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## Chic & cosy

From run-down log cabin to Welsh mountain retreat



ADVICE

### Building in the Green Belt

### Straw bale cruck home

Energy-efficient Highlands hideaway

### HOUSE PLANS

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### 42 PAGES OF INSPIRING PROJECTS

- Energy-efficient barn conversion
- Reinvention of 1950s bungalow
- Affordable London new build
- Cutting-edge family home in

### BEGINNER'S GUIDE TO BASEMENTS

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## FROM THE EDITOR

**S**elf-build magazines frequently get accused of publishing case studies that are out of the reach of the average person. Certainly, the most eye-catching and alluring projects tend to be at the high end of the market, usually as a result of owners trying to maximise the potential of their plot. And with land so hard to acquire, who can blame them?

But there are many other smaller, more modest projects that often go under the radar which warrant our attention too. This month we feature three such projects, including our cover story about a tired log cabin in the wilds of Snowdonia which has been transformed into a cosy retreat, thanks to some clever reconfiguring of the layout, and attention to detail with the interiors.

It just goes to show what can be done with a structure resembling little more than a garden shed. Of course, its idyllic location in rural Wales adds to its appeal.

Another holiday hideaway has been created in the Highlands, this time by a retired couple looking to supplement their pension. The first of two new straw bale



eco cabins with cruck frames has been completed using a design by engineer Brian Waite based on his own home built several years ago. I must admit to being impressed by these contemporary-style chalets which really do embrace the 'small is beautiful' principle. The fact that they are highly energy efficient and built using largely renewable materials is another bonus.

Our third example is a new build in east London. Its vivid pink and green rendered exterior may not be to everyone's tastes, but it was built in just six months for £205,000, a far cry from the average self-build budget in the capital.

The architects designed it for a young owner/developer who funded it with compensation from her ski ingaccident. The house has been designed and built as a benchmark for quality rental properties in the capital.

And when you read about the latest surveys regarding the quality and availability of UK homes (see News page), this approach makes a refreshing and much-needed change.

*Ross Stokes*  
EDITOR

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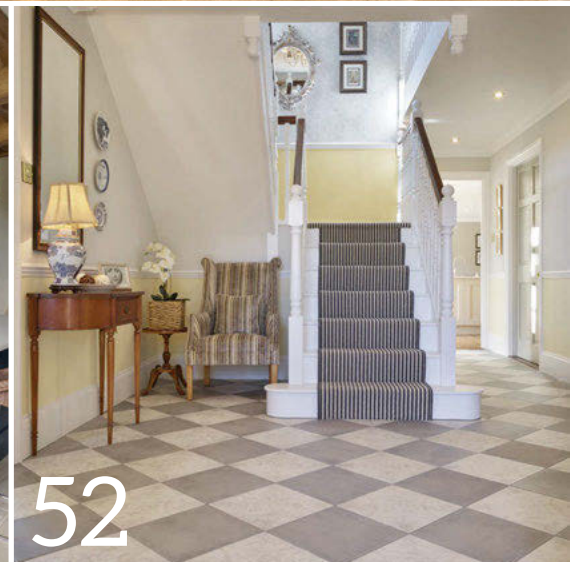
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### On the cover

From run-down log cabin to Welsh mountain retreat. See page 74.

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# NEWS

July 2018



## Most builders report hike in material costs

Ninety per cent of builders reported increasing material prices in the first quarter of 2018, the highest reading on record. But the workloads of small- and medium-sized construction firms still grew slightly over the same period, according to the latest survey by the Federation of Master Builders.

Key results from the FMB's latest State of Trade Survey also included:

- The construction SME sector has now enjoyed five years of consecutive growth;
- More construction SMEs predict rising workloads in the coming three months, up from 38 per cent in the previous quarter to 49 per cent in 2018;
- More than half (58 per cent) of construction SMEs are struggling to hire bricklayers

and 55 per cent are struggling to hire carpenters and joiners; • Two-thirds of construction SMEs expect salaries and wages to increase during the next six months, up from 62 per cent in the previous quarter.

FMB chief executive Brian Berry, said: "Workloads for builders continued to grow in the first quarter of 2018 despite the 'Beast from the East' wreaking havoc across the UK's construction sites.

"However, once again, the growth we are seeing is slower than in the previous three months and this can be partly attributed to pressure from rising costs.

"Insulation, bricks and timber are the materials that have increased the most and builders are predicting that these price increases will continue. We are

also seeing increased salaries for tradespeople stemming from the acute skills crisis and that, coupled with material price hikes, are squeezing margins and stifling growth for construction firms of all sizes."

Berry added: "In terms of housebuilding, these latest results should sound some alarm bells with the workloads of SME housebuilders dropping off in the first quarter of this year. In 2017/18, 197,000 homes were started in England but this is some way off the Government's target to build 300,000 homes per year.

"The FMB has worked closely with the government to identify how to remove barriers to small local housebuilders, but these latest results act as a reminder that there is more to be done."

## Survey paints bleak picture of UK housing

UK adults are more worried about property prices and availability than at any point in the last five years. And the quality of homes is of growing concern, with more than half of adults saying it is a serious issue. These are two key findings of a YouGov survey on behalf of the Homeowners Alliance and BLP Insurance.

Around 83 per cent of people stated that house prices were a 'serious' problem, up from 77 per cent five years ago, while 77 per cent of respondents believed that availability of housing was now a major concern, up from 69 per cent in 2014.

Homeowners Alliance chief executive Paula Higgins said:

"The housing sector in the UK is on its knees. There's a shortage of building, a constant stream of stories surrounding poor quality and unfair deals for homeowners, a lack of social housing, rising homelessness and a leasehold system that is dangerously broken.

"People are just as keen to own a home but the system is failing them, despite the introduction of schemes like Help to Buy. Although Brits have reacted positively to government's changes to stamp duty house prices and availability continue to be major concerns."

BLP Insurance chief executive Kim Vernau added: "This survey paints a bleak picture for both the

UK housing industry and potential homeowners. Concerns around quality of build reflect the serious deficiencies in quality within design and build procurement which are severely impacting confidence in the housing sector. To meet this challenge design codes and reviews should be implemented industry-wide."

The research also found the much-criticised leasehold system is the fastest-growing housing issue for the second year running with 56 per cent of those surveyed now citing it as a serious concern, up from 50 per cent in 2017. These figures are even higher in London at 69 per cent, up from 53 per cent in 2017.



## Carmody Groarke wins architecture award

Carmody Groarke has won BD's coveted Architect of the Year Award. The architectural practice was presented with the prestigious Schueco Gold Award by TV presenter Mark Durden-Smith at a ceremony at the Westminster Park Plaza Hotel in central London.

The practice was picked as overall winner by the judges after it also scooped the award for Individual House Architect of the Year. Its entry included three very different houses in London, including Highgate House (above) and a lakeside pavilion in East Sussex.

BD editor and jury chairman Thomas Lane said: "Carmody Groarke came out at the top of an extremely tough category, individual house, with an exemplar body of work covering a wide range of housing types from refurbishment and new build to a tiny guest pavilion accessed via a 40m long tunnel."

## Government to invest £1bn in home design

The government has called on the housing industry to deliver well-designed homes, saying it will invest £1bn through the Home Building Fund to develop new, modern approaches to design and construction.

The investment is part of its plans to deliver 300,000 homes a year in England by the mid-2020s.

Government ministers said this could help secure community support for new homes, ensuring that there are good-quality homes that "people can feel proud living in and next door to".

So far, eight projects across 11 local authorities have been backed by government funding, and will use modern methods of construction, such as modular homes, to build good-quality homes and speed up the rate of delivery.

There are also plans to learn from other countries, including Australia, Norway and Sweden, "where good design is embedded in decision-making."

Based on a model in Australia, the government is urging councils to set their own design quality standards so that communities can better reflect their character in local planning policy.

Additionally, the government wants to embrace new technologies, including virtual-reality technology so that communities will be able to see what a development might look like before permission has been granted.

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# SIPs-built **BARNs**

**W**hen Jane Fowler decided to build a relaxing holiday retreat in the beautiful countryside in the Yorkshire Dales, she turned to SIPs@Clays, the leading UK provider of structural insulated panels.

Jane's brief was for SIPs@Clays to work alongside local firm White Rose Architectural to help design and construct Mill View Barns, situated on the popular Way of the Roses cycle route. Apart from their eco-friendly credentials, the SIPs could be clad easily with green oak. This would help the barns to blend in with their idyllic surroundings.

In addition, the airtight and insulative qualities of the Kingspan TEK Building System meant much lower heating bills. Jane could also save money on construction, as the project could be finished faster than if she'd chosen a more traditional build.

Advanced CAD software was used by SIPs@Clays to develop a SIP-friendly version of the architect's designs, which were then used to produce the exact dimension for each panel. This attention to detail paid off when the frame was erected with everything slotting together perfectly.

This meant a faster build time due to the ease of using the lightweight materials, together with minimal on-site wastage. Both frames for the two barns were completed in just eight days, so that the trades could immediately begin working on the interiors.

An added bonus is that SIPs don't require purlins so the rooms have vaulted ceilings, making the interiors appear pleasingly spacious. (claysllp.co.uk)



The barns were built using SIPs clad in green oak to blend with the surrounding countryside.







# The future of home building

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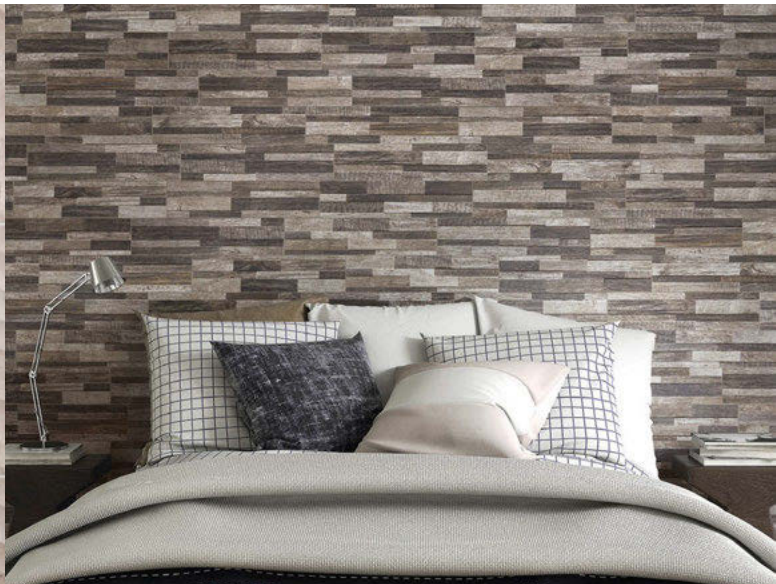
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## TACTILE TEXTURES

This range of textured wall and floor tiles takes influence from architecture, industrial plaster and concrete. The range combines the natural beauty of wood with the practicalities of ceramic or porcelain tiles, pairing subtle background textures with surface patterns. Designs employ the aesthetics of rock, herringbone patterns and soft indentations throughout the hand-crafted range, with schemes varying from neutral earthy tones to rich dark colours for a more dramatic statement. Shown here is the hand-crafted beige décor tile, which measures 600mm x 300mm and costs £27.99 per sqm, and the Inwood 3D black tile, which measures 610mm x 150mm and is priced at £49.99 per sqm. ([ctdtiles.co.uk](http://ctdtiles.co.uk))



## BACK TO BLACK

Roman has added the black grid pattern wet room panel to its Liber8 range. With a height of 1,000mm and 10mm thick glass, it features a matt black profile and square wall or ceiling bracing. A black etched colour is fired onto the glass during the toughening process. Clear glass with a matt black profile is also available, which can be coordinated with brassware across the bathroom. Both come in different sizes to suit small or large spaces, and can be paired with another wet room panel to create a more enclosed showering area. The panels can be fitted to a Roman low-level shower tray or straight to the floor using Roman's shield wet room system. Price: from £408. ([roman-showers.com](http://roman-showers.com))



## Set in stone

Lundhs' real stone is both practical and striking, featuring a blend of feldspar crystals. Naturally durable and strong, the stone can be used for many applications, including indoor food preparation and outdoor dining. Available in four materials: emerald, blue, royal (shown here) and antique, each piece is unique. Prices vary from £680 to £970 per sqm. ([lundhsrealstone.com/uk](http://lundhsrealstone.com/uk))



## Classic British style

The Harwood basin is made in Britain using long-lasting fireclay. It features a deceptively generous bowl depth and a raised cartouche bearing the Thomas Crapper name. Wall-mounted to save space in a compact bathroom or cloakroom, it matches the wall-mounted basin mixer and high-level WC set. Price: £399. ([thomas-crapper.com](http://thomas-crapper.com))





## Slimline design

The ultra-compact flat-fronted Niva radiator is made from steel and comes in horizontal and vertical options; the latter available with a traditional straight edge or the Niva Soft with smooth rounded sides. With a choice of 50 different colours and two depths, the Niva has extra-high heat emissions which reach the target temperature instantly. The clean design is achieved with hidden suspension, with an integrated towel bar giving the radiator an additional function. Price on application. ([vasco.eu](http://vasco.eu))



INSPIRATION

# On trend



## Bright lights

Moonbeam Lighting has a new range of decorative lighting from Ebb & Flow, combining the old with the modern in a selection of individual designs celebrating colour and form. The range includes the Horizon (inset), which boasts a wide shape and shallow height. Hand-blown and finished, it is available in four sizes and nine colours, from cool clear to warm golden brown. Price: from £146.75. Also shown here is the classic Lute pendant, which features a rounded base with a slim funnel-shaped top in metallic coloured glass, extending into a metal pipe. Available in 16 finishes, the Lute is priced from £241.19. ([moonbeamlighting.co.uk](http://moonbeamlighting.co.uk))



## Switch it up

Mejpac has launched a range of matching plates and mechanisms, including buttons and switches. Thanks to the hand-treated surface of the plate, the brass coating comes in a selection of over 20 colours and finishes. The classic brass switches are fitted with mechanisms in warm golden or cooler chrome shades, while the Damier push buttons come in an embossed or flush finish. ([mejpac.com](http://mejpac.com))



## STATEMENT SINK

The new MODE3415 sink from Caple comes in gunmetal and copper (shown here with a Karns copper tap). The one-and-a-half bowl, right-handed model can be inset or under-mounted for a more streamlined look. Made from durable 1.2mm steel, it is easy to clean making it ideal for a busy kitchen. Included are two 90mm waste outlets for basket strainer waste to prevent blockages, and a waste, overflow and connection kit with U-bend. The sink measures 555mm x 430mm x 200mm and is priced from £552. ([caple.co.uk](http://caple.co.uk))





### WORKTOP

The worktop is made of Bianca Carrara composite Unistone combining quartz and resin.



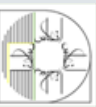
## Suppliers

**Splashback** Opticlear low-ion glass in Oyster Deco Glaze: [decoglaze.co.uk](http://decoglaze.co.uk)  
**Aged Bourne limestone flooring** Martin Moore Stone: [martinmoorestone.com](http://martinmoorestone.com)  
**Paint** Walls, painted in blackened estate emulsion. Farrow & Ball

**Boiling water taps** Fusion Round in brushed chrome. Quooker: [quooker.co.uk](http://quooker.co.uk). Boiling water tap in wine cabinet. Zip: [zipwater.co.uk](http://zipwater.co.uk)  
**Main tap** Ionian mixer in pewter and porcelain. Perris & Power

**Island sink** Kohler: [kohler.co.uk](http://kohler.co.uk)  
**Sink** Farmhouse 90 double-bowl ceramic, Villeroy & Boch: [villeroy-boch.co.uk](http://villeroy-boch.co.uk)  
**Lighting** Similar pendant - Stanley in hammered copper. Original BTC

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**CABINETS**

Units are from Martin Moore's English and New Classic collections. The main units painted in Soft Grey and the island in French Blue.

**INTERIORS**

# Living large

A grand kitchen in a traditional-style home required oversized appliances and bespoke fitted furniture to create a welcoming atmosphere.

**Built in a period style** using traditional materials, this large new home features a very generous kitchen, and owners Georgina and Tim Edwards wanted a well-organised design to make coherent use of the massive space. At almost 900 sq ft, the challenge was ensuring that, despite the proportions of the room, there was a strong sense of homeliness suitable for family living.

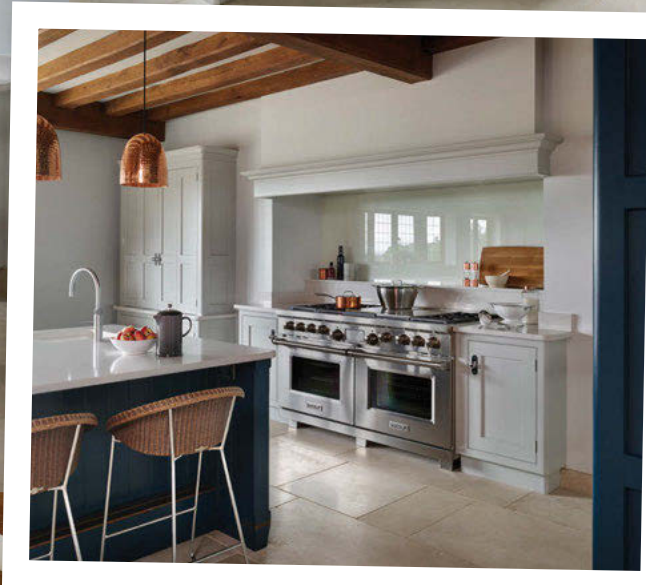
Situated on the top of a hill, the house opens out onto a spectacular valley and making the most of those views was another priority for Martin Moore designer John Davies.

The house is full of timber detailing, and so a classic country look was important to Tim and Georgina, while also imbuing a sense of elegance. They chose a hand-painted look based around individual pieces of furniture with a simple, classic feel.

John carried out a detailed analysis of the couple's lifestyle, cooking habits and aspirations for the new kitchen before plotting out the design and location of the furniture and appliances.

It soon became clear that the chosen appliances were going to be too small dimensionally, and John recommended changing to larger models. John explains: "The kitchen needed to respect the aesthetics of the house, but have a classic contemporary feel." To achieve this, he had to carefully integrate the industrial proportions of the super-sized steel appliances with the hand-painted furniture.

The central island is the largest of its kind ever constructed by Martin Moore. Comfortably seating seven people, it is both the social and functional heart of the kitchen. The breakfast cupboard holds everything



**APPLIANCES**

A Wolf range cooker has a charbroiler, teppanyaki griddle and two warming drawers, and there is a double fridge/freezer





from a kettle and toaster to the high-tech coffee machine, while favourite cups and mugs for three generations of the family sit on the shelves above.

As extremely knowledgeable wine experts, Tim and Georgina wanted a specially fitted and equipped wine area, dedicated to comfortably enjoying fine wines with friends and family. John was determined to make this area just as impressive as the main kitchen itself. Every element of it is purpose designed and fitted out for a pleasurable wine-tasting experience.

Equipped to a professional level, it includes a vacuum-pump system designed to keep wine in premium condition as well as a sink, a wine fridge and specially designed storage for many different types of glasses. All of this sits comfortably within the purpose-built, break-fronted dresser design.

Comfortable bar chairs surround the high central table (which is also just the right height for standing), all oriented to make the most of the exceptional countryside views. The French doors open directly onto the terrace beyond.

Food is stored in a walk-in pantry which has staged shelving which is stepped at the back so all products can be displayed. LED lighting underneath the shelves automatically turns on when the doors are opened, and wicker baskets keep vegetables in good condition, with a solid marble shelf perfect for storing ambient foods such as cheese.

The back kitchen is a multi-purpose area. With a back door directly leading to the garden, it's a perfect place for coats and boots as well as being somewhere to arrange flowers – the two shelves above the coat rack were specially designed for large vases. An additional fridge/freezer also makes the back kitchen an ideal space for hired caterers when entertaining is on a grand scale.

Designer John Davies says: "It's rare to be presented with such a large area in which to design and build a family kitchen. It was a pleasure to work with clients who derive such huge enjoyment from the simple love of cooking, drinking fine wine and spending time with their children and grandchildren. I believe that this project pulls off the dual challenge of creating a really warm family kitchen on a grand scale."

**Martin Moore** (martinmoore.com)

## ASK THE HOMEOWNER

### What's your favourite feature?

It's probably the pantry. We love being able to store and access everything so easily. Our daughter says going into it to fetch ingredients is like shopping.

### How did you choose the colours?

It's all about shades of warm grey and subtle contrasts, making the furniture tonal with, but standing out from, the colour of the walls. Then there's the beautiful contrast of the blue, which works so well with all the greys.

### Have you any advice for others doing a similar project?

Plan and then plan some more. Analyse how you want to use your kitchen and what you want in it, right down to the smallest details such as how big the sinks need to be. Research appliances carefully to make sure they do exactly what you want from them. Time spent getting everything right beforehand will really pay off in the final design.



### SECOND KITCHEN

The back kitchen acts as a boot and coat room, as well as providing space for caterers when entertaining large parties.

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# Bungalow *bonanza*

Richard and Angie Price have reinvented their 1950s bungalow, extending upwards and outwards to create a highly contemporary home on two storeys with space for the whole family.

STORY: **DEBBIE JEFFERY** PICTURES: **MARC WILMOT**



“**T**his was our first home together, which we bought back in 1999 before we had our children,” explains Angie Price. “It was barely habitable and only had a small kitchen and a cramped bathroom, but Richard and I could see the potential and realised that the large garden was a real bonus.”

The couple moved into the detached 1950s three-bedroom bungalow and tackled a great deal of the work themselves over a number of years, updating the interiors as time and money allowed. Richard is an operations manager for an engineering firm and would spend evenings and weekends labouring on the bungalow: building a garage to the side, adding a conservatory, and extending to add a bathroom, a fourth bedroom and a dining area.

He and Angie sometimes struggled with coordinating the various subcontractors and overseeing the budget, and generally found the

whole experience extremely stressful. “It was really difficult because we brought in different people. Richard was doing parts, and it took years to complete,” says Angie, a hospital training manager.

The couple have two children – Zack, 11, and Zoe, 9 – and despite extending the bungalow they began to find single-storey living difficult. “We needed to keep the TV volume down once the children had gone to bed because their bedrooms were right next to the lounge, which also served as a central hallway,” explains Angie. “We considered moving, but we love living here and decided to spend the money on updating our existing home instead to get a layout that would work for us.”

The couple spotted award-winning company Whitshaw Builders on Facebook and were impressed with their large portfolio of projects. The business undertakes loft conversions and bespoke residential extensions all over South Yorkshire and visited Richard and Angie to discuss various options for improving both the look and layout of their bungalow.







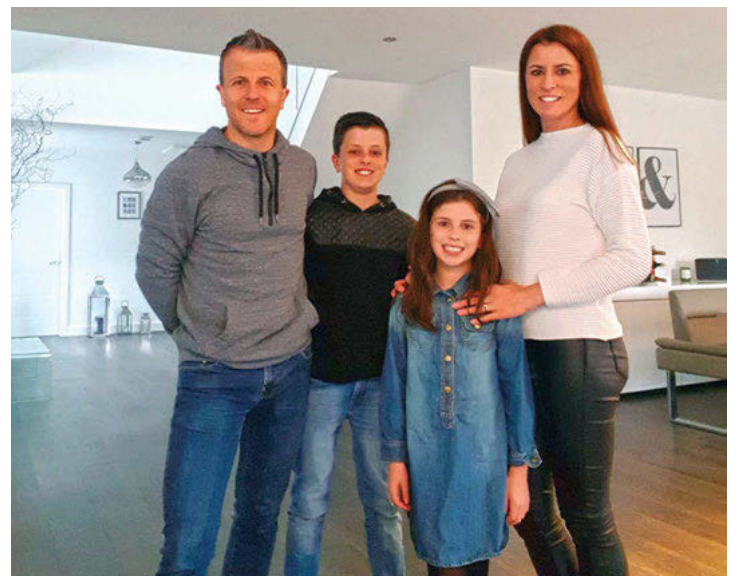
### EXTERIOR

Extending upwards and across the rear, rendering the exterior and changing the roof covering and windows have completely transformed the original bungalow.

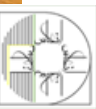


### In brief

**Project** Extension and loft conversion  
**Location** South Yorkshire  
**Cost** £65,000 in 1999  
**Spent** £100,000 plus £40,000 on fixtures and fittings  
**Worth** £375,000+



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## In detail

**PROJECT**

**Builders** Whitshaw Builders: whitshawbuilders.co.uk

**Architects** Coda Studios: codastudios.co.uk

**STRUCTURE**

**Aluminium sliding doors**

Mayfayre Aluminium Systems Ltd: mayfayrealuminium.co.uk

**Marley Modern roof tiles** Marley Eternit: marleyeternit.co.uk

**Staircase** Whitshaw Builders: whitshawbuilders.co.uk

**Roof lights** Roof Maker: roof-maker.co.uk

**Roof windows** Velux: velux.co.uk

**Render** Wetherby Building Systems: wbs-ltd.co.uk

**Doors** Bison Windows and Doors: bisondoors.co.uk

**Windows** SolarFrame: solarframe.co.uk

**Window installation**

Double Glazing Installations: doubleglazinginstallations.com

**Staffordshire blue bricks**

Howarth Timber: howarth-timber.co.uk

**FIXTURES AND FITTINGS**

**Vinyl flooring** Polyflor: polyflor.co.uk

**Kitchen, boiling tap**

John Longley: jslongley.com

**Sanitaryware** Victoria Plum: victoriaplum.com

**Astroline 4CB multi-fuel burner**

Dovre: dovre.co.uk

**Stove supply** Denby Dale Stoves: denbydalestoves.co.uk

**Solar panel supply** Yorkshires Green With Energy: 01226 497138

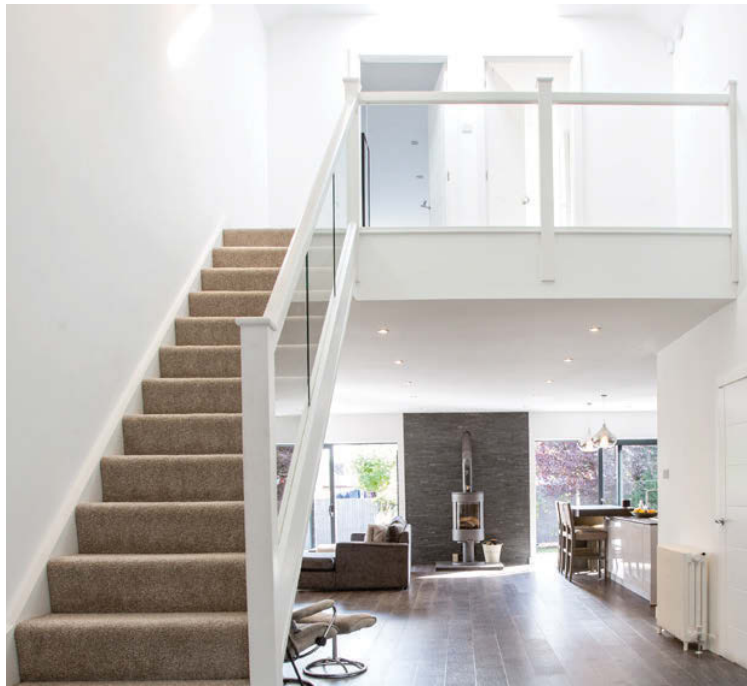
**Black split-faced wall tiles**

Tile Giant: tilegiant.co.uk



**BEFORE**

Angie and Richard had previously extended their bungalow and added a conservatory.

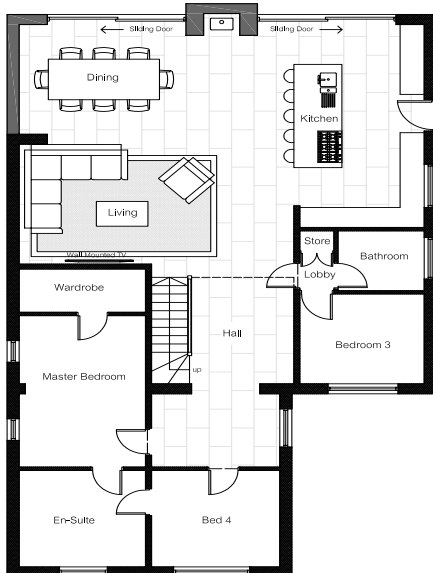


“We wanted a more contemporary, open-plan home, but when we’d previously applied for planning permission to extend we were told that we couldn’t build another storey because of height restrictions,” says Angie. “Whitshaws came back to us with some great suggestions, acted really professionally, and their communication was excellent. It was a no-brainer – they were the people we wanted to use.”

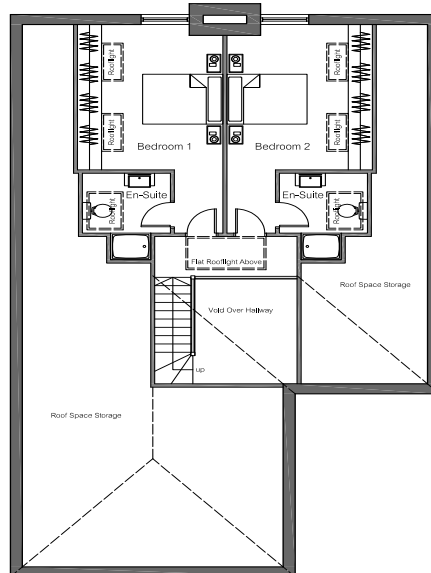
Whitshaw Builders are partnered with architects Coda Studios, who drew up plans for the proposals and submitted these to the local authority for planning consent in December 2015. They suggested building two en suite bedrooms upstairs right into the roof space, which would limit the overall height of the property to appease the planners.

A scheme was also devised which involved demolishing the old conservatory and building a small two-storey blockwork rear extension. This would rationalise the existing space and allow the former kitchen, sitting room and second bedroom to be combined to form one large kitchen/dining/living room, opening onto a terrace through two sets of sliding doors on either side of a new chimney breast.

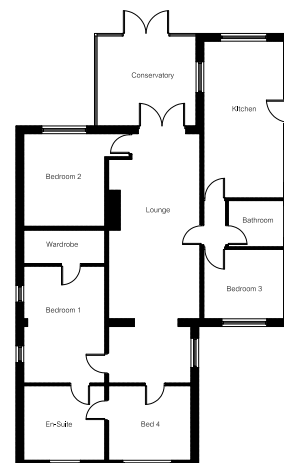
Part of the former sitting room would then become a spacious open-plan feature hallway with



Ground floor



First floor



Previous floorplan

**FLOORPLAN**

Extending upwards to create two children’s bedrooms with two bathrooms freed up existing bedrooms on the ground floor to become a guest bedroom and playroom. A two-storey rear extension added further space to the open-plan kitchen/dining/living area, which opens directly into the spacious hallway.



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## HOMES Extension/loft conversion



### KITCHEN

The open-plan kitchen has white gloss cabinets and Silestone worktops with a boiling water tap, an induction hob and a retractable extractor. Hard-wearing timber-effect vinyl flooring was laid over underfloor heating throughout the living/dining/kitchen and in the open-plan hallway.



