

# selfbuilder + homemaker

JAN/FEB 2019

## 06

### BIG QUESTIONS ON BASEMENTS

Our expert answers your questions on the best ways to ensure your below-ground structure is watertight

### Inside outside

Creating a gazebo for maximising your garden is easier than you think

### A home for life

How to future proof your home with the right accessibility solutions



*On top of the  
world in Wales*

Matthew and Emma Greenland's plans changed during the building of their dream house on a hill in Pembrokeshire



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# EDITOR'S LETTER



One of the key things to remember in creating a happy and successful self-build is to remember your neighbours. You're likely to be getting hundreds of deliveries over the course of a build, so anything you can do to help their lives not be too disrupted is going to pay dividends in long-term relations.

However it's not just the comings and goings to site, it's probably more about the obvious and persistent issues of noise and mess when it comes to what will really get you in neighbours' bad books. Of course these factors are also temporary, but the effects might last a lot longer than the build!

Communication is the no-brainer in terms of the list of things to do. Chartered surveyors Delva Patman Redler advise that this should go beyond just telling neighbours what's about to occur, post-planning consent. "It should not be a short discussion, they need to be shown the plans and understand what the works will entail." They warn that neighbours can often "get very upset" when they hear about things being planned next door which they had no idea about.

The firm also advises that you encourage your builder to communicate with your neighbours, focusing on work that's going to cause excessive noise or access problems. This is particularly important if you need access to their property, which can be the case in Party Wall works. At the end of the day, a bit of empathy, and an attempt to put yourself in your neighbours' shoes, can go a long way!

JAMES PARKER

## DIARY

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# £210m opens the door to more self-builders in Wales

Building your own home in Wales is set to become easier thanks to a new scheme, Self-Build Wales, which is due to launch this spring. Over the term of the scheme a total of £210m is projected to be invested including an initial £40m from the Welsh Government.

Through the scheme, the Development Bank of Wales will guarantee loans on pre-agreed plots. These loans will be repayment-free until the new home is mortgaged. Successful applicants will be able to choose whether to use an approved builder or do the work themselves.

Local authorities and housing associations will be making plots available with planning and site requirements complete. Each plot will have a 'Plot Passport' which will include approved designs, an estimated build cost and options for personalising the home.

Approved applicants can reserve a plot by paying a 25 per cent deposit on the plot cost. The Welsh Government, through the Development Bank of Wales, will provide the rest of the funding, with an option to defer repayments for up to two years or when the home is finished.

Commenting on the scheme, Housing and Local Government Minister Julie James said: "We want to make self-build available to more people in Wales. Finding land, navigating planning consents and being able to afford to build while covering the cost of living can be real barriers. We've launched this scheme in partnership with local authorities to overcome these barriers."

Andrew Baddeley-Chappell, CEO of the National Custom & Self Build Association said: "This package of measures sends a clear message that Wales welcomes and supports self-builders and we are excited to see the positive benefits that will flow from this announcement."



## Numbers signed up to Right to Build underplays true demand

Research by the National Custom and Self Build Association (NaCSBA) has found that since 1 April 2016, over 40,000 people have signed up to Right to Build registers across England.

Despite the fact that over 10,000 new registrations have been added since NaCSBA's last Freedom of Information request to Government for data on signups, it believes the number remains short of the real underlying demand.

This is down to both a lack of promotion of the registers by local authorities, and the introduction of measures that make it harder for individuals to sign up and stay on registers, according to NaCSBA. The research shows that while in the first year very few local authorities placed restrictions on joining, more than one in four now have. These restrictions include local connection tests and charges to join and remain on registers.

Local connection tests should only be applied where there is a "strong justification" and in response to a "recognised local issue", while charges should be implemented on a cost recovery basis only. Charges currently range from between £50 to £350 as a one-off to join a register, and average £150 a year to remain on it.

NaCSBA commented that there are "strong grounds to challenge the approach" local authorities are taking. The association also argues that councils should be doing more to promote their registers.

While NaCSBA said it "supports the fact that the majority of councils are managing their registers as part of a wider suite of evidence for demand for custom- and self-build", it plans to use the findings of its research to raise its concerns over the "uneven picture" with the Government.

## SELF-BUILDER FACES HEFTY FEE AFTER FAILING TO GIVE COMMENCEMENT NOTICE

A self-builder in Middleton Cheney, South Northamptonshire, is facing a £48,800 Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) fee plus a £2,500 fine for starting clearing work onsite without notifying the council.

Despite the fact Graham Evans had received planning permission and had an application for a CIL exemption accepted, the council have argued that his failure to submit a commencement notice for the work means that he is disqualified from receiving the exemption.

The CIL was introduced in 2008 in order to help local authorities deliver infrastructure to the area, but self-builders can apply for an exemption.

Evans told the local press that he was still awaiting the discharge of two conditions of his planning permission, and was under the impression he couldn't submit a commencement notice while that was the case.

## POTTON SHOW CENTRE NOW OPEN LONGER TO GIVE SELF-BUILDERS MORE FLEXIBILITY

The Potton Self Build Show Centre in St Neots has extended its opening hours for 2019, meaning self-builders can now visit six days a week.

The centre will now also be open on Mondays, increasing the hours to 9 am-5 pm Monday to Friday, and 10 am-4 pm on Saturday. Visitors to the centre can explore the five show homes – including the recently refurbished Milchester – discuss their project with one of Potton's self-build experts (booking is recommended), attend a self-build course, workshop or seminar at the Self Build Academy, and explore the two product centres. The first of these showcases the various build systems on offer to customers, while the other exhibits the door, window and stairs systems available to choose from.

Alongside the St Neots centre, Potton has also updated its offering at the National Self Build & Renovation Centre (NSBRC) in Swindon. The Ruskin show home on display at the centre was closed in October for a refurbishment, reopening at The National Self Build & Renovation Show at the end of January. It has been converted into an exhibition space, showcasing how Potton can help visitors with their build from planning and design right through to completion.



# Getting water-proofing right



If you are installing a concrete basement or other below-ground structures, getting your waterproofing specification right to combat leaks is crucial, as they can undermine your

entire project. Yassar Altaf from Sika answers readers' questions on long-term approaches for controlling water

## HOW DOES A RENDER-BASED SYSTEM COMPARE TO A CAVITY DRAINAGE SYSTEM?

Unlike render products, cavity drain systems require ongoing maintenance. This incurs greater running costs, while the system itself requires more space to install. As for benefits, the cavity drain system acts as a vapour barrier and requires limited surface preparation. It can be used where the substrate

does not have the strength to resist stresses caused by water pressure a pre-bagged render system can be argued to be a more cost-effective solution, over a lifespan of 60 years.

## HOW CAN I GET A WATERPROOFING SYSTEM WITHOUT ALL THE MAINTENANCE?

Taking a pre-bagged system for example, once applied there is no

requirement for drainage products or equipment such as water pumps. Eliminating the need for revisiting the site means the system is extremely cost-effective. It bonds directly to the substrate and follows the contours of any structure. Some substrate preparation may be required, but once installed, it provides a hard-wearing surface capable of resisting damp and high water pressure.

## WHAT'S THE SYSTEM MADE UP OF?

Watertight renders and screeds, produced using mortars which consist of a blend of special cement and kiln-dried graded aggregates. The Sika-1 Pre-bagged waterproofing solution is packaged in four grades, each specifically designed for optimum application performance and durability. It consists of a render system for use on walls and overhead surfaces and a screed system for use on the floor.

## ARE THERE ANY LIMITATIONS ON WHERE IT CAN BE INSTALLED?

The system is suitable for virtually any application, providing an effective watertight seal for structures that need to keep water out as well as structures that must keep water in such as swimming pools. The system is suitable for applications in both new build and refurbishment projects.

## HOW DID THE SYSTEM ORIGINATE?

The Sika system has been in use for 100 years, originally as a quick-setting waterproofing admixture for mortar, used to waterproof the Gotthard Tunnel in the Swiss Alps. The project enabled the Swiss railway company to electrify a vital connection between northern and southern Europe.

## WHAT ARE THE INDUSTRY ACCREDITATIONS?

It is available as a BBA-approved structural waterproofing system and classified as a Type A internally applied waterproofing system according to BS 8102-2009. It also has Drinking Water Inspectorate approval and a guarantee is provided when the product is installed by a registered Sika waterproofing contractor.

