

selfbuilder + homemaker

NOV/DEC 2019

A labour of love in Cornwall

A luxurious renovation keeps
the charms of an old mill

Simple tips for bathrooms

Creating a minimalist look

6 REASONS TO CHOOSE TIMBER

Our timber expert puts the case for the
material as the 'gold standard' for building
frames, in a fabric-first approach

Low energy for a lifetime

Why a retired couple built a rustic Passivhaus in
the Kent countryside as their 'forever' home

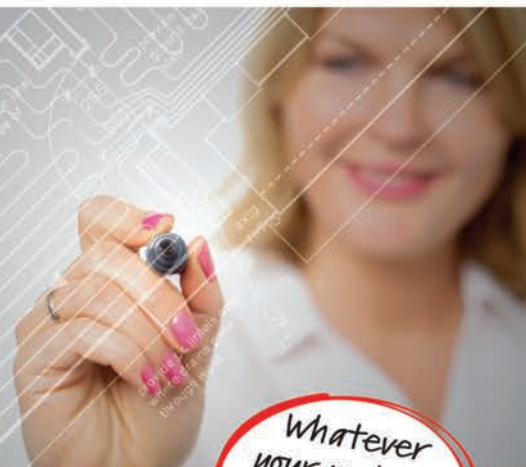




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FROM THE EDITOR...

Graven Hill in Bicester, as you are no doubt aware, is billed as the UK's largest self- and custom-build development site. With 1,900 homes of varying designs and levels of owner involvement, it was the obvious place for the National Custom & Self Build Association (NaCSBA) to hold its first Right to Build Day, on 30 October.

This marked the moment when local authorities became compelled to show how many plots they have granted for self-builds in their area, it being three years since Right to Build legislation came into force. According to NaCSBA, local authorities should have been able to register 18,000 individual planning applications in this period based on the demand it is aware of, however the body thinks that they haven't been able to grant anything near this amount.

According to the association's Right to Build Task Force however, a total of 58 per cent of local authorities "have, or are bringing on" policies that "support custom- and self-build housing delivery." Forgive me if that doesn't seem a bit woolly, given that the UK is still thought to have the world's lowest rate of self-build versus commercial development.

The Task Force did admit that while local plans are "becoming more ambitious" (good), "few offer the necessary support within the spirit of legislation and Government policy (very bad)." And most "only include vague policies supporting custom and self-build housing in principle, without enabling development to come forward."

I'm aware there are other political challenges centrally, but why, oh why can't we do better, at least at a local level?

JAMES PARKER



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31 JANUARY - 2 FEBRUARY, SWINDON

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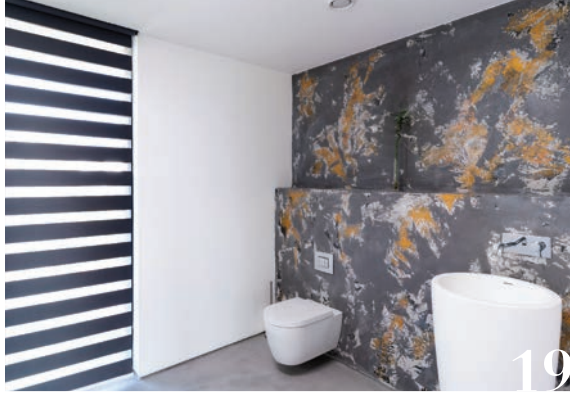
ON THE COVER...
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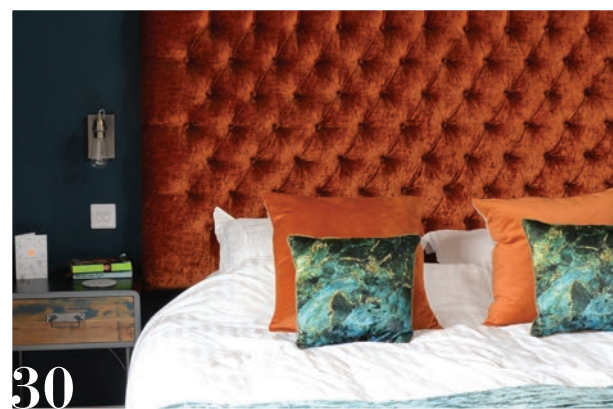
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Industry survey shows just how important the self- and custom-build market is to small builders

For the first time, the Federation of Master Builders (FMB) annual House Builders' Survey has "evidenced the importance of the self- and custom-build sector as a source of work for its members," according to the organisation.

The 2019 findings from the survey indicate that over half of its housebuilder members have built a home to the plan and specification of a new home owner in the last year. The figure is important, says the National Custom & Self Build Association (NaCSBA), as it reflects the close links between the SME market and custom- and self-build.

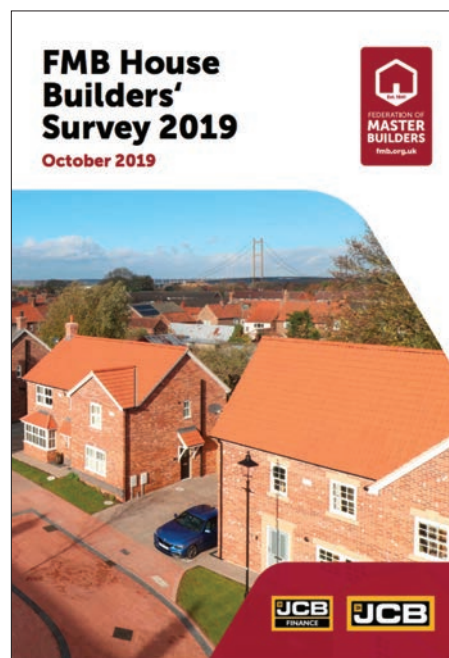
The FMB conducts the survey to assess the housing market and the constraints faced by small and medium sized housebuilders. The sector has seen a dramatic decline – in 1988 two thirds of the UK's homes were built by SME builders, while in 2014 it was just a third, and since 2007 the number of SME builders has halved.

As part of its efforts to alleviate the housing crisis, the Government wants to see a return of SME housebuilders to the market. This, NaCSBA says, chimes with its ambitions for custom- and self-build to be a viable source of additional housing.

The survey findings included:

- 52 per cent of housebuilder members surveyed have built a new home to the plan and specification of a new home owner in the last year
- Of these, 42 per cent have built one home, 32 per cent have built two, 10 per cent have built four to five and 12 per cent have built six to 10
- The vast majority (68 per cent) reported that one of these homes was on land they obtained for the development, 19 per cent reported two to three, 8 per cent reported four to five and three reported six to 10.

Andrew Baddeley-Chappell, NaCSBA CEO said: "Custom- and self-build has the potential to help the Government reach its target of creating 300,000 homes per year by the mid-2020s, and the SME sector is crucial in delivering this. We want to see more opportunities that create a level playing field that enables our sector to operate in the same conditions as the large housebuilders, such as a Help to Build equity loan that mirrors the support the Help to Buy loan has given to the mass market. This would also provide



low-cost development finance to SME builders."

FMB chief executive Brian Berry added: "If the Government is going to increase both the quantity and quality of new homes a more diverse housebuilding industry is needed. What this new research shows is that custom- and self-build can help bolster SMEs because without local builders to help find land, service the plots and build the houses, delivery is much more difficult. The FMB is urging the Government to support the custom- and self-build sector, by encouraging prospective home owners to consider building their own home through policy solutions such as the Help to Build scheme idea."

National Design Guide for homes launched

As part of its revised set of planning practice guidance (PPG), the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government (MHCLG) has launched a new National Design Guide.

The guide is broken down into three parts, listing 10 characteristics relating to a "well-designed place" and linking them to physical character, a sense of community, and addressing environmental issues affecting climate. This new national standard supports ideas set out in the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF). The 10 characteristics are:

- Context – enhances the surroundings
- Identity – attractive and distinctive
- Built form – a coherent pattern of development
- Movement – accessible and easy to move around
- Nature – enhanced and optimised
- Public space – safe, social and inclusive
- Uses – mixed and integrated
- Homes & buildings – functional, healthy and sustainable
- Resources – efficient and resilient
- Lifespan – made to last

Currently local authorities can refuse planning permission if the proposed building will not improve the quality or functionality of the local area, under the NPPF. The National Design Guide will further support this, and local authorities are being encouraged to develop their own specific guides for each area, using the principles set out in the new standard.

There is also an intention to publish the first Government-backed National Model Design Code next year, which will be discussed following the publication of the final Building Better, Building Beautiful Commission report in December.

Industry reaction to the guide was mixed, with the Royal Institute of British Architects (RIBA) president Alan Jones stating that while the idea of highlighting good practice is positive, particularly focusing on how the built environment affects climate change, the proposal to extend Permitted Development Rights will undermine principles set out in the guide. "The RIBA will continue to urge the Government to seriously consider this move, which will only lead to more homes that sidestep vital quality and environmental standards," he said.

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Increasing number of local authorities support self- and custom-build

An “in-depth analysis” by the National Custom & Self Build Association (NaCSBA)’s Right to Build Task Force has found that 58 per cent of local authorities have “current or emerging policy provision” for custom- and self-build. In 2015, before the launch of the Right to Build legislation, that figure was 24 per cent.

Despite the positive increase, NaCSBA says it “feels that more could – and should – be done.” For its analysis the Task Force examined the plans of all 336 English local authorities, looking at the level and type of provision for self- and custom-build – both in plans already in place and those currently being processed. UK councils are obligated to produce new plans every five years.

Of the authorities that have post-2015 plans, 76 per cent have a policy in place that actively supports custom- and self-build housing. NaCSBA says its analysis also found that post-Right to Build legislation plans were becoming more “ambitious,” but that there is a lack of supporting documents and guidance, and that most policies only offer “vague” support.

The Task Force credited in particular those authorities that have what it calls “package approaches,” in which there are a mixture of policies aimed at supporting custom- and self-build and responding to local demand. These

policies include the following:

- Allocation of both small and large sites for custom- and self-build housing
- Allocation of a percentage of serviced plots on larger housing developments
- Identification of specific locations for custom- and self-build housing
- Allocation of public land for serviced plots
- Promotion of custom- and self-build housing as a route to affordable housing.

These packages, NaCSBA said, can help facilitate more custom- and self-build housing projects, especially when implemented in conjunction with additional planning documents and guidance.

Commenting on the findings, Right to Build Task Force director Mario Wolf said: “The Right to Build Task Force works with a range of stakeholders and welcomes the findings that two thirds of English authorities now have policy provision. However, our research has also found that there is a long way to go. It is unacceptable that almost five years on from the 2015 Act almost one in three adopted post-legislation plans, and one in four emerging local plans, are making no provision for custom- and self-build housing.”

RIBA crowns 2019’s House of the Year

House Lessans, a simple zinc-roofed home in County Down designed by McGonigle McGrath, has been named RIBA House of the Year 2019. The annual award is given by the Royal Institute of British Architects (RIBA) to the UK’s best new architect-designed house.

Built on the site of a former farmstead, House Lessans completes a small compound of agricultural buildings. Its white rendered concrete walls capped with pitched roofs echo the adjacent corrugated barn and “root the family home within the landscape,” said RIBA.

The house is formed of two perpendicular blocks – a “dramatic” double-height living space, and a suite of three bedrooms overlooking a “tranquil” sheltered courtyard garden. While all rooms are “minimal and paired back,” they vary in volume and feel. The “breathtaking” open-plan kitchen and snug take advantage of the views with huge expanses of glass, while the three equally-sized bedrooms are “restrained, private and more familiar in scale.”

Through the application of basic building materials, cost-saving ‘hacks’ and the “simple arrangement of rooms and spaces,” said RIBA, the architects



Images © Aidan McGrath.

“managed to design a home of outstanding quality on a budget”. It added: “Walls of cheap concrete bricks have been carefully laid and painted inside with flush mortar joints to ensure a perfect finish.” The huge windows are also fixed throughout – with openings for ventilation – a cheaper alternative to bi-fold doors.



RIBA President Alan Jones said: “House Lessans demonstrates that life enhancing architecture does not have to cost the earth. Executed with incredible clarity and restraint, McGonigle McGrath have used simple and cheap materials to create a truly bespoke home that resonates with its owners and its context.”

House Lessans was revealed as the winner in the final episode of a special Channel 4 series *Grand Designs: House of the Year*, broadcast on 13 November.




TOPS ON TOP

Cindy Crawford on New Silestone Eternal Noir



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INTERIOR INSPIRATION: FURNITURE

Are you sitting comfortably? No matter how great your overall house's design is, the bottom line is whether your chairs, tables, beds and other key items are comfortable, as well as stylish enough to be a room's centrepiece. Here we round up a few of our favourite functionally chic furniture items for 2020

1. Modish Living's Mitcham Large Oak Squared Industrial Sideboard has been handcrafted using solid oak and finished with squared features on the cupboard doors for a unique design. Perfect for a living room or dining room, it features black steel angled legs with give it a retro finish. The sideboard's priced at £795.
www.modishliving.co.uk

2. Oak Furniture Land's Highgate rustic oak painted large TV unit helps keep media clutter under control. Two cupboards and the central shelf keep things contained, and with pre-cut holes for cables, the unit is delivered ready to use. It's finished with inky blue paint tones and copper-coloured handles, and is priced at £399.99.
www.oakfurnitureland.co.uk

3. The Grange dining table from **Furniture Choice** has a chunky design, with the solid hardwood legs and plank top effect combining to make a striking impression. It pairs perfectly with the **Bewley** chairs which feature a curved, button-back upholstery. The table is priced at £699.99.
www.furniturechoice.co.uk





4. The Amberley Bookcase from **The Painted Furniture Company** (pictured in sea mist with white oiled oak top) features a tulipwood carcass, an 'A' grade European oak top and a dove-tail drawer construction. Each bookcase is made to order meaning it's offered in a range of paint colours and wood finishes. The bookcase is priced at £629. www.paintedfurnitureco.co.uk

5. The Appledoe Sofa (pictured in broad weave linen silver) from **Willow & Hall** combines sleek style with comfort, featuring a padded 'M'-shaped fixed back and plump cushions. The sofa has solid wooden feet and ruched arms, giving it a "dainty and sophisticated" finish. It's priced at £1,035. www.willowandhall.co.uk

6. The Lavina Storage Bed from **MY Furniture** features an impressive tall headboard with a deep, chrome-plated frame. Pictured in storm grey, the headboard is finished with a deep buttoned upholstery. The bed has a large internal storage area with a gas lift mechanism for easy opening. Prices start at £499.99 for a double (excluding mattress). www.my-furniture.co.uk





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Vent-Axia's high quality spares department, requiring parts once in the 1990s and replacement housing recently. This all leads to further improved fan longevity and so reduced waste, helping lower environmental impact.