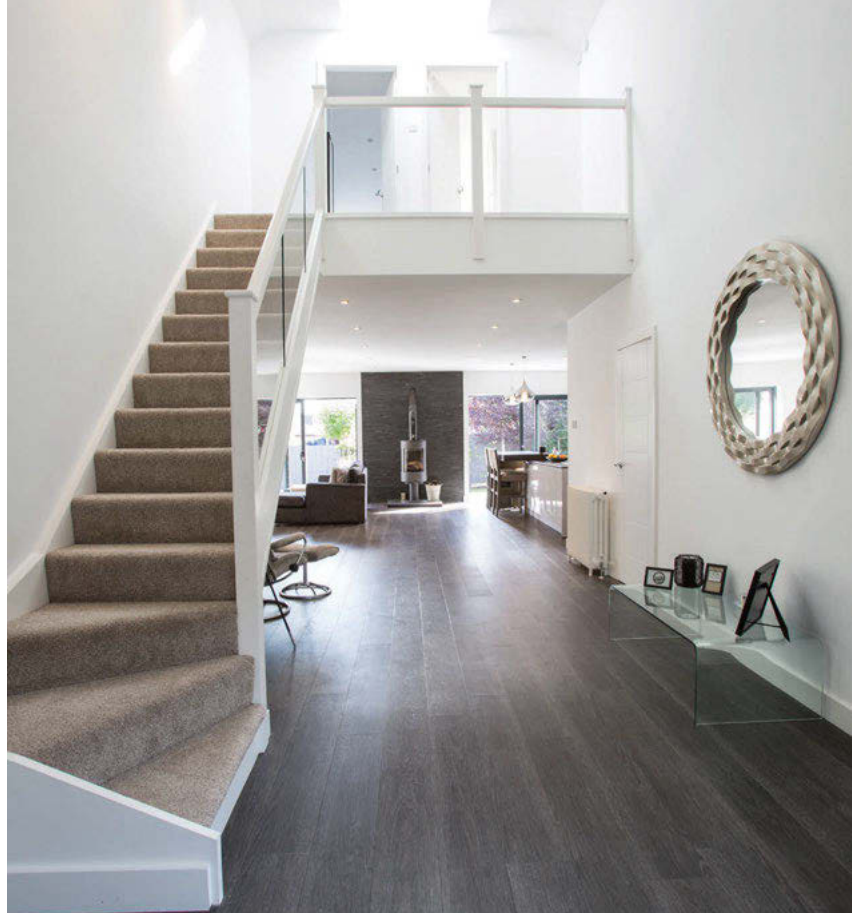
an impressive galleried staircase leading up to the new first-floor bedrooms and bathrooms. Externally, white render would cover the entire building, uniting the various elements and contrasting with the new dark grey roof tiles and aluminium windows.

“We honestly didn’t think we’d get planning permission to extend upwards, because our previous architect had told us that it wasn’t possible,” says Angie. “Designing the pitch of the roof in such a way that the height only increased by half a metre meant that it sailed through planning, though, with no objections from neighbours.”

At first the family remained living in the bungalow as work began in January 2016, with the builders planning a schedule which would limit the impact on the interior. Business partner Ryan Whittaker has over 30 years of experience in the building industry and took on the role of site manager, organising the entire project from demolition through to decoration at a fixed price.

“It only took about four months to finish the work, and we could have stayed living here during that time if we’d wished, but in the end we moved out to stay with relatives a couple of roads away as they had two spare bathrooms and bedrooms,” explains Angie.

The old conservatory was demolished to make way for the rear extension, which stands on a modest four square metre footprint and evens up the back of the house. New concrete strip foundations were excavated and the extension walls were constructed in blockwork, with the whole house finished externally in white silicone self-coloured render. The extension incorporates a striking chimney stack in contrasting blue brickwork which serves the log-burner in the sitting room.





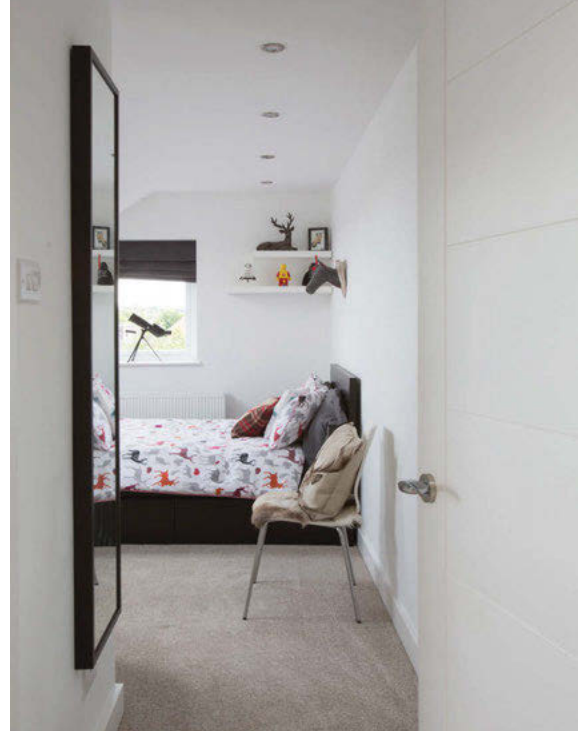
#### HALLWAY

The spacious new hallway enables views right through the ground floor to the sliding aluminium doors and terrace beyond. Whitshaw Builders' joiners built the new feature staircase which has glazed balustrades.



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“Find experienced professional people who listen. Our project manager understood our vision and worked within our budget, which made everything run smoothly.”

RICHARD AND ANGIE'S TOP TIP

“When it came to extending upwards we were lucky that the existing foundations didn't need strengthening or reinforcing,” says Angie. “Nothing slowed down the build, despite the fact that they were working in the depths of winter – it was all really well organised.”

The entire roof of the bungalow was removed and the wall plate was then built up in blockwork with metal web joists. The new roof was constructed in timber, inset with roof lights, and was clad in dark grey concrete tiles for a contemporary finish.

“As well as the children's bedrooms and bathrooms, which are identical, we also have plenty of boarded-out loft storage and cupboards built into the lower eaves upstairs, which reduces clutter,” says Angie.

Downstairs, one of the bedrooms has become a playroom and another a guest room. The new hallway is so large that the children are able to practise gymnastics in it with their crash mats, and the whole layout has been cleverly rationalised.

Richard and Angie decided to upgrade various items in their budget, including the tiles, flooring and kitchen, and were able to use Whitshaw Builders' online payment system to keep track of expenditure and any amendments, as well as to view floorplans and regularly post progress pictures. “We re-mortgaged to pay for the work and transferred bank payments once we'd agreed that each stage was complete,” explains Angie.

The couple chose a combination of radiators and underfloor heating, although they rarely need to turn on the heating and instead rely on their wood-burning stove. Photovoltaic panels were also installed on the side of the garage, which generate electricity and help ensure that running costs for the two-storey house are less than for the original bungalow.

“Richard laid the underfloor heating and installed the fire himself but everything else was done for us, which was such a relief compared to our previous building projects,” says Angie. “The interiors were completely



finished, including the decorating, before we moved back in – it was like a well-organised military operation.”

The children now enjoy the privacy of having their bedrooms and bathrooms up on the first floor, and favourite features include the spacious hallway and the bespoke feature staircase. “Our builders have completely transformed what was an old, rundown bungalow into something more like a brand-new modern build,” says Angie. “There was no stress and no concerns with any of the work – it's all top quality and was completed to a high standard. The end result really has surpassed our expectations and there's absolutely nothing that we would change.”

#### BEDROOMS

Two identical children's bedrooms were built into the eaves, with Velux roof lights above built-in storage cupboards and wardrobes.

## Final word

#### What was the high point?

It was such a straightforward and stress-free experience compared to building our previous extensions that we enjoyed the whole process.

#### ...and the low point?

Just before we moved out of the old bungalow part of the roof had been taken off and there were high winds which made us anxious, but really there were no problems at all.

#### The best buy?

We love our wood-burning stove, which we light almost every night. The boiling water tap in the kitchen is also something we wouldn't be without.



#### ...and the biggest extravagance?

The kitchen was £17,000, we have a hot tub in the garden, and our photovoltaic panels were quite expensive but save us money every day with the Feed-in Tariff.



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## In brief

**Project** Barn conversion  
**Location** York  
**Cost** £495,000  
**Spent** £300,000  
**Worth** £1m



# Space to GROW

A sprawling barn has been converted into a stylish family home with a variety of finishes and lots of glazing.

STORY: **LOUISE PARKIN**

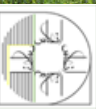
**A**lex and Emma Main weren't even looking to move house, let alone take on a huge renovation project, but when Alex found an impressive barn ripe for conversion, they knew they had to act. Living in an affluent part of York in an end-terrace house, the couple never imagined that their next home would be a striking triple-gabled barn, with cavernous interiors, a stable block, and paddock and woodland amounting to four acres.

Emma, who is a full-time mum to three girls, recalls: "Alex called me one day when he was driving down a quiet local road. He'd seen a sign for a development opportunity, and said: 'I've found our forever home - but there's a bit to do!'" What followed was a nail-biting period where an open day attracted more than 50 potential buyers and sealed bids were invited. Fortunately, Emma and Alex's bid was successful and they were invited to meet the vendor, who lives next door.



### EXTERIOR

The triple-gabled barn has been converted into a rural yet contemporary home, reusing existing materials where possible.





## In detail

### PROJECT

**Architect** Chris Robinson & Son:  
chrisrobinsonandson.carbonmade.com  
**Builder** Croft Building: croftdeveloper.co.uk

### STRUCTURE

**Cladding** The Main Company:  
maincompany.com  
**Insulation** Kingspan: kingspan.com  
**Staircase** Howdens: howdens.com  
**Windows** Aluminium Frame Company:  
aluminiumframeco.co.uk

### FIXTURES AND FITTINGS

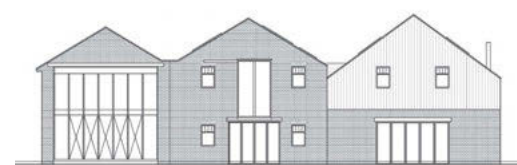
**Internal doors** Howdens: howdens.com  
**Kitchen** The Main Company: maincompany.com  
**Internal cladding** The Main Company: maincompany.com  
**Bathroom tiles** Bert and May: bertandmay.com  
**Flooring** The Main Company: maincompany.com  
**Lighting** Well Lit: well-lit.co.uk  
**Staircase cladding** The Main Company: maincompany.com  
**Stove** Yorkshire Stoves:  
yorkshirstoves.co.uk  
**Paint** Little Greene Paint Company: littlegreene.com



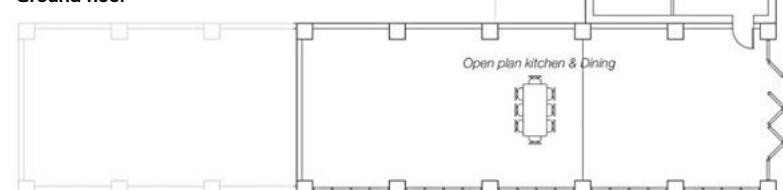
### THE FLOORPLAN

To one side of the entrance hall and utility room is the kitchen/diner with the living area at the far end. The lounge is located on the other side of the entrance. Upstairs are four bedrooms, a large landing that doubles as a guest bedroom and two bathrooms including an en suite for the master bedroom.

#### First floor



#### Ground floor



A large stable block opposite the barn was included in the sale, but there was no entrance to the site other than through the vendor's land. "Creating an access was the first thing we did, so that builders and deliveries didn't have to travel across the neighbour's drive," says Alex, who runs his own kitchen company.

Outline planning permission was already in place for the barn's conversion into a home, but half of the largest section was given over to parking. Alex and Emma wanted to use the entire ground floor as living space and so decided to redesign the layout themselves.

One end of the L-shaped barn extends to the rear, providing ample room for a statement kitchen/diner and a bank of bifold glazing with a double-height area to the front. The middle section accommodates the entrance hall, utility and plant room, while the right gable houses the living room. Four bedrooms and two bathrooms are spread across the first floor, along with a spacious landing that doubles as a guest bedroom.

"We could have had five or six bedrooms but we wanted to make the most of the barn's dimensions rather than try and cram in rooms we didn't need," says Emma.

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Photograph: Simon Maxwell

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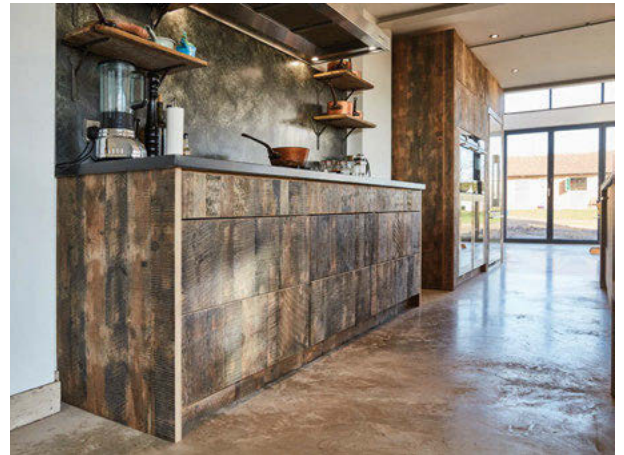
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#### KITCHEN

The interiors combine rustic reclaimed wood with vintage lighting, stainless steel, concrete and contemporary-style appliances.



“Our daughters are not yet at a stage where they want to be in their rooms, so we needed a layout that would provide somewhere we could all spend time together.”

An architect was commissioned to see the application through planning, and careful consideration was needed when bats were discovered in the barn. Alex explains: “The ecologists wanted to dedicate a huge space to the bats which would have meant sacrificing one of the bedrooms so the house wouldn’t work for us as a family and the layout we were trying to achieve. However, we were able to work with an ecologist and Natural England to obtain a bat licence that allowed us to move the roost into the stables opposite.”

Wayne Ashcroft of Croft Building and Developers was chosen to complete the building work and act as project manager, having worked for Alex on his clients’ projects. His high levels of organisation meant that decisions about locations for services and ordering materials were always arranged well in advance, keeping the project moving and ensuring there were no major delays.

The roof was taken off under the supervision of the ecologist, and eight new steel A-frames inserted



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### INTERIOR

The same neutral tone from Little Greene paints has been used on the walls throughout the house.



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which have been left exposed and painted. The roof was then rebuilt using the existing tiles.

Despite being over 100 years old the barn's structure was in good condition, but there were a number of pillars down one side of the kitchen which had no foundations and needed rebuilding. "The columns had curved bricks, which sadly were unsalvageable so we had to rebuild them square using blocks and covering them with facing bricks," Alex recalls. A membrane was needed between the bricks and blocks which allowed the surface of the bricks to be exposed. The existing foundations for the main barn were topped with a polished concrete floor that has been insulated and fitted with underfloor heating.

The shuttering on the third gable was removed and replaced with reclaimed barn board, which Alex sourced along with the internal cladding and the wood for the kitchen. He designed this himself using reclaimed wood, aged metal and lots of concrete to create a dramatic and striking scheme that combines rustic finishes with contemporary lines and tones. He runs The Main Company, a kitchen design company that uses reclaimed wood from many locations including America, Eastern Europe, France and the UK, offering a wide palette of finishes to clients.

"The colour variation changes so much depending on where the wood comes from and even on which side of a building it was laid. Wood from a south-facing aspect will be quite grey while that found in a more western position will be richer. It's my aim to create finishes in my client's kitchens that are unique, and can never be replicated. That's the beauty of using reclaimed materials," says Alex.

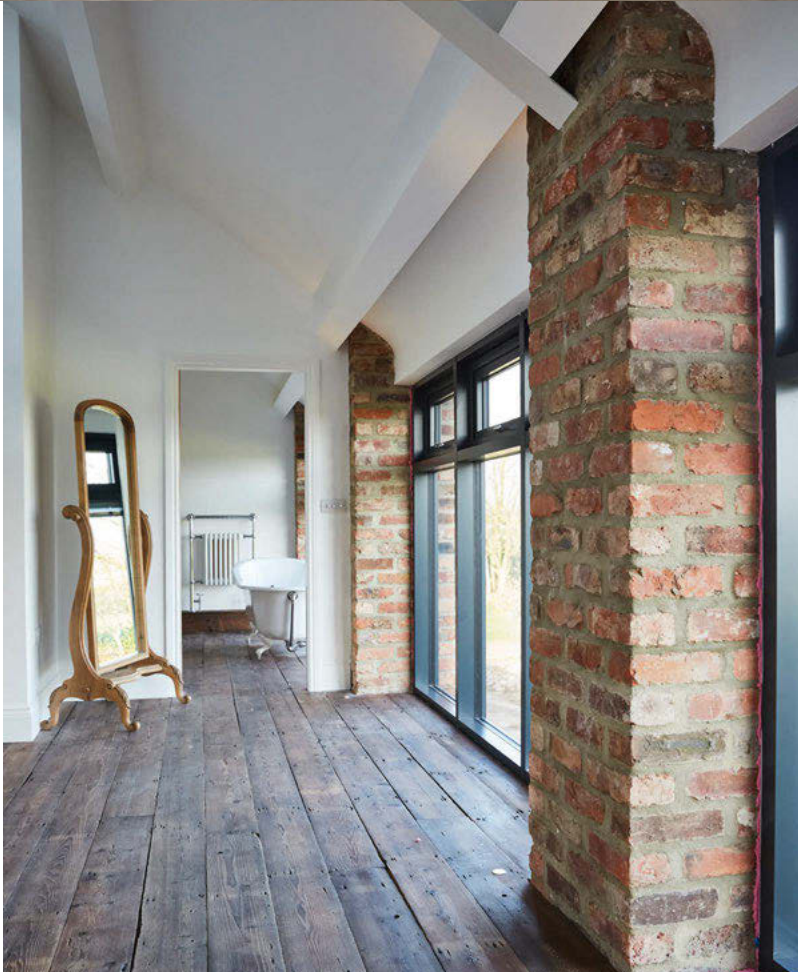
“It's a very comfortable house to live in, and we only use the heating between November and February.”





#### RECLAIMED MATERIALS

Reclaimed wood sourced from the USA and Eastern Europe has been used to clad walls and for the floors upstairs.



Only the top layer of wood is used, which is engineered onto birch ply to create a stable material that is strong and will not warp. One-hundred-year-old barn board was used to make the kitchen island and wall cabinets, including the breakfast bar which is attached to chunky wooden columns with flanges for the pipework. The pantry is clad in wood, as is one of the walls in the kitchen. Concrete end pieces have been moulded and rendered in micro-cement, and the worktops are made of zinc, wood and stainless steel.

A dramatic lighting installation above the dining table features more than 20 filament light bulbs hanging from a series of ceiling roses, looped over hooks to achieve the required spacing. Above the kitchen island, conduit conceals electrical cable for the vintage pendants.

The style of the kitchen inspired the interiors elsewhere in the house, with a number of walls in the living room and bedrooms also clad in timber. Reclaimed sinks in the bathroom have been surrounded with wood, and all the wooden floors are reclaimed.

On completion of the building work Emma, who was heavily pregnant with their third daughter Hazel (now two), took on managing the interior fit-out, organising the internal fittings. Alex, Emma and their two daughters Olivia (now eight) and Martha (six) continued to live in their old house during the project, but they visited the site at least once a day. "We wanted to be on hand to talk through problems or issues so that they could be resolved immediately before they caused a delay," says Alex.

The concrete floor retains the warmth from the underfloor heating, which is powered by an oil-fired boiler, and the combination of solar gain and high levels of insulation means the house is warm much of the time, with radiators upstairs only required to







**UPSTAIRS**

High ceilings combined with wooden and steel beams add to the sense of space in the bedrooms.



“Make sure your builder asks for decisions well in advance.” ALEX AND EMMA'S TOP TIP

provide a heating boost on the coldest days. “It’s a very comfortable house to live in, and we only use the heating between November and February,” Emma says.

Work on the landscaping is due to start this summer, the family having spent the last two years enjoying their new home and spending time in the woodland areas building camp fires. “We were lucky because it was not a very complicated build, but once it was finished we needed some time off. Now we are ready to start designing the garden,” says Alex.

**Final word**

**What was the high point?**

The achievement of creating something that no one has lived in. We would like this to be our forever home.

**And the low point?**

Running out of money to do the outside. But there is always hope!

**What was your greatest extravagance?**

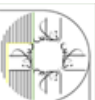
A projector that cost £1,000.

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## In brief

**Project** New build  
**Location** Cardiff  
**Cost** £370,000 for existing bungalow  
**Spent** £450,000  
**Worth** £850,000+





# A home for life

Rob and Sara Boltman designed and built their highly contemporary, timber-framed home to adapt with their family's changing needs.

STORY: **DEBBIE JEFFERY** PICTURES: **ROBERT BOLTMAN PHOTOGRAPHY**



**“S**ara and I had moved house every couple of years since we married, carrying out various remodels and extensions, but this is definitely somewhere we plan to stay,” says Rob Boltman. “We’d been looking for a suitable plot for 15 years, and the other properties were stepping stones which eventually allowed us to design and build our own home.”

Set in a walled garden on the site of an abandoned 1970s bungalow in Cardiff, the couple’s contemporary design for a replacement house was welcomed by both the planning and conservation officers. The triangular site is located towards the edge of a Conservation Area on a small side road and is screened on three sides by a high stone wall.

“The bungalow hadn’t been lived in for about three years and there was no planning permission for the site when we bought it, so we took a calculated risk,” continues Rob. “During the buying process we did a pre-app with the local council, which gave us some reassurance that a contemporary replacement dwelling should be acceptable.”

## EXTERIOR

Designed by project architect Rob Boltman as his own family home, the ultra-contemporary four-bedroom house sits in the Roath Mill Gardens Conservation Area of Cardiff. The house has an L-shaped plan, with stone fin walls reflecting the locality and contrasting with the modern Equitone external cladding.



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## In detail

**PROJECT**

**Architects** Downs Merrifield  
Architects: downsmerfield.com

**Landscaping** Victoria Wade  
Landscapes: victoriawade.co.uk

**STRUCTURE**

**Passive slab and timber frame**  
Advanced Housing Systems:  
advanced housingsystems.co.uk

**Timber/aluminium windows**  
Velfac: velfac.co.uk

**Staircase, gate and screen**  
Ad Hoc Designs:  
adhocdesigns.co.uk

**Equitone cladding** Marley  
Eternit: marleyeternit.co.uk

**Single ply roofing**  
Fatra (UK) Ltd: fatra.co.uk

**Natural stone cladding**

Real Stone Cladding:  
realstonecladding.co.uk

**FIXTURES AND FITTINGS**

**Kitchen** Elementi Cucina:  
elementicucina.com

**Sanitaryware** Laufen: laufen.co.uk

**Boiling tap** Quooker:  
quooker.co.uk

**MVHR** Rega Ventilation:  
rega-uk.com

**Underfloor heating**  
Continental Underfloor: ufh.co.uk

**Tiles** Ariostea:  
ariostea-high-tech.com

**Neohub smart room  
thermostats** Heatmiser:  
heatmiser-shop.co.uk



Sara and Rob first met when they were both working as IT consultants, but later Rob decided to retrain as an architect. "I've always been interested in design and computer graphics, and wanted a new challenge," he says. After purchasing the bungalow in September 2016, Rob worked with Sara to design a new home for themselves and their children: Katie, 11, and Jack, 8.

The highly sustainable, contemporary two-storey house is tucked behind the garden walls, with the L-shaped plan set in the front corner of the plot in order to maximise garden space. This makes the most of its park setting and south-facing aspect, while large amounts of glazing to the central hall and landing link two distinctive rectangular boxes.

"The house started off a little bigger, but then we needed to shrink it in order to stay within our budget," says Rob. "I came up with two alternative designs: one with a pair of mono-pitch roofs and the other with flat roofs, which the planners preferred as it maintained a lower overall height."

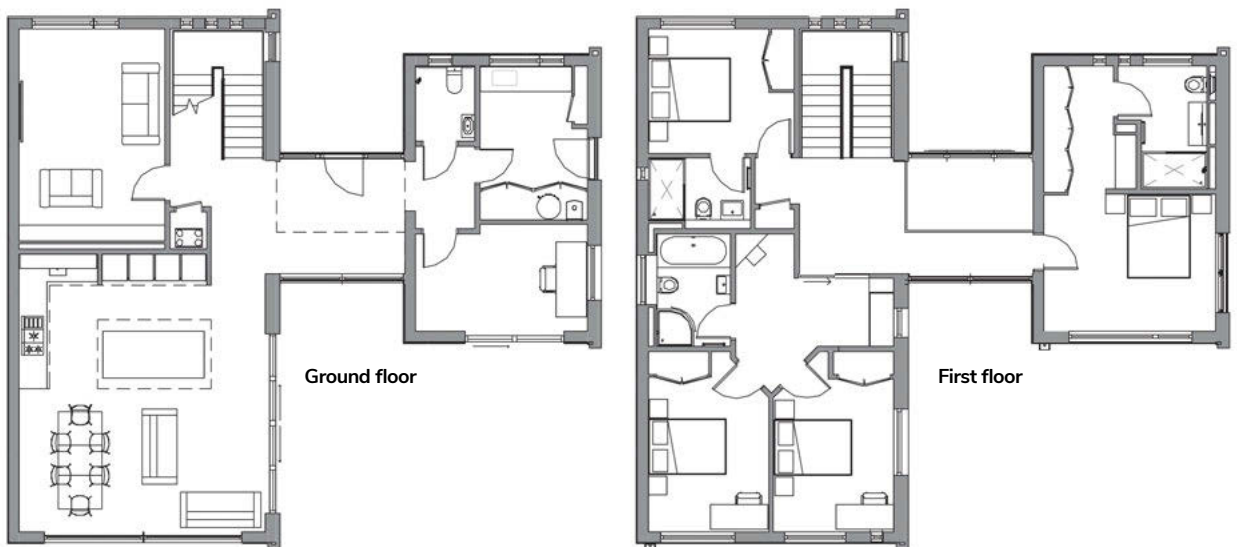
**THE BUILD**

The timber frame was constructed off-site by Advanced Housing Systems in Devon, and was erected in just three weeks during May 2017. A 'passive-slab' insulated structural concrete raft provides the foundation for the timber superstructure.



**FLOORPLAN**

The 215-sqm house was formed by connecting two rectangular wings using a glazed double-height hallway. The master bedroom is upstairs in the smaller wing, with a study/guest bedroom, utility and WC below. The larger block has the kitchen/living space and a separate sitting room.





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## KITCHEN

Grey and orange cabinetry and copper accessories were chosen for the kitchen. Biscotto Timo and Anthracite Sole 22mm thick doors were teamed with K-Works Stone Italiana work surfaces, and walls were highlighted with a frosted bronze mirror.



The detached house stands in an area of predominantly Edwardian terraced properties, and while undeniably modern in design the external materials acknowledge the surroundings.

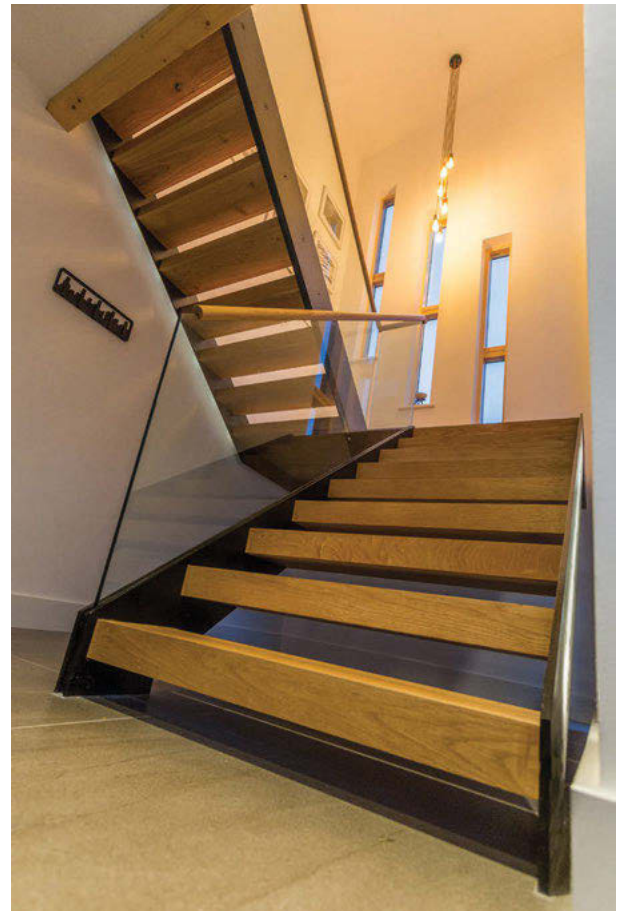
Elevations facing a public park to the south-east are clad in natural stone, referencing the existing garden wall. The other elevations are finished in dark slate-coloured fibre-cement panels in a seemingly random rectilinear pattern, albeit working to a strict 300mm grid that incorporates the window openings. The four-bedroom house also meets the Lifetime Homes design criteria, with ramped access to the family entrance and a ground-floor study/bedroom with an adjoining wet room.

“The hallway is a double-height space, and part of the upstairs landing was designed as a communal play area for the children, with sliding doors which can close it off from the rest of the house,” says Rob. “Then there’s a bridge landing leading across to the master bedroom and en suite in the smaller wing.”

Once planning permission had been granted the family moved into rented accommodation during the build, using the profits from their previous house sale to fund the project.

“I took a 12-week sabbatical from work at Downs Merrifield Architects so that I could project manage the build,” says Rob. “One company was employed to complete the demolition and groundworks, and then the timber-frame company delivered the slab, timber frame, internal walls and glazing as a package. After that the fit-out was finished by various subbies.”

Work started in February 2017 with the demolition and groundworks, and an opening needed to be



“The house started off a little bigger, but then we needed to shrink it in order to stay within our budget.”

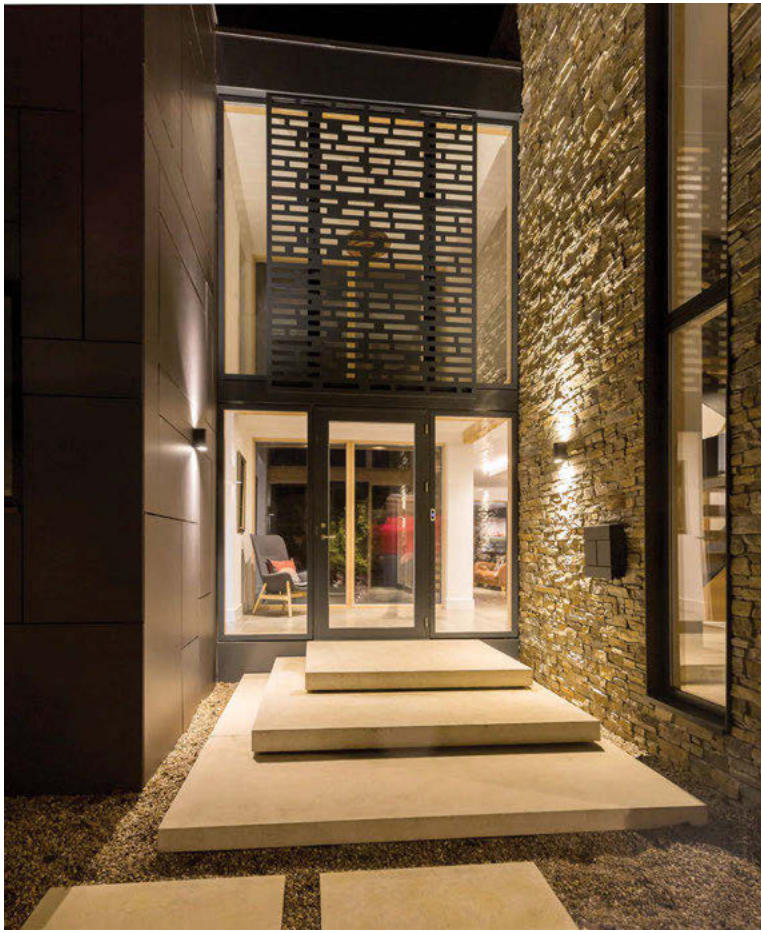
#### STAIRS

The distinctive staircase was designed to sit on hidden supports in the timber frame, with a shadow gap around it, and is the only steel element in the entire building. Steel treads are clad in the same hardwood flooring as the landing, with bespoke nosing.





