, relaxing and enjoying family time.

"Making spaces eclectic is the biggest trend," says interior specialist Abigail Ahern. "The kitchen design has to integrate with the rest of the living space." The must-have feature in a contemporary zone is a freestanding

island unit. Often doubling as a breakfast bar, an island creates extra worktop space, packs in storage and – when fitted with a sink or appliances – becomes a multifunctional workhorse.

Clever planning

Your new kitchen needs to suit the way you cook and live. If you opt for a flexible open plan arrangement there are lots of pluses, but a few downsides as well. Cooking smells are likely to percolate

around the living space, so include a good extractor. Choose a quiet washing machine or dishwasher, too, as you won't be able to shut off the noise.

If you are self building, it is relatively easy to design in exactly the kitchen you want. For renovators, however, things get a little more complicated. If space is lacking, could you move a wall or build an extension? Sometimes relocating a window, or rehanging a door to open the other way, can make a layout work. Jot down existing features that will affect the design, such as a chimney breast.

One of the easiest ways to play around with the arrangement of units is to use an online planner (try www.ikea.co.uk). "If possible, mark out potential layouts on the floor with masking tape to test their operation, functionality and how much moving-around space you have left," advises designer Jon King, from Hamilton King.

When deciding where to put the sink, fridge and cooker, imagine a triangle, with an appliance at each corner. This will ensure you can move easily between them, without too much distance or too many obstacles in the way. Keeping the plumbing close to its existing position will save money.

Stowing goods

Kitchen storage is all about easy access. You're missing a trick if you don't include fitted nifty pull-out corner and larder units, and if you have the space, a walk-in pantry is a luxury worth considering. To make your design operate like a well-run professional kitchen, designate specific areas for the items you need to tidy away. "Storage solutions can really be very creative," says Bernard Otulakowski from SieMatic UK. "You can use the backs of doors to hold pan

closer look

Fact file

Kitchen company: The Kitchen Store

Project: Kitchen extension

Products: Logic units in high gloss white and black glass from Rational, worktops in Corian, floor tiles from Porcelanosa

Cost: £12,000 (excluding worktop and appliances)

This super-smart Logic kitchen from Rational was designed by Eddie Grant of The Kitchen Store for the Hewitt family, who renovated their home to create an open plan kitchen and dining area. They built a small extension and knocked through to the original dining room. "The family wanted a kitchen that was not only stunning to look at but practical," says Eddie. "The 3m-long island unit provides storage, a large prep area and somewhere to sit while enjoying views of the garden. We kept the white cabinetry to one wall for easy access, and accentuated the whole design with the addition of black glass units for the island, topped with 60mm Corian." Finishing it all off are large-format porcelain floor tiles in a pale neutral shade, from Porcelanosa.



closer look

Fact file

Kitchen company: Hamilton King

Project: Kitchen/diner orangery extension

Products: Plywood and laminate/European oak units made-to-order, worksurfaces in Zodiac Cygnus Pearl, Zerox sink from Blanco, Just monobloc tap from Gessi, and appliances from Siemens

Cost: £37,000 for the kitchen, including appliances, worksurfaces and installation.

Building and structural works cost £82,000

Designer Jon King and his wife Gail Hamilton-King worked together to create their own kitchen and dining space as part of the kitchen-orangery extension they designed for their four-bedroom house. "We wanted to create a space for living – a room for cooking, eating and relaxing," says Jon. "We made sure to lift the beams as high as possible so that the ceilings were on one level, allowing the space to feel streamlined." Jon had used plywood for several projects and was tempted by its layered composition. "It's a material that is very honest about its structure – unlike standard kitchen units, which are made from MDF wrapped in a layer of plastic. We worked hard to ensure that the look of the grain came through, and it's been finished with a satin lacquer. The full-height wall of wood sits adjacent to an exposed brick wall, creating a contrast that we love."



lids, while the (usually vacant) plinth area can be used to make a deeper drawer. There are also flexible options that can allow taller items from the shelf below to peep through the shelf above."

Trend watch

Kitchens are fast becoming spaces for living, with some cabinets used as multi-media cupboards or practical furniture. "Designs can now completely disguise or screen their functional elements while not in use, leaving only an image of striking furniture and ambiance," says Kieron Bell, senior designer from Kitchens International.

If you have the space, planning in dedicated wine storage will give your kitchen the edge. John Lewis now offers bespoke solutions – the racking can be customised with acrylic displays, LED lighting, mirror acrylics, cooling units and cellar conditioners, for example. Another trend is to ensure that extraction is unobtrusive: telescopic hoods, downdraft or ceiling extractors won't obstruct the line of a sleek kitchen. A remote-controlled combined extractor and light fitting is another option.

Precise rows of units will add slick contemporary style to your new build. But if you prefer a more relaxed kitchen environment, character pieces can bring personality to the zone. For example, a dresser provides great display space, and can be painted to contrast with the units – and refinished if you ever tire of the colour. Do away with the fitted look altogether and every item you need, including the sink unit, can be made bespoke, while vintage pieces will enhance the farmhouse effect.

CHOOSING WORKTOPS



Stone will look beautiful in any style of kitchen, but will need occasional resealing. It withstands heat well but can be broken or chipped if hit hard. As well as ever-popular granite, limestone, marble and other options are available. This high-quality Silver Vein travertine has a polished clear resin finish. **From £360 per m², The Stone & Ceramic Warehouse**

Timber worktops have a warm, natural appeal, though they're not good around water and you'll need to oil them regularly. Hot pans can burn the material and it can stain, but scratches can be sanded out. This full stave prime oak 40mm worktop, **starting at £275 per linear metre from 1909 Kitchens**, includes an option for inset steel balls to create a convenient trivet for hot pans

Solid surface worktops such as Corian and HI-MACS are made from a durable mix of acrylic and minerals. They offer endless possibilities for creating curves and organic shapes, and can be jointed seamlessly or moulded to form upstands or a sink. This **HI-MACS worktop in Alpine White, £300 per linear metre**, comes with a removable chopping board

Engineered stone, also called quartz composite, is surging in popularity due to its durability and luxurious looks. Also, it is extremely easy to maintain and requires no finishing or sealing. The earthy-coloured **Woodlands, £475 per linear metre, from Caesarstone's Supernatural collection**, is designed to replicate the tactility of marble.

Laminate is a great all-rounder, with a hardwearing surface layer attached to a high-density particleboard core. It offers a huge range of colours and lookalike materials: this one appears natural because the pattern isn't repeated at all across its whole width. **True Scale Bark Microplank worktop, 3,600x600x40mm, £113, Axiom by Formica**

Other options include industrial-look concrete, which is cast in situ; glossy and resilient toughened glass, which will require a site survey by the manufacturer, known as 'templating'; and stainless steel – the choice for professional kitchens. This polished grey concrete work surface is part of an **Urbo kitchen, from £30,000, Roundhouse**

Materials and finishes

Instead of single-colour kitchens, the drift is towards dual tones. Interest in varied surface textures is growing, too, with smooth and glossy surfaces being mixed with rough sawn or structured woodgrain laminate. "Different materials help create a sense of individuality," says Craig Burgess-Allen from Rational. "This, along with an explosion in the choice of worktop finishes and materials, adds a little excitement into the visual aspect of the kitchen."

Neutral tones still prevail when it comes to colour, and can work really well mixed with timber, perhaps accented with a bright colour. For painted kitchens, this season the trend is leaning towards lighter shades. "The pale soft pinks, which are all over the catwalks, can translate into the home, too," says Kiran Noonan from John Lewis of Hungerford. "Pink might not be the first hue that comes to mind when thinking about kitchen colour, but it's surprisingly versatile."

What to spend

Whatever your budget, you'll want to spend it wisely. Off-the-peg retailers and DIY stores offer a computer planning service and standard-size units that you

can then upgrade with smart worktops and appliances. They're a good bet, especially if you want to install the kitchen yourself. A Metod Forvara 600mm base unit with drawer and two shelves costs from just £72 from Ikea.

High street retailers such as Magnet provide a full-service from planning to fitting. Units come in fixed sizes and in a wealth of door styles. John Lewis' new fitted furniture studio at its flagship store on London's Oxford Street includes 15 kitchen displays, including its own-brand First Collection range, which costs from £7,000 including appliances, as well as examples from Alno, which cost from £5,825 for furniture only.

Custom-designed kitchens are made to your specific dimensions from a range of door styles and offer lots of variety as doors can be finished and painted in any way you choose. Harvey Jones' handmade kitchens cost upwards of £17,000.

Truly bespoke kitchens are the couture option. Made from scratch, the furniture will fit your kitchen perfectly, ideal if you've converted an older building with awkward nooks and crannies. Big-name companies such as Smallbone of Devizes quote prices from £35,000, but the sky's the limit.

POSITIONING**How to set out kitchen units to maximise any room's potential:**

A galley kitchen with a single row of cabinets may be the only option in a narrow room, but it's an efficient layout with everything within reach.

A double galley – two rows of units facing each other – is practical. You'll need a gap of at least 120cm between facing cabinets or there won't be room to open doors fully or avoid bumping into another person using the kitchen at the same time.

An L-shaped arrangement with cupboards set against two walls makes great use of corner space, and you can fit a pull-out or carousel unit into the corner to maximise storage.

A U-shaped kitchen is a practical arrangement that can work well in medium or large rooms.

An island unit is an excellent choice if your room is large enough. Place your sink and appliances close to each other so you won't have to walk around it too much.

A peninsula unit juts out into the room, an option that works well if you don't have space for an island.

closer look**Fact file**

Kitchen company: Kitchens International

Project: Kitchen for a new build

Products: Bespoke handleless island in zebrano veneer by Mowlem & Co, tall cabinets by R W Kuhlmann, worktops in Espresso Brown by Zodiaq, panoramic induction hob from Siemens, sink and taps from Carron Phoenix, Quooker hot water tap and splashbacks from Intaglio Glass

Cost: £50,000 including appliances

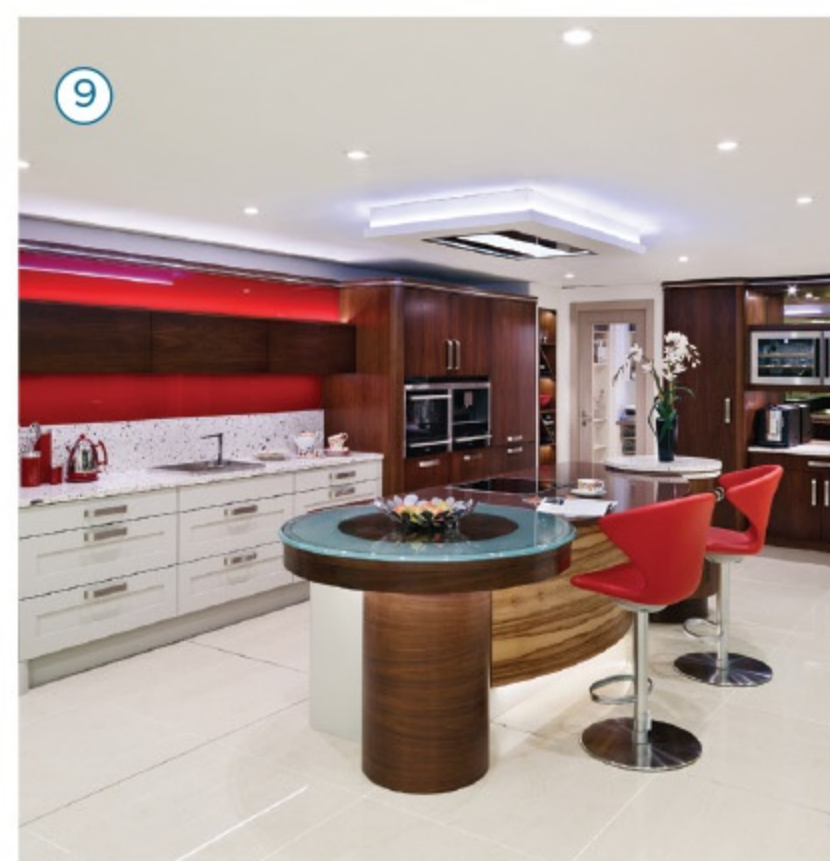
To create a dream kitchen for Fiona Ward and partner John Gillespie's new home in rural Perthshire, Kieron Bell from Kitchens International came up with a contemporary concept. The design includes free flowing, organic shapes to soften the space and relate to the home's stunning views over the river Tay. The room works as one huge living space, with a bespoke zebrano veneer island with horizontal grain providing the highlight. "A curved island provides a better flow between spaces than a linear design and gives a good transition between the cooking area and the living/dining space," says Kieron. Storage was achieved through the backdrop of tall units in high gloss reflective acrylic. "The zebrano, paired with a Cubanit olive-grey deep gloss, gives a natural organic feel and has more than enough contemporary punch to connect all the elements together," he says.

**CONTACTS**

1909 Kitchens 01325 505539 www.1909kitchens.co.uk **Alno** 01924 487900 www.alno.co.uk **Axiom** 0191 259 3478 www.axiomworktops.com
Barnes of Ashburton 01364 653613 www.barnesofashburton.co.uk **Blanco** 0844 912 0100 www.blanco.co.uk **Caesarstone** 01706 863600 www.caesarstone.co.uk **Carron Phoenix** 01324 638321 www.carron.com **Corian** 0800 962116 www.corian.co.uk **Farrow & Ball** 01202 876141 www.farrow-ball.com **Gessi** 07734 954513 www.gessi.com **Hamilton King** 020 8995 3608 www.hamiltonking.com **Harvey Jones** 0800 389 6938 www.harveyjones.com **HI-MACS** 01892 704074 www.himacs.eu **Homebase** 0845 077 8888 www.homebase.co.uk **Ikea** 020 3645 0000 www.ikea.co.uk **Intaglio Glass** 01355 248899 www.intaglioglass.com **John Lewis** 0845 604 9049 www.johnlewis.com **John Lewis of Hungerford** 0700 278 4726 www.john-lewis.co.uk **Kitchens International** 0845 074 0022 www.kitchensinternational.co.uk **The Kitchen Store** 0114 255 8008 **Magnet** 01325 744093 www.magnet.co.uk **Mowlem & Co** 0191 257 6112 www.mowlemandco.co.uk **Porcelanosa** 020 7253 1227 www.porcelanosa.co.uk **Rational** www.rational.de/en **Roundhouse** 020 7297 6220 www.roundhousedesign.com **RW Kuhlmann** www.kuhlmannkueche.de **SieMatic** 0161 246 6010 www.siematic.co.uk **Siemens** 0844 892 8999 www.siemens-home.co.uk **Smallbone of Devizes** 020 7589 5998 www.smallbone.co.uk **The Stone & Ceramic Warehouse** 020 8993 5545 stoneandceramicwarehouse.co.uk **Zodiaq** www.dupont.com

A place to meet and eat

When creating your kitchen space, choose a design that's functional and a style that's timeless. Here are some clever ideas to inspire your scheme



- 1** Industrial-style Treviso kitchen with a light oak and glossed copper island, which features plenty of storage. **From £10,000, Mereway Kitchens, 0800 028 4466, merewaykitchens.co.uk** **2** The contemporary Scandi-style Air kitchen features a mix of curved oak and aluminium panels. **From £20,000, Devol, 01509 233000 devolkitchens.co.uk** **3** The C24 kitchen in ultra-popular ivory green features soft-close drawers. **From £3,000, Bohen, 0800 862 0220, bohen.co.uk** **4** Country-style maple painted solid timber cabinets with recessed butt hinges. **From £17,000, 01298 872422, churchwood.co.uk** **5** The Spa Fields kitchen's synchronised wood grains create an interesting layered effect. **From £10,000, Daval, 01484 849500, daval-furniture.co.uk** **6** Scandinavian kiln-dried solid wood kitchen cabinets. **From £8,000, Pineland Furniture, 01606 832050, pineland.co.uk** **7** Cambia units in natural gloss lacquer with Cult oak island. **From £12,000, Rational, 01543 459459 rational.de/en** **8** Shaws Classic Shaker 800 handmade deep sink. **£506, Shaws of Darwen, 0844 840 4529, shawsofdarwen.com** **9** This Callerton kitchen combines the modern with the classic. **From £15,000, Abingdon Furniture Gallery, 01235 558000, afgltd.eu**



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Glazed doors FAQs



They are a much loved addition to homes old and new, but what's the best way to specify glazed doors and what are the options?

Build It asks the experts your questions

If you take a look at the selection of readers' homes in this and past issues of *Build It*, you'll notice a running theme among many of the properties. Some may be renovations, others new builds, with some traditional in style as well as those that are ultra-contemporary – but there's a common feature that so many of them include: glazed doors.

From an aesthetic point of view, it is easy to see why they are so popular – they bring light into even the darkest of zones and provide picturesque views of the landscape beyond. From a practical perspective, they link home and garden, making it much easier to use the outside area, which can increase a property's overall living space in the warmer months.

There are a variety of doors to choose from, both in design and materials, and a host of configuration options. But what's best for you and your home? Here we answer some of

your frequently asked questions to help you pick the perfect match.

What's the difference between sliding and bi-fold doors?

Although they share similarities, these are two very different products. "Sliding doors consist of moveable panels that glide open along the length of the track, but don't open inwards or outwards – great for those wanting to maximise space without causing obstacles when the doors are open," says Anna-Marie DeSouza, *Build It's* editor. The units run on single, double or triple tracks depending on the size and number of doors required – double tracks are around 100mm wide and up to 160mm for triple.

You can create an opening of up to 65% of the run depending on the system, number of panels and the configuration. In general, one or two sliding sections move behind a single

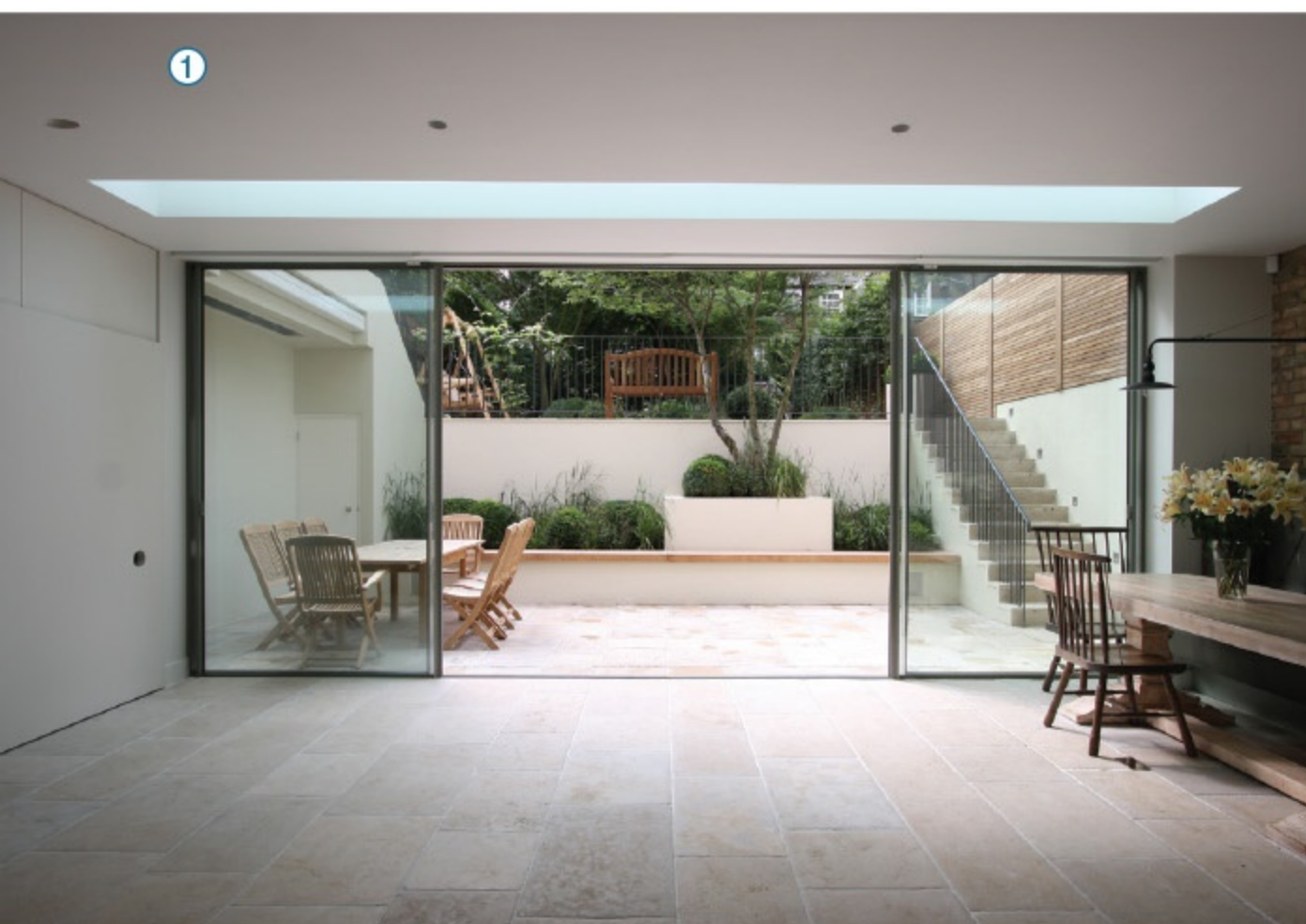
static panel, usually located at either side of the run. The most common configuration is for the central doors to move in opposite directions towards fixed units at the end of the track.

Bi-fold (or folding sliding) doors are made up of a concertina of panels that stack at one end of the track, at 90° (perpendicular) to the frame. "The main draw of folding sliding doors is that they create around a 90% clear opening when all of the panels have been folded back, which can be especially attractive if you have limited wall space," says Anna-Marie. The moveable leaves operate in pairs but are usually specified in odd-numbered arrangements. This allows the single panel to double-up as a traffic door when you don't want to open the entire run. In most cases, the doors are outward hanging so as not to eat into interior space.

Do I need to obtain planning consent to fit new glazed doors?

