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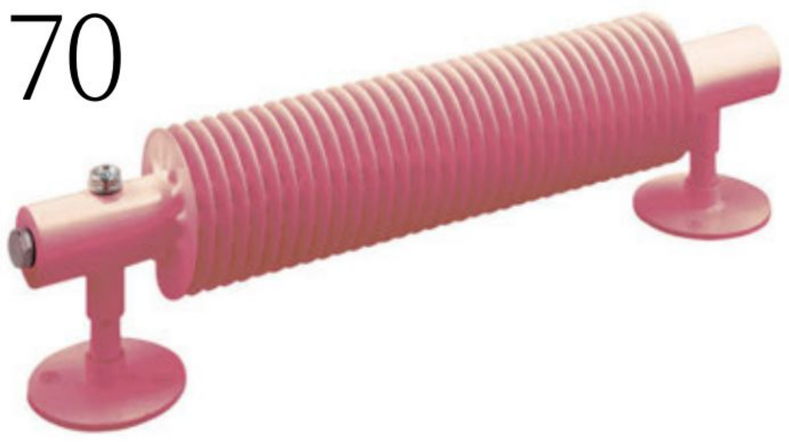


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* Cover photo





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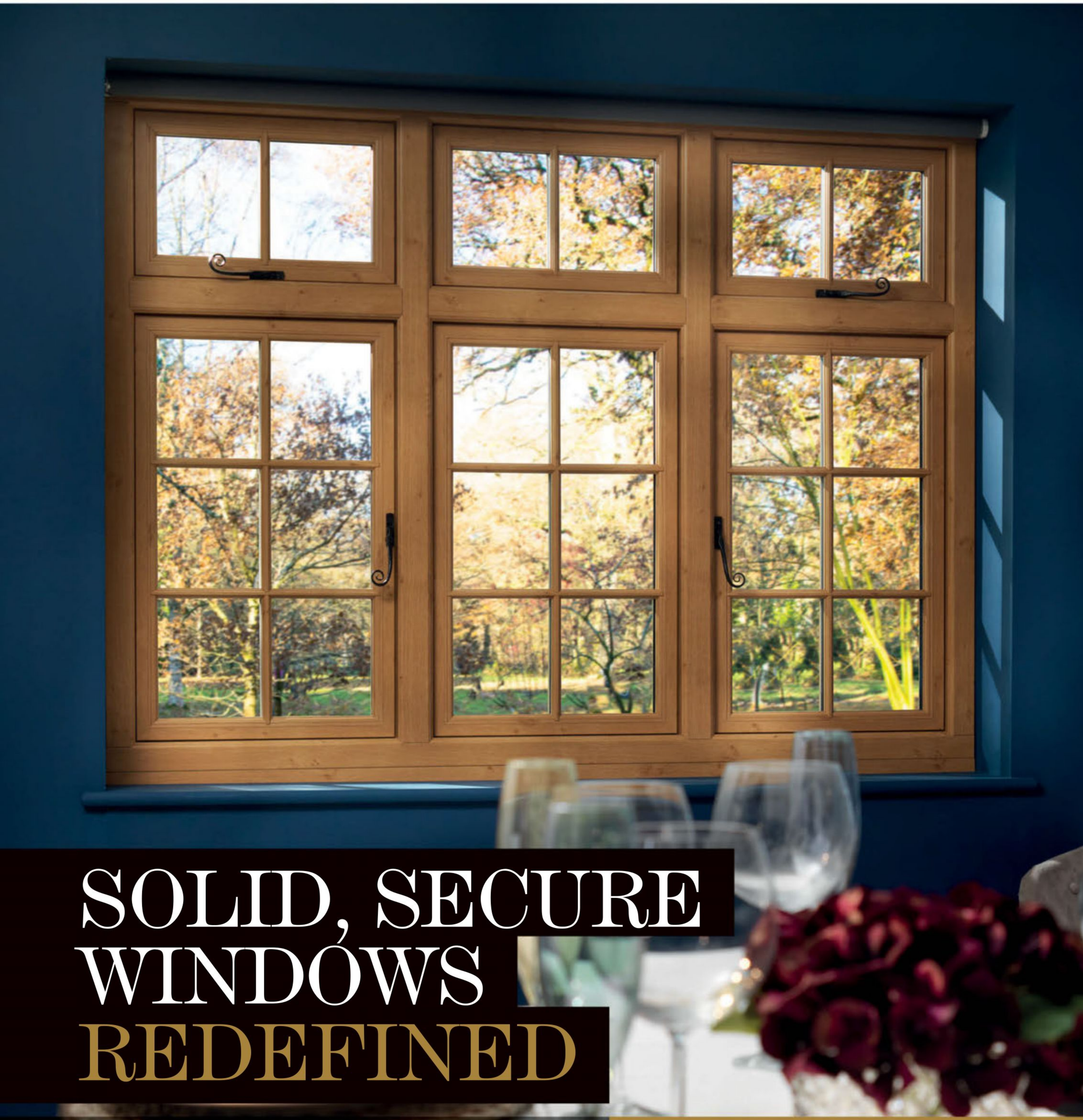
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www.selfbuildanddesign.com

PlotBrowser

Tel: 01283 742972 **Fax:** 01283 742957
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SelfBuild & Design is published by WW Magazines, 151 Station Street, Burton-on-Trent, Staffordshire DE14 1BG.
Printed in England by Warners (Midlands) plc, Bourne and London.
Distributed by Marketforce.
Tel: 020 3787 9001

Subscriptions

UK subscription price for one year (12 issues) is £36, Europe/ROW Surface mail £63.50, ROW Airmail £83.50.
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Welcome



WE LIVE IN INTERESTING TIMES. And I'm not just referring to Covid-19.

At the time of writing, we are awaiting more details about the government's proposals for sweeping changes to the planning system. Housing Minister Robert Jenrick says they are part of the government's plan to "cut red tape, but not standards" in order to achieve Prime Minister Boris Johnson's "build build build" mantra.

Many readers have tales of their own frustrations in dealing with local planners to fulfil their dream of building their own home. Ian Jennings is one of them. His stunning eco home is our Reader's Homes case study in this issue. It took him five long years to get planning permission for what seemed a pretty straightforward development. Sadly, he not alone.

So any proposals to do away with unnecessary planning hold-ups should be welcome. However, there is good cause for caution, which has been reiterated by the planners themselves.

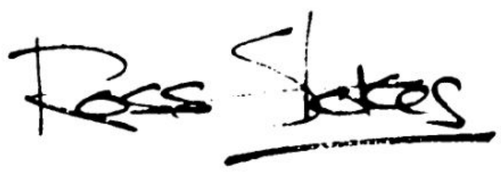
In our bid for reform we don't wish to throw out the baby with the bath water. Most planning rules are there for good reason – to protect local communities from unsightly and inappropriate development.

In our rush to provide 300,000 new homes a year, we should avoid the mistakes of the past. Nearly every town in England bears the legacy of developments that should never have happened, with poor quality housing and ugly buildings.

Alarmingly, that trend has continued in more recent times with reports of sub-standard housing, largely by developers, as a result of the relaxing of Permitted Development rules.

It should be noted that it is selfbuilders, not developers, who set the standard when it comes to housing, leading the way by embracing new materials and technologies such as timber frame, ICF and underfloor heating, to name just a few.

So this sector should be given key consideration in any government changes to our planning policies. The country deserves better housing – not just more.



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‘Perfect opportunity’ for SME developers

A drop in land prices and the availability of skilled workers and labour could offer a lifeline for small developers, according to Saffron Building Society, which offers SME finance.

Peter Owen, head of development finance, said: “It can seem a little daunting for smaller developers to begin a housing development at this time, but it could actually be the perfect opportunity to take advantage of high unemployment and the recession following this year’s unprecedented events.”

A recent survey found that 70 per cent of mortgage brokers believed the market would return to pre-pandemic levels in nine months.

“If the property market has not recovered at the end of a project, although disheartening, it is not the end of the world,” Mr Owen said. “Clients who have fallen foul of a slump in the property market have used bridging loans to finance their next project – allowing 12-24 months of leeway whilst the market recovers.

“Bridging allows the developer to borrow against their development whilst waiting to sell – this funding is then used to finance the next project. This allows the SME to continue with a flow of builds with limited disruption,” he said.

Materials sales up

The latest figures from the May Builders Merchant Building Index (BMBI) report reveal a sharp rise in sales as lockdown restrictions eased and trades returned to work.

Year-on-year, total builders merchants value sales in May were down 39.9 per cent compared with May 2019, reflecting the cautious reopening of merchant branches with many still operating a restricted service. However, the overall trading figures are a significant improvement on April 2020 sales (-76.3 per cent).

MPs back devolution

The Housing, Communities and Local Government Committee has recommended that setting planning fees should be devolved to local authorities, with a national minimum rate.

Its latest report states that local planning authorities should have the right resources to deliver the social housing needed so they can guarantee that private developers deliver “sufficient” social housing on new developments.

The HCLG committee added that £10bn in extra grant funding is required to deliver the homes needed to meet demand.

Sweeping planning changes proposed

The housing secretary, Robert Jenrick (right), has announced plans for sweeping changes to the planning system that will allow “permission in principle” for developments on land designated “for renewal” to speed up the building process.

Writing in the Sunday Telegraph, Mr Jenrick said that under new rules land will be designated in one of three categories: for growth, for renewal and for protection.

“We are cutting red tape, but not standards,” Mr Jenrick said.

But the announcement was met with a degree of caution by some sectors, including planners. Local Government Association chair James Jamieson said the idea that planning was a barrier to housebuilding was a myth.

“Nine in 10 planning applications are approved by councils, while more than a million homes given planning permission in the last decade have yet to be built.

“The government’s own recent independent report warned of the worse quality of homes not delivered through the planning system. We urge the government to heed these warnings and not further sideline the planning process,” he said.

In announcing the proposed planning changes, Mr Jenrick said that the country’s “outdated and cumbersome” planning system had contributed to a generational divide between those who are homeowners and those who are not.

“Land designated for growth will empower development – new homes, hospitals, schools, shops and offices will be allowed automatically,” he said.

However, he did not specify the criteria for designating land under these proposals.

Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty and the Green Belt will be protected.

Mr Jenrick said the new plans will also focus on quality and design, drawing on inspiration from the idea of design codes and pattern books that built the picturesque city of Bath, the model village of Bournville and the wealthy district of Belgravia in London.



Eco-friendly homes with new spaces and parks nearby would be built, he added, saying local authorities will move away from placing notices on lampposts towards an interactive online system.

The Federation of Master Builders has previously stated that construction output fell to historic lows due to the coronavirus pandemic and that streamlining planning applications would bring forward new developments.

Call to suspend five-year land supply rule

The District Councils’ Network is calling for a suspension of the five-year land supply rule and housing delivery test requirements, due to the slow-down of housebuilding caused by the coronavirus crisis.

It warns that local communities may be denied a say in new housing under the current planning rules which allow developers to ignore Local Plans if there is not a five-year supply of development land available.

A recent survey of DCN members revealed that many councils fear that they may fall short of meeting their housing targets.

This is despite council planning departments continuing to work and approve housing schemes during the lockdown.

The DCN, which represents 187 district councils, warns that this risks opening the door to speculative developments beyond the control of local communities.

It has called on the government to take a pragmatic approach to support councils, and amend existing planning guidelines.

The DCN survey found that over half of respondents were ‘very concerned’ about the impact of coronavirus on being able to sustain a supply of land for housing over the next five years – known as the five-year land supply.

Without this, local planning policies don’t apply and areas could see developments which are refused able to proceed on appeal.

Nearly two-thirds of responding councils also fear they will not meet the government’s housing delivery test, which sets targets on housebuilding in local areas.

This means that new developments would be subject to nationally defined planning policies as opposed to Local Plans agreed by local communities.

Help to Buy deadline extended

The Help to Buy equity loan scheme in England has been extended to ensure buyers do not miss out due to delays caused by the Covid-19 pandemic.

The government confirmed that the deadline for homes to be completed in order for buyers to benefit from the equity loan scheme has been extended by two months to February 28, 2021.

The scheme was originally due to close on December 31, 2020 but there were concerns that buyers could miss out if they face a delay in construction due to the coronavirus. Buyers will need to legally complete their purchase by March 31, 2021 to qualify for an equity loan.

Contracts up

The total value of construction contracts awarded in June 2020 was £2.2bn, based on a three-month rolling average. Compared to May, this is a decrease of 9.2 per cent and is 57.3 per cent lower than June 2019. However, contract award numbers in June increased by 81.4 per cent, signalling an improvement in conditions.

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on**trend**



Practical pot filler

Say goodbye to hauling heavy pans of water across the kitchen. Choose instead a pot filler, a dedicated extendable tap dispensing water direct to the pan, positioned behind the hob and perfect for filling a pan for pasta, rice or vegetables – as well as soaking before cleaning. After use, it can be folded flat against the wall making it a great space-saver and safe for families with young children. Perrin & Rowe's Traditional Pot Filler is available with lever handles or crosstop handles, and in a number of finishes. Price: from £767.28. (perrinandrowe.co.uk)



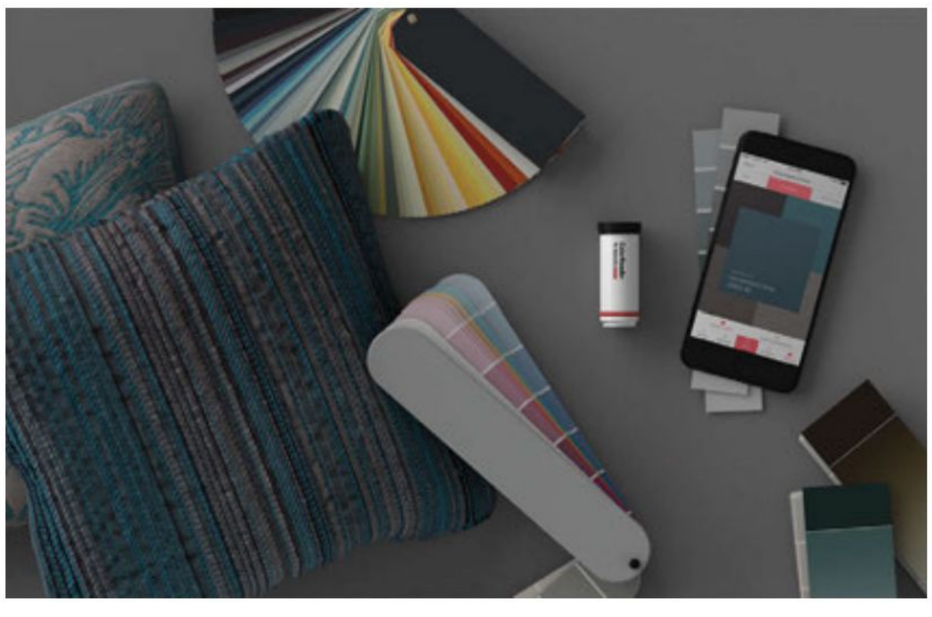
Wood-effect stone

Combining the warm appearance of wood and the hardwearing finish of porcelain, this Mikeno tiled floor, shown here in Honey, has a matt finish and can be used on walls too. Each tile is 900mm x 150mm. Price: £16.99 per sqm. (tilemountain.co.uk)



Precise colour match

The ColorReader is a new colour-matching tool, perfect for perfectionists looking to match that exact colour. The handheld device identifies a colour and saves it for future reference – simply touch it on a flat surface to instantly capture the colour, plus it suggests the three closest colour matches from the most popular paint brands. It works with an app that allows saved images to be arranged into colour palettes. Price: £100. (datacolor.com)





Atrafloor's poolside villa collection of vinyl flooring features designs to imbue a sense of sunnier climes – the fun watery hues of a pool, Moroccan mosaic floor tiles, and even a lush green lawn. If jewel tones are your thing, Agra (second from right) combines stunning deep watercolours with Islamic geometric patterns. Azulejos (far right) is perfect for turning any space into a Mediterranean paradise, with a classic blue and white printed tile pattern. (atrafloor.com)

Bedside lighting

”The key to bedroom lighting is to create layers that come together harmoniously and can be dialled up or down to achieve a desired mood,” says Astro Lighting’s design director James Bassant. They have created the Side by Side bedside lamp, which combines accent lighting with task lighting in a compact, simple design. A small directional spotlight aids night-time reading, while small lampshades create an intimate ambience that imbues a sense of peace and calmness. Three base colours and four shade colours are available. (astrolighting.com)





Keep germs at bay

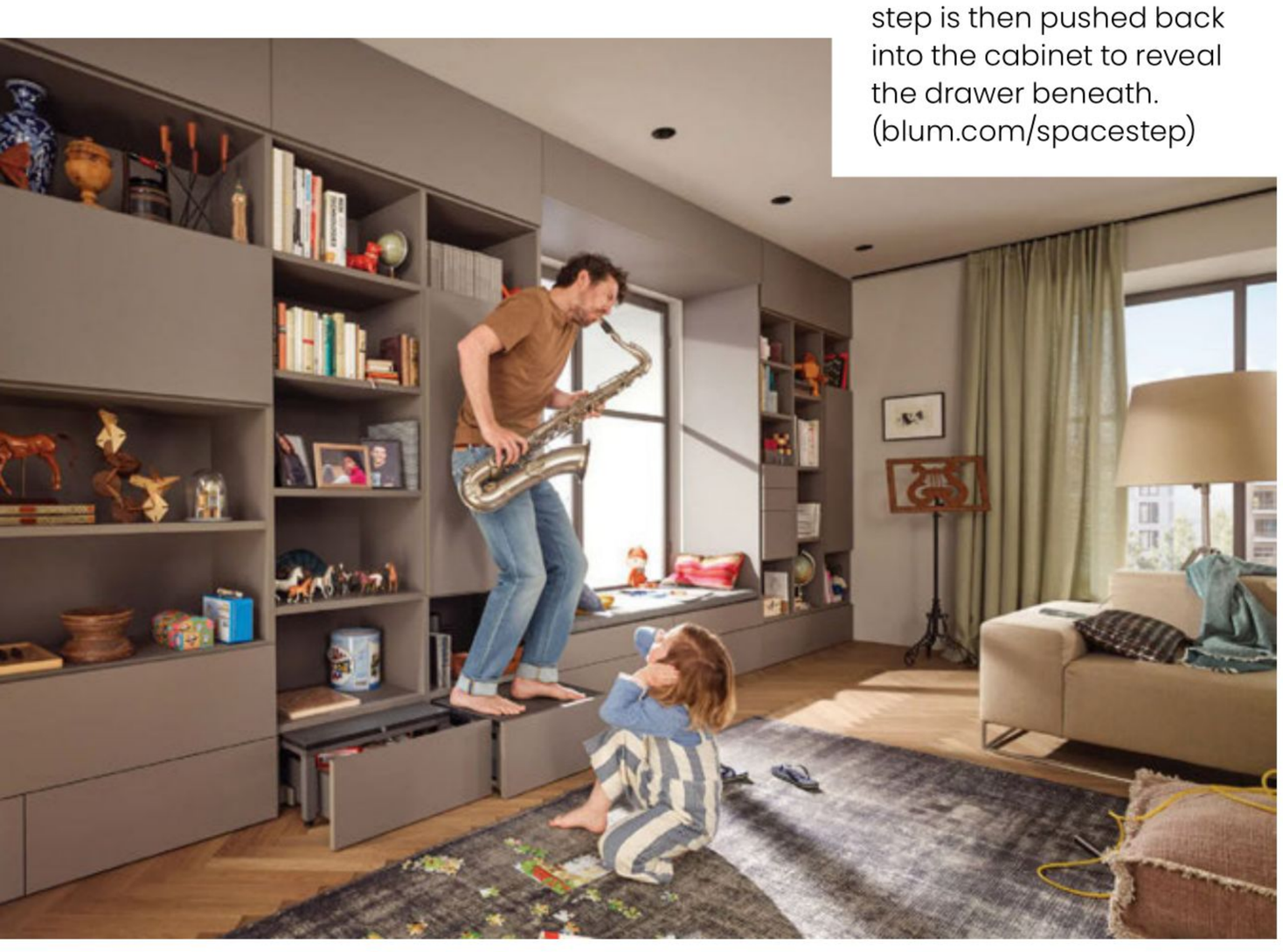


Fisher and Paykel’s appliances feature innovative technology which keeps germs at bay. The DishDrawer dishwasher, which has two drawers that operate independently, includes a ‘sanitise’ mode that raises the temperature during the rinse mode to kill bacteria. Fisher & Paykel also impregnates antimicrobials into the plastic liners and seals of their fridge freezers to prevent the growth of bacteria, while the washing machine has a self-cleaning door flush, anti-fungal door gasket impregnated with antimicrobials, and a ‘Drum Clean’ function. (fisherpaykel.com)



Clever step

Blum has been awarded a Red Dot design award for its innovative Space Step, which incorporates a step and a drawer, providing storage as well as the means to reach higher storage areas. Simply touch the edge and the Space Step glides out of the cabinet – the step is then pushed back into the cabinet to reveal the drawer beneath. (blum.com/spacestep)





Antibacterial porcelain

Marble-effect porcelain has been impregnated with an antibacterial shield, for use on walls, floors and work surfaces. Called Semblance, the coating makes the material hygienic and completely weather resistant. Available in tile and slab formats in four colours, it can be used indoors and outside too. Price: from £118.80 per sqm. (lapicida.com)









Creative with **colour**

A tired, bland interior has been transformed with the addition of rich colours, statement furniture and sumptuous fabrics.

Dramatic wall coverings have been used to create interesting decorative impressions in this newly refurbished home, designed for Kate and David Adams and their three teenage children during their visits from Hong Kong, and Kate's mother Anne who will live here permanently. The home has been transformed by Sussex-based interior designer Clare Pascoe into a light family home with rich textures and fabrics and bold colours blended with brooding dark tones.

As the home had been recently renovated by the previous owners, the initial plan was just a change of furnishing and decoration. This was to include a new kitchen and a change of lighting, replacing the huge number of 240v spotlights with subtly positioned low-voltage ones.

However, it was soon discovered that the smart home system was overly complex, poorly installed and complicated by an incompatible mix of US and UK fittings. The full extent of the substandard electrical installation was only revealed once works were underway, so all the lighting, AV system, security and smart home system needed to be rewired.

The new interior has a pared-back neutral palette as a backdrop for rich textures, colours and finishes. New items of furniture sit alongside the couple's existing furnishings, while Pascoe designed key bespoke pieces handmade locally in Sussex.

The entrance hall gives a bold first impression of the interior beyond, with its faux panelling wallpaper, a classic sofa upholstered in British







Meet the designer

Clare Pascoe's vintage contemporary interior design style has been honed over the last 20 years, achieved through sourcing and importing original mid-century furniture from the UK and Europe, which is then sympathetically restored and reupholstered in Pascoe's design studio in Oving.

Championing British suppliers and makers and celebrating sustainable design, Pascoe sources traditional handmade sofas, fabrics woven in UK mills and paints recycled in West Sussex, while ensuring an affordable price tag. (pascoeinteriors.com)



wool, a rich orange leatherette ottoman and brass lamps. A bespoke stair runner in rich blue and pale grey leads invitingly upstairs, and beyond is a glimpse of the kitchen/dining/sitting room.

The kitchen has been designed for Anne's daily needs as well as those of the family when they visit. A large kitchen island creates drama through its scale, simplicity and the beauty of the stone worktop, along with the total-control Aga that is a welcome classic addition to the clean contemporary look. The Aga and Quooker tap, together with low-voltage feature and task lighting, combine to deliver a sustainable kitchen that is impressively efficient despite its size.

By relocating the dining table, space was created for a comfortable seating area in the kitchen, zoned by a soft pink rug. The white oak dining table, surrounded by a mismatched set of Eames chairs, is offset by a pair of impressive Hex pendants in brushed brass, a material used throughout the house to inject subtle glamour and warmth to the crisp base palette.

In the living room a pair of traditional sofas, handmade in West Sussex and upholstered in British Wool, a pair of Knoll Relax armchairs and an Eames chair, are offset with brass and smoked mirror glass tables. A duck-footed lamp with ostrich feather shade adds welcome humour, while bold colours and textures have been introduced through an eclectic mix of cushion fabrics ranging from vivid florals to stripes.

The family room was tricky to furnish, so a corner sofa was chosen to fill the space. Working with a Surrey-based company, Pascoe designed an extended corner sofa surrounded by dramatic black walls and graduated grey curtains, while faux bookshelf wallpaper at the other end of the room forms the backdrop to the Saarinen dining table and chairs, with their orange seats.

CLARE'S DESIGN TIP...

"For feature walls don't limit yourself to just one: consider two adjacent or opposite walls, and do not shy away from continuing around corners – the most important thing is to observe and work to natural start and stop points such as corners, chimney breasts or reveals."



Shopping list

Interior design Pascoe Interiors: pascoeinteriors.com
Smart home installation New Land Solutions: newland.solutions
Granite worktop County Stone: countystonegranite.co.uk
Furniture and lighting TwentyTwentyOne: twentytwentyone.com
Wallpaper Cole and Son: cole-and-son.com; Mineheart: mineheart.com
Kitchen rug Knots Rugs: knotsrugs.co.uk
Boiling water tap Quooker: quooker.co.uk
Coffee table Tom Dixon: tomdixon.net
Kitchen GM Cucine: gmcucine.com, exclusively imported by Pascoe Interiors.

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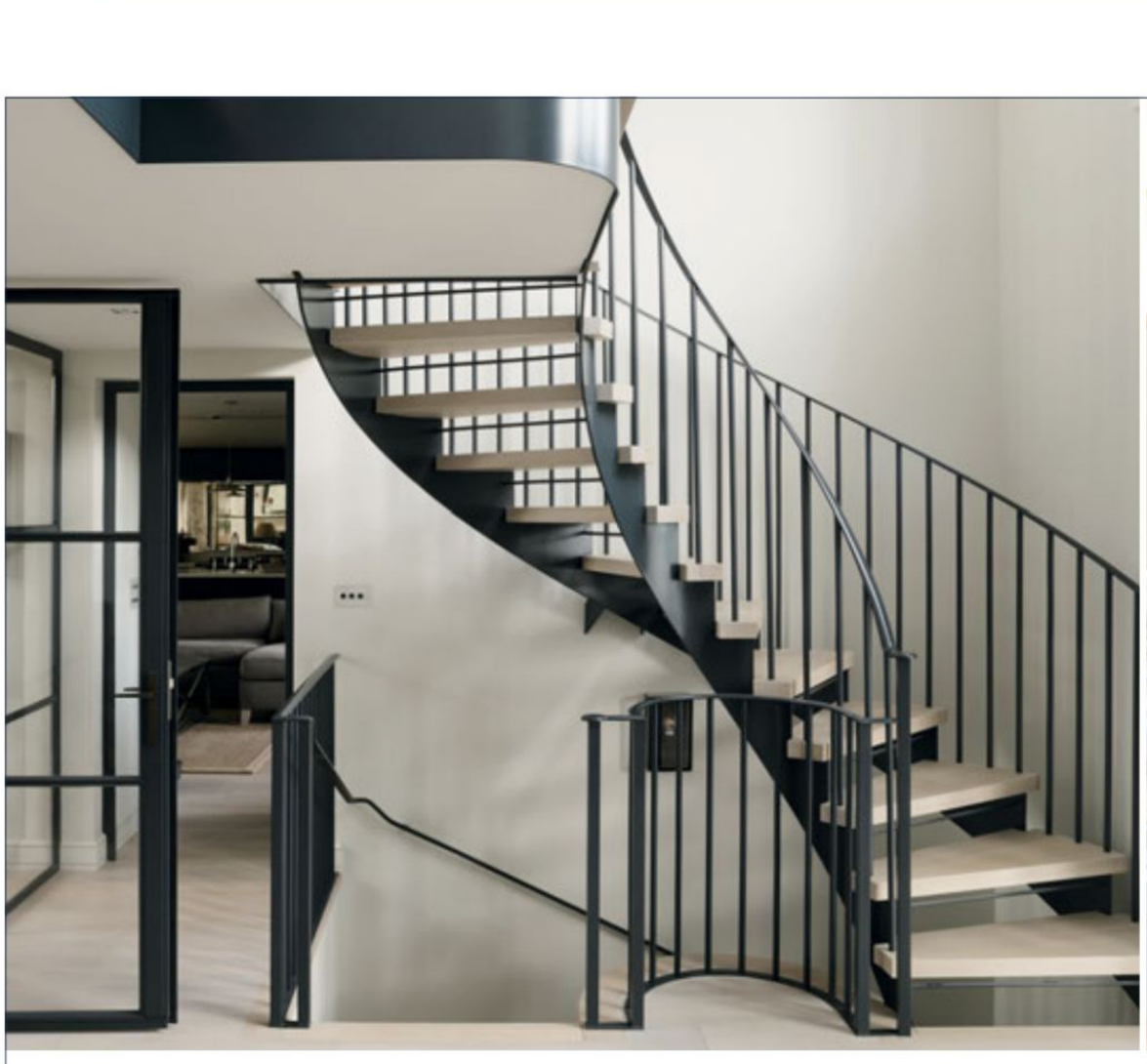


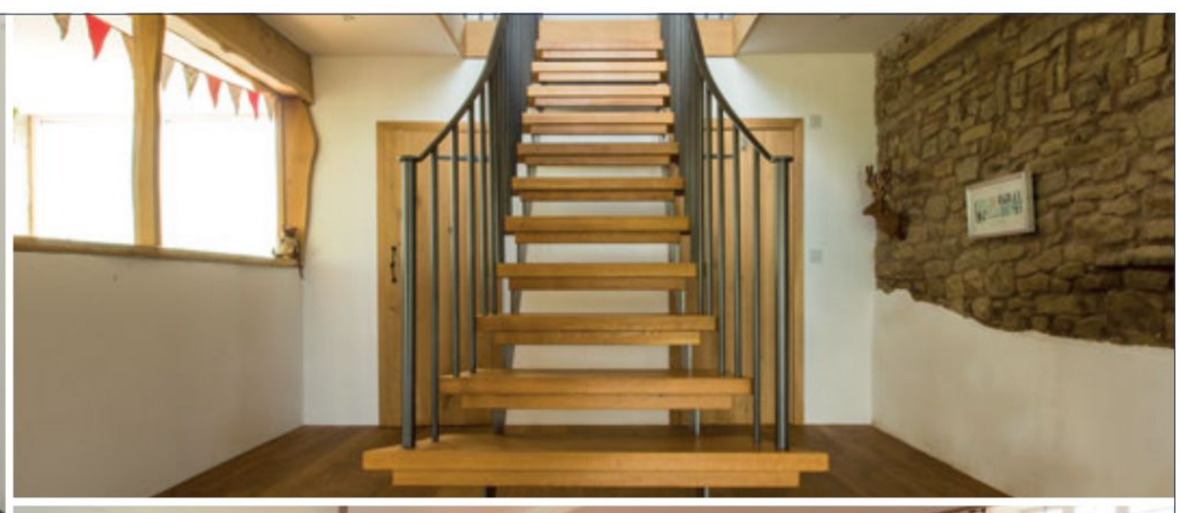
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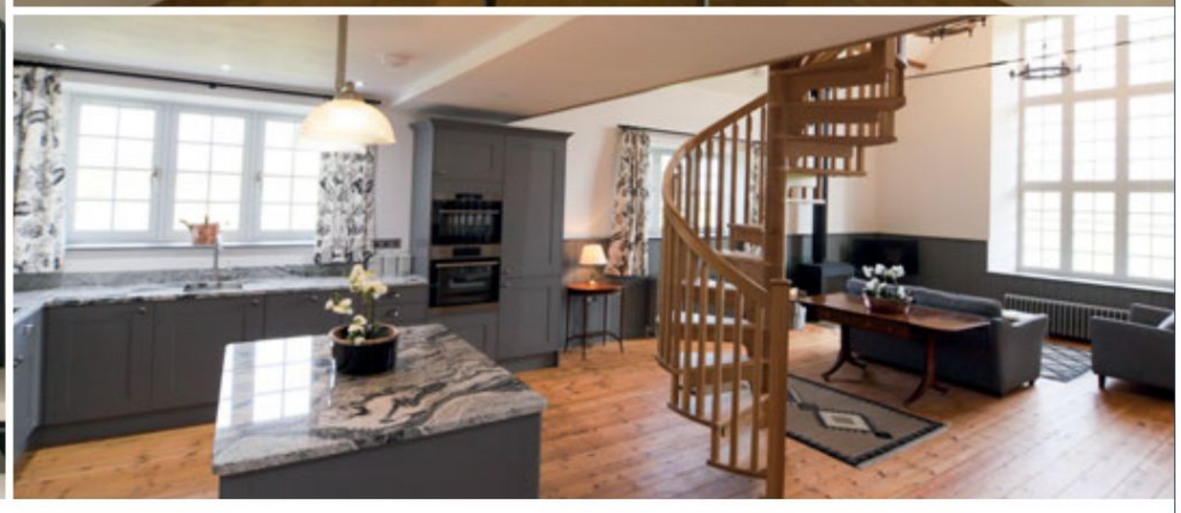
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Open House looking for festival ideas

Open House organisers are inviting proposals for physical, online and outdoor events for the annual London festival.

Maybe you have a building to open up, would like to host a talk, stage an exhibition, or lead a guided tour, Open House invites you to be part of the 2020 event.

This year's programme includes a diverse range of activities, experimenting with new formats alongside carefully managed traditional ones. The main festival weekend runs from September 19 to 20, but this year's programme also includes the two weeks either side, from Monday September 14 until Sunday September 27.

New formats include outdoor film screenings, online pub quizzes, podcast recordings and supper clubs. Organisers have extended an open invitation to cultural organisations, architects, community groups and individuals to come forward with ideas. **(open-city.org.uk)**

Eco development 'a template' for future

Ssassy Property and Greencore Construction are working together on a Passivhaus development at Springfield Meadows in Southmoor, which they claim to be the most sustainable residential scheme in the country.

The development has been recognised by the environmental charity Bioregional, which has awarded the project One Planet Living Global Leader status.

The scheme uses Greencore's own timber-frame system which is insulated with lime-hemp and natural fibre insulation. These natural materials absorb carbon dioxide.

The roof is integrated with solar panels to supply as much energy as the homes require over the course of a year.



Working with the Wildlife Trust, the developers have also incorporated as much nature as possible, providing an electric car club and generally supporting the new community to live as sustainably as possible.

Greencore MD Ian Pritchett believes Springfield Meadows is leading the way in new building standards and could form a template for Boris Johnson's 'build build build' economic recovery.

