

i-build

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i-build i-nterior i-scape

February 16 Issue 19



COVER STORY:

Cracking the code

Family home Cedar Barn built with energy saving principles in mind



MAKING A SPLASH

Tim Evans offers advice on installation of natural swimming ponds



FUN AND PRACTICAL

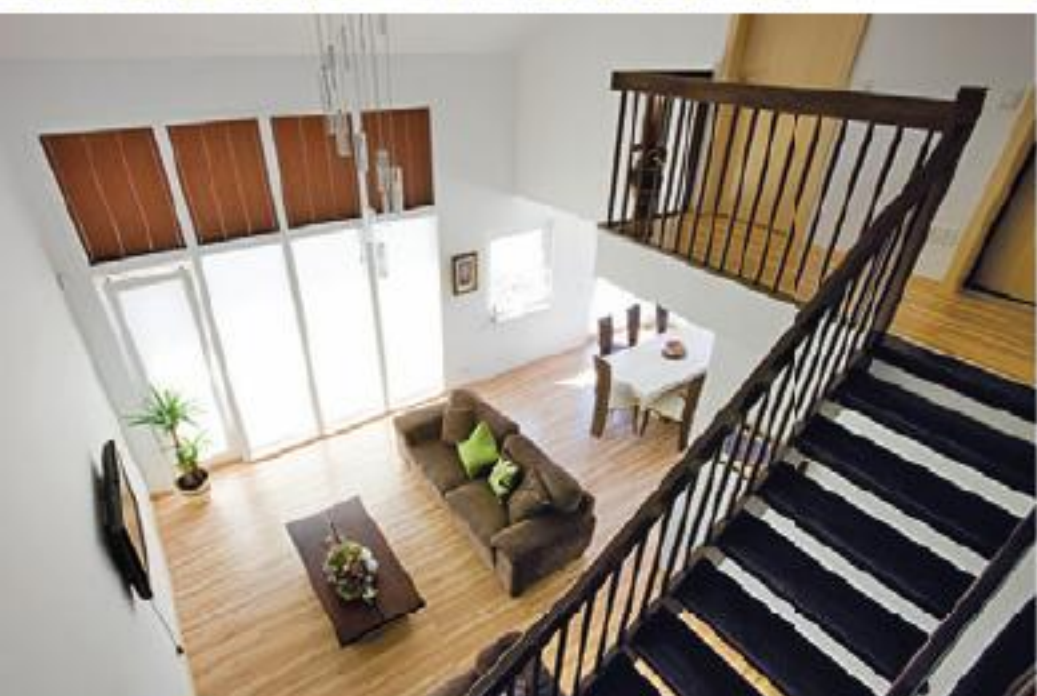
Children's furniture solutions that will ease them into your self-build



FINANCIAL FORECAST

Lead Economist, Michael Dall talks of the shape of the self-build industry

IN THIS ISSUE: • SELF-BUILDS • RENOVATIONS • EXTENSIONS • CONVERSIONS



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Cover story: Richard Green of Deluxe Developers has used his extensive knowledge of sustainable technologies to build an energy-efficient family home. See page 24.

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Welcome to the February issue of i-build

The remarkable thing about self-build is that every building is unique. Homeowners' preferences are all different, as are their aesthetic tastes, space requirements and budgets. While some homebuilders choose to design for the moment, others plan for the future – and this is exactly what sets apart our two spotlight case studies this month.

Featured on page 24, Sustainable Living explores a family home built on a family-owned farmyard using the highest quality energy-efficient technologies. Despite being up against several planning restrictions, the property boasts ample room for the family to enjoy. Meanwhile on page 30, i-build tells how professional architect couple David Liddicoat and Sophie Goldhill scoured the streets of London for a plot that was both affordable and had planning potential. The result is The Shadow House – an urban gem that is neatly tucked away in a highly sought-after location. Clever design and meticulous attention to detail enabled the couple to maximise all the space available on this tiny area of land.

Elsewhere in this issue, we reveal the hottest bathroom trends that were identified by a panel of experts at a recent Mira Showers 'discussions' event. From technology through to textures and tones, these latest styles are sure to inspire your bathroom design choices. Turn to page 40 for more information. Meanwhile on page 38, i-build has sourced a selection of fun and quirky beds designed especially for children. Help your little ones settle into their new rooms by introducing playful pieces.

For those yet to embark on building their own home, be sure not to miss the wide variety of trade events that are on offer throughout the country. Coming soon is The Listed Property Show (highlights available on page 14) which is tailored to owners of listed properties or prospective owners. Offering expert guidance on maintaining, altering or restoring properties, the show is a vital resource to ascertain the correct procedures.

Also imminent on the event calendar is Ecobuild. Here, visitors can discover the latest in smart technologies as well as top quality building materials. Find out more on page 16. Lastly, for those who were unable to attend Build It Live Kent, the exhibition will be hosted further north later this month at Manchester's Trafford Centre.

I hope you enjoy this issue. Don't forget, if you're coming to the end of your self-build journey and would like to offer your home as inspiration for other budding home-builders, please contact me at hannah@mixedmediainfo.com.

HFrackiewicz

Editor in Chief

hannah@mixedmediainfo.com

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Download the i-build app for iPhone, iPad and Android. Search 'i-build'.

Editor's picks



Rainwater protection solutions by Rainclear See page 54



Prefabricated construction from WeberHaus See page 56



App-controlled unitary fan from Vent-Axia See page 56

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Trade Secrets:
Look out for our 'Trade Secrets' dotted throughout this issue. These are the insider insights which can be invaluable to budding self-builders!



A romantic rococo retreat

Add a subtle touch of romance to your home with these French rococo inspired pieces.

Keeping to the valentine theme, i-build explains how you can subtly introduce a romantic theme into your property. Forget heart cushions and excessive decorations; why not opt for the romantic rococo style? The rococo style originates from the 18th century and initially was integrated into furnishings, silver and ceramics rather than architecture. It was a style developed from craftspeople and designers rather than architects and is not symmetrical in the slightest. Romantic white and blue shades instinctively give that romantic, spotless feel to any new build and a minute splash of gold can give off a less flamboyant rococo style. Focusing on the French rococo movement, i-build has listed some designs that have benefited from a contemporary twist. This romantic theme can bring an idyllic finish to any new build or renovation.

1. Gold cherub candelabra, £125, WITHIN
2. Bonaparte French Bed, from £2570, The French Bedroom Company
3. Louis XV Desk, £2150 (+VAT), Oficina Inglesa
4. Louis Bedside in French white, £169.15, Newtons Furniture
5. The Rococo ceiling rose, £195, Stevensons of Norwich
6. Ornate dressing table, mirror and stool, £293.71, Melody Maison
7. Louis XV style Carrara marble fireplace, £6800 (+VAT), Ryan & Smith Ltd
8. Monty Love Seat, £945, Loaf
9. Lockley chaise longue, £890, Sweetpea & Willow
10. French white Rococo blanket Box, £229, Newtons Furniture





1. Rococo dressing table and stool, £645
2. La Parisienne bedroom package, £2097
3. Grandeur Pavone chest of drawers, £525
4. Provincial Cheval mirror, £395



Rococo Interiors

Renowned for its high quality French furniture, Rococo Interiors has a wide variety of carefully handmade, reproduction antique furniture. Using the finest solid mahogany wood and workmanship, Rococo Interiors has a varied selection of French and Italian furniture available. From beds and dressing tables, to wardrobes and chaise longues, all furnishings exemplify the French Rococo style exceptionally with a range of minimal and flamboyant designs.



1. Colonial toile de jouy cushion cover, £35, Jim Lawrence
2. Botanic blue dinner plate set, from £64, Portmeirion
3. Folie Villandry wallpaper, £120 per 10m roll, Cole and Son
4. Scenic toile bedding, from £29.50, Marks and Spencer

Toile

Keeping to the February theme of romance, i-build brings you toile de jouy – another classical way to bring an elegant theme into your new build or renovation. Toile is available in a variety of colours and can give off a real country-style-living feel to any home. It can be found in many different prints with the most common being young couples having a picnic under a tree. For a real fresh romantic feel, add hints of toile de jouy to your interior.





A taste of Asia

Inspired by the Chinese New Year? If so, add a touch of the orient into your new build.

1

Bookworm

This wooden bookcase is inspired by the oriental moon gate design – a poetic moon shaped form traditionally used in openings within Chinese interiors and garden thresholds.

(www.orchidfurniture.co.uk)



4

China black

These willow pattern cushions are included in Jan Constantine's China Black range. The collection includes a stunning range of cushions and throws produced from luxurious wool and linen. The designs are intricately hand embroidered versions of the elaborate willow pattern ceramic design.

(www.janconstantine.com)



2

Take a seat

The La Lune sofa is designed to have a high arc, which is echoed in the front rail and gives the arms a low curved profile. This sofa is available in a leather or fabric of your choice with piped or blind seams.

(www.rume.co.uk)



5

Light it up

These blue painted lanterns exude charm with their distressed exterior and metal roofing. Each has a latched door encasing the candles, which you can reach easily. Perfect for indoors or on a balmy summer evening in the garden, these lanterns will help set the mood and create a luscious ambient atmosphere.

(www.puji.com)



3

Hammered drums

This two-piece drum set is a perfect multi-functional addition to any interior. The set can be used as additional seating or turned the other way to be used as planters.

(www.sweetpeaandwillow.com)

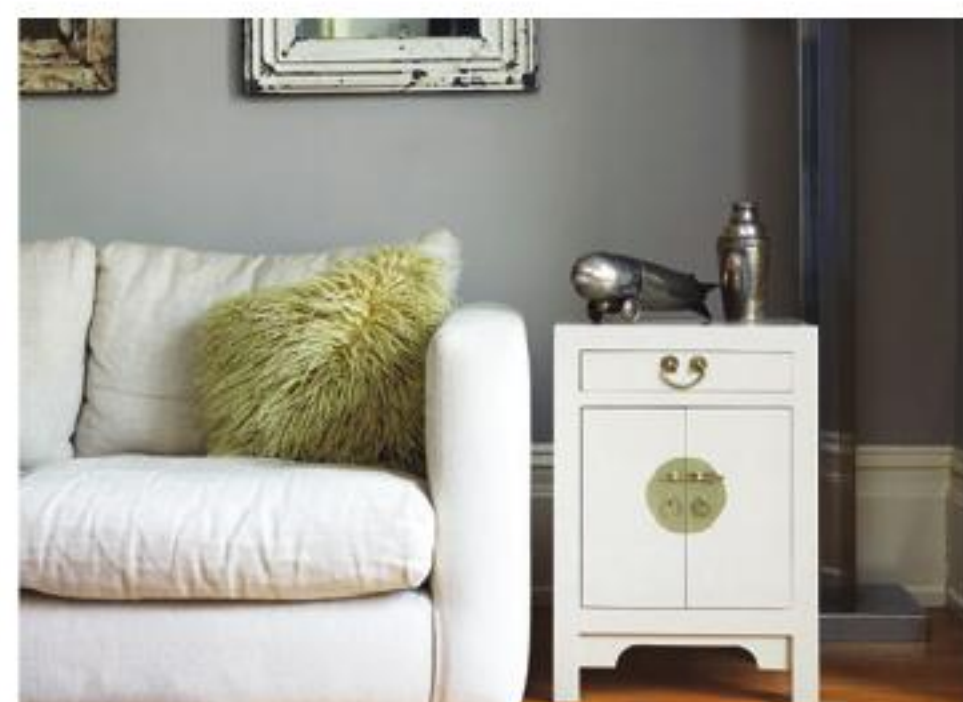


6

Chinese cabinet

The entire finish on this Chinese cabinet is clean and sleek, making it a perfect addition to any shabby chic or sophisticated country-style home. This small cabinet is ideal for any space and will add a subtle touch of an oriental design aspect into your self-build whilst keeping a contemporary feel to your decor.

(www.furnish.co.uk)





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Light up your life

Searching for the ultimate finishing touch? Check out these elegant statement pieces that are sure to give your home that glow.



1

Moulded molecules

Add a contemporary statement piece to centralise your room. This unique set of black and gold plated round shades is the perfect addition to a modern living room, which will surprise your guests.

(www.delightfull.eu)



4

Tantalising tulips

These delicately curved pieces of glass can be assembled into a fixture of any size and colour. The Tulip chandelier is perfect for entrances, hallways or bathrooms and is available in three sizes.

(www.lightinart.com)

2

A kaleidoscope of butterflies

Koket's unique Nymph chandelier is produced from delicate brass butterflies. Bring a touch of wildlife to your room with this exclusive chandelier. This 360° design is enjoyable from any angle.

(www.bykoket.com)



3

The mother ship

Hudson Furniture's Mother chandelier is an elegant addition to any room. It is produced from gloss nickel-plated laser cut rings and chains. This dramatic piece would complement a cascading stairwell.

(www.hudsonfurnitureinc.com)



5

Brass and black

The Hexagonal Polished glass chandelier is a sleek and captivating chandelier that offers a sophisticated lighting solution. This piece perfectly combines decorative black glass finishes and finely sculpted metal work.

(www.touchedinteriors.co.uk)



6

Blown glass

The San Marco SO13 is homage to Venice's beauty and glass making. This collection is a de-structured restyle of the Venetian chandelier; various sizes have been matched with a modular arrangement of glass pendants to create this exquisite piece.

(www.luciitaliane.com)



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Left: There are around 30 information-packed free seminars and workshops developed to address specific problems

Below left: Companies exhibiting at the Manchester show include Northcot Brick

Top tips for your self-build



After a successful inaugural event in 2015, Build It Live Manchester will take place for the second time at the Trafford Centre, from the 20th to 21st February 2016.