*Yassar Altaf is head of product and marketing at Sika's Concrete & Waterproofing division*





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## CASE STUDY

# A DIFFERENT OUTLOOK

Although Matthew and Emma Greenland's west Wales self-build would not turn out to be their 'forever home' due to a change in their future plans, they created a building that makes the most of its spectacular site. Roseanne Field reports





Building their own home was something Matthew and Emma Greenland had always wanted to do. A builder by trade, working on private residential projects, Matthew had the inside knowledge on the merits of doing it themselves, as well as the necessary skills.

Matthew and Emma had been keeping their eye out for suitable plots around their village – St Dogmaels on the Pembrokeshire coast – for a while, as they were after something with a good amount of land to house Emma’s horses. They finally found an elevated 10-acre plot with great views overlooking the village and the River Teifi that had been up for sale for some time, and it won them over. “Standing on this plot looking at

the view, we just said ‘this is it.’” Matthew tells *Selfbuilder & Homemaker*.

The plot was actually part of a group of three situated on an old farmyard. These plots had been given planning consent twice before – originally as four plots for semi-detached houses which lapsed after five years, then for three detached – but nobody had bought or built on them due to what Matthew says was “bad design”. He approached the owner with a view to doing a deal. He proposed to buy the large plot at the top which came with the farm’s agricultural land, while an architect he had worked with previously would buy the other two, situated between Matthew’s plot and the



## HIGH POINT

Matthew: "The excitement of moving in for Christmas! Just actually getting it finished and the feeling of moving into something we've created – we've lived on a building site for so many years."



adjacent farmhouse, to develop and sell on, both of which Matthew would also build. "It is a sort of complex of different properties that all work together," he says.

The fact the owner had been marketing the land for a total of seven years meant the couple were able to get a good deal, which also included an old pig shed, which Matthew transformed into a three-bedroom cottage. They bought the site in October 2013 and moved into the converted pig shed in May 2014 once their previous house had sold. This would serve as an excellent base for Matthew, Emma and their three children while the main house was constructed. "We lived onsite in a caravan, but within two months we pretty much had the conversion finished because I didn't want to go through winter in a caravan," Matthew says.

Although planning had already been consented, Matthew and Emma wanted to design something that closely suited them. "It had planning permission for detached, dormer-style houses," explains Matthew. "There was no way I was ever going to build that on such a unique plot in this area."

They worked closely with their architect, Roger Bell, who Matthew already had a good working relationship with, and came up with a design inspired by houses they'd seen on holiday in Australia. In fact, it's their love for the country and dream to move there one day that has seen them put their dream home on the market. In February last year, midway through the build, they discovered they had been granted visas to make a permanent move down under.

### PLANNING

Matthew and Emma decided to go the route of providing a building notice, which meant they

didn't have to have full, detailed plans drawn up for their application. "We saved quite a lot of money not having to have detailed drawings," says Matthew.

Although they were submitting a design that was very different to the original approved plans – including the work to the pig shed (which had originally been approved for conversion into a garage) – the couple didn't face serious objection from their local planning office. "The only thing they were concerned about was the height of the tallest side of the property, where it's three storeys," explains Matthew. "They were concerned with how that would look from the other side of the bank and lower down in the village."

Despite the planning officer's worries, Matthew and Emma were able to prove that due to the height and slope of the site, nobody would be able to see the basement level from below. "It just looks like a two-storey house," he says. There were also other minor queries regarding things like the shape of windows, but he found the best approach was to visit the planning office and discuss it face-to-face. "Because this was going through planning for the third time they'd spent too much time on it – in the end they'd had enough of seeing us!" Matthew says. "Going down there was a good thing to do."

In the end, the only condition they had to follow was keeping the ridge height the same as the other two new properties next door, which sit lower on the hill and have pitched roofs. "That's the reason we came up with the arched sedum roof," says Matthew. "The site warrants keeping the building as high as you can, so I wanted to go higher and reduce the roof down."

Once they were ready to begin work onsite,



## MATTHEW'S ADVICE

"Don't be afraid to make changes, but know what those changes are going to cost you. You know the space you need, so don't be afraid to move a wall here or there if you need to. And do your research! Make sure you use the right builders and local tradesmen, go and look at their work to make sure you're happy."



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## LOW POINT

"Matthew: Taking longer than we intended due to work commitments, and finance – we've had to work and earn to build. If we'd had the money in place we'd have got it done quicker!"

## CONTACTS/ SUPPLIERS

### MAIN BUILDING & ROOFING CONTRACTOR

**Matthew Greenland  
Limited**

### ARCHITECT

**Roger Bell, Bell Designs**  
[www.belldesigns.org.uk](http://www.belldesigns.org.uk)

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the first job was bringing all the utilities up the hill. The road had mains gas, electric and water connections so it was a reasonably simple job to extend these slightly further up the slope to the site. However, connecting to mains drainage was a different story. "We had to bring it a good 200 metres from the lowest point on the road, and then it swept round the back of the other sites to get to ours," Matthew explains. "That was very expensive."

They looked at other options – they even had a septic tank onsite temporarily while living in the barn – but ultimately wanted to be connected to mains. It also seemed the logical thing to do, given it was being brought up the road for the other two houses anyway. However, in hindsight Matthew says: "Had I known what the end result would be I would have stuck with an alternative." The work meant closing the road for three weeks and the estimated cost ended up doubling. "But once we'd started," he says, "we were committed to it."

### DESIGN & BUILD

Being a builder, Matthew took on the majority of work himself, along with his team. But this naturally meant fitting it in around other jobs. "I was busy doing other stuff so we built the main house over the space of two to three years, taking bites at it when we could," he explains. "We got the slab in, then we worked to get the blockwork up, then we came back and did the roof and got it watertight. It was a stage by stage process." Hitting a timescale wasn't Matthew and Emma's biggest concern, as they were "comfortable" in the barn conversion.

The only work not undertaken by Matthew's team was the plumbing, electrics, and steel frame. He also worked with a structural engineer

to figure out the logistics of certain aspects. Having not had full drawings done meant a lot of structural decisions were made on the hoof, as well as cost-saving tweaks. "My experience in the building trade made it a lot easier," he admits, adding: "I've enjoyed doing this with Emma, designing it as we go." Matthew's experience also meant he knew plenty of local places to source materials.

Due to the slope, the basement level doesn't cover the same footprint as the rest of the house. The entrance is at the level above, the front door leading into a large Australian-inspired open plan living/dining/kitchen area – a must-have for Matthew and Emma – along with a pantry. The angle of the front door means guests are immediately faced with floor-to-ceiling windows in the opposite corner, delivering the panoramic view. "The main thing when you walk through the front door is you see that view," Matthew explains.

Making the most of the surroundings was a high priority in the design. Having both lived in and worked on Welsh cottages and farmhouses, Matthew wanted something different. "It's great to have that 'comfy' feel, but we wanted to have something that could let plenty of light in and feel airy and open," he says.

The ground level also features a utility room and toilet. Upstairs is the master suite, including a large ensuite and dressing room, situated at the back of the house and maximising the view with more floor-to-ceiling windows and a glass balustrade balcony. There are also a further four double bedrooms, all with ensuite shower rooms. "We wanted bathrooms for everybody," says Matthew. "The kids have got that flexibility – that was something we liked."

The 52 m<sup>2</sup> basement level, which sits on a raft



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foundation slab, features a large open space, used to store this active family's mountain bikes, and as a games room. This was something they wanted to include to keep their children entertained during the bad weather the west Wales coast has been known to endure. It also features sliding patio doors that lead out to the fields below. "It would have been easy for me to have put bifold doors across the back but it wasn't worth it," he explains – we'd only ever open them once or twice a year."

Matthew used a couple of different construction methods. The three-storey end of the property is built using steel frame in order to get the height and large openings they wanted, while the rest is of traditional block construction. The house is finished with a mix of white render and cedar cladding, and features hidden gutters to maintain the minimal aesthetic.

The timber trusses for the arched roof were "a little bit more complex" than traditional ones. The arch also meant they were limited in terms of finish options. In the end, it was waterproofed with a fibreglass underside and finished with a sedum roof, which also boosts the house's thermal properties. Matthew says: "It was something different for me to do, and for our own home it was a bit of a risk, but we love it."

The house is heated with a mix of underfloor heating and anthracite radiators. These are fed by a gas boiler, although they are also installing solar panels to help with heating hot water. Originally the pair considered including additional PVs and rainwater harvesting, but, explains Matthew, "That came after we found out we had our visas, so some things had to take a little bit of a back seat." However, future owners could incorporate additional sustainable features, he says.