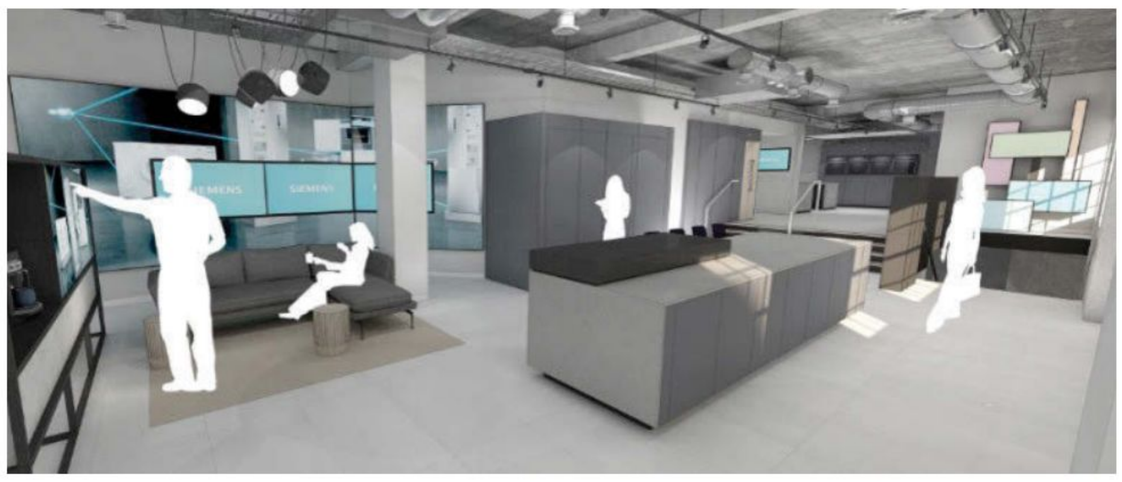
"Our approach used to be considered rather niche, but there is no doubt there is now major, mass-market appeal," he said. Only a few plots remain**. (ssassyproperty.com)**

Siemens to open its first UK showroom

Siemens will open its first UK home appliance showroom this autumn. The 350 sqm shop in Wigmore Street in the heart of London's 'kitchen alley' will showcase the full range of Siemens' electrical appliances.

Designed with both consumers and trade partners in mind, visitors will have the chance to see the appliances in action, as well as enjoy an in-depth consultation on the appliances and their wider kitchen requirements.

The showroom will feature a Virtual Reality Lounge where visitors will be able to visualise the appliances in a kitchen setting before finalising their design.



Work is currently underway to fit out the building and the first appointments will be available to book from the autumn.



Scheme for 'age-in-place' living

Plans to create an active retirement community which provides a unique model of independent age-related lifestyles have been submitted to Aberdeen City Council.

The development in Milltimber at Binghill House will feature cottages and apartments built in the extensive grounds, alongside a nursing home.

The development has been designed for the over 60s who can buy care and support packages to suit their long-term needs, allowing them to 'age in place'.

Higher levels of care can be provided in an on-site nursing home. The plans include a corner shop and community allotments for growing produce.



Designer Halliday Fraser Munro says the low-rise, low-impact scheme respects the surrounding landscape, with properties located amid mature trees.

Pedestrian movement will be prioritised, creating an environment to encourage residents to spend time outdoors.

Footpaths will link the new development to Milltimber, inviting people to use the new facilities and to integrate the development into the existing community.

Halliday Fraser Munro offers architectural, urban design and masterplanning services. **(hfm.co.uk)**

Zoom your room

Zoom That Room is a new virtual interior design service from well-established international designer Benji Lewis.

The online bespoke design service offers a one-hour home consultation which costs from £90 per zoomed room.

Lewis, known for his accessible and non-judgemental approach to design, hosts the sessions for all types of properties, from studio flats to country retreats.

"My job is to help and inspire my clients and to celebrate the space they have created by lifting it to its true potential," says Benji. "You don't need big bucks, you need advice, ingenuity and an open mind – very often you don't have to buy anything new at all." **(room.com)**

Choosing a piece of art for your home

When it comes to designing interiors, too often artwork is treated as an afterthought. **Federica Beretta** offers some advice on how to select and exhibit art for your home.

LOTS OF THINGS CAN TRANSFORM A ROOM or make it unique – and art is certainly one of them. Collecting art can be considered a lifetime journey and living with it is a thoroughly enriching experience. Over the last few months, with museums and galleries being forced to close due to Covid-19, we have come to realise how crucial personal collections are if you want to experience art in real life, but don't have access to public artworks.

Choosing an artwork for your home gives you the chance to add a new twist to a space, as well as giving voice to your creativity and personality. And if the choice is supported by an advisor who can provide useful guidance to make the most of your selection, the experience is all the more enjoyable.

Love at first sight

My first tip when choosing a work of art is simple: just fall in love with it. A work of art needs to speak to you, to move you, to make you dream, to inspire you every day – you need to feel it. I have seen many clients fall in love with a work, who then go on to explore other works by different artists, but always come back to their first love.

I also recommend conducting due diligence duties on an artwork: your advisor needs to check that the paperwork, provenance, and dating of the work are immaculate. Everything can be bought online nowadays, including works of art, but the offline shopping experience will always have an additional value, due to the physicality of the object, and the way it can speak to you in the flesh and can shape the surrounding space. However, if collectors are familiar with the artist and trust the gallery, then acquiring the piece online might prove more practical in some cases, as well as allowing a more thorough comparison of different options.

Space and the atmosphere

Knowing what overall ambiance you are aiming to achieve in your home helps when creating a bespoke selection, and the relationship between the artwork and its surroundings plays a central role when designing the desired atmosphere. Think about the architectural features of the room, from ceiling height to the colour scheme and lighting. The function of the room should also be considered. For example, it is quite common to display artwork in the living room. This is usually where the family gets together and where guests are entertained, so it is the best place to showcase an art collection. For the bedroom, more intimate works are advisable, such as pieces that have a special connection with the couple or the individual sleeping there – perhaps a souvenir from an unforgettable journey, or a gift for a special occasion.



Artwork offers the chance to add personality to an interior.



Federica Beretta is director of Opera Gallery. (operagallery.com)

Colour scheme

What atmosphere do you want to create for your space? Dramatic, neutral or harmonious? The artwork's palette can either match, contrast or redefine the tones of its surroundings, through endless bespoke combinations that can really make a place unique. If you are not sure about what to choose, I suggest visiting other gallery or museum spaces, to be inspired by the arrangement of their collections.

Lighting

Consider the medium of the artwork: is it a painting, photograph, sculpture, or multimedia installation? Depending on the light's intensity, it is generally recommended to consider glazing both paintings and photographic work with a UV protective and anti-reflective glass or perspex. Whatever you do, keep the artwork away from natural light, as this can cause the colours to fade over time. If the room is particularly bright, consider prints that are less expensive and less likely to fade. For sculptures, try positioning a few lights around them: shapes and details can be better appreciated from different angles, if the light comes from different sides.

Framing and hanging

I always recommending having artworks framed as they provide essential protection. Whether you choose a dominant colour in the artwork to match the frame, or go for a contrasting colour to let the work to stand out, artworks and frames should always be complementary.



Left: Karel Appel, Composition, 1963, oil on panel, now on display at the Opera Gallery.

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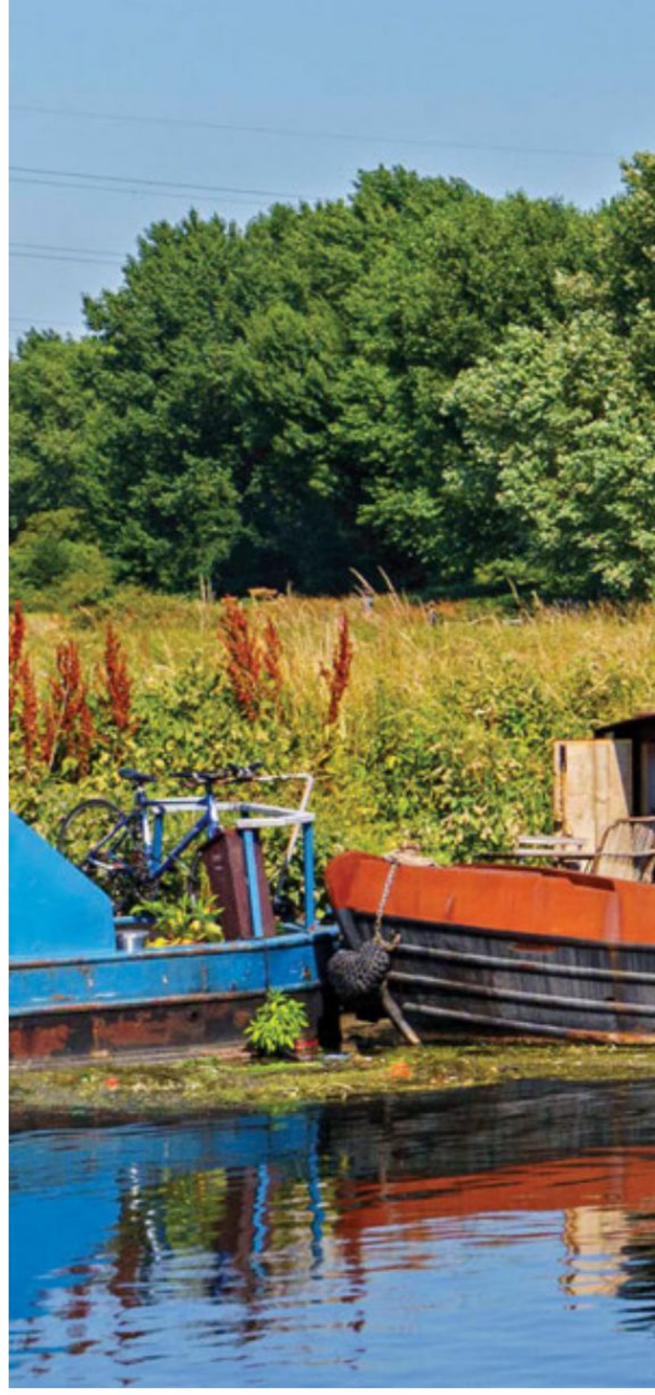
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First corten **eco houseboat**

DESIGNER OWAIN HARRIS AND HIS WIFE ROSE, an art teacher, have built an affordable nautical home In London, using corten steel, perhaps best known for its use in contemporary buildings. It is believed to be the first houseboat to use the sustainable material, which weathers to a rusty patina.

The couple knew exactly how to make the most of the space in their modest-sized home, having lived on London houseboats for eight years. The boat has two bedrooms, an open-plan kitchen/living space, utility room, two bathrooms and plenty of storage space. There's also the capacity to entertain, with seating for 10 at the dining table. It is furnished entirely with recycled furniture, well insulated and double glazed.

"We wanted to create something unique," says Owain, who decided to use corten steel in homage to the heritage of the canal in central London. "It's a sustainable choice as no maintenance is required once the stable rust-like appearance is developed." The rust forms an orange patina which acts as a protective coating, slowing the rate of corrosion.

The boat doesn't require painting, its appearance improving over time as patterns come and go. "Marine paints are extremely hazardous toxic substances," says Owain, who had the boat commissioned by a traditional boat-builder in Mansfield and fitted it out himself with the help of Rose and handy friends. All of the wood used was FSC certified and the floor is made of reclaimed scaffold boards.

The boat has many other sustainable features including solar panels and compost toilets. "Boat life is far more environmentally friendly than living in bricks and mortar," says Owain, who recycles wood pellets from local joineries to fuel the heating. "We don't take up any land, we are much smaller (than a house) and use much less energy," he adds.

"We are far more conscious of the resources we use and the waste we produce as everything has to be transported on and off the boat. We have a closer relationship and awareness of nature and our immediate environment as we meander through. This in essence is why making as little impact as possible on our surroundings is of the utmost importance – nature is literally outside the window."

Owain and Rosie grew up in the country and by the sea respectively, and living on a boat in London has given them a taste of rural life in a big city. "Coming home is always a delight," enthuses Rosie. "The contrast in landscapes is striking and keeps every day exciting – one minute we can be in the sticks and the next surrounded by towering skyscrapers. The change in seasons always offers up a lot of romance, we always hanker to light the first fire of the year, or the sun to ride higher in the sky in the spring."

As boaters, the couple are aware of their surroundings and the measures required to reduce pollution of the











waterways. All their soaps and detergents are eco friendly and the compost toilet uses no water, with the waste composted when broken down. Waste and recycling have to be carried to local bins so are kept to a minimum.

"Having to fill up a water tank makes you very aware of how much you're using and we keep showers brief," says Owain. The couple are now selling their home to be nearer to family. "Boats allow a great deal of flexibility in location but unfortunately there are no canals where we're from," says Rosie wistfully.

Currently on a continuous cruising licence, the boat is for sale on Rightmove for £149,950.

Julian Owen – Architect

STYLISH *and* practical

INTERVIEW: **DEBBIE JEFFERY**



Julian Owen is a chartered architect and author, whose projects have featured widely in the national press. He is a founding director of Associated Self Build Architects (ASBA), the UK's largest network of local RIBA-registered architects, who specialise in new homes and restorations. His own practice, Julian Owen Associates, is based in the East Midlands and undertakes a wide variety of projects, including the alteration, extension and refurbishment of many hundreds of properties, as well as designing one-off houses. Julian has published several books aimed at informing and empowering those considering building projects, and his latest publication is a second edition of Home Extension Design. He also delivers talks and seminars at exhibitions and shows, explaining the design and construction process, and moderates the Facebook page Self Build and Home Alterations UK. In 2003 he received an MBE for services to architecture.

Describe your childhood home

I only ever lived in one house as a child and my dad is still there, so I see it fairly regularly. It's a modest townhouse in Southend, set just back from the top of the Cliff Gardens and built in Edwardian times, with high ceilings, bay windows and two reception rooms. The house was previously owned by two sisters for nearly 60 years before my parents bought it in 1963. Living close to the seafront was a wonderful experience as a child, and it was certainly a great playground. The best domestic architecture is along the seafront itself to the west of the town, mostly late Victorian and lined up to take in the view across the estuary to Kent. In between those, there are a few Art Deco buildings from the 1920s and 30s, which is my favourite architectural style.

What made you decide to become an architect?

My father was an architect, so I suppose it's in the blood. Actually, it's strange just how many architects do seem to follow in their parents' footsteps, often for several generations. It's the range of the work which interested me and still does. My school was organised with one end of the building for studying arts and the other for sciences, so as I chose a mix of subjects I got a lot of exercise rushing from one end of the school to the other. My job requires me to have knowledge of design, art history, materials, science, IT, project management, mathematical calculations, the law, psychology and geography. One of the reasons I enjoy being an architect is because, to do it well, you must be both creative and highly practical.

How did you set up your practice?

I got a place at Nottingham University and after my second degree I stayed in the area and later set up in practice. I was in a very well-paid but mind-numbingly boring job, drawing the walls of hospital wards to show all the plug and socket locations. I don't fit well into corporate culture, and realised that I wasn't going to get an interesting job that way, so when I had the opportunity to take over some projects from an architect who was about to retire, I took it. I lacked experience, business contacts and any kind of track record, so it was a big gamble financially. If I had been in a fulfilling job, I don't think I would have gone for it. A lot of my early work was for funeral directors across the country, and the first one involved being on my own, measuring up a cold storage basement in Bath, with only half a dozen of their 'clients' for company.





This side extension creates a light airy sunroom and a home for house plants.



A contemporary-style timber-framed house contrasts with its standard suburban neighbours on the rest of the street.

> “I DON’T STRIVE TO DEVELOP AN EASILY RECOGNISABLE STYLE, BECAUSE VISUALLY I LIKE EVERY HOUSE TO DIFFER. IT SHOULD BE ABOUT THE PEOPLE WHO LIVE THERE AND THE SITE CONDITIONS RATHER THAN IMPOSING YOUR OWN TASTES AND SIGNATURE DESIGN.

Below: This double-height space makes the most of the countryside views.

Opposite: A new timber-framed house built on a river bank by a client who managed the project and did a lot of the work himself.

How would you sum up your design philosophy?

Stylish and practical teamwork. Contrary to many architects, I don’t strive to develop an easily recognisable style, because visually I like every house to differ. It should be about the people who live there and the site conditions rather than imposing your own tastes and signature designs. You can create beautiful houses in all kinds of styles, and what interests me is the process of gathering information and producing a design which answers the brief.

Describe your own home

I am a dedicated suburbanite. I like to visit cities and the countryside but prefer not to live there. My home is an ordinary 1930s house which we gutted, refashioned, and extended, in keeping with the existing room sizes and character. It has a generous garden, plenty of space and is within walking distance of friends, schools, shops and nightlife. I would like to self build one day, but I love where we live and building plots are like hen’s teeth around here. I ran the office from home for many years, but once we reached a staff of five my wife said ‘either they move out or I will’, so we now work nearby in the town centre.



Which achievement has given you the most satisfaction?

ASBA is very important to me and was set up as a way of bringing together architects around the country who specialise in one-off houses and often can’t afford to advertise their services individually. The architect Adrian Spawforth and I attended a self-build exhibition at the Alexandra Palace in 1992, where we met several other architects on the RIBA stand. Later that night we had coffee together and discussed how architects were not well represented at the exhibition. Many would have taken stands but it was too expensive, given we were all small businesses who only worked in their own local areas. The obvious solution was to share the cost of a stand at the next exhibition and direct any selfbuilders to the practice nearest to them. We also agreed to share the cost of placing adverts in magazines, and the idea grew into ASBA. Crucially, we were given a lot of support by Murray Armor, who almost single-handedly re-established the concept of self build in the UK in the 1980s. I’ve made some very good friends out of ASBA and hope we’ve gone some way to promoting







Above & left: A modern addition to a listed Georgian manor house. Glazing forms the corner to maximise the garden views.
Right: Makeover of a house with an elevated view over the surrounding area.
Left: A stable conversion where the open-plan layout and high daylight levels compensate for the long, thin nature of the existing building.





Left: A new house in the style of the local vernacular.
Middle: Interiors of a bungalow makeover.
Bottom: A contemporary twist on brick and timber.





smaller practices. It's all run on a voluntary basis and we have a solid core of loyal people, but we're always looking for new members to join us.

What advice would you give to selfbuilders when choosing an architect?

Choose one whose advice you're happy to listen to – particularly if they're telling you something you don't want to hear. So often at exhibitions people bring me their plans and just want an instant idea of the build cost. Overspending is the commonest problem with self-build projects, so you want someone to give you the cold hard truth from the start, which is usually that you can't afford everything that you want.

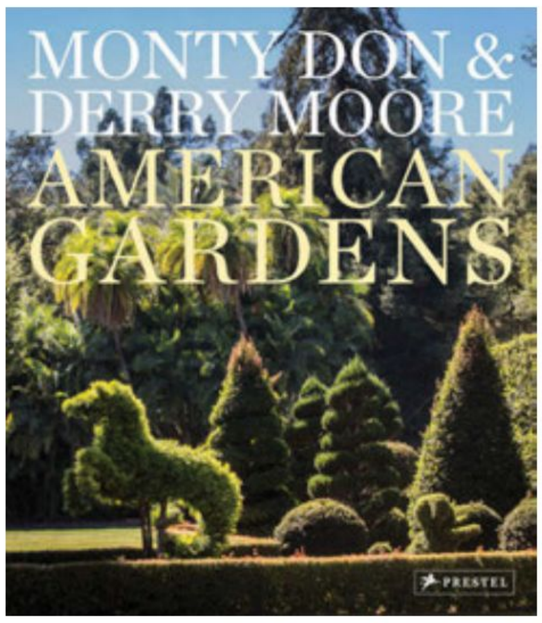
Do you have any tips for selfbuilders?

Half the battle is knowing what's coming and being prepared. Identify risks that can occur over the life of the project, face up to them right at the start and put strategies in place to deal with them. Enjoy the early design stage, because once you submit for planning you spend a lot of time accommodating other people's requirements, such as councils, funding bodies, builders and conservation officers, not to mention the neighbours!
(julianowen.co.uk; asba-architects.org)



American beauty

American Gardens
by Monty Don and Derry Moore
(Prestel: £35)



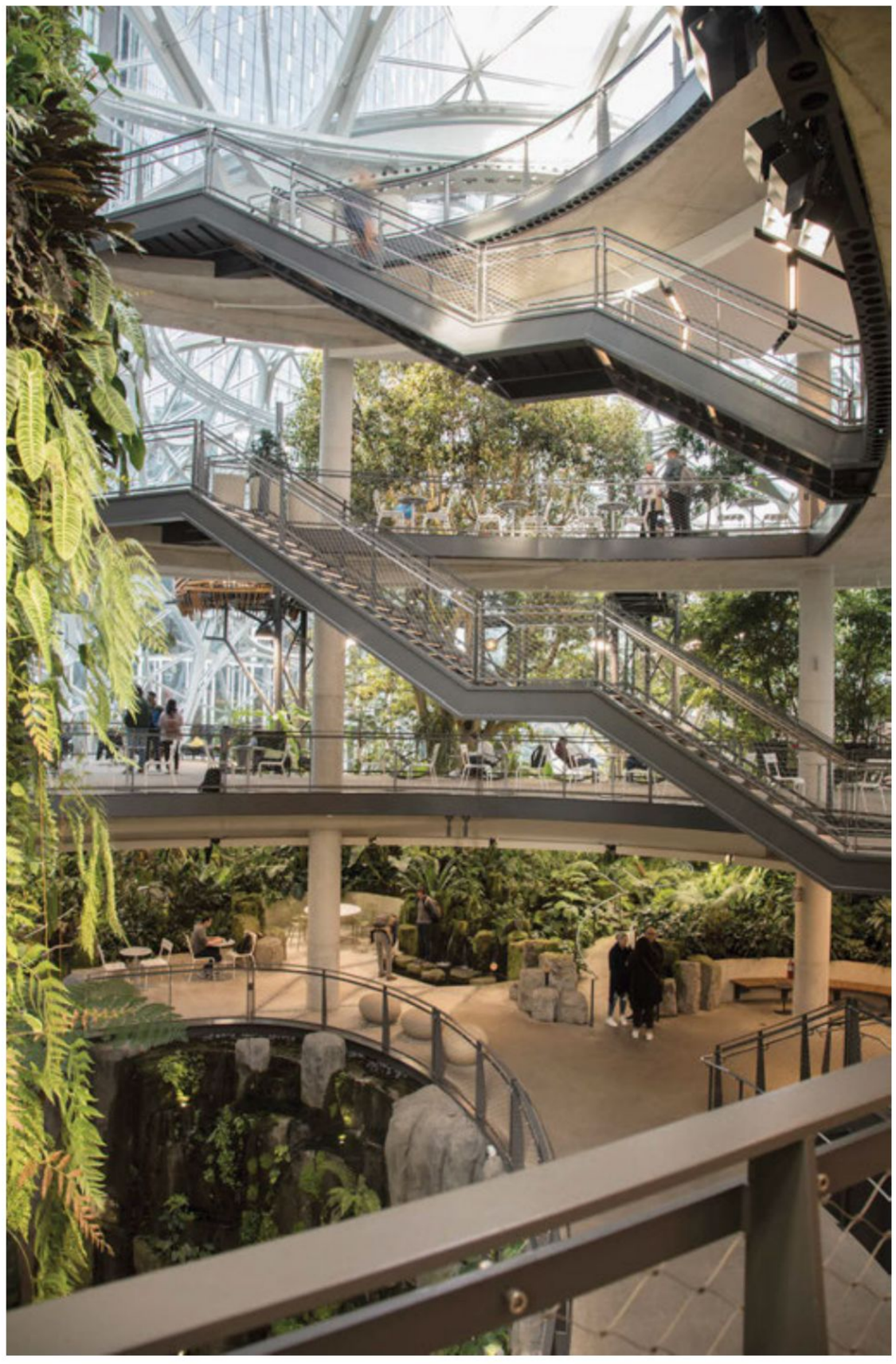
Following onthe success of this summer's BBC series of the same name, American Gardens is an impressive showcase of some of the country's most significant gardens.

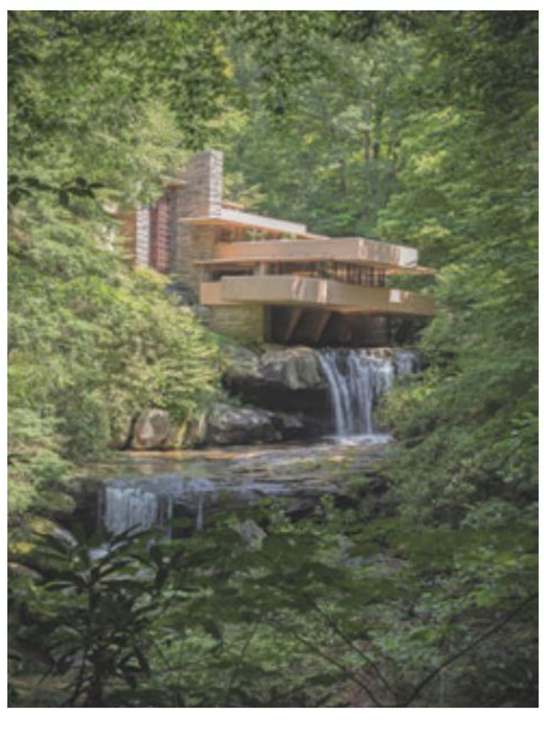
As well as being an engaging presenter (okay, national treasure), Monty Don is an eloquent writer and his highly readable musings strike just the right chord for a book that will be mostly admired for Derry Moore's photography.

The book features the designs of some of America's leading architects and landscape designers, including John Lautner, Richard Neutra and Steve Harris. All have been beautifully captured by Moore, who is no stranger to working with Don on various jaunts across the globe.

Featured on its 200-odd pages are some of America's great houses, gardens, landscapes and parks – from Neutra's Modernist Kaufmann House in Palm Springs, to Middleton Plantation in South Carolina dating back to 1760. There's also Lautner's 1961 Sheats–Goldstein Residence and Bunny Mellon's Oak Spring Garden.

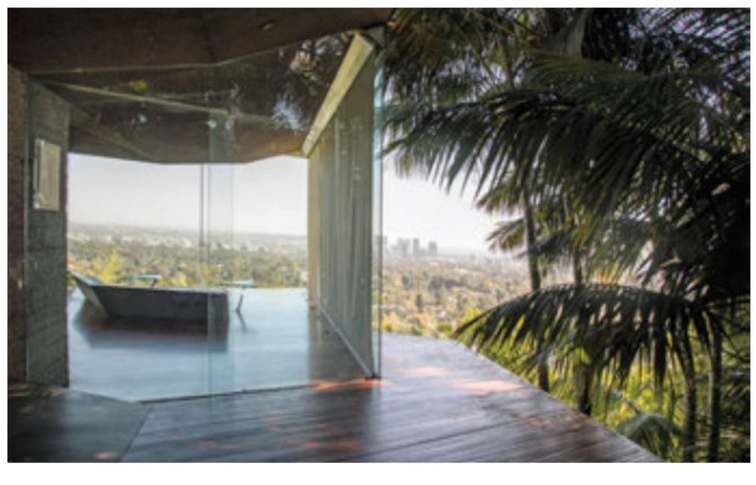
Public architecture and landscaping are also given rightful recognition – from the park on top of a car park in Chicago and the Amazon HQ garden spheres, to the 'Las Vegas of gardens' the 1,000-acre Longwood gardens in Pennsylvania with its Versailles-scale fountain jets.





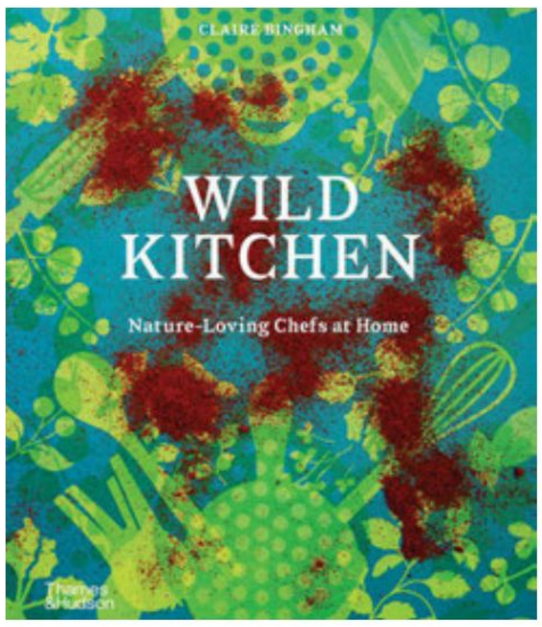


Pictures from left to top right: Frank Lloyd Wright's Falling Water, Pennsylvania; Redwoods, California; Sheats-Goldstein House, Los Angeles; interior of Amazon's Spheres, Seattle.



Going wild

Wild Kitchen: Nature-Loving Chefs at Home
By Claire Bingham
(Thames & Hudson £25)

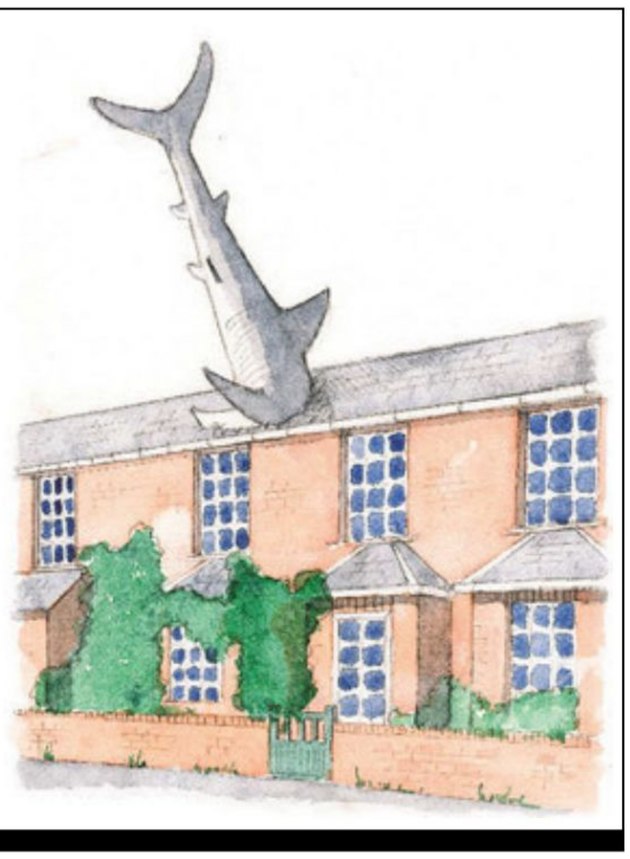


Bingham offers an intriguing glimpse of the home kitchens and dining spaces of 20 of the world's top chefs, restaurateurs and food bloggers in this charming book sure to be lapped up by foodies and those looking for kitchen ideas.

From a chef who experiments with herbs in a city apartment to a blogger who forages with her family, each personality's featured kitchen offers a behind-the-scenes view of their own cooking philosophy along with their advice for creating a unique kitchen space.

As its title suggests, the book has an eco theme, with tips on kitchen design and good food.





Two illustrations from Rory Fraser's Follies: An Architectural Journey, published by Zuleika. Through watercolours and witty written accounts, Fraser showcases how follies capture and define the people, periods and places in which they were built.

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> “I WANTED A HOUSE OF ITS TIME, LIGHT AND WARM, WITH AS MANY ENVIRONMENTALLY FRIENDLY FEATURES AS POSSIBLE.

In brief

PROJECT Eco new build
LOCATION Bridport, Dorset
LAND Already owned
PROJECT COST £450k
WORTH £1m+



EXTERIOR
The new eco house is clad in locally grown timber and render. It looks particularly impressive at night as a result of careful attention to lighting.

Persistence **pays off**

Ian Jennings and his wife Clare fulfilled a long-held ambition to build their own eco home in Dorset, but it wasn't all plain sailing.

Story and pictures: **Ian Jennings**

I bought the field behind my house in West Bay Road Bridport 20 years ago for £33k. It is three and a half acres within the West Dorset Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty and has views of downs and open countryside, with the sea less than a mile away. The top section that backs onto West Bay Road is inside the development boundary of the town and within this plot was a large stable block and yard. At the time I was working as a broadcast engineer in Cyprus and I let the field for horses.

Following my return to the UK in 2002, marriage to Clare and the birth of our first child, Cecilia, in 2004 we considered moving to a larger detached house. I also knew that our field had development potential and the prospect of selfbuilding had been in the back of





> I NEEDED A GREAT ARCHITECT WITH A TRACK RECORD OF DESIGNING MODERN BUILDINGS.

my mind for a while, so we decided to give this a go.

Getting planning permission was our first hurdle. Given the top section of the field was in the development boundary and already had a stable block on it, I decided to make a full planning application. The field had a track for vehicles, and the council's highways department confirmed there was no problem with access. The Environment Agency (EA) also confirmed the development site was outside the one-in-100-year flood zone (although the River Brit runs alongside one edge of the field) so it didn't object either. At this stage, I thought there was no point troubling the neighbours whose houses backed onto the field. I knew one or two would object, but others were further away and probably wouldn't be that interested. How wrong I was.

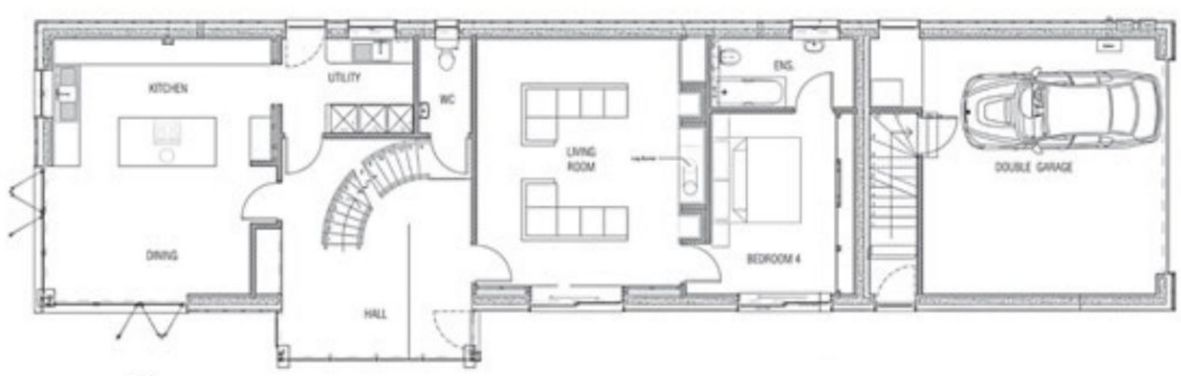
I submitted my first planning application – for a package timber-framed house – in September 2005, just after our second child, Frank, was born. Some of the neighbours thought the land was protected from development by a restrictive covenant. Although this wasn't true, I was surprised by the reaction. Letters of objection piled onto the planning file. Despite the site being outside the mapped flood risk area, the EA requested a flood risk assessment as there had been anecdotal reports of flooding from the neighbours. I decided to withdraw the application.

Two years later, I submitted a second application, in November 2007. In the intervening time, I had read more about planning and architecture and subscribed to self-build magazines, including this one. By now, the original package timber-frame house felt a bit 'safe' and I began to think about an architecturally designed property that would fit better in the landscape. Given my first unsuccessful planning application, I decided to apply for outline permission, as this would simply test whether I could build in principle, with less scope for objection to a particular design. It would also give me more time to investigate the style of house I really wanted.

Although the EA map showed the development site outside the one-in-100-year flood risk area, my planning application included a flood risk assessment as requested. However, opposition remained as strong as ever. West Dorset Council refused the application on the grounds of the design being out of character with the surrounding area. As no other reasons for refusal were given, this seemed really weak. The nearby housing was a mix of different styles. It seemed logical to me that some type



THE BUILD
Concrete is pumped into the shell of the Nudura insulated concrete formwork system before the curved steel roof is installed using a telehandler. Three trenches in the field in front of the house were dug out during the early stages of the build and a 100m ground loop collector installed in each.



