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appeals

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The case for
heat pumps

Basements

Creating below ground living space

GARDEN
LIGHTING

36 PAGES OF SELF BUILDS & CONVERSIONS

- Three-storey oak-framed new build in Wales
- Workshop converted to a light-filled home
- Opening up a London Victorian terrace
- Luxury self build in Mallorca
- Contemporary extension to a 1930s home

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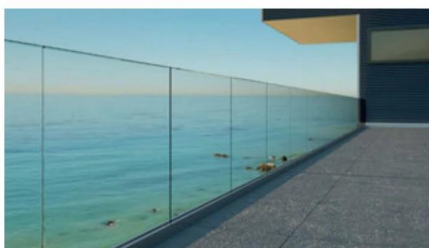


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Welcome



As I write this, I have everything crossed in the hope that the worst of the pandemic is behind us. These are unprecedented times, and Covid-19 has taken a devastating toll on the health of the nation,

both physically and financially. It will probably take years to fully recover, and sadly many lives and businesses will never come back.

Construction has been particularly badly hit. While work has managed to continue on many sites over the past few months, progress has been painstakingly slow, impeded by the lack of materials and the limitations of social distancing. (No one can condemn the latter as the health and safety of workers are paramount.)

However, there is cause for optimism – albeit in the long term. The Construction Leadership Council has launched a three-phase industry recovery plan (see page 6) in which it outlines the way forward over the next 12 months and beyond. This has the backing of major players in the industry, including the Federation of Master Builders, which sees retrofitting our homes to make them more thermally efficient as crucial to any sector recovery.

Gerald Cole takes a more focused approach to environmental concerns in this month's Topping Out, where he concentrates on heating, and heat pumps in particular. Within five years, gas boilers will need to be replaced by low-carbon heating systems under changes announced by the government last year. This means that selfbuilders will need to take this into account with their new builds. Gerald argues the case for heat pumps, which makes for interesting reading.

We also have plenty of other helpful advice, not least a detailed explanation of how to make an appeal against a planning refusal, dealing with delays blamed on the coronavirus pandemic, and our practical guides to both flooring and basements.

There's also an interview with Gardeners' World's Frances Tophill who talks about her latest book, *Rewild Your Garden*, and of course, our must-read case studies – large and small – to inspire and inform.

Nature lovers should particularly enjoy our case study about The Hide, a quirky home in Cornwall built to make the most of its lovely surroundings.

Ross Stokes

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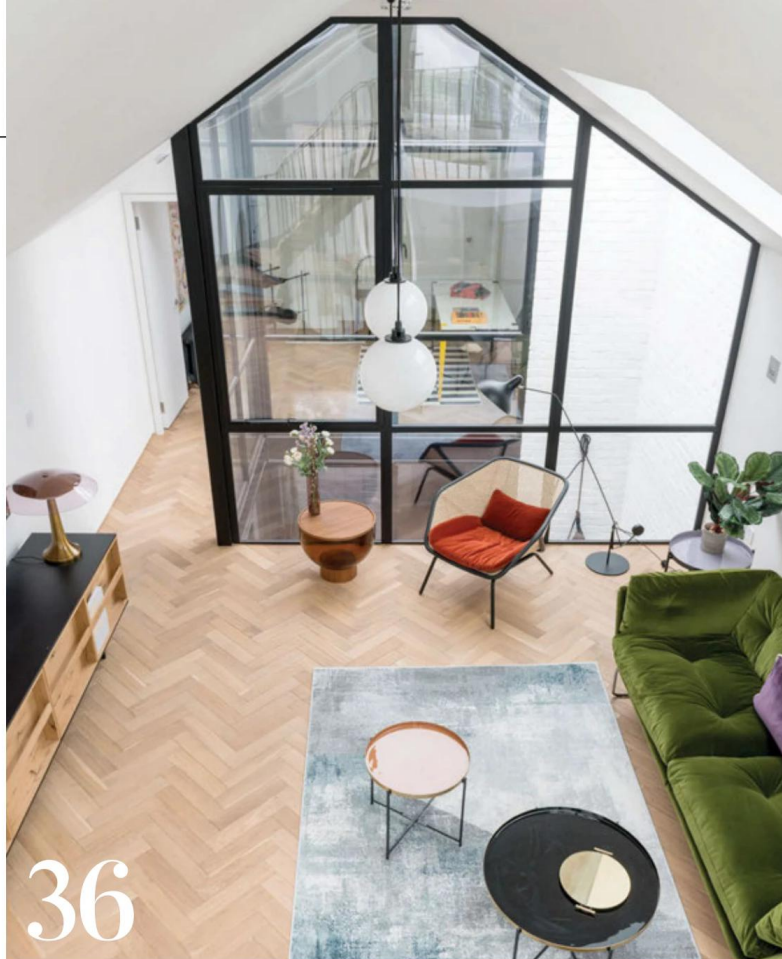
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Peterborough boasts the highest solar panel ratio

Peterborough has the highest percentage of houses in the UK with solar panels, with one in 10 homes boasting photovoltaic installations. Government statistics show that 11.1 per cent of homes in the Cambridgeshire city have solar panels, closely followed by the Scottish city of Stirling, where 10.1 per cent of homes have PV units. This puts homes in both cities well ahead of the national average which is just 2.96 per cent.

TOWN	HOUSES	PANELS	%
Peterborough	81,901	9,088	11.1
Stirling	40,157	4,051	10.1
Wrexham	60,341	4,432	7.3
Boston	29,355	2,153	7.3
Sunderland	124,438	8,802	7.1
Colchester	79,540	5,548	7.0
Taunton	67,198	3,791	5.6
Stroud	51,756	2,858	5.5
Doncaster	131,355	7,049	5.4
Plymouth	115,264	6,172	5.4
Selby	37,379	1,965	5.3

Lowest ratio of solar panels

Kensington & Chelsea	79,930	127	0.2
Tower Hamlets	136,292	219	0.2

NaCSBA AGM

TV presenter and architectural designer Charlie Luxton will be the keynote speaker at the National Custom and Self Build Association AGM this month. He will be sharing his experiences of bringing forward a community self-build project in his home village and his own recently completed home.

The meeting will be held online at 2pm on June 23 when members will be updated about NaCSBA's activities over the past year and setting out its plans for the next 12 months.

"As well as a creative solution to the impact of Coronavirus, we hope that by hosting an online AGM we can encourage more members to join in and share their issues with us. This will be the first of many such online member events, as we work to improve engagement," said NaCSBA chief executive Andrew Baddeley-Chappell.

£1.1M FINE FOR H&S BREACH

A company convicted of breaching health and safety regulations relating to working at height was fined £1.1m with costs of almost £69,000 at Luton Crown Court. The court heard that on September 5, 2016, an engineer testing a sprinkler system for leaks at a site in Hemel Hempstead fell almost three metres after the extension ladder he was using slipped away from him. The engineer fell into the gap between the internal roof and the external wall resulting in a fractured vertebrae, soft tissue damage and severe blood loss. An HSE investigation found that reasonably practicable measures had not been taken to prevent the fall.

Recovery plan for construction sector

The Federation of Master Builders has backed the Construction Leadership Council's Industry Recovery Plan, which outlines the way forward for a post-coronavirus economic revival. The plan – backed by leading construction industry bodies – champions a greener recovery, growth in all communities, and a focus on quality delivered through three phases (see below).

Brian Berry, chief executive of the FMB, said: "I am determined that we build back better with small, local builders at the heart of the recovery, following the unprecedented shock of the coronavirus. I celebrate the fact

that the UK construction industry is speaking with one voice, and that voice is calling for a sustainable future for construction, with a mandate to develop initiatives on energy retrofit to fix our leaky homes.

"If we are to reach the net zero carbon target, tackle fuel poverty, and improve health we need a national retrofit strategy, and local builders are the ones to deliver this.

"As we tackle our ongoing housing crisis, small builders must also be central to delivering more, better quality homes for all those who need them, including our keyworkers," Mr Berry said.

Industry Recovery Plan

Phase	What
Restart (1-3 months)	Restart work on all projects and programmes, and increase this to the highest level possible consistent with Government guidance Maximise employment of all those working in the construction industry and supply chain Minimise disruption due to contractual disputes
Reset (3-12 months)	Demand and Pipeline - demand and supply-side measures to increase workload across infrastructure, construction, housing and domestic new build and RMI. Develop a robust pipeline of work across the whole construction ecosystem, including contracting, SMEs, merchants and manufacturers. Productivity - new approaches will be needed to compensate for the loss of productivity due to the requirement to implement Government guidelines across construction and the built environment Professionalism - investing in training, collaborative business models, fairer contracts and payment
Reinvent (12+ months)	Transformation - sustain economic growth through the adoption of digital and manufacturing technologies to consistently deliver low carbon, sustainable and better quality outputs and outcomes Value - adopting procurement models and approaches across the industry and clients to deliver better value and whole life performance Partnership - stronger partnerships between the industry and its clients, supply chain firms, investment in upskilling the workforce

Saffron reports dramatic rise in self builds

Specialist mortgage provider Saffron Building Society reports a 144 per cent increase in self-build completions compared to the same period in 2019. The society also reports a rise in self-build enquiries, from a mix of first-time buyers, converters and multiple-plot owners.

Colin Field, SBS chief executive, said: "Most people have images of giant Grand Designs-style builds. In reality, many self builds are modest first homes, two- to three-bedroom houses built on a pre-planned plot. Self build does not have to mean built from scratch. Barn conversions, knock-downs and rebuilds, loft or basement conversions or a large extension all constitute a self build and can be mortgaged accordingly," he said.

A self-build mortgage differs from a typical loan in that the lender requires full planning permission, detailed architectural drawings, and a schedule of works and costings at application stage. The mortgage

includes flexible stage payments assisting cash flow during the construction phase.

"A self build might seem a little daunting, especially for a first-time buyer," Field explains, "but the structure of the lending is so flexible, releasing funds at pre-set stages of the development to assist with cash flow, it is a very supportive way to get on the market. It can be an exciting and rewarding path to your first home; or update, grow or improve your current home."

This month Saffron launched a new mortgage for the retrofit market. It is designed to encourage borrowers to upgrade current housing stock to a better energy efficiency rating (EPC).

If updating a home, the mortgage offers an interest reduction reward for the remaining time of the two-year fixed rate, when the borrower can prove that any upgrades made to the property have improved the EPC by one band, to a minimum of band E.

AMA Research is predicting a drop of 11 per cent in the bricks, blocks and precast concrete market as a result of Covid-19. This is in stark contrast with the past four years, when the sector enjoyed a steady 13 per cent growth up till 2019. However, AMA is expecting a return to growth through the second half of 2020. The concrete block market is influenced by the housebuilding sector with demand slowing in the second half of 2019 due to extenuating circumstances such as Brexit and storms which caused building sites to grind to a halt. Precast concrete and cast stone products account for the largest share of the market with growth underpinned by moves from larger housebuilders to more off-site construction. However, AMA forecasts overall growth of 18 per cent to 2024.

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ON TREND

Glass finish

Shown here in Alpine white, the Emerso built-in washbasin is made from steel enamel, produced by fusing steel and glass together for an extremely resilient, ultra-hygienic finish. In today's climate, products with non-porous surfaces have become especially important. Each of Kaldewei's glass surfaces has an easy-clean finish, so that dirt and germs are effortlessly rinsed away. The Emerso measures 520mm x 420mm x 32mm and costs from £954. (kaldewei.co.uk)



Spinning around

Create an inviting ambience in your garden or patio with these modern fire pits. Their attractive low design will not dominate your garden space, but still keep you warm. They are handmade in the UK by the art of metal spinning, they are available in various designs with prices starting at £59.99. (etsy.com/uk/shop/metalmakeryltd)

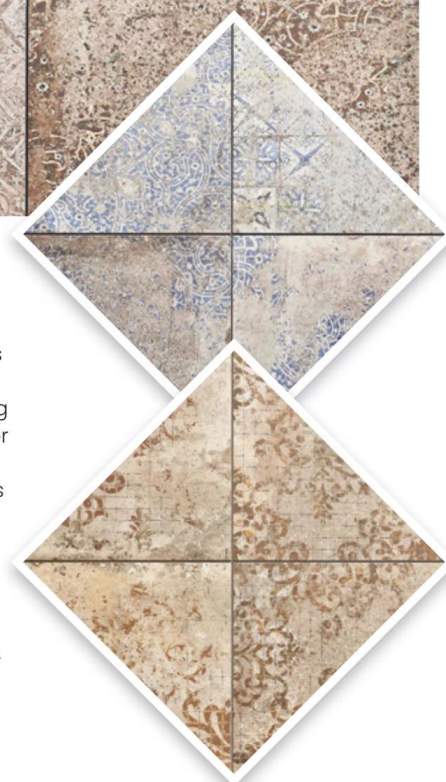
Safety first

Designed to help minimise the spread of Covid-19, the Shoe Pull replaces handles, allowing doors to be opened by foot. Made from 4mm thick stainless steel and finished with a satin brushed polish for added durability, the design protects the door from scuffs and is compatible with a floor-mounted door stop which may be purchased separately. Price: £36 or £42.75 with the door stop. For the next year, 20 per cent of sales profits will be donated to NHS charities. (philipwattsdesign.com)



Italian style

These vintage-effect tiles are made from porcelain with a vitreous glaze finish. Handmade in Italy, Tuscan tiles come in four patterns, in tones of fawn, blue, brown and sage, featuring a worn-away look. Suitable for interior and exterior walls and floors, the patterns are available in 18 variations and measure 400mm x 400mm, while the single colour designs are offered in three sizes: 400mm x 400mm, 800mm x 400mm and 800mm x 130mm. Shown here, from top to bottom, are the Pienza Decoro, Saturnia Decoro and Vulci Decoro patterns. Price: £85 per sqm. (indigenous.co.uk)





In check

Neglected floorboards can be easily transformed with Chalk Paint from Annie Sloan. With no sanding or prepping required, geometric shapes are simple to create, starting with a neutral base colour. A pattern can then be added using just a pencil, tape measure and some masking tape to ensure sharp lines, sealed with a layer of Chalk Paint Lacquer. The colour shown on this checkerboard floor is Old Violet. Prices start from £5.95. (anniesloan.com)



Kitchen metallics

The Mode 175GD sink has a two-tone gold and stainless steel finish and is available inset or under-mounted. Its PVD coating is highly resistant to tarnishing, corrosion and scratches. It comes with a 90mm outlet with basket strainer, and the waste and overflow connections are included. The model shown here measures 760mm x 470mm x 220mm and costs from £681. (capple.co.uk)



Bright lights

These colour block lampshade pendants from Matchimatchi come in a selection of bright shades and materials, including velvet, linen, metallics and corduroy. Seven different shapes and 18 colours are available, and each light is customisable. You can play with the colour combinations on the website to find your perfect colour combination. Prices vary depending on lamp choice and colour, but start from £100. (matchimatchi.com)

Striking storage

The Nomino wall by Ooh My Design is a customisable storage system made of panels with removable pegs and shelves. It offers numerous configurations of black and white optical art, including squares, arrows or an abstract motif. Featuring monochrome lacquered birch plywood, black solid beech sticks and black and white edged melanin shelves, each pack contains four panels, four 30cm x 14cm shelves, eight 30cm x 14cm shelves and 30 sticks measuring 18cm. Price: £865. (limelace.co.uk)



LIGHT THE WAY



Monkey business

These IP44-rated monkey lights are made from polyresin and come in black, making an eye-catching garden centrepiece. Shown here is Abu the sitting monkey, which also comes in gold. Abu measures 32cm x 34cm and is priced at £210. Marcel, who is 76.5cm tall and swings from a 3m rope, costs £290 and looks effective hanging from foliage. (dowsingandreynolds.com)



Garden glow

Lights4fun has a range of atmospheric lights for the garden, including these large solar garden path lights, each with four warm white LEDs for a warm glow. Finished in an ice-effect glass, they are fully weatherproof for year-round outdoor use, and give up to eight hours of illumination. Each light measures 10cm x 10cm with a height of 5cm, and costs £34.99. Also shown here is the Micro Light Rope, which adds a rustic vibe, perfect for hanging on a shepherd's hook and lining a pathway. The nylon rope is 4.5m long, featuring 60 warm white lights on a silver cable powered by three AA batteries. Price: £19.99. (lights4fun.co.uk)



Golden globes

The Brooklyn outdoor and bathroom globe wall light is ideal for modern themes or traditional interiors. Boasting a vintage aesthetic, it is available in brass, copper and pewter. IP20, IP44 and IP65 rated, it is waterproof and weatherproof. Price: £85. (industville.co.uk)



Bronzed

Cast in bronze or aluminium, the LED Mast light from Davey Lighting comes in several finishes: polished, anodised (aluminium only), weathered (bronze only) or sandblasted. IP54 rated, it measures 140mm x 80mm and is shown here in sandblasted bronze. Price: £185. (originalbtc.com)

Copper cluster

Displayed here in copper, the Mini Mini floor lamp is also available in brass. The lamp is IP55 rated and features a long slender rod with a 15cm base and is fixed in the ground with a spike. It is available in lengths of 1m, 2m and 1.5m, and supplied with an LED bulb. It looks atmospheric here clustered with a number of other lights at various heights. Price: from €283. (nedgis.com)





Vintage style

These Festoon cluster lights comprise five filament style bulbs, each containing five LEDs that give off a warm glow, and are ideal for subtle lighting above a dining table or dotted under a pergola. The bulbs hang at different heights, come with a battery pack and circular spacer if required, and can be moved around and adjusted easily. Price: £35. (gardentrading.co.uk)



Making shadows

Monsieur Lebonnet, Madame Latoque, Madame Cachet and Monsieur Ellipse make up the Monsieur Tricot range of garden lights, available in two distinctive knitted patterns and three sizes ranging from 30cm x 30cm to 60cm x 60cm. This LED dimmable weatherproof lighting has a removable cover made from knitted polyolefin rope, which can be selected in white, linen, brick moss or wenge, casting shadows to give a warm glow to the patio, terrace or garden. Price: from £770. (gomodern.co.uk)



Piece of art

This hemisphere-shaped solar outdoor floor lamp is set on the ground and covered by a circular plane that simultaneously screens the lights and acts as a resting surface and flush for the rain to slip away. It features a polyethylene diffuser, a brown textured porcelain stoneware top and a polyester powder-coated zinc alloy die cast base. The lamp is adjustable with an incline up to 15 degrees. Priced from £705. (christopherwray.com)

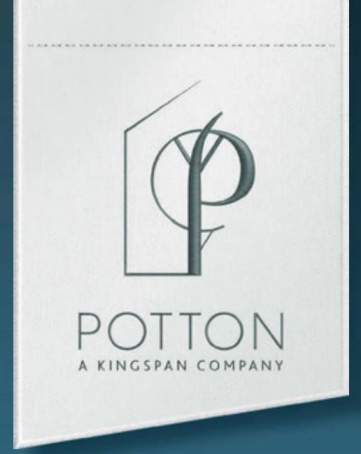


Decorative lighting

These stone globe lights are made from toughened polyethylene. They have a weathered appearance and are available in three sizes and six stone-coloured finishes. Particularly effective along borders and pathways or amongst planters, prices start from £109. (stoneglobelights.co.uk)



PICTURE: MELISSA MORTON GARDEN DESIGN



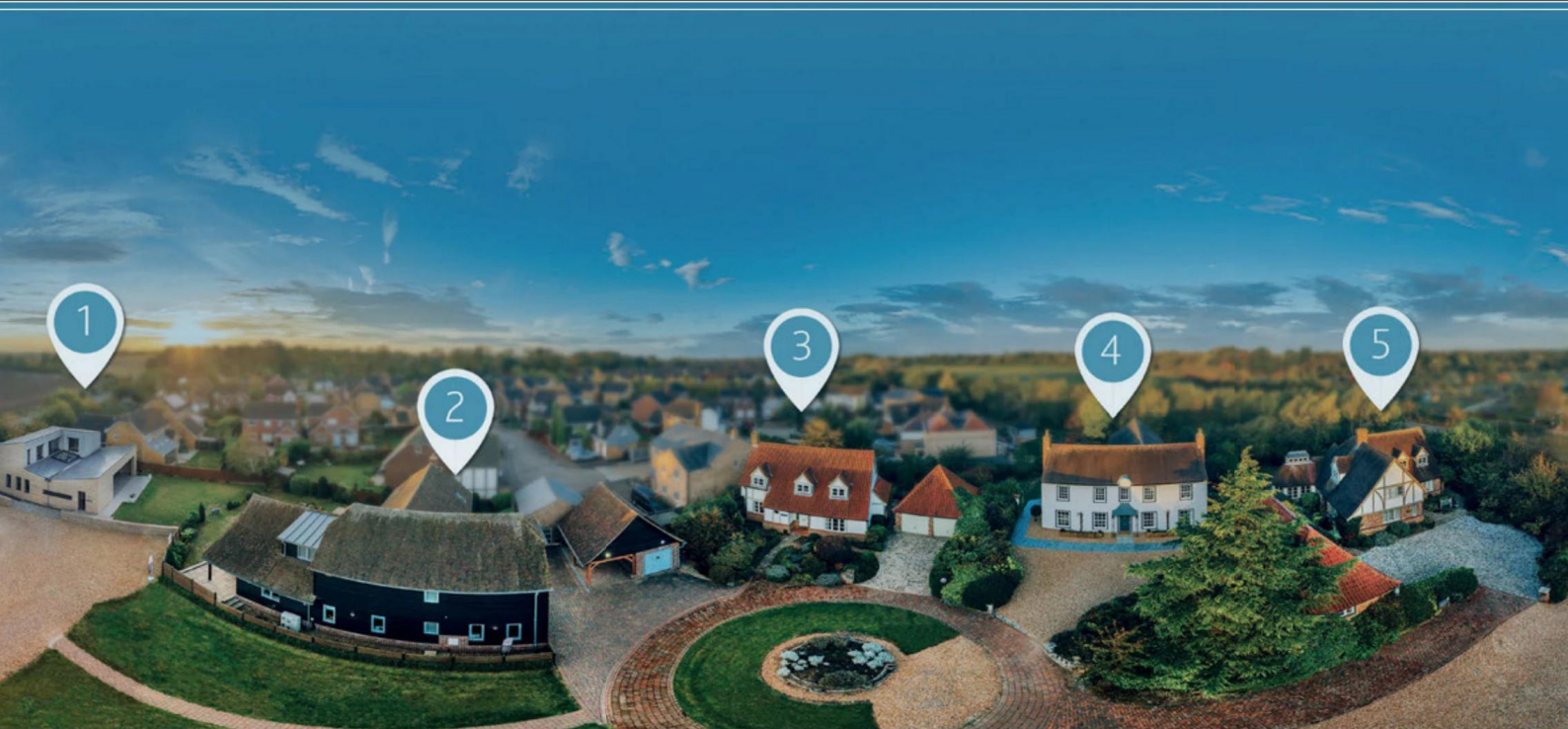
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Design Matters

HOUSE DESIGNED FOR SLOPING SITE

This bespoke new five-bedroom house, designed by AR Design Studio, will replace a bungalow and garage on a steeply sloping site near Brighton.

The suburban site offers long distance views over the city towards the English Channel as well as the local rolling hills of the South Downs.

The proposed dwelling is spread over four clearly defined floors, with each stepping back from the one below to follow the terrain. The ground floor is cut back into the hillside, creating a forecourt and clearly defining the entrance to the house.

The three floors above are staggered and stepped apart from one another in order to reduce the visual mass of the dwelling and provide external space at each level.

One of the main aims of the design was to improve upon the old bungalow's access and street frontage, bringing the entrance to the property down to street level and creating an inviting approach.

The primary living spaces are located on the upper floors to take advantage of the expansive views, with a central staircase providing a direct route from the front door up to this area.

Most of the bedrooms are on the first floor off this central staircase, with each room spilling out into the garden.



The third floor of the house, above the open-plan living space, is dedicated to the master suite.

Each floor opens out onto its own enclosed balcony space, taking advantage of the views and space created by the stepped form. With the site enclosed on three sides, the house is designed to be a single room deep where possible. Glazing faces east and the stepped

form of the house allows spaces to be top-lit at every opportunity.

Brick, chosen for the ground floor, helps to tie the house in with the streetscape, while the dark metal above it adds definition to the form.

Timber cladding is used throughout to make the house sit comfortably into the natural landscape of the hill. (ardesianstudio.co.uk)



HOME WITH MINIMAL IMPACT

Planning permission has been granted for this new family home on a greenfield site in Wiltshire. The detached three-bedroom house is designed to have minimal impact on the landscape, utilising materials appropriate to the area, and a broken-up mass to help it blend in with its surroundings.

The orientation maximises views across a green corridor immediately to the south west of the site. The lower-ground floor has a perforated plinth of masonry and glazed openings with the elevation a careful balance of full-height and half-height openings, solid walls and voids.

The dwelling is split horizontally into two elements: 'plinth' and 'top', with the plinth partially submerged. The top has then been vertically split into three elements: a pair of agricultural pavilions – one at each end – and a sedum-roofed glazed link set back.

Energy efficiency has been maximised by exploiting passive solar design principles.

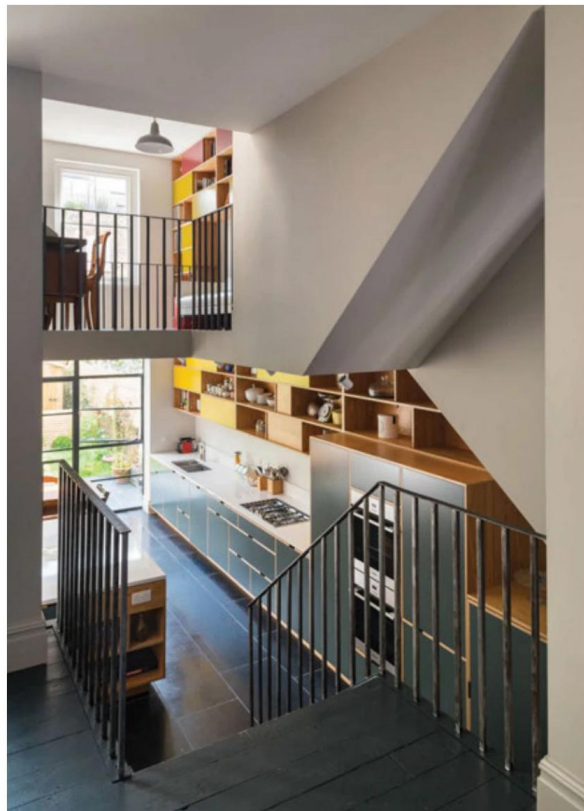
The windows are deep set to take advantage of passive solar shading during the summer months, and have supplementary external shutters to protect from excessive solar gain, and to minimise light pollution.



The building is partially submerged with a single storey under the existing ground level for both design and environmental reasons. This ensures minimum excavation and disruption to the site.

Though traditional and standard building materials

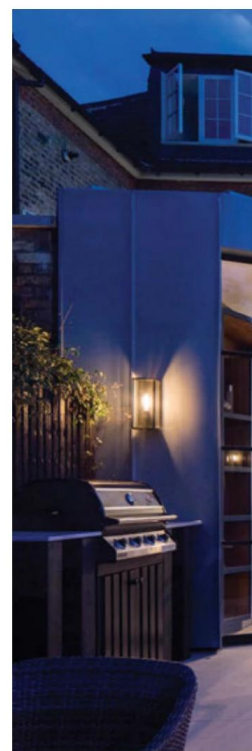
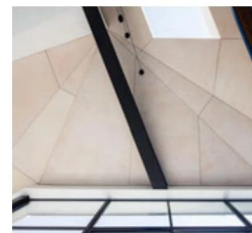
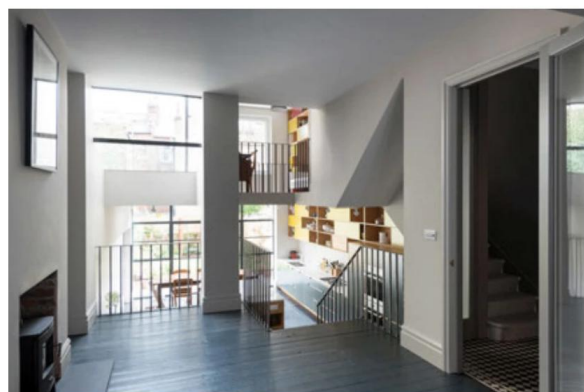
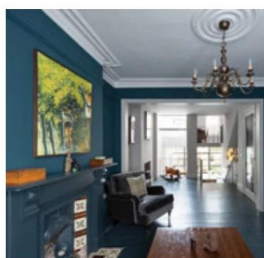
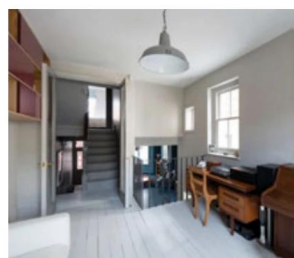
have been specified, guaranteeing a long life expectancy, high levels of thermal insulation and airtightness throughout will reduce energy use, surpassing the requirements of Building Regulations Parts L and K. (mailemdesign.com)



Rearrangement of living spaces

MW Architects saw the potential to connect the three key living spaces of this split-level Victorian terrace, opening it up into a dramatic but functional family space. The side return was filled at the lower level to create a spacious kitchen and dining area that opens onto the garden through a steel-framed screen.