**LANDING**  
A communal study/play space on the first-floor landing features built-in seating and shelving, and a pocket door allows this area to be closed off.



made in the garden wall to gain access onto the site. Sewers were repositioned, drainage installed, and tall conifers removed to prevent overshadowing.

Off-site timber-frame construction was chosen to maximise thermal efficiency and minimise time on site, as well as increasing accuracy for the cladding grid.

A 'passive-slab' insulated structural concrete raft provides the foundation for the timber superstructure. "Instead of digging out conventional foundations we put down a layer of hardcore and polystyrene formwork, which is filled with fibre-reinforced concrete to create the fully insulated raft," explains Rob. "It was the first time that the plumbers had installed underfloor heating outside before a house had even been built. They laid the pipes in the rain and we had to mark out where the walls would go using spray paint."

Following a Flood Consequence Assessment the slab also raises the ground floor by half a metre due to the proximity of a brook, which runs along one side of the plot. "This left us with an issue with wheelchair access, so we sloped the parking area and added a pedestrian ramp to the side door," says Rob.

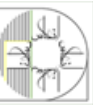
The timber frame was constructed off-site by Advanced Housing Systems in Devon, and was erected in just three weeks during May 2017. "The softwood timber studwork panels were made in the factory, with high-performance plasterboard on the inside and pre-formed openings for windows," says Rob. Both sides of the external walls are closed in the factory, and service conduits and electrical back boxes are pre-installed, which saves time on site."

A local roofing company completed the single-ply membrane flat roofs, and Sara worked with her stepfather to attach the stone slips which have been used to clad part of the exterior. Grey cladding panels were fixed in place by Rob and his parents, but after 10 days they had only succeeded in completing one elevation. "The process needed to be very precise, with consistent 10mm shadow gaps between every section, and some of the bigger pieces were quite heavy," says Rob.

The cladding boards measure 3m x 1m, with each divided into five different shapes – a bit like the game of Tetris – to ensure the whole sheet was used. Composite timber and aluminium windows were chosen to complement the cladding and fitted to the same 300mm grid pattern, with everything planned out in great detail at an early stage.



**GLASS LINK**  
A decorative aluminium screen in the double-height glass link provides privacy from the road and matches the gate in the boundary wall. Glulam beams support the first-floor landing bridge in the double-height entrance hallway.







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# STYLE

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PERFORMANCE



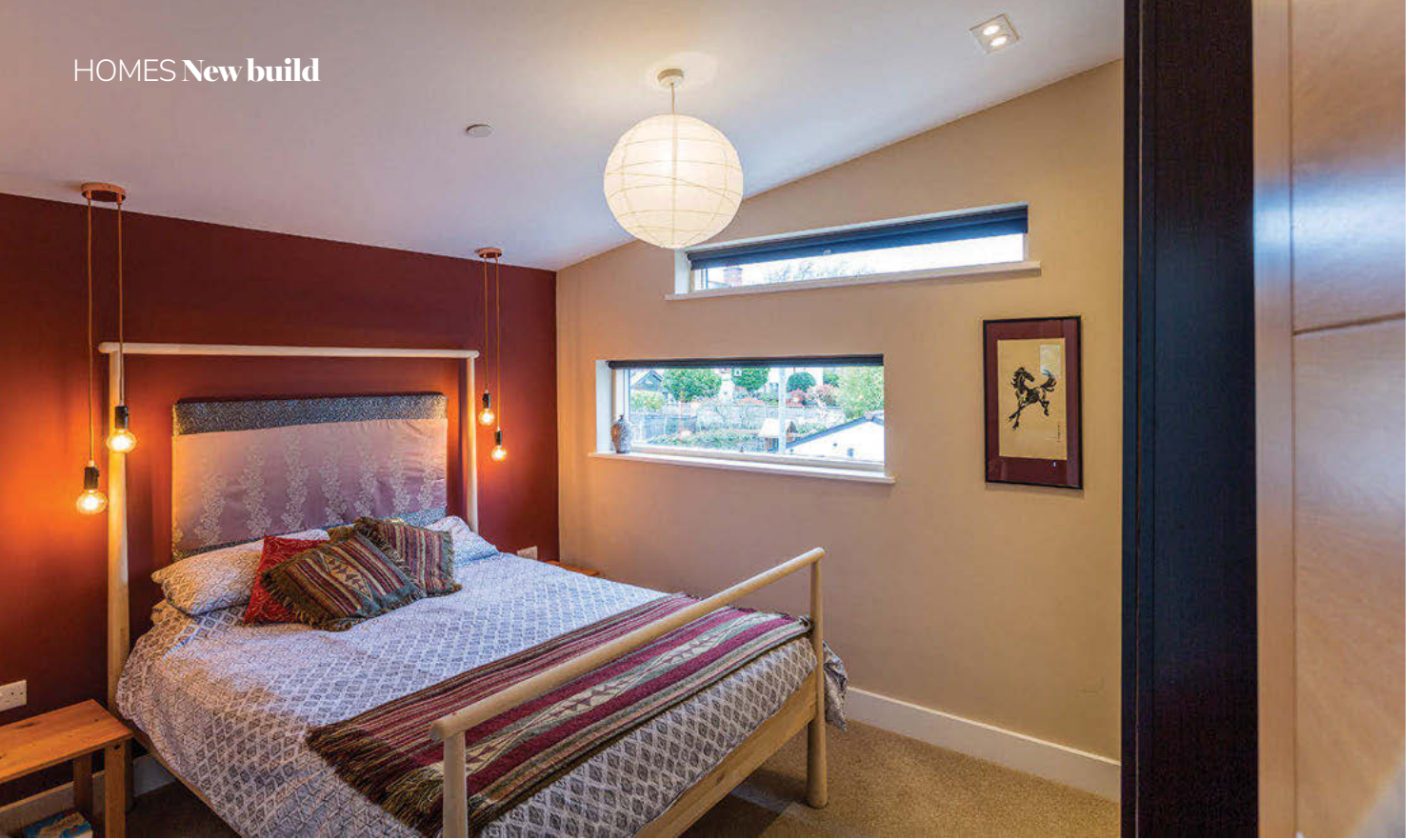
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**BEDROOMS**

The master bedroom suite is positioned in a wing to one side of the landing bridge, with an en suite guest bedroom, two identically sized children's rooms and a family bathroom to the other side.



**BATHROOMS**

Electric tile heating and towel radiators provide heating in the bathrooms. The master en suite is copper and orange, while turquoise and blue tiles were chosen for the family bathroom with a wave-inspired pattern across the bath.



While work continued outside the interior was fitted out by a team of electricians, plumbers, carpenters, plasterers and decorators. The house was then occupied in mid-September, with only the kitchen installation and some cladding work left to finish. "We were concerned about tiling on top of the wet concrete floor slab, and wanted to wait for it to dry out, which delayed finishing," says Rob. "The kitchen was then installed in mid-October and formal Building Regulations completion was achieved in November 2017."

Super-insulated and airtight, with a passive solar design, the house requires only minimal heating – scoring a SAP rating of 85 and airtightness tested at 1.3.

"There's no heating upstairs, other than electric tile heating and towel radiators in the bathrooms," explains Rob. "We have a mechanical ventilation and heat recovery system, and the smart heating system has room thermostats so that we can monitor how the house performs now we're living in it, which is useful for me as an architect."

Brook House has been shortlisted for the RSAW 2018 Welsh Architecture Awards, the first round of the RIBA Awards that culminate in the Stirling Prize and House of the Year competitions. "It's been an exciting project building a house for our own occupation, and getting so involved at every stage," says Rob. "To be honest it's turned out even better than we'd imagined and is somewhere we plan to stay."



**Final word**

**What was the high point?**

Seeing our timber frame arriving on the back of a lorry was an exciting moment.

**...and the low point?**

A two-month delay in planning was caused because of the referral to planning committee, who then decided to visit the site, which held up the start of the build.

**The best buy?**

Our modern feature light which was made from component parts bought online.



**...and the biggest extravagance?**

The staircase, which is constructed using steel and finished in timber matched to the first-floor landing.

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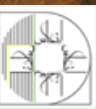


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2



3



4

**1:** This white painted twin stringer staircase has slim stringers supporting open oak treads. The glass balustrade slots into the treads and circular oak handrails without visible fixings. ([bisca.co.uk](http://bisca.co.uk))  
**2:** The Ataja creme has a stainless steel balustrade with a chrome polished finish and an oak handrail. ([chesneys.co.uk](http://chesneys.co.uk))  
**3:** This two-flight cut-string staircase boasts strings and risers in primed whitewood. It features redwood stop-

chamfered newels and spindles, black walnut 32mm thick treads and a traditional handrail. ([pearstairs.co.uk](http://pearstairs.co.uk))  
**4:** This contemporary glass and brushed steel staircase has a cut-string design, so that each piece of glass is shaped perfectly around the treads. Price: from £2,000. ([nevillejohnson.co.uk](http://nevillejohnson.co.uk))  
**5:** This contemporary chunky oak staircase features MDF treads and carpeted stairs. ([stairbox.com](http://stairbox.com))

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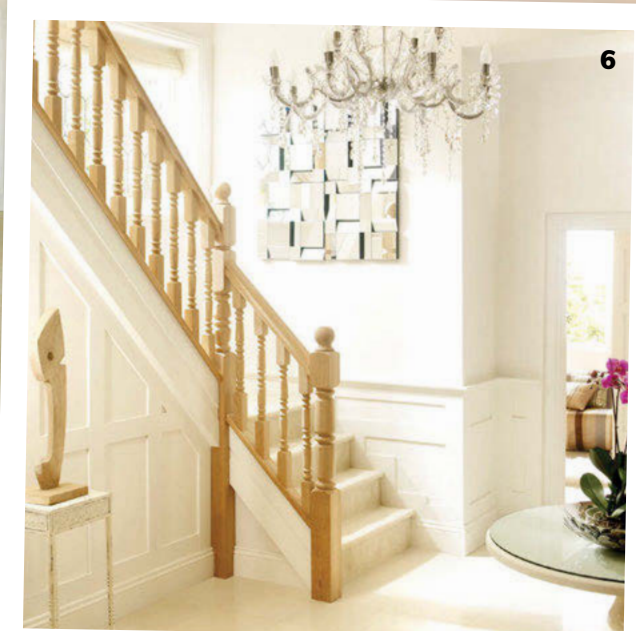


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**6:** Shown here in Arlington white oak, the Heritage collection is available in a range of plain and turned spindle and newel designs. Price for a 13-step project starts from £1,015. (richardburbidge.com)

**7:** The Immix with glass is available in white oak, and comes with pre-cut balusters and panels. Prices start from £1,075. (richardburbidge.com)

**8:** The Fusion range comes in oak or pine with glass infills, or brushed nickel or chrome balusters (shown here). Prices start from £510. (richardburbidge.com)



6

# NEW heights

**T**he growing popularity of open-plan living means increasing numbers of selfbuilders are choosing a feature staircase as a way of creating impact and drama. No longer must it be crammed into a dark corridor, shut off from the living space. Glass in a light-filled hallway can instantly enlarge the space, while oak remains a timeless option that can suit most interior styles. A timber staircase may have a traditional look, but when accompanied by glass, aluminium, steel or chrome handrails, newels and balustrades, the look becomes instantly more contemporary. For something unique, a bespoke design, like the Philip Watts staircase shown here, could be the solution to create that striking statement.



7

8

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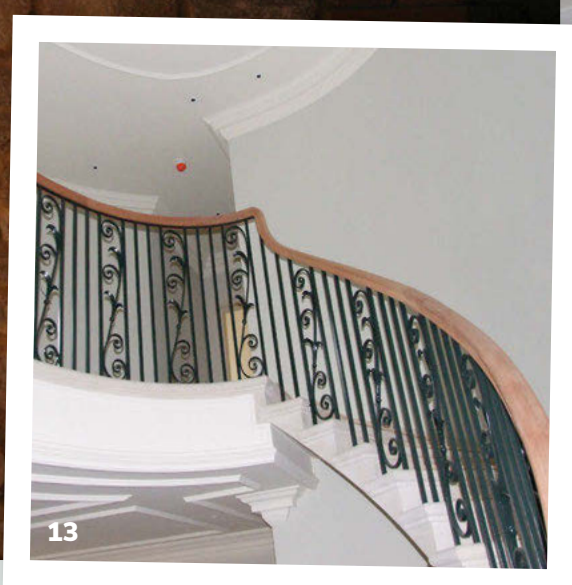
11

- 8:** Made from American white oak and polished to achieve a Jacobean oak finish, this cut-string staircase has 45mm timber spindles and a bespoke continuous handrail. Guide price: £35,000-£40,000 ([haldaneuk.com](http://haldaneuk.com))
- 9:** The Accendo combines oak with a touch of glass. Shown here with a square newel and pyramid cap, the glass panels give the impression of added space. ([jeld-wen.co.uk](http://jeld-wen.co.uk))
- 10:** The Northampton sculptural staircase has a spinal look that appears to be melting into the floor. Cast in aluminium and finished with a bright polish and beech treads, it also includes curved glass balustrading and an internally illuminating handrail. Guide price: £50,000. ([philipwattsdesign.com](http://philipwattsdesign.com))
- 11:** Made from chunky flamed oak treads, this cantilevered staircase has blacksmith-forged stainless steel balustrades. ([bisca.co.uk](http://bisca.co.uk))
- 12:** This double-spine staircase has a painted finish with bespoke handrails. It is constructed of mild steel with walnut treads. ([bespokestaircasecompany.co.uk](http://bespokestaircasecompany.co.uk))
- 13:** Each panel on this cantilevered stone staircase is hand forged and screwed into the spindle. Made from mild steel with a painted finish, the handrail is constructed from hardwood. ([bespokestaircasecompany.co.uk](http://bespokestaircasecompany.co.uk))
- 14:** This American white oak staircase combines light timber with granite grey balustrades and curved open stringer with a large bull-nose tread. The bespoke 58mm x 56mm profile handrail spirals via a 90-degree raking to horizontal wreath, finishing with a volute. Guide price: £35,000-£40,000 ([haldaneuk.com](http://haldaneuk.com))



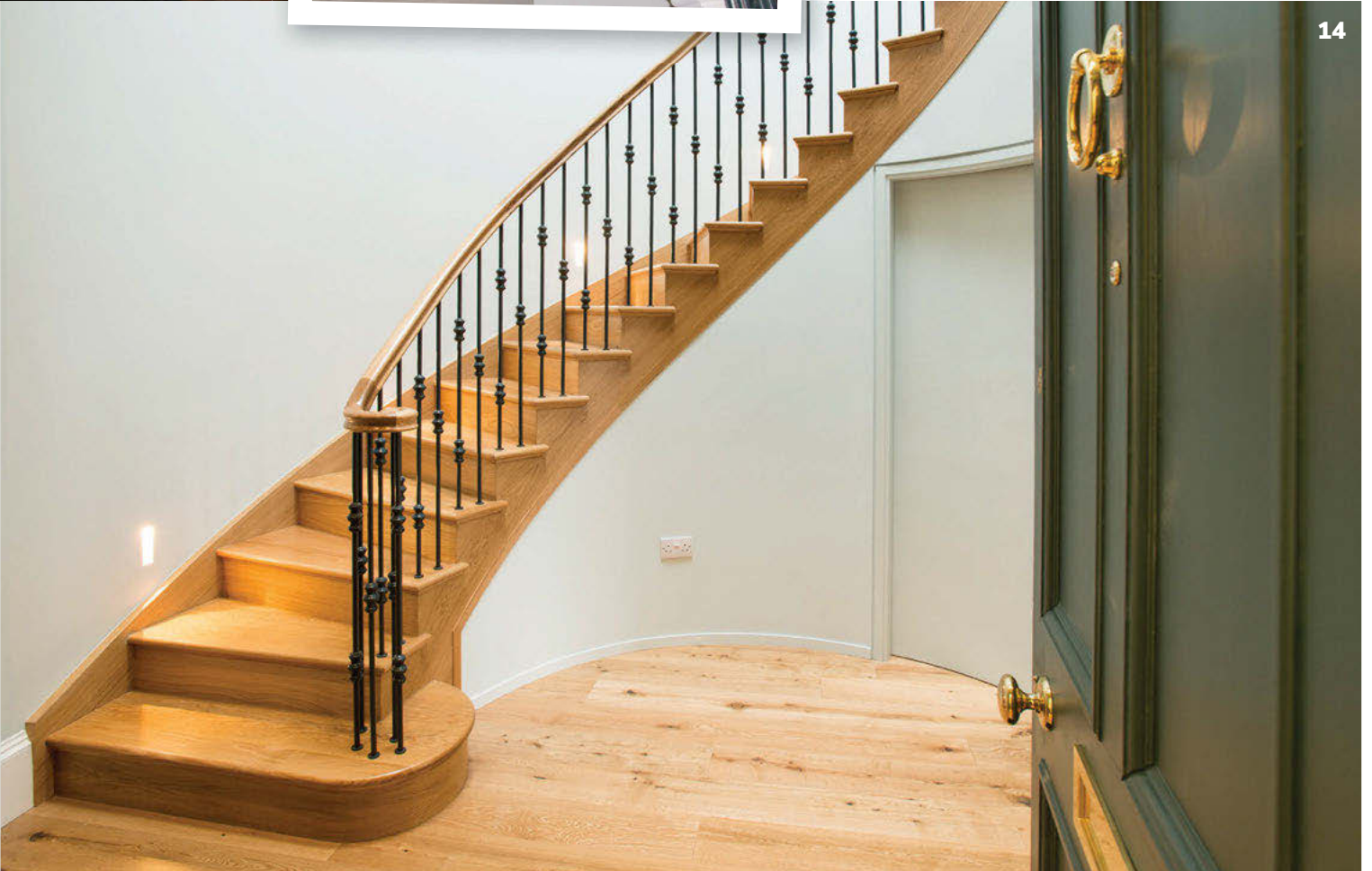


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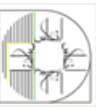
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Available space will often dictate the shape of the stairs, with ceiling height a key factor. Stair layouts are subject to Building Regulations, which govern tread size, riser height, headroom and spindle spacing. Check with your supplier that your choice meets these regulations. A straight staircase requires a longer, narrower area than a half-turn or spiral staircase, and double-turn and winder staircases provide corners, which can be useful when a straight flight won't fit. Regardless of shape, a well-designed staircase can be a worthy addition to the space. Whatever your preference, the hallway is an important area of the house and shouldn't be neglected. Here is a selection of ideas to get you on your way.

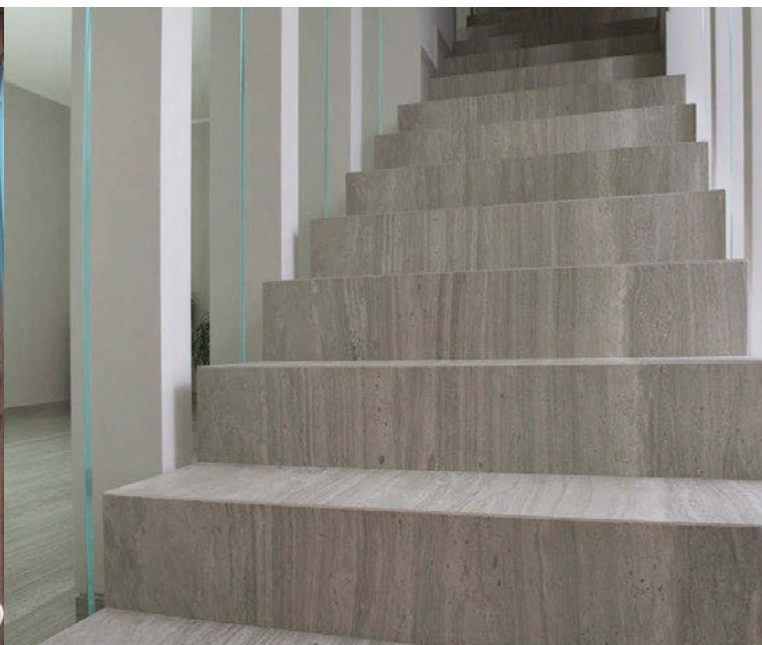


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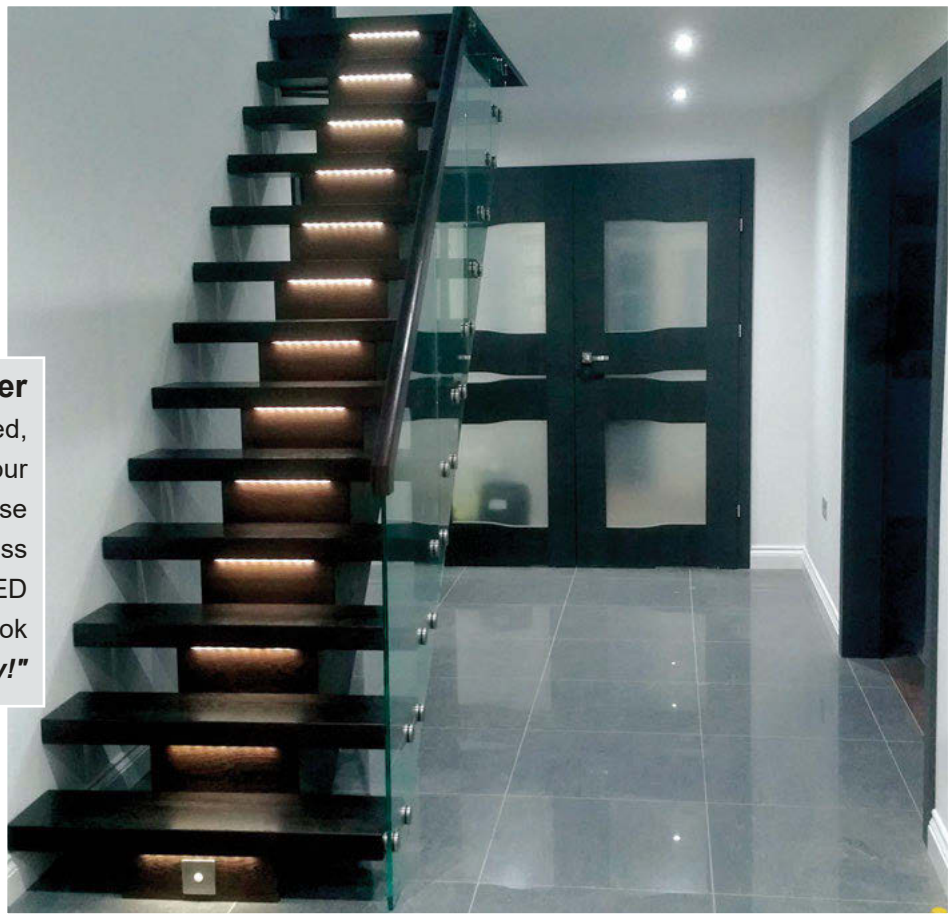






- 15:** Displayed here in white oak, the Prestige range also comes in redwood with a choice of spindles and newels. This example has turned oak spindles, but barley-twist and fluted versions are also available. ([jeld-wen.co.uk](http://jeld-wen.co.uk))
- 16:** This feature curved staircase is an oak cut-string construction with turned newels and chamfered spindles. ([pearstairs.co.uk](http://pearstairs.co.uk))
- 17:** This minimal glass and steel staircase features clear glass panelling and tactile brushed steel handrails. Price: from £2,000. ([nevillejohnson.co.uk](http://nevillejohnson.co.uk))
- 18:** The Fontanot Spin R is a kit staircase with a laminated HPL elm tread. The kit is adjustable in height rotation during installation. Price: from £1,429. ([fontanotstaircases.co.uk](http://fontanotstaircases.co.uk))
- 19:** A white painted stringer is set in from the edges of continuous ash treads and risers. The stringer flows from the raised entrance area up to the bridge. An ash handrail caps the uprights, starting from feature newels at the foot of the stair. ([bisca.co.uk](http://bisca.co.uk))
- 20:** This staircase from Neolith is made from Strata Argentum, a fine light grey horizontal-veined porcelain inspired by Silver Travertine marble, replicating the original texture of the stone. ([neolith.com](http://neolith.com))
- 21:** Family friendly with deep routed treads, this oak staircase has glass embedded into the treads and risers. The newel posts feature kerf tops and the risers boast check grooves. ([stairbox.com](http://stairbox.com))





## 1. Central Stringer

Contemporary at its finest. Designed, manufactured and installed for one of our customers in Cornwall. Dark oak staircase with glass balustrade. Addition of stainless steel fixings and motion sensor activated LED lights allows to retain classy yet spicy look  
*"Because I can, that's why!"*



## 2. Floating

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*"I'm flying!"*

## 3. Zig Zag

Yes it's always bespoke; this "impossible" construction is fully self supporting. Hardwood handrail on top of glass balustrade closes zigzag staircase in beautiful and sharp form.  
*"Look at all the space underneath for you to use and abuse!"*



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## EXPLORING

# Down under

A basement or cellar can add space and value to any property, old or new.

**T**he planning regulations around basement builds and conversions are currently under review. Converting an existing residential cellar or basement into a living space is, in most cases, unlikely to require planning permission as long as it is not a separate unit or unless the usage or external appearance of the property is significantly changed.

Excavating to create a new basement which involves major works, a new separate unit of accommodation and/ or alters the external appearance of the house (such as adding a light well) is likely to require planning permission.

If you own a listed building you will probably need consent for internal or external work. If you live in a Conservation Area you will need to find out whether there is a general objection to basements in the area and, if not,



**Pictures:** This four-storey semi-detached house in Richmond has had a new 95-sqm basement as part of a full house refurbishment by Kapital Basements. (kapitalbasements.co.uk)





#### **Pictures:**

A basement can add extra living space, such as a kitchen, bedroom, lounge, studio, cinema or gym. These examples were undertaken by Advantage Basements (advantagebasements.co.uk)

what guidelines have been laid down relating to external appearance. (See [planningportal.co.uk](http://planningportal.co.uk) for further information.)

In all circumstances you are advised to contact your local planning authority for guidance before starting any work. You can apply for planning permission yourself or employ a professional architect or specialist company. Most basement projects are considered uncontentious forms of development as they have little visual impact on the way a house looks, don't overlook neighbours or take away natural light.

### **RULES AND REGULATIONS**

Typically, existing cellars tend to have limited headroom and commonly only extend over part of the area of the property. Adding waterproofing and some finishes will lower the available headroom. There is, however, no limit on headroom within the Building Regulations, except at stairways, but if the space has noticeable lower headroom compared with the rest of the property then its value may be reduced.

Unless you live in a detached property standing in its own grounds you will need to reach an agreement with your neighbours over shared walls and the correct notices must be issued and consents obtained before work begins. You will also need to ensure that any proposed light wells are on land owned by you and do not impinge on any shared parts of the grounds or obstruct a right of way.

To make existing basements or cellars habitable, and to comply with Building Regulations, your walls may



have to be underpinned and the floor dug out further in order to achieve enough head height. Because of this you may need to add structural supports such as steel beams. Any structural alteration will need to be passed by Building Control to make sure that it does not impact on the rest of your house or your neighbours' property, and that it can support your proposed plans.

A basement usually only has one access point. If you are planning to use the space as additional living accommodation you will need to provide further means of escape in case of fire. A fire escape can take the form of a window or additional door, as long as you can show that in an emergency there is another way to get out of the basement.

### **CONSTRUCTION**

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

Concrete is the most common and appropriate material used in the construction of new basement walls and floors, due to cost and availability as well as durability underground and its inherent resistance to water.

Cast in-situ concrete is a popular choice because of its relatively simple application, adaptability and cost, and is often the only appropriate form of construction for retrofit basements under existing properties because of its ease of placement on site.

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

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

A basement can be added to a house without an existing cellar by using specialist underpinning techniques. And, of course, a basement may be included under a new build property. It is similarly possible to add a basement under an extension, but that may require the existing property to be underpinned unless the basement is kept a sufficient distance away, with the superstructure bridging back to the existing property.



Generally, basements are not a DIY job – at least with regard to the main construction work. Excavation may undermine existing foundations, leading to instability or even collapse of supporting walls, and specialist companies will hold appropriate insurance cover and be able to offer warranties.

Although waterproofing is a possible DIY job this is again best left to the experts. The basement may also require the installation of a sump and pump, which has to be sized to suit the project. DIY is therefore best left to finishing work rather than the main elements of construction.

## WATERPROOFING

Building Regulations for cellars and basements state that all floors and walls below ground level need to be waterproofed. This is to prevent damp or water entering the structure and reaching the rest of the house.

Water penetration below ground can be difficult to control and choosing the right system requires an assessment by a qualified and competent contractor.

There are three main methods of waterproofing a basement: barrier systems, such as tanking; structurally integral systems (which are reliant upon the design and construction of the basement as an integral shell); and drained protection, where any water is drained to a sump via an internal cavity. A combination of these can also be an appropriate design solution. Products used should have a British Board of Agreement accreditation and you should receive an insurance-backed guarantee. You will also need to have adequate heating and ventilation in your basement, which will help prevent future condensation issues.

## LIGHTING

Natural light is a boon for any basement, and a light well is the most obvious way of introducing this. It will also help to ventilate the space. A well-designed light well, complemented with tall windows or even doors at basement level, will also totally change the feel of the space, making it just as impressive as an upper-floor room.

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

For security, a locking mechanism should be installed on the grille covering the light well. Glass panels can also be fitted within the ceiling above to access additional light from the ground floor. Effective spot and mood lighting will support the natural light whilst providing a comfortable ambience at night.

## FITTING OUT

The key considerations when fitting out a basement are comfort, light and space. The first stage of the process is to establish the position of walls, the staircase, lighting and all other fixtures and fittings. Services such as water, gas and drains will have been installed at an early stage and will help to determine the location of any sanitaryware.

Basements are naturally well insulated by the earth that surrounds them but will require additional insulation in order to meet Building Regulations. This usually involves adding a thick layer of insulation over the damp-proof membrane. When underfloor heating is to be installed the insulation is laid under the pipes.



Plasterboard walls can be fitted around the perimeter of the core, but as it is essential that the damp-proof membrane is not punctured these are erected on a metal frame that does not touch the membrane. Ceilings can be suspended from the floor joists above, allowing a cavity for services and inset light fittings. Timber or metal stud wall partitions can be used to separate a basement into individual rooms, if required, and will also be used to carry services.

If tiles or wooden flooring are to be fitted onto the screeded floor a secondary membrane will create a cushioned effect. Colour and material choice are crucial for a potentially dark space so choose them carefully. Glass bricks, chrome balustrading and gloss tiles will all reflect light and further enhance the look and feel of a basement. As with any room, storage is important. Plan to have built-in units wherever possible so that rooms remain uncluttered.

