

selfbuilder & homemaker

July/August 2015

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Bricks, Blocks & Cement

Insulation

Lighting & Electrical

Stonework & Masonry

Stairs, Balustrades & Balconies

Pools, Spas & Decking Showcase

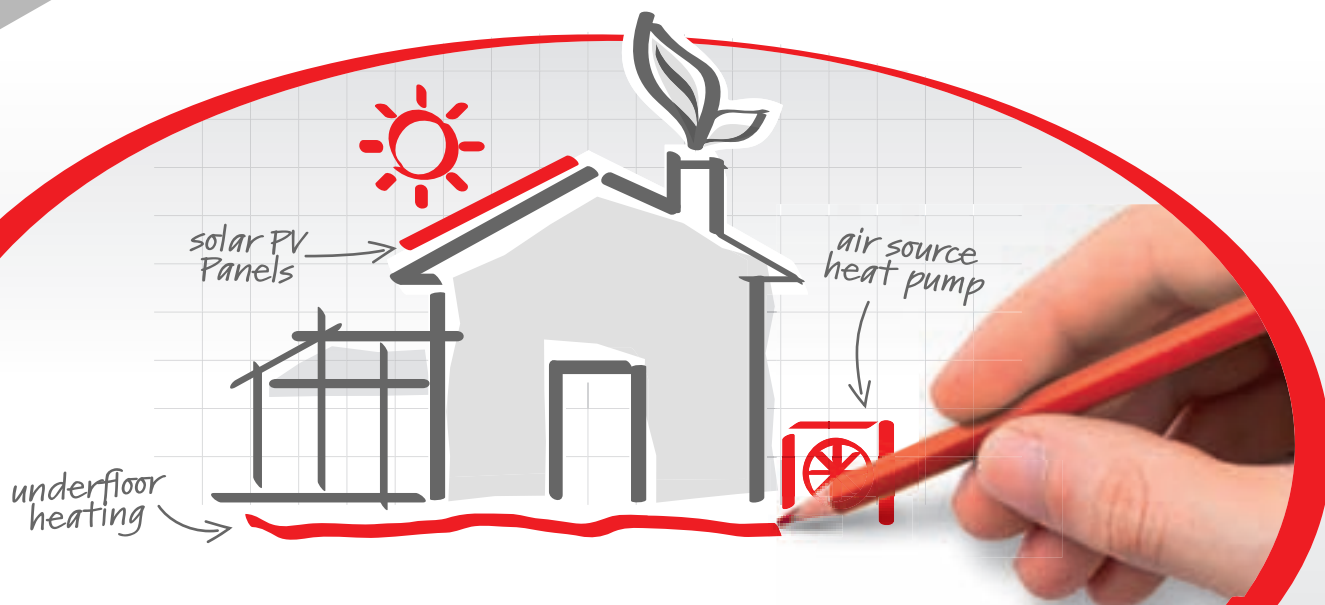
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editor's letter



Regrettably there appeared to be very little in the Budget to support the government's desire to create the new communities and self-build projects the country really requires.

The Chancellor's austerity measures will now bite hard as the government will want to get unpopular cuts out of the way early in their current term in office. We must just hope that any pain felt by consumers does not damage purchaser confidence, derail the recovering housing market and discourage the growing army of potential self-builders.

What was interesting was the Treasury's 'Fixing the foundations: Creating a more prosperous nation' which identified five planning initiatives to accelerate home building. Which you can read more about on page six.

Sadly there was no mention of self-build but there is now far too much momentum to slow this essential part of the housing sector.

budget 2015

Housing fails to feature in summer Budget

Given that the government supports the need to create thousands of homes around the country, including self-build projects, there was very little in the summer budget that even mentioned housebuilding.

However, the Chancellor did confirm several of the housing initiatives already identified by the government.

These included the planned introduction of the Help to Buy ISA for young savers and the Right to Buy for housing association tenants, although the latter is not likely to help create the homes required by so many potential homeowners.

The Chancellor did say it was 'a national shame' that apprenticeships were under funded, and confirmed that he is introducing an apprenticeship levy on all large firms.

The government's apprenticeship levy is seen as an effort to reward those companies



training young staff and to tackle those, which use funding, but do not provide an adequate apprenticeship programme.

Commenting on the apprenticeship levy Simon Hay, CEO of the Brick Development

Association (BDA), said: "The BDA supports an increase in apprentices to combat future skills shortages both in our industry and the wider on-site construction industry. Over the next five years approximately 200,000 new construction jobs are to be created.

However, we must not forget that almost twice this number will leave the sector, making schemes such as the levy crucial to attract future construction workers. It must be assured in the details that we are not however disadvantaged against continental competition, we will certainly be monitoring the outcome of the proposed levy with great interest."

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Grand Designs Live

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Edinburgh Homebuilding & Renovating Show

8 - 11 October, Edinburgh
edinburgh.homebuildingshow.co.uk

The Big Green Home Show

23 - 25 October, Swindon
www.nsbc.co.uk/the-big-green-home-show

Ten sites identified for potential self-builders

The Homes and Community Agency (HCA) has identified ten schemes that are suitable for people who want to build their own homes.

The identified schemes are being delivered through the HCA's land portfolio and will collectively provide the opportunity to create around 290 custom build homes.

Spencer's Park, Hemel Hempstead

Land is available for 10 custom build homes as part of a wider housing development by Barratt Homes.

Urban Pioneers, Middlesbrough

Middlesbrough Council and the HCA are currently in the process of making 14 serviced plots available for flexible development including custom build which could be suitable for at least 25 custom build homes.

The land is being made available under plans to transform Middlesbrough, which lies between the retail quarter in Middlesbrough, and the river.

Trevenson Park, Pool, Cornwall

Trevenson Park has capacity for 144 homes, of which 54 are planned to be custom build homes.

Igloo Carillion was selected through the HCA delivery partner panel to create a high

quality scheme to support the continued regeneration of the local area.

Building work is due to begin later in 2015 and marketing of the custom build plots has already commenced.

Chase Avenue, Milton Keynes

Chase Avenue has land available for five custom build homes.

Goldcrest Developments was selected as the developer following an open market tender process and work has started on site.

Carr Lodge Farm, Doncaster

Carr Lodge Farm has land available for 25 custom build homes as part of the larger development. Fairgrove Homes has been appointed as the custom build development partner. Work on two show homes has started on site and serviced plots for custom build are now available for sale.

Oxley Park, Milton Keynes

Oxley Park has the potential for up to 14 custom build homes, subject to planning. The site is next to one of the most distinctive modern developments in Milton Keynes.

Pound Lane South, Basildon

Pound Lane South has the potential for around ten custom build homes, subject to planning. The custom build land will be

available for sale in autumn 2015.

Lightmoor Urban Village, Telford

Lightmoor Urban Village has the potential for up to ten custom build homes on two separate plots. The HCA and the Bournville Village Trust are working together on the scheme to build a choice of houses, which will complement the current high quality environment at Lightmoor.

Park Prewett, Basingstoke

Park Prewett is a major development of 1,250 new and affordable homes in total. The site has the potential for up to 120 plots for custom build homes, subject to planning. Park Prewett is to the North West of Basingstoke town centre, with homes to be designed to a high standard and fit the partners' overall vision for the development.

Marksbury Road, Bristol

Marksbury Road will support at least 15 plots for custom build homes, once the developer has been selected. The developer selection process has started, through an open market tender.

For more information and development contact details visit the HCA website: www.gov.uk/government/news/custom-build-supply-of-land

Farrells awarded planning for new ECO House

Award winning architect planners, Farrells has been awarded planning consent for a new rural eco house in Goudhurst, Kent.

The eco house design met the exceptional architectural quality and innovation criteria required by the National Planning Policy Framework, providing special circumstances for a new dwelling to be built in the countryside.

Located on the edge of the Kent village of Goudhurst, existing disused farm sheds on the site will be replaced by the proposed five-bedroom family home. The low impact house is stepped and sunk into the sloping site, making it appear as single storey with views across the High Weald area, which is an 'Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty'.

Farrells Partner, Gary Young said: "This 'buffer thinking' approach, first proposed by Farrells in the 1980's, applies climate awareness and intelligent passive design rather than heavy handed technology. The design of the eco house not only reduces exposure to extreme heat losses, but also gains from wind and sun, creating interiors, which are cool in the summer and warm in the winter.

"This will be the first home to use low carbon and zero-cement structural concrete



from ground blast furnace slag in floors and retaining walls. Renewable energy will be supplied by biomass and photovoltaic solar panels. Water conservation and harvesting, water treatment with reed beds, locally sourced timber, brick and tiles, recycled earth and local stone in gabion garden walls all contribute to setting new standards for rural house construction".

Client Russell Jarvis, of Jarvis Homes, said: "We look forward to delivering this innovative eco house and welcome the proactive engagement with the Council's planning team on design standards. Green box and closed loop recycling of construction waste, zero landfill and green sourcing are integral parts of our business".

The project will start on site later this year.

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Government support small builders

Small builders will benefit from a £100 million cash boost to recognise and support their important role in keeping the country building.

The Housing Growth Partnership will act as an initiative that will invest alongside smaller builders in new developments, providing money for support and help get workers onto sites and increasing housing supply.

The Partnership will also establish a network of builders, including experienced developers, who will act as mentors and advisers to those looking to expand and grow their businesses.

In the last 25 years, the number of firms building between one and 100 units a year has fallen from over 12,000 to fewer than 3,000.

The latest housebuilding figures show starts have more than doubled since 2009 – with both starts and completions rising in the past year and the number of homes granted planning permission are at the highest annual total for eight years.

The Housing Growth Partnership will help small builders to play their part in the growth in home building numbers.

The government matched a £50 million investment from Lloyds Banking Group to create the £100 million Housing Growth Partnership. It will be used to help smaller builders to invest in new projects and

develop their businesses. The partnership expects to make around 50 investments, with the aim to provide an additional 2,000 homes.

Housing Minister Brandon Lewis said: "The 2008 economic crash devastated our army of small builders, with delivery falling from 44,000 homes to just 18,000. Seven years on, companies are getting back on their feet but we're determined to give them all the help they need.

"Access to finance is one of the biggest challenges they face – so that's why today I'm launching this £100 million commitment which will help our smaller builders fund new projects, expand their businesses, create more jobs and build more homes.

"With housing starts at a seven-year high and climbing, and homes granted planning permission at 261,000 – the highest since 2007, this work will ensure we maintain this momentum and keep the country building.

Group Director and Chief Executive, Commercial Banking, Lloyds Banking Group, Andrew Bester said: "The challenge of housing supply and affordability is one of the biggest issues facing Britain today, so we at Lloyds Banking Group welcome the government's announcement of support for the Housing



Brandon Lewis

Growth Partnership, which will double the capability to support SME house builders. It will provide SME house builders with much needed equity to support residential development projects, to stimulate growth in their businesses and facilitate access to conventional property development finance.

"We believe building both a greater quantity and mix of homes will help Britain prosper and this partnership will help address the issue of housing supply in the UK."

Chief Executive of Federation of Master Builders, Brian Berry said: "There has been a sharp decline in the numbers and output of SME house builders over the past eight years. One of the biggest obstacles these firms have faced is a severe difficulty in accessing finance. Without adequate access to finance they cannot bring forward the number of new homes they would otherwise.

"The new partnership will directly help to address this issue and the additional £50 million greatly increases the scale of what can be achieved. We commend Lloyds Banking Group and the government on their trailblazing approach and we hope this marks a real turning point in the fight to provide adequate finance to the SME house building sector."

planning

Government planning reforms to boost housebuilding and productivity

The government has announced plans to reform the planning system in an attempt to accelerate the construction of new homes around the country.

The detailed plans, which are part of a 90 page document titled 'Fixing the foundations: Creating a more productive nation', is aimed at improving UK productivity towards housebuilding, and includes automatic planning permission on 'suitable' brownfield sites in the new government Housing Zones.

When describing 'Planning freedoms and more houses to buy' the Treasury document states that: "The UK has been incapable of building enough homes to keep up with growing demand. This they believe harms productivity and restricts labour market flexibility,

and frustrates the ambitions of thousands of people who would like to own and even build their own home."

Based on this belief the document describes five actions that the government will take. These include:

- The introduction of a new zonal system, which will effectively give automatic permission on suitable brownfield sites
- Taking tougher action to ensure that local authorities are using their powers to get local plans in place and make homes available for local people, intervening to arrange for local plans to be written where necessary
- Bringing forward proposals for stronger, fairer compulsory purchase powers, and

devolution of major new planning powers to the Mayors of London and Manchester

- Extending the Right to Buy to housing association tenants, and deliver 200,000 Starter Homes for first-time buyers
- Restricting tax relief to ensure all individual landlords get the same level of tax relief for their finance costs

Speaking about the need for the proposed planning reforms Secretary of State for Business, Sajid Javid said: "The UK has long been incapable of building enough homes to keep up with growing demand. This does not just frustrate the ambitions of hard working people who want to own their own home, it also harms productivity and restricts flexibility in the labour market."

The inspiration starts here... with a visit to Grand Designs Live in Birmingham



Grand Designs Live, the UK's top contemporary home show, returns to NEC Birmingham from 8 - 11 October for its 10th anniversary show. Presented by design guru Kevin McCloud, and based on the hugely popular Channel 4 series, the show offers visitors a unique opportunity to see all the latest trends for the home.

With areas dedicated to interiors, technology, kitchens, bathrooms, build and gardens, there's something for every room in your home. And with over 500 exhibitors, you can shop from a great selection of brands with 100's of items not available on the high street.

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ecobuild 2016

Ecobuild unveils new plans for 2016

At a launch event in central London, Ecobuild unveiled exciting new plans to take it into the next phase of business growth and reinforce the brand's position at the centre of the UK building industry.

Alison Jackson, group director for UBM EMEA Built Environment Exhibitions commented: "Ecobuild will continue to be the most

innovative and leading event on the construction calendar. This enduring brand has been updated and modernised for today's market challenges whilst reflecting Ecobuild's continued success in the construction industry."

Following a survey of 2,500 exhibitors and visitors as well as input from focus groups, Ecobuild 2016 will feature an improved show

layout, increased capacity conference arena and three learning hubs covering industry trends and issues in Design, Zero Carbon and Energy.

Ecobuild covers everything from design, construction and performance and is firmly established as the event to meet with senior decision makers, discover the newest products and learn about the latest trends.

bim

A building owner's guide to implementing BIM

The Building Services Research and Information Association (BSRIA), the UK-based testing, instrumentation, research and consultancy organisation, has produced a new Building Information Modelling (BIM) Roadmap guide.

The guide provides a method for an organisation to chart or map its corporate BIM strategy, which meets the Level 2 requirement by UK Government, through a number of clear stages or layers. The information provided expands on the approach already in use by government departments involved in the current 2016 BIM and GSL mandate by explaining the stages in detail and putting them into context.

