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March 19 Issue 56

20+

Nude necessities to ensure your self-build is on-trend

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+ AN IN-DEPTH GUIDE ON HOW TO AVOID COMMON SELF-BUILD MISTAKES

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Editorial:

Paige Smith

paige@mixedmediainfo.com

Hannah Woodger

hannah@mixedmediainfo.com

Print & Digital Advertising:

Sam Ball

sam@mixedmediainfo.com

Grant Jeffs

grant@mixedmediainfo.com

Print Design Manager:

Jack Witcomb

jack@mixedmediainfo.com

Digital Design Manager:

David Perry

david@mixedmediainfo.com

Production Assistant:

Philip Coyle

philip@mixedmediainfo.com

Accounts:

Jackie Dearman

jackie@mixedmediainfo.com

Managing Director:

Sam Ball

sam@mixedmediainfo.com



Barham Court, Teston, Maidstone,
Kent ME18 5BZ
T: 01622 232723
www.mixedmediainfo.com

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Cover story:
Must-ask questions when picking your kitchen worktops.
See page 26.



Welcome to the March issue of i-build

Arguably the most critical part of your self-build is laying the foundations – after all, this is the base for your dream home. But it can be frustrating when you feel like you're investing a large amount of money into a hole in the ground. Nevertheless, this step is vital to get right and with so many different types of foundation for homes, especially in the pioneering self-build market, it can feel like a minefield trying to decipher which is best for your project.

Because of their simplicity and cost-effectiveness, strip foundations are the most common type of foundation among self-builders. Raft foundations tend to cover at least the same area size as the ground floor of your self-build and they are used on soft subsoils such as soft clay and are also quite popular. You may also want to consider pile foundations as they are more likely to be the most accurate and precise. All three of these possibilities are common choices when building a home, however very few self-builders consider aircrete as a viable option for foundations. With that in mind,

this month i-build explores aircrete and helps you decide if it is worth considering as the foundation choice for your self-build. Turn to page 20 to read more.

Elsewhere in this issue, an extensive list of industry experts discuss the mistakes that every self-builder makes and helps you avoid them on page 10. Meanwhile on page 24, The Sash Window Workshop gives you guidance on choosing the best windows for your self-build and Caesarstone helps you prepare a list of questions that you need to ask your worktop fabricator to ensure you make an informed decision on page 26.

I hope you enjoy this issue. Don't forget, if you're coming to the end of your self-build and would like us to feature your home as inspiration for other budding house-builders, then please do not hesitate to get in touch. Alternatively, if you're about to embark on your self-build journey and would be keen for us to document your progress, do get in contact.

Paige

paige@mixedmediainfo.com

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Editor's picks

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March 2019



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An interior scheme that's barely there

If you are looking for a fresh yet warm new look for your interior space, have you considered going nude in your self-build? Nude colours are earthy, barely-there shades that create a warmer, friendlier look than the popular greys of recent years. To get an idea of nude colours, think of sandy shades, fleshy pink tones, oatmeal, linen and earthy colours.

Nude walls create a chic, clean and inviting backdrop to any room in the house but work particularly well in living rooms and bedrooms. You don't have to stick with one tone – use various tones and shades on your self-build walls for a soft, warm feel to a room. All nudes and neutrals work well together so you can combine nude pinks with more earthy tones or even very light blue, beige, caramel and brown. Add layers of nude colour to your room. Pile cushions and throws in various shades of nude to a neutral coloured sofa. Add some pattern in muted tones with a rug or floor tiles. Contrasting textures like glass, metal and wood work well to add variety and interest to a room. If you don't want to go fully nude, use it as a backdrop that can be paired with a bold statement style to create a different look altogether. Combine it with black and gold for boudoir glamour or with a pop of bright colour such as sapphire or wine to add some richness. Introducing nude to your self-build interiors is a great way to create a new clean yet warmer look.

1. Pillar pendant, Nedgis, EPOA
2. Muuto unfold nude pendant light, Rume, £149
3. Rounded glazed table lamp, The Farthing, £110
4. Trenzas square pouf by GAN, Chaplins Furniture, EPOA
5. Bronze sand table lamp, El Corte Inglés Decoración, £69
6. Blakes large round ottoman, MADE.com, £299
7. Manarola leather sofa, Ligne Roset, EPOA
8. Golden Jar lamp, Sweetpea & Willow, £109
9. Moseley beige leather bar cabinet, Artisanti, £1427
10. Mia Sofa, Covet House, EPOA





1. Angles wallpaper by Erica Wakerly, £96 per roll
2. 366 armchair, £590
3. Case pendant light, £65
4. Leaf wallpaper by Erica Wakerly, £96 per roll



Lime Lace

Lime Lace is an online interiors boutique selling a wide range of wallpapers, lighting, artwork and home accessories from worldwide designers. Lime Lace aims to avoid the mainstream and bring excitement, interest and fun to people's home.

i-build loves...

Stripped-back seats

These nude toned chairs will work perfectly in any interior.

1. Hepburn armchair, Sweetpea & Willow, EPOA
2. Sling-back nude leather occasional chair, Cranmore Home, \$849
3. Anderson upholstered armchair, Cult Furniture, £399
4. Eichholtz Volante dining chair, Sweetpea & Willow, £480





The 'Right to Build'

In 2016, new legislation came into force which meant that councils now have a duty to grant planning permission to appropriate serviced plots as part of the 'Right to Build' entitlement. This was part of the government's solution to tackling housing shortages across the country – the objective was to double the value of the custom and self-build market by 41% by 2020. But has the scheme been a success? Here, Stephen Malkin, Associate at Whiting & Partners, explains more.

Under the Right to Build, all councils in England must maintain a register of individuals and groups who want to build their own homes. This potentially game-changing scheme means that councils have a duty to grant planning permission for sufficient serviced plots to meet demand, measured on Right to Build registers, within a three-year period (and on an ongoing basis).

The idea is that this could not only transform the self-build sector, but also provide a much-needed opportunity for the continually under-delivering housebuilding market.

So what does this all mean? Essentially, we're now in a position where we can ask our

local authorities to look to make viable plots available to us. This should lead to serviced sites with genuine planning permission coming through to meet the level of demand elected on each council's register.

