

Direct to the self-builder

Your Build

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6 Phases to Your Build

Money & Management
Design & Methods
Footings & Foundations
Framing Your Self-Build
Interior & Exterior Finishing
Groundwork & Landscaping

SECLUDED INDULGENCE

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meticulous details

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- SMART HOME TECH
- CONSTRUCTION METHODS

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& Renovating
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**SELF BUILD
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7-8 March 2020 Peterborough Arena
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Welcome to Your Build magazine.

Here you will find inspiring case studies to feed your creative build ideas, and practical information to address every stage of your project.

In this issue, we head to London and take a look at three stunning case studies: a breath-taking family home that is equal parts drama and serenity, a soothing grid-inspired design for a creative couple, and a high-end renovation that reinstates a property to its former glory.

We head out to the Norfolk countryside to visit an elegant and sustainably designed home set within the beautiful landscape, and we cross the Irish Sea to marvel at the 'RIBA House of the Year 2019' built on the site of a former farmstead in County Down.

Our 'Phases' section has been curated to inform you of the fundamental considerations when taking on a build project: each phase contains focused articles, which cover specific elements of a build. Firstly, we delve into assessing your financials, making decisions on how the project is going to be managed, and the process of designing your build. We then focus on the construction process, from the early foundations and connecting to services, to framing the key elements of your build. Finally, our phases look at the interior and exterior finishes that need careful consideration, as well as the outdoor areas of your project, which require equal attention.

Your Build provides you with an easy-to-reference guide, taking you step-by-step through every stage of your project.

Enjoy the issue.



Rebekah Killigrew
Editor



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6 Key Phases to Your Build...

43 Phase 1 - Money & Management

Before any work can commence on your build, you will need to calculate building costs, assess your financials, and make some decisions on how the project is going to be managed.

47 Phase 2 - Design & Methods

Within the design phase you will need to research building regulations, decide who will be designing your build, and investigate suitable construction methods.

51 Phase 3 - Footings & Foundations

The construction work at the beginning of your project involves deciding what type of foundation is required, how to build the foundation, and how and when to connect to services.

54 Phase 4 - Framing Your Self-Build

Stud walling, roofing, windows, external doors, and heating and plumbing systems are all key elements of framing your build. You will need to decide on the best approach for each of these areas.

58 Phase 5 - Interior & Exterior Finishing

The finishing touches aren't just about stylish décor; you will need to select internal walls, external brickwork and rendering, soffits and gutters, as well as considering how to make your build as energy efficient as possible.

61 Phase 6 - Groundwork & Landscaping

The outdoor areas of a build also require attention; from driveways and garages to entrance gates and fencing, alongside planting and landscaping, there is a lot to consider.

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A soothing grid-inspired design for a creative North London couple

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Tips for helping you to keep warm while saving cash (and carbon)



RIGHT TO BUILD DAY

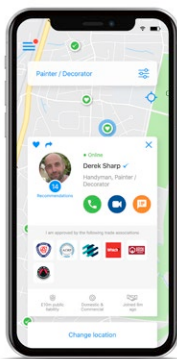
The National Custom and Self Build Association launched Right to Build Day at Graven Hill, the UK's largest custom and self-build development site, in Bicester, Oxfordshire. The initiative is being delivered with the intention of tracking local authority activity around the Right to Build legislation and to also encourage innovation in the UK's housing sector.

Right to Build Day is a watershed moment for anyone wanting to create their own home via self or custom build, as it marks the date by which all councils in England must demonstrate that they have met consumer demand on the

Right to Build register by allocating self and custom build plots. To coincide with Right to Build Day, MP and Right to Build Task Force Ambassador, Richard Bacon, opened Graven Hill's new Education House. The House (a self-build project itself) will give visitors the opportunity to learn about the various aspects of creating their own home, including product choice, design and construction methods. As visitors explore the Education House, informational graphics will guide them through the magazine's self-build journey and some of the decisions they can expect to face during their own projects.

LOCAL TRADESPEOPLE ON DEMAND WITH APP

A new app has launched which promises to be the fastest and simplest way for tradespeople to communicate with potential customers and secure jobs. Paddle App was co-founded by Ben Milton, who owns a plumbing and heating company in Kent, after experiencing years of disappointment with current offerings from companies that promise to generate leads for tradespeople. Open to 28 different trades, including plumbers, electricians, decorators and gardeners, Paddle uses location targeting to help customers find their nearest tradespeople and allows them to communicate via instant messaging, phone calls and video calls. This centralised communication means tradespeople can host all of their customer relations in one place. Users are also able to see which trade bodies and certifications each tradesperson is associated with, providing peace of mind and job security. For more information visit: www.just-paddle.com



ECO-FRIENDLY BUILDING MATERIALS SET FOR BIG 2020

One of the biggest developments in the property industry has been that of eco-friendly building materials, which essentially reduce the harmful environmental impact of building operations. With an interest in sustainable building, Sell House Fast surveyed 582 architects, engineers and construction (AEC) professionals to identify the eco-friendly building materials they expect the property (commercial as well as non-commercial) industry to increase using in 2020. Sell House Fast found that the majority of experts believe bamboo (74%) is the eco-friendly building material that will experience the greatest use in the property industry next year. Thereafter, 69% expect straw bales to have a strong inclusion in construction projects scheduled in 2020, whilst slightly less feel the same way about timbercrete (61%). Contrastingly, cork (38%) is the eco-friendly building material that experts predict will be utilised the least by the property industry over the course of 2020.

GROWTH IN KITCHEN RENOVATION SPEND

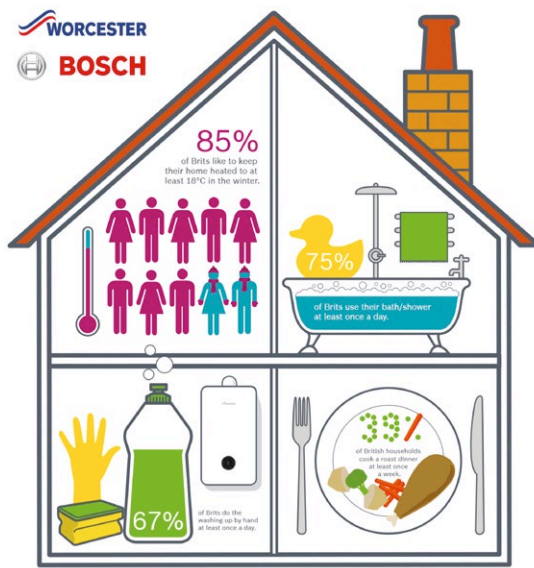
According to the annual Houzz & Home UK survey of more than 7,500 respondents in the United Kingdom, spend on kitchen renovations, one of the most popular rooms to renovate, grew by 11 percent in the past year to a median spend of £10,000. Median spend on bathroom renovations also grew by nine percent, to a median spend of £4,350 in 2018. Overall, renovating activity remained strong through 2018 with more than half of homeowners on Houzz renovating (57%) an average of three rooms per project, at an overall median spend of £18,000. Baby Boomers (ages 55-74) and Gen Xers (ages 40-54) combined represent three quarters of the renovating activity (7%), at a median spend of £20,000 each. Similar to expectations from previous years, 46% of renovating homeowners planned to continue or begin renovations this year, with 42 and 29 percent of Gen Xers and Baby Boomers, respectively, anticipating new projects. As homeowners consider whether to renovate their current home or to purchase a new home, the top two considerations for renovating are to stay in their current home or area, outranking return on investment. Wanting to stay in the current home is the biggest decision driver for Baby Boomers and Gen Xers, whereas Millennials (ages 25 to 39) chose to stay in their current home and renovate because it was more affordable than moving.



FEELING THE HEAT

Worcester Bosch released findings from recent research, demonstrating daily boiler usage habits across Britain as the national 'boiler switch on' gets underway. The vast majority (92%) of Brits are aware that a boiler breakdown would have an impact on their day to day life this winter and the survey reveals that the appliance is truly at the heart of everyday home life, with 85% of us planning to keep our home heated at over 18°C this winter, 75% of Britain typically taking a warm bath or shower at least once a day, 67% of Brits washing up with warm water by hand once a day, and 39% of households cooking a roast dinner at least once a week, with one in twenty (5%) roast addicts cooking one every day. The survey also reveals household differences in how the boiler is used, with the younger generation found to be swerving household chores such as washing up after a meal (48% of those aged 55+ wash up by hand twice a day or more vs. 30% of those aged 18-24). Additionally, when quizzed on whether they do the most washing up at home, only 18% of Brits said that washing up responsibilities are shared equally across their household. When looking at daily heating habits across the nation, Worcester Bosch's survey found that those in the North

West of England feel the cold more than the rest of Britain, with 61% of the region preferring to keep their house heated over 20°C during the winter months. This figure is 20% higher than the hardened souls of the West Midlands, of whom only 41% keep their house heated at over 20°C – the lowest of any region in the survey.



WORLD-FIRST 'SMART' FUNGAL BUILDING

A revolutionary new type of intelligent building made with green construction materials and capable of adaptively reacting to changes in light, temperature and air pollutants is being developed by UWE Bristol academics in collaboration with partners from Denmark (Centre for Information Technology and Architecture), Italy (MOGU) and the Netherlands (Utrecht University). Researchers from the UWE Bristol's Centre of Unconventional Computing will lead the construction of a smart home for the future using fungi, a carbon free material, as part of a £2.5 million project funded by the European Commission.

Using a novel bio-electric system developed by scientists, living fungi grown inside the building's framework structure will act as a sensor detecting changes in light, pollutants and temperature, and computers will analyse the information. When particular changes are recognised, the system will have the potential to respond adaptively by controlling connected devices such as lights and heaters. UWE Bristol computer scientists will work with European experts in architecture, biophysics and mycology on the project, which has been heralded as a potential breakthrough for the building industry due to its eco-friendly credentials. By using fungi as an integrated structural and computational substrate, buildings would have low production and running costs, embedded artificial intelligence, and could be returned to nature when no longer in use.

STYLE WITH CAST IRON PERFORMANCE



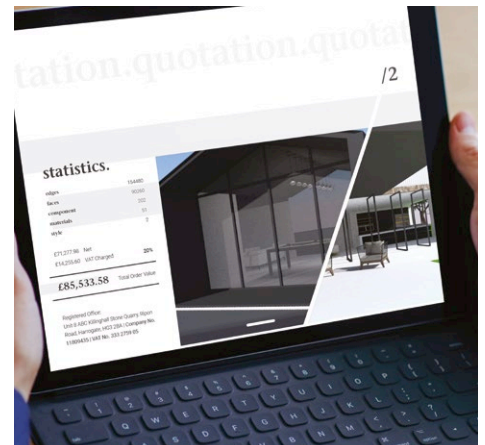
Dovre has over 60 years' experience in manufacturing cast iron **wood, multi-fuel, gas and electric** stoves and fireplaces that are built to withstand the harshest of Scandinavian winters, to view the full range visit www.dovre.co.uk

GREEN HOUSING REVOLUTION

A new green standard for new build homes will bring an environmental revolution to home building, tackling climate change while keeping household bills low. Unveiled by the Housing Secretary, Rt Hon Robert Jenrick MP, the Future Homes Standard will see polluting fossil fuel heating systems such as gas boilers banned from new homes by 2025 and replaced with the latest generation of clean technology, such as air source heat pumps and cutting-edge solar panels. Ministers will also consult on a new blueprint to overhaul the planning system in order to create a simpler, fairer system that works for everyone – from homeowners to small and medium businesses, local communities to housing developers. The government has also announced plans for a new national design code that will ensure developers build beautiful, well designed homes that people are proud to live in. In the coming months, every single local authority across the country will be expected to produce their own design guide which reflects their unique setting, character and history, while meeting the expected national standard.

NEW APP CREATES DREAM HOME IN TEN WEEKS

Modular housebuilder Built & Spaces has created its own software that helps it turn a customer's dream into a fully constructed house in just ten weeks. The Build My Home software lets customers assemble their new home room-by-room on the computer, adding different modules to meet their needs for kitchens, bedrooms, bathrooms and other living areas. Modern Methods of Construction (MMC) firm Built & Spaces' unique component-led system allows unparalleled customisation in the design stages, and minimises waste during manufacture and construction. Built & Spaces allots one week for the design process, but for one time-sensitive project the firm's staff were able to complete the blueprint for a four-bedroom house within 24 hours. Manufacture of the panels for the project is carried out to the firm's exacting specifications over eight weeks before being checked for quality by Built & Spaces staff. Foundations are laid over two days, before the frame and panels are assembled on-site by Built & Spaces staff within a week. The Build My Home software creates an inventory of all parts required for the build, meaning that customers' quotes



reflect exactly what elements are used. And Built & Spaces can estimate labour costs extremely accurately as on-site construction is not affected by weather and other delays, as other building methods can be. Both of these factors mean that customers' quotes are accurate, and not subject to guesswork and inflated mark-ups of traditional builders. Built & Spaces is working on a web-based version of the Build My Home software that will allow customers to design their house from the comfort of their own living room.