The distinct layers of the Building Information Modelling (BIM) Roadmap explain:

- Layer 1: Industry practices – the Roadmap 'datum'
- Layer 2: Corporate/strategic practices – client processes
- Layer 3: Project/particular/local practices – client roles and supply chain responses

The guide initially focuses on BIM engagement via new build construction projects. It then moves on to look at the wider aspects of BIM used as a process or tool for managing live asset portfolios, where individual construction projects are simply parts.

It is aimed at those who are responsible for developing a BIM strategy within a building

owner organisation. However, it can also serve as a useful guide to BIM for all those involved with BIM projects and for those who may be taking over assets provided using BIM processes.

The guide will put all the concepts and documents such as PAS 1192-2 into a common framework to help demonstrate relationships – where they are and how they relate to each other and to wider industry practice.

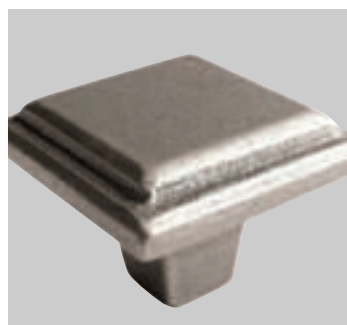
Hard copies of The BIM Roadmap are available to order from BSRIA Bookshop at £40 to non-members or £20 to BSRIA Members. PDF versions are also priced at £40 to non-members and are free for BSRIA members.

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Digitising custom build

The NaCSBA has announced that it is working with six industry partners on a new research and development project funded by Innovate UK called 'Digitising Custom Build'.

The project sets out to develop digital methods and tools that will help custom builders better manage the planning and design, customisation and sales, on-site construction and handover stages of new custom build homes. Whether for individual plots or large-scale developments, the aim of the project is to create an excellent customer journey which helps inform the homebuyer on choices and supports their continued involvement throughout the process.

Online participation software provider Stickyworld along with

HTA, Axis Design Architects, Facit Homes, Commusoft, and Slider Studio leads the project.

The project will support and inform homebuyer choice and is based on a cloud-based customer engagement platform. The platform has been developed to create a new interface between homebuyers, custom builders and their supplier partners. It is also believed that the project will ultimately benefit both plot specific, custom-built homes and larger-scale developments.

NaCSBA will support the project dissemination with a series of, to be announced events, and user access to test the tools that will help shape final project outputs.

news

Many councils are taking action to boost private homebuilding

More than 130 local councils in England (39 per cent) are already taking action to help boost the opportunities available for people who want to build their own homes.

This is one of the conclusions of the first comprehensive survey of custom and self build activity across all local councils in England.

The work has been undertaken by the research and development team at the National Custom & Self Build Association (NaCSBA). The team is spearheading a year long initiative that involves researching international best practices, and working with local councils to help them create opportunities for the provision and building of more affordable homes by private homebuilders.

Other key findings include:

- One in five councils have already set up a local custom and self build 'Register' or carried out assessments to measure local demand for people who want to build their own homes
- 77 councils are already creating opportunities for private homebuilders through their Local Plans and programmes. These involve a range of initiatives from policies asking for a mix of homes on sites and promoting private homebuilding as part of affordable housing initiatives, to requiring building plots on larger housing sites, supporting collective projects and commitments to work with industry and local communities to identify suitable opportunities and, in some cases, providing finance support
- More than 30 councils are identifying suitable sites or locations where private homebuilding is encouraged and in some cases are disposing of public land or buying land
- A number of councils are also identifying

more significant opportunities. These include the re-use of former public sector sites, proposals to include private homebuilding opportunities as part of future urban and village extensions, and introducing new planning policies that encourage affordable self and custom build homes in rural areas

- Councils in the North East are currently the most proactive where 70 per cent of them are progressing initiatives to make it easier for people who want to build their own homes. Two other regions (the South West and West Midlands) have half or more of all councils bringing forward initiatives. The least active region is currently London, where just 21 per cent of Councils have so far taken action
- Since 2012 the overall level of local authority activity across England has approximately trebled.

If this level of activity continues then by the end of 2016, between 150 and 200 councils will have brought forward new planning policies and initiatives to support private homebuilders across England.

By the end of 2018 the combined impact of all these initiatives will assist towards enabling up to 10,000 more self or custom build opportunities to come forward – if this happens the scale of the current self build sector will have doubled.

The NaCSBA research and development team has already completed visits to several German regions, and locations across the Netherlands, Belgium, France, Spain and Scotland. In addition the team is examining the Irish, US and Australian markets, and is currently investigating how the Scandinavian and some Far Eastern sectors operate.

The leader of the research and development team, Mario Wolf said: "Our international

work has focused on how local councils support people who want to build their own affordable homes. In most other countries a significantly higher proportion of all housing output is delivered by private homebuilders. We have seen a wide range of innovative ways councils facilitate more homebuilding – from huge 'self refurb' projects that transform redundant buildings into affordable homes, to novel collective city-centre developments, and numerous planning-led initiatives that deliver modestly priced serviced plots for local people to build their own home at prices they can afford."

"We have also met with scores of English councils to discuss local opportunities and challenges and to help them develop their ideas. This work suggests that many councils are keen to support the government's ambition of doubling the level of private homebuilding in the UK to help address the growing need for more housing. If realised, it will help diversify our homebuilding industry, create local jobs and support smaller builders and thousands of suppliers up and down the country.

"But we have also found that councils need ongoing help to drive forward these initiatives, and that the financing of private homebuilding projects is a lot easier abroad."

Later in the year the team will publish an online Toolkit that will help councils, small builders and community organisations that want to know how to deliver more opportunities. The Toolkit will also include details of a wide range of inspirational projects – from the UK and overseas.

The team, alongside the Department for Communities and Local Government, will be working with members of the UK financial sector to explore how they can develop and implement a range of new financial products to support the growth of the sector. And some of the lessons learnt from abroad will be forwarded to the government, to see if it can support the sector further as the new 'Right to Build' policy and Self-build and Custom Housebuilding Act 2015 are implemented.

Could you design the ultimate 'flexible' self-build starter home that can be constructed for £40,000?

The organisers of the 2015 National Custom & Self Build Week are launching a unique ideas competition – open to anyone – to design an innovative 'self-build' starter home that can be constructed for less than £40,000.

The home must have one bedroom, a living room, kitchen and bathroom, and be capable of being easily expanded as the family grows. Later on, it could grow again to provide a multi-generational home, or contract as the family downsizes, or even be split into two.

The first two 'Self Build on a Shoestring' competitions attracted lots of entries and both the winning designs are expected to be built – a number of houses based on the 2013 winning design have now secured planning permission in Scotland and Wales, and the team behind last year's winning entry is currently evaluating a number of potential sites in London to build it on.

This year's competition has been designed to showcase innovative designs that will provide an adaptable home that will last a family a lifetime. The focus is on delivering a 'modular' solution that can either be fully self built, or part-built in a factory (to provide a watertight shell) that the self builder can then finish off. The judges will be looking for clever approaches and innovative use of materials to keep the costs down, and they also want the homes to be sustainable and attractive.

Full details of how to enter – including a comprehensive Competition Brief – are available on the NaCSBA website (www.nacsba.org.uk/selfbuildonashoestring).

The judges will include Grand Designs presenter Kevin McCloud, serial self builder Geoff Stow and the chair of the Royal Institute of British Architects' self build committee, Luke Tozer.

The timeframe for the competition will give entrants until 18th September to submit their designs, with the winners being revealed at the Grand Designs Live exhibition at the NEC in early October. There is a £5,000 prize fund.

NaCSBA Chair Michael Holmes said: "Self build doesn't just happen on television. Every year more than ten thousand of us commission a new home for ourselves, or build it with our bare hands. The National Custom & Self Build Association is dedicated to making that easier, cheaper and more accessible – which is why we're running this competition again to shine the spotlight on affordable self build. We're looking for ultra-flexible designs for a simple-to-build home that can be 'grow' or 'contract' throughout the lifetime of the occupants. This competition will appeal to all those brilliant architects, building companies and offsite manufacturing firms who believe that the future of housing is self build.

"The potential market for the winning design could be enormous. A recent Ipsos MORI poll suggested there are around six million people currently investigating the feasibility of undertaking a self build project, and one million of these are searching for or trying to acquire a plot of land.

"In the 1970s and 1980s, the UK led the way when it came to innovative, low cost self build homes, and hundreds of very inexpensive, simple-to-build homes were constructed. We believe there is a huge appetite in Britain, especially from young families on modest incomes, to build a truly affordable home for themselves. And we are confident we will get some wonderfully innovative designs."

The competition will require the design to meet current UK Building Regulations. All entrants will have to include a detailed cost report that itemises the materials used and their cost.

grand designs live

Grand Designs Live – show round-up

As the eleventh Grand Designs Live London, sponsored by Anglian Home Improvements closed its doors; Media 10, the event's organisers, celebrated a hugely successful show, with over 100,000 visitors and over 500 exhibitors attending the event, to affirm the event's position as the UK's number one contemporary home show.

Show host Kevin McCloud was on hand to greet the visitors, before cutting the ribbon and declaring the 2015 show officially open. Welcoming visitors across nine days; the scale of the show has expanded to house more features in both Grand Technology and Grand Kitchens sections. Grand Technology featured a new interactive walkthrough experience, 'The Green House' showcasing the latest in innovative gadgets and eco-technology – and Grand Kitchen introduced visitors to the "Miele Live Kitchen Seminar Stage" which hosted a busy schedule of informative kitchen design talks.

Visitors arrived early, eager to get home ideas, inspiration and advice from the show's

experts, which included Kevin McCloud, George Clarke, Wayne Hemingway, James Alexander-Sinclair and Charlie Luxton, amongst others, who hosted a series of talks and workshops over the course of the show.

Commenting on the 2015 event, Show Director of Grand Designs Live, Nathan Garnett said: "Over the course of the 11 years Grand Designs Live London has been at London ExCel both the exhibition and exhibitors continue to grow and push the boundaries of home development. The fact we're able to introduce new features to the show each year has enabled us to increase the variety of the exhibitors, and reach out to a much wider and diverse level of consumer. Not only has the show continued to attract local visitors, but we're also seeing those from further afield come to explore the latest trends in home design and seek advice from the top experts in the business."

Some of this year's key highlights included the announcement of the Garden Designer of the Year Award winner, who was selected



during a live judging event with Kevin McCloud and James Alexander-Sinclair presenting the award to Mark O'Neil for his stunning 'WILD LIFE' Garden. Another exciting highlight of the show was the exclusive launch of 'George Clarke's Amazing Sheds' which brought together the build and design talents of architect and TV presenter, George Clarke, and master craftsman William Hardie of Studio Hardie.

Natural Building Live also proved to be a big success with the visitors who attended, by showcasing natural building techniques which can be applied to new build projects, retrofit, extensions or restoration to create healthy natural homes.

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New venue marks 25th anniversary celebration of The London Homebuilding & Renovating Show ExCel London 25 - 27 September

Coinciding with the latest report that the South East of the UK has seen the largest rise in self-builders in 2015 with the numbers increasing year on year by 16 per cent, the up-and-coming London Homebuilding & Renovating Show, sponsored by Anglian Home Improvements, is set to attract thousands more visitors at its new spacious and contemporary venue, ExCel, London from 25 - 27 September.

Throughout the three-day event, people who are still unsure how to undertake a project

efficiently from inception to fruition will have access to expert guidance and tailored advice at 15-minute consultations, in-depth seminars and masterclasses hosted by the UK's leading property experts and housebuilding companies.

The Ask the Architects zone will be hosted by four experienced members of the Royal Institute of British Architects (RIBA) who will be available to provide solutions on how attendees can navigate their building projects and overcome challenges on the way.

The 15-minute consultations, designed to be individual interactive sessions with over 20 property specialists, will be available at the Ask the Experts zone, where attendees can show plans and discuss ideas with the selected specialists.

Standard tickets are £12 in advance or £18 on the door (children under 16 go free). For further information call the ticket hotline on 08712 301 086 (calls cost 10p per minute plus network extras) or visit: www.homebuildingshow.co.uk/London

The Mindful Home: The secrets of making your home a place of harmony

The Mindful Home unites two of the world's most popular trends: the desire to live better in a lovely home combined with the ever-increasing interest in the practice of mindfulness.

Authors Craig and Deirdre Hassed have produced a book that will enable its readers to live a happier and more fulfilled life by helping them to create the living space they really want and need. If your home becomes a mindful home you are

likely to be better rested, more fulfilled, happier and healthier.

The authors look at the philosophy of the mindful home before moving on to the most critical spaces: leisure, socialising, quiet, storage, and outdoor living.

In The Mindful Home quiet spaces are discussed and the uses of light and colour explored. In addition, lots of tips and guides on mindfulness practice are featured throughout this fully illustrated book.



Engineers welcome Chancellor's housing initiatives but much more action is needed

As the recent report 'Building The Homes We Need' points out, the UK has "a housing supply system that consistently delivers too few homes, of variable quality, at very high costs".

The UK's housing supply market is widely recognised as being broken, and fixing it will require bold long-term leadership from the government to incentivise innovation, set challenging standards and put the householder at the heart of the build process.

Dr Colin Brown, Director of Engineering at the Institution for Mechanical Engineers, said in response to Chancellor George Osborne's

plans to speed up housebuilding in the UK: "While today's announcement on planning reform shows that the government is taking action on the UK housing crisis, it needs to be far more radical in its thinking if it wants to deliver an effective solution.

"Reforming the planning system is a one approach, but we fundamentally need to look at overhauling the way we construct homes in the UK.

"Off-site construction technologies have advanced greatly in recent years and can offer shorter build times, better energy efficiency, less waste, and lower costs for buyers.

"Government needs to support investment in the UK supply chain for off-site construction technologies, must reverse policies that are working against improvements in quality and standards and work much harder to diversify the UK housing supply market, by opening up much greater opportunities for self-builders, local authorities and housing associations.

"We need a minimum of 250,000 houses to be built each year to keep up with the nation's growing population. At no point over the last two decades has the figure exceeded 180,000, therefore, it is imperative this number is increased so we can meet demand."



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showcase

Whether you're choosing your new bathroom or upgrading an existing suite, be inspired by our choice of the latest styles and products for bathrooms and wetrooms to suit both traditional homes and modern living.