The bespoke plywood kitchen rises up through the void and becomes storage for the study above. A generous staircase takes advantage of the former void in the centre of the house to connect the kitchen below with the study above. These simple moves have transformed three dark and poky rooms into a dramatic, bright, family space. (mwarchitects.co.uk)





CRITTALL-STYLE GLAZING LINKS GARDEN AND HOME

This striking addition to a Victorian family home in Bromley, south-east London, provides a contemporary kitchen and living space alongside a sleek garden room. From the outset, Minifie Architects wanted to overhaul the conventional layout and kitchen/living set-up with something more spacious, useful and beautiful, enhancing the connection between inside and out.

The design explores a contemporary play on the traditional pitched roof, where angled segments of the roof extrude from the existing structure to create a new form. The architects worked closely with the owners and an expert team of contractors to experiment and push their ideas to realise something extraordinary – a living space, with a striking blue bespoke kitchen and an expertly crafted angular roof, clad externally in zinc and internally in plywood. The high ceiling and vast expanse of Crittall glazing links the home with the garden room and garden.

Ben Minifie, director at Minifie Architects, said: “The new extension and garden room are exciting, crafted spaces that have a sense of serenity, connecting the interiors with the outside area. It’s a place where the inhabitants can feel comfortable and settled, a place that’s functional, whilst still providing intrigue at every angle.” (minifiearchitects.co.uk)

PANDEMIC CAUSES SHIFT IN OUR HOUSE PRIORITIES

Architect Dr Tara Hipwood suggests that lifestyle changes caused by the Covid-19 lockdown have prompted a fundamental shift in what we perceive as priority features in our homes.



Our choice of where we live is often prompted by factors such as access to good schools or an easy commute to work. We are likely to invest in more expensive homes in good locations with access to quality facilities and then adapt them to accommodate our lifestyle.

As a researcher in housing and sustainability, my work examines adaptations ranging from extensions and loft conversions, through to the installation of renewable technologies and retrofits. Many homeowners view their homes in desirable areas as a sound financial investment. For this reason, renewable and energy-efficient measures are often not included in adaptation considerations, due to uncertainties about how these will be reflected in the resale value.

But with fewer now commuting and more of us working from home, where we choose to live and how we want our houses to function may change after this prolonged period of lockdown. There have already been suggestions that the countryside may be preferred to city life, with many longing for more space and better access to nature.

It's likely that this period has also highlighted that personal space is hard to find when the family is all hunkered down together. Open-plan living, a popular design concept in recent years, usually functions best on the premise that homeworking parents can occupy this space during the day, before the family comes together to socialise in it in the evening. This 'phased' occupation, where different members of the household are home at different times of day, is very different from the current situation where everyone is at home together. This lack of privacy can be challenging, particularly when trying to make online calls, for example. Self-isolating is also more difficult, especially in regard to quarantining items coming into the home.

Changes in commuting or work habits could also prompt a fundamental shift in what we perceive as priority features in the home. As homeworkers use their heating more often, thermal comfort and energy efficiency become more important. Likewise, many of the environmental considerations, such as indoor air quality, noise pollution, and visual comfort, are paramount. All of which may lead to greater investment in triple-glazing and high-performance windows, and increased insulation and draught-proofing.

Research shows that a comfortable, private space to study away from the communal areas of the home increases children's educational attainment. So parents' preoccupation for wanting to live close to high-performing schools may now be channelled into optimising their homes for study.

A growing interest in exercise and health could also see more people thinking about their internal environment – prioritising natural light and access to nature. In turn, this could lead to reduced reliance on electric lighting and greater demand for gardens that encourage biodiversity. Food shortages at the beginning of lockdown have also prompted a renewed interest in self-sufficiency. This could encourage more of us to use our gardens for growing fruit and vegetables and even consider generating energy from solar panels or other renewables.

As a result of the pandemic demand for new housing could also increase, particularly where the design responds to the new realities of home schooling and working, as well as a healthier, more self-sufficient lifestyle. The experience of lockdown will, no doubt, have a lasting effect on us all. And many will be rethinking the kind of life they want to live post-pandemic, along with the role their homes could play in this.

The author is a lecturer in architecture at Northumbria University.

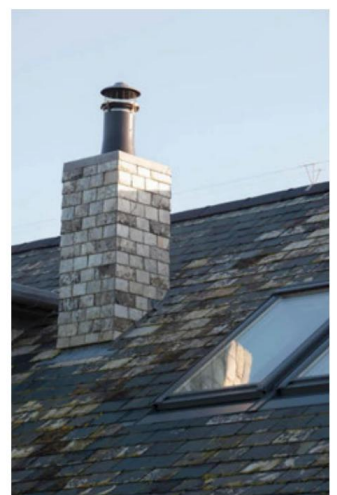


COTTAGE TRANSFORMED

Traditional cottages tend to be simple in shape and are made from local, easily available materials. Very often windows have more or less the same shape, and are either perfectly in line with each other or set randomly in a higgledy-piggledy fashion. The owners of this cottage in Cornwall had a very clear idea of the way they wanted it to be transformed into a modern home, yet protecting and respecting both the building and the setting.

They loved the traditional Cornish slate cottages as well as the local Voysies buildings. So when they consulted Catja de Haas Architects they agreed a few basic rules: the shape needed to be simple, windows had to be in line with each other, and not more than three materials – slate, oak and plaster – could be used for the exteriors.

The converted five-bedroom cottage boasts a new side entrance, underneath a canopy and next to the kitchen with adjoining dining and living area which is a dramatic double-height space. Stairs lead up to a loft space with two small rooms in the dormers and a mezzanine overlooking the living room and to the ocean beyond. The whole property is wheelchair-friendly, with a combination of sliding and other specialist doors. The extra downstairs bathroom is also wheelchair accessible.



PHOTOGRAPHY: SIMON BURT



RURAL LIVING ON CITY OUTSKIRTS

These three townhouses capture the essence of rural living just 15 minutes from Edinburgh's city centre. The concept behind the design was driven by the original three-bay, steel-frame, timber-clad and corrugated metal-roofed agricultural shed on the site.

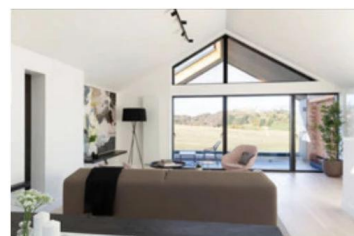
The reimagined, contemporary design for each property includes a fully glazed courtyard that has been cored out of the form to create light wells and external spaces.

With bedrooms on the ground floor, the open-plan living on the first floor extends the entire length of the dwelling with views across open fields towards the historic Liberton Tower. At night the development comes to life as the hit-and-miss timber cladding, which provides privacy during the day, reveals glimpses of activity within.

Externally the British larch gap-board cladding reinforces the feel of a traditional shed. Likewise, recycled stone from the original barn has been used in a retaining wall below the cladding.

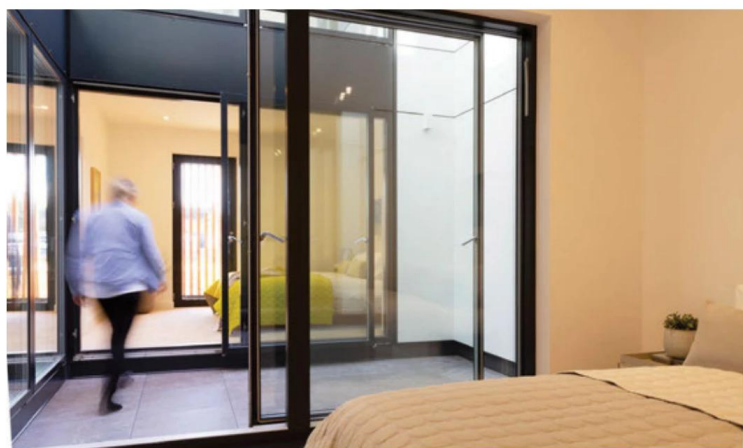
The vaulted ceilings on the first floor continue through to the partially covered terrace, while the white Marley Eternit board on the covered section of the terrace retains the clean lines of the internal sleeve. The large rear partially covered balcony has a glass balustrade so as not to interrupt the views.

The development was constructed using Kingspan's TEK system to achieve good airtightness and insulation and to incorporate a vaulted ceiling in the living area.



The windows and cutaways in the re-built stone wall are clad in dark metal as a contemporary insertion into the rural vernacular.

Internally, white plank oak flooring features on both the ground and first floor. The pale wooden floors help in creating the light and open spaces of the properties. (studiolba.co.uk)





HOLIDAY HIDEAWAY

Inspired by bird hides and designed to connect with nature, this quirky new build is a perfect retreat.

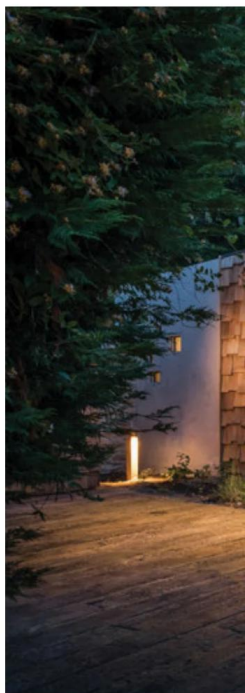
STORY: **DEBBIE JEFFERY** PICTURES: **DAVID CURRAN/ UNIQUE HOMESTAYS**

When Sarah Stanley and Andy Davey bought their listed thatched cottage in a small hamlet near the Cornish seaside town of Perranporth in 2015, they immediately spotted potential in the garden. "An existing carport and store on the site seemed to offer the ideal place to build an annexe," explains Sarah. "It's tucked away, nestled in trees, and the old structures weren't making best use of the space."

As the founder and director of Unique Homestays, a company which lets some of the most extraordinary and luxurious holiday homes in the UK and overseas, Sarah knows a thing or two about property.

She grew up in a Cornish farmhouse and decided to follow in her father's footsteps as a farmer, but then changed course to train as a chef when farming faced an uncertain future. Later, she travelled the world and lived in Australia for 12 years – all experiences which have influenced her love of indoor/outdoor homes that focus on cooking, relaxing and entertaining.

"I find myself drawn to rustic tin sheds and natural materials, which could be attributed to my farm-life childhood and to a positive association with places I stayed when travelling in developing countries," she explains. "Once we'd finished renovating our thatched cottage, I couldn't wait to get started on designing an annexe to replace the old carport."



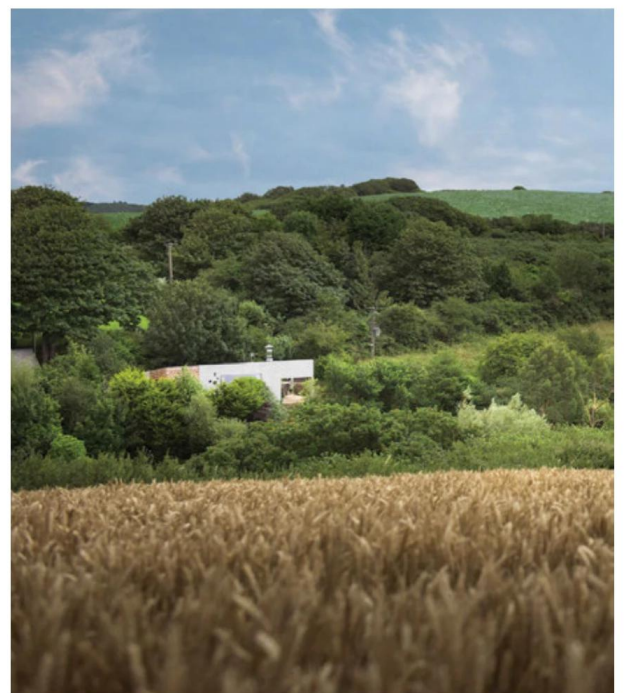
IN BRIEF

PROJECT New build
LOCATION Cornwall
COST Existing garden
SPENT £250,000
VALUE Annexe to main house



EXTERIOR

The annexe replaces a carport and store in the garden of a listed thatched cottage and was designed as a contemporary building, clad in untreated cedar shingles and rough render, with a fibreglass monopitch roof and aluminium windows.





“I loved the idea of peeking out of the angled flap window and being totally ensconced in nature.”

Jess Clark, Unique Homestays' in-house design consultant, was invited to work with Sarah and Andy to create a suitable building for the site. Jess has worked with the company for 14 years, and her passion for creative, quirky architecture and interiors played a vital role in the design process. “Taking shelter in a bird hide during a downpour was my starting point for The Hide,” she recalls. “I was walking with my children at the Argal Lake, near our home in Falmouth, and loved the idea of peeking out of the angled flap window and being totally ensconced in nature.”

Jess was keen to develop a simple design which would encompass the rustic simplicity of the bird hide, and was further inspired by the visitor centre at the Eden Project, which is clad externally in cracked wooden shingles, weathered to a soft silver colour.

WINDOWS

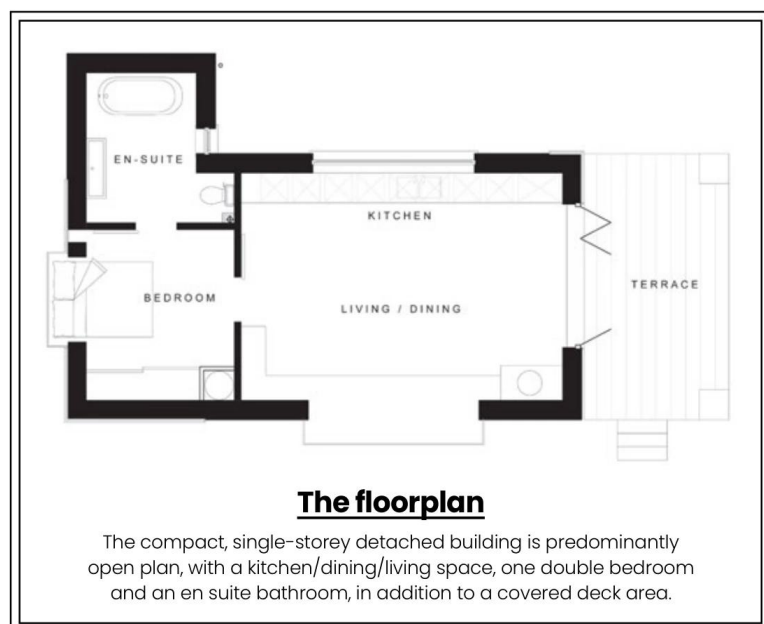
The glazing was one of the more problematic and expensive aspects of the project. The window in the main living area measures four metres across.

“I naturally gravitate towards very rough-and-ready natural materials, but I wanted to try and do something out of my comfort zone and create a building which was also linear and contemporary – softened by the warmth of the wood inside and out,” Jess continues. “I drew up the designs by hand and then a local architecture practice produced workable plans and submitted them for planning permission.”

“Although it’s tucked down in the landscape and fairly hidden from view, we were still amazed that the planning application was passed in just eight weeks, with no objections,” admits Sarah, whose partner Andy was always going to complete the build.

The site was cleared, and concrete strip foundations laid before cavity blockwork walls could be erected. Structural steelwork supports one end of the building, where the open-plan living kitchen leads out onto a covered deck through bifold doors.

The carport on the site had a sloping mono-pitch roof, and this is echoed on the new structure, which has a fibreglass roof covering and walls which are partially clad in shingles. The remainder have



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been finished in a trowelled cement render, and the building's sharp lines and contemporary appeal contrast with the crooked cob walls and deep thatch of the neighbouring Grade II-listed cottage.

In addition to the large sections of glazing and unusual angled windows overhanging the garden, small frameless glazed peepholes punctuate the building's fabric and create a dappled effect, designed to emulate sunlight through leaves in a forest, with nest lights creating a similar impression after dark.

It was the aluminium-framed glazing and bifolds which delayed the project and caused the most issues, including several on-site breakages when the glass was delivered. The sitting room window measures four



IN DETAIL

PROJECT

Architect Studio Arc:
studio-arc.co.uk

Builder Andy Davey,
Davey Construction:
daveyconstruction.co.uk

STRUCTURE

Building materials
Jewson: jewson.co.uk

Insulation Celotex:
celotex.co.uk

Concrete blocks
Denis May & Sons Ltd:
denismay.co.uk

Railway sleepers
Build Supplies:
buildsupplies.co.uk

Roofing Sowden and Sons:
sowdenroofing
cornwall.co.uk

Flue, fire cowl
Hawk Stoves Ltd:
hawkstoves.co.uk

Insulation supply Encon
Insulation: encon.co.uk

Shingles Silva:
silvatimber.co.uk

FIXTURES AND FITTINGS

Air source heat pump Mitsubishi:
les.mitsubishielectric.co.uk

Concrete bath, kitchen handles
Mole Valley Farmers:
molevalleyfarmers.com

Deck Millboard:
millboard.co.uk

Hot tub Cornish Hot Tubs:
cornishhottubs.co.uk

Lights Graham and Green:
grahamandgreen.co.uk

Kitchen, worktops, fireplace, bed, concrete furniture, firepit

Davey Construction:
daveyconstruction.co.uk

metres across and needed to be craned up a relatively small driveway, with the glazing proving to be one of the more expensive elements of the £250,000 build.

"The angled window in the living room creates a huge window-seat area, overlooking the garden and green hills," says Jess, who designed log storage below the seat to supply the corner fireplace. "It's a cosy space to sit and read, although it can get quite warm in summer, sitting right beside the glass. Originally, I'd planned for the little side triangular sections to be openable, but the cost was just too high."

A similar angled window in the private bedroom enables stargazing at night, with the head of the bed pushed right into the glazed section, and concrete finishes to floors, walls and ceilings continuing through the bedroom and en suite.

"I like to keep the essence of the property rustic and simple, then the individuality lies in the dressing and accessories."





“Concrete is one of the main materials, which we’ve used for everything from the garden seating to the fireplace, with the TV hidden behind a secret door on the chimney breast.”

A vast cast concrete bath was originally sold as an animal trough, more often seen on farms, which Jess found at an agricultural store. “It was such an inexpensive thing to buy – just £130 – although it needed work to adapt and took four men to manoeuvre into place, which pushed up the cost,” she says.

“I like to keep the essence of the property rustic and simple, then the individuality lies in the dressing and accessorising, and this bath is probably my favourite purchase to date. It’s massive, and we needed to check that the floor would be sturdy enough to support it and that the air source heat pump could cope with heating the water.”

A sliding door between the bedroom and bathroom was made from reclaimed scaffold boards, as were the wardrobes, and Jess found a reclaimed wooden dough bowl online, which was adapted as an unusual sink in the bathroom.

A quote for finishing internal ceilings and walls in a tadelakt plaster proved prohibitively high, at around £30,000. Instead, a wet cement render was trowelled on and then sealed by the builders to create a textured concrete effect, with a concrete floor laid over underfloor heating throughout the building.

The kitchen was another of Jess Clark’s designs, which was made by the builders from a combination of cast concrete and reclaimed scaffold boards. The £1.50 metal



Sarah's top tip:

“Be bold with your design, but don’t overcomplicate things. I wanted an organic, winding path leading to The Hide, but cutting railway sleepers was so labour intensive that the builders were cursing me!”

ring handles were another find at Mole Valley Farmers, more usually found on a farm for tethering cows, and cast concrete worktops complete the look. Even the extractor housing above the hob was made to suit.

“Designing and making unusual items are so rewarding,” says Jess. “Concrete is one of the main materials, which we’ve used for everything from the garden seating to the fireplace, with the TV hidden behind a secret door on the chimney breast. The bed was also handmade, with a concrete base and timber slats.”

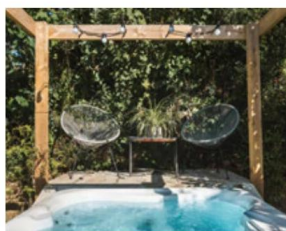
BATHROOM

An open rain shower, concrete bath and monochrome finishes give the bathroom a pared-back, industrial feel.

Despite its striking architectural design, The Hide is subtly immersed in its rural setting, deep within pastoral Poldark country and ensconced in nature at the end of a winding Cornish lane. Its covered deck leads from the kitchen and features a handcrafted concrete barbecue, with a raised deck and hot tub enjoying far-reaching valley views, a verdant lawn and a large corner seating area, complete with fire pit.

“The outside space is definitely as important as the interior, because the setting is what makes it so special. Building something new in the grounds of a listed building was actually far more straightforward than we’d anticipated,” says Sarah.

“Although we used reclaimed materials, bespoke elements like the kitchen do take time, and labour costs can soon elevate. In such a pared-back space, it’s important that every element has a design-led edge, though, and a high level of craftsmanship is vital to the overall aesthetic.”



FINAL WORD

What was the high point of the project?

Creating something which is a fusion of contemporary architecture and rustic design – it works so well on the site.

...and the low point?

The glazing. We had several breakages when the company delivered the doors and windows – it was like a farcical slapstick comedy of disaster!

Your best buy?

Undoubtedly the concrete feed trough, which became the designer bath! It cost less than £150 from Mole Valley Farmers,



although the time spent adapting and installing it bumped up the final price.

Biggest extravagance?

The glazed elements of the house and corner concrete seating.

The Hide is available for holiday rentals through Unique Homestays: uniquehomestays.com



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WILD at heart

INTERVIEW: DEBBIE JEFFERY

Tell us about your childhood home

I grew up in Kent, and lived in the same house in the coastal town of Deal until I was 19. It was a lovely old Conservation Area townhouse, built in the 1700s and some of the windows had been blocked up because of the window tax, with two fake ones painted onto the front wall.

The garden was a fairly standard size, and both my mum and grandma were very into gardening, but I was never particularly interested – the garden was mainly for playing in. I have two sisters, so we'd make assault courses and use a camcorder to film pretend garden makeovers with a sandpit, as if we were on *Ground Force*!

My dad was a drama teacher, and as a keen DIY enthusiast he made some lovely traditional windows, although at other times he tended to invent his own methods. He would get me to lend a hand, which meant I became used to handling tools from a young age. Now, I have no fear of construction and am happy to lay patios and build raised beds in my job.

So what inspired you to become a horticulturalist?

My grandma was German and would take us out into the woods to go foraging for mushrooms, and my mum told us the names of trees on our walks, so I grew up loving nature and being outdoors. Camping and building fires were all part of our childhood, and when I started working in a branch of Marks & Spencer after leaving school it felt quite claustrophobic having no natural light. Then, when I was 20, my mum suggested I apply for an apprenticeship at Salutation Gardens in Sandwich, and I absolutely loved working outdoors for most of the day.

I went to university in my early 20s and studied for a BSc in Horticulture with Plantsmanship, which took my love of plants to a whole new level. The tutors at SRUC and Royal Botanic Garden Edinburgh were inspiring, and I enjoyed learning about coastal gardens, which became a bit of a passion.

How did you break into television?

As students, we were all sent an email from the production company at *Love Your Garden*, which was recruiting another presenter, and several of us went to interview and do screen tests in London. I'm not naturally an extrovert, and at the age of 23 it was terrifying. Getting chosen to work alongside Alan Titchmarsh was slightly surreal, as I'd grown up watching him on *Ground Force*, but he is so down to earth that it felt like I'd always known him.

I was still studying and preparing for exams in Edinburgh when we filmed the second series, which was hard, but my lecturers helped as much as they could, and I spent the long train journeys studying and writing essays.

After finishing my degree, I moved to Devon, where I volunteered at the Dawlish Garden Trust, a nursery



Frances Tophill, 32, is a horticulturalist, TV presenter, and author, who joined BBC Gardeners' World in 2016 and is a presenter of ITV's *Love Your Garden*, alongside Alan Titchmarsh, David Domoney and Katie Rushworth. She is involved with the RHS campaign for school gardening and is passionate about encouraging young people to become interested in horticulture. In addition to volunteering, working on community gardens and giving talks, Frances has written *First-Time Gardener* and *The Container Gardener*. Her third book, *Rewild Your Garden*, is due out in August.

providing opportunities for adults with learning difficulties. After a few months I was offered paid work and stayed there for several years, while continuing with the TV presenting, as well as getting a second job with a social enterprise doing ground maintenance work for people struggling with their mental health.

Do you have any gardening tips?

A blank canvas can be daunting, but it's an amazing opportunity to start from scratch and get the framework of paths and trees exactly how you want them. If you inherit an established garden, though, it can be really hard to see past what's already there to make it your own. It might feel brutal taking out plants, but gardening is a fairly ruthless operation at times. As a gardener you're controlling nature, so it can feel daunting to be faced with a beautiful garden which isn't at all what you want. If you go about it carefully, though, it should be possible to take out plants and even some

trees while they're dormant to sell or give away, so you're not killing things – you're just moving them.

Every garden has its own unique conditions, which will suit different plants. I moved from Kent to Devon, where the sea would literally come into the garden, and I needed to learn about a very different type of coastal gardening.

Finding what will thrive in a particular area is important, and these need to be plants you'll have the time to maintain. Also, choose things which will be interesting for as much of the year as possible, and if space is limited then make sure that every plant has flowers or is edible.

How have you spent lockdown?

I've been writing and editing my latest book, *Rewild Your Garden*, which was a really enjoyable thing to do in lockdown. I was also involved in a new ITV gardening show called *Grow Your Own at Home*, with Alan Titchmarsh, David Domoney and Katie Rushworth, about growing food. I'm fortunate because my partner is a cameraman, so he was able to film me working in the garden.

We only moved into our rented terraced house in Folkstone just before lockdown, and the small concrete yard needed loads of work. Fortunately, I had the time and incentive to give it a massive makeover for the programme, which involved starting from basics and making shelving for pots, as well as planting small fruit trees against the wall. Now we're making more episodes, so I need to come up with some new ideas, which is challenging for such a small space. Perhaps I'll make a washing-up bowl sized wildlife pond!

Gardening has become such an important part of the lockdown experience and gives kids something to do when they're being home schooled, so viewing figures for all these programmes have gone through the roof. Many live talks and shows have been postponed or cancelled this year because of Coronavirus so I'm very fortunate to have other work to focus on.

Any other interests apart from gardening?

I've never been particularly interested in social media, and don't have a website. I spend so much time looking at screens anyway, that I try to avoid it. I have an allotment and love crafting and making things, such as jewellery and pottery, as well as walking my rescue lurcher.

What are your plans for the future?

The TV work is fantastic, and it allows me to travel and meet some amazing people, so I hope that will continue. I absolutely love writing, too, and there's potentially another book in the pipeline, which would be my fourth. I find that talking in front of a crowd can be unnerving, and this lockdown has given me some extended time at home, which I haven't really had for the past 10 years.

I've always said yes to everything, as I didn't want to waste the opportunity, and every year has got busier, with long stays in hotels. I'm hoping to restore a bit of balance and maybe not be sucked back into quite such a hectic schedule. Perhaps I could start my own little nursery or communal garden in the future, too, which would give me a connection to one place and the chance to settle and become part of a community.



JULIE SKELTON PHOTOGRAPHY/BBC GARDENERS' WORLD LIVE



FRANCES TOPHILL

Top: Frances with fellow BBC Gardeners World presenter Monty Don at Gardeners World Live.

Above and right: Frances is currently creating her own small garden at her rented property in Folkstone.

Rewild Your Garden by Frances Tophill is a practical guide to the plants and sustainable techniques that encourage and protect bees, birds and butterflies. It is published in August by Quercus Books, RRP: £15.



FRANCES TOPHILL

Framing the view

Ian and Julie Perrin have built a stunning three-storey oak-framed house on a difficult site in mid-Wales.