If enough people sign up, it could also boost the general interest for self- and custom-build among decision-makers, and encourage them to grant planning consent for more custom-built schemes – not just those that are supported through the Right to Build.

So has it been a success? In the year October 2016 to October 2017, 15,174 plots were granted for new buildings and conversions. This is up from 11,850 plots granted the year before – an increase of 28%. Moreover, research by



the National Custom and Self Build Association (NaCSBA) has found that, since 1st April 2016, over 40,000 people have now signed up to Right to Build registers across England. Although, this is positive it falls far short of the number required to meet demand. ■

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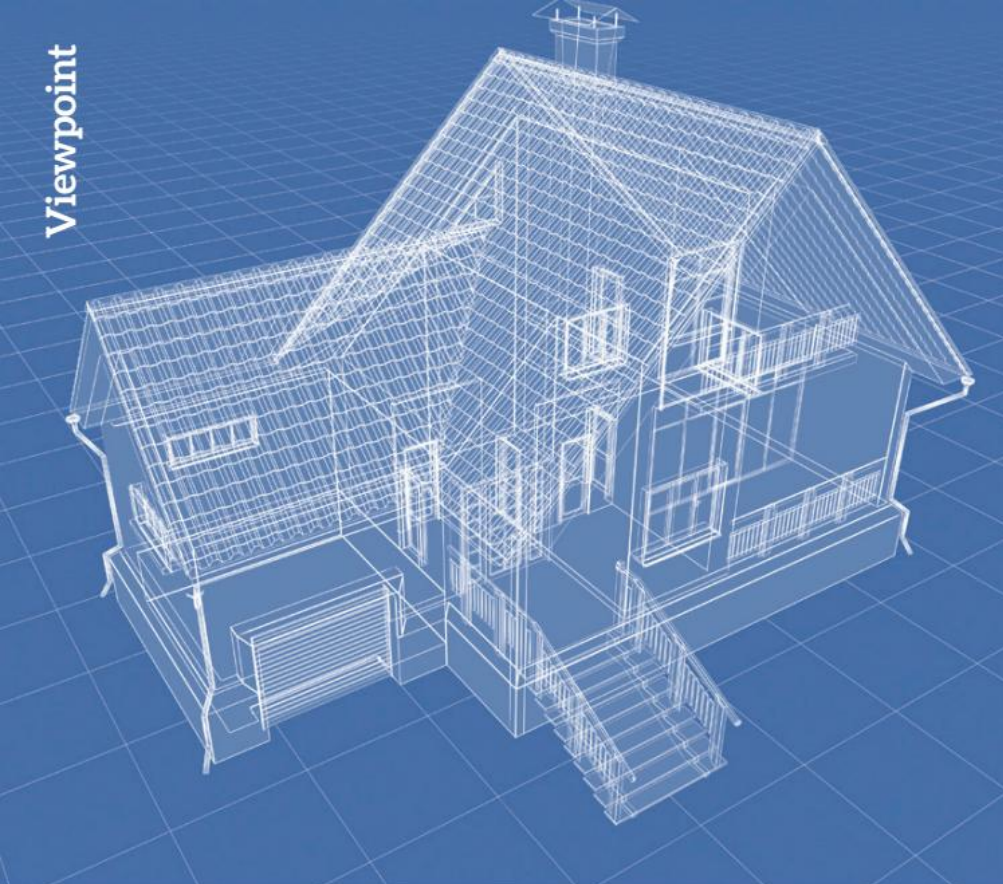
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Common self-build mistakes and how to avoid them

There's a steep learning curve when you're building or carrying out a large renovation project. Homebuilding & Renovating Show specialists who have lived through it describe the most common pitfalls and how to avoid them.

Tom McSherry, National Relationship Manager at Buildstore, says: "With any homebuilding project there's never a day without bills – and if the right funds aren't available at the right stage of the build, delays are inevitable (and often expensive). It's important to clearly understand your budget and borrowing options early on, and always consult an expert mortgage adviser to avoid cashflow problems during your project.

"We recommend discussing your plans as soon as possible, because by choosing certain design elements before agreeing your finances you may be limiting your choice of lenders and products. So, before you get carried away with the design, build type and materials for your new home, find

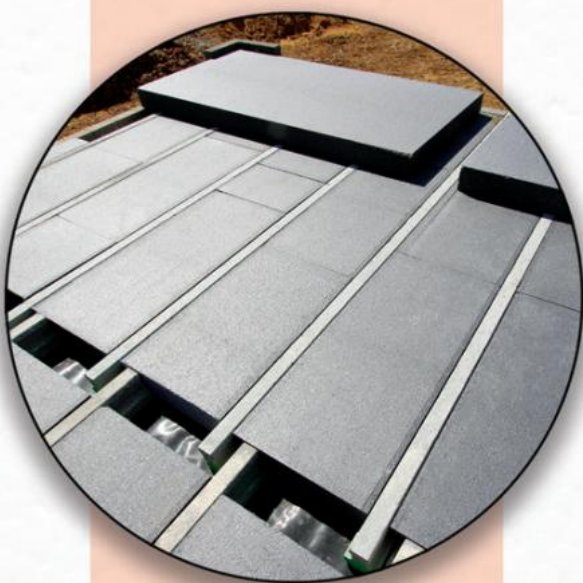
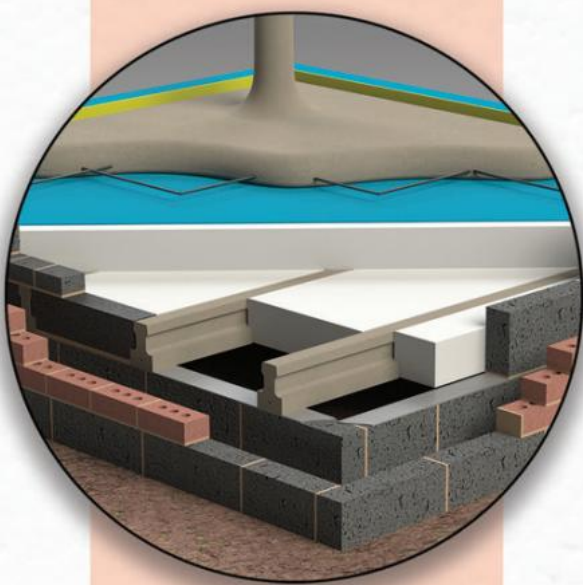
out if your plans are affordable and mortgageable. You'll also need to allow around eight to 12 weeks to arrange a self-build mortgage, and factor this into your building timescales.

