

selfbuilder + homemaker

JUL/AUG 2017

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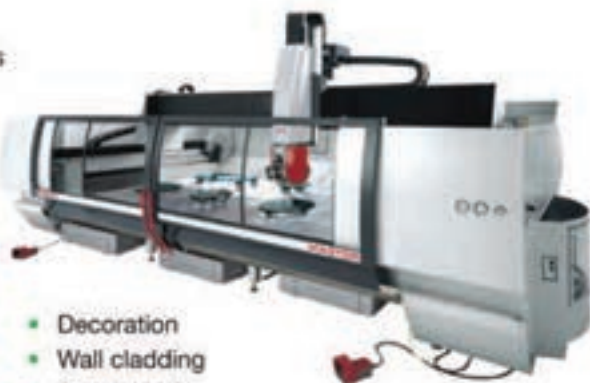
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See page 37

EDITOR'S LETTER



Hello and welcome to your new-look *Selfbuilder & Homemaker*! The team has been working hard to produce a great-looking new design for the magazine and we hope you like it as much as we do.

We all know that first impressions are very important, but so are the details. Just as you will be putting a lot of effort into getting the details right on your self-build, we have also tried to get the little extra tweaks right as they help the whole design work harmoniously. For example, as well as a set of smart new fonts and layouts, we've introduced simpler

labelling and colour-coding of the product feature sections – providing a quick visual clue to tell you exactly where to find information on the latest solutions for each area of your self-build.

We have also added a couple of new sections to give more advice and inspiration for self-builders in future editions. In addition to Ask the Expert which we've been running for a while (answering your questions on key innovations), we have introduced a Home Styling feature looking at how to create a specific look in your interiors. Lastly, Secrets of Success will be providing stories from real life projects on how self-builders have surmounted their obstacles. If you have any that you'd like to share from your project, I'd love to hear from you – email me at james@netmagmedia.eu

James Parker

DIARY

HEAT & ENERGY WORKSHOP

19 AUGUST, SWINDON

The Heat & Energy Workshop is one of the eco workshops run by the National Self Build and Renovation Centre. It will provide education on everything you need to know, from heat pumps to solar panels. The workshop will also cover the latest on Government incentives and the costs involved with various heating options.

www.nsbrcc.co.uk/eco-workshops

SELFBUILD & DESIGN SOUTH WEST

9 - 10 SEPTEMBER, EXETER

SelfBuild & Design South West offers visitors the chance to attend seminars, masterclasses and demonstrations and meet with a variety of manufacturers, architects, builders and designers from the region. There will also be the opportunity get advice from the show's team of experts.

www.selfbuildanddesignshow.com/southwest

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Self-build sector records third consecutive annual rise in growth

A report has revealed that the self- and custom-build industry is growing at a rate of 6.25 per cent year on year, marking its third consecutive year of growth.

At its current pace, the sector is estimated to reach 16,500 housing completions by 2020, according to the Self & Custom Build Market Report. The report's compilers said its three-year forecast "implies an industry growth of 41 per cent and an average industry value of £6bn, reinforcing the sector's strategic role as a contributor to the Government's housebuilding targets."

The report is claimed to be the most comprehensive analysis for the industry yet produced from associated publicly-available data, and is supported by the National Custom and Self Build Association (NaCSBA).

Commenting on the report's significance, the association's chair Michael Holmes said: "We believe that this is the best attempt yet at providing a single reference for information on the custom- and self-build market. It will allow us and others in the industry to better understand the motivations, hurdles and aspirations of self-builders themselves and to understand activity in the market, down to a level previously undiscovered in terms of product choices and spend."

The report is based on a survey of 500 self-builders who had recently completed or are about to complete a project and figures from HMRC and DCLG among other bodies.



New faces add to NaCSBA's strengths

The National Custom and Self Build Association (NaCSBA) has announced three new board members.

Mary Riley, a prominent figure in the self-build mortgage market, has been appointed as the organisation's new self build executive. She is a regular contributor to a variety of self-build media outlets and has experience of consultations of local and national Government level in relation to housing.

Gus Zogolovitch is NaCSBA's new custom build representative. In 2013 he was elected to serve on the NaCSBA executive committee and he was responsible for setting up London's first custom-build developer Inhabit Homes.

Taking on the role of marketing representative is Nathan Garnet who until recently ran Grand Designs Live and has been an "essential part of NaCSBA's Self Build on a Shoestring competition" said NaCSBA.

COMPETITION SEEKS GRANNY ANNEXE ON A SHOESTRING

Now in its fifth year, the National Custom & Self Build Association (NaCSBA)'s competition Self Build on a Shoestring is back, searching for unique designs to combat building challenges in the UK.

For 2017, the competition is themed around housing for the elderly, and the winner will receive £5,000 from Grand Designs Live.

In mainland Europe scores of modestly-priced retirement communities have been built by local people who have formed a group, commissioned an architect to produce a design that meets their needs, and then hired a builder. Homes are tailored to each resident's requirements and the communities encourage interaction, healthier lifestyles and mutual support.

NaCSBA commented that it is "time more projects like that happen in the UK, which is why this year's competition challenges designers to devise an innovative low cost granny annexe." The designers also have to demonstrate how 30 of the homes could be grouped together to create an "innovative retirement community."

The individual homes must be constructed for less than £40,000, alternatively the community of 30 homes as a whole – which must include a range of community facilities – has a maximum budget of £1.5m.

The judging panel for the 2017 competition includes three well-known TV architects – George Clarke, Piers Taylor and Charlie Luxton, plus other design and self-build experts. The winner will be announced at Grand Designs Live at the NEC in October, where the finalists will also be displayed. The deadline for entries is 21 September 2017.

To download a full brief visit www.nacsba.co.uk/selfbuildonashoestring

2016 winner Ecomotive





TOP TIPS FOR SELF-BUILDERS

For those of us lucky enough to get the chance to take the challenge on, you will no doubt understand that with the highs of the self-build dream come the perils of the design and build process. Problems lead to delays and delays lead to spending more money trying to get the job done. This can be a logistical nightmare as budgets need to be strictly adhered to as well as juggling the role of project manager with normal, everyday life. Planning permission can also be a sticking point - there are rules to follow and you must adhere to them to make sure your project gets going.

We have helped quite a few self-builders over the years and know a thing or two about the concerns that can arise. Here's a few tips to get you started on your journey:

DO YOU REALLY KNOW WHO YOU ARE WORKING WITH?

There are builders and contractors who may not be as reputable as you would think! The last thing you need is to invest all your money into your new home only to realise that you haven't got what you have paid for. It's a situation we've seen over the years and we don't want it to happen to you!

Before you decide to employ a builder and/or contractor, you should look at the following actions to protect yourself against any dodgy dealers:

- Check their professional credentials - are they part of any professional trade bodies and/or do they have any accredited qualifications that you can check against?
- Research online - look into self-build forums and communities online that offer advice on mistakes to avoid and recommendations of trustworthy builders.
- Many self-builders choose the additional protection of a self-build warranty to cover against any major defects in the first 10 years of the building's lifecycle. If your contractor has agreed to organise putting this in place, but you haven't seen any evidence of this, you can contact the warranty provider in question and check further details of the cover to be provided.



PROTECTING YOUR DREAM HOME

You should contact a warranty provider for two reasons:

Quality of your build – Having the support of an experienced warranty surveyor who has worked with self-build projects can minimize the risk of problems occurring.

First hand surveyor sign off - It's a common myth that warranty providers can use third party surveyor reports to approve builds and issue certificates. All inspections are undertaken and signed off by our own surveyor network.

TIMING IS EVERYTHING

So, if you need a warranty in place, when is the best time to sort it? Before you have even thought about getting your boots dirty and digging holes, you should speak to a CML approved warranty provider like Premier Guarantee. The earlier you get us involved, the easier it will be to support you.

T: **08444 120 888**

W: **WWW.PREMIERGUARANTEE.CO.UK**

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Trio of announcements bolster self-build association's Task Force



Mario Wolf

The National and Custom Self Build Association (NaCSBA)'s Right to Build Task Force has announced its new director Mario Wolf, as well as a self-build expert who will be joining his team, and the second organisation which will be receiving its specialist support.

NaCSBA has appointed Wolf from the Government to lead the team as its founding director. He has taken up the role while on secondment from the Department for Communities and Local Government (DCLG). In 2015 Wolf was seconded to NaCSBA to lead a research and development project that introduced the first comprehensive implementation toolkit for custom- and self-build housing in the UK.

At the DCLG he recently led the implementation of the Government's Starter Homes policy, and prior to this Wolf led the introduction of the custom- and self-build homes programme which consequently led to the introduction of Right to Build.

Commenting on his appointment, Wolf said: "I'm delighted to be joining the Right to Build Task Force as its founding director. As recognised in the Government's housing White Paper, the Task Force can play an important role in supporting the delivery of significantly more affordable custom- and self-build homes."

NEW EXPERTISE

NaCSBA also confirmed it has appointed a planning expert to the Task Force team, Joanne Ellingham, a senior consultant within the planning and design firm HTA Design. Prior to joining HTA, Ellingham worked as a planning officer at Broadland Council in Norfolk. She will work closely with Mario Wolf in advising projects.

Commenting on the announcements, Richard Bacon MP – who initiated the Right to Build legislation and is ambassador for the Task Force – said: "I'm very happy to see the Task Force taking big steps forward to give advice so soon. I couldn't think of a more suitable candidate than Mario Wolf to lead it."

EAST NORTHAMPTONSHIRE HELP

The Task Force has announced the second project to receive support, which will begin "imminently" – advising East Northamptonshire Council on how self- and custom-build housing can be promoted across the district. This will include "the potential for the proposed Tresham Garden Village to include this type of development." The Task Force will also advise North Northamptonshire Joint Planning Unit on its ambition to bring forward custom- and self-build across the wider North Northamptonshire area, including six identified Sustainable Urban Extensions.

This follows the Task Force helping to research the potential for custom- and self-build housing to play a significant role in a 1,100 home mixed-use development for Buckinghamshire Advantage. Since its launch in February 2017, the Task Force has received "significant interest from organisations nationwide."



Picture by Heather Dixon

Research reveals four month wait for good builders

New research from the Federation of Master Builders (FMB) has revealed that home owners should book in their builder at least four months before their project begins or "risk working with a cowboy".

The research also shows that the majority of consumers don't ask their builders for essentials such as a contract or references when embarking upon a major piece of building work. Key statistics from the research show:

- More than 40 per cent of builders need at least four months notice from consumers who want to hire their firm.
- 90 per cent of builders say that the majority of home owners don't ask for a written contract.
- 80 per cent of builders report that most consumers don't ask for an agreed payment schedule.
- Fewer than 10 per cent of builders say that clients normally request to see vital insurance policies such as public liability or employer's liability insurance.

FMB chief executive Brian Berry explained that consumers should be concerned if a builder is available at short notice. "If a builder is free to start work tomorrow, alarm bells should ring," he said. "Demand for building work is incredibly high at the moment and it should be no surprise that almost one in two builders need to be contacted at least four months in advance of when a client is looking to start a home improvement project."

Berry also explained how home owners are leaving themselves vulnerable to problems with the wrong approach. "The vast majority of builders say that most clients fail to ask for references and even fewer ask for a written contract on their work," he said. "There is a similar trend when it comes to asking for critical things like an agreed payment schedule and key warranties on work. These protections really are essential to helping clients weed out the cowboys and mitigate against any issues that could crop up during the build. A quality builder will insist on these things and if they don't, consumers ought to question why."

Everything you need under one roof

Looking for guidance on your self-build? The National Self Build and Renovation Centre in Swindon is the place to go for help with any aspect of a project, as Roseanne Field reports

The National Self Build & Renovation Centre (NSBRC), located just off the M4 in Swindon, is a must-visit for any novice self-builder, providing all the advice you could need under one roof. The permanent exhibition centre is home to an array of experts and suppliers and plays hosts to a number of events throughout the year.

The NSBRC, which celebrates its 10th birthday this year, was launched by mortgage broker BuildStore in 2007. Since then it has welcomed more than 200,000 visitors, many of whom return throughout their project for help, tips and advice. It's believed to be the only facility of its kind across the whole of Europe, spanning 67,000 ft².

Since November 2014 the NSBRC has been owned and operated by The Homebuilding Centre, an employee-owned business. Last year alone the centre is thought to have helped over 16,000 self-builders.

The centre is dedicated to serving a growing self-build market, with more and more people choosing to build their own house every year. "Around 13,000 people will take on a self-build project this year," explains Harvey Fremlin, NSBRC managing director. "They benefit from a huge degree of choice; from where the house is located, how it is constructed, and the energy efficiency of the building fabric through to the level of finish they will enjoy once moved in."

Offering advice on everything from planning and finance to structural elements and design, a visit to the NSBRC is likely to prove invaluable. Alongside its regular events, the centre contains many features to guide and educate visitors towards real solutions to problems and ideas to make their projects work better. "There are several routes available to individuals wanting to design and build a bespoke, well finished, energy efficient home and the



More than 220 suppliers and manufacturers have stands

NSBRC provides the knowledge and support people need to make an informed decision on which route is best for them," says Harvey. "Our aim is to inspire, educate, and provide impartial advice."

PLANNING & FINANCE

The NSBRC has elements to help self-builders through every stage of their project, starting with the things that need addressing before a foundation is dug or a brick laid. Finding a plot of land is the first hurdle to contend with, and one that many aspiring self-builders find themselves falling at. BuildStore's PlotSearch is believed to be the UK's largest database of land available for self-build, and has its own stand at the NSBRC to help those who are struggling to find a plot.

Another obstacle people often find themselves facing is how a project will be funded. While some are lucky enough to have the cash available for a

The NSBRC is designed to help self-builders through every stage of their project

self-build, more often than not some form of mortgage or loan will be required. BuildStore also has a stand at the centre dedicated to financial planning, with a resident expert offering advice on the various types of funding available, from short-term loans to specialist mortgages.