INDUSTRY SHOW BUILDS RESILIENCY

Despite Brexit looming, the London homebuilding and renovating market is showing no signs of slowing down, with reports of a 14 per cent increase in self-build projects underway, according to the latest London Homebuilding & Renovating Show visitor survey. In addition, it reveals an average project increase of over 10 per cent, from £120,000 to £134,000, alongside a 20 per cent growth in London-based visitors to the recent event, between 1-3 October at ExCeL. In addition to this year's success overall, the event experienced a significant per cent rise in exhibitor pre-bookings ahead of the 2020 show, as high demand from exhibitors continues; this year's event hosted eight per cent more companies this year than in 2018. The strong and positive response from exhibitors reveals that businesses within the property sector are addressing the needs of home owners within the self-build and renovation market and are maintaining their resilience despite economic volatility. This optimism was also displayed through the ambitions of self-builders and renovators attending the event,

with 76 per cent preparing to undertake a live project within the next 12 months, and each visitor spending 3.55 hours at the event. Visitors were keen to boost their knowledge and skills on everything from finding and buying a plot and creating a brief to planning

and project management. The best-attended seminars included those on creating more storage space within a home, while the free sessions at the new Land Hub stage, sponsored by Plotfinder and Potton, also experienced a high turnout.



DIARY DATES

Keep up to date with the latest trade events and shows to gain access to expert advice on your project

17th Jan 2020

Potton's Introduction to Self-Build & Finding Land *St Neots*

If you are considering self-build for the first time or still searching for a plot, then this seminar provides an essential introduction to the process, covering key topics including finding land, designing your home, getting planning permission and how to build a timber frame home.

18 - 19th Jan 2020

Homebuilding & Renovating Show *Farnborough*

The Homebuilding & Renovating Show offers a wide range of free talks including topics on self-build, renovating, innovative products, extensions, conversions and DIY projects. At the Advice Centre, there is the chance to have free one-on-one consultations with architects, planners, builders and our very own Homebuilding & Renovating experts.

31st Jan - 2nd Feb 2020

The National Self-Build & Renovation Show *Swindon*

This ultimate self-build show that is useful whatever stage of your self-build or renovation project you're at. Over the weekend the NSBRC's experts will be on hand to answer all of your trickiest questions, look over your plans and offer their professional advice to help you make the best decisions for your project. Take a tour of our Educational Zones and Exhibits, or talk to one of our 250+ exhibitors who will be showcasing the very latest products and technologies. The show's free talks are a great way to pick up a wealth of valuable information and over the weekend we'll be covering topics including planning, financing, finding land, custom build, and energy efficient building.

29th FEB 2020

NSBRC Workshop: Eco Design, Planning & Sustainability *Swindon*

Find out first hand how your designs, lifestyle and specification choices could impact on your home's energy performance. This day promises to answer all your design and planning questions, covering everything from the more traditional methods to more modern higher performance buildings. It will also cover legislative drivers and government initiatives as well as current incentives.

3rd - 5th Mar 2020

Futurebuild *Excel, London*

This is the built environment event where brands can share innovations, from products, to processes and solutions, with over 27,000 industry influencers and shapers. It brings the most important people in the industry together around the things that really matter to them. This is achieved through the agenda setting conference and industry leading keynote stages. This world class knowledge programme, alongside the exhibition of innovative and inspiring brands, will combine to create an unmissable experience.

7th Mar 2020

NSBRC Ask An Architect *Swindon*

The Royal Institute of British Architects (RIBA) is offering attendees of the National Self-Build & Renovation Centre a free personal consultation with an architect to discuss ideas for designing and building your own home or renovating or reconfiguring your existing home in a strictly no obligation 25 minute meeting. Undertaking a building project, whatever the scale, can be a daunting experience. By using an architect from RIBA Chartered Practice you know you are employing someone who has undertaken seven years of training and works to the highest standards in design, health and safety and quality assurance.

NOTHING WARMS BETTER



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smart home tech

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Fire It Up

The Wychwood gas stove features realistic ceramic logs that give a fabulous flame effect, which can be viewed through the large glass panel in the door. It is compatible with the MyFire App when the MyFire kit is purchased, meaning that you can control the stove from your smartphone or tablet.

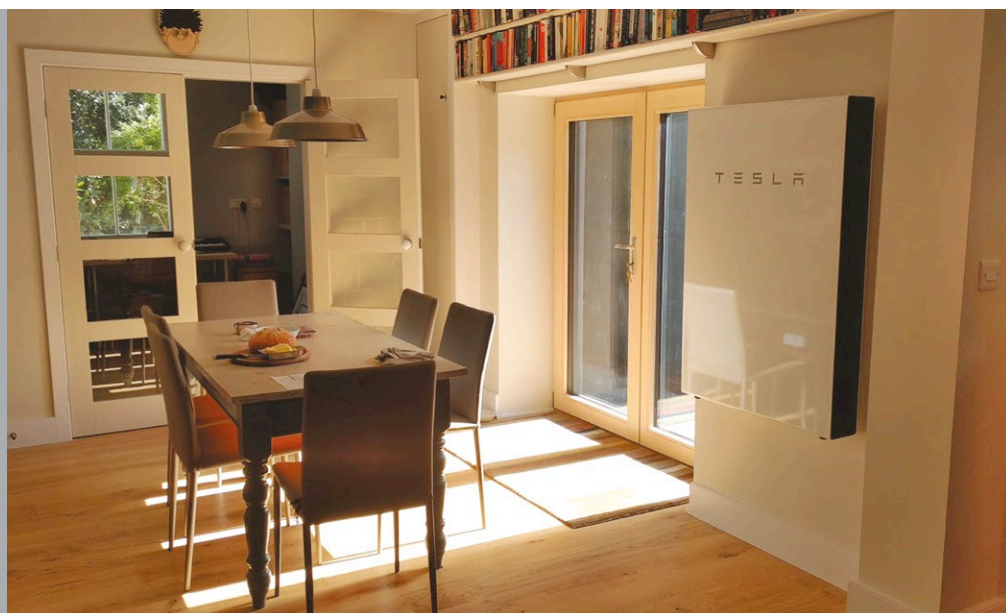
www.acrstoves.com



Home Battery

During the day, solar panels may produce more energy than a home uses; the Tesla Powerwall has the ability to store that excess solar energy, and makes it available on demand, providing you with a self-powered home. The Powerwall comes with a Tesla mobile app, including over-the-air software updates, which gives you full visibility and control over your self-powered home

www.tesla.com



Immerse Yourself

The Kaldewei Sound Wave is an audio system that provides an extraordinary experience of sound - both in and under water. This innovative bath audio system allows you to immerse quite literally in your favourite tunes! With the bathtub acting as the sound box, you can connect to your music collection via your smartphone, laptop or tablet.

www.kaldewei.co.uk



New Gen

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www.duravit.co.uk



Not Just a Table

Hidden inside the lower shelf of the Koble Kobe Smart Side Table are four premium Bluetooth speakers that connect users to music, audiobooks and phone calls. The surface provides wireless charging for compatible devices, and for non-wireless devices, there are USB points too!

www.cuckooland.com



In Control

EasyControl Smart TRVs are smart thermostatic radiator valves, which, in combination with the EasyControl Smart Thermostat, allow you to control the heating in each individual room to give maximum comfort when and where you want it. Controlled through the EasyControl app, benefits include a child-lock setting.

www.worcester-bosch.co.uk



Mirror Mirror

Simply connect your phone, or any bluetooth device, and enjoy your music in the bathroom with the Galactic Illuminated LED Bluetooth bathroom mirror cabinet. As well as a Bluetooth speaker, it has a range of additional smart features, including motion sensor and an internal shaving socket that charges a shaver or toothbrushes while stored.

www.my-furniture.co.uk



LUXURIOUS MONOCHROME

with a twist of **THEATRE**

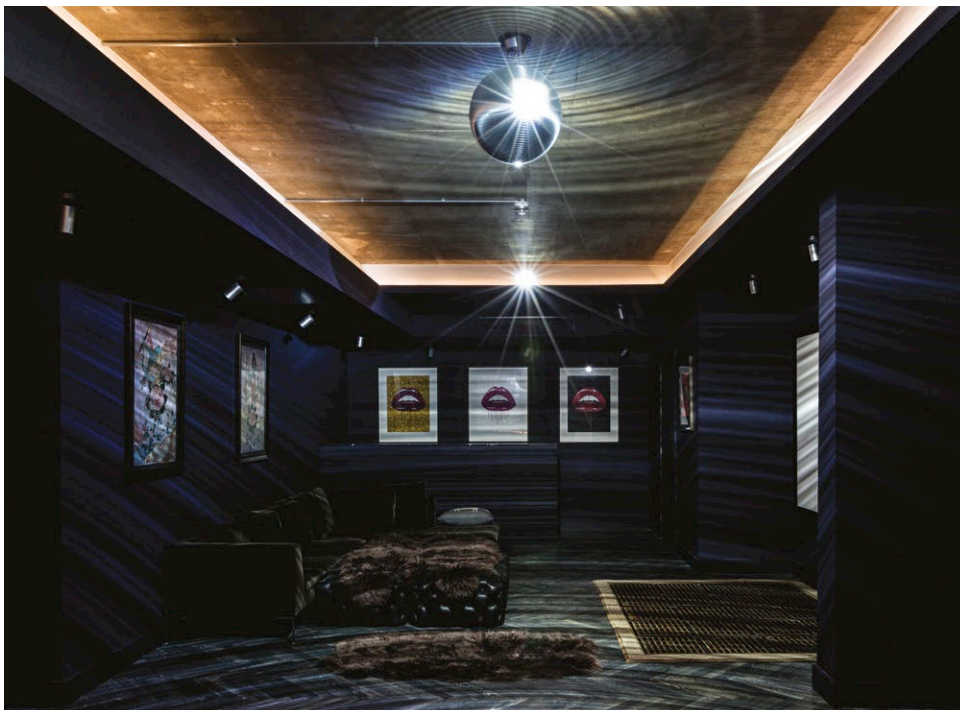
MW Architects completed a breath-taking, new build home in Hampstead, London for a family desiring theatrical interior spaces coupled with areas of calm

With a generous 750sqm floor plan, this unique Hampstead property exceeds its duties in providing a private yet indulgent home

for its large family – a finance manager and housewife with five children, and two dogs. The grand interior spaces have been meticulously detailed with luxurious monochrome fixtures and fittings, whilst allowing the homeowners to display their personalities throughout. Inspired by dark interiors and natural stone, the homeowners were passionate about injecting an Asian influence to the joinery where possible.

The four-storey build, which includes a basement, hosts generous living spaces and bathrooms, as well as a wine room, designated entertainment areas and a dramatic helical sweeping staircase. The garden has been designed to provide additional entertainment and relaxation space, and includes an outdoor yoga studio.

When the homeowners originally purchased the property, the plot was already flattened with planning permission for a new house to be constructed, and the basement concrete shell had already been built. Having worked with MW Architects on a previous Victorian villa project, the homeowners were quick to appoint the architectural practice again. Tweaks were made to the original scheme, minor material amendments to adjust the layout and look, to be more in keeping with the family's style and fulfill their brief for bold and theatrical interior spaces coupled with moments of peace and areas of calm.



At ground floor, the sculptural staircase is a striking focal point stretching in two parts to the second floor, which gives a sense of great height and scale. The main family spaces are at ground floor level and are connected in and out of the hallway as well as having a direct route through at the rear and to the external terrace. The kitchen and living areas are mirrored by the outdoor kitchen and dining area, providing a transience between the indoors and out, which was a key requirement of the brief. Tying the interior scheme together is the use of dramatic slabs of marble throughout the house.

On the first floor, the Master Suite is the epitome of private luxury with a 90sqm bedroom, bathroom and dressing area across the entire south facing rear of the property, behind a large double door from the main hallway. Facing a central Juliette balcony, the bed sits against a bespoke back-lit bedhead wall with inbuilt side tables and reading lamps and lights floating above. This opens up onto a large dressing area



with a set of corner cupboards and a central dressing unit.

Walking around to the bathroom there is a suggestion of what is to come as large slabs of contrasting marble 'peek out' into the passageway. The design is based on a series of slabs rising from floor to ceiling in contrasting and inverted marbles to create distinct spaces for the functions of the room as well as to define 'his and hers'. The marbles were carefully selected to be as close to a perfect inversion of each other as possible, with the monochrome adding to the impressive contrast. The floor-to-ceiling slab partitions are set to be perpendicular to the rear wall and window allowing light to flow into the entire bathroom space. The striking pebble free-standing bath floats harmoniously in front of one of the windows. The effect is a dramatic yet functional bathroom space where the rich materiality is given space to perform.

The remainder of the first floor comprises of a grand 'gallery' style landing, two further ensuite bedrooms, and a study. The second floor is a designated space for the younger children, with bedrooms at the rear of the property overlooking the gardens, a family bathroom and a play area, as well as an abundance of eaves storage.

At basement level, spaces for indulgence and

relaxation take precedence. A glass fronted wine room leads off to a large study area with a semi-circular roof light and bespoke, semi circular desk beneath. Along the full length of the floorplate at the rear is a luxurious party room, including a home cinema.

Of paramount importance to the homeowners is the outside space and gardens. A grand terrace has been designed to include an external kitchen, dining, sunken seating area with lily bowl and living room area with external fireplace, providing additional entertaining space which was required from the brief.