Ground floor



First floor

The floorplan

An impressive helical staircase leads up to a minstrel gallery from the double-height entrance hall. Off the hallway is the kitchen/diner to one side, and the separate living room on the other. There is also a fourth bedroom on the ground floor and a utility room. Upstairs are three bedrooms, including the master suite, which opens onto a private balcony. A separate office with its own entrance is located directly above the garage.

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HALLWAY
A steel framing company designed and installed the impressive helical staircase, which is anchored to a foundation pad and bolted to a steel joist that spans the house top and bottom. The white oak treads were made on site by a joiner.

of house could be designed to suit its setting in a site that was, after all, within the development boundary.

For a reality check, I spoke with a few planning consultants. The best of them was Gavin Boby of planning-permissions.co.uk. He thought I had a good case against the council's decision and an appeal was submitted in May 2008. This carefully addressed all the planning issues raised by the council and accordingly the planning inspector dismissed their grounds for refusal.

This on its own was great news, but the inspector went on to reject my appeal on grounds of flooding, despite the fact the council had not refused the application for this reason, and as the site was outside of the one-in-100-year flood zone the EA had not objected either. It was all very confusing. I subsequently discovered that during the course of my appeal, the EA had published a draft one-in-1,000-year flood risk map and this was brought to the attention of the planning inspector. A small part of my development site was within this revised flood zone and as this had not been taken into account in my flood risk assessment, the appeal was rejected.

I remained undeterred. As a selfbuilder you need to have tenacity. I worked my way through Planning Policy Statement 25 that deals with flood risk, and reapplied for outline planning permission, this time submitting a flood risk assessment taking into account the one-in-1,000-year flood map. Although only a small part of the site was within this flood zone, and it was shown that the risk could be entirely mitigated by design, my application was refused on grounds of flooding. The refusal seemed particularly unfair as the council had permitted a number of other local developments at higher flood risk, so I appealed for a second time, again with Gavin's help, and, in August 2010, finally succeeded.

It had taken five years just to get outline planning permission. The experience had been bruising and expensive and there was still the reserved matters planning application to go. During the time that passed I had read as many self-build resources as I could, and



attended several shows. I now knew that I wanted a house of its time – light and warm, with as many environmentally friendly features as possible, and with large windows to make the most of the beautiful countryside views.

I became familiar with the fabric-first approach, which focuses on highly insulated walls, floors and ceilings and I was looking for a construction system where I could be as hands-on as possible. I decided on insulated concrete forms (ICF) and was impressed with Nudura, which has a brilliant internal webbing system, making the attachment of internal plasterboard and external cladding a cinch.

I was interested, too, in a green sedum roof, in part for its environmental and storm water attenuation credentials, but also to help the house blend into its setting and soften the neighbours' view of it. An ICF structure would be more than strong enough to support a green roof.







I also realised that I needed a great architect with a track record of designing modern buildings on contentious sites. I especially wanted to avoid yet another appeal at the reserved matters planning stage and, importantly, I wanted to make the very best use of our site that had taken so much time and trouble to secure.

The old shipyard site in nearby West Bay had been successfully developed into attractive harbourside apartments with curved roofs that took cues from the sea, the cliffs at West Bay and the countryside beyond. Part of this development featured as the police station in the ITV series Broadchurch. The shipyard site had many opponents, causing a lengthy journey through planning, yet the architects, Western Design Architects, had managed to devise a scheme that won favour with the planners.

I decided to approach them, and Clare and I met architects Matthew Witt and Nepheli Theophanidis not long after gaining outline planning permission. The pair carefully listened to our brief and produced several incredible schemes that used the Nudura ICF system with a curved roof which aped the development in West Bay. The scheme we chose included a roof that has a large overhang for solar shading and is topped with sedum plants, with room for a large photovoltaic array. The overall design was for a 26m-long, 340 sqm building with a cantilever to maximise the width of the first floor.

We wanted the internal space to be divided into individual rooms rather than an open-plan arrangement. Matt and Nepheli carefully thought out the room proportions, circulation space and sight lines and added particular value to the office space above the integral garage. This has a separate entrance and staircase with its own bathroom and has multi-functional use as a studio or guest accommodation. Other features included a double-height hallway with gallery landing, helical staircase and three balconies.

This time round, we learned from experience and

In detail

PROJECT

Planning Consultant G Boby: planning-permissions.co.uk
Architects Western Design Architects: westerndesignarchitects.com
Groundworks Piling and Foundations Ltd, Wimborne Dorset: pilingfoundations.co.uk
Plant hire Evans, Bridport: evans-plant-hire.co.uk
Gates and fencing Blamphayne Sawmill: blamphaynesawmills.co.uk
Paving and gravel JC Phillips Bridport: jcphillipsandsonltd.co.uk
Insurance Build-Zone: build-zone.com

STRUCTURE

ICF Nudura ICF The Fell Partnership Yelverton, Devon: thefellpartnership.co.uk
Builders' merchants Jewson, Bridport: 01308 423651
Builders Kevin Mear: 07929 273982; Techno: 07342 981808
Sedum roof Edengro, Different Aspects: 01432 341582
Electrician Chris Dolman: 07810 124248
Plumber Dave Tewson: tewsonplumbing andheating.co.uk
Carpenter Dan Bullen: danbullen77@hotmail.com
Staircase spraying Sprayfine Ltd: sprayfine.co.uk
Fire sprinkler system Dorset Fire Sprinkler Systems, Poole: firesprinklersdorset.co.uk

FIXTURES AND FITTINGS

PV panels Evergreen, Lyme Regis: evergreensw.co.uk
MVHR Systemair: systemair.co.uk
Windows and doors Velfac: velfac.co.uk
Balcony glass, splashbacks and mirrors: All Glass & Glazing, Crewkerne: allglass-glazing.co.uk
Front door RK door, Heavers, Bridport: heavers.co.uk
Garage door Hormann: garagedoorsonline.co.uk
Office staircase TK Stairs: tkstairs.com
Tiles brandedtiles.co.uk
Oak flooring ukflooringdirect.co.uk
Bathroom fittings Ocean Bathrooms, Bridport: oceanbathrooms.com
Internal doors Todd Doors, Bournemouth: todd-doors.co.uk
Ground source heat pump Alto Energy: altoenergy.co.uk

KITCHEN
A specialist German manufacturer supplied the kitchen. All Glass & Glazing of Crewkerne supplied the pastel violet kitchen and utility room splashbacks. Money was set aside for some Miele appliances, including an induction hob.

LIVING AREA
The interior is divided up into rooms rather than being open plan. The living room has a log-burner to supplement the underfloor heating. European oak flooring has been fitted throughout.



















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STAIRS
The metal channelled strings of the staircase are sprayed anthracite grey to match the external doors and window frames. Each tread is lit by an LED strip light which makes the hall look dramatic at night.

discussed the plans with the neighbours. The architects had pushed the envelope on the design, expecting that the planners would impose some concessions. However, other than a few changes to the windows, the design sailed through the reserved matters planning process and by the summer of 2012, we were ready to start construction.

Around this time, the broadcasting station where I was working was earmarked for closure and I was offered redundancy, which gave me the opportunity to be as fully hands-on in my self build as I wanted to be. Clare is a family solicitor and was starting work in legal publishing in London. In the early stages of the build, we bought an apartment there as she needed to be in London during the week. This took out a sizable chunk of our build budget. We also decided not to sell our existing house. It is very near the development site and as we had primary school-aged children, we didn't really want to move into a caravan.

These decisions impacted the build budget significantly. We had £450k in savings and I didn't want to compromise on the design or quality of finish, so my intentions of doing as much of the work as possible became a necessity. I project managed the construction and became a hands-on builder. Fortunately, Western Design Architects produced excellently detailed building drawings and throughout the whole process I only had to ask a few questions for clarity.

As I was my own main contractor and responsible for sourcing all the materials, I established trade accounts with a number of builders' merchants and online providers. The nearby branch of Jewson was particularly helpful, with friendly, knowledgeable and efficient staff.

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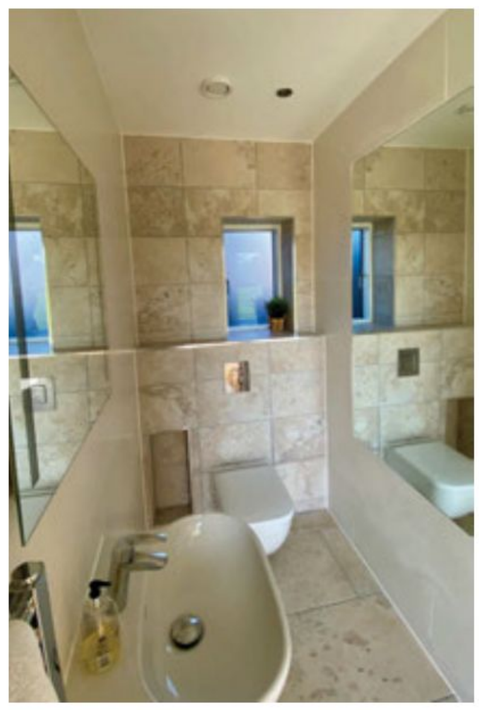
Prepared for print 21/01/19





BATHROOM/ BEDROOMS
The main bedroom has its own balcony from which to enjoy the countryside views. The bathroom fittings were supplied by Ocean Bathrooms of Bridport and, with a few exceptions, all the white goods are Duravit and the taps, shower/ bath valves and shower heads are Grohe. Edimax Instone bone tiles, which were fitted in the kitchen, have also been laid on the bathroom floors and some of the walls.





Following a geotechnical appraisal, the foundations were piled and work began on the beam and block floor in September 2012. I had known Kevin Mear, my builder, for a while and he could turn his hand to almost anything. The Fell Partnership in Devon supplied the ICF blocks and with their help, the ICF structure was soon in place.

A Somerset steel framing company designed and installed the steel staircase, which is anchored to a foundation pad in the hallway and bolted to a steel joist that spans the house. By the time the steel frame roof structure was ready for installation, winter had set in and heavy rains turned the already churned-up ground around the site into a quagmire. The steel framers decided to assemble the whole roof structure on the field and lift it in one go onto the ICF walls, using a hiab crane.

From my previous experience in the broadcasting industry, I knew about the construction of steel lattice frame towers. I suggested using a telehandler, given the ground conditions. However, the steel framers pressed on with their plan. The hiab crane failed to lift the roof and then got stuck in the muddy ruts it had created. The hiab needed to be professionally rescued. Shortly afterwards, I parted company with the steel framers and Kevin and I installed the steel-frame roof ourselves, with a telehandler.

The roof was sealed with a seamless waterproof membrane, a clever drainage layer and topped with rolls of sedum matting. We were greatly assisted by some excellent advice from the sedum matting supplier, Edengro in Herefordshire. The plants soon established and the roof has become a habitat for a range of insects, and is alive with colourful flowers in springtime. Green roofs can get a bad press, but they are not too complex to build and help create a warm, quiet environment inside the house, also reducing a building's impact on its surroundings. It is important that the structure is designed for the weight of the roof, and be aware that the insurance industry has a cautious approach to green roofs, so you need to search for a reasonable premium.

Velfac supplied the windows and these included three large sliders, the wall of glazing in the double-height hallway and some angle-head windows which are a nice architectural feature. Kevin and I installed the windows with occasional help for the larger panes and they all fitted their apertures perfectly.

The external western red cedar cladding was sourced from local forests and cut into random-length feathered boarding at a Bridport sawmill. Although not a specific condition, the planners were keen for local materials to be used for the cladding and this turned out to be reasonably cost effective. Rendered sections of the exterior are coated with white Knauf Conni S, a silicone-based two-coat system, applied directly to the ICF walls.

Kevin saw the project through until the building was weathertight and then moved on to another site. I carried on by myself for a number of months, installing the ground-floor insulation and underfloor heating, the upstairs stud walling, first-fix plumbing and air ducting. I was the wireman for the electrician and only brought in trades for testing and inspection and where the work was specialised or complex. It meant I could work at my own pace and save money. I also had a great sense of achievement in building so much of the house myself. I could tailor the construction as I went along – for

> “
> WE COULD EASILY HAVE EMPLOYED AN ARMY OF BUILDERS TO COMPLETE A NEW BUILD IN A QUARTER OF THE TIME, BUT IT WOULD NOT HAVE BEEN THE SAME HOUSE WITH ALL ITS UNIQUE FEATURES OR BEEN AS MUCH FUN!

example, designing an ambitious lighting scheme with more than 100 internal and 30 external spotlights and LED strip-light coving in many rooms. The downside was the time it took. Installing the plasterboard was particularly time consuming and I had help with this from local builders. The internal ceilings are high at 3.2m on the first floor and required two staggered layers of specialist board. One of the builders, Techno, went on to complete the external block-paved drive, patio, fencing, landscaping and worked with me on much of the second fix. Working together and with Techno's experience and expertise, we managed to achieve a high-quality finish.

In keeping with my wish to make the house as sustainable as possible we installed a ground source heat pump which was supplied and commissioned by Alto Energy. This required digging three trenches in the field in front of the house during the early stages of the construction and installing a ground loop collector in each. The pump was fitted by a plumber during the second fix and this produces domestic hot water and heating for the underfloor circuits and first-floor radiators which are made of stainless steel and oversized to run effectively, given the lower temperature output of heat pumps. The system works really well and is cost effective, especially when used with the electricity generated by the PV panels.

I managed to keep on track with my budget throughout. With £450k, we could easily have employed an army of builders to complete a new build in a quarter of the time, but it would not have been the same house with all its unique features, or been as much fun!







GREEN ROOF
The curved roof is covered in plants which helps the house to blend in with its surroundings and provides a natural habitat for a range of insects. Photovoltaic panels generate sustainable electricity.



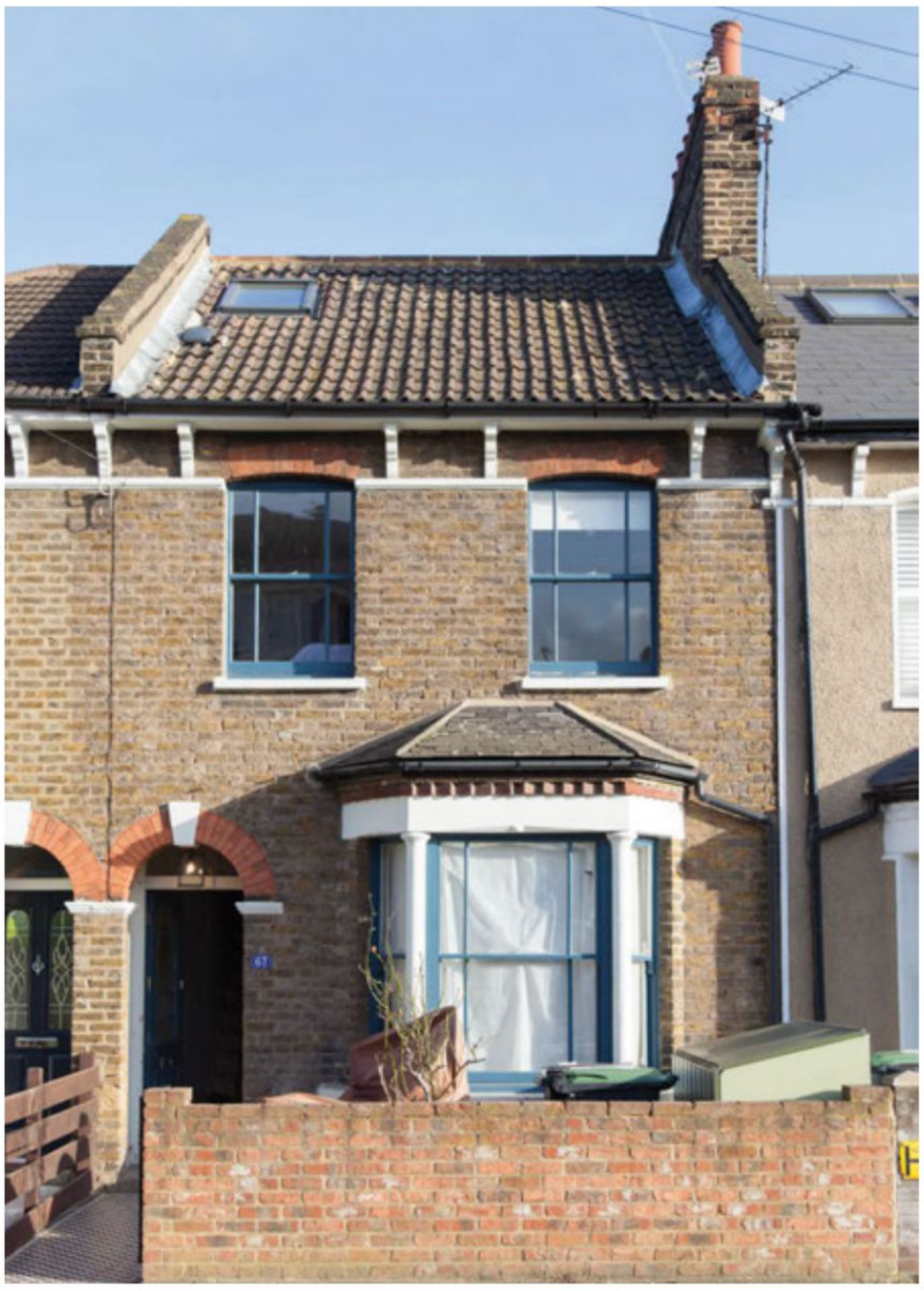




My top tips

- **Always consult the neighbours** of any plot you wish to develop before submitting a planning application. If you face objection, focus on the process.
- **Address all the planning issues and don't be afraid to go to appeal.** If this is necessary, consult a planning professional first.
- **Spend money on an architect.** It may seem expensive at the time, but only amounts to a small percentage of your project costs. A good architect will add value to your project and you'll learn what a sight line is!
- **Accept that any self build is a complex project** and will run into problems from time to time. Delays and cost overruns are inevitable and a sprint finish may turn into a marathon. Embrace the process and you'll realise that slowing down can avoid expensive mistakes.
- **Look into different building techniques** beyond the standard brick and block and timber-frame methods. I really enjoyed using the ICF system. It has created a high thermal mass, achieving a quiet and warm house – and novices can build with it.
- **Consider installing a fire sprinkler system.** The cost is only one to two per cent of your budget and in time may become a requirement for all new homes.
- **Embrace as many eco-friendly design features as possible.** A good architect will appropriately design for solar gain and cross airflow cooling. Heat pumps use no fossil fuels if combined with a PV system and a renewable electricity supply.
- **Mechanical heat recovery ventilation** is an absolute must in highly insulated airtight buildings.
- **I spent a lot of time on lighting schemes, both inside and out.** There is no fancy computer-controlled lighting system, just ordinary light switches.





A real corker

Environmentally friendly cork was chosen to clad this unusual extension to a Victorian terraced house.

Story: **Debbie Jeffery** Photography: **Megan Taylor/Claire Pepper**

EXTERIOR Building a new cork-clad ground-floor extension to the rear and side, together with a loft conversion, has transformed the terraced house.



When it comes to homes, cork has never really been at the forefront of cutting-edge design. More usually associated with dated floor tiles or functional pinboards, as a building material it seems to have little merit.

But when Nimtim Architects was invited to come up with a design for Hat and Dan Barber and their two daughters, which would expand and reinvent their cramped two-bedroom Victorian terraced house in Lewisham, south-east London, the practice felt that cork could provide the answer to a number of challenges.

"We bought the house in 2013, when it was marketed as 'in need of modernisation'," explains Hat, the director of a picture agency. "There was a small and cluttered rear kitchen, just two bedrooms, and an ugly lean-to at the rear. With two growing children, we definitely needed more space."

The garden was accessed by a side door and there were internal issues due to the sloping nature of the site. The separate dining room was on a different level to the kitchen, which was too small to even contain the family's fridge/freezer.

Hat and Dan had originally discovered Nimtim Architects through the NLA Small Projects Award and knew from seeing their projects that they could do interesting things on a tight budget, later meeting with them at the house to discuss ideas.

"Our budget was tight, but we told Nimtim that ideally we wanted an open-plan kitchen/diner/family room overlooking the garden, as well as a loft conversion," says Hat. "We knew it was a big ask, but they delivered far more than we could have hoped for."

Nimtim's philosophy is to make projects that are not only a reflection of the people who commission and use them, but also of those who design and build them, inviting clients, builders and fabricators to collaborate in order to create spaces that resonate deeply with everyone involved.

The family was keen to contribute to the design of the rear extension and loft conversion, working collaboratively with their architects. Nimi Attanayake of Nimtim says: "Our work has been largely focused on delivering new and reimagined homes for residential clients, and we love the

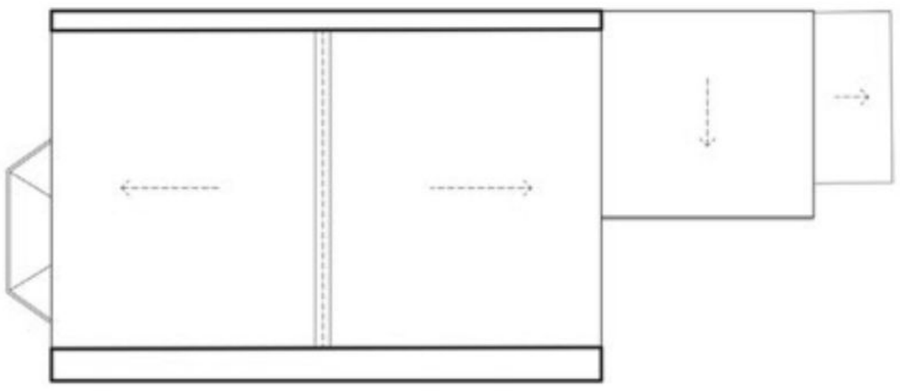
> "WE'RE UTTERLY IN LOVE WITH THE HOUSE NOW AND COULD NOT HAVE IMAGINED LIVING ANYWHERE SO AWESOME.

EXTENSION & LOFT CONVERSION



In brief

PROJECT Extension and loft conversion
LOCATION London
COST £353,000 in 2013
SPENT £144,000
WORTH £700,000



Loft (before)



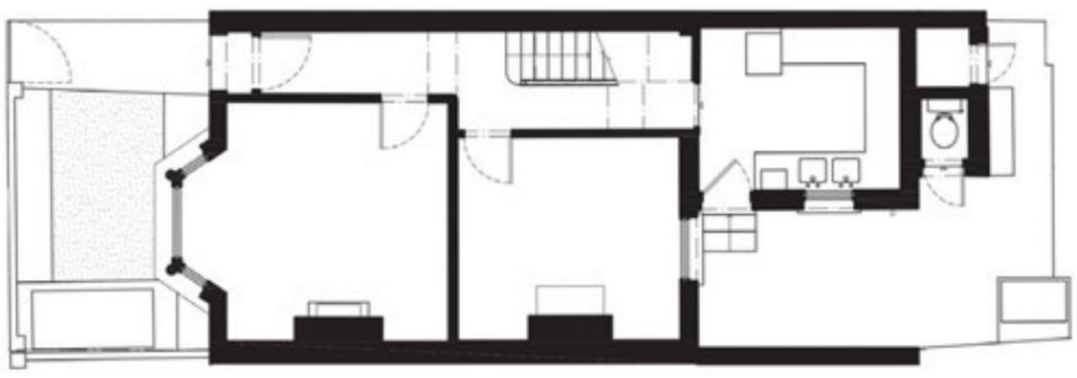
Loft



First floor (before)



First floor



Ground floor (before)



Ground floor

The floorplan

The 113 sqm house has been extended upwards with a new loft conversion containing the main bedroom and en suite. Two bedrooms and a bathroom are located on the first floor. The ground floor consists of a separate sitting room and the new open-plan kitchen/diner/family room extension. In total, 44 per cent of new living space has been added.

challenge and opportunities this offers. We ask a lot of questions and take time to listen, testing various scenarios and ensuring everyone is heard. By inviting clients to feel ownership of these ideas, they become bolder and more ambitious in terms of what the project can be."

The new extension takes a simple pitched-roof form, with a large pivot door framing an uninterrupted view of the garden beyond. A slot window aligns with the glazed roof light over the new side extension to bring in daylight and views of the sky.

The simple roof rationalises a more complex array of ceiling heights and boxed structures that deal with existing elements internally, while reflecting the geometry of the original house externally.

"We received planning approval for the extension in the summer of 2017, and the loft conversion was acceptable under Permitted Development rights," Hat recalls. The family moved in with Hat's parents at the start of the project, although they later returned to the house before work was completed.

Nimtim organised a tender process with several builders before Hat and Dan chose building company TW Space Conversion, who had worked with the architect on several previous projects.

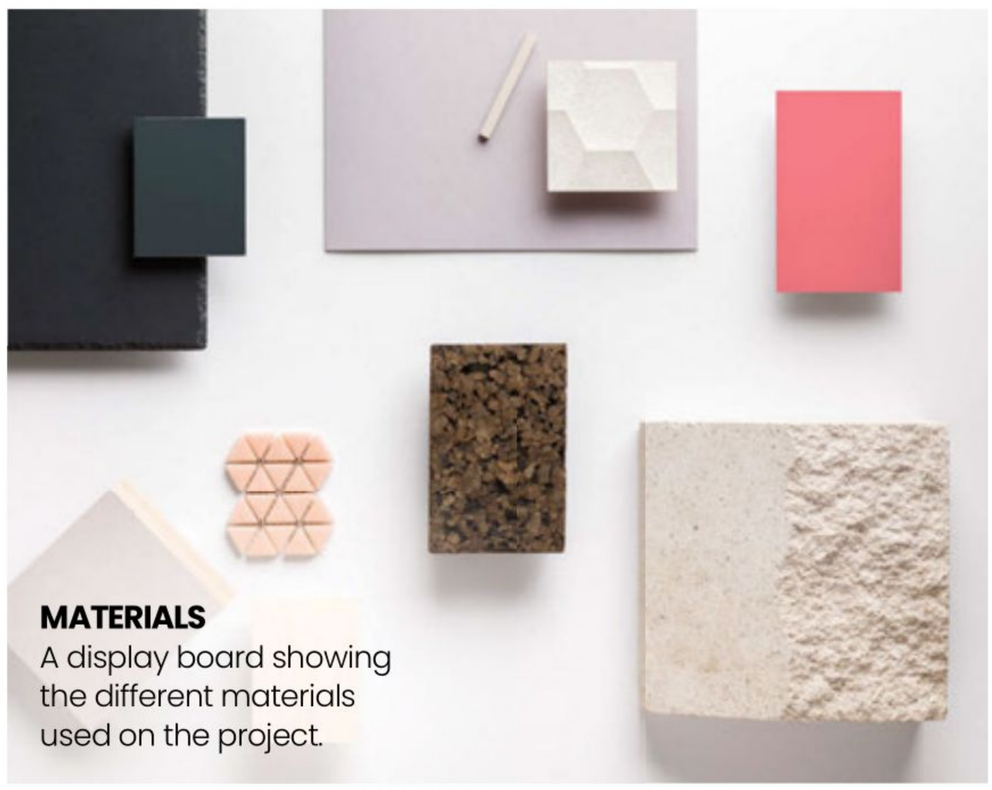
"When the tenders came in over budget, we worked with Nimtim and our chosen builder to come up with ways to reduce costs without compromising on the quality," says Hat. "We offered to source some of the materials and fittings ourselves, as well as helping out with decorating, to save money."

The new loft conversion is of timber construction, with tile-clad walls and a flat roof over the full-width dormer, while the ground-floor extension is constructed from supporting steelwork and masonry blockwork walls, with slate tiles cladding the timber pitched roof over the ground floor to both the side and rear.

The steel construction for the ground-floor extension was put in place first, after which the loft and major first-floor works were completed to accommodate the family living in the house during the latter stages of the build, while work continued on the ground floor.

Working on a mid-terrace house, with no rear access to the garden, meant that all materials and equipment needed to be taken in via the front door and through the property to the rear.

Cork was chosen as an unusual cladding material both internally and externally, where it will weather to a silver-grey over time, serving as a rain screen and providing thermal insulation. The cork achieves the required U-values without the need for any additional expanded foam insulation. It absorbs noise internally,



MATERIALS
A display board showing the different materials used on the project.

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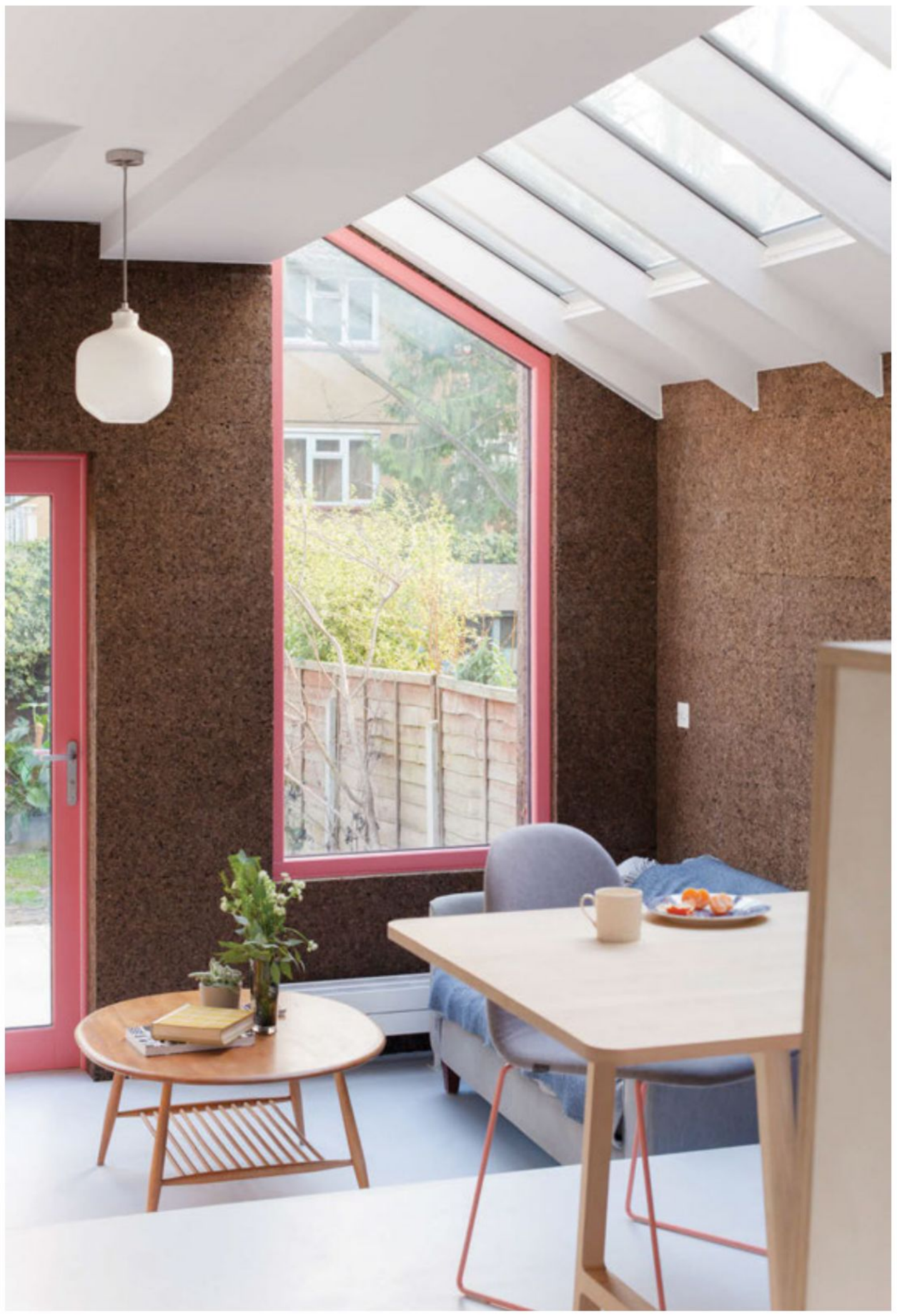
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"We'd never used cork before, but felt it complemented the existing London stock brickwork," explains Nimi. "It creates a healthy environment inside the house and was really easy for the builder to work with, so we've since used cork on other projects as a floor finish and feature wall."

The ground level at the front of the house is one metre higher than the rear, and a stepped internal layout was created in order to connect the extension to the lower garden. This clearly defines the kitchen, dining, and informal seating area within a larger family space through changes in floor level.

"Working with the existing proportions and levels of the site and house proved to be both a challenge and an opportunity, as the kitchen and dining room previously had little connection to the garden level or views," Hat explains. "Small rooms were badly linked by steps, because the garden was so much lower than the front pavement."

In detail

PROJECT

Architects Nimtim Architects: nimtim.co.uk
Builder TW Space Conversion: spaceconversion.uk
Structural engineer SD Structures: sd-structures.com

STRUCTURE

Roof light Patent Glazing: patent-glazing.com
Doors and windows AJ & D Chapelhow: ajdchapelhow.co.uk
Cork Ty-Mawr Lime Ltd: lime.org.uk
Slates Marley: marley.co.uk

FIXTURES AND FITTINGS

Kitchen units Howdens: howdens.com
Ply kitchen door stain Auro: auropaint.co.uk
Formica worktops Baldwin Plastic Laminates: baldwin-plas-lam.co.uk
Kitchen tiles Claybrook Studio: claybrookstudio.co.uk
Resin floor Horizon Resin Flooring: horizonresinflooring.co.uk
Bathroom tiles Domus Tiles: domusgroup.com
Marmoleum Forbo: forbo.com
Bette bath CP Hart: cphart.co.uk
Sinks Lusso Stone: lussostone.com
Shower Crosswater: crosswater.co.uk
Tap Sanctuary Bathrooms: sanctuarybathrooms.co.uk
Radiators Bisque Radiators: bisque.co.uk
Pink door paint RAL 3014



LIVING AREA
The living spaces are set on different levels. A roof light, pivoting pink door, and fixed window draw in natural light.



HAT'S TOP TIP...

"Definitely move out if you can – the reduction in stress is well worth it. Most importantly, find an architect (and builders) that you like and can communicate with. Nimtim listened to us and understood what we required from the building."



> "OUR GIRLS REFERRED TO IT AS THEIR 'NEW HOUSE', AND WE'VE BEEN THRILLED TO ENTERTAIN IN THE KITCHEN SPACE.

KITCHEN
A built-in dining bench connects the kitchen and living area.

The house, including the new master bedroom and en suite at loft level and the renovated first floor, is defined by bold colours and patterns, reflecting the playfulness of both the family and their design team.

Internally, a pale grey resin forms a continuous finish, with crisp edges, over both horizontal and vertical surfaces. Pink windows provide a flash of colour against the cork, and the warm hues are carried internally to the kitchen splashback and first-floor family bathroom. The pink is referenced throughout the house in different shades and patterns, including the new loft level.

"We had always imagined quite a bold colour for the windows and doors, but only once all the materials started falling into place on site did we decide on pink," says Hat. "It was really useful being able to collect small samples of the materials to see how everything would work together."

The kitchen was made using standard carcasses, with stained plywood for the bespoke doors, and a pale pink Formica worktop, which folds down to form a bespoke bench seat for the lower level dining space.

Hat and Dan picked pink mosaic tiles for the splashback from Claybrook, with bathroom tiles sourced from Domus, and the same light pink Formica worktop was teamed with a lilac Marmoleum (rubber) floor in the bathroom.