1. When it comes to designing a new bathroom, everything down to the last detail should be considered. Gone are the days of basic bathrooms and basin taps – they're now available in a variety of styles and shapes to give an ultra-modern and expensive feel. Just Taps Plus stock a diverse mix of striking and statement taps. Pictured are the Cascata single lever wall mounted basin mixer in a chrome finish (top), £249 and the Leo single lever basin mixer with pop up waste (bottom), £135.45.

www.justtapsplus.co.uk

Enq. 106



1



2. MX Group has recently launched a new extended range of thermostatic shower valves and an extended electric shower range, as well as a new range of brassware – taps and mixers, additional accessories – hand sets and cables; and an extended range of shower trays and enclosures. The new products are all on the company's website, or you can request a copy of the new catalogue, which features every product from the company's extensive shower range.

www.mx-group.com

Enq. 107



2



3. With waterproof wall panels making a real splash in the bathroom market as a practical yet luxurious alternative to tiles, multiPANEL has just raised the bar. You can now add photos – convert high resolution digital images into feature shower panels; add tunes – convert shower panels into speakers with the Bluetooth compatible soundPANEL system; and add light – embed back-lit acrylic shapes into your shower panel with multiPANEL glow (coming soon). Find out more at the website.

www.multipanel.co.uk

Enq. 108



3





4. As well as looking good, mosaics are extremely practical in bathrooms as they can be installed easily and simply on both flat and curved surfaces. Their versatility means they can also be installed virtually anywhere - within shower or wetroom inclosures, bathrooms walls or even on floors. The Tavo glass penny round mosaics from Original Style are a pleasing combination of neutrals, but they reflect the colour of their surroundings. This shape is also available in two other shades.

www.orginialstyle.com

Enq. 109

5. The Maxxus is a structural deck designed to span over joists without any deflection. The Maxxus is the quickest and easiest type of deck to fit. These kits can be used for tile or vinyl floors. The Maxxus deck is the strongest available for its thickness of just 22mm. It can take loads up to 470kg over 400mm joist spacing so you know your tiles and grouting are going to stay in one piece. For more information on the Maxxus or other Wetroom Innovations products, visit the company's website.

www.wetroominnovations.com

Enq. 110

6. The Elsdon Suite is part of the Pure Bathroom Collection's exclusive Pure sanitaryware range. The suite walks the line between angular yet curvaceous; its rigid linear outline softened by contoured corners. Three WC options; each featuring a soft close seat, are included as well as a basin and brassware. Prices as follows: Atlantic bath £205; Front panel £29; basin £95; Pedestal £55; WC with soft close seat £395; Elsdon basin mono £89; Elsdon bath filler £129; Wastes £20; Suite total price £1017.

www.purebathroomcollection.co.uk

Enq. 111



Electric showers get interesting with AKW's iShower

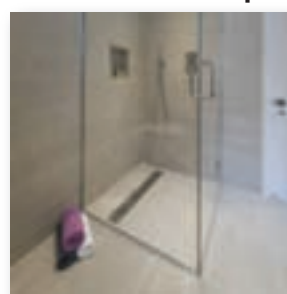


AKW, a leading manufacturer of inclusive bathrooms has introduced iShower, a new generation range of electric showers that make installation fast, simple and flexible. With options to suit all budgets and needs, this modern, stylish new range includes three units, iSure, iTherm and iCare – the world's first Bluetooth® enabled smart electric shower. Each shower unit has a size and shape that makes it easy to retrofit. Able to cover almost every manufacturer's model, iShower units are able to hide the footprint of the previous shower thereby reducing, or in some cases removing the requirement of any extra works or tiling.

Tel: 01905 823 299 www.akw-ltd.co.uk/ishower

Enq. 112

On The Level – Bespoke Wetrooms



With 30 years experience, On The Level is a leading UK manufacturer of concealed wet floor formers and is the only manufacturer to produce bespoke formers in any size or shape. The formers are precision engineered in 24mm birch ply which means that they are extremely strong, but light and easy to handle on site. To complete the perfect bespoke wet room, On The Level offers a package containing everything you need including tanking kit, drain gully, a choice of floor gratings, underfloor heating, toughened clear or sandblasted glass shower screens plus a choice of showers. Formers are guaranteed for 25 years.

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Enq. 113

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Enq. 114

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www.wetroominnovations.com 01629 815500

Enq. 115

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Enq. 116

editor's focus

1

BUILT ENVIRONMENT TECHNOLOGY

Research by the National Institute for Health and Welfare indicates that exposure to indoor pollutants is linked to reduced life expectancy and disease. The study suggests that changes to the way UK homes are ventilated could reduce the overall burden of disease caused by indoor air pollution. Whole House Mechanical Ventilation Systems with Heat Recovery (MVHR) together with pollen and carbon particle filtration offer potential solutions to the problem and can create a healthy allergen free home environment. Contact Built Environment Technology for more information.

Enq. 117



2

HÖRMANN

When choosing an entrance door, style, security and insulation are the three things we all look out for. Hörmann's steel ThermoPro range has it all. Rigid 46mm or 65mm-thick polyurethane-filled door leaves ensure excellent insulation values, while an aluminium frame with thermal break prevents any further heat loss. With five-point locking as standard, including conical swing and hinge bolts, the ThermoPro entrance door offers real peace of mind. A wide variety of finishes, colours, glazing options and matching side elements can be chosen to complement design choices or create a stunning visual statement.

Enq. 118

3

TOTAL HOME ENVIRONMENT

With gas and oil prices increasing year on year, what better than to offer a truly energy efficient home that will kill bills? Obviously you can insulate the building fabric up to the hilt, then Total Home Environment can install air source heat pumps for 350 per cent efficient heating; and they can provide heat recovery ventilation, to ensure that the VOC's in the house get expelled, but the heat stays in. Total Home Environment can complete room-by-room heat loss calculations to work out the best combination of systems for the homes you build.

Enq. 119



MX extends shower range



MX Group, a leading UK shower tray manufacturer, has extended its ranges of shower products including an extension to both its thermostatic and electric shower ranges, its accessories ranges – especially its handsets and cables – and added a range of taps and mixers to the company's already extensive portfolio of showers and shower related products.

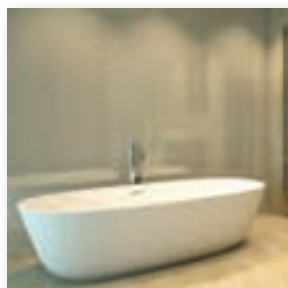
For more information on MX and its products, or to order your copy of the

new catalogue please visit the company's website or contact them via the contact number listed below.

Tel: 01684 293311 www.mx-group.com

Enq. 120

Take a walk on the wild side



Add a touch of nature to your kitchen or bathroom with this raw, untamed Safari shade from Lustrolite from Abacus Direct. Let Safari's woody grey green tones transport you to the broad plains of Africa and make your home an adventure. Lustrolite's glass effect acrylic wall panels are the perfect way to breathe life back into your kitchen and bathroom and a great way to incorporate current trends into your home. Lustrolite is available in nine colours – Arctic, Glacier, Blue

Atoll, Rouge, Mocha, Safari, Forest, Titan and Carbon – all of which can be used for both kitchen splashbacks and shower and bathroom walls. For further information please contact the website.

Enq. 121

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Enq. 122



A futuristic family farmhouse

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Paul and Maria Richardson constructed a home that combines the best of both worlds – integrating a traditional working farmhouse with the practicalities and technologies of modern living

Continued overleaf...

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HIGH POINT
 "Every day we pinch ourselves about living in this amazing home. It's not just down to the views or how it is finished, but how its very construction has allowed us to enjoy healthier and more comfortable lives."



It was time for them to embark on a labour of love to design and build a traditional farmhouse to blend in with its surroundings, with a high spec finish and gadgetry more akin to a James Bond hideaway

Nestled in the heart of the rolling Cambridgeshire countryside lies a traditional looking farmhouse – with a difference. This stunning, newly constructed home is built to Passivhaus standards and delivers a unique living experience for its owners and their family.

Unusually, the family farm did not have an existing dwelling but Paul and Maria Richardson had always outlined the perfect spot for a home, overlooking a protected nature reserve, yet adjacent to the farm buildings so they could remain close to the family business. Finally, it was time for them to embark on a labour of love to design and build a traditional farmhouse to blend in with its surroundings, with a high spec finish and gadgetry more akin to a James Bond hideaway.

Passivhaus design

The design process was a detailed affair working closely with their architect, Tim Christy, who empathised with their focus for the build, and their desire for a practical yet high-specification home suitable for their family needs.

"We always wished our new home to be a modern take on a traditional working family farmhouse, allowing two sets of family to enjoy the home yet maintain their own privacy," says Paul Richardson. "Additionally it had to be high quality, low maintenance, with high energy efficiency, yet take the opportunities modern architecture, design and materials offer in creating an exceptional living space."

Various methods of construction were considered; traditional timber frame, Sips panel

Continued overleaf...



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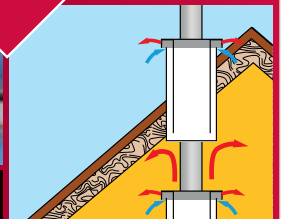
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and Integrated Concrete Formwork (ICF) with pros and cons discussed for each method. After much research it was decided to use a bespoke system by Beattie Passive; a unique and innovative building method using a timber frame structure, the first building system to achieve Passivhaus certification in the UK.

This special timber frame construction allows a continuous layer of insulation to pass from floor to wall and wall to roof, providing a complete thermal jacket to the entire building enclosure, eliminating the effects of cold bridging. This unique build system uses simple 'off-the-shelf' products, providing an economical and quick method of construction and doesn't rely on specialist craftsmen.

The unusual combined timber and concrete suspended floor construction with ground beams on concrete pads proved to be particularly suitable for the highly shrinkable clay conditions that existed on the site.

Great attention was given to the detail of airtight construction and final test results achieved less than $0.5 \text{ m}^3/(\text{h.m}^2)$ at 50Pa. in addition, thermal image cameras were used to test the whole structure before being finally sealed.

"We even have a double catflap system using the external side door and interior hallway door to ensure no air can escape!" says Paul.

Continued overleaf...



"It had to be high quality, low maintenance, with high energy efficiency, yet take the opportunities modern architecture, design and materials offer in creating an exceptional living space"

– Paul Richardson





LOW POINT
"It was a terrible shock when the house got struck by lightning and caught fire. However due to the phenomenal air-tightness, the house was far less damaged than a traditional build would have been."

With such high levels of airtightness, a whole house Mechanical Ventilation Heat Recovery unit was installed, drawing fresh air in via a 60m long below ground 450mm diameter 'earth tube' which pre-heats the air in cold months, and provides cooling in hot summer temperatures. The unit runs on minimal electricity, largely generated by the associated solar PV array installed on the adjacent farm-building

roof. Domestic hot water is heated by two individual air source heat pump electric cylinders run during the day whilst the sun is out and stored for nighttime use. There are even three wood burners installed, more for aesthetics than as a heating source, with air tightness maintained due to the air flow channelled via a separate underfloor pipe.

Clayboard was used instead of plasterboard

for ceilings, having the ability to absorb heat during the day and release it at night. Thermal mass is also created by the internal fair-faced brick walls of the large solar space and large areas of stone flooring, absorbing and moderating heat and helping cooling in the summer.

The farmhouse is orientated to generally face south and west with the main fenestration able to gain maximum amount of sunlight. The largest windows are shaded with zinc-clad canopies at ground floor and with extra large eaves at first floor level. This provides protection from the high summer sun, but allows low-level winter sun to penetrate deep into the house plan. There are large areas of glazing to provide good views out and create naturally light interiors, and all windows are aluminium clad high-performance timber frame and triple glazed.

The owners have also noticed a significant difference in the internal air quality. Maria smiles as she highlights there is almost no dust: "Despite having animals and five members of the family living here, the MVHR system has given us a virtually dust-free home. An utter joy when it comes to the task of cleaning!"

One team

Taking on such an extensive build was not for the faint hearted yet it was made considerably easier with the unwavering support of the entire network of contractors. Paul commented: "We doubt that many projects have been so collaborative in their nature. As clients we could not possibly have designed the living space we knew we wanted but our architect Tim,

Continued overleaf...







**BUILD
COST:**
£1,700
per sq m

Contact/suppliers

Architect: Tim Christy
01763 853 548

Passivhaus Certified Timber Frame System:
Beattie Passive
www.beattiepassive.com

Bathrooms: C P Hart
www.cphart.co.uk

Kitchen: Mark Wilkinson Furniture
www.mwf.com

Paint finishes: Faux Creation
www.fauxcreation.net

Fireplaces: Anglia Fireplaces & Design Ltd
www.fireplaces.co.uk

Electrical: Avocet Electrical Technology
www.avocet-electrical.co.uk

Audio/Vision Technology: Martins Hifi
www.martinhifi.co.uk

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www.nicheblinds.co.uk

Staircases: David Smith Staircases
www.davidsmith.co.uk

Lighting: Lighting Sensations
www.lightingsensations.co.uk

Windows: Redfen Windows
www.redfen.co.uk

MVHR System: Total Home Environment
www.totalhome.co.uk

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succeeded in incorporating our better ideas, injecting his own creative suggestions and strategically removing our less practical proposals. When we chose the Beattie Passive design, the original drawings had to be slightly re-drafted and the Beattie team joined us wholeheartedly. Even during the build process the spirit of collaboration extended to all the specialist trades. We are contented clients who shall be lifelong friends of their architect and builder."

Gracious gardens

With a large, sweeping patio area accessed via the expansive kitchen dining area, the views over the garden are enchanting. The area adjacent to the patio has been transformed from a bare patch of earth, to an enviable vegetable garden with herbs and produce close at hand for culinary entertaining. Shelter from a westerly wind is provided by the picturesque treeline yet Maria's pride and joy is her new greenhouse, built on the footings of an old farm structure. "I spend almost every day in here, planting, re-potting, watering and planning what to grow next," she says. "And when it gets too hot, I just head for the house knowing that without exception, it will be the perfect temperature."

High-spec interior

The interior of the farmhouse has been lovingly designed and is finished with exceptional attention to detail and exquisite choices of fixtures and fittings throughout. From the bespoke granite washstand in the guest cloakroom through to the hand fitted oak kitchen, the results are truly spectacular.

"The joy of designing your own home is creating the perfect space which will work for your lifestyle, whilst integrating every conceivable dream gadget. We love everything from

Lighting was a key factor in maintaining the focus on energy efficiency, with both technical and decorative lighting utilising 100 per cent low energy lamps using LED colour changing technology

the downstairs wet room for washing muddy boots and dogs, to changing music channels from anywhere in the house with just a touch of a button," says Paul.

Lighting was a key factor in maintaining the focus on energy efficiency, with both technical and decorative lighting utilising 100 per cent low energy lamps using LED colour changing technology, together with some low energy compact fluorescent fittings. All light fittings are dimmable, allowing for the creation of stunning night-time effects.