Generally, planning permission isn't required when adding glazed doors to the rear of a house. If you are self building, the inclusion will have been drawn into your application, and if you

Above: These bespoke outward opening conservation bi-fold doors would be perfect for renovations to traditional-style homes. Made from knot-free engineered timber with double glazing. From £5,815, Mumford & Wood



1 Sliding doors open up this rear extension to the garden area. These units are aluminium framed with a visible 21mm vertical profile. **A similar installation would cost around £19,000, IQ Glass**

2 If you want your doors to stand out from the crowd, choose an unconventionally coloured finish. This five door set comes in Light Pink from the Beach Hut Colour Palette range. **From £1,200-£1,400 per panel, Origin**

3 These lift and slide doors use engineered FSC Redwood for the internal supporting frame and an external aluminium system to clamp the 48mm triple glazed units in place, creating a facade of glass that can be as large or small as required. **From £1,000 per linear metre, GreenSteps**

are renovating/extending the doors should be classed as permitted development (PD). If you are in a conservation area or live in a listed building then you'll need to get in touch with your local council to see what their restrictions are. This is particularly important if the doors affect principal elevations that are visible from the main road.

"Any alteration to the opening should be carried out by a professional builder and done so in accordance with Building Regulations," says Chris Wood, managing director of Lomax and Wood. "A new lintel will be required and the calculations for it should be carried out by an engineer, in relation to supporting the structure and to suit the new or wider opening in the wall. Building Regulations may also need to be adhered to when increasing the glass area to ensure it meets part L (energy efficiency) requirements."

Do doors come in a standard size?

Although units do come in standard sizes, it is possible to have them custom made to a measurement that suits your project. It's not uncommon for a sliding door to have panels of up to 2,500mm wide or even larger, but typically they are available as 1,100mm-1,200mm units. The panel width on bi-folds is limited to a maximum of around 1,200mm for practicality.

Where you are replacing an existing patio door, it is highly likely that the opening is a regular height and width. "Standard sized doors will usually be immediately available and at a reduced cost compared to bespoke versions. However, for homeowners wanting a

perfect fit, or for those who are looking to make a dramatic change and open their home to the beautiful world outside, custom sized doors are available through most reputable window and door suppliers," says Peter Watkins from Centor. "Most companies fabricate to at least a 2.7m high frame and up to 3m is not uncommon. If you really want to make an impression, door manufacturers can buy hardware systems for folding doors up to 4m high."

What framing materials are available?

The main materials used for glazed doors are timber, aluminium and PVCu. The latter is the most budget-friendly option, but is often criticised for its lack of aesthetic appeal. In fact, it's also probably the least durable – poor quality versions can suffer from twisting and warping through exposure to UV light.

Timber is a popular choice and is much loved thanks to its characterful appearance and excellent thermal properties. In most cases it is a highly durable selection, especially if hardwood is specified. Softwood is a cheaper option, but will require a little more upkeep to remain in good condition. Frames can be painted or stained to suit your requirements, but this will also require regular upkeep.

Aluminium is inherently strong so slim frames can be produced, which provides great sightlines. For best performance, pick thermally-broken versions that will reduce heat loss. In terms of aesthetics, aluminium frames can be anodised to show off the natural colour, or powder-coated in a full range of RAL hues. Aluminium can

also be used as a sheathing material on timber units to create an ultra-durable composite frame.

"Timber is a very good natural insulator it's also strong and secure. Aluminium usually has a thinner frame section that creates a more contemporary feel, and requires very little maintenance," says Matt Higgs from Kloeber. "Most timber bi-folds will be hung from the top, which means the hinges are attached to carrier rollers that slot into the top of the frame and take the weight of the doors. A top hung system is ideally suited to heavy doors and ensures a smooth and trouble free operation. Most aluminium systems are bottom rolling, which means the weight is on steel or nylon rollers on a track at the bottom of the frame. Aluminium profiles are hollow and therefore light, which makes the bottom rolling mechanism more suitable for this setup."

What glazing options can I consider?

As with other types of fenestration, specifying the right combination of frame and glazing is crucial. "The glass element can make up around 90% of the surface area of a product – so the door is only as thermally efficient as the glass you put in it," says Matt. "Many types are available. Triple glazing is always a good idea for aluminium products as this reduces the U-value – a measure of thermal insulation, where the lower the number the better. Solar controlled glass is another good option as it reduces solar gain (giving a lower G-value). If you're investing in a lot of glazing on a south facing aspect I would always recommend this."





You can specify other features that will further boost the efficiency of your units. Gas filling the cavities between the double or triple glazing with Argon or Krypton can have a significant positive effect on thermal efficiency. The gas reduces the level of heat conductance between the panes, helping to keep more warmth inside the house during the winter and shutting it out in the summer.

Another popular specification is Low-emissivity or low-E glass, which is a thermally insulating product. It's basically a transparent metallic coating that reflects warmth from radiators or other heat sources back into the room, rather than allowing it to escape.

What do I need to know about Building Regs?

"With straight like-for-like replacement, no regulations apply. If sliding or folding doors are part of an extension, they should have U-value below 1.8 W/m²K. For a new build the U-value should ideally be below 1.4" says Peter Watts from Centor. "Since July 2013 all manufacturers are obliged to declare a U-value under EN standards."

You'll also need to ensure the glass is toughened or laminated for safety and security reasons, another Building Regs requirement. Toughened glass is heat treated during manufacture to produce a product that is five times stronger than normal glass and will shatter into tiny pieces with dull edges if broken, rather than large sharp sections.

Laminated panes are made from sheets of glass held together with clear plastic film. If broken, the fragments adhere to the film to slow down or prevent intruders gaining access.

How much do doors cost?

As you may expect, the cheapest option is to purchase a standardised system. An average two door sliding set should cost from around £800 and bi-fold units start from around £1,000. For bespoke/made-to-measure systems, the price will increase – but you'll receive a greater degree of design flexibility as a result.

"Obviously price is very important with every project and you don't want to spend too much, but more often than not you really do get what you pay for with this type of product," says Matt Higgs from Kloeber. "You should expect to pay at least £1,200 per linear metre of overall frame width for a good quality, well-engineered system. You will probably only buy a glazed door once for your property so it's worth taking the time to ensure you make the right choice."

4 The Kustomslide Plus aluminium sliding door system offers up to six sliding doors with a lift and slide mechanism. All doorsets are bespoke with frame sizes ranging from 1.5m to 13m wide and up to 2.8m high. **Prices start from £2,000, Kloeber**

5 This solid oak, premium patio doorset boasts U-values of just 1.6 W/m²K. It's top hung for ease of operation and is available in standard sizes or made-to-measure. **Five-door set from £6,518, Jeld Wen**



CONTACTS

Centor 0121 701 2500 www.centor.com **Greensteps** 01621 740591 www.greensteps.co.uk **ID Systems** 01603 408804 www.i-d-systems.co.uk
IQ Glass 01494 722880 www.iqglassuk.com **Jeld Wen** 0845 122 2890 www.jeld-wen.co.uk **Kloeber** 01487 740044 www.kloeber.co.uk **Lomax & Wood** 020 8616 2187 www.lomaxwood.co.uk **Mumford & Wood** 01621 818155 www.mumfordwood.com **Origin** 0845 894 8989 www.origin-global.com



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How to



SELF BUILD

Part six: BUYING MATERIALS

Getting the right products for your build is key to a successful project. But what's the best way to source them and who can you enlist to advise you? **Anna-Marie DeSouza** explores the options

If you relish the opportunity to research products and materials, then you'll be in your element when sourcing items for your self build. Shopaholics will delight in being part of what's commonly described as the biggest shopping trip of your life – and the odds are that it'll be the most expensive one, too. Here you get to choose where to spend and where to save, as well as enlightening yourself on any new products and technologies on the market.

While you can – and should – enjoy the process, it's still one that you need to take very seriously. This task is in a completely different league to popping to M&S to pick up the weekly shop. For example, builder's merchant Travis Perkins has more than 30 different types of steel lintel for sale – do you know how to make the right

selection? If you're a novice (and even if you're a seasoned enthusiast, for that matter) you probably won't be familiar with everything on offer.

If the prospect is too daunting, you don't have to go it alone: for instance, you could contract a merchant to help you with some or all of the procurement. Here we will look at all of the options to help you decide what the best route is for your scheme, as well as giving you advice on how to run a smooth operation.

Self procurement

Many people go down the route of sourcing everything themselves. This is certainly something that can and has been completed very successfully by hundreds of *Build It* readers. However, this route is not without its risks. Before deciding to take this

This series is sponsored by the Self Build Academy.



Design and build specialist, Potton has partnered with *Build It* to offer an educational series of courses to guide self builders through the exciting journey of creating their own bespoke home. The independent sessions will cover everything from building with masonry or structural timber, to project management and finding land.

NEXT SESSIONS:

How to start your build 27th June
How to plan, manage & control your build 25th July

For more information and to book, visit www.selfbuildacademy.co.uk



Above: *Build It* readers Richard and Christine Wolfenden wanted their new home in Yorkshire to be as authentic as possible to the local vernacular, so to ensure the mix of bricks was spot on, Richard took charge of sourcing them. "I agonised over the decision and eventually found a company that manufactured imperial-sized versions, which have a bigger profile than standard," he says. "It has the character of the old-fashioned units and really adds an air of authenticity to the house. I didn't want to leave this essential decision to anyone else."

Below: Peter and Pip Marnham wanted to create an eco friendly and sustainable home in Cornwall and felt a great way to achieve this on a set budget was to source a lot of the materials themselves. While the structural elements – the timber frame, blockwork and RSJs – were procured by their architect, they took control of the insulation, windows, solar panels, heat pump, underfloor heating and all the decorative finishes

course, you must assess whether or not you actually have enough time to devote to both researching products and scheduling orders. It can undeniably save you a great deal of money, but it's also a full-time job.

If this is your first build, you will not be overly familiar with all of the components that go into constructing a house. Aside from the obvious structural elements such as bricks and mortar, concrete and timber, all manner of components will need to be sourced – from tiles to cladding, flooring and heating products, the list goes on. Online research will help you to develop a knowledge of what's available, but you should match this with visits to showrooms, merchants and self build exhibitions. You may be able to source items cheaper on the internet, but nothing will give you a more accurate impression of what the product is like than seeing it in the flesh. If you can't get to a showroom in person, ask if they can send you a sample.

Establish a good relationship with your architect or builder, and the chances are they'll be happy to guide you towards the best options for structural components. This will prove essential if you are to meet Building Regs requirements and tailor choices

to your construction system. Check and double check lead times, and schedule deliveries accordingly, otherwise any money you've saved by self sourcing will be eaten up by the costs associated with delays on site.

If you are not familiar or comfortable with this role, then it's worth leaving it up to your builder or project manager. If you take on responsibility for providing materials that either don't arrive on time or are the wrong specification or quantity, your tradespeople may be left unable to proceed to the next stage.

Builder's merchants

Working with a single supplier can be a cost effective and organised way to purchase goods. The first thing you should do is set up a trade account with a merchant – such as Jewson, Travis Perkins or Buildbase – and brush up on your haggling skills.

Trade cards and accounts are available from the vast majority of builder's merchants, and they are usually (but not always) open to self builders. An account will really help manage your cash flow. They are usually settled at the end of the month after the purchase is made, so buying materials at the start of a month can give you up to 60 days of credit.

TOP TIPS

- Compile a comprehensive schedule that details exactly when deliveries are due. Ensure there are copies available on site and with your key contractors so everyone knows what's expected.
- Take sole responsibility for signing for materials when they arrive, or delegate the job to a single person. You don't want to risk them being left in an unsuitable location on site or taken back to the depot.
- When placing your order, check what is required for delivery. For example, do you need forklifts/cranes to unload bulky materials? If so, will your supplier provide this or do you need to make your own arrangements?
- Check through every order as soon as it arrives and before the delivery driver departs. Count that the correct amount and specification has been sent – if not, make an immediate call to the merchant to make suitable arrangements. Secondly, check for quality – has anything been damaged in transit? If you are unsure of what you are looking for, ask someone with experience to help you. If there are problems, negotiate a discount with your supplier to make up the cost of wasted time on site.
- It is essential that you have a suitable storage facility. Firstly, you'll want it for security – theft is a common problem on building sites. Bad weather is a further reason for needing storage. Have somewhere sheltered where you can lock up goods – a garage or outbuilding would be ideal. Alternatively, hire a heavy duty container or portable site office from a company such as Brandon Hire. With this in place, you can procure items as and when you see them in the sales or when there is a promotion on – if you have adequate space, you can make lots of savings this way.



ALEX PRAIT

It's worth establishing a good rapport with merchant staff as they'll be a great source of help and information. Sometimes they'll even be able to advise you on good local builders and tradesmen to employ. Ask them whether they can recommend workers who are reliable and who pay their trade account off on time – this should translate to them being just as reliable when working for you.

Builder's merchants can also assist with estimation calculations based on your plans. They will be all too willing to help with this process because there is every chance that you'll end up buying the materials required from them. The more you are willing to spend with a single retailer, the bigger the discount you can expect to achieve. However, it's worth bearing in mind that as a self builder your buying power will never match that of a large-scale developer – meaning you'll never command the same sort of discount that they can.

Large DIY stores, including B&Q and Homebase, should not be dismissed for sourcing items for your self build – many branches even have a trade counter. These are popular with construction professionals as the prices for consumables and tools are often competitive. However, here, you probably won't be able to negotiate a large discount – and you may struggle to find some of the more heavy duty materials you'll need. Don't forget to get a VAT receipt linked to you or your project for any materials over £100 so that you can reclaim tax at the end of your build. A standard till receipt is not sufficient.

Your builder

Probably the most hassle-free way to source materials is to get your main contractor or project manager to buy everything on your behalf. This is a great option for those who are time-poor or are complete novices to the industry – but you will pay for the service to some extent.

If you have hired a good builder, with a good reputation, they'll certainly be able to command a good discount

with their local merchants. It's to be expected that not all of this discount will be passed on to you – but you should assume that you can reap at least some of the benefits.

To avoid being overcharged, you could suggest that your builder be put on your trade account so they can do some of the negotiating on your behalf. They will have a much better idea of what specific products should cost and you'll get to see exactly what was bought, and for what price. You should also ask your builder to take you to go and see some of their regular suppliers – especially when it comes to finishings (such as tiles) and for your kitchen units and bathroom products. This way you can see the fittings in person while taking best advantage of the discount offered to professionals.

Package companies

If you are working with a package builder – ie, a company that is both designing and supplying your home – you will have few of the worries felt by those who are self procuring. A package company can combine an architectural design service with providing all of the main materials needed to build the house for an agreed price – hence the title of 'package'. Timber-frame firms, for example, will usually erect the skeleton of your home using their own materials and suppliers. These arrangements often exclude kitchens, bathrooms, heating and final finishes (unless you have selected a full-service turnkey option).

In most cases you'll be appointed your own contacts manager who will steer you through the purchasing process. They will give you the options available for the extra elements you need, offer you increased specifications for the standard shell (extra insulation, for example) and even give you a list of recommended suppliers. Once the basic structure is complete, you'll again be given the chance to source your own fixtures and fittings, which can often shave a big chunk off the package price.



Above: Pat and Tony Priestly self-procured materials for their homebuilding project. When it came to ordering aluminium windows and doors, the couple quickly discovered that it pays to shop around. An estimate from a national firm came in at £85,000, but when they turned to local companies they were quoted less than half this amount. They made savings on insulation, too, by using Rockwool, which was on offer in B&Q. "You could only buy a limited amount per store, so we asked family and friends to go out and get it on our behalf. Thankfully we collected enough to complete the job," says Tony.

HOW TO SELF BUILD

To guide you through the process of creating a bespoke home, our new 11-part educational series covers all aspects of self building, from finding land and planning to design details and project management. Here's a list of what to expect in the coming months:

- 1 Why self build?
- 2 Finance & budgeting
- 3 Finding land
- 4 Self building: structural systems
- 5 Design options
- 6 Buying materials
- 7 Project management
- 8 Planning permission
- 9 The regulations
- 10 Insurances and contracts
- 11 Final matters

CONTACTS

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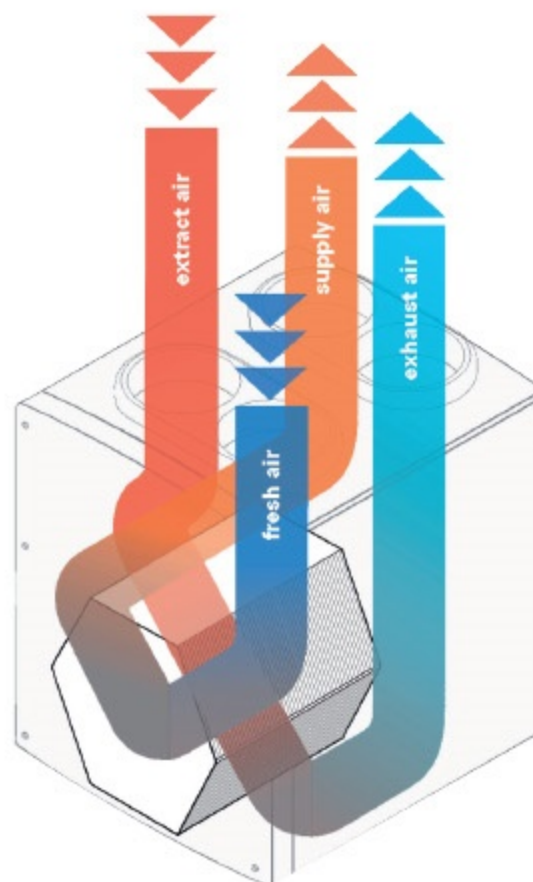
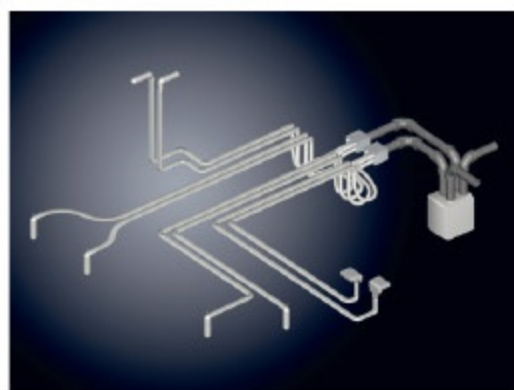
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CHOOSING

Choosing a Green Deal assessor

Build It speaks to Green Deal assessor **Des Locke** about why you should take advantage of this government scheme to fund eco improvements

Build It: Why do I need a Green Deal assessor?

Des Locke: If you're looking to get any finance through the government scheme or would like Green Deal cashback, you will have to have an assessment completed by a registered professional. Energy prices will continue to go up year-on-year, so if you can make your house more thermally efficient you'll be able to save on your bills. The assessment will also help if you'd like to sign up for the Renewable Heat Incentive (RHI) tariff as it will show you what the payback period is going to be. You should carry out an assessment before you commence any works.

BI: What will the assessment entail?

DL: It is a two-stage process. Firstly, the assessor will visit your home to complete a domestic energy performance certificate (EPC). Then you'll have an occupancy assessment, which details how you use your energy. For example, how many baths or showers you take during the week, how you use your central heating or how often you run your dishwasher and washing machine. Once both of these stages are complete you'll receive your EPC. This will tell you the energy rating of your property and will indicate how much carbon you use.

Most people charge around £130-£140 for an assessment – the price depends on the amount of bedrooms that you have. An advisor is limited on what they can tell you as we can only advise on what the report throws up. It's common for the assessment to reveal

whether your home's walls are uninsulated, for example. At present there is £4,000 cashback available to upgrade. If you had a three-bedroom semi-detached house with nothing in the loft, inefficient windows and solid walls, it's likely to cost you a fair amount to heat, and you would probably qualify for the £4,000 grant.

BI: How long does the assessment take?

DL: This will typically take an hour to complete; it all depends on the size of your home. The more rooms there are to assess the longer the assessor will need. Most reports are sent back to the homeowner via email or post, either the same or the next day at the very latest.

BI: How does the GD report actually work?

DL: Once the assessment has been completed, you will receive a report that shows green and orange ticks. The green tick shows measures that qualify for Green Deal finance. This means that the suggested improvements will pay for themselves over a period of 10-25 years. An orange tick means that even when the work has been implemented it will only partially pay for itself. Only works with green ticks will receive some support from the Green Deal – and you can only claim cashback on the recommended improvements. There are around 40 different improvements that the report could find, such as, boiler upgrades, cavity and solid wall insulation, and so on. You will then need to take whatever the report finds to a green deal provider who is able to grant the funding.

DES LOCKE

is the managing director of The Coloured Render Co (0845 3194852, www.plasterer.co.uk). He has over 30 years' experience in the external solid wall finishes sector. Des is also a qualified Green Deal assessor and his company is PAS2030 accredited to install solid wall insulation under the Green Deal and Energy Company Obligation schemes.



They will work out a 'Green Deal plan' and decide how much money you'll receive. You can then get installers to quote for the work, but they must all be PAS2030 certified for the relevant upgrade, otherwise you won't be able to receive the funding.

BI: Should my assessor have any qualifications?

DL: Professionals need to be registered as domestic energy assessors (DEA) in order to train as a Green Deal assessor. Anyone can get trained, but it does cost a couple of thousand pounds and to become an assessor you will need to have completed EPCs on five houses. Most of the firms offering Green Deal assessments will be solar panel companies, solid and cavity wall insulators and plumbers. The reason a lot of people train is because it's an add-on for the company. Being an assessor means that we can carry out the review and do some of the work.

For more information visit the gdorb.decc.gov.uk or energysavingtrust.org.uk



GARDEN BASICS:

HARD LANDSCAPING

Chris Bates takes a look at the key design elements that will shape your new home's garden for years to come

Caught up in the excitement of self building a new home, many of us focus our attention and budget on the house design and interiors. Money initially set aside for the garden understandably gets channelled into contingencies or upgrades for the structure and fit-out – but overlooking the key elements of your landscaping scheme comes at a price.

Unless you can afford fully-grown specimens, a good garden will take several years to mature. Putting the work off or downgrading the original design will mean your new home takes longer to blend into its surroundings. Here at *Build It*, we've seen countless otherwise exemplary houses that give off a stark vibe, simply because they seem to jut out of a barren landscape.

There's a financial implication, too. Getting the key hard landscaping jobs done during the initial stages of your build will be more cost-efficient, not least because you'll already have the requisite machinery on site. From a practical point of view, diggers and other plant will have better access while the plot's still empty – so you'll cut out back-breaking wheelbarrow manoeuvring if you act now.

Common tasks are to excavate patios, pools and ponds; establish paths and driveways; level awkward sites by redistributing soil; or skim off topsoil – the latter being a valuable asset when you come to plant up your new garden. If the work is undertaken during the construction of the house (ie prior to completion), it will be eligible for VAT relief (see the 'quick guide' box, opposite, for more on this).