"With so many factors that can affect your borrowing options, it makes sense to consult an expert with in-depth knowledge of self-build mortgages and construction. By consulting a specialist mortgage adviser you'll have access to a wide range of lenders and products and they can confidently recommend the mortgage best suited to your individual circumstances and project requirements. If you approach a lender directly, it will only offer a very limited product range which may not be best suited to your project.

"You're building a bespoke home and just as no two projects are the same – there's no one-size-fits-all funding solution. Every project is completely unique and requires made-to-measure finance. Our advice is to keep your options open and deal with an expert who can match you with the best funding option for your project, so you have the necessary funds available at each stage, and there are no nasty surprises."

Sally Tagg, Managing Director of Foxley Tagg Planning Limited, says: "The planning application process is not always straightforward and applicants tend to make mistakes early on because they have failed to deal with the basic issues and not sought out independent planning advice. It can be tempting to jump ahead and start thinking about proposed detailed designs, and even fixtures and fittings, before seriously assessing whether achieving planning permission on a site is actually a possibility. For an application to run smoothly it is crucial to undertake the appropriate and requisite groundwork such as assessing the access, investigating the Planning Policy constraints and the physical ones as well, and looking into any technical considerations, including ecology on site, tree preservation orders or flood risk etc.

"A Pre-Application enquiry is often an effective way of teasing out many of these issues and saving self-builders or renovators time, effort, energy and heartache by approaching the projects in a more methodical manner."



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David Hilton, Director at Heat & Energy, says: "It's all about the preparation. Getting the specifications right between the homeowners and the tradespeople is absolutely crucial to avoid costly mistakes later on. Make sure that the project manager fully understands your expectations and delivers on them. If the clients don't know or don't clarify exactly what they want, they become part of the problem, as they might change their mind halfway through the project. If your builder starts the work and then you realise that something is different than expected while being on site, more time is usually required to readjust the plan and source new materials, and the delays can cost you both time and money. To avoid making assumptions, one needs to discuss the needs and requirements that a product, an installation or a facility is likely to address.

"I recommend going over the specifics and defining in great detail the expectations. For

a smooth communications process, it's best to meet in person or discuss on the phone rather than via email, but make sure that you do write down what the final agreement is to avoid any confusion later on. Changing your mind halfway through often happens when people liaise directly with a sales team to buy products or services that they're not sure they might need. That's why the process should start with establishing the expectations, reviewing the options which cater for those needs and then obtaining quotes from relevant companies."

Jo Dyson, experienced renovator and Partner at Mae House Design, says: "You'll learn something new on every renovation job you take on. I recommend that people go slow to go fast and really invest enough time and thought in the design before any work is done on-site. I would also encourage spending time thinking about

all aspects of the work. Think about how you currently live, but also consider how you want to live in the future. It's also important to assess how you make use of all the spaces within your home and the best way to do this is by spending time living in a property before working on it, so you can gain a true sense of how it feels. Look at the finer details of your space; like noticing where the sun rises and sets, what rooms do you enjoy currently spending time in. In my latest project, the bathroom was the sunniest room in the property, so I turned this into my bedroom.

"It's also helpful to delve into the specifics. When I meet clients, the majority of the time is spent asking questions so I can really understand their needs, likes and dislikes, and take a detailed design brief; I really try to get down to detail. For example, if you're planning to build a loft conversion, you need to specify every room from detail to detail, where the stairs will be



located, the electric and lighting plan, the positioning of the furniture, details like the colour scheme is the icing on the cake.

"We'd also recommend creating a schedule of works, so you can factor in lead times for sanitaryware or kitchen units to be delivered for installation.

"One of the biggest mistakes is making large-scale changes once the renovation is underway. Taking time to plan detailed design is crucial, as you will use the detailed plans to tender for contractors to obtain accurate quotes. In a nutshell, spend a long time on your design. You don't want to be stuck with something that's not suitable to live in after significant time and money has been invested, and you want to create a home that fulfils your needs and makes you happier to live in."

Andy Stevens, Managing Director of Eclipse Property Solutions, says: "If you plan to do

any building work then check that every single material you might need is in stock. I was surprised to discover that there's now a six-month wait on some bricks, which might be part of Brexit's early impact on the industry. There's also a shortage of blocks and roof tiles in some areas. So, for everything to run smoothly, make sure that you can find the required stock in advance and get your supplier to reserve it for you. Delays at this end will add more time to your completion date and might cost you more money. If you have tradespeople lined up, they're committed to work for you and will charge for any time wasted if supplies are delayed. If you want to check the status of the building materials, I recommend phoning your local supplier and telling them what you need by what date and they can put everything aside for you. In many situations, the online stock isn't updated enough and you risk someone going

in store and buying everything that you require, which will result in significant time wasted.

"Another costly mistake is to not be aware of the materials' year-on-year price rises. Most of the suppliers won't inform you of this, so if you're working on something like a loft conversion it's worth making sure that you won't be affected negatively by a price fluctuation. There is a lot of wood and insulation involved in this type of project and you might realise that some of the materials have gone up by as much as 15-18% which might cost you thousands of pounds down the line. I've found myself in a very similar situation when I priced for a job in August to be carried out in February and the figures were very different. So if you are starting the job in the New Year get the price confirmed before you budget for it"

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Going back to her roots

For Jude Hesselgrave, home is not just where her heart is, it's also where her roots lie. After renting in London and then buying and renovating a house near Brighton with her partner, Roger Page, they rented their property out and made the move to Horam, East Sussex in 2009 to self-build on a plot of farmland that's been in Jude's family for three generations.

With a budget of just £60,000, the couple managed to create a characterful one-of-a-kind log cabin

home through a series of extensions and home improvements over the course of six years.

The farm's 400m² dilapidated cattle and hay barn became the perfect spot for their ideal home, as it was close to water and near the sewage and electric facilities. Jude says: "The site where we chose to build was the barn that, as a child, I used to help my parents load the hay bales into on summer evenings. Over the years the building deteriorated and so we had no option but to pull what was left of the building down.

Building the house on this footprint held great importance to me as it holds many memories and has huge sentimental value so we decided to put our skills and creativity to the test."