GETTING YOUR HOUSE BUILT

Of course the most substantial – and potentially most daunting – part of any project is the build process itself.

"Please don't feel nervous if you have never set foot on a building site!"

Harvey says. "The majority of our visitors are not in the building trade, and we will help you understand the various stages involved in a building project."

The NSBRC is laid out as an 'educational journey', designed to take visitors through the chronology of a self-build. The journey has been broken down into six core phases: 'plan & site set-up', 'groundworks', 'walls & structure', 'roof', 'services' and 'finishes'.

The 'plan & site set-up' area has been created to educate self-builders on the jobs that need taking care of before work begins. A range of equipment is on display such as mixers, cranes and excavators, as well as information on how to make sure things such as water, power (and portaloos!) are ready for the contractors. Tips are also provided on how to run and manage your site.

The 'groundworks' zone is broken down into three sub-sections. The first section focuses on foundations – looking at which are right for your site and specifically its soil – as well as various floor systems. The next section gives the lowdown on the all-important underground services that need consideration, such as drainage. The final section gives visitors the chance to consider the design and construction challenges of building a basement.

The next stop is the 'walls & structure' zone – one of the centre's most popular exhibits due to the impact it has on the overall design and look of a house. The zone displays both new and 'tried and tested' construction systems, with various combinations of materials chosen based on individual performance, and how they work as an overall system. Each wall also features a different type of intermediate flooring.

The 'roof' zone showcases four types of construction type: cut or traditional, attic truss, structural insulated panels (SIPs) and fink trusses. The displays also feature options for coverings, dormers, rainwater disposal and chimneys. The section demonstrates to visitors how roofs can be used as additional living spaces and provides information on the various choices of prefabrication that can speed up the build process.

The 'services' zone addresses issues such as how you can heat your home and its hot water and how you'll light and ventilate it, with energy efficiency at the forefront. A variety of systems and



COURSES

The courses held at the NSBRC are some of the centre's most popular and useful offerings, covering everything you need to know to successfully complete your project on time and on budget. Here are the views of two satisfied attendees:

"It's been the best value for money I've spent in a long time, the course paid for itself on day one, mostly through lots of good advice that will help us to save significant money on our self-build project as well as ensuring we make better informed decisions."

"I attended the Self Build course with absolutely no knowledge whatsoever and was worried that I would look a bit of a fool among others on the course. It was reassuring to find out that, despite our varied projects, we were all beginners with a similar level of understanding. I now feel I am well informed and can confidently talk to architects, planners, builders and contractors with a good depth of knowledge and understanding behind me. I left feeling very positive and excited."

options are on display, such as heat pumps and boilers, to help you decide what will work for your project as all such decisions will impact the performance rating of your self-build.

The last zone on the educational journey is the 'finishes zone', exhibiting a range of staircases, doors, floors and wall finishes. Every Saturday at 12 pm NSBRC staff offer a guided tour of the educational journey.

The help desk (open Wednesday to Sunday) offers visitors the chance to speak one to one with in-house experts on topics ranging from "planning to budgeting and plot finding to Building Regulations," Harvey Fremlin explains. "A common question we get asked is 'what materials shall I build my house with?' We can show examples of many different building methods including oak frame, insulating concrete formwork (ICF), brick and block, structurally

insulated panels (SIPs), Passivhaus and more. Crucially, we can explain the pros and cons of each."

DEMONSTRATION PROJECTS

A permanent show home is on display at the centre, offering an example of the type of house and finish that can be achieved. The show home is a 2,300 ft² Potton Ruskin house, part of the company's Renaissance collection. It demonstrates how a modern interior with all the latest smart home technology can blend with the type of traditional-looking exterior that's likely to satisfy planning authorities. It also allows you to see what kit home providers like Potton can offer, beyond the frame and its construction.

The NSBRC features a zone dedicated entirely to the restoration and refurbishment of older properties, as opposed to new builds. The zone is

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The NSBRC features a zone dedicated entirely to the refurbishment and restoration of older houses

designed to help those working on any kind of renovation project – be it completely overhauling a house that's seen better days or simply modernising a dated property.

The main attraction here, and one of the highlights of the whole centre, is the Renovation House, which is a recreation of an old and dilapidated property that transforms into a dream home. "With careful planning, renovating a house can be one of your best investments, or your motivation may be to turn an ancient wreck into a family home," Harvey says. "In either case, a tour of the Renovation House is a must."

The house – which is typical of a property built during the interwar period – features problems such as damp, damaged brick/stonework, leaky guttering, broken window frames and rotten timbers. "The house shows the four main stages you will need to follow," Harvey explains. "Assessment and design, strip out/build down, renovation first fix and final finishes."

A 30-minute audio tour – with commentary provided via a hard hat with built in speakers – guides visitors through the renovation process, highlighting common problems, recommending solutions and explaining step-by-step how to refurbish such a property. "While not a complete blank canvas, major renovation projects will throw up similar choices to new builds and many of the options available in a new build can be applied," says Harvey.

The centre also offers midday guided tours of the house every Friday and Sunday with its resident technical expert.

TRADE VILLAGE

Here is where you'll find the centre's permanent exhibitors, divided into categories such as Professional Services & Associations, Foundations & Groundworks, and Roofing & Roofing Structures. Over 220 suppliers and

manufacturers have stands in the centre, showcasing up-to-date products and technologies in the self-build market. The NSBRC is claimed to be the only place in the UK where customers have access to these products all year round.

Many of the exhibitors' products are also showcased in various exhibitions throughout the centre, allowing you to view them in-situ, as they would appear in your home, as well as on the stand. Visitors are also issued with scanners, allowing you to request further information from the specific exhibitors' products that you're interested in.

EVENTS

One of the NSBRC's biggest selling points is the variety of events that take place within it through the year. These range from workshops and courses to exhibitions, covering everything budding self-builders need to know.

The National Self Build & Renovation Show and The Big Green Home Show each take place over a three-day period. Along with the regular features of the centre, the shows include live demonstrations and seminars as well as the chance to network with and learn from fellow self-builders. "The shows are the ideal opportunity to discover how the concept of self-building works or simply to explore the options for injecting new life into your existing home," explains Harvey.

Free workshops are also on offer on key topics that combined together cover everything you need to know, says the NSBRC. Four eco workshops are available, covering matters from sustainability-oriented design and planning to heat and energy. A design and build workshop also runs four times a year, teaching you how to take full control of your project, including the undertaking of all or part of the construction.

Held in association with RIBA, an Ask an Architect programme runs five times a year, offering a 25-minute consultation during which you can talk through any ideas or aspects you might need advice on. These sessions must be booked in advance.

In addition to the free workshops three in-depth, paid-for courses are run by the NSBRC for those who "want to be more involved in their project," explains Harvey. The one-day project management course, costing £150, covers everything from budgeting and insurance to site management and health and safety. The heat and energy course (also a one-day session costing £150) aims to simplify what can be a

complex and confusing topic, explaining the basics and solutions available.

The most comprehensive offering is the three-day self build course, which costs £375 and covers a total of 11 topics. These include design and specification, Building Regulations and eco legislation, providing an all-in-one introduction to the world of self-build. "All our courses are packed with useful hints and tips from the experts to help you save money and stay on budget," Harvey says.

For more information on the centre visit www.nsbrc.co.uk

TESTIMONIALS

"Brilliant in every way. Drove down from North Wales and was there for about three hours. It's a must do for people considering self-build as you will learn a lot. My wife and I both left there excited about a potential self-build!"

Wesley Jones, via Facebook

"BuildStore, the National Self Build & Renovation Centre and its various partners have been invaluable – I cannot fault their expertise and advice – they have really made this project much easier, and cheaper, for us!"

Paul Vaughan, via BuildStore

"On the recommendation of a friend who knows our interest in starting out on renovation projects and hopefully, new build, my wife and I visited the NSBRC. From the outset, the welcome was warm and the information available was very impressive and extremely useful."

Peter Cornthwaite, via BuildStore

"Whether you are a self-builder planning a whole house, or thinking of extending, NSBRC is worth a visit either with your architect or on your own to understand how bespoke you can be."

Richard Bowman, via Facebook

"Blown away, this place really does have everything you need for new builds and extensions"

Shane Reeve, via Facebook

Chapter two: preparing for demolition

When we heard from first-time self-builders Sarah and Andy Ball in the last issue, they were at a crossroads, unsure if their Derby build would go ahead. Things have changed however, and the demolition notices are in

When we left you last time, we were on tenterhooks. A decision had to be made about number 41. We were living in a house that needs to either be knocked down or have major surgery. After losing two builders we had to decide whether to abandon plans to rebuild and refurbish the existing house instead. There was a third option, although very unlikely, which was to find a project manager to oversee the build.

It was our architect Dan who came up trumps. He was working with a project manager called Paul on a modern house build just two miles from our plot, and better still there was a chance he would be available. We didn't hesitate. We asked Dan to set up a meeting straight away.

While all this was going on, Andy and I were also working on Plan B. We were

in talks with a local building company who seemed keen to refurbish our house. After two meetings, discussions of plans and a site visit to a property they had completely refurbished, we were hopeful that they would be able to bring in a proposal on budget.

Anyway, we met up with project manager Paul and he seemed up for building the house. He charges a flat fee and works with a team of people he trusts.

At the first meeting, he reckoned he could build the house within our budget. He did some calculations based on the house that he's currently working on. We decided to take it to the next level and get some more accurate figures. Meeting number two went well. The first things he worked on were coming out at the right prices and it looked pretty likely that rest of the

There have been a couple of issues on the later costings – Brexit has hit us, and steel prices are up

costings would follow suit.

Paul is now our project manager. He got started on fleshing out the pricing and started the ball rolling on getting the house ready for demolition – including moving the gas and electrics a safe distance away from the action.

There have been a couple of issues on the later costings – Brexit has hit us, and steel prices are up. There was



I am a savvy shopper and will happily do my research to get the best prices

almost £23,000 of steel in the design to hold up the cantilevers and give the nine metre sliding door protection against deflection. The other part of the build that was coming in far higher on cost was the foundations. We had already had a survey of the soil and from the calculations knew we would need additional depth on the side next to the trees in the car park.

Paul would see if he could get better prices on these and in the meantime we would look at compromises in other areas. We could remove budget out of the bathrooms, kitchen, staircase, wall and floor finishes. Having done a few refurbishment projects before, I like this part of the process. I am a savvy shopper and will happily do my research to get the best prices.

MAKING SENSIBLE CHOICES

Next up for consideration was the air source heat pump, underfloor heating and HVAC. This was something we discussed from early on. We can see the advantages of storage batteries for the long term and felt a good way to reduce long term running costs would be to make the house self-sufficient for power through a combination of solar thermal and PV, air source, an oversized water tank to store energy and a battery wall. Although we hoped we would never have to do it, we wanted to be able to go off grid should power outages become a big issue.

But battery prices are up, making our return on investment less favourable. A gas boiler to power the underfloor heating would be a reasonable option. We can keep the HVAC as the benefits of air changes and keeping dust levels low, are important to us.

We also looked at window and door systems for the house at the FIT Show, a trade show for the glazing industry. We were there as exhibitors with our marketing agency, but it didn't stop us having a good look round at all the systems we might need for our build. Aluminium sliding doors were definitely in vogue, and there were loads of new products on display. All the main UK



manufacturers had stands and they all seemed to be offering bigger door leafs and slimmer frames.

It was great to see because our biggest consideration is the sliding doors from the open plan living space to the garden. Given the span for these doors is almost nine metres, we want to make sure that we have the slimmest frames to gain the maximum effect from our architect's designs. We're also keen to work with a reputable UK manufacturer so we can avoid the horror stories you see on TV when the glazing turns up weeks or even months late.

We also saw some very good looking aluminium windows that would fit our

design just perfectly. We are looking for something that has a chamfered or curved bead as the very square edged systems might look too commercial for our house.

And finally, good news! Project manager Paul is due to meet with the steel manufacturers. He thinks that there's an argument for reassessing the steel and that could have a knock-on effect to the foundations – he's talking about shaving up to £10,000 off the prices.

We are waiting for the gas and electric suppliers to come back with a date, and then the house can be demolished.

Look out for the next chapter of Sarah and Andy's story later in the year

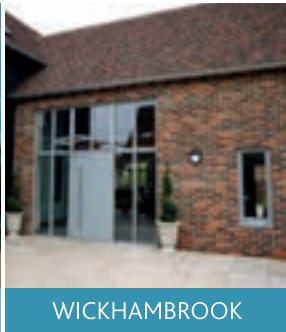


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“ We visited the show centre and were able to walk around the houses and get a real feel for the design. ”

Carol & Andy Whitehouse

“ After visiting the Potton Self Build Show Centre we loved the look and ‘feel’ of the Gransden so much, we knew that was the style we wanted to base our new home on. ”

David Peake



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BEAUTIFULLY TAILORED

Potton celebrates 25 years of helping self-builders' dreams come true

Self-build specialist Potton is celebrating the 25th anniversary of its Self Build Show Centre, which is located in St Neots in Cambridgeshire.

The centre was opened in 1992, when building your own home was still a relatively new concept. It was created "to help introduce self-building to the British public, giving visitors the opportunity to see, feel and experience how a self-build home could look," said Potton.

The centre has expanded and increased its show home offering from three to five. These show homes offer a visual representation of what can be achieved as well as helping visitors understand what self-build means and how it works.

Originally just manufacturing timber frame kit homes, Potton has now evolved into a multi-faceted business that offers a diverse package of services and products to self-builders.

The Self Build Show Centre is now also home to Potton's Self Build Academy, which sees the company run over 14 different courses and events to guide self-builders through every stage of building a home.

Mark Stevenson, Potton's managing director commented on the anniversary: "The Self Build Show Centre has been the jewel in the self-build crown for the past 25 years and we are exceptionally proud that Potton's founder Peter Hutchinson had the vision and belief to create it."