2 016's Build It Live Manchester exhibition aims to provide a stress-free route to creating a truly individual home with the opportunity to meet self-build experts who can provide invaluable advice and top tips for your self-build project. Receive one-to-one free advice from independent experts on how to turn a project into reality including how to find land, what is possible with and without planning permission and how to ensure that you have the right design. Whether it's your own personal self-

build development or one for a client, Build It Live Manchester is sure to provide the ideas, inspiration and information to drive any project forward.

At this year's show you can discover thousands of cutting-edge and traditional products and meet over 100 of the North West's most innovative suppliers. There are around 30 information-packed free seminars and workshops developed to address specific problems and inspire confidence when taking on a renovation or building project.

Companies exhibiting at Manchester include: Potton which offers stylish self-build homes, Oakwrights with its bespoke oak framed houses, and Northcot Brick which is an award-winning master brick maker. Dulux Design Service will be tempting visitors with its inspirational and practical interior design solutions, Byng Joinery has the latest glazing solutions including bi-fold doors and Stali will be exhibiting with its quality timber casement windows that can be finished with aluminium cladding, and its internal and external wooden doors.

www.builditlive.co.uk



Some exciting exhibits to expect from this year's Manchester show include:

The Naked House:

See a section of a new build as it comes together after first fix – a fascinating insight into how things are installed – from ICF blockwork and underfloor heating, to roof trusses and floor joists.

Find A Builder:

New to Build It Live Manchester this year, talk to the Federation of Master Builders who can guide you through the process of finding the right builder for your project. Access to its database of trusted builders in your area is available.

Real Life Projects:

Gain inspiration and confidence from Build It readers who have realised their self-build dreams. Hear their stories in the live theatre on the show floor.

Plotsearch Zone:

Receive tips on searching for plots and access Plotsearch – the UK's premier live online database – plus a gallery of current available plots of land in the North West.

Self Build Academy:

Attend free taster sessions from the Self Build Academy delivered by Potton – providing essential knowledge for all self-builders.

Tool Zone:

Identify the right tools to buy for your project. Featuring all major tool brands and some great demos.

To find out more about the show and to purchase '2 for 1' special tickets visit Build It Live's website. Other show dates around the UK include: Build It Live South East at Glow, Bluewater Kent from 6 to 7th February and Build It Live at Bicester, from 11 to 12th June.

Everything you need to create your own home

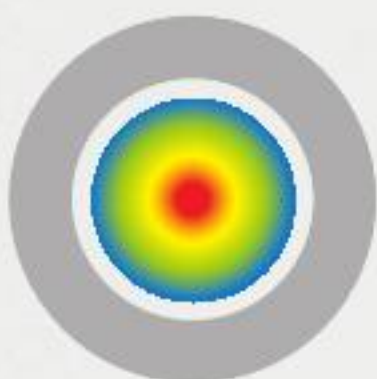
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The Listed Property Show brings you all the specialist information and expert help you need in conserving, renovating or buying a listed property

Guidance for listed properties

If you are maintaining, altering or renovating your listed home – or even looking to buy one – The Listed Property Show is not to be missed!

The Listed Property Show is celebrating 10 years of providing invaluable information, expert advice and practical tips to listed property owners.

The Listed Property Show, created by The Listed Property Owners Club, brings you all the specialist information and expert help you need in conserving, renovating or buying a listed property.

Arm yourself with professional help and advice from the biggest collection of listed property suppliers and specialists during one weekend, under one roof at Olympia London and HIC Harrogate in 2016. This is your chance to gather more information and expert advice in one day than you can through months of researching on your own – and tickets are free when downloaded in advance!

Over 150 of the country's leading experts will be at the show to give advice and guidance.

Many will be giving practical demonstrations including woodcarving, lead work, plasterwork, window and door manufacturing, etc.

Other exhibitors includes English Heritage, architectural historians as well as many commercial suppliers of products particularly suitable for period homes.

Save yourself time, money and stress by sharing your plans and drawings with onsite architects, planners and caring builders.

Don't miss your chance to have one-to-one conversations with Independent Conservation Officers and gain all the information you need on laws, insurances, mortgages and grants.

There will be three independent conservation officers within the exhibition who will happily discuss any plans you may have for altering or extending your property. We all know the

process of obtaining permission for such work can be very lengthy and a free one-to-one conversation will help you better understand the obligations and requirements. Remember to bring plenty of photographs and sketches of your property with you.

Alongside these officers will be a wide range of very experienced and competent RIBA registered architects all with the expertise and experience to develop your plans to fruition.

You can also listen to lectures on a topic of your choice at one of the many show talks including:

- Ask the Expert panel
- Trace the history of your home
- Damp in traditional buildings
- How to choose the right contractor
- Energy efficiency
- Traditional paint methods

New for 2016, the Ask The Expert panel will be on hand to discuss and debate a multitude of topics regarding owning a listed home. The panel will be led by LPOC Conservation Officer Peter Bell and will be joined by experts from The Society for the Protection of Ancient Buildings (SPAB), Historic England, specialist Architect Purcell and Law Expert Suzanne Bowman.

Plus, the whole Listed Property Owners Club team and will be on hand for you to meet.

Register now via the website to download your free invitation or call The Listed Property Owners Club direct. Invitation admits two and is worth £20. ■

www.lpoc.co.uk



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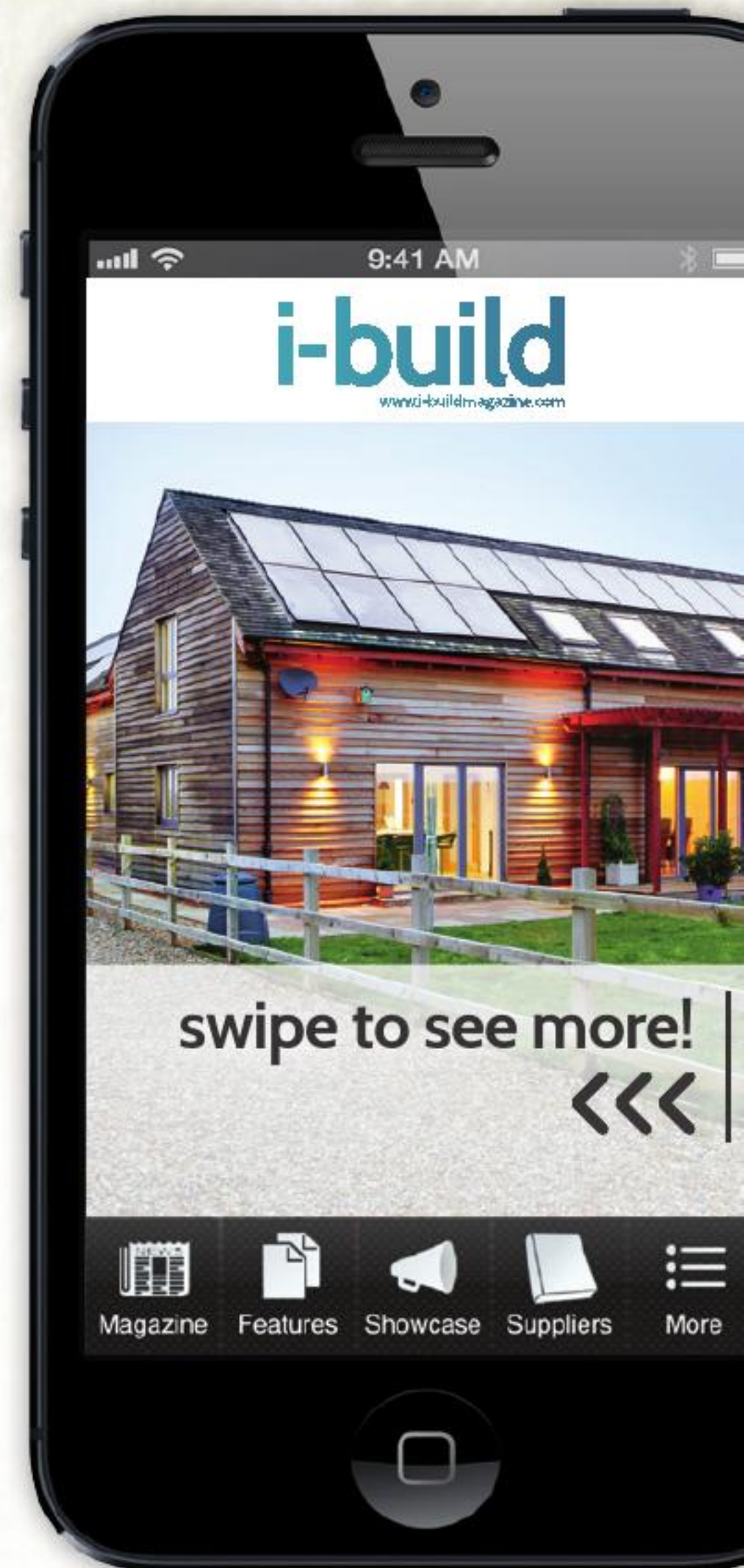
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Discover the latest in domestic smart technologies

Self-builders can get to grips with the latest smart technologies that are forging an ever-closer and advantageous relationship between homeowners and their houses at Ecobuild, the UK's largest show dedicated to construction and energy.

The show will provide visitors with access to a wealth of practical expert advice and information through a mix of a high-level conference, CPD-accredited learning hubs and more than 800 exhibitors showcasing a wide range of new products, materials, solutions and services.

Day one of Ecobuild 2016 is the show's dedicated Homes Day which explores the most pressing, divisive and important decisions the industry must take to deliver comfortable, efficient, resilient places and homes.

Attracting more than 40,000 industry professionals from across the whole supply chain each year, Ecobuild is the leading exhibition and conference for the UK construction and energy market. The 2016 event will see an evolved proposition for the event to focus on areas of industry growth and market priorities such as housing, infrastructure, next generation innovation, technology and people.

The backbone of Ecobuild's Homes Day is provided by a provocative and controversial conference programme that covers property issues ranging from the challenges of refurb and retrofit to the commercial viability of ultra-low cost and low energy homes.

Professor Phil Jones, Chairman of Architectural Science at Cardiff University, is one of the day's

dynamic speakers. Prof Jones led the team which developed SOLCER, the UK's first purpose-built, low-cost energy smart house which is capable of exporting more energy to the national electricity grid than it uses. The property was built for a mere £100,000.

With each session designed to give a glimpse at the future of housebuilding and home creation, Colin Usher, Director of John McCall Architects, provides a presentation on "Living for Tomorrow", in which he offers common sense solutions to low-energy, cost-effective future living. In 2014, John developed a house which runs on a utilities bill of just £15 per year.

The itinerary

Ecobuild 2016 will also feature six CPD-accredited learning hubs; Building Performance, Design, Energy, #BuildCircular, Infrastructure Revolution and Digital Building. A highly-provoking seminar programme, it will provide visitors and exhibitors with the know-how to do their jobs better and the business case to help them make more informed decisions to address these challenges.

The programme will be delivered by industry leading figures and organisations including Architype, Glenn Howells Architects, Marks & Spencer, British Land, Jones Lang LaSalle, BRE,

ICE, Zero Carbon Hub and Willmott Dixon Energy Services.

Ecobuild 2016 will focus on two further streams after the opening Homes Day. The second day looks at Architecture, exploring the changing role of the architect, the importance of architecture across the built environment, the need for change and some of the most interesting and inspiring architectural projects.

Day three is devoted to Next Generation and looks at how smart technology, changing demographics and wellness will drive design and construction in the future as well as how we will address the skills gap and attract young talent to the industry.

Reflecting the construction industry, Ecobuild is constantly evolving; ensuring that it continues to provide relevant, dynamic content and create opportunities to make new connections.

Ecobuild 2016 is co-located with Resource, the leading resource efficiency event. Both take place from 8th to 10th March at London's ExCeL.

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Loving the light

i-build follows Will Anderson as his self-build journey unfolds. This month, he completes an epic work of craft: a four metre high stained glass window.

In the nineteenth century, under the influence of the Gothic revival and latterly the Arts and Crafts movement, stained glass escaped from churches and cathedrals and started appearing in ordinary homes. The staircase window was a particularly popular spot for a little decorative glass, and remained so until the 1940s. These days, of course, the clean lines of modernism have banished such fripperies – unless, like us, you have a passion for the Arts and Crafts movement and delight in the possibilities of manipulating light through coloured glass.

Far from banishing stained glass, we have gone as far as we possibly can in the other direction and created a four metre high stained glass window, rising up the two floors of our stairwell, where a curving staircase is yet to be built. We started making the panels of this window before we began building the house, nearly two years ago, and have only recently finished the task. The expression 'labour of love' for once seems entirely appropriate.

We started out at a beginners' class at the Working Men's College in north London, where master Stained Glass-Designer Edward Burne Jones once taught. The basic skills of stained glass making are relatively easy to master so we were soon able to begin our ambitious nine-panel window for our Arts and Crafts inspired house. The design is abstract: a rising arc of light moving through earth greens to sky blues with a burst of heavenly red-orange appearing at the top.