The project began with them choosing two £7000 tongue and groove cabins with a basic, inexpensive structure which suited their pocket. This way, they could build it themselves but also dismantle it without many challenges if need be. With the help of a local company, they selected a design which allowed them to have more windows on the south side facing the garden, and patio doors on the west orientation, which lead to a veranda overlooking the fields.



Adding elements

With Jude keen for the challenge and Roger's knowledge of construction, from owning his own construction company, Kane Building Contractors, they started their project by getting the site ready – pulling down the barn, levelling the site, building the foundations and then building the structures piece by piece, eventually making the buildings watertight. They used the smaller cabin as the living room and the larger one for the kitchen, bathroom and bedroom but, unfortunately, they soon realised that the space was too small. They then decided to continue the project by extending the cabin to create the second bedroom and cupboard and obtain a total of 124m². In 2013, they extended again to create a living room perpendicular to the main cabin, which adds an element of privacy by enclosing the garden. The internal layout had to be reorganised too by turning the old living room into the bedroom and the bedroom into a breakfast room. A front door was added at this stage and so the breakfast room became the main entrance into the home.



"It's changed our lives beyond our expectations but for me particularly, living on the family farm where my grandparents lived for many years holds huge importance. Even now there's something very special about walking into each room knowing it's something you've lovingly created from nothing."

– Jude Hesselgrave, homeowner



There's a real rustic presence throughout this home and most of the materials and furniture pieces were sourced by Jude from antique markets throughout the UK and France. The large 7ft dining table in the living room was lovingly created by her using old joists found in one of the barns on the farm, leftover from her father's demolition days, before he became a farmer. Jude, who is a prop maker, stylist and who owns a wedding and events company called Mustard Events, looked after the home's interior design.

She explains: "I was very keen to carry a stylish, cosy, rustic feel throughout our home, it was important for it to be warm and welcoming. Once I'd painted the walls with soft Farrow and Ball colours it began to take shape."

The living room is the only room constructed as a permanent structure, so this space was the most important to them when it came to the interior decoration. This structure features a separate timber-framed build with a sloping roof, which allows the extension to blend in with the

existing roofline. The timber utilised came out of a 15th century house that Roger worked on and was used as the structural statement piece within the centre of the living area. Roger also made a 'post box' window on the higher end of a mustard-coloured wall to draw in south-facing light and add interest to the space.

Another interesting feature is the flooring. Floor boards were sourced from an old disused mill in Derby. Jude drove there with a van to collect them and then spent days cleaning and reconditioned



them at home. Reclaimed oak found on site became the primary material for the fireplace framed by a mantelpiece.

The larger log cabin also accommodates the kitchen and the bathroom, which are positioned next to each other for drainage purposes and are separated by a stud wall. As the space was compact, Jude thought of additional clever storage solutions such as creating a spice shelf above the window and adding a shelf for the cookbooks above the door.

The project slowly evolved as more budget became available, so they upgraded the bathroom in 2014 with wall insulation and new sanitaryware and added double glazed windows the following year. They also replaced a cast iron roll-top bath with an acrylic bath to preserve the water's temperatures for a longer period.

Although the house is heated with the help of a Franco Belge red woodburning stove, sourced from eBay, and a handful of storage heaters, Jude and Roger also had to buy additional PVC

windows and doors which help improve the insulation. These are black on the outside and don't look like plastic, which is a great advantage. The cabin expands and shrinks depending on the season so it's important to make sure that the windows and doors are flexible and fit properly. In addition, even if the budget might be an issue, Jude advises people who want to opt for the same route to invest in the right skin thickness of the cabins – this helps insulate by keeping the cold out and the heat in.





In September 2015, Jude and Roger were granted a Certificate of Lawful Development, allowing them to call the log cabin their permanent home. Its current value is estimated at around £250,000 but the couple have no intention of selling. They're currently reaping the benefits of their hard work.

They're both ecstatic with the results and have enjoyed every minute of the build process, even though they went through some harsh winters which delayed the project. Jude concludes: "It's changed our lives beyond our expectations but for me particularly, living on the family farm where my grandparents lived for many years holds huge importance. I work from home as my event venue is here. I also maintain and manage the farm, Roger works locally in Lewes and the surrounding areas, so it's very convenient for him. We both feel very lucky and not a day goes by without us appreciating this wonderful bespoke home and the lovely surroundings it sits within.

"Even now there's something very special about walking into each room knowing it's something you've lovingly created from nothing."

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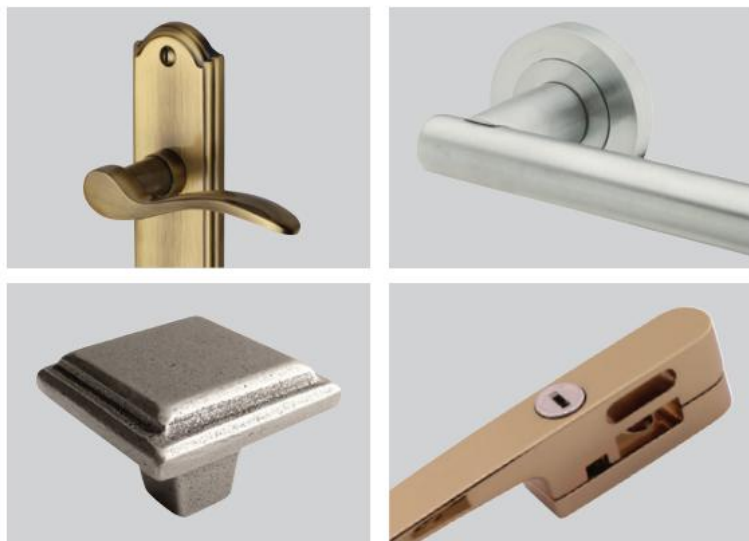
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Aircrete for foundations?

Perhaps one result of aircrete's popularity as an above-ground masonry material has been a lack of awareness of its suitability for use below DPC level. In the British construction industry, using aircrete as a foundation material is viewed as unconventional. The reality is that aircrete provides a simplified and cost-effective method of constructing foundations for residential properties. In terms of strength, aircrete will not be left wanting as a foundation material.