**Above:** Cellars can provide discreet storage space, hidden by trapdoors in the floor as seen in this example from Cellar Access which manufactures cellar doors for new builds and existing properties. (cellaraccess.co.uk)

## FACTORS AFFECTING BASEMENT COSTS

A basement conversion will always work out cheaper if there is no excavation required – either to create the underground space from scratch or increase the headroom in an existing basement. Difficulties with excavation can include:

- + Concrete oversite slabs at the ground floor
- + Sewer and drain diversion
- + Difficult ground conditions eg rock, clay, sand, peat, marsh
- + A high water table
- + Access for removing excavated materials

## COST ESTIMATES

- + Conversion of an existing cellar: **£750 – £1,400/sqm**
- + Lowering the floor level and underpinning an existing cellar: **£1,500 – £2,500/sqm**
- + Digging a new basement space and underpinning: **£2,000 – £3,500/sqm**
- + Digging a new basement space underneath a garden: **£1,500 – £2,000/sqm**
- + Creating a light well/external access: **£5,000 – £7,500**
- + Engineer's fees: **£1,000 – £1,500**
- + Planning application, if required: **£165**
- + Building Regulations application: **£750+** depending on the value of the work undertaken
- + Party wall agreements, if required: **£700** per neighbour
- + VAT: an additional **20 per cent** added by VAT-registered contractors

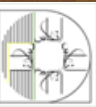
Before you embark on your basement project ensure you take all of these factors into consideration to make your investment worthwhile. For further information: [labcwarranty.co.uk](http://labcwarranty.co.uk); [basementwaterproofingassociation.org](http://basementwaterproofingassociation.org).



## Suppliers

**Designer** Gill Deeks  
**Replacement windows and doors** Bereco: bereco.co.uk  
**Kitchen design** Cambridge Kitchens: cambridgekitchens.co.uk  
**Shaker kitchen** Callerton: callerton.co.uk  
**Bathroom sanitaryware** Sottini: sottini.co.uk  
**Bathroom tiles** British Ceramic

**Tile:** britishceramictile.com  
**Radiators** Castrads: castrads.com  
**Vinyl flooring** Quick-Step: quick-step.co.uk  
**Underfloor heating** Nu-Heat: nu-heat.co.uk  
**Decorative LED lighting** tp24: tp24.com  
**Patio** London Stone: londonstone.co.uk





#### OPENING TIMES

The Milchester is one of five show homes at the Potton Self Build Show Centre in St Neots, Cambridgeshire, which is open Tuesday-Friday: 9am-5pm (last admission 4.30pm) and Saturday: 10am-4pm (last admission 3.30pm). [potton.co.uk/showhomes](http://potton.co.uk/showhomes)



# Period STYLE

Potton's revamped Milchester show home ticks all the boxes when it comes to style, elegance and modern convenience.

**The revamped** Milchester show home at Potton's Self Build Show Centre in St Neots, Cambridgeshire, features the best of both worlds, combining period charm with 21st-century convenience.

Designed by Gill Deeks, who built a Milchester home of her own in London seven years ago, the 3,000-sq ft Queen Anne-style house, originally built in 1992, has been remodelled to suit a more modern lifestyle.

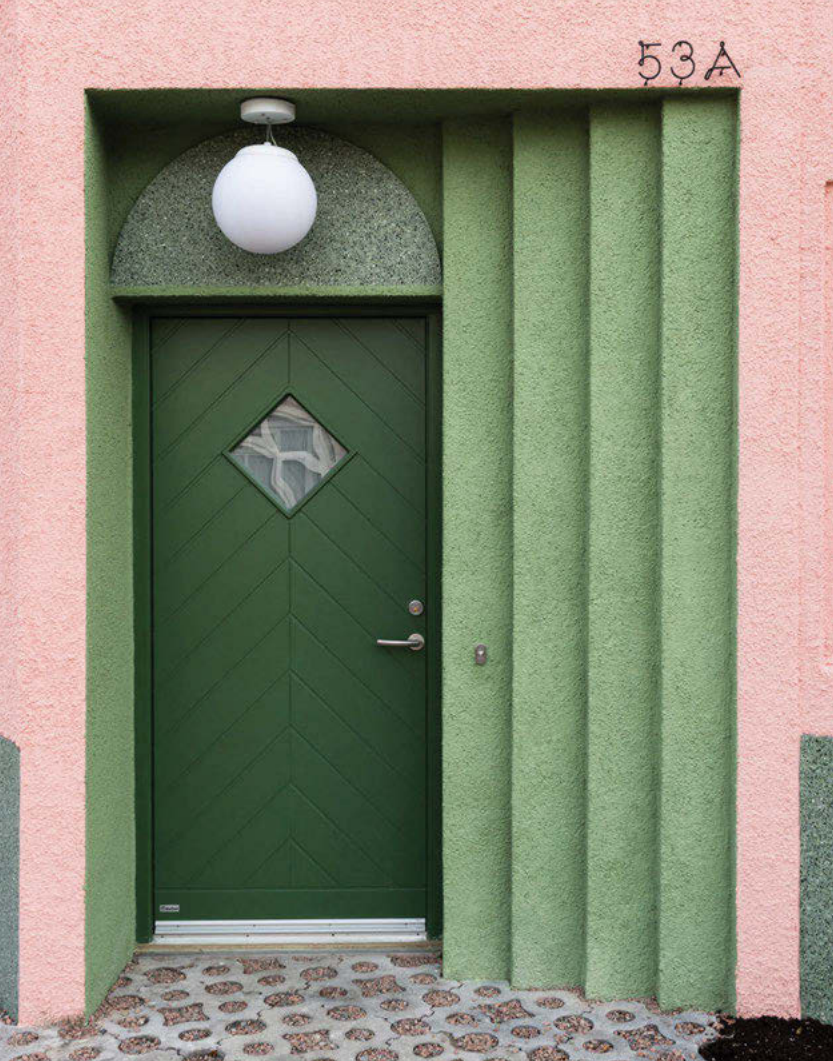
The ground floor has been reconfigured and opened up to create a large family area, incorporating a Callerton kitchen designed by Cambridge Kitchens, while double doors from the sitting area lead out to a redesigned patio featuring London Stone. Upstairs, all the bathrooms have been given a makeover, with new Sottini sanitaryware and tiles from British Ceramic Tile, and the walls have been painted throughout in traditional colours from Farrow and Ball, complemented with bold wallpapers and elegant fixtures and fittings.

The luxurious look is completed with distinctive individual furniture sourced or upcycled by Gill who has a keen eye for detail.

Externally the home's original Georgian facade has been largely retained, albeit with the addition of a cast iron porch in keeping with the period.

Potton's marketing manager, Fae Perkins, said: "We are delighted with the Milchester's makeover. By creating an eclectic mix of styles, using new and old furniture and incorporating different textures and colours, we wanted to stir the imagination of our customers and show that every taste - traditional, contemporary or anything in between - is entirely achievable."

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# PRETTY *in* PINK

The designers of a modest new terrace in east London hope it will provide a benchmark for quality rental properties in the capital.

PHOTOGRAPHY: **FRENCH & TYE**

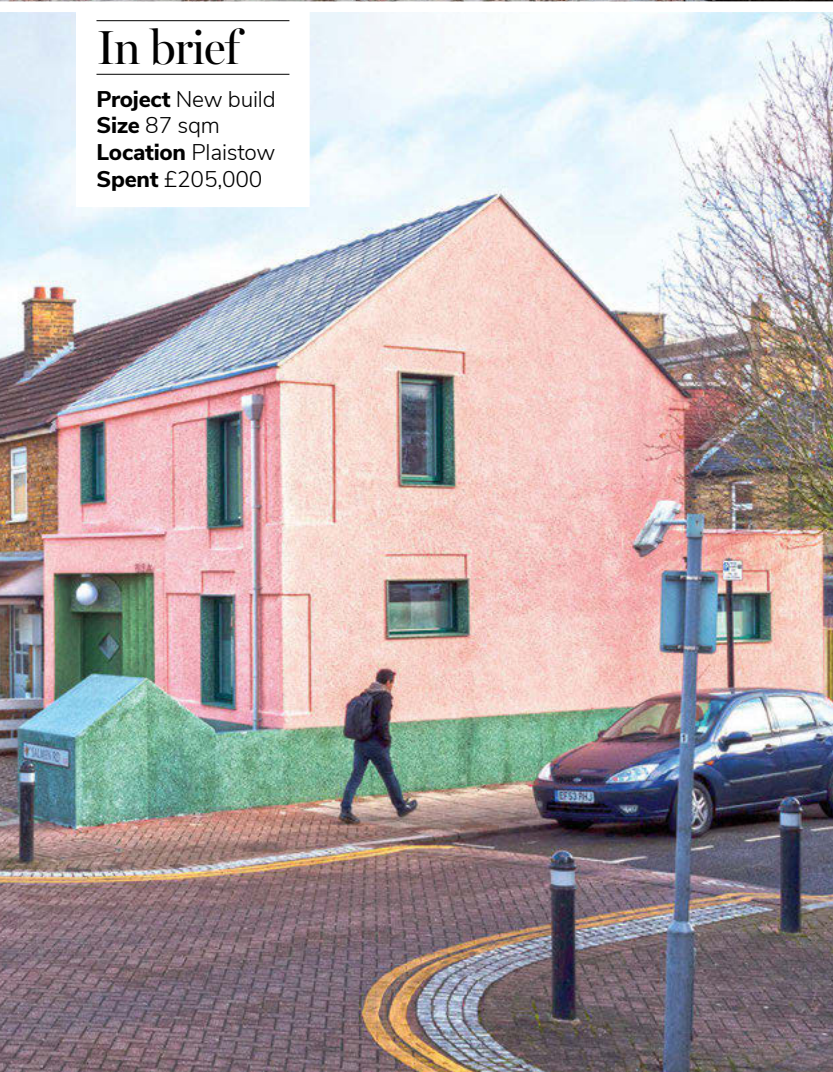
**T**his striking new build in east London was completed in just six months for the relatively modest price of £205,000. The bold exterior demonstrates the youthful approach to housebuilding by architects Office S&M and their equally young client, developer Isla Kennedy of My Property and Home.

Salmen House is a budget rental home with a generosity of space, light and character. The three-bedroom, three-bathroom 87-sqm house sits on an unassuming mid-century terrace in Plaistow and immediately catches the eye due to its colourful millennial pink and lush green exterior. This use of colour is key to Office S&M's ethos to create architecture that stands out, and challenges preconceptions of the capital's typical rental market.

Breaking further away from the biscuit-brickwork of contemporary London design trends, the architects chose a low-cost stippled render and textured terrazzo for the facade. The materials have a characterful and textural richness that also have practical benefits such as the polished terrazzo reflecting the light inside.

## In brief

**Project** New build  
**Size** 87 sqm  
**Location** Plaistow  
**Spent** £205,000



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Unlike most of London's property market, quality in design has not come at a prohibitive price. Isla Kennedy's brief was to produce a low-cost house, which was to be her first new-build development having previously focused on refurbishing flats.

Isla started her development career after a serious skiing accident put her in a coma for five weeks, and she used the compensation payout to get onto the property ladder and into development. She purchased an end-of-terrace garden suitable for the two-storey infill terrace.

The house was built using solid wall construction with a single skin of blockwork for a quick build. Working closely with engineers StructureMode, the plan was adjusted to achieve large open spaces without requiring steel frames – only one steel beam was used. Further costs were saved in the foundations, by flipping to load-bearing timber internal and party walls, plus the ground slab was cantilevered to avoid underpinning the party wall. The internal space has been maximised to create bedrooms with four-metre-high exposed beamed ceilings, and a triple-height staircase. The horizontal circulation is one continuous view from the cranked front door through



**EXTERIOR**

Situated on the end of the street, the acute angle of the corner site is utilised to achieve spaces that accentuate their volume, while disguising the small footprint.





### INTERIORS

The horizontal circulation is one continuous view from the cranked front door through to the rear garden. The staircase opens into a generous triple-height space that pulls your gaze upwards.



### UPSTAIRS

On the first floor are two bedrooms, one with an en suite and one next to the main family bathroom.





**NATURAL LIGHT**

Each interior space has natural light and views from two directions.



to the rear garden, while the staircase opens into a generous triple-height space that pulls your gaze upward.

From the front door, a ground-floor bedroom and accessible shower room occupy the front of the house, with an open-plan kitchen, living and dining room facing the rear garden. On the first floor are two more bedrooms, one with an en suite, and one next to the main family bathroom. This flexible layout, with an ample bathroom for each bedroom, can easily accommodate young professionals on a room-by-room basis, or a family.

Project architect Hugh McEwen said: "With our background in social and private housing, we brought the best of both worlds to the project. We were able to make the most of the space through careful planning of how the house could be used in the future, and want this to be a benchmark for quality rented property in London.

"This house revels in colour and materiality, which makes it a representation of the contemporary age in which it has been built."

**In detail**

**PROJECT**

**Principle designer** Office S&M: officesandm.com

**Contractor** Catalin London Ltd: catalinlondon.co.uk

**Structural engineer**

StructureMode: structuremode.com

**Approved inspector** Wilkinson

Construction Consultants: thebuildinginspector.org

**M&E consultant**

INGINE: ingine.co.uk

**Client CDM Advisor** CDRM

Services: cdrmservices.co.uk

**Structural warranty** Buildzone:

build-zone.com

**STRUCTURE**

**Aluminium clad windows and doors** NorDan: nordan.co.uk

**Fibre Cement Slates** SVK:

svk.be/en-gb, rilco.co.uk

**External wall insulation and render system** STO: sto.co.uk

STO: sto.co.uk

**Terrazzo** In-Opera:

in-opera.co.uk



**Kerr Drummond** is an award-winning designer and property expert who started his Oxford-based interior design company, Hastings Drummond, in 2008. The firm specialises in creating bespoke, cutting-edge designs and offers a full project management and installation service. Kerr presented Kitchen SOS for UKTV Home alongside Nadia Sawalha, and he is one half of the presenting team on the Channel 4 show Coast vs Country, where he goes head to head with Sara Damergi as they help house hunters search for their dream property.



INTERVIEW: **DEBBIE JEFFERY** PICTURES: **DARREN CHUNG/ROSARIO GLORIOSO**

# A LOVE OF *design*

## Tell us about your childhood home

I was born in Glasgow and my earliest memories are of my grandparents' house in Bearsden, which was in a Victorian Conservation Area. There was a white pebble-dashed house with a nice big hallway which had a floral-patterned carpet. My family are really into golf, and we used to putt in the hallway and use the pattern to guide us.

We were the first people in our family to move away from Scotland, which was quite a big shock, and even once we were living in Oxford we would go back to Glasgow as soon as there was a break from school. All of our summer holidays were spent in Scotland, and I still visit four or five times a year.

My father was a pharmacologist, developing drugs for cancer, and when I was very young we moved to Oxford where we lived in the countryside on the edge of the Cotswolds. I have two brothers and a sister, and we spent a lot of time outdoors fishing in the river, sailing dinghies and causing trouble.

We had a detached house in the middle of a village and my parents extended it twice to make a six-bedroom home, which also had a long hallway that was perfect for golf practice. My mum is only now moving out of that house after almost 30 years, which feels quite strange.

## What inspired you to become a designer?

Well, I didn't necessarily see myself being involved in property, that's for certain. Like many young people I dreamed of becoming a footballer or golfer, and I became quite good at golf in the end but not good enough. After that I was really into theatre and was planning on going to drama school, but to be honest I chickened out because I knew it was a risk.

After school I spent a few months working in pubs and restaurants, and I planned to take a year off and then maybe go to university, but during that time I saw an ad in the paper for a trainee designer at a local high-end bathroom company. The only qualification required was an A in A-level art, which I had, so I applied, thinking I'd be doing it for a few months, and ended up becoming their senior designer after four years.

I met lots of interesting clients and was nominated for some awards, but the company only designed bathrooms and I was often asked to design bedrooms and kitchens by clients, so at the age of 23 I decided to set up on my own.

## How has your company evolved?

I set up in business in 2008 just as the housing market crashed,

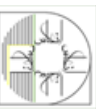
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**Above left and top:** Lighting is key in this timeless painted kitchen, which incorporates plenty of storage.

**Left and above:** Kerr designed the vivid red of this poured-resin floor to contrast with sleek grey kitchen cabinets.





This entire bathroom was clad in Corian, attached to a timber-and-ply studwork frame and chemically bonded to eliminate joints. LED sheet lighting was placed behind thinner panels, which glow when illuminated.

and people thought I was mad, but as I started out working from my bedroom I didn't have many overheads so the company grew steadily. I remember going to the bank to set up a business account, and the bank manager was amazed because I already had £100,000-worth of business on the books.

I was living in a shared house with my brother and some friends at that time and gradually our house became a warehouse for storing goods for my various clients' projects. Often there would be a free-standing bath and toilet in the front room, and it wasn't ideal, so I then set up an office at my parents' house as they had spare rooms. Now the company has a showroom in Oxford which opened in 2013, and we focus on kitchens, bedrooms and bathrooms, working out how best to use the space.

### How did you get to become a TV presenter?

In 2011 I got a phone call from a production company asking if I was interested in being on TV for a show called Kitchen SOS. When the show was commissioned it was specified that new talent should be used and they had Googled 'young designer'. I'd just been nominated for a young designer of the year award, so luckily my face came up. I'd always wanted to get into acting so it seemed like an ideal opportunity to combine design and a bit of showing off!

The main presenter on the show was Nadia Sawalha, and she and her husband owned the production company, so when I turned up for an interview in a Brighton café it was with Nadia. We hit it off straight away and I had a very brief screen test before being signed up for 20 episodes.

I thought it would be a one-off thing which I could use to generate interest in my business, but then I was offered a co-presenter role for the show Coast vs Country, and I've been working on that for the past three years, presenting 66 episodes. I spend most of my time in London and am in the process of closing the Oxford showroom as I'm never there. Hopefully I can open an office or a small showroom in London and combine my TV and design work.



### Describe your own home

I'm currently renting in Oxford, where almost all property in the city centre is owned by the university, and although there are some big new estates being built in the area there aren't many smaller affordable properties for young professionals to buy. I'm planning on moving to London and renting for a while until I know which area I'd like to settle in. If I was building a house from scratch I'd design something very modern, sleek and minimal, almost to the point of obsessing over it, and would want everything to be hidden away out of sight. The main open-plan living area would need to be flexible, and I'd use pocket doors to divide up the space.

### Do you have any design tips?

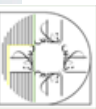
Don't be tempted to scrimp on bathroom fittings because if a bathroom is inconvenient to use, or a nightmare to keep clean, it can be so frustrating – and there's nothing worse than starting your day in a grim bathroom. The average client is much more aware of what's available nowadays, and there's so much choice, so enjoy experimenting with different materials and really consider the lighting in every room, as it's incredibly important.

### How do you like to relax away from work?

I love all sports and still play golf, although not nearly as much as I'd like to, and my family has a share in a racehorse as there's nothing better than a day at the races. I like to socialise and think Britain's pubs are one of the greatest things about our country. If I could do a show that involved visiting different pubs to have a drink and discover their history and architecture then that would be my dream job!

**Hastings Drummond:** [hastingsdrummond.co.uk](http://hastingsdrummond.co.uk)

**Pictures:** Combining a variety of materials and textures brings these rooms alive, while contrasting curves and straight lines add drama.



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## BRIAN WAITE'S STRAW BALE HOUSE

**The design** for the Sunart Straw Bale houses comes from Brian Waite, a former engineer who designed and built his straw bale house in 2012. Brian now works with UK straw bale specialists Huff and Puff Construction, who supply the design in kit form as the 'Huff Puff House', with both self and custom build options. See [huffpuffhouse.com](http://huffpuffhouse.com) for details.

Brian's website says: "I designed this low-energy, low-carbon, affordable straw bale house primarily to reduce my own energy bills in retirement, but it is obvious that we all will need to reduce our energy consumption, so it is now available as an easy-build kit for selfbuilders."

The design is intended to bring straw bale building into the mainstream, featuring cruck frames based on the structure of old 15th-century barns. The bowed A-frame provides enough space for a generous first floor and is infilled with straw bales which rise seamlessly all the way to the ridge. This is coated in lime render which is breathable, and roof tiles almost completely cover the

### In brief

**Project** Straw bale build  
**Location** Scottish Highlands  
**Cost** Manse, £75,000 in 2002  
**Spent** £177,400  
**Worth** £300,000





# A sensitive approach

Straw bales and lime are being used to create a pair of pretty holiday cottages overlooking a sea loch in the Scottish Highlands.

STORY: **LOUISE PARKIN** PHOTOGRAPHY: **COTTAGES.COM**

**N**estled on the edge of a conifer forest in the western Highlands of Scotland sits a visually striking and highly energy-efficient holiday home overlooking a sea loch. Built by first-time selfbuilders Justine and Robert Dunn, the home, called Jill, features 14 large cruck frames creating an A-frame structure which is infilled with straw bales, rendered in lime and covered with a long slate roof with local larch cladding the gable ends and side dwarf walls.

The buildings were designed by Brian Waite, a former engineer who designed and built an almost identical structure in 2012. Robert and Justine already knew they wanted to build using straw and found Brian's design following an internet search.

"I was inspired by the shape of Brian's design so we went to see the building he created. He also advised us on

## LOCATION

The house is nestled on the west coast of Scotland in front of a conifer forest, with views of Loch Sunart and the mountains of Morvern behind.

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## In detail

### PROJECT

**Designer** Brian Waite: strawbalehouse.co.uk  
**Architect** David Mee: davidmee-architect.co.uk  
**Structural engineer** Duncan McCormick, KWA Consulting Engineers: 01349 863333  
**Groundworker** Murdo Campbell Contracts: 01967 402145  
**Digger operator** Kenneth MacLennan: 01855 841216  
**Plumber** Nigel Traynor: 01967 402064  
**Electrician** Gus McLean: 01972 510389  
**Timber frame supply** Touchwood Homes: touchwoodhomes.co.uk  
**STRUCTURE**  
**Roof tiles/slates** Dreadnought Tiles: dreadnought-tiles.co.uk  
**Lime render (internal)** Rob Williams: williams-lime.co.uk  
**Cladding** AL MacDonald: ardslignish.uk.com  
**Sliding glass windows** Frameless Glass Curtains: fgc.co.uk

**Windows/French doors, curved window panels** Hepworth Framework Ltd: hepworthframework.co.uk  
**Internal doors** Howdens: howdens.com  
**External doors** Welthaus (Austria): welt-haus.com  
**Ground source heat pump, underfloor heating** Lochaber Renewables: lochaberr Renewables.co.uk  
**FIXTURES AND FITTINGS**  
**Kitchen** Howdens: howdens.com  
**Bathrooms** Better bathrooms: betterbathrooms.com  
**Flooring and skirting** Howdens: howdens.com  
**Lighting** Better Bathrooms: betterbathrooms.com  
**Paint** LBS: lbsfw.co.uk  
**Builders' merchant** Caley Timber: caleytimber.co.uk; Travis Perkins: travisperkins.co.uk  
**Timber frame kits** available from Huff and Puff Construction: huffpuffhouse.com



## Budget breakdown

Professional fees and planning	£3,400
Road building/groundworks/stone	£9,500
Foundations/dwarf wall/slab/gable walls	£5,300
Insulation (straw and EPS and 'sound')	£4,800
Heating system (GSHP)	£10,200
Lime plastering	£10,300
Timber frame	£25,600
Roof/gutters/facades	£18,100
Plasterboard/painting etc	£1,600
Plumbing	£3,900
Electrics	£10,800
Windows (and associated steelwork)	£18,000
Doors	£3,700
Heat recovery ventilation	£900
Kitchen	£7,600
Floor/stairs	£9,700
Bathrooms	£7,700
Cladding	£5,000
Balcony/deck	£13,300
Services	£4,600
Sewage/septic	£3,400
<b>Total</b>	<b>£177,400</b>

the project over the phone as well as helping assemble the crucks on site," says Robert, who is a retained firefighter and is also building an identical house next door.

The couple moved to the west coast of Scotland following a number of years as development workers and tropical foresters in Sri Lanka, Ghana, Nigeria, Belize and Grenada. With three growing children at the time, the couple decided it was time to settle back in the UK.

Robert is from Bristol but went to university in Edinburgh, where he met Justine, who works for a mental health charity. Robert explains: "I spent many childhood days on holiday on the nearby Isle of Mull. The area has a rich culture, society and environment – amazing wildlife, scenery, music, the dry west-coast humour, and small communities that help each other. There was a new secondary school being built in Strontian, so the timing could hardly have been better."

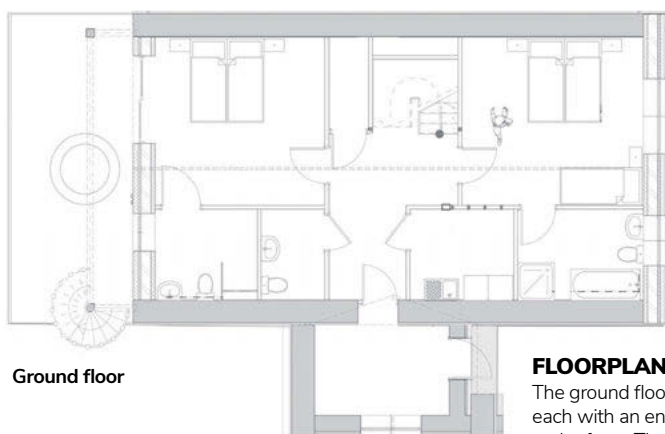
On arrival in Scotland, the Dunns bought a manse with seven acres of land, moved in and renovated it, putting solar panels on the roof. Over the next 15 years they had another son, Angus (14), ran a mushroom farm and were widely involved with a number of community initiatives and local charities.

The land on which the holiday homes are being built is 100m above sea level behind the manse.

Local architect David Mee oversaw the application through planning, which proved surprisingly easy despite

### EXTERIOR

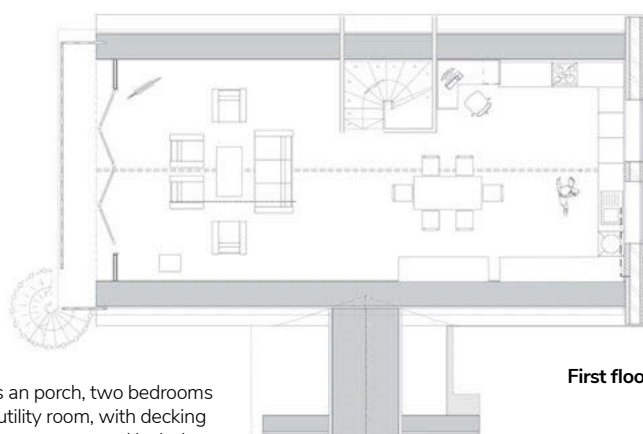
The roof forms a large proportion of the side elevations, with local larch cladding concealing the lime-covered straw bale walls. Floor-to-ceiling glazing opens onto a balcony, with a hot tub on the decking below.



Ground floor

### FLOORPLAN

The ground floor comprises an porch, two bedrooms each with an en suite, and utility room, with decking to the front. The first floor is one space and includes kitchen, diner and living room, with a balcony beyond.



First floor

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being outside of the village planning boundary. “The planners formally asked a local disability action panel to comment on the project and wrote a supportive letter praising our proposal to make the second house, Jack, fully disabled accessible,” Robert explains.

A side porch was added to the original design to allow windows in each gable end, which proved a tricky addition due to the shape of the smaller crucks. Innovative thinking was required to find a way of fitting them to the curved wall of the main crucks.

The simplicity of the low-cost structure was complicated by the porch, and with hindsight

**OPEN-PLAN**

The curve of the roof is visible in the kitchen/ living/diner, which is on the top floor to make the most of the views. Matt grey cabinets and white metro tiles create a simple look paired with rich wood tones.





“We always planned to do something like this.”

Robert would recommend locating this at the end, extending the length with a few more crucks which he believes to be a far easier process.

Despite having little building experience, Robert was determined to do as much of the building work as he could to save money as well as learn new skills. “We subscribed to *SelfBuild & Design* magazine when we lived in Grenada so we always planned to do something like this,” he says.

The couple’s sons also worked on site, as did several neighbours. Specialists were employed when needed and thepoosh.org volunteers were invited to work in exchange for accommodation and meals. “We had around a dozen or so over the course of the project – they worked for four or more hours per day, and we fed them and put them up in a static caravan,” says Robert.

The sloping granite plot posed a number of challenges for the build and the first job was laying a track to access the remote site, carried out by local digger operator and groundworker Murdo Campbell.

Concrete strip foundations on the sloping bedrock were installed, onto which the blockwork dwarf walls were built before being covered in a damp-proof membrane and insulated. These form the base for the curved I-beam crucks which act like ribs to form the structure of the walls, positioned at intervals of one bale’s length. Each cruck is capable of bearing around 15 tonnes, supporting a total of 23 tonnes of wet lime,

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and 12,000 curved clay roof tiles that resemble slate.

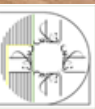
The bales were installed between the crucks before the whole facade was coated internally in lime render over a galvanised mesh. A vented ridge allows moisture from the lime to escape. Polytunnel plastic sheeting was placed over the crucks to protect the straw from the weather while work went on beneath.

Justine tackled the taping and jointing on the plasterboards on the internal walls and downstairs ceiling, as well as painting and designing the interiors, along with daughter Hazel.

Touchwood Homes, which specialises in Passivhaus building, supplied the floor joists, CaberDek flooring, and other structural timber, sourcing the crucks from Eastern Europe. "Pat and his sons at Touchwood were amazing, they went beyond their remit really and I can't praise them enough," enthuses Robert.

### BEDROOMS

Simple finishes, engineered wooden floor and wooden furniture have been brightened up with wall hangings created by the couple's daughter Hazel.





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“The main focus of the lounge is the fantastic view, so we have kept it simple so as not to distract from the beautiful scenery.”



#### **BATHROOMS**

White tiles have been used with dark grey grout to tie in with the slate grey floor.

Power is provided for the entire site by two microhydro turbines and a solar photovoltaic array on the roof of the manse, while a ground source heat pump provides heating and hot water.

“We are firm believers in renewable energy and we currently export 10 times more power than we use, although this will probably be less once the other home has been completed,” explains Robert, who worked with a charity in Scotland





providing advice on renewable technology, Feed-in Tariffs and the Renewable Heat Incentive.

Waste water and sewage passes through a submerged aeration plant, the effluent undergoing a series of processes before being discharged into local ground water. All guests use only eco-friendly cleaning products to avoid damaging the system.

Inside the completed holiday let is a first-floor open-plan kitchen/living/diner, with full-height double glazing to take advantage of the breathtaking views of Loch Sunart and the Morvern hills in the distance. Double doors open onto a balcony with glass balustrades from which to enjoy uninterrupted views of the dramatic Highlands, with the decking below providing space for a hot tub and eating area.

The ground floor has two bedrooms, two en suite bathrooms, a WC and utility room. Neutral colours in white and light tones allow the curve of the walls and the stunning views to take centre stage. "The main focus of the lounge is the fantastic view, so we have kept it simple so as not to distract from the beautiful scenery," says Hazel, a graduate of Glasgow School of Art. "We sourced a large and comfortable sofa with wooden legs, and teamed it with a woven rug and furniture that followed mid-century modern design principles."