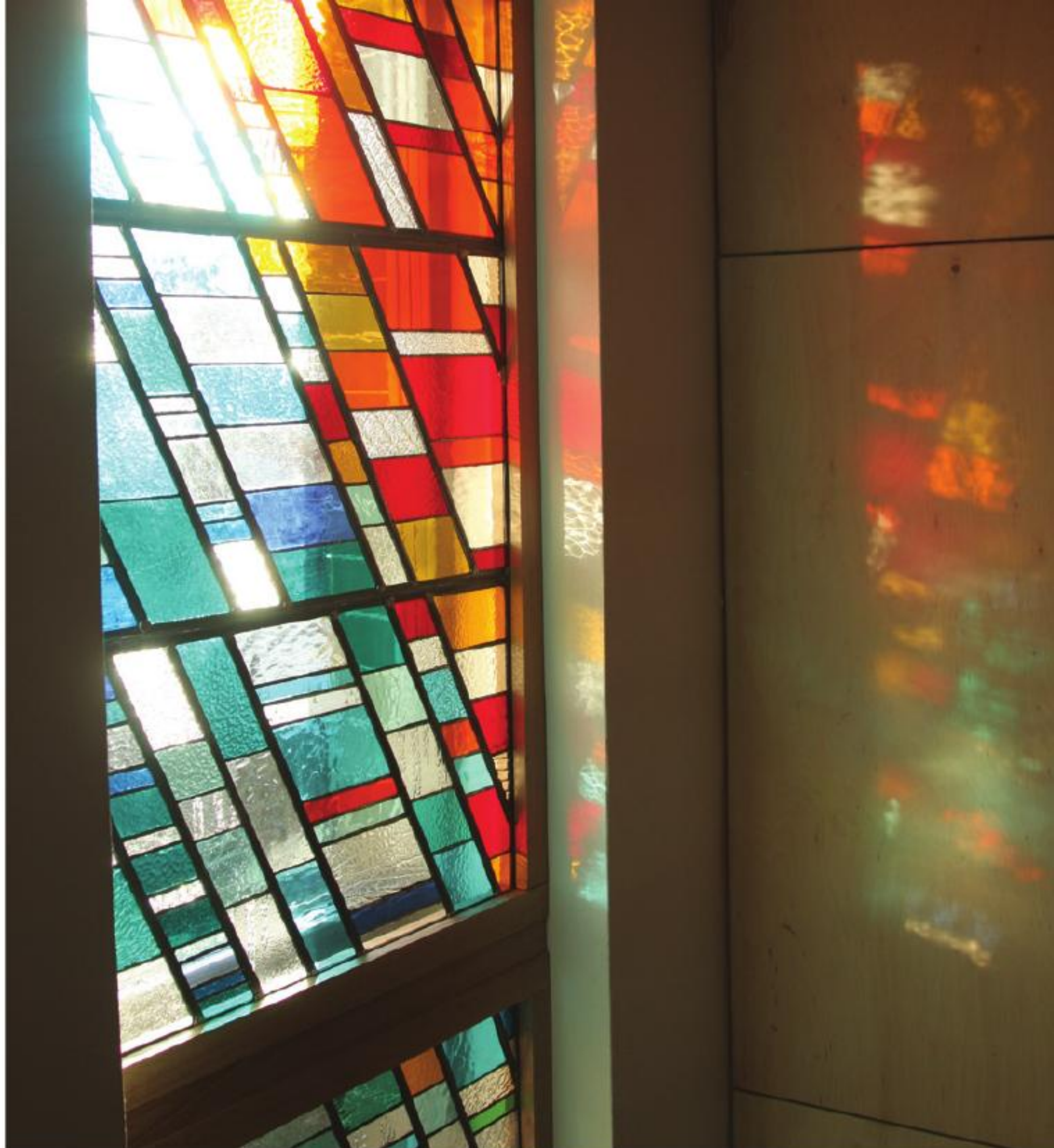
Happily you don't need many tools to make stained glass. Just a glass cutter, pliers to nibble off any ragged edges from the pieces of cut glass, and a soldering iron to join up the pieces after the edges have been wrapped in copper foil. You begin with a cartoon drawn on paper and cut the pieces accordingly, scoring the glass along the lines of the cartoon then tapping the ends of the lines to create points of weakness,

before snapping the glass in two. Easy really, once you've got the hang of it, though designing something non-figurative and abstract with no curving lines proved to be a good move.

We installed the window over the New Year holiday. This involved building a secondary oak frame to sit in front of the existing triple-glazed window that went in when the building's structural timber frame went up back in 2014. We then carefully slotted each of the panels in place, one on top of the other, and filled any gaps between the panels with lead-coloured silicone. The window faces east so we get the morning light. As this is the middle of winter, this light doesn't exactly stream in, but it's still a joy to behold. Everyday we see something new.

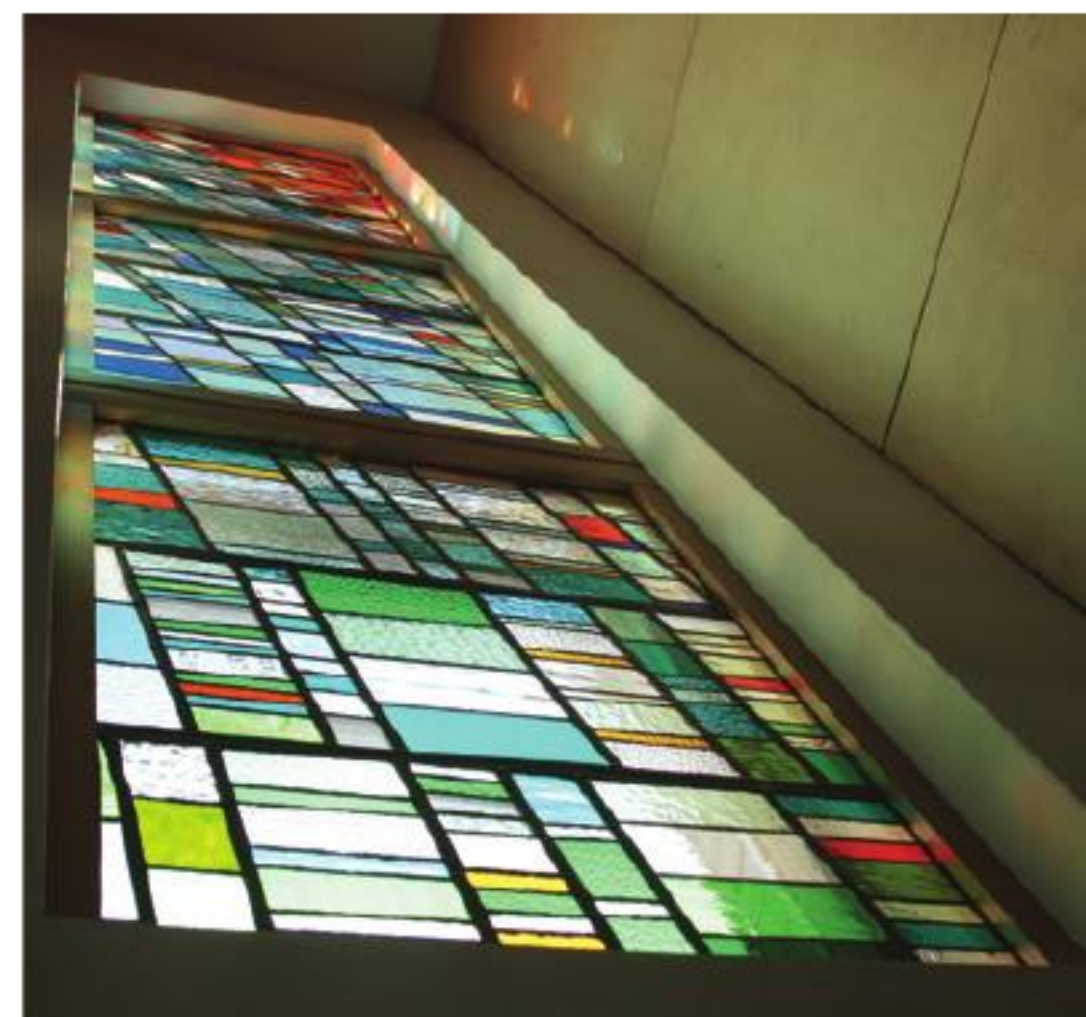
The window has transformed the house. What's more, it didn't really cost that much, as we made it ourselves: just the cost of the lead and the many and various pieces of glass that we incorporated. A cheap thrill, you might say, but one that will keep us smiling for the rest of our lives. ■

www.buildingtheorchard.com



Above: The basic skills of stained glass making are relatively easy to master

Below: The design is abstract: a rising arc of light moving through earth greens to sky blues with a burst of heavenly red-orange appearing at the top





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The lie of the land

Michael Dall, Lead Economist at construction data expert Barbour ABI, reflects on the current state of the custom-build market.

Trade Secrets:

With councils freeing up more land for custom-build, and an increase in grants available, 2016 is a great time to re-evaluate self-build plans that never got off the ground.



The construction sector in general has had a faster than anticipated recovery in 2013 and 2014, after a “double dip” recession in 2012. It is forecast to increase by 4.9% in 2015, with final figures still to be published. This is a healthy growth rate demonstrative of a healthy industry. However, concern for the custom-build property market remains, despite a modest increase in planning applications across 2015.

Custom-build planning applications in 2015 for new homes continued to lag with just under 18,000 submitted, 30% below the historic 2010 peak figure. Our latest data shows that custom-build planning applications in 2015 were the second lowest for eight years, with only 2014 faring worse. These figures are more surprising considering the apparent turn-around over the last two years within the housing market.

The custom home build industry turns over

£4b a year and provides a substantial amount to the national economy. In October 2015 the Government released a new Housing and Planning Bill that they hoped will spark a national transformation from ‘generation rent into generation buy’ with a target of building 20,000 custom-build homes a year by 2020.

The statistics

With a Government-backed £350m boost to funding for custom-build and a commitment



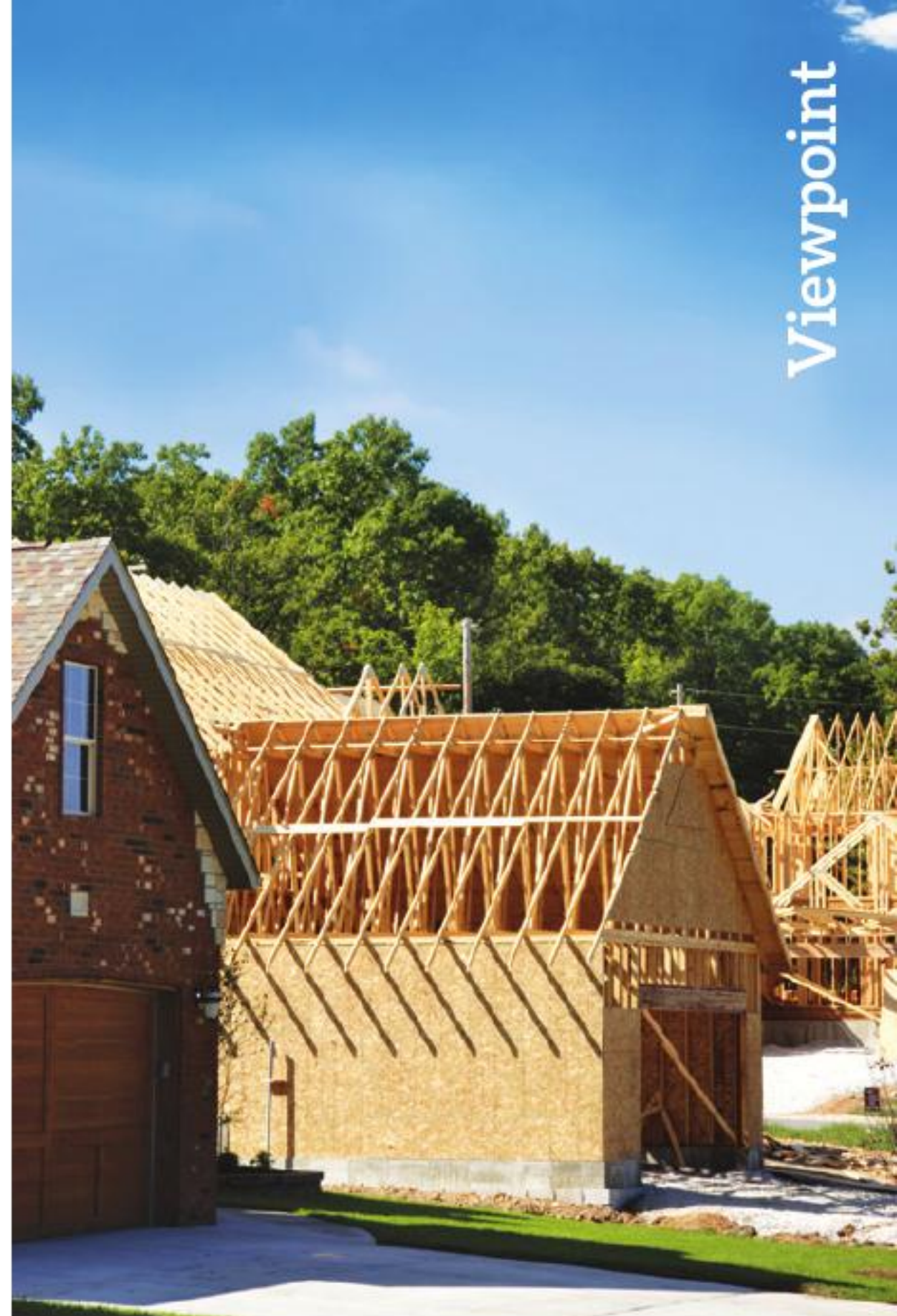
to removing the main barriers that hold back many thousands of custom-build projects every year, the news is not encouraging that self-build planning applications are still below the levels that they were in the midst of the recession.

The latest statistics for England and Wales show that the number of housing completions were 130,690 for the financial year 2014/15, an increase of 10.6% on the previous year. With just 18,000 planning permissions submitted last year for self-build, the figure suggests that there is not enough interest in custom-build to have a serious impact on improving housing stock across the UK currently, particularly as the country is estimated to need 250,000 homes to keep pace with demographic changes.

Construction forecasts

However with the recent changes that have come into force, such as councils freeing up more land for custom-build and an increase in grants available, this should have a positive effect on the forecasted number of self-build applications in 2016. While the modest increase in 2015 is welcome there is still a long way to go for these types of properties to make any significant impact on the current housing crisis in the UK.