He continued: "Over the years the centre has seen many changes and additions and has shaped trends and innovations within the self-build sector. With the introduction of the Right to Build Act in 2016 and the growing interest in custom-build, the show centre is more popular than ever."

Potton are currently working on improving the centre further, as Stevenson explained: "We are constantly rejuvenating the show centre, making it relevant and inspirational for today's self-builder and have implemented an ongoing programme of refurbishment and renewal." He explained further: "Following last year's successful remodelling of The Gransden and the construction of The Elsworth show home – a contemporary home built to Passivhaus standards – we are now embarking on our next major investment on the site, the renovation of one of our original homes, The Milchester."

Looking to the future, Stevenson concluded: "The continued success and ongoing popularity of the Self Build Show Centre demonstrates that Potton is still at the forefront of self-building in the UK and we are dedicated to forging ahead with Peter's pioneering ambitions to inspire a whole new generation of self-builders. We're ready for and looking forward to the next 25 years!"

With self-build completions now estimated at around 13,000 per year, the Self Build Show Centre has played a significant role in the self-build revolution. It is "recognised as a key education hub for aspiring self-builders," commented the firm, and is "a must-see for anyone thinking about building their own home."

The Self Build Show Centre is open Tuesday – Friday from 9 am–5 pm and Saturday 10 am–4 pm (last admission at 3.30 pm).



Potton's rectory-style design, The Milchester



The Elsworth, a new Passivhaus show home



The Caxton, a popular traditional design, now updated

Shower power

Ashley Prescott of Power-Pipe discusses how waste water heat recovery can stop you throwing money down the drain every time you shower



In terms of the practicalities, waste water heat recovery (WWHR) couldn't be more straightforward. A WWHR system is essentially a length of copper piping which works by recovering heat from outgoing shower waste water and using this to pre-heat incoming cold shower water. This helps to save energy, lower hot water bills and also to cut down CO₂ emissions.

By recycling heat energy in this way, you not only increase the amount of available hot water in a home, you also reduce the load on its heating system.

WHY INSTALL IT?

Wasted hot water is a huge untapped resource in UK housing. That's why it is important to have a good understanding of technologies like WWHR which can make showering and other hot water processes more energy efficient.

Believe it or not, a shower uses more energy than any other appliance in the home. To put that into perspective, the average UK shower lasts eight minutes and uses the same amount of energy as:

- boiling a kettle 22 times
- leaving the TV turned on for 26 hours
- running a laptop for 36 hours
- having an LED light on for 13 days.

Up to 90 per cent of heat produced during showering is lost down the drain but most of it is recoverable through installing a WWHR system.

The bottom line is that WWHR systems can be up to 70 per cent efficient and are compatible with all types of heating systems.

WHAT ARE THE COST-SAVINGS SELF-BUILDERS CAN EXPECT?

Put simply, installing a WWHR system can save up to 10 per cent a year on annual energy bills or 500 Kwh per person.

In a typical household, this could be a cost saving of £80 to £100 a year, and the more people using the shower, the greater the energy saving returns.

As well as cost savings, waste water heat recovery also reduces annual carbon emissions by between 300 kg and 1000 kg. This obviously depends on how long people spend in the shower and what fuel they use to heat

their water. These systems have no moving parts or components. You don't need to switch them on or off. So once fitted, it's job done as they require no maintenance or user interaction.

Also, if they are made entirely from copper, they are expected to last the life-span of the building and will continually save energy every time the shower is in use.

IS IT A GOOD WAY TO HELP MEET BUILDING REGULATIONS?

If you are building a new home, WWHR is a no-brainer. Not only will it save energy and reduce your carbon footprint, it could also keep building costs down.

Believe it or not, it is the most cost-effective way of increasing a Standard Assessment Procedure (SAP) score – required to pass Building Regulations – something you will have to familiarise yourself with if you are building your own home.

Dependant on the model or size, these systems can cost between £250 to £750 to buy and install but can offer a generous SAP uplift in the region of two to 12 per cent. This is the equivalent energy saving to triple glazing or solar thermal, but at a fraction of the cost. It could also be the difference you need to achieve compliance on a home – without breaking the bank.

Return on investment is typically around five to six years based upon an occupancy of four people.

HOW DO YOU INSTALL WWHR?

Installation is normally undertaken by a professional plumbing or mechanical contractor and takes less than an hour to complete.

If it is going into a new home, the process is straightforward as these systems come with specialist design or commissioning. If you choose a 110 mm diameter model, it's even simpler, as it replaces a section of the soil stack.

If the WWHR comes with 22 mm connections, this again means less work is required by the installer. This is because there is no need to reduce the size of the incoming mains water feed (also 22 mm) which would restrict the flow of the water passing through it.

When choosing a WWHR system, we would always advise you to opt for a model which has a twin wall between the waste and potable water. This helps to avoid any possible cross contamination between the water



supplies and will also allow for a leak to be detected if one occurs.

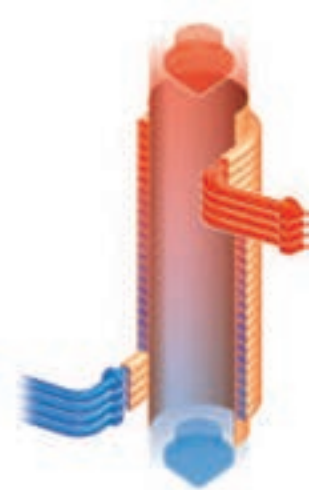
HOW DO YOU SET IT UP?

There are three ways to set up a waste water heat recovery system. The most effective way is according to the System A configuration where the pre-warmed water from the WWHR unit is connected to the shower and the water heater. This provides maximum performance and energy savings.

In some cases, where the System A configuration is not possible, it may be necessary to install according to System B (pre-heated water to shower only) or System C (pre-heated water to water heater only), however this will reduce efficiency performance.

IS IT WORTH RETROFITTING?

Retrofitting is more complicated as it is usually difficult to access the pipework of a building. That said, we have worked with self-builders who have successfully done this and have case studies on our website for anyone looking to do it.



IS THERE ANYTHING ELSE I NEED TO KNOW?

Other design requirements you need to consider with WWHR include:

- it needs to be installed vertically and inside the building;
- it must be fitted on the floor below the shower – this is why it can't be used in a bungalow or ground floor flat;

- WWHR is compatible with all water heaters but will not provide any savings if used with electric showers. This is because electric showers cannot regulate both temperature and flow rate.

Ashley Prescott is UK director at Power-Pipe

A convincing entrance

Chilstone Architectural Stonework's Kate Walker discusses the use of cast stone as an alternative to natural stone to create an impressive entrance

A beautiful entrance can add that crucial wow factor to a property, while also boosting its value. Cast stone is a cost effective way of producing a wide range of impressive stone porches and columns that look like the real deal. It's suitable for a range of homes – from new builds to restoration projects.

CLASSICALLY DESIGNED NEW BUILD

An impressive new build in Kent was designed as a classic but elegant house, in keeping with the surrounding village properties with a timeless design. A local company handcrafted and supplied many stonework pieces, including the cast stone portico – a major focal point that makes this house stand out – as well as stone window surrounds that add stature and fine detailing. Porticos are made to order and can be scaled up for

larger properties to a double size, for a truly grand entrance.

OLD BUT NEW - RESTORATION ON A BUDGET

The owners of a Cornish property wanted to reinstate columns that had been removed from the entrance. They had searched the country for fluted columns to match the ones depicted in an old photograph they had found that had been taken of the house several decades earlier. Fluted columns were eventually sourced from a cast stone manufacturer to match the original design. The client had existing foundations so the simple addition of a pedestal block was inserted with the fluted columns to achieve the required height. The addition of a timber roof structure restored the house to its former glory for around £1,500.



WEIGHT-BEARING MODERNITY

Cast stone can also be reinforced with concrete and steel in order to take significant weight, combining beauty and strength. In another project, this type of stonework was used for a very contemporary design. The architect worked with a local cast stone maker from the planning stages of the project, creating a modern design using a versatile stone product.



INTERIOR INSPIRATION: BATHROOMS & WETROOMS

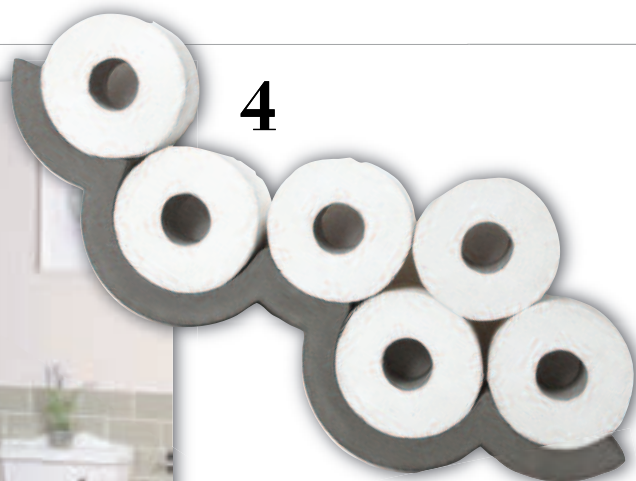
The bathroom is the ultimate relaxation room, a place where you can escape from the stresses and pressures of day-to-day life. But being relaxing doesn't mean it has to be plain or boring, as our selection of great sanitaryware, baths and furnishings shows

1. The unique shape and iridescent finish of the **Mosaics Solitaire Landscape** tiles means they can be used to create a dramatic and eye-catching centrepiece in your bathroom. The tiles measure 290 x 206 x 10 mm and are priced at £16.95 per piece. They're available to buy from **Original Style**.
www.originalstyle.com

2. The timeless design of the **Montefresco** bath will make a bold statement in any bathroom. It is available in any colour from the Dulux Trade or Farrow & Ball ranges or Albion's burnished metallic finishes, gold, iron or bronze (pictured). The Montefresco is available from the **Albion Bath Company** priced from £2,750.
www.albionbathco.com



3



4



5

3. This **Abbey** bathroom suite incorporates the flexibility of a modern P-shaped bath – allowing you to choose between a bath or shower – with the beauty of a traditional, Victorian style toilet, basin and taps. The bath comes as either left or right hand. The suite is available from **Bathroom Takeaway** for £399.97. www.bathroomtakeaway.co.uk

4. The concrete **Cloud Shelf** was designed by Bertrand Jayr for the Lyon Béton design house and offers a practical yet fun place to store your toilet paper. Once stacked the toilet rolls become a part of the shelf's overall design. The shelf is available from **NOXU Home** for £145. www.noxuhome.co.uk

5. The **Kilmore LED Mirror** features a strip of LED lighting on either side as well as an incorporated 3 x magnifying mirror with a light surround. The mirror has an on/off sensor switch and measures 500 x 775 mm. It's available to buy from **Frontline Bathrooms** for a price of £315. www.frontlinebathrooms.co.uk

6. Freestanding baths are often seen in more traditional styles, but the **Cara Bath** has been designed with a much more modern look in mind. It has a matte finish and integrated overflow, and measures 1,700 x 750 mm. The bath is available to buy from **The Pure Bathroom Collection by Smiths Briten** for £1,890. www.purebathroomcollection.co.uk



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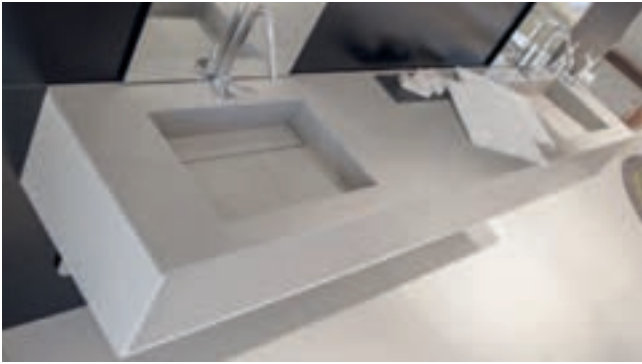
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CRL Stone launches Ceralsio tiles

Ceralsio tiles from **CRL Stone** are made from porcelain, a hard-wearing, non-porous material that makes the ideal floor surface for all areas of the home, including the kitchen and bathroom. Flooring in the bathroom needs to be water-proof, easy to clean and hard wearing. Ceralsio from CRL Stone is a porcelain surface that meets all these requirements. Durable and non-porous, Ceralsio is the ideal material for use in the bathroom, available in two thicknesses – 6mm for wall cladding and 10mm for floor tiling - and a large choice of tile sizes from 30 x 30cm to 150 x 300cm. Totally impermeable, porcelain is completely stain and scratch resistant, making it a suitable choice for the family bathroom, downstairs cloakroom or master en-suite. Because it is a non-porous surface, the build-up of bacteria or mould is prevented, while no extra care or special products are needed to clean it. A mild cleaning product is all that is required to keep the flooring looking as good as new. Available in 25 colours, Ceralsio tiles tap into the latest trends in interior design, offering a natural palette that will work in harmony with the bathroom's sanitaryware and furniture. Team the porcelain flooring with a countertop made from the same durable material for continuity of design throughout the bathroom. For more information call CRL Stone or visit the company's website.

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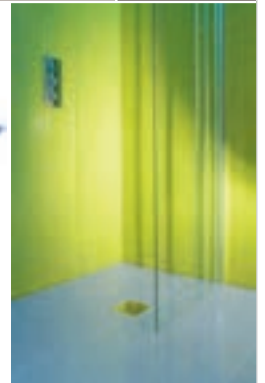


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Could timber frame give you more space in your self-build home?

Self-builders who have begun designing their dream home will have quickly realised three things. Firstly, the floor area – the internal living space – drives the market value of your home. Secondly, the size of your new home – its external footprint – is limited by the plot and planning permission. Finally, it will have soon become apparent that space comes at a cost.