A common assumption amongst contractors is that foundations need to have more strength than the superstructure above. However, it is in fact the lintel bearings where windows and doors are introduced to the wall structure which need the most strength. The loading is evenly distributed across the entire height of the wall below the ground floor DPC. This means that despite being one of the lightest forms of masonry, aircrete is fully load-bearing.

Because designers often assume that higher strength masonry units which are capable of

sustaining their load at critical points must be used across the entire structure, aircrete is often overlooked for foundations. This can lead to an expensive over-design, as dense aggregate is used on the foundations instead.

Standard Celcon Blocks at 3.6N/mm^2 are more than adequate for low rise housing, and aircrete is produced at a range of strengths to suit all sorts of other applications.

Because of its simple method of construction and lightweight properties, aircrete leads to less money spent on construction, which is beneficial to both contractors and end-users.





A Foundation Cost Comparison Study by Calfordseaden, an independent construction and property consultancy firm, revealed that using aircrete for foundations on a three-bedroom semi-detached home could reduce build costs by almost 25%.

This is down to several factors. Because of its lightweight properties, aircrete can be laid extremely quickly.

Aircrete's relatively fast build speed compared to dense aggregate leads to reduced labour costs, as less contractors can do the work in the same amount of time, or the same number of contractors can complete the works in even less time. Furthermore, the solid construction means that fewer building materials are necessary. These cost savings cascade down, saving money for everyone involved in the construction.

These are just a few of the reasons to use aircrete as a foundation material. Even before we take into account the outstanding quality of residential dwellings that aircrete is capable of producing, there are clear cost benefits to using the material which can be enjoyed by all involved with the project, contractor and self-builders alike. ■

www.hhcelcon.co.uk



Warm, welcoming colour combinations enhance the sense of space within the bathroom and give a light, harmonious impression. Adding furniture in lighter colours is ideal for creating a pleasant atmosphere.

Focal points can be created by single, intense splashes of colour, such as a console made from real-wood walnut or perhaps some pieces of furniture finished in chrome. Doing this creates order in the room and, at the same time, provides space for decorative accessories in broken white and soft natural tones.

There is a wide range of options for blending various shades of colour and materials in your self-build bathroom.

Using warm lighting will also help to create a natural and appealing atmosphere and will help showcase the subtle nuances in your self-build bathroom in their best light. ■

www.duravit.co.uk

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Choosing the right windows and doors for your property

Deciding on the windows and doors is an important part of a building project. The decision not only affects the look of the property, but also impacts on the thermal efficiency.

The material used can make a huge difference to the aesthetics of a building. Traditional properties often suit timber windows and doors as they are more period appropriate.

Timber is often seen as a high quality option for windows and doors. This is partly because, when maintained and painted properly, timber windows and doors can last for over a hundred years. High quality timber windows and doors can offer great durability and energy efficiency.

However, it is important to note that not all timbers offer the same longevity. When choosing a timber, check its durability and stability.

Glass options

When choosing the type of glass, consider what the room will be used for. For example, a bathroom window will often want a smaller window with privacy glass, stopping passers-by from seeing into the property.





In contrast, a living room may suit a larger window and door set with clear glass, allowing the occupant to relax inside with a nice view of the garden.

Deciding on the right style

If you are planning an extension to an existing property, high attention to detail is required to ensure that the property's

character is not lost. Make sure that the windows and doors in the extension are in the same style as the original property. This means checking various specifications. For example, for sash windows, make sure that they have the same designs for any sash horns, moulding, glazing bars and finish.

If the project is a new-build, consider the style of the property. For example,

Georgian-style windows will look out of place on a property designed to a Victorian architectural style.

Choosing a supplier

Make sure that you leave enough time to order the windows and doors. The best companies can get very busy, especially if their products are made to order, and will often be booked up several months in advance. You don't want to have to settle for a lower quality product because the best companies are already fully booked.

Check that the supplier has experience working on similar projects and installers are registered with FENSA.

Ask about U-values and check that new windows and doors are draught proofed on installation. This will allow you to check how energy-efficient new windows or doors will be.

View where the windows and doors are made – this allows you to check on the quality of the manufacturing process. ■

www.sashwindow.com



The questions you need to ask your worktop fabricator

Choosing a kitchen is no easy task. Whether you're in the midst of a complete renovation or simply updating an old style, the finer details of the process can complicate matters and it helps to be as well prepared as possible. This is especially true when procuring your worktops.

Due to the man-made nature of quartz, the quality can vary between different brands and selecting one based on price could be a costly mistake further down the line. In order to get a good grasp of what's on offer, you need to speak to different fabricators and fitters to understand if they'll be the right fit for you.

Before you commit to a professional, ensure you know everything you need to make an informed decision by asking your potential supplier the following questions:

Should I speak to a fabricator or a kitchen and bathroom retailer?

A kitchen and bathroom retailer is a good starting point if you are looking at a complete renovation of your kitchen, with new cabinetry, appliances or even structural changes such as an extension. A good kitchen and bathroom retailer will help manage the entire process for you, including the kitchen design, and dealing directly with one company would ease potential complications.



If you are simply replacing your existing worktop, or have already designed the new layout and ordered new cabinetry yourself, then it might be better to go directly to a fabricator who will be able to assist you in templating, cutting and fitting a new quartz worktop.

What types of quartz are available?

Though you'll likely have done some research into the different types of quartz available, when you visit a fabricator you'll be able to see in person the variations of colour and finishes. Ask to see all of the options on offer, as quartz is able to capture the look of many other types of stone, including granite, marble and concrete. Whilst you may have an idea in your head of which type you would prefer, it's worth taking the time to discuss all alternatives and see how they can work in a range of kitchen styles.

Can you explain the pricing structure?

There are a number of factors that can have an influence on the pricing of quartz worktops and it's worth asking your fabricator to explain the differences.

Is there a warranty provided on the products and installation?

When properly maintained and cared for, quartz worktops can last for many years. Because of this, most fitters will provide a long-term warranty on the workmanship involved. As standard, Caesarstone offers a 25-year warranty on the material for complete peace of mind. It's always best to be certain and get a clear explanation of what will be covered and for how long.

Can I have an input into the slab layout or template pairing?

Generally, fabricators will balance using the material in the most economical method with the visual impact. There are different ways to layout the worktop, even when the same amount of material will be required. Once you have selected a colour and design, you may wish to find out how much input, if any, will be required on your part. Caesarstone surfaces can be fabricated into a number of beautiful details that provide both practical and aesthetic benefits. A range of different edging options are the perfect finishing touch, so be sure to enquire about the options available.