As if this wasn't enough, nestling your home in surroundings that match up to the quality of the build will be a

real boon should you ever come to sell the house. "Nowadays, buyers expect outdoor spaces to be designed and installed with the same care and attention to detail as the interiors," says Andrew Gill, marketing manager at Brett Landscaping. "The average viewing takes 20 minutes, of which the first five will often be spent looking at the house from the outside."

Planning & design

There's another big advantage of setting out your garden ideas early – namely that it can sit well with your planning officer. Some local authorities will even insist that you supply a landscaping plan as part of your application, as they want to see the proposed house in context. They'll look at elements such as how your scheme enhances the area, its impact on any trees covered by protection orders and whether a lack of boundary fencing, tall planting or suchlike might give rise to privacy issues. A well thought-out design can thus be crucial in heading off objections to your self build plans.

Your architect should be able to come up with an initial scheme for planning purposes and identify key materials for the hard landscaping, but they're unlikely to be skilled in the detail of how this will affect your planting plans. Involving an expert at this stage will ensure tweaks are made before work starts – and may be useful if the garden amenity aspect of your proposal is in any way controversial.

The cost of engaging a professional landscape designer can range from a few hundred pounds up to £5,000 or more, depending on the specification and size of the project. But you'll recoup

Above: This L-shaped self build works in tandem with its countryside surroundings, combining swathes of bespoke glazing by David Salisbury with natural materials and clever use of hard landscaping. Step out through the first floor patio doors, for example, and the deck morphs into a stunning external staircase

This layered contemporary scheme uses stepped zones of Comsilk sandstone from Natural Paving's PremiaStone range, from £35 per m², to create an intriguing vista. Timber screening, subtle lighting effects and carefully-positioned planting complete the look



most of that investment with a well thought-out scheme that adds value to the finished house by maximising views, providing functional outdoor living spaces and delivering a lush, flourishing planting scheme.

Key considerations

Your home's orientation on the plot will have a big impact on which parts of your garden are sunny and which are shaded. A south-facing aspect is ideal for bright outdoor living spaces, for example. Meanwhile, different plants enjoy different conditions, from full sun through to dappled or deep shade – with paths, walls and other features all framing these areas.

In effect, your hard landscaping will work in tandem with the other major 'fixed' components of your property – the buildings and trees – to establish a structure and inform where living zones and plants will go. A good design team will also look at the impact of new drainage and services on your plans (nobody wants a manhole slap in the middle of their patio, for example) and whether hardstanding areas require sustainable drainage systems (SUDs). They'll work with you to ensure the



materials palette matches up to your style, functionality and maintenance requirements, too. Let's take a closer look at the main elements of a hard landscaping scheme:

Driveways While it's never going to be the most glamorous part of your project, getting the driveway right is crucial if you're to create a good first impression. It's worth carving out the shape right at the start of a build and covering it with a geotextile membrane and a base layer of well-compacted hardcore. This will ensure good access for deliveries and prevent the ground from being churned up. Once your home's nearing completion, you can

STEPPED CONTEMPORARY GARDEN



Jeremy Witt's overhaul of a Victorian terraced house may not be a self build, but it's an exemplary model of how to combine new construction work with a stunning landscaping scheme. A cuboid rear extension has added a much-needed kitchen/diner, which leads through bi-fold doors and across a level threshold directly to a hardstanding patio area.

Part of the project involved making the steeply sloping garden easier to manage. The design – developed by David Nossiter Architects and Jeremy's father, Derek, who is an experienced landscaper – incorporates series of stepped retaining walls. These offer space for beds planted with tall reeds, ensuring the extension's glazed bi-fold doors are sufficiently screened. The slate steps lead up to an attractive elevated area that's centred around a small pond and mixes lawned zones, flagstone paving and two interconnected raised timber decks. Slatted screening along the boundary adds another modern touch and acts as the backdrop for architectural planting.

then upgrade to the finished surface. Popular options range from cost-effective decorative gravels such as pea shingle (which can start from as little as £4 per m²) through to concrete block paving (from around £30 per m²).

Boundary treatments Another element worthy of early consideration, getting the boundaries right is vital – not least if you want to avoid disputes with your neighbours. Putting in your finished fencing at the start of a project will help to secure the site (and save you the cost of hiring metal screening). You can pay anything from £20 per panel for a simple arrangement right up to £60 per linear metre for top-end timber screening kits. The main alternative is brick walls, with 1.8m-tall versions starting at around £150 per linear metre, including foundations and labour. Dry stone walling is popular for its traditional aesthetic, but will cost more – expect to pay upwards of £200 per linear metre for this.

Retaining walls These are designed to hold back earth on steeply sloping sites. The specification of a retaining structure is based on the pressure exerted by the soil, as well as loads imposed by patios, cars etc. Larger versions must be reinforced, usually with wire mesh. Elements such as waterproofing and drainage need careful consideration, too, so the

design must be properly calculated by a qualified professional (eg a structural engineer). Retaining walls can be used either to create stepped gardens, where the individual platforms are levelled for accessibility, or to provide a perimeter within which the main dwelling can be constructed.

Patios & decking Incorporating a hardstanding area will add valuable outdoor living space to your new home that's ideal for lounging or entertaining. The obvious choice is a patio, which tends to be sited adjacent to the house so it can be accessible through sliding,

Left: This compact garden brings together a range of materials. The crisp white-edged raised beds are planted with tall grasses, while a central light feature is set among natural pebbles. The walkways are 145mm smooth Balau decking, £36.50 per m² from Roundwood of Mayfield

VAT RECLAIMS: QUICK GUIDE

If you're a self builder, you should be eligible for tax breaks on your project – including aspects of the garden.

Labour for groundworks on a new home is zero-rated for VAT, so you shouldn't be charged for this on your supplier's invoices. You can also recoup all of the VAT (normally charged at 20%) on some of the major elements of your landscaping scheme – provided you submit your claim within three months of completion.

The main eligible areas are:

- Garages and attached conservatories
- Driveways and main paths to and from the dwelling
- Retaining walls and boundary walls/fencing
- Patios

Note that garden buildings (such as greenhouses and sheds), ornamental features and planting arrangements (soft landscaping) are not included in the exemption.

VERNACULAR HOME & GARDEN



When the Rob and Sandra Searles commissioned a low-energy Scandia-Hus home on a countryside plot in Cambridgeshire, they felt a responsibility to enhance the surrounding area. "Before we bought the site, its derelict woodland hadn't been touched for about 50 years – and it's the first thing you see when you enter the village," says Rob.

The house is accessed via a pea-shingle gravel drive and pathway. These cut through a small section of beautifully planted lawns and beds, which offer a carpet of snowdrops, daffodils and primroses in spring. Attractive post-and-rail

boundary fencing, complete with field gates, helps to maintain privacy without creating a harsh juxtaposition between the property and its setting.

The couple planted around 130 trees in their garden and the surrounding woodland, in addition to hedges and shrubs, to complete the scheme. "We tried to improve the landscape not just for us, but for the wider village, too," says Rob. "I think we've created a very attractive vista." The total cost for the Searles' home building project came in at £548,000 – of which the clever landscaping scheme accounted for just £8,185.



Above: Here, Brett Landscaping's Alpha Antique block paving in Silver Haze has been used to create a turning circle around walled planting. The units are available in three thicknesses to suit different levels of traffic. **Right:** This pre-treated, multi-purpose timber lath screening by Q-Garden, from around £6.55 per 3.6m length, provides a contemporary backdrop for border planting

bi-fold or French doors. Popular materials include flagstones (from £30 per m²) and block paving, both of which can be used to evoke either a traditional or contemporary feel. You might plan extra zones elsewhere in the garden to provide a place to perch, enjoy a sunny spot or take in views. The main alternative is timber decking, which can also be located next to the house or built as a standalone feature. A wide range of wood species is available, from treated softwood (from £10 per m²) through to exotic hardwoods (£30 per m² or more), so there's something to suit every garden.

Pathways As with any form of hardstanding, you'll need to provide a suitably-compacted and levelled base for your paving. In terms of materials,

you'll have access to the full gamut of products, from traditional paving slabs (around £10 per m²) through to gravel, concrete blocks and flagstones. Many self builders match their pathway and patio materials for a uniform effect.

Beds & borders These areas will provide the skeleton for your planting scheme, so are more typically considered part of the soft landscaping. Nevertheless, if you're looking to create a formal garden you may want to delineate them with edging materials such as stone, wood or concrete. Raising beds can make them easier to access for planting and maintenance – consider fashioning them from railway sleepers or dry stone walling for a rustic look, or switch to concrete for a contemporary touch.

Decorative features Taking in anything from fountains to pergolas, these are the softer elements of your hard landscaping. In most cases, the work for these will come at the very end of your self build project – but with some features, such as ponds, the excavation and lining may be carried out during the groundworks phase.

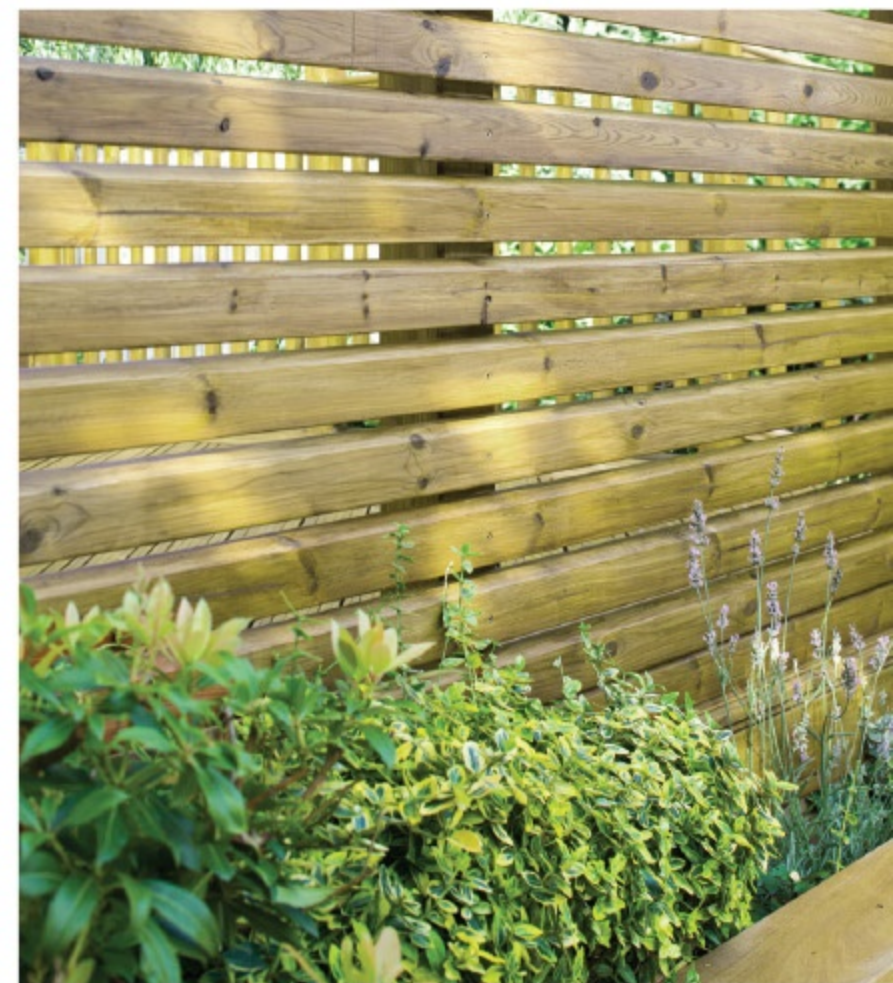
MORE ADVICE ONLINE:



Garage & driveway costs
Self-build.co.uk/cost-guide-garages-driveways

CHOOSING A GARDEN DESIGNER

- Treat the selection process as you would with any trade or professional. Ask to see examples of previous projects and check whether they have experience with self builds and the style of garden you're after
- Try to get a feel for whether they're a good communicator, as this could come in vital if anything untoward occurs during the works
- Recommendation is always the best route to appointing a designer, so seek advice from friends or neighbours who've recently had work done
- While there are no official industry standards, there are a number of well-respected courses that cover hard landscaping, such as those offered by the RHS (www.rhs.org.uk)
- You can also look for membership of a recognised body, such as the Association of Professional Landscapers (www.landscaper.org.uk) or the Society of Garden Designers (www.sgd.org.uk)



CONTACTS

Bradstone 01335 372289 www.bradstone.com

Brett Landscaping 0845 608 0577 www.brettlandscaping.co.uk **David Nossiter Architects** 020 8251 8978 www.davidnossiter.com **David Salisbury** 01278 764444 www.davidsalisbury.com **Marshall's** 0870 411 2233 www.marshall.co.uk **Natural Paving** 0845 072 1150 www.naturalpaving.co.uk **Roundwood of Mayfield** 01435 867072 www.roundwood.co.uk **Q-Garden** 0800 849 6339 www.qualitydecking.co.uk

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BUILDING WITH **brick & block**



This traditional-style new build features York Handmade's Old Clamp blend, here used in a mix of three colours. Prices for the range start from £800 per 1,000 bricks

The traditional cavity wall has stood the test of time in the face of stiff competition – and it still delivers across the board. **Chris Bates** takes a closer look at a structural system that appeals to self builders for its familiarity, versatility and affordability

Despite frequent rumours of its imminent demise, brick and block (also known as cavity walling and modern masonry construction) remains the UK's leading construction method, accounting for 70% of all new housebuilding. There are countless alternatives out there – many of which shout loudly about the apparent speed and efficiency improvements they make over the humble cavity wall – yet self builders keep returning to brick and block.

At its heart, the cavity wall is made up of two skins of masonry, separated by an air gap. The external leaf – usually of facing brickwork – was originally designed to protect the structural inner core from exposure to moisture. Over time, it's become standard practice to fill the air gap with insulation. And so the cavity wall as we know it today has emerged: solid, dependable and durable.

There's an element of reassuring familiarity, then, for those of us looking to create our own homes. This often translates into well-conceived designs that are enjoyable to live in and cost-effective to construct. At around £80-£100 per m² for the insulated shell, it still leads the pack in the affordability stakes. But brick and block is capable of giving self builders so much more than a robust structure – innovative techniques and clever design make it a fabulous choice whatever style of home you want; and whatever your budget.

CONTACTS

Bovingdon Bricks 01442 833176 www.bovingdonbricks.co.uk **Design & Materials** 0845 404 0400 www.designandmaterials.uk.com **Furness Brick** 01229 462411 www.furnessbrick.co.uk **Green Building Store** 01484 461705 www.greenbuildingstore.co.uk **H+H Celcon** 01732 886333 www.hhcelcon.co.uk **Ibstock** 0870 903 4000 www.ibstock.com **Northcot Brick** 0800 038 9575 www.northcotbrick.co.uk **Revolution Homes** 01243 885285 www.revolutionhomes.co.uk **Wienerberger** 0161 491 8200 www.wienerberger.co.uk **Xtratherm** 0371 222 1033 www.xtratherm.com **York Handmade** 01347 838881 www.yorkhandmade.co.uk

NEED TO KNOW: BRICK & BLOCK

- This is a flexible building method that can be easily adapted to a wide range of house designs, interior schemes and lifestyles – including open-plan layouts
- The construction process is easy for self builders to follow, which can help ensure a smooth-running site
- High levels of energy efficiency can be achieved affordably, but will usually come at the expense of thick walls. This may be an important consideration if you want to maximise usable floorspace
- As a wet system, using cement-based mortar, brick and block is slow to build with and at the mercy of the

British weather. It can take 20 weeks or more to complete a typical three-bedroom masonry project; although there are no lead times for prefabrication

- Its familiarity means you'll never struggle for good trades and competitive prices. For this reason, brick and block is still the most cost-effective system for many self build projects
- Unlike with prefab systems, where most of the quality control is taken care of at the factory, you'll be relying on your builder to come up with the goods on site – so it's important to manage the team effectively

DESIGN FLEXIBILITY



One of the joys of building with brick and block is that there are very few restrictions on what you can achieve, both architecturally and in terms of the internal layout. As you'll see over the course of this feature, the system lies at the heart of a myriad of successful self builds – from immaculately-proportioned Georgian-style dwellings to ultra-modern houses replete with swathes of glazing. Internally, concrete upper floor structures have reduced the need for load bearing partition walls – while steelwork can be used if necessary to enable large spans for runs of bi-fold doors or similar features. There's flexibility to be had during the build, too, as the site-led construction process means that tweaks can be more easily accommodated than with timber frame and other prefabricated structural systems.

When it comes to cladding your home, the most affordable route is often to leave the external brickwork exposed – giving you a robust, low-maintenance and attractive result. But your options don't stop there and many self builders opt for alternative materials, such as stone, timber and render – as this project by Design & Materials shows. The 250m² house features rendered walls atop a dark grey brick plinth, which blends beautifully with the aluminium windows and natural slate roof. The result is a traditionally-proportioned home with a contemporary twist, which delivers an energy bill-busting U-value (a measure of heat loss) of just 0.16 W/m²K. Delivered as a shell build for the client's subcontractors to complete, the project cost £375,000 in total.

A TRIED & TESTED SYSTEM

We've already mentioned that there's an element of familiarity to the cavity wall system. It's been used countless times to build houses of all styles, so designers and tradesmen alike know what it's capable of – and more importantly, how to use it to deliver an individual, tailored home that suits your needs.

With brick and block, all the hard work is carried out on site, where the two masonry leaves are built up in courses from the footings. The facing brickwork is connected back to the structural inner leaf via cavity wall ties for stability, and the gap is stuffed with either mineral wool or rigid insulation. For self builders looking to manage their own projects, the fact this construction process is so well known makes it easy to keep track of what's happening on site. More than that, provided your design makes use of widely-accepted standard detailing, you can expect to have a choice of skilled local contractors. What's more, unless your project involves specialised products such as hand-made bricks, the vast majority of the core materials you use will all be available from the local builder's merchant – so you're unlikely to run into any delays or lead times for this phase of your project.



team delivered the main shell in just two months. The external walls accounted for £35,000 of the total £800,000 budget.

For the structure of his city-centre infill project, Stuart Lawton chose to use cavity walls atop piled foundations. Working space was tight, and a lack of storage space meant waste had to be taken away on a daily basis. In spite of these challenges, the build

CAVITY WALL VARIATIONS

Ask a bricklayer for his definition of a 'standard' masonry wall and he's likely to come up with a traditional model, probably involving a 100mm leaf of dense concrete block, 100mm mineral wool-filled cavity



and an external skin of 102.5mm-thick facing brick. For many projects, this kind of setup is perfectly adequate – but your designer or structural engineer might suggest a number of variations on the theme. These could range from the relatively obvious departure of using dressed stone cladding rather than brick, through to options such as double-skin blockwork (often used below-ground or to simplify construction if you're cladding the house in random stone).

The most common variant is 'thin joint' construction, where the dense blocks are switched out for large-format aerated versions – such as the H+H Celcon units pictured above. These lightweight blocks are easier to manoeuvre on site and manufactured to such a high degree of accuracy that they don't need to be bedded in the traditional 10mm-thick cement mortar. Instead, a thin layer of quick-drying bedding compound is used. Combine all of those elements together and you've got a recipe for a much quicker build that's less likely to fall prey to the notoriously fickle British weather. Conventional masonry is widely considered to offer good sound proofing, but this is improved even further with thin joint – although you will lose a little thermal mass (see overleaf) in comparison to dense blocks.

Material costs for thin joint are a little higher than with standard brick and block, but the ultra-fast build speeds mean you can recoup that spend through labour savings.

INSULATION OPTIONS

Depending on the type and specification of the thermal fill, a standard Building Regs-friendly modern masonry wall is likely to have a cavity of 75mm-150mm. With a total wall thickness of 275mm-350mm (plus the wet plaster internal finish), this kind of setup should easily achieve U-values of between 0.20 W/m²K and 0.28 W/m²K.

If you want to achieve above-standard levels of energy efficiency, there are two main routes to follow: increase the size of the cavity so that it can accept more insulation; or up the specification of the materials. Green Building Store took the former approach for its work on the Denby Dale Passivhaus (a 118m² three-bedroom home built for £141,000). Here, three layers of 100mm mineral wool fill the supersized gap between an inner leaf of 100mm dense concrete block and an outer skin of lime-pointed stonework. It's an easy approach for trades, but it does mean you'll need to specify extra-long cavity wall ties and certain non-standard products, such as deep lintels for windows – all of which will add to costs. It will also entail extremely thick external walls, which can encroach on living space.

If you like the familiarity of masonry construction but want to retain a slimmer wall profile, then a partial-fill design fitted with rigid insulation will be better-suited to your requirements. Insulation manufacturer Xtratherm claims that its CavityTherm boards can be used to achieve U-values as low as 0.12 W/m²K within a 150mm cavity. Part of the extra cost of high-performance products such as this can be offset by the fact that sticking to a fairly standard wall thickness makes your materials selection easier elsewhere in the build.

**THERMAL MASS & AIR TIGHTNESS**

Whichever method you settle on for your insulation, you'll still get to enjoy one of the major advantages of cavity wall construction, namely that it offers excellent built-in thermal mass. Basically, the internal blockwork leaf will absorb warmth during

the day and (as it's effectively wrapped in insulation) is able to release this back into the house as temperatures drop – helping to ensure an even internal climate and reduce peak heating demand.

One area often cited as a stumbling block for cavity walling is guaranteeing good air tightness. The system's reliance on site-based quality control opens up the possibility for human error to creep in during the build, which can compromise efficiency measures. In practice, though, you could say this about pretty much any construction method – including timber frame, where joints between panels etc often need to be sealed with tape; although this is admittedly a simpler job. With cavity walls, the air tightness layer is provided by the wet plaster finish – so skilled labour is critical for this part of the process.

For their self build project, architects Gill and Ian Hunter combined traditional brick and block walling with concrete beam and block floor structures. The result is a 1.5-storey family home that's packed with thermal mass – complementing the super-insulated walls, floor and roof. The high-spec 174m² house cost £250,000 to construct.