STORY: LOUISE PARKIN PHOTOGRAPHY: WELSH OAK FRAME

IN BRIEF

PROJECT

Oak-framed house

LOCATION

Montgomery, Wales

PLOT COST £130,000

FRAME COST £107,000

WORTH £650,000

Overcoming their initial reservations, tricky topography ultimately proved no deterrent for Ian and Julie Perrin when they decided to build their oak-framed home on a sloping site in Montgomery, mid-Wales. Visiting the area while tracing Ian's ancestry, they soon decided, sitting in the square eating ice cream, that this could be the ideal spot for their relocation. "We had already decided to look for somewhere quiet to move to, but never expected it to be Montgomery, where some of my family comes from," says Ian.

The couple spotted a garden plot in the town with planning permission for a mock Edwardian house, and although they found the design unappealing, the size and location of the site was just what they were looking for.

Having never built before, the Perrins were cautious, but were attracted by



the idea of an oak-framed home. They found Welsh Oak Frame at the Homebuilding & Renovating Show at the NEC and, given confidence by the positive approach of the company, they agreed to purchase the plot.

"We liked the look and feel of an oak-frame structure, and the fact that Welsh Oak Frame were nearby and would be able to hold our hands through the project helped us make the decision to go for it," says Ian, a retired landscape gardener.

Amendments were made to the existing planning permission to change the design while keeping the house within the same footprint. "I had a few ideas and sketches of what I thought might work on the site - we wanted something contemporary that would not look out of place in the centre of Montgomery. Welsh Oak Frame interpreted our thoughts and requirements very well and, after a few small alterations came



EXTERIOR

Occupying a sloping site, the oak-framed home is clad in local stone and larch, surrounded by terraces and attractive gardens.





up with a design we were very happy with," says Ian, who used materials from his model railway to make a scale model of the house to help visualise the layout.

The team at Welsh Oak Frame recommended a project manager to assist with the build, whose input was invaluable to Ian and Julie. The groundworks included redirecting the neighbour's sewerage pipe, before a concrete raft foundation was laid. Their neighbour permitted a mini digger to be brought through his garden to create a new access, during which a medieval kiln was discovered, its removal causing a three-week delay.

The frame erection caused a stir in the town as immense oak beams were craned onto the site and erected in just three weeks. Adverse weather before the roof was fitted meant that the timbers got wet, and the floor screed took three months to dry out, factors which delayed progress. The Perrins were also advised that tannins would seep out of the oak and stain the beams as part of the hardening process, and many hours were spent cleaning up the timber. "I was on site every day from 6am, and once the contractors left at 5pm, I would spend my evenings at the top of an internal scaffolding tower, scrubbing the oak beams with a diluted oxalic acid solution and pressure washing them. It was time consuming but very worth the effort, because the frame looks fantastic now," says Ian.

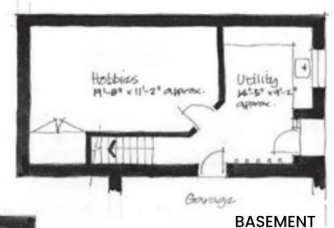


DESIGN AND MATERIALS

Dark grey aluminium window frames tie in with the slate roof tiles. Local materials ensure the appearance of the house fits the vernacular.

Floorplan

An open-plan kitchen/dining/sitting area forms the main part of the raised ground floor, with a separate vaulted lounge. There is also a study/guest room with adjacent shower room. The basement level has a utility room, storage cabinets and a model railway room, while upstairs there are three bedrooms, including the master with its generous walk-in wardrobe and en suite, plus a family bathroom.





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Ian & Julie's top tips

"Do lots of research and plan carefully. Also try to be on site as much as possible to ensure day-to-day decisions are made as you want them. And be aware that vaulted ceilings mean no loft space. Include lots of storage in the design, because you can never have too much."

KITCHEN/ DINING ROOM

Dark and light grey cabinets and pale worktops contrast harmoniously with the rich tones of the oak frame. A secret walk-in pantry is accessed through the central pair of pale grey doors.



IN DETAIL

STRUCTURE

Oak frame Welsh Oak Frame:
welshoakframe.com

Builders' merchants Boys & Boden
Ltd: 01938 556677, TG Builders
Merchants: tgggroup.co.uk
Huws Gray: huwsgray.co.uk

Groundworks Malcolm Coates
& Partners: 01686 430636

Structural engineer Bob
Johnson Engineers: bjse.co.uk

Stone mason E. Betton:
07989 356681

Plumber Lee Harding:
07850 303884

Electrician Edward Jones:
01686 413026

Roofer KJ Hughes Roofing
Contractors: 01686 805478

Stone cladding JA Griffiths
Ltd, Gladestry Quarry:
01982 570417

Ridge Roof light

Architectural Products
architecturalproducts.co.uk

Roof lights Fakro GB Ltd: fakro.co.uk

Airtightness tape and membrane
PYC Systems: 01938 500797

Oak flooring, skirting, architraves
SJ Timber: 01686 688849

Rainwater goods Rainclear
Systems: rainclear.co.uk

Roofing slate Heritage Clay
Tiles Ltd: 01708 853953

Site cabin hire Hire This: hirethis.com

MVHR Systemair: systemair.co.uk

Underfloor heating and air source heat pump

Nu-Heat UK: nu-heat.co.uk

Underfloor heating screed
EasyFlow: easyflow.org.uk

Rainwater harvesting system

Rainwater Harvesting:
rainwaterharvesting.co.uk

Garage doors Garador: garador.co.uk

Steel balustrade and balconies

JPG Site Services:
jpgsiteservices.com

FIXTURES AND FITTINGS

Sanitaryware Farr & Harris Ltd:
01686 626261; Monkmoor

Bathrooms Ltd: 01743 242242;
Boys & Boden Ltd: 01938 556677;

Bath Waters of Ashbourne:
watersbaths.co.uk

Shower unit Matki: matki.co.uk

Bathroom units

Deuco:
deuco.co.uk

Tiles Craven Dunnill & Co

cravendunnill.co.uk

Slate cills and fire hearth

Roofing Salvage Depot:
roofingandsalvagedepot.co.uk

Stairs

Stairplan:
stairplan.com

Kitchens

Abbey Kitchens:
abbey-kitchens.com

Bespoke internal oak doors

Phillip Andrew: 01938 850559

Log-burner

Clearview Stoves:
clearviewstoves.com



LOUNGE

A separate lounge has vaulted ceilings and an inglenook fireplace.

DINING/ SITTING AREA

The sitting area has full-height glazing, and there is a light well above the dining room.



Clad mainly in stone from a local quarry with some larch weatherboarding, internally the house has generous open spaces with soaring vaulted ceilings on both main levels. Dug into the slope of the hillside, steel beams support a basement level that includes a room dedicated to Ian's model railway, a utility room containing white goods and an integral double garage. The basement supports the oak frame, which is covered externally with Surecav on the stone-clad elements, and with OSB board and membrane under the timber cladding.

The highly insulated home has been made as airtight as possible, with an air source heat pump supplying underfloor heating beneath the oak and tile flooring, and an MVHR system maintaining a constant indoor temperature. "There are lots of things that we would have done differently if we had more experience, such as the ducting for the MVHR. It was tricky to install this around the frame, and ideally we should have planned it from the outset. You can't just make a hole in the oak beams and posts," says Ian.

The width of the roof light frames also posed problems, with the roofers unable to nail on the slates between them. "The roofers suggested hanging the slates from clips, but the site is quite windy. Instead, we contacted the manufacturer and we were able to change them. It meant they were not as thermally efficient, but the roof slates are at least secure," says Ian.

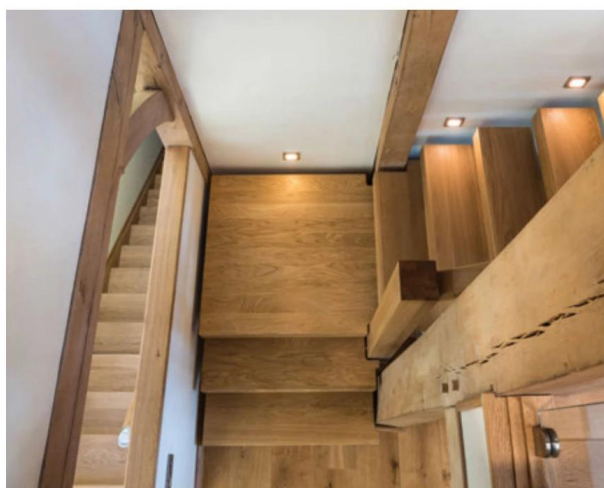
Designed to accommodate visits from their two sons and grandchildren, the kitchen, dining room and informal sitting areas form one large space, with a separate lounge. Double-height spaces celebrate the exposed oak frame, and a fixed apex skylight above the dining room enhances the sense of scale. This provides plenty of





STAIRS AND LANDING

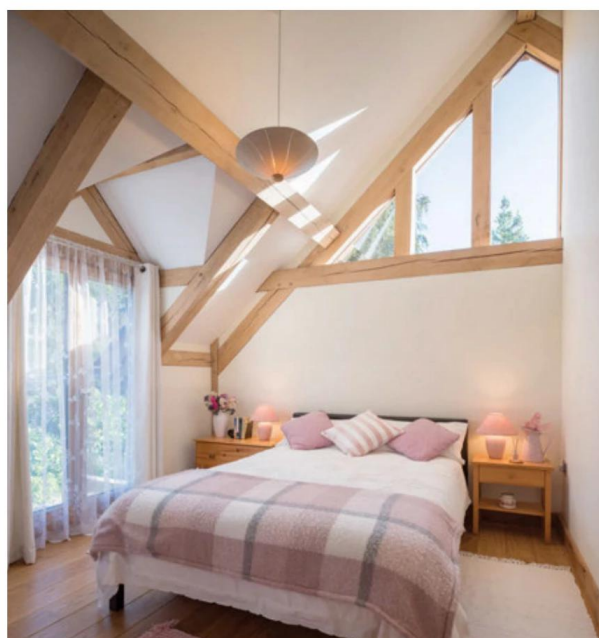
A chunky contemporary oak and glass staircase ascends to a dramatic vaulted galleried landing.



room for the three generations to spend time together, and the generous kitchen with a large central island unit makes catering for larger numbers manageable. "Ian's must-have was his model railway room, and mine was a secret walk-in pantry and a large central island in the kitchen," explains Julie, who is a retired civil servant.

A chunky oak and glass staircase was built by a local joinery firm, leading to the first floor where there are three bedrooms. There is also a study which doubles as an occasional bedroom on the ground floor with adjacent shower room to provide one-level living should Ian and Julie require that in the future.

Capturing the far-reaching countryside views was an essential element of the design, which frames them from every window. The glazed gable in the master bedroom features large double doors, taking in arguably the most stunning view of all. This room also has a



BEDROOMS

Loft space was sacrificed to enable vaulted ceilings in every bedroom, where there is also oak flooring.



MASTER BEDROOM

A glazed gable offers stunning views. There is also a walk-in wardrobe and a generous en suite bathroom.

GARDENS

Designed and laid by Ian, the landscaping and planting took two years to complete.

walk-in dressing room and an en suite bathroom.

Ian and Julie's house in Reading sold quickly, and they bought a house nearby to live in while the build was progressing. When they moved into the almost completed home, they sold the temporary home, using the proceeds to pay for the completion of interiors and landscaping, which Ian carried out himself. Lots of retaining walls were built – some of rendered blockwork, some using leftover stone, with the smaller, awkwardly shaped pieces used to fill steel gabions that border terraces. "The landscaping was extensive and took a further two years to complete after the house was finished, but it was worth the effort. There are various seating areas for different times of the day, and even though it's not an enormous plot, we have gardens on all four sides of the house, so we are very happy and very lucky," says Julie.



FINAL WORD

What was the high point of the project?

Seeing the oak frame go up. After an anxious period getting the basement built in time to accept the frame, it was a great joy to watch huge chunks of oak being craned up into a blue sky above Montgomery.

And the low point?

Several! But mainly not being able to get the roof on before winter set in (the wettest winter for some years) and seeing everything getting soaked – with the inevitable delay for some of the internal jobs.

What was your greatest extravagance?

I suppose the main stairs.

I don't think we went over the top in our level of specification overall but the stairs and open landing were a central feature of the house and, therefore, deserved to be a wow factor.

And your best buy?

We were able to get a second-hand Ikea kitchen for the utility room...it only cost about £100.

Is there anything you would do differently?

We should have spent more



time up front researching the environmental elements. For example, the hot water boiler and heating apparatus had to be housed in the garage, but could have been sited inside the house if considered early on.

What did you most enjoy about the project?

When it was all over and we could sit back and enjoy it! Relief in the knowledge that, after all the long hours, hard labour, and the sleepless nights worrying that maybe we'd taken on more than we could handle, it was now finally behind us. We'd managed to build a modern house of character (many people have commented on how well it fits into the landscape) with a layout that suits us perfectly at this time in our lives and in a place that we love.





BLACK OUT

Amie Oyston's converted mechanic's workshop may be black outside, but a glazed internal courtyard ensures the interior is flooded with light.

STORY: **DEBBIE JEFFERY** PICTURES: **THE MODERN HOUSE**

Built within the shell of an old garage, an unusual new east London home has been created with split levels across three storeys, centring around a private courtyard lined with glass. "I first got the building bug when I completely gutted and extended our Victorian terraced house," explains Amie Oyston. "I enjoyed it so much and got on really well with the building company, so we decided to team up again for this project, too."

Amie lives with her family in Hackney, east London. "I previously worked in recruitment and then set up my own massage company, but once the boys started school it gave me time to get my teeth into another building project," she recalls.

Amie had a strong relationship with builders Future Structural Solutions, which had also worked on her father's house. "It was our builders who first told us about this garage, which was next to the brickyard they use," she says. "We thought about the idea for a while and felt it would be a fantastic challenge to make the old workshop into a really cool home."

EXTERIOR

The three-bedroom house, designed by architect Stuart Hatcher, occupies a plot in east London and has been built inside the shell of a former garage workshop.



When Amie realised that the garage was about to be sold off she and her father stepped in and purchased the brick building. "Dad worked in engineering and has done a lot of builds before, including our family home, but this time he ended up financing this project and left the overall management to me," she says. "We set up a little company with the builders, called Williams Hall Developments, and worked with an architect to design a house for the site."

Built in 1924 as part of a steelworks on Bow Common Lane, a short walk from Mile End Park in east London, the single-storey workshop had a pitched roof and was open plan inside – lit from above by roof glazing. The industrial space had been used to repair cars and was crammed onto a small site between Victorian terraces. "It's a tiny Conservation Area plot, right next to a listed building, and had no planning permission at all when we bought it," says Amie, who received positive pre-planning feedback from the local authority.

"We wanted to build up another storey, but the council insisted we could only work within the existing garage. Fortunately our architect, Stuart Hatcher,



IN BRIEF

PROJECT Conversion

LOCATION London

COST £400,000

SPENT £500,000

WORTH £1,495,000

The property is currently
on the market with
The Modern House:
themodernhouse.co.uk

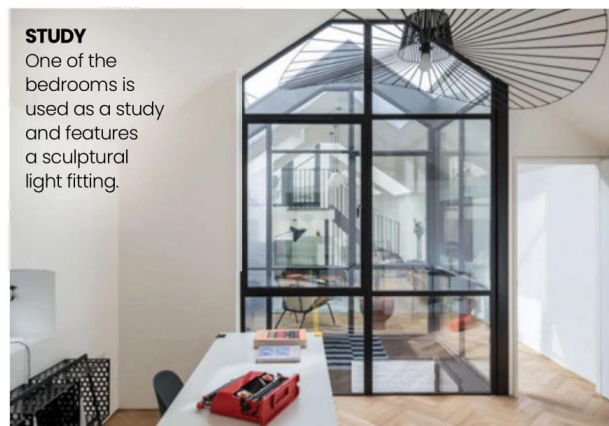


came up with a brilliant scheme incorporating a new basement, which was granted planning permission."

Stuart's 145-sqm design exploits the dimensions of the existing workshop to create a striking set of contemporary living spaces, configured across three storeys, including a secluded roof terrace and a private courtyard lined with steel windows.

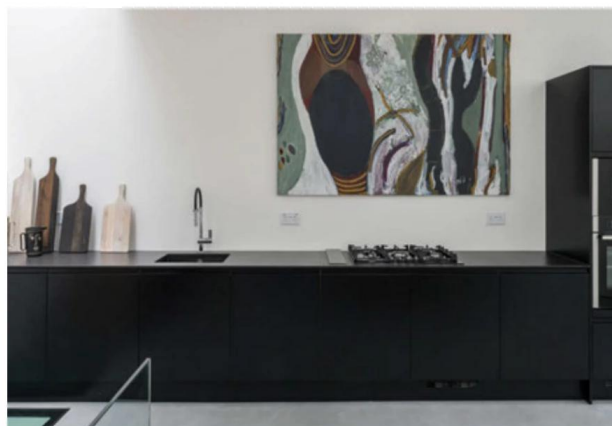
The compact house is slightly set back on the peaceful residential street, its facade characterised by black-painted brickwork, with newly installed industrial-style wooden doors and sections of frosted glazing to draw light into the front of the plan.

"We weren't allowed any external opening windows, so the central light well brings ventilation and light into the building, all the way down to the new lower ground floor," Amie explains. "I'd struggled to imagine how the design could work, even until the staircases were going in, but Stuart knew exactly how all the spaces would connect."



STUDY

One of the bedrooms is used as a study and features a sculptural light fitting.



KITCHEN

Underfloor heating was laid beneath a polished concrete floor in the kitchen, where a small glass floor panel drops light into the space below. A pocket sliding door leads into the bike store.



"We weren't allowed any external opening windows so the central light well brings ventilation and light into the building, all the way down to the new lower ground floor."

Designing a full basement level with a large family bathroom, a plant room for the underfloor heating controls, and a utility room with storage, circumnavigated the problem of retaining the existing single-storey garage.

"It was part of the planning permission that we keep the same building, so we dug a new sub-basement and a full basement level, which involved excavating around 600 tonnes of earth beneath the garage and building concrete retaining walls, with a slurry and membrane tanking system," explains Dave Murphy, director of Future Structural Solutions.

"In addition to underpinning the garage we also had to underpin the houses to either side, and there's a 50mm gap between them, which means that the new house is technically detached."

Previously, there was no external drainage, as the roof drained inside the building, so a new system needed to be devised. A septic tank has been installed to serve toilets below drain level, pumped through an existing pipe at the rear of the building. Solid brick walls were repaired and finished externally with black masonry paint, which helps to give the house its dramatic appearance. "We couldn't change the materials externally, because of the Conservation Area setting," says Amie.

The original 1920s corrugated metal roof covering was stripped and a new timber roof structure built to the same pitch. This has been clad in natural slate, with zinc trims and gutters. "Despite all the challenges it was quite good fun, although working in the snow wasn't ideal," says Dave.

Rigid insulation was used for the roof, walls and floors to meet Building Regulations, and Crittall-style steel glazing was installed, together with a large roof lantern and remote-controlled Velux roof lights. An iroko grid frame, made for the front facade, is inset with four doors



LIVING SPACE

A glazed courtyard and light well ensure the heart of the building is flooded with light. The living room is stepped up from the kitchen, and has an oak floor. The roof windows are fitted with rain sensors and blinds.



IN DETAIL

PROJECT

Builder Future Structural Solutions Ltd:
futurestructural.com

Architect Stuart Hatcher:
stuarthatcher.com

Structural engineer Anderson Consulting
Engineers: andersoneng.co.uk

STRUCTURE

Solar roof lights Velux: velux.co.uk

Steel ESS Steel: ess-steel.co.uk

Steel light well windows West Leigh:
west-leigh.co.uk

Timber windows Caledonian Joinery:
caledonianjoinery.co.uk

Bespoke roof lantern Bi-Fold Door Factory:
bifolddoorfactory.co.uk

Insulation Kingspan: kingspan.com

FIXTURES AND FITTINGS

Concrete finishes Polished Concrete
Specialists: polishedconcretespecialists.co.uk

Dekton worktops Cosentino: cosentino.com

Furniture Mad Atelier: mad-atelier.com

Sanitaryware Hansgrohe: hansgrohe.co.uk

Parquet flooring The Wooden Floor Store:
thewoodenfloorstore.com

Spray paint for kitchen doors Paintworks
UK Ltd: paintworks.uk.com

Mist sprinkler system

Plumis Mist System: plumis.co.uk

Cast iron radiators Cast Iron Radiator
Centre: castironradiatorcentre.co.uk

Double sink Lusso Stone: lussostone.com

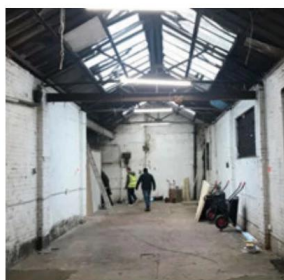


BEFORE

The 1920s single-storey brick garage was used as a car repair workshop. To retain the original building, a new sub-basement and full basement level were excavated, removing around 600 tonnes of earth beneath the garage.

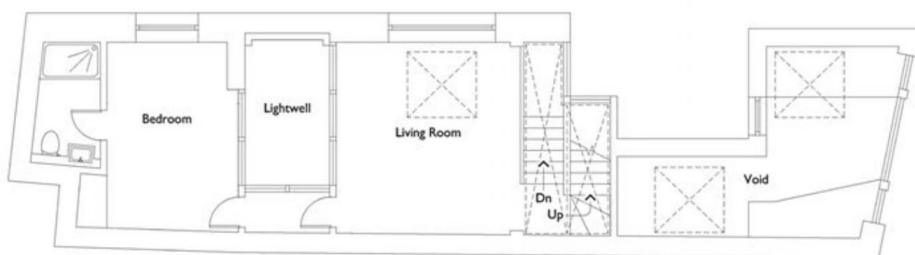
The floorplan

The split levels make the most of the space, with a bathroom, plant room and utility in the basement. There's an open-plan kitchen/diner on the ground floor, plus a guest WC and internal bike store. Steps lead up to a guest bedroom, the master bedroom, and en suite, beside a courtyard light well. On the first floor is a living room, a third bedroom and en suite, with stairs to a roof terrace.

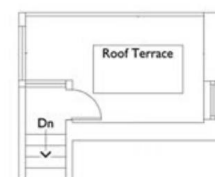


below frosted glass panels. One of the doors also has frosted glass, while the other three are oak, opening into bin and bike stores to either side of the main entrance. "We tried to keep everything low profile, so there are secret hinges on the side doors," explains Dave.

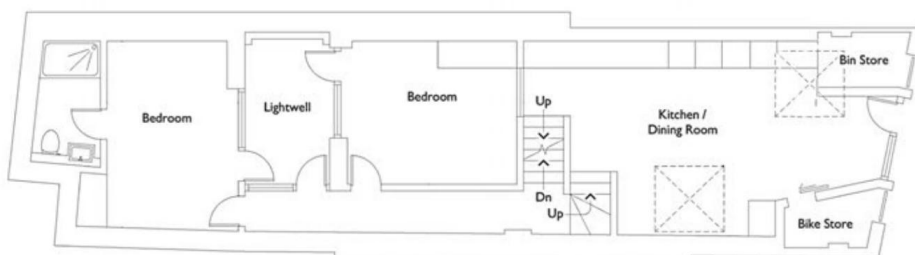
Upon entry, the ambitious nature of the design is immediately apparent. Split levels seem to rise at staggered junctures, beneath large sections of glazing and open-tread staircases, creating a dramatic sense of scale and volume, while promoting the flow of natural light throughout.



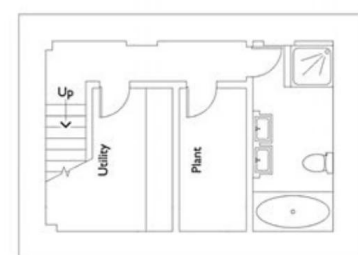
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BEDROOMS/ BATHROOMS

Bedrooms are positioned to look into the light well, creating an open, airy feel. Micro-concrete was used for floors, walls and even the exterior of the bath in the spacious basement family bathroom, which was excavated to the front of the house.



"It's a bit of a Tardis," says Amie. "The outside seems small and quite enclosed, but when you walk indoors it opens right up. There are no overlooking windows, so it's a completely private space and so bright."

A judicious material palette includes polished concrete floors, engineered oak parquet, black steel, exposed brick and extensive sections of glazing. "There are four flights of stairs, with welded steel bars running continuously up through the building, and softwood treads clad in oak," says Dave.

The ground floor contains a double-height kitchen/diner, positioned beneath two large skylights inset in the vaulted ceiling. A glass panel in the kitchen floor creates a talking point and ensures even more light can pass between levels. A short staircase leads down to the large light well, forming a courtyard with glazed doors on three sides, and the master bedroom with en suite is positioned on one side, with a guest bedroom to the other.

On the first floor, a living room overlooks the kitchen at one end, with views down into the light well at the other. This brightly lit space forms the

ROOF TERRACE

Stairs lead up to a small external roof terrace, with built-in seating and obscure glass privacy panels.



"Our main aim was to show that a tight site can still give scope for a really exciting design."

heart of the house and leads on to a third bedroom (currently configured as a study) and an en suite shower room. Stairs rise to a private roof terrace with views over the rooftops towards Mile End Park.

"The build itself ran really smoothly," says Dave. "The hardest part was probably the finishes – things like the painting and creating shadow gaps instead of skirting, because we wanted to get a really high-quality result."

Amie was responsible for choosing fixtures such as the kitchen and bathrooms, ensuring items were ordered in time without needing to be stored for too long on the site, where space was at a premium. "I wanted a matt black kitchen, to complement the steel staircases and glazing," she says. "Dave installed the cabinets, and we had the hardwood doors sprayed, fitted Dekton worktops, and installed black appliances."

Wet rooms are finished in a grey micro-topping, installed by Polished Concrete Specialists, which applied the finish to floors and walls for a dramatic, industrial look. "We had enough space at the front to dig out a really large family bathroom so we installed an enormous boat-like bath, with a walk-in shower and double sink," says Amie, who completed the project in April 2020. "Our main aim was to show that a tight site can still give scope for a really exciting design."

FINAL WORD

Describe the high point.

Watching the steel being craned in and windows installed was exciting, as everything came together.

...and the low points?

We weren't rushing for a deadline, so it wasn't particularly stressful, but the builders dug out the basement in winter, which wasn't ideal.

Your best buy?

We were quoted £50,000 for the stairs, but our carpenter worked with a steel fabricator and made it for a third of the price.



Biggest extravagance?

Installing steel windows instead of timber and choosing shadow gaps instead of skirtings meant we did go over our original budget, but we felt the house deserved high-end finishes.

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SPOTLIGHT

Light & shade

The combination of increasingly hot summers and the trend for large swathes of glazing in modern homes leave them prone to overheating. This risk should be addressed at the design stage, with the positioning of windows and the glass specification, but there are other solutions too. Here are a few outside ideas...

