

# selfbuilder + homemaker

MAY/JUNE 2018

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### **Case study: Barn different**

A Kent couple turned a rural  
planning restriction into a  
virtue for their project

### **Scandi style**

Embracing the cool Swedish  
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### **6 TOP DOORS & WINDOWS TIPS**

Our resident expert explains the relative  
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## CASE STUDY 12 Barn stormer

In order to build in the Kent green belt, Richard and Susan Skelly had to exactly replicate the dimensions of an old barn they were replacing. Roseanne Field reports on how this constraint has given their home a unique character

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# EDITOR'S LETTER



Hi and welcome to your May/June edition of *Selfbuilder + Homemaker*! We have the usual array of useful features offering advice to self-builders on product choices – and this month it includes how to choose mortar and cement to avoid extra cost from wastage. Then there's a look at the benefits of smaller radiators that use less water, the importance of hinges for fire safety, and even how the garden foe of Japanese Knotweed can be defeated.

When it comes to interiors, we feature kitchen blogger Kat Jacklin on key kitchen design trends, and how low-VOC paints can now give you not only a healthier household but also the standard of performance you want. This month's Interior Inspiration selects some inspiring flooring products to underpin your house's look and feel, and Home Styling looks at how the Swedish trend of 'lagom' – i.e. everything in balance – is catching on among UK homeowners looking to get their interiors 'just so'.

When it comes to self-build projects, we welcome back Sarah Ball who updates us (in Secrets of Success) on progress on her self-build, which stalled a few months ago but is now back on site with a vengeance. The diggers are onsite and the groundworks are going in, and she's loving it! We also have a great case study starting on page 12 where Roseanne Field reports on how an agricultural planning constraint can be turned into a design virtue.

We hope you enjoy reading the issue as much as we enjoyed putting it together.

James Parker

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# Self-building turns a deep shade of green at Grand Designs Live

London's ExCeL saw the return of Grand Designs Live in May, with the show putting a strong focus on encouraging consumers and self-builders to reduce their waste on projects, and to look at innovative, eco-friendly product alternatives.

On 9 May, the 'face' of the Grand Designs brand Kevin McCloud guided press around some of the show's features, ranging from his Green Heroes to a pedal-powered motorhome called 'The Cockroach'. McCloud then got down to business, chairing a panel discussion on the main stage that focused on the reuse of plastic.

McCloud told the audience that it wasn't all down to self-builders: "Consumers feel that they have to bear all the responsibility and all the weight of recycling plastics at home, but there are responsibilities right through the supply chain – from big waste companies to manufacturing plants to designers," he commented.

McCloud also talked through some of his selected Green Heroes, including a sheet material made from recycled plastics, eco-friendly coffee logs and a natural insulation made from mushrooms. "Right from the start I felt very strongly that the Green Heroes should be products, ideas and people who are under-represented in the market," he said.

"It isn't enough for a green product simply to be low carbon, or recycled, or recyclable – it has to be all these things but moreover it has to stand its ground, compete with commercial products and succeed and win because it's more beautiful, it's more interesting, it has a greater value."

Harry Dwyer's 'The Cockroach' was the next stop – it is constructed entirely from 100 per cent recycled materials such as 'for sale' signs and tanking membranes. "It was basically what we could find in skips, so it evolved as we found more things," Dwyer explained. Solar panels on its roof power a mobility scooter battery and it includes an area fit for two people to sleep in along with a gas stove and TV powered by old laptop batteries.

Summing up what such projects demonstrate, McCloud said: "What we've got to stop doing is thinking about the waste stream as second best and start realising that it's capable of generating for us very bespoke, very high tech and very high performance products. It's all there to be extracted, squeezed out and reused."

Finally McCloud chaired the talk 'Plastic Surgery – Reducing Plastic Pollution', which saw comment and insight from James Shaw of James Shaw Studio, Vanessa Yuan of ecoBirdy, Adam Fairweather of Smile Plastics and Craig Bennett of Friends of the Earth. The discussion challenged consumers to be more aware of the products they buy both day to day and for their homes. Shaw, Yuan and Fairweather showed how their businesses create products from plastic waste, while Bennett and McCloud explained why they think the Government should introduce tighter legislation surrounding waste and recycling to make it easier for consumers.



# German design fuses traditional and contemporary in prefab show home

German prefabricated housing designer and manufacturer Baufritz has unveiled its new show home, which is designed to demonstrate how prefabricated housing can effectively combine traditional features with contemporary living.

On the ground floor of Heimat 4.0., which roughly translates as "feeling at home", elements of traditional living are revived. There is an open plan kitchen-dining-living space for cooking and socialising; the living and dining areas are divided by a traditional ceramic stove. There's a secluded alcove with a sofa set into the wall and a built in library, plus a home office and guest toilet, direct access to the terrace and garden, and copious natural light.

The first floor has four bedrooms including three children's rooms, two of them with space saving split-level sleeping galleries and a third with a cosy bed niche plus a play area. The three bedrooms share a children's bathroom. There is a spacious master bedroom with built-in furniture, its own dressing room and ensuite bathroom.

The self-contained apartment on the lower ground floor functions as a spacious workshop. In front, an integrated wood bench references traditional farmhouses. The show house also has a barn for small animals and integrated raised growing beds, giving a hint at self-sufficiency; the annexe is equipped with a wood-burning oven to make bread and pizza.

The concept also includes pellet boiler technology; as well as an integrated Stirling engine, photovoltaic system and battery to generate and store green energy. Also installed are a non-central ventilation system, AAA walls, underfloor heating and triple biological thermal insulation – all of which fulfil the criteria of a KfW 40 energy-saving house. Smart home technology offers lighting control using handheld and in-build devices, and "electro smog protection technology" gives electromagnetic protection.





# MOCT Studio-designed ‘3 x 5 House’ starts onsite

Bespoke architecture and design practice MOCT Studio has commenced work on its 3 x 5 House project, which received planning permission last year.

The name of the project refers to the dimensions of the house in Voss Street, east London. MOCT Studio are providing a full range of architectural services to transform the former garage site into a 40 m<sup>2</sup> home for the client.

The project is the latest in a string of renovations down the cobbled mews which traditionally occupied lock-up garages for market traders.

The house has been designed with a “deliberate lack of hierarchy”, which means the living spaces can be used flexibly. The areas within the building were designed to intersect in order to allow activity and light to pass through on into each other.

The three-storey house challenges the constraints of the narrow site by stacking areas against the rear wall. The available daylight will be maximised from the north facade through a double skin veil of translucent polycarbonate. An open kitchen occupies the lower ground floor, while a mezzanine-like raised ground floor contains a bathroom and living space.

The top floor comprises a bedroom and balcony that overlooks the mews. A perforated metal stair connects the levels and acts as a light shaft.

Chris Thorn, director at MOCT Studio commented: “For the first time the Draft New London Plan makes specific reference to small site, infill developments recognising the contribution these can make in delivering new homes for London.

We know that higher densities lead to higher land prices and in turn higher purchase prices. Rather than contributing to this problem, the project shows that small highly constrained sites, previously thought unbuildable, can be usurped by taking a creative and ambitious architectural approach.”

Mo Wong, also a director at MOCT Studio added: “Limited space and a constrained site meant that clear concepts were established at the outset of the project. These pose questions about contemporary urban living, the fabric of urban infill sites and our open, sometimes veiled, relationship to the street.”

## WE WANT YOUR PROJECTS!

At *Selfbuilder + Homemaker* we are constantly on the lookout for interesting self-build projects for both potential coverage in the magazine, and on the website. If you would like your project to be featured in the magazine, please drop the editor a line at [jparker@netmagmedia.co.uk](mailto:jparker@netmagmedia.co.uk)

Also, if you are not already registered to receive your free copy of *Selfbuilder & Homemaker* you can register online at the URL below, where you can also see a selection of case studies we have featured, in the Archive.



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## A WARNING ON BUILDERS’ INSURANCE

Homeowners improving their properties have been warned to check building contractors’ credentials after it was revealed up to half of the UK’s contractors may be underinsured.

Experts at Construction Insure claimed that around half of all UK contracting firms, including builders, plumbers, roofers and electricians do not have adequate insurance in place to cover their work.

The company say the use of price comparison websites for insurance services has led to an “epidemic of under insurance” across the construction sector.

The firm warned that the use of insurance comparison websites had often led to the purchase of an inadequate policy, putting homeowners at risk of liability if things go wrong. In some cases, said Construction Insure, this could lead to the homeowner losing all their investment.

Mark Herbert of Construction Insure commented: “Homeowners need to inspect insurance documents from prospective builders before agreeing to quotes and going ahead with works. Failure to do so could have disastrous consequences. We estimate around 50 per cent of all UK contractors do not have adequate insurance in place.”

He said there is a legal requirement for contractors to make sure they are insured by giving their insurance company full disclosure on the nature of the work they’re undertaking. He also advised homeowners to check builders’ insurance policies and check the small print to make sure all aspects are covered.

Explaining further the contractor’s responsibilities, he said: “The insurer needs to know everything about each project – from all planned work to the staff employed to carry it out. They need to know about all work subcontracted out to companies or if labour-only subcontractors are used.”





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# Shedding some light

Martyn Haworth from Bison Frames answers your questions about the wide range of window and door options available to self-builders, while describing some of the benefits of different styles and materials, and what to watch out for



**W**indows and doors clearly play a crucial part in the overall look of your self-build, so choosing the right products is key. But the vast choice of styles and materials can be pretty overwhelming, and make it hard to know where to begin.

## WHICH ARE THE MOST POPULAR TYPES OF WINDOWS AND DOORS?

In terms of materials, most modern windows and doors are made from PVCu, aluminium or timber. There are other options available (such as steel or hybrid), but they're not so common. Of the three, PVCu is still dominant, especially for

windows. At the same time, timber continues to decline. It still has its niche, particularly in the high-end replacement market, but isn't used so much on new build and self-build projects. In contrast, aluminium declined badly in the 1990s but is making a strong comeback.

## STYLES AND DESIGNS SEEM TO BE CHANGING; WHAT'S AVAILABLE?

When it comes to window designs, casements sit in the number one spot, followed by more specialist styles such as sash windows. More traditional styles are seeing a big increase in demand, partly driven by improvements in the versatility

of PVCu, allowing it to be used to create much more authentic looking windows. As a result sash windows have been growing in popularity for several years, and more recently traditional flush casements have burst onto the market.

For doors it's a different story. Composite doors are by far the most popular choice for entrances – their range of styles, colours and designs means that they can cater for almost every taste, at a reasonable price. Around the back of the house bi-folding doors are popular on new builds and extensions, while French doors are often used on refurbishments where bigger doors are impractical. Patio doors, which almost died out completely in the 2000s, are on the rise again as well.

## WHAT ARE THE RELATIVE MERITS OF PVCU?

The choice of material is governed by several things – not least personal taste. However, the two biggest considerations are generally style and budget.

PVCu is the market leader for a reason. It performs well in terms of insulation (both heat and sound) and security, it requires almost no maintenance and is generally the cheapest option. Its downfall used to be appearance – standard white PVCu was plain and bulky and in the early days earned a reputation for discolouring.

That has been resolved now though; modern PVCu can be made with a variety of woodgrain finishes and in a huge range of colours and shades. It performs better than ever before, the development of UV stabilisation means that it no longer discolours, and it's fully recyclable up to 10 times, making it more environmentally responsible.

Also, more care now goes into the way it's designed into windows, with developments such as PVCu sash windows and flush casements accurately mimicking the styles and designs of traditional windows. In short, PVCu has come a long way from the plain white frames of the 1980s and 90s.