INSPIRATIONAL PROJECTS

These stunning builds show the huge variety of architecture you can achieve with brick:



This stunning house in Cheshire is faced in 80mm imperial Edwardian bespoke-mixed grey units from Furness Brick, laid in a Flemish bond with narrow joints to allow the masonry blend to shine through



Ibstock's Chailey Rustic stock brick, from £450 per 1,000, was selected to inject a touch of classic warmth into this modern Suffolk farmhouse



The pale hue and precise lines of Wienerberger's Platinum White brick, from £50 per m², is the perfect complement to the sleek contemporary design of this detached villa near Maidenhead



This Georgian-inspired new home in Hampshire features Northcot's 65mm Lyneham Red handmade bricks in Flemish bond, from £850 per 1,000. The protruded corbel detail was created with standard bricks

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Skirting board

Get the right style for your home with our quick-fire guide

materials
spotlight:

The little details provide the subtle touches that can make or break a decorative scheme – so it's important that you put time into choosing elements that sit comfortably in their surroundings.

One area that's worth particular consideration is the skirting board, which offers a number of functional and aesthetic benefits. It's pretty much an essential if you have wood floors, as it will hide the unsightly 'expansion gap' around the perimeter of the wall (which prevents damage as the timber expands and contracts). What's more, it's great for concealing uneven wet plaster finishes (a common problem in houses both old and new) and will also provide a barrier to ensure the wall doesn't get scuffed or damaged as you whizz the vacuum cleaner around.

Styles & profiles

Skirting has evolved into much more than a practical prop – it can serve to underpin your home's character, too, with a myriad of mouldings and materials available to suit your decor.

If you're replacing existing boards, the obvious starting point is to swap like-for-like. Take a section of your skirting down to the local hardware shop to see whether they have a close match; they should stock all the common profiles. Their ranges will include the decorative types that tend to sit well in period-style settings (such as torus, ogee and ovolo) as well as simpler designs for a clean, modern look (such as square-edge, pencil round, bullnose and chamfered).

If authenticity is important, perhaps on a period renovation, give a sample of the board to a nearby joinery shop – they should be able to run off a good copy in whatever timber you require. Various online stores have sprung up, too. Some specialise in particular materials, for instance, while others focus on specific areas, such as reproductions of historic designs.

Materials & costs

Easy to install and widely-available either pre-primed or pre-finished, MDF has become a popular choice for new homes. It's resistant to warping and swelling – so it's a low-maintenance option. It's affordable, too, with prices starting from as little as £2 per linear metre for basic versions. The main downside to standard MDF is that it can only be painted. If you want to combine the benefits of this material with a high-quality finish, consider investing in types with real-timber veneers, which start from around £6 per m.

While softwood skirting is more susceptible to movement, it offers a number of advantages over MDF. For a start, it can be stained or varnished to provide a natural look – which is a huge advantage in period homes. It can also be sanded down and re-finished, so won't need replacing as often. A basic pine board shouldn't cost you any more than the MDF equivalent and gives you access to a range of finishes as well as, typically, a greater choice of skirting heights (Georgian and Victorian houses tend to suit taller profiles).



For a top-end finish, try hardwoods. Prices for solid oak range from around £4.50-£30 per m, depending on the specification. The timber's honeyed tones sit beautifully in historic homes, and it's an obvious match alongside oak floors, doors or internal beamwork. Alternatives include ash, beech and walnut. Hardwood skirting is usually machined to order and available oiled or stained if required.

Today, skirting is increasingly used to provide an easy-access cover for pipework and electrical cables – leaving them more accessible than if they're embedded into the wall. You can get plywood or self-coloured plastic versions with pre-routed channels (the latter material is often available as a clip-on product for easy fitting). Many self builders prefer rebated boards, available in MDF and solid wood.

Above: Metsa Wood (www.metsawood.co.uk) supplies a wide selection of skirting profiles and materials, including the softwood and primed MDF versions pictured here. Some of the range is reversible

MORE ADVICE ONLINE:

 How to fit skirting board
Self-build.co.uk/diy-projects

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Kota ogee 119mm (H) pre-finished MDF skirting, £10.98 for 2.4m
www.diy.com



The period house project

Alan Tierney and his team investigate the plasterwork in the Derbyshire millworker's cottage and decide which sections need to be replaced with a more traditional finish



The plasterwork that we inherited in the Derbyshire millworker's house was quite varied in terms of its quality, age and type. This is pretty typical for renovation projects in old buildings and requires flexibility in approaching different situations.

As a rule, modern cement-based plaster is incompatible with period buildings for a number of reasons:

- It is not vapour permeable, so doesn't allow the underlying fabric to breathe. This lack of breathability can contribute to damp.
- It is a rigid material, whereas most

been done to a very high standard with a material that, while not breathable, was much softer and more flexible than today's plaster. The finish was actually not dissimilar to the high-quality lime in the rest of the house and there was no sign of cracking. Our decision about whether to intervene was therefore down to its affect on the underlying fabric – and fortunately this part of the building was quite dry (our damp issues were confined to the back of the house).

It's important to bear in mind that destructive work, like stripping plaster, has the potential to cause significant

damage, even though it is done for the overall benefit of the building. Because of this it is only justifiable if there is a real problem to be resolved. In this instance, the best decision was to leave well enough alone.

Further back, the stone piers that supported the double ash beam running across the building had been plastered recently with a very hard, modern material. This had been done badly and had sharp angles with corner beads; it was quite extensively cracked. It looked in such poor shape that we had no choice but to strip it off. The pier on the staircase side was refinished using two coats of lime plaster – a coarse base and then a fine finish coat, with rounded corners similar to those found on the upper

floors. The other pier abuts the rear fireplace's exposed stonework and leads into the unplastered section of wall above the ash beams. We decided to leave it bare, tying these elements together. It probably hadn't been plastered before the modern finishing was applied, but the evidence was not conclusive.

The worst modern plaster was covering the bricked-up rear fireplace. This was extremely damp and had obviously been so for some time. The plaster had a 'waterproofing' additive, which made matters a lot worse, resulting in an unpleasant, sticky mess that was very difficult to remove.

Because we were opening up this fireplace it was possible to remove bricks, plaster and all from the opening. The remaining material had to be laboriously removed from the stonework of the fireplace and some off the surrounding fabric, working back to the adjacent original lime plaster. After making good around the fireplace with fine lime plaster, we refinished the area to the side of the fireplace using only coarse, base coat of lime plaster with a sponged finish. This results in a slightly textured finish which worked well with the roughness of the adjacent stonework.

Lime plaster

The early plaster throughout the house was lime based, and of a high quality. It isn't known whether the walls were plastered at all originally; in fact it's possible they weren't. The insertion of a new chimney stack in the mid-19th century would have caused considerable disruption and damage to any pre-existing plaster, so



1 Very damp modern plaster covering the bricked-up rear fireplace
2 The fireplace opened up and the surround replastered in lime



older buildings are quite flexible, so it has a tendency to crack.

- It has a very flat, sharp finish that can be at odds with the generally softer, flowing lines of older plasterwork. This tends to be more of an issue the older the house.

Modern plaster

On the ground floor there were a few different areas of modern plasterwork that needed to be addressed. Much of the front part had been refinished early in the 20th century. It had clearly



we are pretty sure that the surviving material dates from that work.

Most of the walls, including the internal partitions, are made from solid stone, with the plaster applied directly to it. This had generally survived in excellent condition and needed no more than conventional filling and sanding before painting. However, a few small sections had lost their key, meaning that the plaster was no longer attached to the stone. The large amount of hair in the plaster gave it very good strength and integrity, so there was no danger of it crumbling (as sometimes happens with later lime plaster). So we drilled small holes in the unkeyed areas and injected a lime slurry grout in behind to re-establish the key.

The house also has a few small sections of lath and plaster. These were much more fragile and had suffered quite a bit of surface damage over the years – added to during wallpaper stripping. The only practical solution was to cover over these panels with a single additional finishing coat of fine lime plaster.

Clay plaster

While lime is almost always the default material for use in period buildings it is not the only option that is compatible with old building fabric. Because of the size of aggregate, even in fine lime plaster, it is difficult to achieve a satisfactory finish at the interface between old and new work. This is particularly true where there is an uneven join or the junction needs to be feathered.

There are a number of clay plaster products available that are more suited to such situations, as they can be applied very thinly if necessary. Clay has similar characteristics to lime. It's hygroscopic, vapour permeable and extremely flexible. Its



only real limitations are that it is not as hard, so can be more liable to damage, and that it does not have a chemical set, so will revert to wet clay in the presence of enough water. This latter property can actually be advantageous in conservation work: in the January issue I described the major crack repair we carried out and explained how we used clay plaster to cover it, which was possible because it can be removed and remixed if necessary. In resurfacing that section of wall we had to carry the new plaster round the corner to cover a badly damaged adjoining section. The edge of this new work had to run into the existing lime plaster in an irregular feathered edge. Using a clay product, we achieved this with an invisible join.

There was a small section of wall on the ground floor that had inexplicably been stripped of plaster and left as exposed stone. This meant that the bottom half of the wall was bare stone, while the top half was early 20th-century plaster. We used a coarse lime base coat on the stone to bring the level flush with the adjoining plaster. The point where the two areas joined was a potential



problem because of the probability of differential movement between them. To minimise the risk of cracking, a clay top coat was used. The material offers far greater flexibility, as well as better repairability, than modern options.

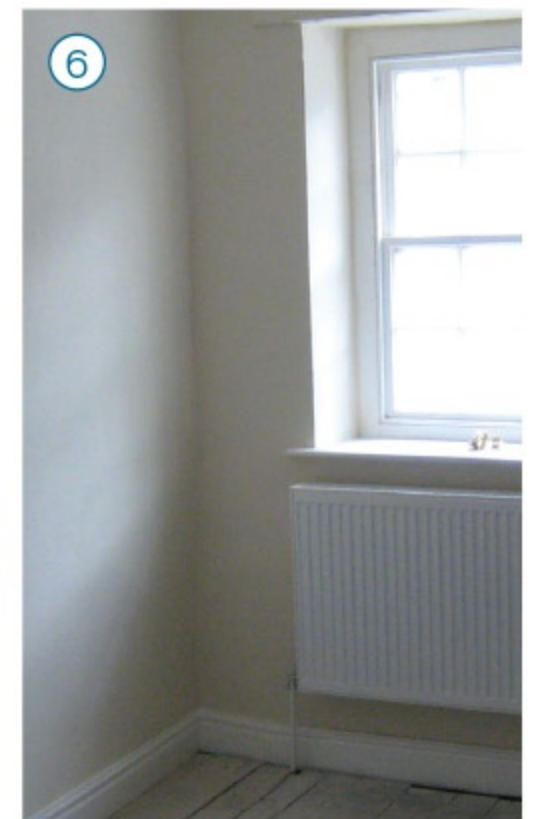
Added extras

Lime and clay plasters are the best materials for use in a period house, primarily because of their physical properties, compatibility with the building fabric and visual appearance.

Their benefits go further than this in less expected ways, however. Clay and lime's hygroscopic characteristics enable buffering of the atmospheric moisture within the building – this means that water vapour can be readily absorbed and evaporated, so variations in humidity inside a room

3 Poor quality modern plaster on the stone pier; the angle beads used create harsh corners

4 The stone pier, replastered in lime; without the angle beads, the edges are softer and more rounded



are smoothed. This provides a healthy living environment. This 'moisture buffering' also has an effect on the temperature, improving overall comfort levels. Finally, their acoustic properties are very different from the hard, modern plaster finishes we are used to, helping to dampen loud noise and reduce echoes.

5 Clay plaster feathered into an uneven edge to repair damaged plasterwork

6 The same area after decoration
7 Alan completes a section of new clay plasterwork

Next month: Alan and his team will be looking at the finishing touches, with decoration and flooring coming under the spotlight

ALAN TIERNEY



Alan Tierney is a historic building consultant and conservation specialist. He runs Picketts Historic Building Conservation (www.pickettsconservation.co.uk), offering hands on advice to period property owners.

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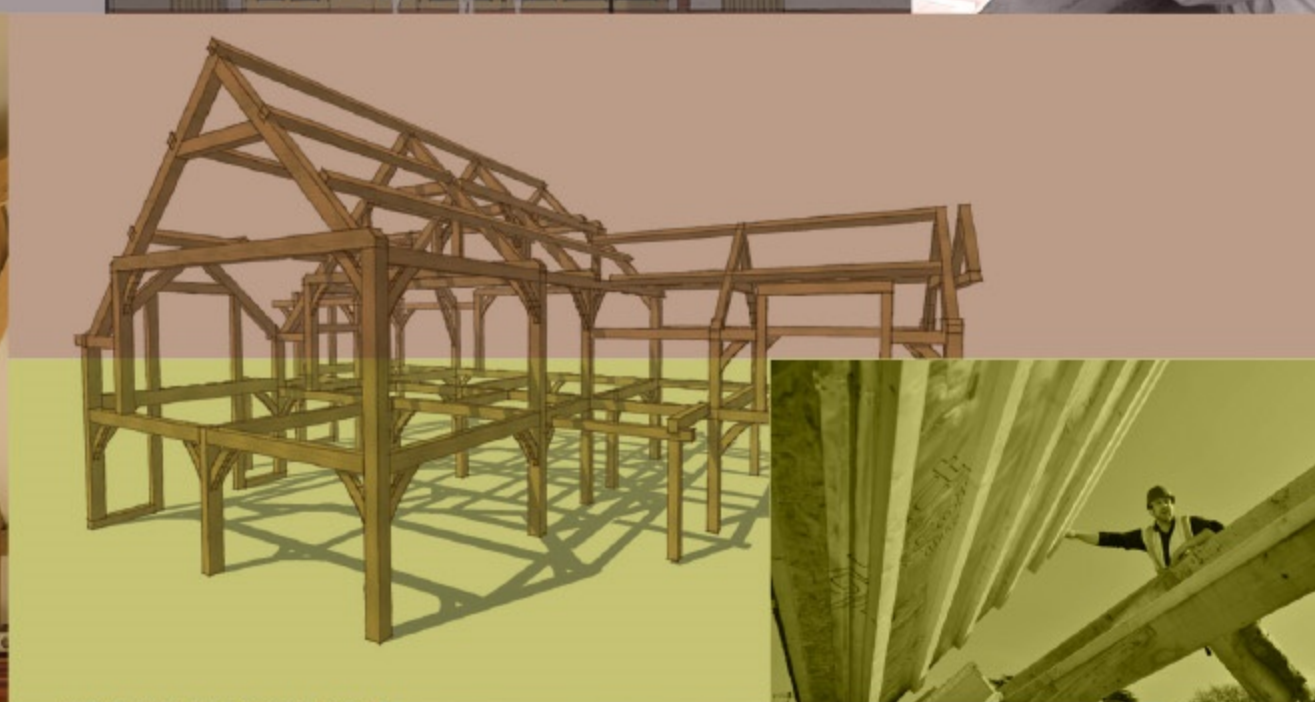
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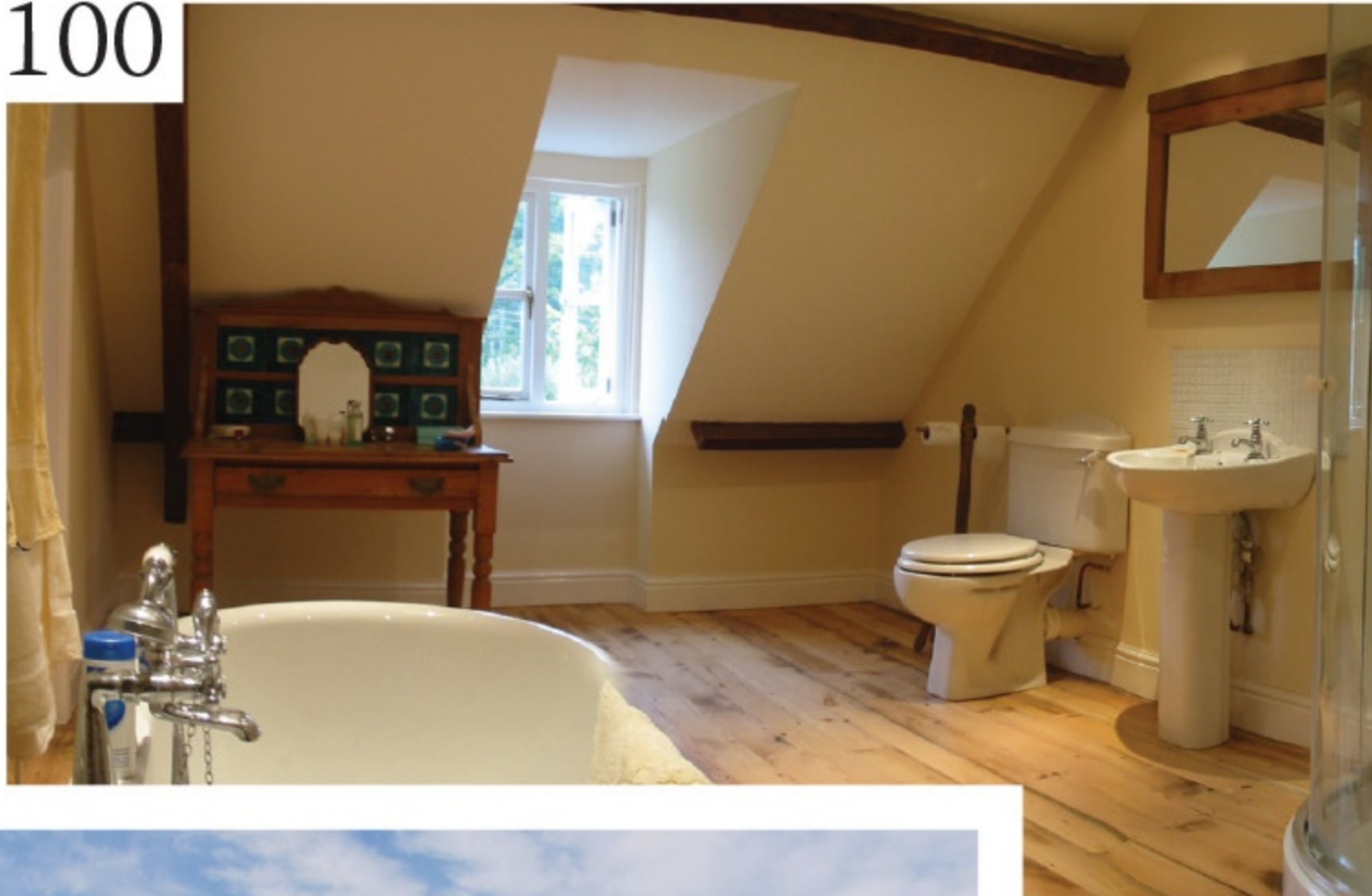
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Want to extend? Here's what you're allowed to build within permitted development rules

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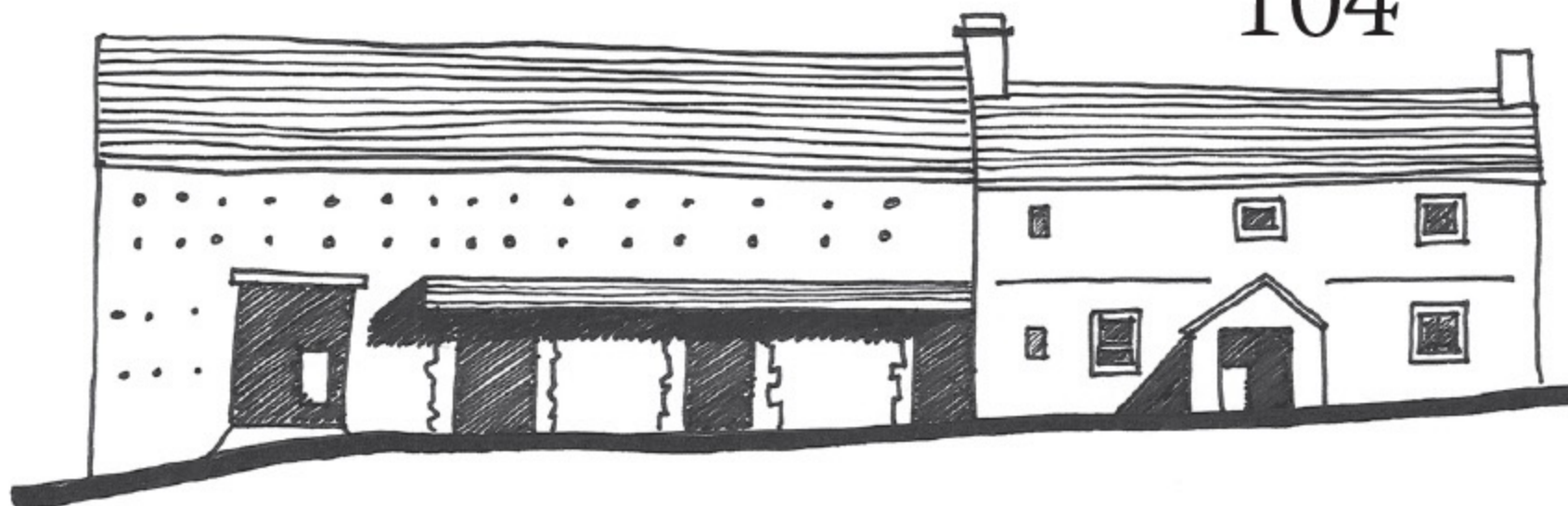
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POTENTIAL >>

No planning required

Architect Opinder Liddar looks at the most popular – and effective – ways to boost space at home without having to apply for building consent



You may be surprised at the amount of extension work that you can undertake without needing to submit a full planning application. If you avoid the potential challenges and objections that can accompany this process, you should be able to create extra space at home with fewer headaches.

In this feature, I'll be highlighting what work you are able to carry out without planning consent and what the most popular types of extensions are. This commentary is relevant to most homes, with the exception of listed buildings and properties within an area of outstanding natural beauty (AONB). Some of the information won't apply to conservation zones, either – check with your local authority about any special conditions imposed in these cases.

The regulations

The permitted development (PD) regime has been around for many years and allows you to extend within certain limits without formal consent. Previously, the volume you could add to your house was strictly limited, but the regime has recently undergone major changes that we'll discuss later. As the rules relate to the size of the structure when it was built, you, or a past owner, may have already used up any allocation.

Before you start thinking about design, you need to know the history of your home and check what size (and shape) it was originally. If it's quite an old building, you must find out how it stood in 1948 – this is a baseline standard date for planning rules. If your property has already been extended, or is part of a large housing development that has been built within the last 25 years, your local authority may have removed your permitted development rights. Check the details with your council at the outset. With this established, and if your PD rights are in tact, you can now start to plan what can be added or changed.

Garage conversion

How many people park their car in the garage these days? Not many, as I found from chatting to attendees at *Build It Live* in February. Your garage takes up a considerable amount of room, which may be better used as living space. In particular, integral garages can be easily converted – and as they are on the ground floor this can greatly increase your habitable zones.