The eight-month project was completed in the winter of 2018, came in under budget, and was shortlisted for the AJ Small Projects Award 2019. "Our girls referred to it as their 'new house', and we've been thrilled to entertain in the kitchen space, with the cork absorbing any additional noise and creating an intimate feel in the large open-plan layout," says Hat.

"We are so happy that the house reflects our personalities, which is a real testament to the amazing, thoughtful and unique design which Nimtim produced. We're utterly in love with the house now and could not have imagined living anywhere so awesome."

Final word

What was the high point of the project?
There were so many: seeing the extension downstairs form and the space becoming real; when the windows went in; and and seeing that pink against the cork!

...and the low point?
We had to redraw plans early on in the build and reduce the footprint when a surprise sewer was discovered, but in the end I think the shape and size are just right.

Your best buy?
We researched online for expensive items and found both CP Hart and Bisque Radiators have great clearance departments, so we could get luxury items we couldn't otherwise afford. The Domus tiles in the main bathrooms make me smile every time I see them, and people always comment on them.



Your biggest extravagance?
The resin floor was the biggest single expense (apart from the steels) but was absolutely worth it to pull the levels together and withstand the wear of a busy family home.

In brief

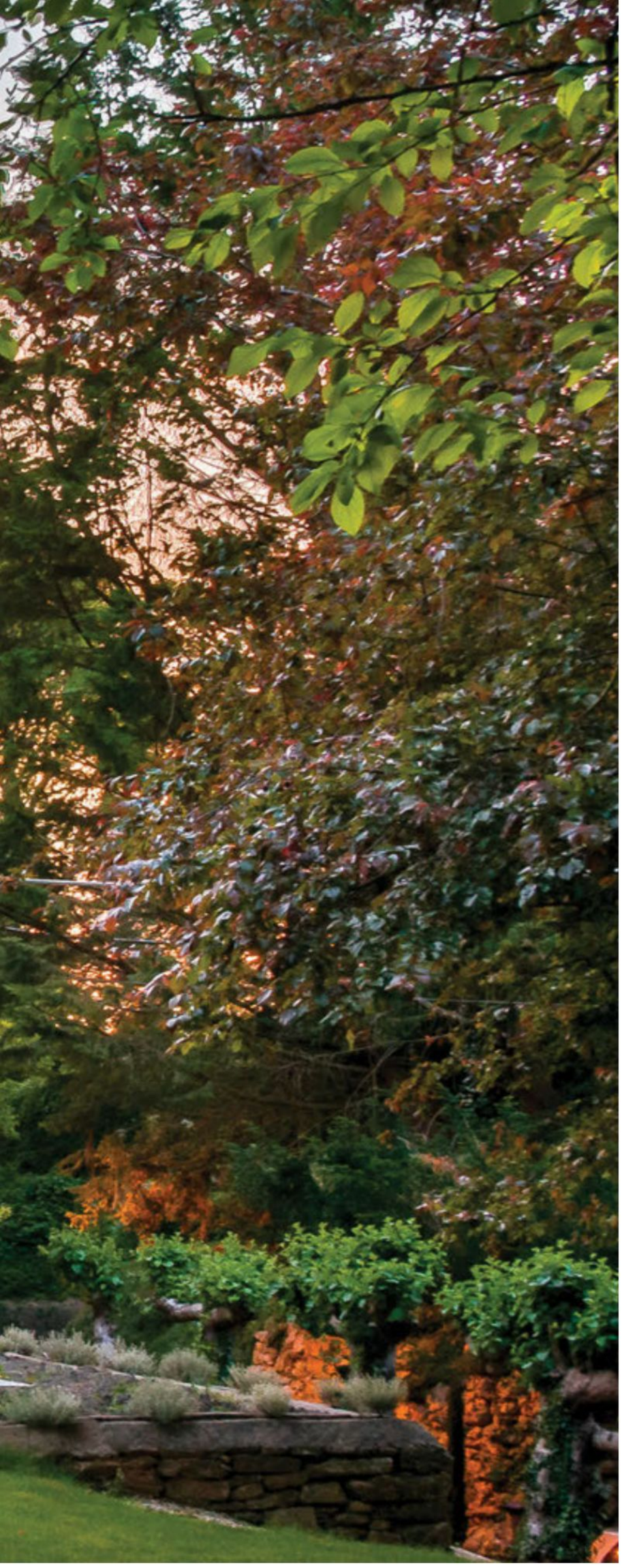
PROJECT New build
LOCATION Wiltshire
COST £250,000
SPENT £360,000
WORTH £850,000

The Log House is currently on the market with Savills, Bath: savills.com



EXTERIOR The Log House is set between Bradford-on-Avon and the hamlet of Turleigh, overlooking the Avon Valley.











Out of the **woods**

Standing in woodland and resembling a pretty alpine chalet, this timber-framed home is clad in dramatic black larch.

Story: **Debbie Jeffery** Photography: **Savills**

"For years I'd wanted to buy this plot, and we were incredibly lucky that the timing was just right when it finally came up for sale," says Michelle Sames. "It's in a sought-after village, in a part of Bath we know really well, and although the 1950s bungalow wasn't particularly inspiring, its location was outstanding. For the same price, you could only buy a small apartment in town."

Michelle and her husband, Barry, are familiar with period renovation projects and have owned several listed buildings in the Bath area, but this was their first new build – although the house was never going to be for them.

"We bought the plot and existing chalet bungalow for our daughter, Emily, and her husband, Fletch, just before they married in 2018, and then they paid for the building work, so it was a joint investment," explains Michelle, who has two other adult children. "The setting is so idyllic, nestled away in trees in a little hamlet, and at first we planned to remodel the bungalow."

Michelle is well adept at visualising spaces and chose not to work with an architect on the design – gaining planning permission for the alterations with help from a planning consultant. Then work began, revealing the poor quality of the building's structure and foundations, causing her to immediately halt the project.

"We thought we'd bought a fairly substantial classic 1950s bungalow, but what was uncovered made us

NEW BUILD









rethink," she explains. "That level of investment was just too much of a risk, so instead we lodged a fresh planning application – this time for a complete new build. Fortunately, making the decision so early in the project meant that the added expense wasn't too great."

The existing design for the converted bungalow has remained the same, standing within the original footprint, but instead of recreating the series of cramped rooms, Michelle and Emily chose to open up the spaces. "There were already three bedrooms in the old bungalow, but everything was squeezed into the ground floor," Michelle continues.

Building upwards to create a one-and-a-half-storey house, and adding two new bedrooms and a bathroom into the roof space, freed up the ground floor for a large kitchen/dining/living area to the rear, and the original tiny kitchen and bathroom are now hallways. In addition, a study/snug, utility room, bedroom and generous bathroom are located on the ground floor.

"Nobody who saw the old bungalow can believe how spacious the new house feels. Designing the layout from scratch was actually quite hard, especially as I'm used to working with listed buildings," says Michelle, who once again worked with a planning consultant to tweak the original design.

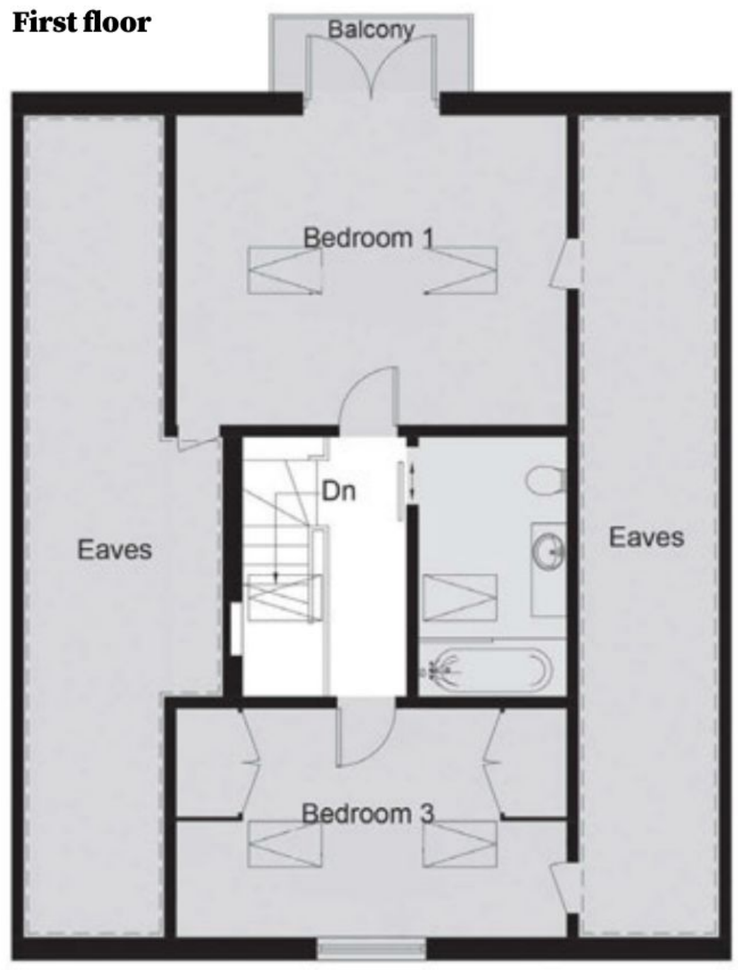
Michelle and Emily are directors of their family business, The Salcombe Trading Company, which specialises in Scandinavian-style furniture and home accessories, and both love the simple appeal of Nordic homes.

"The house definitely resembles an alpine chalet, with its steeply pitched roof, the balcony and black timber cladding," says Michelle. "We've lived in Switzerland, and Scandinavian design has a strong influence in our

> "BUILDING THIS HOUSE HAS BEEN AN AMAZING EXPERIENCE, AND SOMETHING I'D DEFINITELY LOVE TO REPEAT ONE DAY.

THE BUILD
The original intention was to renovate the existing bungalow but a rebuild proved a better option when the poor state of the building was revealed. The footprint remains the same, however. Building two bedrooms into the roof space has freed up space downstairs for a bigger kitchen and living area. The build took just four months to complete.

First floor



Ground floor



The floorplan

The 185-sqm house has an open-plan kitchen/dining/family room on the ground floor, together with a study area in the hallway, one double bedroom, a study/snug, utility/WC and family bathroom. On the first floor, the spacious master bedroom has a balcony and there's a further double bedroom and bathroom.



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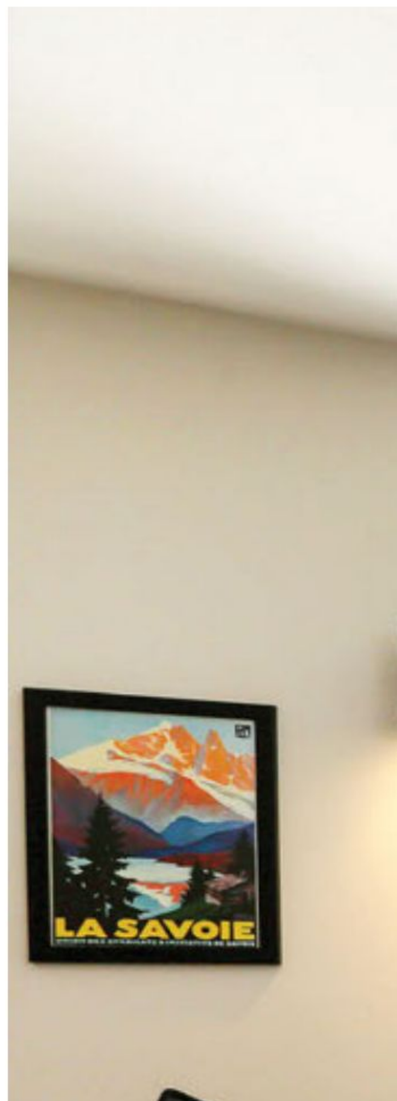
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business, so building a timber chalet with an English twist made sense. We didn't want to overdo the ski chalet look, though – our aim was for a more subtle effect."

Gaining planning consent for a replacement dwelling delayed progress by eight weeks but proved surprisingly straightforward, despite the plot standing in a Conservation Area.

Set into the hillside within a secluded walled garden, the site is surrounded by mature trees, creating a woodland feel. "None of the neighbours objected – in fact, they were really supportive," says Michelle, who acted as project manager for the build.

"We had no new-build experience, and certainly no knowledge of timber framing, but chose this method for its speed," she continues. "I've never known anything like it – the build was so swift that we hardly had time to take photographs before the house was up."

Michelle wanted to use local suppliers and products wherever possible and worked with groundworkers, before a timber-frame company, Seviour Timber Frames, took the project to completion. Seviour's owner, Craig Seviour, is an experienced timber-frame manufacturer, carpenter/ joiner and kitchen fitter, who proved invaluable throughout the build – making the bespoke staircase and even some smaller items, such as a chopping board from an oak worktop offcut.

"The only unknown was the groundworks, because after that we knew exactly what to expect, which is

In detail

PROJECT

Planning consultant
LPC Trull Ltd: lpc.com
Structural engineer
Simply Self Build: simplyselfbuild.co.uk
Groundworks
Dig-It: dig-it.co.uk

STRUCTURE

Timber frame and build, handmade doors, windows, staircase, kitchen fitting etc
Seviour Timber Frames. seviour-timber-frames.business.site
Oak shakes Coyle Timber: coyletimber.com
Roof lights Velux: velux.co.uk

FIXTURES AND FITTINGS

Acova radiators
Screwfix: screwfix.com

Furniture, accessories
The Salcombe Trading Company: salcombetrading.co.uk
Kitchen, flooring, parquet
Magnet: magnet.co.uk
Limestone, tiles, fireplace slate
Mandarin Stone: mandarinstone.com
Black taps Crosswater: crosswater.co.uk
Bath, sanitaryware
Victoria Plum: victoriaplum.com
Oak worktops
Worktop Express: worktop-express.co.uk
Solar panels
Beazer Electrical: beazerelectrical.co.uk
Wood-burner
Bath Woodburners Ltd: bathwoodburners.co.uk







INTERIOR
The kitchen/dining/living area is an open-plan space with double doors opening out onto the terrace. Dark blue cabinets have been teamed with oak worktops to one end of the room. Split-faced slate creates a dramatic corner backdrop for the wood-burning stove in the living area.

very different to working on an older building," says Michelle. "Once you sign off on your timber-frame design there's really no going back, which meant that everything needed to be decided early on. Then, for 12 weeks while the building was fabricated, I had time to concentrate on sourcing interior fittings with Emily."

The highly insulated shell of the house was erected on block-and-beam foundations, with the timber-frame company also installing bespoke hardwood doors and casement windows, and cladding the exterior in locally grown black-stained larch weatherboarding above a painted render plinth. One side of the slated roof also serves as a mount for an array of solar thermal panels.

"It's a woodland setting and we didn't think it would receive enough sun to justify solar panels, but we were surprised to find that it's actually a really light and sunny spot, which made installing them worthwhile," says Michelle. "Emily and Fletch have been really pleased with the low running costs."

Stone found on site was used to extend the existing garden wall, with a gate positioned opposite the entrance door, enabling views right through the property. "It's such a symmetrical building, it wouldn't have been possible to make changes without spoiling

> "WE'VE LIVED IN SWITZERLAND, AND SCANDINAVIAN DESIGN HAS A STRONG INFLUENCE IN OUR BUSINESS, SO BUILDING A TIMBER CHALET WITH AN ENGLISH TWIST MADE SENSE.







MICHELLE'S TOP TIP...

"Communicate every day with people on site so that they know who else will be working alongside them and can plan not to get in each other's way."



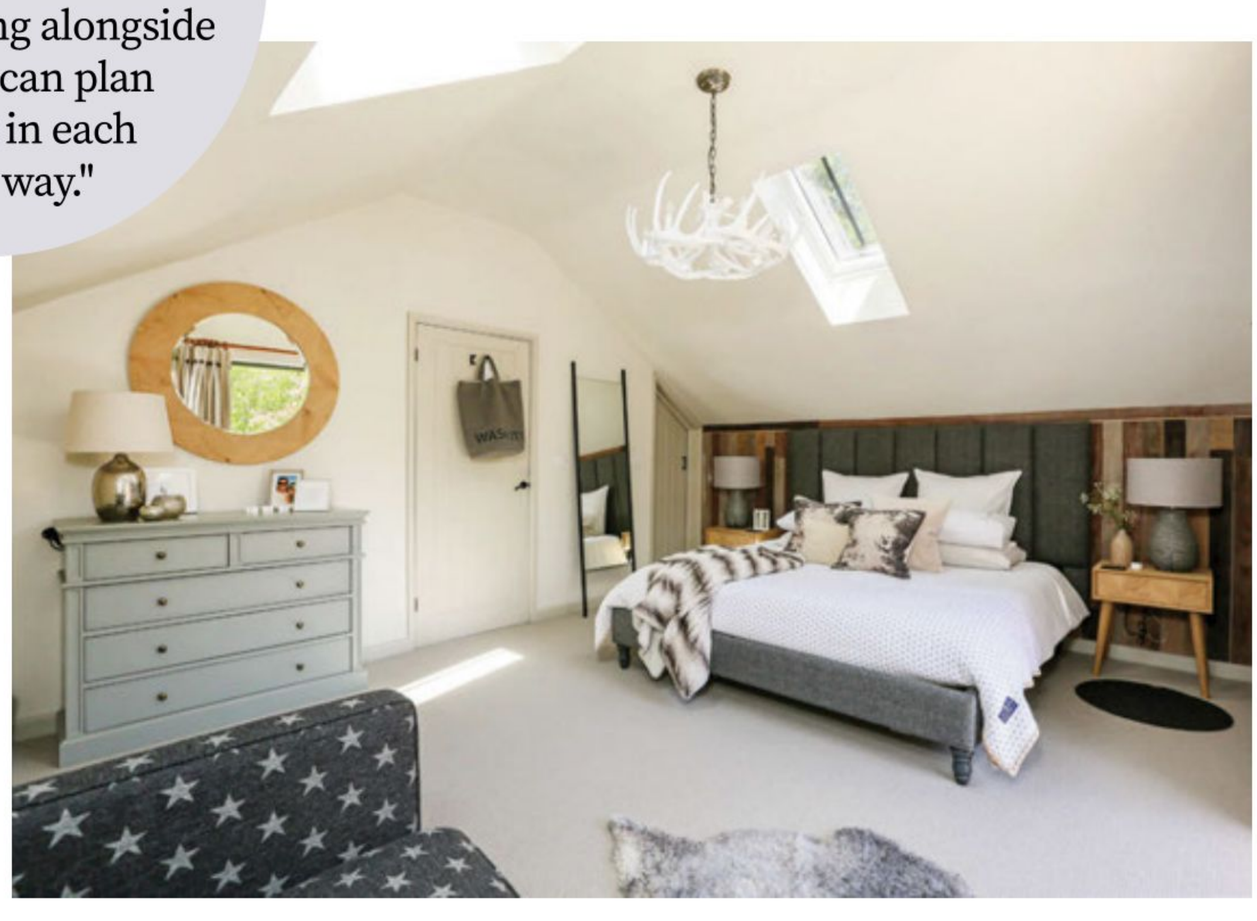
GARDEN
The garden wraps around all sides of the property with the terrace accessed via doors from the main living area.

HALLWAY
The spacious hallway has herringbone flooring and a useful study area under the stairs.



MAIN BEDROOM
The impressive main bedroom has a private oak balcony overlooking the rear garden. Reclaimed timber wall panelling, Scandinavian-inspired furnishings and accessories all add to the cosy alpine cabin feel.









> THE SETTING IS SO IDYLLIC, NESTLED AWAY IN TREES IN A LITTLE HAMLET.

the balance and proportions," explains Michelle, who helped out with the demolition and decorating.

The contrasting oak balcony and entrance porch were handcrafted by Seviour Timber Frames, with oak shakes chosen for the porch roof. "It's such a dark-coloured house that we wanted something which would show up at night as a guide to the entrance," says Michelle. "It's completely invisible in the dark, and when the lights are on the windows look like eyes."

Internally, pale painted dry-lined walls serve as a neutral backdrop to fixtures and furnishings, with Emily choosing a navy-blue kitchen for the open-plan space. "We wrongly expected the building to be dark, and went for lots of textures, warm colours and cosy sheepskins," says Michelle. "We have a bit of an obsession with herringbone, so it appears subtly throughout the house, including the hall floor, out on the terrace and in rugs, tables and headboards."

Work started on site in October 2019 and was completed in just four months, although the garden was yet to be landscaped. "Emily and Fletch agreed to delay moving in until the New Year, which took the pressure off," says Michelle, who donated numerous leftover materials and items from other projects, including stone terrace slabs, black taps and flooring.

"They now have a baby, Ruby, and have decided to move on to another project, but building this house has been an amazing experience, and something I'd definitely love to repeat one day."

NEW BUILD



GROUND FLOOR BEDROOM
A third bedroom, on the ground floor, has been designed with an oversized headboard and subtle herringbone theme which is continued throughout the house.





BATHROOM
The vast ground-floor bathroom has both a generous bath and a walk-in shower, with rough-luxe timber wall cladding and stone flagstones laid over underfloor heating.

Final word

What was the high point of the project?
The camaraderie and banter of working together on site every day and the speed of the timber frame going up.

...and the low points?
The weather – it rained throughout the entire build, apart from two weeks when the roof slates went on. We were drenched from morning to night.

Your best buy?
We recycled leftover materials from another project, including floor tiles and taps.

Biggest extravagance?
The wood-burning stove was fairly expensive but makes a lovely feature and is powerful enough to heat the entire house. Any timber offcuts from the build go onto the fire.



In brief

PROJECT Chapel conversion
LOCATION Somerset
COST Purchased with house
SPENT £160,000
VALUE Not applicable as tied to house

'The Burrow' is available for holiday rentals with Plum Guide: plumguide.com

Chapel **retreat**

A former Wesleyan Methodist chapel, built in 1841, now has a new purpose after undergoing a meticulous restoration and conversion.

Story: **Debbie Jeffery** Pictures: **Neil Perry**

When Oliver and Kerry Hugh-Jones bought their Grade II-listed Somerset house in 2014, it came with a surprising bonus. Standing in the grounds of almost half an acre was a small stone chapel, which had been deconsecrated in 1961 and was used as a garage and workshop, with storage above and a WC downstairs.

"As soon as we saw the estate agent's details, we instantly wanted to buy the house and chapel – making an offer even before we'd been for a viewing," says Kerry. "It's surrounded by fields and offers spectacular views of King Alfred's Tower, the Bruton Dovecote and neighbouring dairy farms."

"We bought the house as a holiday home, and it was in need of updating," continues Oliver, 52. "Our plan was to carefully strip everything back to reveal flagstone floors and original features, during which time we actually camped out in the chapel, which had no heating, kitchen or bathroom. Meals were prepared with a microwave, barbecue and fondue set!"

The couple and their sons – Amory, now 13, and Felix, 11 – grew to know the chapel building well, and felt that improvements could be made without significantly altering the exterior of the listed structure. The addition of a full first floor had sliced through





EXTERIOR
The Grade II-listed former chapel building has undergone a complete renovation. The elevated landscaped grounds of around half an acre enjoy views towards King Alfred's Tower and include a productive vegetable plot.







arched windows and created a low ceiling downstairs, in what would previously have been a vaulted space, with garage doors added on the ground floor.

"Once the renovation work to the house was complete, we turned our attention to the chapel as a fun project," says Oliver of the stone building, which was built in 1841. "The previous owners had given us some wonderful old black-and-white photographs showing the tiny congregation standing outside the chapel, dressed in their Sunday best, which spurred us on to return it to a building with a purpose."

Oliver and Kerry worked with a local architect to reconfigure the interior, creating a mezzanine bedroom which has allowed much of the ground floor to return to a double-height space. "Our architect drew up plans and made planning and listed building applications for both the house and chapel," says Kerry,

> "THE BUILDING IS NOW THE PERFECT COMBINATION OF OLD AND NEW.

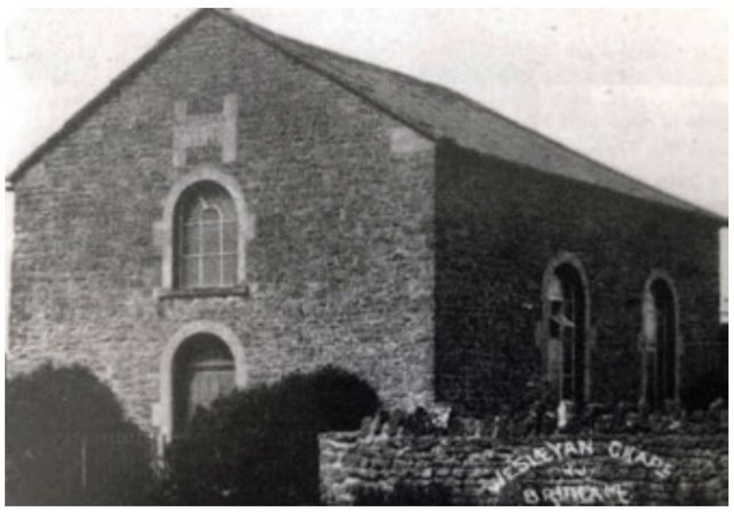
CHAPEL CONVERSION

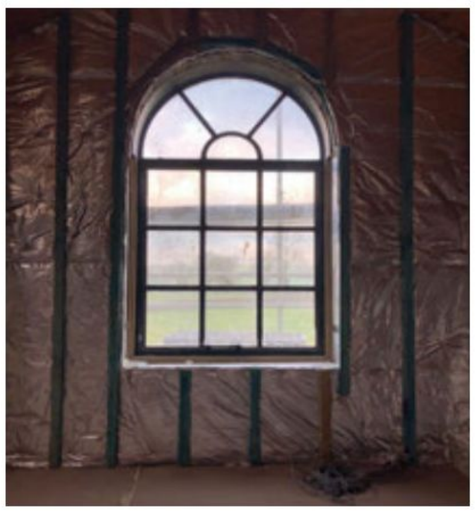






> “WE TURNED OUR ATTENTION TO THE CHAPEL AS A FUN PROJECT.





who works in finance. “The chapel is tied to the house and could never be split as a separate dwelling, so there was no question of ever wanting to sell it on.”

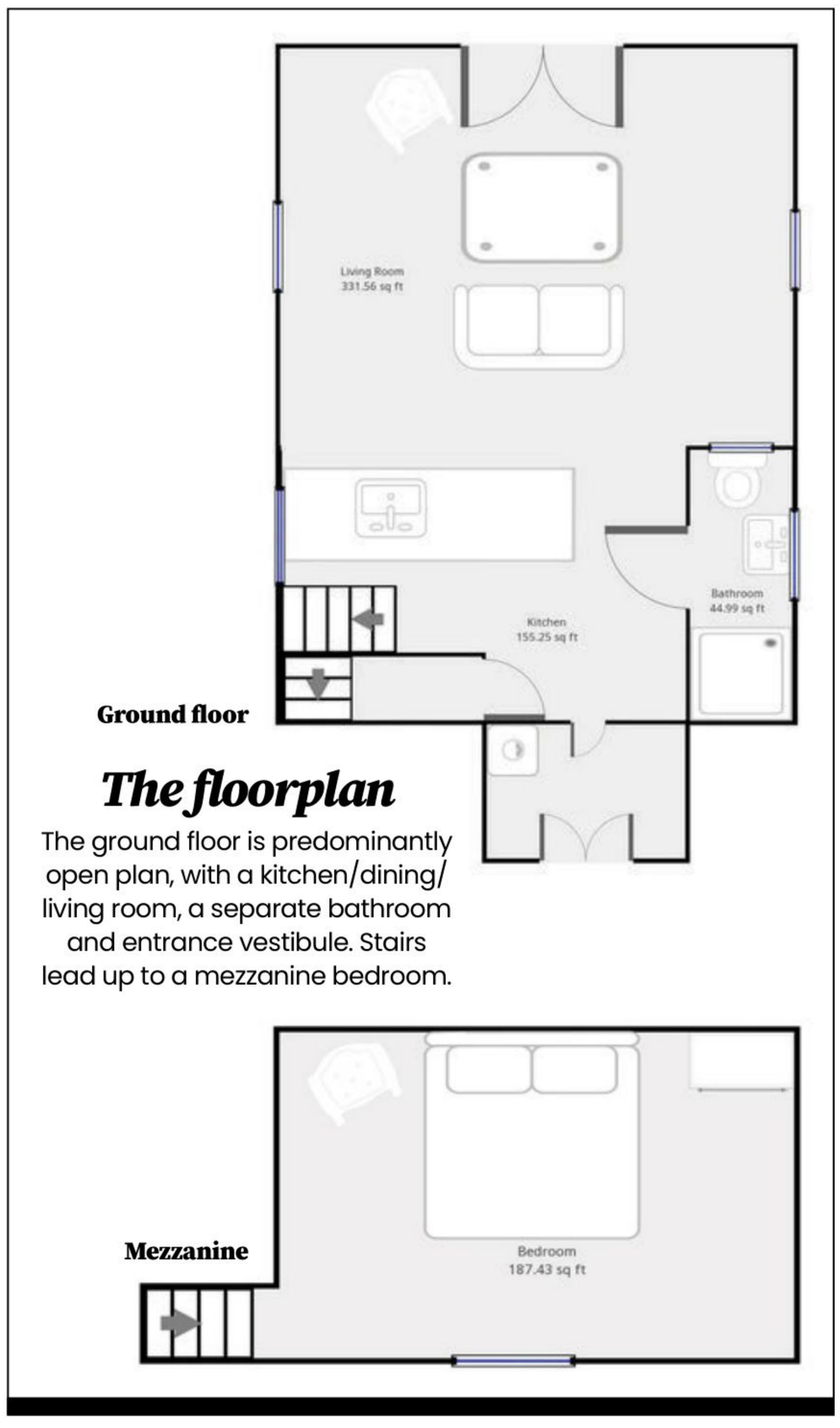
Oliver’s work in financial technology enabled him to travel from the family’s home in London for several days each week to oversee the project, with a trusted friend acting as project manager at other times. “We’ve renovated our London house and love a project,” he says. “I tend to focus on the building work and Kerry takes care of the interiors.”

Keen to employ local companies and trades, the couple found a Somerset builder to undertake most of the work. The chapel stands on earth, and one wall had cracked significantly so that an arched window was on the brink of falling out. An incongruous and unnecessary chimney, added by a previous owner, was adding weight to the building and was removed.

The chapel’s coursed stonework exterior had been repointed in the 1960s using cement, which was causing some damp problems, and the entire chapel required repointing with lime mortar – a time-consuming and expensive task. The roof was in poor repair, with no insulation, so slates were carefully removed and reused once the timber roof structure had been rebuilt.

Existing roof lights were replaced with conservation versions, and two ugly square 1960s windows in the new bedroom were removed and replaced with a single

BEFORE
The previous owners had a set of old photographs of the chapel which has undergone a complete restoration involving rebuilding the roof, repairing windows, repointing stonework, and insulating the structure.



The floorplan

The ground floor is predominantly open plan, with a kitchen/dining/living room, a separate bathroom and entrance vestibule. Stairs lead up to a mezzanine bedroom.



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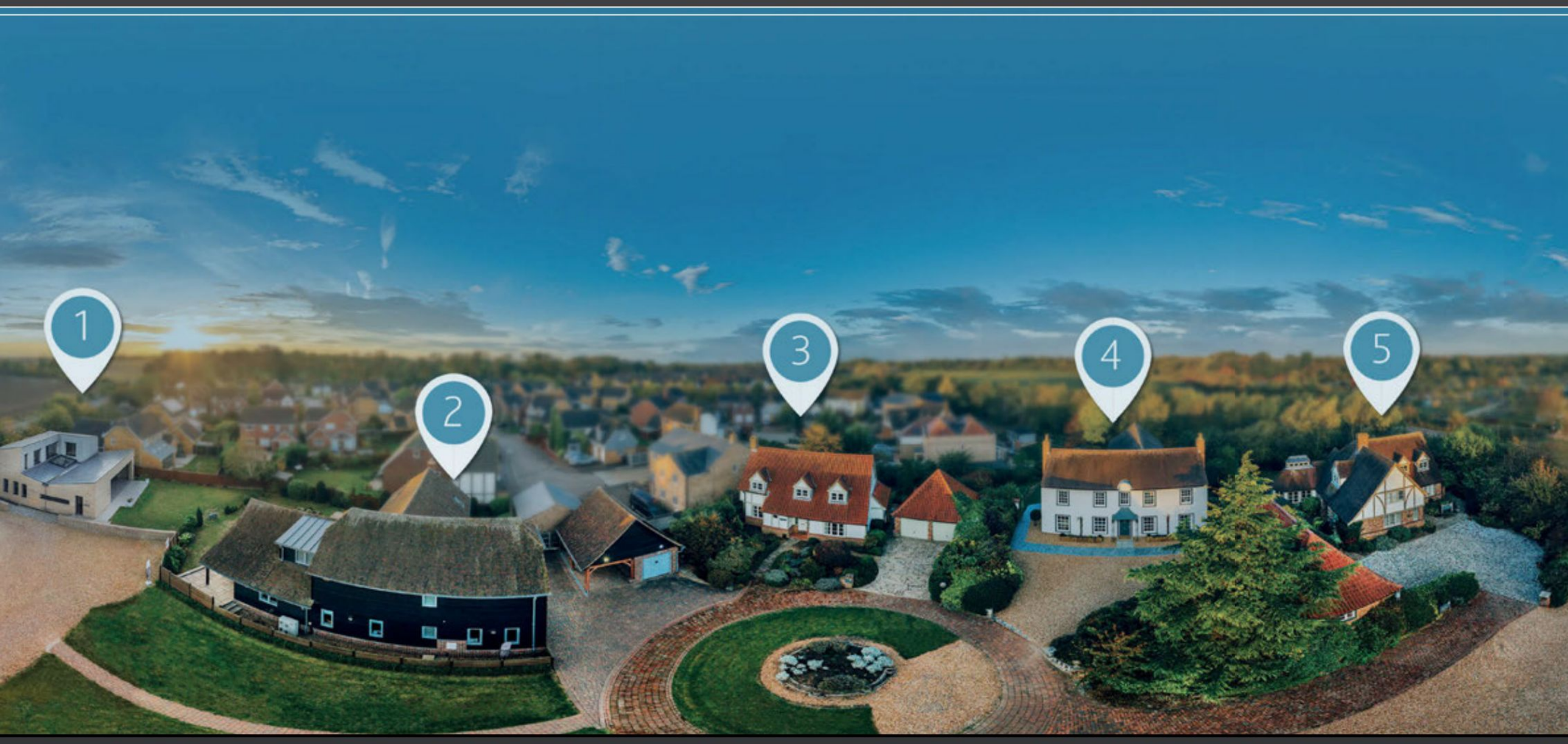
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CHAPEL CONVERSION

large arched window, discovered in a local reclamation yard, for which stonemasons created an opening. A local carpenter made the replacement double doors, which have been painted grey to match the windows.

"All the windows needed to be single glazed due to the listed building status and because we wanted to keep them original, which is why we've insulated everywhere incredibly well," says Oliver.