While there are other considerations, the living space your new home offers is key when it comes to its value; the more floor space it has, the higher it will be valued. But providing more floor space by simply building a bigger home will of course mean spending more money – construction costs fall on average at around £1,400 per m². Fortunately, technological product advances now mean there are ways to release extra space, without increasing the overall footprint.

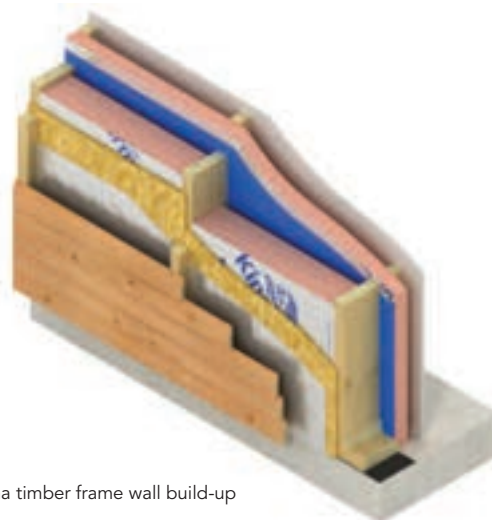
HOW DO YOU FIND FREE SPACE?

The answer to this is simple: it's in the walls. When specifying build systems many self-builders are driven solely by cost, ignoring factors such as performance and thickness. It's relatively easy to achieve reasonable levels of thermal efficiency with insulation, but if the material chosen isn't high performing then more of it will be required, therefore meaning walls will be thicker and floor space compromised.

Similarly, many self-builders look to renewable technology for thermal efficiency, but these products can end up taking up even more of that all-important space.

The solution is to build thermal performance into the building fabric, which often represents good value for

ABOVE: A typical Kingspan Ultima timber frame wall build-up
BELOW: Figure 1



CONSTRUCTION TYPE	INSULATION TYPE	WALL THICKNESS TO ACHIEVE 0.17W/M ² K
Masonry (medium dense block)	Cavity blown bead	435mm
Masonry (medium dense block)	Cavity PIR board	380mm
Insulating concrete formwork (ICF)	EPS permanent formwork	451mm
Timber frame	Kingspan Kooltherm	312mm

money when compared with other options. Products such as Kingspan's Kooltherm used within a timber structural wall offer high thermal performance without compromising on space. Figure 1 compares some typical systems used with a brick external skin, all providing a U-value of 0.17 W/m²K (inclusive of service zones and internal finishes where applicable).

This demonstrates that both the structural material and insulation type can have a significant impact on the overall wall thickness – providing up to an extra 139 mm of space around the entire perimeter. On an 8 metre x 10 metre two-storey house that could mean an extra 9 m² of internal floor space.

For an even better U-value of 0.13 W/m²K the Kingspan Ultima system can be used with the setup shown in Figure 1 to provide a wall thickness of just 337 mm.

WHAT COULD YOU DO WITH 9 M² OF EXTRA SPACE?

Aside from utilising the extra space yourself, when it comes to selling your home that extra space could pay dividends. In Bedfordshire, Zoopla values detached homes at £3,400 per m², so 9 m² of extra space could add up to £30,600 to the finished home value. Or, if your budget is tight, you could even reduce the overall house size, saving you over £12,600 in build costs!

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THE BEST LAID PLANS

For many self-builders, finding a plot to build on is the biggest hurdle, but for one retired couple using their own land proved just as problematic, for a host of reasons. Roseanne Field reports

Set back from the main A22 road and tucked in to a tight site behind large trees and bushes, it's hard to fathom why Alan and Elizabeth Berryman's self-build in the desirable East Sussex town of East Grinstead would have initially been refused planning permission.

But the couple's journey has by no means been an easy one.

Their substantial and elegant current house, built in the 1960s, is situated in a large plot at the end of a long driveway, the garden including a small parcel of land to the front where they initially decided to build a modest new home for Elizabeth's elderly mother. Sectioned off by an assortment of trees, the plot is in line with various other houses that have been built on adjacent plots throughout the years.

TWO-YEAR STRUGGLE

The first hurdle was arranging a meeting with a planning officer – at a cost of £100 – at Haywards Heath Council, to discuss the way forward. Showing up for the appointment, they found they were meeting someone who dealt only with extensions and couldn't help them.

They were told that while there was no guarantee they would meet the relevant

A visit to Grand Designs Live proved to be a turning point

person, they would have to apply for another meeting, and find another £100. Upon hearing this, "my mouth dropped open," says Elizabeth, who ran a chocolate shop before retiring, adding: "The more I try to find out about planning, the more I realise I don't know."

Nevertheless they persevered, and it was during this second meeting they discovered that their proposed plot was classified as 'C1 countryside', meaning it can only be built on in exceptional circumstances. Despite being somewhat disheartened, a visit to Grand Designs Live proved to be a turning point. "We met a young designer called Will Foster who had won several awards," explains Elizabeth. "He said, 'I'll get your planning permission,' and a great deal of time and money later, he did."

The design that was eventually given approval was a low, circular house with a small chunk missing to allow for existing trees. Alan, a former IT specialist, explains that as well as

ABOVE

The house had to be rotated so that it faces the hedge bordering the A22 road

OPPOSITE

The construction of the Scandia-Hus was one of the most straightforward parts of the whole process

LOW POINT

"I think the most frustrating thing is still the planning permission. It took far too long and was far too irritating."

Elizabeth Berryman



two bedrooms, it had a lounge and open-plan kitchen diner, and its circular design allowed every inch of space to be utilised. "It was quite clever, actually," he says. However, during 18 months of design tweaks required to get through planning Elizabeth's mother passed away, which naturally meant the project was put on hold.

Despite the trouble their design had faced getting planning, permission for two new houses was granted on an adjacent plot of land fractionally bigger than their site, and demolition began within six weeks of the previous owner moving out. It was this state of affairs that steeled their determination to go ahead and build.

A CHANGE OF PLAN

Although the 'round house' design had planning, they decided against it due to cost, opting instead for a two-storey dwelling, as Alan explains, saying: "It worked out that it would be the same cost to build a two-storey house." They also contemplated selling the land, but decided it wasn't worth it, due to the risk that "somebody could build anything."

Following all the delays, they wanted something that would be quick to build, as well as good quality, so they paid a visit to the nearby showroom of Swedish timber frame 'kit home' firm Scandia-Hus. Impressed, they decided on a two-storey, split roof design



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HIGH POINT

"Without a doubt the [building of the] house!"

Elizabeth Berryman

which would limit the height of the house and thus make it more discreet.

However there was a further twist in the tale. Alan and Elizabeth discovered that their assigned planning officer, having not been in agreement with the decision to allow permission for the houses next door to their plot, was not minded to grant further planning. This was complicated by objections from a neighbour to the house (seemingly sensibly) facing the driveway, claiming it would overlook their swimming pool, despite numerous tall trees in between. Confusingly, the planning officer said that "he would have granted permission, if we had any trees!", comments Elizabeth.

The house had to be rotated 90 degrees so that it now faces the hedge dividing the plot from the road beyond it, but this meant the design had to be altered. "It was going to have a carport on the side with a balcony above it so you could see the South Downs," explains Alan. It also had to be reduced by a metre horizontally, in order to sit at least five metres away from another neighbour's trees. "This made things like wall widths and positioning of things much more critical than they would have been," says Alan. A bath was to go in one of the ensuites, but had to be replaced by a shower: "It's only a metre, but that has made a lot of difference," adds Elizabeth.

They sought the help of a local councillor, who along with Scandia-Hus helped them fight their case with the planning department. They attended the planning meeting, and

were finally granted permission – with a majority of 11 to one.

BUILDING (FINALLY) BEGINS

Once actual activity began on site, things went a little more smoothly. However there was a costly misunderstanding with the drainage system. A surface water drain was mistaken for a sewage drain, meaning a pumped system had to be connected to an alternative drain at the rear of their existing house – at a not-insubstantial cost of £15,000.

Things really began to motor in October 2016, but Alan and Elizabeth weren't there to see it. Following what was a stressful few months, they flew to America for a well-earned break as the block and beam floor was being laid, but returned to find a very different scene on their plot. "We went away for five weeks and when we got back we had a house!" says Elizabeth.

The relatively compact four-bedroom house began as a simple adaptation of a Scandia-Hus model but became more and more bespoke with the necessary changes required to achieve planning. It has been constructed using a combination of blockwork and timber frame with the ground floor rendered and the first floor covered in wood-effect cladding. The roof design reduces the height of the building to the extent that it isn't visible from their existing house.

There are three bathrooms, including two ensuites, plus an additional downstairs WC. The bathrooms have all been finished to a



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The house began as a simple adaptation of a Scandia-Hus model but became more and more bespoke with the necessary changes required for planning

high standard and are fully tiled. On the ground floor, efficient warmth is provided by a water underfloor heating system, while there are radiators upstairs. One of the two ensuites features another space-saving addition, an electrically-heated wall, which is a clever alternative to a heated towel rail. All of the building's windows are triple-glazed and aluminium coated.

The two floors are connected with a central modern oak staircase with a glass balustrade which creates an impressive focal point upon entering the house. No expense has been spared in the kitchen, which sits to the left of the entrance hall. The modern, dark brown units feature three integrated ovens (two standard and one steam), a microwave and dishwasher, while an island/breakfast bar houses the hob with a downdraft extractor that sits hidden in the worktop when not in use. A separate utility room includes space for a washing machine and tumble dryer.

The living room sits to the right of the hallway, a bright room with double doors leading out to the garden. The landing features a large window and skylight, while the two front bedrooms benefit from floor to

ceiling windows, filling the space with light.

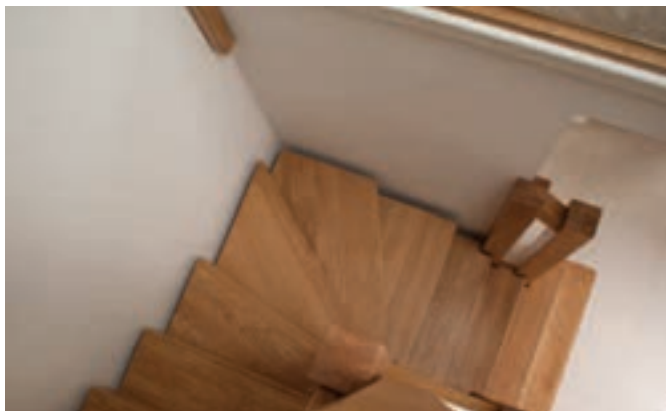
Leading off the driveway up to their existing house, the new dwelling's good-sized driveway offers plenty of parking, and the rest of the outside space is turfed. A row of hedges will run up the side of the existing driveway to give the house some privacy and separation.

As well as erecting the frame, Scandia-Hus provided a full design service – including all changes needed, as well as constructing the entire framework including all internal supporting walls. The main contractor Head & Southon – recommended by Scandia-Hus – managed the project and sub-contracted all other trades, including the groundworkers who constructed the block and beam floor.

The main contractor is based locally, which Alan and Elizabeth say has been a major advantage compared with working with a London-based builder – as has been their previous experience. "It makes a big difference," Alan says.

The majority of the construction work took place over winter which meant predictable delays caused by weather conditions and Christmas and New Year. The blockwork got wet during winter rains and therefore the rendering was delayed while it dried out. They also struggled to get hold of the edge tiles for the roof which Alan puts down to "the general slowdown in the industry last year."

Scandia-Hus' eco credentials as well as build quality influenced the couple's decision to go with the firm. However, the air tightness levels provided means an MVHR ventilation system will normally be required to remove stale air. They planned to install this, but it had to be abandoned as it upset the SAP (Standard Assessment Procedure) calculations for Building Regs compliance. "If we wanted that we would have had to have a woodburner,"



says Elizabeth, "but we didn't, so we had to go around it." They instead installed extractor fans in the toilets and could also only use a certain type of combi boiler to satisfy SAP. But looking on the bright side, she says: "Actually it saved us quite a bit of money!"

The installation of the utilities also proved somewhat frustrating. "The services were a nightmare," Alan says. They arranged for the water and electrics work to be done on the same day to prevent the road from being dug up twice, but only one of the two turned up. They also experienced a wait between each step of the electrics and gas installation – having to wait for one job to be finished before the next could even be arranged. "It's a sequential problem," Alan says.

They also had to pay £3,500 for a telegraph pole to be moved 15 feet and discovered that the utility companies "will not work under scaffolding," says Alan. He says, resignedly: "It's the little things like the services that have caused us more grief than building the house."

LESSONS LEARNED

Reflecting on their experience, they agree there are lessons for others from what was an expensive process. "It really is quite scary," says Elizabeth. "For example, suddenly all sorts of people want different surveys which all cost money." Alan gives one example of an unexpected sudden charge in the form of the SANG (Suitable Alternative Natural

Greenspace) payment, which they discovered was compulsory when building on empty land. They also found themselves paying a fee for the build due to it being within 7 km of the Ashdown Forest, plus various soil tests.

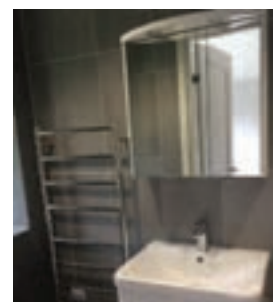
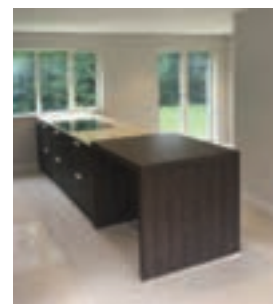
Elizabeth says one of her biggest frustrations with the process is what she perceives as a lack of rights when appealing decisions or arguing additional or unnecessary charges. She cites the example of the drainage issue, for which they paid the council for a sewage map only to find it so out of date their existing house isn't even on it. "You pay your money and there's no redress," she says.

They have also found other extra costs cropping up that hadn't originally been allowed for. "Because we've got a slightly sloping site, we've had an additional cost to put steps down out the back," says Alan, giving one example.