The garage conversion shown below allowed the clients to create seating for a private entertaining space, and to house their extensive library of books and music. The walls and roof have been thermally upgraded, with the garage door changed to part wall and part glazing. Rooflights were also added and some finishes updated. The end result has transformed the whole house.

Porch

If you'd like to add a porch to your home, you can do so without planning permission so long as the new fixture is more than 2m away from your front boundary, less than 3m in height and no more than 3m² in its total footprint.

Single-storey rear & side extensions

You can add a substantial amount of volume with rear and side extensions; in conjunction with some replanning of existing space, these can truly transform your home. The rules for semi-detached or terraced houses are that you can extend by 3m to the rear. For a detached home you can extend by 4m.

The governing factors here are that the ridge can be no higher than 4m from the nearest ground level and, if you are within 2m of the side boundary, the



eaves must be no more than 3m in height. For side extensions, you can extend to each side by no more than 50% of the original width of the house. If your plot has enough space to each side, this means you could effectively double the width of the existing property. With these types of extensions, the materials need to match the main house, unless you are adding a conservatory.

Back in 2013, the government announced a temporary relaxation of the rules relating to extensions for England, which enable you to extend up to 8m from the rear for a detached house and 6m for semi-detached or terrace.

However, in this instance, you do need the consent of each of your immediate neighbours and must submit a very simple application to your local planning authority under the neighbour consultation scheme.

This is great news considering how much additional space you can add in this way. I would always advise that you consider the natural light conditions

for the existing house as part of the design, as with this size of extension, it may make the original zone quite dark. I often introduce large rooflight areas in extensions so there is sufficient natural light in the finished building.

Unfortunately, this initiative will not be around forever and the revised rules currently only apply until May 2016 – so if you are thinking of creating a large extension, now is the time to do so.

Two-storey rear extensions

It still surprises me that this falls within permitted development – but you can build a two-storey rear extension in certain circumstances without planning.

The rules are that the rear of the extension will need to be more than 7m away from the rear boundary, the extension can only be 3m deep and the eaves and ridge can be no higher than the existing house. If within 2m of a side boundary, the eaves cannot be any more than 3m in height. If you do place a window in the side elevation at first floor level then this will need to be 'frosted' and non-opening if less than 1.7m from floor level, to protect neighbours' privacy.

Loft conversions

Another popular way to add space to your home is via the conversion of roof space. Firstly, make sure that you can stand up in the existing loft, then plan a new staircase to take you into it. Usually, I would look to design the stairs to ensure they emerge in the converted roof at its highest point, and then add

Above: Combining a single-storey extension of around 15m² with some internal alterations has created a new kitchen/living space



Left: Garage conversions add space where it's often needed most, on the ground floor. A generous rooflight ensures it's not too dark. Opposite page: You can even have a two-storey rear extension without planning permission, if you follow the rules – for example, it must be less than 3m deep, and under 7m from the rear boundary

dormers to create space that you can stand in. Under PD you can add 40m³ of habitable space to the existing roof if you live in a terraced home, and 50m³ in any other house. You can add dormer extensions to the side and rear, but they need to be set back from the eaves.

Because a room in the roof is so much higher, you may get great views over the rear landscapes, so make the most of these with your windows. It's a shame, but balconies are not allowed.

Outbuildings

As long as you don't cover more than 50% of your garden, you can also build structures in your outdoor space. They need to be ancillary to the main house in terms of use, but could include a swimming pool, playroom, home office or gym. The following rules apply: the dimensions must include a ridge of no more than 4m and eaves no greater than 2.5m. If the building is within 2m of

the boundary then the whole structure needs to be less than 2.5m in height.

There also needs to be a gap between the outbuilding and the main dwelling, but there is no stipulation as to what this distance might be.

Pressing ahead

Providing you follow the rules, there is a tremendous amount of space you can add to your home. Even where planning permission is not needed, I would advise you to get a certificate of lawfulness from your local authority, which confirms that you do not need consent. While this may seem odd, when you come to sell your home, you will find that your buyer's

solicitor will ask if you have planning permission for your addition and will need proof that it was not required. It is easier to get this resolved at the time of building rather than waiting until you sell, as this process can take as long as a planning application!

As I write, the government has also announced that there will be a relaxation of the rules that govern changing redundant agricultural buildings to residential use. It has previously been hard to gain consent for barn conversions so this is about to become a whole lot easier – which is great news for those of you wanting to create a unique space in a rural location.

1 You can add 40m³ of space to the existing roof if you live in a terraced property, and 50m³ in any other house. Any dormer windows need to be set back from the eaves. **2** This rear extension doesn't eat in to the garden too much, but instead maximises internal space by running the width of the house, and by having a pitched gable roof. **3** This luxurious bathroom was created in the roof space of a house in Milton, Oxfordshire. Its dormers may not increase floor space, but provide more standing room, and good views. **4** This side extension has created a bigger kitchen-dining space, topped by a large roof lantern



OPINDER LIDDAR



Opinder Liddar is a director at LAPD architects (www.lapdarchitects.co.uk). The practice specialises in residential projects from extensions to new build. He is an expert at the National Self Build & Renovation Centre (NSBRC) and a member of NaSBA. Through the Build A Dream Self Build Association, Opinder hosts workshops for prospective self builders.



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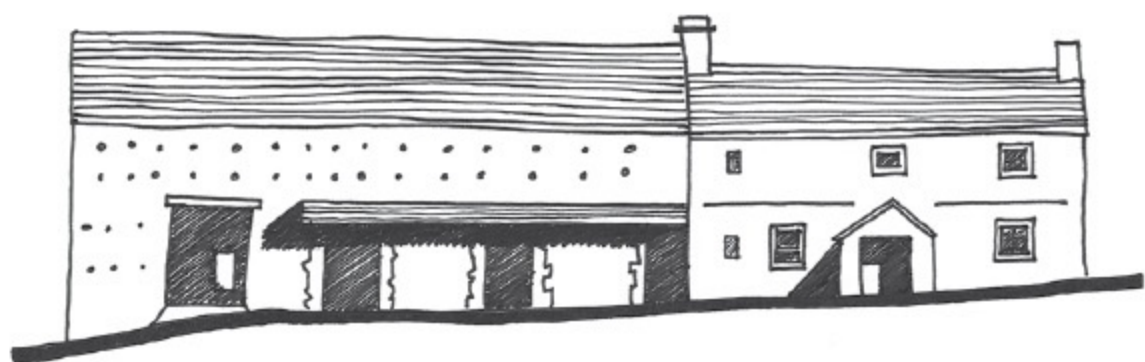
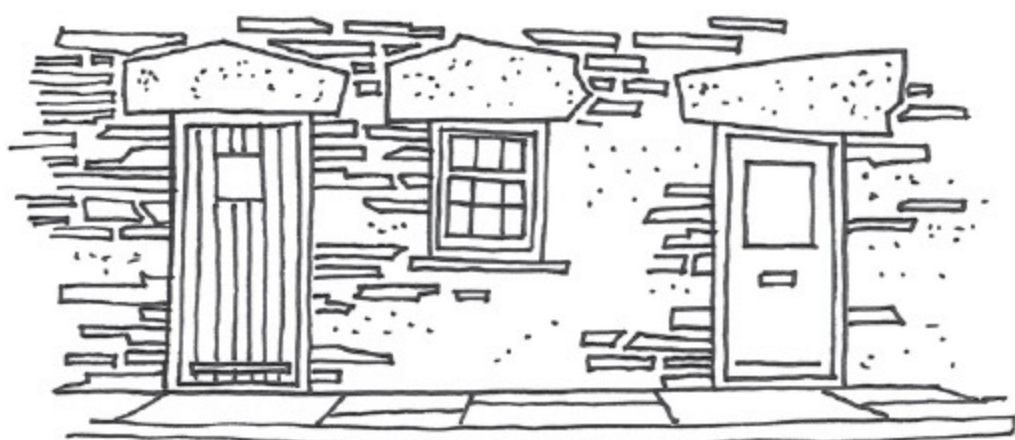
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Vernacular design: Regional buildings & geology

The traditional houses of northern England and Wales come under the spotlight in the last of **Julian Owen's** mini series looking at how geology and location shape local architecture

NORTHERN ENGLAND (County Durham, Cumbria and Northumberland)

The hills and valleys of the Lakeland area provide a dramatic backdrop to its traditional rural buildings. This is a distinct geological area, made up of hard mineral-bearing slate and large areas of volcanic rocks, which together form the vast dome of the



Top: Slate was sometimes used in very large pieces for lintels in the Lakes. Above: A Cumbrian barn with 'pentice'; an overhanging roof that shelters the area just outside the doorway

Lake District. The rivers radiate out from the centre of this dome, forming very steep valleys that were quite isolated before modern methods of travel were available. In spite of this, however, the building style is consistent throughout the area.

The more accessible areas have long since been developed for tourism, with many of the original buildings becoming the victims of 'tarting-up' by the Victorians, who had overly-romantic ideas about the ideal architecture for a lakeside setting. They added a variety of verges,

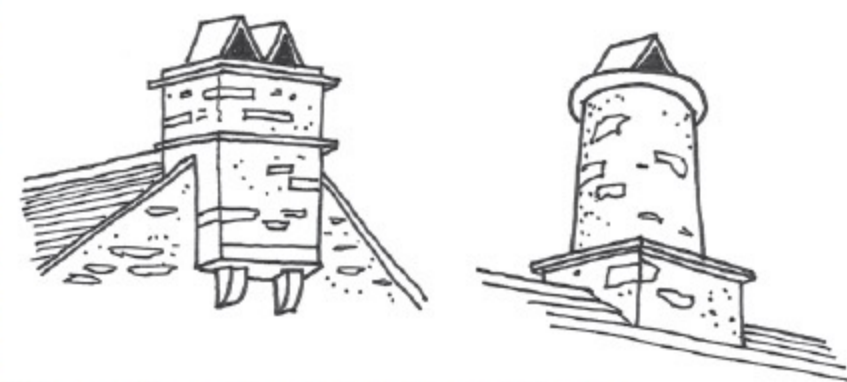
shutters, verandas and complex roof shapes, all of which are the exact opposite of the genuine traditional buildings, which are more sombre in character, occasionally enlivened by some unusual architectural features. There are a few original cottages left, but most of the surviving older buildings are farmhouses.

The inhabited farm buildings were often whitewashed, with the more functional barns and outbuildings left as unfinished stone. The preferred layout was the longhouse, with the house, byre and barn in a continuous terrace under the same roof, although sometimes the barn is taller than the others. A common local feature is the 'pentice', a shelf-like roof that provides shelter to the area outside the barn and byre doorways.

The slate-like walling stone can be split into long thin pieces with the mortar joint recessed, emphasising the shape of the dark blue-grey or brown blocks. The district's pale blue-green Westmorland slate has been used for roofing throughout England but could sometimes be found in large pieces here, so was often used for lintels and corner-stones. Roofing slates were laid in diminishing courses, which means that very small courses were used at gutter level, with the size increasing up towards the ridge.

Apart from giving a pleasing appearance, this method was also economical as it allowed all sizes of slate to be used. The roofs are very simple shapes without any hips or dormers and do not have much of an overhang, with pitches of around 30°-35°.

There are chimney designs peculiar to authentic Lakeland farmhouses. They are conventional at ground level but once above the line of the roof, they become round, tapering turrets using small stones, which were hard to cut into precise square corners.



Above: At roof level, Lakeland chimneys sometimes formed tapering turrets, while others were corbelled out from the wall to give them support, since the flues below were made from flimsy lath and plaster

End chimneys were corbelled out from the wall at high level because the lower part of the flues were made from lath and plaster rather than masonry, offering no support below. The flues were capped off with two slates, leaning into each other to protect against snow and rain.

In western Lakeland areas, dark grey/pink granite boulders were available for wall building, but in such irregular shapes that they were placed in alternating courses with long thin slates and small stones to reduce the amount of mortar needed.

Windows were squarer, with vertical sliding sash frames, or sometimes split horizontally with a top opening light hanging out over a fixed lower pane. The oldest surviving farms have a small covered veranda tucked under an extended main roof with an oak balustrade. No one is

quite sure what these 'spinning galleries' were used for – possibly making or airing yarn.

Westwards toward the coast there is a sudden change in the geology from volcanic rocks to soft New Red Sandstone, and this is neatly mirrored in the dark red buildings, still with the green slate roofs characteristic of the Lakelands. Further north in the Cumbrian coalfields, the later 19th-century houses of workers and miners are mostly rendered and painted in bright, contrasting colours. Rendered and painted walls are particularly found towards the coast, where the building stone is of a lesser quality.

In contrast to the architectural quality of Cumbria and the Lake District, the buildings to the east of this region are more austere. The traditional houses of the northern Pennines are similar in character to their cousins in the south, albeit in a darker stone from the carboniferous and occasional volcanic rocks found in the area. This was never an area of great wealth so the cottages are mostly small and modest: low lying, low pitched and built from poor-quality building materials. North of the Tyne there are few villages but many compact hamlets, clustered together in a defensive fashion as a direct result of their location in border country, subjected for centuries to raids and skirmishes between the Scots and English. The classic layout has at its centre a four-square farmhouse with cottages and outbuildings huddled around it, all made from brown stones and grey slates. Further to the north east around Bamburgh, pinky-grey limestone is the usual building material, with bright red pantile roofs.

WALES (Gwynedd, Clwyd, Powys, Dyfed, Glamorgan and Gwent)

Although it covers a large geographical area and it may seem a long way from the north coast to Cardiff, there is surprisingly little variation in the style of traditional houses in Wales. They are all stone and mostly rural, with the later industrial buildings confined to the fringes. The countryside is unforgiving and it was very tough to make a living as a livestock farmer, so the small



farms and crofts here are frequently rather modest when compared to similar types in England. They also tend to be scattered across the countryside, so they're remote from one other rather than clustered together in villages. The reason for the consistency in style is because many of the early houses were too poorly built or modest in size to survive the major rebuilding period that happened here in the late 18th and early 19th centuries.

The central uplands of Wales are a mix of 500 million-year-old grey or black rocks, although in the north and far south west there is some more colourful volcanic stone. The variation in geology across the region is not reflected in the building styles. Slate roofs are universal, as you would expect in an area with the finest slate in the world. Early miner's cottages and the industrial terraces in the south are made from a dark brown sandstone that is found interleaved with the coal measures, occasionally with brick walls or arches.

Traditional farm buildings tend to follow a standard pattern, with two chimneys and the door and windows, but any symmetry is mainly due to later alterations. The older original farmhouses have a single storey with randomly arranged windows and an entrance off a through-passage between house and byre. Where the building stone was of poor quality, the walls were often rendered and painted to improve their weather resistance. In coastal areas in central and west Wales, bright colour-washes are found, which are a contrast to the dull grey of the unfinished building stones.

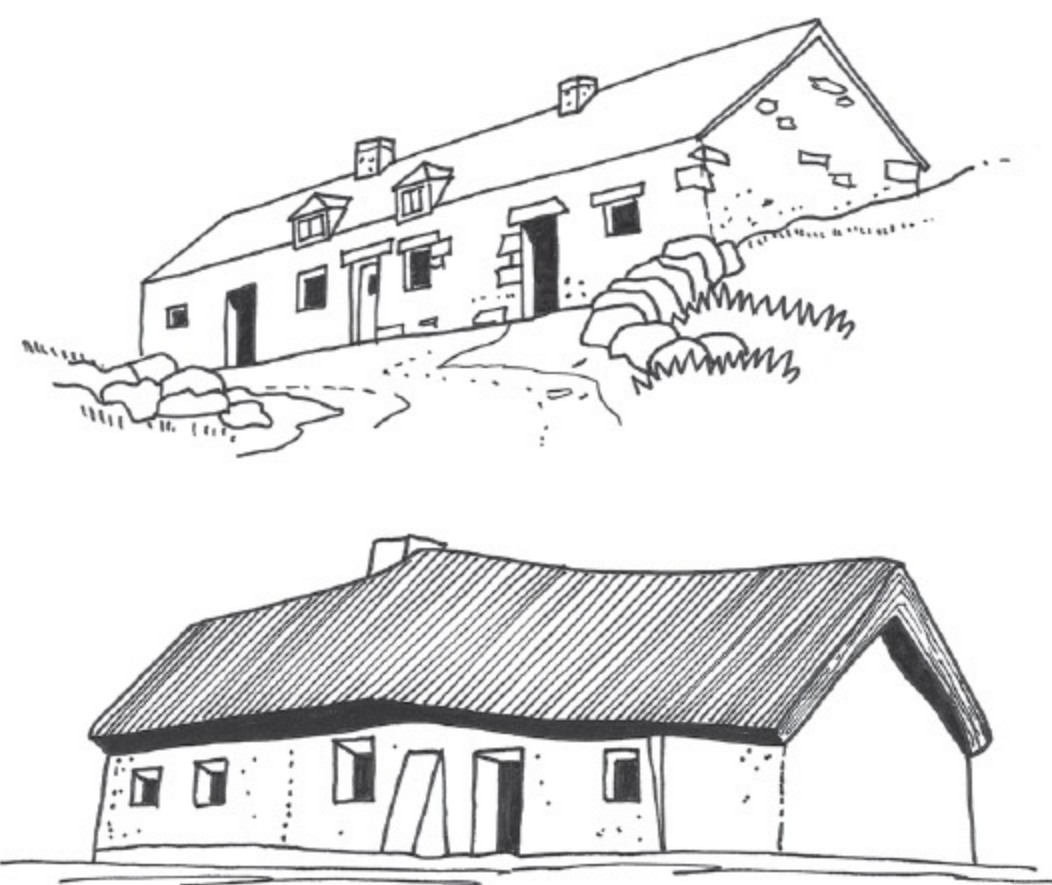
In the less mountainous parts of central west Wales, single-storey cob (mud) houses can be found. Despite the apparently cheap nature of the

walling material these were originally covered with thatch – a rare and expensive material in this part of the world, which has usually long since been replaced. The simply shaped

roofs have pitches of around 35°-40°, which is the best range for the very thin but large slates from the Snowdonian quarries. In coastal districts, slate roofs were slurried over and jointed with cement mortar, then plastered between rafters to keep out the rain. In very exposed areas, such as St Davids, wires were stretched across the roofs to hold the slates down. In the north west, Anglesey has its own striking style using the very ancient local rocks: many of the older single-storey houses on the island have been unchanged since they were built, having deeply recessed windows and thick whitewashing on their stone walls.

Left: Colour-washed houses are more common in west Wales's seaside areas, such as the stately town of Beaumaris, Anglesey

Below: Longhouses in Wales tend to be more modest than their English equivalents, and more isolated. **Bottom:** Some cob houses survive in parts of central west Wales; they were often topped off with thatched roofs



JULIAN OWEN



Julian Owen is an East Midlands-based chartered architect and author of several books on self build and house alterations. His publications include *Self Build, Home Extension Design and Kit and*

Modern Timber Frame homes. He's also chairman of the ASBA Architects network. To find out more visit www.asba-architects.org

Gold standards

Building Regulations lay down the rules for the design and construction of your new home.

Mike Hardwick explains the essentials about what they are, and how to get approval

Most people realise that building a new residential property in the UK requires planning permission, but it's important to remember that you will need Building Regulations approval, too. Planning permission concentrates on what the house looks like and how it fits into the local environment, while 'the regs' are all about making sure that new houses are safe to live in, easily accessible and efficient to run. Unlike planning permission, which is subjective and involves getting someone to support what you plan to build, Building Regulations are objective and refer to a complex set of rules that need to be dealt with. This article outlines the essentials that you need to know.

What are the regs?

Building Regulations are a set of statutory instruments managed by the Department for Communities and Local Government (DCLG), although Wales, Scotland and Northern Ireland have devolved responsibilities in their own areas of jurisdiction. The regs are set out in a series of Approved Documents (AD) covering specific areas of construction.

In England and Wales, there are 14 separate ADs listed as Parts A to P. In Scotland, they are numbered from Sections 0 to 7 (with three supporting appendices) while Northern Ireland has a similar system to England and Wales but with different letters denoting the various chapters. Why they have to be different is anyone's guess, but the table (opposite) shows what each part covers in each region, and you can download and view the documents themselves online.

When do they apply?

There are some situations where Building Regulations are not required, usually when constructing modest structures like conservatories and smallish outbuildings made from non-combustible materials. For any habitable new builds or extensions, approval will be needed (if you are in doubt, ask your local authority). Some areas have been devolved under the Competent Persons scheme, where members self-certify their work. This includes replacement doors and windows (through FENSA) and boilers (through OFTEC and Gas Safe) but for a new build, your building control inspector will want to satisfy compliance with the Regs before signing off the completion certificate.

Who approves your build?

Historically, Building Regulations checks were under the remit of the local authority (LA), but deregulation has allowed an appointed Building Control Body (BCB) from either the public or private sector to undertake the role. You therefore have a choice between using your LA or an approved inspector from a private company. If you plan to project manage your own build, you will have to make a decision as to which option to use. If you are hiring a builder, then you should be clear who will be responsible for liaising with the relevant BCB.

What options are there?

There are three ways that Building Control approval can be obtained:

Full plans For most self builders, the most sensible course of action is to submit a full plans application to your chosen provider well in advance of the commencement of works. The details of the design would be scrutinised in a 'desktop' check, and if they are satisfactory you will receive notification of approval. If clarification is required, they may refer back to your architect or designer for more detail. You will be required to give 48 hours notice of the commencement of work to your building control

inspector, who will then visit the site to check the footings, and after that at regular intervals (they will tell you what these stages will be). The final visit will usually be to issue a completion certificate, which declares that the finished property complies with Building Regulations. A benefit of using the full plans route is that if there is a disagreement about compliance with the rules, you can ask for a 'determination' from the Department of Communities and Local Government (in England) or the Welsh Assembly (in Wales) as to whether or not your plans comply.

Building notice A quicker but less detailed route to obtaining approval is to simply give notice of the intended work without submitting the plans for formal approval. Designed to allow small projects to get underway quickly, it is not recommended for new dwellings. For this route, you need to be confident that the work will comply, because if errors are made, your LA can ask you to rectify the work even if to do so means tearing down subsequent improvements – and the costs involved will fall to you. The build will still be inspected at regular intervals and if more information is called for, such as structural designs or calculations, you will be obliged to produce them. Under this scheme, the LA has no obligation to issue a completion certificate, and you will not be able to ask for a 'determination' if there is a disagreement over compliance, as you would under a full plans submission.