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Tobermore launch new Specification Guide

Tobermore continue to set standards with the launch of their official new Specification Guide. Designed with architects, landscape designers, developers, building contractors and housebuilders in mind, the all-encompassing new guide is complete with all the latest additions to Tobermore's extensive paving and walling ranges, and photography of stunning commercial schemes. The almost 300 page guide is a carefully detailed resource with extensive visual and technical references to help designers and architects choose the ideal solution for their project. The clearly indexed format enables the user to choose from the hundreds of colour, size and finish options suitable for the full range of traffic applications and project sector. Importantly, all the product options are located in one document so essential elements including steps and kerbs can be referenced and specified at the same time. Tobermore's Managing Director, David Henderson, has expressed his delight at the launch of the new guide, "Throughout the years, we've set ourselves apart in the marketplace with our undeniable product quality, our innovative manufacturing processes and our first class customer service. Our new Product Specification Guide reflects these values perfectly – it is simply quality like no other." The guide is just one of the tools available to specifiers who can also use Tobermore's interactive online tools to compare alternative products and request product samples to aid their selection process.

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National Ventilation's Monsoon Energysaver™ IntelliSystem Heat Recovery Unit has been shortlisted in the prestigious Electrical Industry Awards. Already an award-winning product, the IntelliSystem has been named as a finalist in the 'Residential/Domestic Product of the Year' category. This exciting news is another boost for the state-of-the-art IntelliSystem which is packed with innovative features. National Ventilation's Monsoon IntelliSystem Heat Recovery Unit offers a smarter way to

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Why timber needs to be in the frame



Malcolm Thomson of Scotframe explains why he believes timber frame is the 'gold standard' for modern construction and why we should all be thinking about fabric-first approaches

Offsite timber frame construction allows homes to be built faster and to a higher sustainability standard compared with traditional construction methods, making them more cost-effective to build and live in.

WHY SHOULD I CHOOSE TIMBER FRAME?

It's fast. Timber frame kits are prefabricated offsite so the weather won't delay delivery and construction. Average build times range from 14-26 weeks.

They're versatile too. The kits are precision engineered to your individual design, and there are no limits to what you can design and build. They are strong and durable, able to withstand the worst weather.

You also get quality. The timber frame

kits and components are factory-constructed, which ensures increased accuracy and reliability.

Energy efficiency is a key advantage and saves money in the long term, plus good acoustic properties means you hear less noise from neighbours.

OK, WHERE DO I START?

The world is your oyster when it comes to design! There are timber frame house styles to suit every budget, lifestyle and location, from compact bungalows to large family homes. Kit providers usually provide a range of properties to inspire you, and then offer a customisation service to suit your exact requirements.

For those who feel daunted by the prospect of creating a dream home from scratch, there's plenty of expert help around. Technology has come a long way

and offers a wealth of benefits to support your decision making – it's never been easier to design a timber frame home. For example, 3D images and 'walk through' visualisations can give you a feel for how a design would translate into living space.

WHAT IS THE 'FABRIC FIRST' APPROACH I KEEP HEARING ABOUT?

Fabric first refers to the practice of designing homes with long-term efficiency measures built in from the start. By fabric we mean the external walls, floors and roofs.

A fabric first approach prioritises the insulation and airtightness of the building, using insulation and high-performance doors and windows to create an airtight structure that prevents drafts and retains heat. This reduces the need for costly 'add-ons' such as renewable energy or heating systems, as the building does all the hard the work for you.

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WHAT'S THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN 'CLOSED' AND 'OPEN' PANELS?

Closed panel building systems refer to wall, floor and roof panels where high performance insulation has been fitted in the factory prior to delivery.

The more sophisticated closed panel systems can factory-fit windows, external doors and even patio doors before the panels are transported to your site. They can be erected extremely quickly, thereby reducing timescales and speeding up the build programme.

Open panel systems refer to a structural frame that arrives on site without insulation or vapour control layers – it's an 'open' format, hence the name. Once the building is weather-tight and the services have been installed, the insulation is then manually fitted between the studs before a vapour-proof barrier is placed on top. The final step is lining with plasterboard. This takes longer, as you can imagine.

WHAT ABOUT THE GREEN CREDENTIALS OF TIMBER FRAME?

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heat. All buildings must conform to new thermal performance standards, and timber is a natural insulator, enhancing the efficiency of the other insulation materials used.

Building in such a sustainable fashion also has a positive impact on the environment. By creating homes which are less reliant on fossil fuels, we can do our bit to make the world a greener place for future generations. This means that in addition to saving money on your utility bills, you can also help protect the environment.

HOW DOES THE COST COMPARE?

Building your own home is the most affordable way to secure your dream property, and is likely to be less expensive than you think.

Timber frame construction is cheaper than a brick and block built house, which is why more and more developers are starting to use it. The kit can be put together more quickly, attaining wind/watertight status within days, unlike brick-built properties which can take weeks to become wind/watertight. This means that electricians, plumbers and



heating engineers can begin work on the interior fit out immediately, and you can save money on build time.

It might seem a little pricier at the outset, but the costs are recouped via a shorter build time and lower energy bills in future – for example, space heating

energy costs are significantly lower. Plus, it's important to remember that throughout the duration of the build, you have total control over costs.

Malcolm Thomson is sales director at Scotframe

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Königstone's expands team



Königstone has appointed Dan Snaith as its new Regional Sales Manager. Dan joins the team with plenty of experience in sales from his position with a components supplier and then at Rotpunkt kitchens. In his previous role, Dan was responsible for selling kitchens and knowing every aspect of them, including worktops that were often made by Königstone. He became familiar with the brand and then, after some time away from the industry, was delighted to hear about the chance to become a part of the worktop

manufacturer's team. Dan commented, "I'm really looking forward to joining the journey that Königstone is on and being part of what is to come for the company in future years."

info@konigstone.co.uk

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NO COMPROMISE

Replacing a single-storey bungalow with a highly contemporary two-storey house of bold geometric forms – built to take in views across Poole Harbour – was a quest for minimalist perfection for one self-builder

TEXT DEBBIE JEFFERY IMAGES JACK LODGE PHOTOGRAPHY

STAYING POWER

It took many years of planning and several design iterations to get the very modern and minimalist new build onsite

LOW POINT

“Having to re-do subcontractors’ work due to poor quality finishes.”

– Simon Stanborough

In a road where modest 1960s bungalows stand shoulder to shoulder with striking contemporary new builds – all angular lines and glittering glass – Simon Stanborough’s new home is totally unique.

After years spent debating how best to remodel his single-storey bungalow, during which time three separate planning applications were approved, he finally took the decision to demolish the property altogether.

“My father’s a property developer, who has worked with Western Design Architects on various projects, and I also became friends with the company’s founder, Phil Easton,” says Simon, who previously lived in a traditional-style farmhouse he built, which was designed by the practice.

Established in 1986 by Phil, when it was based in his garden shed, the business has grown into a respected and award-winning Dorset design practice. Coincidentally, Western Design Architects had also designed a pair of highly contemporary properties in Simon’s road: striking timber-clad boxes, perched on a concrete plinth and constructed around a steel frame.

Simon and Phil are fellow motorbike enthusiasts, who have travelled to far flung corners of the world on their bikes, and a spacious garage was one of Simon’s top requirements to house and maintain his bikes.

“I bought the bungalow, which was in a tired but decent condition, back in 2005 mainly because of the location and views across Poole Harbour,” explains Simon, a claims manager. “The first planning application in 2008 was for a new pitched roof and first floor to convert it into a two-storey house, which was approved.

“Three years later I worked with Western Design Architects, once again, and applied to replace the pitched roof with a second storey and a flat roof, as well as extending to the rear to infill an existing corner. A year on, in 2012, we revised that application, but despite gaining approval I never went ahead with the work.”

Situated in the charmingly-named Lilliput, less than a five-minute drive from Shore Road Beach



“We experimented a lot with the design, changing some details multiple times, it had to be really crisp”

in Sandbanks, the 1960s bungalow stood in an area which is slowly being redeveloped, with contemporary new builds springing up along Simon’s road inspiring him to consider a similar project himself.

“It turned out to be more expensive to convert the roof of the bungalow when compared to demolishing it and building a new house, so in 2016 I went back to the architects to put together a new application for a contemporary new build home, exactly how I wanted it and without the restrictions of the existing building,” he explains.

The low-slung bungalow consisted of painted brickwork walls with a brick plinth, plain concrete roof tiles and white PVCu windows: a simple design of little intrinsic merit, which was no longer appropriate for its developing surroundings.

Orientated east-west, the plot enjoys enviable

views of Poole Harbour and Simon was keen to make the most of the fantastic location with his new design proposal. Working with Phil Easton and project designer Rianna Holliss of Western Design Architects, he was determined to build something with architectural merit which would also be ideally suited to his lifestyle.

"Having designed two other properties further up the road, we knew the outlook from upstairs was going to be incredible – with panoramic views over Poole Harbour, Sandbanks and to the Purbecks," explains Rianna, who also lives in Poole and says she thoroughly enjoyed working on the design.

"Simon was quite open with his brief and flipping the layout to place open plan living

accommodation upstairs with bedrooms on the ground floor made sense – especially as he was keen to have a large and impressive entertaining space."

The upside-down house was therefore designed with four ensuite bedrooms, a garage, dressing room and utility on the ground floor, and an open plan kitchen/living/dining area upstairs.

"We started sketching our design ideas, then quickly moved on to using SketchUp, a 3D computer modelling software package. As it's quite a geometric design, SketchUp is really good for mass modelling – allowing us to create blocks and forms – with a large amount of glazing at the rear of the property





UP PERISCOPE

A retractable, periscope-style extractor was installed above the hob in the kitchen to ensure air remains fresh in the open plan living/dining/kitchen space on the first floor

SIMON'S ADVICE

"Make sure you have a good working relationship with your architect. It can be a long, tough process and the right architect will make it a positive experience."

facing the view," says Rianna.

Working within the exact footprint of the original bungalow and designing for the narrow, sloping site, she admits the project was a challenge: "It took quite a long time, and Phil and I experimented a lot with the design until we were happy, changing some details multiple times because we wanted everything absolutely perfect to meet Simon's expectations. It had to be really crisp."

The site stands on a hill, which rises up roughly three metres from the rear to the front of the plot, west to east. The new design proposal took account of the sloping nature of the plot and reduced the overall height of the first design, which had been approved back in 2007 and consisted of a pitched roof approximately 1.7 metres taller than the latest application.

"We positioned the house further away from a neighbouring property on the ground floor, where there are glazed openings, allowing the first floor of the design to protrude out, improving the outlook to the rear without limiting neighbours' views," explains Rianna.

Visually, the new house could not be more different from its predecessor. Angular and minimal, the linear design exudes a pared-back masculinity, with two main rectangular forms on the front facade – one vertical and one horizontal – cantilevering out over the garage almost to the existing building line of the neighbouring property.

These letterbox-like forms are inset at different planes and are joined by a recessed glass link,

which accentuates the main entrance to the house. White render and contrasting pale grey cladding further define the building's lines and echo other contemporary houses in the area.

This style is replicated to the rear of the house, with an L-shaped element outlining a large glazed area. First floor glazing consists of four main panels: two fixed at either end, with two sliding central doors opening onto a Juliet balcony.