The residential sector has been the key driver of the construction industry's recent growth and this continued in 2015. However, custom-build did not have a major impact on the residential sector's dominance in 2015, with many of the schemes and cutting of the red-tape still trying to work its way through parliament in 2016. The Government's target is to double the amount of self-built homes by 2020. Only time will tell as to whether the recent removal of red-tape will develop into an increase of spades in the



ground for self-build properties.

The latest construction forecasts for overall residential are positive, predicting that output will increase by 10% in 2015, falling back to 5% growth by 2016 and to 2% by 2017 and beyond. The extent to which this solves the "housing crisis" remains open to debate however, the state of custom-build and its future impact is still up in the air. ■

www.barbour-abi.com

Above: 18,000 planning permissions were submitted last year for self-build

Top right: Time will tell as to whether the recent removal of red-tape will develop into an increase of spades in the ground for self-build properties

Right: The Government's target is to double the amount of self-built homes by 2020





It's vital to protect your dream home right from the very start of your build

Do I need self-build insurance?

Following recent floods that caused damage to many UK properties, Andrew Reardon, Senior Selfbuild Account Handler at self-build insurance policy expert ProActive Selfbuild, stresses the importance of protecting your self-build site and structure.

The risks a property can face differ depending on where it is built. An inner city property is more susceptible to theft and malicious damage. While a more rural property can suffer from weather related claims such as storm.

With the unpredictable nature of British weather you never know what you might face therefore it's vital to protect your dream home right from the very start of your build.

Once you exchange on your plot of land or property you are responsible for the insurance on it, in the trade known as self-build insurance. Initially with the plot of land there is only a small chance of a claim occurring. However should an accident occur onsite for which you are held responsible (this includes trespassers) the claims can run into a great deal of money which can delay your build or make it financially impossible to complete it.

If your building project is a renovation or extension there are additional initial risks. Unoccupied properties do attract unwanted attention and are often stripped of anything of value such as copper piping and lead. It's therefore important to note that normal home insurance or an unoccupied buildings policy is not appropriate. These types of policies will have an exclusion clause for a property undergoing structural work or large scale renovation. A property left unoccupied for more than 60 days will either have no cover at all or restricted to fire only, therefore if a claim occurs it is unlikely to be covered. Unoccupied properties are also prone to malicious damage and in the cold weather may lead to water claims caused by frozen pipes which can go undetected for days.

Once your contractor is in place and works start onsite they will probably provide some cover. As a minimum they should have liability cover however there are some grey areas with that. It may be the case that when they leave site the insurance goes with them, so when the property is at its most vulnerable at night and over the weekend no cover would be in place. It may also be the case that they carry insurance for your materials once they arrive onsite depending on the type of insurance they have however, if you are sourcing and buying some of the materials yourself your contractor cannot cover these and you will need to insure them yourself.

ProActive provides comprehensive self-build insurance for new builds, extensions and renovation/conversion work.

www.selfbuildonline.co.uk

Once your contractor is in place and works starts onsite they will probably provide some cover



Building A Mortgage Free Home?

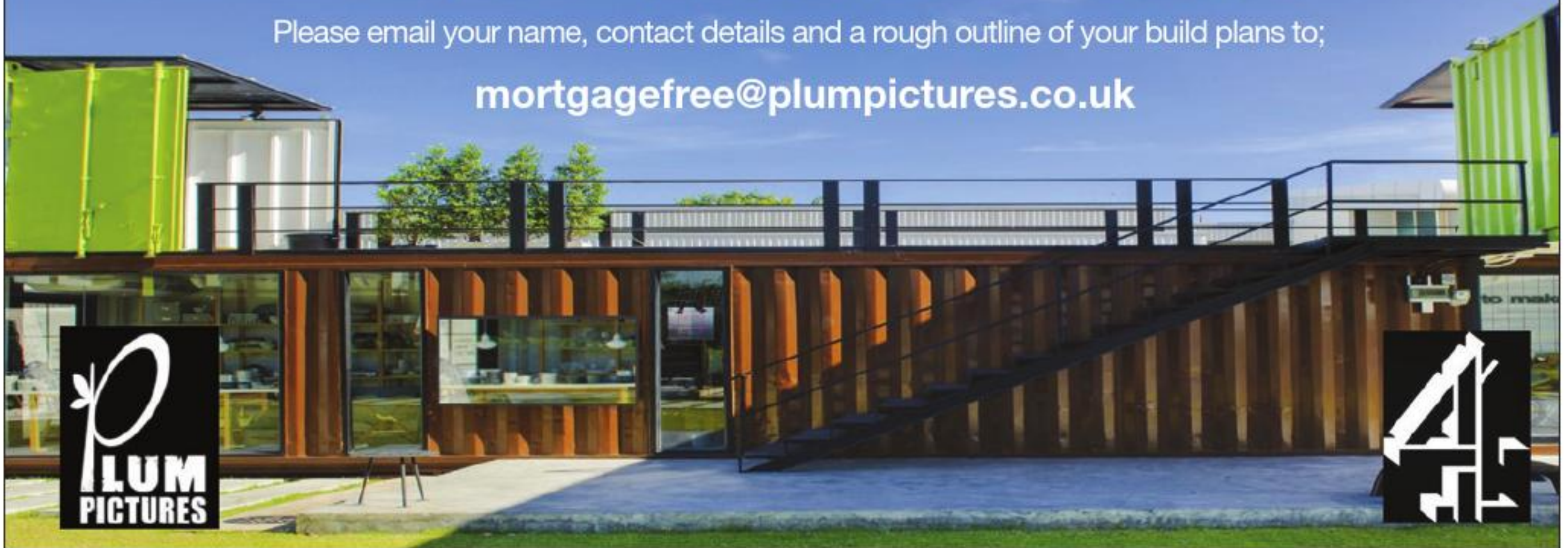
Plum Pictures, the creators of George Clarke's Amazing Spaces, are looking for people to take part in an inspiring new series that follows individuals who plan to build their own home and become **mortgage free** in the process.

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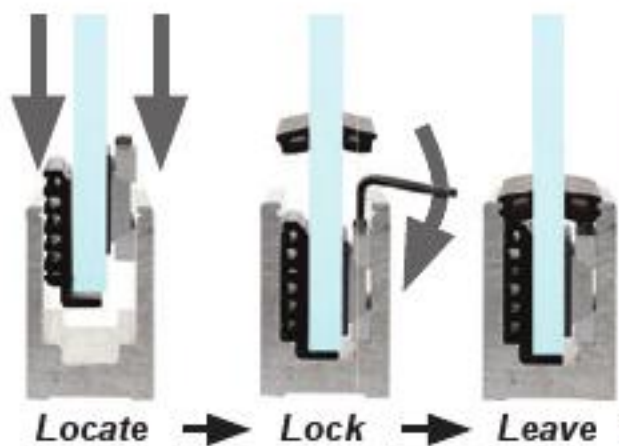
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Cracking the code

Richard Green, Managing Director of Deluxe Developers, has used his extensive knowledge of sustainable technologies to build his own truly energy-efficient family home.



A home grand in scale and bold in composition is a goal for many aspiring self-builders. Yet for Richard Green, his approach focused entirely on designing a super-efficient, traditional build, comfortable in its setting with little impact on its surroundings.

Richard developed a keen interest in energy whilst studying for his Mechanical Engineering degree at Liverpool University. As part of the course, he undertook an apprenticeship at a

wind turbine company and identified several flaws in the technology and the service it provides. He explains: "This was the start of me realising that solar PV was a much better way to a sustainable future. The opportunity to design and build my own energy saving home then came when planning permission was given for a project that had to meet the innovative Code for Sustainable Homes Level 6."

The arrival of Code for Sustainable Homes Level 6 was great news for Richard as it meant

his vision was closer to becoming a reality. "I had realised for some time that the building industry is very slow to accept change," he says, "and that many of the techniques and innovations for more sustainable properties had not been incorporated into current developments."

"I knew it was possible to create a very sustainable (Code Level 6) and energy saving home, working to a level which had previously only been achieved in what I called 'wacky homes'. I was



sure that all the eco or fossil free materials and energy saving facilities could be incorporated within a traditional style house, which was not obtrusive or dependent on CO₂-producing materials, such as mass concrete or steel structures."

As the chosen plot for the new property was on a family-owned farmyard of limestone barns and ancillary buildings, planning stipulated Cedar Barn had to be constructed under planning policy D1. This meant the home had to be in keeping with the surrounding buildings (i.e.

stone farm conversions). This was in addition to the challenges of building to Code Level 6. Richard explains: "The design brief was driven by two things – the exterior had to be made in traditional materials with the lowest possible CO₂ footprint and it also had to incorporate the latest energy saving principles."

To help achieve planning permission, Richard and his family turned to Milton Keynes-based architect practice, 3d Architects. "Given the detailed methodology needed to obtain the

planning permission and to be able to build Cedar Barn to such a high level, we choose 3d Architects," comments Richard. "In addition, in order to incorporate our own ideas for a solar powered, 'nil bill' home, a huge amount of work went into the design of the fabric, where we worked closely with 3d Architects."

With Cedar Barn being the first of its kind in the UK, Richard spent several years researching the market to find quality materials and products to enhance the performance of his



home. He explains: “Renewable systems are at the heart of Cedar Barn, and is one of the main factors behind us achieving a ‘nil bill’ home.

“Specifications were influenced by the site. For example, we were able to install a ground source heat pump solution in the paddock for heating and hot water. We installed several elements such as underfloor heating, cat 6 cabling throughout, and 100% LED lighting plus advanced technical systems to run and monitor the home’s performance.”

Performance beyond expectations

Thanks to the installation of this advanced system, Richard has noticed Cedar Barn has performed well beyond his projections: “Cedar Barn is all electric, generating 14.5kW from the latest thin-film solar PV panels. By applying passive house principles, we produce, annually, three times the electricity required by the property.”

Despite inclusion of high tech, ‘mod-cons’ designed to help achieve a truly efficient home, the building’s overall aesthetic is remarkably sympathetic to its rural setting. Cedar Barn is a timber-framed, part limestone and part cedar-clad home, set within a courtyard of limestone farm barn residential conversions of various sizes.

“The interior of Cedar Barn is contemporary by design,” comments Richard. “A large lounge with wood

Above: Renewable systems are at the heart of Cedar Barn

Below: The building’s overall aesthetic is remarkably sympathetic to its rural setting



burner is the centre of our family home, with a dining room and kitchen all south-facing over the beautiful surrounding countryside.

“Also on the ground floor is a large L-shaped hall, cloakroom/shower room, home office, plant room and a roomy two-car garage.

“We have five bedrooms on the first floor, with two en-suites and a main bathroom. Also on the first floor is the mechanical ventilation plant room and a walk-in airing cupboard.”

For the Green family, the finished building is everything they hoped it would be and much more. Richard enthuses: “Cedar Barn is so comfortable. It gives a positive reaction the moment you see it. Performance-wise, it is just the same. With a modern and homely feel inside, it is a real family home costing very little to run. I would say our favourite thing about Cedar Barn is the space! There is space for storage, transitional space in the landings and hallways, space in the bathrooms/bedrooms and for entertaining.”

Natural surroundings

In contrast to the modern interior scheme, Cedar Barn's exterior landscaping exquisitely complements the natural surroundings, with features such as a natural pond and waterfall. Richard reveals: “We did work with an environmental and ecological consultant who provided a substantial list of plants and trees suitable ➤

Below: Cedar Barn is a timber-framed, part limestone and part cedar-clad home





for the site. Interestingly, the points awarded for the environment was part of achieving the Code Level 6.”

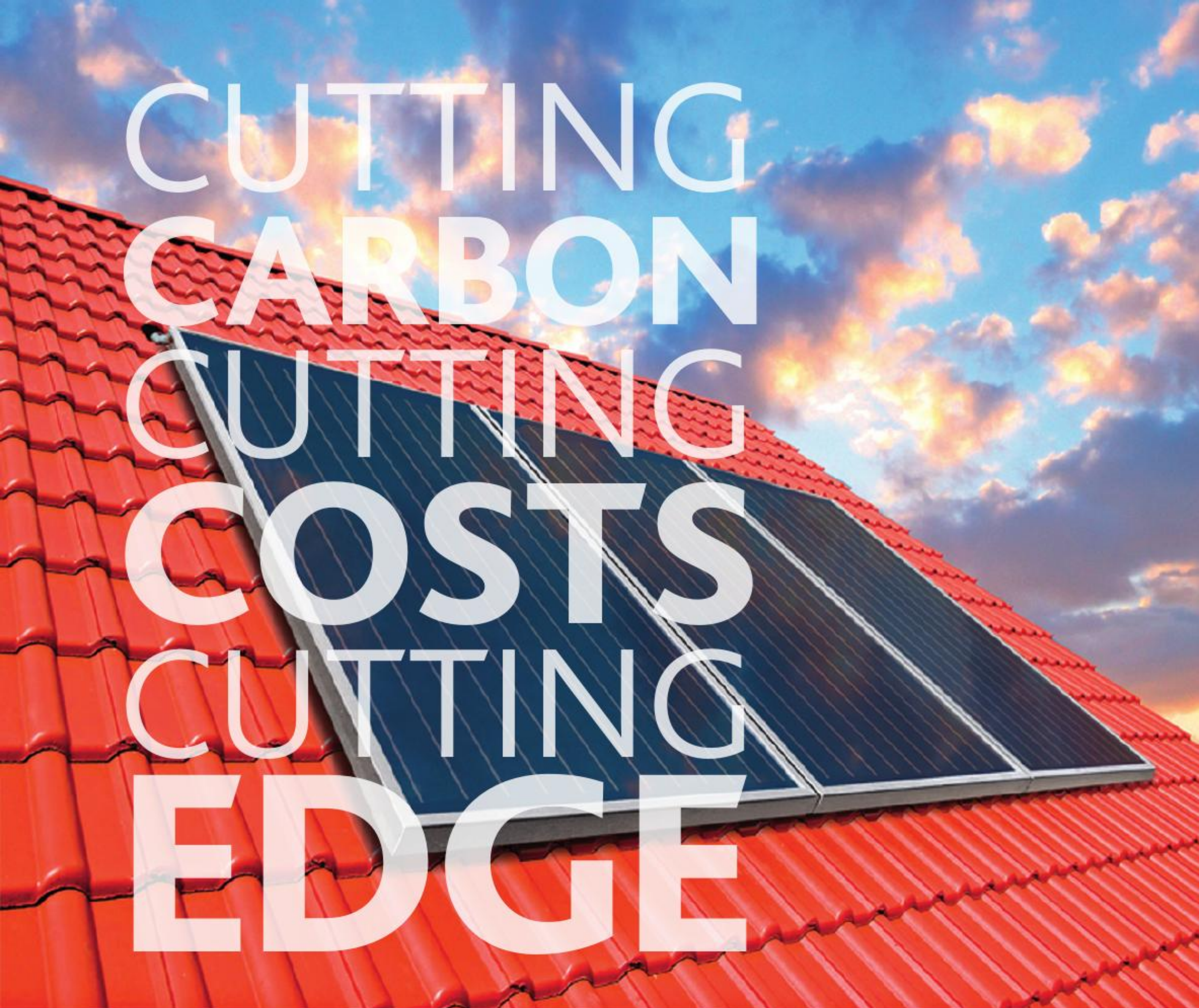
Providing such a valuable asset to the Hanslope landscape, Cedar Barn demonstrates that self-build is not all about ‘statement’ architecture. It’s about well-considered decision-making that inevitably makes your home work the way you want it to. As a final thought to aspiring self-builders about to embark on their own challenge, Richard concludes: “Principally do your research and planning very carefully with as much detail as possible – not only on the construction and the methodology but also on the finished house. Regarding the construction, without a good knowledge of the building process, project management is best left to the professionals.”