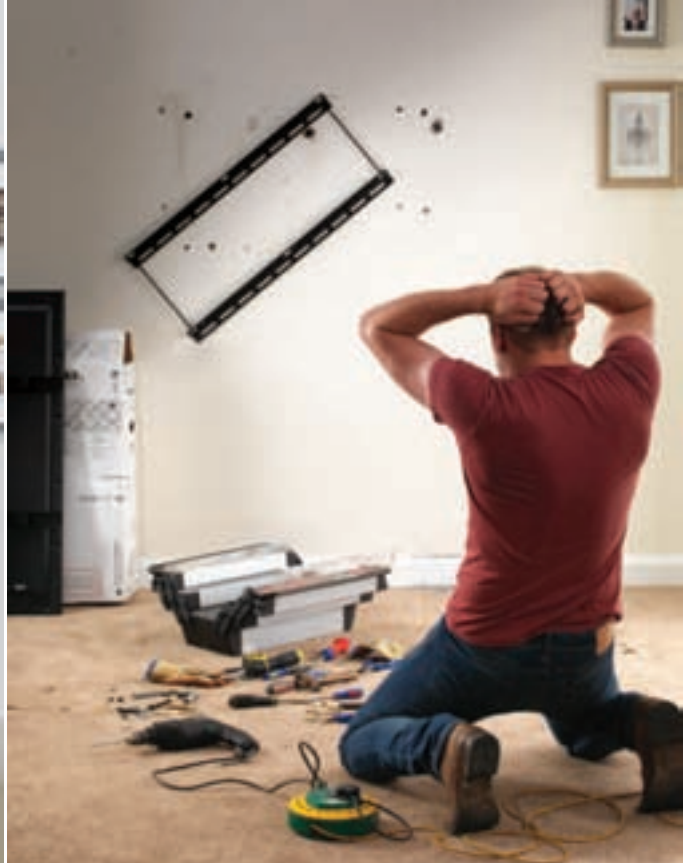
Hi-tech hub

With the focus around a farmhouse for the future, technology was an integral part of the design stage. "We love music and film, so this was the perfect opportunity to incorporate the latest in audio and visual technology throughout the house," commented Maria who is in charge of the 'hi-tech hub' conveniently tucked away in the attic.

Working with a technical supplier to realise their vision of a smart, connected home, they now enjoy multi-room AV integration, lighting, blind automation and Networking, with music in every room, mood lighting and even a hidden 'stealth' cinema in the drawing room. All controllable from one device for the ultimate blend of convenience and luxury.

Even the heat generated from the technology is utilised with a duct installed in the attic room so that the warm air that spills out mixes with the general re-circulating MVHR system, allowing the heat to transfer to other parts of the house.

There is no doubt that Paul and Maria have maximised the enhanced living environment provided by their super-insulated home. From Egyptian stone floors and Italian chandeliers, to remote control blinds and mood lighting, every inch of this extraordinary home dovetails beautifully.



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Enq. 127

Hole in one specialist visits Atlantic rowers



Spain's Miguel Angel Jiménez, who made a hole-in-one during the third round of the BMW PGA Championship at Wentworth, took time out from the golf to visit the **Mitsubishi Electric** stand within the tented village at the four-day event. Jiménez, who is brand ambassador for Mitsubishi Electric called to cheer on the All Beans No Monkeys team, who will row the Atlantic later this year when they take part in the Tallisker Whisky Atlantic Challenge. Crew and Mitsubishi Electric Heating product manager James Timbs-Harrison, says: "Jiménez [...] was very impressed with the challenge facing us".

Tel: 01707 282880 www.allbeansnomonkeys.com

Enq. 128

Eurobrick celebrates 25 years in business



Brick and stone slip cladding specialist **Eurobrick** reaches a milestone in 2015 with 25 years in business. Despite two major recessions, the company has seen year on year growth since day one with 2014 being its best year to date. The company is now one of the country's largest stockists of brick slips, introducing its innovative patented insulated brick slip cladding system in 1990. Eurobrick's directors, John Mayes and Tony Hornsby, introduced the first

comprehensively designed X-Clad brick cladding system to the market. The team convinced a reluctant market of its benefits, recognising the potential of X-Clad as a reliable alternative to traditional construction methods.

Enq. 129

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Enq. 130

Rest assured



Many self-builders have sleepless nights wondering whether they can meet the skill levels required for neat and effective brickwork, or – perhaps – should they be calling in the professionals at some considerable expense? With the **Durisol UK** wall construction solution, these worries are a thing of the past. The simplicity of the construction method takes all the stress out of building walls that are strong, quick to erect and will last every bit as long as a traditional construction.

Durisol UK offers training sessions at its base in South Wales, and at various locations throughout the UK.

Tel: 01495 249400 www.durisoluk.com

Enq. 131

Northcot Brick launches new yellow handmades



Northcot Brick has launched a new range of classic yellow bricks as part of its well-established handmade range. The three new blends: Woodstock Weathered, Wellacre Antique and Marlborough Mellow add variation to the rich warm reds and orange hues often associated with the historic brickworks. Handmade using traditional bench mould methods and burnt in a coal-fired kiln, these distinctive yellow bricks offer subtle variations in tone and texture and a character designed to complement the architecture of the south and south east of England.

Tel: 01386 700551 www.northcotbrick.co.uk

Enq. 132

Choosing bricks for self-build homes

Graham Irving, managing director of Bovingdon Bricks explores the use of brick in self-build homes

For centuries clay bricks have been an integral part of the English architectural landscape and they continue to be the single most popular way of constructing a house.

In practical terms bricks are not only suited to the damp British climate, but they require very little on-going maintenance compared to other external finishes. In fact any weathering can actually add to the charm of brickwork and to some extent even improve its weather resistance. In addition, brick has superior thermal, acoustic and fire resistant properties and excellent sustainability credentials throughout its entire lifecycle, compared to other materials.

However, for most self-builders, the real attraction of brick lies in its aesthetic qualities and the 'kerb appeal' it brings to a property. As it cannot easily be changed at a later date, it is important to take time to make the right choice of brick from the start.

Handmade or machine made

Broadly speaking, there are two main types of facing bricks (bricks for the facade of a building) to choose from: handmade or machine made

Continued overleaf...

Bricks are not only suited to the damp British climate, but they require very little on-going maintenance compared to other external finishes





which, depending on the density of the clay, are manufactured using hard or soft mud processes.

Handmade bricks are often the preferred choice for self-builders because of the sheer quality they bring to a property. Individually made, with no two bricks exactly the same, they are the most expensive to produce, but their mellow variable tones, rough textures and their uneven creases and 'smiles' give them immense character.

Volume produced machine made or wirecut bricks use more cost-effective modern automated processes and therefore are cheaper to buy. However, they tend to be more regular and uniform in appearance with a sharp edged smoother-faced finish. Although they may be tumbled, artificially stained or weathered to create a distressed or reclaimed look, they fail to recreate the idiosyncratic charm of a genuine hand-thrown brick.

Stock bricks, which are made using a 'soft mud' process, tend to be more expensive than wirecut bricks, but they have an attractive mellow finish and can sometimes be irregular in shape.

Other brick types include common bricks, which are not used as facing bricks, being more suitable for garden walls and outbuildings, and engineering bricks, they are highly durable and moisture resistant are generally used for below groundwork and damp-proof courses.



The best starting point when specifying bricks is to consider the architectural style and the character of the region

When choosing your type of brick, the quality, appearance and relative costs need to be carefully considered. Handmade bricks may be up to £200 per 1,000 more expensive than machine made bricks, so for a house costing £400,000 to build, 20,000 bricks may cost an additional £4,000. This equates to only 1 per cent of the property's overall value, whereas the bricks amount to 95 per cent of its entire appearance.

Respecting the regional architecture

The best starting point when specifying bricks is to consider the architectural style and the character of the region, particularly if you are building in a conservation area or in an Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB).

In centuries gone by, brick making was entirely a regional matter with most towns having their own brickworks. As they were generally made by hand on site from locally dug clay, bricks from one part of the country would often have a different tone and texture from those made in another region.

We still see these regional differences today. For example, bold red bricks tend to be common in the north of the country, blue toned bricks are typical of the Midlands, oranges in Lincolnshire and creams and yellows are predominantly seen in Cambridge and London.



Stock bricks such as those manufactured in Hertfordshire and the Home Counties traditionally use the soft local clay that produces mellow Multis that range from flaming orange through to subtle grey browns.

When building your home it is important to respect these regional differences. In fact, if you are building or extending a home in a conservation area, planners will usually insist on a local reclaims (often expensive and in short supply) or handmade bricks – or at the very least a very local-looking 'brick-matched' alternative. If in doubt it is always worth sending some sample boards to your local planning office for approval.

Being creative with brick

The beauty of brick for the self-builder is its potential for creativity. Depending on your budget and the style of property you are building, you can incorporate decorative features and interesting brick bonds to make your home truly unique.

The bond or pattern of the brickwork most commonly used today is the 'stretcher bond', because it is cheap and easy to lay and suited to cavity wall construction. More elaborate bonds such as 'Flemish', 'English' or 'English Garden Wall', often found on historic properties that were built with solid walls, are a very attractive alternative particularly for traditional styled

properties. However, the headers bricks do need to be cut to accommodate modern cavities, incurring an additional expense.

Choosing the brick is probably the most important decision you will make when building your new home

Similarly, taking inspiration from the past, you can create striking herringbone or diaper patterns in the brickwork, or use special shapes such as arches, curves, angles, plinths and decorative columns, all of which will add distinction and individuality to your home.

Before you take the plunge

Before placing the order, it is wise to make sure that you have examined a wide cross-section of sample panels and if possible seen your preferred brick blend on a completed project.

For additional reassurance you could even ask your builder to construct a sample wall so that you can view both the brickwork and the quality of his workmanship. All new facing bricks – both handmade and machine made – should meet BS quality standards – preferably F2 for frost resistance.

It is very easy to underestimate the number of bricks you require, so when calculating quantities, remember to take into account potential wastage, (which can be up to 5 per cent) plus any further work you may wish to undertake (garden walls or outbuildings etc.) in order to avoid any expensive re-ordering.

As industry brick demand currently exceeds

supply, you will also need to take into account longer lead times, which may vary according to brick type and manufacturer, with special shapes and bespoke options often taking the longest to supply.

The long-term investment

Choosing the brick is probably the most important decision you will make when building your new home. The brick itself is not just a practical, aesthetic lifestyle choice, but also an important investment, which has the potential to add to the long-term value of your self-build property.

Enq. 212



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Enq. 133



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Enq. 134

Everbuild expands its adhesive range



Everbuild – a Sika Company – is thrilled to be expanding its array of powdered tile adhesives by introducing four new products to the popular range. The key product within the new range is Lightweight Extra Floor and Wall Tile Adhesive, a multi-purpose product created from a unique lightweight formula which can be utilised as a thick, thin or pourable adhesive depending on how much the product is diluted while still retaining its superb quality and performance. Also within the range is Standard Set Tile Adhesive, a cement based wall and floor tile adhesive with excellent adhesion and non-slip properties, formulated specifically to give a longer open and working time. Large Format Tile Adhesive is a synthetic resin-modified thin bed adhesive that is specifically formulated for binding large format ceramic, vitrified, porcelain and stone tiles to walls and some floors and finally a PTB Adhesive which is a pourable thick bed adhesive for bonding large format tiles to floors in highly loaded areas. These four exciting new powdered tile adhesives are packaged in highly attractive sacks in line with the current range.

Tel: 0113 240 3456 www.everbuild.co.uk

Enq. 135



GPML Construction is a leading provider of building and maintenance solutions to customers in London and across the South East.

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Enq. 136

Workwear gets shorty

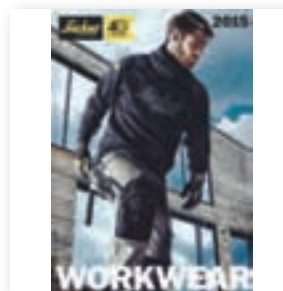


Workwear brand **Scruffs** is making it easy for you to keep your cool this summer, with the launch of the new multi-functional, lightweight Scruffs Trade Shorts. Made from performance materials and loaded with functional features, the durable and lightweight cargo-style shorts, are designed to be smart enough for business and strong enough for work. The Scruffs Trade Shorts are durable and lightweight work shorts with tough reinforcements for durability in stress areas. Designed for the busy tradesmen on the go, they include easy to access cargo pocket, phone pocket, rule pocket and tuck away holster pockets.

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Enq. 137

The best gear for working on site



The latest **Snickers Workwear** full colour brochure is now available free in print or as a digital edition. It features a leading range of working clothes, the only one that will work hard on site all year round, whatever the working environment or weather condition. Whatever trade you're in, there's something for you in the Snickers range – Work Trousers, Work Jackets, Tool Vests, Shirts, Underwear, Accessories and Tool Carriers. Complimented by Snickers Profiling and Embroidery services and the UK's most extensive range of garment sizes, Snickers' Workwear System delivers the ultimate solution to make every man and woman's workday easier and safer.

Enq. 138



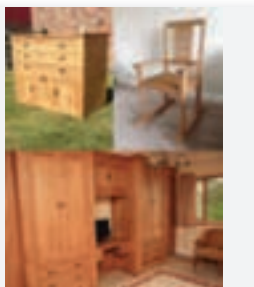
Freefoam launch new style double shiplap cladding

Freefoam, a leading manufacturer of a wide range of innovative products for the building industry, has made a valuable addition to its popular cladding range and launched Fortex Pro, a new style double shiplap board. The new product features an increased width and thickness creating a stronger board through improved profile design and offers greater coverage with a quick and easy calculation for specification purposes. Colour choice is important for any exterior building product and as colour specialists Freefoam have now added four new colours to this product range, making a total of ten. The combination of all these new features and the addition of superior colourfastness and weatherability properties using advanced skin technology makes Fortex Pro the perfect choice for all building professionals. The Fortex® cladding range includes a double shiplap plank and a weatherboard style both with an attractive embossed textured wood effect finish and an authentic render finish. PVC-U cladding requires minimal maintenance once installed, a major benefit for property owners and a compelling feature for any property developer or public sector housing provider. With significant environmental credentials, being awarded an A+ rating from the BRE's 'Green Guide To Specification' when installed with standard components, the range makes a real alternative to timber and fibre cement products.

Tel: 01604 591110 **www.freefoam.com**

Enq. 139

High quality furniture deserves a high quality finish



Many woodwork professionals across the UK enjoy using **Osmo UK's** wood finishing products. All Osmo products are designed to enhance, maintain and prolong the beauty of wood – an ideal finish for all wooden furniture. Gavin Kirkbride, owner of Lily handmade furniture, has dedicated his life to creating stunning hand-carved furniture. Based in North Yorkshire, Gavin's pieces are bespoke and made in 100 per cent solid oak. In order to ensure maximum wood protection,

Gavin uses Osmo's Polyx-Oil and Wood Wax Finish products. Gavin said "I have been using Osmo Polyx-Oil and Wood Wax Finish for 10 years and have always been thrilled with the results."

Enq. 140

Architects and designers get the Imago Point



700 architects regularly use the Imago Points network of showrooms in Italy for Imago Lift & Slide Doors from **AGB** and now it has arrived in the UK and Ireland. Companies manufacturing and installing Imago Lift & Slide timber doors have full sized examples at their showrooms and offer expert advice. Developed by Italian hardware specialist **AGB**, Imago features the highest thermal efficiency and frames the view with large expanses of glass and a very slim wood surround. A map

showing the 18 Imago Points across the UK and Ireland can be found at the Imago website.