ENDING ON A HIGH

Although the project has taken longer than they had originally anticipated, Alan and Elizabeth had no specific deadline to finish by and so were not feeling unduly stressed as the project neared its end. Says Elizabeth: "On the whole, it's most likely taken longer than we thought it would, but our motto throughout was 'It doesn't matter'."

The 'inside-first' efficiency of the Scandia-Hus construction method has impressed Alan. "Because they put the interior of the house up





“We like the house, we think it’s been well built and we haven’t really had any problems on that front – we would build another!”



first, it’s waterproof and all the windows go in straight away, they’re able to work through all the cold weather.” He adds: “You haven’t got these scenes like you see on TV where all the water’s pouring in.” Elizabeth agrees it was a very smooth process: “It went up easily and they were there to support us.”

They are still undecided as to what they will do with the house once completed. But despite the rollercoaster ride they’ve been on to get here, remarkably the pair say they would take on a self-build again – providing they could find land with some form of building, and therefore utilities, already in place!

“We like the house, we think it’s been well built and we haven’t really had any problems on that front,” summarises Elizabeth. “We would build another!”

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A brochure is available for download, which includes installation advice, performance characteristics and safe working loads. Sales Director, Jon Head explains: "With the off-site construction footprint increasing all the time, we've seen a growing demand for post base and column support solutions, prompting us to not only make more options available 'off the shelf' but to expand our 'made to order' service to cope with ever more interesting and unique house design". Request or download a copy of 'Connectors for Timber and Masonry Construction' from Simpson Strong-Tie's website.

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Aggregate extends Lafarge Cement offering



Aggregate Industries has extended its packed products offering with the introduction of six new products to the Lafarge Cement range. New products in the portfolio include Concrete Mix and Postmix, both premixed ready to use applications. New Mortar Mix, also premixed and ready to use. Other new additions include Super White Cement, which provides an attractive, light coloured, natural looking concrete.

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Cladding makes an 'Ideal Home'

Every year one of the most popular elements of the Ideal Home Show at Olympia, London is the full size show homes. Visitors to this year's show were treated to two stunning properties, both featuring **Freefoam** Fortex cladding. Pale Gold Double Shiplap cladding formed the exterior finish of a three apartment structure designed to reflect the three stages in life, first time buyer, new family home and downsizing. Visitors were invited to 'climb the property ladder' apartments to navigate first-hand the design and practical challenges faced by designers and city dwellers alike as they move through these stages. Pale Blue Weatherboard cladding was used to great effect on the second show home – 21st Century Cottage. A traditional cottage with a contemporary twist designed to appeal to metropolitan families relocating to the countryside or as a second home. The house featured a beautiful thatch roof and timber cladding with the lower level also clad with ultra hard-wearing, low maintenance Freefoam Fortex pvc cladding. David Richards, Director David Richard Associates, commissions the homes each year and explained the background to this year's projects "We have been delighted with the Freefoam cladding range and its performance throughout the project and would recommend it to homeowners and housebuilders – it made a stunning finish to both properties."

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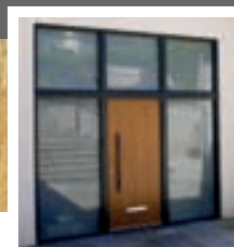
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Bi-fold door specification made clear

When it comes to buying bi-fold doors, there are various factors to bear in mind before laying out cash on such an important purchase. Solarlux breaks down the key areas to consider

It may not seem so to the casual observer, but bi-folding doors are not all built equal: the quality and finish can vary enormously and there is no substitute for seeing, operating and 'feeling' the product for yourself. The mechanism and ease of use can vary drastically between brands.

A bi-folding door can be superb addition to your home, adding value and saleability for many years; however some brands use cheaper parts which could result in a shorter lifespan and demand more upkeep. For example, nylon runners are far less effective and not as long lasting in comparison to their more robust stainless steel counterparts.

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High quality manufacturers produce secure systems which don't rattle in the wind and offer extensive noise reduction from both weather and traffic noise – an important factor for any door.

With a good quality bi-fold door you can achieve a noise reduction of 44 dB and full protection from the elements during inclement weather, while still allowing natural light to flood through the property, bringing a homely warmth to relax and unwind in.

Sometimes people ask 'how can I determine whether a bi-fold system meets my requirements?' Michelle Spangehl, marketing manager at Solarlux, explains: "I have come across this question many times during exhibitions. My advice is to ask for certificates that indicate the system's performance. For instance, DIN EN regulations for protection against driving rain, resistance to wind load

and air permeability.

"As an example Solarlux always tests its systems to the highest standards so that we're able to achieve protection against driving rain up to class 9A, wind load B4 and air permeability class 3 according to DIN EN regulations. Another tip is to ask for cross sections of the doors. The more sophisticatedly engineered the profiles and floor tracks the better the performance – be it weather resistance, security or thermal efficiency."

THERMAL PERFORMANCE

Although bi-folding doors are all about creating open spaces, they also need to perform when closed. Many manufacturers now offer triple glazed doors and are pushing this product option. However, it's not necessarily all about triple or double glazing – if the profiles are of high quality triple glazing won't be necessary to reach the key U_w value for window thermal performance of 1.1. If the door's frame is of poor quality triple glazing will not offset the difference.

It's worth keeping in mind that the quality of a bi-fold door is also determined by what you cannot see. Generally, heat is lost via the profiles, so high quality manufacturers incorporate precisely engineered thermal breaks (air chambers) in order to reach a low U -value and prevent condensation. When comparing U_w values ask manufacturers if they have considered the profile and frame within their calculation – often they refer to the glass only.

Previously to achieve a Passivhaus standard you had to choose a system



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manufactured with a combination of timber and aluminium; however, this has now changed. The Bi-Fold Door by Solarlux is believed to be the first aluminium system to achieve thermal transmittance values corresponding to the guidelines for Passivhaus suitability, with a U_w value as low as $0.8 \text{ W/m}^2\text{K}$. Achieving good thermal performance doesn't mean compromising on current contemporary design trends.

BE SECURITY AWARE

With bi-folding doors featuring so much glass and making your house open for all to see, you may fear it could attract uninvited guests. Three point locking is a must, and five point is even better. Glass should be toughened and a minimum of 4 mm thick – you may even choose laminated glass as an upgraded safer option.

The optional security specification RC2 for bi-folds and RC3 for sliders is a European security upgrade which is similar to Secured by Design, the certification preferred by the British police. This means that the system will withstand a prolonged attempted break-in and it comprises additional covers for various door components, making them even less accessible for

There is no substitute for seeing, operating and 'feeling' the product for yourself

burglars. These additional security specifications are available for selected aluminium systems only, but generally high quality bi-folds will provide good security as standard.

SLIDING VS FOLDING

The alternative to bi-folding doors is sliding doors. Subject to design and type, they are often the more expensive option. Sliding doors are usually made up of two, three or four panels with one or two panels fixed. When closed, you can enjoy uninterrupted views outside due to the fact there are less vertical profiles than with bi-folds;

however, there is always an occupied area reducing the overall usable opening width.

Martijn Venema, managing director of Solarlux generally advises: "Sliding doors work best closed, bi-folds work best open. A solution should be chosen depending on the room and the situation. For example, adult-only and pet-free families can choose either, whereas families with busy lifestyles, pets and or children can rather choose a bi-folding door."

Where the space is often used a bi-folding door is recommended, as it is typically easier to open as one panel can serve as a traffic door. Kitchens especially are where the family and friends often gather, so a bi-fold enables maximum access to the garden. However, large houses with fantastic views might rather choose a sliding door to enjoy an almost completely uninterrupted view.

Both sliding and folding doors can create a seamless transition from house to garden and can be combined with a glass or brick extension. Consult your local dealer, compare the doors' features and test and try the systems to find your own bespoke product solution that suits your personal needs.



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SCHÜCO

Schueco gain Q Mark Certification



Schueco UK, has announced that as a system supplier two more of its popular sliding door systems – the Schueco ASS 70.HI lift/slide door and the Schueco ASS 70 FD folding/sliding door – have been awarded Q Mark Product Certification by Exova BM Trada. Q Mark Product Certification covers a wide range of characteristics including weather performance, mechanical strength, operating forces, corrosion resistance of fittings and PAS 24 security. In addition,

the tests certify the doors' opening and closing performance over 50,000 operating cycles. Q-Marked companies are eligible to bid for projects covered by the police's Secured by Design initiative.

01908 282111 www.schueco.co.uk

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For more information please contact Westbury Windows & Joinery.

info@westburyjoinery.com



PURe® inspiration for best-selling author

Senior Architectural Systems' stunning PURe® FOLD patio aluminium doors have helped add character to the Yorkshire home of USA Today best-selling novelist Susan Stephens by providing the perfect setting to relax with a good book. Fabricated and installed by Dortech Architectural Systems Ltd, Senior's patented PURe® aluminium folding sliding doors feature as part of a stunning extension to Ms Stephen's home. Offering slim sightlines that maximise views of the property's pretty garden, the narrow yet robust aluminium frames of the PURe® doors have been powder-coated to provide an attractive brown finish that further complements and connects with the outdoor space. Awarded a UK patent, Senior's PURe® range of energy-efficient aluminium windows and doors is one of the first on the UK market to benefit from an enhanced thermal barrier manufactured from expanded polyurethane foam (PUR). The innovative use of PUR as a thermal barrier in windows and doors gives the PURe® range the potential to achieve U-values as low as 0.71W/m² K when calculated as a commercial CEN standard window and 0.93W/m² K when calculated as a CEN standard door. Ideally suited for a wide range of applications, the PURe® aluminium windows are available as tilt and turn or casement windows. Senior's innovative door range also features a choice of the PURe® FOLD and PURe® SLIDE options.

www.seniorarchitectural.co.uk/pure-windows-and-doors

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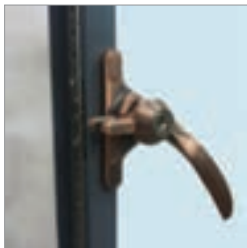
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Keeping burglars out with steel windows



Difficult to force because of the inherent strength of their frames, steel windows are not liked by burglars. One of the best deterrents to a prospective thief is the traditional 'cottage' style steel window, divided into small frames, with interlocked steel glazing bars. **Steel Window Association** members also offer W40 steel windows that comply with Secured by Design requirements. Newly appointed member, Steel Window Fittings Ltd (swf), manufacture most steel

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

info@steel-window-association.co.uk

Specflue celebrates silver anniversary



As **Specflue** celebrates its 25th year in business, the company's guiding principles remain the same today as they were in 1992 – a deep commitment to the highest possible quality, pioneering innovation, and a passionate belief in offering outstanding customer service. It is these values, coupled with the exceptional technical knowledge, that have driven Specflue to become one of the UK's foremost suppliers of flue, chimney, wood burning fire and

renewable heating products. But Specflue's expertise is not confined to product supply. It also runs a state-of-the-art training centre to educate and raise standards within the solid fuel and renewables sectors.

0800 9020220 www.specflue.com

Clever living from the screen experts



Phantom Screens are gaining in popularity due to the trend for larger openings and bi-fold doors. Its retractable power screens cover openings up to seven metres wide, the perfect solution for new build projects and contemporary extensions. Get more from summer evenings with Phantom Screens; enjoy thermal comfort gains made by retaining heat in the evenings and deflecting energy during the day. Make savings on HVAC costs, and

benefit from insect free ventilation. A range of technical fabrics is available including insect meshes, solar shading, blackout, and privacy screens.

0800 0963015 www.phantom-screens.co.uk

Coloured radiators from Stelrad



Any doubts that coloured radiators are becoming mainstream in the UK heating sector have been blown away with the arrival of the **Stelrad Vita** Column Concept radiator – now available from stock in Anthracite grey. The new radiator has joined the successful Vita Series range and begins the process of seeing coloured radiators available from stock. Until now, radiators have been available in up to 35 colours but with an order delivery delay of up to

eight weeks. To find out more about the huge Stelrad range of radiators, head for the website. You can also see regular updates from Stelrad on Twitter @Stelrad and Facebook @StelradRadiators.

0844 543 6200 www.stelrad.com

Let the daylight flood in...

Don't you feel just so good when it's a sunny day outside. Evidence suggests it's important you get that feel good factor inside your home. It's well known that balanced levels of sunlight are crucial for producing essential amounts of Vitamin D in our bodies. But, our positive well-being – physical and mental – also depends on frequent exposure to light. Daylight is the most energy-efficient way to achieve it. "Let the sun's rays stream in to your home – they're good for you," says Stuart Judge, managing director of **Crittall Windows**, makers of steel window frames and doors. Mr Judge continues: "Steel-framed windows are ideal for maximising daylight in the home; steel is three times the strength of aluminium and achieves strong, elegant frames combining the slimmest of profiles. This allows large expanses of glass, bringing-in that essential natural daylight." Very much now on-trend are interior screens, which enable open plan living to take on a different dimension. They allow you to cleverly partition open areas to create contemporary 'zones' – without compromising on light or space. Crittall brings a further dimension to interiors through its minimalist style windows and its InnerVision glazed steel partitioning screens. Elegantly slender, the slim steel framing, with single or double opening doors, is unobtrusive. Combining style with functionality, a distinguished looking installation makes a wonderful talking point.