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Above: There is space for storage plus transitional space in the landings and hallways

Right: A large lounge with wood burner is the centre of the family home





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A gap in the market

When architects David Liddicoat and Sophie Goldhill, the partners of Liddicoat & Goldhill, began market research for a separate private housing venture, little did they know they would discover the perfect plot for their own modest home.



It wasn't the typical start to a self-build journey, as the couple explains: "We hadn't planned to build our own home together, it was something that happened whilst we were working for other practices on high-end residential projects for private clients and complex urban social housing developments. We were keen to extend this experience into building more modest single houses.

"We took this idea and said, well actually let's run with it, as we wanted to get onto the

property ladder but couldn't find anything that we both liked or could afford."

As with all self-build projects, finding the site was not an easy ride, as David reveals: "We cycled around London, exploring the backstreets and peering over fences, looking for a forgotten scrap of land. We knew we could only afford a site that was too challenging for developers or 'Grand Designs' hopefuls.

"We had been looking for a project for about three months and then we finally came across this strip of land, a derelict gap at the end of a

terrace in Camden. At only 390ft², it seemed almost impossibly small but in an excellent central location."

Despite finding the perfect plot, the couple's dream was still a long way off. David explains: "When we found the site, we carried out a quick search revealing that planning had been refused twice.

"The location is in the fiercely-protected Camden Square Conservation Area but we knew the project could only become a reality through our skills of designing in historic areas,



© Tom Gildon

Above: The home's location behind Kings Cross, Pancras – is steeped in sooty industrial heritage

Above right: Two slabs of bookmatched Statuarietto marble was used throughout the house as a reflective contrast to the brick walls

Right: At only 390ft², the plot seemed almost impossibly small but in an excellent central location



© Keith Collie

Urban Sanctuary

and negotiating with neighbours and local planners. We soon snapped it up for just £75,000 with the belief that we would be able to create something quite spectacular and get the go-ahead from the planners.

"We initially put in an application for a very small three-story house with one level as a basement, and received planning permission on first attempt. However,

we went back to the drawing board after realising that we could squeeze some extra square footage out of an adjacent site. We managed to secure some more land (part of someone's back garden) for an extra £20,000.

"We then submitted a reapplication for a three-story house in London stock brick and another for cross-laminated timber. After discussing both applications with ➤



© Keith Collie



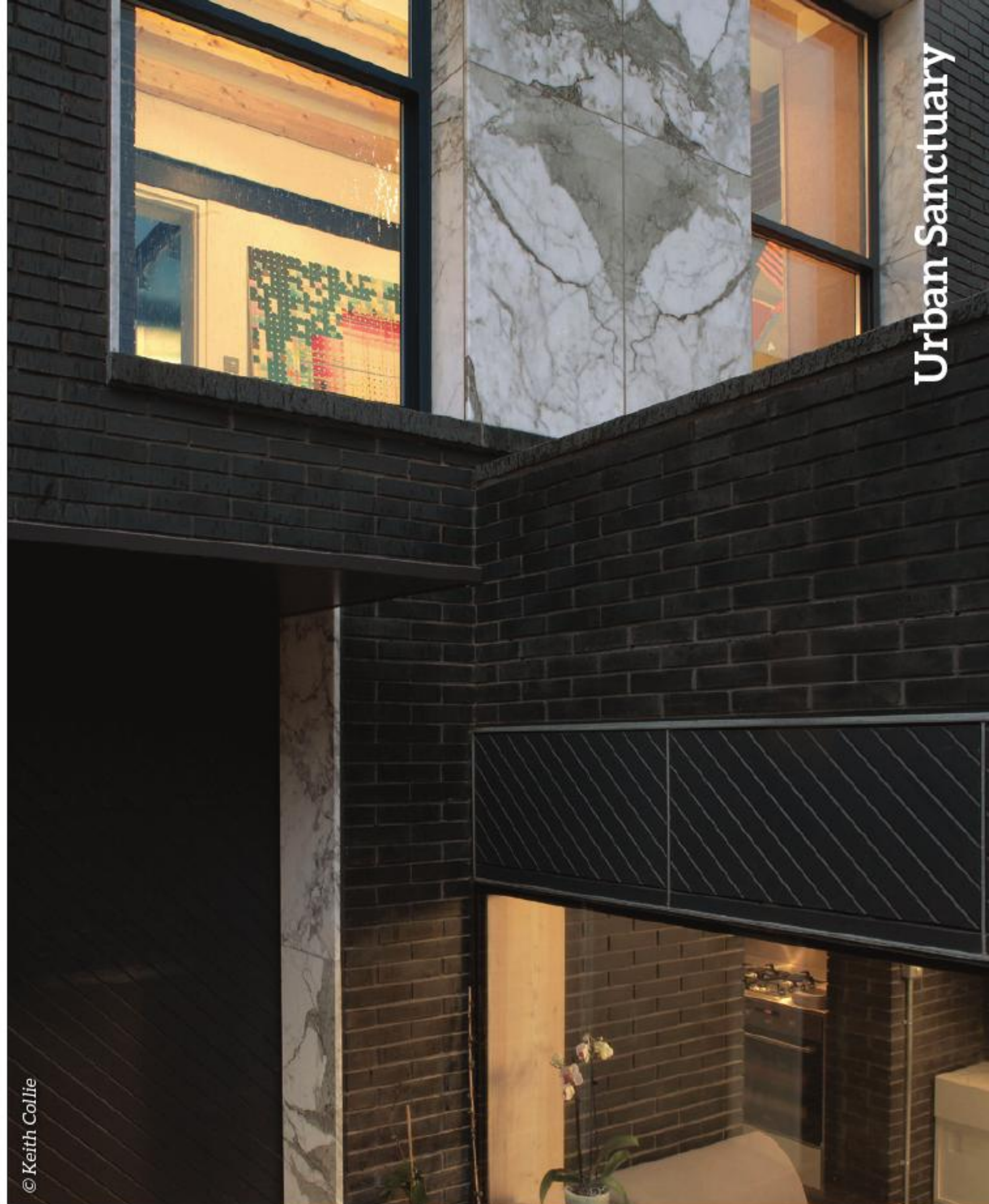
the planner, we decided to run with something a bit grittier and more industrial looking that was representative of the local aesthetic and heritage of the area. The coal-like brick facade eventually did it and we were granted planning-permission."

Overall, the building's design was dictated by the heritage and aesthetic of the local area and of course budget, as David explains: "Because our budget was so tight, we had always planned to carry out as much of the work as possible ourselves. The budget also limited our palette to primary materials."

"The tiny plot drove the design brief to a certain extent but in the four years we were doing the job, we were able to constantly rework every last little corner of the scheme. Rather than producing all of the drawings at the beginning and then building it, we were able to visit the site every day and work out how things needed to change and adapt them in order to improve the project."

The couple's vision for their new home was inspired by a set of architects in Japan – renowned for producing miniature urban homes. What's more, David had always dreamt of building a generic small city house. The home's location – located behind Kings Cross, Pancras – is steeped in sooty industrial heritage. It is where the railway cuttings used to be and previously home to a builders' yard.

Working in quite a confined space, David and Sophie were keen to experiment with the space they had available. Sophie comments: "In order to give a sense of space to what could feel ➤



© Keith Collie



© Keith Collie

Above: The building's design was dictated by the heritage and aesthetic of the local area

Far left: The couple's vision for their new home was inspired by a set of architects in Japan

Left: The whole design revolves around this play of light and dark



© Tom Gildon

like very constrained rooms, it was important for us to modulate the sections and vary the ceiling heights.

“Getting as much light into the inner spaces was also key. By changing the floor level and building roofs at different heights, they created a range from 3mm in the living room to 2.1m in the entrance area. This allowed us to give each space its own sound quality and sense of cosiness or airiness.”

To ensure the project ran as smoothly as possible it was decided that either David or Sophie would take on the role of project manager. David kept his job as it made better sense financially, while Sophie quit hers to take on the role of project manager.

The Shadow House

The couple were essentially the client, the architect, project manager and builder rolled into one, which was exhausting. Sophie remarks: “Our days involved 6 o’clock starts and manual onsite labour, while evenings were spent at home making any tweaks to the design.”

The end result is The Shadow House, built inside and out in slim-format Dutch engineering brick – a robust material with a dedicated brick glaze. Interior structure and window reveals are in raw larch, while polished concrete floors flow between each of the rooms.

“One small luxury that we allowed ourselves,” comments David, “was to buy two slabs of bookmatched Statuarietto marble, which we used throughout the house as a reflective contrast to the brick walls. The whole design revolves around this play of light and dark;



© Tom Gildon

carefully controlled moments of intensity and quiet shadow. We wanted to create interior spaces with maximum emotional effect.”

This desire is reflected in the bright first floor bathroom. It has a huge sheer glass ceiling (which needed to be craned into place) that contrasts with the intense atmosphere of the living spaces.

David continues: “We playfully carved space into the walls for everyday clutter; the TV and its cables are concealed behind a black glass wall, the toilet roll has its own marble niche and the washing machine is in a secret cupboard behind the toilet. Discreet storage fills every spare corner while the kitchen extract is buried into the brickwork.

“Because it was such a small house, it was really important for us to think about all of our possessions and where we were going to keep them. For example, by using the underneath of the bath area for storage, we’ve been able to reclaim the floor space for use. The bathroom is only 2.5 x 1.5m so for this reason we have used a Japanese bath, which is just over a metre squared.

“We also designed our own fittings and furnishings; the minimalist Zero larch bedframe; furniture cabinetry in elm; stainless steel, marble and spray lacquered matt doors; The Shadow Lamp, a granite and laser-cut timber table light; soft furnishings using amazing African fabrics, Nyaradza bedspread and Akwasidee cushions.”

With the support of the local community and a very hands-on approach, the couple have delivered an exceptional home that truly makes the most of available light and space. Sophie comments: “We learnt a great deal and even though the process is extremely time consuming and tiring, it’s very exciting. We’ve even committed to another self-build project, which is completing this Spring.

“Building your own home can be profitable financially, although everything you don’t put in in money terms you make up for in blood, sweat and tears. We definitely recommend the process of building your own home – a lot of tenacity and energy is required, but it is a truly satisfying experience.” ■

www.liddicoatgoldhill.com

Above left: Polished concrete floors flow between each of the rooms

Left: The bathroom is only 2.5 x 1.5m so for this reason the couple specified a Japanese bath

Right: David and Sophie wanted to create interior spaces with maximum emotional effect



© Keith Collie



more restricted in tile choice the lower you go.

When deciding on a roof design, it is important to check whether there are any planning restrictions in your area that may prohibit the use of a particular style or material. This is most relevant in historical towns and villages where the local authority will want to ensure that an overall architectural aesthetic is maintained. If there are no such constraints, it is more than likely that you will want to choose a tile that will match the facade of the house.

The format and size of tile you use will dictate the type of detailing you can achieve. If you are looking for something a little more versatile, it is better to choose a Plain Tile rather than an interlocking tile. It all depends on the effect you are looking to achieve and how much you want to spend.

Once you have decided on all of the above, it's time to think about the specification. Most manufacturers, including Redland, will have a specification service to help with this. As part of our services, we will not only tell you how many tiles that will be needed, but also the fittings and components that you will require. The recent change in the British Standard for Slating and Tiling, BS 5534, last year resulted in far more stringent requirements for the fixing of tiles and fittings. Your SpecMaster specification, if followed properly, will ensure that the roof will meet these current standards and will often come with a manufacturer's guarantee.

There are so many things to consider when building a roof that it can seem a bit overwhelming at times. However there are a number of tools and services at your fingertips. At Redland, we have a wealth of information and tools available on our website and a specialist Technical Solutions team to assist with the more complex queries. ■

www.redland.co.uk

A brief guide to roofing

Choosing the roof you want on your custom-build home can seem like a minefield and is one of the most important aspects of the design process. David Patrick, Head of Marketing at Redland, discusses the merits of pitched roofing for residential properties and has some top tips for choosing your next roof.