These windows have been fitted with 50/30 Western Red Cedar shutters, which can be installed vertically or horizontally as desired. Price on application. (contrasol.com)



Left: The IQ Louvre roof uses automated louvres to control the light, energy, wind and rain entering your garden and living space, turning up to 140 degrees for optimum shading. The roof modules have a maximum coverage of 6m x 4.5m, however multiple roof fields can be connected together to cover larger spaces. Price on application. (iqoutdoorliving.co.uk)



Right: The Renson Algarve louvred canopy is a patio cover which offers sun protection and a waterproof roof system, complete with aluminium blades on the roof that rotate up to 150 degrees, enabling the user to decide how much sun screening or ventilation they require. The canopy can be free-standing, mounted to an outside wall or built into an existing opening as an Algarve roof only. Sizes from 2m x 2.6m are available, priced from £9,200. (gardenhouse design.co.uk)

Below: The Cassette awning has a compact, rectangular construction, fitting seamlessly into architectural designs with flat or mono-pitched roofs. It provides dirt and weather protection to the awning fabric, features fully integrated WMS Comfort control and comes in a wide selection of frame colours and designs. Price on application. (design shanghai.com)



Left: The Sierra patio cover features rust-resistant powder-coated aluminium profiles, in both white and grey and a 6mm twin-wall polycarbonate panelled roof which is UV protected for a long-lasting quality finish that will require very little maintenance. It can be used for a multitude of functions like a balcony cover, a garden cookout protection or a dinner table canopy. The cover can be purchased in multiples to create a longer patio cover depending on your size requirements. Available in seven sizes from £564.. (gardenchic.co.uk)



Right: The Galaxy gazebo has a toughened aluminium shuttered roof, allowing in the sun and air as required. Optional slightly transparent Textilene side screens can be pulled down as desired. The structure measures 3m x 3.6m and costs £1,999.99. (gardenfurniturecentre.co.uk)

Below: The four seasons screen house features square window patterning with a tinted outer synthetic overlay and an inner synthetic gauze. The side and roof panels are also tinted, offering both a cool shaded area when the sun is out, and a warm space during cooler months. The unit measures 276cm x 362cm and can be fixed to hard or soft surfaces as a permanent entertaining solution. Price: £1,499.99. (gardenfurniturecentre.co.uk)



Left: Solar control window films from Purlfrost come in a choice of designs, including tinted, reflective, heat rejection and UV control, which blocks 99.5 per cent of harmful rays from the home. The self-adhesive material is applied directly to the internal or external surface of existing glass using soapy water and a squeegee. Price on application. (purlfrost.com)



Available freestanding or with a wall connection, the Laxama is made from high-grade powder-coated aluminium in a choice of weather-proof colour coatings. The slats can optimally position themselves depending on the weather, temperature or sun rays, regulated by WMS control alongside light, heating and time. An optional ZIP awning will protect further against sun and wind. Price on application. (designshanghai.com)



Left: The Eos picnic house combines a table and roof structure to provide shade from the sun, available in black or white. Measuring 235cm x 275cm x 150cm, it is made from powder-coated aluminium with a waterproof Sunbrella fabric covered roof, which is highly UV resistant and easy to clean. Price: £2,900. (centralliving.co.uk)

Right: The Renson Camargue is an aluminium pergola or terrace covering equipped with an automatic watertight bladed roof system. Side screens, glass sliding doors, automatic windproof sun protection side screens or wooden Loggia sliding panels can then be added to make the canopy completely enclosed. Guide price: £12,000. (gardenhouse design.co.uk)



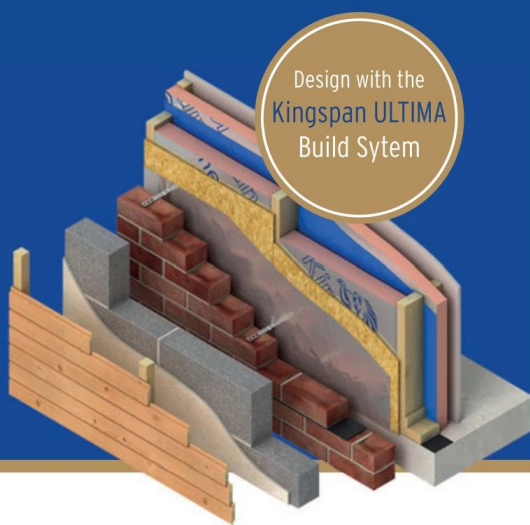


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IN BRIEF**PROJECT** Loft conversion and extensions**LOCATION**

South-east London

COST £675,000 (2016)**SPENT** £300,000**WORTH** £1.15m+

Opening up

Bobby and Michael Harris have extended their Victorian terraced home upwards and outwards, using large panels of glass for maximum impact.

STORY: **DEBBIE JEFFERY** PICTURES: **SALT PRODUCTIONS/STUDIO 30 ARCHITECTS/BELLA ALLADIO**

So muddled and fragmented was the layout to Bobby and Michael Harris's Victorian terraced house that they knew they needed to rationalise the space to create a practical home for themselves and their children: Reuben, Max, and Naomi.

"We'd lived here since 2010 and the rooms were fairly small, with poor circulation," recalls Bobby, a tech consultant. "Coming in through our front door was like going through the wardrobe into Narnia – there were so many coats crammed into the narrow hallway."

A windowless two-storey coach house, attached to one side of the house, was used as a glorified

EXTERIOR

The terraced house has been transformed with a sizeable side extension and a full-width loft conversion, uniting a dingy coach house into the adjoining property.



store. "We didn't want to lose too much garden, and felt the coach house could be better integrated," continues Bobby. "I knew exactly what I wanted to do to resolve the problems, but the first architect we used completely ignored my requests."

Feeling disillusioned, the family then approached Henri Bredenkamp of Studio 30 Architects, who listened carefully to their ideas. After years spent washing up facing a miserable north-facing wall, Bobby and Michael wanted to relocate the kitchen sink to the back wall and introduce a work surface facing the garden, with half-height folding doors offering a view. They were also keen to move the entrance and create a new hallway.



“We didn’t want to lose too much garden, and felt the coach house could be better integrated... I knew exactly what I wanted to do.”

“The house obviously used to be two properties and the layout was bizarre,” explains Henri. “There were effectively two entrances, with a spiral staircase in the coach house. To reach the bathroom, you had to go down one flight of stairs, through the living space and then up another set of stairs, which was quite convoluted.”

Working with the family, Henri produced 3D computer models to illustrate his concepts. The brief was to transform the property into a practical family home with a kitchen/dining side infill extension, connected to the former coach house, and a full-width master bedroom suite loft conversion. Overall, 70 sqm of space has been added.

A new entrance doorway into the coach house would also be created, opening into a spacious hallway, and the old door would be blocked up to make space for a practical ground-floor WC in the original hallway. “We needed to make quite a few changes on a fairly tight budget,” Henri explains. “Reinstating the coach house doorway as the

KITCHEN

From the new entrance, views through the house reveal the new airy open kitchen/diner and garden beyond. The glazed side-infill extension connects to a former coach house, which was integrated into the open-plan living space.







BEFORE

The old layout didn't really work for the family, and the coach house next door was used largely for storage.

main entrance and blocking up the previous front door to make an external store for the wood-burner logs made sense of the previously confused street elevation, where replacement sash windows were also installed and a new window added above the front door."

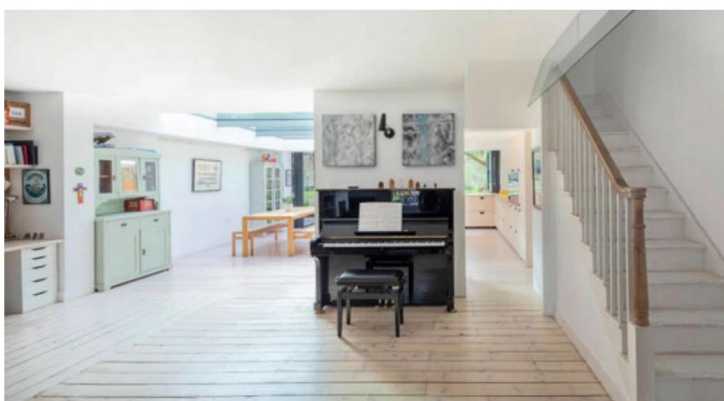
These layout alterations and the removal of internal walls enable a clear view from the entrance through the newly formed kitchen/dining space to the garden beyond. Removing the wall between the main dwelling and the attached coach house allowed the two structures to be amalgamated, creating enough space for a home office area and the family's much-used piano.

Towards the rear, large windows and roof lights flood the heart of the house with natural light, with bifold doors and a wide slot window in the kitchen further extending internal spaces into the garden. The extensive use of glass is continued on the two upper floors, with large picture windows bathing bedrooms in light and framing views to the garden. Frosted glass in the first-floor en suite allows daylight to penetrate further, with every bathroom naturally lit.

A new staircase replicating the existing stairs leads to the luxurious master bedroom within a full-width, zinc-clad dormer, and roof lights allow maximum headroom in the converted loft space. Floor-to-ceiling windows make the room feel taller and offer an attractive outlook from the bed.

"Not only do we now have glass doors out onto the garden, and a huge roof light above the new kitchen, but large picture windows make bedrooms beautifully light and frame the views," says Bobby. "We were nervous, as we assumed that so much glazing would be expensive and we were on a budget, but it proved more affordable than we'd thought."

While being mostly finished in a modern style, existing features were retained where practical. Original floorboards have been re-oiled and placed over new underfloor heating - efficiently



Before



FIRST FLOOR



GROUND FLOOR

After



LOFT



FIRST FLOOR



GROUND FLOOR

The floorplan

The ground floor is now predominantly open plan, with a kitchen/dining space and family room, plus a new WC. On the first floor there are three bedrooms, a bathroom and en suite, with a master suite in the loft extension.



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“We were nervous, because we assumed that so much glazing would be expensive and we were on a budget, but it proved more affordable than we thought.”

adapting the house to modern standards.

The different directions of the floorboards on the ground floor also serve as a quirky reminder of the previous layout, where the coach house has been amalgamated into the design, and the existing staircase was also retained.

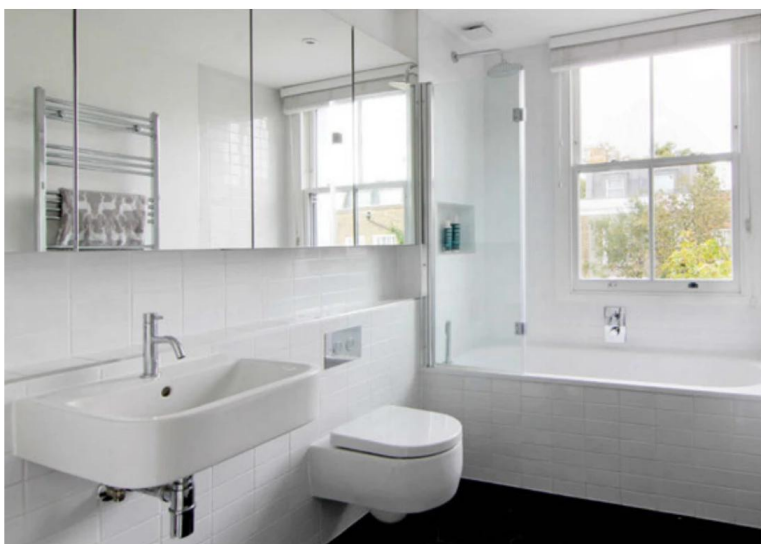
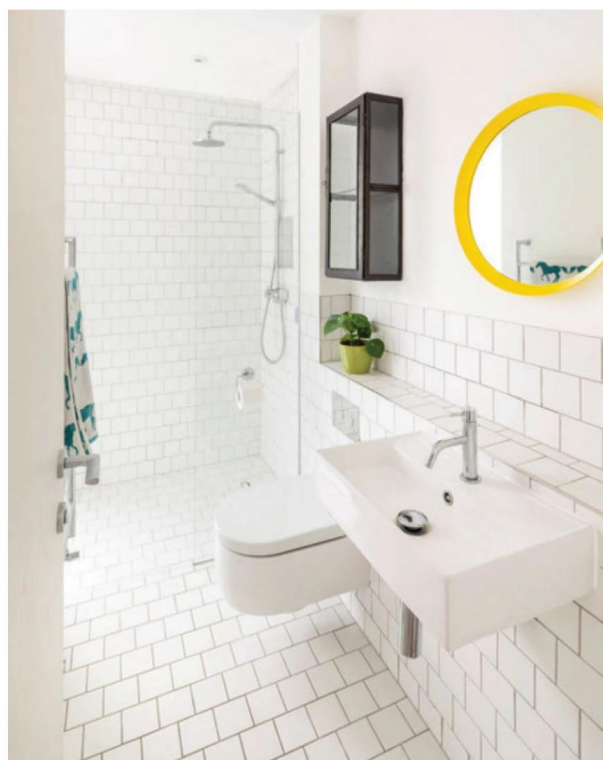
“We were based abroad during the build and only met the team three times, so clear communication and trust were vital,” explains Bobby, who liaised closely with both the architect and builder. Henri Bredenkamp oversaw the project and constantly updated the family with pictures and emails.

“We reclaimed materials wherever possible and the cost of installing underfloor heating was balanced by re-using the existing floorboards, which have been oiled. When walls were demolished, the bricks reappeared as pavers in our new patio,” says Bobby.

The design team’s extensive experience of this scale of project also helped utilise standard components

BEDROOMS/ BATHROOMS

The bedrooms and bathrooms all benefit from natural light. A new staircase leads to the luxurious master bedroom within a full-width zinc-clad dormer, giving views over the rear garden.



IN DETAIL

PROJECT

Architect Studio

30 Architects:

studio30architects.co.uk

Contractor Sutton

Construction: suttonltd.com

Engineer Mike Crate

Associates: 01203 090049

Garden design Alladio Sims:

alladiosims.co.uk

STRUCTURE

Glass doors The Folding

Sliding Door Company:

foldinglidingdoors.com

Roof lights Velux: velux.co.uk

Windows Windows4UK:

windows4uk.eu

FIXTURES AND FITTINGS

Kitchen carcasses, light fittings Ikea: ikea.com

Yellow kitchen worktop

Stantons Ltd: stantonsuk.co.uk

Wall tiles (bathrooms)

Bernard J Arnall:

bernardarnall.co.uk

Paint Farrow and Ball:

farrow-ball.com

Sanitaryware

Bathrooms By Design:

bathroomsbydesign.com

Bathroom floor tiles

Rovic Tiles: rovic.co.uk

Roll-top bath The Cast

Iron Bath Company:

castironbath.co.uk



WET ROOM

Converting the loft created enough space for an en suite wet room, lit from above by sloping roof lights, with the same large-format floor tiles extending into the shower.



intelligently for maximum effect. Ikea kitchen units were made to look bespoke with birch plywood doors and colourful handles, while off-the-peg bifold doors have been detailed to show only minimal frames, giving them a sleeker finish.

“The work was completed ready for us when we returned to the UK, and although it was stressful managing a project from abroad, we’re so glad we took the plunge,” says Bobby. “Our architects gave us generous rooms and clear views right through the ground floor. The extra space makes all the difference and works with the rhythm of the original house.”

GLASS ROOFS

Roof glazing is especially useful where windows are small or restricted and is ideal for new extensions, which are often single storey. Instead of a standard framed roof light, consider glazing a larger area using structural glass to bring light into the heart of a room and create a talking point.

It’s possible to install completely seamless, frameless glass roofs to enjoy unobstructed views, but it may be advisable to fit remote-controlled blackout blinds to bedroom roof glazing. Choosing self-cleaning glass means that any debris will be washed away in the rain, and an opening roof light may be needed during warm weather in more enclosed spaces.

Heat loss is a major consideration and Building Regulations will need to be met for energy efficiency, structural stability and fire safety. Structural glass is heavy, requiring adequate support, careful measuring, and installation. An architect, structural engineer or glazing company can advise.



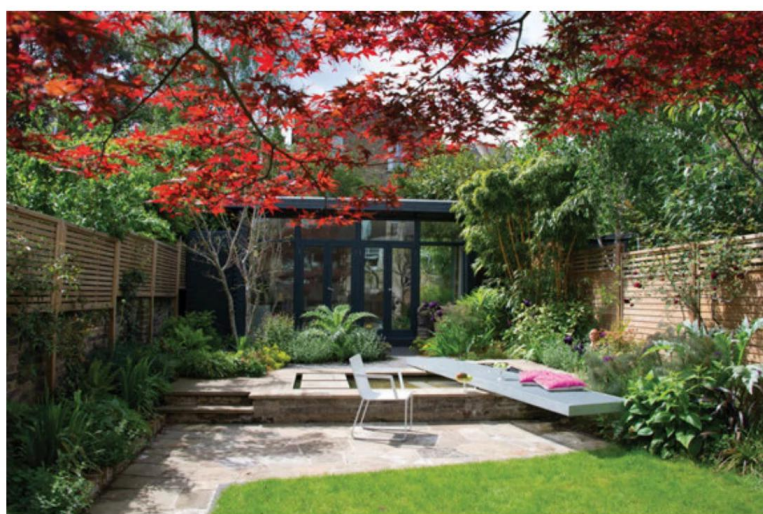
THE GARDEN

Jon and Bella of Alladio Sims Garden Landscape Design were invited to create a new rear garden space, and their starting point was an overwhelming desire to frame the key views out from the kitchen and living areas. Existing acer and magnolia trees helped to channel the view from the lower terrace, but a new focal point was needed for the back.

The original irregular crazy paving path and overgrown pond have been given a new lease of life by adding a few contemporary elements, which mirror the fusion of old and new architecture in the house. Clean-cut stepping stones and a striking industrial steel-mesh bridge were added to a new middle terrace, creating a very social space and focal point, while doubling as a bench which makes the perfect place to sit and enjoy the pond.

The same juxtaposition between old and new is reflected in the planting, so that the precise, bold lines of the built elements are relaxed by waves of soft perennials, with roses and peonies at the edges adding bold splashes of colour.

From early spring to autumn, a succession of blooms ensures plenty of fresh new pickings for the cutting garden and surrounding wildlife, while every inch of the available planting space is maximised by using fan-trained fruit trees along the walls and a selection of herbs and vegetables mixed in the borders. The result is a relaxing, atmospheric garden with a series of private terraces and a separate studio building to one end.



FINAL WORD

Describe the high point

Having such a great team, which was vital as we were abroad during the build.

...and the low point?

I'm a perfectionist, and only seeing the project three times in person led to a few shocks and surprises! Trying to continually cut costs to stay within our very tight budget was stressful.

Your best buy?

The glazing, which has totally transformed the whole look and feel of the house.

Biggest extravagance?

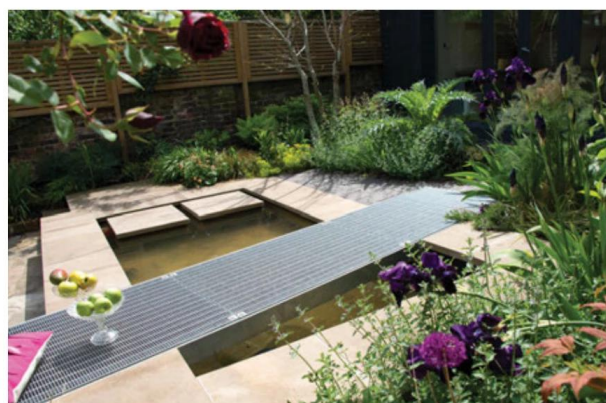
Waiting a year to get the loft bathroom finished, so we weren't restricted on budget. This allowed us to buy the beautiful roll-top bath.

Any top tips?

Look at what you can reuse. We kept our original sanitaryware,



taps and showers wherever possible, as well as the floorboards. We didn't build appliances into the kitchen so we could re-use our originals and be more flexible in future.



SUN SEEKERS

Architect and designer Thomas Griem and his wife Liliانا have built a striking single-storey second home in Mallorca, combining luxury with rustic local materials.

WORDS: **LOUISE PARKIN** PHOTOGRAPHY: **TOMEU CANYELLAS**

IN BRIEF

PROJECT New build
LOCATION Mallorca
COST €350,000
SPENT €1.75m
WORTH €2.5m





Thomas and Liliana Griem run an established architectural and interior design practice in London, their work taking them all around the world, including recent projects in the Balearic islands of Mallorca and

Ibiza. Working on these beautiful islands inspired Thomas and Liliana to pursue their ambition to build a holiday home for their family, filling it with their favourite furniture and accessories from the UK.

An extensive search led them to a large plot of 2,000 sqm in the south-west of Mallorca, close to the capital Palma. "We searched the entire island looking for the right piece of land, and this was perfect, providing the space we needed to build a second home. It's also in an area where the land will hold its value," explains Thomas, who crafted the design for the house following Liliana's idea for all accommodation to be on one floor, providing a bedroom for each of their three children who are 15, 12 and 10, plus a solitary guest bedroom on the first floor.

The corner site has the desirable combination of coastal views and privacy. The flat topography allowed a straightforward project resulting in a large five-bedroom home, in a contemporary style that respects traditional materials and fuses them with modernity. White walls are softened by sections of traditional Mallorcan stone cladding, cleverly illuminated at night, while iroko ceilings and doors add to a more organic aesthetic.

Every aspect of the sprawling L-shaped home has been carefully thought out by Thomas and Liliana, every detail planned to ensure a close connection between inside and outside.

Closed to the road, the 4,000 sq ft house is accessed by a Corten steel entrance gate and three-metre-high iroko front door. But the back of the house tells an entirely different story. Opening up to the courtyard garden,



EXTERIOR

Examining the interplay between traditional materials and modern aesthetics, white render sits beside authentic Mallorcan stone cladding.

terrace and swimming pool, wide doors slide open to banish any distinction between inside and outside. A four-metre canopy above this threshold provides welcome shade from the intense Mediterranean sun, while metal sliding shutters, spray-painted to replicate the look of Corten steel, provide air and shade. "The idea was to break up the facade and introduce another material, but these shutters also provide protection from the sun. It means we can sleep with the windows open, because the closed shutters are secure, and we also get a fresh breeze," Thomas explains.

Local architect Andreu Crespi, who has worked with Thomas before on other local projects, assisted with planning, a process which took more than a year, due to Spanish bureaucracy rather than problems with the design. He also helped to oversee the work, Thomas visiting for two days every two weeks to closely monitor progress and hold site meetings with the contractor, a local building company. A clerk of works was also employed to sign off the building works. "It was a huge logistical challenge," says Thomas, who brought AV specialists and a joiner from the UK to work on the

"We decided to install a heating system, fed by a heat pump sited away from the house, and we are pleased we did. Mallorca can get chilly in the winter."



details of the build. Reinforced concrete foundations were used to shore up the rocky site, while concrete beams on concrete columns support blockwork walls insulated internally with rockwool. Externally pigmented render is applied, with Mallorcan rough stone cladding on two of the walls, laid without grout.

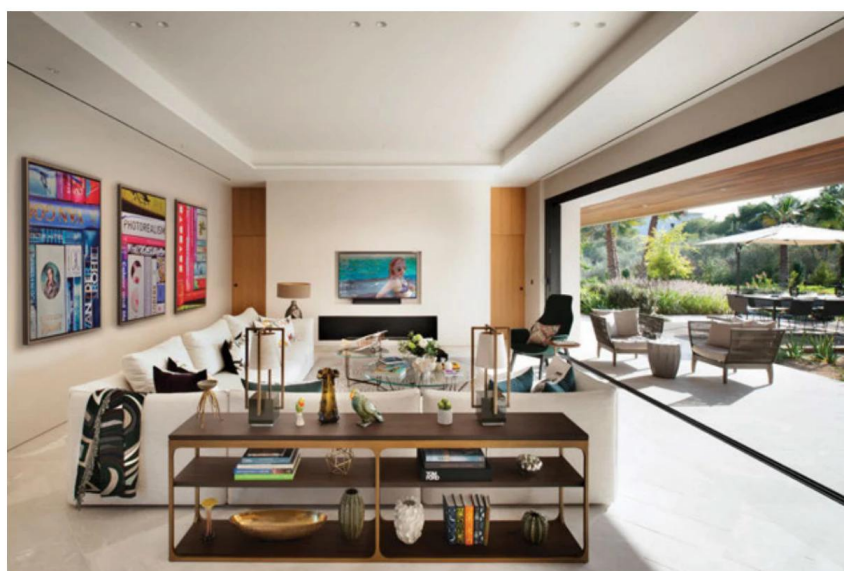
A concrete screed forms the solid floor, which is fitted with hot water underfloor heating throughout, fed by an air source heat pump. "We thought a great deal about the best solution for heating and received lots of different advice," explains Thomas. "Some said we didn't need any heating, while others said warmth from the air conditioning unit would be sufficient. In the end though we decided to install a proper heating system, fed by a heat pump sited away from the house and we are pleased we did. Mallorca can get chilly in the winter."

Flat roofs are formed using a concrete screed covered with a bituminous layer, topped with a screed and stones for ballast. Windows from Technal have aluminium frames in matt black. The interiors are modern and minimal, with lofty 3.5m-high ceilings enhancing the generous open living/dining/kitchen, which is 15m long and seven metres wide and provides almost 75 sqm of living space. A bank of 9.5m-wide glazing slides into the wall in three sections, increasing the already cavernous indoor area to reveal the courtyard with its outdoor dining space, and the south-facing garden beyond.

Traditional Mallorcan stone flooring from the nearby town of Binissalem has an authentic hammered finish, slabs in two sizes laid over the screed in the living area continuing onto the terrace outside, creating a rustic look well suited to the island's vernacular. Light stones, organic oak and local rough wood are used for interior surfaces alongside elegant furniture and splashes of colour. "We wanted to create a sense of calm, serenity and happiness," says Liliana who is part owner and project director at TG-Studio.

Sculptural geometric lighting in gold and brass, and striking photography and artwork add depth and bold colours, illuminated with spotlights that allow great flexibility by fully extracting out of the ceiling.

UK company Kochwerk supplied the kitchen, which features cabinets with an oak and concrete-effect finish,



INTERIOR

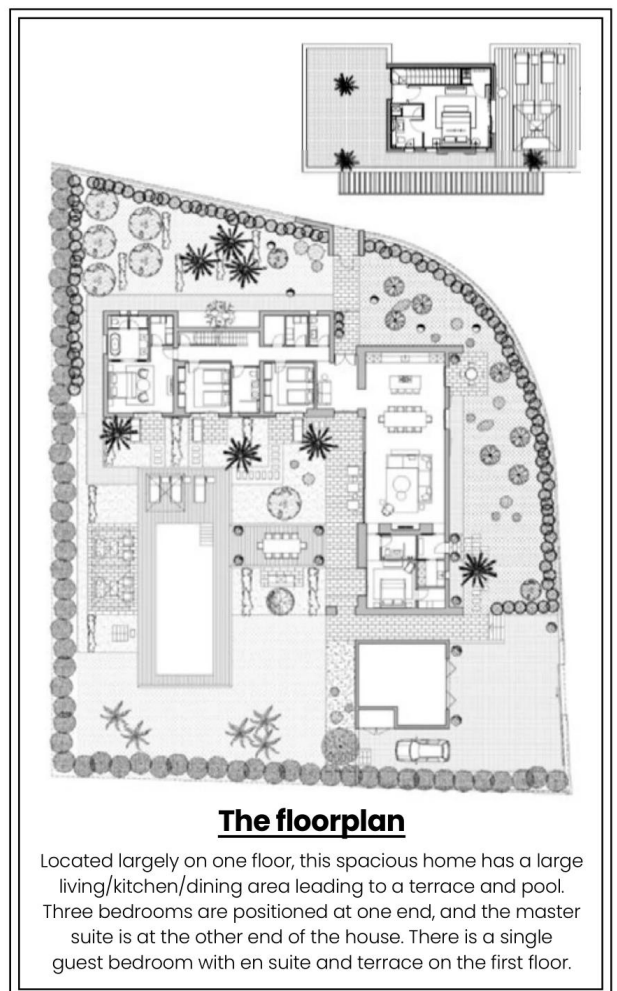
An open kitchen/living/dining room has 9.5m glazing that retracts completely into the wall, creating a seamless transition between inside and out.





TERRACE

The solitary bedroom that occupies the first floor terrace, with views of the pool and the mountains beyond.



and a flamed granite waterfall worktop that drops to the floor on both ends of the large island unit. This is home to the hob, with a recessed extractor high above, fitted flush with the ceiling. Fridges, ovens and storage cupboards occupy tall units on either side of perimeter units, while an extra deep 800mm central worktop is designed to allow space behind the line of the sink for small appliances including toasters and mixers.