Now that Jill is finished, work on their other let, Jack, is in full flow. The latter will be fully accessible for disabled guests complete with wheelchair lift, wet room, hoists in the bathroom and bedroom and lowered kitchen worktops. Even the hot tub will be half sunk into the deck with a hoist above it.

Not having much in the way of pensions, Robert and Justine's Sunart Strawbale eco homes are designed to provide a source of income in their retirement. Jill Strawbale House is currently available for holiday rentals, with Jack to follow when completed. (cottages.com)

## Final word

### What was the high point?

Having family come and stay at Christmas for the first time – we had nine in the hot tub!

### And the low point?

The stress of getting everything finished in time for paying guests arriving.

### Your greatest extravagance?

The frameless glass curtains – although we could call them an expensive investment because they were essential to the success of the project.

### Your best buy?

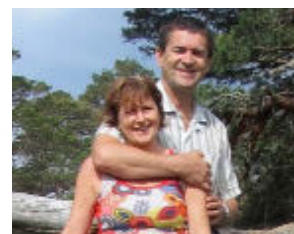
The hot tub – although this was also a big extravagance!

### What do you like most about your house?

We love the shape, and also the huge open-plan area upstairs containing the kitchen/dining/living space, with the spectacular curved roof and the view through the glazed southern wall. It is an amazing space with an amazing view.

### Anything you would do differently?

Although we will use straw for



the second holiday cottage, we might not use it again if we did another project. The time and cost of the lime render process would make me consider an alternative option that Brian Waite has devised – using plasterboard curved around the crucks and the cavity filled with Warmcel recycled newspaper. This would be a quicker process and would probably cost around the same. However, it wouldn't have the lovely organic feel of straw and lime.

We also plan to put the entrance door in the porch's gable end for the second property, rather than trying to install it into a curved wall.

Much easier just to extend the length of the house with more crucks.

## In brief

**Project** Remodel of log cabin

**Location** Wales

**Cost** £65,000 in 2001

**Spent** £65,000

**Worth** £100,000+



## Log cabins

Log cabins are still relatively rare in the UK and are more usually built as holiday lodges, although a small number are used as permanent homes. You are more likely to win planning approval if your land is appropriately rural, with one of the main criteria being adequate access to the site to allow for delivery transport and heavy-duty equipment such as a crane.

Timber has a high thermal mass and is a good insulator of heat and sound but, as with any alternative technology, Building Control may take some convincing that all-timber buildings meet Building Regulations, and mortgage lenders may be sceptical.

Some timber-frame suppliers offer log slip cladding to appear as if the building has been built from logs. Others provide small-scale log buildings for out-houses and extensions.

Log buildings can be factory manufactured, pre-assembled and tested, then dismantled and shipped and re-assembled on site. It takes a matter of days to make it watertight, enabling work on the interior to begin almost immediately.

The solid log construction technique offers some inherent design advantages for those who want to create a multi-level living space with impressive double-height ceilings and huge exposed timbers.

By using massive purlins, ceilings can soar and span great distances to create interiors which combine rustic beauty with a modern, spacious layout. Interior logs are usually left exposed, with the wood giving a distinctive look, feel and smell – although it is advisable to dry-line the kitchen area to simplify the installation of wiring and plumbing.



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**EXTERIOR**

The luxury cabin is set within a wooded copse, with views of the peaks of Snowdonia. These views can also be enjoyed from the hot tub which has an electrically operated cover for ease of use.



# Cabin fervour

Jane and Justin Humphreys have restored and remodelled a secluded 1970s log cabin on the northern tip of the Snowdonia National Park.

STORY: **DEBBIE JEFFERY** PICTURES: **UNIQUE HOME STAYS**

**W**hen Jane and Justin Humphreys first viewed their modest log cabin 17 years ago it was painted in a lurid orange-coloured stain and reminded them of a glorified garden shed. “The cabin was built in 1974 as one of three, and it can only be used as a holiday home rather than as a permanent dwelling,” says Justin.

“We’d spotted an advert in the property section of the local paper and immediately enquired, but sadly it had already been sold. We left our details with the estate agent and were very pleased to receive a call three months later to say that the buyers had changed their mind and the sale had fallen through, which meant that it was once again on the market. It took us just a couple of days to secure the purchase.”

The cabin stands on a hilltop surrounded by forestry on the northern tip of the Snowdonia National Park, and on a clear day it is possible to see more than 20 mountain peaks from the site. Despite being just 10 minutes from a main road the setting is quiet, private and relaxing, and Justin and Jane knew it would make a perfect holiday retreat.

“We ran a hotel for 30 years but are now semi-retired, and as Jane works part time as cabin crew for BA we enjoy travelling and have stayed in cabins and wooden villas around the world,” Justin continues. “We could definitely see the potential for this to be a really lovely property.”



## In detail

Hinterland Cabin is available for holiday rental through Unique Home Stays: [uniquehomestays.com](http://uniquehomestays.com)

### STRUCTURE

**Patio doors** Jewson: [jewson.co.uk](http://jewson.co.uk)

### FIXTURES AND FITTINGS

**Worktop** (kitchen and bathrooms) Ruby Granite Ltd: [rubygranite.co.uk](http://rubygranite.co.uk)

**Basin** Victoria Plum: [victoriaplum.com](http://victoriaplum.com)

**Infrared sauna** UK Saunas: [uk-saunas.co.uk](http://uk-saunas.co.uk)

**Hot tub with electric cover** Concept Spa: [conceptspa.co.uk](http://conceptspa.co.uk)

**Furnishings** John Lewis: [johnlewis.com](http://johnlewis.com);

Habitat: [habitat.co.uk](http://habitat.co.uk); Etsy: [etsy.com](http://etsy.com)

**Paint and sofa** Designer's Guild: [designersguild.com](http://designersguild.com)



### ORIGINAL

The original 70s cabin has been given a makeover to transform it into an idyllic hideaway.



### EXTERIOR

The single-storey cabin is constructed from 25cm tongue-and-groove logs and required no insulation. While only a few lower external timbers had to be replaced, the interior has been completely remodelled.

The couple had previously converted a church to live in and had built a small hotel, as well as completing various renovation projects. "We've always tackled a lot of the work ourselves and enjoy getting involved," says Jane. "There were already mains water and electricity to the site, although there's no phone line, so it was immediately habitable."

The cabin is constructed from logs with tongue and groove, and had three bedrooms, a bathroom, a small sitting room and a kitchen area. "The bedrooms were far too cramped, so we took out the internal wall between two of them which was a quick and straightforward DIY job using a chainsaw," says Justin. "Then we built decking over the old paving slabs outside from which to enjoy the view."

A couple of the lower timbers needed to be replaced as they were rotting, and the Humphreys managed to find a company which makes cabins and which was able to supply similar logs. Joiners then jacked up the building and were able to carefully slide out the damaged logs and replace them.

### FLOORPLAN

The 60-sqm cabin is predominantly one open-plan living/dining/kitchen space, with a separate utility room, a shower room, and a bedroom which may be closed off from the main area with a remote-controlled curtain.



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“Don't approach a renovation project with the resale value in mind – go with your heart and the results will be far better.” JANE AND JUSTIN'S TOP TIP



#### KITCHEN

The newly fitted kitchen is small but perfectly situated in one corner of the open-plan sitting room.

Slowly, the couple improved the single-storey cabin on a DIY basis, including replacing the French doors and painting the interior walls cream which brightened the space immeasurably. The timber ceiling was stained to match the exterior, which the couple finished in a dark oak colour to cover the previous orange shade.

The original bathroom was converted into a utility room, and a fitted kitchen was installed. The old WC became a storage cupboard, and a new







bathroom was created in the smallest bedroom and fitted with sanitaryware and underfloor heating.

“Then last year we decided to give the cabin a really luxurious makeover so that we could rent it out as a holiday home with Unique Home Stays, who have very high standards,” Jane explains. “They came to take a look and allocated a designer to refurbish the whole place. It was quite a big investment, but we knew it would be worthwhile.”

The tiled roof and original wooden windows had already been restored by the couple, who had also fitted timber shutters throughout, but Justin and Jane worked with Unique Home Stays during 2017 to replace virtually everything inside the cabin.

“Wood expands and contracts with the heat, so window frames needed to be fitted into slots rather than screwed in place to allow for the movement,” explains Justin. “When we tiled the bathroom we had to explain this to the tiler, who used battened plywood cut with screw slots to face the external wall and allow it to move without disturbing the tiles.”

The extensive refurbishment work took just over a month to complete, with Unique Home Stays orchestrating the entire process. “It was quite stressful because we had holiday bookings already, so there was no time for any delays as we had a fixed deadline,” says Jane.

Electric radiators can now all be controlled by a single thermostat, with underfloor electric heating and a heated towel rail in the bathroom. As there is no gas to the site the water is also heated in a large cylinder with two elements.

#### SITTING AREA

Elemental-alpine meets traditional Welsh hideaway at Hinterland Cabin. The main living room enjoys mountain views through French doors which open onto a slate terrace.





“The logs are around 25cm thick, and the roof is also of heavy tongue-and-groove construction, so no extra insulation was needed,” says Justin. “It would have been impossible to add any internally without covering up the logs anyway, and we also needed to be careful when positioning wires and pipes so that they’d be hidden in cupboards and behind architraves and skirtings.”

A new white kitchen was installed in one corner of the main living/dining space, and a large opening between this and the bedroom may be closed off for privacy with a remote controlled curtain. “The layout means you can lie in bed and watch the TV in the living room,” Jane explains.

Internal walls have been repainted in a soft shade of grey, and this small change has made a big difference to the feel of the cabin. “In some ways it was strange handing over the interior design to someone else, but we trusted Paul Hervey from Unique Home Stays and

went with his ideas,” explains Justin. “When we finally saw everything come together we realised that we’d made the right decision, as it works beautifully.”

The cabin stands in around an acre of land, including part of two fields which the Humphreys also own, and recent outdoor renovations include replacing the decking with a Welsh slate terrace and using railway sleepers from the local Conwy valley line. “We also invested in a hot tub with an electrically operated cover, and an infrared sauna in its own cabin,” says Justin.

The log cabin is almost fully booked for holidays, but the Humphreys still enjoy time there whenever they can. “We love to walk along the nearby lake on a summer’s evening or through the carpets of bluebells in spring, and the diverse wildlife and views ensure every season is just as exciting as the last,” says Jane. “For us it’s the perfect hideaway.”

#### SETTING

The cabin is situated in around an acre of land, including part of two fields which the Humphreys also own.



## Final word

#### What was the high point?

Seeing how beautiful everything now looks and how much improved the cabin is.

#### ...and the low point?

Worrying that work wouldn’t be completed in time for the first guest booking.

#### The best buy?

The pale grey paint for the interior walls, which initially worried us as we thought it could look cold. It actually makes everything else stand



out, though, like the roof, floor and wooden shutters.

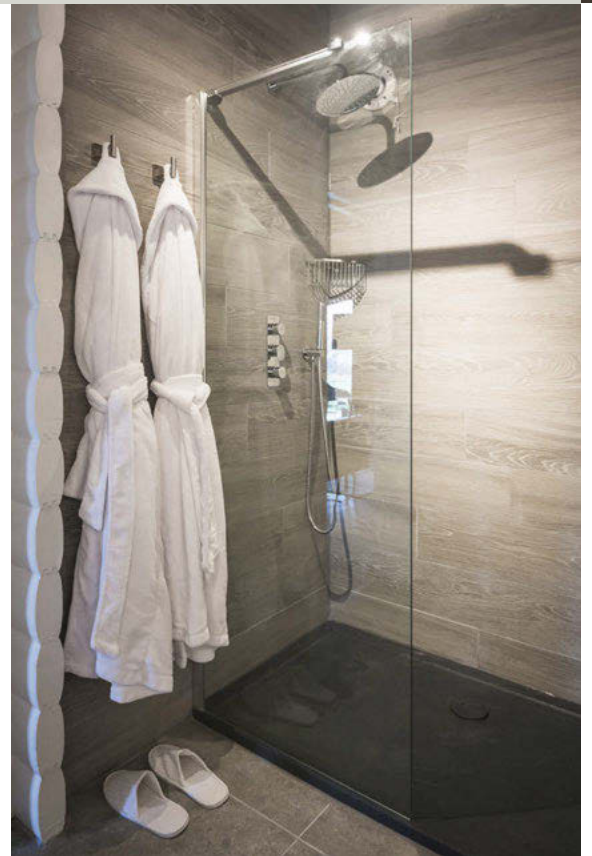
#### ...and the biggest extravagance?

The remote-controlled hot tub roof, which avoids the need for lugging a great big damp cover on and off.



**BEDROOM**

Part of the wall was removed between the living space and bedroom, which may be closed off with a remote-controlled curtain.



**BATHROOM**

The luxury shower room features a walk-in shower, stone sink and electric underfloor heating.





## GREEN NEWS

# Clay-based heating system used in period property renovation

When architect Silke Stevens stripped back a 150-year-old terraced London house to reveal stunning clay plaster partitions, brick fireplaces and pine floorboards she knew she had to seek an unconventional alternative heating system that would not clutter these original period features.

Keen not to jeopardise the warm and authentic feel of the building Stevens ruled out radiators, and dismissed underfloor heating as being impractical due to the excellent condition of the original floorboards. Instead, she specified the German Naturbo clay panel heating system because of its invisibility, sustainability, and low running costs.

Lamabuild Ltd installed the panels under the Victorian ceiling joists throughout the house except for the bathrooms where they were used on the walls due to limited ceiling space. They were then connected to a conventional manifold and boiler, and tested under substantial pressure for leaks.

A fine grade and natural colour clay plaster from Clayworks was specified to cover all of the walls and the delicate finish took less than 48 hours to dry.

According to Naturbo's Andreas T'anner, the system has potential for delivering lower carbon heating in new build and retrofit buildings.

"It works very much by heating up the clay first which then radiates healthy warmth like the sun or a clay oven. Rather than heating up the air around you to keep you warm, the infrared heat can be felt nearly instantly on the surface of your skin. It is very gentle, running at much lower temperatures than radiators and connects to the same boiler/manifold/tank like underfloor heating."



A concern when using clay as a building material can be the time it takes to dry on site, but Silke found that the panels offer a new solution.

"Using pre-dried clay panels reduced the drying time considerably, and it opens up new opportunities for using clay in larger projects with tighter time frames. The finish plaster dries within two to three days and fits into any construction process," she said.

Stevens added: "The system has many health benefits, too. It reduces dust and allergens in the air, balances humidity and absorbs odours. The panels are 99 per cent recyclable and require very little energy during production as the wet clay is applied to either side of a wood fibreboard and dried at low temperatures.

"The weight of the clay combined with the wood fibre make them excellent noise insulation panels too. All of the above, combined with the traditional use of clay as a natural surface material, means they are perfect for restoring historic buildings."

This is the first project in the UK to use heated clay panels, and the first to complete a heated wall system entirely of clay using traditional materials.

## Airtightness seminars

Ecological Building Systems is celebrating BBA approval of its pro clima Intello Plus Intelligent Airtight Membrane with a seminar tour of five locations around the UK.

Kicking off at the National Self Build and Renovation Centre in Swindon on October 16, the Air Tightness Tour then visits London, Belfast and Glasgow before culminating at the Studio in Birmingham on November 22. Each full-day seminar will include technical presentations from Pro Clima, the Ecological Building Systems team and the BBA, along with practical installation demonstrations.

Further details of the seminars are available online at [intellosealofapproval.com](http://intellosealofapproval.com) where delegates can register their interest and secure their place, with early bird discounts available on the standard delegate fee of £80 (including VAT).





## Viridian panels from E.ON

Viridian Solar's popular Clearline fusion in-roof panels (pictured) are now available to UK homeowners through E.ON. The roof-integrated solar panels replace tiles or slates on roofs, so they sit lower down in the roofline to look more like an intended part of the house than conventional solar panels. The panels also offer good wind resistance and durability.

Anyone who owns their home can have E.ON Solar and Storage installed. Homeowners can visit [eonsolar.co.uk](http://eonsolar.co.uk) to enter details about their home, and use the online calculator to work out how much E.ON Solar and Storage would cost and what they could save and earn from it.

## Multiple-builds can qualify for non-domestic RHI

Selfbuilders with two or more domestic buildings on a site could earn a profitable income by utilising a simple district ground source heat pump system to qualify for quarterly payments from the government's non-domestic Renewable Heat Incentive (RHI) scheme for the next 20 years.

More commonly associated with commercial projects, the non-domestic RHI tariff for ground source heat pumps is generous in comparison with other renewable technologies.

It has recently increased in line with inflation to 9.36p/kWh on the first 1,314 hours of eligible energy produced, followed by 2.79p/kWh on any additional heat produced over a 20-year period.

UK manufacturer Kensa Heat Pumps has created a dedicated online resource showing the typical return on investment from a district ground source heat pump system.

Paul Dennison, sales manager for Kensa Heat Pumps, says: "If your new build or retrofit project features multiple buildings, you may be able to link them to a shared ground array to cut installation costs and fuel bills.

"This will qualify as a district heating scheme and allow you to maximise the benefit of the RHI scheme, whilst delivering the energy savings and efficiency



benefits that ground source naturally brings."

As few as two properties can be linked together in a district ground source heat pump system, opening up the opportunity for self-build or renovation projects with smaller numbers of residential properties or outbuildings to access the RHI funding.

As each dwelling has its own individual ground source heat pump, this eliminates the need for a central plant room to be incorporated into the build. Also the occupier has complete control of their own heating and hot water system.

Installation can happen in stages to fit around individual build schedules. And as the ground arrays (typically slinky pipe, pond mats or boreholes), are all part of the same system, they can be sited where practical, rather than individually. Once installed, the district ground source heat pump system



Ground source heat pump system with individual heat pumps in each dwelling.

infrastructure will last for up to 100 years, and provide all heating and hot water needs.

Ground source heat pumps are a popular choice with many selfbuilders. They work by harnessing heat from the ground or water using pipework buried underground or submerged in water, and converting this to a higher temperature.

Ground source heat pumps do not require annual servicing or maintenance, and the units typically have a 20-year lifetime. ([kensaheatpumps.com/solution-centre/homeowner/multiple-buildings/](http://kensaheatpumps.com/solution-centre/homeowner/multiple-buildings/))

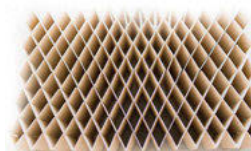
## Cardboard bed solution for landlords

Bed retailer Happy Beds has joined forces with German-based Room in a Box to become the UK's first and only supplier of an innovative simple-construction cardboard bed.

Made of 100 per cent recyclable cardboard, the minimalist, hard-wearing bed is easy to transport, with a concertina design that allows it to be 'built' in seconds. With no screws, nuts or tools required, it can be assembled almost instantly, saving landlords time and money.

Available in four finishes – classic cardboard, white, black and petrol – the alternative material bed is vegan and low emission, as well as stylish and durable. It can also be moved easily or stored when not in use.


A proven seller across Europe, particularly in high-rise and multi-occupation properties where transporting bulky items is a problem, the lightweight Room in a Box bed is now available in the UK.



## Build your own cob oven

If you fancy a pizza or bread oven in your garden, you can learn how to build your own, using natural materials. South Yeo Farm West, near Okehampton, hosts specialist cob courses run by Debbie Kingsley and her husband Andrew Hubbard. The hands-on day covers all the stages of building an oven, from sourcing the materials, creating the cob, shaping the former, building the cob dome and applying an earth render. [smallholdertraining.co.uk](http://smallholdertraining.co.uk).

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# BUILDING MATTERS

The latest news, products, ideas and tips



## Imperial Bricks

has updated its app to help selfbuilders identify the right brick for their projects.

The app, which is now downloadable from Google Play and iTunes, makes it easy to view Imperial's entire range of bricks and the relevant technical data. Users can upload a picture of existing brickwork, and receive an email with the suggestions of the closest brick – usually an exact match. Free samples are available on request. Enter the dimensions of a wall, and the built-in brick calculator will determine how many bricks are required in either imperial or metric sizes. Users can also specify the brickwork bond or pattern for a more accurate estimate.



## UK BRICK PRODUCTION UP DESPITE RUMOURS

Brick production in the UK continues to rise, according to the latest figures released by the Office for National Statistics. The most recent February figures show a six per cent rise on the same time the previous year. The rolling quarterly figures are even more impressive: December 2017 to February 2018 shows a 13 per cent increase on the same period the previous year.

The Brick Development Association points to a continuing rise in output from existing facilities and the introduction of additional brickworks – most notably the new Ibstock factory commissioned at the end of 2017.

"While construction output as a whole may be slowing we are still seeing housebuilding numbers rising," observes BDA's Tom Farmer. "As housebuilding is a major market for our members it is perhaps not surprising to see manufacturing figures rising to meet demand."

Asked about continuing rumours of brick shortages, Farmer said: "There is a scarcity of reliable information about the general availability of building materials, hence we find many commentators relying on anecdotal information from a relatively small number of respondents. However, the Mace Business School monitors lead times for various product groups across the construction sector and its April 2018 analysis suggests an overall lead time for bricks of 11 weeks. This compares well with drying (12 weeks) hard landscaping (15 weeks), architectural metalwork (15 weeks) or reconstituted stone cladding (29 weeks).

"We are confident that the manufacturing numbers meet current demand. In 2017 UK brick factories delivered over two billion bricks – the highest volume since 2007."

## OFF-SITE MODULAR LOFT INSTALLATIONS

Landmark Lofts has transformed home extensions with its cutting-edge approach to modular loft design. The off-site custom build reduces construction from an average of 12 weeks to as little as 14 days, with each loft tailored to clients' specifications by the company's in-house architecture team using 3D laser technology.

Furthermore, each custom build takes place off-site at the company's factory in South Yorkshire.

The fully completed lofts are then delivered on site where the modules are craned into position and installed by a specialist team that ensures that all utilities are connected before signing off after a final inspection.

Prospective clients can log onto the online quotation tool to customise their loft, from choosing the colour of their roof tiles to the preferred style of bathroom tap.

A 3D walk-through offers the opportunity to get a better look and feel of the space, alleviating the need to interpret conventional floorplans.



**Black Millwork** has launched a new range of bespoke garage doors. This means the company can provide bespoke entrance, back and garage doors to achieve a uniform door style for any property. The new garage doors are available in side-hung, roller and traditional up-and-over profiles. Cedar wood is standard but doors can be upgraded to rot-resistant acocya for harsher conditions. The new range is on display at Black Millwork's Burton-on-Trent showroom.

## NEW IRISH CONTRACTS

Homeowners in Ireland now have access to a new suite of building contracts from contractstore.com. These comply with Irish law, in particular the Construction Contracts Act 2013, as well as the current Building Regulations. They are the only forms that take into account provision for taking out a 10-year warranty to protect against the risks of defects in design, workmanship or materials.

Written by English solicitor Giles Dixon, the forms were developed in conjunction with Self-Build Zone which offers 10-year structural warranty insurance for UK selfbuilders and is now moving into the Irish market.

The four contracts include: Building Contract for a Home Owner; Trade Contract (for appointing specialist trades) in the form of a letter; an Equipment Supply Contract; and a Variation Form (needed to record changes in scope, cost and time as a building project progresses).



**Bespoke doormaker Deuren** has opened a new 2,000 sq ft showroom to display its ranges of internal, external and garage doors. Since bringing its manufacturing operations in-house in 2014, the company has crafted more than 7,000 doors. Visitors to the centre in Mirfield, West Yorkshire can check out the door choices on offer, and witness Deuren's craftsmanship in action in the adjacent on-site workshop.

آموزشگاه انعکاس منبع جدیدترین اطلاعات، مقالات و دوره‌های آموزشی دکوراسیون داخلی

# Making the right connections

First-time selfbuilders Mary Hynd and her husband, Jim Harrower, are peddling up a steep learning curve as they experience the frustrations of installing services to their property.



**A** seemingly casual remark from a solicitor or builder can be more important than you realise when all you can think about is bagging that perfect building plot before someone else does.

Have we checked that services are easily accessible? Of course. The seller pointed them all out – blue plastic pipes bringing in water, an electricity pole just over there in a field and an extra piece of land tagged onto a nearby plot for waste water to flow into.

Does a porosity test need to be done before the plot can be purchased, the builder enquires. This should have been a red flag.

Of course he knows how important this can be. We don't have a clue. What is porosity anyway? Don't want to look too green so Google it. Ah, drainage. Important if you can't vent into a sewer system.

We have a field earmarked. So it all sounds hunky dee. The field is on a hill, the water will just run down it and away. Only it doesn't.

At a later date, once house plans are well advanced, we find the porosity isn't what we'd imagined. The ground is stony and sodden as it's the middle of winter.

The water goes nowhere as a man in a digger excavates several big holes in the field and another man pours in some water and marks levels with a ruler (hi-tech stuff) and waits. And waits. They've created a water garden.

This is not good. An engineer tries to think of a cunning plan. Later, after a fair amount of worrying, there is a plan – dig a new set of holes,



this time on the plot in the middle of what will be our front garden.

The weather is better, spring is in the air, snowdrops are out. The water drains as we hope. An engineer comes up with the required drawings for our building warrant application. We can progress.

## Heating

For a while we think about heating. A ground source heat pump is suggested. The architect draws metres and metres of coloured lines around our garden – the pipe loops. Sounds fine. It isn't. The ground is too stony. This is possibly lucky, as in due course the garden will be needed for drainage.

Well, we can have air source then or an oil or gas boiler. We go for the air source, plus PV panels to help power it.

We'll need a 16kW system plus an extra tank – a large cupboard area is drawn on the utility floorplan to accommodate it all.

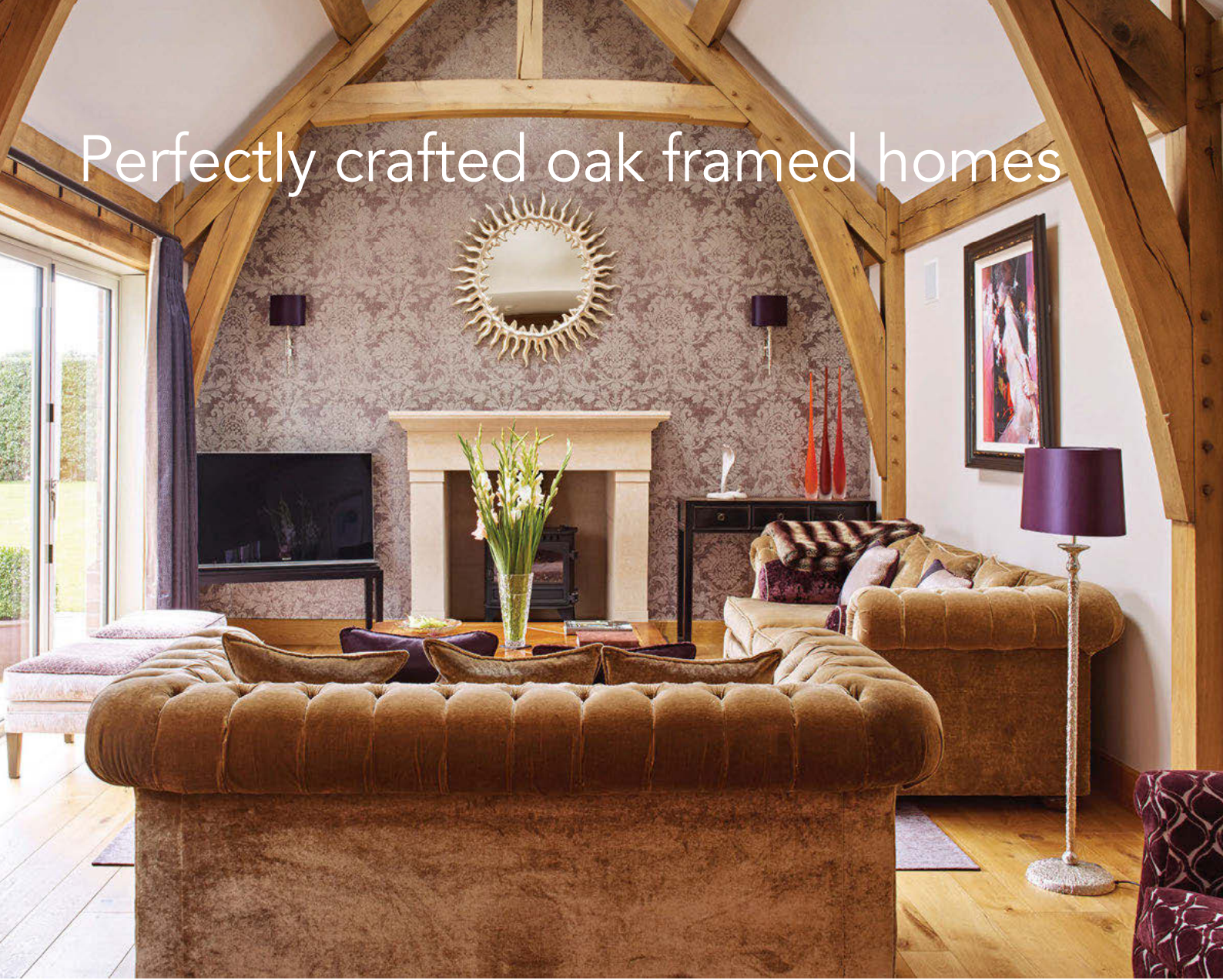
Next up is power. Heck, we won't need much of that with our PV panels and heat pump. Oh yes we will.

The electricity people don't seem to like the idea. Yet they know about us and our housebuilding plans as we'd flagged them up when arrangements were made to bring a power cable through our plot to service the neighbour's new house.

The soakaway is dug in the front garden.



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The engineer helpfully left the cable exposed and explained we'd just be able to tap in. Only we can't.

They'll need to upgrade the substation. And the cable. Er no, we'll need to upgrade it, they tell us. Here's the bill you'll need to pay to get connected. And costs for groundworks, not to mention annoying the farmer who has sheep in the field where the power cables are.

Hey, wait a minute, they knew there would be two houses. Why do we have to pay? Too big a load, they say. It's your air source heat pump.

Needs a wallop of power to fire it up. Cough up. But what if we didn't have a heat pump? Are they seriously saying we should install a fossil fuel boiler? The neighbour has a heat pump.

Then there are the PV panels. They didn't know about these – there was nowhere to detail them on the application made to the power folk. So don't they mean we'll need less power from the grid?

That'll all be okay? No, they make things worse. If the panels are exporting excess power back to the grid, the cables need to be able to receive it. They need bigger capability.

This is all news to us. We had no idea that trying to go green could mean having to pay to upgrade the area's electricity infrastructure. It's hardly an encouragement.

Calls are made. The PV panels are off the hook as we'll only have 12. If there had been 16, that would have been a different story.