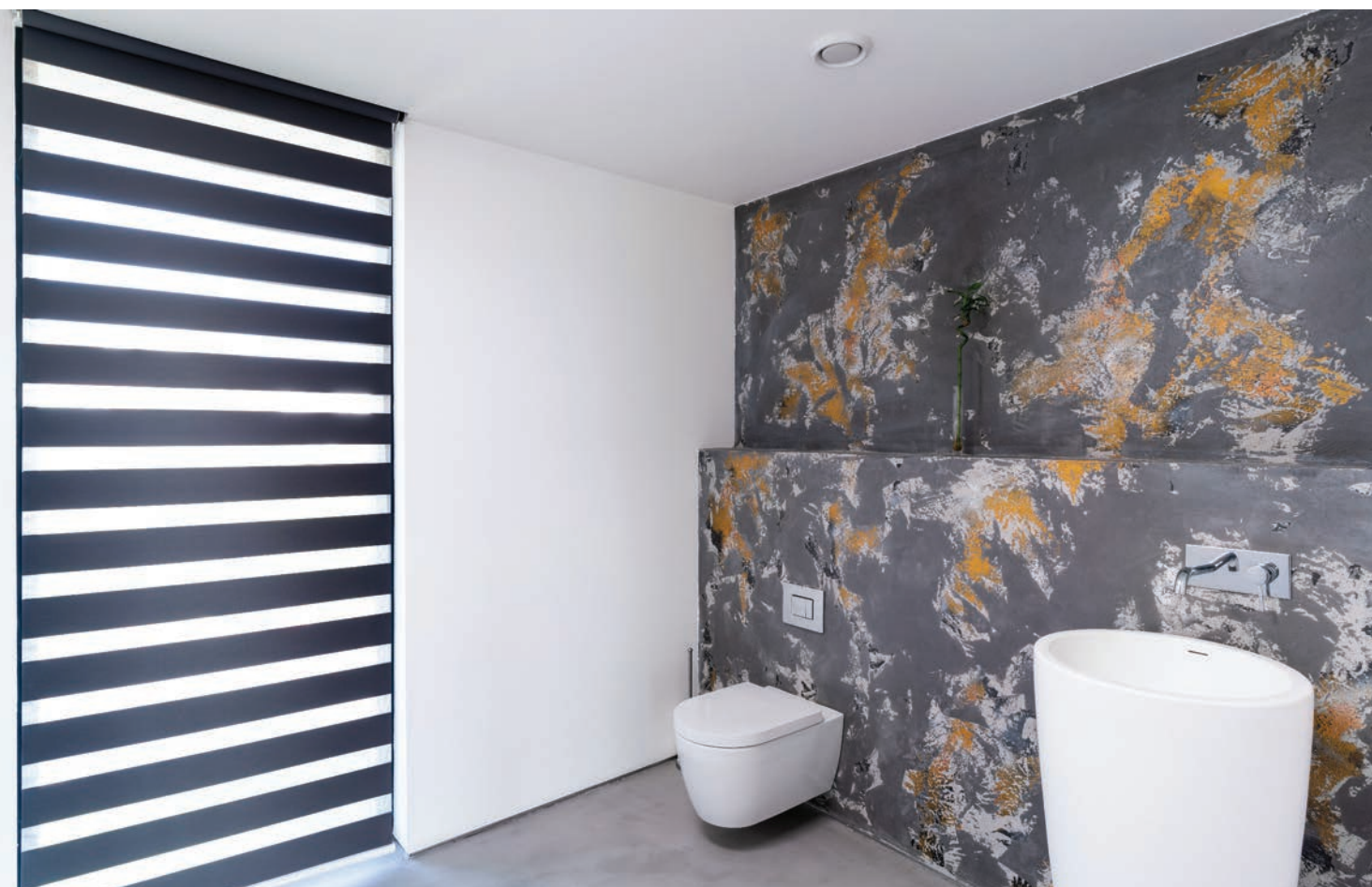
The L-shaped white frame protrudes out further than the glazing by 0.5 metres to serve as 'blinkers' and prevent overlooking into neighbours' gardens. To respect neighbours' privacy, there are no windows to the first floor side elevations facing neighbouring properties to the north and west.

"Rianna and Phil encouraged me to pull together ideas to share on a Pinterest board, and almost all the houses I preferred were white rendered and angular, with flat roofs," explains Simon.

"The house designs came from all around the world, but saving them together on a Pinterest board showed common themes, which Rianna then worked into her own design. Everything was tailored to my preferences rather than what she thought I should have."

The existing driveway remained in the same position, allowing vehicles to access straight from the road, and an accessible path and a level threshold to the entrance door avoid the need for steps and improve disabled access.

"Western Design Architects were great to



work with, from the first approval in 2007 all the way through to the third and final approved design in 2016," says Simon.

"They always understood what I wanted to achieve and helped me pinpoint what I needed within the design, based on my lifestyle and hobbies. As for the final look and form of the house, I couldn't be happier with what Phil and Rianna created."

Planning permission was granted for the replacement dwelling, and Simon moved out so that his old home could be demolished. The site was cleared in readiness for the new steel-framed structure to be built in its place, using wooden infill panels with wood fibre insulation, to which the render was applied. The cantilever is achieved thanks to the building's steel frame, and a single-ply roofing system was chosen for the flat roof.

All the windows are aluminium-framed, and the rear fixed glass panels and sliding doors in the living area were made bespoke, due to their huge size. The grey external timber cladding is apparently the first of its kind to be used in the south of the UK.

"I built the house with my eldest son, Henry, who I can't praise enough. He took the bull by the horns and was 100 per cent dedicated every step of the way – I don't know what I would have done without him by my side throughout the whole process," says Simon, who referred closely to the original SketchUp model of the house during the build process.

"We worked all hours, doing most of the work

"I'm a perfectionist, and monitored every stage really closely; with so much natural light any flaws are visible"

ourselves to save as much money as we could. The house was built in a year and was liveable, but we then spent another year fine-tuning all the details."

Simon lived offsite at a friend's house during the build and invested a great deal of time and energy ensuring that finishes were of an extraordinarily high standard.

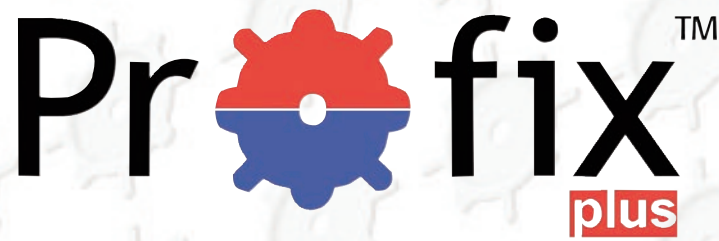
"I'm a perfectionist and monitored every stage really closely," he says. "With so much natural light, any flaws are easily visible – especially with such crisp straight lines – and I knew that errors would be glaringly obvious."

Internally, the finishes are predominantly white walls and ceilings, with contemporary concrete flooring and exposed metal detailing around internal doors, continuing the pared-back feel. Natural light from the vast swathes of aluminium-framed glazing in the house reflects across these surfaces, and is

HIGH POINT

"Working with my son, and the teamwork that was achieved during the process was very rewarding. For this reason, I would do it all again given the chance."

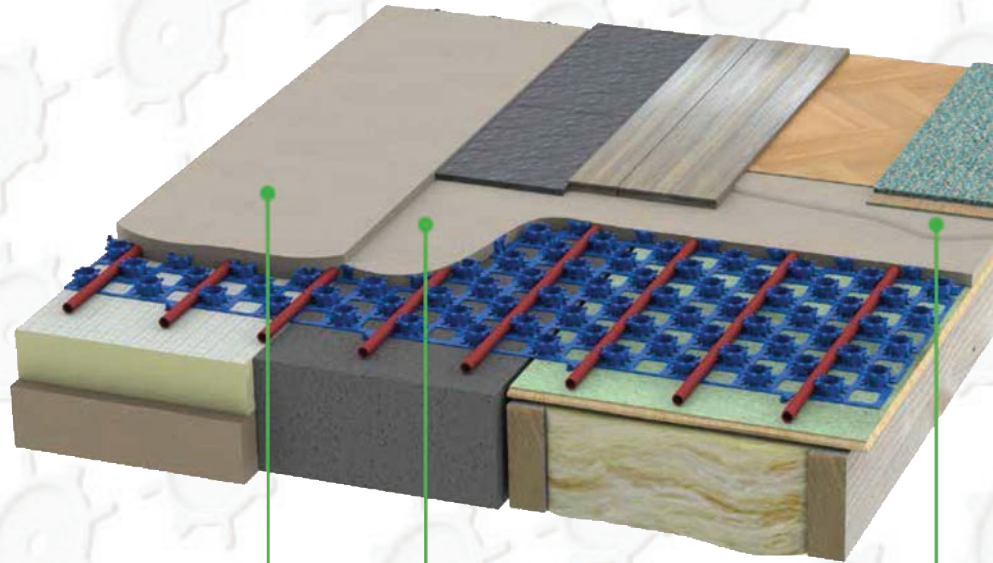
– Simon Stanborough



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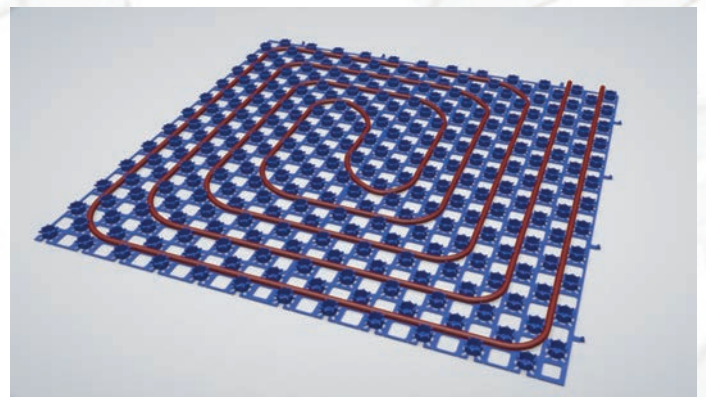
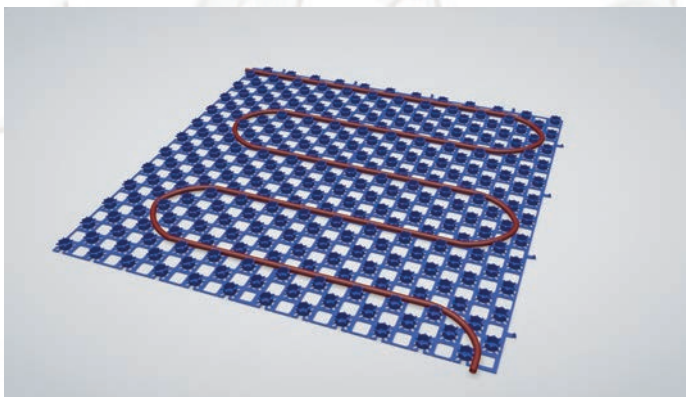
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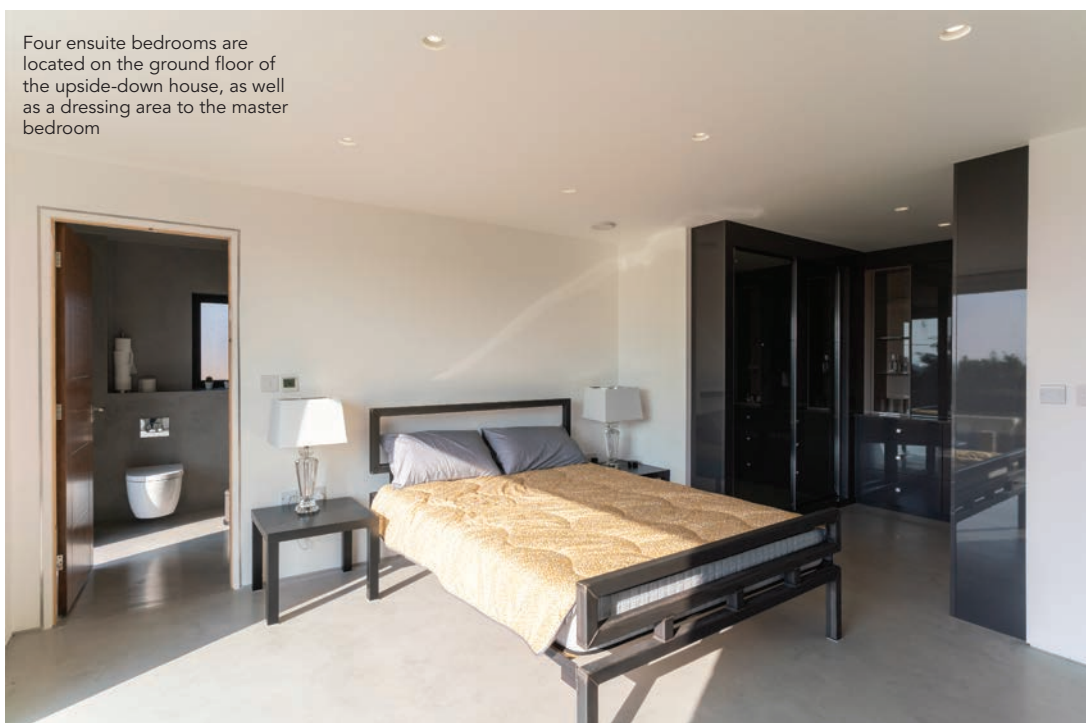
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ARTIFICIAL TURF

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Four ensuite bedrooms are located on the ground floor of the upside-down house, as well as a dressing area to the master bedroom



complemented by thoughtfully designed artificial lighting.

"Most of the main furniture pieces – for example the chess table in the main entrance hall and the pool table that doubles up as a dining table – were purpose made by different specialists," says Simon.

From the entrance, a bespoke cantilevered stair with illuminated walnut treads and a glazed balustrade leads up to the open plan first floor. Here, the kitchen has been carefully designed so that at no time is it necessary to turn your back on the view or to guests.

"I employed a specialist painter to create feature walls in the main living space and upstairs toilet," recalls Simon. "They add interest and appear textured, like wood or stone, without detracting from the architecture,"

he adds.

Cleverly, the emphasis has been directed outwards so that the views are captured and form the main focus of the new house.

"Previously you couldn't see very much at all from the ground floor, but by putting the living space upstairs and introducing so much glass – it's made the best possible use of the site," says Simon, who recently returned to the UK after travelling.

"I'm very glad that I didn't settle for just converting the old bungalow, as I'd originally planned. Now I have an energy efficient home, designed exactly to my needs, which is perfect for entertaining. It ticks all the boxes, such as having enough garage space, and has allowed me to get involved in a really exciting project." ■

CLEAN & SIMPLE

In order to help you create a flawlessly minimalist space in your bathroom, Granville Developments' Matthew Firth offers his top design tips – from the right towel storage using modern radiators, to glass shower screens, and more

Bathrooms are, typically, small spaces with an endless list of necessary installations, from your sink to showers and towel rails. As a result, designing your bathroom to produce a minimalist, sleek finish can feel like an impossible task.

Fortunately, using a few key tips, you can utilise your space to create a sublimely simple bathroom that boasts both luxury and affordability. Carefully considering the aesthetic of your bathroom's design and how best you can store your everyday necessities, minimalist bathrooms require a little extra effort that's certainly worth the reward in terms of the resulting aesthetics.