Above: The format and size of tile you use will dictate the type of detailing you can achieve

Below: The pitched roof is still the most effective way of protecting your home from the elements

The pitched roof is by far the most used style for residential buildings across the country and has survived centuries of innovation and change. This is because the pitched roof is still the most effective way of protecting your home from the elements.

When building a pitched roof the number one

thing that needs to be considered is the pitch; it is what will determine the style and type of tile that can be used, as well as the design detailing you are able to achieve. The most common pitch is between 35 and 45 degrees, meaning that virtually all tiles can be laid at this angle. Once you go below this pitch, you will become even





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Sleep easy

Building your dream home is a fantastic achievement. Despite the hurdles and challenges, seeing your vision come to fruition is a rewarding experience and is welcomed with open arms. Yet for children, the change of surroundings and fear of the unknown might seem a daunting prospect.

It is human nature to seek ownership of a space. From childhood right through to our adult stage of life, we desire somewhere that feels safe and is familiar territory; therefore it is no surprise that, for children in particular, moving home can be at first a stressful and unsettling experience.

In this dedicated furniture focus, i-build highlights a selection of fun and quirky bedroom solutions, which might just help ease those new home nerves.

Innovations in children's beds have enabled these spaces to really come to life. Available in all different sorts of shapes, sizes and configurations, beds can add a personal touch to a bedroom. Fun, practical and space-saving options can be very affordable and could make all the difference when occupants are acclimatising to their new environment.

Ideal for space optimisation, the triple trundle bed solution by Clever (supplied by www.myitalianliving.com) is an innovative concept which features a quirky, playful design. Suitable for children aged 8-16, the set contains a triple truckle bed, bridge wardrobe and tall bookcase. The bright, contemporary 'Red' hue makes an instant impact and enables its users to take ownership of the space.

Box beds also offer plenty of character. With soft lines and a lacquered finish, the Spanish furniture range from Nubie is the ideal sleeping companion for any child. The range comes in over 16 stunning colours and can be accompanied by matching bedroom furniture. Eight large drawers are perfect to keep safe toys and treasures – but are also handy storage solutions for those parents who prefer rooms neat and tidy.

Luxury living specialist e-side has introduced another innovative concept – behold the bed with multiple functions designed to grow as both the child and family grows. The IO Bunk Pod is an all-in-one, space-saving place for children to sleep, store and study.

This clever bunk pod can be configured in many ways to suit a whole host of needs – use as a single bunk bed that houses a self-contained workstation and shelving unit beneath; a standard bunk bed that sleeps two; or as two standalone single beds.

Crafted from smooth, sustainable and sturdy Scandinavian birchwood and laminated for extra





Left: The Charterhouse solution from ASPACE has a touch of effortless style

Below: Ideal for space optimisation, the triple trundle bed solution by Clever is an innovative concept

Below left: A box bed from Nubie is the ideal sleeping companion for any child

Bottom: e-side's IO Bunk Pod is an all-in-one, space-saving place for children to sleep, store and study



resilience, the Bunk Pod exemplifies the typical IO Kids Design aesthetic.

With grooved panelling, clean lines and gentle curves, the Charterhouse solution from ASPACE has a touch of effortless style for the more discerning child's bedroom. These beautiful bunk beds come in five classic colours, from soft whites and neutral taupe to Prussian blue and a lovely dark grey, all with a gorgeous silky finish.

The bunks are made from solid pine and composites, with panelled head and foot ends. The sturdy lean to ladder can be positioned at either end to suit their room. The beds can be easily spilt into two full sized single beds, to give another option for sleeping arrangements when the time comes for a change.

Whatever your new property's decor or size, there are a whole host of bedroom solutions to help your little ones feel more at home. ■

www.e-side.co.uk
www.myitalianliving.com
www.aspace.co.uk
www.nubie.co.uk



Showered with inspiration

Forward thinking company Mira Showers recently brought together a panel of experts to reveal eight must-have bathroom trends to look out for this year.

In its most recent Moment Masters discussion, Mira brought together a panel of experts including its own Industrial Design Director Simon Browning, Sally Nettleton and Sarah Shepherd from TrendPulse, Digital Expert Will Brocklebank, Interior Designer Richard Randall and Heloisa Righetto from WGSN to discuss the prominent themes and trends that will be found in homes this year.

From this discussion eight new bathroom trends have emerged for your home. From finishes to colour palettes and technology, you can expect a vast development in the bathroom design industry.

The first trend covered at Mira's Moment Masters discussion was the use of the blurring of boundaries in the home. In 2016 the home will no longer be formed of self-contained rooms. Instead, the house will be perceived as a whole, with light and space being created by bringing the outside in and generating a sense of flow between the rooms.

Over the years the bathroom has become a place where we want to spend time, rather than it being a necessity in the home. This movement will bring an increased emphasis on finishes within the room, with taps and tiles becoming the focal points of the space.

Throughout the last year, consumers' desire for products has been driven by the reinventing craft, with young designers using traditional techniques to manipulate modern materials. Taking inspiration from spas, Mira and the team from its Moment Masters discussion expect consumers to bring this form of craft to their own homes, using foliage to generate that sense of calm and serenity that is visually present in luxurious spas.

Technology and texture

Texture and natural finishes will take a front seat in 2016's bathroom trends. The bathroom is predicted to contrast the clinical minimalism found in the kitchen, with the use of wood and texture to recreate the look and finish of various materials. It will no longer be a scary place for delicate items, as material developments allow us to have products in the bathroom that would not have been existent in bathroom decor in previous years.

This year expect a grey colour palette to overtake the traditional taupe palette that is often found in traditional bathroom schemes. The use of warm finishes, including gold, copper and brass, that were present last year in other common areas of the household – such as the kitchen – will contrast against pastel colours. Neutral bases will also be prevalent in the coming year. Brass metal will be the primary choice as a finish and will be complemented with the use of soft pastel colours and pinks, alongside concrete finishes.

Right: This year expect a grey colour palette to overtake the traditional taupe

Left: The Mira Vision Dual enables the user to set the water temperature without being in the bathroom

Below: Eight new bathroom trends have emerged from Mira's Moment Masters discussion



The inclusion of products and features that enable us to adjust the mood of our home will allow us to maximise the space we have. Small portable accessories in the bathroom will be imperative in creating these adaptable spaces. Whether it be the lighting, temperature or water pressure, we like to be in control of our property, and these features will enable us to personalise our home.

The 'Connected Home' will feature heavily in 2016, with the constant access to information enabling us to make changes to the home without actually being present. From eco and cost saving, to general ambience and lifestyle choices, these technological developments are changing the

way we live. The balance between futuristic technology and products which are accessible to everyone will be extremely important. The Mira Vision Dual enables the user to set the water temperature without being in the bathroom, while interactive apps will allow us to feed our pets whilst in the office.

Personal preference

Our homes will no longer be for show; design narrative will be used to demonstrate individual personalities. This increased confidence with design means that choices will be made on personal preferences. Global influence has allowed inspiration to be taken from around the world, with trends becoming functional and

able to fit into everyday lifestyles rather than simply for design purposes.

This year retailers such as John Lewis will lead the surge in inspiring and assisting us in the personalisation of the home. The explanation of products that are available and how their technology can help improve specific rooms will become an increasingly popular service.

The development of bespoke items means that technology needs to be beautiful and practical at the same time. The story behind the creation of the product will be fundamental in the decision of whether or not it will be purchased. ■

www.mirashowers.co.uk



Left: The home office can greatly benefit from the addition of writable surfaces

Below left: Help children embrace their creativity and inner artist by transforming the walls into an area where they can write

Write it down

Paint is constantly progressing. From magnetic paint to writable paint, innovative methods are commonly being used in paint solutions. John Stephans, CEO of IdeaPaint, explains the benefits of using erasable paint in your self-build or renovation project.

Today, one in five employees work from home. As these workers look to create efficient and creative spaces in their homes, having writable surfaces to plan and collaborate top the list of must-haves. Driven by the trend established by major innovators like Google, Facebook and Uber, having writable surfaces in the office and beyond is a way to take creativity and organisation to

the next level. Installing writable surfaces can showcase the innovation of a builder, as well as offer clever add-ons and features that can help to make a home more desirable to buyers.

The home office – the home office can greatly benefit from the addition of writable surfaces. Once installed, walls become a canvas to brainstorm, plan and create. In addition, clear coat writable paints allow for

the full benefit of writable surfaces without sacrificing colour schemes.

The kitchen – the to-do list just got an instant upgrade. When homeowners create a space for a writable surface in the kitchen, it becomes the hub for all messages. Grocery lists, weekly schedules, recipe planning...the possibilities to communicate and plan more efficiently are endless in this primary family room.

The playroom – kids love to draw on the walls, so why fight it? Help them embrace their creativity and inner artist by transforming the walls into an area where they can write, doodle and draw to their heart's content. Or try covering desks, tables and other furniture with a writable surface to allow them the freedom to create.

The children's bedroom – afterschool homework doesn't have to be stressful. IdeaPaint has learned through its vast network of teachers that children feel more confident and happy when they are working through homework on a large erasable surface. Why? Because the wall gives children the freedom to make mistakes without feeling insecure. Also, parents and children can work together on the wall in harmony. You can also use dry erase paint on bedroom doors to leave messages and create calendars.

Taking the time to install writable surfaces as part of the initial self-build not only showcases the builder as innovative and forward-thinking, but is also a great way to add value by making the home feel more livable and welcoming. These little touches can make a home stand-out.

www.ideapaint.com



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Line of defence

If a self builder decides to build a property on an area that has previously been flooded, it's vital that they take the proper precautions to ensure that flooding wither doesn't happen again. With the help of The Water Gate, homeowners can be assured an extra level of protection, as Simon Crowther of Flood Protection Solutions explains.

Flooding is the biggest threat the UK faces as a result of climate change. A warmer atmosphere can hold more moisture, which means rainfall and storms can be more intense. Alongside this, as sea water warms, it expands.

A recent study published in Geophysical Research Letters, found human activities responsible for 87% of the sea level rise which has occurred since 1970. Using the most recent data, even with stringent carbon dioxide emission reductions, sea level rise could still exceed 60cm by the end of the century.

This winter we have had multiple 'unprecedented' floods; perhaps a sign of things to come.

Being flooded is horrible. Filthy brown water devastates the ground floor of your house, and insurance claims run into tens of thousands of pounds. You are likely to be out of the house for around 9 months whilst it is repaired. By planning ahead, you can minimise the risk of this happening to your home.

Before starting a building project, check your flood risk, but remember – anywhere it can rain, it can flood.

Houses are naturally porous and water is likely to enter through the weakest points. A study showed 300l/minute of water could enter the average property through the bricks alone.

It may be possible to build the ground up above the flood level. Try to keep the water away from your property. This could be done using walls, or perhaps a product like the Water-Gate barrier. Pumps are often overlooked, but groundwater flooding is recognised as a significant source of flooding in the UK. If you have one foot of rain (as Cumbria recently did) this is one foot of rain either side of your flood defences, so pumps must be in place to deal with it. It is also important not to forget to fit a non-return valve to your sewerage. Some people do not realise they are flooding until sewage starts backing up out of the toilets.

Flood defences reduce the risk of flooding, but do not remove it. Flooding and its effects are always unpredictable and can vary from property to property. Flood resilience is therefore important too. Consider having electric sockets raised up, and having ceramic floor tiles instead of carpet etc.

The same methods can be used to help protect housing developments. Flood defences can make houses much more saleable, and reduce insurance premiums.

Community Level Resilience is fantastic, and on a housing development it would be sensible to include 'resilience hubs'. These hubs would be accessed in emergencies and could include pumps, torches, high vis jackets and Water-Gate barriers. The Water-Gate barrier is a reusable temporary roll out flood defence. These would enable residents to be more proactive and defend their homes.

Sandbags have proved ineffective and expensive. Newer proven technology should be embraced.

www.floodprotectionsolutions.co.uk

Flooding is the biggest threat the UK faces as a result of climate change

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Tim Evans offers advice on installation of natural swimming ponds



FUN AND PRACTICAL

Children's furniture solutions that will ease them into your self-build



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Growing old gracefully

There are few things more satisfying than knowing you've chosen a material that not only looks great and complements your home but also provides a cost effective, long term solution for your project.



Wood is nature's most versatile and unique material. The fact that it has been used in building for hundreds, even thousands of years is perhaps not surprising when you consider some of its impressive attributes. Wood is strong, durable, long lasting, restorable, recyclable, renewable and of course, attractive. The fact that no two pieces of wood are the same only adds to its appeal. With its myriad of grain patterns, characteristics and colour tones, wood is a beautiful material that cannot be replicated by man-made products.

Being 100% natural and highly versatile, it's guaranteed to provide a stunning finish to your project and add value to

your property.

What species should I use?

There are many different wood species on the market, so it's worth considering firstly what the timber will be used for; decking, cladding, fencing etc. then how you want your project to look and feel. When most people think of using timber outdoors they head to their local supplier for treated softwood, however there are some beautiful wood species out there for a range of uses, including:

Western Red Cedar: Most commonly used for cladding, decking, fencing and roofing, this beautiful softwood is resistant to both insects and rot and is extremely lightweight

and durable. It is ideally suited to exterior and interior use and can be used for a range of applications. Over time it ages to a stunning silvery grey but also takes wood stain exceptionally well making it easy to achieve your desired look.

Siberian Larch: Another naturally durable softwood, it is most commonly used for cladding purposes due to its excellent durability, high density and lifespan not to mention its aesthetic appeal.