## WHAT ABOUT ALUMINIUM?

The key benefit of aluminium – both in windows and doors – comes from its inherent strength. That means its profiles can be slimmer than other materials,



## *When it comes to choice of material, the two biggest considerations are generally style and budget*

maximising light and giving a clean, modern look. It's ideal for high-end modern builds, where architects, builders and homeowners want unfussy, understated windows. The real driver behind its recent popularity though is doors – specifically bi-folding doors.

Aluminium's strength makes it ideal for large aperture doors that help builders and architects blur the line between indoors and outdoors. Like PVCu, aluminium is also low maintenance, and especially long lasting. However, typically it's expensive, and in its standard form it suffers from poor thermal efficiency (although there are now hybrid forms on the market such as WarmCore which include a PVCu core through the aluminium profile in order to dramatically improve insulation).

### **AND WHAT ABOUT TIMBER?**

Timber is the traditional option for windows and doors, and brings a soft, warm feel. It's been used for hundreds of years, so it's well established. It performs well across the board and looks good – especially on more traditional projects.

If chosen with care it can also be long-lasting and sustainable.

However timber is generally in decline as a choice for windows and doors, replaced by PVCu in the window market and composite doors for entrances. There are two reasons for this: cost and maintenance. Timber windows and doors are usually expensive to buy, especially if you go for a long-lasting hardwood option. It's also the option that requires the most maintenance – repainting or staining every five years or so to keep it protected and looking good. This can put people off.



### **ONCE I'VE SELECTED MY WINDOWS AND DOORS, WHAT ELSE I SHOULD LOOK OUT FOR?**

Whichever option you go for, make sure you buy from an established manufacturer. Everything they make should be CE Marked, while information on U-values and energy ratings should be available and – if you're taking any extra options such as enhanced security – a manufacturer's PAS 24 or Secured by Design accreditations should be available to you too.

When installing your windows, be aware that they're subject to building control, so they will be inspected. If you're using an installer (rather than fitting them yourself or your builder

doing it), the installer should be part of an approved Certified Persons Scheme – FENSA is the most common – which negates the need for an inspection.

Finally, as a manufacturer my advice is to not order windows and doors off plan – wait until the apertures are in place and have them properly surveyed. And always allow a 10 mm fitting tolerance. I've seen too many projects go wrong when windows were ordered off plan, arrived and didn't fit – the windows were the right size, but the holes they go into weren't. It can be a costly mistake!

*Martyn Haworth is director of Bison Frame – manufacturers of the Genesis Collection and WarmCore windows and doors*



# INTERIOR INSPIRATION: FLOORS & FLOOR COVERINGS

The flooring you choose can make a huge difference to the overall finish and look of your new home. This issue, *Selfbuilder + Homemaker* takes a look at the various options available, from bright, daring tiles and sumptuous rugs to calm, neutral carpets and mix and match porcelains.



1. The **Graffiti** tile is part of **Stone & Ceramic Warehouse's** Style Collection. The colourful tiles are finished with a highly polished glass surface, giving them an unparalleled shine. The tiles are inspired by street art from cities all over the world, with a total of 68 different creations forming the range.  
[www.sacw.co.uk](http://www.sacw.co.uk)



2. The unique finish of the **Calamine** tiles from **Planium** is created by a rolling technique during the thermal processing of steel. The finish is sensitive to humidity and light, meaning the colours of the tiles can range from dark blues to copper tones depending on the environment.  
[www.planium.it](http://www.planium.it)



**3. The Moliere Grey Décor and Plain tiles from Tile Mountain** are ideal for mixing and matching, allowing you to be as adventurous as you want with the patterned tiles and allowing you to create your own unique design. The tiles are made from porcelain with a matt finish.  
[www.tilemountain.co.uk](http://www.tilemountain.co.uk)

**4. Shimu's Shetland Wool Rug** in cream is made with 100 per cent pure wool threads of Shetland. The thick rug benefits from a neutral colour and will instantly add warmth to any room. The rug is available in four sizes as standard although bespoke sizes can be made to order.  
[www.shimu.co.uk](http://www.shimu.co.uk)



**5. Sisal & Seagrass' Coir Boucle carpet** is created by hand spinning the raw fibres derived from the outer husk of a coconut. This technique creates a rustic-looking, homely design and a resilient carpet that can stand up to wear and tear, making it ideal for high-traffic areas.  
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## CASE STUDY

# BARN STORMER

In order to build in the Kent green belt, Richard and Susan Skelly had to exactly replicate the dimensions of an old barn they were replacing. Roseanne Field reports on how this constraint has given their home a unique character





#### AGRICULTURAL MISSION

The barn which was previously on the rural site in Knockholt

The asymmetrical sloping roof of Richard and Susan Skelly's home in the village of Knockholt, just outside Sevenoaks in Kent, exactly mimics the roof of the old cattle barn that previously sat on the same spot.

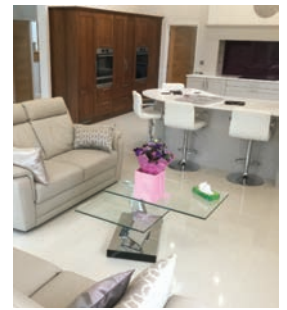
The building had lain unused and dilapidated for a number of years – the dairy farm ceased operating 40 years ago – but nevertheless played an important part in the couple's journey.

Richard and Susan had lived on the farm for 24 years before the opportunity arose to develop the barn – which was something that

Richard had always thought about doing. "When we bought the farm, I'd always said this would make a nice site to build on, it being one and a half acres," Richard says. Their belief however was that due to its location in the green belt, they would never be granted planning permission.

It was thanks to a change in permitted development rights in England that Richard's ideas finally looked like they could become reality. This key change made it easier for agricultural buildings to be transformed into residential dwellings.





## LOW POINT

Richard: "When we thought the boiler had gone wrong." He had in fact knocked a lever when he almost fell into the oil tank while dipping a stick into it to check the oil level (as their monitor is broken)!

However, while the permitted development rights amendment meant it was now possible to do something with the footprint of the barn, it also came with some strict requirements. "One of the criteria was that you had to have not used the barn in the last two years," Richard explains. They were fine on this front, as during their two decades on the farm it had seen no use.

The house also had to sit within a very specific boundary. "The design had to be within the footprint of what the barn was," says Richard. "We couldn't go even a centimetre over what was originally here." The requirement to slope the roof in the same way as the barn meant the house wouldn't be what Susan had ideally wanted. "I would have liked a more 'conventional' house," she explains. The barn had also featured skylights along the flatter part of the large sloped roof, which also had to be replicated in the new design.

Despite the restrictions, they persevered and made contact with a local architect who drew up plans for the build. Originally the idea of using weatherboarding was posed to them but Susan was concerned it would make the house look inappropriate in its setting, even that "it would make the house too much like a factory". She adds: "We had to be so careful in terms of how we designed it".

### GETTING THE BALL ROLLING

The new legislation Richard and Susan were applying for planning under caused some confusion among the architects and the council planners. "When we first spoke to them, Sevenoaks Council were adamant we couldn't do certain things," explains Richard. The permitted development rights meant they needed to meet 10 different points in order for the application to be approved – unfortunately their architect also failed to include some of these necessary elements.

Luckily, a good friend of the couple was on hand with the right skill set to help get everything in order. "He does a lot of building, and he pointed out what was missing and came with us to a meeting," says Susan. They had all the necessary surveys done, went back to the council with revised plans and documents, and it was successful.

The couple then began discussing their build with various potential providers and were invited to attend Build It Live at the Bluewater retail park by one firm, a specialist oak building company. Armed with their plans, they visited the show and located them, however it didn't turn out as planned. "When we showed them what we were intending to do they didn't want to get involved," says Susan. "It was quite surprising."

Richard had originally dismissed the idea of approaching a kit house builder, assuming the unique shape and design of their house simply wouldn't be a good fit. However, as they were leaving the show an undeterred Susan spotted Scandia-Hus and decided to talk to them, which proved to be the turning point for the couple. "They really showed us what we could do," she says.

### MAKING PROGRESS

They provided Scandia-Hus with all the plans and drawings they had, along with all the letters and paperwork Sevenoaks Council had sent them detailing the permission granted. "They basically took it over at that point," says Richard.

Susan and Richard dealt in the main with the company's managing director, Derek Dawson. He suggested one key change to the existing plans which the pair are now extremely grateful for. Originally, they had planned to include a garage within the build, but he assured them they didn't need to. "He told us we'd be able to get some form of separate garage once the



## HIGH POINT

Susan: "The excitement of moving in."

Richard: "There was a bit of trepidation as well though having lived in the same house for the last 24 years!"



house was up, so why take away all that space," Richard explains.

The couple worked collaboratively on the design for their house, which was loosely based on Scandia-Hus' chalet-style timber framed Adelia design. Derek and his team also helped double-check all of the legal compliance issues.

With work about to begin onsite in February 2016, Richard and Susan encountered another hitch – they weren't allowed to completely demolish the barn before commencing. "We couldn't just pull it down – they had to build around it, which was obviously a challenge," explains Susan. Some parts of the barn were removed as the new building went up, while others had to remain within the new structure, as per the requirements of the permitted development rights.

Despite starting the build in late winter, the weather surprisingly caused no delays. "We had a mild spring and quite a hot summer so they were able to get the footings in quickly," says Richard. "The team that put up the timber frame were able to get it done within a few weeks. The weather was always good to us!" The frame was manufactured offsite in Scandia-Hus' West Sussex factory.

The major construction work didn't take too long, despite having to build around the pre-existing barn. "The biggest phase really was the inside," explains Richard. In particular, laying the pipework for the underfloor heating – of which there's 2.5 km – the tiling and the carpentry for the flooring, internal doors and skirting boards were the biggest and most time-consuming jobs. "I think the tiler spent almost four months here!" Richard says.

One of the elements they found most frustrating was 'plugging in' the services – they had to have electricity and water connected, a process they found to be drawn out and expensive. "We had to have the road closed for

a week to get the electricity onsite," says Susan. "The pipe for the water runs down the road, and we took the new pipe to it, but to get the two connected was £2,000," adds Richard. "You have no choice, you have to do it." The couple decided against connecting to the mains drainage and installed a Klargestep septic tank system.

Although they found the build took longer than they originally anticipated, they admit they were in no hurry. In fact, when the build began they didn't necessarily plan to move into it themselves. "It wasn't always our intention," says Susan. "We just thought we'd do it, and then we saw how nice it was!" As they still had their farmhouse next door – which they still own and are currently letting – how long it took wasn't a huge concern.

The final major piece of construction work was creating a separate entrance to the house from the road – something Richard and Susan were surprised see the council recommending. "We thought it might be quite difficult, but they said the other entrance had poor sightlines," Susan says. "Overall the site really did lend itself to a separate dwelling."

Although Scandia-Hus managed the project, the couple kept themselves as involved as possible. "We would come down everyday and see the progress," says Susan. They were also responsible for ordering in key fixtures such as the sanitaryware. "We had to keep on top of it, otherwise it would hold everything up," Susan explains. "You can't afford to make a mistake because that costs everyone time, and also costs us money."

## THE FINISHED PRODUCT

The 4,500 ft<sup>2</sup> house boasts a double-height hallway, with an open timber staircase curving up to the first floor which is situated on the right of the house, due to the sloped roof. Susan



confesses she's still taken aback by its size: "I still find it impossible to believe this was a barn. It didn't seem this big!"