In detail

PROJECT

Architect Roger Gallannaugh: roger@rg-architect.co.uk
Builders GDW Building and Renovations Ltd: gdwbuilding.co.uk
Project manager Caroline Kitchiner: carolinekitchiner@gmail.com

STRUCTURE

Custom metalwork Richard Drescher, RD Engineering: rdengineering@hotmail.co.uk
Insulation Superfoil: superfoil.co.uk
Conservation roof lights The Rooflight Company: therooflightcompany.co.uk

FIXTURES AND FITTINGS

Bespoke kitchen Luke Haughton: lukehaughton.co.uk
Column radiators Heritage Cast Iron Radiators: heritagecastironradiators.com
Wood-burner Clearview Stoves: clearviewstoves.com
Sanitaryware The Water Monopoly: thewatermonopoly.com
Floorboards, church pew, flagstones etc Frome Reclamation: fromerec.co.uk
Projector benq.eu/en-uk
Surround sound AVR-X2600H AV Receiver Denon: denon.com
Speakers and subwoofer Monitor Audio: monitoraudio.com

KITCHEN A bespoke handcrafted wooden kitchen with reclaimed slate worktops has been installed to one end of the open-plan ground floor.

"There were four original arched windows which needed to be restored, as these were all completely rusted and had been painted white. Their cast iron frames have been thoroughly cleaned and repainted."

For the new mezzanine, the aim was to leave the ground-floor windows unobstructed. Previous stairs, which cut diagonally across one window, have been replaced by a small turned staircase, designed by the architect for a corner behind the kitchen.

Structural steel had already been installed to support the first floor in the former garage, and this was reused for the new timber mezzanine.



The view from the mezzanine bedroom, showing the vaulted living space and french doors.





> “PEOPLE SEEM TO LOVE IT AND WE HAVE EVEN HAD HOLLYWOOD CELEBRITIES STAYING HERE.

HOME CINEMA
Luxury fittings include a surround sound system and an automated cinema screen, which drops down from above the double doors.

LIVING AREA
A Clearview wood-burning stove is a cosy feature in the living area.





Wide reclaimed pine planks, which would once have been used to store truckles of cheese, were sourced from a reclamation yard and laid as flooring. These were finished with a lime wash to lighten the wood without obscuring circles denoting where the cheeses had been. The original exposed pine ceiling timbers have been treated in a similar fashion. A local blacksmith was then commissioned to create the beautifully crafted railings which run behind the bed.

“We already had water, electricity and a sewage pipe to the chapel, but no heating, so we installed a wood-burning stove and column radiators, reclaimed from an old MI5 building, which were restored and repainted,” says Oliver.

A cabinetmaker friend produced beautiful pen-and-ink kitchen designs and handmade the in-frame painted cabinets, with the top of a billiard table used as a slate worktop. Flagstone flooring was laid in the entrance vestibule, where Oliver has made a storage bench with leftover teak from bookshelves.

“At first we were just going to use the chapel ourselves, but later realised that it would work as a romantic holiday getaway which we could rent out,” explains Kerry, who collated ideas on Pinterest, commissioned handmade furniture, and ensured every item for the interiors is both beautiful and hard wearing.

The couple have incorporated quirky features found on their travels, such as the unusual wicker basket pendant lights, which they purchased on the roadside from a trader in Mexico and hauled back to the UK as hand luggage.

When it came to installing the bathroom, its location was determined by the existing waste pipe for the ground-floor WC, opposite the open-plan kitchen. “We carved out a larger room and created a blind for the arched window which can be easily clipped into place using magnets,” says Oliver.

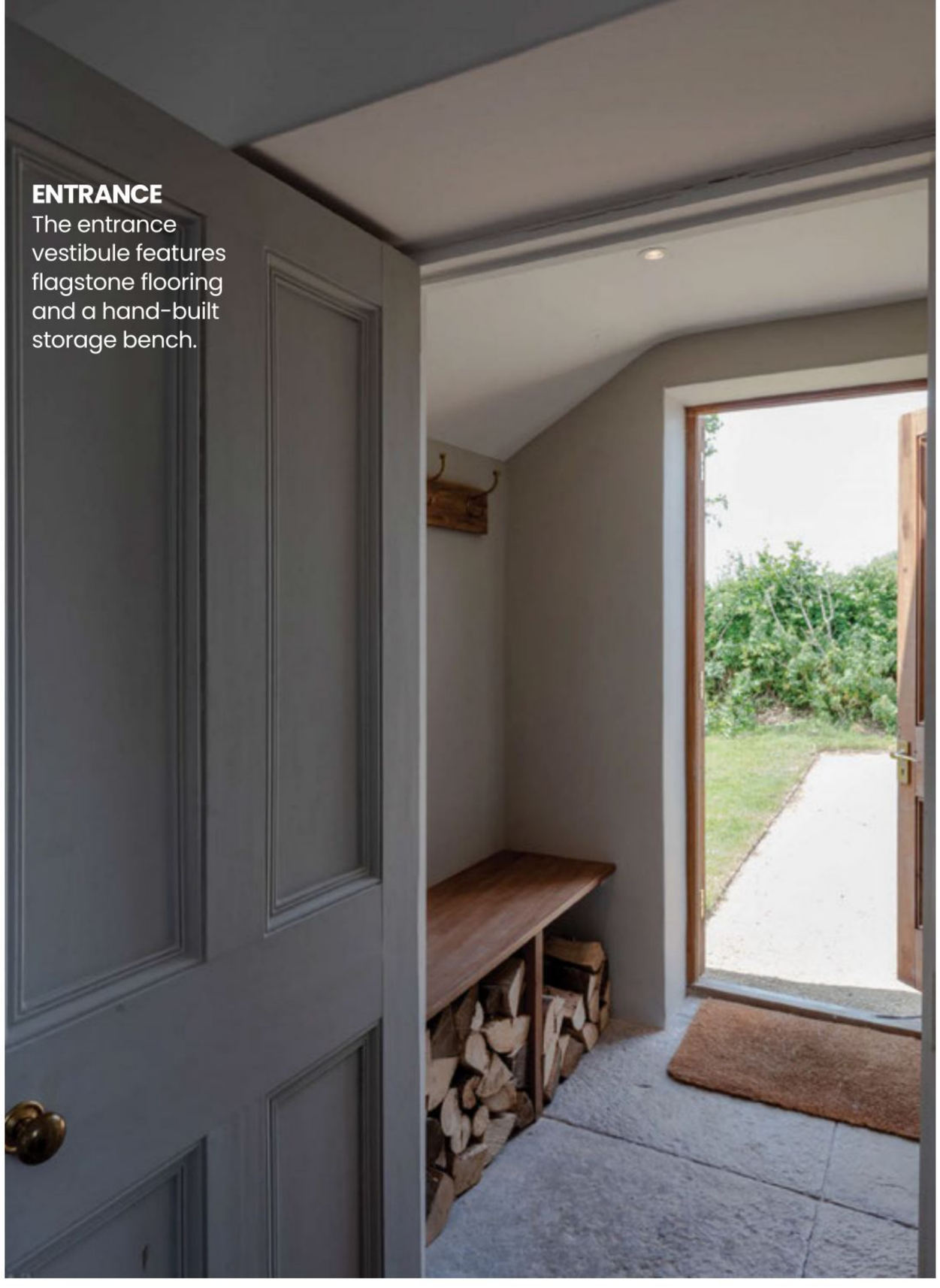
Outside, the couple were keen not to create a neatly manicured garden which would sit awkwardly among the surrounding farm fields, preferring instead a more



BATHROOM
A new bathroom was formed on the ground floor, where an original arched window has been incorporated and a luxurious walk-in shower installed.



BEDROOM
The bedroom overlooks the open-plan living space.



ENTRANCE
The entrance vestibule features flagstone flooring and a hand-built storage bench.

natural effect, complete with nettles and butterflies. A stone garden wall needed to be taken down and relocated, where it was rebuilt using lime mortar.

Original iron railings still stand before the double doors to the chapel, and there are chickens roaming the garden and a productive vegetable patch from which visitors are encouraged to help themselves. "People seem to love it, and we've even had Hollywood celebrities staying here," says Oliver.

"The project took eight months to complete during 2019 and cost double what we had anticipated, because we weren't expecting to replace the roof or repoint all the stonework. We also installed luxuries, such as a surround sound system and an automated screen, which drops down from above the double doors for the cinema projector. With all our reclaimed finds the building is now the perfect combination of old and new."

Final word

What was the high point of the project?
The kitchen installation was particularly exciting and instantly brought the space to life.

...and the low points?
A small leak in a heating pipe caused problems over Christmas.

Your best buy?
The front of the mezzanine was made from an old church pew found in a reclamation yard.

Biggest extravagance?
Our shower cost around £2,000



and the bathroom mirror £800 – we wanted the finishes to be luxurious and high end.

Your top tip?
Get involved – don't leave it all to others as you'll enjoy the project far more doing it yourself.



In brief

PROJECT ICF new build
LOCATION Devon
COST Already owned
SPENT £500,000
WORTH Unknown

EXTERIOR
Nestled into the Devon hillside, this ICF single-storey home has an angular roofline covered with sedum planting. The facades are clad in local Yennadon stone, scorched-effect cladding and render, in well-established gardens.

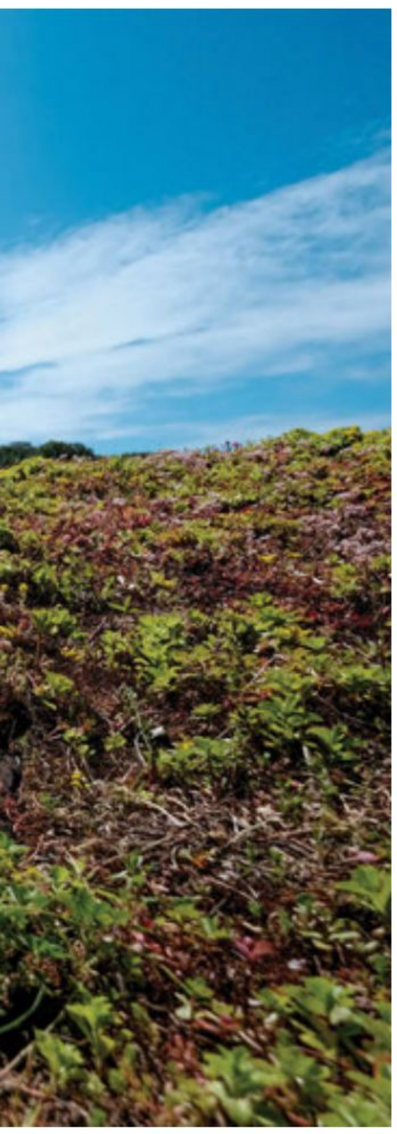












A celebration of **green**

Shirley and Paul Fleming have built a single-storey ICF home in their former garden, carefully moving plants and trees and preserving as much of the greenery as possible.

Story: **Louise Parkin** Photography: **Matt Keeble**

Shirley and Paul Fleming took the unusual step of building a second 'forever' home in the garden of their first retirement home, having relocated to Devon from Bath when they took early retirement in 1998. The couple spent the next 20 years lovingly restoring a charming but neglected three-storey house, landscaping the extensive gardens to a standard to warrant being opened to the public for charity.

It was this mature sloping plot that was to provide the site for their single-storey retirement home. "It was a strange feeling when Paul leapt up one day, while enjoying the sunset from our wonderful garden, exclaiming that there was room to build a house up there! We had spent 20 years working on the landscaping and we experimented with growing so many different plants. It really was a labour of love. But building on it made perfect sense, and we have managed to retain almost all of the plants," says Shirley.

Designed to be manageable as the couple grow older, the Cote is built using Nudura insulated concrete formwork and clad with local Yennadon stone and scorched-effect larch. It has a green roof, aluminium sliding glazed doors and enjoys panoramic views across the valley.

When their initial attempt to secure planning



permission for a modernist home at the top of the site was unsuccessful, architect Eric Davies, whom the couple had approached early on, convinced them to try again. "Although we initially worked with a different architect, Eric had been monitoring the planning application, and contacted us to say he believed a modest house could be achieved on the site. I am very into Frank Lloyd Wright and I was keen to explore simple clean lines with consideration for the environment," says Shirley. Eric produced a design to suit the uneven topography, with all living accommodation on one storey, along with a small garden, garage and a studio complete with kiln for Shirley's hobby of sculptural ceramics.

Initial indications from the planning department were positive and the Flemings were told the project had been recommended for approval, but their hopes were dashed when it was rejected again. Undeterred, however, Eric insisted that all of the planning stipulations had been met, and a subsequent appeal ruled in their favour.

The couple sold their old home, spending several weeks moving plants into pots and shifting newer trees to make way for their groundworks to begin. "All the old trees had tree preservation orders, so we had to pay careful consideration to protecting them, but we are very keen gardeners and so we were passionate about saving them anyway. We moved four newer trees, although sadly only two of them survived," says Shirley.

Building contractor Doyle and Whitley was chosen through a tender process from candidates recommended by Ercle, during which Shirley and

Cost breakdown

Prelims: **£60k**
Groundworks: **£165k**
Structural waterproofing: **£20k**
Superstructure: **£150k**
M&E: **£45k**
Finishes: **£50k**
Green roof: **£10k**
Total spend: £500k





DESIGN
The energy-efficient home is mainly arranged over a single storey, designed to maximise green spaces and orientated to enjoy the valley views.

Design details

Built using Nudura insulated concrete formwork on top of a steel-reinforced thickened edge slab, the concrete provides the structural strength, the polystyrene acting as the shuttering for the concrete pour as well as the insulation. A single-ply membrane covers the roof, topped with sedum planting, and 170mm PIR insulation has been used here.

Highly efficient aluminium double-glazed windows include two banks of sliding doors, with roof lights dropping light in from above.

Parex through-coloured render, Yennadon quarry Pilsamoor stone and vertical scorched-effect timber cladding combine and contrast on the home's exterior which is fitted with aluminium fascias, soffits and guttering.

Heating is provided by an air source heat pump, which supplies the underfloor heating, and a full MVHR system has also been installed.



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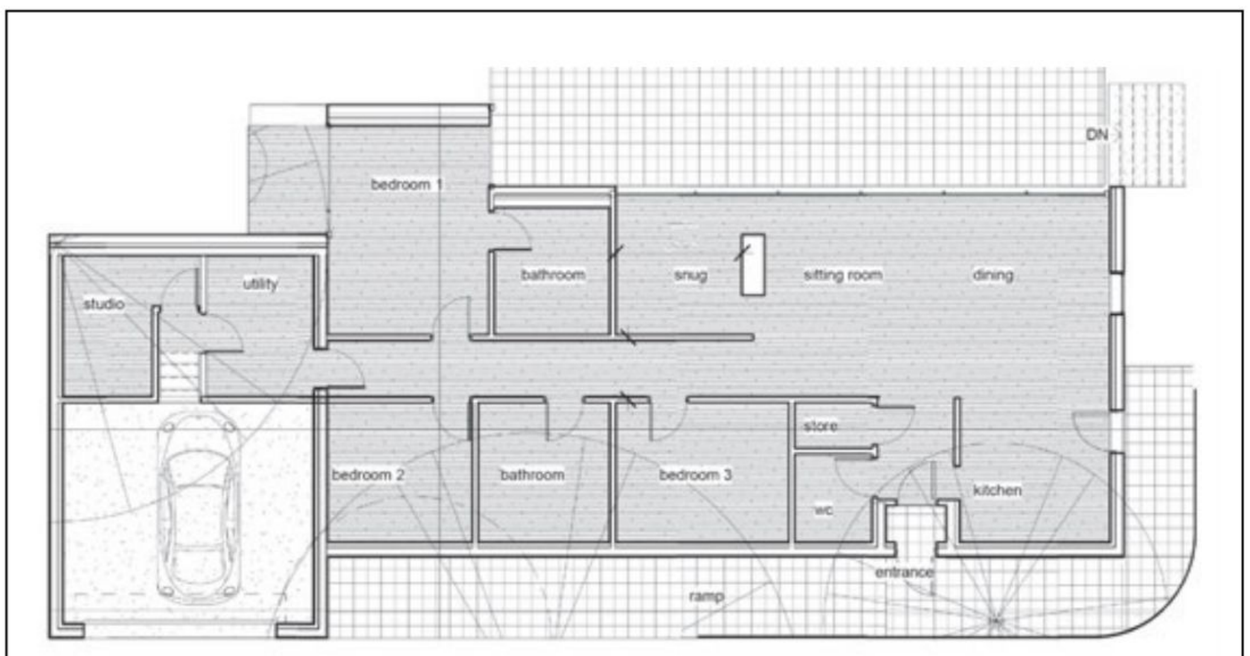
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Paul visited Andrew and Joanna Jefferys' home, (Thinking Differently, *SelfBuild & Design*, January 2020). Built by Tom Whitley and Will Doyle using Nudura formwork, the house is brimming with clever ideas and innovation, which was enough to convince Paul and Shirley to use the same building method.

The builders were unable to start work immediately, so Eric recommended a groundworker to dig out the site, and bring services in from the road. During the excavation a strange smell was noticeable from the spoil so work was halted. Samples tested in a laboratory revealed mild contamination from an ancient gas pipe through the nearby Revelstoke estate. The spoil was required to be buried in a quarry, all of which added to an expensive delay.

When the builders took over, they tweaked the groundworks, installing drainage and laying the steel-reinforced slab foundations to provide a sturdy base for the formwork, which would be filled with



The floorplan

The front door enters onto an elevated mezzanine, with access to a ceramics studio complete with kiln, and a garage. A staircase descends to an open-plan living space, with a hallway leading to two bedrooms, study, shower/cloakroom, plant room, and utility room.

KITCHEN
Pale stone-coloured units include interesting curved cupboard fronts, which have been topped with polished concrete-effect Formica.







> “I AM VERY INTO FRANK LLOYD WRIGHT AND I WAS KEEN TO EXPLORE SIMPLE CLEAN LINES.



OPEN SPACE In spite of the home’s modest size, living areas feel light and spacious thanks to its high ceilings and copious glazing.

concrete. “It all went up in a matter of weeks! It was very dramatic seeing the huge hose reaching over the roof of our old house,” says Paul, who made daily trips to the site, while Shirley visited at weekends. The couple rented a house a five-minute walk away, and watched the build from close quarters.

“Living nearby was a real boon as we were able to attend at a moment’s notice to answer queries, which came thick and fast. The whole build was really exciting and very enjoyable, and Tom made sure we were fully involved by explaining what was happening, and we were shown different ways of accomplishing what we wanted, which invariably reduced costs,” says Shirley.

Cladding was chosen for the attached garage and main entrance, but the suggested Japanese method of scorching wood to achieve a blackened effect, Shou Sugi Ban was rejected in favour of a more conventional black stain. “We were planning to burn

In detail

PROJECT

Architect Eric Davies, Ercle: ercle.co.uk
Builder Doyle and Whitley: doyleandwhitley.co.uk
Structural engineer Swayne Consulting: swayneconsulting.com
Plumber Sadler and Bourne: sadlerandbourne.co.uk
Electrician Tredan: tredan.co.uk

STRUCTURE

Nudura insulated concrete formwork The Fell Partnership: thefellpartnership.co.uk
Green roof Pellow Roofing: flatroofscornwall.com
Single-ply roof membrane Danosa: danosa.fr
Cladding Yennadon Pilsamore stone: yennadonstone.com
Render Baumit Thin Coat: baumit.co.uk

FIXTURES AND FITTINGS

Windows and doors Green Circle Windows: greencirclewindows.com
Internal doors Howdens: howdens.com
Underfloor heating and MVHR Omnie: omnie.co.uk
Air source heat pump Grant UK: grantuk.com
Kitchen SC Kitchens: sckitchens.co.uk
Bathrooms Mayflower Bathrooms: mayflowerbathrooms.co.uk
Vinyl flooring Polyflor: polyflor.com
Lighting Tredan: tredan.co.uk
Staircase Stairbox: stairbox.co.uk
Steel balustrade West Country Fabrication: westcountryfabricationltd.co.uk
External paving Marshalls: marshalls.co.uk

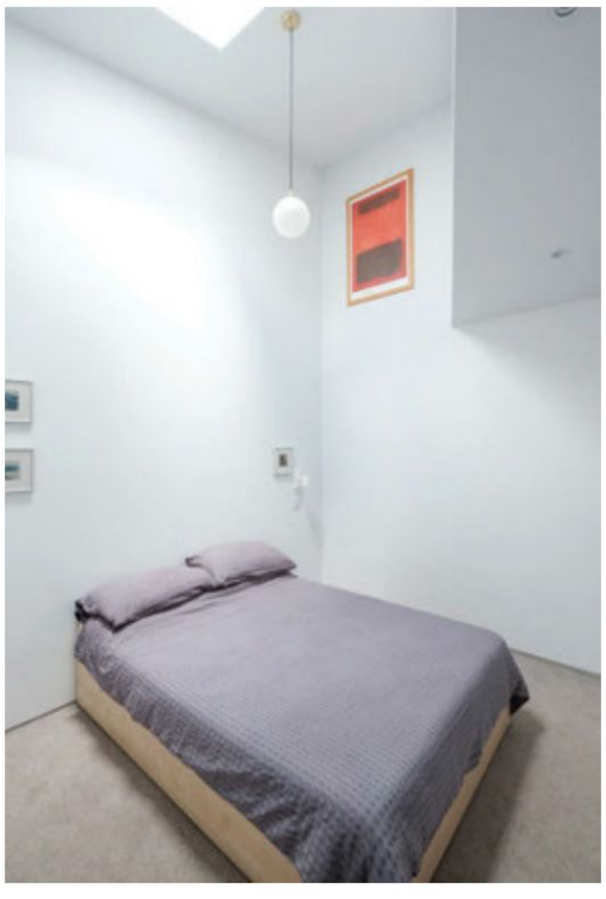


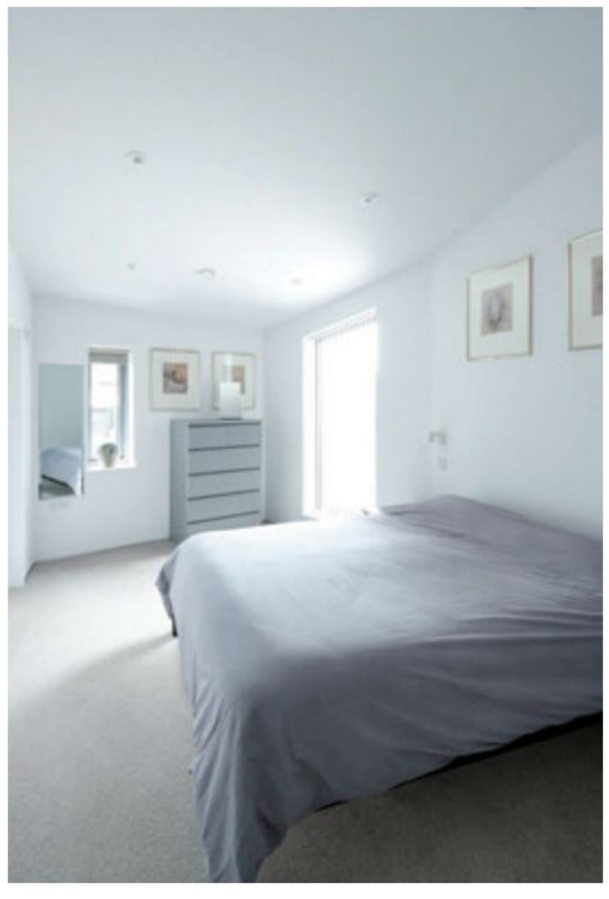


STAIRS
Powder-coated aluminium framework is clad in natural oak treads.

BEDROOMS
The master suite has an angled window with views down the terrace; a roof light casts daylight into the guest bedroom.







the wood ourselves, but the idea made us nervous,: says Shirley. “We are really pleased with the result.”

Interesting angles have been created on the shallow-pitched roof, which was covered first with single-ply membrane and then planted with sedum, chosen for its environmental qualities, though the view from the couple’s previous home also influenced their decision. “We wanted to make the new house as visually appealing as possible, and avoid a mass of roof slates being visible from our old house. We wanted to retain as much green space as we could. It’s good for wildlife and good for the environment. Although it was expensive we are so pleased that we did it!”

Further eco features include an air source heat pump, and a mechanical ventilation and heat recovery system to keep air fresh in the highly insulated home.

The front door opens onto an elevated mezzanine hallway, with access to the garage and Shirley’s ceramics studio. A powder-coated steel staircase with oak treads leads to the double-height living areas, where there is space to install a lift in the future, should the need arise. The u-shaped bespoke kitchen has contemporary pale stone-coloured units and a polished concrete-inspired Formica worktop and splashback, with an induction hob.

Vaulted, angled ceilings and high-level windows are bold contemporary features in the main living areas, which are unified by fossil limestone-effect PolyFlor vinyl floor tiles. Sliding glazed doors provide access onto a paved terrace, offering broad views across the valley. Artwork has been carefully chosen and hung, and Shirley’s sculptures adorn shelves and surfaces throughout the house.

A hallway leads to the two bedrooms including the master suite, which has an angled window looking out on the terrace and an en suite shower room. The guest bedroom has no conventional windows, only a large opening roof light that floods the vaulted room with natural light.



SITTING ROOM
A sliding door opens to reveal the terrace, the well-maintained garden and the views beyond.

The deceptive floorplan also provides space for a utility room with access to the garden, a study with a high-level angled window and a roof light, and a plant room housing the controls for the air source heat pump, the MVHR system and underfloor heating manifold.

With just a week required to complete the project, lockdown was announced and work came to a grinding halt. Doyle and Whitley applied for road closures to make water connections but these were rejected – twice. Water was finally connected just a week before the Flemings moved in, which was six weeks later than anticipated.

"Everything was almost finished, and then Covid-19 stopped everything," says Shirley. "We haven't seen our grandchildren since February and they haven't seen the house since it was finished. Their first visit will be a highlight for us."



NEW BUILD





BATHROOM
Designed for easy access, the bathrooms are fitted with flush shower trays.

Final word

What was the high point of the project?
There were too many to mention. The first pour, the slab, the Nudura going up so fast, and the beam across the living area, the windows and doors going in, and when we first saw the vaulted ceiling heights – awesome. And laying the terrace really transformed a building site into a home. We were also pleased that we were able to successfully move and incorporate most of the trees and shrubs to surround the Cote.

And the low point?
When planning consent was given and then taken away – an early planning officer who was assigned to our application said that he was recommending approval. When Eric rang to let us know, I couldn't speak from excitement and dashed up the garden to hand Paul the phone – and promptly tripped and broke my foot! Said planning officer disappeared, never to be seen again. A new officer was appointed who then refused it.

And your best bits?
We keep finding new little delights, like the view along the terrace from the master bedroom. We also love it when you open the front door from the dark approach to see this enormous vaulted space, full of light, below you with the glass wall opening onto the terrace and the view right across the valley to the hills beyond. We also love the sedum roof – it's fascinating.

Any regrets?
That we couldn't incorporate solar energy. This was thoroughly investigated but in the end would have involved too many compromises.

Biggest extravagance?
The sedum green roof but it was totally worth it.

And your best buy?
The high quality windows together with frames specially designed by our builder.

7 top tips to keep your site safe and sound



1 Check CDM requirements
It is essential to check out the HSE website to see how Construction Design & Management regulations apply to your particular project. As a domestic client, CDM 2015 still applies, though the duties are normally transferred to the builder on a single-contractor project or the main contractor on a project involving more than one. A selfbuilder can also choose to have a written agreement with the designer to carry out these duties.

If acting as the project manager employing subcontractors, selfbuilders must comply with all matters outlined in Part 4 of CDM 2015 and be expected to demonstrate sufficient competence to meet those requirements. However, their responsibilities are for coordination and management rather than direct supervision of on-site contractors who will be expected to comply with the CDM regulations.

Check what signage is required and ensure it is properly fixed in a prominent position close to the entrance to the site. Remember, there are fairly hefty fines for non-compliance so make sure you are familiar with your responsibilities.

2 Ensure personal protection
There are three essential items for anyone working or visiting a site. These are non-negotiable: a hard hat, high visibility waistcoat/ jacket and safety boots or shoes. Other safety wear is dependent on the task being undertaken and, for the most part, is common sense.

Gloves are useful, with various types suited for specific jobs, from light gripper gloves for bricklayers to rigger gloves for heavy lifting work. Eye protection, too, is a must where there's a risk of flying debris. Hearing should be protected with ear defenders or plugs when using or working close to noisy plant and tools. In dusty conditions use a mask and make sure it is up to the job in particularly dusty environments.

3 Treat tools and plant equipment with care
Wood chisels, saws and anything with a sharp cutting edge should be treated with caution. If you are hiring plant equipment it is essential that you have the proper training. All power tools are potentially dangerous and need to be treated with respect. Electric saws and angle grinders are probably the most hazardous and each year claim a few fingers and cause eye damage. Mains powered tools are gradually being replaced with battery-powered models but 240v tools still tend to be used for continuous jobs or those that require a bit more muscle.

These tools must have a residual current device (RCD). Extension leads should also be checked regularly as they are easily damaged.



For outdoor sites or when working with electric tools in wet or damp conditions 110v equipment should be used.

4 Check the lay of the land
Before any work starts on site check there are no underground electric cables, gas or water mains passing beneath the site. Hitting a live electric supply not only puts the digger driver's life at risk but is also very expensive to repair. Overhead cables or any that will be within touching distance when the scaffolding is in place need to be protected. This is a job for the electric supply company.

Mini diggers and dumpers are widely used for foundation excavations and it's important that they are operated by certified drivers. No shoring is needed for standard one-metre deep foundation trenches, but it is for those more than 1.2m deep. Remember one cubic metre of soils weighs around 1.5 tonnes. Any deep excavations that are left open overnight or at weekends should be fenced.

5 Beware of heights
The two most common causes of fatalities on building sites are workers slipping off scaffolding or items falling on their heads. All scaffolding must be erected by professionals and should be checked weekly. Buying a job lot of second-hand scaffolding and erecting it yourself is not a good idea.

Any alterations to the scaffold once it's erected must be carried out by the original scaffolding firm. Ladders for access to scaffolding must be fixed at the top and extend at least one metre above the scaffold platform to provide a safe handhold. Scaffold towers are quick and easy to use but must be put up plumb on firm ground and if possible secured at the top to something solid.

The Health & Safety Executive recommends that ladders are only used when safer forms of access are not practical. If ladders are used on their own they need to be secured so there is no risk of the ladder slipping. Step ladders also need to be used sensibly.

6 Be careful when working alone
It is tempting and often necessary to be on site long after the contractors have gone home. It's a good time to check progress and plan ahead, if managing the project yourself, or quietly getting on with jobs. It is also good practice to keep the site tidy and free of debris and hazardous obstacles.

But take care both inside and outside. Avoid scaffolding and trenches outside, and beware of unfinished staircases and unstable floorboards inside.

7 Beware of asbestos
This applies more to the renovation or conversion of existing buildings than new builds. Hazardous materials such as asbestos are in the fabric of many older buildings in the form of lagging, insulating board, sprayed insulation, decorative coatings and cement. If found, seek professional help.

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Beginner's guide to

HOME HEATING

Nobody enjoys a freezing cold house, but high fuel bills are never welcome, so choosing an efficient and economical heating system is a top priority for selfbuilders and renovators alike.

Even well-sealed and highly insulated new-build homes in the UK will still usually require some form of heating for the winter, and most selfbuilders or renovators will install a boiler connected to underfloor heating (UFH), radiators or a combination of both. Operating costs vary enormously, depending on which fuel is used and the energy efficiency of the system, particularly the level of insulation in the building and the efficiency of the boiler.

Underfloor heating

Increasingly popular with homeowners, underfloor heating warms the whole floor area and the air above, eliminating cold spots and providing a gentle, even heat. Compared to radiator systems there is no noise. The entire floor literally becomes a radiator and, because of its area, UFH does not need to reach the high temperatures of a standard wall radiator.

It's perfect for heating tall spaces and for modern interiors where radiators would add clutter and limit furniture layout options. Underfloor heating also reduces the circulation of both dust and dust mites, as the moisture content of the warmth produced is too low to support the mites.

There are two types of underfloor heating. Electric (dry) systems use electricity to warm the elements and often come in the form of a mat. Water fed (wet) systems use coils of pipework to contain a flow of warm water that is linked into the main boiler system.

Electric underfloor heating is usually faster and cheaper to install than warm water UFH, although it's likely to be more expensive to run (a common mistake is to just fit an electric system over an existing uninsulated floor, leading to high electricity bills). It is also a slimmer system and is typically used in renovation projects, where head height is an issue, and for small areas, such as bathrooms.



Top: Stovax Elise 540T free-standing multifuel stove. (stovax.com)
Above: A underfloor heating system from Nu-Heat . (nu-heat.co.uk)

Water underfloor heating is ideal for new builds and extensions and may also be linked into existing radiator heating circuits. Space will usually be required in the form of a cupboard or plant room to contain the control manifold.

Insulation can lower running costs by as much as 50 per cent because the floor heats up much faster. To maximise the underfloor heating system's performance, consider installing insulation boards, particularly with a concrete sub-floor. The choice of floor covering will also impact on the system's efficiency and will ideally be a conductive material such as stone, tiles or engineered wood.

Underfloor heating is less responsive than radiator central heating and it will usually take at least an hour for a room to be heated from cold. The same applies when an UFH system is turned off – it takes time to cool down. Sophisticated controls are available to help overcome this problem, including weather compensation

sensors. Consider a hybrid system with underfloor heating downstairs and in bathrooms, and radiators in bedrooms, which only need to be heated for short periods.

Radiators

Radiators are sometimes the best option for existing homes with low ceilings, as underfloor heating will generally require floor levels to be raised to accommodate the layers of insulation, the heating elements and floor covering. This means that doors and skirting boards may also need to be adapted.

Some wet systems can increase floor levels by as much as 100mm, and if the floor structure is a concrete slab rather than timber then this becomes even more of a problem. It's possible to install suspended systems that sit between floor joists if you have them, but this means lifting floorboards to gain access. The obvious advantage of this is that you can keep your existing floor level.

So, unless you can dig down or raise boards, stick to radiators or choose one of the low-profile retrofit UFH options available, which don't normally incorporate conventional insulation or screed. These are ideal for renovation projects, or when floors can't be raised in height, as they can be fitted to timber joists or floating floors.

For homeowners on a tight budget, underfloor heating is almost always more expensive to install than a standard central heating system, with pressed steel panel radiators, mainly because it involves more labour and materials. Radiators don't need to be dull, and are becoming increasingly exciting in terms of designs, materials and finishes: from traditional column-style cast iron to highly contemporary and colourful radiators more reminiscent of art or sculpture. Floor-standing radiators are also becoming more popular, due to their flexibility.

Trench heating

Trench heating is another solution when wall space is minimal and is ideal for colder spaces, such as outside walls and glass bifolds. Trenches are dug within the floor and a simple convector unit with a grille is connected to the heating system. The grilles that cover the trench come in various designs and different materials.

When used against large windows, heat emitted from the trench acts as a kind of 'air curtain' which restricts draughts, minimising heat loss and therefore increasing efficiency. It also prevents condensation building on the windows.

The trench's width and depth determine the size of the heating element it contains, as well as the amount of cooler air that can be drawn in through the grilles, warmed and then naturally convected back out into the room. Greater airflow, and consequently heat, can be achieved with the installation of a fan system within the trench. Rooms are heated evenly, which eliminates draughts and cold spots and provides an even, comfortable temperature. Dust does tend to accumulate in the trenches, which will need regular cleaning.