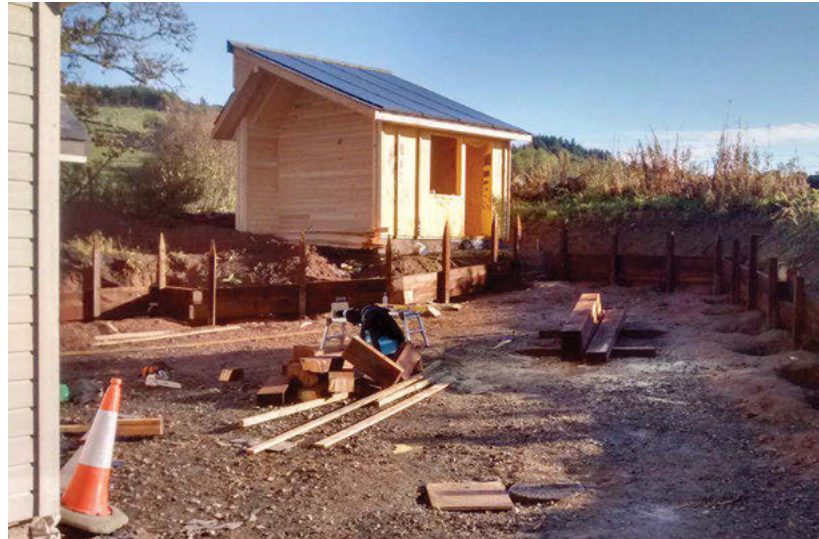
And the air source heat pump? Oh, wait a minute, we don't need a 16kW model, just 8kW, we're told. Eight? It seems incredible this will be able to heat a whole house when we needed a 6kW stove just for one room in our old Victorian home.

Ah, but most of those kW's would have been going out of the house through the terrible insulation. What insulation? Exactly.

An engineer is sent out to investigate and a much smaller connection fee bill arrives. At a later date we find out that the local power system had been upgraded fairly recently after part of it fell down in high winds but someone forgot to update the plans so no one officially seemed to know about it.

At least we won't have to worry about the water supply. We'd had a choice – a private supply or from the water board. We chose the latter and our plot seller had helpfully laid in a pipe for us.

A huge tank is seen to appear at the neighbour's new house and takes up a good bit of his garage. It's a water



**Left:** The photovoltaic panel array installed on the new shed. The panels caused some problems with the electrical supply.

tank. There's not enough flow rate to run his plumbing. He needs a tank and pump. We might need the same.

Our builder arrives with a plastic container with levels marked on the side. It looks like something you'd use to fill up an iron. This cutting-edge device will test the pressure coming from our water pipe.

### Phone and broadband

It seems okay during the day but to be on the safe side we'd better get a tank and pump so we've water at peak demand times. If we'd known this earlier, it would have been on our house plans.

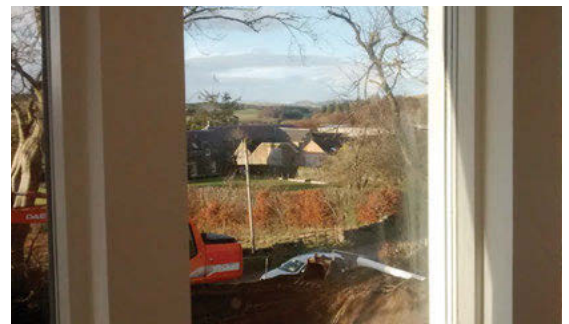
Will it go in the shed? We insulate it in case. Then we find it can go in the space allowed for the large heat pump system we don't need. The smaller system all fits in a large fridge-like unit.

So, power, water, drainage, we're all set. Not quite. Phone and broadband? It'll be a cinch. Our neighbour has a pole just outside his house and when our builder asks Openreach (the only phone line provider in this area) if we can have a cable, please, the surveyor earmarks this as where our line will come from. Goody.

But we can't have it yet – not until we have ordered it personally. We call them up pronto. We're not allowed to order yet – we won't be in the house for months – we have to order two weeks before move-in date. Why?

If they did it now, it'd be easy to feed into the house when the trades are on site. Nope. That's the rules. We'll have to wait. Months later we call again. Fourteen sleeps to go before move-in. An order number is issued.

A man visits and looks at the pole. He calls us up next day. It's a green light – all we need to do is be in our new house on our move-



**Below:** The telegraph pole, which is much closer to the house than originally planned.

in date and a phone engineer will connect us up. Perfect.

Then we get a call, followed by texts and emails – there's a hitch, the cable won't be in in time. Why not? It needs to be planned out.

Haven't there been seven months for that? We complain – yes, isn't it terrible? We call the surveyors who reveal the cable "isn't long enough" and there are "other tasks" which need to be done. They might be able to finish the planning stage a week after our move-in date. And of course we'll have to wait for the special long-cable team to arrive but will they be able to find us?

We discover that they have logged our address on their system as a set of driving instructions and an engineer has already got lost on the massive mile-long drive out of the nearest town. We hammer in a house sign to help him find us.

So when will work get done? No one knows. We complain some more. We find an email address for the company chief executive. The response is almost instant.

Suddenly there are engineers in vans clogging up the road. When we do move in, three vans appear with an installation team. The line goes in from a different pole much nearer to the house. Our lovely groundworkers help clear the way by trimming back some branches. We're connected.



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# Ask our legal expert

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

## Copyright for house plans

**Q** We purchased a plot three years ago and instructed a firm of architects to prepare plans to obtain planning consent and a second set of more detailed plans for the build. The plans formed the tender documentation.

We are now due to start work. The architect who prepared the plans, and with whom we worked very closely, has since moved on to another firm. Whilst the contractor has the paper plans that were attached to the tender, these have been tweaked over the last few years and exist in digital format with the original firm of architects.

We wish to use our architect to manage our project, but the plans are with his old employers who have been reluctant to release them, stating that they own the copyright. We suspect this may be the result of some bad feeling with their old employee.

I find the situation bizarre as we have already paid for the plans. Surely we own the copyright and are entitled to receive all the amendments so that we can pass them on to our preferred architect? We have no problems with the architectural practice itself, and don't owe them any money.

**A** Unless ownership is assigned to another person, copyright belongs to the author of the original material. No one else is entitled to copy, issue or adapt the copyright material without the owner's permission and damages can be claimed for any infringement. The author in this case is not the individual architect himself but the company who employed him at the time.

It is also worth noting that in addition to owning copyright for their drawings, architects also own the copyright for the finished building itself. This means that copying the design of a building can be a breach of copyright, even if the plans for the building are not copied.

There are two ways in which the copyright can be used by another party: by a licence to use the copyright (normally provided in a clause in the original letter of appointment); or by an assignment such as a written agreement.

A licence is the most common method. I suggest that you look at your original agreement with your architects to see if a licence was provided. When an architect (or designer) grants a licence over its copyright material, they retain ownership. This means that the firm has the right to copy, issue or adapt the material and to grant further licences if it wishes.

A licence can be provided expressly (ie in writing) or it can be implied. In your situation I suggest that it has been implied where the architects produced a design knowing that it is for use on a specific project, even though the appointment doesn't mention copyright. An implied licence depends on individual circumstances and its terms can be difficult to establish so it is unusual to rely on this when negotiating copyright.

If the original firm of architects has been paid in full then there is an implied licence in your favour to use the drawings for any purpose in relation to the project. Though the copyright remains with them, you have a licence to use the drawings. And while their comments to you about ownership are correct, you are entitled to receive the plans and use them as you so wish under an implied (or express) licence.

### Difficulties

Difficulties can arise where there is a disagreement over payment but you have stated that this is not the case. If, for example, there were outstanding fees, the architects could legitimately withhold any licence until this was paid in full.

Your right to use the plans extends to any use for that building for which the drawings were prepared. In practice this means that you can't use them for a similar project on another building.

If the architects refuse to hand over the drawings then they should expect to find themselves on the receiving end of a claim for the delays and cost of having your preferred architect complete the drawings. I would impress this fact upon them; it should prompt them to send the drawings to you.

It would be advisable for any future project that you request an express copyright in the letter of engagement. Once the firm of architects has been paid in full I suggest taking both hard copies and electronic versions of the drawings, photographs etc that were prepared for you.

The wording of this licence should express that you, as the employer, recognise that the copyright in the drawings, plans etc vests with the architect; and that the architect shall provide you with an irrevocable copyright licence to use the drawings for any purpose related to the project.

The wording of the licence should also include the right to use the drawings for any extension to the project. Architects sometimes exclude extensions from the list of permitted uses of copyright material because they feel that extensions are entirely new projects, unrelated to the project for which they are engaged. However, I suggest that you don't agree to this exclusion as it can be difficult to extend a building without copying, issuing or adapting the original copyright material.

As a compromise, a copyright licence may permit use of the material in an extension, but prohibit its reproduction in the design of the extension. Such clauses are intended to prevent any extension from copying the design of the existing building. This type of clause is relatively common and is used in professional appointments such as the BPF (British Property Federation) and ACE (Association of Consulting Engineers) Consultancy Agreements.

Most of the bespoke forms of employment contracts with design professionals contain a clause that confers a copyright licence in favour of the employer. The RIBA and ACE form of appointment comes with a health warning as they qualify this copyright licence dependent upon the professional being paid in full.

This qualification should, in my opinion, be deleted. On the face of it, it seems fair. However, if you are withholding payment from the architect because of defective work and this is disputed, then the architect has an absolute right to hold onto the drawings and as a consequence the project cannot proceed – effectively holding you and the project to ransom.

It should be noted that these basic copyright principles encompass the plans prepared not only by the architect, but any designers such as landscapers and structural engineers.

**Guy Elyahou** is a solicitor specialising in construction law. He is also the author of *Law for Home Improvers and Self-builders*. Email your questions in the first instance to [ross.stokes@sbdonline.co.uk](mailto:ross.stokes@sbdonline.co.uk)





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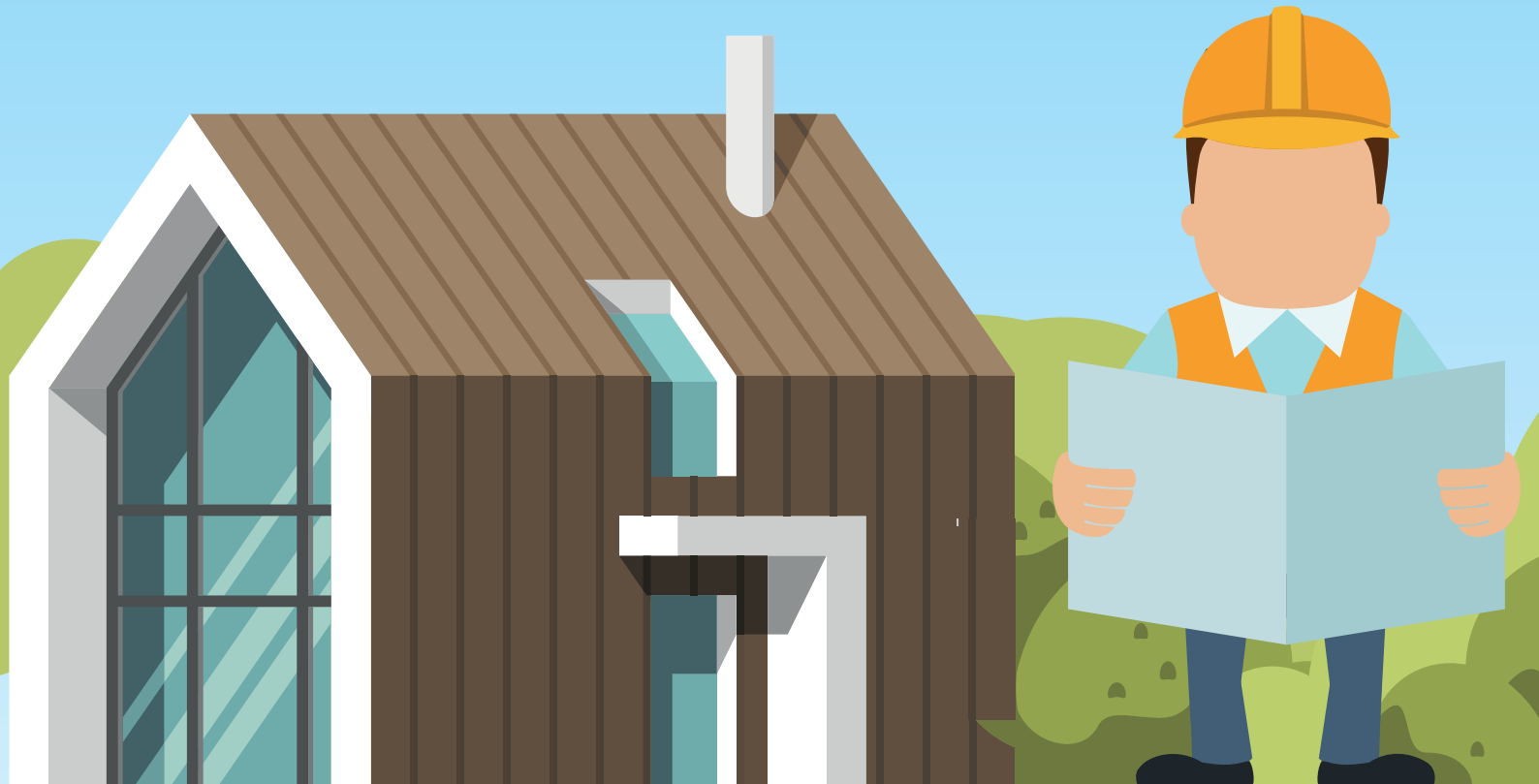


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**NACSBA**  
National Custom & Self Build Association





# Planning clinic

Our Plot Doctor **Roy Speer** answers your planning questions.

## ***Should I withdraw application for annexe?***

**Q** Three doors down from me, our neighbours built an annexe in their back garden. I applied for the same thing and when the planning officer came out he said it would be considered a separate house and that wouldn't be acceptable. Should I pull out the application now before it's refused and are there any other options?

**A** Withdrawal needs to be weighed up in every case but, generally, I'm not in favour of it. If an application is decided, the council must give a reason, the planning officer has to write a report on it and you retain the option to appeal. A withdrawn application stays on the council's records – with the implication that it was going to be refused – and you can't appeal. Planning officers often encourage it – withdrawal saves them a job – although there's not usually a lot for an applicant to gain. Have a look at the neighbour's property on the council's website to see whether planning permission was given for their annexe and, if so, on what basis. Find out whether there was a difference between their circumstances and yours. If your application is turned down and, assuming the council objects to the principle, I suggest you think about appealing against the

decision and/or consider having a mobile structure instead of a building. A mobile structure can be virtually indistinguishable from a building and might not need planning permission. The way to test that is through a lawful development certificate application, which is always advisable to make in cases where planning permission for anything significant might not be required.

## ***Frustration with planning application***

**Q** My planning application has been running now for four weeks. Apart from the confirmation letter from the council, I've heard nothing. I've phoned and left several messages for the planning officer. I've tried emailing. Whatever I do, I can't get hold of the officer and I want to discuss the application with her, in case there are problems. I'm worried that my application will just get turned down without being able to do anything about it. What can I do?

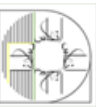
**A** Monitoring your planning application is sensible and a planning officer ought to be available to discuss it with you. Many planning departments are under pressure at the moment, but this doesn't really excuse such poor service. Others have strong defences designed to make it difficult or impossible to contact

officers. It would be only take a few moments to dash off a quick email or make a short call, even if that's just to acknowledge your communications and tell you when the officer will be able to consider your case or to respond fully. If you've not tried already, see if you can speak to an admin person, ideally one in the planning department, and ask that person to get the officer to the phone or twist their arm to call you back. You could try escalating it up the planning chain of command. Find out the name of the case officer's manager and endeavour to speak to that person. If that gets you nowhere, there's always your councillor – the person who's supposed to represent your interests. Take care always to be polite and don't criticise the officers or fire off an accusing email in anger. That is unlikely to help your chances and could sour what you want to be a good working relationship.

## ***Case for building in Green Belt***

**Q** I own a cottage on a one-and-a-half acre plot in the Green Belt. Next to me on one side are storage units and I've been told a planning application is about to go in for eight houses to be built on the site. On the other side is a small village shop. I wish to build another house on my land – will I get planning permission?

**A** The first thing to check is whether your property is actually designated Green Belt, as the term is sometimes misused to mean any countryside or greenfield land. If it's in Green Belt, it will be subject to restrictive planning policies which, in most cases, makes getting new houses difficult. One exception is re-development of existing non-agricultural buildings. That could explain the thinking behind the scheme next door. The fact that you're located between other buildings, and could be having a new residential development next door, might not help you. There's no presumption that infill will be allowed. Green Belt policy is based on planning dogma not on practicality or common sense. If an application is submitted for next door, see how that is justified. Probably your best bet is to carry out a pre-application enquiry or to get an independent professional view to see whether you would have a case.



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# Finance

## A guide to self-build mortgage lenders

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



[www.buildstore.co.uk](http://www.buildstore.co.uk)

LENDER'S NAME	Lend on land	% of end value of property advanced	Number of stage payments	Minimum works completed for 1st stage payment	Mortgage types available	National or local	Telephone
<b>GUARANTEED ADVANCE STAGE PAYMENT MORTGAGES</b>							
<b>Bath Building Society (Accelerator)</b>	95% (OPP)	80%	Six	DPP & Building Regs granted	4.74%	England/Wales	0345 223 4647
<b>Darlington Building Society (Accelerator)</b>	80% (OPP)	80%	Six	DPP & Building Regs granted	5.49%	England/Wales	0345 223 4647
<b>Furness Building Society (Accelerator)</b>	80% (OPP)	80%	Six	DPP & Building Regs granted	4.7%	England/Wales	0345 223 4647
<b>Hanley Building Society (Accelerator)</b>	85% (OPP)	80%	Six	DPP & Building Regs granted	5.24%	England/Wales	0345 223 4647
<b>Mansfield Building Society (Accelerator)</b>	85% (OPP)	85%	Six	DPP & Building Regs granted	5.44%	England/Wales	0345 223 4647
<b>Melton Mowbray BS (Accelerator)</b>	85% (OPP)	75%	Six	DPP & Building Regs granted	5.24%	England/Wales	0345 223 4647
<b>Penrith Building Society (Accelerator)</b>	85% (OPP)	75%	Six	DPP & Building Regs granted	5.50%	England/Wales	0345 223 4647
<b>ARREAR STAGE PAYMENT MORTGAGES</b>							
<b>Buckinghamshire BS*</b>	75% (OPP)	75%	Six	Foundations	4.84%	England/Wales	0345 223 4647
<b>Chorley BS*</b>	85% (OPP)	80%	Six	Foundations	4.75%	England/Wales/Scot	0345 223 4647
<b>Cumberland BS</b>	75% (OPP)	75%	Flexible	Flexible	Call branch	Branch area only	01228 403141
<b>Darlington BS*</b>	80% (OPP)	80%	Six	Foundations	4.99%	England/Wales	0345 223 4647
<b>Dudley BS*</b>	50% (OPP)	75%	Six	Foundations	5.49%	England/Wales	0345 223 4647
<b>Ecology BS</b>	80% (OPP)	80%	Flexible	Flexible	4.65%	National	0845 674 5566
<b>Furness BS*</b>	80% (OPP)	80%	Six	Foundations	4.24%	England/Wales/Scot	0345 223 4647
<b>Halifax BS</b>	75% (OPP)	75%	Five	Foundations	5.7%	Eng/Wales/Scot/NI	0345 850 3705
<b>Hanley BS*</b>	85% (OPP)	80%	Six	Foundations	4.49%	Central England	0345 223 4647
<b>Hinckley &amp; Rugby BS</b>	N/A	75%	Four	Footings	5.89%	England/Wales	01455 894083
<b>Holmesdale BS*</b>	80% (OPP)	80%	Six	Foundations	4.99%	England/Wales	0345 223 4647
<b>Ipswich BS*</b>	75% (OPP)	80%	Six	Foundations	3.99%	England/Wales	0345 223 4647
<b>Loughborough BS*</b>	80% (OPP)	80%	Six	Foundations	4.14%	England/Wales	0345 223 4647
<b>Mansfield BS*</b>	80% (OPP)	80%	Six	Foundations	4.99%	England/Wales	0345 223 4647
<b>Newbury BS</b>	66% (DPP)	75%	Flexible	Flexible	4.2%	Postcode restricted	Local branch
<b>Newcastle BS*</b>	80% (OPP)	80%	Six	Foundations	4.99%	England/Wales/Scot	0345 223 4647
<b>Nottingham BS*</b>	75% (OPP)	80%	Six	Foundations	5.19%	England/Wales	0345 223 4647
<b>Penrith BS</b>	85% (OPP)	75%	Six	Foundations	5.75%	England/Wales	0345 223 4647
<b>Progressive BS</b>	N/A	75%	Four	Wall plate	3.49%	Northern Ireland	Local branch
<b>Stafford BS*</b>	85% (OPP)	75%	Six	Foundations	4.5%	England/Wales	0345 223 4647
<b>Tipton &amp; Cosley BS*</b>	85% (OPP)	75%	Six	Foundations	4.24%	England/Wales	0345 223 4647
<b>Scottish BS</b>	80% (DPP)	80%	Flexible	Foundations	5.99%	Scotland	0131 313 7700
<b>Vernon</b>	75% (DPP)	80%	Four	Wall plate	Call branch	England/Wales	0161 429 6262

\* exclusive from Buildstore

## Funding a self build

Self-build mortgages are paid out on the completion of various stages of the build, typically four or five.

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

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

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

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

آموزشگاه انعکاس منبع جدیدترین اطلاعات، مقالات و دوره‌های آموزشی دکوراسیون داخلی

# Diary dates

To publicise your course, seminar or exhibition, contact Sue Stelfox on 01283 742960 or email [sue.stelfox@wwonline.co.uk](mailto:sue.stelfox@wwonline.co.uk).

## Courses

### Brighton Permaculture Trust Introduction to Photovoltaics

June 16; income-based fee £130-£280  
Brighton

The course will cover the basics of photovoltaics, from system design and load calculation through to the various types of solar panels, batteries and inverters and their suitability in different situations. The afternoon will be spent setting up a small photovoltaic system and will include a tour of the award-winning Earthship Brighton. The day is aimed at those who wish to get a broad introduction to renewable energy technologies, as well as those wishing to install a photovoltaic energy system for water or space heating. ([brightonpermaculture.org.uk](http://brightonpermaculture.org.uk))

### Brighton Permaculture Trust Selfbuilding an Earthship

6-8 July; income-based fee £175-£340  
Brighton

Participants will learn what needs to be considered when building an environmentally sensitive home as well as what is involved in building an earthship. Learn how to gain autonomy and be free from gas and electricity bills, and understand basic building physics which can shed light on how all buildings work. The course provides the knowledge and confidence to take ideas to the next stage. ([brightonpermaculture.org.uk](http://brightonpermaculture.org.uk))

### Centre for Alternative Technology Self-Build Project Management

June 30-July 1; £150  
Machynlleth, Powys

Project management is a popular option for selfbuilders undertaking their own project, but there are techniques which make the whole process easier. Learn how to create a project plan, which key elements should be included, when key tasks should happen and how long they are likely to take. UK planning and approval processes as well as the Building Regulations and control inspections will be explained, as will managing budgets, reclaiming VAT, estimating costs and how to select and work with suppliers. ([courses.cat.org.uk](http://courses.cat.org.uk))

### KLC School of Design Introduction to Kitchen Design

July 26; £185

### Introduction to Bathroom Design

27 July; £185

Chelsea Harbour, London

Whether you are a practising interior designer or someone just looking for ideas and inspiration for your own home, this is an area of design that requires specialist knowledge. This course will consider the fundamentals of practical bathroom design. The emphasis will be on understanding the range of considerations involved in planning and designing a bathroom,

and putting these into practice in practical workshops which respond to a client brief. The day will also examine planning issues, the latest style trends and new technology. ([klc.co.uk](http://klc.co.uk))

### Mike Wye & Associates Practical Lime Course

June 15; £144 inc lunch

Buckland Filleigh, Devon

Gain hands-on experience in using lime mortars and lime plasters for the repair and maintenance of traditional buildings on this practical course, which offers an introduction to the use of the different types of building lime followed by practical sessions. ([mikewye.co.uk](http://mikewye.co.uk))

### Mike Wye & Associates Lime Plastering

June 22; £144 inc lunch

Buckland Filleigh, Devon

The Lime Plastering Course is an opportunity for some 'hands on' experience in using both traditional and modern lime plasters and techniques to conserve, maintain or upgrade traditional buildings. This course offers far more depth than the Practical Use of Lime Course, which covers other tasks such as pointing. ([mikewye.co.uk](http://mikewye.co.uk))

### Mike Wye & Associates Natural Paint

June 29; £96 inc lunch

Buckland Filleigh, Devon

This is a one-day practical course on the use of natural and traditional paints, oils and waxes. Participants will work on a wide range of traditional and natural decorative materials including: clay paint, linseed paint (stand oil paint), lime paint, silicate paint, chalk paint including distemper, natural hard oil, wood whitening techniques (liming) and decorative effects. ([mikewye.co.uk](http://mikewye.co.uk))

### Mike Wye & Associates Practical Lime Course

July 20; £144 inc lunch

Buckland Filleigh, Devon

Gain hands-on experience in using lime mortars and lime plasters for the repair and maintenance of traditional buildings on this practical course, which offers an introduction to the use of the different types of building lime followed by practical sessions. ([mikewye.co.uk](http://mikewye.co.uk))

### National Self Build & Renovation Centre Heating your Home

June 16; £150

NSBRC, Swindon

Designed specifically for selfbuilders and renovators this course explores the latest options in heat and energy sources – both renewable and conventional systems. The jargon-busting one-day session is packed full of useful tips and advice. Starting with the basics, before delving into the detail of each option, this course will allow you to make key decisions

## Seminars & Open Days

### John Cullen Lighting

#### Learn About Lighting Masterclass

June 19; £35

King's Road, London

A two-hour lighting masterclass which demonstrates how creative lighting techniques can transform design schemes in the house and garden. Presented by leading lighting expert Sally Storey (John Cullen's Creative Director) and her team of designers, the lighting masterclass is held at the London Showroom, which shows the latest in lighting technology through The John Cullen House and a unique custom-built lighting pod. ([johncullenlighting.com](http://johncullenlighting.com))

### Camden Mews Passivhaus site visit

June 21; £19-£35

London NW1

This visit showcases a new build two-bedroom urban infill project aiming for Passivhaus certification. Currently being constructed in the rear garden of an existing property, it's designed by Bere architects who were given a free hand by the client. It features a number of bespoke elements such as external shutters constructed from vacuum panels to be controlled by the smarthome system. At the time of visit the project is due to be undergoing first fix and the MVHR being installed. ([passivhaustrust.org.uk](http://passivhaustrust.org.uk))

### Vision 2018

June 21-22

London N1

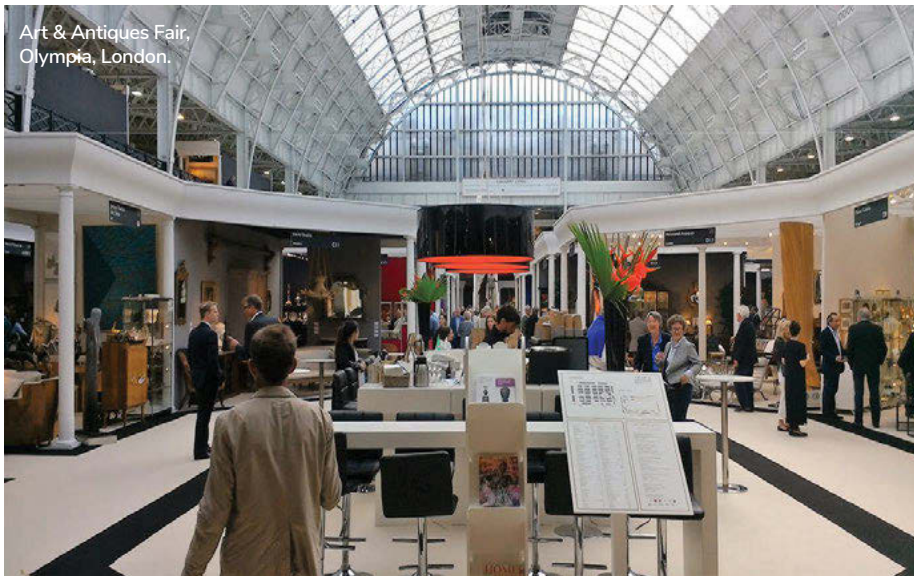
Held annually, Vision is the place where architects, suppliers and clients come together to discuss, debate and showcase the latest innovations and developments in architecture, design and the built environment. Vision focuses on innovative building products, materials and technology and provides ideas for new and inventive ways to achieve better building design and comply with changing legislation. The educational programme is free to attend and features a series of seminars, live debates, technology talks and interactive show features alongside a carefully curated exhibition of cutting-edge products. ([visionlondon.com](http://visionlondon.com))

### National Self Build & Renovation Centre Ask an Architect

July 7

NSBRC, Swindon

RIBA, the Royal Institute of British Architects is offering a free personal consultation with an architect to discuss ideas for designing and building a new home or renovating or reconfiguring an existing home in a strictly no obligation 25-minute meeting. Undertaking a building project, whatever the scale, can be a daunting experience. Architects from RIBA chartered practices provide assurances that work is completed to the highest standards in design, health and safety and quality assurance. No other building professional is trained in design and construction to such a level of expertise. ([nsbrc.co.uk](http://nsbrc.co.uk))



during your project and to engage with the key trades from an informed and confident position. You will discuss the most common processes for ordering new heating systems and what might be the typical costs. (nsbrc.co.uk)

### National Self Build & Renovation Centre Eco Workshop

June 23  
NSBRC, Swindon

This programme of eco workshops brings a wealth of independent and informed advice and information on the latest energy-efficient technologies, products and services. It looks at sustainability; environmentally responsible building principals and retrofitting of existing properties. Each workshop focuses on a particular phase or aspect of energy-efficient homebuilding, offering something new each time. Industry experts will be on hand throughout the day to provide the opportunity to discuss green ideas, designs and plans. (nsbrc.co.uk)

### National Self Build & Renovation Centre Self Build

July 21-23; £375  
NSBRC, Swindon

This three-day course will cover a wide range of aspects that need to be considered when undertaking a self build. Learn about budgeting and finance, finding and evaluating land and design and specification. Then look into the different building systems and construction methods, and how to get planning permission, what is allowed under permitted development and complying with Building Regulations. Advice will be provided on hiring trades, arranging contracts and tendering. Learn the skills needed to manage a project, and understand eco legislation, eco design, planning and management. (nsbrc.co.uk)

## Exhibitions

### Antiques for Everyone Summer Fair

July 19-22  
NEC, Birmingham

Visitors can expect to see a wonderfully rich variety of beautiful antique, vintage and contemporary pieces including colourful ceramics, sparkling glass, glittering silver, fabulous fine art, Art Deco and exquisite jewellery. Over 200 specialist dealers will be showcasing their wares with all items

for sale stringently vetted by a team of experts for quality, date and condition, giving buyers assurance in their choice of items. (antiquesforeveryone.co.uk)

### Art & Antiques Fair

June 20-27  
Olympia, London

Returning to London for its 46th edition, the Art & Antiques Fair Olympia is a key event in the global art and antiques calendar, hosting 160 dealers showcasing a vast array of items from antiquity to the present day, with prices ranging from £100 to £1m. Loved by collectors, interior designers and those looking for exceptional pieces for stylish interiors, the fair offers the finest array of objects drawn from antiquity to the present day. (olympia-art-antiques.com)

### Homebuilding & Renovating Show

June 16-17  
Glasgow

The world of housebuilding and renovating doesn't stand still for long. That's why this show is full of information on the latest trends, technologies and tips for getting the most out of your project. At Scotland's biggest self-build and renovating event, there are thousands of ideas from suppliers based across the country – all in one space, with seminars, masterclasses and the Advice Centre. (glasgow.homebuildingshow.co.uk)

### House & Garden Festival

June 20-July 24  
Olympia, London

The festival brings together four leading lifestyle events, the Art & Antiques Fair Olympia, HOUSE, Spirit of Summer and GROW London, and presents an eclectic collection of products ranging from antiquity to contemporary – focused on craftsmanship and quality, design, interior and garden trends and luxury lifestyle. Bursting with ideas and packed with inspiration and professional advice. Free talks and workshops from leading antiques, interior, garden and lifestyle experts plus loads of inspiration to take home from the stunning room sets in Decorated Spaces and the Style Rooms and however large or small your outdoor space, fabulous ideas from the beautiful feature gardens. (houseandgardenfestival.com)

## Training Academies

These organisations run regular courses aimed at hands-on selfbuilders.