Tel: 01279 812958 **www.chooseimago.co.uk**

Enq. 141

Synseal welcomes summer with open doors



With summer just around the corner, **Synseal**, a home improvement expert, looks at why its unique bi-fold doors are a must-have home improvement essential this season. Bringing the outside in, Synseal's brand new range of premium bi-fold doors, WarmCore, are a true innovation adding a super stylish addition to any home and lead the market in thermal insulation, protecting the indoors from the seasonal rise and falls in outdoor temperatures. The WarmCore range is a clever and superior quality 'warm aluminium' bi-fold door system which is available from three to seven folding sliding sashes (up to six metres wide) in four popular colours which provide 16 dual colour combinations. WarmCore is perfect for exterior walls, conservatories and orangeries. Homeowners installing WarmCore will enjoy additional peace of mind too as the bi-fold doors meet the stringent security standard required for construction, security, safety, weather tightness and strength of performance. This means behind the super striking looks, your door is robust and built to last all year round, 365 days a year, with a 10 year guarantee.

Tel: 01623 443200 **www.synseal.com**

Enq. 142

**CASE STUDY
BUILDING
WITH BESPOKE
EAVES
ROOFLIGHTS**



A relaxed contemporary
house within a
natural landscape

Frameless glass finishes are not always easy to achieve. One of the critical design requirements of glass used in any building project is to resist the loads created by wind pressure and snow, as this can dictate the maximum single pane size permitted before the deflection of the glass exceeds what is considered safe

Broombank is a RIBA award winning new build house featuring a bespoke eaves rooflight. Broombank, designed by SOUP architects, is situated on the edge of River Alde in Suffolk.

The balance between nature and architecture

The brief, as stated by SOUP, was to 'create a relaxed contemporary house within a reconsidered, natural landscape that blurred the site boundaries to its neighbours and adjoining marshland'. The location therefore remained a strong focal point throughout the entire project, with each aspect of the build designed to accentuate the surrounding views of 'outstanding natural beauty'.

As Patrick Walls, from SOUP explains, the central motif was to 'try and control the sense of arrival and movement through the house by creating an entrance courtyard to the front which didn't give a direct view through to the River Alde'. He goes on to say that 'the view is kept and created by the front entrance; you move through into the main living space which then opens out onto the wide landscape'. The property itself has been kept minimalist in style; large open space and concrete floors remain neutral in colour to further highlight the surrounding greenery.

The unfolding relationship between nature and architecture is maintained through the property via the carefully positioned rooflights that allow sunlight to pervade the building.

Using rooflights to make the most of natural light

As part of the architects vision to incorporate as much outdoor space as possible, Glazing

Vision supplied a range of bespoke rooflights to make the most of this natural source of light.

The central feature Glazing Vision supplied was a Bespoke 'Eaves' Flushglaze Rooflight [3650mm x 1685mm]. This was positioned within the stairwell, enabling light to flood into a typically dark, enclosed space using both horizontal and vertical sections of glass.

Glazing Vision's ethos of 'minimal framework' made them a good candidate when it came to the roof glazing on this building. In order to achieve the goals of the design brief, the avoidance of visible framework was critical to the overall aesthetic.

The glass on the central feature rooflight appears to disappear into the building fabric, forming a seamless integration between the glass and building envelope.

As communication is essential when dealing with small details, Glazing Vision provided detailed general rooflight arrangement drawings. These included recommendations on how internal finishes might be carried out in order to minimise, and in most cases, completely hide any supporting framework.

Frameless glass finishes are not always easy to achieve. One of the critical design requirements of glass used in any building project is to resist the loads created by wind pressure and snow, as this can dictate the maximum single pane size permitted before the deflection of the glass exceeds what is considered safe. Glazing Vision calculated the appropriate thickness and type of glass to meet the specified requirements. After assessing the unit and the deflection of glass to wind pressure, Glazing Vision felt that there might have been a risk of fracture, due to the sheer size of the horizontal pane.

Continued overleaf...



LIGHT AND SPACE

"The homeowner's requirement for a haven of peace and tranquility was fulfilled, in part, due to the carefully planned use of light and space throughout the design build"



Refining the design for better performance

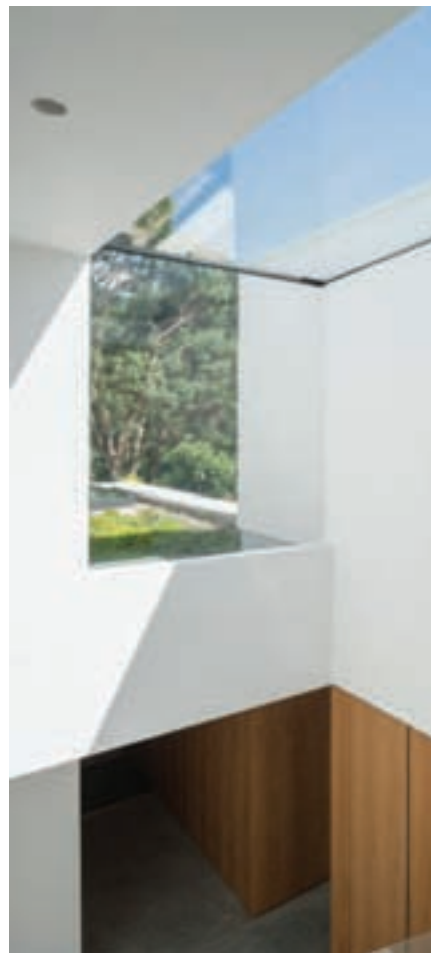
The rooflight had to be considered with a new specification to deliver the appropriate safety requirements. Glazing Vision's standard glass specification of 6mm toughened glass was increased to 10mm thickness on the horizontal plane in order to minimize deflection. The eaves unit was designed in house at Glazing Vision by one of their experienced CAD designers, before being installed to meet the new specification.

Without these revisions, further framework would have been needed to support the horizontal pane of glass; splitting the pane into two sections in order to strengthen the large unit. Ultimately, the overall flow of the glass and minimalist appearance of the property would have been interrupted.

The homeowner's requirement for a haven of peace and tranquility was fulfilled, in part, due to the carefully planned use of light and space throughout the design build.

Installing the bespoke rooflight required a high level of skill and attention to detail. Glazing Vision were able to adapt their designs to deliver the best possible performance, meet safety requirements and to achieve the desired, minimalist aesthetic.

Enq. 213



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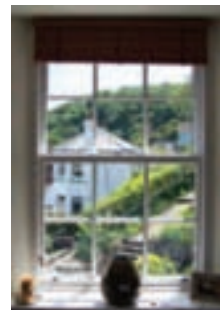
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Enq. 144



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Life **Engineered.**

Modena Hybridge orangery - case study

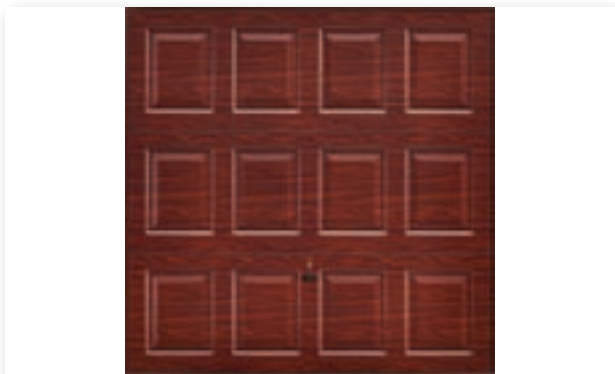


Creating a large kitchen-family room at the heart of the home was the plan for the Burton family. They decided to demolish the conservatory, remove the rear wall of the extension, extend further (where the conservatory had been) and create an open plan design. So instead of opting for a traditional brick built extension, Tim designed a bespoke hybrid orangery extension to replace the conservatory and incorporate the kitchen. He opted for the contemporary and linear aesthetics of the Modena orangery from **Synseal**. The Modena orangery presents traditional orangery design with a particularly modern twist. Its deep aluminium fascia is a unique feature, creating an overhanging soffit which is just short of 60cm in depth. When designing modern open plan premises linking kitchen, dining and living room areas, flexible use of space is essential and the Modena can be fitted with full-width bi-folding doors to deliver just that. The technology used, including high performing Celsius glass, means the space is thermally protected and can be used all year round. In addition, the deep soffit acts as an effective shade and shelter.

Tel: 01623 443200 www.synseal-homeowner.co.uk

Enq. 147

Georgian Rosewood is a market leader



Garador's recently launched Rosewood timber effect Georgian Up & Over door is a new top seller. The precision engineered steel Georgian, with its crisp and elegant panel pressings, is a hugely popular door. Following the launch of this door in new timber effect foil coatings, it is now enjoying a dramatic surge in sales. "These doors offer all the benefits of a steel door but none of the maintenance issues involved with timber doors," said Garador's managing director Simon Hipgrave. "Our customers want durability, security and an attractive appearance. The Georgian Rosewood delivers all three." The Georgian door is constructed from high grade galvanised steel. Built around a strong box section chassis with back bracing for extra rigidity, the door panel is welded for a seamless finish and therefore avoids the need for rivets. Along with its outstanding engineering and functionality, it offers excellent value for money. Now, with exciting new timber effect styling, it is no wonder that the Georgian is becoming one of the main players in today's modern garage door market. Find out more about the Georgian timber effect foil coat door at the Garador website.

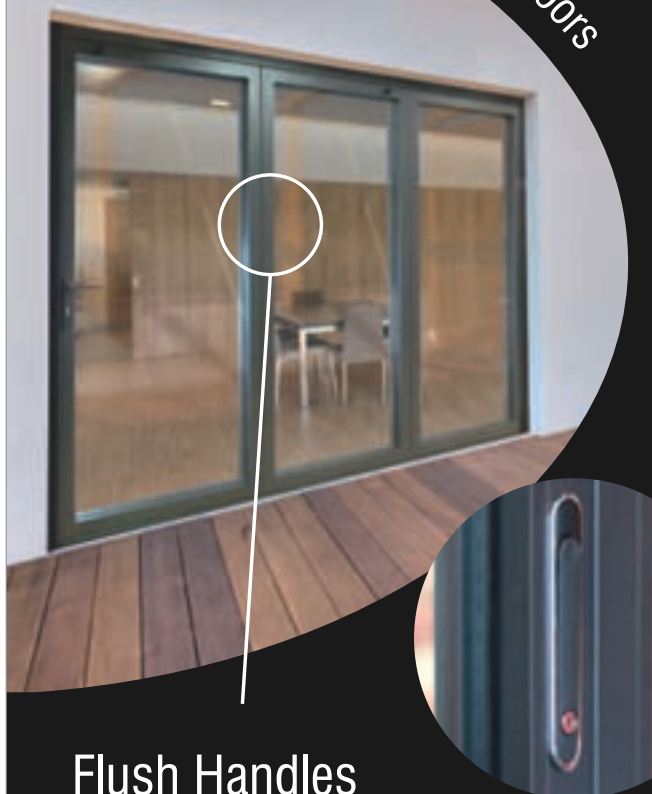
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Enq. 148

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Enq. 149

Synseal launches Masterdor Benchmark doors

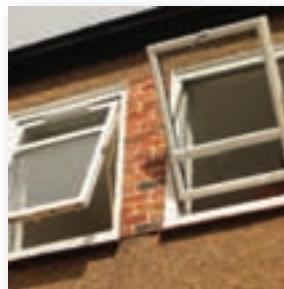


Synseal has launched a new range of Masterdor Benchmark high quality, low maintenance GRP composite doors, readily available for sale to the Trade via Synseal's nationwide network of approved direct purchasing account partners. Featuring 14 beautiful and popular residential door styles with an array of stunning glass designs supplied by Synseal's IGU manufacturing division Global Glass, the Masterdor Benchmark range is neatly summarised in an informative 40 page brochure designed for sales presentation to UK homeowners. They all have attractive names such as the 'Moorgreen', 'Derwent' and 'Butterley'.

Tel: 01623 443200 www.synseal.com

Enq. 150

Sheerframe ensures window cleaning in safety

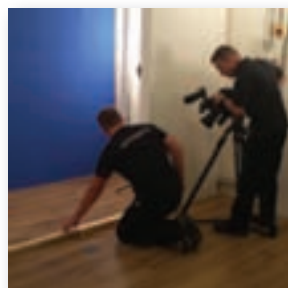


Sheerframe 8000 Top Reversible windows from Synseal fully reverse for ease of cleaning in total safety from inside the building. This specialist Top Reversible window design features a purpose-designed Sheeturn hinge and is ideal for domestic applications including escape windows as well as medium and high rise dwellings and office or hotel accommodation. A range of transoms and mullions provide additional multi-light and stick construction curtain walling configurations to complement this user-friendly window design and deliver effective fenestration solutions for commercial buildings.

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Enq. 151

Spring into DIY action with P C Henderson



With 22 per cent of homeowners choosing to improve their homes rather than move, P C Henderson's step-by-step installation tutorials are an ideal solution that will help to make home improvements projects easier. The installation tutorials are available from P C Henderson's YouTube page (YouTube Search: P C Henderson Ltd) or website and will cover all 13 products included in its residential brochure with more to follow. These handy video guides not only highlight which

tools are needed for which component, they also show the correct installation technique giving customers all the information they need.

Tel: 0191 377 0701 www.pchenderson.com

Enq. 152

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and provides guaranteed high performance sealing for the lifetime of the window.

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Enq. 153

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Enq. 154

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Enq. 155

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Bespoke system helps create stunning home

Bespoke sliding doors from Reynaers at Home have helped to create a luxurious Spanish villa, effortlessly combining state-of-the-art performance with arresting aesthetics.

Casa Las Palmeras was designed by architect Valentín de Madariaga and his fabricator partner Grupo Moncada. They used a total of 18 sets of sliding patio doors throughout the home, to create a smooth transition from interior to exterior. The sliding doors, specially designed by Reynaers based on the Hi-Finity system, were chosen thanks to their incredibly slim sight lines and fully automated mechanism, allowing the homeowner to open and close the doors at the push of a button.

José Miguel Moncada of Grupo Moncada says: "These specially designed doors are 5.9m high and weigh 285kg. The pace of construction forced us to finish in record time; the entire project was completed in nine months."

The Hi-Finity sliding elements installed by Grupo Moncada had the tracks set deeply into the floor at specific points, with the top and side



profiles integrated into the walls. The only thing that remained visible was the meeting section of the minimalistic profiles. The sliding door has been cleverly designed so that the outer frame can be concealed behind the surrounding wall, making wall-to-wall and floor-to-ceiling glass a possibility in any home.

Marketing Manager at Reynaers Rebecca Cope says: "This project was very much a

bespoke solution, but the unique design means that even the heaviest of these doors will glide open and closed with minimal effort."

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Enq. 209

Global summer casting shapes footprint design



Synseal's best-selling hybrid orangery, Global Summer, is now available in an extended range of building extension footprint styles thanks to a new 90 degree internal corner casting. Fashioned from sturdy cast aluminium, Global Summer's corner castings complement the aluminium decorative external fascia to ensure a neat fitted appearance. Launched in May 2012, Global Summer was initially available in Georgian, Victorian and Gable conservatory styles which cater for the vast

majority of orangery applications but the new 90 degree casting now allows more complex T-shaped and P-shaped orangeries to be constructed.