Above: Trench heating falls somewhere between radiators and underfloor heating. A trench in the floor is fitted with a convection unit, and covered with a grille. Providing an even temperature, it can work well in front of a glass bifold or sliding door, acting as an air curtain to restrict draughts and increase efficiency. It also prevents condensation forming on windows. Grilles can be wooden or aluminium. Heat output ranges from 147W to 6,857W. Price: from £410.10. (theradiatorcentre.com)

Thinking outside the box

You can install radiators with bench tops that double as seating, heated towel rails and even dual-purpose heated mirrors – so there's no need to compromise on space. Alternatively, if you prefer totally invisible heating, then discreet heaters can be concealed within plinths in kitchens, operating as part of a central heating system or connected to a standard household electrical system. These replace conventional radiators, free up valuable wall space and may also be installed in stair risers, and even built-in furniture, but are not usually suitable for use in bathrooms or other high humidity areas.

It is also possible to introduce radiant heating panels into walls and ceilings – although this is still more commonly seen in commercial situations, it is becoming a popular solution in apartments and other environments where space is at a premium.

Warm-air heating is rarely installed in the UK, but mechanical ventilation with heat recovery is more popular, which replaces stale air with fresh air which is warmed through an efficient heat extraction and recycling process.

Energy efficiency and home automation go hand in hand. Smart thermostats and radiator controls will reduce energy bills, and intelligent heating controls using smart thermostats can monitor and adjust temperature and will reduce household bills by learning habits and only heating spaces when required.

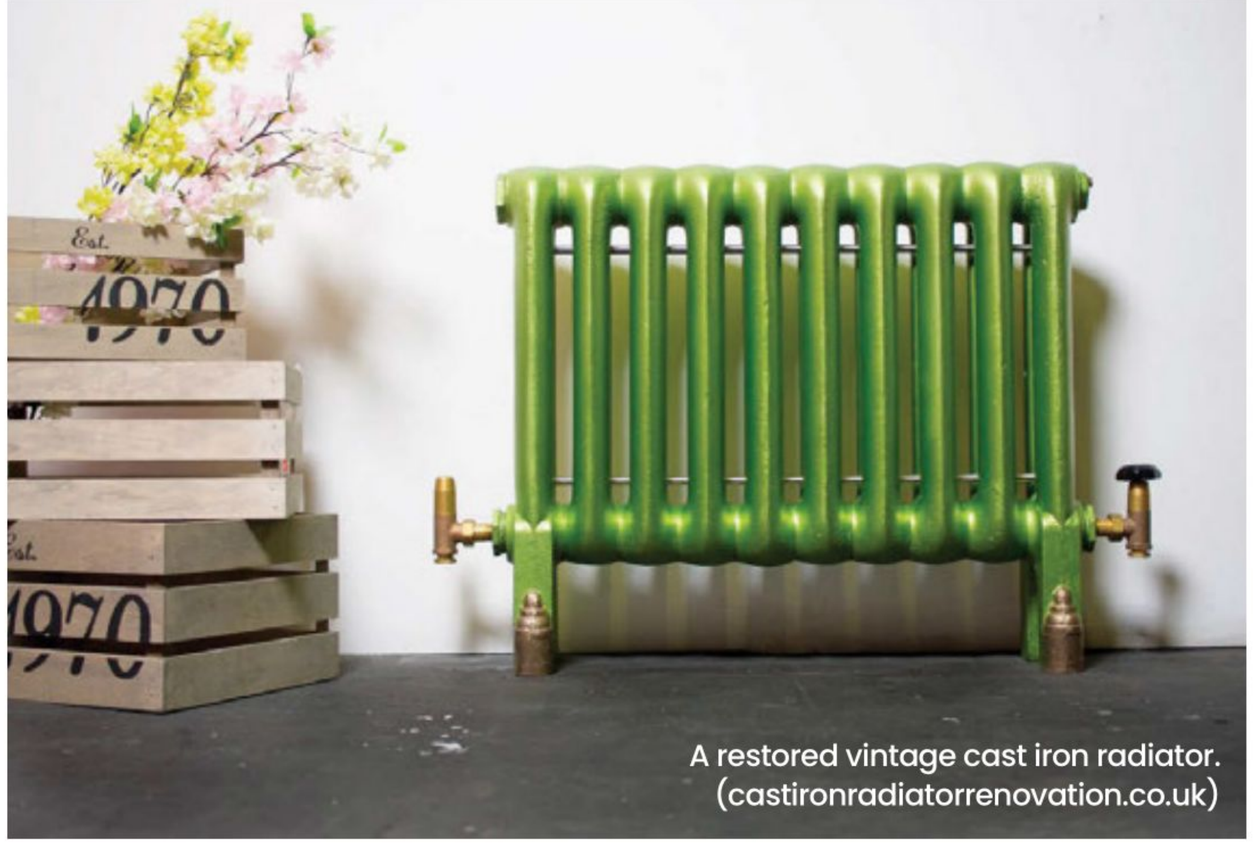
Smart radiator valves can also help to control heating in individual rooms via an app, or remote control, and are easy to install on a DIY basis. Smart boilers can be turned on and off or adjusted using an app, as well as alerting the installer in case of problems.

Boilers

Boilers account for around 55 per cent of domestic energy bills, so an efficient boiler can make a big difference. Specifying the correct size for a boiler is crucial, and there are several online guides to calculate your needs. The size of boiler will directly relate to the number of radiators and hot water usage in a home.

If you have mains gas, then a gas boiler is usually the cheapest heating option. If there's no gas pipe nearby it might be worth paying for a new connection to get cheaper fuel. Some houses without mains gas access use liquid petroleum gas (LPG) or heating oil, which work in a similar way to gas, but will be more expensive to run.

However, gas is a fossil fuel and produces carbon dioxide when burnt. Prices are continuing to



A restored vintage cast iron radiator. (castironradiatorrenovation.co.uk)

rise, and are likely to remain high, and gas boilers will need annual servicing to remain efficient.

Technological advances mean that electric boilers are becoming another option in new homes, often in rural areas without an oil or gas supply. These use electricity to heat water in a wet central heating system in the same way as a gas boiler and are not the same as 'dry' electric storage heater systems, which store electricity during off-peak periods to radiate through heaters later.

Electric boilers are light, compact, quiet, easy to install, low maintenance and almost 100 per cent efficient, as no heat is lost via waste gases through chimneys and flues. Converting an existing heating system is likely to be costly however and running costs will be higher than gas alternatives. They are also susceptible to power cuts. The hot water they can heat will be limited, so electric boilers are not usually suitable for larger properties.

Since 2005 virtually all gas boilers fitted in the UK are condensing boilers, which have bigger heat exchangers that recover more heat from the burning gas. Sometimes the flue gases get so cool that the water vapour in the gas condenses out (hence the name). When this happens, even more energy is recovered from the condensing vapour and the efficiency gets higher still.

Most old gas and oil boilers have a separate hot water cylinder to store hot water, rather than providing it directly from the boiler. When replacing one of these, you have a choice of buying a new regular boiler, and keeping your hot water cylinder, or buying a combi boiler that doesn't need a feed tank, an expansion tank or a hot water cylinder because they heat water as required. This means that they need less space and are also economical.

A regular boiler is more efficient than a combi at producing hot water in the first place, but then some heat is lost from the hot water cylinder, so a combi may be more efficient overall. The biggest drawback with combi boiler systems is their low flow rates, as there is no stored hot water and instead it's heated on demand.

The best option will depend on several factors. A large family using lots of hot water could be better off with a regular boiler, while a smaller household using less may find a combi more suitable. Many combis are not compatible with solar water heating or cannot use it as effectively, so other options – including a hot water store – may be preferable.

You could also consider a wood-fuelled or biomass boiler. These burn renewable fuel of logs, pellets or chips, and are connected to your central heating and hot water system. Installation costs can be high, but if you replaced electric heating with a wood-burning system you could make significant annual savings.

The boilers themselves also tend to be larger than gas equivalents and need to be compatible with existing plumbing. Biomass boilers are often best suited to those not connected to mains gas who have at least six cubic metres of space for covered fuel storage, close to the boiler and accessible for delivery lorries. They require maintenance, need to be fed fuel and regularly cleaned of ash.

Heating an extension

Any new extension should fully comply with Building Regulations, and new extensions need to ensure they do not make the overall energy performance of the existing building worse. Additional radiators can be added to your current central heating system only if the boiler has the capacity to supply more radiators, so consult with a certified plumber before making any changes.

Alternatively, an electrical heating system with storage heaters is fairly simple to expand, and plug-in electric panel radiators or convector heaters may be suitable for a smaller extension. Many people take the opportunity to install underfloor heating in the new part of the house, and it is possible to purchase underfloor heating systems specifically designed to integrate with an existing boiler and radiator system to provide controllable radiant warmth without the need to compromise wall space – ideal for open plan layouts.





Above: The elegant Lotus Style 470W has a heat output of up to 10kW, with a choice of limestone, soapstone or Indian night stone frames, it also has a log store base. Price: from £3,189. (lotusfires.com)
Right: Part of the company's new Lifestyle range, the Greenstar 8000 Style is Worcester Bosch's new top-of-range model, and comes in two distinctive high gloss colour options: black and white. (worcester-bosch.co.uk)

Log-burners

For many selbuilders a log-burner is an essential feature for a living area – even if it doesn't have a chimney. Contemporary-style log-burners are designed to have an exposed flu which can be a feature in itself.

While it is easy to get carried away with the aesthetics, with so many models to choose from, size and performance are essential considerations. A stove that is too big for a room can be just as bad as one that is too small, so ensure the output matches the space you need to heat, taking into account the age of the house and level of insulation, number of doors and windows, outside walls and general airtightness. The room should be well ventilated and installation is best left to professionals to ensure it meets Fire Regulations.

Once considered a very green option, there has been some conjecture about a stove's eco credentials of late, with concerns over levels of health damaging particulates from burning coal and wet wood.

As a result, sales of house coal and wet wood in small units (less than two cubic metres) will be phased out from February 2021. Volumes of wet wood greater than two cubic metres will also have to be sold with advice on how to season it before burning. Wood for fuel should have a moisture content no greater than 25 per cent, and newly cut wood should be left for at least two years to dry out.

Next month: heating with renewables (solar, heat pumps and wind turbines)

Helping you

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Stoves

Above: The Dovre Rock 500 wood-burning stove features Cleanburn and Airwash systems, ensuring highly efficient operation. With a heat output of up to 9kW, this comes as a tablet or wood-base model in grey or white enamel. Price: £2,645. (dovre.co.uk)

Top right: In the rear of the stove an extra duct system spreads preheated combustion air. The system, called Clean Burning, is activated by a sliding control on the front. The stove emits 6kW and burns at 80 per cent efficiency, with very few particle concentrations. Price: £3,190. (contura.eu)

Middle right: The new ESSE 175 is the cleanest wood-burning stove yet from this manufacturer which has been in business since 1854. It delivers 5kW of heat using a three-stage combustion process to extract every last bit of energy from each log burned. Incorporating ESSE's innovative Particulate Reburn technology, the ESSE 175 reignites gases and particles to minimise emissions while maximising heat output. (esse.com)

Right: The NEO3FGas and E-NEO3C Electric (far right) stoves have flame beds visible from three sides, thanks to two side window panels. Manufactured in steel and finished in a matt black powder-coat, the electric model has the option of 1kW or 2kW heat output with four flame settings and even has an optional decorative flue pipe kit. Price: £1,299. The gas version, which has ceramic logs on the fuel bed, is suitable for natural gas or LPG, with a variety of flue kits and heat outputs of 6.75kW. It can be controlled via a smartphone app. Price: £2,760. (acrstoves.com)







Left: The angular Westfire Uniq 23 Pedestal wood-burning stove is highly efficient thanks to insulated chambers and triple air supplies. Pedestals vary in height, and a log store can also be included. Output is 5.3kW. Price: £1,155. (eurostove.co.uk)

Above: Presenting a stunning view of the flames, the Vogue Midi T has an expansive glass viewing window, kept clear by the Airwash system that ensures high levels of combustion efficiency. A log store base is optional. Price: from £1,765. (stovax.com)







Left: Available in wood-burning and multifuel options, the Arada i600 stove has a max output of 4.9kW and is suitable for use in smoke-control zones. It is available in seven colours including black, grey, cream and blue. (aradastoves.com)
Right: The Zebru Walltherm Air is a 6kW-12kW stove, with an integral fan to distribute warm air evenly into the room. Operating at 87 per cent efficiency, the Zebru stands 1,250mm high and can accept logs of up to 350mm. Price: £5,000. (ludlowstoves.co.uk)









Above left: The Chilly Eighty Ate 88 has a large fire window, a small oven and a stainless steel hotplate on top. The 8kW stove has an integral plinth with space for log storage. Price: £2,150. (ludlowstoves.co.uk)
Left: The Alea is a pellet stove with reduced depth of less than 28mm, making it ideal for confined spaces. The smoke outlet can be either on the back (pictured) or on the top, reducing the total volume even further. Emitting 7kW of heat, the Ecodesign ready stove operates at an efficiency of up to 93 per cent. From £1,960. (mcz.it/en)

Above: The Stanford S21 cast iron oil stove is designed to provide a continuous source of background heating, with the ability to increase the heat output at the turn of a dial. Price: £2,319. (eurostove.co.uk)
Below: The Ecoburn 5 stove is Ecodesign ready, and achieves heat outputs of 4.9kW. Suitable to burn wood or solid fuel, it is approved for use in smoke control areas. A widescreen version is also available. Price: from £1,149. (aradastoves.com)



Radiators





Above: The Morsø 1412 Squirrel cast iron multi-fuel stove may be compact but it has a powerful 5kW output, with an airwash system to keep the glass clear. Price: £1,099. Morsø's 4441 (right) 5kW multifuel stove is certified for use in smoke control areas, and is Ecodesign ready. Price: £1,299. (morsoe.com)





Above: Operating at almost 90 per cent efficiency, the Debdale wood-burning stove from Burley's Fireball range is Ecodesign ready, and has a maximum output of 5.3kW. Price: £900. (burley.co.uk)

Above: The Carre radiator has square pipes, and comes in widths from 295mm to 895mm, and heights from 1,600mm to 3,000mm. Available in a broad range of colours, BTUs are from 3,364. Starting price: £475. (vasco.eu)
Right: The Bubbles towel warmer comes in a broad range of colours including standard colours of matt black and white. Heat output ranges from 208W to 442W. Price: £552. (theradiatorcentre.com)
Below: Now your favourite photo can be printed onto a panel radiator, using UV-bonded ink. This Panio Crystal Glass triptych achieves high-resolution print, and has a BTU of 7,230. Price: from £2,354. (agadondesign radiators.co.uk)







HOME HEATING







Cool colours

Part of Bique's Earth collection, the Flow Form in Lake Red (from £480) and the Classic in Dutch Orange (from £460.80) explore sophisticated pastels in the home. These are painted with colours by Farrow & Ball, and colour matching is also available. Flow Form BTUs are from 839 to 2,718, and Classic heat output is from 1,875 to 5,074 BTUs. (bisque.co.uk)



Classic looks

Burlington's Arcade Lansdowne (top), shown here in nickel with a white insert, offers 1,904 BTUs of heat output. It has angled radiator valves and stands 950mm tall, 600mm wide and 235mm deep. Price: £1,098. The Trafalgar radiator, with a chrome finish and choice of white or black insert, has an output of 2,346 BTUs. Price: £649. (burlingtonbathrooms.com)



Above: Featuring bold metallic finishes of copper, bronze, silver and gold, these column radiators are perfect for tight budgets. With heat outputs of 2,504 BTUs, equivalent to 734W, they are available in vertical and horizontal formats. Price: from £199.95. (bestheating.com)
Top right: Inspired by a cascading waterfall, the Rio has a stainless steel polished or brushed finish, and is available in one size with impressive heat outputs of 807W and 863W respectively. RRP: £3,000 and £3,134. (mhsradiators.co.uk)
Right: The Sirius infrared mirror heater emits 1,000W of heat. Made from mirror-finish toughened glass, this saves wall space and can provide effective heating in any room. Price: £825. (jigsawinfrared.com)
Below: This is a modern take on a traditional column radiator. The Etam achieves a BTU of 5,780, featuring a double panel design and 14 stylishly curved bars. It measures 600mm x 860mm. Price: £319. (easybathrooms.com)





Left: Available in horizontal, vertical and square models, this towel warmer comes in electric and mains versions, the latter producing 314W to 604W. Price: from £2,580. The electric model produces 300W to 900W. Price: from £2,037. An optional wooden shelf for storage is available on some models, and all variations come in a range of RAL colours. (tubes radiatori.com)





Fires





Top left: The 73 suspended glass or hanging gas fire has a ceiling-hung canopy of tinted glass with a white plaster finish around the top. The area below the canopy is open, allowing the flames to be visible from every angle, and the sandblasted Belgian Bluestone base is custom fitted around the step, and can even be made into useful storage. Price: from £9,800 plus VAT (excludes stone base). (modusfireplaces.com)
Above: The 997 double-sided fireplace features a circular centrepiece with a striking exposed flue that stretches up to the ceiling. Partially closed with glass blades, the fireplace can be finished in an array of colours and finishes and can be designed to rotate. Price: from £12,150 plus VAT. (modusfireplaces.com)
Left: Bio-ethanol fireplaces can provide a welcome blast of heat, without the need for a chimney. There are no emissions, odour or smoke, thanks to the natural bio-ethanol fuel used which produced up to 3.5kW of heat. This option, from Le Feu, can sit on a stand or hang down from the ceiling. Price: £1,499. (cuckooland.com)

Above: Clever sensors on the electric Dimplex Pemberley create a 3D flame and smoke effect with a fuel bed of pebbles. The wall-mounted fire has two settings, and can produce either 1kW or 2kW of heat. The heat is provided by a fan heater, and the flame effect can be created without giving off heat if required. Price: £449. (ao.com)
Below: The Reflex gas fire range has a bed of logs to create a gas flame effect almost indistinguishable from a wood-burning fire. Available in portrait, landscape, single and multi-sided versions, the fire can be controlled through an app for remote control. Price: from £3,415. (gazco.com)





Above: Undulating flame visuals and a deep bed of realistic logs or shining crystals are achieved with the latest LED technologies, with a choice of fuel beds. Available in a variety of outset and inset fires, the eReflex has a programmable thermostatic eco handset to control a host of energy-saving features, including open-window detection. Price: from £945. (gazco.com)

Fenestration

Matching doors to suit stylish facade

As contemporary houses go, this one is rather special. The attention to detail and the finishes tie in the elevation, complemented with a front door that floats in frameless glass. This contrasts with the cladding that has already begun to weather to a silver grey.

The Raw V Fumed Oak design from Urban Front has no grooves – just the grain running vertically. Fumed Oak features blonde strips to add depth and texture.

In order to fit the door into frameless glass, it needed a steel frame which was hidden in the door frame with a rebate. The garage door matches the front door in design and finish. **(urbanfront.com)**



Triple glazing enhances extension

Alison and Phil Ball had always dreamed of creating a light and contemporary family living space in their home in Rainhill near Liverpool.

The layout of the early 80s detached property didn't suit their requirements for a family home, with no connection from the conservatory at the rear of the house to the adjoining living area.

Downstairs was boiling hot in summer and freezing cold in winter. A few years after moving in, Alison and Phil decided to demolish the conservatory and replace it with an extension.

The couple commissioned a local architect to design an open-plan living space spanning the width of the rear of the property, to include a large kitchen with breakfast bar and a contemporary family area.

Planning permission went through fairly quickly, the only requirement being that all the new windows and doors be triple glazed.

"This does make it nice and toasty when they're all shut, but we designed the space so that when they are open it's perfectly airy," says Alison.

Phil and his father Graham, a joiner, completed most of the building work themselves, with local trades engaged when needed. Roof windows complement the extension, with four Keylite triple-glazed, centre-pivot PVC roof windows installed into the roof.

The project took the best part of three years to complete, with the decking to the outside patio adding the finishing touch.



"The sheer scale of the building process was quite daunting but well worth the upheaval in the end," says Alison. "My advice to anyone who wants to undertake a similar project is to use a local builder to do the work if you want it completed in a shorter timescale.

"With two young children at home, living in a building site for so long was quite difficult at times. My favourite part of the entire extension is the roof windows. They set off the space beautifully and cast a wonderful light across the whole space," says Alison.

"The fact they are triple glazed with expanding thermal collar and warm edge glazing supplied as standard also means the thermal performance is second to none. They really set off the room – fully transforming the space and helping bring the outside in."





Pictures: The new extension includes a kitchen and living area, which is filled with natural light through the triple-glazed doors, windows and roof lights.

building**matters**



Easy install heat pump

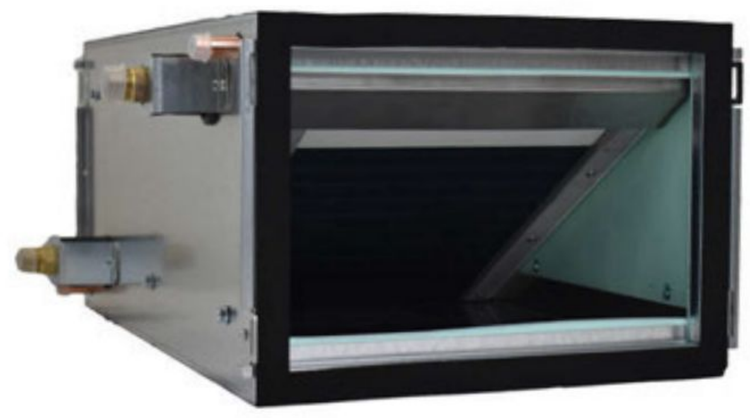
Viessmann's new Vitocal 100-A air source heat pump is designed for ease of installation in the standard British heating system – and is ideal for the replacement of gas and oil boilers. The monobloc unit's tight dimensions are perfect for homes where space is at a premium, while its A+++ rated energy efficiency offers low running costs, being the most compact and affordable model in the range.

Graham Russell, Viessmann UK's MD, said: "It is a new, environmentally responsible heating option that is as simple to retrofit to existing homes as it is to specify for new builds. Viessmann is serious about offering a quality product in this volume sector of the market and therefore the Vitocal 100-A is price-competitive with equivalent standard monobloc air source heat pumps from other leading manufacturers."

The Vitocal 100-A doesn't require a complementary indoor unit and uses eco-friendly R32 refrigerant so a refrigerant certificate isn't necessary.

The pump measures 377mm to 455mm deep, 924mm to 1047mm wide, and 828mm to 1409mm high, depending on output. Six versions are available, with outputs ranging from 6kW to 16kW. Where a greater output heating system is required, the units can be arranged in a cascade system of up to seven heat pumps.

The pumps can be used in conjunction with an indoor space-saving combi cylinder, which combines a 250l heating water buffer cylinder and 50l DHW cylinder, or with an outdoor-located plinth-style horizontal buffer store. (viessmann.co.uk)



New heat exchangers

Zehnder has launched a pioneering range of air-to-water heat exchangers to be used with ComfoAir MVHR and ComfoWell technology as part of a comprehensive ventilation system to reduce overheating in homes, particularly in passive houses. The ComfoPost range can also be used to produce warm air in colder temperatures, providing filtered fresh air into the home. The four models range from the CW6 for airflows of 300m³/h up to the CW12 600m³/h for airflows of 600m³/h. (zehnder.co.uk)

NZ Tilcor steel roof tiles launch into UK

Permaroof has become a UK stockist for the New Zealand-based Tilcor Roofing Systems. The textured-finish Bond tiles have the refined look of a traditional-style roofing tile while incorporating the lightweight advantages of steel.

Tilcor's Bond tile, which launched in New Zealand in 1989, can be used on both residential and commercial roofs for renovations or new builds. The tiles come with a 50-year warranty and are around a third quicker to install and 70 per cent lighter than conventional roof tiles. They can be fitted to roof pitches as low as 12.5 degrees.

As well as being wind-tested to 100mph, the tiles are low maintenance, non-combustible, and 100 per cent recyclable.

"Tilcor's Bond is a lightweight roofing system that provides exceptional durability and strength – allowing homeowners to improve the look and value of their house in a matter of days," says Permaroof MD Adrian Buttress.

The tile profiles and roofing accessories are engineered to interlock and overlap. Tilcor is manufactured by the Ross Roof Group, which has been involved in roofing over five generations since 1942. Its stone-coated roof systems incorporate cutting-edge Zincalume protective steel, which gives the tiles a significantly longer service life than typical galvanised tiles. (tilcor.com/uk)







Fire safety guidance for trussed rafter ceilings

New ceiling construction details which show fully tested solutions for fire safety in new homes with trussed rafter roofs have been published with selfbuilders in mind.

The new Trussed Rafter Association guidance provides design options to meet the fire resistance requirements for trussed rafter ceiling constructions in individual homes. When followed correctly, these details provide fire resistance of 30 minutes, in line with European Standards (and the less onerous British Standards).

Fire resistance tests were commissioned to cover four different design solutions for trussed rafter ceilings in single occupancy dwellings, including options for new homes with more than one storey.

The free guidance includes information on the truss type, plasterboard, battens, insulation and additional components. (tra.org.uk)

30 years of Huws Gray

Anglesey-based builders' merchant Huws Gray has celebrated its 30th year in business. Founded from a single branch, the company has expanded to become one of the largest independent merchants in the UK, with nearly 100 trading locations.

The Huws Gray Group continues to push forward with ambitious plans for growth, with its most recent acquisition of Welshpool-based AC Roof Trusses completing just before lockdown. (huwsgray.co.uk)



Long-format bricks for a real design statement

Imperial Bricks has launched a new, long-format range, offering architects and specifiers the chance to create bold design statements and standout facades.

The range has six different linear bricks – Soft Red variations, Original London Stock and York Clamp – all available in 327mm x 102mm x 50mm, with slips cut to order.

Handmade, elegant and slender, linear bricks date back to Roman times, although modern variations are increasingly sought after for new builds across the UK.

"These really are beautiful bricks," said Jason Hughes, MD of Imperial Bricks. "They offer architects an exciting opportunity to create distinctive projects that also complement and even enhance their surroundings. We've seen increasing demand for linear bricks with the textures and colours to suit different urban environments. The long format can be used to emphasise angles in contemporary designs while the natural colour and finish variations add character." (imperialhandmadebricks.co.uk)



Taking the plunge

Gutter Mate Finia reservoirs are a suitable base for most water features. The tanks are made of 100 per cent recycled plastic and are available in four models. For large scale features, the Finia 1800 boasts a 420-litre capacity and can carry up to one tonne of weight. It is made from MDPE and is resistant to chemicals and algae. For smaller features, the Finia 650 can hold 35 litres. The simple design means they are easily concealed by the water feature and the reservoir can be used as a mould for a concrete base if required. Suitable for all types of landscaping, the reservoirs are easy to install and maintain. And there's no need to remove the water to get at the pump, as there is a dedicated hatch for access, making maintenance simple. Prices range from £57 to £187. (guttermate.co.uk)

Soil mixing solutions for eco-friendly binders

Ground remediation specialist Deep Soil Mixing is researching new environmentally friendly binders from recycled material for their soil mixing process.

Cement is commonly used as the main binder for soil stabilisation but DSM is exploring new ways to make its soil-mixing process even more sustainable.

Managing director Robert McGall said: "We have to be innovative in the way we build to tackle carbon emissions and this means starting with the groundworks. UK soil contains about 10 billion tonnes of carbon. It is vital we don't, where possible, dig this out and take to landfill."

Mr McGall said contractors often look to remove poor soil such as peat and this needs to be reviewed.

"Solutions such as soil stabilisation treat peats in-situ, changing its geotechnical properties without the need to remove it.

"By making use of the existing ground on site and improving it to achieve a specified bearing capacity and sheer strength, there is no need to excavate, cart away or dispose of the existing material off site and then bring in costly and bulky fill materials.

"It is not just about improving unsuitable ground but aims to turn poor-quality soils and fill into acceptable bearing strata for numerous applications," he said.

The company will undertake R&D at its research facilities in Bedfordshire and Staffordshire over the next 12 months.

Decking brush



Giving your decking a new lease of life with a fresh coat of oil or varnish just got a bit easier with this new swan-neck brush from Harris.

Combined with the Harris extension pole, it makes the job that much quicker and a little easier on the back, too. The brush is ergonomically designed to get into all the crevices, grooves and corners easily, making it ideal for painting a deck, or fence floor and is equally effective with paint, oil, or varnish. The extension pole is easily attached with simple push fittings.

For DIYers who prefer using rollers, the Harris Seriously Good Roller Frame and Sleeve set can also be used for fast coverage of decking, fencing and sheds with or without extension pole. (harrisbrushes.com)

Tested



New Greenworks cordless mower



There's a lot to like about the new Greenworks 48V, 36cm cordless lawnmower. It has a handsome and robust plastic deck, made all the more striking with its bright green paintwork and contrasting black catcher.

The motor is relatively quiet (about the same hum as a modern vacuum cleaner) and easily controlled by a lever which can be attached to either side of the upright handle for preference.

Two-in-one functionality allows the mower to be to set to mulch, to return the grass cuttings to the lawn, reducing the need for regular fertiliser, or to the catcher, which is a good size for easy handling.

Setting the cutting height couldn't be simpler with a single lever to adjust the five levels from 25mm to 70mm.

The motor is powered by two 24V Ah batteries which slot easily into the compartment at the top of the main body.

On the minus side, the battery life isn't long, so it took a couple of charges to complete a 300-sqm lawn. This was partly a result of having to restart it several times when my hand regularly slipped off the control lever as I manouvred it round a corner. RRP: £199.95. (greenworkstools.eu)



Call for ban on gas boilers by 2025

An independent commission has called on the government to ban the installation of conventional gas boilers in homes from 2025.

The commission, which was set up by the CBI and University of Birmingham, has published a new report recommending that substantial acceleration in decarbonising heat in buildings and industrial processes is needed.

In order to achieve this the commission proposes that the government focuses on rapidly stimulating business investment in new technologies and phasing out all fossil fuel heating systems by 2050.

Heating accounts for over one-third of UK carbon emissions, and is the largest single source. Half of this comes from domestic buildings, most of which are heated by natural gas boilers.

The commission's report outlines a series of practical recommendations to decarbonise heat, improve energy efficiency and promote transition to low carbon technologies, while delivering overall benefits to the whole economy.

The report also recommends that:

- From 2025, conventional natural gas boilers should no longer be installed, with alternatives such as heat pumps, hybrid systems, and hydrogen-ready boilers being installed instead.
- Energy efficiency is prioritised to prepare for the roll-out of a nationwide heat infrastructure upgrade that will support new jobs and skills opportunities.
- A time-limited 'Olympics-style' national delivery body is established to lead the development and implementation of a national heat decarbonisation strategy.

"A green recovery and progress towards the UK's net-zero emission target are doomed to fail if we don't address the urgent need to decarbonise the heat in our homes and buildings," said CBI president and commission chair, Lord Karan Billimoria. "Recent government announcements will undoubtedly fast-forward our transition towards net-zero. The commission's recommendations offer a roadmap to accelerate progress, ensure our nation stays on a path to sustainable recovery and guarantees the UK remains a global leader in meeting climate commitments.

"Aside from the moral imperative, there's also a strong economic case for protecting our planet. Large scale heat decarbonisation and energy efficiency would provide a huge jobs boost for the economy at a time when new career opportunities are needed more than ever," he added.



City's first EnerPHit home completed

ST BART'S VICARAGE IN WALKLEY is the first property in Sheffield to be certified to Passivhaus EnerPHit standard, one of the most stringent building standards for retrofitting existing houses.

The brick house was an ideal candidate for renovating to the required standards – it is detached, has south-facing living accommodation, and was built on a raft foundation, which provided a solid structure that could be insulated.

The home has also been insulated externally and sealed for airtightness, creating an interior that has 0.3 air changes per hour.

Designed and project managed by Bilton Design Ltd, the design transformed the property into an eye-catching modernist home providing ultimate internal comfort, functionality and energy efficiency, whilst utilising easily available low-cost building materials and construction techniques.

The stepped retrofit saw all unnecessary protrusions removed, including the central chimney, a concrete canopy, coal house and steps, with the walls repaired and repointed. This all made airtightness and installation of 240mm-thick EPS insulation



The original brick house.



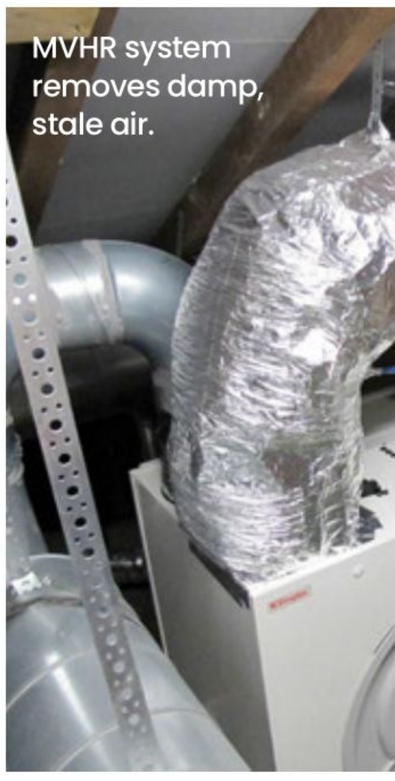








Airtight cable grommets.



MVHR system removes damp, stale air.

Sheffield's first Passivhaus EnerPHit house is clad in Siberian larch.





Left: Boxes ensure windows sit flush with external insulation.



much easier. Fire protection was also enhanced with 50mm of Rockwool slabs.

North-facing windows were reduced in size, and boxes made of OSB coated in liquid-applied waterproofing, were installed to ensure new triple-glazed composite window frames from Rationel were aligned with the external insulation.

The pitched roof over a single-storey extension was replaced with a flat one, to make way for a south-facing window at first-floor level, while new steelwork was installed to support an enlarged opening between the kitchen and dining room, creating better connection of the internal spaces.

A combination of PU glues, special tapes, liquid-applied membrane and foam has been used to make the structure airtight.

Graphite EPS insulation at 240mm thick was used on the outside of the warm roof along with 50mm of mineral fibre, with fibre cement slate-effect roof tiles selected for their light weight.

Internally, brick walls were stripped, repaired and pointed, and a parge coat applied to the face of the brickwork before liquid airtightness membrane and PU foam were applied.

Ventilation was essential in such a well-insulated and airtight building, and a faulty unit caused a build-up of mould. This problem was quickly addressed with the installation of a new MVHR system.