Regularisation Where notifiable work is carried out without Building Regulations approval, the owner may be prosecuted. However, recognising that there will be situations where work has been done in ignorance of the regs, it can be retrospectively approved. This may involve exposing details of the work and in some cases, rectifying it, but the resulting Certificate of Regularisation will ensure that the property is safe, and that it can be more easily sold in future.

Building Regulations approval isn't a substitute for project management

BUILDING REGULATIONS BY REGION

ENGLAND & WALES		SCOTLAND		NORTHERN IRELAND	
Approved document:	Topic	Section:	Topic	Part:	Topic
A	Structural Safety	0	General	A	Interpretation & General
B	Fire Safety	1	Structure	B	Materials & Workmanship
C	Site Preparation & Resistance to Contamination and Moisture	2	Fire	C	Preparation of Site & Resistance to Moisture
D	Toxic Substances	3	Environment	D	Structure
E	Resistance to the Passage of Sound	4	Safety	E	Fire Safety
F	Ventilation	5	Noise	F	Conservation of Fuel & Power
G	Sanitation, Hot Water Safety & Water Efficiency	6	Energy	G	Sound Insulation in Dwellings
H	Drainage & Waste Disposal	7	Sustainability	H	Stairs, Ramps, Guarding, Protection from Impact
J	Combustion Appliances & Fuel Storage	Appendix A: Definition of Terms		J	Solid Waste in Buildings
K	Protection from Falling, Collision Impact	Appendix B: Standards & Other Publications		K	Ventilation
L1	Conservation of Fuel & Power (Domestic Dwellings & Extensions)	Appendix C: Index		L	Heat-producing Appliances & LPG Installations
M	Access & Facilities for Disabled People			N	Drainage
N	Glazing: Safety in Relation to Impact, Opening and Cleaning (Wales only)			P	Sanitary Appliances & Unvented Hot Water Storage
P	Electrical Safety			R	Access & Facilities for Disabled People
				V	Glazing

or proper site supervision. The completion certificate merely states that, to the best of their knowledge, the inspector believes that the regulations have been complied with.

You should take out a suitable structural warranty product to ensure that the work carried out will be rectified if significant faults are discovered in the first 10 years of a building's life. Your mortgage provider will usually insist that a structural warranty is in place before any funds are made available.

How to apply

If you are using a private BCB, then they will give you a price for their service based on your plans and their own pricing policy. If you decide to use the public-sector service, application forms can be downloaded directly from your local authority's website. This will also contain a table outlining the applicable charges based on the size of the proposed work. The costs are usually split into two distinct areas: plans approval and the inspection stages.

Enforcement

If your local authority thinks you have contravened Building Regulations, they will ask you to rectify the error within 28 days. If you carry on, or

refuse to correct the work, you can be issued with an enforcement notice. When this happens, you have the right to either ask for a 'determination' or you can appeal the decision and provide a report from a suitably qualified person, stating why the work complies. Alternatively, you can go straight to a magistrates' court to make your case. If you choose the latter option, the 28-day period is extended to 70 days.

Enforcement notices are quite rare, not least because if you win the appeal the LA may be asked to pay your costs, which could amount to a lot of money. However, it may well be the case that you don't think you can be reasonably expected to comply with the regulations, because the rules are too complex or inapplicable in your particular case. In these circumstances you have the right to apply to your LA for a dispensation within 28 days of receiving the enforcement notice.

Local authority or private company?

As we have established, you have the choice of using either the LA service or hiring a private BCB, so what are the benefits and disadvantages of each? Well, ultimately it is down to your personal preference. Private

companies can be linked to with structural warranty providers, so one inspector will visit the site to give both regs and warranty approval. There is also commercial competition in the private sector, so prices can be very keen. That said, your LA inspector can also offer a warranty through the LABC Warranty scheme, but I think the real advantage the LA inspectors offer is in local knowledge and availability. The LA inspector will probably know the soil conditions in your area, and may even know the builder you use. How they interact is a useful indicator of how well the inspector regards the builder. Finally, a local inspector will be able to drop into the site at fairly short notice. A private sector inspector may need more notice for each inspection visit.

MIKE HARDWICK



Mike Hardwick is a self build consultant and project management specialist. He has first-hand experience of the process involved, and helps to deliver a three-day self build course at Swindon's National Self Build and Renovation Centre (www.nsbr.co.uk)

Meet the new targets

Building Regs have changed when it comes to assessing the energy efficiency of new builds. **Mike Hardwick** explains how the move could affect your project

Building Regulations comprise a series of Approved Documents (in England and Wales, usually referred to as Parts A to P). These documents are used by Building Control Body (BCB) inspectors to establish that new homes are safe, accessible and sustainable.

Changes happen fairly infrequently, and they are often technical tweaks to existing standards. You still need to understand their impact on your own build, though, and sometimes the revisions are significant. In April 2014, for example, the changes to Part L1A *Conservation of Fuel and Power (New Dwellings)* came into effect. They represent the next step in the government's push towards creating zero-carbon housing by 2016, and will have a big influence on how new homes are designed (energy-efficiency standards for extensions to existing homes are unchanged).

Every new build house currently has to have an Energy Performance Certificate (EPC) issued at the end of

the build, and to get this it has to undergo a Standard Assessment Procedure (SAP) to establish the amount of carbon dioxide (CO₂) the house will produce. Under the SAP process, every new house is assessed against a notional house of similar size to produce a target emission rate (TER), which is expressed as the amount of CO₂ produced in kg. The TER is therefore calculated before the house is built, and submitted to your BCB at least one day before work starts on the build. Once the house is constructed, a revised CO₂ emission figure, known as the dwelling emission rate (DER) is calculated based on what was actually built rather than what was planned, and this figure needs to be no worse than the TER.

What's changed?

The 2014 regs aim to achieve a further 6% reduction in a house's carbon footprint by assessing the energy efficiency of the materials used in the build, as well as the CO₂ calculations. This will be done via the newly introduced fabric energy efficiency standards (FEES). FEES uses the same basic principles as the TER/DER process: there will be a target fabric energy efficiency (TFEE) calculation before the build starts, and a dwelling fabric energy efficiency (DFEE) calculation on completion. As with TER/DER, the DFEE would need to be no worse than the TFEE.

This is a complex procedure requiring the use of special algorithms supplied by the government, so it needs to be done by an accredited energy assessor. Your architect or designer should arrange for the calculations to be done as part of their service – so make sure they are included in the price. Provided they're carried out by an accredited assessor using the updated SAP software, the calculations will be accepted by your building inspector as meeting the requirements of the new Part L1A.

Does my design comply?

There is still a great deal of flexibility as to how you meet the carbon targets. However, you will be expected to at least consider the feasibility of using high-efficiency alternative systems – such as heat pumps and renewables – in the design and may be asked to provide an assessment (again, this is one for your architect or designer to address).

However, there is a useful table included in the revised Part L1A regulations (Table 4: Summary of Concurrent Notional Dwelling Specification). In layman's terms, it lists all the main elements of the notional house the TFEE will be based on (windows, roof, floor, walls, heating systems etc) and gives a baseline performance standard for each component. The idea is that if a dwelling is built to these standards, it will *definitely* meet the TER and will better the TFEE rates required. Your designer can tweak these component parts as they see fit, so you can reduce performance in one area as long as you compensate for this by over-specifying in another. The bottom line is that as long as the CO₂ and fabric performance targets are hit when the SAP calculations are done, it's up to you how you get there.

Moving forward

I think that all of the popular current building systems will be capable of meeting the new regulations, but a 'fabric first' approach of air tightness, insulation and using thermally efficient materials will be the sensible choice.

All in all, the changes to the Building Regulations have been broadly welcomed by the industry as a positive step towards creating more efficient and sustainable new homes without undue additional cost. The revised targets are more challenging but not that difficult to meet; and they will certainly contribute to lower energy bills in the future, which can only be a good thing for all of us.

INDUSTRY VIEWPOINT

Could choosing a particular build system help you meet the stringent targets more easily? Structural insulated panel (SIPs) specialists Kingspan TEK says it could – here's the company's take on the revised regs:

- Provided a 'fabric first' approach is taken, the energy savings to be had by building to higher standards will outweigh the added build costs
- The tougher thermal bridging and air tightness requirements of the new Notional Building Specification can be both extremely challenging and costly in a standard construction
- Because they're factory designed and cut for each project, systems such as SIPs offer a simpler route to compliance – the accredited construction details can be programmed into their production
- SIPs have a track record of achieving air tightness levels far exceeding 1.0m³/m²/hr @ 50Pa (twice the minimum requirement), with short and predictable build programmes, whether used as cladding for a concrete or steel frame, or as free-standing structural panels

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National Self Build Association



Build It is an enthusiastic supporter of NaSBA, and we are delighted to see that the campaign to persuade the government to make it easier for more people to build their own homes is achieving such encouraging results. Visit www.selfbuildportal.org.uk, the gateway to more custom build homes. Follow the seven routes to achieving your own self built home.

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PLANNING



Mike Dade is a land and planning specialist. He is a contributing editor of *Build It*, a plot hunting expert and author of books on planning and plot issues

FINANCE



Rachel Pyne is director of financial services at BuildStore (www.buildstore.co.uk). She has worked in self build finance for over 10 years and works with a diverse portfolio of lenders across the whole market as well as on exclusive self build and renovation mortgage products

PROJECT MANAGEMENT



A self build consultant and project management specialist, Mike Hardwick has first hand experience of the process involved and helps to deliver a three-day self build course at Swindon's National Self Build and Renovation Centre

CONSERVATION



Douglas Kent is a chartered building surveyor and technical and research director of the Society for the Protection of Ancient Buildings (SPAB). He is responsible for the organisation's technical activities, including enquiries, publications and courses. For more details visit www.spab.org.uk

BUDGETS



Tim Doherty was the founding MD of the National Self Build & Renovation Centre and a founding member of NaSBA. He runs Dobanti Property Consultants, a specialist surveying & building consultancy providing support to the residential and commercial sectors, including surveys and site appraisals, project management, dispute resolution and custom build solutions

DIY



Eric Streuli has worked at Bosch since 1992 and currently manages the power tools training centre in Denham. He's the go-to man for DIY know-how and is always on hand to provide technical and application support for any customer who needs it

DESIGN



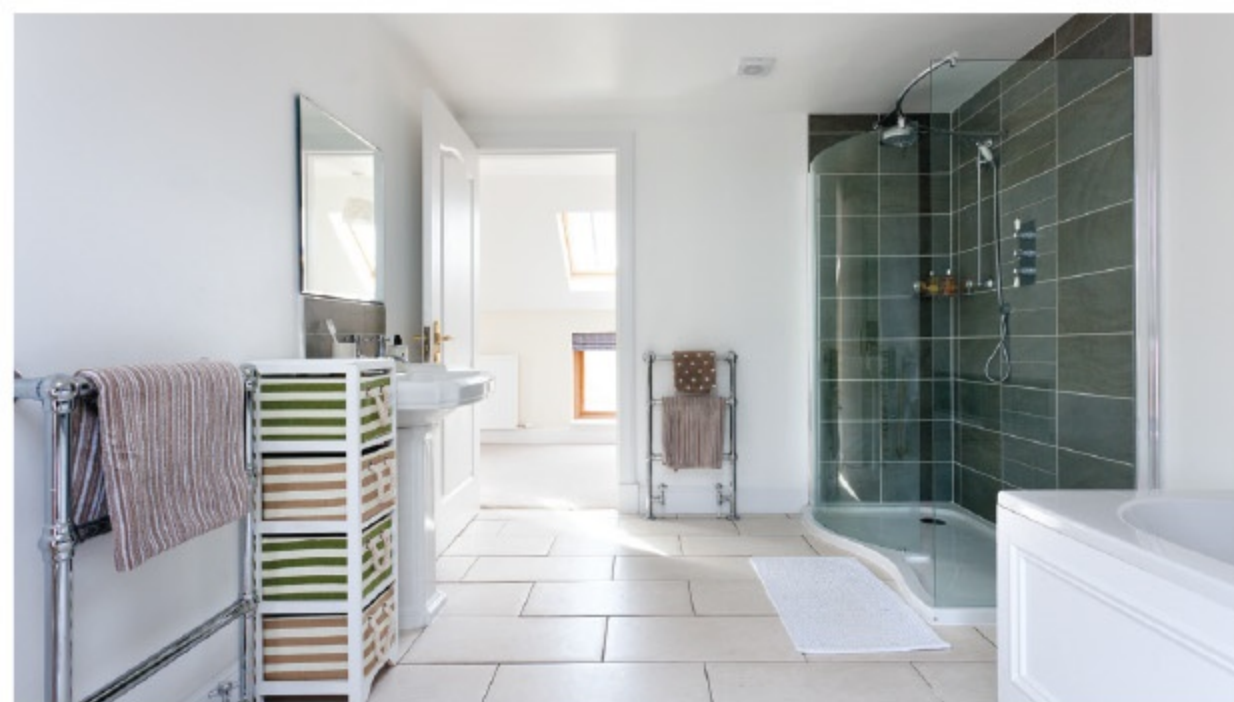
Opinder Liddar is a director at lapd architects. The practice specialises in residential projects from extensions to new build, making him the ideal person to answer all your home design questions

PLANNING

Can I build an ensuite bathroom without planning consent?

Do you need planning permission to build an ensuite in an existing bedroom? There will be no alterations to internal walls and no need for an external window.

No you won't, unless you're altering a listed building, in which case listed building consent would be needed before you proceed. Generally internal alterations to houses, including installing bathrooms, don't need planning permission. However, Building Regulations do apply.



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DIY

QUESTION
OF THE
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Can we restore our doors?

We have just bought a 1930s bungalow, which we're renovating. We also intend to build new living space into the roof area. We hope to keep as many of the original features of the house as we can, and are keen to do a lot of the work ourselves to save money.

However, we've not done much restoration before and don't want the results to look low quality. We have enough doors to kit out the downstairs and they all have Art Deco-style handles. The leaves have been painted, but we would like to strip them back and restore the original wood, then varnish them. We are, however, slightly worried about the handles being ruined by the acid that is used to dip the doors – not to mention what we will actually reveal once they have been treated. What's the best way to proceed?

You won't know what type of wood is going to be exposed at the outset and should perhaps consider revealing a small patch on one of the doors first to see if you like what lies beneath.

If you think that the results of this test look good, then by all means progress to dipping the doors. However, I would suggest that you use a different treatment for the handles and other ironmongery – in fact, you should really remove these items prior to dipping to protect them from damage.

The metal should be treated with an appropriate stripper, and there are many suitable products available from listed building/renovation specialists that you can use. This also gives you the option to just reuse the ironmongery on new doors, if for whatever reason your originals don't quite come out as expected or should they require further refurbishment post-dipping.



PROJECT MANAGEMENT

I'd like to add an extension to my house – how much will it cost?

I am in the process of planning an extension above what used to be the garage on my four bedroom detached house in Gloucestershire. The garage has been turned into another reception room and we are now considering building on top of this to provide a bedroom plus ensuite of 17.4m². We have planning permission but are struggling with the possible cost of the build. We have had two quotes: one for £36,000, plus another one for £36,900 plus VAT, which brought the figure to nearly £45,000. My question now is, are the figures correct and what should I expect to pay for this kind of work?

This is very frustrating as we thought we had budgeted for this project, but now it seems out of our price range. Any advice you can give me would be much appreciated.

You are not the first to query the quotation for a relatively small project; logic says that a smaller job should be a cheaper job, but the problem you have is the lack of scale involved. On a new build house the additional costs involved, such as scaffolding, plant hire, preliminaries, insurances, transport, delivery costs and the like are all absorbed over a much larger area. Your job will still have all these overheads, but much less scope to absorb them. For example, the delivery of a pallet of bricks costs the same if you order one pallet load or 10 – it's the cost of the driver and vehicle

you are paying for. The additional work involved in matching up the new work to the existing structure and services also takes time and therefore will cost you more money.

If a typical turnkey self build home using a reputable main contractor comes in at £1,500 per m², then the smaller scale of your job could easily push the price towards £2,000 per m² – although this depends of the level of quality you're asking for. Without knowing the details of your project, I'd say that £2,000 per m² would not be an excessive price for a good quality build. At 17.4 per m², this would give a guide cost of £34,800 for the extension, so not a great variation from the prices you have already received. The VAT is unavoidable, I'm afraid, unless you decide to call in individual tradesmen who are not VAT registered, thus potentially saving on the labour element. Materials still attract VAT at 20% whatever route you take.

You could shop around for a lower quotation, but remember that cheaper does not necessarily mean better value for money. I'd suggest this would be an ideal project for a local jobbing builder rather than a larger firm, as the overheads will probably be much lower. Apart from that, I can only suggest looking at the cost of the materials you are using. Perhaps there are some savings to be made on the ensuite sanitaryware or your choice of windows?

ANY QUESTIONS?

Send all your self build, renovation and conversion questions to buildit@castlemedia.co.uk for our panel of experts to answer

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LENDER'S NAME	Lends on land	% of end value of property	No. of stage payments	Minimum works completed for 1st stage payment	Mortgage types available	National or local	Telephone
GUARANTEED ADVANCE STAGE PAYMENT MORTGAGES (available from www.buildstore.co.uk)							
Bath Building Society (Accelerator)	85% (OPP)	80%	Six	DPP & Building Regs granted	5.89%	England/Wales	0845 223 4888
Hanley Economic (Accelerator)	85% (OPP)	80%	Six	DPP & Building Regs granted	6.19%	England/Wales	0845 223 4888
Hanley Economic (Accelerator)	85% (OPP)	60%	Six	DPP & Building Regs granted	4.19%	England/Wales	0845 223 4888
KRBS (Accelerator)	85% (OPP)	85%	Six	DPP & Building Regs granted	5.49%	England/Wales	0845 223 4888
Melton Mowbray (Accelerator)	85% (OPP)	75%	Six	DPP & Building Regs granted	4.89%	70 mile radius	0845 223 4888
ARREAR STAGE PAYMENT MORTGAGES							
BM Solutions	75% (OPP)	75%	Flexible	Foundations	Depends on scheme	National	0845 223 4888
Cumberland Building Society	75% (DPP)	75%	Flexible	Flexible	Call branch	Branch operating area	0845 601 8396
Dudley Building Society	50% (DPP)	75%	Six	Damp proof course	5.49%	England/Wales	0845 850 2369
Ecology Building Society	85% (OPP)	85%	Flexible	Flexible	4.90%	National	0845 674 5566
Furness Building Society	66% (DPP)	80%	Eight	Excavation	5.99%	Local	0800 781 4311
Hinckley & Rugby BS	No	75%	Four	Footings	5.64%	England/Wales	01455 894083
Leeds Building Society	75% (DPP)	75%	Five	Wall plate	6.19%	National	0845 050 5062
Lloyds TSB Scotland	70% (DPP)	70%	Three	Foundations	Depends on scheme	Scotland	0845 603 1637
Loughborough Building Society	No	75%	Three	Ground floor	Standard products	Leics/Notts/Derbyshire	01509 631950
Newbury Building Society	66% (DPP)	75%	Flexible	Foundations	Depends on scheme	Postcode restricted	Contact local branch
Norwich & Peterborough BS	80% (DPP)	80%	Seven	Foundations	4.89%	England/Wales	0845 300 2522
Nottingham Building Society	No	65%	Flexible	Eaves	Standard products	England/Wales	01159 564716
Scottish Building Society	80% (DPP)	80%	Flexible	Foundations	5.99%	Scotland	0131 313 7700
Vernon	75% (DPP)	80%	Four	Wall plate	5.25%	25 mile radius	0161 429 6262
ARREAR STAGE PAYMENT MORTGAGES (exclusives available from www.buildstore.co.uk)							
Bath Building Society	75% (OPP)	80%	Six	Foundations	5.29%	England/Wales	0845 223 4888
Chorley Building Society	85% (OPP)	80%	Six	Foundations	5.49%	England/Wales	0842 223 4888
Darlington Building Society	80% (OPP)	80%	Six	Foundations	4.99%	England/Wales	0842 223 4888
Furness Building Society	75% (OPP)	80%	Six	Wind & watertight	4.99%	England/Wales	0845 223 4888
Furness Building Society	75% (OPP)	80%	Six	Foundations	5.20%	England/Wales	0845 223 4888
Furness Building Society	75% (OPP)	75%	Six	Wind & watertight	4.99%	England/Wales	0845 223 4888
Furness Building Society	75% (OPP)	75%	Six	Foundations	5.20%	Mainland Scotland only	0845 223 4888
Hanley Economic BS	75% (OPP)	80%	Six	Foundations	5.69%	England/Wales	0845 223 4888
Holmesdale Building Society	85% (OPP)	80%	Six	Foundations	5.29%	England/Wales	0845 223 4888
Ipswich Building Society	75% (OPP)	75%	Six	Foundations	5.75%	England/Wales	0845 223 4888
Kent Reliance Building Society	85% (OPP)	80%	Six	Foundations	4.99%	England/Wales	0845 223 4888
Loughborough Building Society	75% (OPP)	75%	Six	Foundations	4.99%	Central England	0845 223 4888
Mansfield Building Society	80% (OPP)	80%	Six	Foundations	5.59%	England/Wales	0845 223 4888
Newcastle Building Society	80% (OPP)	80%	Six	Foundations	5.25%	Eng/Wales/Mainland Scot	0845 223 4888

FIGURES SUPPLIED BY BUILDSTORE AND CORRECT AT THE TIME OF GOING TO PRESS

PLOT WATCH:**Mike Dade** *investigates*

Looking to the national plan

The Lukes' local council hasn't given much thought to self build, and has indicated that it wouldn't support the couple's plans to create a new home on their garden plot. But can they use the government's new planning policies to take the decision to appeal? **Mike Dade** takes a closer look

WHO John and Joanne Luke

WHAT Can the Lukes build a small house in their garden plot to replace a redundant barn currently standing there? The location is residential, but is still in a rural hamlet – and the council has no policy regarding infill houses. Will the local authority have positive feedback for their proposals?

WHERE North Kent

For more planning advice visit www.speerdade.co.uk

YOUR TURN

If you'd like Mike Dade to cast his expert eye over a plot you're considering for your build, and flag up any potential problems, send your details and those of your potential site to buildit@castlemedia.co.uk

John and Joanne Luke live in a small hamlet in north Kent. With grown-up children flying the nest, they're looking to downsize from their large detached family house. Their current property is situated in a row of houses and has a large garden to the side, with separate access and a barn on it. Could this part of the garden be a potential plot on which they could build a new home for themselves?