Outside the house, there is a grey limestone patio and abundant oak sleepers. "It works up here and we wanted that beachy feel," says Matthew. Oak sleepers also separate their property from next door, which he prefers, as

it's "not as harsh as a big dividing wall or timber-panelled fence."

The site also has planning permission for a manège – which has been constructed – and stables, which were originally intended to house Emma's horses before the move to Australia became a reality.

## MOVING ON

Having fallen head over heels in love with Australia, emigrating "had always been in the back of our minds," Matthew says. "We're outdoors people, we spend a lot of time out surfing and biking, so we've found it hard living in Wales and having such long winters."

It was on their third trip in 2016 that they decided to set the wheels in motion on a permanent move. But, explains Matthew, with no idea whether they'd be successful, their plan to create their ideal home needed to continue. "It took 18 months to get the visas, and until you have that you don't know whether you can go."

Despite the imminent move, Matthew, Emma and their children moved into the house in time for Christmas last year. "Although it's on the market, it could take two months, six months or a year to sell," Matthew says. In the meantime they'll also rent the barn conversion out. This "was always the original plan, because that would then pay for us to live in the new house."

When the house was valued, they were pleasantly surprised by the figure. "It had never popped into my mind once, that if we build this home it's going to be worth 'x' amount of money," says Matthew. "It didn't matter because it was going to be our family home." And although moving to Australia has long been the dream, they "will be sad to leave it," he says. "We've put our heart and soul into it. Moving abroad is the only reason we'd ever consider selling it."

So will they self-build again down under? "I want to," Matthew says. "Another spectacular home, but closer to the beach in a sunny climate!" ■



The barn conversion provided a perfect base for the family while they built the main house

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It's simple to work with Kingspan – 3 steps to your dream home

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**Architecture:** We support professional designers with CAD format details, backed by thermal, fire and structural performance data.

**Engineering:** From outline structural appraisals, to specific foundation loads and CAD layouts. All our systems are professionally designed by experienced Engineers to form a coherent and complete building structure including all walls, floors and roofing elements.

**Thermal efficiency:** Kingspan is a name you can trust to provide industry leading innovation on thermal performance. Our systems are designed to lower energy costs by using Kingspan Kooltherm® insulation products to improve U values and minimise thermal bridging.

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All our systems have 'proven to perform' credentials



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## 3 We construct the timber building structure on-site

All our systems are erected to the highest standards by specialist erection teams and supervised by our expert contracts managers. We offer a comprehensive build service taking up the strain of on-site operations. We include, as standard, access checks and all costs for erection, delivery and offloading no matter where your project is located.

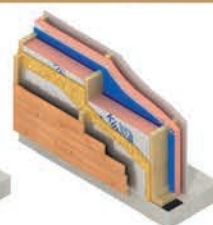


## You finish the build to your specifications

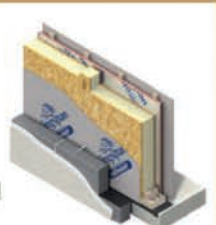
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# INTERIOR INSPIRATION: LIGHTING

The dazzling range of lighting fixtures and luminaires now available on the market just goes to show how much customers have embraced the importance of lighting to enhance their homes. From setting a mood to providing the right enhancements to decor, here are some top options



1. Inspired by Hollywood glamour, the **Chicago Tripod Floor Lamp** (pictured in muted grey and brass) from **MADE.COM** is perfect for industrial and vintage interiors alike. The bulb faces inwards, meaning light is reflected off the gold foil lining, creating a broad and warm effect. [www.made.com](http://www.made.com)



2. Lighting for your home office doesn't have to be boring. **The Margot Table Lamp** (pictured in copper) from **Cult Furniture** features a spherical lampshade plus a curved stand that serves to create a striking silhouette. The glass globe shade creates a warm and relaxing glow. The lamp is also available in gold. [www.cultfurniture.com](http://www.cultfurniture.com)

3. The **Lightyears Orient Black P3** pendant light from **Rume** is a revamped version of the original Orient designed by Jo Hammerborg in 1963. The aluminium pendant has been updated with a modern twist – a matt surface. The fitting conceals the light source and ensures a glare-free light is emitted. [www.rume.co.uk](http://www.rume.co.uk)

4. The **Complementi Luce Strato Quadre Luce** wall lights from **Lithos Design** have been designed so the light becomes part of a textured feature wall. The stone lamps allow you to be creative with the light and shadow effects depending on how the tiles are laid. [www.lithosdesign.com](http://www.lithosdesign.com)

5. With a design inspired by its namesake, the **Guggenheim Chandelier** from **Luxxu** is ideal for those looking for a statement lighting piece for a hallway or dining room. Made from nickel and Swarovski crystals, the chandelier is perfect for a modern and contemporary interior. [www.luxxu.net](http://www.luxxu.net)



6. The **Sleek 1 Wire** range from **Industville** features a simple but modern design. Both practical and decorative, the focus is on the exposed bulb (pictured is the vintage LED Spiral Edison bulb, sold separately). The lights are available in brass, copper and pewter finishes. [www.industville.co.uk](http://www.industville.co.uk)



Ancon wins third Queen’s Award



**ANCON** has officially received the 2018 Queen’s Award for Enterprise from the Lord-Lieutenant of South Yorkshire, Mr Andrew Coombe, on behalf of Her Majesty the Queen. This is the third time the company has been honoured in this prestigious award scheme that acknowledges outstanding achievements by UK businesses. Ancon’s 2018 Innovation award follows its Queen’s Awards for International Trade in 2015 and Innovation in 2012. The award was received on behalf

of Ancon by company director Peter McDermott at a special ceremony attended by 36 long-serving employees representing all areas of the business from sales and marketing to production and accounts.

0114 275 5224 [www.ancon.co.uk](http://www.ancon.co.uk)

DKG Group achieves Level 4 certificate



The DKG Group, the organisation behind the successful **Keller Kitchens** brand, has obtained a level four certificate on the CSR Performance Ladder; a first for the kitchen industry. With the achievement of level three on the CO<sup>2</sup> Performance Ladder, Keller has demonstrated that the company is actively working on reducing CO<sup>2</sup> emissions within the organisation. This has created a perfect foundation for the company’s ambition to achieve an additional level on the CSR Performance Ladder. Toine

van Rooij, COO of DKG Holding and chairman of the CSR working group, concludes: “Our certificate at Level four now confirms that we are taking the right steps forward”.

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

Tudor wins award for the second time



**Tudor Roof Tiles Co Ltd** has received a 2018 ‘Build It Award’ for its range of ‘Bespoke Handmade Clay Roof Tiles’. This is the second time the company has claimed the prize for ‘Best Roofing Product’ in these prestigious awards, which recognise the best products, services, projects and innovations available to self-builders and renovators. This achievement for the bespoke tile making abilities follows the company’s previous success in 2014 as category winner for its authentic standard

range of peg and plain tiles. Tudor’s capability to produce traditional looking roof tiles in bespoke and non-standard sizes is vitally important when it comes to restoring historic roofs.

01797 320202 [www.tudorrooftiles.co.uk](http://www.tudorrooftiles.co.uk)

Viessmann awarded Which? Best Buy status



**Viessmann** has secured a Which? Best Buy status for its six most popular Vitodens gas boilers for the second year in succession. The annual survey by Which? conducts robust research in order to “reveal the boiler brands you can trust.” Viessmann is also one of only two boiler brands to score five stars for reliability, customer satisfaction, and engineers’ recommendations. In the overall brand assessment – based on reliability, customers’ scores, and the expert views of

engineers – Viessmann scored second place in the table. Which? reports that the survey again resulted in “a huge difference in overall score between the best boiler brands and the worst.”