Do you also carry out the installation?

There are two very different skill sets required for the fabrication and the installation, however, the fewer people involved in the process, the better. Having the same person with you throughout minimises the margin for error and helps result in a higher quality outcome. So it's worth understanding the buying process fully, from selection, fabrication and to fitting.

By preparing some key questions to ask when selecting a fitter, you'll be able to keep your visit much more productive and efficient. Home improvements are arguably one of the biggest investments and by arming yourself with the right knowledge you can make the very best decision that's right for your kitchen. ■

www.caesarstone.co.uk



Creating a family home

Steve Elliott's aim was to convert a dilapidated 16th century apple storage barn and some outbuildings from agricultural use to a residential haven for his family.

The barn is set within the former grounds of Ightham court in an area of outstanding natural beauty (AONB). The vision behind the barn conversion was to create a family home and an open-plan style of living that would be long lasting and enjoyed for generations to come. This was a pretty complex project due to the dilapidated state of the site, the building even had trees taking root inside the barn – this, coupled with a low budget and many planning restrictions in an AONB,

did not make life easy for Steve. These planning restrictions included limiting the number of windows to the external facade of the barn, as well as stating that the living room area had to be located on the first floor whilst keeping the main central bay open. There was also a dilapidated piggery that required a considerable amount of drawings and documents with close liaison with the planners as the roof had to be completely replaced. It was important from the get-go to come up

with a design that used natural materials and was in keeping to its original design.

There were a number of challenging aspects of the build that Steve encountered. He wanted to maintain the existing roof however, some of the posts were not in a great state. This meant the roof had to be suspended up on scaffolding to allow all the support timber to be repaired, replaced and then new sections had to be inserted. All the roof tiles were also taken off individually and cleaned by hand. Another large job was underpinning all the foundations of the barn. Japanese knotweed and bamboo also covered part of the plot which was all removed.

Steve project managed the build himself and also worked without an architect on



the project, however a structural engineer was used to give much-needed guidance and design specifications for restoring the structure and complying to building control requirements.

Keep organised

Steve has been involved in the construction industry for more than 30 years, so his previous experience allowed him to keep to his original time frame of nine months – three months of that time period was for the planning permission to be approved. He managed to stay within the original budget however, flexibility was needed due to unforeseen repair costs.

Steve's advice to anyone planning to self-build is: "Invest time in using

reclaimed materials, consider oak frame structures because they look incredible both internally and externally and really add character. The use of natural materials also certainly helps in gaining planning permission especially when planning laws are very stringent particularly in an AONB.

"Use experienced specialised tradesmen. You also need to be highly organised with sufficient information and materials on site when you're with your trades men. Also ensure deliveries and material stocks are organised well in advance, remember this can be problematic with different site restrictions."

Despite a few challenges at the start of the build, Steve insists he would do it all again in a heartbeat. ■

www.oakdesigns.co.uk





Save money by installing pressure treated fencing

Here Jacksons Fencing explains how you can save money by installing pressure treated fencing vs untreated fencing and why treated timber is not as susceptible to insect and rot attack, wind damage or harsh weather conditions.

Every year we are contacted by thousands of people who are distressed, worried and anxious because their fencing has fallen down in last night's storm. Often broken fencing is old, poorly installed and rotten from the inside out because it was not pressure treated, so when they approach us their first concern is to re-secure the area with a new boundary fence.

You may wonder how long untreated timber fencing will last for. Typically, four to eight years dependent upon the species of timber, location of install, quality of installation and weather conditions.

Replacing timber fencing can be an expensive project, especially if you're doing so every four to eight years due to poor

quality untreated timber. So, let's explore how you can save money by installing pressure treated timber fencing and why we believe this to be a more cost effective solution.

What is pressure treated timber and why is it better?

The pressure treatment process is a procedure that involves the pressurised insertion and delivery of preservative concentrate through the sapwood of the timber, which, as the 'living' outermost section of the wood, is most likely to become adversely affected by the challenges of the outdoor environment, right through and into the heartwood, which although technically dead, is still susceptible to rot and damage caused by wood-boring pests.

Did you know?

Heartwood is wood that, as a result of a naturally occurring chemical transformation process, has become more resistant to decay. Sapwood is the younger, outermost wood on the tree which is essential for carrying water and sugars from the roots to the leaves.

Pressure treated timber fence post vs untreated rotten fence posts

The insertion of a protective concentrate means the timber cannot be penetrated by rot or insect attack unlike untreated timber which can rot from the inside out, then making it highly susceptible to harsh weather conditions.

How will installing pressure treated timber fencing save you money?

The simple answer is if you adopt a long-term view, using pressure treated timber represents a low life time cost. Yes, the initial monetary investment may be slightly higher when compared to untreated timber fencing, however over a 25-year period if you factor in the cost of having to replace rotten timber and possibly the fence posts plus the labour then pressure treated timber. ■

www.jacksons-fencing.co.uk

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www.stovax.com/ecodesignready

Prepared for print 21/01/19



Celebrating the best of British

Ideal Home Show, sponsored by Zoopla, the world's longest running exhibition, has returned to Olympia London from Friday 22nd March to Sunday 7th April 2019.

Celebrating its 111th year with a 'Best of British' theme, the show features more than 600 exhibitors, the biggest ever show home, and demonstrations. Expert guests are hosting workshops on stage, including DIY expert and TV Presenter Nick Knowles, Property Expert Phil Spencer, renowned British Chef Rosemary Shrager and Actress and Chef Lisa Faulkner.

From gardens to interiors and housewares through to gadgets, Ideal Home Show, sponsored by Zoopla, has everything for every room in your home. Across 17 days visitors will find accessory inspiration for the living room, space maximising ideas for the office, decorating ideas and the latest trends for the kitchen and bathroom.

This year's spectacular first-of-its-kind, life-size Evolving Home is the main focal point of the

show village. With a focus on adaptable and open-plan living to maximise light in the home, this modular structure can be extended easily and quickly to create an even larger, or differently configured, home as the owners' lifestyles change. Visitors to the show can take away ideas from different sections of the house to use in their existing properties, from adding extra space with a modular extension to letting in light with smart windows and open-plan layouts.