Many of the interior furnishings and accessories were sourced from UK companies, some of the items designed by Thomas and made bespoke, such as the

IN DETAIL

PROJECT

Architect and interior designer TG-Studio:
tg-studio.co.uk

Project coordinator and planning permission

CMV: cmv-architects.com

Builder Habitat Balear:
+34 971 760 699

Landscape gardener

Stephen Woodhams:
stephenwoodhams.com

FITTINGS

Windows Technal:
technal.com

Decked pool surround

Millboard: millboard.co.uk

Kitchen Kochwerk:
kochwerk.co.uk

Bathrooms Dornbracht:

dornbracht.com and

Hansgrohe: hansgrohe.co.uk

Bathroom taps Waterworks:
waterworks.com

Dining room Hurricane chandelier RV Astley:
rvastley.co.uk

FURNITURE AND ACCESSORIES

Master bedroom rug

The Rug Company:
therugcompany.com

Master bed Camerich:
camerich.co.uk

Bed cushion

Timorous Beasties:
timorousbeasties.com

Coffee table

Gallotti & Radice:
gallottiradice.it

Armchair Ventura by
Poliform: poliformuk.com

End table RV Astley:
rvastley.co.uk

Dining table Heerenhuis:

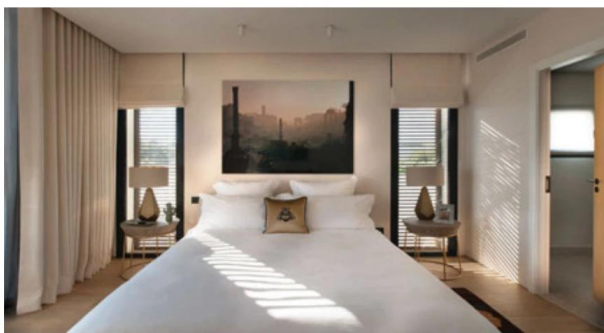
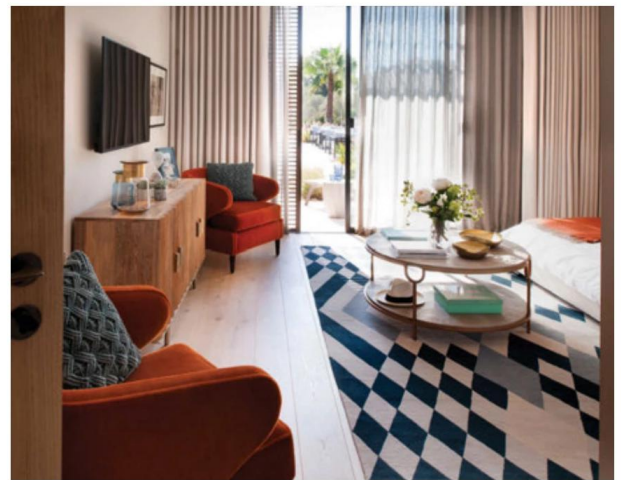
heerenhuis.be

Eclat wallpaper

Elitis: elitis.fr

BEDROOMS

Located on the ground floor, bedrooms feature high-end furnishings and vibrant artwork.



Hurricane chandelier above the 12-seat dining table, which was made by RV Astley in London. Products purchased in the UK were sent by a storage company, which arranged a single shipment to the island.

Four of the five bedrooms are located on the ground floor, all with an en suite and a terrace. The master bedroom features a walk-in wardrobe and en suite bathroom accessible through sliding pocket doors that retract into the wall, covered in fabric on the bedroom side and mirror in the bathroom.

A free-standing bath sits in front of a large square window with views over the garden, and a bespoke vanity unit has two sunken basins. The backdrop here is delicate wallpaper designed to replicate the effect of birch bark, speckled with golden highlights.

The fifth guest bedroom, located above on the first floor, has sliding pocket doors leading to a furnished terrace, affording far-reaching views to the Bay of Palma and the island's Tramuntana mountains. A metal frame supporting reed sticks positioned above the window provides sun protection and introduces another material, its shadow effect similar to that created by the window shutters.

"For 10 months of the year in the Mediterranean, the temperature remains above 20 degrees and the garden becomes part of the house," explains Thomas. "We spent a lot of time and effort perfecting the garden, hiring renowned garden designer Stephen Woodhams, who has designed several UK and Mallorca gardens for TG Studio before. The garden features fruit trees, olive trees grasses and low-maintenance plants. There is also an outdoor shower in the pool area. It's perfect for us!"

"We searched the entire island for the right piece of land, and this was perfect for the space we needed."

FINAL WORD

What was the high point?

When we received planning and when the basement was built in record time.

And the low point?

When our contractors changed their site manager for the sixth time.

Your greatest extravagance?

The pool, but it was a necessity. Also the underfloor heating was expensive, but again, essential.

Your best buy?

Probably all the planting which we organised in Valencia and shipped over to Mallorca.

What do you like most about your house?

The openness of the floorplan and the nine-metre opening created by moving the sliding



doors of the living room in their entirety into the wall.

Anything you would do differently?

I would have tried to stretch to another bedroom on the first floor.

Any future projects?

We are working on two more projects in the Balearics at the moment and I have hired a Spanish architect now so we are able to offer a full service to our clients.



OPEN HOUSE

Lorcan Cleary and Kitty Cheung have almost doubled the ground-floor space in their 1930s London home with a contemporary extension that opens into the garden.

STORY: **LOUISE PARKIN** PICTURES: **ADELINA ILIEV**

When Kitty Cheung and Lorcan Cleary began searching for a home on the sought-after Cator Estate in south-west London, they anticipated that some renovation work would be necessary, but the scale of the project quickly escalated. After a spell living in Asia, the couple found an elegant 1930s home upon their return to the UK, and launched plans to carry out a modest extension.

The scope of this grew rapidly however, with the realisation of its potential. "We knew that we would have to do a bit of work, but we assumed this would be a small extension and knocking down a few walls. Once we engaged with our architect, however, we realised that this could be so much more, and the vision grew from there," explains Lorcan.

INTERIOR

White walls, light oak flooring, structural glazing and broad sliding doors ensure the interior is flooded with light all year round.



Miles Griffies is director and co-founder at Red Squirrel Architects, a London-based RIBA-chartered architectural practice established in 2007 by Miles and Carl Johansen-Ward. Lorcan and Kitty found Miles by searching the area for projects they liked, and using the planning application page on the council website to discover the designer. They instantly sensed a connection that proved key to the success of the project and the maintenance of the good relationship.

Lorcan and Kitty initially requested a house that had separate spaces that would provide privacy or seclusion when required. "Living in Asia we got used to contemporary interiors but we always lived in apartments, which had just one living space, so we wanted the potential for privacy and different activities. Miles had different ideas though, and we were quickly persuaded that an open-plan design would work," says Lorcan, who works in banking.



EXTERIOR

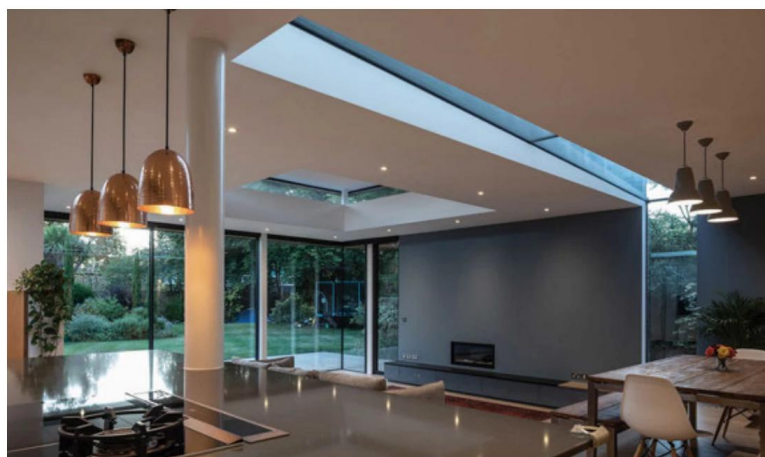
The walls of this extension in south-west London are clad in brick to match the rest of the house. New glazing is fitted on three sides to form a contemporary bay with large sliding doors.



Using sliding doors and changes in floor level, Miles designed flexible living spaces where the family can be together while doing different things. The kitchen, dining area and living room form one large space, but with clearly defined zones, and the existing dining room is now a snug/TV room, which can be closed off from the living space when required by sliding double doors.

The existing rear wall of the house was removed, and the floor level steps down into the newly extended dining/living room, which increases the footprint by around 500 sq ft.

Kitty is in remission from chronic myeloid leukaemia, and the couple have four-year-old twin daughters, Cara and Ellie, so project management duties were assigned to Miles while the Clearys remained in their rented house in nearby Wimbledon. They hired





Lenys Construction to carry out the build, based on Red Squirrel's recommendation after putting the job out to tender, and Lorcan visited the site regularly. "We went for the full service with the architect, and I would recommend that. However that doesn't mean that as client you are not involved – far from it. It's a partnership between the contractor, architect and client. The client, even under this arrangement, is as much managing it as the other two," he says.

Some excavation work was required, and a concrete slab that was part of an existing conservatory had to be dismantled and removed. Mass concrete strip foundations were then installed, and the existing suspended timber floor was continued into the new areas of the extension.

GLAZING

Vast sliding doors retract to expose the garden, and there is a window seat with storage beneath.

A combination of brick and block and timber frame was used in the wall construction, and an extensive roof combines zinc, structural glazing, lanterns and sedum planting. "We wanted to create a surface that had texture and rhythm, with a reduced scale," explains Miles Griffiths. "We also wanted to find a high-quality material that was malleable, which could be applied on a low pitch, and which matched Lorcan and Kitty's colour palette. Dark grey zinc was the obvious choice. Because some of the bedrooms look down on it, we wanted to soften the roof surfaces into the extensive rear garden landscape. The sedum green roof was perfect for this. It is also low maintenance, which was a requirement from the client."

STAIRS

Fittings for the treads are hidden in the wall to create a simple effect.

Upstairs, six bedrooms became five when a box room was converted into an en suite for the master bedroom. The loft had to be completely redone when it was discovered that the previous conversion

IN DETAIL

PROJECT

Architect Red Squirrel Architects: redsquirrelarchitects.com

Contractor Lenys Construction Ltd

Structural engineer Vara Consulting
Engineers: varaconsulting.co.uk

STRUCTURE

Structural glazing IQ Glass: iqglassuk.com

Sedum roof Sky Garden: sky-garden.co.uk

FIXTURES AND FITTINGS

Stairs and front door K&D Joinery Ltd: kandd.org

Kitchen supplier Acqua kitchens: acquakitchens.co.uk

Bathrooms Acqua Bathrooms (New Malden):
020 8336 0220

Automated Lutron blinds, curtains and manual rollers Ace Contracts: acecontracts.com

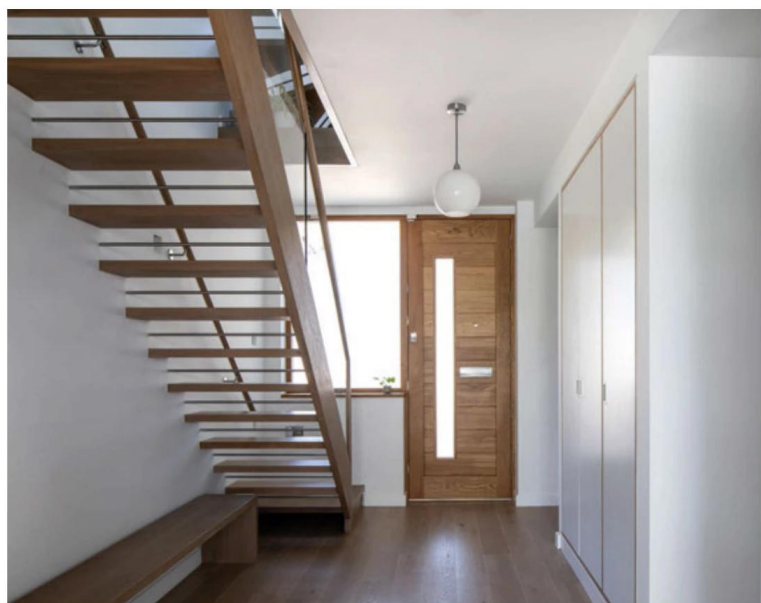
External paving London Stone: londonstone.co.uk

Wood-burner and gas fire Westcombes: westcombes.co.uk

Water softener Friendly Water: friendlywater.co.uk

Wooden flooring Natural Wood Floor:
naturalwoodfloor.co.uk

Alarm British Security Technologies:
britishsecuritytechnologies.com





was unsound despite having been signed off by Building Control. “We were knocking through a wall upstairs to create more space for storage in the master bedroom and noticed that support beams were resting on wooden joists and some steel beams were resting on loose bricks. The whole thing was not fit for purpose and it cost an additional £50,000 to put it right, which was very annoying and caused a delay of several months,” says Lorcan.

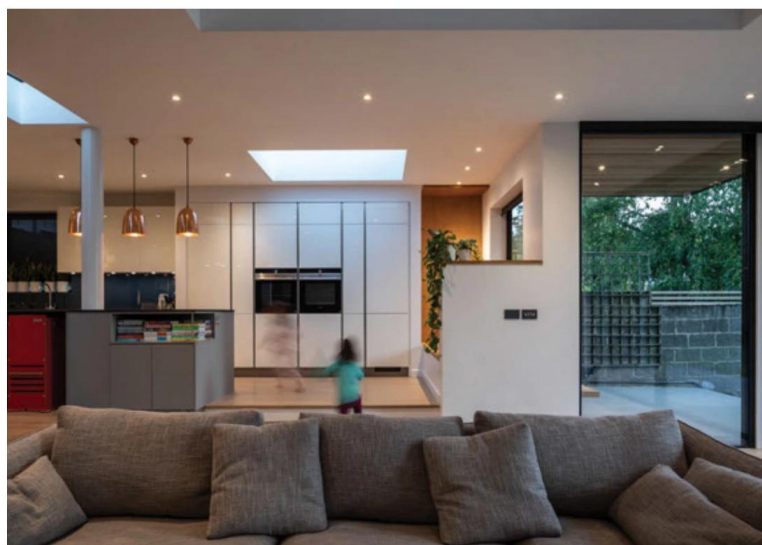
The dark grey aluminium windows caused further delays when an imperfection was discovered in one of the glazed panels. The supplier refused to rectify this, which caused conflict and slowed things down while a resolution was found. Lorcan confesses: “I chose them because they were quite cheap, but I was wrong to try and save money on something like windows. That’s an important lesson – we didn’t make the same mistake on the structural glazing and it’s brilliant. Sometimes it’s just worth spending the money.”

The floor level is flush with the garden and a wide bank of glazing floods the open-plan space with light. Structural glass panels in the ceiling and wall have been placed where the existing building meets the new volume.

Choosing the internal fittings and furnishings proved exhausting for Lorcan and Kitty, who admit they underestimated the number of decisions required of them, and how much time would be spent scouring the internet searching for products.

The subtle grey and white tones and gloss surfaces of the contemporary German kitchen have since been covered with Cara and Ellie’s artwork. Engineered oak boards are laid throughout the open-plan interior and into the hallway, with a new oak and glass staircase – a late addition – created by a local joinery firm.

“We are really pleased with the staircase because we had planned to keep the existing one but once the extension was nearing completion we realised it didn’t tie in with the style of the interiors we had chosen. It really finishes off the house,” Lorcan enthuses.



KITCHEN

The kitchen is located up a step from the dining and living areas, the grey and white tones brightened up by four-year-old Cara and Ellie’s drawings.

FINAL WORD

What was the high point of the project?

Getting in!

And the low point?

The remedial work to the loft conversion was very frustrating and expensive.

What was your greatest extravagance?

Replacing the stairs all the way through the house with oak. These go into the loft conversion too and were added to our plans quite late on in the project.

What do you like most about your house?

The way it flows, how calm it feels and how it reaches into the garden.

Anything you would do differently?

I think the kitchen, as the colours are quite stark, but with the kids’ artwork it really works, so perhaps not this after all.

Any future projects in the pipeline?

No, but I would be up for it.



A PRACTICAL GUIDE TO

FLOORING

Choosing your floor type needs to happen during the design process, as it will influence your choice of heating and dictate floor levels and therefore room heights. Floors should be resistant to heat loss and moisture, as well as suitable to support the contents of a room and its users.

Traditionally, houses in the UK have been built with solid concrete slabs on the ground floor and boarded timber joists upstairs. Solid ground floors are still often chosen for smaller extensions, as they are economical to build using hardcore, with sand blinding and a layer of concrete. A sand and cement screed ensures a level finish, and a suitable damp-proof membrane and thermal insulation should be incorporated.

For new builds, though, suspended concrete beam and block floors are currently more popular with selfbuilders. They are made up from precast concrete planks or small precast concrete beams, with concrete blocks laid between. These floors can normally span greater distances than timber joists, and manufacturers or a structural engineer should be able to provide calculations. Beam and block floors can prove more expensive, in terms of materials, but are quick and straightforward to install.

Timber floors are now rarely built for ground floors but are still popular for upper floors, although wood can shrink and move over time. Kiln-dried softwood joists typically span up to 4.5m, with joist ends supported from galvanised steel hangers.

Alternatively, factory-produced timber I-beams can span over six metres, and are a popular choice because of their stability. They are more expensive than traditional softwood joists, but can be installed quickly.

Above: Laminate flooring is a practical and cost-effective alternative to real wood and suitable for DIY installation. (directwoodflooring.co.uk)

Above right: The Deco Collection comprises six special colours – shown here in Nordic Beach. The oak top layer is lightly brushed to form a relief of the natural grain. (v4woodflooring.co.uk)



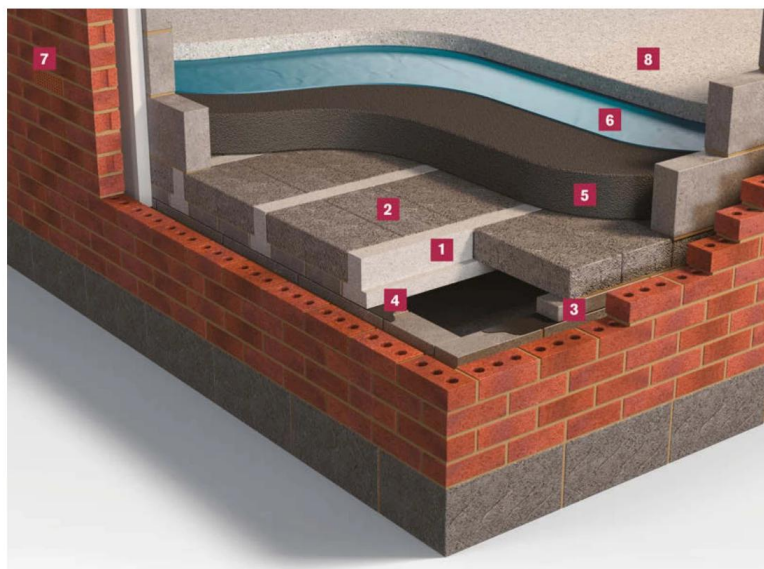
Engineered open metal web joists, on a framework of galvanised steel, are a more expensive option but make installing services and cables easy and are lightweight and capable of achieving spans above 7.5m.

Insulation in all floors must meet the minimum energy efficiency values set out in the Building Regulations. In England and Wales, floors should achieve a U-value of 0.25 W/m²K or less, if possible. The U-value is a measure of how quickly heat will travel through the floor. This standard normally requires at least 70mm of high-performance foam insulation, or 150mm of mineral wool, but this will vary depending on floor type, shape and size. Air leakage, thermal bridging and condensation should all be taken into account.

Part E of the Building Regulations also requires first floors to be insulated against the passage of sound, and this can be achieved with suitable insulation, such as mineral wool or with acoustic flooring panels.

PREPARATION

Knowing the size of the room or rooms is the first step to choosing a floor covering, particularly if budget is important. Measure the area to be covered and decide



Above: A beam and block floor (1 and 2), topped with insulation (5), membrane (6) and concrete screed (8). (bison.co.uk)

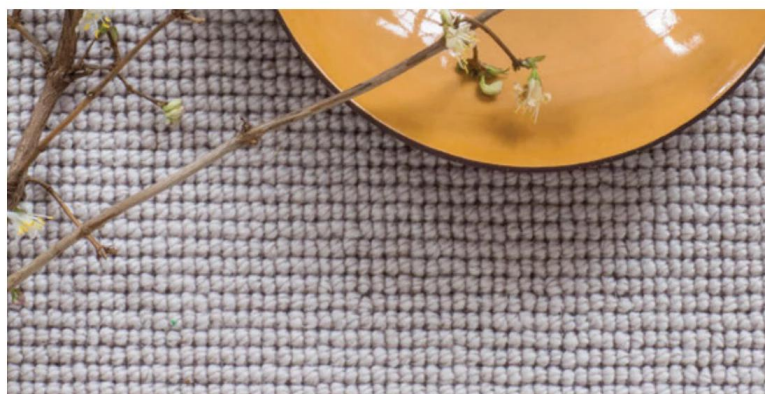
how much you can afford to spend, leaving enough funds for additional items and accessories such as any remedial work to the existing sub-floor, underlay and delivery. Once you've calculated how much flooring you'll need it's important to factor in eight to 10 per cent wastage. Some selfbuilders plan ahead and design spaces specifically for particular floor tiles or floorboard lengths to avoid excessive cuts and waste.

Consider how the space will be used before you make your final decision – is it an area that will take a lot of wear and tear? Are there going to be pets and muddy boots in the room? How will the flooring connect to the rest of the house? Using the same flooring in several rooms will avoid threshold strips or joints, and cost savings may be made if you buy a product in bulk.

Poorly prepared and installed floors will wear more quickly, and the existing base can be an important consideration for your final choice. A concrete sub floor can be levelled with self-levelling compound or screed to create an even surface. A wooden sub-floor can be levelled using a sander. For hard flooring, such as wood or stone, acoustic insulation should help to deaden sound and prevent echoes.

Left: Junckers oak flooring. (junckers.co.uk)

Below: Blueberry from Alternative Flooring is made from 100 per cent wool. The thick carpet is ideal for bedrooms, stairs and living areas. (naked flooring.co.uk)



UNDERFLOOR HEATING

It is best to choose floor coverings before the heating system is designed, as if you want to install underfloor heating the floor levels can be considered early on. Underfloor heating is well suited to concrete floors, and can be laid in the screed that covers a beam and block floor or cast directly into the concrete, ensuring pipes are well protected.

Bear in mind how the floor covering will affect the heat output. Ceramic tiles or stone are ideally suited to underfloor heating as they are excellent heat conductors. Carpet can also be laid over underfloor heating, provided you choose a low tog-rated carpet and underlay, as this will allow the heat to dissipate. Many laminates are designed without glue to be used specifically with underfloor heating. Solid wood floors are more prone to movement than engineered versions, so check with the manufacturer for guidance for compatibility.

CARPET

Carpet remains a popular flooring choice because it is easy to lay, reduces noise, is warm underfoot and comes in a wide variety of materials, colours, patterns and prices. Available in pure wool versions, synthetic fibres, or a mixture of both, carpets can fade in bright sunlight and are best avoided in wet areas such as kitchens and bathrooms, where they may become saturated and rot – although it is possible to buy waterproof-backed carpet specifically for these locations.

Pure wool carpet can be expensive but there are plenty of cheaper wool mixes available. For added strength and durability, and to reduce shedding, wool is often blended with a synthetic fibre like polyamide or polyester. A blend of 80 per cent wool and 20 per cent manmade fibres can provide the best combination of wear, thermal insulation, and comfort.

A new underlay can prolong the life of a carpet by up to 40 per cent. Many carpets come in a choice of different weights, with heavy-duty versions suited to reception rooms and on stairs, and lighter, cheaper versions for bedrooms. Carpets are usually the least environmentally friendly floor covering option. Their manufacture generates pollution and they emit varying levels of volatile organic compounds (VOCs). Production methods are improving but check manufacturers' specifications if you have any concerns.

Natural matting, such as sisal, jute, coir and seagrass, are more environmentally friendly, but stains can be difficult to remove. Wear and tear can cause them to become slippery underfoot, which makes them unsuitable for laying on stairs.



SOLID WOOD

Wood flooring is robust, easy to clean and hypoallergenic. Hardwoods, including walnut, oak and maple, are more durable than softwoods like pine. Colours range from pale ash through to dark chestnut, and plank lengths vary. Look for the FSC (Forestry Stewardship Council) label on solid wood, which guarantees it comes from a sustainable source.

Solid wood is made from natural planks which often need to be nailed to a permanent floor, although some newer floors can be floated on an underlay. It is usually the most expensive flooring option and the boards are thicker than most other floor types.

Solid wood is water resistant but needs to be sealed if you're planning to use it in a kitchen or bathroom. Engineered boards with a lacquered rather than an oiled finish are a more practical choice for these rooms. Wooden flooring expands in a humid room and contracts in a dry atmosphere, so an expansion gap of around 10–12mm should be left around the perimeter using wedges and spacers.

PARQUET

Parquet is the term applied to geometrically patterned wood block, where each piece of square-edged flooring is glued and pinned in place. Popular patterns include herringbone, basket weave and chevron. The parquet is then sanded and finished with either lacquer, oil, or stain to protect the floor. It is also possible to buy engineered parquet, which comes pre-finished and is laid over an underlay by gluing the tongue and grooves.



Above: Planate

Fossil Grey Slab tiles are porcelain, designed to look like polished concrete and designed to merge the outside and inside (wallsand floors.co.uk)

Above right:

Series Woods Professional 12mm laminate flooring in smoked oak. (ukflooring direct.co.uk)

Below right:

Scandi premium oiled flooring from Kahrs. (kahrs.co.uk)

Below left:

Herringbone engineered flooring. (homechoice flooring.co.uk)



ENGINEERED FLOORING

Engineered, or composite, flooring is produced from wood fibres and other materials fused together to make an extremely strong, durable floor which resembles real wood. Most solid wood floors have a maximum plank width of 160mm, whereas some engineered boards are available in larger sizes. Unlike solid boards, engineered wood floors are suitable for laying over many types of existing floor, such as concrete, and most come pre-finished and are simple to lay on a DIY basis.

LAMINATE

Laminate is a type of synthetic flooring that is made by fusing several layers of synthetic materials together using heat, pressure, and adhesive. The core of a laminate floor is often a fibreboard material, topped with a textured image that replicates real wood. While laminates are often manufactured to replicate the look of a variety of hardwood surfaces, they usually contain no wood materials. A laminate product has patterns that will recur throughout the floor, compared to the random patterns of real wood. Laminate is comparatively robust and is scratch resistant, but can't be repaired if damaged. Installation is relatively easy, as it is usually designed to click together.

CERAMIC & PORCELAIN TILES

Ceramic tiles are available in a wide choice of patterns and colours, are long lasting, easily





cleaned, highly resistant to stains and spillages and won't require sealing after grouting.

They can be noisy underfoot and cold if walked on in bare feet. Unglazed tiles tend to be porous and are not suitable for kitchens and bathrooms. Ceramic tiles can be slippery when wet, but anti-slip tiles are available. The amount of wear the floor will receive should be considered, and porcelain tiles are especially tough and suitable for high traffic areas.

Ask to see a sample of tiles rather than relying on a picture in a brochure, where colours can appear distorted, and inspect all tiles prior to installation to ensure they are undamaged and without variation in colour. A timber sub-floor may need to be strengthened to take the weight of the tiles, and water-resistant, insulated tile backer boards are available which create a sound base.

VINYL & MARMOLEUM

Vinyl floor coverings are made from PVC (polyvinyl chloride), a plastic material, and are available in tiles or sheets. Vinyl comes in a wide range of designs, styles and widths and can be moulded or printed to resemble other materials, such as wood, glass, and even water or sand.

Hygienic, easy to clean, and suitable for use in kitchens and bathrooms, it is possible to buy versions which include an integral antimicrobial treatment to protect against bacteria, moulds and odours. Smooth vinyl becomes slippery when wet, whereas cushion-backed varieties are safer, warmer and quieter underfoot.

The sub-floor should be well prepared before laying vinyl to avoid showing undulations or creasing.

Marmoleum, often referred to as linoleum, is made from natural materials including linseed oil, resin, wood flour, cork, clay and chalk. Available in tile or sheet format it can be used to create attractive, modern floor designs, is ideal for wet areas, very hardwearing and becomes more durable as it matures.

STONE

Natural stone tiles such as marble, limestone and slate make an attractive, waterproof and hardwearing floor covering in kitchens, bathrooms, hallways, living rooms and conservatories. Stone is porous and needs to be washed with a mild soap solution and sealed regularly to prevent staining.

Above: Vinyl tiles with a dark concrete effect. (carpetright.co.uk)

Above left: Off-cuts of onyx, travertine, marble, quartzite and semi-precious stone were recycled to create this stunning herringbone floor. (solidnature.co.uk)

Highly polished stone can be very slippery when wet, while matt finishes attract dirt more easily. Marble is currently in fashion, and is extremely tough, but can feel cold and is slippery when wet. Limestone is available in large slabs, but stains easily, and slate is waterproof and cheaper than other types of stone.

Stone flooring is a relatively expensive option and should be laid by an expert. Try to purchase all the tiles at the same time to avoid any differences between batches. The floor must be smooth and level to accept the new tiles, as any movement will cause cracks, so fill large holes with a self-levelling compound. If you have a boarded floor, this will need to be covered with water-resistant plywood or a suitable backing board at least 12mm thick to form a stable, rigid sub-floor.