Upstairs are three of the five bedrooms, each with their own ensuite, including the master, which features a west-facing balcony to make the most of the views across the fields at the back. Due to following the line of the original barn, the roof has two different gradients, giving an unusual variation to the front facade. Beyond the junction where the roof begins its shallower gradient the space is not habitable but is ideal for storage, and has walk-in wardrobes leading through to smaller storage areas – one of which Susan has put to use as a home office.

The front bedroom benefits from floor to ceiling windows, which make it a bright, sunny room. Originally the two wardrobes in the master bedroom were going to be bigger, but Richard decided they were unnecessarily large so requested they were made smaller, which caused a slight construction headache. "They had to knock the walls down and move them," he explains.

Downstairs, the other two bedrooms and their ensembles sit on one side of the hall, while a snug and WC are on the other. At the back of the hall a door on the left leads through to the large dining/living/kitchen area and separate utility and boot rooms. Two different coloured cabinets feature in the kitchen, which the couple chose in order to break to space up, but the standout feature is the curved breakfast bar, which is covered by one large piece of quartz. "It took five men to bring it in!" recalls Richard.

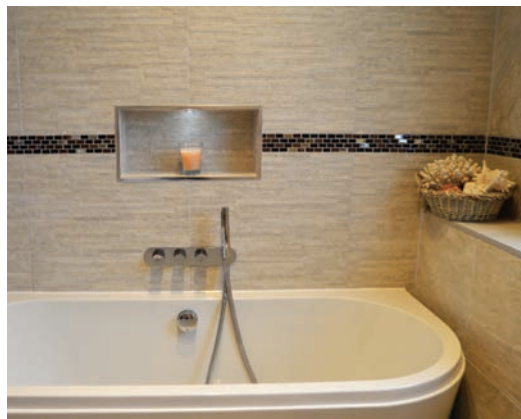
The living room, which features a modern woodburning stove, can be reached from either the kitchen/dining space or a door at the back of the hall. It was intentionally kept separate: "We wanted the doors to cut off the lounge so we can make it a cosy room on its own," says Richard.

The house also incorporates some exposed timber beams and is contemporarily decorated and furnished. Susan took on the substantial task of the interior design and decorating, of which one of the most crucial jobs was choosing the tiles for each bathroom. "I made one mistake with some tiles," she admits. "They'd been put up and I just didn't like them, so he had to take them all up!"

The house is encircled by grass, which under the planning conditions the couple must leave untouched. "We can't treat the land as a garden, we can't plant anything," says Richard. Various sliding doors across the back of the house open out onto this land.

The underfloor heating which warms the home works off an oil boiler, which also heats the hot water. They did consider both ground and air source, but the cost was "substantially more" and Richard was advised that the technology in this area is moving at such a pace it can be hard to keep up. However, should they want to switch further down the line their system can be easily connected.

After nearly two years of work, and just as Richard and Susan thought they were finally



going to be able to move in, a particularly heavy bout of rain caused the ground floor to flood. "They put the water pipe through a protective sleeve – some water got into it and therefore into the house," explains Richard. "We mopped it all up but the grouting got quite badly stained so it had to be redone."

Despite this last minute drama, in January this year the couple finally moved in, and they are very happy with the house – as are most of the locals. "Even the people that were against it now say it's so much nicer to have an attractive home rather than a dilapidated barn," says Richard. "I'm pleased with everything," Susan adds. "It's been superb!"

The final validation for the couple of their house's quality is the fact it has been nominated for a regional LABC Building Excellence award, which is the icing on the cake for their highly successful project. ■

## CONTACTS/ SUPPLIERS

**Scandia-Hus**  
[www.scandia-hus.co.uk](http://www.scandia-hus.co.uk)

### WINDOWS

**Westcoast Windows (7012 Basalt Grey)**  
[www.westcoastwindows.com](http://www.westcoastwindows.com)

### UNDERFLOOR HEATING

**Robbens**  
[www.underfloorheating.co.uk](http://www.underfloorheating.co.uk)

### EXTRACT SYSTEM

**Systemair**  
[www.systemair.com/en-GB/UK](http://www.systemair.com/en-GB/UK)

### KITCHEN

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[stoneham-kitchens.co.uk](http://stoneham-kitchens.co.uk)

### TILES

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## Builder and Plasterers Essentials

One of the world's largest construction manufacturers, **Simpson Strong-Tie**, has released a new catalogue of structural connectors, beads and meshes aimed squarely at the repair, maintenance and improvement sector.

The 2018 'Builder and Plasterers Essentials' brochure includes all of the core products that the professional builder or plasterer reaches for when renovating or extending homes.

Simpsons' Sarah Greenway explains: "We wanted to provide something more accessible to the builders' merchant. We spoke to our customers and they told us what they really like to see in the catalogue (and what they don't particularly need), and this is the result – a brochure focussed entirely on the things that matter to the RMI sector."

The lighter and easier to navigate brochure is now on Simpson Strong-Tie's website and hard copies are available on request.

01827 255600 [www.strongtie.co.uk](http://www.strongtie.co.uk)

## The Solid Gear VENT Safety Shoe



**Solid Gear** continues to modernize safety footwear with the revolutionary 'Infinity' technology in this new shoe. Combining a lightweight athletic look with maximum breathability and superb safety features, the new VENT safety shoe is ideal for workers who are constantly on the move. VENT's upper is made from lightweight mesh combined with Cordura and a TPU reinforcement to ensure cool comfort, maximum breathability and enhanced durability. While the shoe's two midsoles deliver stability, flexibility and optimal energy return for enhanced comfort on your feet, the rubber outsole provides a high level of anti-slip protection.

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**Snickers'** new ALLROUND Tool Vest is the ultimate in tool-carrying technology. Versatile and adjustable, the ergonomic design features a wide range of hard-wearing pockets for a variety of tools fixings and accessories. It's lightweight, hard-wearing, comfortable and easy to keep clean. The Tool Vest's ergonomic comfort also looks after your back by providing for comfortable heavy tool carrying through the specially designed wide shoulders, elasticated back and an integral waist belt to take pressure off your shoulders. It comes with Cordura® 500 reinforced front holster pockets for enhanced durability and easy-access angled rear holster pockets.

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## The impact on wood-using industries



The popular website [www.usewoodwisely.co.uk](http://www.usewoodwisely.co.uk) answers the demand for easily-digestible and understandable information on the contentious issue of UK power stations burning wood to generate electricity. Hosted by **Norbord**, a leader in panel products, the site explains the intricacies of the argument which has seen industry confront government over the issue of subsidies provided to biomass power plants amongst other related topics. Government

policy has created a market distortion, resulting in increased wood costs. Norbord continues to campaign for the best use of wood supplies via the Use Wood Wisely campaign.

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

## Third Queen's Award for Ancon



**Ancon** has won a 2018 Queen's Award for Enterprise in the Innovation category, for the successful introduction and on-going development of its advanced composite, low thermal conductivity, Teplo wall tie range. This is the third time that Ancon has been honoured in this prestigious award scheme. Teplo wall ties are manufactured from continuous basalt fibres set in a resin matrix; a fibre-reinforced polymer that is 70 times more thermally efficient than steel. Teplo wall tie range includes Teplo-L

suitable for surface-fixing in timber frame construction, the Teplo-BF with moulded safety ends that improve build ability, and the Teplo-BFR which can be resin-bonded in existing walls for retrofit applications.

0114 238 1219 [www.ancon.co.uk](http://www.ancon.co.uk)

## George Clarke becomes Ecodan brand ambassador

**Mitsubishi Electric** has announced an association with TV presenter, architect, lecturer and writer, George Clarke, to help promote Ecodan air source heat pumps. Best known for the Channel 4 programmes *George Clarke's Amazing Spaces*, *The Home Show* and *Restoration Man*, George Clarke is a passionate advocate of design excellence and high levels of quality in the construction industry. In addition to his TV work, George is creative director of George Clarke + Partners and has set up the charity, Ministry of Building Innovation and Education (MOBIE) to inspire new generations into the building profession to "fundamentally transform" the way we think about, design and construct homes and bridge the skills gap.

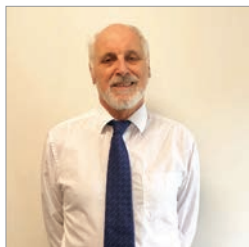
Mr Clarke will help promote renewable heating and write a monthly column on the company's award-winning blogsite, [thehub.mitsubishielectric.co.uk](http://thehub.mitsubishielectric.co.uk), which covers a diverse range of informative and useful topics around energy use in buildings.

George Clarke comments: "The way we design, build, heat, power and recycle our homes needs to change and change quickly and renewable heating is an important part of our future. I'm therefore delighted to associate myself with the market-leading brand of heat pumps which are built here in the UK and which can help reduce energy bills and lower emissions for almost any home."

01707 278666 [www.ecodan.co.uk](http://www.ecodan.co.uk)



## BLM British Lead's technical support service



**BLM British Lead** is pleased to announce the launch of its own in-house technical support service with David Pounds joining the company as Technical Advisor. David comes with a wealth of knowledge and experience in the industry, having spent 13 years as Technical Advisor at the Lead Sheet Association. The service aims to fulfil the requirements of architects, specifiers, surveyors, contractors and property owners working at design, construction or post installation stages.

For more information on the level of support you require, please contact BLM's technical team.

0330 333 3535 [technical@britishlead.co.uk](mailto:technical@britishlead.co.uk)



## Imperial launches historic bricks



**Imperial Bricks**, one of the leading traditional handmade brick suppliers in the UK, has added two new bricks to their range: the Olde Reclamation Clamp and 2% Reclamation Cheshire. The Olde Reclamation Clamp replicates traditional handmade bricks in historic towns across the UK, particularly Yorkshire, Lincolnshire and Cheshire, and the 2% Reclamation is an excellent solution for restoration and renovation projects throughout the UK.

The Olde Reclamation Clamp is a highly attractive and characterful brick, with red/orange shades. Available in both imperial and metric sizes the brick is the perfect option for restoration and renovation projects, as well as new builds.

01952 750816 [www.imperialbricks.co.uk](http://www.imperialbricks.co.uk)

## The people behind the product

**Freefoam** are delighted to announce the launch of three new short videos to promote the business online and through social media. Showcasing the faces behind the product, and the production and distribution facilities located in Northampton all three give a real insight into how pvc building products are made and distributed from start to finish. With social media becoming an essential part of any companies marketing strategy Freefoam are committed to producing high quality, interesting, up to the minute content – and video is the perfect medium to achieve this. It instantly engages with both existing customers and prospective audiences. Using Social Media agency Mind Made the filming took place over three days using drone, GoPro and steadicam technologies to capture the busy day to day operation as it happened. The production facility video features Freefoam's 21 metre high 'mixing' plant, and 3,840m<sup>2</sup> manufacturing plant illustrating how the virgin powder is mixed and blended to produce the raw material and then skilfully heated and processed on extrusion lines to produce a range of products including fascia, soffit and guttering. This video highlights how products are stored, picked, packaged and despatched to customers throughout the UK.