### Able Skills

#### Dartford, Kent

Five-day courses in plumbing, plastering, bricklaying, tiling, dry-lining, electrical and kitchen fitting. (0808 100 3245, ableskills.co.uk)

### Access Training Academies

#### Cardiff, Bristol, London & Edenbridge

A wide range of accredited training courses for beginners and seasoned professionals alike – whether you want to become a professional electrician, earn your Gas Safe certificate, or simply learn some basic DIY skills. (0800 345 7492, accesstraininguk.co.uk)

### Builder Training

#### Farnham, Surrey

Courses include tiling, carpentry, basic plumbing, bathroom installation, bricklaying and blocklaying. Dates are arranged depending on demand and there are never more than three or four people on each course. They also teach one-on-one and can customise courses to suit your needs. (07780 977767, basicplumbingcourse.com)

### Builder Training Centre

#### Croydon, Surrey

Run over five days, or two weekends, learn bricklaying (mixing mortar, building walls and damp-proofing), plastering, tiling, plumbing and carpentry. (0800 389 2775, thebtc.co.uk)

### Tradeskills4U

#### Crawley, West Sussex

Plastering, tiling, electrics, plumbing and bricklaying are taught with courses of varying lengths, including a DIY course specifically for women. (0800 856 4448, tradeskills4u.co.uk)

## Self Build Days

### Potton Self Build Academy

June 16: **An Introduction to Self Build**

June 16: **Design Your Perfect Kitchen and Bathroom Masterclass**

July 13: **An Introduction to Self Build**

July 14: **How to Find and Appraise a Plot**

Dates subject to change – please check website.

(selfbuildacademy.co.uk/events)

### Kingspan Timber Solutions

June 13: **Self Build Day**

These events are suitable for those with land and planning permission for a new home.

(kingspantimbersolutions.co.uk/events/events-for-self-builders)



The dilapidated former stone dairy is to be converted into an impressive family home.

# RURAL HIDEAWAY

Set within beautiful gardens and grounds of approximately five acres, The Old Dairy in Boscall, Kenwyn, near Truro, offers a rare opportunity to purchase a rural barn in Cornwall with planning permission for conversion into a three- to four-bedroom detached residence with a double garage and store.

**W**ith no close neighbours, The Old Dairy occupies a rural location with stunning far-reaching views over the Kenwyn Valley. Despite its tranquil setting, it remains convenient for central Truro and the Royal Cornwall and Duchy hospitals.

Conditional planning permission was granted by Cornwall Council under application no PA17/10233 for this large historic stone former dairy to be converted into a residential dwelling. Once completed, the impressively spacious home will extend to around 197 sqm, exclusive of garaging. An open-plan dual aspect living room/dining room/kitchen will open out onto a private sheltered west-facing inner courtyard, with sliding glazed doors overlooking a large balcony. Here, views across the surrounding countryside can be enjoyed.

The master bedroom suite with walk-in wardrobe and ensuite bathroom, and a further spare room or fourth bedroom, will also have a balcony. A linking entrance corridor leads to two further double bedrooms and a family bathroom with views over the inner courtyard.

Outside, planning permission has also been obtained for the construction of a double garage on the north side of the property, with additional roof storage above. Mains water and electricity are connected to the site by the barn.

The property will be approached by a



The Old Dairy stands in around five acres of land.

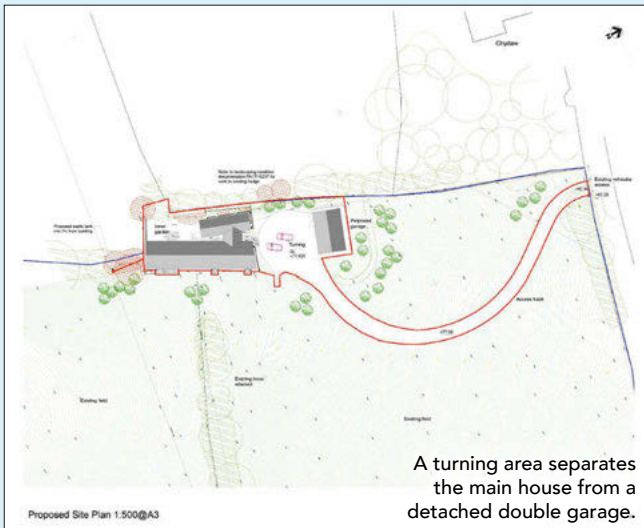


A long driveway leads up to The Old Dairy.



long private sweeping driveway accessed from a quiet country lane. There is a restrictive covenant on part of the land, details of which are available from the agents.

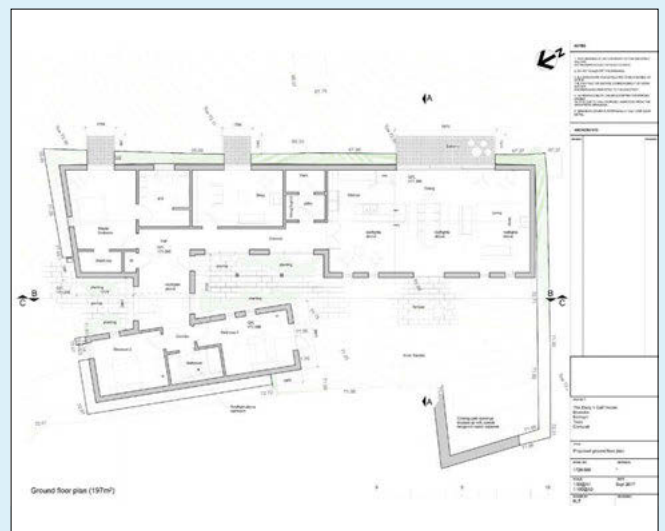
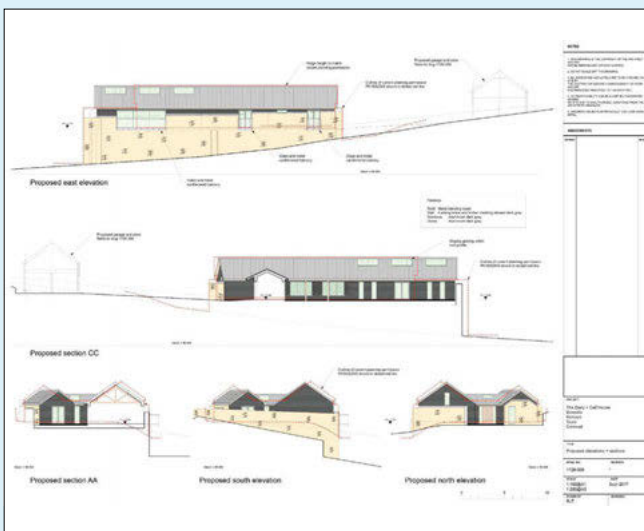
The Old Dairy is being offered for a price in excess of £400,000, with a further acre of land available by separate negotiation. Sold with immediate vacant possession with no onward chain. (lillicrapchilcott.com)



A turning area separates the main house from a detached double garage.



Plans show a four-bedroom home of approximately 197 sqm, exclusive of garaging.





## SITE AND SETTING

The property is in the Bedfordshire countryside less than a couple of miles from several villages. These have a range of general and specialist shops, pubs and restaurants, schools and doctors and dental surgeries. Larger towns with a greater ranges of facilities, including large shopping centres, department stores and supermarket, are within about 10 miles.

There's a motorway junction two miles from the property and a station a few miles away. The property is approached through an area of upmarket detached housing in spacious plots, via a narrow road. The last length of road leading to the property is a narrow unmade lane with hedges on either side and houses dotted along it at intervals. The property is on the north-west side of the lane, quite well hidden by trees. The main building comprises a long single-storey traditional agricultural-type building. This has brick walls with openings along its length on the north-eastern side and a slate pitched roof. In front of this is a brick tower with a large metal tank on top. A floor slab has been laid between the building and tower. The buildings sit towards the north-western end of the irregular-shaped plot which the agents' particulars say extends to about three-quarters of an acre. There are mature trees at the south-eastern end of the plot, close to the rear wall, and at the north-western end of the main building. The woods continue to the north-east of the property. To the south-west are a few detached houses, two of which adjoin the south-west boundary.

On the opposite side of the lane are a few detached houses. To the north of the property is undulating open countryside.



## IS THIS SHRUTI'S PERFECT PROJECT?

Shruti Mishra has had an offer accepted on an interesting conversion. It's not an entirely straightforward case though and she has some questions.

**S**hruti Mishra has been searching for a plot for the past five years, seeking something different or unusual, ideally in a nice location, wooded, with a view. She is looking for a project to find out whether this is something she could do and enjoy.

Shruti has a vision for her new home and, together with her family, has seen many potential properties, missed other plots which sold quickly and dismissed others still because they were too expensive or in less attractive areas.

Previously, she had found a two-bedroom bungalow on a 12-acre plot with outline permission for a replacement dwelling. She had spoken to the council but the officer couldn't

be definite about the size of house which would have been allowed.

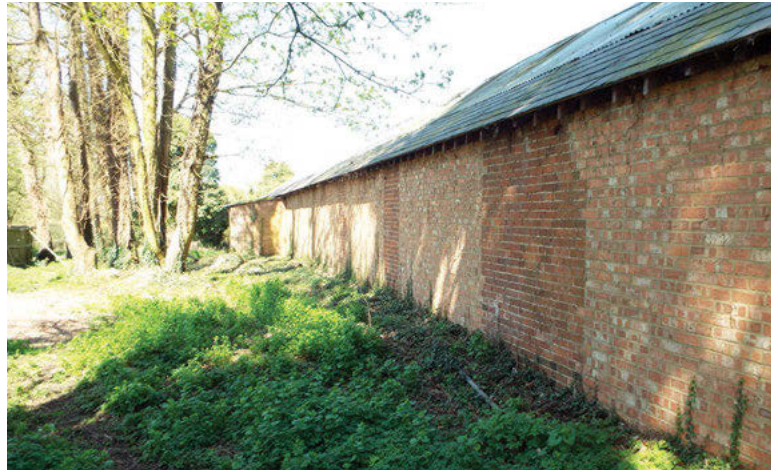
Another possibility was a Georgian refurb opportunity, about 17 miles away, with a barn which might have had further development potential.

Shruti mainly used the Rightmove website to do her searching and says she didn't bother much with agents for the familiar reason that they didn't get in contact until they had something they were desperate to sell, which usually met none of her requirements.

She found this property on the internet. The agents' particulars say that planning permission to convert the buildings was granted in 2010 and shortly afterwards the owner laid foundations and base in the area



The property comprises a long single-storey traditional farm-type building, and a separate brick tower with a metal tank on top. Shruti would prefer to redevelop the site rather than convert the existing buildings.



### Proposal

Shruti would prefer to re-develop rather than convert the existing buildings. This is mostly for environmental reasons - to maximise energy efficiency, build with structural insulated panels and incorporate rainwater harvesting - all within a design suitable for the location.

Also, the shape of the existing building isn't ideal, being long and narrow. Shruti would prefer bedrooms on a first floor, rather than the same level as the living accommodation. The particulars say the area of the approved conversion would be just under 3,000 sq ft, whereas Shruti's preferred floor area would be around 3,500 sq ft and she wonders whether a basement would be possible.

According to the particulars, mains electricity and water are already laid on but there's no drainage system in place so this would have to be installed.

### Planning history

The planning history of the property dating back to the early 2000s at least is on the council's website. In 2001, an outline application for a detached dwelling following demolition of the existing buildings was refused. A proposal to convert and extend the buildings was refused in 2003 and then approved in 2004.

There then seems to be a period of planning inactivity before permission was granted once again in 2010 for the conversion and extension of the existing storage/stable building and water tower to form a four-bedroom dwelling.

The following year, a similar application was approved and then, in 2013, a landscaping scheme was approved. The officer's report on the 2011 application - which usually provides useful insights - isn't on the website but the decision notice gave the reason for approval, which was that the conversion and extension of the buildings wouldn't harm Green Belt objectives or the visual amenity of the locality and so would comply with government policy and relevant Local Plan policies.



between the tower and the barns, thereby exercising the planning consent.

Shruti instantly liked the property when she visited the site with her husband and son, and made an offer, initially below the asking price, but then

increased it when other parties were interested. Her offer was accepted.

She spoke to the council on the phone about the planning permission and was asked to send photos of the foundations, which she proposes to do.



The permission sets out various conditions. There's the standard one giving a period of three years to commence the development. Another condition requires the scheme to be carried out in accordance with the recommendations of a bat survey report submitted with the application. Householder permitted development rights for work such as extensions and alterations were removed.

The only condition to require further approval before the development could start was one asking for a detailed landscaping scheme, including a tree survey to be submitted and approved. The 2013 landscaping scheme application referred to the 2011 permission.

The approved drawings of the conversion show the north-western end of the main building demolished and a slightly larger area of new build to link the main building and the tower. The door opening in the tower would be the front door of the house. The link is shown as a kitchen, bathroom and fourth bedroom.

The main building would contain a garage at the south-eastern end, then a master bedroom with en suite, two small bedrooms, a dining room and a lounge.

### Planning policy

Government policy sets out types of development deemed to be appropriate in Green Belt. These include the partial or complete re-development of previously developed sites (brownfield land), which wouldn't have a greater impact on the Green Belt than the existing development and the re-use of buildings which are of permanent and substantial construction.

The current Local Plan for the area dates from the mid-1990s. The proposals map shows the property to be in Green Belt, outside any settlement boundary, the nearest village with a boundary being a mile or so away.

The Local Plan policy for Green Belt says that the aim is to keep the uses of land open in character. Unless there are very special circumstances, planning permission will only be granted for new buildings, extensions, and changes of use which are considered appropriate and wouldn't result in significant visual impact.

A conversion policy states that re-use of permanent and substantial buildings in Green Belt will be permitted where certain criteria are met and the new use doesn't have a materially greater impact on the openness and purposes of Green Belt.

The conversion criteria are that there won't be an adverse effect on the rural economy, the building doesn't require extensive alteration, rebuilding and/or extension and the residential use won't harm the character of the countryside or highway safety.



The property is in a wooded setting overlooking open countryside.

A new Local Plan is in the advanced stages. This contains Green Belt and conversion planning policies broadly like those in the current Local Plan.

The draft plan allocates new housing sites at nearby villages but not in the immediate area. The buildings on site and adjoining it don't seem to be listed and a quick scan of the council's website doesn't show any locally listed buildings.

### Planning permission status

This is a crucial point in these circumstances. It wouldn't be safe for Shruti to buy the property at a price which reflects planning permission, without first establishing that it exists.

The 2011 permission would have expired if it was not implemented properly within three years. To qualify, the landscaping condition would have had to have been discharged, which appears to have been done before the

work on the link was undertaken.

The bat report isn't on the council's website and any requirements for measures to be taken prior to starting work would have to have been met. The foundations and floor slab work must have been built in accordance with the approved scheme.

The important thing about all this is that the council accepts that a valid start on the permission was made. At the very least, Shruti should obtain unequivocal written confirmation from the council that the permission is still available. Before it provides that, the council might require evidence of when the work was undertaken and that would have to be supplied by the current owner. Shruti has already contacted the council about this and would either need to pursue this herself, with the assistance of the vendor as necessary, or ask the vendor to obtain confirmation.

### DOCTOR'S DIAGNOSIS

The property ticks many boxes – it's in a good location in a pleasant, quiet rural area, it's 'different', it has a view over attractive countryside and is in a wooded setting. As it stands, it doesn't have quite the floor area Shruti wants and the arrangement of accommodation isn't her ideal. One of the adjoining houses to the south-west has first-floor windows overlooking what would be the rear garden and the windows in the back of the main building. Otherwise the property is fairly secluded.

With regard to her preference for a replacement instead of a conversion, Shruti would have to contend with Green Belt policy. Government policy does allow for re-development of brownfield sites, so a key question is whether this property would meet the definition of 'brownfield' for this purpose. Agricultural buildings are excluded and so Shruti would need to establish what the buildings were used for.

Even if the property did qualify as brownfield, that wouldn't guarantee planning permission for replacing it with a house. Such a replacement would likely be limited to the volume and height of the existing buildings to preserve the openness of the Green Belt.

It would take some time to get even an indication from planning officers whether they might support a re-development.

If Shruti was prepared to do a conversion, it might well not be possible to gain any more space than has already been permitted. I imagine the vendor has maximised that already and Green Belt policy is usually applied strictly. It would be handy to see the application documents that aren't available online. They should shed more light on some of these issues.

The officer's report on the 2011 permission should reveal the council's thinking and to what extent the preservation of an interesting building played in granting permission for residential use. The approved landscaping scheme would show which trees have to remain and which could be felled. This could also influence Shruti's thinking.

There are fundamental points here to consider. These include establishing that planning permission is still available, deciding whether Shruti is prepared to carry out a conversion if re-development isn't an option, and whether the floor space is acceptable if no more can be achieved, and the uncertainty of getting permission for a re-development.

The property has potential to make a desirable home but as I see it these points need to be pinned down before Shruti decides how to proceed.



# PlotBrowser

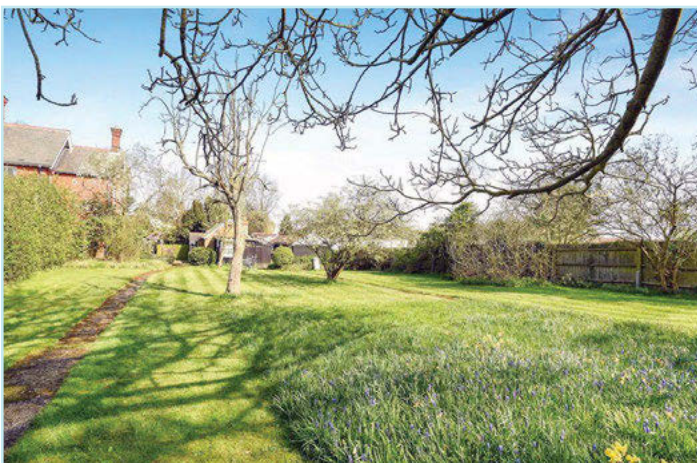
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The following pages contain a sample of the plots, renovations and conversion opportunities which are available on PlotBrowser.com this month. To search for more plots across the UK, and receive free notifications of new plots in your county, sign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



## ASPLEY GUISE, BEDFORDSHIRE

Plot at Spinney Lane – Plot, currently containing its original outbuildings, with planning permission granted (Central Bedfordshire) for the construction of a 2,190 sq ft four-bedroom detached house and garage, with new private access. OIEO £350,000. Jackson-Stops & Staff, 01525 290 641, [woburn@jackson-stops.co.uk](mailto:woburn@jackson-stops.co.uk)

## ARGYLL & BUTE

### TARBERT

Ronachan Plot, Clachan – Unserviced coastal development site on the Kintyre peninsula with uninterrupted views to Gigha, Islay and Jura. Set in around 0.07 acres, permission in principle is in place (Argyll and Bute Council ref: 16/01985/PPP) for the erection of a dwelling and formation of vehicular access. Further land available by separate negotiation. Offers over £45,000. Robb Residential, 0141 225 3880, [sales@robbresidential.com](mailto:sales@robbresidential.com)

### TAYINLOAN, TARBERT

Arrivore Plot – Unserviced development site on the Kintyre peninsula with aspects towards the Isle of Arran and the Knapdale Hills. Planning permission in principle is in place

(Argyll and Bute Council ref: 17/00919/PPP) for the erection of a one-and-a-half-storey house and the formation of vehicular access. Offers over £30,000. Robb Residential, 0141 225 3880, [sales@robbresidential.com](mailto:sales@robbresidential.com)

### TIGHNABRUACH

Portavadie Farm House, Millhouse – Detached Farm House and outbuilding situated on the shores of Loch Fyne. Price band: £200,001-£250,000. Stewart & Bennett, 01369 704 954, [property@stewartbennett.com](mailto:property@stewartbennett.com)

### TORLOISK, ISLE OF MULL

Plot at Port Rainich – Site of approx 0.47 acres with planning permission in principle (Argyll and Bute Council ref: 14/02623/PPP) for a single dwelling. The site has spectacular sea views on the West Coast of Mull. Guide price:

£85,000. Bell Ingram, 01631 566 122, [oban@bellingham.co.uk](mailto:oban@bellingham.co.uk)

## BEDFORDSHIRE

### SHILLINGTON, CENTRAL BEDFORDSHIRE

Building plot with adjoining paddock – Good sized building plot with an adjoining paddock totalling 1.41 acres or 0.57 hectares. The site is situated in a popular Bedfordshire village and stands on an elevated plot with attractive views to the rear over surrounding countryside. The plot has the benefit of outline planning consent for the erection of a detached dwelling with garage. Price band: £300,001-£450,000. Norgans New Homes, 01462 455 225, [simon@norgans.co.uk](mailto:simon@norgans.co.uk)



## BUCKINGHAMSHIRE

### CHALFONT ST PETER

Sandy Rise – Cleared site with full planning consent (Chiltern District Council ref: CH/2016/1039/FA) for a five-bedroom new build house of just under 3,500 sq ft with garden, garage and off-road parking. Guide price: £800,000. Rodgers Estate Agents, 01753 880333, [csp@rodgersstates.com](mailto:csp@rodgersstates.com)

### GERRARDS CROSS

Land to the rear of Mill Lane – Planning permission has been granted (South Bucks District Council) for a 3,200 sq ft four-bedroom detached dwelling, set over three storeys. Offers over £500,000. Trevor Kent, 01753 885 522, [sales@trevorkent.com](mailto:sales@trevorkent.com)

## GOT A PLOT TO SELL?

Go to [PlotBrowser.com](http://PlotBrowser.com) and register as a seller to list your plot for FREE

## CAMBRIDGESHIRE

### BURWELL

Clematis Cottage, Silver Street – A detached period two- or three-bedroom cottage in a non-estate location requiring improvement with plenty of scope and potential. Private and well stocked gardens to rear, off road parking and a single garage to front. OIEO £350,000. Morris Armitage, 01638 742 461, [burwell@morrisarmitage.co.uk](mailto:burwell@morrisarmitage.co.uk)

### FORDHAM, ELY

Trinity Close – Individual building plot with full planning permission (East Cambs District Council ref: 17/02207/FUL) for a three-bedroom detached bungalow. Guide price: £150,000. Peter Michael, 01353 725 400, [sales@petermichael.co.uk](mailto:sales@petermichael.co.uk)

### LITTLE GRANSDEN, SANDY

Church Street building plot – Mature village site of around 0.35 acres with detailed planning consent (South Cambridgeshire District Council ref: S/2348/17/FL) for a detached house of 1,780 sq ft and a basement of 607 sq ft. Guide price: £250,000. Redmayne Arnold & Harris, 01223 323 130, [rah@rah.co.uk](mailto:rah@rah.co.uk)

### WITCHFORD

Ely Road – Single building plot adjacent to Hereward House with outline planning permission (East Cambs DC ref: 17/01649/OUT) for a single detached dwelling in this popular village. OIEO £225,000. Pocock & Shaw, 01353 668 091, [ely@pocock.co.uk](mailto:ely@pocock.co.uk)

آموزشگاه انعکاس منبع جدیدترین اطلاعات، مقالات و دوره‌های آموزشی دکوراسیون داخلی



**TREBETHERICK, POLZEATH, CORNWALL**

Plot adjoining Pen-y-Bryn – Very rare 0.4 acre plot a short walk to Polzeath and Daymer Bay. Very private and not overlooked, owned for 45 years. Full planning permission granted for a four-bedroom eco dwelling with garaging and parking. Lovely inland views. Price: £595,000. *Private seller, 07785 542 487.*

**CARMARTHENSHIRE**

**CARMARTHEN**

Nash Avenue – Building plot in sought-after area with full planning permission (Carmarthenshire County Council ref: W/29915) for a two-storey four-bedroom dwelling. Guide price: £70,000. John Francis, 01267 233 111, carmarthen@johnfrancis.co.uk

**ST CLEARS, CARMARTHEN**

Building plots off Tenby Road – Two freehold building plots with detailed planning consent (Carmarthenshire County Council ref: W/33732) for a pair of four-bedroom detached dormer bungalows. Guide price: £85,000 per plot. BJP Residential, 01267 236 363, carmarthen@bjpc.co.uk

**CHESHIRE**

**DARESBURY, CHESHIRE**

Orchard Croft, Daresbury, Cheshire – Plot with planning consent for a four-bedroom detached home. Double garage and open views to the rear. Lovely village location in Conservation Area. Price band: £250,001-£300,000. *Private seller, 07843 280208.*

**LYMM**

65 Mill Lane – Plot of 0.25 acres with countryside views in a popular residential location. Outline planning permission is in place (Warrington Borough Council ref: 2017/31103) for a large two-storey detached dwelling of over 4,000 sq ft. Guide price: £495,000. Gascoigne Halman, 01925 758 345, lymm@gascoignealman.co.uk

**WINSFORD**

Plots adjacent to 615 Swanlow Lane – Development site of 0.427 acre with planning permission (Cheshire West and Chester Council ref: 15/04391/FUL) for the construction of two detached dwellings, with off-road parking and garages. Guide price: £225,000. Wright Marshall, 01829 731 300, tarporley@wrightmarshall.co.uk

**CORNWALL**

**DRACAENA VIEW, FALMOUTH**

Penwerris Farm – Corner plot located approx half a mile from Falmouth town centre. Planning permission is in place for the erection of a detached two-bedroom bungalow (Cornwall Council ref: PA17/10450). Guide price: £100,000. Lewis Haughton Wills, 01326 211 511, info@lewishaughtonwills.com

**TREGONY, TRURO**

Rear of 47 Fore Street – Level garden plot with detailed planning permission (Cornwall Council ref: PA18/00564) for a two-bedroom detached bungalow with parking and garden. Guide price: £100,000. Philip Martin, 01872 242 244, sales@philip-martin.co.uk

**TREWINT**

Building plot – Large plot with full planning permission for a six-bedroom house with large garden in an edge of village location next to moorland with lovely views down the valley services on site. Guide price: £200,000. *Private seller, 07960 738 791, a.smith953@btinternet.com*

**COUNTY DURHAM**

**PELTON FELL**

Front Street – Stone built barn with permission granted (Durham County Council) to convert to a detached three-bedroom barn conversion. The property sits in approx 1 acre, with beautiful surroundings. Guide price: £550,000. Carousel Estate Agents, 0191 500 8500, info@carouselestateagents.com

**TOW LAW**

Campbell Street – Plot in a village location with planning permission granted (Durham County Council) for a three-bedroom detached house on a quiet residential street. Guide price: £50,000. Carousel Estate Agents, 0191 500 8500, info@carouselestateagents.com

**CUMBRIA**

**NEWTON ARLOSH**

Building plot – Serviced building plot with planning permission (Allerdale reference: 2/2014/0212) for the construction of a four-bedroom detached house. Approx plot size is 15m frontage, 14.5m rear and 35m depth. Guide price: £69,950. Hayward Tod Associates, 01228 810 300, info@haywardtod.co.uk

**WIGTON**

Plot at Heskett Newmarket – Site extending to one third of an acre with full planning permission (Lake District ref: 7/2016/2092) for a stylish eco-friendly architect-designed three-bedroom house of 160 sqm, in the heart of a National Park Conservation Village. Guide price: £95,000. Savills, 01325 370 500, darlington@savills.co.uk

**DEVON**

**EXWICK, EXETER**

Gloucester Road – Outline planning permission has been granted (Exeter City Council ref: 16/1248/FUL) for a three-bedroom end-of-terrace house in a convenient location. Guide price: £80,000. Bradleys Estate Agents, 01392 270 720, stthomas@beagroup.co.uk

**TOTNES**

1 Ashleigh, Kingsbridge Hill – Site in the market town of Totnes with planning permission (South Hams District Council ref: 56/1893/15/F) for the erection of single dwelling with an undercroft parking space. Plans show a two-storey three-bedroom detached house of around 1,340 sq ft. Guide price: £129,000. Luscombe Maye, 01803 863 811, totnes@luscombemaye.com

**EAST AYRSHIRE**

**CULROY**

Plot at Knockdon – Rural plot of approx 14,500 sq ft with planning consent (East Ayrshire Council) to build a charming two-bedroom 1,033 sq ft cottage with countryside views. Offers over £55,000. Corum, 01292 880 888, ayr@corumproperty.co.uk

**GALSTON**

Plot at 1b Garden Street – The plot extends to around 500 sqm and has off-road parking and access at the front from Garden Street. There is detailed planning permission in place (East Ayrshire Council) for a four-bedroom detached family villa on the site extending to around 178 sqm. Offers over £59,000. Corum, 01292 310 010, troon@corumproperty.co.uk

**EAST YORKSHIRE**

**ATWICK**

Church Lane – Single building plot with full planning permission (East Riding of Yorkshire) for the erection of a four-bedroom detached double fronted house with private driveway and garage. The plot has an irregular shape, with the rear boundary (north) measuring around 63 ft and the eastern side boundary measuring approx 72 ft. Guide price: £100,000. Quick & Clarke, 01964 537 123, hornsea@quickclarke.co.uk

**EASINGTON, HULL**

Seaside Road – Residential building plot measuring 79ft x 125ft with full planning permission (East Riding of Yorkshire Council) for a pair of four-bedroom detached houses, each of around 1,420 sq ft. Guide price: £160,000. Quick & Clarke, 01964 537 123, hornsea@quickclarke.co.uk

**ESSEX**

**BARKINGSIDE**

Land at Forest Road – Large plot of land with full planning permission (Redbridge ref: 4295/17) for a detached three-storey four- to five-bedroom property. Guide price: £350,000. Arbon & Miller, 020 8551 4133, sales@arbonandmiller.com

**COOPERSALE**

Coopersale Common – Quiet village building plot with planning permission (Epping Forest District Council) to erect a two- to three-bedroom detached house with parking. Guide price: £250,000. Millers, 01992 560 555, sales@millersepping.co.uk



**WENDENS AMBO, SAFFRON WALDEN, ESSEX**

Land adjacent to Drayton Hill Cottage – Single building plot extending to around half an acre with planning consent (Uttlesford DC ref: UTT/17/2572/FUL) for a large 4,030 sq ft detached house and double garage. Price band: £450,001-£600,000. Arkwright & Co, 01799 668 600, info@arkwrightandco.co.uk

## GLOUCESTERSHIRE

### CAM, DURSLEY

Site of 47 The Quarry – Freehold residential site with detailed consent for two dwellings. For sale by informal tender - OIEO £300,000. Perry Bishop and Chambers, 01285 646 770, landandnewhomes@perrybishop.co.uk