CONCRETE

Polished concrete floors are becoming popular in contemporary homes with an industrial edge. Low maintenance and durable, they have an extremely long life expectancy and work well with underfloor heating. Polished concrete tiles come in various sizes, whereas a poured concrete floor offers a seamless finish. Both types come in a range of colours and need to be installed by a professional.

POURED RESIN

Poured resin flooring comes in liquid form, can be used on most sub-floors and takes from two to five days to install. It's not a budget option, but offers a smooth, seamless, noise-absorbing, hypoallergenic and waterproof surface that is hardwearing and easy to clean. Perfect for a bathroom, kitchen, conservatory, utility area or a contemporary living space, resin flooring is available as a gloss or matt finish in any RAL colour and comes in anti-slip options.

Below: Resin flooring is waterproof, durable and easy to clean. (resinflooringcompany.com)





DIGGING DOWN FOR EXTRA SPACE

A basement is a worthwhile consideration for a new home. It provides extra living space without adding to the visible volume of a building, often a bone of contention with the planners.

Below-ground rooms have a long association with homes in the UK. Cellars for storing coal were common in Victorian and Edwardian houses, while grander period properties had large basements to store food, wine – and even a team of servants. Both servants and cellars went out of fashion in the last century, the latter largely the result of our declining reliance on coal.

Basements, however, continue to be popular in northern Europe, particularly Germany, Austria and Switzerland, where sloping building sites are common. These plots are ideal for building into the bank to provide anything from a gym or plant room to bedrooms and even home cinemas. German housebuilders such as Huf Haus and Baufriz are synonymous with houses that have large basements, effectively providing an additional storey of living space without affecting the ridge height of the building.

In London, basements have enjoyed a renaissance due to the high price of land in desirable areas. The number and alarming size of some of the multi-storey subterranean extensions has prompted some boroughs to clamp down on the practice.



Pictures: This new house, built by German company Baufriz, includes a basement built into the slope of the plot.

Elsewhere, though, a reasonable-sized basement is considered a good use of space, especially where local planning restricts ridge height in areas where a new home may be surrounded by bungalows. A basement can also be a practical and economical solution to problems associated with building on a sloping site. At the very least, this void can provide a garage/workshop/plant room and can often create much more with a real wow factor such as a games room, office, playroom, guest suite, or even a complete granny annexe.

THE TECHNICAL ASPECTS

From the outset, your architect/designer should be familiar with basement design and construction. If not, they should work with a structural engineer or waterproofing specialist who is. The level of required watertightness will depend on the function of the basement – some damp may be okay in a garage but not in a living area.

BASEMENT TYPES

TYPE	DESCRIPTION	DETAILS	BENEFITS	COMMENTS
Refurbishment	Alterations to existing space below ground.	May require lowering the floor to increase head room; underpinning adjacent walls; improving ventilation and lighting. Typically involves improvements to, or new, waterproofing system; and new finishes and fixtures.	• Adds value and desirability of property. • Additional usable space. • Addresses potential existing damp problems. • Provides opportunities for new activities in property, eg games room.	Building Regulations approval will be required for any works. Planning permission may be required, depending on extent of works and extended use.
New garden basement	New basement adjacent to existing property, usually in a garden space.	New structure below ground, with planted green roof or terrace at garden level. Access from main house via new external covered staircase.	• Adds value and desirability of property. • Additional usable space. • Provides opportunities for new activities in property. • Potential for natural daylight, and ventilation through roof lights.	Planning and Building Regulations approval required. Likelihood of need for structural support to existing house is reduced as distance from the house increases.
New house basement	Basement space built as part of a new build.	Arrangements of windows and internal and external access vary. Designed to suit current and future use requirements, site conditions, cost, and constructability.	• Adds value and desirability of property. • Future adaptability. • Usable space for sustainable technologies and recycling. • Potentially reduces footprint of house. • Improves thermal performance.	No additional building or planning regulation requirements, provided it is included in the initial application.
Retrofit	New space created through excavation below ground floor of an existing property.	Allows creation of additional space below business or homes, which benefit from staying in the same location. Preservation of existing building possible (eg listed building). Underpinning works required.	• Additional space for business to develop in same location or family to expand. • Releases potential of empty property.	Planning and Building Regulations approval required. Specialist work. Generally only economically viable for high land value properties.

Gases are also a health hazard so the site conditions will need to be assessed at an early stage for the presence of radon, methane, carbon dioxide, VOCs, and even mercury. Safeguarding against the hazards posed by these gases will usually require more than simply specifying a gas membrane, and adequate ventilation is essential.

Building Regulations requirements for ventilation will generally be met by incorporating windows. This may entail adjusting the external ground levels in partially below-ground basements, and may mean forming open areas for windows in fully below-ground basements.

NATURAL LIGHTING

Windows or glazed doors also allow in plenty of natural light, meaning the space has more potential for future adaptation and uses, as well as requiring less artificial lighting. Sun pipes, mirrors and glazed floors or stairwells can also improve light levels.

A light well is the most obvious way of naturally illuminating an area to be used as a living space. This is less important if it is going to be a cinema or plant room, but bear in mind that a basement is likely to be used for different purposes over the lifetime of a property.

A well-designed light well, complemented with tall windows or even doors at basement level, will also totally change the feel of the space, making it just as impressive as an upper-floor room.

Externally, light wells can either be open and protected with railings, or covered using horizontal grilles, glass panels or a combination of both. It is usual for the inside of light wells to be painted white and recommended that doors are fitted with glass panels if possible. The light well will also provide a means of escape in case of fire.

For security, a locking mechanism should be installed on the grille covering the light well. Glass panels can also be fitted within the ceiling above to access additional light from the ground floor.

METHODS OF CONSTRUCTION

The most suitable method of construction will depend upon various factors such as accessibility for labour and cranes, budget, and the type of construction system permitted according to water table and use.

Concrete is the most common and appropriate material for walls and floors, due to cost and availability as well as durability underground. Cast in-situ concrete is a popular choice because of its relatively simple application, adaptability and cost – it is often the only appropriate form of construction for retrofit basements under existing properties because of its relative ease of placement on site.

Masonry construction or concrete blockwork can be used with suitable waterproofing protection, and walls are typically reinforced, with special care required at corner details and the wall slab junctions to cope with ground pressure.

HOW TO MAXIMISE DAYLIGHT

- Partially sunken light wells and windows.
- Full-depth external spaces with glazed doors providing separate private amenity space and potential access to the garden or alternative entrance from the street.
- Sunpipes and pavement lights are suitable for basement spaces extending beyond the footprint of the building above. They provide permanent natural lighting with additional security but limited views.
- Glazed roof lights can wash spaces with natural light and provide sky views and natural ventilation if openable.
- Mirrors facing and adjacent to window openings can significantly increase the perceived light levels and provide depth of field. Light and/or polished surfaces will generally improve the sense of space and daylight levels in a room.
- Glazed floors, particularly below upper floor roof lights or windows, can be useful additional sources of light but will require fire-rated glazing to maintain fire compartmentation between floors.
- Light from upstairs rooms can brighten lower ground floor spaces via the stairwell. This arrangement will depend upon the specific fire arrangements of individual properties and may require an upgraded fire resistance or detection system.



Insulating Concrete Framework (ICF) systems use either lightweight twin-walled expanded polystyrene (EPS) or extruded polystyrene (XPS) and usually simply lock together to create a suitable form for the structural walls of a building. As with in-situ formed concrete walls and floors, reinforcing steel bars are usually placed inside the forms before concrete is poured. ICF is left in place to act as insulation and the polystyrene provides a good background for appropriate waterproofing barriers.

The basement may also require the installation of a sump and pump, which have to be sized to suit the project.

It is possible to add a basement under an extension or to a garden, but it may require the existing property to be underpinned unless the basement is kept a sufficient distance away, with the superstructure bridging back to the existing property.

WATER PENETRATION

There are three main methods of waterproofing a basement: barrier systems, such as tanking; structurally integral systems (which are reliant upon the design and construction of the basement as an integral shell); and drained protection, where any water is drained to a sump via an internal cavity. A combination of these can also work well.

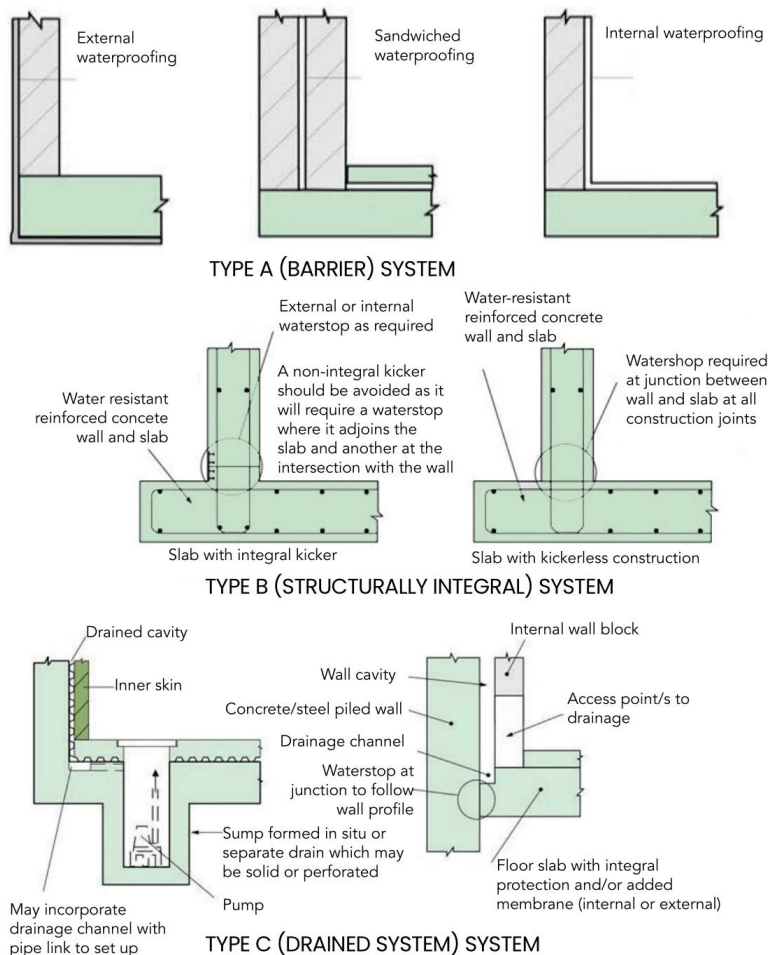
All products used should have a British Board of Agrément accreditation with an insurance-backed guarantee, while appropriate heating and ventilation will help prevent any condensation issues.

FITTING OUT

The location of services such as water, gas and drains will help determine the location of any sanitaryware. Basements are naturally well insulated by the earth that surrounds them but will require additional insulation to meet Building Regulations. This usually involves adding a thick layer of insulation over the damp-proof membrane. When underfloor heating is to be installed the insulation is laid under the pipes.

Plasterboard walls can be fitted around the perimeter of the core, but as it is essential that the damp-proof membrane is not punctured these are erected on a metal frame that does not touch the membrane.

Timber or metal stud wall partitions can be used to divide up the floor space into individual rooms, if



required, and will also be used to carry services. If tiles or wooden flooring are to be fitted onto the screeded floor a secondary membrane will create a cushioned effect.

COSTS

Ground conditions, water levels and the position of sewers and drains all impact on costs. Consideration should also be given to access for removal of spoil.

The Basement Information Centre estimates that groundworks for basement construction can amount to 18 to 44 per cent of overall construction costs. The centre has several useful models of cost estimates on its website (see further info).

FURTHER INFO

For more information on basements and their construction: basements.org.uk

Fenestration

SLIDING GLASS DOORS TO FRAME THOSE VIEWS

Fabricator/installer Bedford Bi-Folds is extending its range by becoming one of just four companies in the UK to be supplying Reynaers Aluminium Hi-Finity sliding doors – a system which uniquely frames those all-important views. Already part of Reynaers' fabricator network, Bedford Bi-Folds creates and installs several aluminium window and door systems from Reynaers.

With its ultra-slim profiles, Hi-Finity (right) minimises sightlines to maximise natural light and seamlessly connects indoor and outdoor spaces. The system is suited to creating large architectural glazing, with glass panels of up to 5m x 3m and weighing 750kg.

Bedford Bi-Folds is set to move to a new 13,000 sq ft factory, as well as investing in new Elumatec machinery which will significantly increase production. Its existing 4,000 sq ft site will also be transformed into a show centre.

Meanwhile, Reynaers has launched SP 68 (below right) – an innovative patio sliding system which delivers excellent thermal performance. The sliding door features a flush design with concealed frame to achieve an ultra-slim design which significantly reduces sightlines compared to traditional sliding doors.

Alongside its pleasing aesthetics, SP 68 delivers impressive thermal insulation and is designed to be straightforward to fabricate and easy to install.

Offering a broad range of options, including a single rail set-up through to two and three rail options, the system accommodates glass thicknesses of 24mm to 36mm to achieve U-values of $U_w 1.2 \text{ W/m}^2\text{K}$.

(reynaers.co.uk)

Roof light information

The National Association of Rooflight Manufacturers has launched a new marketing campaign targeting selfbuilders and homeowners. It follows recent complaints about sub-standard glass roof lights either sourced from questionable suppliers, or fabricated by a non-specialist builder. In some instances, safety both inside and outside has been severely compromised.

The new campaign includes additional homeowner-focused sections on the NARM website, an information booklet entitled *Getting Rooflights Right: What to ask your builder or architect*, a display at the National Self Build & Renovation Centre and a series of articles and social media posts covering specific roof lighting subjects for homeowners.

NARM is the trade body representing the UK roof light industry – and the leading independent authority on roof-lighting best practice. NARM members must meet key criteria relating to product performance and quality. Membership can be seen as

an assurance of compliance with the relevant standards and legislation pertaining to roof lights in the UK. (narm.org.uk)



Industrial-style steel windows are a popular choice for conversions. These windows have interlocked steel glazing bars for extra strength and security. Steel windows require less maintenance than their timber counterparts and have a slimmer frame, allowing in more light. Single-glazed steel windows can still be manufactured for listed, historic and conservation buildings.

Building Matters

Flushjoint downpipes for contemporary look

This complete rebuild and extension of a late Victorian terraced house in Brockley, south-east London, presented challenges at every turn. The existing house had been subject to a series of poor-quality extensions leading to structural problems, which prompted Conibere Phillips architects to demolish it and start from scratch.

The striking new front facade features large modern windows and a zinc-clad roof to complement the contemporary look of the house. This grey metal finish is set against a white glass box, formed of cast glass planks, which contains a bathroom.

Rainwater Flushjoint downpipes and hoppers from Alumasc were also installed because of their sleek and minimalist design that would further contribute to the contemporary look of the building.

"The joints sections are very elegant. The whole effect is much less cluttered than most other RWP products. A simple, modern elevation would have been ruined with more traditional products," explains architect Robin Phillips.

Part of Alumasc's range of extruded aluminium downpipes, the Flushjoint system is based on concealed spigots which give a smooth, clean appearance that complements modern buildings. This is emphasised by mounting the pipes on brackets, enabling them to stand proud of the structure.

Flushjoint is available in circular, square and rectangular profiles and has a life expectancy of 40 years in rural/suburban areas and 25 years in marine areas. It is also 100 per cent recyclable. (alumascwms.co.uk)



Fleece-backed rubber flat roofing system

Leading rubber EPDM importer and distributor Permaroof is exclusively offering SealEco RubberTop Fleece – a complete single-ply flat roofing system that has a strong, low-maintenance waterproofing membrane with an expected life of 50 years or more.

The fleece-backed EPDM has a thick 2.3mm membrane for a more durable finish, wider lightweight 3.4m panels that aid a swifter installation, has a high resistance to punctures, as well as a smooth, wrinkle-free installation that is protected from thermal movements and tensions in the fabric.

Permaroof MD Adrian Buttress said: "It's a fantastic product that aids excellent installation on new-build and refurbishment projects and so we're thrilled to be bringing it to the UK market for the first time."

SealEco is one of Europe's largest EPDM manufacturers with more than 50 years in rubber production for waterproofing and the protection of all parts of the building envelope. SealEco is suitable for both domestic and commercial applications.

FLOOR SWITCH GETS THE NOD

NodOn has designed a ready to install foot control lighting system to lower the risk of Covid-19 transmission. The smart solution comprises a floor switch, operated directly by the foot, eliminating the need to disinfect wall switches.

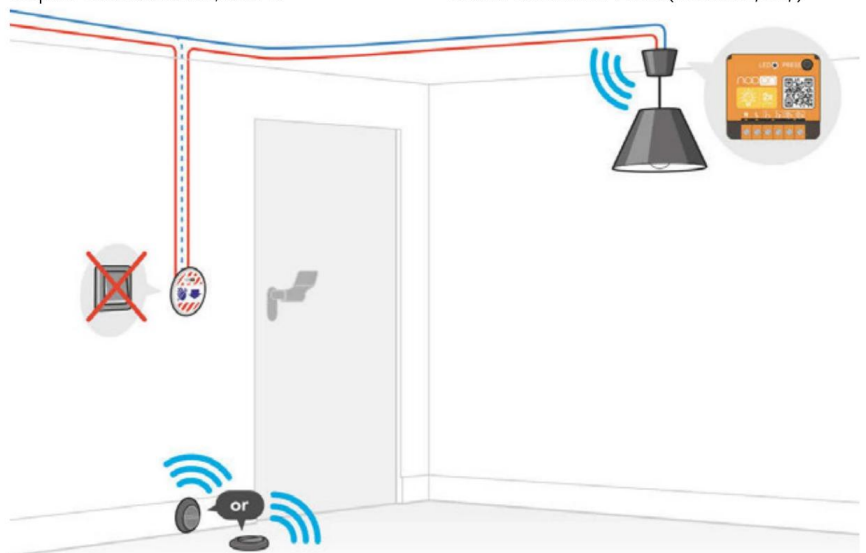
The product can be easily paired with a lighting relay switch. The floor switch is wireless and battery-free, and simple to install on the floor or on a baseboard.

The EnOcean device can be retrofitted to any lighting, doesn't require maintenance, and is



resistant to the effects of detergents. The lighting relay switch can be installed in less than 10 minutes.

The kit, which includes the floor switch plus the lighting relay switch, retails at around £100. (nodon.fr/en/)



Tool box



Scaffolding guide on Covid-19 from PASMA

PASMA is helping managers keep scaffold tower users safe during the coronavirus pandemic.

In a new free guidance document, the industry body delves into issues such as how long the virus lasts on aluminium, how rescue plans will be affected and how workers can avoid passing instruction manuals around.

Importantly, it recommends ways to assemble a tower while keeping to social distancing, suggesting that the most reliable method could be buying or hiring one-person towers, which are especially designed to be built and dismantled by an individual working alone.

As PASMA training starts to resume in some areas, it has also addressed the need for



attendees to be protected from coronavirus during their course.

PASMA cardholders can get an extension if their qualification is due to expire before it's safe for them to visit a training centre. (pasma.co.uk/covid-19)

More eco and waterproof fibreboards

Two new projects at Sweden's Linnaeus University aim to reduce the impact of fibreboards on the environment with new starch- and water-repellent adhesives.

Fibreboards consist of wood fibres pressed together under high pressure and are used in furniture, joinery and buildings.

Most fibreboards contain adhesives as a binder and water repellents to protect the wood fibres. These are often based on compounds that are not environmentally friendly.

"By using more natural products, we can reduce the environmental impact of the boards and also increase the possibilities

for recycling," says Stergios Adamopoulos, professor of forest products at Linnaeus University.

One project will develop and test adhesives based on modified starch. These may replace the petroleum-based formaldehyde resins currently used and also make it possible to recycle fibreboards instead of incinerating them.

The second project aims to utilise residual products formed in the distillation of tall-oil. The renewable mixtures will replace paraffin wax to provide better water resistance of furniture components.

HI-RES SECURITY CAMERA

The EZVIZ C3WN is a high-definition outdoor security camera.

Compatible with Amazon Alexa, Google Assistant and IFTTT devices, the camera gives access to live footage either through voice control or via the EZVIZ app. Users can also talk to visitors via the internal waterproof mic, offering audio pick-up within five metres. The app can be used to set schedules, create detection areas and review and share previous footage. Notifications can be turned on to alert of potential intruders wherever the user may be.

The wall-mounted camera itself is easy to set up and just needs to be located within range of a wifi signal. Dual antennas ensure reliable wireless transmission indoors or outdoors to enhance the connection to the router.

The camera is fully protected against rain, snow and other harsh weather conditions and, with the integration of the infrared technology, images can be seen clearly in low light levels. Footage can be stored on a card or users can sign up to the EZVIZ Cloud storage system which is subject to subscriptions tariffs. Users can also link to EZVIZ alarm sensors via the app to ensure footage begins when a sensor is triggered to capture the incident from all angles.

Our verdict: You probably won't get a better security camera than this for the price (£69.99). The HD picture is crystal clear, and even at night there is recognisable detail, thanks to infrared technology.



POWERFUL PUMP

The soaring temperatures of early summer are already putting a strain on water supplies, so it makes sense to conserve as much rainwater as you can for the garden. Water butts are one of the best ways to do this but distributing the water to your plants can be hard work using a watering can.

The new Bosch Garden Pump 18 makes life a lot easier. It is the first cordless pump which enables convenient and sustainable garden irrigation. Operated with a Bosch 18 V Li-ion battery, it can be used with all kinds of rainwater tanks.

The battery unit remains dry in a bracket clipped to the rim at the top of the butt, while the pump is submerged below the water. The short hose can be used to fill watering cans or, better still, connected to a garden hose. RRP: £99.99.

Our verdict: The power of this pump is very impressive, filling a two-gallon watering can in a matter of seconds. There is probably a use for a pump like this on a building site too, where there is no mains water supply.



JUST THE JOB, JUST THE PRICE

This compact palm sander from Clarke has a triangular-shaped base, making it ideal for those tricky sanding jobs such as edges, corners or other difficult to access areas.

The orbital action provides a fine finish by preventing scratches and swirls on the workpiece.

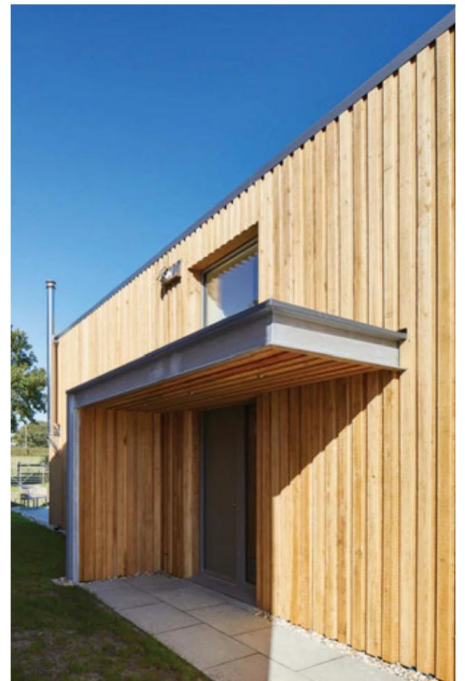
125W motor
No load speed
13,500rpm
Weight: 1kg
RRP: £23.98

Our verdict: Comfortable to use for those small sanding jobs, and deceptively powerful for the price. Hard to fault.



Green building

PICTURES: ANDY STAGG



BARN-STYLE PASSIVE HOUSE

The Ringmer Passivhaus is a new home built to the exacting German construction standard. It replaces a redundant asbestos dairy barn, with planning approved following a Class Q permitted development for conversion to a larger new dwelling.

The three-bedroom house in East Sussex is built using a SIPCO SIPs frame which stands on an insulated raft, ensuring a thermal bridge-free construction. The walls and roof are clad in Siberian larch, with feature galvanised steel verges and rainwater downpipes.

A mechanical ventilation heat recovery system delivers continuous fresh air, and the thermal performance of the structure is so efficient that the body heat of the inhabitants provides 35 per cent of the heating required for the coldest winter months.

Under Class Q permitted development the original concrete barn could be reclad, but not replaced, when it was converted to a home. This requirement compromised the owners' aspirations

for a highly energy-efficient home, as the space needed for insulation would impact on the 150-sqm floorplan.

After much research, they decided that Passivhaus would provide the most suitable solution to meet both their lifestyle needs and their low-energy requirements. They chose HMY architects to come up with the design.

The owners were given special permission to replace the old building with a new home providing it met the Passivhaus standard.



FROM TIGHTS TO TABLES

A Swedish stocking company has modified and developed its process for producing industrial tanks from discarded tights to making minimal and functional furniture. The initiative is a collaboration between designer Gustaf Westman and Swedish Stockings.

"Approximately two billion pairs of tights are worn once and then discarded every year. Hosiery is a petroleum product that usually ends up in landfill, in which they never degrade, except for into smaller micro-plastics," explains Swedish Stockings founder Linn Frisinger.

"We have taken the responsibility upon ourselves to show other hosiery brands how to take responsibility for their products at the end of their life. We hope to inspire, challenge and change things for the better." Swedish Stockings will accept old hosiery, of any brand, direct from customers around the world or through their participating retailers.

The recycling process in Köping involves grinding the hosiery down, mixing it with recycled fibreglass, and injection molding the mix into fibreglass tanks, as fibre-to-fibre recycling is not currently possible. The recycling programme receives around 1,000 pairs of tights a month.

Swedish Stockings will release five different variations of tables, from sideboard size to dining table size, all round in shape, at various heights. The process of making them is similar to creating the fibreglass tanks, except the sanding and finishing is done entirely by hand.

GREEN BUILDING STORE AND ENHABIT MERGER

Two leading companies in the field of Passivhaus and low energy construction have merged. Eco-consultants Enhabit and Green Building Store aim to offer a whole-house approach to provide a wider range of products, consultancy services and geographical spread by the combined group.

Enhabit and Green Building Store will continue under their own names and the existing teams in Huddersfield, the Midlands, Norwich and London remain in place.

Green Building Store has been supplying triple-glazed timber windows and MVHR ventilation for over 25 years and has been at the forefront of introducing low energy products to the UK. Enhabit was established in 2010 and designed and delivered the UK's first Passivhaus retrofit projects.



One of the biggest challenges of achieving the standard was combining an IsoQuick insulation system, which wraps the entire raft foundation to eliminate any thermal bridges, on highly shrinkable clay. The solution was to pour a sacrificial bed of concrete on which the IsoQuick was laid.

The new house performs extremely well, with a constant year-round temperature of 21C, even on the coldest winter days. Although a wood-burner is installed it is rarely used. (hmy.co.uk)

IN DETAIL

Size 150 sqm

Budget £450,000

Architects HMY

Consultants Enhabit

Green credentials

Airtightness: 0.6 ach @ 50 pascals.

Primary energy demand: less than 120kWh/m²/year with primary space heating demand below 15 kWh/m²/year, which equates to an energy use less than 10W/m² in peak demand.



HOW TO APPEAL

Planning specialist **Christian Leigh** explains the process.

Any long-held dreams for a self-build home, extension or conversion can't happen if you fail to get that all-important planning permission from the council. We all hope this will come without any problem – and quickly. But what happens if the local authority refuses permission, or just fails to make a decision on your application? You might feel disappointed, indignant, frustrated or even angry.

This isn't the end of the road. You don't have to meekly accept the council's decision. There is a right of appeal to the government. This allows the case to be looked at independently, and a new decision can overturn a refusal.

What are planning appeals?

Think of a planning appeal as the case effectively starting again. The appeal is handled by the Planning Inspectorate, which is a government agency. The entire case file is passed to them and your development proposal is examined from the very beginning.

And, with most appeals, everyone with an interest in the case – you, the council, your neighbours – can write in again to express an opinion on why planning permission should be granted or refused. So you have the chance to explain exactly why the council was wrong, and why permission should be granted.

The appeal is determined by an independent planning inspector. They are experienced professionals who have no connection with your council. Nor do they live in the area. They read the submissions from everyone, look at the plans, review the case, then visit your site. They balance all this evidence and come to a new legally binding decision that the council and you must accept.

Most appeals run through the written representations route, which means the case is assessed just from written submissions. There are also hearings and inquiries for more complex appeals which offer the opportunity to put your views in person to the inspector.

You have the option about which route to take when lodging the appeal, although the Planning Inspectorate has the final say on the choice.



Think before appealing

The appeal system is widely respected as being independent, impartial and fair. Negative feelings following a planning permission refusal can lead to a knee-jerk reaction to go to appeal. But before you embark on this process, take time to weigh up if it is the best course of action.