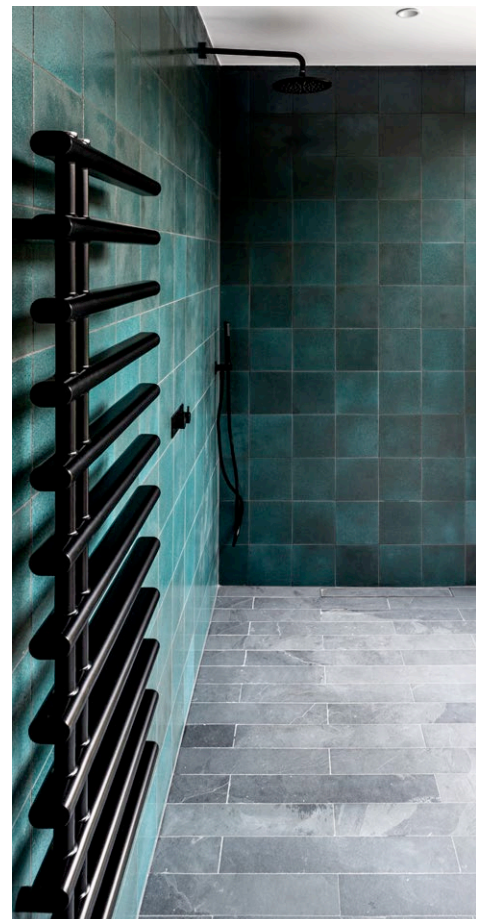
At the end of the garden is a contrasting area to retreat – the Yoga Dojo – a standalone garden pavilion under the canopy of towering lime trees. The building comprises three main spaces connected visually through its design and the continuation of materials. The structure and use of refined glazing provide the ultimate immersive connection between inside and out and allow the building to appear visually 'light' and subtle when viewed from the exterior and upper floors of the main house.

www.mwarchitects.co.uk

Twitter: @mwarchitects

Instagram: @mwarchitects_london

Photo credit: FRENCH•TYE





BESPOKE **DOORS** FOR YOUR HOME

For over a decade, **Kloeber** has offered self-builders, home improvers and developers a range of bespoke glazing solutions, helping them select the perfect doors and windows for their unique projects

Changing your front door is a cost effective way to improve the look of your property and add kerb appeal. Market leader, Kloeber, offer a wide range of bespoke doors and windows to self-builders and home improvers. Specialising in providing its clients with the full package, it offers a VIP service from the initial meeting and showroom visit, through to liaising with architects and builders involved in the project. The company will also conduct a detailed site survey to guarantee the perfect installation service, carried out by their in-house fitting teams.

With a wide range of doors on offer, Kloeber's

most popular design is the award-winning FunkyFront entrance door system. You can choose from 45 panel styles in their timber range (with oak or hardwood options) and 11 panel styles in aluminium. With numerous frame options, ironmongery and factory finishing in a range of stains or any RAL colour, you can create your own truly unique entrance door.

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Kloeber entrance doors are sold as a complete system with frame, glass, handles, hinges and locks, there are no hidden costs and with Secured by Design certification, these doors provide you with complete peace of mind. If you would like to match your door with the exterior and interior of your home, then you can choose the dual colour option. All doors can be delivered as supply only or Kloeber can offer a full fitting service.

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AWARD-WINNING DREAM HOME

on a budget

An exquisitely simple home in County Down, designed by architectural practice **McGonigle McGrath**, has been named 'House of the Year' by the Royal Institute of British Architects (RIBA)



Built on the site of a former farmstead, House Lessans completes a small compound of agricultural buildings. Its crisp, white rendered concrete walls capped with zinc pitched roofs echo the adjacent corrugated barn and root the family home within the landscape.

House Lessans is formed of two perpendicular blocks, a dramatic double-height living space, and a suite of three bedrooms overlooking a tranquil sheltered courtyard garden. While all rooms are minimal and paired back, they vary dramatically in volume and feel. The breath-taking open plan kitchen and snug take advantage of the views with huge expanses of glass, while the three, equally-sized bedrooms are restrained, private

and more familiar in scale.

House Lessans cost just £1,425 per square metre (£335,000), a remarkable achievement for a newly built home of this scale. Through the application of basic building materials, cost-saving hacks and the simple arrangement of rooms and spaces, McGonigle McGrath have managed to design a home of outstanding quality on a budget. Walls made of cheap concrete blocks have been carefully laid, rendered outside and painted inside with flush mortar joints to ensure a perfect finish. The huge windows are also fixed throughout (with openings for ventilation) a far cheaper alternative to bifold doors. Every penny of the client's budget has been carefully and well spent.

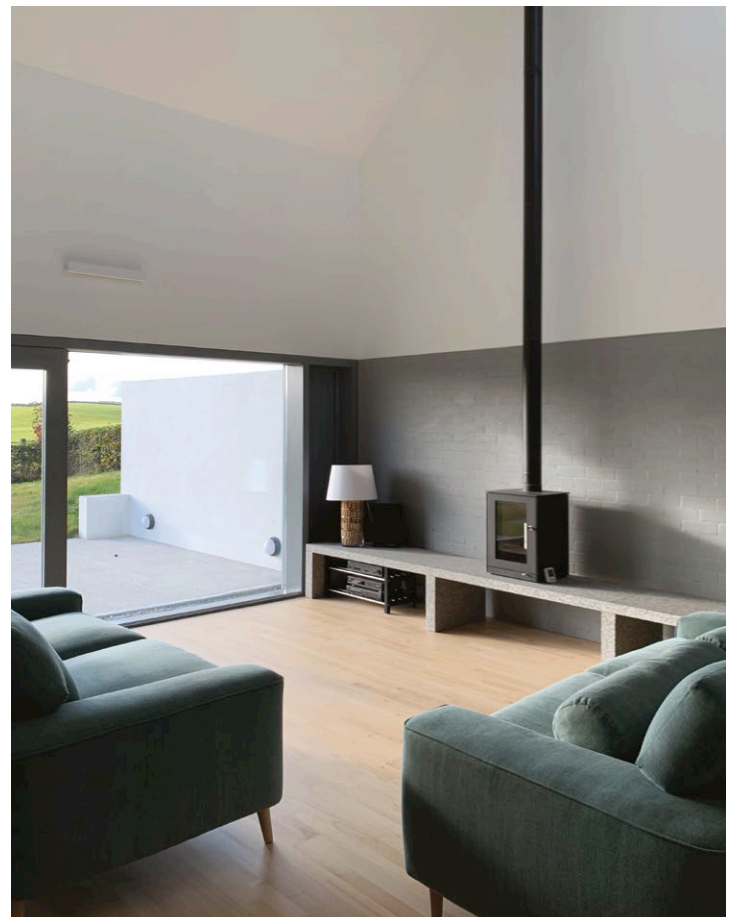
www.mcgoniglemcgrath.com

Instagram: @mcgoniglemcgrath

Photo credit: Aidan McGrath

Details:

Gross internal floor area: 235m²
Form of contract: JCT Intermediate Contract
Construction cost: £335,000
Construction cost per m²: £1,425
Architect: McGonigle McGrath
Client: Private
Structural engineer: MWL Consulting Engineers
QS: MJ Donnelly Quantity Surveyors
Main contractor: Hans Crosby
CAD software used: AutoCAD



OWNING YOUR WOODBURNER

Stovax explains how to get the most from your woodburning stove

Interest in how we personally impact on the environment is something we're all becoming more aware of. Many benefits come with owning a woodburning stove, from the ambience of a living flame, to making a positive impact on improving air quality. Here are the key things you should know to get the most out of your woodburner.

Understand regulations

As the owner of a woodburner, it is important you are aware of any regulations that may apply to you; for example, if you live in an urban area, it is likely that your property will be affected by smoke control restrictions. Smoke control zones are generally found in towns and cities and are in place to improve the quality of the air. In these areas, wood can only be burnt on approved appliances – look for stoves and fires that are DEFRA-exempt, or check that yours is approved on DEFRA's list of exempt appliances.

There is also a government initiative called Ecodesign, which seeks to improve air quality across the UK. By January 2022, all stoves sold in the UK must meet new strict criteria by law,

to increase performance efficiency in the home whilst also reducing emissions. While you do not have to update your stove as a homeowner, it is worth noting that new Ecodesign Ready models are much more efficient, reduce emissions and use far less logs than older models and open fires. In fact, many Ecodesign Ready models not only comply with the forthcoming rules, but they exceed the targets.

Burn the right firewood

If run with high quality recommended fuels, and if regularly maintained, an SIA Ecodesign Ready stove offers low-emission and efficient heating. A Stovax Ecodesign stove can reduce particulate emissions by 90% compared to an open fire, and 80% compared to an old stove. However, it is essential that good quality wood is used for burning, even if you are using a non-Ecodesign product.

Green or wet wood results in poor quality combustion, increased smoke and the production of tar and creosote and therefore increased emissions. Along with this, the heat energy produced by the fire will be wasted boiling the water within the logs.

It is easier now than ever to identify quality firewood with the Woodsure 'Ready to Burn' label – the UK's only wood fuel quality assurance scheme. Look out for the Ready to burn logo, which gives you peace of mind that you are choosing firewood that is of the right quality for burning on your stove/fire. It is also important that you store your logs under cover, off the ground and with good all round airflow. If seasoning your own wood it is recommended that you purchase a moisture meter – this will give you a good guide as to the actual moisture content.

Look after your appliance

It is essential that you maintain your woodburning or multi-fuel stove, which involves cleaning the appliance every year, after a long period of use – usually late winter or early spring. This involves cleaning out all ash, checking the seals on your stove are in good condition, and checking that the glass and firebricks inside the stove do not need replacing.

Along with cleaning the stove, your chimney also needs maintaining. Chimneys need to have a clear passageway for the combustion gases to exit your home. Along with obstructions, soot, deposits and tar can build up in your chimney over time, reducing the draw, making the stove run less efficiently and putting your property at risk of a chimney fire. For this reason, it is important to have your chimney swept at least once a year, although sometimes more. Factors such as how often you use your fire or stove, and the moisture content in the wood you burn, can affect how often you need your chimney swept. It is best to ask a qualified chimney sweep for assistance.

With a quality DEFRA-exempt or Ecodesign stove, good firewood, and proper maintenance, owning a woodburner can have a positive impact on improving air quality. You can find out more about the various styles and options available at your local trusted retailer.



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SUSTAINABLE DESIGN

Ambitious architectural practice **Studio Bark** designed an elegant and environmentally-friendly family home set in the beautiful landscape of rural Norfolk



Periscope House sits on virgin land in rural Norfolk, with a southern aspect and a gentle slope towards the valley of the River Tud. The two timber clad periscopic balconies frame the beautiful views to the valley, but also act as fixed passive solar shading, proportioned to respond directly to summer and winter sun angles. This ensures that the hot summer sun is blocked, whereas the

cooler winter sun is able to enter into the thermal envelope with very little obstruction.

A locally sourced amelanchier tree has been transplanted in front of the southern aspect of the building, and once established will provide additional seasonal solar shading. A high level openable rooflight and a substantial GGBS concrete trombé wall and stair provides for a low impact and season specific passive heating and cooling system.

High ceilings and a generous open courtyard ensure that the plan depth is minimised, accompanied with low level openable windows, (positioned to make the most of prevailing winds) efficient occupant controlled natural ventilation is provided. On the very coldest winter days, the building is heated with a small, efficient log gasification boiler, utilising seasoned firewood from the adjacent woodlands. The firewood will be sourced from the waste



timber of nurse trees, planted to encourage the growth of final crop timber.

All site spoil unearthed during excavation has been used for the landscaping, hugely reducing the impact on the UK's landfill sites, whilst also reducing transport footprints. All the Western Red Cedar used for the cladding was sourced from the local woodlands, situated just 500m from the site and was milled by mobile saw mill. The planks were stacked 'in stick' in the adjacent and redundant farm buildings before being processed, graded and installed by a team of masters architecture students from UEL.

This elegant solution for an affordable and environmental family home won permission unanimously at planning committee through Paragraph 55 (National Planning Policy Framework), which relates to building in rural areas where only designs of exceptional quality and designed to the highest architectural standards are approved. Periscope House was the first Code Level 6 building designed and built in the UK to gain planning permission through this policy.

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Underfloor heating frees your walls so you'll never have to place a sofa on a jaunty angle or compromise on your interior design ever again. You can even hide your thermostats away and control the entire system from your smartphones or tablet.

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Enjoy every room in the way you always planned – no more bulky dressing gowns, no more mittens and hot water bottles, the leap from bath to towel to bed can be far more enjoyable and luxurious. No draughts, no cold spots, no need for slippers or socks!

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The great thing about underfloor heating is that it gives the maximum comfort with minimal harm to the environment especially when paired with a heat pump or solar thermal energy, allowing you to feel good about your home and your carbon footprint.

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#FeelTheDifference

A top-down view of a white rectangular bathroom sink set into a dark wood vanity. The word 'WOW' is painted in large, stylized pink letters with blue outlines on the inside of the sink. On the vanity to the left of the sink are a white cup with a pink toothbrush and a round pink soap dish with a bar of soap. On the floor, which has a light grey and white diamond pattern, are large 3D letters spelling 'WOW'. The letters are purple with blue and pink internal details. A red and green plant is in the bottom right corner.