### HORSLEY

Development site at The Street – Freehold residential site with detailed planning consent for three four-bedroom townhouses. For sale by informal tender - OIEO £400,000. Perry Bishop and Chambers, 01285 646 770, landandnewhomes@perrybishop.co.uk

### STOKE ORCHARD, CHELTENHAM

Pickwill Mill, Mill Lane – 0.24 acre site with planning permission granted (Tewkesbury Borough Council ref: 17/00208/FUL) for the demolition of two storage sheds and stable and the erection of a single dwelling of circa 1,000 sq ft. Guide price: £175,000. Savills, 01242 548 000, cheltenham@savills.com

## GREATER LONDON

### CROYDON

Rear of 51 Lodge Road – Plot with full planning consent (Croydon Council ref: 17/06225/FUL) for the construction of a two-bedroom single-storey house following the demolition of the existing garages. Set in a convenient location in Croydon, the land measures 675 sq ft. Guide price: £175,000. Acorn Commercial and Development, 0208 315 5454, commercial@acorn.ltd.uk

### LONDON

Land to the rear of 76 Vanbrugh Park – Plot with planning permission (Royal Borough of Greenwich ref: 16/0428/F) for a three-bedroom house measuring 1,786 sq ft and set over two or two-and-a-half storeys. Guide price: £500,000. Acorn Estate Agents, 020 7089 6565, londonbridge@acorn.ltd.uk

### ORPINGTON

Plot 1 High Street – One of two plots available with full planning permission, with conditions, to build a two- to three-bedroom house of around 1,044 sq ft with an enclosed garden. Bromley planning ref: DC/16/03718/FUL. Guide price: £200,000. Purplebricks, 07809 465 944, stuart.richards@purplebricks.com

## HAMPSHIRE

### BASINGSTOKE

– Two plots, one with outline planning for a three-bedroom house and one with full planning for a four-bedroom house. Can be sold as one or separate plots. Semi-rural location within 10 min drive to Basingstoke. Price band: £450,001-£600,000. Private seller, 07831 310 304,

### HOUGHTON, STOCKBRIDGE

Four-bedroom building plot – A substantial single building plot with detailed planning permission granted for a detached residence on a flat, level

plot in excess of 0.4 acres, (Test Valley Borough Council ref: 17/03089/FULLS). The proposed property offers over 2,500 sq ft of living accommodation. Price band: £450,001-£600,000. Charters Estate Agents, 01962 830 880, winchester@chartersestateagents.co.uk

### RINGWOOD

Eastfield Lane – A building plot with detailed planning permission (New Forest District Council ref: 16/10094) for a detached 2,000 sq ft house with five bedrooms. Guide price: £325,000. Spencers New Forest, 01425 462 600, ringwood@spencersnewforest.com



## KENT

### BEARSTED, MAIDSTONE

Detached four-bedroom house with detached garage – Outline planning for demolition of existing property to build a detached four-bedroom house with detached garage, granted by Maidstone Borough Council, planning REF: 16/501957/FUL. Views over the Downs. Private Lane, all mains services present. Current property is a pretty three-bedroom bungalow of timber construction, with parking for 3 vehicles and front and rear gardens. Price band: £300,001-£450,000. Private seller, 07837 418 257,

### LANSDOWNE, HARRIETSHAM

Dickley Lane – Semi-rural plot with planning (Maidstone Borough Council ref: 17/506313/FUL. Currently withdrawn - needs to be reapplied for) for a four-bedroom house following the demolition of the existing dwelling and outbuilding. OIEO £450,000. Sandersons UK, 01622 686 686, maidstone@sandersonsuk.com

## LEICESTERSHIRE

### SMEETON WESTERBY

Mill Lane – Building plot of approx 0.36 of an acre, located on a quiet backwater of a sought-after south Leicestershire village. Planning permission has been granted (Harborough District Council ref: 17/01732/FUL) for the erection of an architect-designed detached dwelling of circa 2,980 sq ft with a detached double garage. Guide price: £425,000. James Sellicks Estate Agents, 01858 410 008, mh@jamesellicks.com

### THURMASTON, LEICESTER

The Meadows Field View off Colby Drive – Very desirable single building plot with full planning permission for a detached two-bedroom bungalow situated in a very quiet location on an exclusive private estate of just 14 recently built properties (Charnwood Council Application P/17/1548/2) OIRO £75,

000 for the freehold plot which does not include the donor garden bungalow, also available by separate transaction. Price band: £50,001-£100,000. Private seller, 07946 245 432,

### WHITWICK

Land rear of 76 North Street – A residential building plot with planning permission for an individual three-bedroom detached home with detached double garage in a delightful secluded silvan setting with brook to rear while close to the village centre. The driveway leads to the proposed double garage with steps down to the lower level plot and the Gracedieu brook beyond. Price band: £50,001-£100,000. Sinclair Estate Agents, 01530 838 338, debbie@sinclairestateagents.co.uk

## LINCOLNSHIRE

### DONINGTON

Goxhill Avenue – Plot of 391 sqm located in the heart of Donington close to amenities with outline planning consent for the erection of a bungalow and garage. Price band: £50,001-£100,000. Longstaff, 01775 765 536 / 01775 766 766, commercial@longstaff.com

### GAINSBOROUGH

Walkerith Road, Morton – Plot with a frontage of approx 59 ft and a depth of around 190 ft. Outline planning permission is in place for a detached bungalow and garage. West Lindsey District Council ref: 135456. Guide price: £125,000. Hunters, 01427 616 118, gainsborough@hunters.com

### SPALDING

9 Spalding Common – Building plot with full planning permission (South Holland ref: H16-1178-16) for a two-bedroom detached bungalow with side and rear garden and off-road parking. Guide price: £85,000. Morriss and Mennie Estate Agents, 01775 767 575, enq@morrissandmennie.com

### WEST PINCHBECK, SPALDING

Plots 2 & 3 Six House Bank – Two plots

with rear views over open farmland. Outline planning has been granted by South Holland District Council (ref: H14-0976-16) for the erection of two three-bedroom detached houses. Plot 1 also available individually. Guide price: £130,000. Pygott & Crone, 01775 717 366, spalding@pygott-crone.com

## NORFOLK

### CROMER

Land adjacent to 38 Connaught Road – Land with planning permission to build a three-bedroom detached house. Plot measures 81ft x 34ft. North Norfolk District Council ref: PF/17/2194. Guide price: £100,000. Watsons, 01263 515 120, cromer@watsons-property.co.uk

### NORWICH

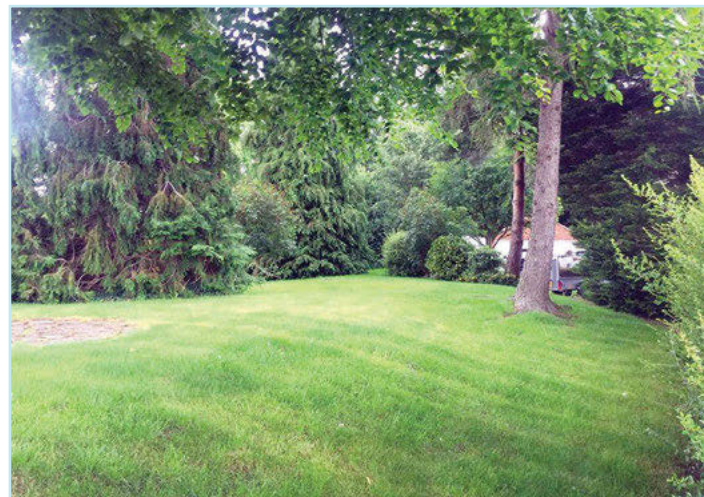
Plot at Armes Street – Plot measuring approx 27m x 7.5m with full planning permission (Norwich City Council ref: 17/01045/F) for a stylish two-storey three-bedroom house of around 85 sqm. Guide price: £80,000. Brown & Co, 01603 629 871, susan.parker@brown-co.com

### OLD HUNSTANTON

The Woodland Hut – Detached bungalow with planning permission (Kings Lynn and West Norfolk ref: 17/02318/F) for its demolition and the construction of two detached houses. The houses are of a contemporary design by Strata Architectural and each has its own private access. House 1 is approx 2,873 sq ft, including garage, set over two floors with a Crow's Nest. House 2 provides 1,722 sq ft of accommodation. Guide price: £550,000. Bedfords, 01328 730 500, bmkt@bedfords.co.uk

### WEST RAYNHAM, FAKENHAM

The Bowling Green building plots – Development site of 0.415 acres lying within a designated Conservation Area on the edge of an attractive village. Consent granted (North Norfolk) for three dwellings of approx 1,205 sq ft each. Guide price: £399,000. Bedfords, 01328 730 500, bmkt@bedfords.co.uk



## THIRSK, NORTH YORKSHIRE

Alexander Close – Building plot with consent subject to conditions (Hamilton District Council) for a detached two-bedroom bungalow with garden in a prime corner plot. Offers over £85,000. Dacre, Son & Hartley, 01845 574 939, thirsk@dacres.co.uk



**NORBURY, SHROPSHIRE**

Land adj to Hollys Cottage, Gauntons Bank – Elevated plot extending to approx 0.175 acres situated in an idyllic rural residential area. Planning permission is in place (Cheshire East Borough Council ref: 15/1437N) for the construction of a single dwelling on the land adjacent to Hollys Cottage. The proposed detached house will be around 2,300 sq ft. Guide price: £150,000.  
 Wright Marshall, 01270 625 410, nantwichadmin@wrightmarshall.co.uk

**NORTH LANARKSHIRE**

**AIRDRIE**  
 Main Street, Plains – Site extending to approx 0.463 acres with outline consent (North Lanarkshire Council ref: 17/00843/PPP) for a pair of two-storey detached dwellings fronting onto Main Street. Offers over £80,000. Robb Residential, 0141 225 3880, sales@robbresidential.com

**LONGRIGGEND**  
 Main St, half acre or quarter acre for sale – Half acre site suitable for minimum two houses. Beautiful rural outlook within small village. Direct access to plot from Main Street. Flat ground. Outline planning gained for two large houses previously. Now lapsed but precedent set. Price: £85,000 for half acre or £45,000 for single plot. Private seller, 07887 541 336,

**NORTH YORKSHIRE**

**HARROGATE**  
 Garden plot, 1 Oakdale – Single building plot within the exclusive Duchy area with planning permission (Harrogate Borough Council ref: 17/05048/FUL) for a four-bedroom contemporary property of around 1,430 sq ft, designed by Maclean Architecture. The dwelling will stand in gardens and grounds extending to just over 0.1 acres. Guide price: £250,000. Carter Jonas, 01423 523 423, harrogate@carterjonas.co.uk

**MALTBY, MIDDLESBOROUGH**  
 High Lane – A level 0.36 acre plot with planning permission (Stockton Council ref: 16/0380/FUL) for the conversion and extension of the existing single-storey stable block into a residential dwelling. Guide price: £275,000. Michael Poole, 01642 955 140, billingham@michaelpoole.co.uk

**ORMESBY, MIDDLESBOROUGH**  
 Ormesby Bank – Cleared site of 0.3 acres with detailed planning permission (Redcar & Cleveland Council ref: R/2015/0515/FF) for a

four-bedroom detached house and a pair of three-bedroom semi-detached houses with garages. Guide price: £185,000. Michael Poole, 01642 955 140, billingham@michaelpoole.co.uk



**NORTHUMBERLAND**

**LOWICK**  
 Main Street – Level building plot with outline planning permission (Northumberland County Council) for one detached dwelling and garage. Guide price: £80,000. Price band: £50,001-£100,000. Aitchisons Property Centre, 01668 281 819, info@aitchisons.co

**MORPETH**  
 Old Swarland – Development site of 0.2 acres with full planning permission (Northumberland County Council ref:



**FRAMLINGHAM ROAD, LAXFIELD, SUFFOLK**

Plot to the north of Chestnut Tree Farm – A building plot of 0.2 acres with planning permission (Mid Suffolk District Council ref: DC/17/05995) for a contemporary detached 1,430 sq ft three-bedroom house, along with offset land of ten acres, situated within walking distance of the centre of Laxfield. Guide price: £250,000.  
 Clarke & Simpson, 01728 724 200, jcook@clarkeandsimpson.co.uk

17/00070/FUL) for a four-bedroom detached dwelling with panoramic views over the countryside to the south. The proposed design is a split level, one-and-a-half-storey four-bedroom home of around 2,450 sq ft. Guide price: £175,000. Strutt & Parker, 01670 516 123, morpeth@struttandparker.co.uk

**WOOLER**  
 Glendale Road – Single building plot in a sought-after location with full planning permission (Northumberland County Council ref: 17/02621/FUL) for a detached one-and-a-half-storey house. Guide price: £110,000. Aitchisons Property Centre, 01668 281 819, info@aitchisons.co

**NOTTINGHAMSHIRE**

**BLIDWORTH**  
 White Lion Square, Blidworth – Conservation Area plot with full planning permission granted for a pair of three-bedroom cottages. This could be varied for a single custom built dwelling. Land area is around 660 sqm and forms part of the former White Lion car park and garden. The pub has been recently converted into three dwellings and is served by separate access. Price band: £100,001-£150,000. Private seller, 07976 120 587

**NEWARK-ON-TRENT**  
 27 Hutchinson Road – Single building plot of around 400 sqm with full planning permission (Newark & Sherwood District Council ref: 17/01027/FUL) for the erection of a two-bedroom dormer bungalow. The proposed one-and-a-half-storey chalet style house will have an internal area of 1,370 sq ft with off-street parking. Guide price: £150,000. Richard Watkinson & Partners, 01636 611 811, newark@richardwatkinson.co.uk

**NORTH MUSKHAM**  
 10 Crab Lane – Three-bedroom cottage plus planning permission for a three-bedroom house in the approx one third of an acre garden. Newark & Sherwood DC planning ref: 18/00015/FUL (5th April 2018). Guide price: £400,000. Private seller, 07775 862 491

**PERTH AND KINROSS**

**MURTHLY**  
 At Stewart Lodge, Druids Park – Building plot extending to approx. 1,050 sqm with planning permission granted for a substantial five-bedroom detached home in a private and secluded location accessed via a private driveway shared with just one other property. (Perth & Kinross Council ref: 17/01742/FLL) Price band: £100,001-£150,000. Clyde Property, 01738 507 070, perth@clydeproperty.co.uk

**WOLFHILL**  
 Plot 2 Birnam Wood Way – Level building plot of approx 465 sqm with full planning permission (Perth & Kinross Council ref: 15/10164/FLL) for a two-storey four-bedroom property of around 210 sqm. OIRO £85,000. Clyde Property, 01738 507 070, perth@clydeproperty.co.uk

**SHROPSHIRE**

**LUDLOW**  
 Building plot at Maple Close – Plot with outline planning permission (Shropshire Council ref: 12/04328/OUT) for a two-storey detached house of approx 199.92 sqm with front and rear gardens and off-road parking for two cars. Guide price: £62,500. Balfours, 01743 353 511, sales@balfours.co.uk

**SHREWSBURY**  
 Land at Grafton, Montford Bridge – Semi-rural site with full planning permission granted for three detached executive new build homes (Shropshire Council ref: 13/01108/FUL). Further land to the north is available by separate negotiation. Guide price: £400,000. Balfours, 01743 353 511, sales@balfours.co.uk

**WOODSIDE, TELFORD**  
 Land adj to Denholme, Park Lane – Plot of approx 242 sqm with outline planning permission (Telford ref: TWC/2014/1114) granted for detached dwelling with associated parking. Guide price: £65,000. Nock Deighton, 01952 432 533, ironbridge@nockdeighton.co.uk

**WORTHEN, SHREWSBURY**  
 Plot at Fenwick House – Single level building plot on the edge of village with a road frontage of 50 ft and a depth of 52 ft. Existing timber shed is to be removed, with detailed planning consent in place (Shropshire Council ref: 17/04173/FUL) for the erection of a single dwelling. OIRO £65,000. Halls, 01588 638 755, bishopscastle@hallsgb.com

**SOMERSET**

**COXLEY, WELLS**  
 Rear 5 & 6 Church Cottages – An opportunity to acquire either a single building plot or both plots as part of a small development. The planning permission is for two detached houses with garages and offering around 153 sqm of accommodation over three floors. All mains services available. (Mendip District Council ref: 116658/006) Backing on to open farmland. £125,000 for each plot. Holland & Odham, 01749 671 020, wells@hollandandodam.co.uk

**NORTON-SUB-HAMDON,  
STOKE-SUB-HAMDON**

Plot at Quinta, Little Norton – Building plot of around 0.57 acres in a highly desirable village with planning permission in place (South Somerset District Council ref: 16/00976/FUL) for a single dwelling of around 3,000 sq ft. The house will have four bedrooms, generous gardens and a garage/carport for ample parking. Guide price: £350,000. Stags, 01935 475 000, yeovil@stags.co.uk

**SOUTH AYRSHIRE****DALMELLINGTON**

Plot at Gateside Road – A substantial plot in a residential area with planning permission for a one-and-a-half-storey two-bedroom house designed by Fleming Homes. The property will be over 120 sqm and will enjoy open countryside views. Offers over £29,000. Corum, 01292 880 888, ayr@corumproperty.co.uk

**TURNBERRY**

Ground at Turnberry Lodge Road – A fully serviced building plot of 627 sqm located just 500 yards from the World famous Turnberry Hotel and Championship Golf Course. Planning consent has been granted (South Ayrshire Council ref: 10/00154/APP) for a one-and-a-half-storey chalet style detached villa of approx 2,200 sq ft. Offers over £95,000. Corum, 01292 880 888, ayr@corumproperty.co.uk

**STAFFORDSHIRE****FRADLEY, LICHFIELD**

Blackheath Farm, Cowhill Lane – Single building plot in a pleasant rural setting with full planning permission (Lichfield District Council ref: 17/00824/FUL) for the erection of a four-bedroom dwelling of around 1,786 sq ft. Guide price: £245,000. Bill Tandy & Co, 01543 419 400, lichfield@billtandy.co.uk

**STOKE-ON-TRENT**

Clewlow Bank, Stockton Brook – Secluded and elevated building plot with outline planning permission (Staffordshire Moorlands District Council ref: SMD/2017/0745) for a two-storey detached house with views over Stanley Pool, following the demolition of the existing dwelling and outbuildings. OIEO £225,000. Hunters, 01782 626 522, endon@hunters.com

**SUFFOLK****BREDFIELD, WOODBRIDGE**

Rear of the Old Post Office – Building plot of 1.37 acres with planning permission (Suffolk Coastal District Council ref: DC/16/2362/FUL) for a four-bedroom 2,400 sq ft chalet house in

**LEAMINGTON SPA, WARWICKSHIRE**

Grove Place – Plot available with outline planning (Warwickshire ref: W/16/0021) for the demolition of garages and the development of a two-bedroom detached house with parking. Guide price: £100,000.

Hawkesford, 01926 430 553, leamington@hawkesford.co.uk

a tucked away location with gardens to the side and rear. Guide price: £300,000. Clarke & Simpson, 01728 724 200, jcook@clarkeandsimpson.co.uk

**STOWMARKET**

Station Road, Finningham – Generous single building plot with planning permission (Mid Suffolk District Council ref: DC/17/05871) for a three-bedroom single-storey dwelling with countryside views. Guide price: £150,000. William H Brown, 01449 614 459, stowmarket@williambrown.co.uk

**WHEPSTEAD**

The Chestnuts building plot, Brockley Road – Building plot of approx 1.25 acres with full planning permission granted (St Edmundsbury Borough Council ref: DC/16/0456/FUL) for a detached architect-designed contemporary earth sheltered dwelling of around 2,500 sq ft. Guide price: £295,000. Jackson-Stops & Staff, 01284 700 535, burystedmunds@jackson-stops.co.uk

**SURREY****CHURT, FARNHAM**

Barford Lane – A village centre building plot with full planning permission for the erection of three dwellings (Waverley Borough Council ref: WA/2017/0338). A terrace of three dwellings with parking, garaging and associated works following the demolition of the existing building. Guide price £700,000. Warren Powell-Richards, 01428 604 016, grayshott@wprhomes.co.uk

**FERNHURST, HASLEMERE**

Woodfold – Former coach house with full planning permission to substantially extend and create a large family home (SDNP/17/05371/HOUS) situated down a private road. The property sits on a plot of approx one third of an acre surrounded by woodland and a generous gravelled driveway to the front. Guide price £650,000. Warren Powell-Richards, 01428 656 596, haslemere@wprhomes.co.uk

**HASLEMERE**

24 Petworth Road – A pretty double fronted stone townhouse offering tremendous potential to make a spacious home occupying an established position just off the High Street. The property has

been used as offices since the late 1950s and has recently been granted planning permission to revert to a residential house. (Waverley Borough Council ref: CR/2017/0016) Guide price £695,000. Clarke Gammon Wellers, 01428 664 800, haslemere.sales@clarkegammon.co.uk

**WARWICKSHIRE****FARNBOROUGH, BANBURY**

Building plot, – A building plot with planning permission (Stratford upon Avon ref: 15/02712/FUL) for the erection of a three-bedroom detached stone house of around 1,076 sq ft with off-road parking, set within this highly sought-after and popular village. Guide price: £195,000. Round & Jackson, 01295 279 953, office@roundandjackson.co.uk

**LIGHTHORNE, WARWICK**

Land at Moreton Morrell Lane – Attractive 0.7 acre site on the outskirts of the village of Lighthorne. Outline planning permission in place (Stratford District Council ref: 17/03344/OUT) for three detached houses. Price on application. Peter Clarke, 01789 415 444, stratford@peterclarke.co.uk

**WEST SUSSEX****BURY GATE, NR PULBOROUGH**

Stane Lodge – An opportunity to either enlarge and refurbish an existing 3,421 sq ft family house, build a new country house with garage/annexe of around 7,835 sq ft, or design and build your own Grand Design. Plot is set in a stunning, elevated rural position within the South Downs National Park with panoramic views. South Downs National Park planning ref: SDNP/15/01953/FUL. Guide price: £1,000,000. R H & R W Clutton, 01342 410 122, mail@rhwclutton.co.uk

**LEWES**

Windmill Lodge, Spital Road – Two stable blocks with full planning permission (Lewes District Council ref: LW/07/0988) for conversion into a two-bedroom bungalow with parking for two cars. Windmill Lodge is located at the end of a quiet no-through road, close to the South Downs. Guide price: £250,000. Fox & Sons, 01273 476 378, lewes@sequencehome.co.uk

**STORRINGTON**

The Dell, Water Lane – Land with planning permission granted on appeal (Horsham District Council ref: DC/14/0151) for a four-bedroom chalet bungalow style detached property. Guide price: £260,000. Fowlers, 01903 745 844, storrington@fowleronline.co.uk

**WEST YORKSHIRE****BOSTON SPA, WETHERBY**

Clifford Moor Road – A large barn with planning permission (Leeds City Council ref: 17/07683/DPD) to create a single four-bedroom family dwelling. Set on the edge of a sought-after village with views from the garden to the west and south overlooking farmland. Offers over £295,000. Beadnall Copley, 01937 580 850, wetherby@beadnallcopley.co.uk

**HOLMFIELD**

Building plot at School Cote Farm – Individual building plot looking out over surrounding fields and hills. Outline planning permission has been granted (Bradford ref 15/06186/OUT) for the construction of a three-bedroom single substantial dwelling. Offers over £60,000. Bramleys, 01422 260 000, halifax@bramleys1.co.uk

**NETHERTON, HUDDERSFIELD**

Deyne Road – For Sale by Auction on 7 June 2018 at 7pm – The Revell Ward Suite, The John Smith's Stadium, Leeds Road, Huddersfield. Building plot with planning permission granted (Kirklees Council ref: 2017/62/93397/W) for the erection of a pair of two- to three-bedroom detached dwellings. Guide price: £70,000-£80,000. (GUIDE PRICE: An indication of the seller's current minimum acceptable price at auction. It can be subject to change up to and including the day of the auction. Buyer's administration fees may apply) Bramleys, 01484 530 361, auctions@bramleys1.co.uk

**WILTSHIRE****BROAD TOWN**

Redhill – Plot of land with planning permission (Wiltshire Council) for a four- to five-bedroom detached family home. The land is located in Broad Town which offers great access to Royal Wootton Bassett, Wroughton and Marlborough. Guide price: £175,000. Richard James, 01793 877 708, barrie@richardjames.info

**OGBOURNE ST GEORGE**

The Garages, High Street – Building plot with full planning permission for a detached three bedroom house (Wiltshire Council Ref 17/11511/FUL). Current site of two garages. Total plot area is approx 160 sqm. Guide price £145,000. Private seller, 07971 530505

**STEEPLE ASHTON, TROWBRIDGE**

Barn at Southview Farm – Barn set in around two acres with uninterrupted views and approval for conversion (Wiltshire ref: 17/11299/PNCOU) into a five-bedroom detached home of around 450 sqm. Guide price: £350,000. Kingstons, 01225 709 115, sales@kingstons.biz

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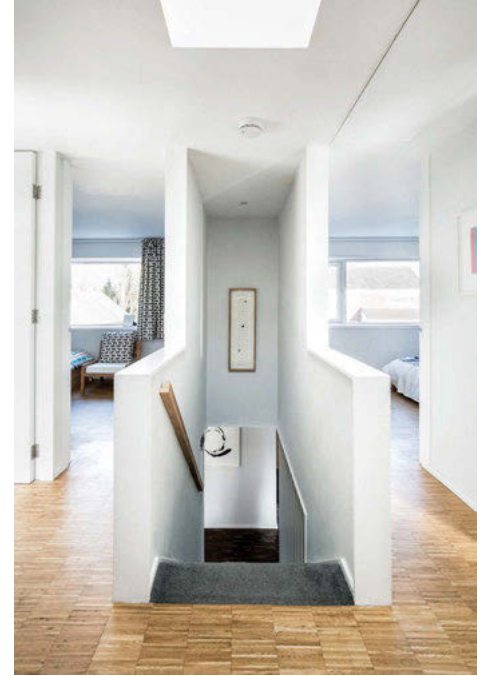
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# Next month

August issue on sale 27th June 2018



## Passivhaus renovation

Anna and Russell Hayden have breathed new life into a 1960s house which they extended and renovated to Passivhaus standards, ensuring that the dwelling is well insulated and airtight.



We talk to Dick Strawbridge who, with his wife Angel Adoree, moved to France to renovate a ruined chateau. The couple's efforts to restore Chateau-de-la-Motte Husson are the subject of Channel 4's *Escape to the Chateau*.

## PLUS

### Timber frame

All you need to know about timber house construction.

### Focus Bathroom taps

### On trend Spiral staircases



## Celebrating the best of both worlds

Tucked away in idyllic woodland this stunning barn conversion was transformed from the shell of a 19th-century farm building, and has been brought to life with contemporary open-plan interiors.





# DASH FOR GAS?

**Gerald Cole** asks: is gas still the best choice for home heating?

**B**lazing summer might not seem the best time to consider space heating, but for selfbuilders warmer weather can make a considered view a lot easier than when wintry beasts from the east are raging outside.

Britons, after all, have become chillier mortals over the past couple of generations. In the 1970s the average expectation of internal comfort was a balmy 12°C. Today, it's 17°C, with main living areas at around 21°C.

But that's come at a price. Space heating uses up to 60 per cent of our average domestic energy usage, while hot water takes up another 18 per cent. At the time of writing British Gas, EDF and E.On have just raised their prices by averages of 1.4 to five per cent and it won't be a surprise if the rest of the 'big six' energy suppliers follow suit.

The better news is that bills would be even higher if the past half century hadn't seen the introduction of a range of energy efficiency measures, largely dictated by the Building Regulations. They include double glazing, much increased home insulation and high-performance central heating boilers, though it's the latter, arguably, which has benefited from the most development.

Seventy per cent of British homes are now heated by gas – a choice initially prompted by the 1956 Clean Air Act which banned the smog-producing coal that had previously kept most home fires burning.

The discovery of cheap North Sea natural gas in the mid-1960s only added to its appeal, and made it the obvious fuel of choice for domestic central heating when it took off in the 1970s.

Boilers then were relatively straightforward in design. Gas entered at the bottom, was atomised into fine droplets and ignited by electrodes, achieving temperatures of between 250°C and 350°C. The burning gas rose through a heat exchanger made of cast iron or steel, heating water-filled pipes as it went, and exited via the flue close to the combustion temperature.

The design was simple, reliable and easy to install. But it wasted a lot of energy to the open air.

So-called 'energy-efficient' or 'condensing' boilers tackled this problem from the 1980s onwards. These extract more energy by using either larger or secondary heat exchangers.

The exhaust fumes pass over pipework containing cooler water returning from the central heating system. This causes steam in the burning gas to condense out, releasing latent heat which raises the temperature of the water before it reaches the main heat exchanger. As a result less energy is needed to heat the water fully.

Condensing boilers can now achieve efficiencies of up to 92 per cent, 20 to 30 per cent higher than conventional boilers. But it took a change in the Building Regulations in 2005 requiring all new installations to be condensing boilers to give them market dominance.

## Unpopular

It wasn't a universally popular decision. At the time condensing boilers were considerably dearer than the conventional variety and, due to their complexity, generally less reliable or durable. It also wasn't widely known that the condensing mode only operated when the temperature of the water returning to the boiler was at around 55 °C.

In fact return flow temperatures in most homes are closer to 70°C. The cooler returns are only regularly achieved with low-temperature underfloor heating or systems using deliberately oversized radiators. The boiler was still more efficient than its predecessors, but not dramatically so.

Today reliability has improved and prices, in relative terms, are lower. Durability, however, is less certain. But improvements have come in other ways, mainly through external controls.

Many of these are neatly summarised in new regulations, known as Boiler Plus, introduced in England this April.

“Gas could be the most sensible long-term choice for your future home.”

Newly installed gas boilers must now be fitted with an independent time control, a room thermostat and thermostatic control valves (TRVs) on radiators – features most of us would regard as standard. However, combination boilers – the UK's most popular – must also have at least one of the following:

- weather compensation via an external sensor which varies the boiler's output as conditions change;
- load compensation, which does the same internally;
- a smart thermostat, which automatically learns your heating habits and optimises your system; and
- flue gas heat recovery (FGHR).

Doesn't a condensing boiler have the latter anyway? Yes, it does but FGHR devices, which sit on top of the existing flue, claim to extract another seven per cent of efficiency. Their high cost, however, only makes them economic for upgrading existing conventional boilers.

Super-efficient or not, gas boilers are still cheaper to buy and run than those using oil, LPG or sustainable alternatives such as biomass or ground and air source heat pumps. But as natural gas prices continue to rise how long can that last? Is gas still the best choice for a 'forever' home?

Sustainable power sources produce 'free' electricity from wind and sunlight, but unpredictably. Until battery power can store it cheaply and easily, it can't undercut gas.

There is, however, an alternative, as a recent study carried out in Leeds by Northern Gas Networks established. And that's to use hydrogen which is abundant, clean, more powerful than petrol and produces no harmful emissions.

The H21 Leeds City Gate project found that the existing natural gas infrastructure could easily be adapted to distribute hydrogen throughout the city, and local production could be economically viable.

To use hydrogen, boilers and cookers would also have to be adapted, but these appliances underwent similar changes, very successfully, in the 1960s when natural gas replaced coal gas.

In an uncertain world gas could be the most sensible long-term choice for your future home.



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