[info-uk@viessmann.com](mailto:info-uk@viessmann.com)



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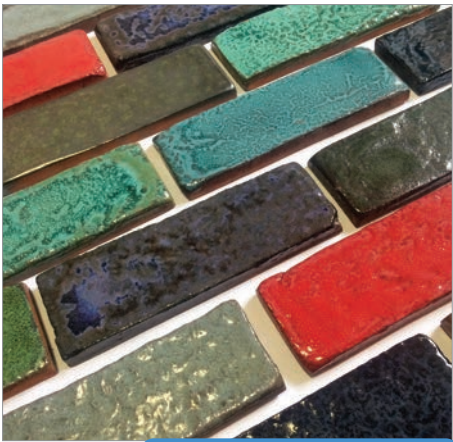
**Firman**



New Imperial Brick Tiles for feature walls at show

**Imperial Bricks** will showcase its new range of Brick Tiles for decorative feature walls on stand E204 at the Homebuilding and Renovating Show, 28<sup>th</sup>-31<sup>st</sup> March, NEC Birmingham. This will include latest additions to the range, such as the premium Glazed Brick Tiles, with an artisan finish, plus a selection of new wooden Feature Wall Panels. Imperial's expert team will be on hand at the show to discuss brick matching, review project plans and offer samples and advice for internal and external applications. Imperial has the widest selection of handmade, wirecut and pressed bricks with reclamation/weathered options, regional varieties and more. The Brick Tile range – driven by demand from architects and interior designers – is suitable for use on internal feature walls, kitchen splashbacks, decorative fireplaces or externally as cladding. Brick Tiles create an authentic brick wall effect, but don't require costly labour or bricklaying skills for installation. Seven standard options are available, from Victorian Limewashed to the metallic blue Designer Linear. Jason Hughes, Managing Director, comments: "Homebuilding and Renovating has always been a really successful exhibition for us to connect with self-builders and homeowners and show them the possibilities traditional handmade bricks offer. We're looking forward to another buzzing atmosphere!" Free tickets for the show are available directly from Imperial Bricks, or £18 on the day.

01952 750816 [www.imperialhandmadebricks.co.uk/products/types/imperial-brick-tiles](http://www.imperialhandmadebricks.co.uk/products/types/imperial-brick-tiles)



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01843 598649

NATIONAL H&R SHOW STAND NO C111



# Get advice and inspiration at the NEC

**Homebuilding  
& RENOVATING  
SHOW**

Discover the wide range of expert knowledge and advice on offer for self-builders at the National Homebuilding & Renovating Show, which is being held in March at the NEC, Birmingham

Recent reports from Plotfinder reveal a 31 per cent year on year increase in the number of plots that are becoming available to home builders in the Midlands. At this year's National Homebuilding & Renovating Show, people interested in finding, assessing and buying the right plot for their project will be assisted for the first time by masterclasses from the Land Hub, a new self-build stage at the show, in association with Plotfinder and Potton's Self Build Academy.

The show, sponsored by Hormann, will also welcome for the first time Sian Astley, builder and TV presenter for BBC2's Watch This Space. She will tackle topics ranging from fresh design ideas, cost-effective styling, and mixing traditional style with a contemporary edge, to underfloor heating and insulation, based on her vast knowledge garnered over 22 years.

Providing a wealth of industry knowledge from more than 500 exhibitors and 16 free daily seminars and masterclasses, the event is a premium showcase of cutting-edge products and services by specialist companies from a wide variety of industries including kitchens, bathrooms, doors and windows, extensions and conversions, eco and heating, architecture, design, financial services, planning permission and more. People can also interact with real case studies to find out the most common obstacles they might face during their self-build and renovation process.

The Advice Centre, a drop-in clinic for personalised, impartial guidance, is open to people who are keen to run ideas past industry-leading specialists with years of experience in their fields.

This section will see the return of the Ask the Builder area, where members of the Federation of Master Builders will offer tips to visitors on hiring accredited, highly skilled construction workers.

Visitors interested in finding out more about the design, planning and construction process are encouraged to visit the Ask the Architect area, where chartered specialists from the Royal Institute of British Architects will provide tailored advice via one-on-one sessions.

For personalised tips on all aspects of self-build and renovation, the Ask the Expert zone will offer 15-minute consultations via interactive sessions with the UK's leading property experts. Visitors will be able to discuss their ideas, plans or problems with property experts Michael Holmes and Jason Orme, interior designer and architect Mariana Pedroso, construction expert Peter Richardson and Mike Cruickshank, and finance expert Tom McSherry. Building experts David Hilton and Bob Branscombe, eco expert Tim Pullen, builder Andy Stevens, home renovator Jo Dyson and planning expert Sally Tagg, will also be on hand.

To assist visitors in the pre-construction phase, Oakwrights Design Consultation and The Potton Lounge will be offering bespoke consultations with members of their skilled design teams across the four days. Attendees who are interested in these sessions can pre-book their entry in advance via the event's website.

All attendees can navigate their way on site with the help of the show app, available on iPhone and Android. They will be able to schedule and receive alerts for key seminars and masterclasses, browse through the list of professionals available at the Advice Centre, and access the latest offers and information.



## WHEN & WHERE

The **National Homebuilding & Renovating Show** takes place at the **NEC, Birmingham** from **28 – 31 March**. For more details and to buy your tickets visit [homebuildingshow.co.uk/national](http://homebuildingshow.co.uk/national)





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NATIONAL H&R SHOW STAND NO D178

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concealed hinges and a discrete, recessed operating latch. The result is a high quality, seamless finish. For further information, please visit the Premier Loft Ladders website.

0845 9000 195 [www.premierloftladders.co.uk/designo](http://www.premierloftladders.co.uk/designo)

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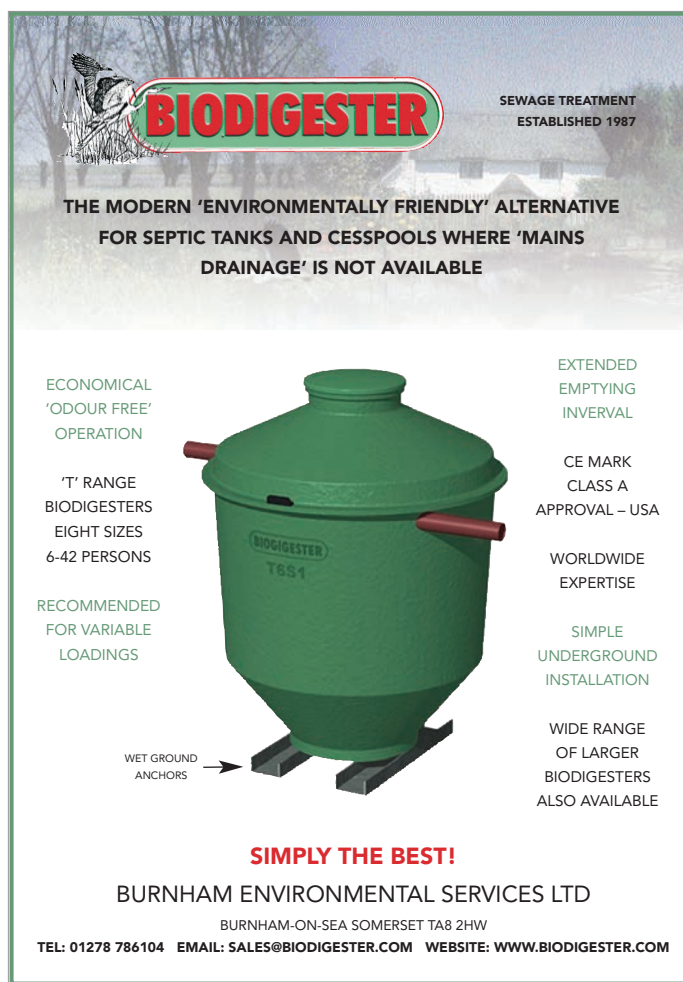


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# Taking an alternative route to drainage

When building or renovating a home with no connection to mains drainage for the disposal of sewage, alternative options have to be considered. Burnham Environmental Services' Mark Newbery explains further

The UK currently has four different environmental regulators for surface and groundwater pollution control. These are as follows:

- England – The Environmental Agency (EA)
- Wales – Natural Resources Wales / Cyfoeth Naturiol Cymru
- Scotland – SEPA (Scottish Environment Protection Agency)
- Northern Ireland – Northern Ireland Environmental Agency (NIEA).

These regulators operate in different ways, and consequently generalisations have to be made. For example with the EA in England, a document produced by DEFRA (Department of the Environment, Fisheries and Rural Affairs) entitled 'General Binding Rules for Small Sewage Discharges' (SSDs), with effect from January 2015, is the yardstick.

The standard checking procedure starts off with the question 'how far is the site from the nearest public foul sewer?' If more than 30 metres then alternative options can be considered in most cases.

If considering pumping to a public foul sewer there needs to be checks regarding the legal rights of access, connection fees, obligations in perpetuity, and the technical aspects of pumping and storage. Package pumping stations are available constructed in glass fibre (GRP) or other materials with pumps of different types.

If a property's wastewater cannot be connected into a sewer, there are three alternative options: a cesspool, a septic tank or a package treatment plant.