The site

The small hamlet where John and Joanne's home is located is no more than a scattering of houses and an ancient church. However, it is within two miles of two larger villages, each with a range of facilities, including local shops, a pub and schools. The house is on a bus route, with a direct service to the neighbouring villages.

Despite the rural setting, John and Joanne's home is set in a row of houses, which presents a more or less continuous built up frontage to the road. There's also a house opposite, so they're not exactly living in open countryside. Their side garden plot forms a gap in this frontage, although the existing timber-clad barn bridges that gap to some degree. The site is more or less level lawn, although the barn is set a little lower than the road. A plot could be created that would be about 25m wide by 35m deep, which would still leave a generous garden for the existing house.

The barn is about 12m long by 5.5m wide. It's timber clad under a pitched slate roof. It doesn't look in sufficiently good condition to be converted, but it does at least set a precedent of a building on the plot.

Planning basics

As is often the case with rural hamlets, this one does not have a development boundary prescribed in a local plan. Consequently, from a planning point of view, the site would

be considered to be countryside, where new housing would not generally be allowed. This particular council doesn't have a policy that might allow infilling of small gaps in housing outside defined settlements. Replacement of the barn wouldn't be an adequate reason to justify a departure from policy and so, on the face of it, the prospects for success here don't look very good.

Pre-application advice

John and Joanne have done the sensible thing and sought pre-application advice from the council. They had an architect produce a sketch layout and provide some design ideas for a 'barn-like' modestly sized dwelling that would fit comfortably on the plot and be aesthetically in-keeping with its rural setting. Perhaps predictably, the response from the council was to trot out the countryside protection policy, pointing out that the proposal didn't meet any of the exception criteria (such as dwellings needed to serve rural businesses) and concluding that an application, if made, would likely be refused.

That, though, did not deter John and Joanne. They were well aware of the government's efforts to increase house building and to encourage self build. Policy, at least at government level, seemed to be moving in their favour. What they were keen to discuss with me was whether, in the current pro-building climate, they might have a chance of winning a planning appeal.

Planning details

The starting point for any analysis is the legal requirement for all planning decisions to be made in the light of the development plan, unless so-called 'material considerations' dictate otherwise. An important material consideration is the government's National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF), which establishes a presumption in favour of sustainable



of the new building on views from and to the countryside. Landscaping details could be included too, to show how the house could be blended into its rural setting.

As well as submitting a good design that includes a low energy, green approach, it would be helpful if John and Joanne could enlist the support of neighbours, or at least avoid local objections. Lobbying the parish council would also be helpful. Although a lack of objection is not a major consideration



The barn in the garden

While the local council has an adequate housing land supply to cater for anticipated demand over the next five years, none of that housing is earmarked for self builders.

It is impossible to say with any certainty whether the support for this project inherent in the NPPF would be sufficient, at appeal, to overcome the council's countryside protection policies. Each planning appeal is decided by an individual inspector and as a result, appeals are something of a lottery at the best of times. There is a case to be made, though.



development. The NPPF also refers to locating housing in rural areas where it will enhance or maintain the vitality of rural communities. It gives, as an example, the fact that housing in one village can help support services in another nearby. It also cautions against allowing isolated new homes in the countryside, unless particular exceptional circumstances exist, none of which are applicable here. Finally, it requires councils to provide housing opportunities for, among others, self builders.

Here, despite the clash with local plan policies, there is a pretty close match with the advice in the NPPF. There are villages close by, where local services would benefit from additional customers, and those villages are readily accessible by public transport. While isolated new housing is discouraged, this location is clearly not isolated, being within a row of houses and forming part of a small settlement. A new, appropriately sized house would not encroach into the countryside in any way.

Planning strategy

At the moment the council's local plan is considerably out of date, but is under review. Within a year or two, a new local plan will be adopted that contains policies in line with the NPPF. Meanwhile, the 2014 Budget announced the consultation and trials of a 'right to build' policy for custom homes; whether this policy, if and when it comes in, would help John and Joanne is anybody's guess – but the whole picture seems to suggest a very pro-self build tone. In terms of timing, now would seem to be as good a time as any to make an application.

Although John and Joanne could opt for an outline application, they would be better advised to go for a detailed scheme. This is because what they want to build is not that big a house – it would only be marginally larger than the barn, which would be demolished. A specific design would also enable a more detailed analysis of the effect

in an appeal, if the issues were very finely balanced in an inspector's mind, an absence of objection could help tip the decision in the right direction.

As mentioned, an application would almost certainly be refused by the council and an appeal would be necessary. The whole process would take six to nine months. Professional input into the appeal from a planning consultant would be sensible, as the policy arguments would need to be carefully articulated. Even then, the outcome would be by no means certain.

Conclusions

John and Joanne have to weigh the very considerable advantages of creating a building plot next to their house against the risks that an application and appeal might fail. If they can meet the costs of design, application and appeal without too adverse an impact on their finances, then this may well be a gamble worth taking.

The best-laid plans

Unlike a formal planning application, there is no standard procedure for getting pre-application advice from your local council.

Mike Dade

explains how and when to seek early consultation, and what to expect when you do

Both government planning guidance and local councils encourage people thinking about making a planning application to carry out a pre-application (pre-app) consultation with the council first. But what exactly is the pre-app process, what are the advantages and disadvantages, and are there circumstances where you should or shouldn't take it?

Pre-app basics

Unlike planning applications, where there's a common submission form and process for the whole country, pre-app procedure is determined by individual councils. The amount of detail you have to provide, the cost of the consultation and the length of time it takes to get an answer varies considerably from place to place.

Broadly speaking, though, you have to give detailed information about your proposed project to the council. You'll then get back a letter commenting on the relevant policies and issues, any likely problems with the scheme and, sometimes, details of information required with the application. When you come to make your official planning application, the forms include a question about pre-app consultation, whether you have taken it, when, from whom and what the response was.

The procedure

For so-called 'householder' proposals – that is, extensions, alterations, garden buildings and generally any changes to an existing house – most pre-app consultation is free. Some councils offer a duty planning officer service, where you can pitch up and discuss your sketch ideas with an officer, or a bookable clinic service. Others insist on the more formal process of filling in a short form and sending it – plus a location and other plans and possibly photographs – to the council for written comment.

For larger schemes, such as new houses or conversions, there's normally a fee to be paid. In some areas this can be as much as £500 or £600 – considerably more than the formal planning application fee. The amount of information sought by councils varies too, from a location plan and sketches of what you want to build, through to a requirement for



The Padgetts sought pre-app advice for their garden plot in Surrey: the answer came back as a 'no', but it meant the couple could gather more targeted supporting evidence, such as a tree survey, ahead of their formal application

full drawings and supporting information. This might include tree reports and structural surveys (for conversions of existing buildings).

The length of time a pre-app consultation takes also varies greatly. Most councils have a page on the planning section of their website, setting out the target response times, which vary with the complexity of the proposal. Some councils give you the option of a meeting in person, which might come at an extra cost, and this can add to the time the process takes. Where councils are busy with formal planning applications, pre-app response times tend to lag. They can vary from as little as a week or 10 days up to several months in the worst cases.

A pre-app response is usually given in the form of a letter. While the amount and quality of comment varies, there's one constant regardless of which council you apply to. That is, the response will contain a proviso that it's the opinion of a planning officer and not that of the council, and it can't be guaranteed that the council's view will be identical when a formal application is made. In short, it's a get-out clause, enabling the officers to change their minds later, perhaps in the light of feedback from consultees, which might include the neighbours, the parish council or the highways authority.

Pre-app advantages

The pre-application process can be particularly helpful where the planning officer adopts the attitude of looking for solutions rather than building barriers. If your proposals are met with general support, then all well and good and you can make your formal application with a high degree of confidence. If, though, there are issues – for example the officer is unhappy with the design or thinks the layout might impact on neighbours – positive suggestions as to how to overcome these problems can be really helpful. Adjusting a scheme to meet the planning officer's concerns gives them a degree of involvement and 'ownership' of your scheme. Working with a planning officer to find mutually acceptable compromises can result in him or her being more supportive of your scheme than they might otherwise have been.

As well as getting feedback on the scheme itself, you should ask for confirmation of what documents are required with the application, as this can help avoid delays at the validation stage of a formal application. If the council has any requirements for 'financial contributions', then the amount, the mechanism for securing the payment and the timing of it should all be confirmed. Again, this all helps avoid unpleasant surprises at a later stage.

Pre-app disadvantages

Where pre-app advice costs more than making a planning application, then its benefit is debatable. If you make a formal application and then discover the planning officer wants you to amend it, you can always withdraw, amend and resubmit, taking advantage of the 'free go' provision built in to the system. This enables you to make a similar application within 12 months of withdrawal or refusal, without paying an additional fee. Because a formal application is subject to consultation, arguably the feedback you get here is more reliable than a pre-app.

Pre-app consultation can also be troublesome if you are committed to a particular design and do not intend to change it. Seeking pre-app feedback in this scenario risks the planning officer asking for, and expecting, amendments, which you aren't prepared to make. At the formal application stage, the planning officer may well be disappointed that his or her suggestions have not been taken up, and that can create a negative attitude towards your scheme. To counter this, you should always explain in a formal application why any pre-app suggestions have not been followed in the final scheme.

The underlying problem with pre-app consultation is that you cannot rely upon it. No matter how detailed and helpful it might appear, there's nothing preventing the council from taking a very different approach when your formal application is eventually made. One hazard is that a different planning officer may deal with your formal application to the one that dealt with your pre-app. Another is that the decision on your application might be made by the planning committee and not the

planning officer, and committees don't always follow officers' advice.

Pre-app and permitted development

Note that pre-app consultation is not a reliable way to determine whether or not a project falls under permitted development. The only way to formally determine this is via an application for a certificate of lawfulness. Where you're contemplating building a large extension or outbuilding as permitted development, this certificate of lawfulness gives you formal confirmation that the council agrees it's indeed permitted.

Pre-app meetings and professional advice

If you're taking professional advice on design from an architect, or on planning from a planning consultant, you might think that pre-app consultation with the council is unnecessary. The problem is that on matters of design and planning, there are many areas of opinion and interpretation and these tend to be significant elements in the decision-making process. However well qualified and experienced a professional might be, they cannot guarantee that a planning officer will share every aspect of their opinion about a project.

For professionals, the pre-app process enables them to advise on whether amendments sought by a planning officer are reasonable, and on the pros and cons of ignoring or following the pre-app suggestions. Knowing what objections might be made to an application enables a more robust case to be made in support of the formal application, and this in turn provides a solid base for an appeal, should the application fail.

MIKE DADE



Mike Dade is a land and planning specialist, and *Build It's* plot guru. He's one half of Speer Dade Planning Consultants and the author of several must-read books on plots and planning

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ABBREVIATIONS

OPP: Outline Planning Permission
DPP: Detailed Planning Permission

ENGLAND

East

Bedfordshire

Bedford, Green End, Pertonhall, 1 Plot with OPP for the construction of a replacement dwelling. Located in a setting with far reaching views over farmland. Guide price £300,000. Compass Land & Property Group 01234 270333. PS-id: 119360.

Bedford, 15 Trow Close, Cotton End, 1 Plot with DPP for the construction of a three bedroom detached house of approximately 1,300ft² with integral garage. Cotton End is to the south of Bedford, five miles from the centre of the town. Guide price £115,000. Compass Land & Property Group Ltd 01234 270333. PS-id: 119361.

Cambridgeshire

Wisbech, Bar Drove, Friday Bridge, 1 Plot with DPP for the construction of a large executive style four bedroom dwelling with a detached double garage, workshop and garden store. It will involve the formation of a new access to the front. There is a paddock to the rear. Guide price £125,000. William H Brown 01945 464451. PS-id: 118471.

Wisbech, Ringers Lane, Leverington, 1 Plot with OPP for the construction of a new residential dwelling. Guide price £89,500. Maxey & Son 01945 583123. PS-id: 120043.

Essex

Maldon, Beeleigh Road, 1 Plot with OPP for the construction of a detached residential dwelling. Maldon is a lively former market town on the River Blackwater dating back to Anglo-Saxon times and is famous, amongst other things, for its sea salt and the traditional Thames sailing barges. The site extends to approximately 1 acre. Guide price £500,000. Curtis O'Boyle 01621 855558. PS-id: 118456.

Saffron Walden, Whitelodge, London Road, Newport, 1 Plot with OPP for the construction of two detached dwellings. This mature

garden plot is located behind a large single dwelling with access to the plot currently running up the left hand side of the existing property. Offers over £450,000. Mullucks Wells 01279 755400. PS-id: 120480.

Hertfordshire

Much Hadham, Wildford Road, 1 Plot with DPP for the construction of a stylish four bedroom detached family home. There is currently a bungalow on the plot, which would need to be knocked down. Guide price £325,000. Steven Oates 01992 303300. PS-id: 119812.

Norfolk

King's Lynn, 15 Chequers Road, 1 Plot with OPP for the construction of a detached dwelling. Guide price £90,000. William H Brown 01353 663311. PS-id: 119737.

King's Lynn, Pentney Lakes, 1 Plot with Lapsed Planning for the construction of a detached log cabin for holiday use. Guide price £30,000. William H Brown 01760 721655. PS-id: 118699.

Wymondham Norwich Common, 1 Plot with OPP for the construction of two dwellings. Guide price £230,000. The site is in a popular location and has a prime position. William H Brown 01953 602578. PS-id: 120409.

Suffolk

Woodbridge, Old Post Office Lane, 1 Plot with DPP for the construction of four detached/semi-detached houses. Guide price £250,000. William H Brown 01362 699 999. PS-id: 119991.

South East

Berkshire

Reading, Henley Road, Wargrave, 1 Combined with OPP for the construction of a stunning contemporary riverside home that makes the best use of this unique and special location on the River Thames. Also included in the sale is the existing detached property situated on this outstanding site. Designed by a local architect. Guide price £3,000,000. Knight Frank 01491 844900. PS-id: 119363.

Wokingham, Finchampstead Road, 1 Plot with OPP for the construction of three substantial detached homes set in a fantastic location close to Wokingham town centre. EPOA. David Cliff 0118 447 2136. PS-id: 119384.

Buckinghamshire

Milton Keynes Laker Court, Oldbrook, 1 Plot with DPP for the construction of a three bedroom detached property. Offers over £130,000. Taylor & Co 01234 855875. PS-id: 120512.

Greater London

London, The Pastures, 1 Plot with OPP for the construction of a contemporary home. This property is situated in a much sought after residential cul-de-sac in the heart of Totteridge. The plot provides convenient access to the amenities of Whetstone High Road, Totteridge and Whetstone underground station and the open spaces of Totteridge Green and Common. Guide price £1,475,000. Statons 0208 445 3694. PS-id: 119437.

London, 79a Highbury New Park, 1 Plot with DPP for the construction of a five bedroom detached family dwelling on a rare plot benefiting from front and rear gardens. Guide price £1,200,000. Charles Xenakis (private seller) 07845 510319. PS-id: 117880.

Hampshire

Basingstoke, London Road, Overton, 1 Plot with OPP for the construction of a dwelling and associated landscaping with access to parking. The building plot lies about a mile to the east of Overton, and four and a half miles to the west of Oakley, in the upper Test valley. Guide price £330,000. Jackson Stops & Staff 01962 844299. PS-id: 120048.

Southampton, Chilworth Road, Chilworth, 1 Plot with OPP for the construction of a large and stylish contemporary six bedroom dwelling in a beautiful location. This is a very rare and extremely exciting opportunity to acquire a substantial building plot that approaches one acre in size. Guide price £700,000. Morris Dibben 023 8124 2671. PS-id: 119567.

Ventnor, Isle of Wight, 9 Inglewood Park, 1 Plot with DPP for a detached four bedroom home. The plot is situated in a quiet cul-de-sac road in an established and well-regarded residential area of St Lawrence. Guide price £150,000. Hose Rhodes Dickson 01983 527727. PS-id: 119847.

Kent

Cranbrook, Causton Road, 1 Plot with DPP for the demolition of the existing building and the construction of a stylish new property with detached double cart barn garage. Guide price £295,000. Lloyd Martin and Co 01580 712500. PS-id: 119633.

Faversham, Scoggers Hill Road, Dunkirk, 1 Plot with DPP for the development of a substantial detached seven bedroom house with detached garage EPOA. Savills 01732 789750. PS-id: 120157.

Gravesend, Adj 47 Huntley Avenue, Northfleet, 1 Plot with OPP for the construction of a 4 bedroom detached residential dwelling with detached double garage. Guide price £49,000. Thomas Draper (private seller) 0042 060 386 5126. PS-id: 119695.

Oxfordshire

Wallingford, Henley Road, Shillingford, 1 Combined with OPP for the construction of a detached bungalow along with a two storey extension of the existing semi detached home. Guide price £499,950. Chancellors 01491 837567. PS-id: 118979.

Surrey

Oxted, Park Road, 1 Plot with DPP for the construction of a five bedroom two storey detached house. Guide price £350,000. Payne & Co 01883 712261. PS-id: 120007.

Sussex

Hove, Elrlington Road, 1 Plot with DPP for the construction of a large detached home set within the extremely popular Hove Park area. Guide price £650,000. Mishon Mackay 01273 829317. PS-id: 120453.

Wadhurst, Whispers, High Street, 1 Plot with DPP for a two story barn

style property of approximately 3450ft². Guide price £650,000. Mr Alex Birch (private seller) 07747 624747. PS-id: 119797.

Worthing, Land to the Rear of 142 Warren Road, 1 Plot with OPP for the construction of a detached executive style four or five bedroom house in the highly-rated Offington area. Guide price £250,000. Jacobs Steel 01903 506080. PS-id: 118687.

South West

Cornwall

St. Austell Trethurgy, 1 Plot with DPP for the construction of a new detached dwelling. Offers in the region of £130,000. Fulfords Land and Planning 01392 813300. PS-id: 119777.

St. Ives Hecla Drive, Carbis Bay 1 Plot with DPP for the construction of a new detached three bedroom dormer bungalow. Offers in the region of £125,000. Fulfords - Land and Planning 01392 813300. PS-id: 119778.

Torpoint Rockley, Downderry, 1 Renovation with No Planning Required for the modernisation and improvement of the existing detached bungalow dating from the 1930s. Guide price £450,000. Stags 01752 223933. PS-id: 119187.

Devon

Torquay, Glebeland Way, 1 Plot with OPP for the construction of a three bedroom townhouse located in the popular residential area of Shipway. Offers over £50,000. Haart 01803 200183. PS-id: 118817.

Yelverton, Station Cottage, Station Road, 1 Plot with DPP for the construction of a contemporary style three bedroom dwelling. An extremely rare opportunity to acquire a building plot in a much sought after area close to Yelverton shops and amenities. Guide price £245,000. Ward & Chownen 01822 612458. PS-id: 120569.

Dorset

Bournemouth Shapland Avenue, 1 Plot with OPP for the construction of a two bedroom bungalow



approximately 400m². The site is situated in a residential area of bungalows. Guide price £115,000. Mr Tony Brewer (private seller) 07740611026. PS-id: 119838.

Lyme Regis Greenhill, Somers Road, 1 Plot with OPP for the construction three detached residential houses. 1,015m². Outstanding views of Lyme Bay. Guide price £900,000. Edward Hollway (private seller) 07824 882822. PS-id: 119613

Poole, Old Coastguard Road, 1 Plot with DPP for the construction of a superb detached residence with accommodation of 3,361ft². The house has been designed by David James Architects. Guide price £2,500,000. Tailor Made Estate Agents 01202 706006. PS-id: 118799.

Gloucestershire

Stroud, Plot to the Rear of St. Mellons, Cirencester Road, 1 Plot with OPP for the construction of a two storey dwelling with single detached garage. Offers over £155,000. Mr David Hames (private seller) 01225 949718. PS-id: 119808.

Somerset & Avon

Yeovil, Mudford Road, 1 Plot with OPP for the construction of a detached bungalow with garage. The details can be printed off the south Somerset. Guide price £130,000. T. R. G Lawrence 01460 62223. PS-id: 119548.

Wiltshire

Warminster, Shreenwater, Wellhead, Mere, 1 Plot with DPP for a detached four bedroom house with a double garage. It is in an area of outstanding natural beauty. Offers in the region of £100,000 Chaffers Estate Agents 01747 852301. PS-id: 120585

North East

Durham

Spennymoor, Tudhoe Village, 1 Plot with DPP for the construction of a six bedroom detached property. This building opportunity offers spacious grounds. Guide price £395,000. Bradley Hall 0191 383 9999. PS-id: 120650.

Stoke-on-Trent, Coalpit Hill, Talke, 1 Plot with DPP for the construction of a three storey, three bedroom detached house. Guide price £49,950. Stephenson Browne Estate Agents 01270 883130. PS-id: 119689.

Wingate, Former Fir Tree Inn - Plot 6, Durham Road, 1 Plot with DPP for the construction of a five bedroom detached house. Offers in the region of £65,000. Euro Property Management 07814 936580. PS-id: 120613.

Northumberland

Morpeth, Coningsby Gardens, 1 Plot with DPP for a three storey detached house with a garage. Guide price £80,000. Groves 01670 504400. PS-id: 120432.

Tyne & Wear

Stockton-on-Tees, Emsworth Drive, Eaglescliffe, 1 Plot with DPP for the construction of a detached house Guide price £65,000. Your Move (Scott-Collier Taylor) 01642 783902. PS-id: 120440.

North West

Cheshire

Stalybridge, Mottram Road, 1 Plot with OPP for the construction of a detached four or five bedroom house. Guide price £550,000. Cordingleys 0161 330 4800. PS-id: 119956.

Widnes, Coroners Lane, 1 Combined with OPP for the construction of two 1.5 storey houses. Guide price £500,000. Cookwill & Co 01704 827075. PS-id: 120074.

Cumbria

Penrith, Crosby Ravensworth, 1 Plot with DPP for a detached four bedroom house with an one en suite. Guide price £89,000. Wilkes & Green & Hill 01768 625010. PS-id: 119545.

Lancashire

Wigan, Rear of 11 Lee Lane, Abram, 1 Plot with DPP for the construction of three detached houses. Located in the residential area of Abram, the site is approximately 0.45 acres. Guide price £200,000. Cookwill & Co 01704 827075. PS-id: 120075.

Merseyside

Wirral, Croft Drive West, 1 Plot with DPP to construct a residential dwelling. Guide price £900,000. Clive Watkin Partnership 0151 625 0900. PS-id: 119700.