WOW
WOW

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HOUSE FOR A **STATIONER**

Architecture For London created a soothing grid-inspired design for a creative North London couple



This North London project extends a maisonette that had previously been converted from an early Victorian house. The reconfigured and extended home flips the original bed and living rooms creating a series of connected spaces for improved daylight and views. The new kitchen, dining and study spaces are informally defined by exposed oak posts and beams, which also allow natural light to penetrate deep into the lower ground floor plan. Soap washed timber bounces soft light around the house, enhancing the layered internal partitions. Framed views are created between the spaces and direct the eye towards the lush green backdrop outside.

The orthogonal grid continues throughout the property with bricks in a variety of bonds externally, and square tiles with contrasting colour grout lines to the kitchen and bathroom. This contemporary, geometric approach is contrasted with refurbished traditional Victorian details on the upper floor. The large skirting boards were painted to match the walls for a harmonised finish.

The depth of the rear extension was defined by an existing upstairs neighbour's stair, which had to be retained to allow access to their garden. Peterson bricks, akin to the tone of whitewashed London stock, cover the rear as it tucks underneath the stair. Fluted glass reduces the impact of this stair when viewed from the



new study. Garden life is brought right through the house from potted plants in the kitchen to a large planter in the hall.

The home was completed for a modest budget

but with significant benefits for the clients: boutique stationer Neil and graphic designer Mark. This is a home that highly compliments the considered and detailed approach that Neil and Mark bring to their work. The clients put significant energy into decorating, sourcing discounted fixtures and furniture, all allowing the budget to be pushed to the maximum.

Cost savings were not an afterthought - they informed the design rather than compromising it. The size limitations of the affordable rear glazing system influenced the graphic arrangement of the varied brick courses, highlighting rather than hiding the framing.

In the kitchen, the lines from the raw oak beams run through the kitchen cabinets, splash back tiles, and terrazzo-tiled floor. Using terrazzo tiles with matching grout gives the impression of a site poured terrazzo floor for a fraction of the cost. Other design led savings included using standard Ikea kitchen carcasses with upgraded fronts finished with minimal knobs.

The clients deeply engaged in the process, leading to a home that is truly theirs. Like a neatly ruled grid in a stationer's notebook, the house is all in order.



www.architectureforlondon.com

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Photo credit: Christian Brailley



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A BESPOKE HOME

South-London based design and build experts **Create Bespoke** recently completed work on a high-end four-storey home in Herne Hill





Formerly converted into two flats, this Edwardian property was reinstated to its former glory as a stunning four-storey home with the addition of some bold and dynamic features.

The clients wanted a home where they could relax and re-energise and also entertain friends and family. The use of quality materials and a high standard of finish were key to their vision.

The owners appointed Conibere Phillips Architects to create designs for a full house refurbishment and loft extension to add more space and light to the property and create a 'forever home'.

Utilising their expertise in structural engineering, traditional and contemporary construction techniques and handcrafted joinery, Create Bespoke's expert team worked closely with Conibere Phillips to realise their designs and transform the property. Key features include a highly complex geometric roof, custom library shelving, and a dramatic floating kitchen island.

The final result is a beautifully synergised collection of entertaining and living spaces, which challenge conventional layouts. The light-filled ground floor connects to the newly landscaped exterior and the addition of bespoke joinery and custom designer lighting create a continuous theme throughout the property.



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- Interactive Features
- Practical demonstrations
- Free Parking

The show will provide you with a source of inspiration, free one-to-one advice from experts, as well as 100's of exhibitors so you can compare prices in key areas such as glazing, flooring and the kitchen.

There's no better time to start planning – bring your ideas along to the show to find out how they can become a reality.

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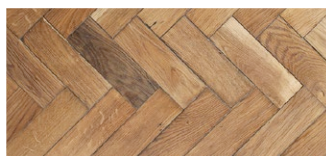
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STAY WARM SPEND LESS

Rex Nye, owner of online builders' merchants NYEs Building Supplies, shares his top tips for helping you to stay warm and spend less this winter

With winter's icy grip taking hold across the UK, it may be tempting to dial up the heating and leave it on a high setting till spring. But the impact on energy bills, and our carbon footprint, should not be underestimated.

Fortunately, there are many simple ways that heat can be conserved around the home and energy bills reduced. And as Britain works towards its target of zero net carbon emissions by 2050, it's more important than ever to reduce CO2 emissions within our homes.

Here are some tips for helping you to keep warm while saving cash and carbon.

Lofty ambitions

According to the Energy Saving Trust, a quarter of heat is lost through the roof in an un-insulated home. If your loft lacks insulation, make it your mission to act this winter. It's possible to lay insulation yourself, but for best results call in professionals, who will know exactly which types of insulation are suited to your loft space. As well as insulating over floor joists, it's possible to fit insulation between and over the roof rafters.

Deal with draughts

Even in a new-build house, it's likely you will be losing heat through narrow gaps around windows and skirting boards. If you've stripped your floor back to the original boards in an older property, the results might look fabulous

but your feet will be feeling the chill. Use draught excluding products such as silicone sealant to stop up these gaps. Keep doors closed and use a draught excluder - a rolled-up towel or blanket will work just as well as a shop-bought excluder. Block up unused chimneys using a chimney balloon or simply a bin bag packed with loft insulation.

Turn down the thermostat

Is your room thermostat set to a toasty 23 degrees or even higher? Turning it down by just one degree could save around £80 a year in heating bills, says the Energy Saving Trust. For most people, around 18 - 21 degrees should be warm enough (if the prospect is enough to make you shiver, please consider the next tip!). Install separate radiator thermostats and turn them down to frost setting in any unused rooms.

Wear extra layers

Wearing a thick jumper but still feeling the cold? You may need to rethink your indoor winter clothing. A combination of multiple thin layers is the key to staying cosy, because warm air trapped between the layers acts as an insulator. A good old-fashioned thermal vest might be all you need to stop the shivers and help you resist the temptation to whack up the thermostat.

Soft furnishings – think strategically

Your living room or bedroom may look worthy of a style magazine, but is it energy efficient? Floor-length curtains that completely cover a radiator when pulled will massively limit the radiator's ability to heat a room. Ideally, curtains should fall to the level of the window sill. Thermal curtains or liners are now widely available and can make a real difference. Place sofas and chairs close to radiators for comfort, but never block radiators totally.



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7-8 March 2020 ■ Peterborough Arena

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SelfBuild & Design East returns to Peterborough Arena on 7-8 March 2020, providing all of the advice, knowledge and inspiration you need to make your self-build project a success. Featuring both local and national companies with a wide range of products, systems and ideas, this show will offer vital information all under one roof, saving you hours of research.

Again for 2020, the focus will be on design and build, including project management and a variety of construction methods such as ICF, SIPs, timber frame and oak frame. Whether you are undertaking a new build or replacement dwelling, or favour a turnkey or custom-build approach, representatives from specialist companies will be on hand to offer their expertise. If you plan to build a low-energy home, come and receive support from Passivhaus experts who will ensure

your green build is on track. If you are having problems with planning permission, our planning expert will be available to discuss queries in our Ask an Expert area so make sure to book an appointment on arrival at the show.

Other show highlights include windows and doors to suit every style, interior design inspiration and advice on funding your self build, including how to manage your finance, self-build mortgage options and VAT reclaim.

With so much on offer, here's how to make the most out of the show...

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Meet the companies that supply materials, help with finance, design and build your home and so much more.

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Our free seminars cover key topics including how to get started on your project, funding options and advice on building methods and techniques, led by the experts.

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ASK OUR EXPERTS

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Alternatively, call 01283 742950 and quote **YOUR BUILD**.

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BREATHING LIFE INTO A HOME

Penny Jones, Product & Marketing Manager at **Domus Ventilation**, discusses the benefits of ventilation and how to archive it within the home

With buildings becoming increasingly air tight in a drive to improve energy efficiency and lower carbon emissions, the need for 'pro-active' ventilation has never been greater.

By correctly ventilating a property we not only bring in fresh external air to breathe but we also dilute and remove airborne pollutants (including odours) and control excess humidity. Every single person reading this will know what it's like to be in a poorly ventilated room, whether it be hot and stuffy or damp from condensation. It not only

makes for an uncomfortable home environment but poor indoor air quality (IAQ) also has known links to a variety of health issues.

Ventilation Requirements

Building Regulations Approved Document F, which details the means of ventilation in new and materially altered properties, sets the minimum continuous extraction requirement for domestic properties at 13l/s from the kitchen, 8l/s from each bathroom/utility area and supply at the same rate.

Clearly opening a window is never going to achieve this, which is where mechanical ventilation steps in.

Types of Ventilation Systems

There are four ventilation types suitable for a domestic property:

System 1 - Intermittent Extract Ventilation

System 2 - Passive Stack Ventilation

System 3 - Continuous Mechanical Extract Ventilation (MEV)

System 4 - Continuous Mechanical Ventilation with Heat Recovery (MVHR)

To achieve the levels of extraction required under Building Regulations, MEV and MVHR whole house ventilation systems are necessary in most cases.

An MEV system actively extracts air from 'wet



via ducting to a central ventilation unit which further ducts to an exhaust point. The systems are typically dual speed, providing low speed continuous trickle ventilation and high-speed boost flow. Replacement fresh air is drawn into the property via background ventilators located in the habitable rooms and through air leakage.

Unlike MEV, MVHR systems combine supply and extract ventilation in one system. They work on the principle of extracting and re-using waste heat from wet rooms. MVHR systems efficiently temper the fresh air drawn into the building with heat attained from waste stale air using a heat exchanger; up to 95% of waste heat can be recovered by this mechanism. The filtered, pre-warmed air is then distributed around the home, effectively meeting part of the heating load in energy efficient dwellings.

Key Considerations

All new homes can benefit from mechanical ventilation, but there are some aspects that it's important to consider when specifying a system, based on the nature and location of the property.

Size

In larger properties, you have a far wider range of options in terms of the unit to use, where it's located and how/where you run the ducting. In smaller properties, that choice is reduced. Installation of the main MEV/MVHR unit in the loft used to be common practice, but with access issues and potential problems caused by lower temperatures in the loft, most units are now wall mounted within the heated envelope of the property; most commonly in a cupboard. The size of the unit therefore needs to be compact, especially when it comes to height; the Domus Ventilation HRXE MVHR, for example, is just 507mm in height. Where installation in a cupboard is not an option, then a ceiling void should be a consideration. Here the depth of the unit and weight are key factors. The Domus Ventilation HRX-aQ is the shallowest in the market place, measuring down to 199mm in depth and weighing from just 7.9kg, making it compact and light enough to be easily installed in the most restrictive of ceiling voids.

Noise

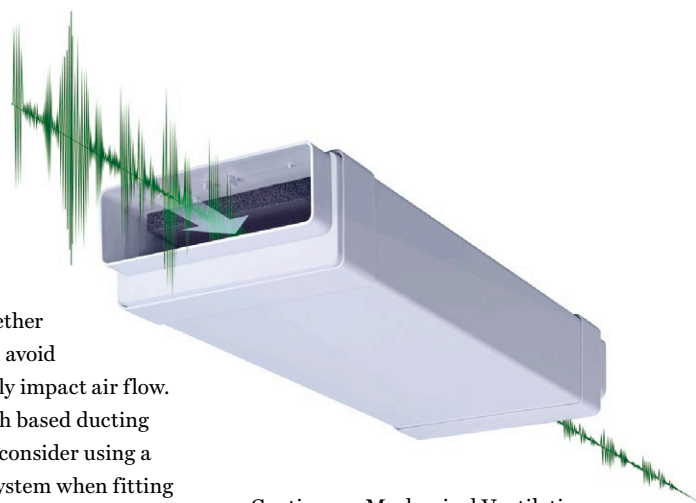
Being kept awake by a noisy appliance or building service is exceptionally annoying. Mechanical ventilation systems aren't silent but they can be very quiet. Opt for a system that generates less than 24dBA (typically whisper quiet) at a distance of more than one meter away from the air valve. Also, consider the use of an Anti-Vibration tray and duct sound attenuators to further reduce system noise.

Ducting

Poor ducting (and that relates to the product quality, the duct run design and installation) impacts the air flow, sound and overall effectiveness of a system. Ensure quality ducting is used that fits together to minimise air leakage and avoid sharp bends which negatively impact air flow. Instead of traditional branch based ducting systems, you might want to consider using a Radial semi-rigid ducting system when fitting MVHR systems – especially good in small spaces. Radial systems allow each room vent to be served by single or twin duct runs which connect directly to the central distribution system, evenly splitting the air from the MVHR unit. Some manufacturers enable you to combine both types of ducting through the use of special adaptors, for a versatile solution where lack of space or tight void areas are an issue.

Polluted areas

Inner-cities have higher concentrations of pollution so bringing that air into a property may meet Building Regulations, but it's not good for you. Here an MVHR system is ideal as they come with filters to remove pollutants.