A major consideration is the delay an appeal will involve as even the simplest householder appeal is likely to take several months. During that time you might be able to negotiate with the council about a revised scheme.

Another reason for deliberation is the prospect that you may lose your appeal and that decision is binding on all future applications. This means that a negative appeal decision might hinder future discussions for the site.

It is also important to know that an appeal is not the forum for discussing alternative schemes. The appeal just looks at the particular development rejected by the council. Therefore, it may be better to discuss with the council how a scheme could be modified to meet their requirements – this could be quicker and more certain than an appeal.

So you are going to appeal...

If you decide an appeal is right for you, the process is simpler than you may think. But there are strict procedures: timetables to be followed, documents that can (and cannot) be submitted, particular information that is expected to accompany an appeal, legislation that must be taken into account, and the possibility of having to pay the council's costs if procedure is not followed properly.

So what are the key points to think about if your planning application has hit the buffers?

Pay attention to deadlines

The Planning Inspectorate runs to strict timetables and, unlike the case often with local authorities handling planning applications, those dates are rarely changed.

The first date to be aware of is the deadline for lodging the appeal. This is counted from the date given on the formal decision notice from the council and is 12 weeks for householder applications and six months for most other applications. If your council has not made any decision on your planning application

then you have six months from the date when they should have determined that application to lodge your appeal (called a 'non-determination' appeal).

Once an appeal is lodged and registered the Planning Inspectorate will set out the rest of the timetable, and the dates you have to meet to make any further submissions.

Make sure you keep to these – anything submitted late is likely to be returned to you, and there is a risk that your appeal will not be valid.

Give yourself time

Like council planning applications, the appeal system thrives on form filling and numerous documents. And it is important to remember that the Planning Inspectorate is looking at the case from the very beginning – they have no prior knowledge of your project or the site – so you need to explain the scheme fully.

This means that if you want to provide a good case then you need to spend time on it. Given the strict timetable in an appeal, do not leave that till the last few days before the appeal deadline. Lodging the appeal involves submitting a lot of supporting documents, including a vital Appeal Statement.

The Appeal Statement

When you lodge an appeal you are required to send an Appeal Statement that sets out your grounds for appeal. In written representation appeals, this is the only chance to make your case.

So what should you include? First, read the council's decision notice carefully. That sets out the reasons why permission was refused. Respond to each of the points raised – if you don't, you are not putting a good case.

Second, read the objections from neighbours and any consultees and

respond to them. Even if their objections were not upheld by the council – they didn't appear as a reason for refusal – the inspector will still take them into account.

Thirdly, make sure your statement refers to the relevant planning policies in the council's Development Plan and any supplementary planning documents. All planning appeals must be determined against these. And also see if there are policies or guidance that support your case – the council is unlikely to have referred to these.

Finally, concentrate on the main issues. Avoid long descriptions of the area and what happened during the course of the application unless particularly relevant. The inspector will be visiting the site, and they are rarely interested in any complaints you may have about how the council treated you.

Planning conditions

Most planning permissions are granted subject to conditions. The appeal process involves a discussion of these, and the council will usually submit suggested conditions in the event the appeal is allowed. You can also suggest conditions with your case. Is there an aspect of the scheme that could be controlled or mitigated with, say, a condition about glazing on a window? Or access to a site? Or landscaping the site? Offering a condition with an appeal may help the inspector conclude that there are ways to allow the appeal.

Some applications require the signing of a legal agreement, or planning obligation. The Planning Inspectorate is very strict with these. It requires an executed and certified copy within a certain time period; this varies, but is always before the inspector's formal decision.

An appeal cannot be made subject to a planning obligation being made – a

common misunderstanding with many who lodge an appeal. So if your scheme requires a planning obligation, seek advice from your solicitor to ensure you have it resolved in good time.

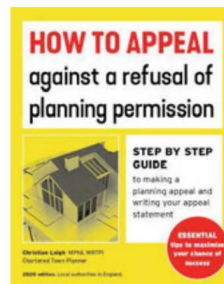
Costs

Unlike a planning application there is no fee for making a planning appeal. This means that there is no cost if you undertake the appeal yourself.

However, there is an exception to this: if one side behaves unreasonably. 'Unreasonable behaviour' is broadly set out by the government, but in general it means – as far as you are concerned – meeting the Planning Inspectorate's timetables, being truthful in submissions, and not pursuing appeals with obviously no hope of success. So, provided you follow the rules, there is little chance of having costs awarded against you.

The costs regime also means, of course, that the council might be similarly liable to a claim. For example, if they don't meet deadlines, withhold information or refuse planning permission on grounds they cannot justify. If they behave unreasonably then you can ask they pay your costs.

Christian Leigh is the author of *How To Appeal against a refusal of planning permission*, a step-by-step guide through the process of lodging an appeal. (RRP: £21.99) town-planning-know-how.co.uk



TOP TIPS

More than 20,000 appeals are lodged every year across the country, which is around 40 per cent of the number of refused applications, so it is an important part of the planning system. If you think this is the way to progress your project, then remember:

• THINK FIRST

BEFORE APPEALING

Appeals take many months, so could there be a negotiated compromise with your council instead?

• DON'T TRY TO MODIFY THE SCHEME THROUGH THE APPEAL

The process is not set up to look at alternatives.

• PAY ATTENTION TO DEADLINES

The Planning Inspectorate is strict with these.

• SPEND TIME IN PREPARING YOUR CASE AT APPEAL

Your Appeal Statement is the main document to submit – make sure you properly respond to the reasons why planning permission was refused.



• THINK ABOUT PLANNING CONDITIONS

And if you need a legal agreement, then get that resolved in plenty of time.

• FOLLOW ALL THE GUIDANCE FROM THE PLANNING INSPECTORATE

So you are not at risk of paying costs.



ASK OUR LEGAL EXPERT

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

Effects of Covid-19

Q We keep getting tripped up with unforeseen conditions with our new build. Covid-19 is the latest headache and we are now at a loss as to how to manage this. The contractor seems to think that they can down tools and have requested more time and money in order to complete the job. I am considering terminating the contract and getting a new contractor. What advice can you give?

A There is no common law right to suspend a project. The only right to do so (outside of any negotiated clause in the contract) is covered in the Construction Act. Here the contractors must give you seven days' notice of their intention to suspend the works and the grounds for which they are doing so. The right to suspend the works ends when any outstanding payments are received by the contractors. The recent changes to the law also allow contractors their costs and expenses for the suspension and any additional time to completion.

It is a risky move for a contractor to suspend the works. This is because it could be perceived as a breach of contract, thus placing the contractor at fault. There are established cases where the contractor thought they had a right to suspend the works because payments were outstanding, yet it was found that they were in breach of contract in so doing.

In relation to Covid-19: firstly, consider that all contractors (and employers) have a duty to ensure, so far as is reasonably practicable, the health, safety and welfare at work of its employees. This means that the contractor will, at the very least, have to reconsider how they carry out the works. I doubt that in your case it would amount to them simply downing tools and not progressing with the works.

If the lack of workers on site was due to the infection then you should ask what health and safety measures were implemented on site to prevent the spread of infection, and what alternative labour sources were considered.

If the delays caused by Covid-19 affect staff shortages, difficulties with the supply of materials or plant etc, then consider

the terms of your contracts to determine what relief is available. I suggest taking a pragmatic and commercial view in order to share the cost and delay to the project.

If we consider the benchmark JCT contract then we start with the overriding principle that the contractor is best placed to manage the risk of delays, costs, materials and labour. Certain events that delay the project can result in additional time to complete the project (but not necessarily additional money).

For an extension of the time to complete the project, the JCT (and most contracts in the UK) will refer to a 'force majeure' event. Some contracts specifically list what type of events are considered force majeure.

This is not the case with JCT contracts. In general terms such an event can be considered to be one that is beyond the control of the party seeking to rely on it. It must not have been foreseeable at the date of the contract and must be the sole cause of non-performance.

It has been suggested in previous judgments on force majeure that a flu pandemic was a qualifying event. It is not force majeure if the contract has just become more expensive to perform.

I would suggest that Covid-19 is a qualifying event, but only up to a point. For example, it has to be the sole cause of non-performance. In addition, the contractor must take steps to limit its losses. A failure to mitigate may result in the contractor losing entitlement to an extension of the completion date.

Termination is a right for both parties. The termination of a contract can occur on the basis of one of four grounds, the most obvious being that all parties have fulfilled their obligations under the contract.

The second ground would be the termination of the contract due to circumstances outside of the control of either party. Thirdly, both parties can always agree to terminate the contract, in which case a separate agreement to reflect this would be drawn up. Finally, and most litigious of all, is a right to terminate as a consequence of a breach of the contract.

Any contract will set out specific grounds for termination. As a general

guide to industry norms you may terminate the contract if the contractor:

- suspends his works;
- neglects to remedy defective works;
- becomes insolvent (although this is not necessarily a breach of contract); or
- is guilty of taking bribes.

Conversely, the contractor can terminate the contract if the employer:

- fails to pay;
- obstructs the contractor; or
- becomes insolvent.

If you have used a contract, you will need to consider the precise wording of the termination provisions included in it.

Under JCT contracts the contractor will need to have:

- wholly or substantially suspended the works; or
- failed to proceed "regularly and diligently"; or
- failed to remove defective works; or
- breached specific provisions of the contract.

Clearly there is a degree of interpretation specific to each case as to what would constitute a suspension or a failure to proceed diligently with the works. Only you, together with your professional advisors, can make that decision.

Some contracts, such as GC/Works, allow the employer to "terminate at will". It is unlikely that you will have the benefit of something like this, but without seeing your contract I can't be certain. Here you simply have to give notice of termination and there is no compensation payable to the contractor.

If you terminate you will have to re-tender, which will inevitably incur expenses. Consider when to terminate the works – it is best to do this after a stage completion, or even better once the exterior is completed and you only have to re-tender the fit-out.

If either party terminates the contract pursuant to Covid-19 and the cause of termination is not found to be force majeure (eg, it was not the sole cause of non-performance, or if the contract was signed recently such that the effects of Covid-19 were reasonably foreseeable), then the party that (wrongfully) terminated will be liable to pay compensation.

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- All members are funding the growth of the sector so more people can have an individual home
- All members are covered by NaCSBA's consumer Code of Practice – to protect you if things go wrong



A FULL LIST OF MEMBERS CAN BE FOUND AT:
www.selfbuildportal.org.uk/members

Finance

A guide to self-build mortgage lenders

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



In association with
BUILDSTORE
MORTGAGE SERVICES

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

* exclusive from Buildstore

Funding a self build

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

This means that you need to be able to fund stages, either from your own resources

or other borrowing, before you are reimbursed by the next payment from your main lender. In the case of a timber-frame house, where the frame might account for a third of your total budget – payable in one go – this is likely to require careful juggling of finances. Establish clearly with your lender when and how stage

payments will be made so you don't find yourself running into cash-flow problems.

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

Potential building plot

Bob and Pauline Merrick have seen a plot which has planning permission, but will it be suitable for their requirements?



The site

The plot is on a main road into Bampton, a pretty mid-Devon village, located near the Somerset border, not far from Exmoor National Park. Bampton has a good range of facilities, including primary school, post office, convenience store and other shops, pubs, restaurants and places to stay. The village centre is a Conservation Area and there are almost 100 listed buildings and structures in the parish.

The irregular-shaped plot is just over a third of an acre on a north-facing hillside. The top part is level, there's then a steep slope down to the river, which meanders through the valley bottom below. The plot was previously part of a quarry and stone depot, this section being used for storage of stone. The top part is mostly hard surfaced and open. The slope down to the river is covered with scrub and trees and there's a bank and hedge on the road frontage with a gate towards the western end. A post and rail fence marks the western boundary and a bank separates the level part of the site from the slope. Although it's on the main road up from the south, there aren't that many cars passing mid-morning and it's quiet. The valley beyond the river rises up again to the north where most of the village is located and the plot has pleasant views through the trees.

There's woodland to the east and in the opposite direction the land slopes gently to a small estate of new houses. It's a tapering site and a single house adjoins the western plot boundary, set at an angle of about 45 degrees to make the most of the view to the north-east. At the bottom of the slope are some grass fields with the river running between them and the southern edge of the main village beyond.



The plot was previously part of a quarry and consists of made-up ground. There is a single house on one boundary.

Bob, who has recently retired, and Pauline are looking for a project which will provide them with their dream home and represent a sound investment. They like the West Country but have no particular location in mind. Ideally, they would like to find something close to the coast, although they like Exmoor. They have started looking at plots but still have their existing house to sell. They have been looking on the internet and identified a few possibilities which they feel might suit their needs, including this one.

Planning permission

The plot has full planning permission, approved drawings showing a two-storey house with attached single garage, positioned at the western end of the level area. The ground floor has a kitchen, dining room and sitting room, all on the north side to take advantage of the view, plus a utility room, WC and entrance hall. On the first floor is the principal bedroom with en suite bathroom and balcony, and three further bedrooms, all on the north side. One bedroom has an en suite shower room and there's a family bathroom.

The main section of the approved house has a pitched slate roof with external rendered walls to resemble the appearance of the neighbouring estate houses and match the

local vernacular. The garage has a tall pitched roof tied into the main roof and should provide good storage space if required.

The site plan shows a curved deck extending out slightly over the slope down to the river which can be accessed from a door in the kitchen and sliding-folding doors in the dining and sitting rooms. The existing vehicle access point to the plot would be widened and visibility splays created on either side. Part of the splay to the east is owned by a neighbour who gave written permission for the applicant's use only.

The permission is subject to 13 conditions, four of which relate to contamination. An initial report on contamination was submitted with the planning application. This concluded that the site was made-up ground requiring special foundations which would have to be designed after further investigation but there was a low risk of contamination. The report noted that the adjoining site was developed without the need for substantial slope stabilisation works. The planning permission conditions require an investigation and risk assessment, and for remediation measures to be carried out, if necessary.

Another condition says visibility splays of 2.4m x 120m to the west and 90m to the east have to be provided. A 1.8m wall or fence has to be built on the western boundary between the new house and the neighbouring one. The last condition removes permitted development rights.



The approved house plans would offer views of the river below.

Services

According to the agent's particulars, it is understood that an easement has been granted allowing for an electricity connection to be made to a pole on the opposite side of the road. Foul drainage is to be provided by a private treatment system to be installed at the eastern end of the site. The vendor believes a mains water supply is available in the road. Bob and Pauline would need to contact the various suppliers to confirm availability of supplies and connection costs.

The Environment Agency was consulted on the application and did not object to the proposed use of a private treatment system for drainage. It would, nevertheless, be prudent for Bob and Pauline to speak to the Environment Agency to check there would be no problem with this.

Access

On the face of it, access doesn't look to be a problem. The application indicates that there was discussion and agreement with the highway authority. Since there's a condition relating to visibility splay, it would be advisable to double-check they can be provided. In particular, the consent of the neighbouring owner is required to create and maintain the eastern splay.

While there's a letter granting permission, the consent relates to the applicant. I suspect this would be fine but it would be sensible, before committing to a purchase, to get written agreement from the adjoining owner securing the necessary right so as not to risk falling foul of the planning condition.

Contamination

The report submitted with the application is encouraging. In all likelihood, contamination won't present any fundamental problem to the build, such as rendering it financially unviable. The site appears to have been used for stone storage rather than any industrial processes and the site next door has

been developed without problems. However, Bob and Pauline should at least get quotes for carrying out the investigation required by the planning condition and estimates of possible costs should that investigation say remedial work is necessary.

Ground conditions

The contamination report suggests standard strip foundations aren't likely to be appropriate and that some form of deeper foundation, such as piles, will be needed to get down to the bearing strata which lies below the made-up ground. The foundations will have to be custom designed after investigation into bearing capacity by an engineer. It might be that survey information could be gathered in conjunction with the contamination investigation. Bob and Pauline could get some quotes for the foundations likely to be required.

Values

The guide price is £135,000. The agent suggests a marketing price in the region of £375,000 for the completed house, if it is built to a good specification and finish. Houses in the adjoining development have sold for £245,000 to £280,000 in the last few years. Those are mostly smaller properties on smaller plots on an estate so are likely to be worth less than a house on this plot.

The guide price looks to be around 36-40 per cent of the estimated sale price. Bob and Pauline should get some more views on the value of the finished house for comparison and work out likely construction costs. They should take into account the foundation design and construction costs and the cost of the contamination survey. I'm sure the financial contribution towards open space has been paid but it would be an idea to get written confirmation for belt and braces.

Roy Speer is a planning consultant and co-author of *How to Get Planning Permission* and *How to Find and Buy a Building Plot*. roy@speerdade.co.uk

Doctor's diagnosis

I like the location. The village is off the beaten track in a good situation for lovers of the countryside. There would be excellent views from the house, and only one immediate neighbour. It's quiet while I'm here, but Bob and Pauline should visit at other times of day, such as during morning and evening rush hour, to make sure the traffic levels are acceptable.

Being halfway up a hillside has its advantages but the plot is on a north-facing slope and the hillside above is tree covered. There's also the woodland to the east. This makes me wonder how much sun they would get. It's overcast while I'm on site so not easy to tell but it doesn't strike me as especially dark. The outlook of the main rooms is to the north too. Trees on the bank down to the river partially block the view but these could be pruned or felled to enhance the outlook. There's nothing to suggest the trees are protected but it would be as well to call the council to make sure.

Something for Bob and Pauline to consider is the absence of pavements should they wish to walk into the village.

The design of the approved house is perfectly respectable and in keeping with the estate but not exciting. I can understand why the vendors might have gone for a neutral design if they planned to sell it on. It is possible though that this was to appease the planners.

If Bob and Pauline wanted to tweak the design or do a more significant re-design, it would be worth studying the officer's report on the application and seeing if the council has a fixed view on appearance. There should be flexibility over the internal layout but this looks as though it optimises the view. The permission restricts permitted development rights but all this means is that planning permission would be required for any extensions. It occurs to me that something could be done with the roof space and a dormer window or two or roof lights might be desirable.

RURAL LIVING

Set on the edge of a hamlet north of Melton Mowbray, this development provides an exciting opportunity to build a large family home in a tranquil rural location.

The 1.34 acre plot is situated on a secluded site in Wycomb, Leicestershire. The property currently comprises a substantial barn, which benefits from stunning south-westerly views over rolling local countryside, along with a range of outbuildings.

On April 9, 2020 under

reference 20/00205/GDOAGR, Melton Borough Council granted Class Q consent under Permitted Development for the change of use of this agricultural building into a residential dwelling.

Plans allow for a two-storey four-bedroom home of around 4,575 sq ft, complete with formal gardens, an extensive

driveway and integral open garage. The remaining land is to be uncultivated, with a variety of stores on site.

A closer look at the consent confirms an 'upside down' layout, with four large ground-floor bedrooms, WC, laundry room and three bath/shower rooms. An impressive entrance hall features a spiral staircase leading to a gallery landing.



The agricultural building has south-westerly facing views.



The barn is set in over an acre of stunning countryside.

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The following pages contain a sample of the plots, renovations and conversion opportunities which are available on PlotBrowser.com this month. To search for more plots across the UK, and receive free notifications of new plots in your county, sign up today at www.plotbrowser.com.



BROMBOROUGH, CHESHIRE

Heath Cottage, Uplands Road – Single building plot of around 440 sqm with planning permission granted for a two-bedroom single-storey dwelling with parking and garden. Guide price: £125,000. Planning authority: Wirral Council, APP/19/01207. *Brennan Ayre O'Neill, 0151 343 9060, Bromborough@b-a-o.com*

CAMBRIDGESHIRE

ABBOTSLEY, ST NEOTS

Blacksmiths Lane – Located on an idyllic country lane, a plot of just over 0.2 acres with outline planning permission for a detached dwelling. OIEO £350,000. Planning authority: Huntingdonshire District Council. Giggs & Company, 01480 276 888, sales@giggsandco.com

COLNE

Plot A, Bluntisham Road – Trapezium shaped plot with planning permission granted for two detached family homes, each of approx 2,500 sq ft. Guide price: £325,000. Planning authority: Huntingdonshire District Council, 19/02051/FULTDC. Harvey Robinson, 01480 454 040, stives@harveyrobinson.co.uk

PIDLEY

Warboys Road – Choice of two building plot with full planning permission

for a three-bedroom detached one-and-a-half storey house with parking for two cars and front and rear gardens. Guide price £150,000. Planning authority: Huntingdonshire District Council, 18/01743/FUL. Peter Lane & Partners, 01480 414 800, huntingdon@peterlane.co.uk

PYMOOR

Straight Furlong – Two-bedroom bungalow with planning for single-storey rear extension and creation of a first floor and new access. Guide price £340,000. Planning authority: East Cambridgeshire District Council, 19/00948/FUL. Tucker Gardner, 01353 616 130, ely@tuckergardner.com

WALTON HIGHWAY, WISBECH

Plot adj. 154 School Road – Single building plot with a frontage of 22m and a depth of 42m with outline consent for a two-storey dwelling. Additional land may be available

directly to the rear of the plot by negotiation. Guide price: £150,000. Planning authority: King's Lynn and West Norfolk Borough Council, 17/01962/O. Maxey Grounds & Co, 01945 583 123, wisbech@maxeygrounds.co.uk

CHESHIRE

MACCLESFIELD

Barn for Holiday Lets, Buxton New Road – Barn in original condition, with planning in place ready for the development into two holiday cottages, each providing uninterrupted views across Peak District National Park towards the Goyt Valley. The barn also comes with approx 3.5 acres of agricultural land. Guide price: £169,950. Planning authority: Cheshire East Council, NP/CEC/1114/1186. Jordan Fishwick Estate Agents, 01625 434 000, Macc@JordanFishwick.co.uk

WORLESTON, NANTWICH

Barons Road – A modern agricultural building with full planning permission granted on appeal for conversion into two dwellings. The building has a footprint of 88ft x 52ft. Included in the sale is adjoining land to the east, which totals approx. 2.6 acres. Further land, up to 15 acres surrounding the building is available by separate negotiation at £12,000 per acre, pro rata. Guide price: £460,000. Planning authority: Cheshire East Council, 19/0773N and APP/R0660/W/18/3199356. Baker, Wynne and Wilson, 01270 625 214, enquiries@bakerwynneandwilson.com

CORNWALL

GULVAL, PENZANCE

Plots, Polmenor Road, Trythogga – A choice of two building plots in a sought-after village within a mile of Penzance. £90,000 per plot. Planning authority: Cornwall Council, PA18/09695. Whitlocks, 01736 369 296, whagents@globalnet.co.uk

GOT A PLOT TO SELL?

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LAUNCESTON

Chapel plots – Seven serviced building plots available with outline consent for detached dwellings. Guide price: £165,000. Planning authority: Cornwall Council, PA18/11204. Kirby Estate Agents, 01822 612 010, sales@kirbyestateagents.co.uk

NANCLEDRA, PENZANCE

Chyponds Estate – Plot in a rural village measuring around 16.94m x 7.21m with planning permission for a bungalow with parking to the front and garden to the rear. Guide price: £75,000. Planning authority: Cornwall Council, PA12/06215. Millerson, 01736 754 115, hayle@millerson.com

PERRANWELL STATION, NR. TRURO

Silver Hill – A south-facing individual plot of approx 0.2 acres with outline planning permission granted for a detached house. OIRO £350,000. Planning authority: Cornwall Council, PA19/00541. Lillcrap Chilcott, 01872 273 473, sales@lillcrapchilcott.com

TRESMEER

Land West of Old Post Office – Planning consent for a three-bedroom detached property with garage. Lovely rural village location, overlooking open fields. Close to the North Cornwall Coast of Bude. Planning expires Feb 2023. Build regs required before building commences. Planning authority: Cornwall Council, PA19/10237. Price band: £50,001-£100,000. Private seller, salane45@sky.com

CUMBRIA

COLBY, APPLEBY-IN-WESTMORLAND

Plot – Presently a walled and fence enclosed garden 25m x 14m. Outline planning granted for one dwelling with gross floor space of 150sqm. No local occupancy restrictions. Guide price £90,000. Planning authority: Eden District Council, 19/0098. Hunters Penrith, 01768 899 090, penrith@hunters.com

KIRKBY THORE, PENRITH

Plots opposite Methodist Chapel – A site with outline planning permission for two detached dwelling. Guide price: £95,000. Planning authority: Eden District Council, 18/0396. PFK, 01768 866 611, landagency@pfk.co.uk

LITTLE BAMPTON, WIGTON

Plot 2, The Barn – Planning permission granted to demolish existing barn and develop into a two storey, four bedroom, detached home with gardens and garage in rural location to the west of Carlisle. Planning authority: Allerdale Borough Council, FUL/2019/0029. Price band: £50,001-£100,000. PFK, 01768 866 611, landagency@pfk.co.uk

DERBYSHIRE

MATLOCK

46 Hackney Road – Derbyshire Dales stone-built character cottage in need of renovation and with full planning permission to extend. Planning authority: Derbyshire Dales District Council, 20/00154/FUL. Price band: £200,001-£250,000. Private seller, 07801 179 375, johnturtonipad@gmail.com

MELBOURNE

Penn Gate – A two-bedroom detached property in a Conservation Area and adjoining plot with planning permission granted for a two-storey detached three-bedroom dwelling and the creation of a new vehicular access and boundary wall. Guide price £450,000. Planning authority: South Derbyshire District Council, 9/2019/0425. Fisher German, 01530 410 840, ashbyagency@fishergerman.co.uk

WALTON ON TRENT

1 acre site – 1 acre site comprising existing bungalow and adjacent land with full planning for new executive five-bedroom executive new build and detached coach-house garage. For sale as a whole or two lots. All services in adjacent road. Planning authority: South Derbyshire District Council, 9/2019/0051. Price band: £450,001-£600,000. Private seller, 07921 228 404, antjallen@yahoo.co.uk

DEVON

CHERITON BISHOP

Little Mounson – Site of up to 5 acres with outline planning permission for two detached dwellings in a rural setting with far-reaching views over the Devon countryside. OIRO £500,000. Planning authority: Mid Devon District Council, Y1138/W/19/3235029 and 18/01633/OUT. Kitchener Land and Planning, 01392 879 300, alex@klp.land



KNOWSTONE, SOUTH MOLTON, DEVON

Lower Barn, East Hill Farm – A detached traditional barn of part stone, cob, brick and block construction with part rendered elevations beneath a GI roof, set in a very large plot. Adjoining to the rear is a single-storey extension of similar construction. Plans provide for the conversion of the building into a two-storey dwelling. A steel-framed and corrugated fibre cement roof covered yard measuring 18.24 x 8.74m is suitable for garaging, stabling and general storage. Guide price £275,000. Planning authority: North Devon Council, 65094.