Yorkshire

Yorkshire East

Hessle Hull Road, 1 Plot with OPP for the construction of a two storey detached house. Parcel of land with planning permission for the construction of a single dwelling, vehicle turn table and access bridge on land to the rear of 138 Hull Road, Hessle, access to which is via Green Lane. Guide price £30,000. Larards 01482 654555. PS-id: 118592.

Scunthorpe, Plot 3, Broadford House, High Street Eastoft, 1 Plot with OPP for the construction of a detached dwelling. Offers over £60,000. Springbok Properties 0800 068 4015. PS-id: 120445.

Yorkshire North

York, Common Lane, Wombledon, 1 Plot with DPP for the construction of a very substantial stone-built detached country home. Offers over £500,000. Jackson-Stops and Staff 01904 625033. PS-id: 120225.

Yorkshire South

Sheffield, 12 Penistone Road, Grenoside, 1 Plot with OPP for the construction of a three bedroom detached residential dwelling. Guide price £175,000. Grenoside/Grenowoods Smith (private seller) 07855 391335. PS-id: 119471.

East Midlands

Derbyshire

Ripley, 39 Nottingham Road, Codnor, 1 Plot with OPP for residential development. Offers in the region of £200,000. Elder & Twells 01773 535353. PS-id: 119959.

Leicestershire

Loughborough, Main Street, Woodhouse Eaves, 1 Plot with DPP for the demolition of existing garage and the construction of a three bedroom family house extending to 96.26m² EPOA. Alexanders 01509 861222. PS-id: 120468.

Lincolnshire

Stamford, Casterton Road, 1 Plot with DPP for the construction of two properties. Guide price £900,000. Goodwins Estate Agents 01780 750000. PS-id: 120490.

Northamptonshire

Northampton, Spratton, 1 Plot with OPP for the construction of a four bedroom detached family dwelling located in centre of this highly desirable village. The site extends to approximately 0.17 acres. Guide price £180,000. Richard Greener Estate Agents 01604 230222. PS-id: 118443.

Wellingborough, Roses Close, Wollaston, 1 Plot with DPP for the construction of a detached house. A rare building plot situated in a cul-de-sac in an established residential area. Offers in the region of £85,000. Matthew Nicholas Estate Agents 01933 663311. PS-id: 119747.

West Midlands

Hereford

Bromyard, Pannlers Lane, Flaggoners Green, 1 Plot with OPP for the construction of two dwellings. Guide Price £120,000. Anna Blair (Private seller) 01885 483446. PS-id: 120562.

Ross-on-Wye, Llangrove, 1 Plot with DPP for the construction of a two storey detached house. Guide price £110,000. Go2move 01600 228075. PS-id: 120513.

Shropshire

Shrewsbury, 26 Leek Street, Wem, 1 Plot with DPP for the demolition of existing bungalow and construction of two detached, three bedroom bungalows. Offers in the region of £87,500. David Jones (private seller) 07715 015955. PS-id: 120212.

Staffordshire

Walsall, The Dingle, Mill Lane, Aldridge, 1 Plot with DPP for the construction of a five bedroom luxury detached house. The property is set in a rural location, however it is close to good road links. Guide price £399,950. Acres Estate Agents 0121 323 3088. PS-id: 120455.

Warwickshire

Rugby David Road, 1 Plot with OPP for the construction of a residential property. Guide Price £80,000. The plot is approximately 0.06 acres. Shipways 01788574641. PS-id: 120420.

Warwick Moreton Paddox, Moreton Morrell, 1 Plot with DPP for the construction of a new home to be exemplary both architecturally and sustainably and is targeted to achieve a zero carbon rating. Offers over £500,000. Sotheby's International Realty 01789 273109. PS-id: 120325.

West Midlands

Walsall, Land behind 34 Lichfield Road, Brownhills, 1 Plot with OPP for the demolition of existing buildings and construction of two dwellings. The site has very easy access to the M5, the M6 Toll and A461. Offers in the region of £95,000. Hinson Parry 01782 713444. PS-id: 120458.

Worcester

Redditch, Evesham Street, 1 Conversion with OPP for the change of use of the former takeaway to create a residential dwelling. Close to Kingfisher shopping centre. Huge revenue income potential. Offers in the of region £250,000. Hadley & Co. 01527 60889. PS-id: 118941.

WALES

Carmarthenshire

Neath, Plot 13, Cimla, 1 Plot with DPP for the construction of a detached house. This is an opportunity to build your own property in the popular village location of Cimla. We have several plots available at The Oaks. Guide price £89,000. Clee Tompkinson & Francis 01639 646926. PS-id: 118893.

Pencader, 1 Plot with OPP for the construction of a detached residential dwelling and two bungalows. Level edge of village

location with services at hand. Guide price £150,000. Evans Bros 01570 480 444. PS-id: 119279.

Ceredigion

Cardigan, Isfryn, Penparc, 1 Plot with OPP for the construction of a detached residential single storey dwelling. In the popular village of Penparc two miles from Cardigan town. Guide price £50,000. JJ Morris 01239 612343. PS-id: 118570.

Llandysul, Pont Slan, 1 Conversion with DPP for the change of use of barn into a detached three bedroom house. Guide price £50,000. The Small Holding Centre 01239 851242. PS-id: 120549.

Talgarreg, 1 Plot with OPP for the construction of a detached house. An opportunity to acquire a freehold level building plot located in a pleasant rural village location. Guide price £68,000. Evans Bros 01570 422395. PS-id: 119281.

Conwy

Abergele, Betws yn Rhos, 1 Plot with OPP for the construction of a detached property. An exceptional opportunity to acquire one of a choice of self build plots. Guide price £85,000. Peter Large 01745 888100. PS-id: 118935.

Llandudno, 100 Penrhyn Beach

East, Penrhyn Bay, 1 Plot with DPP for the construction of a luxury contemporary dwelling including balcony, conservatory, double garage, circular drive, and landscaped slope with tiered patio and deck areas. Guide price £275,000. Mr Brian Davies (private seller) 01492 583900. PS-id: 119702.

Flintshire

Denbigh, Between 6 And 8 Beacons Hill, 1 Plot with DPP for the construction of two three bedroom detached houses with gardens and parking to the rear. All services nearby in the roadway and connection quotes have been received from the utility companies. Guide Price £70,000. Martin Le Mar (private seller) 07713 380646. PS-id: 119221.

St. Asaph, 1 Plot with DPP for the construction of a three bedroom detached property situated in a much sought after location. Guide price £62,000. Peckover 01745 812127. PS-id: 119692.

Wrexham, Karlalre, Brymbo Road, Bwlchgwyn, 1 Plot with OPP for the construction of three detached residential dwellings. The site extends to approximately 0.3 of an acre. A portion of residential building land on the lower fringe of Bwlchgwyn having a rural aspect to front and rear approximately six miles away from Wrexham and all amenities. Guide price £150,000. Bowen Son & Watson 01978 340000. PS-id: 119317.



Glamorgan

Swansea, Plot 1, Picket Mead, Newton, 1 Plot with DPP for the construction of a contemporary and luxurious home, designed by the RIBA award winning, Hyde + Hyde architects. A superb opportunity to purchase one of only four plots, set within the gardens of an existing ecclesiastical mansion. Guide price £375,000. Gower Coast Properties 01792 367700. PS-id: 118843.

Gwent

Newport, Adj to Windermere, Pennar Lane, Pentwynmawr Newbridge, 1 Plot with OPP for the construction of two dwellings. Pennar lane is in a semi rural location in a very sought after area with two generous above average size plots. Guide price £189,950. DJM Estates 01443 879727. PS-id: 120176.

Usk, Tredunnoch, 1 Plot with DPP for the construction of a five bedroom detached house with garage and self contained apartment. Guide price £385,000. Nuttall Parker 01633 212666. PS-id: 120183.

Gwynedd

Penmaenmawr, Glanyrafon Road, Dwygyfylchi, 1 Plot with OPP for the construction of three houses, comprising a three bedroom detached property. Guide price £135,000. Beresford Adams Countrywide 01492 596202. PS-id: 112990.

Pontllyfni, Capel Siloh, 1 Conversion with OPP for the change of use of the existing former chapel to create a residential property. This offers someone an opportunity to acquire a project that would be rewarding. Guide price £70,000. Hardy Estate Agents 01286 677 774. PS-id: 118934.

Tywyn, 1 Plot with DPP for the construction of an attractive four bedroom, two bathroom detached house complete with a garage. Guide price £79,995. Welsh Property Services 01654 710500. PS-id: 120053.

Pembrokeshire

Haverfordwest, 1 Plot with DPP for the construction of a four bedroom detached dwelling in the popular area of Haverfordwest. The development is situated on a private road within walking distance of the town. Offers over £120,000. 01437 762626. PS-id: 118398.

Kilgetty, New Road, Begelly, 1 Plot with Planning Application Lodged for residential development of the site. This is a freehold plot of land which has, in the past, enjoyed planning permission for new housing; however this consent

has since lapsed. Offers in the region of £100,000. John Francis Estate Agents 01834 842859. PS-id: 119755.

Powys

Welshpool, Watergate Street, Llanfair Caereinion, 1 Renovation with no planning required for the refurbishment of the existing two bedroom house, which has a solid fuel room fire. Guide price £65,000. Parry Lowarch 01743 343343. PS-id: 119484.

Wrexham

Wrexham, Brymbo Road, Bwichegwyn, 1 Plot with OPP for the construction of three detached dwellings. Guide price £150,000. Reeds Rains 01978 368000. PS-id: 119718.

Wrexham, Temperance Road, Southsea, 1 Plot with DPP for the construction of three detached houses with garages and gardens. Guide price £150,000. Wingetts 01978 353553. PS-id: 119769.

SCOTLAND

Aberdeenshire

Peterhead, Schoolhouse, School Road, St Fergus, 1 Plot with OPP for the construction of a detached residential dwelling. Situated in the heart of the village. Offers over £70,000. Masson & Glennie 01779 474271. PS-id: 118901.

Strathdon, Cottown East, 1 Plot with DPP for the construction of a detached dwelling. Riverside House plot which is situated in the heart of Strathdon, Offers over £70,000. Ledingham Chalmers 01224 632500. PS-id: 120637.

Angus

Brechlin, Hoodston Farm, 1 Plot with DPP for the construction of a single house and garage. Offers over £75,000. Blackadders 01307 461234. PS-id: 120066.

Kirriemuir Balnakelly, Shielhill Road, Northmuir, 1 Plot with DPP for the construction of a single storey, detached dwelling. Offers over £65,000. Blackadders 01307 461234. PS-id: 120061.

Argyll & Bute

Oban Balnagowan, Plot 2, Kilmore, 1 Plot with DPP for the construction of a four-bedroom dwelling Offers in the region of £75,000. Bell Ingram 01631 566122. PS-id: 120188.

Oban Loch Nabelthe, North Connel, 1 Plot with DPP for the construction of one detached modern residential property. The access to the plot is via a shared access track. Offers in the region of £98,500. MacPhee and Partners 01631 565 251. PS-id: 119507.

Ayrshire

Ayr, Station Cottages, Murdochs Loan, Alloway, 1 Plot with OPP for the construction of a three bedroom detached house. The plot extends to around 400m² and is located off Murdoch's Lane at the end of Station Cottages – a row of charming properties just a short distance from Cambusdoon Cricket Club. Offers over £85,000. Corum 01292 880888. PS-id: 120276.

Belth, Balgray Road, Barrmill, 1 Plot with DPP for the construction of an executive residential development of three houses with double garages. Offers over £150,000. Graham & Sibbald 01563 528000. PS-id: 119859.

Borders

Jedburgh, Dounehill, Plot 5, 1 Plot with DPP for the construction of a residential dwelling. A regular shaped west facing site extending to approximately 0.80 acres, it is situated in an elevated position with commanding views over the town and the surrounding countryside. Prices over £55,000. Edwin Thompson 01896 751 300. PS-id: 120540.

Kelso, Stichill Eastfield, Plot 3, 1 Plot with DPP for the construction of a residential dwelling. This is a serviced rural plots, benefiting from full planning consent. The approved designs provide spacious accommodation and take full advantage of the superb views. Guide price £95,000. (private seller) Edwin Thompson 01896 751300. PS-id: 119530.

Dumfries & Galloway

Moffat, Old Carlisle Road, 1 Conversion with DPP for the conversion of the existing cottage. The site is situated in a picturesque and secluded location. Guide price £95,000. Am The Agent 020 8123 4733. PS-id: 119919.

Newton, Stewart Balfarn, Kirkinner, 1 Conversion with OPP for the conversion of existing barn into a residential dwelling. It is situated in a completely rural location. Offers in the region of £69,000. Galloway & Ayrshire Properties 01671 402104. PS-id: 120592.

Fife

Dunfermline, Plot 12 Sandbanks, Torryburn, 1 Plot with DPP for the construction of a four bedroom contemporary detached house with garage, driveway and gardens. Torryburn is a small village situated on the north side of the River Forth. Offers over £90,000. Ballantynes 01314 592222. PS-id: 120164.

Greater Glasgow

Glasgow, Gateside, Gartness Road Drymen, 1 Plot with DPP for the construction of a one and a half storey five bedroom four bathroom

detached dwelling Fixed price £270,000. Allen & Harris 01389 731314. PS-id: 120422.

Helensburgh, Fort Road, Kilcreggan, 1 Plot with OPP for the construction of a four bedroom detached dwelling over two levels. Guide price £65,000. Blair & Bryden 01475 558421. PS-id: 119300.

Paisley, West Brae, Plot 3, 1 Plot with OPP for the construction of dwellings that offer three or four bedrooms, kitchen, bathroom, shower room and ensuite, along with private garden grounds. Offers in the region of £50,000. Hogg & Howison 0141 887 7921. PS-id: 119516.

Highlands

Ross-Shire, West Shoreton, Culbokie, 1 Plot with DPP for the construction of an impressive contemporary country house. Stone built cottage on site with a unique sense of seclusion and privacy. An outstanding house plot with spectacular water and mountain views within easy reach of Inverness. Guide price £250,000. C K D Galbraith 01463 224343. PS-id: 119212.

Strathcarron, 44 Ardaneaskan, Lochcarron, 1 Plot with DPP for the construction of a detached residential dwelling. This beautiful plot represents an ideal opportunity to purchase a quality site in a prime location approximately five miles from the popular west coast village of Lochcarron. The site enjoys a very tranquil rural setting. Guide price £98,000. Macleod and MacCallum 01463 235559. PS-id: 119245.

Lanarkshire

Strathaven East Browncastle, 1 Conversion with DPP for the change of use of the existing barn to create a detached residential dwelling. Large plot set within an exclusive development of seven barn conversions. Full planning granted and all services are on the site. (Private seller) 07774 747034. PS-id: 119454.

Lothian

Gorebridge, Borthwick Castle Road, 1 Plot with DPP for the construction of a two storey villa with terrace and car parking space. Offers in the region of £75,000. Blackadders Solicitors 0131 202 1868. PS-id: 120065.

Moray

Forres, Plot 2 Low Camp Site Whiterow, Ferry Road, 1 Plot with OPP for the construction of a detached residential dwelling. The seller will erect the march fencing, and thereafter maintenance will be mutual with the neighbouring proprietors. Offers over £80,000. R & R Urquhart 01309 676600. PS-id: 118734.

Perth & Kinross

Kinross, Easter Coldrain, 1 Plot with DPP for the construction of a unique five bedroom country home. Easter Coldrain is a small hamlet located to the South West of Kinross. Plot extends 0.247 acres. Fixed price £140,000. Ballantynes 01314 592222. PS-id: 119888.

Stirling

Dunblane, Plot 2, Auchenteck Farm, 1 Plot with DPP for the construction of a four bedroom home. Offers over £155,000. Slater Hogg & Howison 01786 470286. PS-id: 119884.

NORTHERN IRELAND

Antrim

Lisburn, To The Side Of, 5 Sandown Park, 1 Plot with OPP for the construction of a single detached two bedroom house. Offers in the region of £65,000. Fred Dalzell and Partners 028 92 666 638. PS-id: 119019.

Armagh

Newry, Plot 2, Old Armagh Road, 1 Plot with DPP for the construction of a two storey house and attached garage. Offers in the region of £70,000. Best Property Services 028 3026 6811. PS-id: 119141.

Down

Newtownards 147 Scrabo Road, 1 Plot with DPP for the construction of a detached three bedroom residential dwelling in the Blair Mayne Estate. This will see the original property transformed to a detached family home. Offers over £85,000. Templeton Robinson 028 9042 4747. PS-id: 119037.

Newry, 6 Clontigora Hill, 1 Plot with OPP for the construction of a replacement dwelling. Guide price £62,500. Best Property Services 028 3026 6811. PS-id: 119070.

Londonderry

Holywood, 21a Church Avenue, 1 Plot with OPP for the construction of a single courtyard cottage. Guide Price £100,000. Rogers & Brown 028 9042 1414. PS-id: 119078.

Limavady, 18 Main Street, Ballykelly, 1 Plot with Lapsed Planning for the construction of four detached dwellings. Guide price £124,950. O'Connor Kennedy Turtle 028 70344244. PS-id: 120371.

Maghera, 14 Laragh Road, 1 Plot with DPP for the construction of a double storey house that will extend to approximately 2304ft². This site is located just off the main road. Guide price £60,000. Burns & Co 028796 42271. PS-id: 119072



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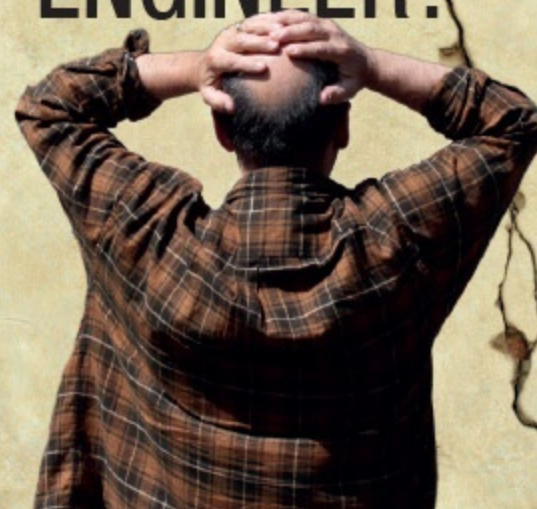
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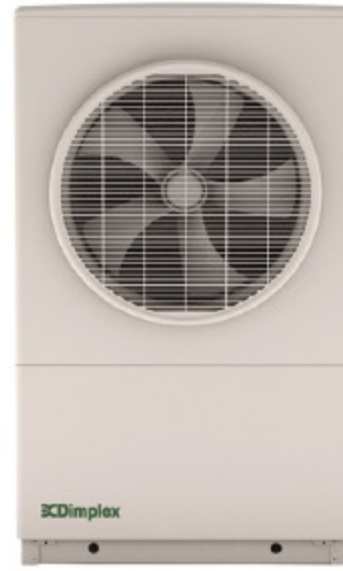
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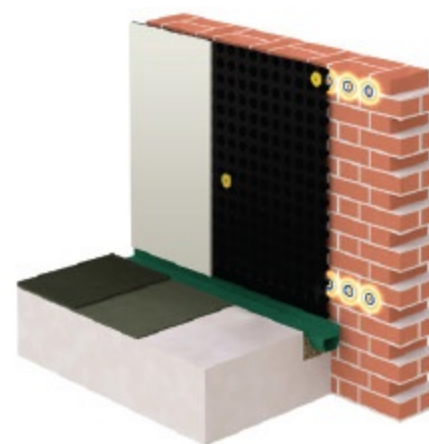


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focus on:

This month we discuss the UK's self build and custom build targets with shadow housing minister, **Emma Reynolds**



What can we do to build more homes?

Labour's recently-proposed Build First scheme will require local authorities to include a higher proportion of small sites in their five year land supply. One of the key barriers for small and custom builders is the lack of access to suitable land. Too often a huge emphasis is placed on large plots by local and national government, which frequently means small sites are ignored.

Why have you launched the scheme?

Last year the number of self build homes constructed actually fell to the lowest level we've had in 30 years. This is despite the government's pledge to double the size of the self build sector.

Our main aim with Build First is to significantly boost the role of SME builders and developers, and the self and custom build industry, to help us reach our overall ambition of constructing at least 200,000 homes a year by 2020.

How does it work?

We will guarantee smaller firms and custom builders access to public land to ensure that any plots given over for house building will have a proportion dedicated to one-off projects.

In addition, we have affirmed our commitment to building a new generation of modern towns and garden cities. Ed Balls has outlined the backing of a Labour treasury and has committed to providing financial guarantees for these new towns and cities. In my speech to the National House Building Council (NHBC) conference in January of this year, I announced that a proportion of the homes built in these new settlements will be constructed by smaller firms and custom/self builders.

How will Build First help to improve the condition of the housing industry?

I think custom builders can play a vital role in tackling the current housing shortage. This will go a long way towards helping the next generation take their first step on to the property ladder. Building those extra homes could also bring up to 230,000 jobs to our construction industry, and I want to see many of those jobs created by small and medium sized builders.

What other barriers will you remove for self and custom builders?

We know that access to finance for custom and self builders is an issue. So where sites are identified on public land for the purpose of self or custom build, we will encourage the use of the Build Now, Pay Later scheme, which will allow home builders to construct, and landowners to realise a fair value for their land.

We will also work with mortgage lenders to create standardised self and custom build finance options.

Taken together, this package of measures will help to overcome the difficulties that custom and self builders face in accessing land and finance. I am confident that they will have the positive effect of boosting the contribution that this group of people can make to tackle the housing crisis.

We have also asked Sir Michael Lyons, chairman of the English Cities Fund, together with a panel of experts, to work on a roadmap for the next Labour government to help us achieve our ambition of building 200,000 homes every year. Among other things, they're looking at how we can create more diversity and competitiveness in the development industry, including the role of self and custom building.

Anyone who wants to contribute can find the commission online www.yourbritain.org.uk/agenda-2015/policy-review/policy-review/lyons-housing-review or e-mail their ideas to submissions@lyonshousingreview.org.uk.

Can you tell *Build It* about any inspirational custom home projects you've come across recently?

Some local authorities have already started custom build schemes in their areas. In Lewisham, the local council is running one that allows the residents to choose the design, select the contractors and specify their individual requirements. In Oldham, the council has bought and cleared the land for an affordable custom build scheme that will deliver homes at 20% less than market value.



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