Continuous Mechanical Ventilation systems have never been so popular. Look at any of the property shows on TV these days and you can bet a mechanical ventilation system will be part of the house specification in one form or another. For you, the homeowner, considerable savings on energy bills can be achieved due to the reduced heating demand but, more importantly, there's a considerable benefit from improved IAQ that goes way beyond simply making a home a comfortable one: it also needs to be a safe and healthy home.

www.domusventilation.co.uk

Twitter: @domusvent





UNIQUE PIETRA™ FROM COMPAC. AWAKENS YOUR SENSES

Unique Pietra™ is an exciting addition to COMPAC's Unique Collection – a distinctive, elegant range of quartz worksurfaces whose designs have been inspired by the textures, beauty and durability of nature's rivers, forests, lakes, mountains and landscapes. Unique Pietra™ is as mysterious as it is inspirational; its dark almost volcanic background will awaken your senses, a unique work surface featuring a combination of defined and wispy strands of cloud running across its surface.

Unique Pietra™ is available in a polished finish that intensifies

its surface colour, or a new unique crêpe finish which combines a fine roughness with a delicateness to provide a flawless, non-glare finish. Whether used for a kitchen or bathroom work surface, cladding a wall or a floor, Unique Pietra™ will transform spaces in your home into something quite extraordinary. Unique Pietra™ is easy to clean and maintain and will retain its elegance and beauty for a lifetime.

www.en.compac.es/coleccion-unique

ALUMINIUM WALL COPING: IN STOCK, IN ANTHRACITE GREY AND IN 2 SIZES

In response to demand for a quicker turn-around, Rainclear Systems, the UK's leading metal rainwater system stockist and online retailer, have taken Aluminium Wall Coping in the most popular colour, RAL 7016 Anthracite Grey, and the most frequently requested sizes, SL30 and SL36, into stock for next day delivery.

- Lightweight, durable and non-corrodible, Low maintenance, and 100% recyclable.
- Life expectancy of 40yrs in rural/urban areas and 25yrs in industrial/marine environments.

- Hidden strap fixing method offers weather-proof covering allowing ventilation over the top of the wall. No fixings pass through the coping, so there's no penetration of the capping, keeping clean lines on the surface and water out.
- Manufactured from high quality BBA approved polyester coated aluminium. Available in 26 standard RAL colours in just 10 days, and in Anthracite Grey in 2 sizes with next day delivery.

www.rainclear.co.uk



DURAPOST® BY FENCEMATE OFFERS AN ELEGANT AND STRONG ALTERNATIVE

An industry first, Birkdale's DuraPost® by FENCEMATE is an innovative galvanised steel fence post system that provides a durable, lightweight and wind-resistant alternative to wooden or concrete fence posts.

Due to its makeup of cold-rolled galvanised steel, DuraPost® is capable of withstanding wind speeds of up to 70 miles per hour and is guaranteed for up to 25 years, so specifiers can be sure that they are selecting a quality product that will last.

While installing concrete fence posts can often be a two-person job, due to their weight, DuraPost® is ergonomically designed to be up to 80% lighter than concrete. As such, the DuraPost® is easy to transport, store, carry and install by a

single tradesperson, which can reduce build time significantly. Due to its superior weight to strength ratio, DuraPost® is available in slimmer profiles than timber or concrete fence posts, making it up to six-times more space efficient. DuraPost® is compatible with a wide range of fence panels and virtually any onsite fencing. Aesthetically, DuraPost® is available in a choice of profiles, Classic and Slimline, as well as four colour options: Anthracite Grey, Olive Grey, Sepia Brown and Galvanised Steel. Colour matched accessories are also available including Post Caps, Gravel boards and Capping Rails.

www.durapost.co.uk

TREX DECKING INTRODUCES NEW 'ENHANCE' RANGE

Trex Company offers a simple and easy way to build with green materials whilst not compromising on look and feel. With high-definition wood grain patterns and rich, saturated colours inspired by the outdoors, Trex composite decking looks natural and boasts a vibrancy that remains unchanged for years. Colour options range from deep earth tones to warm umbers, spicy reds and pristine greys. Featuring a protective shell for superior defense against severe

weather and heavy foot traffic, Trex deck boards will retain their good looks even after years of wet British winters and are guaranteed to look as good as new by the time summer comes around – year after year. Just an occasional sweep, and a clean with soap and water is all that is needed to ensure the beauty of a Trex deck for decades.

Trex Enhance

New to the UK, the new Trex Enhance range provides trade professionals and homeowners with a high-performance, lower-cost deck board designed to compete more directly with timber.

Trex decking is available locally through Arbordeck stores



www.arbordeck.co.uk
www.uk.trex.com

MONEY & MANAGEMENT

Before any work can commence on your build, you will need to calculate building costs, assess your financials, and make some decisions on how the project is going to be managed.

BUILD COSTS TIPS

Paul Smith, Founder of online self-build platform, **MyPlot**, provides tips on keeping your self-build budget on track, and your sanity intact

Self-build can be a complex, nerve-racking process, particularly for those who haven't done it before, and it's therefore unsurprising that novice self-builders have a lot of questions. While some queries are very specific, relating to an individual project, there are some questions that we hear time and again, such as, 'how much will it cost?'

Building your own home is considerably less expensive than buying a home from a developer. You will also be exempt from Community Infrastructure Levy and will be able to re-claim VAT. Funding and cash flow concerns are the primary issues that keep self-builders awake at night, but that needn't be the case.

Clear vision and detailed budget

The key to keeping build costs on track is planning, good project management, and certainty around the finished build - having clarity on the home you want to build and what you're prepared to spend to make it a reality.

The old saying 'the devil is in the detail' is especially true when it comes to building your own home. At the outset of a project, it's important to have a clear plan for every detail; everything from the exterior build to kitchen door handles should be costed. While it's natural to change your mind occasionally, changes should be avoided. Even seemingly small changes can quickly escalate, sometimes with a knock-on effect for other work. It's not ideal in short, and



any changes should be avoided once the build has begun.

Set aside a 10% contingency fund

Occasionally, even with the best of intentions, mistakes are made and changes do need to be made, whether materials, layout or doors. It's important that a contingency fund is available in the event of any amends to the original build, labour, fixtures or fittings. We recommend setting aside 10% of the build cost - having this available will prevent any delays and make for a vastly less stressful experience.

Protect your investment

Give yourself peace of mind and arrange self-build insurance, as well as structural warranty, which will see the build checked at several stages throughout the project and will safeguard your investment from any future defects.

Hire experts and reap the rewards

Your team of contractors and consultants will play an important role in keeping build costs on track, while saving you money. Take great care when appointing your contractors, from your builder and planning consultants, through to

your project manager and mortgage advisor - look for experience and recommendations. The goal is to build an honest team who are driven not by making themselves as much money as possible at your expense, but by doing a good job. Building the right team, people you like as well as trust, will limit avoidable mistakes and prevent spiralling costs.

Shop around to keep costs down

Building your own home does require a certain amount of savvy; be sure to research the options when it comes to sourcing materials, fixtures, fittings and parts. Often, it will be less costly to source materials via your builder, who will benefit from trade prices. If you're sourcing materials yourself, don't be afraid to ask trade counters for a discount.

Take a long-term view and consider carefully where to spend and where to save. With the right team in place, you will avoid escalating costs and see your home built on time, and on budget - with your sanity, and relationships, intact.

www.myplot.co.uk

Twitter: @myplotthq

FINANCING YOUR BUILD

If you're planning to build your own home, you will need a specialist self-build mortgage.
Rachel Pyne, from financial experts **BuildStore**, discusses the details

Many of us dream of building our own home, but before you get carried away with the design, build type and materials, the first thing you need to work out is how to fund the build.

The first and most important point to note, is that you won't be able to borrow funds using a traditional mortgage from a high street lender, as there's not a habitable property to lend against, so you will need a more specialist approach.

Self-Build Mortgage

A self-build mortgage is a specialist borrowing solution designed for self-build, and will lend to purchase your plot and fund your build costs. It differs from a traditional mortgage because

the money is released in stages, rather than as a single amount.

The stages for a self-build are generally:

- Plot purchase
- Foundations
- Frame erected or wall plate level
- Wind & Watertight
- 1st fix and plastering
- 2nd fix and completion

BuildStore has developed two mortgage packages specifically for self-builders, defined by when funds are released during the build, either in arrears or advance.

Positive cash flow is key to any successful self-build; it's not just about how much you can borrow like a traditional mortgage, but when that money is available to you throughout the build, to allow

you to pay your tradespeople and suppliers - whether that's monthly, weekly, or daily!

Your borrowing, unlike a traditional mortgage, is based on the expected end value of your new home rather than the current value, meaning you'll have the funds to purchase the plot and for your building works. With these specialist mortgage products, you can borrow up to 85% of your plot and build costs in arrears and 95% in advance. If you already own your plot, it may be possible to borrow up to 100% of your build costs. However, just like with any mortgage, the amount you can borrow depends on your financial circumstances and how much you can afford.

While interest rates are higher than a traditional mortgage, currently ranging from 3.99% to 5.99%, all of BuildStore's exclusive lender panel offer interest only during the build period, keeping costs low, and you only pay interest on the mortgage funds drawn down. When your new home is complete, you can switch onto one of your lender's traditional mortgage deals, which will have a lower interest rate, saving you money.

Building societies are currently the main source of lending for self-build mortgages. However, Virgin Money is the first major high street lender to enter the sector offering mortgages for custom builders, exclusively through BuildStore.

Other borrowing options

If you have enough equity in your current home or own it outright, you could remortgage or secure a bridging loan. Then when your new home is finished, you can sell your old one to pay off the loan. If you're building to sell or to let, then you will need a development loan.

A specialist mortgage adviser can look at your financial circumstances and project requirements to recommend and tailor a borrowing solution to suit you and your new home.

www.buildstore.co.uk



PROJECT MANAGEMENT

Katy Hardwick, Educational Course Co-ordinator at **The National Self Build & Renovation Centre**, discusses the options for managing a build project and how to source the right tradespeople for the job

All build projects need to be managed to ensure they are carried out properly; the question is, should you hire a professional project manager, or could you self project manage your build?

Hiring a project manager can be a good option, particularly if you're a novice, as taking on a construction project may feel overwhelming. For large-scale, or particularly complex projects, this is often considered to be a sensible route as an experienced project manager can ensure that the project runs to time and that potentially costly mistakes are avoided. It won't come as a surprise that this can be an expensive process, costing on average 10% - 15% of your build budget. Often, using a capable and experienced general builder is enough to keep projects on track, as they are experienced in overseeing the different stages of a build.

Through self project managing, and hiring individual trades when needed, you can save a considerable amount of money which could be used elsewhere in your project. However, sourcing, vetting and hiring trades can mean more time, and increased stress levels. Because of this, self project managing isn't for everyone; it depends on how much time you are able to devote to your project and the level of involvement you wish to have.

The middle-ground between hiring a project manager and self project managing is having an 'oversight contract' with a project manager which incurs a smaller fee of around 2% - 3% of the build cost. This can mean peace of mind for first-time builders who wish to have an experienced professional assess the site regularly.

If you do choose to self project manage, the responsibility of hiring the individual trades lies with you and therefore despite being the less costly route, the risk is ultimately higher. There



are a number of ways you can source the right tradespeople for your project:

Word of Mouth

Recommendation is key; speak to others who have undertaken a similar project, and if they hired a good builder, that builder will most likely be able to do a good job for you. Good builders take pride in the quality of their previous work and will be keen to showcase it. The cowboys are out there, but they are quickly found out so do your research if you want to avoid them. Good builders can be in high demand and you might need to be prepared to wait for them to become available. They might not be the cheapest, but they will invariably offer better value for money.

Contractors' Boards

A contractor's board is placed near ongoing work so you will be able to find information on the tradespeople working on the current project. If you like what they've done for someone else, you can phone them up. Don't be afraid to ask the current client either.

Federation of Master Builders (FMB)

The FMB is a not-for-profit Trade Association, which offers a useful 'Find a Builder Service'.

You can send them your plans, and if they look promising, arrange to meet up for a chat. Look for enthusiasm for your project and how well you can get on with them. The FMB offer a useful free small-works contract if you use one of their members. You can check how reasonable their quote is by checking their price against an online estimating service.

Ultimately, when choosing who should manage your project, it very much depends on the level of time, cost and effort you are willing to devote to your project. The more you do yourself, the more money you will save, but it will cost you more in time and effort. If you do choose to take a more hands-on approach, be sure to do your research and follow up on references.

The National Self Build and Renovation Centre offers a one-day guide to Project Management, written and presented by experienced project managers. This Course is essential for anyone considering their first self build or home improvement project, covering everything from budgeting and site management through to health & safety, snagging and VAT reclaims.

www.nsbrc.co.uk/the-nsbrc-guide-to-project-management

DESIGN METHODS

Within the design phase you will need to research your building regulations, decide who will be designing your build, and investigate suitable construction methods.

BUILDING REGULATIONS

Paul Smith, Founder of online self-build platform **MyPlot**, explains why it's important to make sure your project measures up

Many of the decisions involved in a self-build project are subjective (location, design, materials) but when it comes to Building Regulations, the requirements are prescriptive and must be followed to the letter to avoid incurring delays and even penalties.

The Regulations cover a vast array of statutory requirements, from materials and workmanship, structural safety and electrical safety through to more obscure aspects like ventilation and toxic substances.

At first glance, the technical guidance documents are somewhat overwhelming, however a safe, structurally sound home, assessed by an independent expert, is in everyone's best interests.