Greenslade Taylor Hunt, 01884 243 000, residential.tiverton@gth.net

CHILSWORTHY

West Villa – Site of circa 0.35 acres currently used as garden and a paddock and is bounded by fencing, hedging and vegetation. Outline planning approval for the construction of up to two new dwellings. Guide price £220,000. Planning authority: Torridge District Council, 1/0680/2018/OUT and 1/1174/2019/FUL. Kitchener Land and Planning, 01392 879 300, alex@klp.land

SWIMBRIDGE

Station Hill – A Greenfield site to the edge of this picturesque village set between Barnstaple and South Molton. Planning for 12 units, 8 open market and 4 affordable to sell/rent. Section 106 with contributions. Planning authority: North Devon Council, 61689. Price band: £300,001-£450,000. Phillips Smith & Dunn, 01271 327 878, michael@phillipsland.com

EAST SUSSEX

BRIGHTON

Plot to the rear of Preston Park Avenue – Single building plot with full planning permission for a modern 2,560 sq ft split level family home with extensive use of glass, sedum roof, private parking, garden and patio areas. Guide price: £495,000. Planning authority: Brighton and Hove City Council, BH2019/02275. Mishon Mackay - Land & Development, 01273 829 300 / 01273 829 317, mhollywood@mishonmackay.com

PEACEHAVEN

Timbers, The Lookout in 3.2 acres – 3.2 acres of land with house to knock down and rebuild, on the door step of the Sussex Downs National Park. Lapsed planning permission for a large detached home. Very private location. Guide price: £600,000. Planning authority: Lewes District Council, LW/13/0838. Cubitt & West, 01273 471 231, lewes@cubittandwest.co.uk

ESSEX

ASHELDHAM

Land adj Endway Farm, Southminster Road – 0.25 acre plot on the outskirts of a semi-rural village. Full detailed planning approval is in place for a three-bedroom bungalow. Guide price: £250,000. Planning authority: 18/01273/FUL. Church & Hawes, 01621 782 652, burnham@churchandhawes.com

BRENTWOOD

Horseman Side – Single building plot of 0.41 acres with full planning permission for a three- to four-bedroom detached dwelling of circa 1,800 sq ft. Guide price: £500,000. Planning authority: Brentwood Borough Council, 20/00023/FUL. Walkers | People & Property, 01277 355 005, sales@walkersestates.co.uk

KIRBY-LE-SOKEN

Maltings Lane – Plot with full planning permission for two detached dwellings. Guide price: £299,000. Planning authority: Tendring District Council, 19/00026/FUL. Paveys Estate Agents, 01255 879 020, sales@paveys.co.uk

MANNINGTREE

Tile Barn Lane, Lawford – Plot of circa 0.4 acres with full planning permission for a three-bedroom detached cottage-style dwelling with garden. Guide price reduced to £290,000. Planning authority: Tendring District Council, 20/00262/FUL. Kingsleigh Residential Property Consultants, 01206 940 123, sales@kingsleighresidential.co.uk

HEREFORDSHIRE

BREDENBURY

Plots at The Old Rectory – Two plots available separately in the grounds of a former rectory. Each site has planning permission for a four-bedroom bungalow. Guide price: £150,000 per plot. Planning authority: Herefordshire Council, DCN073079/F. Hunters, 01432 278 278, hereford@hunters.com

ROSS-ON-WYE

Bromsash – Single building plot of around 1.81 acres with outline planning consent for a single detached dwelling, benefiting from fantastic views. There is an existing stone barn on the site for storage only with no planning permission. Guide price: £270,000. Planning authority: Herefordshire Council, 191038. Flint & Cook, 01432 355 455, hereford@flintandcook.co.uk

KENT

GODDEN GREEN, SEVENOAKS

The Glass House, Park Lane – Semi-rural building plot set in around 0.5 acres with planning permission for the demolition of the existing building and the construction of a single one-bedroom dwelling. Guide price: £895,000. Planning authority: Sevenoaks District Council, 19/02020/FUL. Savills, 01732 789 700, sevenoaks@savills.com

SEVENOAKS

London Road (rear, 2 Uplands Close) – Well located plot of about 0.13 acres, with planning approval for a family home of about 3,327 sq ft arranged over three floors with integral garage, located within 0.4 miles of the station. Guide price



ASHPERTON, NR LEDBURY, HEREFORDSHIRE

The Ditch, Ashperton Road – Single building plot with planning permission for a spacious three- to four-bedroom dwelling. Guide price: £150,000. Planning authority: Herefordshire Council, P182827/F. Hunters, 01432 278 278, hereford@hunters.com

£750,000. Planning authority: Sevenoaks District Council, 18/03462/FUL Savills, 01732 789 700, sevenoaks@savills.com

TUNBRIDGE WELLS

Plot at Swiss Cottage, Derwent Drive – A garden plot of 0.4 acres that offers the opportunity to build an architect-designed five-bedroom contemporary home with basement and garage located off a private drive in a popular residential area. Guide price £995,000. Planning authority: Tunbridge Wells Borough Council, 17/02321/FUL. Savills, 01892 507 000, tunbridgewells@savills.com

LANCASHIRE

HIGHER BARTLE, PRESTON

Lightfoot Lane – Plot measuring 14.3m wide x 39m deep with planning permission for a four-bedroom detached house. Guide price: £160,000. Planning authority: Preston City Council, 06/2018/0584. Dewhurst Homes, 01772 788 811, fulwood@dewhursthomes.co.uk

POULTON-LE-FYLDE

Bankfield Lodge, Poolfoot Lane – 1.9 acre plot including a former gatehouse and farm buildings. Planning permission is granted for a 4,693 sq ft five-bedroom home with detached double garage. Guide price: £425,000. Planning authority: Fylde Borough Council, 14/0627. Butson Blofeld, 01253 894 494, sales@butsonblofeld.co.uk

STALMINE, POULTON-LE-FYLDE

Lot 2 Neds Lane – Steel portal frame building with prior approval for change of use to one residential dwelling. Set in a plot of 0.67 acres. The submitted plans provide for a four-bedroom detached dwelling. OIRO £175,000. Planning authority: Wyre Council, 19/00958/COUQ. PArmitstead Barnett, 01995 603 180, garstang@abarnett.co.uk

LEICESTERSHIRE

HUNGARTON

Hope Farm Yard, Main Street – A large,

level and rectangular site of approx 0.32 hectares that currently has a large agricultural building and an area of hard standing. Outline planning consent granted for the erection of three dwellings. Guide price £450,000. Planning authority: Harborough District Council, 18/01110/OUT. Savills, 01780 484 696, stamford@savills.com

LOUGHBOROUGH

Nanpantan Road – Single building plot of around 0.2 acres with planning permission granted for a contemporary four- to five-bedroom detached home with double garage. Guide price: £350,000. Planning authority: Charnwood Borough Council, P/19/2505/2. Alexanders, 01509 861 222, lbrsales@alexanders-estates.com

SCRAPTOFT

Plot 1 Nether Hall, Hamilton Lane – Single plot of land with planning permission granted for the erection of a two-storey detached dwelling. Guide price: £250,000. Planning authority: Harborough District Council, 19/01815/FUL. James Sellicks Estate Agents Ltd, 0116 285 4554, info@jamesellicks.com

LINCOLNSHIRE

LOUTH

Plot 1, The Lanes, Horncastle Road – A self-build plot granted full planning permission for a substantial, architect-designed, five-bedroom detached property. Guide price £250,000. Planning authority: East Lindsey District Council, N/105/00753/17. Hunters Turner Evans Stevens, 01507 601 633, louth@hunters.com

METHERINGHAM

Bungalow Plots, Station Road – Two plots available separately, each with planning permission for a three-bedroom detached bungalow with garage. Guide price £95,000 to £115,000. Planning authority: North Kesteven District Council, 14/0578/FUL. Haart, 01522 510 088, lincoln@haart.co.uk



WAINFLEET, SKEGNESS, LINCOLNSHIRE

Plot to the rear of The Mill House, Spilsby Road – Plot of 605 sqm with full planning permission for a three-bedroom detached dwelling with own access driveway. Planning authority: East Lindsey District Council, S/039/00370/20. Price band: £50,001-£100,000.

Hunters Turner Evans Stevens, 01754 766 061, skegness@hunters.com



WICKLEWOOD, WYMONDHAM, NORFOLK

High Street – 0.27 acre building plot with planning permission for a four-bedroom 3,000 sq ft detached dwelling with double garage and field views to the rear. Guide price: £210,000. Planning authority: 2019/1018.

Hammondlee, 01953 609 100, wymondham@hammondlee.co.uk

UPTON, GAINSBOROUGH

Self-build plots off Church Road – Five plots, each with outline planning permission for single detached dwellings, in a select development. The plots offer an excellent opportunity to create a large detached family home. Guide price £120,000-£150,000. per plot. Planning authority: West Lindsey District Council, 138896. DDM Residential, 01427 616 161, gainsborough@ddmresidential.co.uk

NORFOLK

BARROWAY DRIVE, DOWNHAM MARKET

The Drove – Single building plot with full planning permission for a five-bedroom detached house. Guide price: £165,000. Planning authority: King's Lynn and West Norfolk Borough Council, 17/01395/RM. Morris Armitage, 01366 383 777, downham@morrisarmitage.co.uk

LGREAT YARMOUTH

Plot adj 1 Fisher Avenue – Building plot with outline planning granted for a three-bedroom detached house with parking. OIEO £80,000. Planning authority: Great Yarmouth Borough Council, 06/19/0312/0. Aldreds, 01493 664 600, yarmouth@aldreds.co.uk

MUNDESLEY

Adj 164 Cromer Road – Plot with outline planning permission for a detached two-bedroom bungalow with off-road parking. Guide price: £125,000. Planning authority: North Norfolk District Council, PO/19/2160. Arnolds Keys, 01263 512 026, cromer@arnoldkeys.com

NORTHAMPTONSHIRE

DUSTON, NORTHAMPTON

Rear of 274 Main Road – Site of approx 0.75 acres with outline planning for three detached homes. OIRO £700,000. Planning authority: Northampton Borough Council, N/2019/0570. Jackson Grundy Estate Agents, 01604 624 900, thevillageagency@jacksongrundy.co.uk

RUSHDEN

Plot, Hayway – A site of approx. 555 sqm with planning permission for two semi-detached three-bedroom town houses of circa 1,345 sq ft per house. OIRO £200,000. Planning authority: East Northamptonshire Council, 19/01107/OUT. Charles Orlebar, 01933 313 600, rushden@charlesorlebar.co.uk

THURNING

Plot at The Old Rectory, Winwick Road – An attractive stone barn with lapsed planning permission (resubmitted) for conversion to a two- to three-bedroom dwelling of approx 1,481 sq ft, with garaging and garden. In all about 0.2 acres. Guide price £280,000. Planning authority: East Northamptonshire Council, 17/00280/LBC. Woodford & Company, 01832 274 732, info@woodfordandco.com

NORTHUMBERLAND

PONTELAND

Plot 3, Windsor Place, Darras Hall – Plot of land of circa 0.25 acres, DHC approval in place, NCC required. Guide price: £460,000. Planning authority: Northumberland County Council. Bridgfords, 01661 860 300, ponteland@bridgfords.co.uk

WOOLER

Surrey House – Residential conversion opportunity with full planning permission and listed building consent to convert the existing derelict former coaching inn and house into a character home. Planning authority: Northumberland County Council, 17/04466/FUL (Northumberland County Council). Price band: £100,001-£150,000. Private seller, 07704 297 547, wheelnut500@gmail.com

NOTTINGHAMSHIRE

BEESTON

Robinet Road – Single building plot with full planning permission for a three-bedroom detached dwelling, following the demolition of four existing link garages. Guide price: £90,000. Planning

authority: Broxtowe Borough Council, 17/00421/FUL. Robert Ellis, 0115 922 0888, beeston@robertellis.co.uk

MANSFIELD

Rear of 118 Skegby Lane – Outline planning consent has been obtained for the construction of two detached bungalows. Plot 1 is approx 329 sqm and plot 2 is approx 307 sqm. The indicative new properties on each plot have a gross floor area of approx. 120 sqm. Guide price £200,000. Planning authority: Mansfield District Council, 2019/0385/OUT. John Sankey, 01623 627 247, enquiries@johnsankey.com

STAPLEFORD

Four-bedroom land to the rear of 143 Toton Lane – Land with planning permission for a contemporary chalet-style home of approximately 250 sqm with accommodation over two floors plus an over-sized tandem garage. The total plot is in excess of 500 sqm and the rear garden has a south easterly aspect. The frontage is approx 16.6m. Guide price: £185,000. Planning authority: Broxtowe Borough Council, 19/00082/FUL. Towns & Crawford, 01332 873 875, info@townsandcrawford.co.uk

OXFORDSHIRE

EAST HANNEY

Land adj Dandridge Close – Plot with planning permission granted for a pair of four-bedroom detached dwellings with a combined GIA of 3,882 sq ft, both with double garages. Guide price: £400,000. Planning authority: Vale of White Horse District Council, P15V1359FUL. Green & Co, 01235 763 562, sales@greenand.co.uk

HENLEY-ON-THAMES

Adj 1 Post Office Cottages, Highmoor Cross – Single building plot with planning permission for a three-bedroom detached home of around 1,280 sq ft. Guide price: £370,000. Planning authority: South Oxfordshire District Council, P17/S2452/FUL. Simmons & Son, 01491 571 111, resales.henley@simmonsandsons.com

WALLINGTON

Roke – Single building plot extending to 0.25 acres in a semi-rural location. Planning permission is in place for a contemporary detached 2,550 sq ft home. Guide price: £500,000. Planning authority: South Oxfordshire District Council, P15/S3823/FUL. JP Knight, 01491 834 349, info@jpknight.net

PEMBROKESHIRE

BLAENFFOS

Plot adj. 5, Clos Y Gerddi – A level plot of 554 sqm situated within an existing residential estate with access via an existing tarmac access drive. The plot is 19.7m wide and 29.5m long, with 4.2m access width to connect to the existing estate road frontage to the site. Full planning for a single-storey dwelling. Guide price £69,950. Planning authority: Pembrokeshire County Council, 19/0791/PA. J J Morris, 01239 612 343, cardigan@jjmorris.com



BWLCH, BRECON, POWYS

Plot by Trevanion – Plot of land with detailed planning permission to build a four-bedroom detached property in an extensive garden with stone-walled boundary and a detached garage. The plot has an existing water supply and access to sewerage services. Guide price £195,000. Planning authority: Brecon Beacons National Park, 13/10065/FUL, 18/1564/DISCON, 18/15945/DISCON and 18/16825/MINOR. Bidmead Cook, 01873 812 006, crickhowell@bidmeadcook.co.uk

SCLEDDAU, FISHGUARD

Capel Sion (Sion Chapel), Chapel Road – Detached Grade II listed building in popular village. Detailed planning consent for conversion into a two-storey residence. The chapel stands in sizeable gardens and grounds with 80 ft road frontage and has vehicular access that would allow for off-road parking space. Maximum site depth of approx 70 feet. Guide price £129,950. Planning authority: Pembrokeshire County Council, 15/0800/PA. J J Morris, 01348 873 836, fishguard@jjmorris.com

POWYS

DEYTHEUR, LLANSANTFFRAID, OSWESTRY

Land adj. Deytheur House – Single building plot extending to approx 945 sqm with outline planning consent for one detached private dwelling. Guide price: £150,000. Planning authority: Powys County Council, P/2017/0974. Roger Parry & Partners, 01691 655 334, oswestry@rogerparry.net

DOLFACH

Land adj Bwlch Yr Laen – A site of approx 372 sqm with outline planning permission for up to two detached dwellings, formation of vehicular access and associated works. Guide price: £90,000. Planning authority: Powys County Council, P/2017/0315. Roger Parry & Partners, 01691 655 334, oswestry@rogerparry.net

LLANFAIR CAEREINION, WELSHPOOL
Barns for conversion, Mount Farm

– Former agricultural buildings with detailed planning permission to convert to two units offering spacious three-to four-bedroom accommodation, with adjoining amenity land for conversion to gardens. Unit 1 external measurement is approx 175 sqm. Unit 2 external measurement is approx 200 sqm. OIEO £175,000. Planning authority: Powys County Council. Roger Parry & Partners, 01938 554 499, welshpool@rogerparry.net

SHROPSHIRE

LONGDEN, SHREWSBURY

Plot 1, Lower Common – One of two plots with planning consent for a detached four-bedroom set in generous plot and with countryside views. The site will be cleared by the vendor at his sole expense as a condition of the sale. Guide price £125,000. Planning authority: Shropshire Council, 18/00251. Roger Parry & Partners, 01743 343 343, shrewsbury@rogerparry.net

SHELVE, MINSTERLEY

Plot with 2.64 acres, Dingle Nook – Full planning permission for a detached replacement dwelling set in a substantial plot to include grass paddocks, in all extending to 2.64 acres. Guide price £165,000. Planning authority: Shropshire Council, 19/00421/FUL. Roger Parry & Partners, 01743 343 343, shrewsbury@rogerparry.net

WHITTINGTON, OSWESTRY

The Old Bakery & Bakery Cottage, Station Road – A single building plot and

a one-bedroom end-terrace cottage. The building plot has full planning permission granted for demolition of the former bakery and erection of a three-bedroom detached two-storey house. The end-terrace house requires modernisation and improvement. Guide price: £140,000. Planning authority: Shropshire Council, 19/03145/FUL. Roger Parry & Partners, 01691 655 334, oswestry@rogerparry.net

SOMERSET

CHARD

Plot at 6 Vicarage Close – Single building plot of around 0.09 acres with detailed planning permission for a three-bedroom detached bungalow and adjoining garage. Private drive to be created. Guide price: £115,000. Planning authority: South Somerset District Council, 18/03808/FUL. Greenslade Taylor Hunt - Land and Planning, 01823 334 466, landplanning.taunton@gth.net

COMBWITH, BRIDGWATER

Adj 21 Riverside – Garden plot with outline planning permission for a detached house on the eastern edge of the village with far-reaching views to the east across the adjoining River Parrett. OIRO £100,000. Planning authority: Sedgemoor District Council, 39/19/00013. Kitchener Land and Planning, 01392 879 300, alex@klp.land

HARDINGTON MANDEVILLE

Land N of Tall Elms, Broadstone Lane – The site has full planning permission for three dwellings: two detached four-

bedroom houses along with a detached two-bedroom bungalow. Guide price: £300,000. Planning authority: South Somerset District Council, 18/03891/FUL. Symonds & Sampson, 01935 814 488, sherborne@symondssandsampson.co.uk

SUFFOLK

BENTLEY, IPSWICH

Adj. Woodview Nurseries, Hazel Shrub – For sale by informal tender - a site with detailed planning consent for three substantial detached bungalows. Plots 1 and 3 have a floor area of 162 sqm with a double cartlodge and plot 2 has a floor area of 163 sqm with a single garage. Plot 4 on plans is retained by vendors. Guide price: £625,000. Planning authority: Babergh District Council, 18/04198. Grier & Partners, 01206 299 222, enquiries@grierandpartners.co.uk

LOWESTOFT

Normanston Drive – Plot of circa 0.25 acres with planning permission for two four-bedroom detached houses with driveway and integrated garage in a sought-after location. OIEO £400,000. Planning authority: Waveney District Council, DC/19/2550/FUL. Paul Hubbard Estate Agents, 01502 531 218, info@paulhubbardonline.com

WICKHAMBROOK

Land adj Willow Tree Cottage, Bury Road – A large individual plot with outline planning for a 1.5-storey detached Suffolk-style house extending to around 285 sqm, situated on the fringe of the village. Guide price £200,000. Planning authority: St Edmundsbury Borough Council, DC/20/0087/OUT. Bedfords, 01284 769 999, hilarylynn@bedfords.co.uk

SURREY

HASLEMERE

Scotlands Drive – Single building plot of around 0.2 acres with detailed planning permission for a four-bedroom 1,678 sq ft home with parking. Guide price: £325,000. Planning authority: Waverley Borough Council, WA/2019/1540. Clarke Gammon Wellers, 01428 664 800, haslemere.sales@clarkegammon.co.uk

KINGSWOOD

Woodland Way – An opportunity to acquire one of two plots with consent for a substantial new house in an exclusive Kingswood Warren location. The site of around half an acre is situated at the end of a private close. Guide price: £895,000 per plot. Planning authority: Reigate and Banstead Borough Council, 20/00173/F. Richard Saunders, 01737 360 000, kingswood@richardsaunders.co.uk

WALTON ON THAMES

West of 39 Ashley Drive – Planning has been granted for a dwelling measuring approaching 5,500 sq ft to include a basement on a plot in excess of 0.3 acres with a south-facing orientation. Guide price: £850,000. Planning authority: Elmbridge Borough Council, 2018/1252. Curchods, 01932 247 777, walton@curchods.com

WEST SUSSEX

BOGNOR REGIS

Land rear of 43 & 45 Pevensey Road – Site area approx. 0.47 acres with full planning permission granted on appeal for three dwellings, one detached garage, parking and alterations to existing access and driveway. Offers in the region of £300,000. Planning authority: Arun District



BAILDON, SHIPLEY, WEST YORKSHIRE

Plot 1 Tong Park – A single building plot with planning for a detached property with approx internal floor area of 3,767 sq ft, set over three floors. Guide price: £185,000. Planning authority: Bradford Metropolitan District Council, 18/02249/FUL. Your Move Roebuck Residential, 01274 591 952, baidon@your-move.co.uk

Council, APP/C3810/W/193230749. Henry Adams LLP, 01243 533 633, chris.locke@henryadams.co.uk

EAST GRINSTEAD

Land to rear of Hammerwood Road, Ashurst Wood – Sitting on two thirds of an acre with private entrance and driveway. Ground works and foundations have commenced. Please refer to floor plans on local authority website for proposed accommodation. Planning authority: Mid Sussex District Council, DM/17/2857. Price band: £300,001-£450,000. Connect UK Auctions, 01293 528 575, emma@connectukgroup.co.uk

SELSEY, CHICHESTER

Manor Road – A cleared building plot in convenient location between East Beach and the town of Selsey with planning permission for a three-bedroom

detached house. Guide price £220,000. Planning authority: Chichester District Council, 18/00198/FUL. Astons of Sussex, 01243 607 809, sales@astonsofsussex.co.uk

WEST YORKSHIRE

EAST BIERLEY

North View Road/Bradford Road – Single building plot in a sought-after area with full planning consent for a five-bedroom detached stone built house with detached double garage. OIRO £195,000. Planning authority: Kirklees Council, 2019/62/92614/E. Barkers, 0113 287 9344, birkenshaw@barkersestateagents.co.uk

SHELF, HALIFAX

11 Shelf Moor Road – Single building plot with outline planning permission for a detached bungalow. Guide price: £120,000. Planning authority: Calderdale Metropolitan Borough Council, 19/00616/OUT. Bennett Kaye, 01274 670 675, info@bennettkaye.co.uk

WORCESTERSHIRE

ALCESTER

Avon Crescent – Corner plot of around 236 sqm with detailed planning permission for a detached two- to three-bedroom bungalow of around 68 sqm with parking and gardens to the rear and side. Guide price: £115,000. Planning authority: Stratford-on-Avon District Council, 19/01599/FUL. Hemmings, 01527 62092, HemmingsRedditch@HemmingsAgents.co.uk

WORCESTER

Peachley Lane – Plot with planning permission for a pair of detached four-bedroom homes in a sought-after location, each with a private garden, driveway and integral single garage. Guide price: £575,000. Planning authority: Malvern Hills District Council, 19/01295/FUL. Allan Morris, 01905 612 266, worcester@www.allan-morris.co.uk



COTTON, SUFFOLK

Rear of Broadway Cottage, Broad Road – Single building plot of around 0.25 acres with planning permission for a four-bedroom detached bungalow of circa 1,775 sq ft with field views to the rear. Guide price: £180,000. Planning authority: Mid Suffolk District Council, DC/18/05010. William H Brown, 01449 614 459, stowmarket@williamhbrown.co.uk

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LIGHTS4FUN is Europe's leading internet retailer of decorative lighting for home and garden. This family business began from the kitchen table, when Tim Naughton and his wife, Jo, couldn't find a decent set of fairy lights for their garden. The now 40 strong team, based at their head office in Harrogate offers high-quality, beautifully designed lights with an industry leading two year guarantee. Give your outdoor space that summer festival feeling with their huge range of fairy lights, lanterns and festoons.

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The eReflex electric fire range from **GAZCO** is the perfect addition to any contemporary home, offering not only mesmerising effects from a realistic flame display, but also a range of energy-saving features and sizing options for an array of installations. Available in both Inset and Outset models, the eReflex is particularly suited to media and feature wall installations.

Find out more about this designer electric fire at:
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QUIET MARK



Triton's new thermostatic power shower is so quiet that when the water is running, you hardly hear the pump. Perfect for when you're focusing on that morning briefing, whilst the household takes its morning shower! The AS2000SR is the ideal solution for those with low pressure systems, providing a great flow rate of up to 14 litres per minute. Its continuous running performance ensures there is no waiting around in between showers for busy households.

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Next month

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Exemplar design in Salcombe

This stunning timber-clad contemporary home takes advantage of its equally stunning location overlooking the Devon coast at Salcombe.



Split house

Dug into a steeply sloped north-facing site in Sevenoaks, Kent, this new three-storey family home is split into two halves, connected via a central glazed link, envisaged as an atrium housing the staircase.



Eco house in South Hams

This new build in Devon's rolling South Hams was designed by a local architect with an impressive double-height hallway and bespoke steel staircase. A ground source heat pump and photovoltaics make this contemporary four-bedroom home highly sustainable.



Plus
GUIDE TO DOORS AND WINDOWS



A LOAD OF HOT AIR?

Clean energy will make us heat pump fans, argues **Gerald Cole**.

In his spring statement in March 2019 the then Chancellor, Philip Hammond, announced that in all new homes built after 2025 gas boilers would be replaced by low-carbon heating systems.

This was a bit of a jolt for the housebuilding and heating industries. Eighty-five per cent of all UK heating systems run on gas and around 1.5 million gas boilers are installed every year. Low-carbon or renewable heating systems account for just two per cent of the market.

The year 2025 may seem comfortably distant, but to a selfbuilder about to begin a plot search those intervening years can zip by. It's well worth, then, considering your future heating options from the start, not least because they could have implications for the design of your new home, its construction method and even its location.

So what exactly does the government mean by non-carbon heating methods? A good place to start is with the government's Renewable Heat Incentive (RHI). This encourages householders to install renewable heating systems rather than cheaper conventional systems by paying a quarterly tariff for seven years after installation. It covers solar thermal panels, heat pumps and certain biomass systems.

Biomass systems burn wood chips, wood pellets or logs – useful if you have a rural plot, ideally with or close to available woodland. Wood pellet stoves with back boilers can power a central heating system, be fed automatically and ignited via a thermostat or timer, just like a gas boiler. Biomass boilers are larger, requiring a dedicated space for a hopper and fuel storage.

Because they operate most efficiently at high temperatures for continuous periods, they are often combined with a large, well-insulated thermal store (basically a super-sized hot water cylinder) to soak up surplus heat. But that adds to the space required as well as the initial cost, which can range from £7,000 to £25,000.

This is one reason why government has pinned its renewable hopes on heat pumps. A heat pump is effectively a fridge in reverse. But instead of extracting heat from its interior and releasing it outside, a heat pump extracts heat from the outside world and releases it into the home.



The only power it requires is a domestic electricity supply. Units are easy to install, low maintenance and can last over 20 years. But where exactly does the heat come from, especially in winter?

There are two main sources. The most efficient is the earth itself. A metre and a half down its temperature remains a constant 10°C to 12°C throughout the year. Less efficient is the atmosphere because its temperature fluctuates constantly.

Ground source heat pumps (GSHPs) and air source heat pumps (ASHPs) are similar in cost – starting from around £7,500. But ground source installation costs can be double that.

This is because the underground pipework required needs enough space to extract ground heat in the most efficient way. Kaspar Bradshaw, project engineer at low-energy specialists Enhabit, suggests around an acre for a standard detached house.

For a smaller plot a single borehole can be used, but the cost can double again for drilling a typical 80-90m deep hole.

'Free' energy

Air source heat pumps, however, can be fitted on an external wall, a roof or even at the end of a garden. All they require is clear space around them so that air can circulate freely. For every kilowatt of hopefully renewable electricity used to power a heat pump, between two and four kilowatts of 'free' energy is extracted from the earth or the air. It's a level of efficiency unmatched by even the most energy-efficient gas boiler.

But there are provisos. The most energy is extracted when interior and exterior temperatures are closest. In cold weather an air source heat pump needs to work harder to extract heat from outside.

It's also most efficient in producing low-temperature heat – typically 35°C to 50°C – rather than the 70°C to 80°C produced by a gas boiler. As a result, it best suits a well-insulated house with good airtightness and a low-temperature distribution system, either underfloor heating or over-large radiators.

Heat pumps received their biggest boost this May with the announcement of the government's Clean Heat Grant Scheme. Beginning in 2022, it proposes swapping the Renewable Heat Incentive for a one-off £4,000 grant, covering heat pumps and biomass boilers where a heat pump isn't suitable.

Darren McMahon, marketing director of Viessmann, which manufactures both heat pumps and gas boilers, sees this as a key factor in helping the transition to heat pumps.

"It's much more attractive than the Renewable Heat Incentive," he says. "Retrospective payback doesn't really work for anyone who can't afford a heat pump in the first place."

He predicts the UK heat pump market could triple by 2025, but argues the transition may well be eased by hybrid systems where a heat pump works in tandem with a gas, LPG or oil boiler, either as a combined unit or as a bolt-on to an existing system.

"The heat pump is the lead technology," explains McMahon, "providing heat and hot water until it becomes inefficient and the conventional system takes over."

Last year for the first time renewable and low-carbon sources produced more electricity in the UK than fossil fuels. As their contribution rises, electricity prices are likely to fall and the popularity of heat pumps to grow, creating economies of scale and, hopefully, lower prices.

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