If using a tropical hardwood it's worth considering a lesser-known species too. High commercial demand for certain wood species has put pressure on available stocks. In some cases to preserve biodiversity, countries around



Lesser-known tropical species offer three distinct advantages:

- They can often substitute better-known species in terms of performance and aesthetics whilst being more cost effective.
- The many different species of wood available with rich, truly exotic colours and textures provide new design opportunities for your project.
- The use of lesser-known timbers can alleviate pressure on well-known timber species and increase the economic viability of sustainable forest management.



Left: Wood is guaranteed to provide a stunning finish to your project and add value to your property

Above: Wood is strong, durable, long lasting, restorable, recyclable, renewable and of course, attractive

Below: Western Red Cedar is resistant to both insects and rot and is extremely lightweight and durable

the world have banned the trade of certain species, while other species are difficult to source or prohibitively expensive. There are hundreds of species in the world that offer similar aesthetic appeal and performance to traditionally harvested species. The cost of these species is relatively low because they are under used and abundant. The demand from the end user is low simply because the name is not recognised.

Mandioqueira is a perfect example of a lesser known timber species that is ideal for exterior applications. This naturally decay resistant tropical hardwood species offers excellent performance being dimensionally stable and highly durable. It's very attractive too with unique colours coming through, including pinkish brown to red brown, sometimes olive brown tones.

How do I make sure my timber is sustainably sourced?

There's a common misconception that timber products contribute to deforestation. In reality when timber is sourced from well-managed forests, the trees harvested are replaced with saplings, which grow faster and therefore absorb more CO₂.

Using lesser-known species is also a great way to support the environment, by utilising a range of timbers we can ensure that species are not exhausted and put under threat of extinction.

There are several things to look out for when purchasing timber. Awareness of FSC (Forest Stewardship Council) and PEFC (Programme for the Endorsement of Forest Certification) has risen over the last decade and most timber suppliers will be able to offer certified timber.





How do I protect my timber?

Protecting your timber with a suitable finish is an important but often overlooked step. There are many different types of wood finish on the market which can make the selection process complicated.

Traditional exterior finishes form a film over the wood to seal out moisture; however this type of finish is prone to failure if the film fails or becomes damaged and allows water to penetrate. Once water gets behind the film it can cause the finish to crack, peel and flake and the only remedy is to strip off the failed finish and start again – an extremely time consuming and costly process.

Many traditional solvent-based finishes also contain VOCs (Volatile Organic Compounds), which continually emit chemicals that can have long-term health effects for years after application. To reduce the VOC levels in their products some manufacturers have switched to water-based finishes.

You can have the best of oil-based and water-based finishes with a water-borne alkyd based finish; which contains no VOCs and is environmentally friendly. It works by using water to carry modified natural oils and resins deep into the wood's cell structure. The water then evaporates allowing the finish to bond directly with the wood substrate enabling the wood to breath whilst forming a tough, durable barrier that won't crack, peel or blister. If the timber is well maintained it will grow old gracefully and will not discolour.

When deciding on a stain it's important to understand the characteristics of the timber species it is being applied to. The effect of the stain will vary depending on texture, grain, colour and porosity so always check the colour on samples of the timber being used. There are various staining options; natural and translucent tones, which let the beauty of the wood shine through or saturated and ultra saturated tones that provide a more solid colour appearance to the timber.

The key to an excellent finish is preparation; always ensure that the timber is clean and dry and begin by sanding the surface with an orbital sander using 60 grit sandpaper. Sanding the timber thoroughly removes mill glaze and creates an even surface and a slight texture that allows the stain/finish to penetrate the wood, providing an even, consistent and long-lasting finish. Studies have proven that sanding can extend the life of a finish by up to three times compared to an unsanded surface.

www.silvatimber.co.uk

***Above:** Wood is nature's most versatile and unique material*

***Below:** Protecting your timber with a suitable finish is an important but often overlooked step*

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The root of happiness

Looking for a low-maintenance plant to bring life to your new interior scheme? Indoor trees are decorative, easy to care for and long-lasting.

Products with trunks come in many shapes and sizes: from short and thin to thick and tall, and from twisting shapes to sleek straight trunks.

The succulent properties of the trunk enable the plant to store water in order to survive dry periods in the wild. This convenience is very handy in the home: they're 'easy care' plants that take little looking after.

Most 'greenery on a trunk' is produced in Central America in countries like Guatemala and Costa Rica; some also come from China. The trunks are shipped to the Netherlands in sea containers, after which they are 'finished' at a nursery. Often there are virtually no roots on the plant when it arrives. Within a few months the plants will have grown roots and produced a fabulous array of foliage at the top in many colours, shapes and sizes, depending on the species and cultivar.

When buying plants with trunks it's important to check how well the plants are rooted in the pot. In general the

roots must have grown all the way to the bottom of the pot to have a successful, healthy plant.

Also check the pot size in relation to the number of heads per trunk or trunks per pot, the shape of the trunk, the height/length of the plant and the age of the plant. Apart from Beaucarnea, which is supplied in a pot that is only slightly larger than the plant, the other indoor trees need a pot with some growing room.

Most plants on trunks come in various forms: single trunk, top cutting, clump (several plants of one species in a pot), branched (2 or more side branches on main trunk), with underplanting, stump or mummies (coarse natural trunk shapes).

There should be no dried (brown) leaf tips longer than 5mm.

The plant needs to be free of diseases and pests: with these kinds of woody trunks look particularly for



mealybug, brown scale and scale insects, and possibly banana moth (larvae) in the trunks.

The top of the trunk must be sealed with wax or something similar in order to prevent rot from moisture or the penetration of water. Most indoor trees are sensitive to cold – don't let the temperature drop below 12-15°C.

There is an extensive range of 'indoor trees' on offer. The most common indoor trees are *Dracaena* and *Beaucarnea*, which are both members of the Agavaceae family. *Pachira* is a plant from the Malvaceae family, and *Polyscias* is a member of the Araliaceae, which also includes ivy, for example. Here are four in more depth:

Dracaena

Dracaena is the most common genus in the trade. The range features many different species and cultivars, which vary in terms of leaf shape and colour. The size or appearance of *Dracaena* has nothing to do with the name.

The plants are easiest to distinguish from one another by looking at the width of the leaves at species level. *D. marginata* is 1 cm wide and always has a red edge, *D. deremensis* is 2-3 cm wide, *D. fragrans* is 4-7 cm wide. There is also *D. reflexa* with rather short, bent leaves. A number of species are less well-known: *D. surculosa* and *D. sanderiana*. There are various cultivars of all these species available for sale.

Beaucarnea

There are two forms of *Beaucarnea recurvata* available. The adult form is sold as *Beaucarnea* and always has an attractive, fairly smooth trunk. The young plant is sold under the name *Nolina*, but is actually the same plant and is characterised by the small ball out of which the narrow leaves grow.

Polyscias

We see many different forms of *Polyscias*, from fine jagged leaves (*P. fruticosa*) to *P. scutellaria* and *P. balfouriana* with almost round leaves.

Pachira

Only one type of *Pachira* is sold – *P. aquatica*. However, there are many different forms, from small trunks to trees which are several metres high.

www.thejoyofplants.co.uk
www.flowercouncil.co.uk

Main: By hanging indoor trees you can create a new and interesting display

Top right: Place indoor trees in a neutral pot for a calming feel

Left: Create your own miniature forest by grouping several small trees together

Right: Give smaller indoor trees a lift by placing them on a stool or small table





Practical pond solutions

Swimming ponds are increasingly becoming an alternative solution to conventional swimming pools. Tim Evans, Director of UK leading swimming pond provider Garternart gives some guidance to those self-builders considering a swimming pond.

A swimming pond is basically a low-nutrient lake. Similar to a lake in the mountains – where the water is usually very clear and clean, this is not because it is cold but, because it is low in nutrients. When a swimming pond is designed and built it recreates this natural environment in a domestic setting.

Swimming ponds are designed to be safe and family friendly. In a conventional

swimming pool you do not want water to go green – which is caused by single-celled algae – and if you drink some of the water you do not want to become ill which can be caused by bacteria and other pathogens. So the traditional solution is to kill everything with chemicals. The aim is not to kill anything deliberately, alternatively the idea is keep everything alive in a very low-nutrient environment. When nutrients are very low the growth of single-

celled algae is much slower and this, as well as bacteria, is controlled by other organisms that maintain the water balance.

Swimming ponds have a smart design process when it comes to water filtering. The main filter is actually the whole water body, equalising in each part of the water constantly being filtered by microscopic life-forms. However, the concept in setting up the swimming pond is to keep the nutrient levels low, therefore a filter and pump would be required for this. Water is passed through gravel and other mediums. Plants also help as they take nutrients out of the water as they grow.

There are many other factors in keeping nutrients out of the pond, such as preventing runoff from surrounding areas, using a skimmer to collect leaves and also not letting ducks spend too much time there.

Many homeowners desire a landscape feature they can swim in. There is a general move away from the use chemicals where possible. Another alternative is a natural pool, here the technology behind the pools work in the same way.



Above: When a swimming pond is designed and built it recreates a natural environment

Above right: It is common in July and August for the water temperature to reach over 25°C

Below: If you are planning on including a natural design pond in your self-build, it helps to have clay or chalk soil

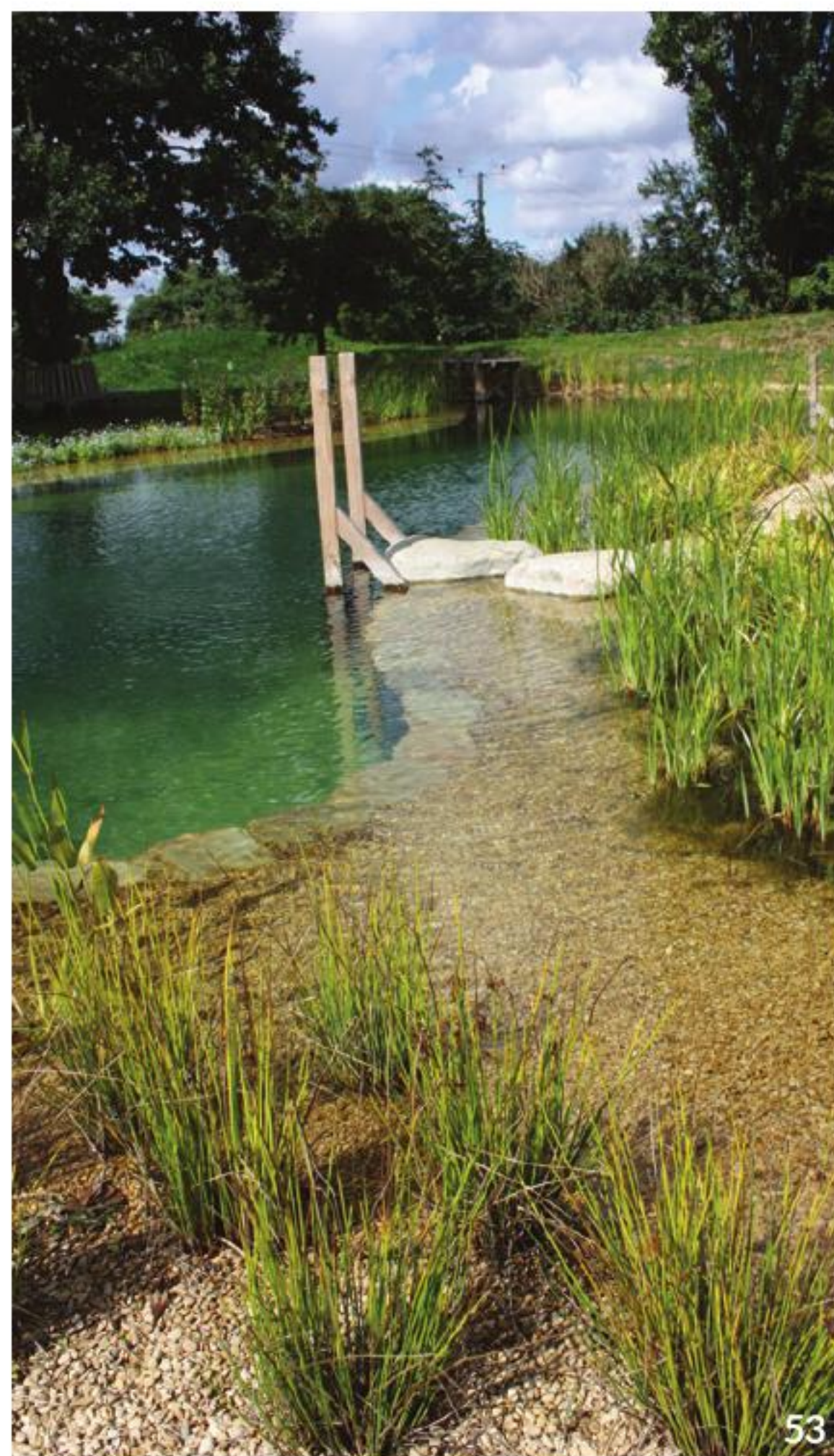
Right: Planning permission may be required dependant on the nature of the project

There are a few specifications required to install a swimming pond. You need enough space; ideally a flat or reasonably flat section of land. Ponds are commonly between 10m and 35m in length. If you are planning on including a natural design pond in your self-build, it would help to have clay or chalk soil – this will eliminate any need for internal structures.

Heating can be installed if required. However it is often suggested that people try the pond without heating for a season. It is common in July and August for the water temperature to reach over 25°C without the use of heating.

Planning permission may be required dependant on the nature of the project. Planning permission is needed if the property is listed, or if the site is outside the area of curtilage, or if you are in an Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty. Otherwise planning permission is generally not required. ■

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Rain protection solutions from Rainclear

Galvanised steel is the most affordable and versatile of the metal rainwater ranges offering smart and contemporary styling

A rainwater system is the first line of defence in keeping rainwater away from the building fabric. With the increasingly unpredictable UK weather patterns, a reliable rainwater system has never been so important.