Delegate the management of Building Regulations

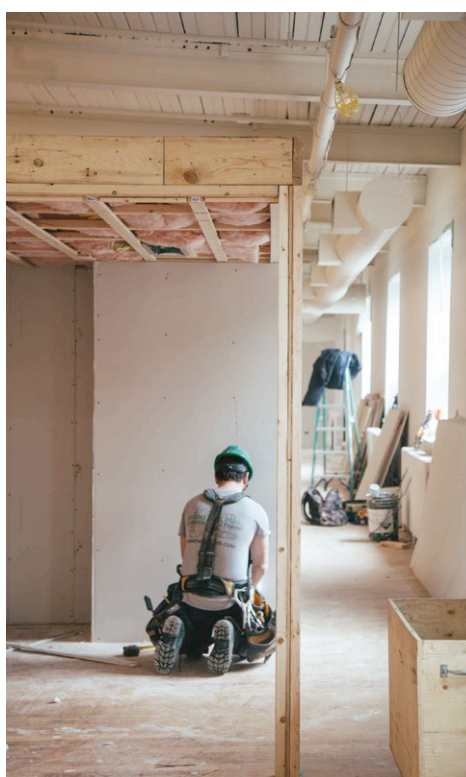
Your contractor should manage Building Regulations on your behalf; however remember that ultimate responsibility for getting it right lies with the homeowner.

Consider the most appropriate inspection method

While the requirements are set in stone and identical for every project, there are several methods to secure Building Regulations approval. The first, and perhaps most common, route is via your local authority building control department. However, approval can also be sought from an approved inspector, or through the competent person scheme.

Decide whether Full Plan or Building Notice is the route for you

Before any works begin, a decision will need to be made on whether to submit a "Full Plans" application or whether a "Building Notice" might



be the best option for your build.

Self-builders usually opt for the "Full Plans" application, but both are viable options. Once a "Building Notice" is in place, works can commence prior to approval - however, the onus is on the builder to make sure that all work is fully compliant. Conversely, a "Full Plans" application will see the plans and technical drawings inspected in detail by the building inspector, giving you peace of mind that the project is fully compliant with expected standards.

The "Full Plans" route eliminates the possibility of any nasty surprises when the project is assessed, and certainty is most definitely the friend of any self-builder, there are many unknowns, so every effort should be made to control the aspects that can be managed. Assess risk and pinpoint any gaps

Prior to the documents being submitted, your architect and builder will ensure that they are likely to be approved by the inspector. You will be made aware of any risky aspects that may cause issues - savvy self-builders should tackle these issues at the earliest opportunity to avoid expensive disputes later down the line, as well as unnecessary rumination over design quirks and features that are unlikely to pass the regulations.

Regular project inspections benefit the builder

The "Full Plans" route will also see regular inspections throughout the course of the project - it may be nerve-racking, but is best viewed as an additional, invaluable eye on the works, giving you peace of mind that your dream home is built soundly and safely, with no defects. Once the "Full Plan" is approved, it's valid for three years.

Negotiate costs where possible

The cost of Building Regulations varies significantly; local authority fees will depend on the individual project and number of site visits. If you opt to use an independent inspector or competent contractor scheme, you may be able to negotiate the rate.

Collect a completion certificate

It's incredibly exciting to see your dream home completed, but it's important to remember to collect a completion certificate to confirm that your property is compliant with Building Regulations. You should make sure the certificate is received before handing over payment.

You will not be able to obtain a completion certificate retrospectively, which could cause significant issues should you decide to sell your home in the future.

www.myplot.co.uk

Twitter: @myplothq

DESIGNING YOUR BUILD

Architects **Rob Woolston** and **Sarah Grocock**, from award winning practice **rg+p**, share their expertise on how to approach designing your home

Custom and self-build housing is a rapidly growing market, with more than 40,000 aspiring housebuilders across the UK registering their interest in building a home. The first Right to Build day has now passed (30th October 2019), meaning all local authorities must demonstrate they have complied to deliver the permissioned plots to match the numbers on their build registers as of October 2016.

So, if you've registered your interest, what do you do next?

As with any project, research has to be the starting point; talk to your local authority, find out what land they have available for custom or self-build plots and engage with them from

the outset. Demonstrating your willingness to collaborate should help shorten the overall process and will also give you a better understanding of what the planning team is looking for and therefore what's more likely to be approved.

Assuming the land is secured, you really need to think about what you want and be clear about the end result. Take time to gather examples of architecture you admire both in general and in the area you plan to live; use magazines, TV programmes, Instagram, Pinterest for inspiration; create mood boards – do your homework!

This will undoubtedly raise lots of questions and options, so appointing an architect as early as possible is advisable as they'll be able to

guide you through the process. Make sure you find the right architect too, as it's likely you'll be working with them for anywhere between 18 months and two years. The RIBA website has an excellent and free facility called Find An Architect (<https://www.architecture.com/find-an-architect/>), which lists qualified practices in your region with the relevant expertise.

Your architect will help you develop a design brief, taking into consideration things like how you live; for instance on one project we're working on the entire driver for the design has been the family dog! Recognising considerations like this will ensure your accommodation meets your needs now and in the future. In our experience, most custom build homes are lived in for a minimum of ten years, so it's worth bearing in mind how your needs might change. An architect will also be able to advise any parameters e.g. building in conservation or heritage areas.

There's also a number of accessible tools and free apps you can use to develop your layouts; software like SketchUp is easy to navigate and files can be shared quickly and simply with your architect; alongside actual drawings too of course. These can then be used to 3D model your home and ensure you have a detailed understanding of space and movement.

One of the biggest pieces of advice we can give is not to rush. Design is a process and will evolve over a project's lifespan so don't be afraid to take your time, after all this is a major investment. Once you're happy with the design, your architect can help you submit the planning application and providing you've collaborated with the planning team, this should take between 8-10 weeks to determine. Good luck!

www.rg-p.co.uk

Twitter: @rgp_ltd

Instagram: @rgp_ltd



CONSTRUCTION METHODS

Considering which method of construction to use when planning your self-build project is important. **Tom Simpkins**, representative of **Lift Mini Crane Hire**, explores both modern and traditional methods

A self-build home is the dream of any builder, architect, or even just those with aspirations for their perfect home. They take a lot of blood, sweat and tears to complete, as well as even more expertise and funds to boot, but they're not impossible endeavours to pursue. But what method of construction is the best for self-builds?

Modern Methods of Construction (MMC)

Modern Methods of Construction (MMC) are quickly becoming more and more commonplace. 2003's ODPM Select Committee Report on Planning for Sustainable Communities said that MMC is "a step-change in the construction industry to produce the quantity and quality of housing" that the UK needs.

Thanks to this, many traditional methods are beginning to embrace MMC in one way or another, whether it's practising more energy-efficient techniques or opting to use sustainable materials.

Natural Builds & Eco-Building

An 'Eco-Building' is one where a majority of the materials used during construction are either recycled or entirely natural resources. Examples of these include using straw instead of bricks and blocks, and even making use of recycled car tyres and glass bottles. This makes them incredibly eco-friendly as well as being surprisingly durable.

Timber Frames

Utilising timber frames provides benefits that traditional brick and block simply can't, such as the nature of the superstructure they create. This structure means that your self-build home can adhere to open plan designs, as they don't require load-bearing walls.

However, timber frames need to be almost

entirely made off-site, which prevents the versatility that alternatives like brick & block offers. It can also be quite costly, especially if making use of the Tudor-style Green Oak.

Brick & Block

Perhaps the best-known and most common method of self-builds, brick and block builds consist of the combination of a brick exterior for a traditional look with the sturdiness of a concrete block interior. Many argue that brick and block builds are the most airtight homes, however, others suggest that timber frames or Structural Insulated Panels (SIPS) methods are stronger in that respect.

One of the biggest benefits of brick and block houses is that they can be built in instalments, making the process one that can be adapted and changed essentially on the fly. Those dealing with a self-build mortgage can tackle them piece-by-piece, much like the building process itself.

Insulated Concrete Formwork (ICF)

Not unlike Lego, Insulated Concrete Formwork (ICF) slots together piece by piece in the form of large, hollow blocks. These stack atop each other to create cavities within a structure, increasing the insulation value of it overall. ICF is relatively simple to construct and it a considerably speedier process than other, conventional methods.

However, ICF is marginally more expensive than brick & block, an average of 5% more expensive, and it can be quite hard to find experienced ICF builders. The slightest mistake at the foundation of these builds can also be disastrous in the long-run.

Structural Insulated Panels (SIPS)

Another incredibly common method of construction is the incredibly cost-effective and energy-efficient method known as Structural Insulated Panels (SIPS). SIPS provides a host of



different benefits, including providing a sturdy, airtight structure, a swift two-week assembly process on average and a larger roof span than conventional methods without the need for additional support.

The only potential downsides for SIPS is the contrast of quality & durability compared to traditional methods such as brick & block or timber frames. Though SIPS materials are rather strong, they can't go head to head with other, more stable materials.

Which Self-Build Method?

In conclusion, each self-build construction method has its benefits and provides distinct challenges, though with MMC becoming more and more common some of the downfalls of these methods are starting to become rarer. When considering a self-build it's always important to consider which approach you wish to take; fast or steady, with a focus on speed or quality.

www.liftminicranehire.co.uk

Twitter: @spidercranes

FOOTINGS & FOUNDATIONS

The construction work at the beginning of your project involves deciding what type of foundation is required, how to build the foundation, and how and when to connect the services.

BUILDING THE FOUNDATIONS

Carl Goulding, Head of Trade Quality at online find-a-tradesman service **MyBuilder**, shares insider practical advice to building foundations

The foundations of a build start with a fixed point and string lines to mark out the trenches. The width of the trench is dictated by the width of the wall, and the concrete should be at least 100mm wider than the planned size of the wall – this dictates the bucket size of the digger.

The most common type of foundation is “trench and fill”, where a trench is dug and then filled with concrete before the brickwork is laid on top.

The material used for good foundations is one that building control deem as compact enough to build on, such as shale. Clay and soil aren’t solid enough; clay shrinks and contracts, and soil washes away and moves.

The depth of a dig varies depending on location; Building Control and architects will set a baseline - usually around a metre. Builders often price based on digging a metre deep, but they will need to keep going until they find shale or sand.

It’s important that the desired depth is met the first time because if parts of the trench have to be re-done, it can mean straddling a machine across the foundations, which risks collapsing the sides.

Going 50-100mm past the depth where solid material it hit is recommended, to be sure the



dig is into the shale. Ground is rarely flat, and it’s essential that all parts of the foundations are level. If the bottom of the ground is to be brought up, a vertical step can be created and continued to climb in this way.

Tree roots suck moisture out of the ground, so Building Control will want to be sure the base of the foundations is far enough away from the shrinkage point of any tree roots. If a tree is killed that’s close to where the dig is happening, over time, the root system will rot away - this can cause instability and gaps in the soil, which can eventually lead to movement.

During a dig, it’s very likely that services like mains water, gas, electric, foul waste or storm waste, will be encountered. If the project is a new build, then a survey should be conducted as part of the planning process, so it’s clear where to connect to the services. If any unexpected drains are encountered, then digging deeper than the invert of the drain will avoid downward pressure.

If there is a pipe crossing the foundation, concrete can’t be placed directly around it because

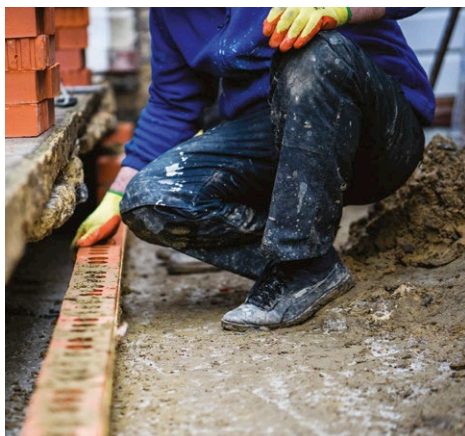
if the foundation moves, the pipe will be put under pressure and could break. The preferred method to deal with this is to “shutter” pipes by wrapping them in some kind of wool insulation, then building a box to encase them. That way, if the foundation does move, it won’t do any damage.

If the foundations are joining up to an existing building, digging below the toe of the existing foundation will need to be carried out; Building Control will want to see that the new foundation is not putting an unacceptable load on the existing foundation.

The whole idea of a foundation is to create something level to build on; bricklayers will want an even surface to work on. If, when it comes to concreting, the ground isn’t flat, then a stepped foundation will need to be incorporated to provide a continuous level. It is difficult to do but absolutely critical, and will ensure that the bricklayers are happy, and the walls are well built.

www.mybuilder.com

Twitter: @mybuilder



UTILITY & SERVICE CONNECTIONS

Rebecca Winn, Business Development Manager at **Complete Utility Solutions**, discusses how to connect to utility services and the importance of planning this step into a self-build project

Undertaking a self-build project is a huge task within itself, from finding the perfect plot, arranging the finances, finding a designer, obtaining planning permission, choosing a builder to preparing your plot – and all this before you even put a spade in the ground.

One of the most overlooked items within a self-build are the new utility connections, whether your home will run on gas, electric and water or just water and electric, it is something that needs to be considered within the very early stages of any development.