01376 530800 www.crittall-windows.co.uk



New 'Calor Compact' gas heating launched for rural builds

Rural energy provider **Calor** has launched the Calor Compact – a new, easy and discreet way to heat your home if you're building on a plot that doesn't have access to mains gas. Undertaking a selfbuild project in the countryside can leave you feeling a bit stuck when it comes to fuelling things such as your heating, hot water and cookers. Oil is often the default option, but this means you have an unsightly tank ruining your garden space. It can also put you at risk of fuel theft – not to mention the dangers an oil leak can pose to the environment. Well now there's a solution that lets you have all the convenience of mains gas – the Calor Compact. The Calor Compact is made up of four gas bottles, neatly contained in a secure protective housing. Best of all, you get the added reliability and reassurance of automatic gas delivery with Calor's clever top-up technology. Matt Masters, Innovation Manager at Calor, said: "The Calor Compact really is a space saver, as it can be tidily tucked away against your property, making it suitable for any selfbuild project. It's perfect if you're building on a small plot and don't have the garden space for a bulk tank or access required for deliveries, so you now have a choice of storage options no matter what your requirements. You don't need to worry about installation holding your project up either, as the Calor Compact is really quick to fit, and in most cases we can install the system in a few hours."

askcalor@calor.co.uk



QuanTec condensing boilers new guarantee



Johnson & Starley's established range of QuanTec condensing boilers has now been given a free eight year guarantee. This covers all parts and labour for every QuanTec model. QuanTec condensing boilers were recognised in 2016 by a leading consumer magazine as one of the most reliable boilers on the UK market. Their build quality and energy efficiency applies to a wide choice of combi, system and regular models including the top of the range QuanTec

HR 28C. This technology provides potential extra energy savings of up to 26 per cent. QuanTec models benefit from stainless steel heat exchangers with Cool-Door technology and low NOx levels.

01604 762881 www.johnsonandstarley.co.uk

Remmers sets sail at Red Wharf Bay

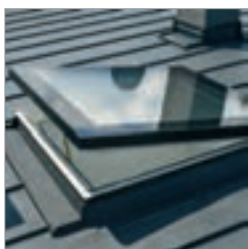


Red Wharf Bay Sailing & Watersports Club is set in an area of outstanding beauty at Traeth Bychan on the Isle of Anglesey, North Wales. The member's clubhouse has been sited here for over 50 years due to its suitable sailing waters. The members of the committee decided that the exterior of the building was looking a little tired and a refresh was needed before the new season started at Easter. **Remmers** Compact Opaque PU topcoat was selected for the

job due to its performance characteristics and suitability to coastal locations. Over two weekends, the clubhouse was transformed and the new colour gave the clubhouse the refreshed look it deserved.

01293 594010 www.remmers.co.uk

FAKRO roof windows set new standards



FAKRO DEF and DMF flat roof windows have redefined the visual aesthetic for such products, the quadruple-glazed DEF U8 offering a U-value of 0.76 W/m²K, ideal for Passivhaus and energy-efficient construction. The triple-glazed DEF U6 has also been awarded a Red Dot Design Award, further evidence of innovation by the FAKRO team of more than 100 engineers. The 'ColourLine' option also provides scope to specify the window finish in any RAL colour from the

'Classic Palette' so whether to blend with roof landscaping or interior design features the design scope offered is virtually limitless. For more information please call FAKRO or visit the website.

01283 554755 www.fakro.co.uk

New Waterstruck brick range



Imperial Bricks, one of the leading traditional handmade brick supplier in the UK, has launched a new Waterstruck range. The new Waterstruck range is soft mud moulded, using water as the releasing agent, giving the imperial sized bricks a relatively smooth, but a characterful aged appearance. The clay used for the manufacturing process creates a distinct texture that is F2 rated for frost resistance and fully tested to BS EN 771-1 standards.

There are three bricks available: Red Waterstruck, Lightly Weathered Waterstruck suited for the Midlands/North, and an Oxford Yellow Multi Waterstruck commonly found across East Anglia and East Coast.

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Naturally beautiful

Stone Federation's Matt Robb discusses what he sees as the unique visual appeal of natural stone, and what you should consider before using it in your self-build



In a sector where aesthetics and durability are equally important and individuality is a unique selling point, natural stone is the ideal material.

Quarried and mined from the earth, and thus bearing unique characteristics that are the result of complex geological processes, natural stone offers the specifier more than just a material – it offers a story.

No two pieces of natural stone will be exactly the same, and when its use is embraced by specifiers, this material can provide a wealth of options in both texture and colour.

Stone Federation is the official trade association for the natural stone industry, working with specifiers, architects, designers and clients to connect you with the ideal material and company for your project. The federation has over 100 years' experience helping the professional understand and therefore benefit from the inimitable qualities of natural stone.

CHOOSING STONE

Selecting the right material for the project in hand is crucial to the success of any job, and there are three key steps

to follow to ensure correct stone selection for a particular project.

The first step is to ensure that the samples are up to the task in hand, namely giving you a true representation of what the final product will look like. One key factor in this is looking at range/control samples. These will show you the range of geological characteristics typically found within the bed of stone as opposed to the small snapshot you would find in a single indicative sample piece. This helps avoid any confusion as to what the finished floor, wall or countertop will look like.



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This unique material can provide a wealth of options in both texture and colour

However, it is worth bearing in mind that this is a natural product, and therefore each stone will have its own unique features.

The second step is the quarry or mine visit. Stone Federation strongly advises that a visit is made so that the stone proposed for the project can be carefully inspected. This is also the ideal stage at which to involve an independent stone consultant to come and provide you with an expert opinion. This allows you to be a part of the unique journey of your material; to connect the final material to its origins and story.

The last of these three steps is the technical assessment of the stone. There are various tests that help build a picture of a stone's potential suitability for a particular application, and while past projects are a good indicator, recent test data on the CE certificate and Declaration of Performance should be examined. Natural stone is the ideal material for a wide range of applications, but choosing the right materials for the desired application is important, and this is where testing can really help.

When it comes to choosing the right stone for the project in hand, it's worth exploring the wealth of options that natural stone offers the architectural industry.

The Natural Stone Awards celebrate the best examples of the use of natural stone across a wide range of applications. The winners are a showcase of the successful use of natural stone in cladding, interiors, repair and restoration, landscaping and so much more.

Both the 2014 and 2016 awards saw a wide range of natural stones used in the successful projects stretching all the way from British limestones through to Italian marbles. The finished projects cover everything from the dramatic to the understated, but all have one thing in common – the architect or designers'



skill in choosing the perfect stone for the desired applications.

NATURAL STONE'S OFFERING

From the fossils found in limestone to the natural, subtle layers of slate, texture is a strong selling point for using natural stone. The three-dimensional dynamic that a feature wall of unpolished, naturally textured stone can provide is stunning and definitely a trend that is on the increase.

Unlike many other materials, the same piece of stone can be finished in a number of ways to provide the texture best suited to the application. Flamed, honed, blasted, sanded, polished and line textured are all finishes that can give the same piece of stone a very different visual impact.

When it comes to creating visual impact, geological striations and natural colour streaks found in marble creates a striking aesthetic which is seen across a wide range of applications, from hotel lobbies and city cladding projects through to floors and church steeples. In a market where individuality is key, the unique visuals that natural stone can create are striking, bringing a strong identity to interior spaces of all description.

Stone also of course has strong credentials on durability. As a result of the geological processes, the thousands of years of compression, natural stone is an incredibly hard-wearing material. You



need only look at the centuries-old limestone clad streets of London, the granite paved streets of Aberdeen or the Clipsham stone-rich buildings of Oxford to see evidence of the longevity of this natural material.

FINDING THE RIGHT FIRM

Stone Federation has a membership of over 240 natural stone firms, covering everything from international stone suppliers and British quarry operators through to design consultants and sealant manufacturers. Each member is vetted and approved and has access to a vast resource of technical backup, training and guidance documents on all the latest Government legislation and guides to best practice.

There are a number of ways in which you can find the right company for your project. The Natural Stone Source Book acts as a source of information and inspiration, containing a full directory of members alongside project profiles. The 'Search for a Member' tool on the website allows you to find the right member for your specific project requirements.

Our free technical helpline is also a great way of accessing expert advice on everything from stone selection and tolerances through to British Standards and slip resistance.

Matt Robb is digital media executive at Stone Federation

Maximising the benefits from below

Toby Howard-Willis of JG Speedfit offers some advice on how to achieve the full benefit of an insulated underfloor heating system

The self-builder market is increasingly looking towards underfloor heating (UFH) systems as a cost and energy efficient way to heat a building. However, the energy savings that UFH can deliver to a homeowner often fail to be maximised because the correct design protocols have not been followed.

Modern homes have a number of inherent heat loss areas built into their design, which can limit the effectiveness of UFH. One way of countering this is by considering the right type of insulation at the design stage.

UFH is becoming increasingly popular with the self-build market, for a number of reasons. It offers a more convenient alternative to traditional radiator heating systems. Not only is the system essentially invisible, since it works by tubing embedded in the floor, but it can also be cheaper to run and is often more energy efficient than radiators.

It works by pumping a controlled flow of warm water from any heat source such as a boiler or heat pump, through pipes installed underneath the floor. This also means that pipework is hidden, and there is no need to hang traditional radiators on the wall, which can take up considerable space in properties.

INSULATION

Insulation is an important consideration when installing UFH – we always recommend that self-builders install insulation with UFH systems. It ensures that as much heat as possible goes upwards into the house, limiting the amount of heat which travels down into the ground.

The general rule is that the more insulation you have, the smaller the amount of heat you are losing through the external fabric of a building. This also means that the

heating demand on your UFH system is greatly reduced.

MATERIALS

Multiple types of suitable insulation exist, falling into various categories. You can have polystyrene insulation, which is considered the more traditional type, or glass fibre insulation, a product commonly used in lofts.

Some builds will require glass fibre insulation. This is often used for joisted floors on the ground and for the first floor in older buildings where it is used with spreader plate systems.

A lot of self-builders also like to use an expanded foam insulation with a foil backing. This has particularly good heat retention properties.

Which of these materials will be more effective largely depends on the application and the type of building. However, it is almost a foregone conclusion that at least 95 per cent of new builds or extensions will use a foil-backed foam insulation.

Generally speaking, the way modern buildings are being constructed means they're creating a demand for expanded foam insulation. For many years, self-builders and installers used very basic insulation which had to be extremely thick. Expanded foam has a significantly higher heat retention rate than many other forms of insulation. The advent of expanded foam has also greatly reduced properties' heat loss.

FURTHER CONSIDERATIONS

Once you have selected your type of insulation, there are still further decisions that need consideration. For example, the position of insulation within the floor structure always needs to be considered. In 2002, changes were made to Building Regulations, stating that all new builds must have



Insulation ensures that as much heat as possible goes upwards into the house

insulation below the concrete slab. All screeded floors will already have insulation below them, regardless of whether an UFH system is installed.

When it comes to the question of how much insulation to use, the answer is – really as much as possible. Regardless of whether or not UFH is installed, you can never have too much insulation under a floor.

Most properties will emit a fairly constant amount of heat due to windows and doors. Even the best quality double glazed unit will emit heat a lot more easily than a brick wall would. When you consider the current trend to have open plan rooms in



The way modern buildings are being constructed means they're creating a demand for expanded foam insulation

modern buildings, and more glass and windows, insulation becomes even more important since the heat loss areas have been increased.

There are also various aspects to take into account when installing insulation in order to ensure you get it right first

time. The type of building, floor construction, and height allowance of the floor will all help to dictate which type of insulation to use.

It's always advisable to use an UFH manufacturer that offers a free of charge consultation and full design

service prior to commencing any project. Some will further support this with aftersales technical support, should it ever be needed.

Toby Howard-Willis is technical sales manager at JG Speedfit

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INDUSTRIAL REVOLUTION

Interior designer Gina Everett of Create Perfect gives some style tips on achieving the key current trend of a modern industrial look in the kitchen



CREATING INDUSTRIAL STYLE

The style often incorporates and makes the best of existing features. In renovation projects this might include exposed brick, wooden beams or original wooden or tiled flooring. In modern homes this could be steel beams, polished concrete floors or exposed pipes seen in warehouse style apartments. Plainer, earthier oaks on floors or furniture are best suited to complement the 'industrial' materials.

Although the style works with both modern flat panel and traditional shaker style cabinets, avoid gloss kitchen cabinets or highly grained woods such as walnut or cherry. A neutral colour palette is ideal, naturally achieved with warm woods, metals and brickwork which can be exposed to their original colour for a warm feel to the kitchen or painted without plaster to add contrast to the scheme.

Adding colour to this style of kitchen should be carefully considered as the main interest comes from the mixture of textures and the contrast of modern and retro styling. However, bold dark neutrals work well. Blacks, greys, dark blues and dark greens all complement the natural materials perfectly.

CHOOSING APPLIANCES, FURNITURE & LIGHTING

For appliances take inspiration from working commercial kitchens. Stainless steel range cookers and fridges, shower taps and large dual sinks are all influences from restaurant kitchens which have become common in homes and add to the industrial feel. Butler sinks are practical, hardwearing and a timeless trend in kitchen design. Retro furniture and lighting are a must-have in this style of kitchen.

For feature lighting, look for reclaimed



factory lighting – go for glass domes with old-fashioned Edison bulbs or simply hanging from the ceiling on old fashioned twined fabric cable. When it comes to furniture antique and retro pieces work really well. Look for chunky wooden tables, metal or leather chairs and stools. Accessorise with warm colours, natural textiles such as wool or linen and plants.

It's reassuring to know that getting the on-trend modern industrial look needn't cost the earth. The mix and match style of old and new means you can make savings by making the best of existing features and sourcing reclaimed materials such as floorboards and cast iron radiators. Antique furniture looks great in these kitchens and is a cost effective and sustainable way to complete your project.

Trends by their nature tend to come and go in interiors, but when considering designing a kitchen, homeowners will want to ensure they are making sound investments which will stand the test of time. There are many decisions to be made when choosing a kitchen design, from the style of the cabinets to appliances, flooring and furniture, all of which need to work together to create a fluid, functional and beautifully-designed space.

Recent projects of ours have taken a lot of style inspiration from the 'modern industrial' trend – a basic and earthy style that uses industrial textures. By working to achieve the correct balance in an eclectic mix of modern and rustic design elements, a modern industrial-styled kitchen can look as good in a country home as it does in a chic city apartment.