01604 591110 [www.freefoam.com/professional/about-freefoam](http://www.freefoam.com/professional/about-freefoam)



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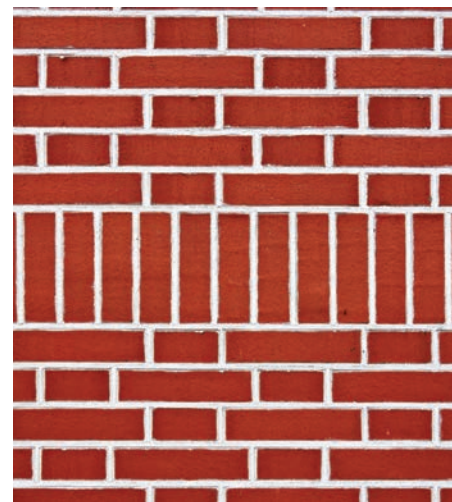


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# Reduce waste and save costs

Tarmac Cement's Dr Bill Price explains why it's important to give mortar and cement careful consideration and how the right product can result in reduced wastage and costs



**T**he value of the self- and custom-build market is forecast to grow by 41 per cent by 2020, according to the Homebuilding and Renovating 'Self and Custom Build Market Report 2017'. Against this backdrop, which is supported by the new Right to Build legislation, it's no wonder that self- and custom-build is becoming a popular housing choice.

For many self-builders the financial rewards are clear, including lower costs and a reduced stamp duty bill. However, as with any building work, self-build projects can vary enormously, not only because of the type of design and materials used, but also because of the level of construction that is commissioned. Keeping in control of the project timeline and staying within budget is therefore of paramount importance when looking to achieve overall financial gain.

Thanks to its strong, durable and long-lasting properties, masonry construction remains the most common form of house construction in the UK. However, while careful consideration is given to the specification of the bricks and blocks, this often isn't the case with other associated materials including cement and mortar. Both of these products are often seen as commodities thanks to their proven track record and availability. This means that buyers regularly make spontaneous purchases. However, doing your homework to select the best product for the job can reap numerous rewards.

In many instances it's often not one big thing that differentiates one type of cement or mortar from another. Rather, it is the sum of all the little things that can really make a big difference including improved health and safety, reduced wastage and a tighter control on spend.

When selecting a cement, always review the product characteristics and

benefits. For example, does it have enhanced resistance to freeze/thaw attack? Does it have a lower water demand? Does it produce a more cohesive mix which is therefore easier to compact, spread and finish? And while it may not seem like a deal breaker, the type of packaging and size of the product is also worth considering.

The majority of cement available to buy as a packed product comes in 25 kg bags for builders to split open with a spade and load up the mixer with half of the bag. On a larger self-build site, where there are multiple mixes to be made in one day, this isn't an issue. However, smaller projects, which may only require one mix at a time could result in the half opened bag potentially going to waste or being spoilt.

This is because of the other half of cement is often left lying around, meaning that cement dust gets into all sorts of unwanted places. Overall, the process is extremely wasteful.

In contrast, there are products on the market now that come in 12.5 kg bags – half the size of the traditional bag. Importantly, this means it has the exact amount for one mix of mortar, ultimately reducing waste. For self-builders this means that money and cement can be saved as they can buy the exact size that they need.

As expected, a smaller bag is also lighter, which makes it easier for builders to deal with onsite. Some bags even come with a small, inbuilt handle so it can be easily carried in one hand, reducing the risk of accidents. It essentially makes the product easier to transport, whether that be up ladders or on to site through confined spaces such as passage ways.

As well as handling, it's also important to look at storage, especially as products can remain outdoors and onsite for a number of months. With the unpredictable British weather,

something as simple as waterproof packaging can increase storage space for water vulnerable products and eliminate wastage through accidental damage.

When looking for a high quality mortar there are many qualities to look out for, from how it hangs on the trowel and spreads, to its workability, compressive strength and appearance. For many self-builders a pre-packed ready to use mortar is therefore a firm favourite. The guaranteed mix proportions of a ready to use mortar also help overcome many potential problems relating to site mixing. These include the use of excess water and the addition of other inappropriate materials. This can result in reduced strength, increased permeability and reduced durability of the hardened mortar.

As expected, a pre-mixed mortar eliminates all of these headaches. With improved quality and consistency, products such as Blue Circle Quality Assured Mortar are made to exacting standards in a controlled factory setting. Ready to use, with the addition of water, these dry mixes already include selected sands, lime, cement and admixtures, which have been blended together to produce the ideal product. Quality products from reputable manufacturers should also be available in weatherproof, tear resistant plastic bags and for even smaller projects, some come in re-sealable plastic tubs to reduce mess and wastage on site.

For self-builders, products that make them feel confident about the task at hand are essential, and the onus is on manufacturers to equip them with the best quality products. For the growing self-build market, the right products that can reduce waste and worries, while also saving costs, are therefore essential.

*Dr Bill Price is national commercial technical manager at Tarmac Cement*





# A green partnership

Heat pumps are often paired with underfloor heating, but a system featuring low-H<sub>2</sub>O radiators could provide greater comfort, control and efficiency. Jaga UK's Claire Owen discusses why implementing renewable heating needs a 'whole system approach' to work best

Many people build their dream home with the vision of it being sustainable, opting to power their homes using renewable energy sources for a lifetime of low energy bills. One of the most popular choices for green heating systems are air, ground or water source heat pumps; particularly in off-grid areas where self-builders seek an efficient alternative to oil, LPG or electric heaters.

All heat pumps use the same basic principle of extracting heat from a natural source and passing it over a heat exchanger to obtain a higher temperature. Many people liken this process to a refrigerator working in reverse. Heat pumps use electricity to harness the latent heat from the source, but the amount of heat energy delivered is several times more than the electrical energy consumed, resulting in a high Coefficient of Performance (COP).

As heat pumps transfer rather than produce heat they are more efficient than traditional heating systems. What's more, they are estimated to reduce electricity use (and cost) for heating by around 50 per cent, compared to electric resistance heaters and, when utilised properly, can also provide excellent thermal comfort. It is also possible to receive Renewable Heat Incentive (RHI) tariff payments for ground source and air source heat pumps, resulting in even greater value for money for the homeowner in the long term.

However, there is more to creating an energy efficient heating system than just a heat pump – the product it is installed with must also be selected for maximum value.

Heat pumps operate at lower temperatures than gas or oil boilers and therefore require a different system set-up. Historically, heat pumps have been partnered almost exclusively with underfloor heating. However, despite its popularity, underfloor heating does have its limitations. For example, it needs a wide surface area to get up to temperature, and therefore requires a large amount of water. For a standard low

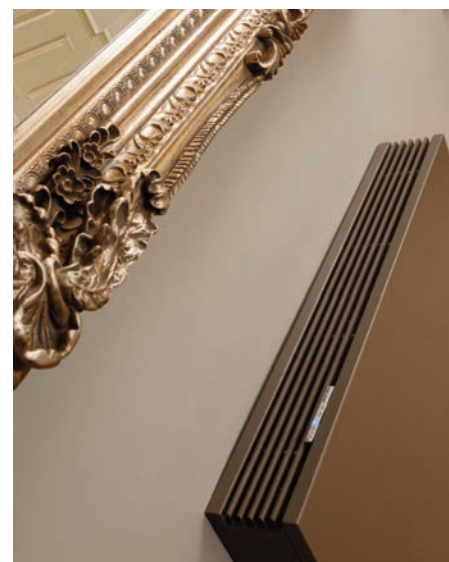
temperature 10 kW wet underfloor system, with a 45/35/20°C temperature profile, an average of 29 litres of water needs to be heated, which means spaces which utilise this technology can take several hours to reach optimum temperature and take just as long to cool back down.

Low-H<sub>2</sub>O radiators used in connection with fan assisted technology are ideally suited to low temperature systems. For example, in a similar 10 kW system, a low-H<sub>2</sub>O radiator can require just 3.2 litres of water – 90 per cent less than an underfloor heating system like the one mentioned above. The aluminium and copper alloy heat exchanger rapidly transfers the heat to the room taking only two minutes to warm up and achieve the same ultimate output. With less water being used, low-H<sub>2</sub>O radiators can respond faster than their higher water content counterparts, consequently consuming less energy.

Heat pumps can work well with radiators provided the system is properly designed. Heat pumps typically work at a temperature of 38-45 degrees, much lower than a standard gas or oil-fired system which typically operates at a temperature of 75 degrees. Radiators that are matched to a renewable system need to be large enough to emit enough heat at the lower temperatures which a heat pump works at. This leads to some installers "over sizing" the radiators, so, for example, fitting a three-metre radiator rather than a one metre low-H<sub>2</sub>O radiator.

The owners of Minstrels Barn in Caldwell, North Yorkshire chose to pair low-H<sub>2</sub>O Jaga Strada DBE radiators with a ground source heat pump when they decided to implement renewable technologies that would make the building sustainable for years to come.

Sean Sowden, property owner and co-founder of Go Geothermal explains: "Minstrel's Barn was previously fuelled through oil. We decided to install a ground source heat pump as an alternative, supported by the use of solar thermal energy (to heat domestic hot



water and to pre heat the glycol up to 20°C), and set ourselves the target of achieving the most efficient closed loop ground source heat pump in the UK – with a coefficient of performance (COP) ratio of at least 6.5, which has been achieved by enhancing the brine temperature from solar integration.

"However, given the heritage of the building, we had to ensure that we retained its character. For example, keeping the original oak floor in some rooms, as well as decorative floor tiling in others, meant that underfloor heating wasn't an option. Low flow, energy efficient radiators became the natural choice.

"Since the radiators have been installed, our energy bills have fallen significantly, and the house is lovely and warm 24/7."

For self-builders looking for a sustainable, future-proof heating and hot water, heat pumps are a smart choice. However, to maximise the efficiency of the entire system it is important to look beyond underfloor heating at other technologies such as low-H<sub>2</sub>O radiators.

*Claire Owen is managing director at Jaga UK*



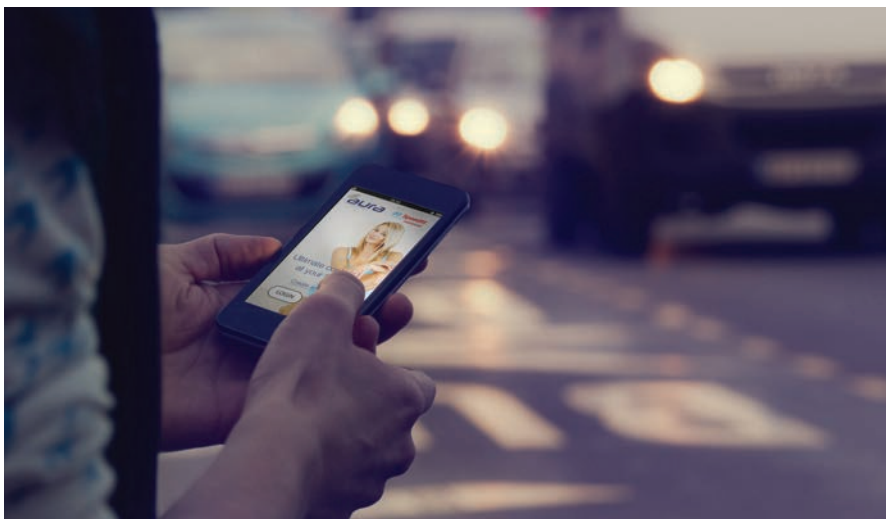
# Everything you should consider when installing UFH

Underfloor Heating (UFH) is most commonly used by homeowners to efficiently regulate heat across a whole floor. However, more and more people are now using UFH in single rooms such as conservatories and extensions. It is therefore very important for homeowners to understand how best to approach this type of installation. Nigel Sanger, Divisional Director – Technical Support at JG Speedfit, explores the different options available to homeowners when considering single room UFH.

In general, underfloor heating systems are installed across multiple rooms – for example across the ground floor of a property. The standard installation process is based around the connection to a manifold, with multiple ports. Each is used to distribute water to different rooms in line with their individual heating requirements.