NEUTRAL TONES

Minimalist décor celebrates simplicity, so opt for neutral colour palettes that'll brighten your space. Whites, creams and light grey tones will compliment any size of bathroom, making the room feel larger and unrestricted. These colours can be used for every feature, from your wall décor to soft furnishings and fittings.

Creating a consistent theme with your colour choices will also help to create a minimalist-inspired design, as you can be sure that there aren't any eyesore colour clashes. If you want to add some colour, stick to one! Pick either a bold colour, like teal or mustard, or more subtle pastel tones. In either case, one colour choice won't lead your minimalist theme down the garden path.

CLEVER STORAGE

Minimalism means no clutter; lots of unnecessary bottles on display certainly won't leave your bathroom looking sleek and simple. Finding clever ways to store your belongings can make a room that's

often quite product-heavy (the various toiletries that are a quintessential part of family bathrooms) appear seamlessly chic, with every item in its rightful place.

From hanging baskets to storage

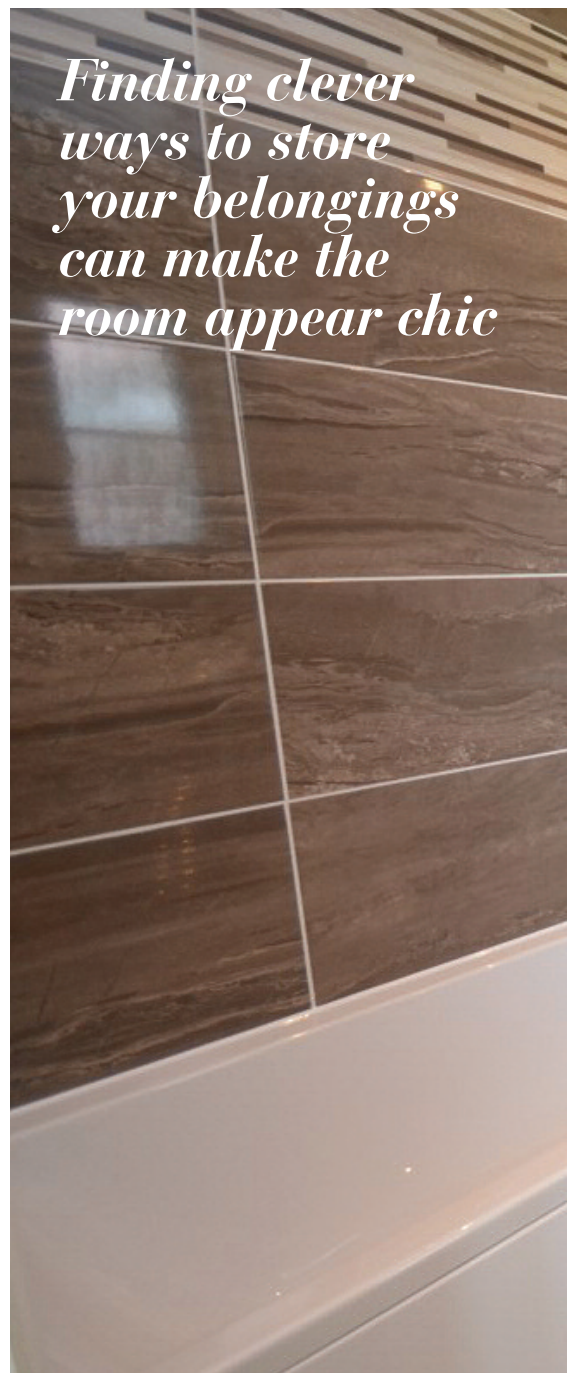


ladders, drawers under your sink and magnetically-mounted organisers, there are a limitless number of creative ways by which you can create a mess-free, minimalist bathroom with savvy storage solutions. Incorporate wicker baskets, mirrored cupboards, waterproof shelves in your shower and door hooks to lessen the amount of 'things' flooding your bathroom space.

WHITE ACCENTS

Filling your bathroom with white accents is a simple way of making your room lighter and brighter, with a clear

Finding clever ways to store your belongings can make the room appear chic

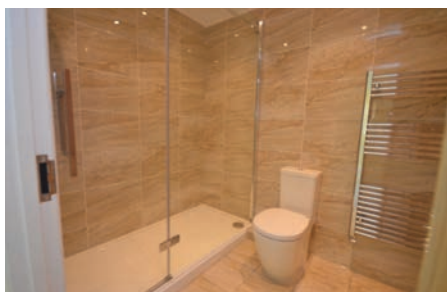


minimalist theme. Consider adding a white tile splash-back behind your sink, a white shower mat and white decorative additions, like vases or photo frames. White really does work wonders!

INTERESTING LIGHTING

When you enter a minimalist bathroom, bright, refreshing, inventive lights can be used to help you bring a bit of levity to the room; drawing your guests' eyes upwards. Quirky fittings will help the room to feel larger and more spacious.

Minimalism is also a modern trend, recognising this by selecting eccentric yet neutral ceiling lights will celebrate



the best of both worlds.

FEATURE MIRRORS

Feature mirrors are an essential ingredient within any minimalist

bathroom; reflecting the room's décor, they make the space feel bigger and more simplistic. Plus, you can choose a neutral tone for your mirror's border if you hope to modernise this feature further.

THINK METALLIC

A metallic theme is incredibly useful if you're hoping to hone a seamlessly minimalist bathroom. Metallic materials can behave like feature mirrors, being reflective. They're therefore able to make the most of the light available in your room without the need for cluttered free-standing lights. Meanwhile, its

simplicity will prevent patterns from busying your space.

GLASS SHOWER SCREENS

To design a minimalist bathroom, consider features which compliment this modern theme. Glass shower screens make your room feel less restricted; you also can't get any more minimalist than translucent materials. As a final bit of advice, avoid bold colours and eclectic patterns that'd make your décor less aesthetically pleasing.

Matthew Firth is managing director at Granville Developments



Simpson Strong-Tie introduces new catalogue

Leading construction connector manufacturer **Simpson Strong-Tie** has released their all-new 2020 catalogue; a comprehensive product guide which showcases the company's most recent innovations and product line extensions.

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Managing Director, Malcolm Paulson explains: "It's been a busy time for Simpson Strong-Tie, we've really pushed the boat out to increase our core product range, engineered to stand the test of time. With our new enhanced product lines, along with our rapid made-to-order service, we really can say that if we don't have it – you don't need it". Available now in print on request, and online in the Resources/Literature section of the website.

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INDUSTRIAL INSPIRATION

A three-year labour of love by its owner, Blowinghouse Mill sits in a quiet valley in Cornwall. Simon Williams bought the building and the 2.3 acres that surround it in 2015 with the intention of salvaging this end of the 19th century corn mill and creating a luxury eco-friendly home

TEXT & IMAGES EWEN MACDONALD

Once a corn mill believed to have been built around 1790, it seems fitting that this once water-driven building should be reimagined as a model of 21st century environmental living where water still plays a central part.

The house now features a ground source heat pump, the very latest in insulation solutions as well as the triple glazing and low energy lights you would expect from a new build. Perhaps most fitting is the newly created wildlife pond – that has proved a Mecca for kingfishers – that also operates as the heat source for the heating and hot water system within the main house. A solar thermal heating system provides the hot water for the

detached ancillary accommodation.

Now home to Simon Williams and his family, this striking building merges the new with the old. The new exterior and interiors are designed to complement rather than copy the original part of the building – the design by CAD Architects is a masterclass in blending old and new to create something all of its own, something Mark Dawes from the firm calls the “new old house.”

Simon bought the property in 2015 with a vision to strip away the crumbling more modern buildings that surrounded this industrial building and add carefully considered extensions. He rented a house for three years while the work was carried out,

LOW POINT

“There’s a tipping point – a point in time when you get three-quarters into the project and it still looks like a building site. You have all this money invested in it and it is nowhere near finished. And then suddenly it is finished and it’s your home.”

– Simon Williams



finally moving in last year.

He appointed the architects to renovate, partly demolish and extend the mill to create a luxurious five bedroom family home, including a separate two bedroom ancillary accommodation with four-car garage.

There have been corn mills in Cornwall since the 13th century. Blowinghouse Mill was built during the last 'golden age' for corn mills. Early in the 20th century the arrival of small, economical machines meant that farmers could mill their own corn.

The original stone walls have been reinforced and sit alongside (mostly concrete) blocks clad in Canadian Western Red Cedar

shingle. An array of patio windows, floor to ceiling and picture windows and triple aspect windows bring the outside in.

"The interiors are relatively minimalist and have been purposely kept that way to allow the stunning original features to shine," explains Simon. "The exterior was designed to be subtle, blending into the surrounding landscape of the valley."

We don't often celebrate hallways, passing through them on the way to a room more interesting, but here, coming through the front door (over a restored bridge above a leat and past a restored water wheel) there are plenty of reasons to stop and stare. The 16.4 ft high room leads to a huge (near



invisible) picture window that fills the wall and overlooks the garden. An exposed stone wall signals the original part of the building. Looking up here is endlessly rewarding – the renovations have managed to incorporate the grand proportions of the large corn mill and its stone building.

The flooring provides some clues as to the old and new parts of the house, as well as the lighting. In the older parts of the building, look down and you see heated charcoal limestone flooring. The newer areas give way to white heated porcelain flooring. Spotlights dominate the new areas, while exposed industrial lighting illuminates the older parts of the house. Interior walls vary between exposed stone, perfect plasterwork, oak cladding and exposed blockwork.

A chunky oak floating staircase sets the tone for the locally sourced air dried oak used to such good effect throughout the house – you can find it on floors, other floating staircases and even walls and ceilings. Here the industrial ceiling lights can be activated, complete with exposed galvanised conduit and trunking. “The industrial lighting came from an oil tanker hold. I wanted an industrial feel as this was once a working building, but not too much,” says Simon.

Pausing to look at the small sitting room-come-spare bedroom with its own shower room, and the clever interior window that grabs light from the hallway, you then continue onwards to a suite of three double bedrooms –





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two of which are home to Simon's children. All of these bedrooms boast patio doors opening out to the enclosed terrace. There's also a games room which doubles up as a media room for the high tech features which the house has, including a Sonos and Bowers & Wilkins multi-room sound system.

On the opposite wing a wood burner entices you into the kitchen/diner where triple aspect picture windows overlook the drive, lawn, and pond, with a sliding patio door and door opening to the patio and courtyard garden. A grey hand painted wooden kitchen sits sleekly against one wall, housing a recessed white composite stone worktop and twin white ceramic sink with a 'Quooker' instant boiling water tap (you can play hide and seek with the cabinets to find the dishwasher and fridge freezer).

A giant kitchen island topped in oiled Zebrano wood – whose clean lines are only marred by a near invisible induction hob – does the talking. Choose between the island and the bespoke steel and oak dining table

and matching bench for eating.

Head up the floating oak staircase and you'll find yourself in Simon's favourite space. The master bedroom suite (no other word will do) is framed by an old knotted oak wood door frame – the wood was saved from a local estate where it had languished unwanted from trees destroyed during the 1987 storm that hit southern England.

Stepping through this opening, you then take in the 16 ft high vaulted ceiling which is bookended by sliding glazed doors opening to the private roof terrace and a galleried bathroom featuring a deep double ended freestanding copper period-style bath by Hurlingham – complete with a halo of small floor spotlights – and matching his and hers copper sinks by the same maker. This is truly a bathroom worth photographing – despite its function as the most utilitarian of spaces.

Tucked underneath the gallery is a private loo and a dressing area featuring highly polished Art Deco wardrobes and dressing table – even the loo has a wrought metal Great

HIGH POINT

"The most fun part of the build was the waterwheel. It took a couple of months to create, and was hand built. We found old parts of it in the grounds of the house. These were digitally scanned and the pieces laser cut to recreate the wheel."

– Simon Williams

"The industrial lighting came from the hold of an oil tanker. I wanted an industrial feel as this was once a working building, but not too much"



CONTACTS/ SUPPLIERS

ARCHITECT

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Western Railway toilet roll holder.

The house is dotted with upcycled and reclaimed architectural elements and interiors accessories. The 'reclamation royalty' continues in the first floor living room which sits opposite the master suite and features a glorious herringbone laid parquet floor. "It came from a post-war Cornish bungalow built in the 1940s," comments Simon.

The living room also features a 14 ft high vaulted ceiling, triple aspect windows which you come to expect on such a property, and a Juliet balcony onto a recessed oak floored balcony. The floor is matched with period lacquered steel style radiators and there is a contemporary woodburning stove set on a slate hearth.

Environmental credentials were important to Simon. The house is triple glazed, and was "insulated carefully" for best results, and the waste water treatment plant discharges drinking quality water back into the water course.

In terms of the challenges, Simon says, "There's a tipping point – a point in time when you get three-quarters into the project and it still looks like a building site. You have all this money invested in it and it is nowhere near finished. And then suddenly it is finished and it's your home."

Simon continues: "You have got to have an obsessive personality for a self-build: you have to live and breathe it and go to sleep thinking about it and wake up thinking about all the little things you need to do. You also need to plan a long time ahead.

"You do have to compromise. I sometimes obsess over things and then I realise it's not always necessary."



Simon rented a house for three years while the work was being carried out. "Never move into a house before it's completely finished or



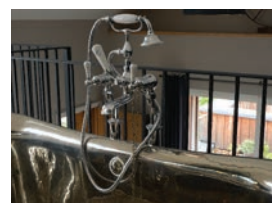
you will never finish it," he advises.