## CESSPOOL ISSUES

Under current naming conventions a cesspool is a holding tank that has no overflow and from which all the effluent must be taken away by a licensed tanker firm. Compliance with Building Regulations requires a large capacity tank of several thousand gallons. Even with extreme water saving measures the cost

of emptying a cesspool is likely to be several thousand pounds in a single year, and so the use of cesspools is therefore best avoided.

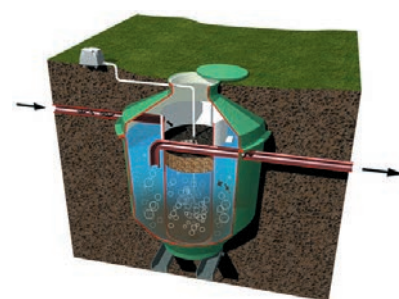
## SEPTIC TANKS

Septic tanks are much smaller tanks than cesspools with two or more chambers that settle out some of the solids that come into them. However the liquid part remains a strong, polluting liquid that may only be dispersed into a system of soakaway trenches, sometimes also called sub irrigation systems. Soil porosity tests have to be carried out in accordance with BS6297:1983 and the Amendments of 2007 and 2008, and the soakaway system sized and designed accordingly. The trenches need to be constructed with 25 mm-40 mm clean stone to a depth of 400 mm, around a rigid 100 mm diameter pipe with slots or holes at the bottom. The width of each trench is normally 600 mm or 900 mm, and there needs to be a suitable covering sheet.

Traditional herringbone soakaways are best avoided as if the main artery blocks the whole system may block. A rectangular grid allows alternative pathways. On sloping ground soakaway trenches should be constructed at a constant depth along one or more contours.

BS6297:1983 requires that septic tank soakaway trenches should only be constructed where there is at least one metre of soil between the soakaway and the water table at all times. This rules out the use of septic tanks in many areas where there is low lying flat ground with clay soil and a high water table.

For septic tanks there may also be a restriction on their use due to underground sources used for extraction of drinking water. In England, check the EA's Protection Zones or ask a specialist to check this for you. There may also be restrictions with respect to Sites of



*Treatment plants with complicated mechanical and electrical components are now becoming less popular*

Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) or similar sites where installation is within or near to such a site.

The discharge of septic tank effluent into a watercourse, including ditches, has been illegal since the 1960s. DEFRA now requires that any existing discharges are stopped by 2020.

Septic tanks should be emptied once per year to avoid failure of the soakaway system.

## PACKAGE TREATMENT PLANT

Package treatment plants are the modern alternative to septic tanks that produce a clear effluent suitable for discharge into a watercourse if one is available. The effluent is typically 20 times cleaner than that from a septic tank. Most new properties built in the countryside nowadays use treatment plants as they represent the environmentally





friendly option.

If no watercourse is available, the treated effluent still needs to be discharged into a system of soakaway trenches. The use of a treatment plant may overcome the difficulties of a high water table, underground water supply areas or sites of special

scientific sensitivity.

To overcome a high water table or discharge into a watercourse that may flood, it can also be necessary to use an automatic effluent pumping system that manufacturers supply with their treatment plants, normally as an optional extra. These systems are

designed with a non-return valve that prevents any back flow.

A number of different types of package treatment plant are available. The ones with complicated mechanical and electrical components are becoming less popular and aeration of the sewage with a small air blower is now commonplace.

Some of the aerated systems still have a septic settlement stage that poses the risk of odours and the need for emptying once or more times per year. The better systems aerate all the sewage that comes into them, including all solid matter. The best systems will go for several years before they need to be emptied. The use of linear air blowers provides operation that is efficient and economical with little maintenance required for the best systems. Package treatment plants should be located no nearer than 7 metres from inhabited dwellings.

In selecting your wastewater solution for off-mains drainage it is important to cover the requirements of the appropriate environmental regulator, BS6297:1983 as amended and local Building Regulations.

*Mark Newbery is director at Burnham Environmental Services*



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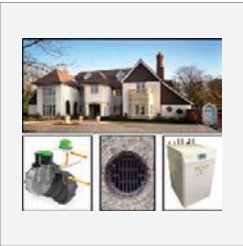
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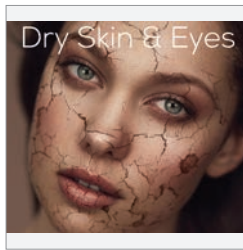


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## REHAU used for luxury houseboat installation

REHAU windows and doors have been installed in a luxury houseboat in Belfast, providing a clean and bright finish to the Scandinavian inspired boat, while keeping it cosy and warm inside. Now listed on Air B&B as one of the top featured properties in Northern Ireland, the boat – affectionately known as Nolly – was once destined for the scrapyard. She was rescued by newly retired couple Gillian and David Campbell, who bought the barge as a renovation project with the intention of transforming her into a houseboat to be moored in the marina of Belfast's Titanic Quarter. As well as being a home for the Campbell's, it can also be rented out as two apartments. While some of the boat's original portholes could be salvaged for reuse on internal doors and walls, the exterior windows all needed replacing with new ones. When consulting with the project team about options, Gillian was very particular about the aesthetics of the new windows and also their ability to retain heat and reduce condensation. Gillian was advised on the window and door specification by REHAU's trade counter partner in Belfast, Windowmate Thomas McAllister, Sales Manager for Windowmate in Northern Ireland explored a number of options for the houseboat and ultimately recommended the REHAU TOTAL70 range. The casement and fixed windows could be easily installed in the steel frame of the boat and offered a high U-value for excellent thermal efficiency.

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## Schueco now has a display stand in National Self-build Centre

Schueco UK, one of Britain's leading specialists in aluminium systems for the residential market, now has a permanent static display at the National Self-Build and Renovation Centre (NSBRC) in Swindon, Wiltshire. Schueco UK's stand (no: TV 82) features their very latest slimline sliding door system, a contemporary panoramic design facade with narrow sightlines and glass-to-glass corner, a concealed vent window system, entrance doors with designer panels and door control system. In addition, there is a TV monitor showing a gallery of project installations.

Visitors will be able to use a scanning facility to request further information and brochures. The National Self-Build and Renovation Centre – which is the largest facility of its kind in the UK – attracts approximately 17,000 visitors every year, all of whom are actively involved in planning or executing a building project.

For further information on the new Schueco UK stand or to arrange an appointment to visit the Centre, please contact the NSBRC.

[mkinfobox@schueco.com](mailto:mkinfobox@schueco.com) [www.schueco.co.uk](http://www.schueco.co.uk)



# Fascia and Soffit Complements Extension

The property based in Chelsfield, Orpington was having a kitchen-diner refurbishment and extension in a modern contemporary design. Dickens Developments – the contractor on site contacted ARP's Area Sales Manager – David Capel, as they had met at a previous site.

David was invited to a site meeting, where the extension was surveyed and the various Trueline fascia and soffit options were discussed.

Having completed the site survey, David provided a full quotation and Dickens Developments were then able to use their local Jewson's at Orpington to fulfil the order.

The bespoke Trueline Fascias and Soffits were made to measure in our in-house production facility, with CAD/CAM drawings produced and signed off by the client prior to going into production. The fascia profiles



were polyester powder coated in matt black RAL 9005 with an over trim covering the fixings on the fascia. The finish was completed with prefabricated corners.

These products were chosen as they suited the modern contemporary style of the extension, but also ties in with the windows and complements the overall design.

Aluminium was the perfect choice for the fascia and soffits on this property as it is strong, durable and non-corrosive.

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# Debunking underfloor heating myths

According to Nigel Sanger of JG Speedfit, many self-builders and property developers are still cautious about installing underfloor heating (UFH) due to rumour and hearsay. Here he dispels the four most common myths

**D**emand for underfloor heating (UFH) is rising, and it's easy to see why. Radiator-free walls mean a cleaner aesthetic and more interior space, while radiant heat from the floor produces a more comfortable temperature in the home. What's more, the ability to create smart zonal heating gives vast potential for increased energy savings.

This has led to the UFH market being given a predicted CAGR (Compounded Annual Growth Rate) of 4.31 per cent, with a projected value of USD 3.92 billion by 2025.

However, as with all new technology, there can be lingering doubts, along with naysayers and those who will question it. It's natural to be sceptical, after all, generation after generation has grown up with radiators, and before that, wood burning fires. The source of heat was highly visible.

For those undertaking a self-build project and considering UFH, it's time that some myths are debunked, so that informed choices can be made.