Bringing to life the 'Best of British' theme, four specially-designed rooms are on display to reflect the British Monarchy. Featuring a 70s-inspired vintage living room for Prince Charles and Camilla, and a family living room and garden with a vertical living wall for Will and Kate, the 'Rooms for Royals' show all that the show has to offer, in right regal fashion.

The 360° Home Theatre takes visitors on an immersive 360° tour of the latest trends in architecture and design. There is no need for a head set in this incredible immersive virtual experience – meaning you can share the experience with friends and loved ones and make notes as you go along.

In the nearby 'Super Theatre' sponsored by Zoopla, there are insider tips from celebrity guests and experts on topics such as gardening, upcycling, interior design trends and home renovation. There is also a virtual-reality tour through the Evolving Home and a virtual reality experience hosted by gadget guru Lee Baldry. Guests can also book in to the Expert Advice Hub for a free, 30-minute, one-to-one advice session from a range of experts including finance, property and interiors experts.

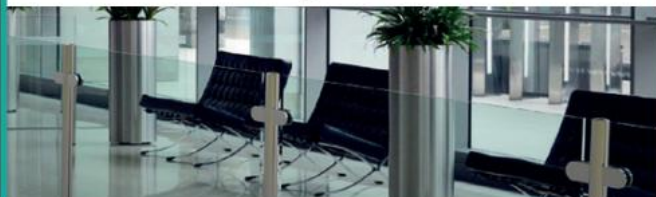
For the green fingered, there are four themed garden designs sponsored by Flymo including: upcycled, modern contemporary, a family fun garden and a grower's garden. Visitors can also treat themselves to some down time, courtesy of London College of Beauty Therapy who are offering free pamper sessions including manicures, hair braiding and make-up.

www.idealhomedshow.co.uk

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www.stovax.com/defraapproved

Prepared for print 21/01/19



Milbank Concrete Products launches revolutionary thermal flooring solution

At Milbank Concrete Products, the company is on a mission to change the way builders and developers think about flooring.

With cost-cutting, time-saving and exceptional thermal efficiency in mind, Milbank Concrete Products is introducing its customers to WarmFloor, the new and improved insulated concrete flooring solution.

So, who are Milbank Concrete Products?

The company is one of the UK's leading manufacturers of precast concrete products with a variety of solutions available, spanning from standard flooring systems to complete bespoke packages. It tries not to shout about it too much, but the company has manufactured concrete products for some of the most amazing projects all over the UK, such as the Kia Oval County Cricket Stadium in Kennington and the Warner Brothers Studios in Watford.

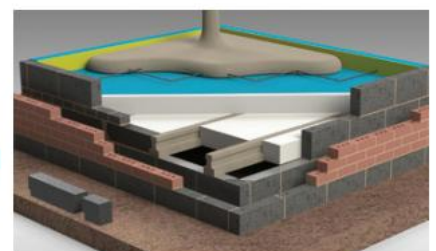
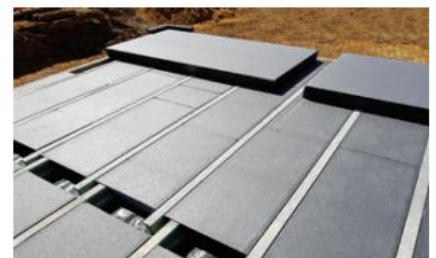
What's WarmFloor Pro?

WarmFloor Pro is suitable for almost any structure, but is most commonly used in housing, from single dwellings to complete housing developments. Without the need for any specialist tools or skills, installation is efficient and streamlined whilst minimising waste and emission rates.

It works by combining rigid insulation modules manufactured from lightweight closed cell expanded polystyrene (EPS panels) which are laid in-between prestressed concrete beams (either 155 or 225mm deep) with an EPS top sheet, damp proof membrane and structural concrete topping. Effectively, it's a beam and block flooring system specifically redesigned to save you money.

If you are interested in learning more about this revolutionary system, or would like to view the company's brochure (including step-by-step installation guide) please visit the website.

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- ✓ Unrivalled technical support
 - ✓ Simple to install
 - ✓ Plumbing flexibility



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- ✓ 60°C hot water
- ✓ Superior acoustic performance

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"I would strongly recommend Whiting & Partners. The partner responsible for my affairs has been exceptionally helpful in matters which have covered a broad range of business areas. His open and friendly manner is a breath of fresh air," explains the Managing Director of a Translations company.

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Top three tips to get the most from your heating system

The impact of heating system selection on heating bills could be of great consequence for your self-build project for many years to come. Environmental pressures have boosted the appetite and need for low carbon low polluting renewable technology in both rural and urban locations, in particular ground source heat pumps.

This technology is also a favourite for its low running costs, minimal maintenance and long lifetime. The Government's Renewable Heat Incentive income makes the financial case for ground source heat pumps even more appealing for self-builders; for those with one building they can enjoy a guaranteed income for seven years, and for those with more than one dwelling, connecting individual heat pumps in these dwellings to shared pipework in the ground qualifies for 20 years of income through the Non Domestic RHI.

With the case for ground source heat pumps clear, British ground source heat pump manufacturer, Kensa Heat Pumps, has come up with three simple top tips to ensure your project is suited to ground source heat pumps. If you tick all these boxes, you can most certainly benefit from this rewarding and renewable home grown technology for years to come.

Top tip 1

What are the insulation levels of the property?

For renovation projects in particular, the better insulated your home the more efficient it is to heat, which means smaller energy bills. Your home's efficiency will also impact the size of the ground source heat pump you require – the lower your heat demand, the smaller and cheaper the heat pump, and the less work it needs to do, which all in all means a far cheaper to run home.

Furthermore, the more efficient your heat pump, the more you earn through the Renewable Heat Incentive. A win-win.

Top tip 2

Strive for optimum efficiency

Selecting whether you have underfloor heating or radiators, and what floor covering you use, can all affect the efficiency of your ground source heat pump system, which ultimately impacts your fuel bills.

Typically, well insulated homes with underfloor heating downstairs and radiators upstairs (oversized if a renovation) return the best results.