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To get 2016 off to a great start, Rainclear is offering 25% off the Galvanised Steel Rainwater Range in February. Sign up to its e-news to avoid missing out on other great deals throughout the year.

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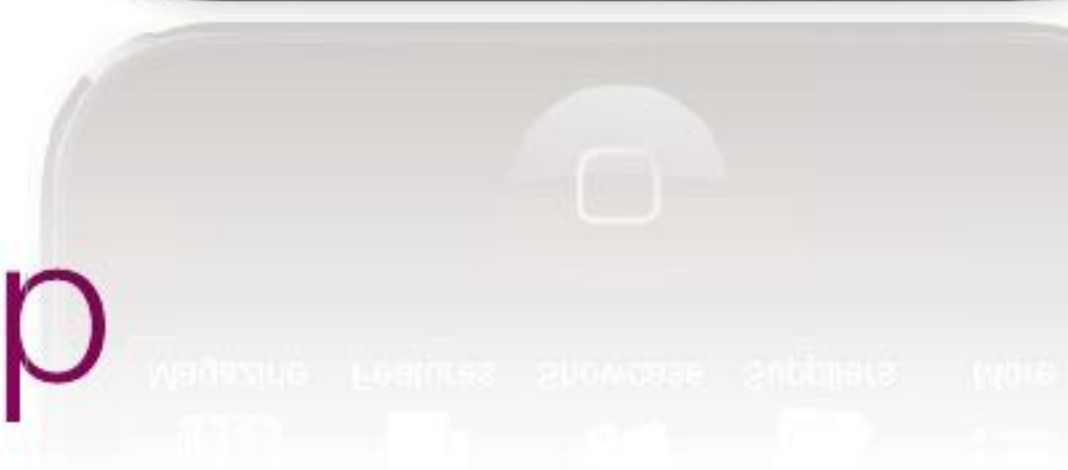
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Building the future

When Julian and his wife found a rundown bungalow on a beautiful site, surrounded by rolling Wiltshire countryside, they knew they had found a great place to build their dream home.

"We chose WeberHaus after extensive research and factory visits. It was clear WeberHaus had the best solution and engineering. Not only was that the right judgement, but the entire process has been superbly executed," comments Julian.

Once the design was finalised the house was manufactured in WeberHaus' factory and brought by truck, along with the German construction team, for assembly on site. The shell superstructure took just four days to put up, at which point the house was wind and watertight. As the client required a turnkey solution, WeberHaus also undertook the full fit-out and project management.

The end result is a contemporary 385m² property with five bedrooms and four bathrooms, including a large wet-room and sauna. A double height atrium is at the heart of the house, with a steel and glass bridge linking two elements of the first floor. The rear of the property incorporates large sliding glass doors, with level thresholds for indoor/outdoor living and this aspect also takes advantage of the garden views and countryside beyond. Features include an air source heat pump, solar thermal, underfloor heating, heat recovery ventilation and rainwater harvesting.

Julian was delighted with the result and has noticed a huge difference between living in a traditional house and his new draft free, warm and comfortable living environment. He concludes: "Great engineering, great people, great process, great house!"

www.weberhaus.co.uk 01727 867900
chris.drury@weberhaus.co.uk

Heritage and style with Black Millwork

A stunning refurbishment and extension project incorporating Andersen windows and doors from Black Millwork has given new life to a family home in Cambridge. The five-bedroom property previously belonged to Emmanuel College but is now owned by Tom Weaver. Using 60 Andersen windows and doors – supplied by Black Millwork – Tom was keen to achieve a traditional arts and crafts style with an American timber influence. Installed at the property were 45 Andersen 400 Series casement windows. Also installed at the property were a number of Black Millwork French doors, bi-fold doors and oak exterior doors, including the custom-designed front entrance door.

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Vent-Axia brings new connectivity to the HEVAC sector

Vent-Axia has launched the UK's first App-controlled unitary fan. Households can now control their ventilation via Svara's free App from the comfort of their sofa. The App allows households to unlock a whole range of different functions to control their home's indoor air quality, such as a silent scheduling and automatic cycles. Svara has three speed modes including a boost. Sensors and speeds can be altered via the App to change the level of sensitivity that triggers them, and the speed of the fan within set parameters. The Svara fan can sense when someone is in the room and then activate.

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Polyx-Oil 2K Pure ideal for high-traffic environments

The eco-friendly wood and finishes expert, Osmo UK, offers Polyx-Oil 2K Pure, a two-part hardwax oil that has been designed for professional use where surfaces are subjected to high traffic. The two-component system includes a hardener which rapidly reduces the drying and curing times; a major advantage for commercial use such as retail environments. Polyx-Oil 2K Pure is the ideal solution for high-traffic areas, due to its much tougher and hard-wearing results, where regular waxes wouldn't provide an adequate long-term solution. Polyx-Oil 2K Pure enhances, protects, and can even refresh the appearance and performance of flooring, while providing an easy to clean and maintain surface.

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Would you like to see your self-build project in our next issue?



Whether you're halfway through your build, or sitting back and enjoying the finished article, we'd love to hear from you! Tell us about your renovation, conversion, extension or new build:

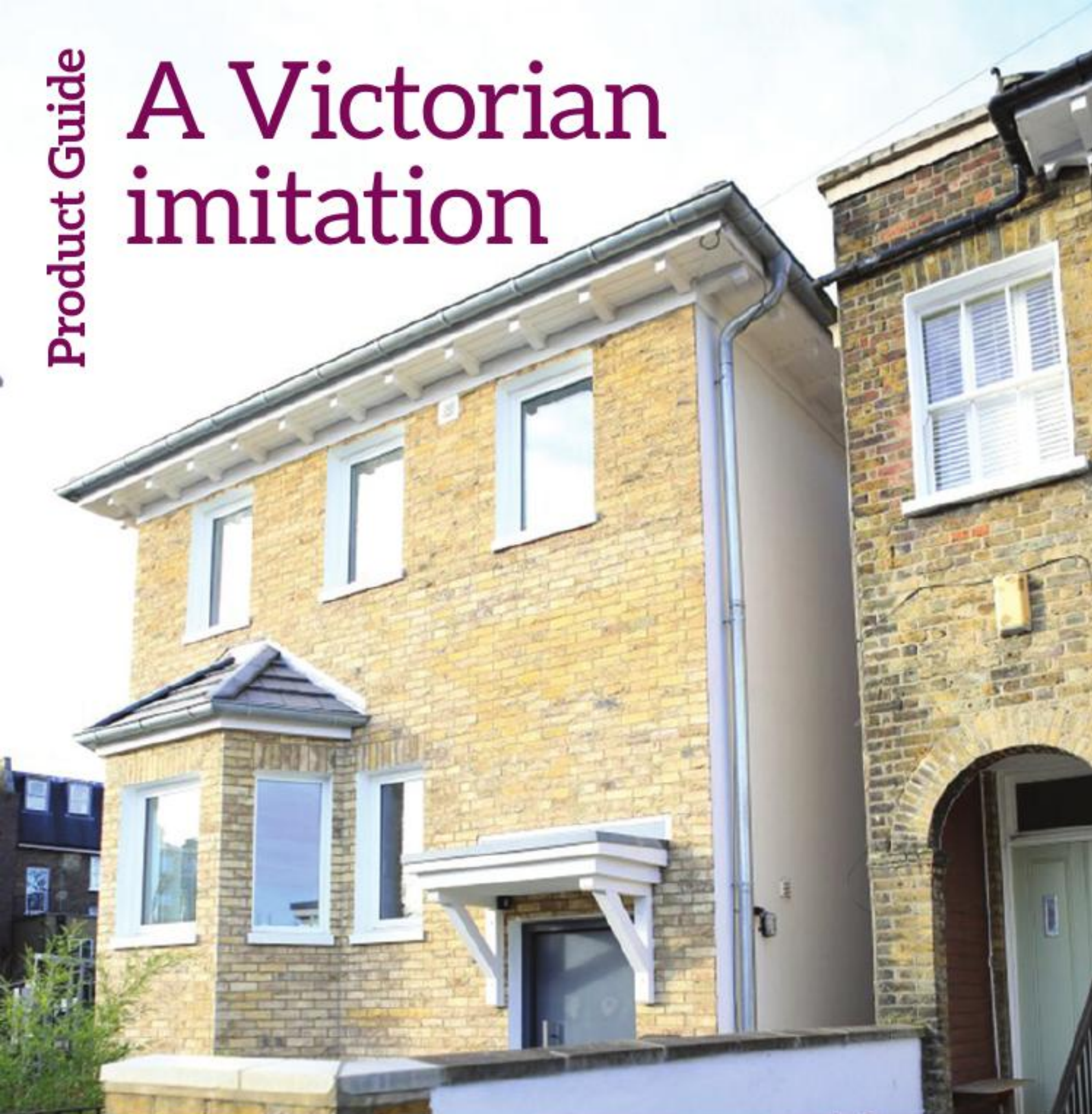
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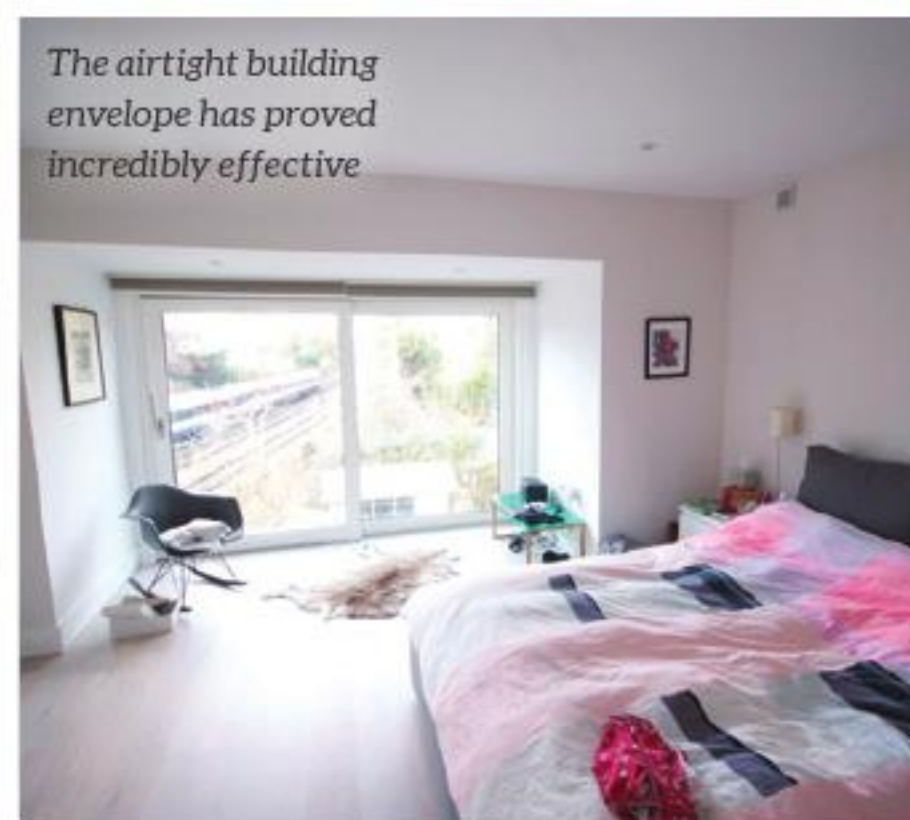
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A Victorian imitation



A beautiful contemporary and highly efficient three-storey house in Putney



The airtight building envelope has proved incredibly effective

A beautiful contemporary and highly efficient three-storey house in Putney, London, is home to Matt and Jo Warnes and their six-year old daughter. Friends and family of Matt may remember many a BBQ on the very plot that this house now sits on – which was previously his mum's vegetable plot.

Built in January 2013 – but fitting seamlessly with the neighbouring end-of-terrace properties – you may think, on first glance that this house had been there perpetually.

With inspiration from many magazines, Matt and Jo researched different self-build companies – whilst having a strong vision of the modern, Scandinavian, clean living interior they aspired to. Due to the plot being in a conservation area, the couple knew the house would have to look like the other Victorian brick houses on the terrace from the outside. The search was narrowed down to two possible pre-manufacturers – both holding the ability to build the house they dreamed of, in terms of a bespoke design, but Hanse Haus could fulfil requirements for brick slips on the exterior rather than straightforward render which was a planning requirement.

In August 2011 the couple resubmitted for planning however there was objection from neighbours worried about the noise and

disruption that may be caused. The application went to committee and after four months they came back to Matt and Jo with a thumbs up – along with 13 conditions of planning.

The planning and logistics of the project required a careful and thoughtful approach as well as a creative and skilled architect.

Working closely with their Hanse Haus Architect, Bianca Keil, the couple were fully involved with the design making models of the house from foam and cardboard – which helped conceptualise what the couple were trying to achieve. Changes made along the way included moving the boiler and turning the staircase around.

The couple now have the family home they have always dreamed of. Matt states: "In many ways, it's a modest house but it's a high-performance house too – with a traditional guise. Unlike many new builds we don't have a long list of renewable hardware – no solar panels, no heat recovery, no rainwater harvesting – but the

airtight building envelope, along with the insulation and triple-glazed windows has proved incredibly effective meaning we really don't need them.

"Bearing in mind we get our fair share of cold, wet and windy weather and we are situated right next to a busy railway line, the house feels consistently warm yet with fresh, with clean air and without the need for much heating through the winter months. In fact, our total energy bills (gas and electricity) for the first year was £850 and to offer some comparison, my mum's traditionally built house, right next door – which is marginally bigger in size – is costing a hefty £4000 a year to run. With our energy bills likely to increase by around 10% year-on-year, we'll be looking at an £80-£90 hike in costs whilst hers will be more. She has already asked if we want to swap homes!"

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