## MYTH 1: IT'S DIFFICULT TO INSTALL

The first most common myth about UFH is that people think it is difficult to install. This is far from true, and arguably UFH can actually be easier and quicker to install than radiators.

UFH installation uses flexible pipes (circuits), which are laid on the floor and connected to a centrally located manifold. In contrast, radiator fit-outs need pipes to be hidden in joists, and then these pipes need to be distributed down (or up) to each radiator. This is much more time-consuming.

An average room can be fully set up with UFH in roughly 20 minutes. This is because UFH can be installed, tested and commissioned in one single phase. In turn, an average sized house can be installed in less than a day. Ultimately, this saves on labour costs, and projects can be completed faster.

## MYTH 2: IT'S MORE EXPENSIVE TO RUN

There are conflicting views on whether UFH is cheaper or more expensive to run. Even those who already own UFH can be left confused. A Which? survey found some 39 per cent of underfloor-heating owners believe it cost them more on energy, but 40 per cent say their energy bills stayed the same. Radiator companies also often state that owning UFH leads to higher running costs.

Thankfully, UFH is cheaper to run, and many studies have shown that screeded UFH solutions are more cost-effective than conventional radiators. The reason for this is because UFH runs at a temperature of 45 - 55°C. On the other hand, radiators run at a much higher temperature of 75 - 85°C. Therefore, UFH puts less stress on the boiler.

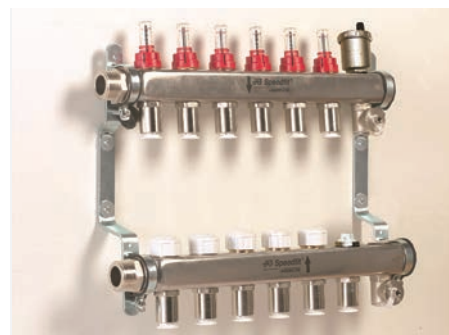
As already mentioned, UFH can also be installed with smart heating controls that enable time and temperature control in individual rooms, thereby introducing 'zonal heating'. Temperatures can be controlled on a room-by-room basis rather than using a single thermostat for the entire house. This then ensures energy is only used in the rooms in use.

## MYTH 3: MANIFOLDS MUST BE LOCATED NEAR BOILERS

Another common misconception is that manifolds, which distribute the water around the UFH pipes, must be located next to the boiler. However, this is not best practice.

Instead, the manifold should be centrally located in the home. If the manifold is placed next to a boiler that isn't centrally located, then it can reduce efficiency through longer pipe runs. Longer pipes mean more distance and time for heat to escape from the pipe.

The reason manifolds should be placed close to the centre of the house is so that none of the rooms are too far away from it. This also frees up the boiler to be placed anywhere in the property.



## MYTH 4: THE PIPES WILL LEAK

Requiring a mass of pipework underneath the floor, it can be easy to see why there is a fear of UFH technology. Concerns over leaking pipes can no doubt unsettle homeowners and others thinking of installing UFH. However, when installed correctly and with the right materials, UFH is as safe as houses.

Pipes are most susceptible to leaks where there is a joint. UFH installations do not require joints however, as pipes can be supplied in long lengths of 25 metres, 50 metres and even 100 metres, which is more than enough to cover the average sized room. One single pipe will create an individual circuit, preventing the need for joints inside the floor.

If you still have any doubts, get in touch with your supplier's support team who should always be there to help.

*Nigel Sanger is divisional director, technical support at JG Speedfit*





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## Stelrad adds Silhouette to series



The latest addition to the growing **Stelrad** Radiator range is the Silhouette with versions now available in the Vita and Softline Series. The Silhouette features sophisticated vertical lines on the fascia creating a crisp, clean, bold appeal. The Vita has flat grille and side panels whilst the Softline features gently curved side panels and grille.

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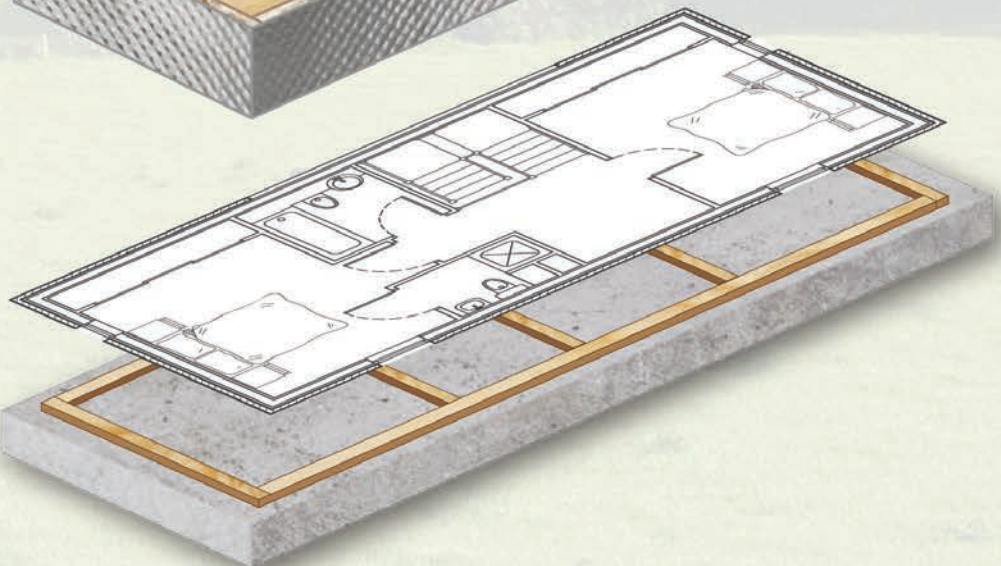
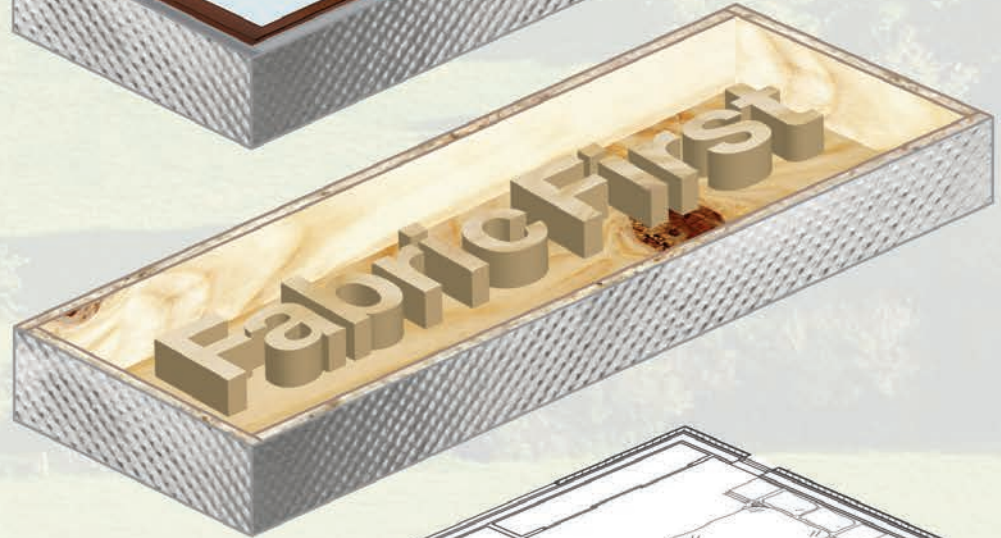
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# Make room outside

David Coleman of Oak Timber Structures explains why the inclusion of an oak gazebo in the garden can add huge value to a property for the long term, and discusses the considerations to bear in mind

With fewer people moving house for a variety of reasons at the moment, homeowners are looking to improve their existing properties, with gardens offering a large potential in terms of usable space. More and more people are looking to fill their space with something both visually appealing and useable. This is why solid oak garden structures are rapidly growing in popularity, with traditional style oak gazebos emerging as a clear winner.

Solid oak gazebos are extremely decorative, durable structures that will give you a peaceful covered area in your garden, while being capable of standing up to the harshest weather Britain can throw at them.

Once exclusively the preserve of kings, queens and wealthy landowners, oak gazebos are now much more affordable, and have been finding their way into residential properties. As a result they are providing a touch of luxury to gardens up and down the country.

The earliest gazebos on record were found in Egypt, dating back 5,000 years. They were used as places to escape and relax, and vines would be encouraged to grow up the posts. Later, the Persians built and used them as places to conduct business. The current style of oak gazebos became popular throughout Europe during the 18th century and their designs have not changed much in all this time.