The mix-and-match style of old and new means you can make savings

CASE STUDY IN THE COTSWOLDS

A feature of a recent refurbishment of a large family kitchen diner in a home in the Cotswolds was blocks of colour, added by using painted kitchen cabinets. After initial meetings, I collaborated with the client remotely using online folders to collate ideas. 3D renders were then created to illustrate exactly how the finished project would look. In completing the project we harnessed our network of sources for trades and furnishings to save our client lots of time and money.

Achieving the look comes hand in hand with great craftsmanship. Sourcing a quality handcrafted kitchen

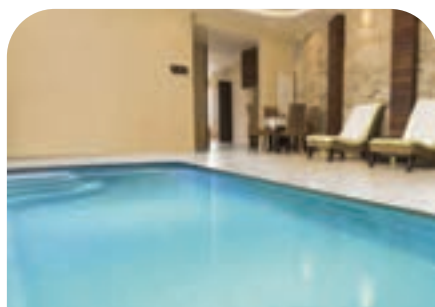
from an independent kitchen company meant the client could add some unique touches. Deep blue painted kitchen cabinets in Zoffany Paint's 'Como Blue' are enhanced with traditional brass cup kitchen handles. A natural stone floor and Farrow and Ball's 'Ammonite' grey white walls keep the kitchen light and bright while allowing the cabinets to be the star of the show. Warm wooden shelves made of reclaimed oak provide storage to display vintage treasures. The grey doors lead to an old fashioned pantry and utility space with signs on the glass to lead the way.



PICTURED

Cabinets with brass handles and painted in a deep blue stand out against a contrasting natural stone floor and grey white walls

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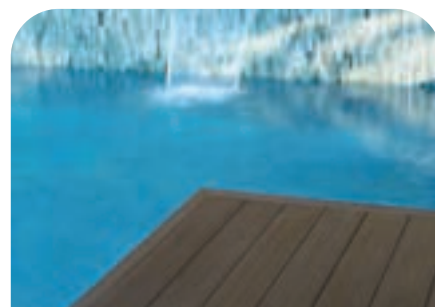
www.bakewellpools.co.uk

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Available in Battleship Grey or Chocolate Brown shades, colours that will last for years and years to come. This reversible board gives has a smooth or ribbed finish with both surfaces providing a low risk of slip in the wet. It is really easy to fit using colour coordinated SmartBoard decking screws and being a solid board makes it also great for use as a fascia.

www.qualitydecking.co.uk



Wallbarn

iDecking from Wallbarn is perfect for poolside. With no mechanical fixings, the decking is connected via grooves and clip. iDecking is expansion-proof, which means boards will not crack or buckle at the ends. iDecking has also been BS Slip tested meaning a low risk of slipping even when the decking is wet. iDecking is made from eco-friendly DURO EXCELLENCE composite boards which are moisture resistant for longer lasting, rot-free decking. iDecking is also available in top quality tropical hardwoods, specially milled to fit the connection system. For more information on iDecking please visit the company website.

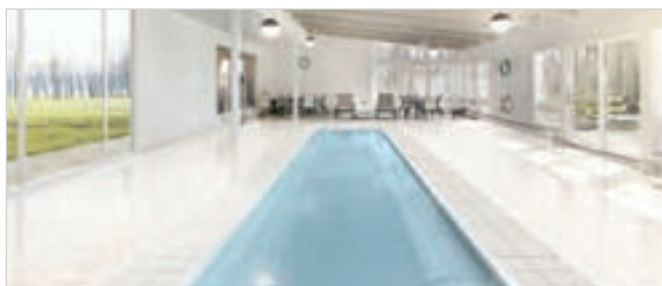
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SAiGE Longlife Decking

In August 2017, we are excited to be launching our new Rustic Decking to the SAiGE Longlife Decking product portfolio.

In a choice of Rustic Walnut and Rustic Grey these composite decking boards have a more traditional, rustic wood-grained finish than our popular contemporary decking range but with all the advantages of composite decking (environmentally sourced, anti-fungal, splinter free, low-maintenance and anti-slip to name a few!).

For more information and samples (when available) please contact a member of the SAiGE team by phone or visit the website.

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'Deck Kit Out' for a simple, stylish fit

When looking to put the finishing touch to the exterior of your dream home with a stylish deck, there's a host of factors to take into account – and a stress-free, simple installation must rank very highly among them.

Liniar's PVCu decking kits have been specifically designed with this in mind and offer a quality product that's not only easy to assemble, but is low maintenance and requires no sanding, painting or staining, unlike timber.

Also, if you've opted for Liniar windows, doors or conservatory roofs, then you'll be able to extend the style of your home into the garden with beautiful balustrades, fully colour matched to the rest of the Liniar range, for a truly stunning finish.

The decking kit sections are delivered to site either part or fully assembled to minimise installation time.

Liniar's galvanised steel sub-frame, unparalleled in the market, comes part assembled and has been strength tested with a weight of 1.25 tonnes.

The only fully sculptured balustrade system on the market also comes ready constructed, meaning no fiddly cutting and fitting of handrails with pickets. By reinforcing the posts and balustrades with steel, there's no timber to create a fire risk or to rot in damp conditions.

Available in seven colours from stock, including four foiled finishes, with alternative foil finishes also available and made to order.

Liniar's woodgrain effect deckboards are available in five attractive colours and cut to length for a hassle-free installation.

You can even add matching gates and steps, which are also delivered pre-fabricated.

Kits are supplied with all necessary



fixings and required hardware to put the deck together.

With a vast selection of standard designs to choose from, plus a bespoke facility available, along with a simple ordering system, Liniar decking kits have been specifically developed to make installation simple.

Watch Liniar's decking kit installation video to see just how easy it is – www.liniar.co.uk/videos/install-liniar-decking-kit.

01332 883900

www.liniar.co.uk/decking/decking-kits

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Bespoke v ready made: which is right for you?

Both bespoke furniture and ready-made pieces have their own set of benefits for self-builds – *Selfbuilder & Homemaker* speaks to two experts in the field to get their views on which way to go

Once the walls are painted, the floors are laid and the wiring and plumbing is all finished, it's time to start thinking about what furniture will be decorating your new home. One of the first choices to be made when buying furniture is whether to commission a bespoke piece or buy a professionally-designed, readily-available item.

Perhaps you've had a plan for your furnishings right from the beginning of the project, or perhaps seeing it come to life has given you reason to rethink your choices. Whatever stage you're at, finding the perfect pieces of furniture to turn your house into a home can be as challenging as it is exciting.

BESPOKE

"Bespoke furniture is a great option if you're looking for something that's unique to your home," comments Adam Brown, director at The Painted Furniture Company. "You may have a certain awkward space you'd like to fill, or a particular colour scheme in mind. Whatever you're planning, going for a tailored option means your furniture fits your specifications exactly, without having to compromise."

Having furniture that's been made to measure means it can be completely customised to your requirements or style, explains Adam. "These designs can include highly efficient storage capabilities, be it concealing office equipment and wiring or including additional storage," he says. "By looking at your own requirements, you can ensure that the piece of furniture fits precisely into your life and does exactly what you need it to. For example, if you have a huge shoe collection, why not ask about including a shoe rack within your wardrobe, or extra storage space underneath your bedframe?"

Bespoke furniture can also be designed to match the specific space, no



matter how inaccessible or small. "This can be particularly useful in smaller spaces or rooms that are an unusual shape," Adam continues. "Awkward nooks and crannies, like the spot under the stairs, might usually go unused but by commissioning a piece to its exact measurements, such as one of our low bookcases, you can turn it into



a practical and beautiful feature of your new home."

Manufacturers of bespoke furniture can also offer various options when it comes to colour options etc. "Bespoke manufacturers can offer collections in bespoke sizes, along with a choice of colours and handles to make each design as personal as possible," Adam



When selecting a piece of furniture which will stand in your home for years to come, quality is the most important feature

concludes. "You can also let them know if you want a certain combination of drawers and shelves, or a certain finish. On top of this, expert teams can even colour match your furniture to ensure that it fits into your scheme seamlessly."

READY MADE

Alternatively, there are many of beautiful ready-designed pieces available on the market. Rachel Edmonds, founder of Newtons Furniture says: "Professionally designed furniture is just that. It's beautifully crafted and

designed by someone with years of experience. Not only is professionally-designed furniture more readily available at the click of a button, but it also looks and feels amazing."

Ready made furniture is designed and created by people who have a passion for interior design, explains Rachel. "Selecting the right pieces is a wonderful way to imprint your personality on the overall design of your room," she adds. "For example, if you love the look of French furniture, there is nothing like hand designed and hand carved furniture. In this instance, it's always best to go with the experts who specialise in a particular look. An expert will always have knowledge on what will and won't work, and should be happy to advise on what will work best in your scheme. They take the worry out of the design process."

The other benefit to selecting something ready made is the savings that can be made from both a time and cost perspective. "You don't have to wait weeks to sign off on a design and can always be sure of finding other furniture pieces to match your scheme," Rachel explains. Companies often create complete sets of furniture, meaning "you can create the perfect room in your desired look safe in the knowledge that each piece of furniture complements the next," Rachel says.

"More importantly, you can send it back or exchange it should the colour, size or design not live up to your expectations."

Both choices clearly have their benefits. While bespoke furniture is often more unique, and best for distinctively shaped rooms, professionally designed pieces are easy to buy and are often a better option if you're looking for a stylised look.

Whatever path you take, one thing which cannot be argued is the old saying 'buy cheap and buy twice'. When selecting a piece of furniture which will stand in your home for years to come, often undertaking daily use, quality is the most important feature. There are many bespoke and pre-made furniture companies in the UK which make the most of dedicated experts and craftsmen to ensure that their products are of the very best quality and will stand the test of time, so a bit of research can go a long way in making sure you get the best possible product for your money.

The furniture you choose for your dream home is a very personal decision. What may be the best option for one person may not be the same for another, and so the best policy is to consider all the options available, and select the piece which fits best into your lifestyle and design tastes.

Elegant and easy to care for – the S21



There are many advantages to owning an oil-fired stove. Perfect for those who live in rural areas without access to mains gas, the S21 traditional design from Nestor Martin is not only easy to use but it is also reliable, low-maintenance and inexpensive to run, using just 0.15 ltr of oil per hour at minimum. It comes with an electric starter but will continue to provide powerful heat output in the event of a power cut, as it doesn't require any electricity to operate and can

also be started manually, too. There are three heat outputs to choose from – 6kW, 8kW and 10kW. The Stanford S21 stove from Nestor Martin costs from £1,570. Contact **Eurostove** for more information.

01934 750500 www.eurostove.co.uk

Schiedel wins at Hearth & Home



Schiedel Chimney System's ICID Plus Double Wall Adjustable Starter Section, a quick and easy way of disconnecting a stove for inspection, has won 'Best Flueing and Ventilation Product' at this year's Hearth & Home exhibition, which took place from 11th - 13th June at the Harrogate International Centre. As well as being easy to remove, the product is also extremely simple to install and as part of Schiedel's new improved ICID Plus range, comes with a lifetime

warranty. The ICID range has now evolved into a multi-application system, suitable for use with traditional and pellet stoves, biomass appliances, mini/micro CHP and even condensing boilers.

0191 4161150 www.schiedel.co.uk

Conventional and Balanced Flue Gas Stoves



Paragon branded efficient, realistic high quality gas flame technology is now available in a freestanding stove design both for conventional and balanced flue systems. The new Paragon gas stove models are manufactured with heavy-duty, seam-welded steel bodies and doors in keeping with high quality solid fuel originals. Conventional flue models can be fitted into Class one, Class two and Pre-cast flues and come complete with an innovative closure plate system.

BF models have a rear mounted "through the wall" flue system supplied with the unit. For more information or to arrange a display please contact **Charlton & Jenrick**.

sales@charltonandjenrick.co.uk

The classic Stanford stove



Whether you're looking for a feature focal point to an open-plan living space or a central attraction for a cosy living room, there's nothing like the warmth and charm of a wood burning stove. With a powerful heat output and attractive view of the flickering flames within, the Stanford collection will instantly elevate any interior and can even add value to your home. The Stanford range is available in three different models to suit your needs. Each

design is crafted from high quality cast iron with a traditional black finish and is created to burn both seasoned wood and smokeless coal. Please contact **Eurostove** for more details.

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Tread with confidence

Complete Stair Systems' Nick Rackham explains how to choose a custom-made staircase while sticking to a budget

A staircase is generally the first feature on view when entering a property, meaning it creates the perfect opportunity for a wonderful first impression. Having a specially designed staircase in the hallway will further enhance this effect while reflecting on the style of the property and the character of the owner. Ultimately, choosing the right stair is a really important decision.

BUT HOW BESPOKE A STAIRCASE CAN YOUR BUDGET STRETCH TO?

Bearing the importance of getting stairs right in mind, while a closed softwood flight with carpeted treads and risers would be the most economical choice, would it give the right impression? There are several key elements to be considered in specifying a more interesting, custom-made flight with open risers, which will affect the price.

THE SHAPE OF STAIRS TO COME

The simpler the shape of the staircase, the cheaper the cost of the flight. A straight flight staircase is therefore the cheapest to produce, followed by a quarter turn (90 degrees) and then a half turn (180 degrees).

Spiral staircases (steps arranged around a central pillar) can be fairly cost effective depending on the materials used. The most expensive option is to add curves to the staircase – whether in a complete curve (helical shaped) or just with a swooping entrance. While a curved stair can look stunning it costs a significant amount to produce.

SUPPORTING STRUCTURE

Above and beyond the conventional double timber stringer construction, there are many other methods of supporting the steps of a staircase.

Steel is very popular due to the fact a smaller amount can support a greater

weight, and therefore appear less bulky than timber. Steel stringers can be cut to a specific desired shape or can be located under the centre of the stair to form a spine.

TREADS & BALUSTRADES

Hardwood is generally the first choice for custom-made staircase treads but glass, granite and stone are also popular.