Tel: 01623 443200 www.synseal.com

Enq. 158

Beat burglars with steel windows



The inherent strength of their frames means that steel windows are the best for safeguarding against unwanted intruders. One of the best deterrents to a thief is the traditional 'cottage' style steel window, divided into small panes, with interlocked steel glazing bars. Steel Window Association members offer W40 steel windows that comply with Secured by Design requirements. The strength and security of steel windows and doors is optimised with appropriate hardware.

When manufacturing new windows, Steel Window Association members provide locking devices, locking handles, concealed bolts and mortice deadlocks.

Enq. 159



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Enq. 162

New Hergom Nature inset stove from Eurostove

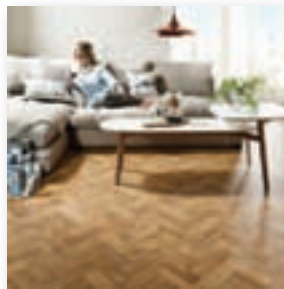


The Hergom Nature inset stove is a new panoramic stove with a heat output of 8.5kW, 10kW and 12kW. Exclusive to **Eurostove** in the UK, this quality cast iron design is ideally suited to contemporary spaces with its minimal lines and flush finish. Available in three sizes – 70cm, 80cm and 100cm wide – Nature is designed to be long lasting with a large ceramic glass door for easy loading of logs and a clear view of the flickering flames within. Key features include automatic temperature controls, which means that the air vents are automatically adjusted to maintain your preferred temperature.

Tel: 01934 750500 www.eurostove.co.uk

Enq. 163

Polyflor launches Designatex for the home



Polyflor is proud to announce the launch of their latest range of beautifully designed and hard wearing flooring developed specifically for the home, the Designatex collection of textile backed luxury sheet vinyl flooring. The stylish yet practical Designatex vinyl flooring range includes 12 wood effect and 6 stone effect designs to enhance any room in the home. To complement both traditional and modern interiors, the wood collection features a variety of wood species and layouts including three classic parquet designs. These wood designs accurately replicate the warmth, grain detail and natural textures of real wood.

Tel: 0161 767 1111 www.polyflor.com

Enq. 164



Setcrete™ sets the pace with 2K Pro

Setcrete's 2K Pro levelling compound has been used to rapidly create a smooth and durable surface for the installation of new floorcoverings at a kitchen refurbishment in Solihull, Birmingham. Thanks to the unique capabilities of Setcrete's 2K Pro levelling compound, contractors were able to complete the entire job in a single day. Normally, before a levelling compound could be installed, this adhesive residue would have to be removed by mechanical means, such as shot blasting, which can be time consuming and difficult. Setcrete's 2K Pro has been specifically designed for use over adhesive residues. By using the purposefully designed product, contractors were able to avoid having to remove the residue before levelling the subfloor, saving a great deal of time and effort. Setcrete's rapid setting 2K Pro can achieve a walk-on time of just 60 minutes and new floorcoverings can be installed in as little as four hours. The fast drying, two component compound can be applied to a range of properly prepared subfloors, including concrete, sand/cement screeds, terrazzo, granolithic paving, ceramic tiles, and it can be applied directly onto Setcrete Rapid Set DPM. One contractor who carried out the refurbishment work said: "I will definitely be using this product again. Not only did we not have to spend time getting rid of the adhesive residue, but the newly levelled subfloor was walk-on hard in an hour, meaning we could get on with the rest of the job in no time." Setcrete 2K Pro floor levelling compound, available from merchant distributors nationwide, is sold as a 20kg bag and 5 litre bottle package.

Enq. 165

Introducing the new Infinity 780BF

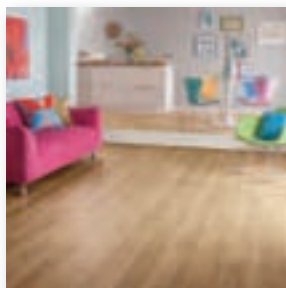


Charlton & Jenrick are very pleased to announce the introduction of the stunning 780BF to the existing Infinity range of fires. The 780BF has a beautiful and extremely realistic flame picture, which will both compliment and enhance any living space. With a modest input of 3.4kW, and an impressive output of 2.7kW, the 780BF is both wonderful to look at and economical to maintain, with a generous 87 per cent efficiency. The large ceramic glass viewing area of

the Infinity 780BF is the same size as the 780FL, which means the new fire is compatible with the fireplace package designs already available including the Edgemond & Rembrandt suites.

Enq. 166

Karndean Designflooring launches new range



Karndean Designflooring, has launched a brand new easy-fit range, Palio Clic by Karndean. Karndean unveiled the new quick to install collection in May which features the intricate finish and natural look customers have come to expect. The plank and tile designs can be easily laid over most existing hard surfaces so long as they are dry, smooth, level and dust-free. Without the need for traditional cutting tools, the range can be trimmed to size with a sharp knife.

The patented click-locking system allows installers to achieve an authentic and luxurious feel in any space without the need for glue.

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Enq. 167



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Enq. 168

Using fixed Flushglaze rooflights for natural lighting



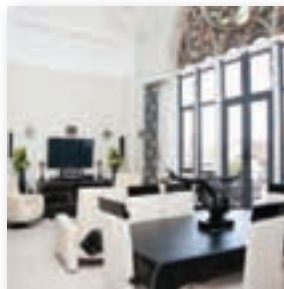
An Edwardian terraced house has incorporated a range of interventions to make the perfect family home. The ground floor plan, which was originally segregated into three rooms, were replaced with a large kitchen diner that extends outwards into the garden. In order to create an extension that provided sufficient lighting as well as space, a large skylight was incorporated into the design plan. Glazing Vision supplied their fixed Flushglaze rooflight for the requirement

of natural lighting; this large, single pane of toughened, triple-laminated glass was installed above the dining area.

Tel: 01379 353741 www.glazing-vision.co.uk

Enq. 169

Solution for historic apartment renovation



Johnson & Starley's WarmCair warm air heating, Aquastar hot water storage and Home 'n Dry ventilation technology have been combined to maximum effect in a spectacularly renovated historic apartment in Penarth. Following a site visit, a specification for a heating system, including detailed heat loss calculations, was drawn up. The solution was based on the installation of a Johnson & Starley WarmCair C20DW high efficiency combined warm air condensing heater with domestic hot water. To maintain the highly attractive look of the apartment, ducting was concealed around the apartment behind the ceiling.

Tel: 01604 762881 www.johnsonandstarley.co.uk

Enq. 170

Easyflow UFH and screed



Easyflow is dedicated to providing its clients with the very best UFH systems, complimented by flowing screeds offering higher strength, improved surface flatness and greatly improved heating performance. It will plan and design your UFH ensuring the highest standard. Quality products and good advice ensure that you get the best possible results from your heating system. Once your UFH and screed are installed you will be provided with a two year workmanship guarantee

that in the rare chance that any defects occur as a result of the installation process, Easyflow will cover all call out and labour costs.

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Enq. 171

Straw eco house offers sustainable living



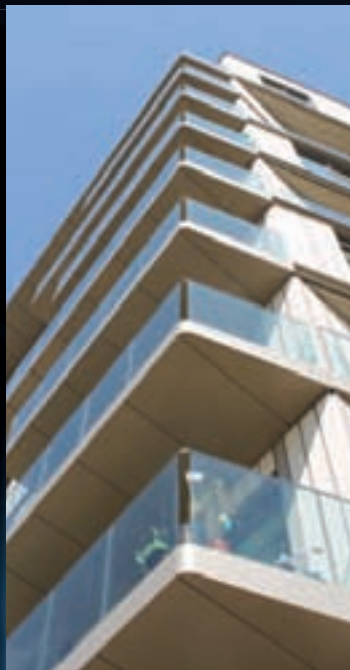
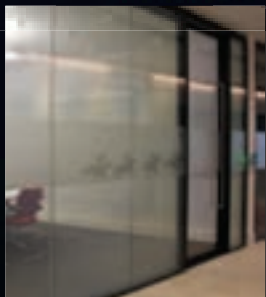
A self-build sustainable house on the outskirts of York has pushed the boundaries of carbon-neutral living with the help of a Mitsubishi Electric Ecodan air source heat pump. Chris Gibbins set out to build a house for his young family made from straw bales. The property in the East Riding of Yorkshire has allied under-floor insulation, loft insulation, high-grade windows, photovoltaic roof panels and solar thermal with an 8.5kW Ecodan air source heat pump. Ecodan is accredited under the Microgeneration Certification Scheme and is therefore among the many features of this project that qualify for the Renewable Heat Incentive.

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Enq. 172



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*In a Danish test of 190 heat pumps.

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Off-grid living with hybrid heating



Creating the ideal property is about more than the design alone. Living a greener, cleaner lifestyle can be just as important as the fixtures and fittings that will create your dream home. **Calor** has teamed up with renewable energy specialist **Daikin** to provide an award-winning hybrid system, combining an air-to-water heat pump with a condensing combi boiler fuelled by LPG. This gives you the best of both worlds; the use of the outside air as a renewable energy source together with a dependable, on-site gas supply – to provide reliable heating and hot water tailored to your home's demands, however large or small. But sustainability isn't the only benefit. Hybrid systems are designed to save you money too. You can input your energy tariff and the system will calculate the most efficient mode to deliver the lowest running costs. This could save you up to 35 per cent on your gas bills compared to using a standard boiler and could cut your CO₂ emissions by as much half; especially important for high-performing eco build properties. For more information on how Calor can help you live a greener, off-grid lifestyle with a hybrid system visit the website.

Tel: 0800 085 5023 www.calor.co.uk

Enq. 175

Energy saving refurbishment with Remmers



A listed 19th century former Schoolhouse was renovated and extended to create a new energy efficient residential family home. Due to the build up of condensation behind conventional insulation when applied to single leaf construction, it became apparent that a "breathable insulation system" would be required. **Remmers IQ Therm** was chosen as it has the highest level of insulation for given thickness of breathable systems. The original U-value of the wall was improved to 0.33W/m²K. Remmers IQ Therm is a complete system of fixing/insulation and finishing available in three board thicknesses.

Tel: 0845 373 0103 www.remmers.co.uk

Enq. 176

Working from home in style



If you enjoy either home or flexible working, or simply like to be really organised at home, **Shelfstore** can help. The company creates modular shelving, cabinets and bookcases with doors, drawers, desks and more, designed to accommodate every space. The solid pine panels use a unique support method for great strength – a 50cm deep x 80cm-wide shelf will carry an impressive 100k. Using the online 3D Design Wizard tool, you can create your own units.

Choices are vast with shelving in six depths and seven widths to match upright measures in eight heights and six depths. It's easy to adjust the designs to suit your needs too, as you can move a shelf, in 5cm increments.

Enq. 177

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Enq. 178

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What to look for when insulating your new build

Matt Rhodes, the national specification manager at one of the leading insulation manufacturers, Actis, talks through the key features to look out for when building an energy efficient home



Previously the preserve of particularly green leaning people, energy efficiency is now a vital component of a new build – both because building regulations demand it (and rightly so) and because without it your fuel bills are only going to get higher.

There are two main ways to reduce fuel bills – one is to generate your own energy through technology such as solar and solar PV panels, air and ground source heat pumps and the like. The other – which can be done in combination with this – is to stop the heat escaping from the building in the first place. In fact, there's no point in making the upfront investment in renewable energy if that is then going to leach out of poorly insulated walls and roofs. Nowadays, with the tightening of Part L building regulations (which govern the thermal efficiency of a building) fabric energy efficiency or building a well insulated home is essential.

While builders are given an element of flexibility on how to balance the efficiency of the building fabric itself and its services to reach the required carbon emissions level, this FEE is designed to ensure that developers can't build homes whose envelopes are inefficiently

constructed and make up the deficiency with excessive use of renewable technologies.

One of the key elements of the Part L regulations states that insulation should be reasonably continuous over the whole building envelope. The building fabric should be constructed so that there are no reasonably avoidable thermal bridges in the insulation layers caused by gaps within the various elements, at the joints between elements such as those around the window and door openings. Reduction in thermal performance can occur where the air barrier and the insulation layer are not contiguous and the cavity between them is subject to air movement.

This means that it's worth looking at an insulation which is flexible and can squash into gaps and bend round corners easily – areas which are notoriously difficult to insulate because of odd angles – thus creating a draught or thermal bridge. Added benefits of these types of insulation are that they're quick, clean and easy to install, don't create dust or fibres and are light and easy to transport. If you're paying someone else to install the insulation then the labour fees should be lower.

Make sure of course that the products are CE marked, and are approved by the NHBC and have what's called LABC registered details. This means that building control officers can just wave it through as it can be accepted by building control surveyors in local authorities across England and Wales when used according to the certification.

It's also worth using both a vapour control layer and a breather membrane. While there is no legislation stating that a vapour control layer must be used, they are recommended because they massively reduce the risk of condensation. Some vapour control layers are dual purpose and also act as an insulation, which means the thickness of the main insulation can be reduced to achieve the same required U-value. It is used on the warm side of any insulation material, behind the internal finish in roofs, walls and ceilings.

A breather membrane is ideal for moisture control. Again, like the vapour control layer, some are dual purpose, and also act as insulation. Reflective and watertight, yet vapour permeable it's used on the cold side of roofs and walls. Because water vapour molecules are



Continued overleaf...

smaller than those in water droplets it lets moisture out but doesn't let water in. It also helps improve the building's air tightness. The membrane not only keeps damp out, it boosts thermal resistance, keeping heat in.

Newer types of insulation can achieve a very impressive U-value using much less space

Here's a checklist of factors to take into account when selecting insulation. Some of them may not be an issue for your particular project but they may include criteria that you hadn't considered:

- **Footprint** – traditionally it was believed that to achieve greater thermal performance construction depths have to increase. But newer types of insulation can achieve a very impressive U-value using much less space. If your footprint is small this is more crucial as the more space taken up by insulation the less useable living space you're left with.
- **Overall thermal efficiency** – depending on the products chosen U-values can get pretty low. Stepping up the fabric energy efficiency

of the building combined with installing renewable sources of energy will make reaching zero carbon much more achievable.

- **Thermal bridging** – compressible flexible products make it easier to reduce or eliminate thermal bridging as the insulation tends to be much more forgiving, leaving no gaps through which draughts could emerge.
- **Cleanliness** – are you happy to wear goggles and a dust mask? If not choose one which doesn't generate dust.
- **Ease of installation** – do you want to use special cutting equipment? Again, if you'd rather not, choose one that's easy to cut with standard tools.
- **Speed of installation** – Some products are quicker and easier to install than others. If you are paying for labour by the hour or are doing it yourself but would rather spend time doing something else it will make sense to choose one that is quicker to install.
- **Cost** – obviously the cost of the materials and the man-hours together are what counts here. Also look at how much wastage is produced – and whether you will have to pay to have it taken away. Some products generate very little waste, others more.
- **The performance gap** – this is the difference between predicted and real life thermal efficiency. Some insulation products have been tested in both situations – which means if you choose one of these you should know, pretty much how effective the end result of the product will be.