This manifold is usually coupled to a blending valve which allows the UFH system to run at a lower water temperature than central heating and hot water circuits. Moreover, each room has its own thermostat which allows the manifold to direct water to every room.

However, what happens when a homeowner decides to use a single room UFH as opposed to an entire floor? Larger projects suit the above method, but this approach is less suitable for a single room. Achieving a



warm conservatory can be done via a much simpler method instead, namely single room UFH packs which offer their own unique benefits.

## CONNECTIVITY

Installing a single room UFH to its own dedicated circuit is a preferred method for most homeowners as it allows complete control over the heating in that room. It can be activated independently of the central heating system and is a lot more effective.

Furthermore, it allows the heating to be tailored to provide the greatest level of comfort, thus maximising energy and cost savings.

## MATERIALS WASTAGE

When fitting UFH into a single room, you will want the installation to be as easy as possible, because it could be an unfamiliar process when doing your own conservatory or extension.

To overcome this challenge, the Room Packs from JG Speedfit have been designed to offer maximum ease of use and functionality to the user. Its pre-configured systems reduce installation times significantly with its intelligent design and each pack comes with everything necessary for spaces up to 30sqm. Unused parts and spare pipes are now a thing of the past!

Fitted with the latest A-rated pump, the control unit has integral ball valves for isolation from the primary heating system. It also includes an adjustable

blending valve and a six-metre head circulation pump. An anti-vibration mounting bracket is incorporated, ensuring silent operation.

For UFH novice installers, particularly homeowners who are completely new to single room UFH, these room packs provide everything necessary to efficiently and easily fit underfloor heating – with very little wastage.

## AESTHETICS AND CONTROLS

Homeowners will benefit from more space for interior design as there are no radiators in these spaces. Single room UFH can also be remotely controlled via the JG Aura app, from anywhere, at anytime.

## DON'T FORGET ABOUT THE SCREED

Finally, make sure a variety of BS 8204 approved screeds are used for this type of installation. Typically, 65-75mm thick for sand-cement types or 40-50mm for liquid pumped screeds work best.

It is imperative that screed should be laid as soon as possible after the pressure test and should be left under pressure during the screeding process. The floor finish must be laid when the screed is fully cured. Single room underfloor heating is growing in demand and JG Speedfit is helping homeowners achieve their heating control goals.

**01895 425333**  
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## Brett Martin launches robust lids and frames



Heavy duty, robust and easy-to-fit 50kN<sup>1</sup> 450mm Lids and Frames have been added to the comprehensive range of Underground, Rainwater and Plumbing systems from **Brett Martin** Plumbing and Drainage. Suitable for residential applications, these hardwearing Lids and Frames offer strength and massive loading capability. Fully compatible with Brett Martin Sfa7 Adoptable and Non-Adoptable Inspection Chambers and manufactured from polypropylene, Brett Martin Lids and

Frames are available in round and square options and feature a webbed rib design for added strength. The lightweight Lids and Frames offer ease of installation are easy to remove for maintenance and inspection.

028 9084 9999 [www.brettmartin.com](http://www.brettmartin.com)

## EnviroVent's systems receive certification



Four mechanical ventilation heat recovery (MVHR) units from **EnviroVent**, one of the UK's leading ventilation manufacturers, have been approved by the Passive House Institute, for use in Passive House developments. EnviroVent's energiSava<sup>®</sup> 300 and 400 and Slimline 150 and 300 units have been awarded a PHI Component Certificate, after each one passed rigorous quality and energy performance tests set by the Passive House Institute. The energiSava<sup>®</sup> models are high efficiency whole house heat

recovery systems with maximum airflow capacities of 300 and 400 m<sup>3</sup>/h. The energiSava<sup>®</sup> and Slimline heat recovery systems work by extracting moisture laden air and re-supplying clean, fresh air into a property.

0345 27 27 807 [www.envirovent.com](http://www.envirovent.com)

## Slates complement selfbuild design



Good quality and modern aesthetics are perfectly combined in the fibre cement slate roof of a selfbuild residential property, thanks to the installation of **Cembrit** Jutland fibre cement slates. The property has been constructed to feature a modern style and character that blends into the surrounding environment. Local builders merchant, James Burrell supplied roofing contractor, Wilkinson Roofing with Cembrit Jutland fibre cement slates. Jutland slates feature a smooth surface and are pre-holed, square

edged and lightweight. They do not need to be graded and sorted like natural slates. These qualities combine to make them easy to handle and install and an ideal solution for a fast-track construction environment.

[sales@cembrit.co.uk](mailto:sales@cembrit.co.uk)

## Timber frame manufacturer goes for gold



Specialist timber frame manufacturer, designer and supplier - **Frame Technologies**, has been awarded the highest possible accolade. Under a new protocol, Frame Technologies has been the first timber frame specialist contractor to be independently audited for the Structural Timber Association's (STA's) Membership and Quality Standards Scheme - STA Assure. The Presteigne based company achieved Gold Status. Managing Director of Frame Technologies, Simon Orrells said:

"As members of the STA, we follow industry best practice and our structural timber solutions are manufactured to exacting standards in our own factory in Presteigne, Wales.

01544 267124 [www.frametechnologies.co.uk](http://www.frametechnologies.co.uk)

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## A heater for almost every application

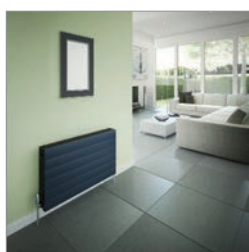


Installers or homeowners looking to replace old warm air heating systems with the latest highly energy efficient technology should consider the advantages of the **Johnson & Starley's** Aquair Heat interface unit. This is possibly the most unique and versatile HIU available and will provide all the benefits that a centralised heating system can offer, but with a host of additional advantages. An Aquair can replace any warm air heater in a home, fully utilise the existing warm air ducting and be

integrated in to almost any centralised heating source. It can be run in conjunction with an existing wet system and also has the option of supplying unheated air for cooling purposes during the warmer months.

01604 762881 [www.johnsonandstarley.co.uk](http://www.johnsonandstarley.co.uk)

## Coloured radiators – popular choice!



Selfbuilders are investing more time and money in selecting their heating systems.

One of the leading radiator manufacturers, **Stelrad** now makes many of its radiators available in up to 35 colours and has begun for the first time stocking coloured radiators for delivery anywhere in the UK within 72 hours.

Whilst the more outrageous designers are looking at bright coloured radiators to contrast with the décor in the home, anthracite grey seems to be extremely popular and look very smart against white walls.

0844 543 6200 [www.stelrad.com](http://www.stelrad.com)

## Xtralite throws light on home refurbishment



A detached dwelling located on a Finchley Road within an exclusive area of the city of London had been recently acquired by new owners and a full modernisation and refurbishment project was designed. One such feature was the use of rooflights to allow more natural light to penetrate a ground floor bedroom whilst also being sturdy enough to walk on from the balcony area above. **Xtralite** was chosen for its ability to provide high quality rooflights and robust solutions to rooflight issues. Xtralite

was able to provide the perfect solution to this with its X Glaze traversable rooflight, which also delivered thermal qualities and strength. For more information visit the Xtralite website.

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

## Heat up your home with AmberDry Foil Mats



The AmberDry underfloor heating Foil Mat from **Amber** offers the perfect solution for keeping every house warm and cosy. With an aluminium dissipation layer for even heat, the simple to use mats can be hidden under floors, banishing any space saving problems. Suited to floating laminate and engineered wood floor finishes, the easy to install heating system removes any requirement for a latex layer which means it can be inserted directly under wood floor.

The AmberDry Foil Mat must be fitted onto the Amber-XPS insulation, and topped with a 500 gauge polythene layer, to create an effective heating solution. With a 10-year-warranty, the underfloor heating foil mats provide trouble free warm floors.

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

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# The hot topic

With awareness of smoke and fire protection needs at an all time high, Steve Bright of A Perry & Co explains how safety goes beyond alarms



*A fire door is not the door leaf alone – it is the sum of all its parts*

The tragic events at Grenfell Tower in the summer of 2017 placed the spotlight on fire safety. Many will wonder how to make sense of the legislation, avoid being confused by industry jargon, and seek reassurance.

Door and ironmongery manufacturers have for some years taken the initiative to ensure products have been exhaustively tested by respected testing houses, and also that products are clearly marked and easily identified. It is vitally important that the industry continues to promote this work, providing information in an unambiguous way. There can be no assumed knowledge.

For example, a fire door is not the door leaf alone – it is the sum of all its parts, that include the door, frame, ironmongery, intumescent/smoke seals, signage plus many more vital elements, tested on their ability to resist fire under BS EN 1634-1:2014.

It is essential that fire doors and associated ironmongery work in harmony. Components most commonly taken for granted are hinges, locks and latches. They serve a vital function in ensuring the fire door stays secure in its frame and cannot fall open, maintaining the integrity of the fire door.

Hinges, locks and latches need to meet exhaustive standards and testing. They have very clearly defined marks – CE & Certifire; there are strict rules regarding placement, and penalties for misuse. CE marking is a recognised way of ensuring that products meet all relevant health and safety legislation, are compliant with EU legislation, and provide full traceability. Testing involves a notified body which provides verification of compliance claims.

Hinges fall under BS EN 1935, that tests a range of functions that include durability and the door weight. Many hinges classified for use on timber doors have been tested up to 200,000 cycles.

Locks and latches fall under BS EN 12209 which has nine categories against which the product is tested, the most critical of these being suitability for use on fire doors. If compliance is

proven, the product can carry a CE mark.

Further reassurance is provided when hinges, locks and latches carry the Certifire logo, which denotes an independent third-party certification scheme that assures performance, reliability and traceability of fire protection products. This is recognised worldwide by regulatory bodies as an internationally respected mark of fire safety. It is also recognised in the Approved Document B of the Building Regulations.

Understanding these standards – and the door and ironmongery combination best suited to your property needs – could be a daunting prospect. However, a countrywide network of registered architectural ironmongers can provide invaluable advice and support. Fire door and ironmongery ranges are available to suit all budgets – but can you put a price on peace of mind?

## DO I NEED FIRE DOORS IN MY HOME?

With so much emphasis placed on our safety when in the workplace and away from home what can we do to safeguard ourselves domestically?

For those undertaking an extensive self-build, renovation or extension project, your architect will be able to advise whether fire doors are required. For your Building Regulations application to be approved, your local council's Building Control officer will need to see evidence that the technical standards have been met, usually undertaken by your architect.

The Buildings Regulations 2010 Approved Document B volume 1 outlines the fire safety requirements for residential dwellings, which include:

- A two-storey house that has a door leading from an integral garage
- New build or renovated domestic properties above two levels: every door leading to the stairwell at all levels (or any habitable room excluding bathroom or cloakroom)
- Where a property has a loft conversion
- Between the business and residential elements in a mixed-use building.

## WHAT IF I'M REPLACING INTERNAL DOORS?

If replacing internal doors and you do not already have fire doors fitted then standard doors are fine, however there is nothing to say you cannot have fire doors. Most of us given the opportunity would like to provide this extra safety measure for our family and home.

If using the existing door frames, check whether a fire door will fit. FD30 fire doors are 44 mm thick compared to the standard 35 mm. It may be possible to amend the existing frame to fit a fire door but be careful to check the door's test evidence as it may require a larger frame section. Your joiner or the door manufacturer should be able to provide advice. Remember that a fire door obtains its test accreditation and evidence through stipulation of the correct door frames, ironmongery, and intumescent strips.

## MAINTENANCE

All doors and ironmongery are tested in their as-new condition so it's important that they are well maintained in use to retain their fire resistance integrity.