## DESIGN DETAILS

With square, rectangular, round and hexagonal shapes available, and popular sizes being three or four metres square and over three metres tall, an oak gazebo in your garden will be a major talking point. Some firms will also make your gazebo to any bespoke size or shape to fit any space you may have. The top-end oak gazebos are hand crafted, using the highest quality oak. The main frames and primary rafters are held together with oak pegs hammered through expertly crafted mortise and tenon joints. The common rafters are held in place with stainless steel screws.

When it comes to roofing, cedar



shingles are the most popular covering, complementing the natural colour of the structure with a material that will also weather to the classic silver-grey over time. Oak gazebos are also strong enough to take even the heaviest slates you can find, so if you'd like to match tiling to nearby buildings, it is unlikely to be a problem for your supplier.

It is common to use pressure treated softwood or oak battens across the rafters, with the shingles or tiles fixed straight onto them, so you can see the roofing material from underneath. If you prefer a more modern look, you could opt for tongue and groove boarding over your rafters, giving a more orderly view from underneath.

As with all external oak, gazebos can be treated with a UV protection oil to delay the onset of the silver-grey bleaching from the sun's rays, or left to weather naturally over the years. You'll need to re-treat every 12 to 18 months with a UV protector if you want to keep the golden oak colour for as long as possible. Various oils and stains are available to bring out the grain or enhance the colour of the oak.

*Gazebos can be put up by a general builder, rather than requiring a joiner*

## GETTING IT BUILT

With regards to erection, oak gazebos are normally supplied in a kit form with all the woodwork already complete, so they can be put up by a general builder rather than requiring a joiner. When your gazebo arrives, all of the joining parts will have corresponding markings, so once all the pieces are laid out, the whole kit just fits together. Builders will normally hire a 'genie lift' to hold the heavy beams up in the air while fixing the main frame together. If you opt for cedar shingles as the roof, you'll find





that many general builders are capable of fitting these.

When it comes to groundworks, you should always check with a builder for your exact scenario, but concrete pads under each post will usually suffice. Gazebos are most commonly rested onto 'saddle stones.' These reconstituted sandstone blocks have small locating pins protruding from the

top, which the oak posts rest on. Because of the weight of a completed oak gazebo, they don't need to be anchored to the floor, with many owners resting them onto steel pins drilled into their foundations.

Some owners go on to purchase removable canvas sidings to windproof some elevations of their gazebo, or you can opt for permanent cladding if you

require extra privacy, with overlapping feather-edged oak being a popular choice.

To summarise, if you're looking for an impressive structure to relax under, with a rich history tied to luxury and available to fit any sized space you may have available, consider a solid oak gazebo.

*David Coleman is a company director at Oak Timber Structures*

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## Osmo revives weathered timber cladding

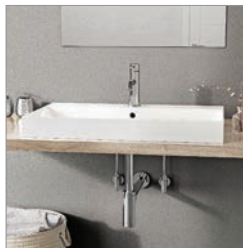


The owner of a two-storey property in Brighton was looking for a wood finish to revive the exterior timber cladding on her family home. After hearing about **Osmo UK's** reputation for good quality sustainable finishes, she knew that its products would not only provide a long-lasting finish, but that it would enhance the natural character of the wood. Rachel Forrest felt that the timber shiplap on the front and rear of her home was beginning to look dull and tired, and wanted to find a wood finish that would

rejuvenate the existing cladding and keep it in good condition for years to come. Rachel chose Osmo UK UV-Protection-Oil in 420 Clear which is ideal for exterior joinery as it slows down the greying process.

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

## The best for beautiful basins



**Abacus Bathrooms** is well known for a philosophy of pioneering development for the ultimate bathroom build. New to the portfolio is a range of four products for simple, effective installation of basins. The chrome professional universal basin waste, with durable plastic click-clack and free flow all-in-one, suits slotted and unslotted basins and comes with a freeflow adaptor. Corresponding chrome isolation valve extensions are also available for a professional designer finish. The final

product is a professional designer bottle trap kit which comprises a designer extended bottle trap with swaged pipe, two designer angle valves, and one angle valve extension pipe set.

[www.abacus-bathrooms.co.uk](http://www.abacus-bathrooms.co.uk)

## Earthborn introduces its brand new colour card

**Earthborn** has launched its new classic colour card. Overstated colour is trending and with Earthborn's seven new hues, each imbued with fresh, fluid energy, you can carry your space to a new, contemporary realm. The new colours are: Bobble Hat – With its roots firmly in nature, Bobble Hat is a majestic blue; Hippo Hooray – An honest, well balanced grey; Hobgoblin – An easy-going green with a subtle hint of blue; Delilah – This delightfully flattering coral hue sits between orange and pink; Flutterby – Nearly white but not quite, Flutterby is inherently versatile; Lady Bug – A richly toned burgundy, both classy and considered; Tick-Tock – A timeless shade offering warmth, freshness, light and shade. Earthborn has also renamed Claypaint 'White' to 'White Clay' to reflect its uniquely soft, creamy look, and made Eggshell No.17 available in 'White Clay' to match it.

Cathryn Helsby, Marketing Manager of Earthborn commented "Carefully curated to help you live better, each of the seven colours brings something unique to your home: a story, a mood, a memory."

The seven new colours are added to the classic range of 72 colours, available in Claypaint, Lifestyle, Eco Chic & classic Eggshell finishes.

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# Home lift solutions from The Platform Lift Company



The introduction of a home lift solution can create a life changing experience. Being able to access different floors and areas of a home not only provides ease of living but enables families and friends to enjoy being together in the same space. It can also help future proof a property, as a home lift is a desirable feature which could appeal to those who are elderly or disabled.

When it comes to installing a home lift or access solution self-builders and homemakers now have a variety of options. These include through the floor lifts, steps which transform into a platform lift, and the ingenious cantilever which sits flush with the floor when not in use.

## THROUGH THE FLOOR LIFTS

Today's home lifts are incredibly compact, so they can fit smaller spaces, for example The Platform Lift Company's Italian Style platform lift is ideal for installation where there is a particularly narrow stairwell. Provided there is adequate room, the installation of a through floor residential platform lift can be achieved without major structural changes. Installation is typically completed within three days with minimal disruption to the property. The external facing doors can be any RAL colour to match a surrounding



décor which gives design flexibility and there is an option to have a glass shaft to give more feeling of space within a room.

## STEPS WHICH TRANSFORM INTO A PLATFORM LIFT

If you are trying to overcome steps or a difference in height between two spaces either inside or outside, then the FlexStep provides an ideal 2-in-1 solution. This clever product can be configured as a flight of stairs and transformed at the touch of a button into a platform lift. The FlexStep is available in different widths to accommodate tight spaces and step heights: the 6-step FlexStep model can travel up to 1250 mm. Customers can choose from a variety of materials and finishes to complement an existing interior or exterior design.

## A PLATFORM LIFT WHICH RISES OUT FROM THE FLOOR

The Cantilever platform lift is mounted in a pit at the foot of the staircase, so when it is not in use it is flush with the surrounding floor. The obvious advantages are that it does not create an obstruction and can be discreetly blended into the decor of the room. By using a remote control or the wall mounted controls, the platform lift will rise out of the floor and over the steps. Again, with a touch of a button the lift

can be lowered back into the pit ready for next time. The beauty of this discrete but ingenious lift is that it can be finished to match an existing floor, so you would never even know it was there.

The Platform Lift Company offers one of the biggest ranges of home lift solutions including cabin style residential lifts, platform lifts and stair risers. The company also has the capabilities to modify a platform lift to fit a desired space. Customers can also choose from a wide variety of materials and finishes to match a décor and create a desired look. Whether you are looking for precious wood, natural stone floor inlays, leather coatings and stainless-steel push buttons or even Swarovski elements for the ultimate luxury look – we can create your perfect bespoke home lift.

This design flexibility can also be coupled with new technology. The Platform Lift Company can interface your home lift with a multimedia in-house system. You can even create mood lighting in your lift with LED. Our latest Swedish Style Home Lift comes with an app called SmartLift which enables you to dim or brighten the light and set your own lighting schedules – how clever is that?

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# A home for life

Mike Lord of Stiltz explains why more and more self-builders are choosing to future-proof their homes by including a 'homelift'



**B**uilding your dream home can be a fantastically rewarding process. This is why, according to studies by the National Custom & Self Build Association, around seven million people every year research or plan how to build a home.