Self builders around the country share their insulation experiences with us:

Simon Day who built a build-to-let in Canterbury said:

"Because of the low U-values achieved I decided that gas central heating is not necessary. As I'm renting the house I can save costs on gas safety certificates each year. I was stunned at just how quickly the property warms up and how well the heat was retained."

Isle of Wight boat builder Phil Clabburn who is building a home for himself and his partner by the sea, wants to protect his purse from the utility companies so he was determined to make a super insulated home.

"Looking at the project scientifically, I had some key objectives I wanted to achieve: mega insulation, low energy usage and low water consumption. This has been achieved by simple technologies, not complicated, expensive ones which consume lots of electricity.

"Air tightness is crucial. I'm not going to build a boat that leaks so I won't build a house that leaks."

Enq. 214

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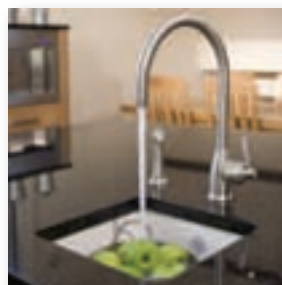
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Enq. 179

Belthorn from Shaws of Darwen



The Belthorn from Shaws of Darwen is a British made, fireclay ceramic sink which can be inset or undermounted.

It features the Shaws logo on the inside of the sink, has a central 3 1/2" waste outlet for basket strainer or waste disposal and is manufactured without an overflow.

The sink works perfectly with granite, marble or wooden work surfaces.

Visit the Shaws of Darwen website to see the complete range of sinks, taps and accessories available.

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Enq. 180

Get to grips with the new range of hand saws



As most discerning craftsmen know, Hultafors' can deliver just about anything you need for measuring, leveling and marking; striking, cutting and chopping; even prying and wrecking. So these really are a range of tools that can handle tough applications, last for ages and feel right when you're working on site. Now there's a new addition to the Hultafors Tools' portfolio – a range of premium quality Hand Saws – with a handful of unique features. So what makes these saws really

different? Take a look at the unique blade tip for an easier start and ongoing sawing motion; the easy-to-use blade exchange system; the extra-stable precision blade; the ergonomic handle and the unique blade protection system.

Enq. 181

Lights and shadows, old and new

Chris Harrison, director of J.G Harrison & Sons Ltd. discusses some of the options available to self-builders when specifying lighting

When embarking on a comprehensive lighting design for a cutting-edge new build, budding developers can experience a heady combination of excitement and dread. On the face of it, the options are endless with such a blank canvas, but this can be quite daunting. The best chance to get lighting right needs to be before any decoration is undertaken so it has to be right first time.

Extreme schemes can have an amazingly striking visual impact, but beyond the initial wow factor, they can prove hard to live with on a day-to-day basis and can also be off-putting for future purchasers.

The polar opposite preferences for ultra-modern schemes to extenuate minimalism and more faux traditional and classic installations designed to bring greater character and a feeling of heritage to new builds endures. But increasingly, domestic developers are opting for an eclectic blending, a deliberate juxtaposition even, of cutting-edge and traditional lighting schemes which can create or enhance practical modern minimalism in task areas such as kitchens and bathrooms, while contributing greatly to the creation of softer, relaxing, even romantic ambiances in dining areas, family rooms, lounge areas and especially bedrooms.

A vintage or a reclaimed look contrasting strongly with its surroundings in a brand new building, can look amazing but certainly, so does uber cool, futuristic lighting. Decisions of this nature are of course purely subjective - there is no clear cut right and wrong. But when a lighting plan comes together living in that space can be a joy and when it doesn't, it can be quite a jarring experience.

Getting the balance right when mixing the old with the new can work fantastically. Vital to success is planning well ahead to create the perfect level of light throughout the property with the best possible positioning to create highly flexible, layers of lighting for shadow free task areas, and definition and drama for mood and feature areas.

Low energy future

No matter what style of lighting scheme being opted for, energy consumption must be a significant consideration for all developers all new builds these days, not just to save money but actually to meet regulatory stipulations. The



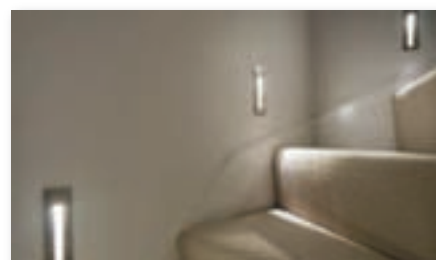
ways in which 'low energy layers' can be achieved have thankfully increased so significantly over the last couple of years with the sudden evolution and aesthetic versatility of cost-saving low energy LED lighting. Early energy saving bulbs were quite visually offensive and therefore were hugely restrictive with most users having to find ways to hide them from view. But now there are numerous shapes and styles of LEDs available which are attractive to look at, come in warm or cool tones and very importantly are very successfully dimmable

Hot and cold

Developers tend to opt for cool white LEDs when they want to achieve a contemporary look in a task area as they compliment high-gloss kitchens. This is especially good with the current trend for grey kitchens, lifting battleship grey to a cool, soft and chic grey. They work fantastically behind splash backs and under units and in central pendants over islands.

Warm whites are often chosen by developers looking to soften the stark lines and the look of

Continued overleaf...



sharp unforgiving edges or warm up dull corners in what can sometimes initially feel like a featureless new build.

Smoothly dimmable

The dimmable versatility of the new LEDs is fast becoming one of their most well regarded features. With a tiny hand-held remote control, a smart phone (or even a universal tv remote), the ambience can be changed instantly without anyone even having to get up. Lights change smoothly and softly fading on or off, in an unobtrusive manner.

As well as making everything look good, some specialist dimmers save energy and increase the life of lamps too, so they are

friendlier to the environment and to a domestic developers' long-term budget. Dimming by 10 per cent will save 10 per cent on an energy bill, and the lamp will last twice as long. Dimming by 50 per cent saves 40 per cent electricity and increases the life of a lamp by 20 times.

Lighting each and every room with different layers and levels gives more flexibility for different activities in the same room. By installing the latest dimmer technology that can have up to 10 pre-programmable scene settings in their new build, developers can create a home that almost seems to intuitively reflect their routines. So the cooking experience can segway into dining lighting seamlessly in open plan living areas, for example.

Dimming the lights is the way to achieve cosy, romantic effects from the living room to the master bedroom. At the touch of a button, you can transform your living room in to a snugly cinema room, or upgrade your bedroom to a romantic haven with flattering mood lighting.

Floating elements/furniture

If uber modern is the way a developer is leaning, light can be used behind shelves, headboards or in false ceiling to give structure and interest to an otherwise flat surface. By doing so, furniture can be made to appear to be floating in space – quite futuristic looking. This effect can add a stunning focal point to a room, providing a soft wash of light over of the floor, and therefore softening hard angles and surfaces. This type of lighting, takes up no floor space so is ideal in today's smaller footprint properties.

Lighting niches

Lighting in purpose-made niches adds an extra dimension to a space, and provides depth, texture and drama in otherwise bland spaces. The narrowest beam can create a dramatic pool of light to illuminate single objects in an alcove space or over a dining table. They can be lit from below or above, and will create a platform to highlight an object, plant or furniture if big enough. They are often used in bathrooms, behind the toilet or either side of the sink.

Lighting in stairs

Low level LED floor washers are practical for night lighting consuming minimal electricity, without risk of overheating, so are an understated way to light stairs. They can be very compact and either square, round or drop shaped. Warm white is best suited for low level lighting to render true floor colours when lit.

With such a blank canvas there really are endless ways to either play up the modernity of your new build or add a sense of aged character and cosiness, but as mentioned at the beginning of the article, it needn't be so daunting. It should be invigorating, empowering even. It is a creative opportunity to create an unified harmonious marriage of contradictions, where even a hammered metal lamp with a distressed finish looks enhanced next to a glossy white modern table with sleek modern chairs. The juxtaposition and contrast of old and new within the same new build or even the same room, can actually create an environment that's respectful of the old while at the same time allowing the new to speak for itself and thus enhance and enrich the entire design statement.

Enq. 215

With such a blank canvas, there really are endless ways to either play up the modernity of your new build or add a sense of aged character and cosiness

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Enq. 182

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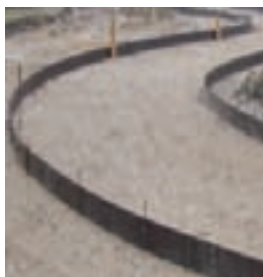


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Enq. 183

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Enq. 184

Pools, Spas & Decking Showcase

1 GREEN SQUARES

Green Squares welcomes TimberTech Earthwood EasyClean, the very latest in domestic and commercial maintenance-free decking. Earthwood EasyClean's unique, impenetrable cap makes it the ideal solution for homeowners, landscapers, leisure businesses and garden designers seeking to maximise good looks and minimise maintenance. Earthwood EasyClean repels the ravages of the British weather and the rigours of a hectic domestic life.

www.timbertechuk.co.uk

Enq. 185



2 OSMO

Osmo UK is focusing on safety this summer with its slip resistant finish for wooden decking – Anti-Slip Decking Oil. A product that does what it says on the tin, a finish which provides a safe outside environment all year round. Anti-Slip Decking Oil increases the durability of the surface, protects it against mould, algae and fungal attack, and reduces the risk of slipping. The clear, satin finish also offers a small amount of UV protection which will help protect against greying.

www.osmouk.com

Enq. 186

3 THE DECK TILE CO.

Levato Mono Porcelain Pavers are comprised of a 20mm single layer of load-bearing porcelain, with incredible technical and aesthetic features; offering the user an eternal finish material (meaning zero maintenance required) with exceptional slip resistance that will not be compromised over time. 40+ ultra-realistic timber and stone effect finishes are 100 per cent colour stable and available with coordinating internal tiles for the complete inside-out installation.

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Enq. 187



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Enq. 188



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Enq. 189

In this issue of Selfbuilder & Homemaker we look at recent trends in pools, spas and decking



4 GRIPSURE

A major extension for award-winning Titanic Spa includes an outdoor sunken hot tub boasting innovative decking with built-in drainage. Gripsure Aquadeck™ controls water run-off and, thanks to its soft non-slip design, remains safe in wet conditions making it ideal for pools and spas. Gripsure Aquadeck™ is a timber board that allows rainwater to permeate through to the water course below. Available in a number of colours, it can fit in with any design.

www.gripsure.co.uk

Enq. 190

5 SAIGE DECKING

SAiGE Longlife Composite Decking is an environmentally sourced long lasting alternative to traditional timber decking with a 10-year warranty and expected life of over 20 years; and it looks good too. It requires minimal maintenance, is anti-slip, splinter free and is resistant to mould and fungus. SAiGE Decking is available in a choice of four colours (Light Grey pictured) and hollow and solid boards for residential and commercial use. Free samples are available from the website.

www.saigedecking.com

Enq. 191



6 NAUTILUS POOLS

Nautilus Pools Ltd is the distributor for the Waterair range of in-ground pools. Waterair Swimming Pools have helped more than 90,000 families turn dreams into an affordable project. Waterair swimming pools are made from corrugated steel panels (strength equivalent to a 45cm concrete wall), to guarantee mechanical resistance and an exceptional lifetime. There is a choice of 86 models and more than 200,000 possible variations.

www.waterair.co.uk

Enq. 192

LEVATO MONO porcelain paver system

As specified at Wokingham Medical Centre, Berkshire
Barbara Webb Architects

The Levato Mono porcelain paver system is the pinnacle of external raised flooring technology; enabling the specification of lightweight, slip resistant and attractive raised flooring solutions, combining incredible technical properties with uncompromising aesthetics; making them the ideal choice for commercial and domestic use alike.

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Enq. 193

Create the perfect outdoor space

James Latham is offering two exciting new composite decking materials for summer 2015 that promise to bring style, functionality and flair to any outdoor space.

Made in the USA and virtually maintenance free, the UPM ProFi Deck range is backed by a 25-year manufacturer's guarantee.

Plus, it's non-porous, so unlike with wood and many other types of composite decking, wine, oil and other liquid spills are not readily absorbed and can be easily cleaned, ensuring that once created, your design will continue to look great for years to come.

Available in eight fresh and modern colours, all inspired by nature, UPM ProFi Design Deck is perfect for creating a distinctive and stunning outdoor area either in a residential or commercial setting.

Also available is UPM ProFi Classic Deck which is offered in five colours: dark Walnut, golden Tigerwood, sun-bleached Desert Sand, Cape Cod Grey and Veranda Brazilian Walnut.

As well as being extremely environmentally friendly – 95 per cent of the materials used to



manufacture the UPM ProFi Design and Classic Deck range are recycled – this fantastic decking requires no sanding, varnishing, painting or staining. In fact, in most cases, brushing and the occasional jet wash is all that is needed. Plus, whether wet or dry, it has a high friction surface making it ideal for areas that are likely to see

high volumes of traffic. And yet this is a deck that loves bare feet. You will never get a splinter from the UPM ProFi Deck range and it feels warm when it's cold and almost soft to touch.

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www.lathamtimber.co.uk

Enq. 210



Gripsure manufacture a wide range of non-slip timber decking suitable for around your home and garden in

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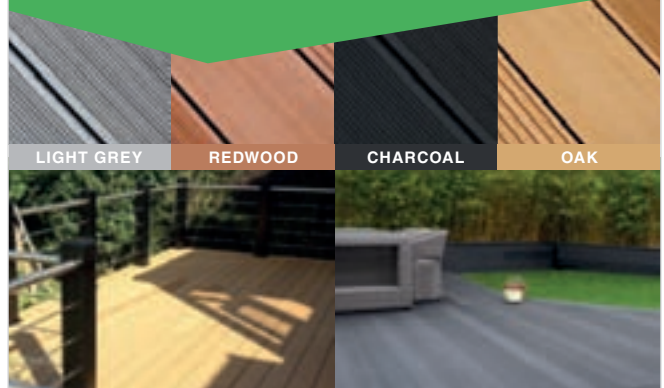
Enq. 194

SAiGE

Longlife Decking



SAiGE Longlife Decking Ltd are suppliers of environmentally sourced composite decking. Low maintenance, splinter free and anti-slip are just some of its key features. Please contact a member of the SAiGE Team for more information.



visit us online at
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Enq. 195

Earthwood Easyclean

One of the UK's largest composite decking ranges welcomes new recruit TimberTech Earthwood EasyClean, the very latest in domestic and commercial maintenance-free decking.

Earthwood Easyclean's unique, impenetrable cap makes it the ideal solution for homeowners, landscapers, leisure businesses and garden designers seeking to maximise good looks and minimise maintenance.

Earthwood Easyclean, and its top of the range sister product Earthwood Easyclean Legacy, from Greensquares, the UK's outdoor living experts, repel the ravages of the British weather and the rigours of a hectic domestic life. A super-resilient wood and polymer mix, topped off by a sleek, uncompromising polymer cap, makes it easy to clean as well as easy on the eye.