His favourite element in the entire 18-month process was recreating the lost waterwheel. The original part of the mill was constructed as a waterwheel-powered corn mill for the surrounding farmland and was in this use until the 1960s. The metal centre of the original wheel was discovered derelict in parts in the grounds and has been painstakingly resurrected and reimagined as the ultimate water feature. A hidden pumping system now delivers water to turn the wheel at the flick of a switch.

Simon, who has an engineering background, comments: "It took a couple of months to

create the wheel, and it was hand built. We found old parts of it in the grounds of the house. These were digitally scanned and the pieces laser cut to recreate the wheel."

So what has Simon learned from his self-build? "Take the time to evaluate your plot of land. Try not to make changes during the construction phase – which means spending time wisely with your architect during the design phase so that you understand every detail. Fully understand your budget and costs. Make use of space. Plan for the future – how will your needs change as time goes on in your home. Above all embrace the detail, it will set your home apart." ■



COPPER LUXURY

The copper bath, which sits on the gallery


THE ARCHITECT'S VIEW

"A mill building had to be substantial in size," explains Mark Dawes from CAD Architects on the house's heritage. "It needed to house all the milling machinery, which was powered by a water wheel, as well as space to store grain and flour. This meant that we had an excellent framework to work with, giving us huge scope to modernise while retaining enough of the original structure to give a clear impression of how it must have looked in its heyday."


"One of the great benefits of combining old with new is that it gave us a broad range of materials to work with for the interior, from traditional stone, slate and wood to modern elements such as steel, glass, and even exposed concrete blocks. These could be used in different combinations to give each room its own individual personality."

"Perhaps more than any other project we have worked on over recent years, when I show people photos of Blowinghouse Mill, it elicits a response of: 'Oh my God, I want to live there!' It seems to appeal equally strongly to lovers of old houses and lovers of modern home design."

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


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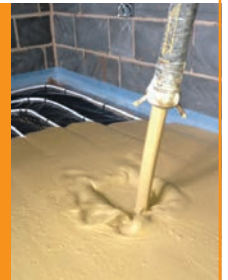
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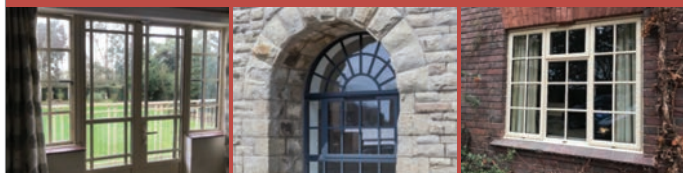
 
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Windows into the future of tradition

Mike Bygrave from Roseview Windows discusses the resurgence of heritage windows, and how self-builders can now benefit from a greater choice than ever before when it comes to finding the right traditional look

The window industry used to be about cheap white plastic windows; that's no longer the case. Heritage and timber-alternative windows are popular and well-established, increasingly used on both refurbishment and new build projects. Nothing typifies this movement more than sliding sash windows.

Sash windows have been a significant part of British architecture since the 17th century. Their popularity peaked in the 18th and 19th centuries, before dipping in the mid-1950s. But the UK's ageing housing stock means that there are a huge number of older properties out there that require renovation.

At the same time, the number and coverage of conservation areas are increasing, as are Article 4 directions locking down permitted development rights in those areas. This mirrors a wider interest in heritage and conservation across the nation that doesn't just cover refurbishment and renovation; it's reflected in new build architecture as well. In turn this drives demand and expectation for suitable building products.

THE HERITAGE EXPLOSION

For many years the fenestration industry was bland and uninspiring. New windows were typically white PVCu casements that all looked the same, accompanied by front doors with feature panels and rambling rose leads. They were commodities; with little consumer demand for difference, manufacturers kept things simple and cheap.

The landscape is different now. Vanguard products such as sash windows, composite doors and – more recently – flush casements have reacted to, and subsequently driven consumer demand. All of these started as niche products, initially developed to meet a particular need or circumstance, but which then caught the public's imagination.

Taking sash windows as an example, in 1985 Roseview Windows partnered with systems house Rehau and London housing group The Peabody Trust, to develop something that could replace the failing timber sashes in much of the trust's housing stock. The existing windows were largely too far gone for cost-effective refurbishment, but the forward-thinking Trust didn't want to replace them with cheap modern casements. Between them the group developed the first commercially viable PVCu sash window, based on the standard London design.

Thirty-five years later, we still manufacture those sash windows – albeit significantly updated and improved versions. Its estimated that now around 8,000 PVCu sash windows are installed across the UK every week.

OLD & NEW

Heritage windows aren't just for renovations – housebuilders have also tuned in to the demand for traditional styles. A significant proportion of new developments take design cues from traditional architecture. Heritage windows – although originally designed as replacements – are an ideal way of enhancing their appearance.

For example, we recently worked with an independent developer to deliver sash windows for 60 plots on a project in Buckinghamshire. The firm's CEO lives in a large Victorian farmhouse in Gloucestershire that was undergoing renovation. He chose to replace his own windows with the same sash windows that were being used on his company's modern urban development – they were ideal for both.

INDIVIDUALITY AS STANDARD

The interest in heritage doesn't stop at window styles; opportunities for consumers to express their individuality have also blossomed. The most obvious example is colour; whereas almost all new



There's a wider interest in heritage and conservation that doesn't just cover refurbishment and renovation

windows were white, now colour and woodgrain finishes are becoming the norm. Across the industry PVCu companies are reporting that more than half their output is grained or coloured – something that was rare five years ago.

Of the thousands of colour options available, over the last two years anthracite grey has been the most popular. This is based on interest in large, clean, minimal, industrial designs, which in turn links back to heritage. The same is true for countless other areas: hardware, profile lines, glazing bars – even glass



options – are all now available in wider ranges, provided in response to demand.

HERITAGE STYLE - MODERN PERFORMANCE

The attraction of modern heritage windows isn't just their appearance. Once you have a window that looks right, a host of modern benefits come into play.

An authentic premium modern sash window will typically cost around 20 per cent less than a modern softwood equivalent. Hardwood is more expensive still. For less outlay, the timber-alternative windows provide superior levels of security, energy efficiency and soundproofing.

But the big difference is maintenance.

Modern heritage windows are designed to be virtually maintenance-free, with no sanding, filling or repainting required. Over a window's lifetime these savings in cost, time and effort make timber-alternative windows even more attractive.

Consumers are naturally concerned by the lifetime and sustainability of PVCu, especially in light of some of the misinformation that has been spread. The reality is that modern PVCu windows are rated for 35 years plus, and this life expectancy is lengthening. Modern PVCu doesn't rot, degrade or discolour, and doesn't require regular maintenance. It simply needs to be cleaned occasionally.

On top of this PVCu is fully recyclable up to 10 times, and the recycled material is remade into new windows, usually on-site or only a few miles away – this is called closed-loop recycling.

The result is a long-lasting, recyclable product that the Building Research Establishment rates as equivalent to timber in terms of sustainability.

THE TIME IS NOW

The demand for heritage-style windows, coupled with the desire for individuality, have spurred the window and door industry into action. It now offers more variety and choice in terms of styles, colours and accessories than ever before.

In turn, the growth of choice has created further demand, as builders and homeowners experience what is now available. This is critical, as it helps ensure that heritage products aren't just a trend, they're a mainstay of a more diverse product range.

The result is great news for self-builders and homeowners; a wide range of maintenance-free, energy efficient, sympathetic window products that are designed, engineered and built with homeowners in mind.

Mike Bygrave is marketing manager at Roseview Windows

Extensive renovation project

Situated near Leyburn in Wensleydale, this characterful farmhouse and barn recently underwent an extensive renovation project including a full set of new timber windows and doors.

The original farmhouse was renovated and the attached barn was converted to provide extra living space for the family. In order to maximise the beautiful views, the owners wanted to maximise the light and open feel whilst

retaining the original charm and character of the buildings.

A mixture of bespoke timber spiral balance sash and timber casement windows were manufactured in our Lincolnshire factory alongside 6 doorsets and an outward folding sliding doorset (bifold). Each was designed to be sympathetic to the original style of the farmhouse whilst providing excellent thermal performance and security to PAS 24 and Secured by Design standards.

Commenting, the homeowner Steven Scott said "We are really pleased with the windows and doors; not only do they look amazing but they also perform exceptionally well, which is important for us living in an exposed part of North Yorkshire! I love the fact that I don't have to worry about painting them for at least ten years and that they should last at least 60 years."



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CASE STUDY

STEP BY STEP

A cosmetic revamp turned into a full blown renovation challenge for a couple in Yorkshire when they bought a house in a familiar coastal village

TEXT HEATHER DIXON IMAGES DAVE BURTON

As a planning and development surveyor, Helen Massey had a good idea of what to expect when she and her husband Pete bought a run-down cottage on a Yorkshire cliffside.

The property itself, though in desperate need of renovating, has one of the best locations in picturesque Runswick Bay, near where Helen grew up, with uninterrupted views of the sweeping shoreline and open sea.

What they didn't bargain for, however, was just how challenging it would be to get all the building materials up the steep, narrow steps which wind their way to the front door.

"We knew everything would have to be carried up by hand, but it still proved to be a much bigger deal than we thought," says Helen.

What they didn't bargain for was how challenging it would be to get all the building materials up the steep steps

LOCATION

The house sits on one of the best locations in picturesque Runswick Bay

"There are 45 steps from the bottom of the village to the door, but they are very steep and often squeezed between houses. At one point



there was a chain of people standing on the steps handing bags of sand along the line, and it took hours to carry things like the concrete mixer and all the building tools up to the cottage."

But Helen and Pete are used to challenges. They have renovated many properties before and while this one had a unique set of issues – including damp walls, a steep hillside location and rotten roof timbers, Helen's positive mindset meant that no problem was unsolvable.

Although they were living two hours away and had to take it in turns to spend the weekends there while overseeing the build, Helen and Pete still managed to run full time

jobs and look after their two young children.

"We rarely do things by halves," says Helen. "My family has roots in Runswick Bay so I knew this house from being a child and had always loved it. The painter Ashley Jackson once painted the view from the balcony, but I never imagined one day owning the property behind it."

Helen, who runs a holiday let business, and Pete, who has his own electrical agency, wanted a place where they could escape to during the summer; the cottage was perfect.

But when they bought it in September 2015 they knew they would have to make massive changes to it before they could consider moving in.



SPECTACULAR

Helen and Pete had a terrace built for their patio furniture, bought online, with spectacular views across the bay

KITCHEN

The kitchen units are fitted in a compact U-shape; Helen limited the wall units to keep the kitchen as open as possible, adding coastal accessories on the walls



"The house had been on the market for longer than it should have been," says Helen. "It was habitable but needed upgrading and I think that, combined with its awkward location, had put off a lot of potential buyers."

The interior was dark on the ground floor, and dated elsewhere. There was also just one bathroom and, with a growing family, they wanted to think ahead and include a second shower room.

"I knew there was a lot of work to do. It was not just a case of rewiring and redecorating."

The cottage not only stands in a conservation area, but also comes under a North York Moors Authority restriction which determines the style of windows, fencing and other external details.

"It's to make sure the property is in keeping with the style and heritage of the fishing village," says Helen. "For example, we could only have white picket fencing outside."

There were no restrictions inside, however, so Helen and Pete were able to take the house back to a shell. The first job was to rip everything out. The boiler was in a cupboard, there was a full chimney breast which had no purpose in the main bedroom and it all felt very damp.

"The cottages we have renovated before have usually been traditional fishermen's cottages which can be pokey and do not lend themselves to a family set-up. The location of this one meant we had to get it right first time," says

LOW POINT

"Trying to juggle my time between work, children and renovating, especially in the winter months when I would come here for the weekend and it would be freezing cold. I did sometimes wonder what we had taken on."

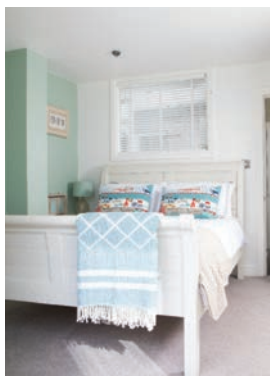
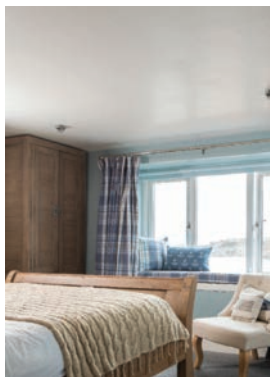
— Helen Massey

FAR RIGHT

The ensuite, which was created using space from the bedroom and landing, has an internal window borrowing light from the bedroom

RIGHT & BELOW

All the furniture (from Barker & Stonehouse) had to be manoeuvred up two flights of narrow stairs or hoisted in through windows



Helen. "You have to have everything well planned out and for timings to be carefully arranged. If you get it wrong it can cost you dearly." It was one of the reasons Helen and Pete decided to take the house back to a shell.

"It's usually better to strip something out completely and rebuild it rather than try to repair things," she says. "The back and side of the house on the middle floor, for example, was dripping wet. We took off the plaster to find solid stone interspersed with reclaimed timbers which were originally ships' beams. Over the years these had absorbed so much moisture that it was seeping into the plaster and running down the walls. The only way to rectify it was to rebuild the walls."

They also asked the builder to shore up the hillside at the back of the house with two tons of concrete and steel, creating a terrace and retaining wall with enough space for a storage shed.

"We knew the builder, and knew he would do a great job," says Helen. "He pulled up floors, took off the plaster, replaced every single window, built a balcony, put on a new roof, rebuilt the back wall and redid the plumbing. Nothing was left to chance. The main part of the renovation took eight months, but we are still making improvements – particularly outside."

The property is deceptively spacious, with four floors that include a bunk bedroom in the attic. When Helen first saw inside, this floor consisted of a tiny storage area, just big enough for a bunk bed, and a staircase behind a stud wall. By knocking out the stud wall and lowering the bedroom ceiling directly underneath, the builder created enough space for a larger bedroom in the roof area.