## THE 'FOREVER' HOME

For many – once the self-build is complete – the new house quickly becomes their 'forever home'. As they have no intention of moving again, they explore ways of future-proofing their properties. A self-build is a sizeable financial and emotional investment, so pivotal to its success is ensuring that the house continues to address a number of practical and functional needs, throughout the whole of its owners' lives.

Factoring in features which enable future-proofing at an early stage is essential in this type of project, to allow the end product to be a multi-functional, fully accessible living environment. This avoids downsizing or making adaptations later on in life.

## A 'MEANINGFUL' SELF-BUILD

Aside from the initial ground work of finding land, securing planning permission and getting services to site,

the majority of self-builders do tend to be much more involved in the creative process, than the laying of individual bricks. They are often interested in how the finished result will help achieve their personal goals.

Thinking about what is most important to them, playing to their strengths, and setting small but achievable goals is just the beginning. Designing a house to respond favourably to the changing climates of an entire lifetime is often a great challenge, but it will also be a colossal benefit once the project is completed.

## THE HOMELIFT - THE NEW HEARTBEAT OF THE HOME

One increasingly popular way of creating a home which offers its occupants complete freedom and independence across the ages, is by incorporating a 'homelift.' This defies the ageing process, as your home is fit for purpose whatever your life circumstances.

The relatively new concept of having a 'real' lift in the home – as opposed to a traditional old-fashioned stairlift – has been around for about a decade, with manufacturers offering various types of homelifts from traction to hydraulic and vacuum lifts – but these all came at a

financial as well as aesthetic cost.

Thanks to advances in technology, the new generation of homelifts are now much more affordable, and provide homeowners with a way of significantly enhancing their lifestyle opportunities as well as adding value to their home.

Modern homelifts look great too. Gone are the days of square, boxy lifts, which looked more suited to a hospital ward than your living room. Today's homelifts, right from the drawing board, are designed to work indoors, blending in with your home and lifestyle. Design has been considered and explored at the research and development stage, and there is much focus on customer satisfaction in terms of the final product being visually desirable, as well offering an alternative way to move around the home.

Some manufacturers have concentrated their efforts on making a homelift range complement the décor of the house, rather than seeming alien to its surroundings. Lift companies are realising that there is now high demand for a finished product which not only 'does the job' but is also stylish and attractive in its own right.

The beauty of one of these new generation homelifts is that they can be



# Today's homelifts are designed to work indoors, blending in with your home and lifestyle

positioned almost anywhere in the home. Popular installation configurations tend to be hallway to landing, main living area to master bedroom suite, or in the turn of a staircase (obviously space permitting).

One UK homelift system even allows the user to enter and exit from opposite sides of the lift on different floors. This is particularly useful for wheelchair users or where turning space isn't available, or where a room layout would have otherwise created a challenge with installation.

## TRANSFORMING YOUR HOME IN A DAY

Many self-builders just starting out are already likely to have planning

permission in place and slotting a homelift into an existing project is very straightforward. An architect will typically only need to know the diameter of the lift and whether extra space is required for how it is powered.

There are freestanding homelifts available which are self-supporting, and only need an aperture hole cut out of the ceiling for the lift pass through as it travels between floors. Latest models now simply plug straight into a normal 13 amp power socket.

There is no planning permission required for those self-builders looking to retrospectively install a homelift once the build has been completed. The maximum requirement needed is a standard building notice application, which involves an inspection by an authorised independent body, usually during the building phase.

## CASE STUDY

David and Carol Simpson transformed a two-bedroom bungalow on Devon's coastline into an incredible four-bedroom detached Hanse Haus home, and included a homelift in their plans from the outset as soon as they had decided on the self-build route.

Mr. Simpson said: "We decided, even before starting initial drawings, that we

wanted a homelift for two reasons. The first was to future-proof our home for when we eventually aren't able to use the stairs properly, and secondly, for Carol's elderly mother.

"We knew exactly how much space we needed for the lift and this made it easy for us to include the lift in the sketches and plans which we handed over to Hanse Haus.


He concluded: "We did consider a stairlift but our stairs bend halfway up. Stairlifts also take up a lot of space in the stairwell and are not the most attractive to look at. Having one would completely spoil the look of our clean, contemporary staircase. We were very happy with our decision to go with a homelift. It sits behind a door in the hallway and goes up to the first-floor landing just perfectly. It is very neat, extremely practical and sensibly priced. We are very impressed with it – mostly because of its ease of use."

Other homeowners like Mr Simpson who have future-proofed their homes with a homelift have also gained that peace of mind so whatever the future brings, home can remain home for many more years to come.


*Mike Lord is chairman and CEO of Stiltz Homelifts*

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## The Platform Lift Company: FlexStep



Where space is an issue, the FlexStep provides an ideal 2-in-1 solution. This clever product, available from the **Platform Lift Company**, can be configured as a flight of stairs and transformed at the touch of a button into a platform lift.

The FlexStep is available in different step widths and step heights: the 6-step FlexStep model is intended for travels up to 1250 mm.

Customers can choose from a variety of materials and finishes to complement an

existing home interior or exterior design. The Platform Lift Company provides full installation of the Flexstep as well as ongoing service and maintenance.

01256 896000 [www.platformliftco.co.uk](http://www.platformliftco.co.uk)



## Award winning Opus Scandfire



The award winning Opus Scandfire makes incorporating a woodburning stove into a new build both quick and simple. Gone are the complexities of designing chimneys and calculating safety distances.

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plastered along with the walls. The stove arrives at second fix and slots straight in. Job done and a house has become a home. For more information, please visit the **Firepower** website.

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## Nestor Martin's S23 stove adds wow factor and warmth

When you want a centrepiece for the living room, dining area or open-plan space, a freestanding stove instantly becomes the hub of the home. Combining classic good looks with an eye-catching ivory finish, the S23 from **Nestor Martin** is a traditional multi-fuel model that features patented Woodbox® combustion technology and an optional remote control for easy use. Part of the hugely successful S-Series, the 7kW S23 multi-fuel convection stove features a large double glazed glass window with an uninterrupted view of the panoramic flames inside as well as thermostatic temperature control for the ultimate in comfort. Keep cosy when you need to and cool things down a little when the temperature rises. DEFRA approved, the S23 can be used in smoke control areas such as urban and city living, with your choice of a top or rear flue connection and an under-grate air control if you wish to burn coal rather than wood. What's more, with the Nestor Martin S23 you can benefit from overnight burning. Simply load it up before you head off to bed then shut it right down. No need to build a new fire in the morning and you also have the advantage of Plexus air control, a riddling grate and long-life cast iron internal protection plates, too. Nestor Martin is one of the oldest stove manufacturers still trading today. Established in 1854, its stoves are designed to efficiently burn natural gas and can be adapted to burn propane.

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## New InnerVision® steel-framed sliding doors from Crittall

Creating a seamless transition between rooms, by opening or closing space is now possible with new sliding doors from **Crittall's** range of InnerVision internal screens. These bright, beautifully crafted walls of glazing will complement timeless styles of period property or contemporary homes. On-trend, open plan living takes on a different dimension by partitioning open interior areas to create contemporary zones with steel-framed single or double sliding doors, without compromising light or space. Available in a variety of options, InnerVision screens and doors are designed with modern living in mind, giving a sense of space, light and understated beauty, with clean lines and subtle detailing. The sliding doors feature concealed running gear to provide a sleek finish. Light-in-weight, and with a soft-close feature and floor tracks, they are so easy to use, gliding effortlessly on opening and closing. These new interior sliding doors offer wider opening areas than more intrusive hinged doors, maximising use of inside room space, particularly where it may be limited. Elegantly slender, the slim steel framing is unobtrusive – the distinguished-looking installation makes a wonderful talking point. Natural illumination inside is increased, while enhanced acoustic properties ensure privacy and reduced noise levels. Fully compatible with other InnerVision products, the sliding door option features a secure latch-able configuration.

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The LANORA-S comes in a beautiful brushed steel finish and has a default cold-setting to save energy. For further information on BLANCO UK, please visit the company's website.  
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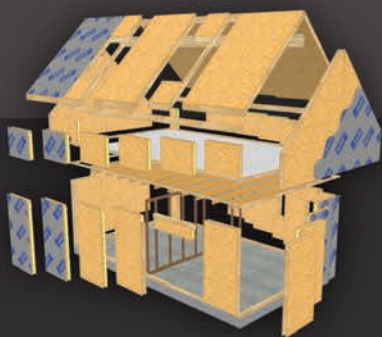
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