When purchasing a plot one of the first

considerations is any existing infrastructure, which may need disconnecting or diverting. There are many ground survey companies that are able to determine any existing pipework or cables on your plot, but you will also need to make contact with the local network operator that own these. Depending on where you are in the country there is an application process and associated timescales to consider.

We recommend having a proper ground survey carried out to ensure there are no surprises further down the line. When uncovering pipework or cables it is worthwhile photographing the pipework with a ruler to be able to provide evidence of the depth, they are

laid to the network operators.

Once you have a confirmed clear site and have had any disconnections or diversions completed by the appropriate bodies, you can then think about your new utility connections. Once again there are always going to be associated timescales with obtaining a quotation (usually 6-8 weeks) and for the works to be scheduled in and undertaken (timescales for these will be dependent on factors such as traffic, management and surface categories, but are generally also in the range of 6-8 weeks). We are often contacted within a few weeks of someone requiring a connection, as people are unaware of the complexities involved with installing new utility supplies.

Top Tips

- Always check your site for existing pipework and cables, and where possible draft in a ground surveyor to properly confirm this.
- If uncovering existing cables, take clear photographs to show the depth pipes are laid at, as this can be useful during your discussions with the networks.
- Quotations usually take around 6-8 weeks and with similar timescales again for the works to be scheduled in. Ensure you factor in these timescales to suit your build programme; never leave it until the last minute.

Utilities may seem like a small and unexciting part of your self-build, but uncovering an old steel gas main for example could put your build programme back by months or worse still make it a totally unviable project.

Utility connections can range from simple to extremely complex making it important to give yourself the time to cover any eventuality so you can enjoy your dream home when you plan to!

www.cu-solutions.co.uk

Twitter: @cu_solutions



FRAMING YOUR SELF-BUILD

Stud walling, roofing, windows, external doors, and heating and plumbing systems are all key elements of framing your build. You will need to decide on the best approach for each of these areas.

WINDOWS AND DOORS

Richard Hall, Managing Director at **Reynaers at Home**, looks at key window and external door considerations for your build project

Windows and external doors are the key aesthetic features of any new build project and with so many different options available, it can be difficult to decide what will be best for your project. To help you get started, here are some of the key aspects to consider when selecting windows and external doors.

Materials

There is an array of materials to choose from depending on personal preferences and requirements. A popular low-cost choice is Unplasticised Polyvinylchloride (uPVC) and is widely used in the replacement windows market across the UK.

For those seeking a weather resistant material and one that delivers good thermal results then the Composite is idyllic, made using two or more different materials such as timber and aluminium.

Timber windows and doors remain a popular choice however as sustainable living continues to rightfully grow in popularity, they may not be the best solution, especially when the ongoing costs of maintaining natural wood can be prohibitive.

A further option is Aluminium, a strong and lightweight material that is 100% recyclable with no loss of quality. As a low maintenance alternative to uPVC, aluminium expands just 1mm per metre, making it especially suitable for larger windows and doors. The inherent strength

means the frames can be relatively narrow, thereby increasing the size of your glass panels to let in much more light than uPVC – perfect for getting your daily dose of vitamin D. Additional benefits include longevity due to its weather resistance, high levels of security, endless possibilities for style and design, as well as lower energy bills.

Thermal performance

Energy efficient windows and doors help reduce carbon footprint and energy bills, as well as offer peace and quiet, and reduce condensation so it is important to understand how the thermal performance of a window or door is measured.

The U-Value is a measure of heat loss within a building element such as a window or door. The lower the number, the better it is at conserving heat on a cold day, which in the UK is a bonus. The Energy Ratings system measures the thermal performance on a scale from A+ to G and is illustrated using a similar graphic to that measuring the performance of white goods. The higher the grade of window, the more energy efficient it will be. Finally, The Standard Assessment Procedure (SAP) rating is particularly relevant for new builds and extensions. It is a measure of likely energy consumption and CO₂ emissions of a building. The U-Value contributes towards the overall SAP calculation.

Installation and security

The installation is one of the most important steps during the construction of a house, yet probably one of the more difficult. Ensure you allow approximately a 10mm gap around, between the frame and the brickwork of the window or door. It is recommended that this gap is properly filled and sealed to avoid any draughts.

Another factor to consider is the weight; doors and windows are supported by hinges when they move, and if they are not installed properly, they may drop over time, becoming difficult to open, close and/or lock.

Any window or door is only secure as its weakest



point. If it is not installed correctly, in the worst-case scenario, it may be possible for an intruder to remove the window or door so make sure you or the installer are using the correct tools. To help selecting the windows and doors, there are various recognised security accreditations to look out for in the UK including PAS 24:2012, a British Standard publication that requires a window or door to achieve a minimum standard of performance.

Secured by Design is an organisation owned by the Association of Chief Police Officers. Their accreditation scheme is for products that can enhance a property's security, including windows and doors. Windows and doors must comply with PAS 24:2012 and be cycle-tested (opened and closed, locked and unlocked thousands of times).

European standard EN1627-1630 subjects the window or door (categorised between RC1 to RC6) to a variety of static and dynamic loads. The test also includes simulated attempts to break in using specified tools.

Windows and doors are a key feature of your new build project, so it is important to choose the right materials and ensure they are fitted correctly. Seeking the advice of a specialist dealer can help ensure that all the fine details are taken care of, so that you can focus your efforts on the bigger picture.

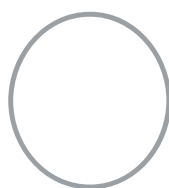
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HEATING & PLUMBING SYSTEMS

The design and installation of your heating and plumbing systems are a key part of your build, explains **Jerry Whitely**, Technical Manager at **The Chartered Institute of Plumbing and Heating Engineering (CIPHE)**



ne of the most important aspects of your build will include your plumbing and heating systems. With safe drinking water and sanitation vital to your health, and

heating and hot water vital to your wellbeing, the design and installation of these systems are central to your quality of life.

Heating Systems

Dependent on your location, you may have a

choice of gas, oil, solid fuel biomass or electric as your main power source. Solar panels and air source heat pumps are becoming increasingly common too. At present, mains gas is the most popular option, however the Government is ending the use of gas in new build domestic properties from 2025.

Regardless of whether you go for traditional radiators or an underfloor system, it will need to be sized correctly, taking into account thermal efficiencies and the way you intend to occupy the space. Be realistic with your hot water demands, as this will have a big impact on

your system choice too.

Getting the design correct at the beginning is vital for efficient use of energy and water. Sizing pipes, pumps and boilers is not as simple as using an online calculator, as they frequently use generic, invalidated data.

To stay within the law, you will need to engage the services of a suitably registered engineer. Employ a GasSafe engineer for gas, OFTEC for oil and HETAS for solid fuel. It's also advisable to employ an engineer who holds membership of a professional body, such as the CIPHE.

Plumbing Systems

You'll need to know what the dynamic pressure is (low pressure or high pressure), and if that pressure is high enough to satisfy the top floor of your dwelling.

You'll need to follow a number of Regulations too:

- Thermostatic Mixing Valves (TMVs) are required in all new build homes and some change of use, such as a barn conversion. TMVs mix hot and cold water to reduce the risk of scalds and need to be serviced annually. Ensure you locate them carefully.
- You will need your water company's approval to install:
 - A bath larger than 230 litres
 - A pump or booster drawing more than 12 litres per minute
 - A bidet with an ascending spray or flexible hose (unless you are using a CIPHE Approved Contractor Person, WaterSafe, WIAPS, TAPS, Aplus, WaterMark or SNIPEF approved plumber)

For more information on notifiable works visit www.wras.co.uk

- Backflow (an unwanted flow of water in the reverse direction) can be a serious health risk. Installers are required by law install backflow prevention devices.
- The design of the water system must incorporate prevention of bacterial growth such as Legionella. Getting the hot and cold water pipe runs and water temperatures correct throughout is vital.

Never mix up your foul and surface water systems. The foul system will take water from toilets, bathrooms, kitchens etc. to your local sewerage plant for treatment. Surface water



systems take rainwater from roofs, gutters, driveway drains etc. to local watercourses untreated. Plumbing misconnections can cause serious environmental damage.

While installing waste or soil pipes might look easy, they also must be the correctly sized height and length to ventilate as well as discharge.

The UK is set to hit serious water shortages within 25 years. When it comes to taps, showers

and appliances, install products that hold the Unified Water Label. These products use less water, save energy and save money on your bills: www.europeanwaterlabel.eu

We recommend using a competent professional when installing either grey water or rainwater recycling systems, due to the higher risks of cross contamination. If you're off grid and the water supply is a private source, then this requires professional scrutiny before you set out.

Professional Installer vs DIY

Self-builders are required by law to abide by the same Regulations and controls as professional engineers. Everything connected to the water supply has to comply with statutory requirements. Contravention of Building and Water Regulations endangers the health of those in the property and can result in prosecution and substantial fines.

Additionally, appliances installed carry a warranty that is only valid if a competent person installs and signs it off as being correctly installed and commissioned. We always advise self-builders to employ a suitably qualified engineer to design and install plumbing and heating systems.

www.ciphe.org.uk

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INTERIOR & EXTERIOR FINISHING

The finishing touches aren't just about stylish decor; you will need to select internal walls, external brickwork and rendering, soffits and gutters, as well as considering how to make your build as energy efficient as possible.

ENERGY EFFICIENCY

John O'Brien, Associate Director of Construction Innovation at **Building Research Establishment (BRE)**, discusses the elements that contribute towards a more energy efficient home

It has been estimated that buildings are responsible for 40% of global carbon emissions. Given the ongoing climate crisis, the need to address this has never been greater. One way of doing so is by making your property energy efficient – in the UK, 14% of emissions come from energy use in our homes, and in 2017, consumption actually increased. There are several ways to go about building an energy efficient home and the payoff is not only environmental but will save a lot of money on bills.

Energy efficiency is not just about using sustainable materials and building techniques but constructing your home in a way that cuts energy consumption in half over your over the property's lifetime. Investment in good design, choosing the best fabric solutions, and installing an appropriately sized heating system are all crucial steps.

Thermal bridging

Central to energy efficiency, a thermal bridge occurs where the insulation of an element is compromised. This happens at junctions, where walls meet floors or roofs, or around openings, doors and windows – and it's not uncommon for a new build home to contain hundreds of defects.

A solution is to build parts of the home in a factory. With a diminishing number of skilled trades in the UK, modern methods of construction use off site solutions to control quality, improve tolerances and eliminate the energy performance gap. This type of innovation is often considered a risk, but sourcing and relying on traditional trades to deliver an energy efficient home is a risky option as well.

Airtightness

Airtightness is about eliminating unwanted ventilation in buildings, typically draughts around openings and junctions, and it is crucial to get it right at the outset. Houses are made up of lots of incompatible materials so there is a need to interface blocks, timber, insulation and concrete, as well as doors and windows, and that takes a high degree of skill, as these may expand and contract at different rates once the house is heated up.



Insulation

Insulation is critical to achieving Building Regulations, but also will determine the long-term running costs of the house. We advise looking for an optimal thickness level and ensuring that you have high quality installation, as any gaps will seriously affect performance.

Lightweight properties can be prone to overheating, in which case you should introduce thermal mass through a solid floor or solid internal walls to help manage temperature extremes. The thermal mass acts as a passive store, so on hot summer days the building keeps cooler, and in the winter the thermal mass keeps a minimum temperature that can then be topped up by a few degrees to achieve the comfort level required.

Solar thermal and PV panels

Once you've built an excellently insulated and airtight building, heat loss can be so small that a traditional heating system would be oversized. Once this need for heating is minimised, hot water becomes the primary demand, so using a

cheap and established technology such as Solar Thermal panels can provide hot water across many months of the year, significantly reducing costs. PV panels are not currently subsidised through a feed-in-tariff, but integrated PV roofs in various finishes are available to reduce the overall running costs and carbon emissions of the home.

People are increasingly having a say in how their property is built and it's crucial that they appreciate lifecycle, while having an open mind about offsite construction. To help builders and customers identify what good looks like, BRE has developed the Home Quality Mark, which covers all aspect of a home, environmental social and financial. To provide confidence in buying an off-site fabricated home, BRE has also developed a product standard BPS 7014 to provide confidence in the off-site systems and products being introduced.

www.bregroup.com

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SOFFITS, FASCIAS & GUTTERS

Steve Collier, owner of Collier Roofing, discusses the different elements of a roofline and the important role each element plays

Most self-builders understand why the roof is such an important part of their structure, as it's one of the first lines of defence a building has against the elements. However, different parts of your roofing have a role to play in maintaining the integrity of its structure and function. This includes the roofline, which is the area where the walls and lower edge of your roof meet. It consists of three main elements; soffits, fascias and guttering. These features work together to ensure your property remains weathertight while supporting the rest of the roof.

Fascias

Fascias are the long and straight boards running along the lower edge of your roof; because of their positioning, it's no surprise their function is to support slates or tiles at the base. They're also designed to hold the weight of gutters, which are attached to each fascia.

One of the most popular materials chosen for fascias and other roofline features is uPVC, replacing traditional wood. It's viewed as a low maintenance choice as it doesn't rot or flake in the same way old wood does, and the paint should be high enough in quality that it won't fade over time. Fascias and soffits come in a wide variety of shapes, sizes and colours

(including woodgrain effects), so they can even influence the way a property looks to enhance its appeal.