"It's amazing the difference you can make

simply by rethinking the internal layout and opening up the spaces," says Helen. "In a coastal cottage it's all about the light, and the more you can bring into a property the better it is. It's amazing what can be achieved when you put your mind to it."

Some of the building materials and larger pieces of furniture were stored in the village hall for a month so they were readily accessible as and when they were required.

'The locals were fantastic. We can't thank them enough,' says Helen. 'We learned to be kind to the builders and locals. In a small community you need to get everyone on side and work with the teams. You have to be prepared to make compromises and keep the lines of communication open. If people understand why you are doing something and you keep talking to them, they will be very supportive on the whole.'

Once the renovation was complete, the finishing touches quickly followed.

The kitchen is now a light, open plan living area filling the whole of the ground floor, with a half wall dividing the units from a dining/sitting area. To make best use of space they had a bench seat built into the back of the units that face into the room, and a pantry created in the corner for storage.

A former bedroom is now a second bathroom to cater for the growing family, and the entire house has been decorated in light 'coastal' colours.

"Runswick Bay is really popular with tourists but being at the top of the village means we enjoy privacy as well as spectacular views," says Helen. "I love the fact that our patio is like an extra room in the summer, and we can throw back the windows to bring the outside in."

HIGH POINT

"Putting the finishing touches to it all and finally being able to enjoy staying here. All the main rooms in the cottage look over the bay, and it's that view which has influenced the entire house."

– Helen Massey



After all the building work, the décor and furnishing seemed easy, says Helen.

"I chose tongue and groove panelling on some walls to create a coastal look, and used lots of soft, neutral tones in the paint colours and soft furnishings to reflect the colours of the



sea and sky. We wanted the children to have a sense of home from home. Now it's all done, we absolutely love it here. It's a perfect family home and a wonderful place for the children to forge the kind of happy memories I still have as a child growing up in and around Runswick Bay." ■

HELEN'S TOP TIPS

- * Plan everything carefully so that the work is all done in sequence and no-one is waiting for someone else to finish their jobs. This includes making sure materials are all on site before building work begins so that no-one has to wait for deliveries.
- * When you are renovating a property in a challenging location, be kind to your builder, who will have to go the extra mile to get the work done, and appreciate the local residents who help to make it happen and have to tolerate the disruption.
- * Take advice from your electrician over sockets – you always need more than you think you will need, and they will also offer advice on the best positions. Make sure you have double sockets on every wall – even in the bedrooms – to allow for moving furniture around in the future.
- * It is worth investing in a full survey of an older property to highlight the amount of renovation work that will be required. This early investment could save thousands of pounds in the long run and form the basis of a realistic budget for the building work. Always add at least 20 per cent extra to the estimated budget to allow for hidden or unexpected extras.
- * Some furniture was delivered before the house was renovated and had to be stored in the village hall for a month, until Helen and Pete were ready to carry it up the steps. "We had to use our imagination to find ways of getting the bigger pieces inside – either through windows or hoisted up onto the balcony and then manoeuvred up the narrow staircase," she says.
- * Old cottages often have steep narrow, twisty stairs which can be difficult to negotiate with large pieces of furniture. Where possible, choose furniture which will separate into two or three manageable sections, or measure the access and furniture carefully before committing to a purchase.

SITTING ROOM

A neighbour described the half renovated ground floor as "like being in a cave" before the heavy stone walls were plasterboarded and fitted with matchboard and painted; a corner pantry and bench seat was built to create storage

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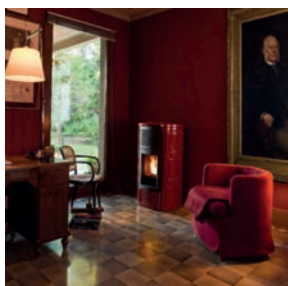
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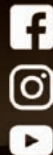


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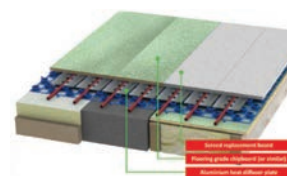
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The Westfire UniQ 37 from Eurostove

Now that autumn/winter is upon us, it's the perfect time to consider upgrading or introducing a wood burning stove into your home. Suitable for city living, modern new-builds, period properties and country dwellings alike, a wood burner offers instant cosy comfort, heating living rooms, dining areas, open-plan kitchens and more thanks to its powerful heat output and mesmerising flames within. For homeowners who prefer a sleek, contemporary look rather than a traditional stove design, the Westfire UniQ 37 from **Eurostove** combines style with substance. The cylindrical shape comes with side glass panels for a spectacular all-round view of the fire inside while the metallic anthracite finish is bang on trend. What's more, thanks to the new 'double' flue, installation is easier as the stove now only requires one air-access rather than two. Previously the UniQ 37 needed an air inlet through a wall or from beneath the floor, along with an outlet through the roof. The stove no longer has to have that wall inlet, as the incoming air flows down the outside of the flue in a secondary pipe. This enables the stove to be installed anywhere with access to the roof, giving flexibility and versatility to your heating and design scheme. And because the inlet pipe is much less complicated, the stove performs better too. Additional advantages include a cooler outer edge of the flue for extra safety while the incoming air is warmed before it reaches the fire – perfect for when it's really chilly outside.

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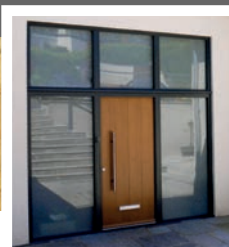
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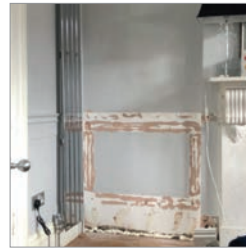
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Dursilite: The impressive coatings range from Mapei

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With its special formulation, Dursilite is particularly suitable for painting all types of cementitious, lime and gypsum substrates which require an excellent permeability to water vapour, and a high degree of long-lasting protection.

Dursilite, supplied in 5kg and 20kg plastic drums, can be applied with a brush, roller or by spray on a dry coat of Malech primer or Dursilite Base Coat primer. Typical application comprises of at least two coats, with a recoat time at around six to 12 hours in accordance with the humidity and temperature of the environment, and in any case, when the previous coat is completely dry. With excellent coverage, it also has a high whiteness level for internal walls, and is the ideal solution for repainting. For long-lasting protection, high washability and low dirt pick-up level, this Mapei offering is available in a wide range of colours, created using the ColorMap® automatic colouring system.

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Kingspan introduces QuadCore Roofboard

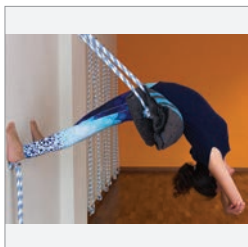


Kingspan Insulation is raising roof performance to new heights with Kingspan QuadCore 426 Roofboard, an innovative flat roof insulation board delivering excellent thermal and fire performance, enhanced environmental credentials, and backed by an extended warranty. Kingspan QuadCore 426 is the first insulation board to feature Kingspan's advanced Quadcore technology. The high-performance, fibre-free, rigid neo-thermoset insulant delivers a thermal conductivity of 0.021 W/mK. This can allow

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StrongFix in dry lining applications



Plasterboard in itself is not suitable for bearing weight so, if the wall is intended for holding weight over 15kg then a structural material such as wood panels should be used behind the plasterboard to hold the weight. OSB is an engineered, wood-based panel made from flakes of wood mixed with a resin and then pressed. This method of manufacture means that the panel does not contain any defects of natural wood.

Norbord manufactures SterlingOSB Zero StrongFix which is a panel designed

specifically for metal Cstud dry lining at 600mm centres. SterlingOSB Zero StrongFix is made from OSB3 and is suitable for structural use in conditions where some moisture is present.

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Planet-friendly paint performance

There's a growing interest in environmentally friendly paints, but you don't have to sacrifice performance or looks to achieve environmental benefits, as Earthborn Paints' Colin Jones explains

Conventional, acrylic-based paints contain two potentially harmful components: volatile organic compounds (VOCs) and acrylic softeners. Both escape into the atmosphere during painting and for many years after application, contributing to greenhouse gases.

These toxic ingredients can also find their way into drains and groundwater when washing out brushes and disposing of paint tins in landfill. They can cause chest complaints, aggravate allergies, and cause sick building syndrome.

Acrylic-based paints can also adversely affect walls. They prevent a wall from breathing, which can lead to moisture damage such as blown plaster.

VOCs

High levels of VOCs are generally associated with oil-based paints, but they are found to varying degrees even in water-based paints. The EU limit for paints to be classed as minimal VOC is 30g/L. However, this is relatively high and it is advisable to seek out those containing a maximum of just 0.5g/L VOC.

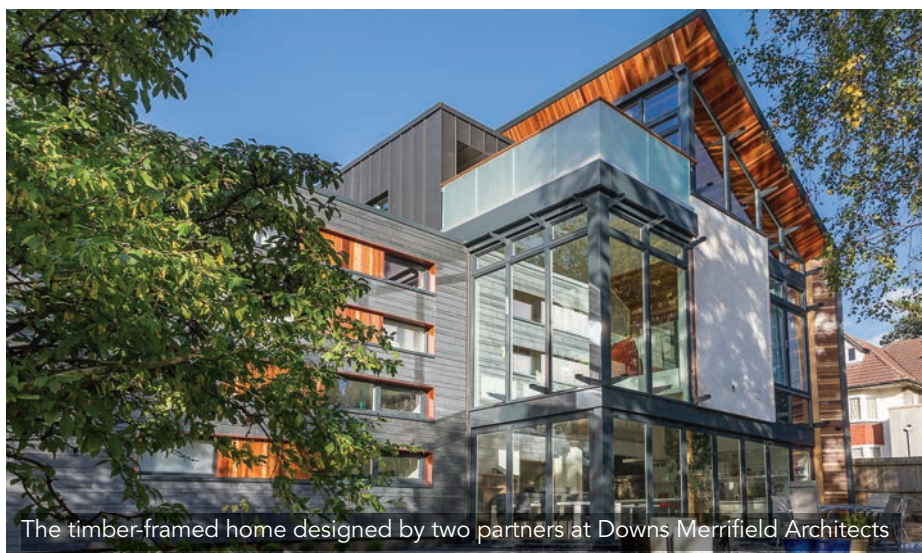
The easiest way to ensure you're creating a sustainable, environmentally sound specification is to check the paint is EU Ecolabel approved. This stringent standard covers every aspect of a product's manufacture, use and disposal.

SPECIFYING SUSTAINABILITY

When it came to building a new home for themselves, two partners at Downs Merrifield Architects were determined to stamp sustainability throughout its specification.

Nic and Carolyn found the perfect plot for their home, close to the centre of Cardiff yet tucked quietly away in a leafy corner.

Nic said: "We wanted the house to reflect our environmental principles, with



The timber-framed home designed by two partners at Downs Merrifield Architects

a strong use of timber and energy saving products. It was only natural for us to focus on sustainability of the build, because that is the essence of our new practice."

Aiming to achieve high quality design and passive house status, Nic and Carolyn's specification for the timber framed, timber and glass clad home includes very high levels of insulation, airtight construction, whole house ventilation, photovoltaics and large areas of south facing glazing, to maximise solar heat gain.

Carolyn added: "We went to great lengths to ensure that our paint finish complemented the other sustainable aspects of the house. It was important to us that our choice was virtually VOC free, while offering high performance and excellent covering properties. The Ecolabel scheme offers environmental reassurance, so that was our starting point."

The couple chose an emulsion that had exceptional eco credentials, low odour and hard wearing finish. Every wall and ceiling that doesn't have ceramic tiles or

Acrylic-based paints can also affect walls, preventing them from breathing which can lead to moisture damage

hardwood cladding has been painted with it.

Paints with Ecolabel approval, such as Ecopro Matt Emulsion, are easy to use, environmentally sound alternatives to conventional emulsions. Ecopro's formulation, for example, is totally free of oils and acrylics and virtually VOC free and the result is a durable, anti-static, matt finish. Newly decorated rooms can be brought back into use quickly because these paints do not give off any harmful

The architects' home has white painted walls which pick up a warm glow from the timber stairs, doors and flooring



emissions or odours: a point that benefited Nic and Carolyn, who planned additional paintwork.

Nic explains: "After living with white paint throughout the house for several months, we were ready to start choosing colours to enhance certain walls. It was great to move straight back into a room once it was painted, without worrying about any smells or emissions."

KEEPING IT NATURAL

When self-builder Joe Shimbart set out

to build his dream home he knew that he wanted to live in a house made of natural materials.

He chose an oak frame with external walls constructed of environmentally friendly hempcrete. This lightweight, breathable, insulating material is made from a mixture of lime and the shredded core of industrial hemp.

Speaking of his three-bedroom home in Hampshire, Joe said: "I didn't want to wrap the oak frame in man-made materials, so I chose breathable

hempcrete for the walls and finished them internally with lime plaster and a breathable paint. The breathability is essential – conventional 'plastic' paints seal the walls and don't allow that.

"I always do a lot of research before making any specification choice. Claypaint stood out because of its outstanding breathability and beautiful matt finish. It looks great on lime plaster, creating a warm, homely effect."

Clay based emulsions such as this maximise the natural properties of clay to create a high performance, highly breathable paints that cover exceptionally well and give a distinctive, 'ultra matt' finish.

Being free of oils and acrylics, they're virtually VOC free and do not give off any toxic emissions. They can have various eco credentials – for example the stringent EU Ecolabel.

Joe added: "The lack of emissions meant I never felt nauseous when using the paint, unlike with acrylic paints in the past. In practical terms, it was easy to use. We only needed two coats to achieve full coverage and, because it is water based, brushes were easy to wash out."