Dan Bilton, who designed the scheme, said: "The biggest concern with retrofitting a property is achieving the required airtightness, so it was a great relief when the test achieved three times better than the requirement for a passive house and 16 times better than the target for a typical UK building." **(biltondesign.uk)**

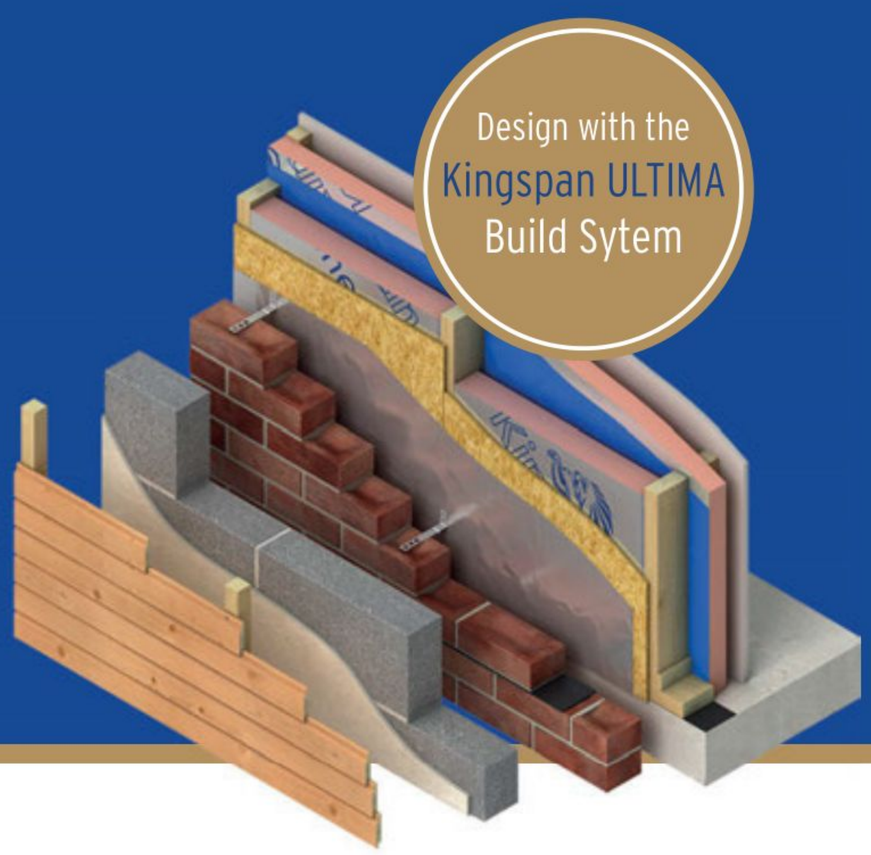


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Options for steading development

Q We are currently considering buying an old steading in Scotland. The property, in a very rural area, has full planning permission to renovate into four units. Our hope is to have one residence there for ourselves, with two units for an upmarket guest house/retreat business. The steading is an 'eyesore' with no historic or aesthetic value and it would be better if the buildings were demolished and something more modern, but in keeping, was built. After a phone call, a planning officer agreed that a single unit instead of four would be acceptable, but they were reluctant to discuss demolition without more supporting information. The person we will use for our pre-planning application reckons we might get away with just renovating one building and demolishing the rest but again we would have to draw plans.

The planning officer mentioned that we could put in a request for pre-planning advice with rough drawings/sketches. Even though it's a tough task coming up with a suitable design, we are about to do this but really want the full demolition. Under the council's policies, we think we could make a case. Is there anything else that would strengthen our cause?

A If you want to get the views of the planning officers, you are likely to have to give them something on which to base an opinion. This doesn't necessarily have to be a highly detailed design. If you can find examples of the sort of style you are thinking of, you could send brochures or photos. Talk to a few designers, look at their work and find out how much they would charge you for a sketch scheme. This could be money well spent.

Of course have regard to planning policies and put forward a case based on them. If the building is in poor condition, there might be a case on viability and/or practicality. A high cost of renovation could mean that conversion of the existing buildings would not stack up.

Maybe, at pre-application stage, the officer would accept some approximate figures for now. Also, the extent of work required to make the buildings structurally sound and comply with current Building Regulations could, in effect, amount to a re-build anyway. Planning isn't a cheap business, I'm afraid, and you'll be lucky to avoid expenditure just to find out whether there are prospects.

ROY'S TOP TIP...

"Talk to a few designers, look at their work and find out how much they would charge you for a sketch scheme. This could be money well spent."

Backland site

Q Our house has a large back garden. We've already got a drive down the side of our house to the back which, at the narrowest point where it passes the corner of the house, measures nearly 4.5m. We want to get planning permission to build a house in the garden. What do you think are our chances and what should be the next steps?

A Backland sites, as they are often called, can be tricky. There can be loss of privacy and disturbance at the rear, and access can create disturbance where it passes close to houses on the frontage. Where other similar development has taken place in the street or area and/or there's an alternative access, for example, a corner plot, there's often a better case. The access should be wide enough for a car or even for two cars to pass, should that be necessary. However, it sounds like it would mean vehicles would pass fairly close to your house. If there are windows of habitable rooms in your house facing the drive, that could make a difference. To get an indication, carry out a pre-application consultation with the council or get in tough with a planning consultant.

Need Roy's help?

You can email your questions to: ross.stokes@sbdonline.co.uk or write to: Planning Clinic, SelfBuild & Design, 151 Station Street, Burton-on-Trent DE14 1BG.



How can I reduce planning conditions?

Q Our planning application is going to committee this month. The planning officer has put it forward for permission, which we are obviously happy about. But, we've seen the planning officers' report and they want to put 20 conditions on the permission. Many of these seem unnecessary to us and I suppose we're going to have to spend time and fees getting them sorted out. Is there anything we could or should do at this stage or isn't it worth upsetting the application?

A Councils often attach far too many conditions to permissions, most of which are not necessary. The trouble is, slapping on conditions costs the council nothing. Unfortunately, many conditions do cost the poor applicants. All you can do is to contact the planning officer and explain why you feel the conditions are unnecessary or unreasonable. Have a look at the government's online planning practice guidance on use of conditions and use that for ammunition.

I have found officers sometimes listen but mostly don't. As you have hinted, getting the permission is the main thing and it's not worth jeopardising that, if the officers are reluctant to remove any conditions or don't want to confuse councillors by making too many changes. There's a right of appeal against conditions but, unless there was significant cost or inconvenience involved, it's probably not worth it.

Ask our **legal** expert

Property law specialist **Guy Elyahou** answers your legal questions.

Slowing down a build

Q I am planning to build three houses on a large site which is subdivided to accommodate one house per plot.

Planning consent was granted about two years ago but I had to delay the works whilst I got the funding in place. There were then some changes to the plans and as a result I have only managed to start work on one of the three plots.

I require the successful sale of the first house in order to fund the continuation of the development.

As in most parts of the UK the property market has collapsed because of Covid-19. The margins that I had originally worked with for the sale and construction costs are currently going to put me in a deficit. This will leave me in an embarrassing position as I am unlikely to have sufficient funds to complete the project.

I accept that this is unfortunate and ultimately my own miscalculation. In light of this I am proposing to ask the contractor to 'decelerate' his work in order to ride out the current property downturn. I want to time it so that I can exchange sale contracts as soon as possible for all three houses (and collect the deposits) but complete the build and sale on the first house before March 31, 2021 so that the buyers benefit from the reduced stamp duty payment.

I am aware that it is accepted in the industry to issue an 'acceleration order' where a developer can ask the contractor to speed up the works and be paid a fee for it. I am wondering if the opposite is feasible.

I intend to issue some kind of order and pay the contractor the costs in demobilising and then remobilising his workforce. Ultimately, I need to build in around a six-month month delay so that the property market has a chance to recover.

> "I NEED TO BUILD IN AROUND A SIX-MONTH DELAY SO THE MARKET HAS A CHANCE TO RECOVER.

A In short there is no straightforward answer to this – it will depend upon your contract. However, anything is possible, provided the commercial terms are agreeable to both parties.

From a purely legal perspective, it depends on what kind of contract you have in place with the builder.

Most contracts have a facility for the employer to issue a variation order, but I don't think the option to delay or postpone the entire works would be valid in this scenario. The order is an instruction which states the extent of any variation to the works.

For example, JCT contracts allow the employer to:

- alter or modify the design, quality or quantity of the works as shown on the contract drawings or contract bills
- make any addition, omission or substitution of any work
- alter the kind or standard of any materials being used on the works
- remove from the site any works or materials.

I don't think that a variation order can be used to slow the works down; in fact this could be in breach of your contract.

However, with a JCT Design and Build contract there is some scope for slowing down the works. The contract requires you to pay the contractor any loss and expense incurred – needless to say you won't want this open-ended and you will need to negotiate this sum with him.

Your suggestion of paying the contractor the costs of mobilising and demobilising his workforce and equipment requires a bit more thought. You will need to consider not only these costs but also any claims that he may have for loss of earnings, profits, rescheduling the works, payments to subcontractors and suppliers etc. It is a long list.

It is not all negative, though. With a downturn in both property prices and construction work it could well be in the contractor's interests to work through this problem with you. He too may want to slow down the pace of the works as it keeps his workforce employed whilst he seeks future projects.

Outside of the pure legalities of your contract, I believe you will need to undertake a certain amount of negotiation, even if your contract does allow you to instruct the contractor to slow down the works.

When it comes to your negotiations with him, consider the following:

- your common goals
- what new completion date you have in mind
- that your calculations are accurate – you can't agree a figure with the contractor and then revisit them at a later date
- don't ambush him.

As both you and your contractor have common goals, this is the key to ensuring your proposal works smoothly. For example:

1. You are both facing a slowdown: you in the value of the properties that you are proposing to sell and him in the available work. Accordingly it may serve both your interests to delay completion.
2. In order to fund the project, you need to complete the sale of at least one of the houses by March 2021 and exchange on the other two off-plan so that you have the funds to continue. Again, from the contractor's point of view he will want to ensure that you are in funds and not about to become insolvent, which would not help any party. You can take this thought even further and consider sharing some of the profit with him or even giving him one of the completed houses as compensation.

As a final note, you will need to start work on the remaining plots (assuming they each constitute separate planning consent) within three years from the date of the planning consent.

The commencement of your development can be triggered by:

- any construction work in the course of erecting a building
- demolition works
- digging the foundations
- laying a pipe, commencing works on a road
- material change in use of the land (in accordance with the consent).

Any one of these activities is enough for the planners to consider that your build has started.

You may also apply for renewal of a planning consent. This must be done before the expiry of the existing consent. Otherwise you will have to apply from scratch.

Renewals are generally a straightforward affair. However, it could get tricky if, in the interim period, there has been a drastic change in the local authority's development plan and your proposal no longer fits in with what they want for that locality.

Finance

A guide to self-build mortgage lenders

In association with BUILDSTORE MORTGAGE SERVICES

The table below, while not exhaustive, is a guide to the lenders that offer self-build mortgages and the range of products available.

LENDER'S NAME	Lend on land	% of end value of property advanced	Number of stage payments	Minimum works completed for 1st stage payment	Mortgage types available	National or local	Telephone
GUARANTEED ADVANCE STAGE PAYMENT MORTGAGES							
Bath BS* (Accelerator)	95% (OPP)	80%	Six	DPP & Building Regs granted	4.44%	England/Wales/Scot	0345 223 4647
Buckinghamshire BS* (Accelerator)	80% (OPP)	80%	Six	DPP & Building Regs granted	4.99%	England/Wales	0345 223 4647
Darlington BS* (Accelerator)	85% (OPP)	80%	Six	DPP & Building Regs granted	4.84%	England/Wales/Scot	0345 223 4647
Furness BS* (Accelerator)	80% (OPP)	80%	Six	DPP & Building Regs granted	4.15%	England/Wales/Scot	0345 223 4647
Mansfield BS* (Accelerator)	85% (OPP)	80%	Six	DPP & Building Regs granted	4.99%	England/Wales/Scot	0345 223 4647
Newcastle BS* (Accelerator)	85% (OPP)	85%	Six	DPP & Building Regs granted	5.29%	England/Wales/Scot	0345 223 4647
Tipton & Coseley BS* (Accelerator)	85% (OPP)	75%	Six	DPP & Building Regs granted	4.99%	England/Wales	0345 223 4647
Vernon BS* (Accelerator)	85% (OPP)	80%	Six	DPP & Building Regs granted	5.50%	England/Wales	0345 223 4647
ARREARS STAGE PAYMENT MORTGAGES							
Beverley BS	N/A	80%	Four	Wall plate	4.99%	England/Wales	01482 881 510
Buckinghamshire BS*	85% (OPP)	85%	Six	Foundations	4.84%	England/Wales	0345 223 4647
Chorley BS*	85% (OPP)	80%	Six	Foundations	4.64%	England/Wales/Scot	0345 223 4647
Cumberland BS	75%	85%	Flexible	Flexible	Call	Branch only	01228 403 141
Darlington BS*	85% (OPP)	80%	Six	Foundations	4.64%	England/Wales/Scot	0345 223 4647
Earl Shilton BS	50%	75%	Flexible	Flexible	4.99%	England/Wales	01455 844422
Ecology BS	80%	80%	Flexible	Flexible	4.65%	National	0845 674 5566
Furness BS*	80% (OPP)	80%	Six	Foundations	3.99%	England/Wales/Scot	0345 223 4647
Hanley	60%	60%	Six	Foundations	3.84%	England/Wales/Scot	01782 255 000
Hinckley & Rugby*	85% (OPP)	75%	Six	Foundations	4.29%	England/Wales	01455 894 083
Ipswich BS*	80% (OPP)	80%	Six	Foundations	3.99%	England/Wales	0345 223 4647
Loughborough BS*	80% (OPP)	80%	Six	Foundations	4.25%	England/Wales	0345 223 4647
Mansfield BS*	80% (OPP)	80%	Six	Foundations	4.49%	England/Wales/Scot	0345 223 4647
Melton Mowbray	75%	50%	Flexible	Flexible	3.49%	England/Wales	01664 414 141
Newbury BS	66%	75%	Flexible	Foundations	4.45%	Postcode restricted	Local branch
Newcastle BS*	85% (OPP)	85%	Six	Foundations	5.99%	England/Wales/Scot	0345 223 4647
Nottingham BS*	80% (OPP)	80%	Six	Foundations	3.99%	England/Wales	0345 223 4647
Penrith BS	75%	75%	Six	Foundations	4.99%	Cumbria	01768 863675
Saffron BS	65%	75%	Flexible	Flexible	3.99%	England/Wales	01482 881510
Scottish BS	60%	80%	Six	Foundations	5.89%	Scotland	0131 313 7700
Stafford Railway BS*	85% (OPP)	75%	Six	Foundations	4.27%	England/Wales	0345 223 4647
Tipton & Coseley BS*	85% (OPP)	75%	Six	Foundations	4.49%	England/Wales	0345 223 4647
Vernon BS*	85% (OPP)	80%	Six	Foundations	4.74%	England/Wales	0161 429 6262
West Bromwich BS*	85% (OPP)	80%	Six	Foundations	4.29%	England/Wales	0345 223 4647

* exclusive from Buildstore

Funding a self build

Self-build mortgages are paid out on the completion of various stages of the build, typically between four and six.

This means that you need to be able to fund stages, either from your own resources or other borrowing, before you are reimbursed by the next payment from your main lender. In the case of a timber-frame house, where the frame might account for a third of your total budget – payable in one go – this is likely to require careful juggling of finances. Establish clearly with your lender when and how stage payments will be made so you don't find yourself running into cash-flow problems.

One solution is to raise a loan on your existing home, to be repaid when you sell it. There are also schemes, such as Buildstore's Accelerator Mortgage, which allow you to remain in your home until your new house is completed.





Third time **lucky?**

Ron Hayward would like to build on a disused piece of land. However, planning permission has been refused. Despite this setback, could the site be the opportunity he seeks?



In brief

The site is in a small town near Coventry. Warwick and Leamington Spa aren't far away and Birmingham is only 15 miles or so to the west. The M40 runs to the south and there are railway stations at Warwick and Coventry.
The site is on the south side of a road which runs through the outskirts of the town. It's not a regular shape and has an area of about a fifth of an acre, with a frontage of about 35m and a depth of 18m. There are some surfaced areas showing amongst the scrub which has overtaken the site. Self-seeded sycamores have grown up around the place.

On the road frontage is a 6ft wooden fence. On one side boundary is a post-and-rail fence and there are trees and bushes along the others. An area of woodland adjoins to the east. There's a house to the south, well separated from the site by trees, accessed via a private drive to the west. Next door is a small office with a car parking area between the building and the site boundary.

Directly across the road is a pair of large semi-detached two-storey houses with white rendered walls and tiled roofs. Surrounding houses are a mix of mainly detached properties without any particular consistent style. The area is mostly residential with a pleasant leafy character.

Ron would like to build a three-bedroom house and a double garage. He's open as far as style of building is concerned. While, of course, he's keen to create an attractive-looking home, he's more interested in getting workable accommodation inside. He would commission an architect to prepare a bespoke design for the site and his main criterion is to include plenty of glazing for light and outlook. He appreciates that, although the site has a decent area, it isn't actually that deep so a house couldn't have a long back garden. This won't be a problem. Ron understands getting permission probably wouldn't be straightforward here and so securing permission for some form of house is the top priority.

Planning history

Planning applications for houses on the site have been made in the past without success. The council's website records aren't complete but I'm able to see that one made in the late 2000s was for a large four-bedroom property, located at about the centre of the site, with a new access point towards the east end of the frontage.

The drawings show a design with brick walls at ground-floor level, timber framing with rendered infill panels at first floor and a hipped clay-tile roof. The front elevation has a projecting gable feature with a lot of glazing which would have lit the staircase.

The ground-floor design has an open-plan dining room and kitchen, lounge, study, utility room and WC. The plans show four bedrooms on the first floor, two with en suites, and a family bathroom.

The application documents refer to a house previously being on the site. The reasons given by the council for turning down this application were that the house would detract from the character and appearance of the area and the position of the access would create potential risk of traffic accidents.

A second planning application for the same design was made shortly afterwards, this time showing the access point at the western end of frontage. This was also refused although highway safety wasn't given as a reason.

The applicant appealed against the council's second decision. In his letter, the inspector said the main issue, in his view, was the effect on the character and appearance of the area.

The inspector acknowledged that there was some evidence left of the previous house on the site but those remains, above ground at least, were minimal and had little bearing now on the decision. The inspector agreed with the council over the visual impact of the house and refused permission.

The council's planning record shows that, presumably in light of that appeal decision, a planning application was made a few years ago for another house.

Unfortunately, the details of this design aren't on the website for some reason. It, too, was refused by the council for a similar reason to the previous application but with an additional proviso that insufficient information had been submitted on the impact on trees on adjoining land. An appeal was made against this refusal of permission.

The inspector in her decision letter said that the issues to consider were the same as those set out in the council refusal notice. The inspector thought this redesign would have less impact than the earlier one but would still harm the appearance of the area, taking into account its setting. It transpired that the application had not been accompanied by the tree survey undertaken by an independent arboriculturist so the inspector thought that the absence of harm to trees had not been proven.

Interestingly, there's a reference in this appeal decision to a pair of semi-detached houses having been on the site originally, which were understood to have been demolished in the 1970s.

Planning policy

The current Local Plan shows the site to be within the defined urban area and states that new houses will be allowed on previously developed land within such areas. There's a list of policies relating to detailed development issues, including layout and design, density, access, parking and energy efficiency.

Amongst the policies' requirements are the need to harmonise with the existing settlement, enhance the character of streets, reflect local architecture, respect surrounding buildings in terms of scale, height, form and massing, use appropriate materials and detailing, and provide adequate open space.

The policies also aim to preserve the amenity of nearby residents, protect local ecology, avoid highway safety problems and take opportunities to maximise passive solar gain and limit overshadowing of buildings.

Principle

The good news is that neither the council nor the planning appeal inspectors have said that this is the wrong area in which to build a house. It's a mainly residential area and the council's planning policies do allow for new housebuilding, with particular emphasis on previously developed land.

I doubt the council would question that the site meets the definition of previously developed or brownfield land, even though there are not many of the former houses left now. So, since the principle should be acceptable, it's a question of whether the detail and constraints would allow a house to be approved.

Appearance

A couple of schemes have been refused on grounds of the effect on character and appearance. The scheme that's available to view on the council's website was for a pretty big property and, because the site isn't very deep, a house here can't be set back too far to reduce its impact when viewed from the road. It would be worth going to the council's offices to look at the revised scheme to see how that compares.

Scaling down is likely to be the answer. First, Ron doesn't need a huge four-bedroom place, so it's likely his house would be smaller. Second, reducing bulk or height doesn't necessarily mean giving up a great deal of floor space. The planning officers' reports on the application might shed more light on the council's thinking on visual impact.

I suspect it would be possible to design a house which would be consistent with surrounding properties and drop into the site without appearing too dominant. A chalet often does the trick in these situations. Careful thought could also be given to tree planting. A decent hedge on the frontage and/or some appropriate tree planting would soften the appearance and help blend a house into the setting.

Trees

I imagine there's sufficient room to site a house somewhere in the middle of the plot without it affecting trees. But, what do I know? This is a job for a tree consultant.

A tree survey would show the quality of surrounding trees and establish root protection zones around them, which would indicate the area available to site a building without affecting the health of the trees.

The council hasn't said trees would be harmed, only that this hasn't been demonstrated. With any luck, it would be a matter of submitting the survey enabling that box to be ticked.

Ecology

This hasn't been raised so far but with the aforementioned box-ticking culture in planning, I wouldn't be surprised if the council was to ask for an ecological survey. I doubt whether the site itself has much potential for being a habitat for any valuable species of plant or creature. The surrounding woodland might have, even though anything likely to be found there probably wouldn't stop the site from being developed. I think an ecological survey is worth double checking with the council as part of any pre-application discussions, prior to making an application.

Access

Having raised its head in the previous application, access seems to have been dealt with subsequently. The gist is that the access point needs to be at the western end. There's a slight bend in the road and it looks like this spot offers the best visibility. This is slightly unfortunate as the site is at its deepest at the western end and so the optimum location to site the house. The first refused scheme showed parking and turning at the eastern end. There might be scope to put a garage and a turning area close to the western boundary to allow all that to be accommodated together in one place, to one end of the site.

Doctor's diagnosis

The fact that planning permission has been refused in the past doesn't necessarily mean a site isn't worth looking at again. The specific reasons and thinking need to be considered. In many instances, refusals can be overcome. It's not uncommon for several applications to be made before the right formula is found. I reckon this could be such a case. It doesn't seem that there's anything fundamentally amiss here. My suggestion is to get a draft scheme drawn up which takes into account what was said about the previous proposals and what Ron wants to build. I think these things could well be compatible.

The draft scheme could then be used as the basis of a pre-application enquiry with the council. Before doing that, it would be desirable to commission a tree survey so the site layout can take into account the tree consultant's views. Should the planning officers still have concerns, Ron or his consultants could discuss them with the officers and attempt to reach a compromise. The draft scheme could then be revised and re-submitted for comment. Sometimes it takes a few rounds of pre-application consultation to get agreement.

Where design is the only or main issue, securing officer support in advance is often the easiest way to go, rather than trying to make amendments once an application is up and running and the council is concerned about meeting its application target timescale. The need for an ecological survey could also be clarified in the pre-application process. Providing all went well there, an application could be drawn up and submitted with some degree of confidence. This appears to be a site worth exploring further and, with careful handling, there would be reasonable prospects for Ron to achieve something.

Roy Speer, planning consultant and co-author of How to Get Planning Permission, How to Find and Buy a Building Plot, and Complete Planning Permission can be contacted on 01273 843737 or roy@speerdade.co.uk.

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WEALD LIVING

Fancy a new home tailored specifically for your needs, but not prepared to take on a self build? A small development in Kent is offering buyers the chance to design their interiors from scratch.



The two houses are set near quiet countryside.

Fernham Bespoke Homes is offering the opportunity to customise the interior of two new homes on its development near Maidstone.

Situated in the village of Linton and overlooking The Weald, the houses are part of a 13-home development set in 15 acres of quiet Kent countryside.

The two bespoke homes on the Hillside Park development are Chestnut House, which sits on a third-of-an-acre, and Sycamore House, which has a quarter-acre plot.

The exteriors feature Kentish ragstone and weatherboarding, with brick and render detailing. But at this stage the interiors are a blank canvas, awaiting the owners to shape the footprint to their own needs.

Fernham Homes has teamed up with custom-build specialist finance company BuildStore, which has created a range of exclusive mortgages to suit the specific needs of bespoke builders, with around 16 different building societies.

Up to 95 per cent of the cost of a plot and 95 per cent of the cost of a build can be borrowed with a custom-build mortgage making it possible for many clients to remain in their current home until their new home is completed.

Prices at Hillside Park range from £890,000 to £1.13m for bespoke four- and five-bedroom homes.



The site of the development in Linton.

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CHIVERY, BUCKINGHAMSHIRE

Chivery Road - Full planning permission is in place for a contemporary new home in an idyllic setting. This appealing residential redevelopment opportunity will mean the creation of an individual home with five acres set high in the Chiltern Hills Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty, adjacent to a woodland nature reserve. The current residential dwelling is basic and of indeterminate construction. Viewing is strictly by appointment via the agent. Planning authority: Aylesbury Vale District Council, 19/00842/APP. *The Wilkinson Partnership, 01525 382065, j.white@qualityhomes.co.uk*

BERKSHIRE

FINCHAMPSTEAD, WOKINGHAM
Fleet Hill – A residential development site of just over 1 acre with planning granted on Appeal for a detached bungalow with accommodation of approx. 1500 sq ft. Guide price £500,000. Wokingham Borough Council planning ref: 181295. Richard Worth Estate and Land Agents, Wokingham, 01189796796, steve@richard-worth.co.uk

BUCKINGHAMSHIRE

BIERTON, AYLESBURY
Badricks Retreat – Plot with planning for 4-bed house double garage, 3 bathrooms. Site has electric installed, water paid for, sewer installed. Drop kerb and lamp post still to move. Guide price £300,001-£450,000 Aylesbury Vale District Council planning ref: 18/00533/APP. Private seller, 07747 016757, mike@ibs1.co.uk

LOUGHTON, MILTON KEYNES
London Road – For sale by informal tender closing Monday 17 August 2020 at noon. A two-bedroom detached bungalow on a large plot, offering potential to build or develop, subject to planning permission. Plot measures approx. 75m in length by 25m wide (approx. 0.45 acres). Guide price £500,000. King Estate Agents, Milton Keynes, 01908 272724, info@kingestateagents.com

CAMBRIDGESHIRE

GUYHIRN
Building Plot Adj. Fairfields, Gull Road – Plot approx. 78 x 20m. Full planning for a four-bedroom detached house. Guide price £140,000. Fenland District Council planning ref: F/YR20/0307/F. William H Brown, Wisbech, 01945 464 451, wisbech@williamhbrown.co.uk

HADDENHAM, ELY
Building Plot, Hill Row – A building plot of approx. 0.18 acres (subject to survey) with outline planning permission granted on Appeal for a detached dwelling. Guide price £150,000. East Cambridgeshire District Council planning ref: 18/01277/OUT. Lacy Scott & Knight, Bury St Edmunds, 01284 748 600, bury@lsk.co.uk

PYMOOR, ELY
Building Plot – Detailed planning consent for a four-bedroom detached house on a site with frontage of 15.7m and depth 34m Guide price £150,000. East Cambridgeshire District Council planning ref: 19/00238/FUL. Cheffins, Ely, 01353 654 900, ely@cheffins.co.uk

TYDD ST GILES, WISBECH
Hollingworth House, Hockland Road – A Georgian family home, retaining many original features requiring modernisation. Guide price £375,000. Maxey Grounds & Co, Wisbech, 01945 583 123, wisbech@maxeygrounds.co.uk

WALTON HIGHWAY, WISBECH
Oakland – Plot for bungalow/chalet bungalow. Guide price £50,001-£100,000. Private seller, 07818 441199, e.peploe@icloud.com

CHESHIRE

BETLEY, CREWE
Ravens Lodge, Main Road – A triple garage block with full planning permission for conversion and extension to form a two-bedroom detached dwelling. The site, extends to one-third of an acre. Guide price £300,000. Newcastle-Under-Lyme District Council planning ref: 19/00788/FUL. Baker, Wynne and Wilson, Nantwich, 01270 625 214, enquiries@bakerwynneandwilson.com

WILLASTON
Mill Lane – Plans passed to construct a contemporary five-bedroom, five-bathroom detached residence spanning approx. 5,500 sq ft. Guide price £600,000.Move Residential, Heswall, 0151 342 0999, wirralsales@moveresidential.co.uk

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CORNWALL

BUGLE, ST. AUSTELL
Rosevear Road – A good sized building plot in a tucked away village location and yet close to the village centre and amenities. Outline planning granted for a 3-bedroom detached bungalow. Guide price £79,950. Cornwall Council planning ref: PA17/09784. Your Move, St. Austell, 01726 68192, staustell@your-move.co.uk

CONNOR DOWNS
Pulsack Manor Farm – Redundant agricultural building with conditional planning permission to convert into a stylish, stone-fronted 2/3-bed dwelling. Guide price £150,000. Cornwall Council planning ref: PA18/01437. Millerson, Hayle, 01736 754 115, hayle@millerson.com

LUXULYAN, BODMIN
Building plot with paddock at Treskilling – Detailed planning permission for a detached house of about 157 sqm (internal area). The plot extends to about 1.9 acres (0.77 hectares). Viewing strictly and only by prior appointment with the selling agent. Guide price £199,500. Cornwall Council planning ref: PA19/07493. Stags, Truro, 01872 264488, truro@stags.co.uk



HELSTON, CORNWALL

Crowntown – Extending to 1.75 acres, this generous plot comes with detailed planning permission for a substantial four-bedroom detached dwelling on a rural site enjoying far-reaching views across the valley of Trevarno. Guide price £195,000. Planning authority: Cornwall Council, PA20/01067.
Christophers Estate Agents, 01326 565 566, property@christophers.uk.com

MADRON

Land SE of Tre-An-Pras, Vingoes Lane – Plot at end of a garden with outline planning permission for a single dwelling. Guide price £120,000. Cornwall Council planning ref: PA18/01325. Miller Countrywide, Penzance, 01736 364 260, penzance@millercountrywide.co.uk

MOUNTJOY, NR. NEWQUAY

3&4 Coswarth Cottages, – Two attached three-bedroom former farm workers cottages set in grounds of 0.25 acres. In need of updating and, subject to consent, it may be possible to create one large family home. Guide price £450,000. Lillicrap Chilcott, Truro, 01872 273 473, sales@lillicrapchilcott.com

SCORRIER, REDRUTH

Redundant buidlings and land, Goonearl – Planning permission for change of use of two redundant concrete block agricultural buildings into a 230sqm residential dwelling and domestic garage. The permission provides for a single storey 5-bedroom residence. Grounds of approx 1/2 acre. Viewing strictly by appointment with the selling agents, Guide price £175,000. Cornwall Council planning ref: PA19/06445. Lodge & Thomas Estate Agents, Truro, 01872 272 722, property@lodgeandthomas.co.uk

SOUTH TEHIDY

Plot 1 and Plot 2 Collingwood – Choice of two non-estate building plots each with planning permission for a four-bedroom home. Guide price £200,000 per plot. Cornwall Council planning ref: PA18/06006. Whitlocks, Penzance, 01736 369 296, whagents@globalnet.co.uk

ST BREWARD

Adj. to Inellan – Building plot of approx. 28m x 16m with outline planning for a dwelling. Guide price £140,000. Cornwall Council planning ref: PA19/10643. Cole Rayment & White, Wadebridge, 01208 813 595, wadebridge@crw.co.uk

UPTON CROSS, LISKEARD

Plot 1, Little Upton Court – A building plot with planning permission for a 4-bedroom detached house on a development of just six properties. Works have commenced including foundation slab, drains, mains water and electric. OIEO £150,000. Cornwall Council planning ref: PA17/04850. Scott Parry Associates, Saltash, 01752 858314, sales@scottparry.co.uk

COUNTY DURHAM

MAINSFORTH

Plots 1 and 2 – Two plots available separately. Outline planning permission for a four-bedroom detached house on each plot. Variation in the exact size of the individual plots welcomed by the seller. Viewing by appointment with agent only. OIEO £140,000 per plot. Durham County Council planning ref: DM/17/03532/FPA. Dowen, Spennymoor, 01388 819900, darren.watts@dowen.co.uk

SHOTLEY BRIDGE

Plot 10 Swordsmith's Lane – Approx. 378 sqm with full planning permission for one detached home with five bedrooms over two storeys with loft bedrooms. OIRO £175,000. Durham County Council planning ref: DM/20/00299/FPA. J W Wood, Consett, 01207 502 109, consett@jww.co.uk

DERBYSHIRE

MIDDLETON, WIRKSWORTH

Soames Farm – Stone barn with planning permission for single dwelling standing in over 6 acres. Further land of about 5.8 acres is also available. Barn guide price £295,000. Derbyshire Dales District Council planning ref: 19/01201/FUL. John German, Ashbourne, 01335 340 730, ashbourne@johngerman.co.uk

SHIPLEY

The Field – A development that is being split into four plots with outline planning permission available for a detached dwelling on each plot. The land is in a secluded location with views over woodland and Coppice Lake. OIEO £375,000 per plot. Ashley Adams, Derby, 01332 202 040, derbyinfo@ashleyadams.co.uk

DEVON

BIGBURY ON SEA

Building Plot – Full detailed planning permission for a contemporary detached reverse-level two-storey 4-bedroom house of 203sqm (2,185 sq ft). The plot extends to approx.0.08 hectares (0.2 acres). Viewing by appointment with the agents only. Guide price £900,000. South Hams District Council planning ref: 3743/18/FUL. Kitchener Land and Planning, Topsham, 01392 879300, alex@klp.land

BRAYFORD, BARNSTAPLE

Sandy Park Barn – A detached barn with Class Q consent for conversion into a two-storey four/five-bedroom residence, set in about 1 acre of land. Viewings strictly by appointment please via the selling agents. Guide price £275,000. North Devon Council planning ref: 70710. Stags, Barnstaple, 01271 322 833, barnstaple@stags.co.uk

ILFRACOMBE

Plot rear Greenford, Kingsley Avenue – 0.411 acres with detailed planning permission for a three-bedroom dwelling with garaging/workshop on the lower level and living accommodation above. Guide price £200,000. North Devon Council planning ref: 65583. Stags, Barnstaple, 01271 322 833, barnstaple@stags.co.uk

SPREYTON, CREDITON

Barn SE of Nethercott Farm – Full planning permission to convert into a one-bedroom dwelling. OIEO £150,000. West Devon Borough Council planning ref: 1046/20/PDM. Stags, Exeter, 01392 255202, exeter@stags.co.uk

EAST SUSSEX

RYE

House with plot – Two-bedroom end-of-terrace home with planning permission granted for a two-bedroom end-of-terrace unit to be added to the side of the existing property. Guide price £300,000. Rother District Council planning ref: RR/2018/2508/P. Rush Witt & Wilson, Battle, 01424 774 440, battle@rushwittwilson.co.uk

EAST YORKSHIRE

GREAT HECK, GOOLE

The Stables Main Street – Full planning consent allows for the conversion of an existing workshop to create a residential dwelling. Guide price £175,000. Selby District Council planning ref: 2019/1269/FUL. Stephensons Estate Agents, Selby, 01757 706 707, selby@stephensons4property.co.uk

ESSEX

STOCK, INGATESTONE

Goatsmoor Lane – Building plot of approx. 0.5 acres with detailed planning permission to demolish the existing semi-detached dwelling and construct a replacement detached 5-bedroom house within the 0.5 acre designated plot. Guide price £1,050,000. Chelmsford City Council planning ref: 19/01954/FUL. Beresfords - Country & Village, Springfield, Chelmsford, 01245 350 614, country@beresfords.co.uk

WEST CHASE, MALDON

St Francis Convent – The Grade II listed property currently has planning consent for an educational use, however planning permission was granted in April 2018 for the change of use to a single dwelling. OIEO £575,000. Maldon District Council planning ref: FUL/MAL/17/01492. Fenn Wright, Witham, 01376 516 464, witham@fennwright.co.uk