You can say goodbye to annual sanding, scrubbing, sealing, painting and staining. Earthwood Easyclean, part of the TimberTech composite decking family, is colour fast, splinter free and won't split, warp, bend, crack or fade. It's slip resistant. It carries the reassurance of a 25-year limited warranty for residential and ten years for commercial applications.

Earthwood Easyclean comes in Brown Oak



and Silver Maple shades and the Legacy option in Mocha, Pecan and Tigerwood. These stylish, elegant high-density hardwood and polymer boards reflect all of the colour grading and shading contained within natural timber boards but with none of the traditional fuss.

Feel the difference. Order a free sample of Earthwood Easyclean from the website. TimberTech- Less Work. More Life.

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Enq. 211

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Enq. 196

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Enq. 197

New handmade clay tile launched



Marley Eternit has launched a new range of premium handmade clay plain tiles to help create stand-out roof designs for high quality housing developments and sensitive refurbishments. The Canterbury range provides a genuine handmade appearance that specifiers are looking for in today's market. The traditional hand making process used to create the range brings random undulations and variations that give each tile a unique appearance and character. The tiles are available in three rich colours with soft edges, fully formed nibs and a sandfaced texture.

Tel: 01283 722588 www.marleyeternit.co.uk

Enq. 198

VMZINC QUARTZ-ZINC roof for home conversion

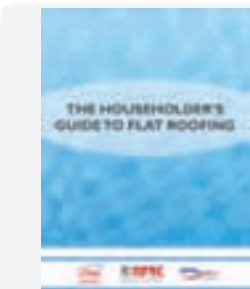


Treetops, in Riding Mill Northumberland, was a classic 1960s piece of domestic architecture for which the brief was to create a modern house in line with current environmental standards. The result combines up-to-date materials and style with contemporary levels of sustainability and function. The Howard Litchfield Partnership specified a standing seam VMZINC roof and zinc rainwater goods in pre-weathered QUARTZ-ZINC®. The colour complements a wide range of materials and will be retained while the metal develops its natural, self-protecting patina.

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Enq. 199

The householder's guide to flat roofing



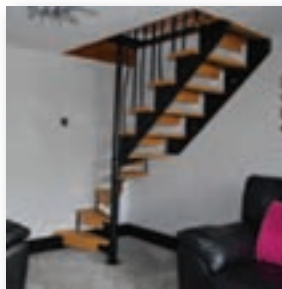
Working in conjunction with the Liquid Roofing and Waterproofing Association (LRWA) and Single Ply Roofing Association (SPRA), the National Federation of Roofing Contractors has published a revised edition of the Householder's Guide to Flat Roofing. The publication has become an invaluable tool for home and property owners by providing them basic knowledge on the design, materials, construction and maintenance of flat roofing. This latest edition

brings all this information up to date, to be in line with current best practice and materials. To download a copy, visit the website.

Tel: 020 7448 3187 www.nfrc.co.uk

Enq. 200

Bigger is not always better



Compact spaces do not mean you have to compromise on quality or design, which is something Gary and Joanne Moore discovered when they installed their very own truly bespoke staircase designed and produced by British Spirals & Castings. Sleek Scandinavian staircases from the company are exceptionally versatile and provide many options for expressing individuality. Available in any diameter to suit your dimensions, the wooden stair treads can be finest birch-faced timber or any solid timber with a choice of either a steel or timber riser bar for staircases that need to comply with Building Regulations.

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Enq. 203

Staircases for self-build projects: best foot forward

Phil Chimento, general manager at JELD-WEN stairs gives his top tips on how to create an eye-catching centrepiece with any budget, and key things to consider when planning your staircase



It's likely that a staircase will be a major consideration in your self-build project – as well as being a core functional part of the property for access, a staircase can also be a focal point, as it's often the first thing visitors see when they enter a home.

When it comes to installing stairs every millimetre counts, so it's crucial that the space available is measured correctly for the new staircase. Before ordering, think about what finish you are looking for, the purpose of your staircase, whether you need a winder or straight flight and the configuration you'll require. Consider where the internal wall will be positioned, or whether you opt for the staircase to be open on one side.

You'll also need to make sure that your installation will meet Building Regulations, for

example, a domestic staircase will need a minimum of two metres headroom space. Also think

Oak offers unbeatable strength and durability, and truly reflects the traditional qualities of English craftsmanship

about the 'bigger picture'; allow for doorways and walkways to ensure that there is enough room for people to walk around once the staircase is in position. If you're ordering your staircase through a builders merchant, ask if they offer a free stairs measuring service; this will give you piece of mind that the responsibility for correct measurement is with them and the manufacturer, and not you and your builder.

From low cost to luxury

If you've got money to play with and you're looking for an impressive staircase that gives a sense of grandeur when you enter the property, there are a number of options to choose from. Firstly, there is no greater luxury than opting for a solid oak staircase. Oak offers unbeatable strength and durability, and truly reflects the

Continued overleaf...



traditional qualities of English craftsmanship. With many manufacturers offering bespoke staircases you can mix and match component styles to create an individual look for your project. For a traditional look choose barley twist or flute style spindles, or alternatively, for a simple statement opt for square spindles and newels.

Another added feature, which complements a solid oak staircase, is the bullnose or curtail step. The bullnose refers to the rounded corners of the bottom step, whereas the semi-circular protruding shape of the curtail step can be used for adding decoration or to support newels and a volute handrail. The continuous volute handrail works with the curtail step to create a dramatic sweeping handrail, which is supported by spindles to extend to the bottom step. The cut and bracketed option creates a memorable impression when a project features a staircase that is exposed on one or both sides.

Where budget allows, a contemporary style staircase is a great way of making a statement. Mixing materials can help modernise a staircase design; by connecting the solid smooth lines of oak with black iron or steel spindles you can create a clean and sleek look. If you choose to use a touch of glass in your staircase, then more light will travel through the property, giving the illusion of increased space.

A top tip for those wanting to achieve a striking look, but don't have the budget for a complete solid oak staircase, is to use square and turned spindles and newel posts and upgrade these components to real oak, while using timber steps. Opting for a pine staircase such as hemlock is a cost effective alternative to oak – but make sure it's from a quality manufacturer and free from knots, as smooth timber with a uniform grain will enable you to apply a range of stain finishes and add a pop of colour to your project. If you want to save time and skip the laborious task of painting your staircase, opt for pre-primed components that are supplied sanded and primed.

Get more from manufacturers

Choosing a manufacturer's stair products will ensure you get incredibly precise measurements by using the latest technology, and in some cases, they will provide pre-cut and pre-assem-

bled components for easier installation. Premium manufacturers also tend to offer decade long guarantees against defects and comply with stair schemes such as those set out by the British Woodworking Federation (BWF), as well as meeting strict Building Regulations.

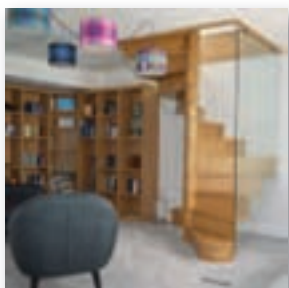
The latest technology has also allowed manufacturers to develop innovations such as demountable balustrades, which are perfect for

projects with narrow staircases, curved flights or tight corners. By simply unscrewing a couple of bolts, a section of the balustrade can be removed in one piece – a practical solution when moving large furniture upstairs. With so many innovations and options available, self-builders should view the staircase as a focal point in their project and not simply a practical means of reaching different levels in the home.

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Why have one staircase when you can have four?



An attractive detached house dating back to the 18th Century, situated on the edge of this historic village of Hurlay-on-Thames is one of the latest properties in the UK to benefit from a truly bespoke staircase from **British Spirals & Castings**; in fact not just one staircase but four! Richard Harding of British Spirals & Castings commented "They [the home owners] were lovely people to work with who had some fantastic ideas about what they wanted, and with our experience and ability to create something truly unique we created four different staircases for them; The main stairs, a squarial, a second spiral and a straight stairs."

Tel: 01633 750716 www.britishsc.co.uk

Enq. 204

MAXXimum security



Speedy installation and reliability in operation, these are a couple of the many features found in the new AlertMAXX alarms from **Delta Membrane Systems**. They are used in sump installations, with the new DMS270 AlertMAXX being used for ground water and surface water applications, and the DMS269 AlertMAXX for foul water use. Just two fixings are required along with the connection of mains power and a float switch for the AlertMAXX to be fully operational.

Each model has an LED display that shows the current status, high level alarm, previous cancelled alarms, mains failure and service reminder.

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Enq. 205

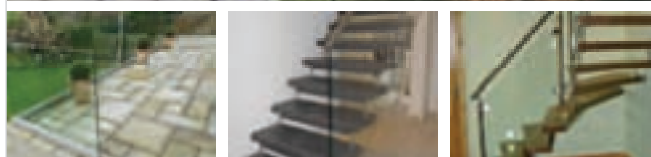
Which species of wood is best?



Once you have made a decision to fit timber windows and doors in your home, how do you decide which species of timber is best for you? **KAT**, manufactures wooden windows and doors from a wide range of species, such as Redwood, Oak, Idigbo, Sapele and Accoya timber. Softwoods such as Fir or Spruce have a low resistance to decay, which makes them good for manufacturing windows. Softwood is less expensive than hardwood and is often the choice of timber when considering your budget. The disadvantage of softwoods is that they absorb moisture so aren't as stable as hardwoods. Hardwoods such as Oak, Idigbo and Sapele are popular for windows and doors as they are more stable and durable than Softwood. Oak has been used for centuries and is admired for its beautiful grain and its strength and durability. Idigbo is a yellow-brown colour hardwood, sourced from West Africa. It's a moderately durable hardwood commonly used as an inexpensive alternative to Oak, due to its likeness when stained to the same colour. Sapele is also sourced from West Africa and has a medium reddish brown appearance. If you are looking for naturally beautiful wooden windows made from the most durable wood possible, guaranteed to last at least 25 years, then Accoya timber could be the timber of choice for you.

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Enq. 208

Rare, beautiful and British – stone adds a touch of class

Orlando Boyne, director of Britannicus Stone explains why you should incorporate stonework into your self-build and discusses the options available



ANGLESEY IS A MID-GREY MARBLED STONE AND GEOLOGIST'S DREAM WITH ABUNDANT STONE INCLUDING THE HIGHLY-FOUGHT RED AND GREEN SERPENTINES AND THE RENOWNED ANGLESEY MARBLE

List the top ten aspirations most of us have and sure to be included will be building one's own home. While many aspire to it few ever have that rare and much treasured opportunity. So while the majority of home owners in the UK struggle with a refurbishment programme, trying to shoehorn their creative bent into a preordained structure, those lucky few who are undertaking a self-build can wallow in self-congratulatory splendour that they are creating something personal, something individual, something unique, something eclectic; in fact something to please themselves and no one else.

There is, after all, something liberating about being one's own master. Yes, it is daunting and hard work but this is also its appeal; self-imposed graft rewarded with personal gratification. One of the most munificent personal pleasures is creating a visually appealing habitat that reflects one's personality, be it in structure, décor, finishes or furniture.

Perhaps one of the most popular choices to make is to include some form of stone or marble, two beautiful, natural and enduring products into the building project

Using materials that complement the essence of a building is also, while perhaps not essential, a judicious choice. Sympathetic yet idiosyncratic selections help create a unique building; and perhaps one of the most popular choices to make is to include some form of stone or marble, two beautiful, natural and enduring products into the building project.

The sheer breadth of choice of both these offshoots of limestone ensures their repetitive use

in houses of character, beauty and charm. The greatest use, statistically, is as flooring within an entrance hall – most notably as a statement piece of design. The purity and uniqueness of the available colour palette from different source points across the UK can help define a building. As the homeowner or their guests enter the abode nothing expresses the quality, attention to detail and absolute commitment to creating a personalised and loving home as honed or polished stone laid to a pattern of choice.

While modern ceramic tiles can lend a uniformity of pattern, one that can be easily replicated anywhere, a stone or marble floor is more abstract, certainly more individual, and can be a far better expression of a home-builder's taste and persona.

Interior usage ranges from cantilevered stairways, luxurious bathrooms (both floor and walls), kitchen surfaces and fireplaces

As way of a brief history and geology lesson carboniferous limestone from British quarries was laid down 350 million years ago, as far back as the Dinantian epoch, when dinosaurs roamed the wetlands of these islands and Britain sat over the equator. It is a composite of millions of crinoidal fossils preserved and compacted within marine sediments that has delivered its unique look and colour spectrum, one that so perfectly suits the British light and interiors. Neither garish nor dull, its palette is perfectly in tune with these islands' landscape.

Its cousin, 200 million years younger, oolitic limestone with its popular scions Portland and Bath stone have been prevalent within British buildings over the years because their relative softness made them easier to work with. In contrast carboniferous limestones like Swaledale Fossil from North Yorkshire and Hopton Wood from Derbyshire have, until now, been more complex stones to economically carve. However, modern technologies have made the process immeasurably more efficient, but where carboniferous stones really steal a march is on their ability to have different finishes from honing, to polished, to highly polished states. These options of finish are a distinct advantage, especially among self-builders who can match the look of the stone to its uses.

Aside from the finishes the stone is very hard wearing, British (important to many), and has a huge depth of colour and pattern variant from the dark black and grey swirls of Ashburton Pink which adorned the original London Hilton, to the blood red of Eskett Red to the Green

THE DARK GREY TO BLACK MARBLE KNOWN AS FROSTERLEY MARBLE IS A BRITISH STONE THAT COMES TO LIFE WHEN POLISHED. THE LIGHT BROWN IS CRINOIDAL LIMESTONE.



Serpentines' red and greens, made famous by George Bullock whose furniture is now in the V&A.

For those with slightly deeper pockets Ball Eye Blue from Derbyshire offers the perfect antidote to mass produced stone. It comes from a very rare vein of limestone/fluorite conglomerate known famously as 'Blue John' which varies in colour from amethyst on the outer edge of the deposit to royal blue towards the middle. It is simply an exquisite stone.

Rarity of some of the British stones is an obvious attraction to many and has resulted in an increase in demand amongst prestigious developments such as private residences but also within luxury retail developments, and even global headquarters. If a building requires a statement entrance then British stone is just the ticket; hard wearing with a beautiful and sophisticated appearance plus, and of particular

importance, unique.

But it is not simply floors that use British stone. Interior usage ranges from cantilevered stairways, luxurious bathrooms (both floor and walls), kitchen surfaces and fireplaces; all declare the owners intent to create something lasting and of true beauty. Certainly not inexpensive British Shining Stones, as these stones are often revered to because of their ability to take a polish resulting in a myriad of different finished surfaces and shines, are increasingly becoming, a benchmark of quality.

Self-build homes are very much about personal expression, the desire to create something unique and different, and to eschew the crowd. Likewise British carboniferous limestones are the earth's expression of its diversity, its geological history and its pure wonderment. Quality homes of distinction deserve to be adorned with the earth's natural gifts of beauty.

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Classified

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