Colin Jones is technical sales manager at Earthborn Paints



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CASE STUDY

RETIRING GRACEFULLY

Ian and Tina Huckle struggled to find a place to build a 'lifetime' home after some health problems, until they realised the solution was right under their noses, in their own back garden in Hampshire

TEXT & IMAGES ROSEANNE FIELD

With their two children having flown the nest, Ian and Tina Huckle were left with a larger-than-necessary house that wasn't particularly cost-efficient. On top of that, the couple had both taken early retirement when Ian had a stroke a few years earlier which, he says, "makes you look at life a little bit differently."

It had therefore been on their minds to downsize for some time: "I don't want to be spending time looking after a garden or house," says Ian. They'd agreed that their only way to really get what they wanted was to build their own home, but finding a plot of land was

The main thing they were strongly against was a "Grand Designs-type project" because of the potential cost and schedule overruns

LOW POINT

"When we found the elevations were wrong, it would have made the building too high and taken us outside of planning consent. We were well committed by that point."

– Ian Huckle

proving easier said than done. "We'd been looking mainly in south west Wales, Cornwall and Devon, but there wasn't much available," Ian explains. They were also unsure about moving to an area so far from transport links such as motorways and airports.

It was at this point they realised their own substantial back garden, in Fareham near the Hampshire coast, could be perfect. "We thought 'we've got a building plot, let's use it,'" Ian explains. They knew good healthcare was available locally and had built their lives there, so they "decided to stay put," and subdivided the plot. The added bonus of this was, as Tina explains, that "the plot was free! And we had no one competing with us for it."

They set about appointing an architect and went through a few designs before settling on their favourite. "The first was a basement option with bedrooms downstairs, using insulated concrete formwork (ICF)," Ian explains. "I liked the idea of 'upside down living,' but the costs of that got horrendous." There was also more risk: "you don't know what you're going to find until you start digging the hole," says Ian.

They also looked at a more conventional house design with a roof garden on top but, explains Tina, "that got thrown out at the pre-application stage." She admits they began to get slightly despondent, but they persevered and eventually settled on a timber framed





home with an open-plan living/dining/kitchen area. "A timber frame kit was a more cost-certain route," says Ian. "Being retired, we were trying to work to a fairly tight budget."

Although the build only started earlier this year, Ian says they really started the process three years ago, when they began doing extensive research. "We went to shows, read lots of magazines and went to the NSBRC in Swindon," he explains. "But you get to a point where you've done enough shows, read enough magazines – you've actually got to do it!"

Their decision to do a planning pre-application meant when they submitted their final design, it more or less sailed through. "The planners were very good, we had no issues at all really," says Ian. They faced a couple of objections from neighbours over the positioning of their Velux windows, but it was "nothing insurmountable," he explains. "I was pleasantly surprised, the council were receptive. It was quite painless." Their architect, Cedric Mitchell, was "instrumental in getting it cleared," Tina says. "He knew what to say and what to do – he proved really useful."

The final design was very much a collaboration between the couple and Cedric, who Ian found via the Association of Self Build Architects (ASBA) website. They provided him with a three-column spreadsheet: 'must haves', 'nice to haves' and 'definitely don't wants'. Ian also used his experience as a chartered engineer and provided an AutoCAD drawing of the site. "We went to three architects and we liked the ideas from Cedric," he says, although admits there were "a few bits we disagreed on!"

The main thing they were strongly against was a "Grand Designs-type project," because of the potential cost and schedule overruns, as well as green roofs, bi-fold doors, tile hung elevations, and noisy floorboards. Their list of 'must haves'



included a contemporary, detached 'lifetime' home with low running costs, two storeys, a utility room and insulation to Passivhaus standards (although they weren't aiming for Passivhaus certification). While Cedric helped come up with the overall concept, Ian and Tina designed the kitchen and bathrooms themselves. "We did the nitty-gritty details," Ian says.

THE BUILD BEGINS

With planning approval in place, they were ready to start onsite – in February this year. They demolished the existing garage and filled in their swimming pool – something Tina admits was "heartbreaking!" It was at this point they realised just how substantial the site was: "when we first started it didn't look that big, but you flatten it and it just grows!" Ian says.

Being in the position of starting onsite didn't mean the project would go smoothly from then on. The architect had calculated the elevation

LOW POINT

"When the water was gushing down the side."

– Tina Huckle

IAN & TINA'S ADVICE

- * "Use an architect to get planning approval, then appoint an architectural technician – they're better at the 'nitty gritty' detail"
- * Don't underestimate how much hard work is involved and how much time it takes – we spent a lot more time on the project than originally planned
- * You need to be able to trust your builder, that's absolutely crucial. Ben made it much easier
- * Keep the workers and the neighbours sweet!"

HIGH POINT

"How the garden's worked out is brilliant, and the kitchen."

– Tina Huckle

CONTACTS/ SUPPLIERS

MAIN CONTRACTOR

BLA Contractors
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ARCHITECT

Cedric Mitchell
www.about-architects.com

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height incorrectly on the drawings, something their building contractor Ben picked up on. He spotted that the finished building would actually end up taller than specified on the drawings, which would have taken them outside their planning consent. "We had to drop the back end of the house down 250 mm," explains Ian.

However, not every unexpected turn was an unwelcome one. "Some bits went better than expected," says Ian. They had been led to believe they were building on clay, and on that basis planned for 2.2 metre-deep footings. When digging began, they realised the ground was actually hoggin (i.e. clay, gravel and sand), and got Building Control to inspect the site. They agreed it was unnecessary to go so deep, particularly given the lightweight nature of timber, and agreed 1.2 metres would be sufficient (with the exception of the back end as it sits near a sycamore tree off their boundary).

All the services (gas, electric, water and sewage) are new – when the pool pump house was demolished they had to have the gas disconnected as it housed a boiler, but, says Ian, "our builder organised all of that so it was ok," says Ian. Their biggest frustration was the disjointed manner in which things are connected: "You get a service come in a dig up the pavement then fill it in, then another provider comes and digs it up again – none of it

is joined up," Ian explains. "And every time you have a fee. Services aren't cheap."

Despite starting in February, Ian says they were "incredibly lucky" with the weather and by April they were ready for the timber frame to be delivered and erected, a process whose efficiency thoroughly impressed them. "The walls were up on day one," explains Ian. "Day two, we had the roof on, and it was pretty much wind and watertight. The guys who put the kit up were onsite for four days in total." This included the doors and windows. "It's pretty amazing really, it was exciting to watch!" The company were recommended by Scotframe, who supplied the timber kit, which mean the arrangement of deliveries was taken care of between the two. "I didn't get involved in that – which was really good," Ian says.

The couple chose Scotframe because their pre-insulated kit included all external doors and windows, the mezzanine floor, plasterboard, internal doorsets and the Velux windows. "You've got a fair chunk of the building costs fixed, you know that's not going to fluctuate," says Ian. There was one small issue when it came to installing the Velux windows – they'd purchased them with an insulation collar but the holes in the roof cassette weren't big enough. "It was a bit of a faff, but we didn't put the collars in, and just used Celotex instead," Ian



says. He was seemingly un-phased by most problems that arose however: "There's always stuff like that. It's a unique project, you're going to get issues – you've got to be pragmatic and come to a compromise."

They had one other slight issue when a mistake made by the roofers meant one of the roof window openings was left uncovered during a bout of rain. "We had water pouring down the walls, which had already been plastered," explains Tina. "I was in tears when I saw it. But we put buckets underneath and it did dry out in the end."

Because they were staying in their house they had no strict timescale to stick to. Nevertheless they were given a rough estimate of the end of July by Ben and his team, "which I didn't believe, but he did actually pretty much hit," Ian says. "It was just finishing bits and pieces but we weren't in a rush to get in." They eventually moved in at the end of September.

Having the house onsite proved beneficial throughout the project. Tina says. "You can keep tabs on what's going on," says Ian. They encountered no other major problems along the way, other than a few of the builders suffering unfortunate injuries ("not on our site!" stresses Tina) that caused minor delays.

Once work had started onsite Ian took on most of the project management responsibility himself, rather than delegating to Cedric. Ben – who they say was "absolutely fantastic" – recommended subcontractors, while the couple sourced everything from the timber kit and

roofing system to the kitchen and sanitaryware themselves. "We've had lots of early mornings!" Tina says. "There's been a lot of long days," adds Ian. "It's a full time job – I was often onsite at 7.30 in the morning and still working on stuff at 10 pm, because there's always stuff to do! It's hard work."

Ian gave detailed spreadsheets to Cedric and every tradesman who worked on the project. "It's easier because it's not verbal – it's in black and white so there's no doubt," he explains. "I think that worked really well."

LAYOUT TO LAST A LIFETIME

With Ian and Tina's key requirement being that the home was future-proofed, bearing in mind their likely future health needs, they included a number of provisions. There are level thresholds and wetrooms throughout and there's space next to the stairs up to the mezzanine for a lift shaft, should they need it in the future. "And it's going to be a nice, warm, leak-tight house," adds Ian.

Entering their home, the two bedrooms are on the right of the hallway, both featuring an ensuite, built in wardrobe and vaulted ceiling, while the master bedroom as leads on to the utility room. "It makes sense!" Tina says. "You can do your ironing and just put it away without having to carry it upstairs. I've never seen a utility room next to a bedroom, but it's extremely practical."

A glass pocket door to the left of the hallway leads through to the open plan kitchen, dining and living area, with a staircase in the far left

FAR LEFT

A glass pocket door to the left of the hallway leads through to the open plan kitchen, dining and living area

CONTACTS/ SUPPLIERS

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www.totalairquality.co.uk

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Natural Stone & Timber
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corner up to the mezzanine floor. The left wall is lined with slim windows placed high as this side is next to the street, while the right hand side has several sliding doors. The high windows were Cedric's idea: "It's brilliant, we've got privacy on the street side but lots of glass the other side," says Ian. "Even on a cloudy day it's really bright because we've got so much glazing and the Velux windows above the stairwell."

The mezzanine floor is a large, open space, and houses an additional bathroom and a substantial plant room, home to the MVHR system. A small area at the back has been allocated to gym equipment, while the rest currently remains empty while they decide what to do with it. The house is a mixture of contemporary styles with more traditional additions. "We wanted a contemporary feel with a few little cosy touches," explains Tina. "We didn't want it too minimalist."

The couple went "fairly conventional" on heating and hot water, says Ian, with a gas condensing boiler system feeding radiators throughout the ground floor (the house is so well insulated they decided radiators would be unnecessary upstairs). They considered other options but dismissed them for various reasons – the drying time for underfloor heating screed put them off, while other systems just seemed too complicated and expensive to install. "Gas is

still the cheapest option and chose it here," Ian explains. "Heat pumps are great, but I couldn't really justify it."

They looked at installing solar panels, but the Feed-In Tariff ended on 1 April, with no replacement in sight. "Everyone's talking about trying to be more eco-friendly, and so this frustrated us," explains Tina. "It wasn't worth it financially," adds Ian. "It's a shame." They did however install a rainwater harvesting system which they use to flush the downstairs toilets, in addition to the MVHR system and well-insulated timber frame.

They faced one final hiccup at the end when trying to get the telephone line connected. It was crucial they got it sorted with so much of the home's smart technology, such as the boiler, relying on Wi-Fi connectivity, but achieving it was "horrendous," says Ian. "We started mid-July this year, and I gave up in the end. We've now got a 4G router which works fine." Tina says it ended up being one of the worst parts of the project. "They wanted to put overhead cables in and we just thought 'no!'"

Now they're finally in the house, they have some final sorting and clearing to do in the old one before they can put it on the market and fully relax and enjoy their retirement. They're both thrilled to finally be in: "We've got something to our design, our brief," says Ian. "It's a one-off, and it suits us." ■



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CASE STUDY

A SURE BET

Despite their background working in the gambling industry, the Cammeghs weren't prepared to risk anything when they decided to build their forever home, a Passivhaus in a rural spot in Kent

TEXT JAYNE DOWLE IMAGES RICHARD HAWKES



The Kent-based architectural practice specialises in this very particular type of rural build



As the founders of an internationally-renowned family business making roulette tables, octogenarians Bill and Barbara Cammegh are used to gambling on the wheel of fortune.

But when it came to building their 'lifetime' home, a rustic Passivhaus in the Kent countryside at Smarden, near Ashford, they left absolutely nothing to chance.

Halfpenny House, which takes its delightful name from a toll bridge over the River Thames in Lechlade, Oxfordshire where the couple share many fond memories, was custom-built – complete with a lift from the kitchen to the bedrooms – with Bill and Barbara's future needs to the fore.

"We purchased the site with the planning consent already agreed," says Bill. "But there were some tweaks we wanted to make as to how we would use the house so we worked with Richard [Hawkes, the architect] and his team to incorporate these changes. In particular, we wanted to reconfigure the utility room and back kitchen to suit us."

Richard Hawkes, whose Kent-based architecture practice specialises almost entirely in this very particular type of rural build all over the UK, introduced the Cammeghs to a builder he trusted. He also put together the team for the project, which included a landscape architect to maximise the site, which started out as part of an old farmstead where chicken sheds and a silage clamp once stood. As well as having an overall picture of how Halfpenny House sat in the landscape, the team took painstaking care to what might appear to the casual observer to be insignificant details.

For example, Bill explains that Richard was very keen for the main barrel of the water-saving



system to not have rainwater pipes visible, so he cleverly hid them inside the columns which support the roof: "It meant getting the pipes in just the right place long before when the foundations were being done. This attention to detail certainly helps. Something like rainwater running off isn't necessarily something you'd think too much about, but it's been cleverly dealt with here."

So did Bill and Barbara get hands-on and do any of the work themselves? "Oh no!" laughs Bill. "Our DIY days are over. We enjoy working in the garden, but we prefer to leave the hands-on stuff to the professionals."