Soffits

The soffit board connects to the underside of the fascia, so it's often the easiest part of the roofline to see directly below at ground level. Its primary role is to provide additional support along the length, while completely sealing the roofline to stop animals and birds finding gaps to enter your home. However, soffits can also be designed to increase ventilation and airflow within the roofing space. This can help to prevent some of the most common issues to occur in your attic or internal roof space, such as damp and mould.

Gutters

Your guttering consists of two principal parts; the downpipes and horizontal gutters, which run along the fascia boards. As rain runs off the sloped part of your pitched roof, the gutters catch it. The water is then transported away from your property into drains on the ground.

Regular gutter clearance is essential to maintain their function. It's easy for them to experience a build-up of debris, consisting of anything from leaves and dirt to animal droppings or other airborne particles. If the waste compacts in the guttering, trapped water could start to overflow down the sides of your property. In winter, the water may even turn to ice, causing damage to your gutters as it expands. If you're experiencing leaks, this is often one of the first areas your roofer will check.

Having your soffits, fascias and gutters installed correctly and maintained, is essential to help your roof function to its full potential.



www.collierroofingsurrey.co.uk

Twitter: @collierroofers

GROUNDWORK LANDSCAPING

The outdoor areas of a build also require attention; from driveways and garages to entrance gates and fencing, alongside planting and landscaping, there is a lot to consider.

DRIVEWAYS & GARAGES

If you are considering building a driveway or a garage for your home, **Carol McCahill**, director at **Associated Garage Doors**, has some key factors for you to consider



Adding a driveway and garage to an existing home or a self-build project is a great way to increase the value of your home and make it more practical.

As with any significant renovation, there are key factors that you should consider to ensure your project runs as smoothly as possible. Here are five suggestions that will help you make the most of your renovation.

Planning Permission

According to the UK Homeowners Alliance, outbuildings such as garages are considered to be 'permitted development', therefore, you don't need to obtain planning permission. In addition, if your garage was included as part of the original plans for your self-build project, you won't need to obtain additional planning permission.

Similarly, you don't need planning permission to build a driveway around your home, so long as it's at or near ground level and it's made of a semi-permeable or permeable material. However, it's always best to contact your Local Authority before beginning any significant renovations as there can be exceptions to these rules.

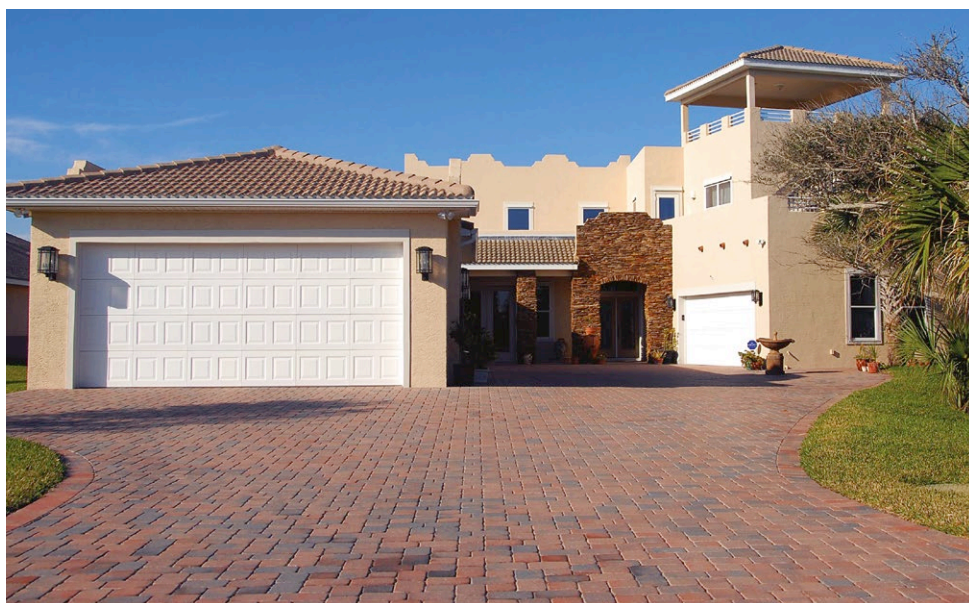
Security

If you're building a garage for your car and other significant possessions, you'll need to make sure your new outbuilding is safe and secure from potential intruders. One of the ways that you can do this is by fitting a secure metal garage door.

Metal garage doors are safer than wooden doors as they cannot be penetrated easily, and they can be fitted with anti-lift mechanisms that make them virtually impossible to open.

Costs of Materials and Labour

Arguably, the main factors to consider with any self-build project are the costs of materials and labour.



When constructing a new driveway, the costs will largely depend on the materials you choose. Concrete driveways are commonly priced in the region of £30 to £50 per square metre, whereas, brick driveways can cost £60 to £100 per square metre as they're more labour-intensive.

Garage prices, on the other hand, can vary significantly depending on the size of your project. Generally, you can expect a basic single brick garage to cost at least £13,000, and adding features such as electric garage doors and an extra car space can make the cost creep up to £25,000-£30,000. However, it's important to remember that a garage is a permanent structure, therefore, the prices reflect the cost of a renovation that will last decades.

Detached vs Attached

Before beginning any groundwork on your self-build project, you'll need to decide if you want your garage to be attached or detached from your home; both of which come with their own advantages and disadvantages.

Detached garages can offer flexibility in terms of space and size, however, they can be inconvenient to access. Alternatively, attached garages are easily accessible from inside the home, making it easier to transport shopping, pets and kids inside from the car. On the other hand, they bring added fire risks to the home, and they're difficult to expand.

The Size of the Project

In the UK, there are restrictions regarding how big you can build a garage or outbuilding without needing to obtain planning permission. Your planned garage cannot be more than four metres tall and it cannot take up more than 50% of the land around the main property.

On the whole, there are fewer rules when it comes to driveway sizes in the UK, but it's always best to check your plans with your Local Planning Authority to make sure you're not breaking any rules and regulations.

www.associatedgaragedoors.co.uk

FENCES & WALLS

Mark Vallender, Technical Manager for **Supreme Concrete**, discusses some of the considerations when setting boundaries around your property

Before building a fence or an exterior wall, you should take time to plan and consider costs, materials and construction methods. Effectively, you may be creating or maintaining a border between your property and your neighbours, so you should carefully consider the correct type of boundary to ensure you're meeting planning requirements as well as keeping your neighbours happy. By taking the time to do so, you can be on the way to preventing issues from arising, and keep your build on track to meet your deadlines.

There are three ways in which you can make a boundary between properties, all with varying aesthetic appeal and benefits. Most traditionally homeowners will opt for a garden fence, which is easy to install and offers the most traditional design appeal, however, if your property is neighbouring a highway you may opt for an exterior wall to offer added privacy. The third option, which can be the most visually and environmentally appealing, is a hedge. While hedges offer added beauty and interest through seasonal changes, they can encounter security problem and can be quite high maintenance. If not regularly pruned and maintained, hedges are

susceptible to disease, which can also pass onto nearby plants and flowers.

If you are leaning towards a fence because of its traditional appeal, considerations should be taken into the fence posts used to ensure longevity and minimal maintenance. Timber fence posts are more commonly used because of their ease of installation however, be mindful that these fence posts are prone to rotting at ground level, and over time with eventually warp, weaken and break. A more robust option is concrete fence posts and concrete gravel boards, these alternatives offers a rot-proof solution that can last more than 25 years, forming an attractive and more importantly private and secure boundary for your garden. Initial outlay of costs do tend to be more expensive with concrete fence posts vs. timber, but the life expectancy and durability outweigh any initial budget concerns.

Once you have decided on the type of boundary you are going to install into your garden, a conversation should be had with neighbours to ensure that they are happy with what you have chosen, particularly as it will act as a dividing line between both two properties, so it's important that they're happy with the type

of fence too. Additionally, before building, you should carefully consider the local building and planning requirements.

It's important to note that planning permission is not usually required if you are taking down, maintaining or improving an existing fence, as long as the height is not increased. Permission may be required if the fence is greater than two metres in height, if the building is next to a highway or if your property or your neighbours is listed. To avoid unnecessary setbacks and delays, consult your local government's planning portal, and if unsure, make an appointment with your local planning department.

In addition to meeting your local planning requirements and regulations, you should carefully plan your budget and consider the costs of materials before starting on the build of your fence. In doing so, you can plan a budget and estimate how much you are willing to spend as this will directly impact the materials you select. Through careful planning and consideration, each of these steps can lead to a more seamless and trouble-free build, especially for the self-builder.

www.supremeconcrete.co.uk



LANDSCAPE & PLANTING

When it comes to designing and building your garden, there are several options to consider. **Phil Tremayne**, General Manager at **Association of Professional Landscapers**, discusses the details

There is no doubt that a well designed and professionally built garden will not only add desirability and potential kerb appeal to your property, but it can also add significant value too.

Looking at a blank canvas of soil, rubble or turf with a few mature plants at the rear or front of your home can be a daunting prospect. However, it could also be an established but tired garden with decaying decking and cracked paving; established gardens in some ways are even more difficult to work around.

Here we explore three landscaping options and offer the pros and cons for each.

Option 1 - Design and Build Yourself

The difficulty of designing and building a garden yourself depends greatly on your own abilities. If you have a flare for design, knowledge of drainage, are competent in construction, and have an understanding of soils, then this would be a smart option.

The starting point for this, and all the options, is to set a budget. There are no hard and fast rules or equations to working this out, as it depends on what you want and what sort of specification you are willing to work to. You can look at sites like the Association of Professional Landscapers (APL) (www.landscaper.org.uk) or Houzz and Pinterest to get some inspiration on designs and materials; this will then help you start to build up the budget.

If you intend to do hard landscape construction, make sure you have a full understanding of subbases, mortars and grouts, and that you have the correct falls and methods of drainage. Drainage is especially important on front garden hard surfaces, where SUDs regulations are enforced. There is some good info on this at www.susdrain.org.

If you are intending on putting in fencing, make sure you check with the planning authority on the planning portal. Usually a rear fence must not exceed 2m high, a front is set at 1m. There



are some regulations also to look out for when raising decks or patios. Generally, if you are raising these above 600mm you will need to seek planning permission. Again, this information is all easily accessible on the planning portal, so do your homework first.

The pro of doing it yourself is that it's cost-effective, and the con is that landscaping is a very specialist and quite often understated profession. There is a lot that goes in to designing and building a garden and an enormous amount of things that can go wrong, some of which can be costly. So, proceed with caution and perhaps don't be too ambitious.

Option 2 - The Design and Build Landscaper

Choosing to work with a landscaper is most likely to be a popular option. A good design and build company will provide you with concepts and ideas that will match your brief. They should also be able to fully explain the build, the materials they will use and the process. They will be able to advise on drainage requirements, planning, and SUDs, taking all that worry away from you. They will also take care of, and be compliant with, all CDM regulations.

If you do decide to go down this route, remember a good landscaper can be working on lead times of up to 6 months, so start your

journey as early as possible, and be clear on your brief and your budget. The pro is obvious: the work will be carried out by professionals who will take the stress and the liability of the project away from you; and the con is the cost.

Option 3 - The Garden Designer

Using a garden designer has many pros; they will have a real flair for design and the ability to understand the brief. Designers have a great knowledge of products and usually excellent plant knowledge. Designers will also help manage the project from start to finish, they will deal with the preferred contractors and also ensure all compliances are adhered to. Design and build companies tend to stick with what they know, whereas a designer will be willing to push boundaries. The major con for engaging a designer is purely another added cost.

So, there are three options in brief to obtaining a landscaped garden. Something to note is that if you are using option 1 or 2, then ensure the companies you use are vetted. Associations like APL independently vet and inspect all its members on a regular basis ensuring that you will be using fully insured and competent landscapers and designers to build your dream garden.

www.landscaper.org.uk

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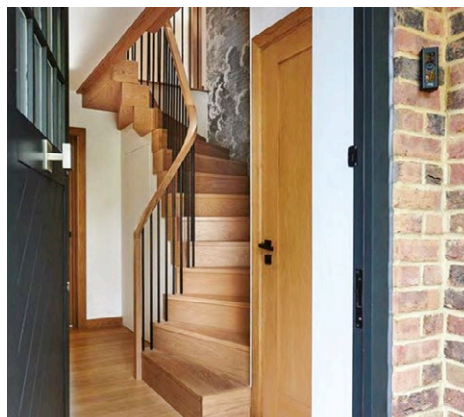
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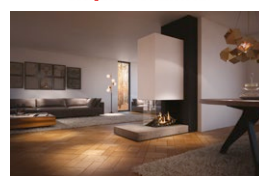
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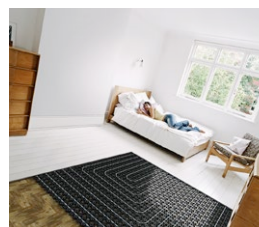
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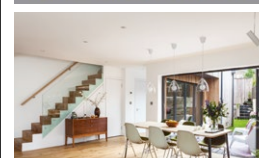
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UPONOR UK
The Pavilion, Blackmoor Lane,
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Tel: 01923 927000
Email: domesticproducts@uponor.com
Web: www.uponor.co.uk

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