The Fire Door Inspection Scheme is a collaboration between the British Woodworking Federation, principle fire door manufacturers and Certifire (as a recognised body its aim is to increase standards of fire doors and associated products across the supply chain). They have a team of inspectors uniquely qualified to undertake fire door inspections, and can help with advice.

*Steve Bright is senior marketing manager at hinge manufacturer A Perry & Co*



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# Back with a bang!

*Selfbuilder + Homemaker* is following first-time self-builders Andy and Sarah Ball from the start of their project to completion. The last time we heard from them, they had just lost their builder. Now, a year on, the project is firmly back on. Sarah takes up the story on the demolition and groundworks



*Before the digger comes in there's a lot of recycling to organise*

Well, it's taken a bit of time, but we're off. We have demolished the old house and the plot is ready to get building.

If you've been following the build of Number 41, you'll know that it's been a bit stop-start for us. We lost two builders, but now we are back on track and it's all systems go. We have Paul, a contractor who is managing the build for us. He's just completed a larger, but similar, modern super-insulated house less than a mile and a half from us, which was designed by the same architect.

Living on the plot for four years has given us a real insight into how the new house will work through the seasons. We have made a few changes to the original design – some things to make the build cheaper and others to make the most of the things we like about the position of the house.

The cost of the build was originally prohibitive for the site. The position and size of the plot means we have to be

realistic about what it's likely to be worth on completion. Andy and I had discussed removing the cantilevers and straightening up the house to reduce the amount of steel required. It also makes it a simpler house to build, but we were both keen not to create a boring house. We both like new homes to look modern. Having a 1950s flat roof house already on site meant there was a precedent to have a modernist design and that was part of the attraction to the plot.

Dan, our architect made the changes, and we love it as much as the first design. I think we were both relieved that it retains its clean lines and that we have maintained the ground floor plan in its entirety. The first floor works better for us than it did before. Of course, we have lost some of the detailing, but Dan has put in some interesting design features.

Andy and I were keen to have windows on the side where the car park to the recreation ground is screened off by trees. If we hadn't lived in the house, we

wouldn't have known what an exciting place it is for squirrels and birds. Because of this we have had two large windows put in so that we can watch the wildlife throughout the year. On the east side of the house and next to the car park, we thought it wouldn't be very private, but for most of the year the leaves on the trees give us cover.

With the changes made, it was time for action. To demolish a building, all the services have to be removed. As we aren't having gas in the new house we had to arrange to get the meter taken away and the gas cut off back to the road. The electric meter needed to be moved and the water diverted. Once all this was done, the demolition could start.

Before the digger comes in, there's a lot of recycling to organise. Sorting the materials into different piles means more of it can be reused. Once they had it sorted, the big Hyundai excavator was delivered. It was huge! It certainly looked massive on our plot. But the driver's



## SECRETS OF SUCCESS

precision was extraordinary – he had both large and small grapplers, but he could pick off the tiniest things even with the larger ones. My parents turned up every day to check the progress and my 84-year-old mum was on photo and video duty. It was handy because Andy and I were away on business for three days of the five they were onsite.

The demolition team made sure my mum got the best views. As long as you don't listen too closely to the soundtrack, it's very impressive. (It included mum saying helpful things like "I'm on the video, Robert!") She managed to perfectly film a window being picked out of the wall and placed with care into the window recycling pile.

The demolition of the house has certainly been a big talking point with neighbours and passers-by. There wasn't a lot of love for the old house, so I'm really hoping that they like the new one as much as we do.

Within a week the house was completely gone: the relatively flat site is cleared and ready to start. Before the foundations could be laid, we had to get the tree specialist to look at whether the build would impact on the roots of either

the large oak or the Cypress tree. Although there are lots of trees at the side of the house, these two are the ones we have to take care of.

Because we had deep tree roots and heavy clay, it was agreed a raft system would be the best option. Strip foundations would have to be dug to 1.8 metres and when the trench to locate the water mains was dug water was pouring in at one metre. That meant we would have serious problems with water ingress, and a big risk that the sides would collapse.

We looked at several off the shelf raft systems, but it was difficult to find one that addressed the issues of cold bridging. We want to build in a traditional block and cavity wall – because surprisingly it's still working out the cheapest option for us.

We wanted to find a solution to address the cold bridging because the raft was better suited to the plot. It also needed to work on heavy clay and achieve the low 1.1 U-value without breaking the budget. After much discussion between Andy, Paul and Dan, they came up with a system that would give us everything we needed.

Interestingly it's a traditional raft construction, with high insulation with innovative insulating blocks, and plasterboard to eliminate cold bridges. It requires very little excavation compared to strip foundations, so there is less rubble to remove from the site.

Currently we are waiting for some structural calculations and as soon as we have these, we will be starting on the raft. This means that the next stage of getting the walls built will be quick and we should start seeing the house take shape.

We are looking at options for the roof, windows and doors at the moment to complete the super-insulated box. It's so important to us to get this right because the fabric of the building gives us passive energy efficiency and ensures that the costs of running the house are greatly reduced.

It may have taken Andy and I a long time to get here, but it really doesn't get more exciting than realising our dream to build a house to live in for the rest of our lives.

*Read the next instalment of Sarah and Andy's story in the September/October issue of Selfbuilder + Homemaker*



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## Recent additions to product range



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We offer a RIBA certified CPD and Blogs, you can read all about these on our website. For any other details, please email or call us.

[info@urbanfront.co.uk](mailto:info@urbanfront.co.uk)

## Bi-fold doors from Duration



With **Duration's** Emperor Concealed Aluminium Bi-folding doors there are no unsightly hinges breaking up the clean lines of the doors. When closed, the cleverly engineered patented hinges are fully concealed within the door leaf, resulting in a contemporary, clean and aesthetically pleasing bi-fold door. The Emperor Concealed Bifold doors are not only thermally efficient and strong, but they are also highly secure and have passed PAS 24:2012 for enhanced security. Constructed

from a low maintenance polyamide thermally broken aluminium profile, these doors will create an open, flexible, modern space for both living and working environments.

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

## Schueco's new panoramic sliding door



One of the leading sustainable building envelope specialist **Schueco UK** has just launched a new version of its highly successful ASS 77 PD panoramic door system. Designated the Schueco ASE 67 PD, the new door provides the same minimal sightlines with an outer frame that remains concealed in the building structure, resulting in a huge panoramic area of clear glass. It offers a number of additional benefits. The door can now be configured in a variety of opening combinations utilising

two, three or four leaves, each up to 3.2 metres wide and 3.5 metres high. The Schueco ASE 67 PD door is available in two options with different outer frames. For more information contact Schueco.

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

## Designer selects steel entrance screen



Architects – and TV shows! – talk about using large scale glazing "to let the outside connect with the inside" of a property, but one design professional has specified a high-performance, triple glazed composite screen from a member of the **Steel Window Association** to ensure the heat inside does not escape to the outside. And similarly, the stylish assembly was chosen to keep extraneous noise out of her beautifully refurbished and extended North London home. The screen, which comprised five

separate elements, was produced using W40 sections with the proportions being optimised in terms of appearance and the physical limits imposed by incorporating triple glazing.

[www.steel-window-association.co.uk](http://www.steel-window-association.co.uk)

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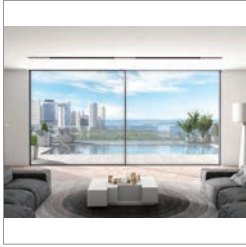
Also available: slender-profiled windows, slimline façades and super-secure entrance doors, all with the highest levels of insulation that can be up to Passive House standard. For German engineering made in Britain, there's only one name.

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

**SCHÜCO**



## AluFoldDirect launches frame glazing



Infinium is now available from **AluFoldDirect**, so installation companies can make the most of the premium domestic market for minimal frame glazing. The perfect system for architects who need wall-to-wall glazing for impressive modernist home designs, Infinium has minimal interruption with its super-slim sightline and fully concealed outer frame. A flush threshold and fully concealed hardware finishes the minimalist look. Infinium is a double track system. Bespoke-design

aluminium rollers are used to give the doors effortless glide whilst the custom-made motorised lock and sliding system opens and closes the doors at the touch of a button, for an even easier user experience.

01706 260700 [www.alufolddirect.co.uk](http://www.alufolddirect.co.uk)

## New visibly different folding door



**Centor** is launching a folding door that removes visual distractions to views beyond.

With all interior hardware concealed, the new 345 Folding Door features the same panels as the 405 Integrated Folding Door but with a smaller frame.

The Access AutoLatch™ is a key differentiator for 345 Folding Doors. This cleverly concealed lever replaces

the traditional interior door handle and is hidden from view in the door stile. Centor 345 Folding Doors are manufactured to individual specifications.

0121 701 2500 [www.centor.com](http://www.centor.com)



## Steel for Kitchen Kudos

'Metallics' will be everywhere, say interior trend experts. So, if you're revamping your kitchen, for glamour and elegance, you can't go wrong with 'on-trend' steel partitioning screens and windows. Rather than putting in a dividing wall, blocking-out light, a great alternative is installing an interior steel screen, which lets light flood-in. **Crittall** brings a further dimension to a kitchen through its minimalist style windows and its InnerVision glazed steel partitioning screens. Designed for modern living, they provide a sense of space and light with clean lines, subtle detailing, excellent technical properties. Elegantly slender, the slim steel framing, with single or double opening doors, is unobtrusive. The distinguished-looking installation makes a wonderful talking point. Natural illumination inside is maximised, while enhanced acoustic properties ensure privacy and reduced noise levels, without compromising on security. Chilly draughts are prevented, warmth kept-in for year-round comfort. InnerVision steel frames can be powder-coated to your choice of RAL or BS colours. Each screen is bespoke to your application - panel shape and size, single or double glazing, decorative or obscure glass.

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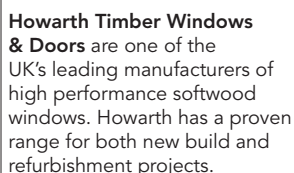
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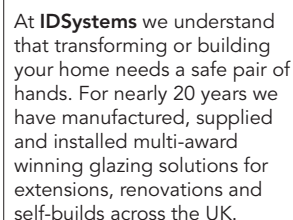
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# SCANDI BALANCE

Embrace the Swedish trend of achieving a more balanced lifestyle using the concept of 'lagom', with tips from Catharina Bjorkman – of Swedish wood burning stove company Contura

**T**he Swedish term 'lagom' (pronounced lar-gom) means 'just the right amount'; 'not too much, not too little'. It comes from the phrase 'lagom är bäst' meaning 'the right amount is best', and is all about achieving balance, moderation and sustainable living, as well as prudent, and being content with what we've got.

Lagom is not just about our lifestyles; it extends to our homes as well. A balanced home means living sustainably, creating less waste, cutting down on clutter and embracing all things natural; from plants to light. In short, embracing lagom will lead to greater wellbeing and happiness at home, while benefitting the environment and your bank balance, too.

## EMBRACE BALANCED COLOURS

Your home should be a sanctuary, a place to unwind, and choosing a soothing colour scheme – cool greens, calming blues and pale or pastel colours – encourages us to relax and regenerate. Try pairing white or grey walls and plain wooden floors with accents of colour from cushions, lamps and rugs for a pared-back Scandi style.

## LESS IS MORE

A cluttered home is a no-go when it comes to lagom. You need a space that balances and uplifts – and endless piles of laundry, stacks of old magazines and clutter isn't going to cut it.

Take inspiration from Marie Kondo's book *The Life-changing Magic of Tidying Up* and make time to have a proper clear out before moving in to your new home – the result will be a more pleasant place to

spend time, and you will feel more refreshed and happy as a result.