Conventional timber spindles tend to be the standard balustrade on a basic softwood stair, but for a more modern, open and light feel a custom-made flight is likely to have a glass balustrade or stainless steel spindles or rails. Glass is extremely popular and is generally held in place between timber or steel newel posts or bolted to the edge of the stringers or treads to give a frameless 'no newel' appearance.

Horizontal rails are attractive and a little less costly than glass, but check your building inspector is happy with them before purchasing. They can be viewed as forming a ladder effect and therefore being climbable.

Spindles are also available for custom-made staircases and are often constructed in steel or stainless steel. They are generally thinner in profile than their traditional timber counterparts and the cost of spindles will generally be less than glass, depending on their finish.

OTHER CONSIDERATIONS

Many custom-made, modern staircases have open risers to allow the passage of light. Building Regulations stipulate that the gap between each step cannot exceed 100 mm for safety reasons. All specialist companies will be aware of the Regulations and will have solutions to reduce the gap, but if they have multiple methods for doing this they may not include the cost in their quote.

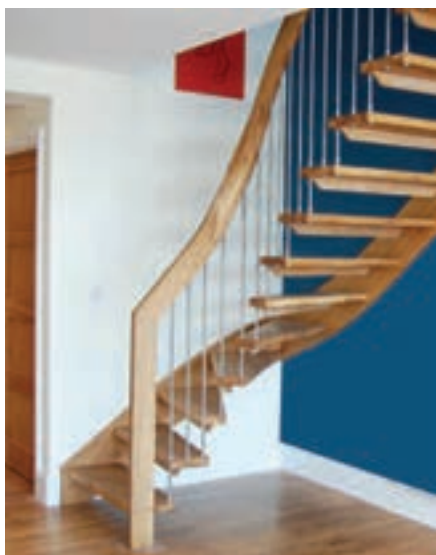


The staircase creates the perfect opportunity for a wonderful first impression

Instead they might list and cost the options separately, so check the quotation carefully.

Another item to consider that can add considerably to the costs is the requirement for a landing balustrade. This is to offer protection around any voids over the stairwell and generally takes the form of a balustrade that matches the staircase. A company is likely price this per metre so be sure to work out how much you need and calculate accordingly.

Installation is another cost to be factored into the budget. Most companies will offer a supply only, or a



supply and installation cost, giving you the option of self-assembly. Given many custom-made staircases are straightforward to fit, it may well prove a more economical option to have your builder install yours – but make sure you get a price first.

Any installation price a company provides will most likely be a little inflated to allow for any necessary travel and accommodation, which of course would not be part of your builder's fee.

To keep your new staircase within a respectable budget, the best advice is to keep the design simple. The most economical solution would be a traditional, straight flight formed with softwood treads and stringers and ply risers. However this style is unlikely to provide the impact of a custom-made design. If you are looking for something a little more striking and modern in keeping with your new build or refurbishment, gather some inspiration from the internet, magazines and TV shows and put together a mood board of your favourites.

It is important to prioritise a list of the elements and materials you would really like to have – for example oak treads, glass balustrade – and be prepared for the fact that you might have to make sacrifices to meet your budget. Perhaps opting for stained beech rather than walnut steps, or having a stud wall at the first floor level instead of a matching glass balustrade, might be a better fit for your budget.

If you can influence the design at the early stages and need to keep costs down it's advisable to specify a straight flight configuration – or at least stay away from curves! Your architect and builder should be able to give you an indication of costs at this stage, before



Be prepared for the fact that you might have to make sacrifices to meet your budget

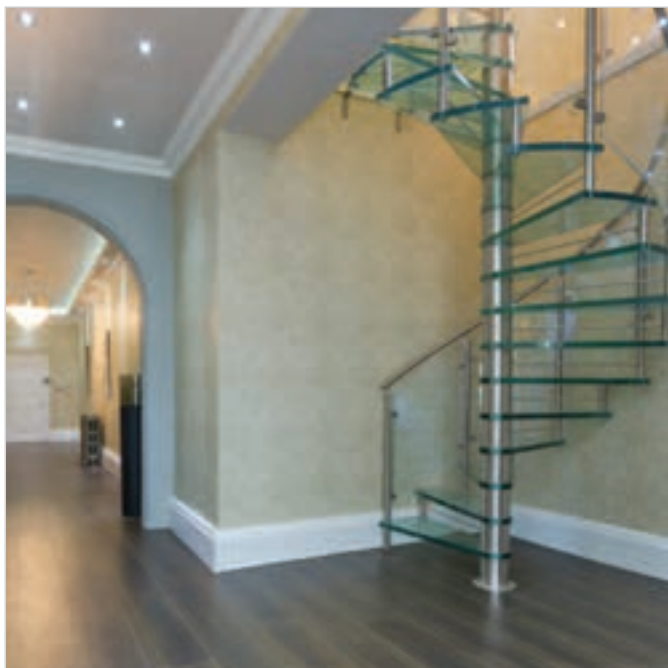
you filter down your selection and contact specialist companies for a precise quotation.

When getting quotations ensure they are for a 'like for like' product and check if the price includes fitting or is supply only. Also check if it is possible to see the product in a property or a showroom to ensure you're satisfied with the quality before proceeding.

There are more specialist staircase

companies operating in the UK than ever before, each with their own beautiful array of designs. Enjoy gathering inspiration, but remember the more ambitious the design and shape and the more unusual the materials, the higher the price of the stair is likely to ascend.

Nick Rackham is managing director at Complete Stair Systems



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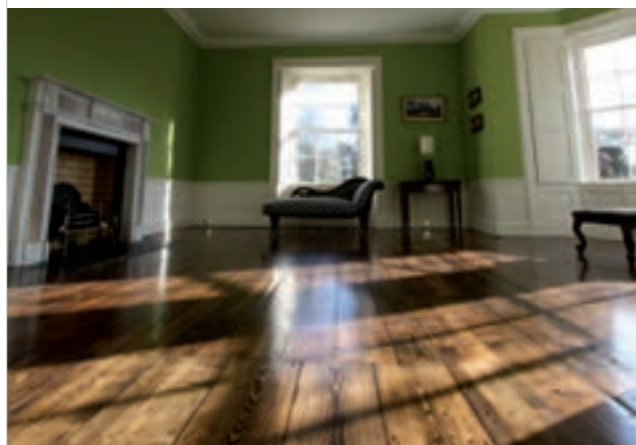


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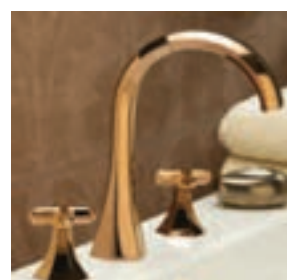




Sunspaces appears on Love Your Garden

SunSpaces was featured on ITV's *Love Your Garden!* To help transform Mark Ormrod's family garden, we supplied a SunSpace Aspire+ Veranda with a glass roof. This surprise project was in aid of Mark Ormrod, a former Marine who lost three limbs in Afghanistan. Mark's story has been well documented in the press and has had high level support from Prince Harry. Since becoming one of the UK's first triple amputee, Mr Ormrod has created a lot of awareness for the men and women wounded in action fighting on behalf of our country. ITV really wanted to support this inspirational man, and we were more than happy to help! We knew that our Sunspace Aspire+ was the perfect solution to the family's outdoor challenges. Sunspace Aspire+ verandas with a glass roof are modern, sophisticated and durable verandas. Their contemporary design provides you with shelter and the perfect space to relax in. These verandas are available either as attached or detached. Attached Aspire+ verandas are fixed to the back or side of your house, while the detached verandas can be placed anywhere you prefer in your garden. Our Aspire+ verandas with glass roofs have few supports hence gives you a clear, unbarred view. They come in four standard colours. They are also available in a range of other colours for an additional cost. We also offer a broad range of accessories to accompany our glass roof verandas.

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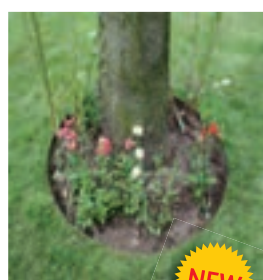
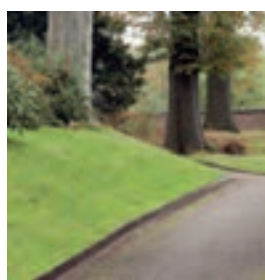
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See the light

Omid Nikroo of Loxone UK shares some advice on smart lighting and why you should consider it for your build

Lighting has been a ubiquitous feature in our homes since time immemorial. Granted, the methods we use to light our homes may have changed over the years, but the basic premise has remained the same.

We're now entering a 'new age' of lighting, moving away from the days of mere 'on' and 'off' to embracing technology as a way of improving how lighting affects the appearance and feel of a home.

Interestingly, many people don't give lighting much thought when it comes to budget allocation, however, it's often the single biggest influence on the way we feel when we're in a space, so getting it right is key. Lighting can be used to highlight features, furniture or favourite works of art. It can be used to zone areas, which is especially useful if your build is of the open-plan inclination.

It's important to consider different sources of light when planning spaces for your home. If we think of an open-plan kitchen/diner, we might have several different light circuits – some spotlights in the kitchen ceiling, some pendant lights over the dining table, perhaps a floor lamp, and some LED strip underneath the kitchen cabinets. Controlling all of these circuits individually would be a real pain. That's where smart lighting comes in.

SMART LIGHTING

In its simplest form, smart lighting affords you greater control over the lights within your home.

There are many options out there – from bulbs that you can purchase from your high street electrical retailer, to much more advanced systems that integrate with other aspects of your home.

More advanced smart lighting systems allow you to create 'moods' or 'scenes', by creating pre-set combinations of different lighting circuits, colours and brightnesses.



INSTALLATION

The technology of today moves at lightning speed, keeping up with the fact that lifestyles are increasingly fast-moving too. Your wiring infrastructure is the backbone of your home.

While it's easy to replace devices such as motion sensors or switches, having to open up walls to pull extra cables is much more costly and inconvenient. Therefore it's important to speak to your electrician or find a smart home professional early on in the build to help design a suitable system that

will work for you and your home.

There are different ways you can wire a smart lighting system. Traditionally, lighting circuits are wired on a ring main. Smart home systems can be wired on a 'bus' basis or 'star-wired' back to a central point, and some solutions offer a more flexible, free-form way of wiring.

Whichever option you choose, it's important to consider the functionality you require from your home, and to plan for anything you may be considering in the future.



Advanced smart lighting systems allow you to create 'moods' or 'scenes'

colder white. A very popular option for colour lighting is LED strip, which is usually used for indirect lighting. LED strip is commonly installed under kitchen cabinets, behind televisions, or underneath shelving and stair treads, to provide a subtle light and draw attention to a particular feature. The colour-changing aspect of this type of lighting is ideal if you're looking to instantly transform the look and feel of the home.

SWITCH PLACEMENT

Traditionally, light switches have always been installed near the entrance/exit to a room. In some rooms, however, it's more helpful to have a switch closer to hand – for example, next to the sofa to easily dim lights and lower the blinds when you're watching a film, or by the bed to switch off all the lights throughout the house without leaving your nest.

If you're planning a large kitchen which includes an island for food preparation, a wireless switch nearby could be used to do anything from making the lights brighter, to adjusting the volume of your music or starting the extractor hood.

The most important thing to do if you're considering smart lighting is to really think about your home and how you will live in it and interact with it. If you're going to be pulling cables for your lighting system, consider solutions that offer greater smart home functionality, such as heating and security automation, as these are likely to be the most reliable and offer the greatest value for money over the long term.

Whether you're embarking on a self-build, extension, renovation or just re-doing your kitchen; consider reaching out to a smart home expert who can help you realise your dream home.

Omid Nikroo is a home automation specialist at Loxone UK



This could mean ensuring you pull cable to the garden for lighting and audio, or to the loft space if you're thinking of having solar panels put in at a later date.

Of course, there are also wireless options. Smart light bulbs offer a very quick and simple way of controlling your lights through an app, but be aware that it's often difficult to integrate these type of products into a wider smart home system.

There are options on the market for fully integrated lighting that don't require any rewiring – the upfront cost of these solutions will likely be considerably more than if you were to opt for a piecemeal solution such as a smart bulb. However, like many things in life, you get what you pay for: in terms of functionality, you'll get much more value for your money if

you're able to have a fully integrated system put in at the first fix stage.

FURTHER CONSIDERATIONS

In addition to the physical wiring infrastructure of your lighting, it's also important to think about flexibility, do you want to control certain circuits, or even individual lights automatically? Individually addressable lights can be useful if you've not yet decided on placement of furniture or key pieces within a space, and they're a great choice if you're keen to maximise energy savings.

Colour is another important consideration. Do you just want a white light, or would you like to add colour to your home? When choosing a white light, most people tend to opt for a 'warm' white, which has a softer tone and doesn't feel as harsh as a



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info@compac.es

The extensive Fundo range from wedi



Whatever your project is - renovation or new build, wooden or concrete floor, point or linear design with or without integrated drainage - you will find a suitable shower element in **wedi's** extensive Fundo range. These shower trays are not only tileable and 100 per cent waterproof, but also unique in their thermal properties which provide added insulation, hence resulting in warmer tiles under foot. A whole bathroom from a single source: wedi building boards,

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Stay crisp and clean with BLANCO



BLANCO introduces the minimalistic, timeless Pleon sink to the impressive portfolio. There are three models to choose from – Pleon 5, Pleon 6 and Pleon 6 Split. The sinks are made from the durable Silgranit® PuraDur®, and are available in all eleven colours in the CombiColour range. There are also optional accessories for the Pleon. These include an elegant ash compound chopping board, a hang-in multifunctional colander in stainless steel

and a practical bowl rack. The innovative new InFino® waste system and the concealed hygienic C-Coverflow complete the look. **BLANCO** offers a selection of mixer taps which complement the Pleon sink.

info@blanco.co.uk

Innovative all-in-one bluetooth speaker



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