Top tip 3

Your land is worth more than you think

Whether you have a modest lawn or acres, you'd be surprised how much this land is worth to you – with a ground source heat pump not only will harvesting this heat from your ground provide you with significantly reduced running costs (typically 40 - 50% compared to oil and LPG), you also get access to the Government's Renewable Heat Incentive (RHI) which pays you for the renewable heat your heat pump generates for seven or 20 years depending on how many properties are being heated by heat pumps (seven for one, 20 for two or more).

There are many options to extract the heat from the ground, from space-saving boreholes to cost-effective slinky trenches, to water sources (lakes, streams, ponds etc.) which provide the most efficient heat extraction for the heat pump. ■

www.kensaheatpumps.com
enquiries@kensaheatpumps.com
 0345 222 4328



A dedicated company

Established in 1984, H.D. Services was initially set up as a cable percussion drilling and sewage treatment installation company, and now specialises in the niches of water supply, sewage treatment systems and heating solutions targeted predominantly at self-builders, developers and contractors.

Attendance at a renewables conference in 2009 gave the team the necessary prod in a different direction, and the company decided to turn its hand to the renewable heating market.

Upon realising the potential for a water and heating solution of a singular nature, H.D. Services made the informed decision to start supplying open-loop ground source heat pumps (GSHP), which rely on groundwater as a heat source.

The company is also well practiced in the fields of sewage treatment system installation and borehole construction, involving the confident employment of its dedicated cable percussion drilling technique, which is recognised as being a cleaner approach to drilling chalk aquifers.

The dedicated designers, suppliers, installers and maintenance experts operate from the company's strategically situated offices in Buckinghamshire, striving to deliver suitable solutions for clients with specific heating and water-based needs across the South East.

The dedicated company has a number of industry awards under its belt and this quest for ongoing success and best practice is further supported by the organisation's penchant for industry compliancy. It is largely because of its coherence with the Environment Agency (EA) requirements and knowledge of the domestic Renewable Heat Incentive (RHI) that has led the business to secure projects with customers of a notably high status – namely, councils, architects and domestic clients.

www.hdservicesltd.co.uk
01494 792000 enquiries@thehdgroup.co.uk



Sleek, modern and perfect for open-plan living

With the trend for open-plan living still going strong, many homeowners, architects and interior designers look to the modern styling of an inset stove to add warmth and a statement focal point to a large, spacious interior.

The new Hergom C-14/70 and C-16/80 designs are modern, cast iron fireplace insets with full glass viewing windows. The C-14/70 is a generous 70cm wide with two convection fans while the larger C-16/80 is 80cm.

Manufactured in black matte cast iron for a high quality finish, the Hergom stoves are extremely resilient with optimum heat transfer and convection blowers to speed up the circulation of convection air. The ceramic glass door with its modern handle gives a contemporary look, while the removable ash pan helps with easy maintenance.

The 14/70 comes with a nominal 6kW heat output and a heat range between 5kW and 12kW, whilst the Hergom C-16/80 has an output between 6kW and 14kW. Both models have an airwash glass cleaning system, where air currents sweep the glass clean from the inside.

As part of the Eurostove family, Hergom is one of Europe's largest and most established manufacturers of cast iron stoves and cookers. Made in its own state-of-the-art foundry in Santander, northern Spain, they use only the finest materials to produce durable, efficient, thermally-effective heating solutions.

www.eurostove.co.uk
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The world's most advanced collated screw system just got even better!

Simpson Strong-Tie's Quik Drive significantly cuts installation time, with screws for a huge range of applications: decking to drywall, modular homes to mezzanine floors.

The ergonomic design eliminates bending, stretching or crouching; the system can operate for hours, and so will you. The patented solid screw strips avoid jamming, and unlike many floppy collated screw strips, partially used strips can be reused later – so it's cost effective too. The catalogue, available at www.strongtie.co.uk, features the full range of interchangeable collated screws, including a new positive placement tool for Simpson connectors.

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Comfort, warmth and energy efficiency for your self-build

Green Building Store has been supplying

low energy projects since 1995 across the UK and can provide the technical knowledge, support and high performance products to help you achieve your self-build project. Green Building Store offers high performance, triple glazed timber, alu-clad windows and doors and is nationally recognised for its expertise in designing and supplying MVHR systems for Passivhaus and low energy homes. There is a wide range of free information for self-builders on the Green Building Store's website. If you want more in-depth support, the cost-effective consultancy service can help.

www.greenbuildingstore.co.uk
 01484 461705 info@greenbuildingstore.co.uk



Bring the outside in with Folding Doors 2 U

Bi-fold doors or folding doors are high on the 'must-have' list for anyone improving their home or adding a new extension due to their ability to instantly change your living style by providing an unobstructed opening onto your patio or directly into your garden.

FD2U timber bi-fold doors are manufactured from engineered timber to ensure structural stability and to help prevent twisting or warping. The range is available in standard eucalyptus hardwood with European oak also available to special order. All folding sliding doors are factory finished with either RAL colour paint finish or translucent stain finishes.

www.foldingdoors2u.co.uk
 01621 834123 sales@foldingdoors2u.co.uk



Energy consultant selects Thermoblock for forever family home

When Richard Britten set about designing a brand-new home for himself and his family, he identified Marmox Thermoblock as the ideal means of tackling thermal bridging around the floor/wall junction of the near-to-zero-carbon construction solution. Not only will the Cotswold stone-clad walls offer a U-value of 0.1W/m²K, but the dwelling's hot water and negligible space heating needs will be met using a ground source heat pump. In erecting the walls, a total of 184, 100 x 600mm Thermoblocks, will be laid at the base of the 100mm-thick dense concrete blockwork outer leaf.

www.marmox.co.uk 01634 835290 sales@marmox.co.uk



Go green with BioLPG from Calor

If you're an eco-conscious self-builder with no access to mains gas, you can now do your bit towards a greener, cleaner project by choosing BioLPG for your fuel supply, available exclusively from Calor. BioLPG is made from a mix of renewable and sustainably-sourced raw materials, so opting for the green gas can help you reduce your carbon footprint for home heating by 38 per cent compared to oil¹. Because BioLPG has the same chemical composition as LPG, it works with standard LPG systems, boilers and appliances. It's also kinder to your bank balance than other renewable systems, so it really is a no-brainer.

¹Atlantic Consulting, 2017; BioLPG's Carbon Footprint Savings

www.calor.co.uk 0800 121 4531





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