## ADD GREENERY

Plants are an inexpensive yet simple way to bring the outdoors in and add a touch of nature to your home. They also brighten up living spaces and help keep the air clean.

Aloe vera, spider plants and cheese plants are easy to care for. Or add a selection of cacti with a mixture of metal and terracotta pots. For a splash of colour, try adding an orchid or a window box of flowers to herald in the spring.

## LET THERE BE LIGHT

Try to use less energy in your home by making the most of natural light. Ensure windowsills are kept clear of clutter and don't position any furniture where it will end up blocking the sun's rays.

Dark curtains can also be switched for lighter ones, or removed entirely, in time for summer. It's also worth switching to LED lights which use 85 per cent less energy than incandescent bulbs, making them super-efficient and sustainable.

## RECYCLE AND REUSE

Being frugal and spend-thrift is also a part of lagom. Upcycle projects can provide huge gratification. You can upcycle items you already own to create completely new and unique items. Rather than discarding items and spending on new ones, sand and paint a shabby wooden sideboard, upholster a worn stool with fabric from a dress that you no longer wear, or sew unwanted clothes into patchwork quilts.

Any furniture you have to buy also

needn't be brand spanking new; you can unearth some real second-hand treasures in charity shops or from websites such as eBay, Gumtree and Preloved that will add character and charm to a home. Opt for natural and sustainable materials where possible, such as linen, cotton, wool and wood, and consider how the items have been produced before buying – the more eco-friendly and sustainable, the better.

## INVEST IN KEY PIECES

Lagom is centred on frugality, but it's also about spending wisely and choosing investment one-off pieces, rather than updating your home every season. Lagom goes against a throwaway culture and encourages us to be selective in what we choose to put in our homes, so pick items based on their practicality and function as well as their beauty.

It's worth spending slightly more on larger home items such as sofas, dining tables, wardrobes and sideboards to ensure better quality, as these will last a lot longer and save time and money wasted on frequent purchases of poor quality items.



*'Lagom' is all about achieving balance, moderation and sustainable living*



## Protect sensitive tiles from staining



**Dunlop** have launched a new Temporary Tile Sealer. Dunlop Temporary Tile Sealer is a protective sealer for use on sensitive tile types like terracotta, marble, limestone, travertine and other natural stone to protect the surface of the tile from discolouration from pigmented tile grouts. Water-based and easy to apply, the sealer is removed by simply washing off after grout application. An essential part of any tradesperson's toolbox, Dunlop Temporary Tile Sealer ensures that tiles remain protected

throughout the grouting process. The use of Dunlop Temporary Tile Sealer removes any potential for re-grouting or re-tiling which could add significant costs and time to tiling projects.

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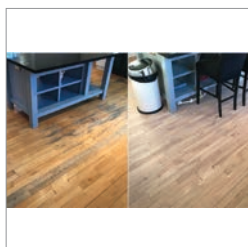


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Floor maintenance specialist, Conrad Park turned to **Osmo UK** when renovating and refreshing an existing oak floor in a family kitchen. Thanks to its hardwearing properties and aesthetically pleasing finish, Polyx-Oil was the ideal choice to rejuvenate the room in the heart of the home.

When the client requested a timeless appearance that would refresh and protect the wooden floor in the kitchen, Conrad Park recognised that two coats of Osmo UK Polyx-Oil Effect Raw 3044 would create the

desired result. Due to Osmo UK finishes being very viscous, and containing both oil and wax, the wood absorbs the finish to provide a smooth surface, resulting in the extra level of sanding not being required.

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# Untangling the issue

Long delays and landfill costs from dealing with Japanese knotweed could be a thing of the past thanks to new methods available to self-builders, explains Nic Seal of Environet



Discovering the presence of Japanese knotweed on a site where you're hoping to build your dream home can understandably send self-builders into a cold sweat. But treatment methods have changed dramatically over recent years, and it doesn't need to spell disaster with long and costly delays on site.

## HOW BIG IS THE PROBLEM?

Number one on the Environment Agency's list of the UK's most invasive plant species, Japanese knotweed is described as "indisputably the UK's most aggressive, destructive and invasive plant", costing an estimated £166m each year to treat.

It was brought to the UK in the mid-19th century by Bavarian-born botanist Phillip von Siebold and delivered to Kew Gardens in a box of 40 Chinese and Japanese plant varieties. It spread rapidly across the UK as keen gardeners obviously shared cuttings and disposed of garden waste and can now be found all over the UK.

An extremely resilient plant thanks to large energy stores in its root system, Japanese knotweed is very difficult to kill when fully grown. The source of its resilience lies in its native habitat. It was dug up from volcanic ash near Nagasaki, where it thrived amid lava and poisonous

gases thanks to its extensive network of underground stems, or rhizomes, that were able to suck up the limited nutrients.

Interestingly, Japanese knotweed is not a problem in Japan where it has natural enemies in the form of bugs and fungi, but in the UK it is predator free.

## DEALING WITH THE INVASIVE INTRUDER

If knotweed is discovered on a site, it needs to be dealt with immediately. DIY attempts to dig it out, tackle it with weed killer or burn it won't solve the problem and could cause further knotweed spread, so it's a false economy to cut corners.

Herbicides can be applied over a period of two to three years, which will achieve an element of control, but without digging up all the infested soil, there is no way of knowing for certain that all the rhizome is dead. Also, disturbing ground containing knotweed rhizome is the catalyst for new growth. Therefore, the need to deal with the problem quickly, and the fact that on construction sites the ground will be disturbed, means herbicide treatment is seldom the answer for self-builders.

Alternatively, infested soil can be physically excavated, with all materials consigned offsite to an authorised landfill site. Named the "dig and dump" method, it's not particularly sophisticated and is referred to by the Environment Agency as the "method of last resort". It also results in significant haulage and landfill costs, which isn't ideal when you're on a tight budget.

A better, eco-innovative solution, which is used extensively on development sites, is to separate the knotweed rhizome from the soil onsite, thereby avoiding the huge environmental and financial costs of consigning vast quantities of otherwise good soil to landfill and importing clean fill. It costs about half that of the dig and

dump method, produces zero waste and is environmentally friendly. But most importantly, it takes just a matter of days to complete, meaning builders and contractors aren't hanging around for weeks unable to move on with the project, and draining the finances.

## GUARANTEES & RESPONSIBILITIES

For any brownfield residential development project it is essential that the knotweed specialist is able to provide insurance backed guarantees acceptable to the banks and building societies. Prior to 2012, guarantees were simply offered by individual companies, but during the credit crunch two notable knotweed specialists ceased trading, rendering their guarantees useless overnight. The banks and building societies responded by making it a condition of their lending that guarantees were insurance backed to protect the lender and the homeowner.

Self-builders should also be aware of their legal responsibilities around preventing knotweed spreading onto neighbouring land. In February 2017 judgement was passed against Network Rail for allowing knotweed to grow on their land, thereby causing actionable nuisance to adjoining property owners. Network Rail was ordered to pay not only for the treatment but, more interestingly, for diminution, the reduction in property value resulting from the knotweed. Hailed as a landmark case, it has very significant ramifications for owners of land affected by knotweed. It reinforces the legal precedent that it is the duty of the landowner with knotweed to prevent it from spreading and failure to do so can very easily lead to court.

Nic Seal is founder and MD of Japanese knotweed removal specialist Environet

*If knotweed is discovered on a site, it needs to be dealt with immediately*





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# Eco performers

Michelle Alcock of Teknos offers an insight into environmentally-friendly paints and how their performance has come on leaps and bounds

**P**aints and finishes are far more than a design device that brings colour and cohesion to your home. They are vital to its sustainability, enhancing and protecting surfaces, extending their life and saving the need for wasteful replacement and the use of further natural resources and energy. But – and it is a big ‘but’ – using and living with conventional paints has not been great for your health or the environment.

Although so called ‘eco’ paints have been around for some time, there is no simple definition of what they are and negotiating the world of ‘environmentally friendly’, ‘natural’, ‘organic’ and ‘green’ paints can be a nightmare, even for the most chemically and sustainability literate. Many paints simply comply with strict legislation first introduced in 2010 to limit the level of one of the ‘nasties’ associated with conventional paints: volatile organic compounds, or VOCs for short. These toxic substances can cause you to suffer nausea, dizziness, headaches and allergic reactions and have been linked to cancer.

VOCs are chemical compounds that vaporise and are found in everything from furniture to the everyday cleaning products you have in your home, but paints have been one of the worst offenders. Organic solvents are the main, although not exclusive, source of VOCs in paints and, during application and drying, the solvents evaporate into the atmosphere. Conventional paint production also involves the use of non-sustainable resources and produces toxins.

Fifty years ago, virtually all paint was solvent-based and, traditionally, these products out-performed water-based paints for durability and gloss levels. For this reason they have tended to be popular for joinery such as skirting boards, doors and windows. When eco paints arrived on the scene, some performed disappointingly against this benchmark. They were difficult to apply, had poor coverage and lacked long term durability.

We are now in a new age of high performance water-based eco paints that, although having a lower carbon footprint

and embracing manufacturing processes that tread more lightly on the planet, can match the performance of solvent-based.

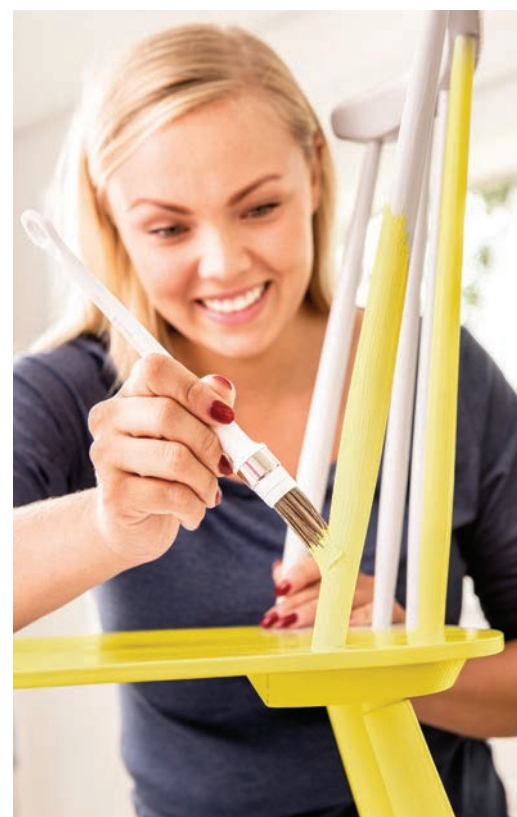
Look for paints that have very low VOC levels so there is little or no unpleasant odour; unlike their traditional counterparts, they do not contain lead, chrome or other heavy metals, making them safer for you and the environment. As well as being more pleasant to use, you will find that the range available offers products suitable for both interior and exterior woodwork.

With the application of any finish, you should consider not only the environmental credentials of the product but the protection level it will provide and the aesthetics of the finish. Helped by the paint film usually being more flexible than with solvent based products, water-based paints tend to last longer and the best have excellent resistance to the weather and UV, rays so retain their colour and gloss. This reduces the frequency of repainting. Some specialist products offer high levels of washability and abrasion resistance where humidity is high, making them ideal for interior walls and ceilings in kitchens, bathrooms and wetrooms.

Good quality water-based paints contain high grade pigments and easily embrace the trend for increasingly strong shades. They are made from high quality raw materials, including superior pigments and binders, and a high proportion of solids. This helps to ensure good coverage and excellent flow, reducing the number of coats of paint you need and making the job a whole lot easier, while helping prolong the life of the paint once applied.