HAMPSHIRE

BENTLEY, FARNHAM

Eggars Field – A garden building plot with planning permission granted for a four-bedroom detached home of 1544 sq ft. Guide price £200,000. East Hampshire District Council planning ref: 50604/004. Charters Estate Agents, Farnham, 01252 891886, farnham@chartersestateagents.co.uk

SANDLEHEATH, FORDINGBRIDGE

Building Plots – two plots with approved



PEASMARSH, EAST SUSSEX

The Paddock, Main Street – Set at the end of an unmade track within approximately 0.3 acres, an individual building plot has planning permission for a four-bedroom detached contemporary house with separate annexe. Guide price: £450,000. Planning authority: Rother District Council, RR/2018/2343/P.
Phillips & Stubbs, 01797 227 338, rye@phillipsandstubbs.co.uk

planning permission for five-bedroom detached houses with garage and off-road parking. Viewing by appointment only. Price on application. New Forest District Council planning ref: 18/10646. Hearnes Estate Agents, Ringwood, 01425 489 955, ringwood@hearnes.com

SHEET, NR PETERSFIELD

Land adj. Westwood House, London Road – Planning decision pending, a plot that will offer the opportunity to build a 3/4-bed, 3 bath, detached dwelling with garaging and swimming pool. Total build area of 6300 sq ft, of which 3750 sq ft is accommodation, this will be a substantial home sitting in a 0.8acre plot. Price on application. South Downs National Park planning ref: SDNP/19/06085/FUL. Homes Estate Agents, Petersfield, 01730 263907, petersfield@homesathomes.co.uk

HEREFORDSHIRE

BARTESTREE, HEREFORD

St. Brides – Planning permission for demolition of the existing dwelling and erection of a replacement home. The plot is approx. 0.8 acres. Guide price £125,000. Herefordshire Council planning ref: 191075. John Goodwin, Ledbury, 01531 634 648, ledbury@johngoodwin.co.uk

WIGMORE, LEOMINSTER

Barn and land, Ongar Street – Planning permission for a four-bedroom detached conversion together with approximately 4 acres of land and orchard. OIEO £250,000. Herefordshire Council planning ref: 191296. Diamond Sales & Lettings, Hereford, 01432 342 882, info@diamondlettingshereford.co.uk

HERTFORDSHIRE

BOURNE END

Union View – Semi detached chalet bungalow with 6500 sq ft of land 1900 sq ft of accommodation in an area of outstanding beauty with full permission. Guide price £450,001-£600,000 Dacorum Council planning ref: 20/01184/FUL. Private seller, 07860 426830, tbcltd@icloud.com

KENT

CHARING

Cobwebbs, Canterbury Road – A site with planning approval to remove two existing residential mobile homes and two outbuildings, and replace with a 4-bedroom detached chalet bungalow set in large gardens and a quiet semi rural location. Viewing strictly by appointment only. Guide price £350,000. Ashford Borough Council planning ref: 18/01651/AS. Hobbs Parker, Ashford, 01233 506 260, property@hobbsparker.co.uk

MINSTER THANET

Planning permission granted for single dwelling. Approx 1/2 acre with additional 1/2 acre available by separate purchase. Quiet country lane. Services connected. Guide price £300,001-£450,000 Thanet District Council planning ref: F/TH/19/0925. Private seller, 07866 234909, pandb79@gmail.com



BOLTON, GREATER MANCHESTER

Lostock Junction Lane, Lostock – A south-facing plot of land extending to 0.125 acres has outline planning permission for a luxury four-bedroom detached dwelling. Located in a sought-after residential location, the land is close to excellent amenities including schools, a direct train line to Manchester and close proximity to the motorway network. Planning authority: Bolton Metropolitan Borough Council, 03478/18

Private seller, 01204 845 982, audbeaumont@gmail.com

LANCASHIRE

BLACKPOOL

120 Ansdell Road – Plot with outline planning for a detached house with own road accesss and off road parking to the side. Guide price £30,000. Under £50,000 Blackpool Borough Council planning ref: 20/0044. Hunters, Blackpool, 01253 362640, blackpool@hunters.com

CATFORTH, PRESTON

Plot 1 and Plot 2 off Benson Lane – Plots with a planning area extending to 0.49 acres (0.20 hectares), with outline planning consent for two family-sized detached properties. The site is available as a whole or as two separate lots. Plot 1 Guide price £200,000. Plot 2 Guide price £210,000. Preston City Council planning ref: 06/2020/0269. Armitstead Barnett, Garstang, 01995 603 180, garstang@abarnett.co.uk

LINCOLNSHIRE

CASTE BYTHAM

Single building plot with planning permission for a four-bedroom detached stone house of approx. 2020 sq ft and double garage. Guide price £150,001-£200,000 South Kesteven District Council planning ref: S19/0978. Shouler and Son, Melton Mowbray, 01664 410166, s.johnson@shoulers.co.uk

HUMBERSTON

Plot 1, Manor Farm – Planning permission for a for a detached four-bedroom dwelling with garden space to the rear and an integral double carport. Further information from the selling agents. Guide price £200,000. North East Lincolnshire Council planning ref: DM/0199/16/FUL. Masons, Louth, 01507 350 500, enquiries@masons-surveyors.co.uk

WIGTOFT, BOSTON

Spion Kop Lane – A plot of approx. 17m x 23m and has planning permission for a detached three-bedroom house with integral garage. Guide price £110,000. Boston Borough Council planning ref: B/19/0449. Poyntons Consultancy Ltd, Boston, 01205 361694, sales@poyntons.com

WRAWBY

Starr Carr Lane – A well-proportioned plot of land with good access. Outline planning for a single dwelling. Guide price £110,000. North Lincolnshire Council planning ref: PA/2019/1912. DDM Residential Ltd, Brigg, 01652 653 669, brigg@ddmresidential.co.uk

LONDON

LONDON

Ravenscourt Gardens – Planning granted to demolish the existing two-storey period building and repalce with a property of circa 3,000 sq ft comprising either two spacious apartments or a possible single family house. Guide price £895,000. London Borough of Hammersmith and Fulham planning ref: 2017/02375/FUL. Unmod London, London, 020 7223 3338, info@unmodlondon.co.uk

WIMBLEDON

Durham Road – Detached building with planning granted to convert to create a two-bedroom dwelling with private garden. OIEO £250,000. CSJ Properties, Colliers Wood, 020 8296 1270, info@csj.eu.com

MERSEYSIDE

LOWER HESWALL, WIRRAL

Marine Drive – Building plot with dramatic estuary views. Guide price £600,000. Wirral Council planning ref: APP/19/00572. Hunters, Heswall, Wirral, 0151 342 2444, heswall@hunters.com

MEOLS

Bennets Lane – For sale by informal tender closing noon 21 August 2020. The preferred buyer will enter into an option agreement to buy, subject to planning. If planning is unsuccessful the buyer can then pull out of the agreement. Plot of land measuring around 530 sqm situated in a favoured and established residential area close to open countryside. Subject to a formal application the selling agents feel that planning would be granted for a four-bedroom detached house with garage. Guide price £185,000. Bradshaw Farnham & Lea, West Kirby, 0151 625 8844, westkirby@bflhomes.co.uk

MONMOUTHSHIRE

LLANDENNY, USK

Two Barns for Conversion, The Cayo – For sale as a whole or in separate lots, two Grade II Listed traditional stone barns that have full planning permission and Listed Building consent to convert into four-bedroom residential dwellings. Viewing strictly by appointment with the Agents. Guide prices Lot 1 (Unit 4) Offers in Excess of



SPILSBY, LINCOLNSHIRE

Main Road, Toynton All Saints – Seven self-build plots are for sale on a site of 1.06 acres/0.43 hectares in an elevated position with views over surrounding countryside. Planning approval of reserved matters was granted in June 2020 for seven detached houses and garages, serviced with mains electricity, water and drainage in an exclusive development off a private road. Guide prices £120,000 - £145,000 per plot. Planning authority: East Lindsey District Council, S/185/00546/20

Pygott & Crone, 01529 414 333, sleaford@pygott-crone.com

£200,000. Lot 2 (Unit 5) Offers in Excess of £230,000". Monmouthshire County Council planning ref: DC/2016/01381 and DC/2016/01379. DJ&P Newland Rennie, Chepstow, 01291 626 775, chepstow@newlandrennie.com

NORFOLK

DEREHAM
Adj Russell House, Commercial Road – Land with planning permission for a two-storey dwelling and garage. Viewing is strictly by appointment with the selling agent. OIRO £130,000. Breckland District Council planning ref: 3PL/2020/0388/O. William H Brown, Dereham, 01362 699 999, andrew.stone@williamhbrown.co.uk

HORSFORD, NORWICH
5 Green Park Road – Planning permission applied for on the 25th June 2020 for a three-bedroom detached chalet. Guide price £100,000. Broadland District Council planning ref: 20201256. Gilson Bailey & Partners, Norwich, 01603 764 444, norwich@gilsonbailey.co.uk

INGOLDISTHORPE, KINGS GREEN
Plot 7, The Green – A serviced plot that is 'ready to build' with all the required utilities. Full planning for a four/five-bedroom detached home of 2,594 sq ft over three floors with parking for three cars and a good sized south-facing rear garden. Designed by renowned architects Project Orange and AREA landscape architects. The design code offers much flexibility in the layout and finish of this property. Guide price for the serviced plot £205,000. Sowerbys, Hunstanton, 01485 533 666, hunstanton@sowerbys.com

MORNINGTHORPE, NORWICH
Hempnall Road – Planning permission granted for a substantial detached house on a 1.5 acre site. OIEO £495,000. planning ref:. Winkworth, Southwold, 01502 723 007, southwold@winkworth.co.uk

SWAFFHAM
Building plot of approx. 575 sqm (stms) which has consent for a new dwelling and garage. OIEO £125,000. Breckland District Council planning ref: 3PL/2020/0484/O. Fine & Country Fakenham, Fakenham, 01328 854 190, fakenham@fineandcountry.com

NORTH YORKSHIRE

HUTTON SESSAY, THIRSK
A single residential build plot with outline planning permission for a new two-storey dwelling with an approx. gross floor area of1,184 sq ft/110 sqm on a plot of approx. 3,164 sq ft/294 sqm with rural views to front and rear. Guide price £175,000. Hambleton District Council planning ref: 19/01022/OUT. Stephensons Estate Agents, Easingwold, 01347 821145, easingwold@stephensons4property.co.uk

MIDDLETON, PICKERING
Plot, South Lane – Approx. 0.15 acres or thereabouts. Plot width 14.57m and depth approx. 51.99m (measured from plan). Suitable for a quality detached residence to neighbouring and nearby properties. The land is for sale on a 'subject to planning' basis to allow buyers to make their own planning application. Guide price £159,000. Boulton Cooper, Pickering, 01751 472 724, pickering@boultoncooper.co.uk

NORTHAMPTONSHIRE

EARLS BARTON
Northampton Road – A garden plot with full planning permission for a two-storey property of approx. 2650 sq ft. Viewing strictly by appointment with the agent only. Guide price £399,995. Wellingborough Borough Council planning ref: WP/19/00534/FUL. Acorn Sales and Lettings, Earls Barton, 01604 810 088, earlsbarton@oriordanbond.co.uk

HARGRAVE
Church Street – Full planning granted for a 4-bedroom detached house on 0.28 acre level site. Viewing strictly by appointment with the selling agent. Guide price £310,000. East Northamptonshire Council planning ref: 20/00041/FUL. Berrys, Kettering, 01536 213176, kevin.odell@berrys.uk.com

NORTHUMBERLAND

GUNNERTON, HEXHAM
Bracken Hill – The last of five individual building plots (four now constructed and occupied). The site has outline planning permission for erection of a detached dwelling and garage. Guide price £140,000. Northumberland County Council planning ref: 19/04602/OUT. Foster Maddison, Hexham, 01434 605 441 / 01434 607 711, hexham@fostermaddison.co.uk

LONG RIGG, RIDING MILL
East Rigg – Planning permission for a large detached house providing over 350 sqm (3,700 sq ft) of living space over three levels. Guide price £200,000. Northumberland County Council planning ref: 19/01157/FUL. Foster Maddison, Hexham, 01434 605 441 / 01434 607 711, hexham@fostermaddison.co.uk



TENBY, PEMBROKESHIRE
Upper Hill Park – This elevated building plot has views of the sea and planning consent for a detached bungalow. The plot fronts a small cul-de-sac and all mains services are nearby. The plot has a frontage of approximately 42ft and and a depth of around 58ft. OIRO £90,000. Planning authority: Pembrokeshire Coast National Park, 19/0484/FUL. *John Francis, 01834 842 859, tenby@johnfrancis.co.uk*



NEWARK, NOTTINGHAMSHIRE
Hawsworth Road, Syerston – This individual building plot extends to 0.26 acres and has full planning permission for a spacious family home, providing a gross internal floor area of approximately 2,325 sq ft and a double garage. The property has a private drive entrance and will have a substantial frontage. OIRO £250,000. Planning authority: Newark and Sherwood District Council, 20/00249/FUL. *Richard Watkinson & Partners, 01636 611 811, newark@richardwatkinson.co.uk*

Maddison, Hexham, 01434 605 441 / 01434 607 711, hexham@fostermaddison.co.uk

NOTTINGHAMSHIRE

FARNSFIELD
Broomfield Lane – Planning consent for a two-bedroom detached bungalow in non-estate position. Available with a pre-paid CIL and a planning consent in perpetuity. Guide price £160,000. Newark and Sherwood District Council planning ref: 14/01854/FUL. Gascoines, Southwell, 01636 813 245, southwell@gascoines.com

KIRTON
Paddock Cottage Plot, Main Street – Planning permission for a detached L-shaped, three-bedroom bungalow. Guide price £125,000. Newark and Sherwood District Council planning ref: 19/02071/FUL. Gascoines, Southwell, 01636 813 245, southwell@gascoines.com

PEMBROKESHIRE

HUBBERSTON, MILFORD HAVEN
A level plot situated off a private road with mains water and sewerage connections. Plot has detailed planning permission granted on Appeal for a four-bedroom detached house. View by appointment with the Agents. OIEO £90,000. Pembrokeshire County Council planning ref: 18/0813/PA on Appeal. West Wales Properties, Milford Haven, 01646 698 585, milford@westwalesproperties.co.uk

LETTERSTON, HAVERFORDWEST
Plots St. Davids Road – Serviced self build plots with planning for a mixture of detached, detached linked and terraced houses. 22 plots available. Prices from £75,000 - £110,000. West Wales Properties, Haverfordwest, 01437 762 626 / 0845 094 3006, haverfordwest@westwalesproperties.co.uk

SHROPSHIRE

BROSELEY WOOD
Former Dairy Garage, King St – A building and ground measuring approx. 165sqm offering potential for redevelopment, with expired planning consent for a detached three-bedroom house and garage. OIRO £100,000. Harwood The Estate Agents, Broseley, 01952 881 010, patrick@harwoodbroseley.co.uk

LLYNCLYS, OSWESTRY
Bryn Benlli Barn and Paddock, Turners Lane – A detached barn with approx 2.45 acres. Planning consent for conversion dwelling and formation of vehicular access. OIEO £150,000. Shropshire Council planning ref: 18/04229/FUL. Halls, Oswestry, 01691 670 320, oswestry@hallsgb.com

OLDWOOD, TENBURY WELLS
Barn 2, Birchley Farm Court – Approx. 1400sq ft barn with planning permission to convert into a dwelling. Guide price £150,000. Nock Deighton, Ludlow, 01584 875 555, ludlow@nockdeighton.co.uk



OTLEY, SUFFOLK

Chapel Road – Available with planning permission for a three-bedroom detached chalet-style house, a building plot is for sale extending to around 0.2 acres. The proposed house is to be around 1,700 square feet and will include a kitchen/diner, ground floor en suite bedroom, first-floor master en suite and a further bedroom. Guide price: £165,000. Planning authority: East Suffolk Council, DC/19/4514/FUL. *Clarke & Simpson, 01728 724 200, jcook@clarkeandsimpson.co.uk*

SHIFNAL

Wolverhampton Road – Cash purchasers only. Full planning granted for a four-bedroom detached dwelling. Guide price £230,000. Shropshire Council planning ref: 17/02636/FUL. Fields Of Shifnal, Shifnal, 01952 460 000, sales@fieldsofshifnal.co.uk

STAFFORDSHIRE

HAMSTALL RIDWARE, RUGELEY

Blithbury Road – Former gospel hall for which the current owners have received a favourable written response from Lichfield District Council regarding the change of use D1 (place of worship) to C3 (Residential Development). Guide price £125,000. John German, Barton Under Needwood, 01283 716 806, barton@johngerman.co.uk

HANBURY, BURTON-ON-TRENT

Meadow View Close – Plot with outline planning consent for a detached dwelling. Guide price £195,000. East Staffordshire Borough Council planning ref: P/2018/01265. John German, Burton upon Trent, 01283 512 244, burton@johngerman.co.uk

SUFFOLK

BUXHALL, STOWMARKET

19 Brettenham Road – A 3-bedroom detached house in large village plot. Ongoing structural issues require cash buyers only as not mortgageable nor insurable. Good position overlooking fields. Viewing strictly by appointment with the Agents. Guide price £200,000. Lacy Scott & Knight, Stowmarket, 01449 612 384, mail@lsk.co.uk

CAMPSEA ASHE

Building Plot at Farm View –Approx. 0.15 acres with planning permission for a detached three-bedroom chalet house, backing onto farmland at the rear. Guide price £140,000. East Suffolk Council planning ref: DC/19/4650/FUL. Clarke & Simpson, Framlingham, 01728 724 200, jcook@clarkeandsimpson.co.uk

ELMSWELL, BURY ST EDMUNDS

Kiln Lane – Choice of three individual garden plots, each about 0.25 of an acre (sts). Full planning permission granted Feb 2020 for a detached properties with garages. Plot 1 £179,000, Plot 2 £175,000, Plot 3 £183,000. St Edmundsbury Borough Council planning ref: DC/19/05810. Jackson-Stops & Staff, Bury St Edmunds, 01284 700 535, burystedmunds@jackson-stops.co.uk

RUSHMERE ST ANDREW, IPSWICH

138a The Street – A 0.2 acre site with outline planning permission for a three/four-bedroom detached property. Guide price £250,000. East Suffolk Council planning ref: DC/20/1736/OUT. Jackson-Stops & Staff, Ipswich, 01473 218218, liza.scott@jackson-stops.co.uk

SURREY

CROYDON

Meadvale Road – Planning permission for a one-bedroom detached bungalow with mezzanine floor that potentially could be utilised as a second bedroom sttp. Please phone agent if you wish to arrange a viewing appointment for this property. OIRO £225,000. Benson & Partners, Croydon, 020 8667 0121, eastcroydon@bensonpartners.co.uk

HERSHAM, WALTON-ON-THAMES

Plot 2, 108 Queens Road – Plot with full planning permission for a detached two-storey five-bedrooms resudence with accommodation of around 3.530 sq ft/ 328 sqm. Guide price £725,000. Elmbridge Borough Council planning ref: 2017/3445. Martin Flashman & Company, Walton on Thames, 01932 227 788, waltonsales@martinflashman.co.uk

WEST CLANDON, GUILDFORD

Development Plots, The Street – Two plots available together or separately in a light woodland setting. Planning approval is for houses of circa 2,539 sq ft including first floor balcony (excluding garage/workshop of 465 sq ft) with 4 generous double bedrooms. Viewings strictly by appointment through selling agent. Guide price OIEO £650,000 per plot. Guildford Borough Council planning ref: 18/P/01959. Knight Frank LLP, Guildford, 01483 565 171, guildford@knightfrank.com

WARWICKSHIRE

BIRDINGBURY, RUGBY

Building Plot, Back Lane – Planning permission for a new four-bedroom detached dwelling. Guide price £225,000. Rugby Borough Council planning ref: R18/2238. Sheldon Bosley Knight, Leamington Spa, 01926 430 555, leamington@sheldonbosleyknight.co.uk

NEWBOLD ON AVON

Almond Grove – A site extending to approx. 0.43 acres that has outline permission for a four/five-bedroom detached property. Guide price £150,000. Rugby Borough Council planning ref: 19/1506. Howkins & Harrison, Rugby, 01788 560 321 / 01788 564 680, property@howkinsandharrison.co.uk

WELFORD ON AVON, STRATFORD-UPON-AVON

Headland Close – Planning consent for a detached, three-bedroom family home. Guide price £250,000. Stratford-on-Avon District Council planning ref: 19/03210/VARY. Knight Frank, Stratford upon Avon, 01789 297735, alison.davies@knightfrank.com

WEST SUSSEX

BOLNEY

Broxmead View – A rare 0.5 acre building plot with full planning permission for an architect-designed 4-storey detached dwelling totaling 7,550 sq ft (700sqm) plus separate garden store in the Heart of Sussex. Mid Sussex District Council planning ref: DM/19/2097. Private seller, glen.mcm@svtprojects.com

ELLENS GREEN

Plot with Planning – A 0.25 acre building plot with planning permission for an architect-designed 3-bedroom bungalow (116 sqm) in the rural location. L-Shaped plot with ample room for garden and parking. Price range: £450,001-£600,000. Private seller, 07590 722558, lucy.lorusso@reed.com

RUDGWICK, HORSAM

Quince Farm – Planning permission for a two-bedroom bungalow on a 9 acre plot. The foundations have already been laid to DPC level and there is water and electricity connected along with the septic tank. There is temporary permission to live in a mobile home onsite during the self-build which has recently been renewed for a further 3 years. Guide price £760,000. Horsham District Council planning ref: DC/14/1295. Churchill Country and Equestrian Estate Agents, Wisborough Green, 01403 700 222, property@churchillcountry.com

WEST YORKSHIRE

BAILDON

Plots 1 to 18 – Fourteen plot for individual detached houses adjacent the river Aire. South facing rear gardens on a private estate with adopted roadway entrance. Also two plots for pairs of semi-detached homes. Guide price £100,001-£150,000 per plot. Bradford Metropolitan District Council planning ref: 07/00464/FUL (part of). Private seller, 07525 323933, richardcraker@yahoo.co.uk

WILTSHIRE

DONHEAD ST ANDREW, SHAFTESBURY

St Bartholomew's Street – For sale by online auction on 11 September 2020. Former school house with planning permission to convert to a single-storey, 4-bedroom residential dwelling. Guide price* £150,000. *An indication of the seller's current minimum acceptable price at auction. It can be subject to change up to and including the day of the auction. Buyer's administration fees may apply. Wiltshire Council planning ref: 18/07176/FUL. Woolley & Wallis, Shaftesbury, 01747 852 242, shaftesbury@w-w.co.uk



EPSOM, SURREY

Headley – A plot is for sale with planning permission for a contemporary carbon-neutral home with four bedrooms, south-facing views over Headley Heath, parking area and landscaping. A number of tired commercial buildings on the site will require demolition prior to building work commencing. Guide price: £600,000. Planning authority: Mole Valley District Council, MO/2018/2045. *Knight Frank, 01932 591600, cobham@knightfrank.com*

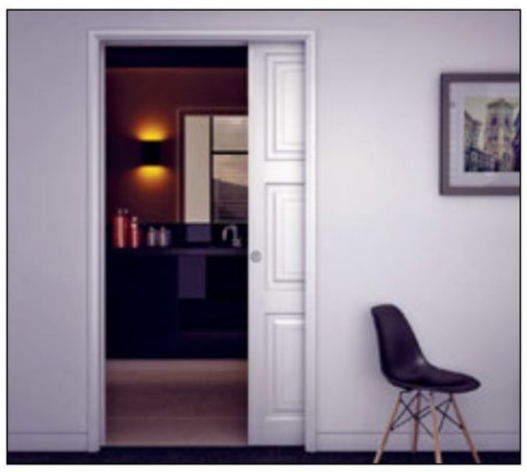
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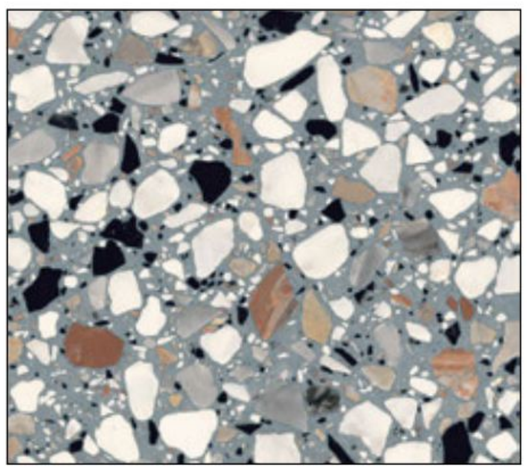
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KALDEWEI brings a classic bath back into the modern bathroom. The freestanding Meisterstück Classic Duo Oval is an object of timeless beauty, with an oval contour and conical external lines, encased in seamless panelling of superior Kaldewei steel enamel. While gentle on the skin, it is exceptionally robust and easy to clean. Two comfortable backrests guarantee relaxed bathing pleasure for two people. The Classic Duo Oval is the starter model of the Meisterstücke Collection representing excellent value for money and is guaranteed for 30 years.

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01480 498053 | **www.kaldewei.co.uk**

CHARNWOOD



CHARNWOOD have been designing and manufacturing stoves for over 45 years, their new Charnwood Fire Ball is a fabulously fun, self-assembly outdoor fire pit kit, British made on the Isle of Wight. A modern, sculptural piece for the garden with a rustic finish. This iconic piece is cut from mild steel and will oxidise over time turning a rich, auburn colour blending into the natural surroundings. This is all part of the design and character of the product.

For further information please contact:
01983 537777 | **www.charnwood.com**

WALLS AND FLOORS



The new Raku collection from **WALLS AND FLOORS** is inspired by the famous Japanese firing technique that dates back to the 1550s, it perfectly captures the tonal variation, the texture, and the crazing that Raku firing is so well known for. Made from ceramic, these tiles are durable and long-lasting, can be fixed horizontally or vertically, available in seven colourways each of which offers six different hues and 35 different designs to allowing you to create a beautiful bespoke wall space.

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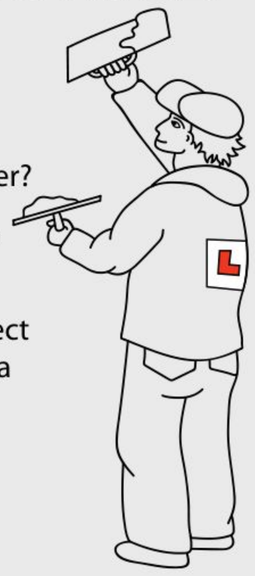
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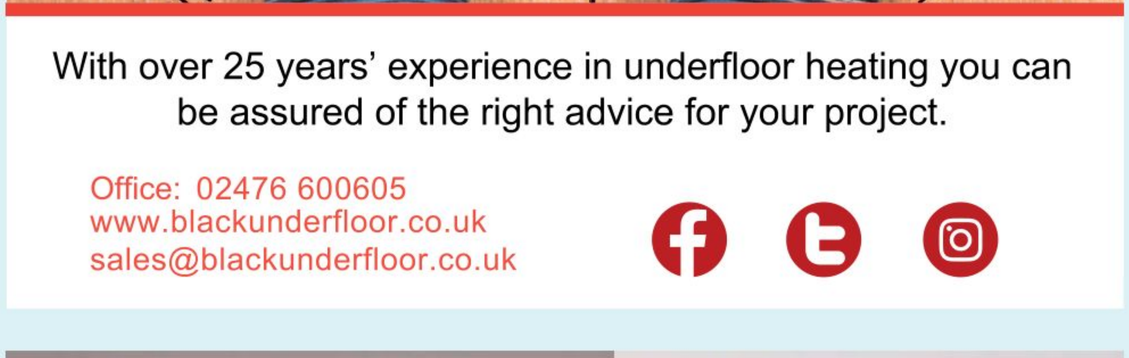
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November issue on sale September 30th

Beginner's Guide to **renovations** & makeovers



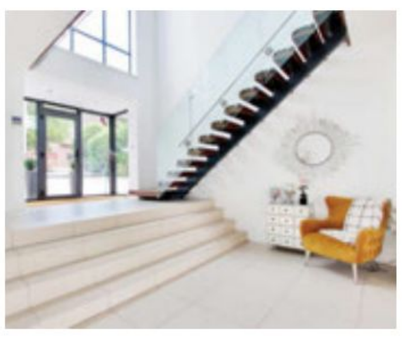
Out of the ruins...

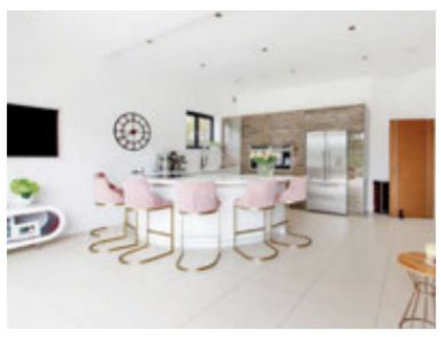
The ruins of a 17th-century parchment factory, together with an old cattle shed, form part of an incredible kitchen/living/dining extension to a listed Victorian house, creating a building within a building.











Floating stairs

Standing in the heart of a sought-after village, and enjoying a picturesque rural outlook, this architect-designed home features an impressive central atrium with a floating staircase.



Island home

This new four-bedroom home on Anglesey makes the most of the spectacular views.





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Selfbuilding IN THE ZONE

Will Boris turn the planning system upside down? asks **Gerald Cole**.

I made a startling discovery the other day. Walking up my street, I found myself taking a fresh look at my very first self build, completed some 20-odd years ago.

You'd think that after all this time, not to mention the two years of building that preceded it, I'd be familiar with every square inch. And I am. Every aspect is steeped in memories – but not always good ones.

It seemed that every stage of the project – from planning permission to foundations to mains sewer connections – opened a fresh controversy, with neighbours, local planners or Building Control. Not that the problems weren't solved eventually, but, as tyro selfbuilders, my wife and I were baffled, and occasionally infuriated, by the constant difficulties and the apparent strength of local opposition.

After all, weren't we trying to improve the neighbourhood – at our own effort and expense? A rather nondescript ex-local council semi was being extended on one side by the equivalent of a narrow three-storey townhouse. To balance the facade of the extension, a metre-deep span of concrete flat roof covering the porch and the entrance to an integral garage was built upwards into a gabled bay.

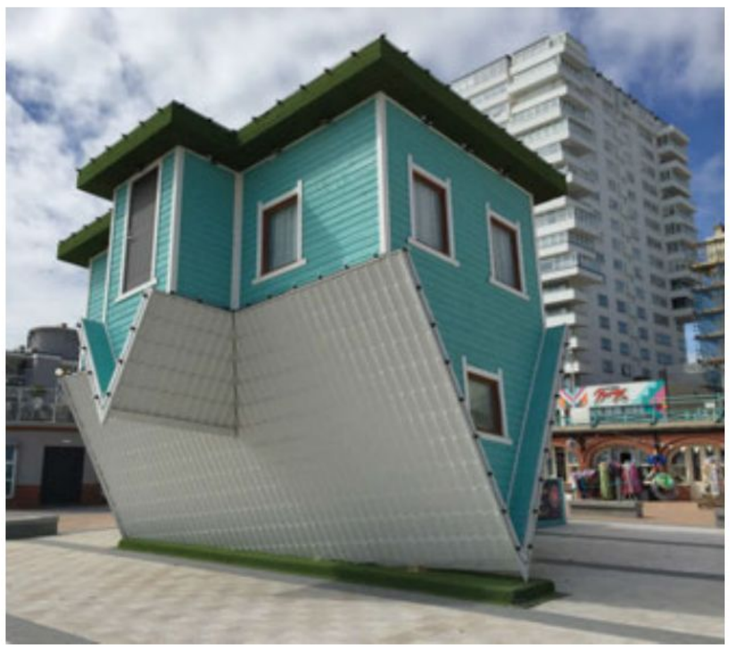
Did the neighbours really prefer the eight-feet high brambles which had previously occupied our side plot?

But then came the other day. You need to understand that the street was originally filled with large Victorian and Edwardian properties with even larger gardens. Over the years many were either converted into flats or replaced by multiple smaller homes, including my own. But, more recently, the replacements have been even bigger, boundary-spanning properties, often with attic accommodation and basements to maximise floor space. As a result I find myself living in a street of ever enlarging buildings.

And the discovery I made? My original home and its townhouse extension seemed to fit right in.

Sadly, this is not because of their size. It's because they're sited near the top of a hill, half masked by a conveniently big tree. All anyone sees approaching from below are two rendered facades – one three-storey, the other two. It looks like one substantial house.

In fact, it's now two separate properties. But the thought struck me. If they manage to seem so much bigger than they really are today, what impact would they have had 20 years ago?



> "LOCAL AUTHORITIES WILL NO LONGER SIT IN JUDGEMENT OVER EVERY (PLANNING) APPLICATION.

Suddenly my neighbours' objections don't seem quite so obtuse. That doesn't mean I entirely forgive them, of course. But it does reveal how easy it is to become locked into one's own carefully thought-out perspective. And the more carefully thought out it is, the less likely you are to consider the perspectives of others, who naturally won't have thought out theirs quite as carefully as you.

This thought arises this month because Britain seems on the cusp of big changes in the planning regulations. Boris has announced 'Project Speed' to 'build back better, build back greener, build back faster', promising 'the most radical reforms to our planning system since the Second World War'.

It would be hard to deny reform is needed. As selfbuilders quickly discover, the UK's planning regulations are complex, sometimes contradictory with decisions often made by elected councillors who are more skilled in local politics than they are in design or construction. Worse, planning departments have suffered dramatic cuts over the past decade, shedding hundreds of experienced staff. All this has made life easier for NIMBYs and planning success even more of a lottery.

At the time of writing details on the government's reforms are scant. There will apparently be greater freedom for developers to convert vacant or unused buildings, including shops, into residences without the need for planning permission. Two extra storeys can also be added to existing blocks of flats. High standards and current regulations will still have to be followed, 'just without the unnecessary red tape'.

But similar planning-free conversions of offices and commercial buildings into flats have been allowed since 2013. A recent independent report, however, found that one in five didn't meet the government's own minimum space standards. Some were as small as 13 sqm. Others had no windows – though the new reforms will demand minimum standards of natural light.

But perhaps the most promising part of the government's proposed reforms isn't in their recent announcement – it's in a recent appointment. Boris's new housing and planning advisor is Jack Airey, co-author of a report from the Policy Exchange think tank called Rethinking the Planning System for the 21st Century.

The report's big idea is zoning. This designates all land either as development or non-development land. Any proposed development has to follow a simple set of rules, designated in a Local Plan. As long as the development complies with the rules – and follows the Building Regulations – it's acceptable. Local authorities will no longer sit in judgement over every application.

The idea has echoes of the Graven Hill development in Oxfordshire where plots come with pre-approved outline planning permission, or Almere in the Netherlands where each plot is sold with a 'passport' outlining the basic requirements for each build. Typically this consists of the maximum height of the property, its distance from its neighbours and building lines for front and rear. Beyond that, you're free to build what you want.

Would a system like this have made a difference with my neighbours of 20 years ago? At least I could have claimed to have followed the rules from the start, rather than spend 18 months discovering they were only vague ideas in the minds of planning officers and councillors, which might change at any moment. That has to be an improvement.



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