Generally you can thin these paints with water, making them extremely easy to use, whether you are applying them with a brush, roller or spray. Furthermore, they retain their ‘wet-edge’ when rolling or brushing onto walls to give an even, smooth finish that is harder to achieve with, for example, chalk-based paints.

With various ‘sheen’ levels available, replicating the look of traditional oil-based products is easy. Some are capable of providing an extremely high gloss finish, making them a popular choice in historic



conservation areas. You can use these highly versatile water-based paints on doors and other joinery as well as furniture and metalwork, including railings and radiators. At the end of the job, painting tools used to apply water-based paints are easy to wash and reuse and just require cleaning with water and a detergent, so no solvent cleaner is needed.

When setting out to choose which paint to buy, it is worth looking beyond the product itself and thinking about its packaging and the disposal of excess paint. Worryingly, some 78 million plastic and 50 million metal cans are used for decorative paints every year in the UK and, despite industry efforts, very few of these get recycled, partly because the majority of household waste recycling centres do not accept waste paint. If paint is left over, consider donating it to a community group or charity that will be able to put it to good use.

When you are ordering paint products try to minimise waste by buying no more than is needed and use the most appropriate paint for the job; do your own research, never be afraid to ask questions, read the label carefully and always consider the claims made by the manufacturer. Remember, the least environmentally friendly paint product is one which fails to work, results in problems that lead to the loss of a building's fabric, or that can make you unwell.

*Michelle Alcock is managing director at Teknos*



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# The view from the showroom

Howarth Timber researcher and blogger Kat Jacklin outlines key kitchen trends identified for 2018 and beyond



Providing a dedicated kitchen design service to both trade customers and homeowners offers a unique insight into kitchen design trends: not only those which glossy magazines tell consumers they should want, but features and colours that people actually want to create in their homes.

But whether your taste tends towards traditional, or you want to bring contemporary cool into your home, there are certain elements of design that will never go out of style. Building these evergreen elements into kitchen design, alongside up to date trend-led colours and features, means that the finished space will be the heart of the home for years to come: which is exactly what a kitchen should be.

## APPLIANCES: TRADITIONAL & TECHNOLOGICAL

For many years, appliances were seen as something of a necessary evil in kitchens:

with limited choice and few colour options, appliances were previously prioritising function over form.

However, modern kitchen design allows for creative use of appliances so that they either become attractive feature pieces within the room, or blend seamlessly into the overall look of the space.

Larger items like freestanding range cookers or US style fridge-freezers can act as a focal point in the room. With a selection of sizes and colours available from suppliers such as Rangemaster, large cookers can work equally well in traditional 'farmhouse' style kitchens or in more contemporary spaces with bright or pastel shades.

Similarly, large Belfast or Butler sinks are enjoying a renaissance in kitchen design. These have been popular for years with those looking to recreate traditional, country-style kitchens. But the style has seen something of a resurgence in more

## *Modern kitchen design allows for creative use of appliances*

contemporary spaces, driven both by aesthetics and practicality as people need more space to accommodate bulky kitchenware!

However, when it comes to appliances, some trends are here to stay. The desire for clean, uninterrupted lines throughout the kitchen accounts for the ongoing trend for integrated appliances.

Modern kitchen design means that smaller appliances can be built into the surfaces or sit perfectly alongside built-in wall units, while larger appliances such as





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fridges, dishwashers and washing machines can be hidden from view entirely.

But the biggest step-change in kitchen appliances is the advent of smart technology. Kitchens have long been a hub of technological advancement, as we look to increase efficiency and – now – to increase connectivity in every aspect of our lives.

Expect to see Wi-Fi operated kettles, pop-up plug sockets with USB points especially for charging phones, or even wireless charge points being built directly into the kitchen counters.

And as we all continue to seek out ways to keep our environmental impact down, kitchen features can lead the way here too.

Boiling taps cut out the kettle without compromising on your tea-making regime. Taps such as Quooker's utilise high-vacuum insulation to provide the exact amount of boiling water required for a cup of tea for a cost of just 3p per day: saving both water and electricity.

### COLOUR AND LIGHT

As the hub of home-life, it's no surprise that kitchen design often reflects trends seen in everything from fashion to high-end interior design. That's certainly the case with copper and rose, two stylish contemporary tones that can add personality and a point of difference to your kitchen.

For years, chrome, nickel, stainless steel and pewter have dominated when it comes to kitchen cabinet handles but the rise in popularity of rose gold and copper elsewhere in the home means that interest is building in these modern metallics in the kitchen too.

Rose gold or copper handles, combined with sinks and taps, add a contemporary twist that stands out from the crowd and works especially well as a point of contrast with the dark hued blue or black cabinets that are also on trend.

Lighting has an important role to play when it comes to creating the ideal atmosphere in the kitchen. Concealed

lighting is a major trend in kitchen design, adding depth and interest to surfaces and cabinets.

Strip lighting can be included throughout the kitchen, including underneath wall cabinets, along the bottom of floor cabinets to create floor-level lighting, and even at the edges of drawers which can help to illuminate dark areas of the kitchen.

### DIGITAL DESIGN

While homeowners often want to see a physical kitchen design before they make their decision, many people have a good idea in mind of what they want before they set foot in a showroom.

Giving customers the option to use an online kitchen planning tool on their own tablet or laptop means that customers are in control, and can virtually create their own kitchen space long before the real-world version needs to take shape.

Those planning a new kitchen can feel free to explore the options online using an online design service to test out different cabinet designs and colour combinations to create a space that suits their home and their needs with the ideal blend of form and functionality.

*Kat Jacklin is a blogger for Howarth Timber's website [www.howarthathome.co.uk](http://www.howarthathome.co.uk)*

## Keller Kitchens for the best delivery times



**Keller Kitchens** not only produces beautiful, smart kitchens, the company also boasts fantastic customer service when it comes to delivery times. Keller Kitchens are manufactured in its own factory in The Netherlands, meaning that the quality of materials and parts are of the highest standard and can be shipped to the customer with ease.

Keller is meeting the market's demand for quality kitchens delivered to customers' homes in record time. For more information on Keller's stunning and modern kitchens then please visit the website where you can request to download a brochure.

[www.kellerkitchens.com](http://www.kellerkitchens.com)

## The ultimate innovation in stainless steel



**BLANCO UK** has developed a durable stainless steel worktop material, **BLANCO Durinox®**, which is twice as strong as conventional stainless steel worktops. Durinox® is available in any STEELART worktop size. Resistant to scratches and fingerprints, the velvety-matt surface can be integrated with the new **BLANCO ZEROX** range of sinks which are also available in a Durinox® surface. The integration of the sink with the worktop is jointless and so creates a seamless appearance. **BLANCO** introduces

seven brand new models to the **ZEROX** range of sinks; all are compatible with the Durinox® surface: **ZEROX 340 IF**, **ZEROX 400 IF**, **ZEROX 400 IF/A**, **ZEROX 500 IF**, **ZEROX 500 IF/A**, **ZEROX 700 IF** and **ZEROX 700 IF/A**.

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# Timber & Joinery Showcase



## James Jones

When it comes to I-Joists first choice among builders and architects is the James Jones JJI-Joist, one of the UK market leaders with an estimated 40 per cent market share. JJI-Joists are being used for much more than just floor systems. JJI-Joists are now commonly used as wall studs where the range of depths and 9mm web make them ideal when thermal efficiency and depth of insulation are paramount. JJI-Joists are also being increasingly used in roof structures as well either as rafters or where cassette panels, formed using JJI-Joists and OSB sheets, are used to create a fully insulated 'room in a roof'.

[www.jamesjones.co.uk/ewp](http://www.jamesjones.co.uk/ewp)

## Oak Design Co.

The growing popularity of combining contemporary twists with traditional timber frame buildings has risen especially with these garden outbuildings. Other factors such as lower environmental impact mixed with the raw aesthetic charm of these timber frame buildings in many instances have resulted in planning consent being granted where it may not of been granted in the first place, have added to timber frames popularity. A company we found that specialise in all of the above and more, renowned for their quality are an oak framing company based in East Sussex called the Oak Design Co., examples of their projects can be seen on their website.

[www.oak-designs.co.uk/case-studies](http://www.oak-designs.co.uk/case-studies)



## Log Cabin UK

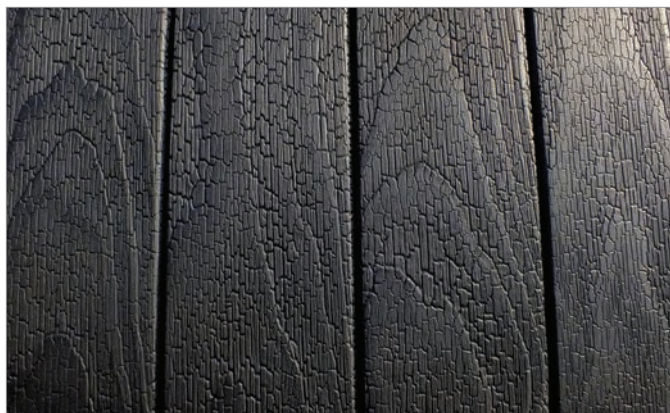
Log Cabin UK specialises in the design and construction of contemporary styled log buildings.

Many people regard real wood as the best building material in the world.

While ensuring its clients are satisfied by the aesthetics of their log cabin, its underlying ethos is one of quality and sustainability.

For more information on the range of cabins and houses Log Cabin UK has to offer visit the company's website or contact them directly.

[www.loghouseuk.com](http://www.loghouseuk.com)



## Accoya® cladding that's exciting architects

James Latham is seeing interest in Shou-Sugi-Ban - a new and exclusive range of charred Accoya® cladding – soar.

Lathams have been a leading distributor of Accoya wood in the UK for more than seven years and have seen its popularity grow significantly, to the point where it is now becoming the material of choice for exterior applications as it can be used for virtually anything, from windows to doors, decking to cladding and siding.

This latest innovative use of Accoya pays homage to the traditional Japanese technique of burning timber to create a beautiful, distinctive, unique and long-lasting wood cladding and it has already made a big impact with architects and designers looking to specify for projects both in the residential and commercial sectors.

Email James Latham for more information on the new and exclusive range, soar.

[marketing@lathams.co.uk](mailto:marketing@lathams.co.uk)

## SterlingOSB StrongFix from Norbord



The new SterlingOSB StrongFix panel from **Norbord** has been designed to strengthen and provide secure anchorage areas in metal C-stud dry lining applications, for fixtures and fittings up to 400kg – such as cabinets, radiators, wash basins and railings. Simple to fit, SterlingOSB StrongFix is precision-engineered to fit metal C-stud walls with 600mm centres. A continuous recess down one side allows quick installation and ensures a seamless finish, ready for hanging plasterboard without adding extra thickness to the stud wall. The pre-prepared panels boast the same inherent qualities as SterlingOSB3 which, unlike ply, has no knots or voids and a consistent density throughout that allows fixings to hold securely at any point across the board.

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

## Selfbuilder & Homemaker website



The Selfbuilder & Homemaker website is an online provider of past and present products and news items for all those involved in and working on a self-build project. [www.sbhonline.co.uk](http://www.sbhonline.co.uk) is a one-stop source for all the latest press releases, providing visitors with access to information about products and services that they may require. From the website, you can find links to digital issues that have live links to advertisers' sites, as well as daily email alerts to keep you as informed as possible. You

can also subscribe to receive regular copies of the printed and digital versions of the magazine, or sign up to the monthly Selfbuilder & Homemaker newsletter.

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