Their three-acre plot cost in the region of £400,000, and the build cost and landscaping came in at £800,000 and £100,000 respectively.

The project had gained planning approval under the exacting standards of Paragraph 55 (now revised to Paragraph 79) legislation and was finished at Christmas 2016, having taken just nine months to build.

Although Halfpenny House is packed with innovative contemporary features such as a

HIGH POINT

"Being in for Christmas! It was a close call but it made it all the more special. We moved in just in time to enjoy this time of year in the house, although we didn't have much furniture at that point."

– Barbara Cammegh



BILL'S ADVICE

"Be realistic about your choices and try to make sure you have enough money to back up your decisions. Also, choose the right architect and builder. Those two relationships are so important to the enjoyment of the experience so it's important to choose wisely – don't let cost be the deciding factor. You get what you pay for."



mechanical heat recovery system, its form is simple; a two-storey Dutch barn with two single-storey projections encompassing 420 m² of living space.

One of the key demands of Paragraph 55 (79) is that a new home in an isolated rural location should look totally at ease in its setting. "Our home looks like it might have once been a Dutch barn even though it's actually a timber-framed new build house," Bill explains. "It does fit in

very well with its surroundings too. It feels like it has always been here, which is a testament to the quality of the design."

The house and its surrounding landscaping, which includes a series of picturesque ponds devised as a flood prevention system, have replaced what Barbara describes as a "scruffy and redundant part of a former working farm, so that's a big improvement".

A stream runs through the site and some parts



sit within flood zones so the landscape architect designed in the ponds to store flood water by altering various levels around the farmyard as part of a SuDS sustainable drainage strategy.

Now that the landscaping has had a chance to mature a little, Bill says that he's delighted to see wildlife settling in around his new home: "A noisy frog has moved in to one of the ponds recently and we see lots of different insects, birds and bats flying around."

As you enter the house from the garden, the entrance hall provides a clear view through the dining area and lounge and out to the landscape beyond, with the gardens carefully planted with a wide range of native plants and trees to help assimilate the building into its rural setting.

The kitchen and dining table share a large open-plan space in the middle of the house. "Everything revolves around the kitchen," says Barbara. "And we use the dining table every day but not necessarily just for eating around – we use it for business meetings as well."

A double-sided fireplace built into a section of wall which also contains the fridge freezer separates this area from the lounge, which has large full-height corner windows to provide a strong connection to the outside spaces while flooding the interior with daylight.

The lounge leads into a self-contained television room in the north-facing single storey extension. "The TV is in a separate room off the lounge," Bill explains. "We like to watch the cricket so it's lovely to kick back in my armchair in front of a big screen, but when we have guests we generally keep the TV room closed off. It's not a cinema!"

The other single-storey space, on the south side of the house, provides a self-contained annex and is accessed via the entrance hall. It's

"Our home looks like it might have once been a Dutch barn even though it's actually a timber-framed new house"

currently being used as a spacious home office but it is equipped with a bathroom and small contained store area which can serve as a kitchenette.

"The ground floor annex was designed to be flexible but capable of providing suitable accommodation for a live-in carer should that be something Bill and Barbara need at some point," explains the building's architect, Richard Hawkes. "At the moment it's working well as a home office and hobby room so it's good to see these spaces adapting well to different functions."

The first floor can be accessed from the staircase within the main hall or by the lift which is discreetly located off the back kitchen area. "We love having the lift," says Bill. "It's a real treat to use the lift rather than the stairs these days."

Upstairs, the house has four bedrooms, two with ensuite bathrooms, and the master bedroom benefits from a large walk-in wardrobe.

Barbara says that when she was thinking about how her new house should look, she loved the

LOW POINT

"One of the ponds kept losing its water because the blue clay hadn't sealed it properly so we had to redo it. The ponds are flood prevention measures, integral to our design, creating a sustainable drainage strategy and bringing many biodiversity enhancements. This leak was a pain but now it's all done and replanted it's water under the bridge so to speak."

– Bill Cammegg

CONTACTS/ SUPPLIERS

ARCHITECT

Hawkes Architecture
01580 892739
www.hawkesarchitecture.co.uk

LANDSCAPE ARCHITECT

Squires Young Landscape Architecture
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Harry Barnes Construction Ltd (now HB Homes South)
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idea of being able to live in a more open-plan way with lots of insulation and low running costs.

It's a completely different prospect to their previous home, a two-storey Edwardian property on the edge of Smarden, with formal gardens, outbuildings and garaging, which the couple used as collateral for the bridging loan which part-financed their project. "It was a lovely house and it certainly didn't take long to sell," adds Barbara.

But with only a steep staircase to the first floor, it was proving a difficult house to live in as Barbara and her husband advanced in years. She says: "Not having to go upstairs to bed now is a welcome luxury."

"Also, it's lovely not having draughts and

always feeling warm and protected. There's no whistling wind from leaky old windows."

"And it's much easier to get about within the house," interjects Bill. "It's one level throughout. The doors are a generous size. You wouldn't really know it was a timber-framed building to be honest."

However, Bill and Barbara do admit that it took a while to get used to how the house worked. "We had no experience of heat recovery systems or underfloor heating, so getting used to the various controls was interesting," laughs Bill. "Thankfully, Richard and the builders were always on the end of the phone if we needed any help so it didn't take long to get things set up as efficiently



as possible."

There is underfloor heating downstairs and in the bathrooms but no heating in the bedrooms, as these areas benefit from the heat distributed across the property by the heat recovery system.

Richard worked closely with the Cammeghs to address the house's overall energy needs. "He was always talking about how to reduce the amount of energy we need before looking at which technologies to use, so we know we've got one foot thick timber-framed walls stuffed with insulation and triple-glazed windows everywhere," says Bill.

"The ventilation system transfers heat from the old air and uses it to warm up the fresh air. The air in the house always just feels right. It never gets stuffy like our old house did. We don't feel compelled to open all the windows to air the house out anymore."

That said, the energy-efficient aspects of the house did require some adjustments to the Cammeghs' interior design ideas. Their original plan for solid wood floors had to bow to the demands of underfloor heating and solar gain.

"Richard insisted that timber flooring wouldn't work so well with underfloor heating or for soaking up the sun's heat from the windows," says Barbara. "We weren't too sure about the timber-effect porcelain tiles at first, but we love them now. They're easy to clean and they stay nice and warm when the underfloor heating is on."

Richard says that Bill and Barbara wished their house to be light, airy and easy to live with and get around, but with separation and cosiness where they wanted it; he feels that together, they have achieved their aim.

"The requirements of any home will vary at different stages of life so for a house to be a

"Having been able to tailor a home so much to suit our own lifestyle is wonderful. Everything is just where we want it"

genuine lifetime home it needs to work well in all seasons of life," he says. "The same is true of how well it functions through the seasons of the year. We're delighted with how Bill and Barbara have embraced the Passivhaus model. It took a while for them to get their head around living in an airtight building but now they've lived in it they get it completely."

And what do Bill and Barbara think?

"It's all nice," says Barbara, "And it makes us feel very relaxed. Having been able to tailor a home so much to suit our own lifestyle is wonderful. Everything is just where we want it, so it makes the house so easy to be in and live with."

Bill thinks for a moment and looks around his comfortable, stylish, and above all practical new 'lifetime home'. "We just wish we'd done it sooner," he says. ■



Bamboo flooring: the sustainable alternative

Rob Wooldridge from Moso Bamboo Surfaces looks at the many merits of bamboo flooring – and provides some installation tips for self-builds

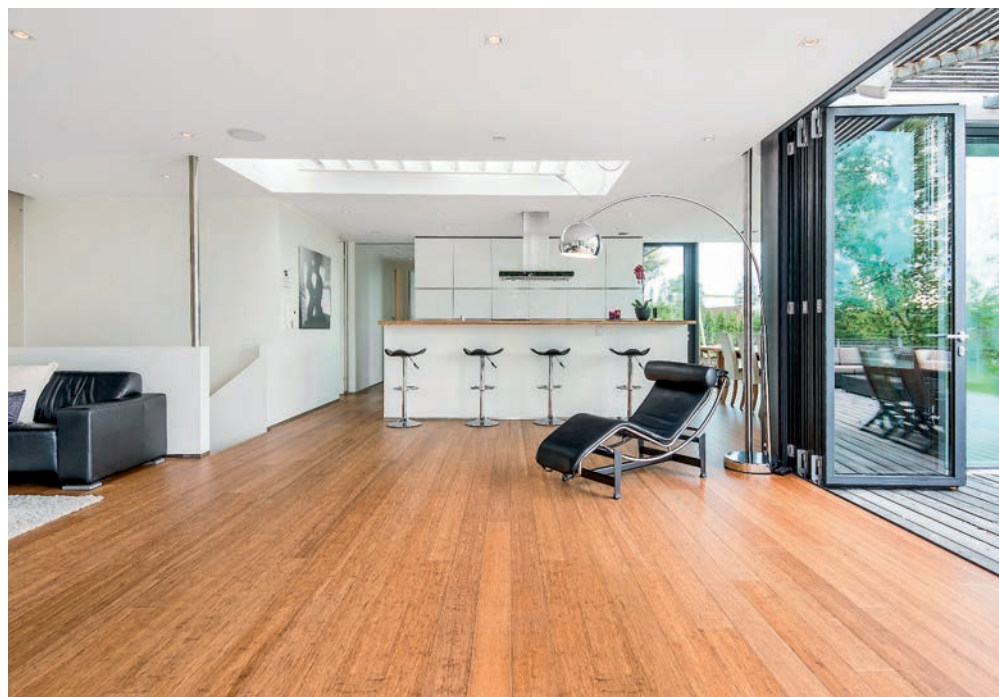
Bamboo flooring may not be your first thought when considering what flooring to lay in your new build house or refurbishment, especially as there is such a huge range on offer, but then again, why not choose bamboo? After all, when people are thinking about what floor to buy, they normally consider the following factors: durability, ease of laying, suitability, environmental benefits, aesthetics, and of course value for money, and bamboo has all these attributes and more.

Let's consider these points to find out whether bamboo is really a good alternative flooring to traditional timbers or other types available.

Bamboo is one of the fastest growing plants on the planet. It can grow up to a one metre a day, taking only three months to reach a height of 20-30 metres, and only five years before it's mature enough to be harvested. After harvesting, the mature bamboo stems are split in a longitudinal direction and the outer skin is removed. After steaming the bamboo, which caramelises the sugar to create the darker shades and drying, the strips are ready to be joined in a variety of ways to create the final product.

There are three main types; firstly is 'plain pressed' where strips are placed horizontally and glued together to create 'staves' of approximately 20 mm wide with the characteristic nodes clearly visible. Secondly, 'side pressed' is where strips are placed vertically and glued together, so each strip is approximately 6 mm wide and the nodes aren't so visible. These two types are similar in hardness and durability to oak. Finally there's high density, or 'strand woven' as it's known, where the strips are roughed up into strands, and glued under high pressure to create a random grain pattern, resulting in a floor that is even harder than the best tropical hardwood species, but still after five years growth!

In terms of installation options, a common question is 'does my floor have to be fully bonded, or can it be floated?'



The answer generally depends on the application and whether there are other factors to be considered such as underfloor heating (UFH), the type of substrate or the type of plank fixing you opt for, i.e. click or tongue and groove.

Bamboo is a very stable material, but will shrink and swell with changing humidity, so floating (not glued or nailed) can be an option, as long as it's laid with an underlay. Generally a click edge for greater hold and more importantly a 10-15 mm gap should be left around the perimeter, to allow the floor to expand into this space (this gap is usually covered by the skirting). Also, a floated floor area can be no more than six metres wide or 12 metres long before expansion gaps should be inserted.

A fully bonded floor is generally preferable as it expands and contracts as one surface, so movement is minimal, it tends to feel more solid and stable under foot, and the tongue and groove edge profile works well. When used in conjunction with UFH, either a wet or

Bamboo flooring offers clear sustainability advantages and is proven to be CO₂ neutral over the full life cycle

electric system where the floor is more susceptible to expansion, a fully bonded floor provides more stability for the changes in temperature.

As for where to lay bamboo flooring, we would say you can use it anywhere you'd lay an oak floor, so don't be put off by thinking it can't be used in a bathroom or a kitchen environment, because it can. The strand woven/high density option is



one of the best choices for any busy family household where there are children racing around on scooters or skateboards, for entertaining and parties, or for homes with pets as the surface is harder and more durable than the likes of oak or other hardwood species.

In bathroom installations we always say

good ventilation is key and surface water is to be removed when spilt as the bamboo is still prone to movement, but only if not looked after. We have a range of flooring colours, textured surfaces and effects which give choices for the use of bamboo in different rooms— so you can never have too much!

Bamboo flooring offers clear sustainability advantages and is proven to be CO₂ neutral over the full life cycle from the growing phase, production, use and end of life. It's long been known that bamboo has hypo-allergenic properties which improves the environment for allergy sufferers, but more recently customers are asking about the VOCs or formaldehyde content; is bamboo a safe option for my children or my new-born? As an example, our bamboo flooring has very low emissions of volatile organic compounds (VOCs) and with the use of eco-friendly adhesives with no added formaldehyde, can comply with the strictest European emissions norm of E1 or EO.

Cost wise, just because bamboo is sustainable and super-durable doesn't mean it's more expensive than its timber alternatives – in fact bamboo prices per m² are very reasonable, with prices typically ranging from £20-£30 (excluding VAT), making them an attractively affordable option.

Why not choose bamboo as your durable, easy to install, sustainable and aesthetically pleasing cost-effective alternative to a traditional timber floor.

Rob Wooldridge is account manager for Moso Bamboo

Revive your worktops for the festive season



With Christmas fast approaching, many homeowners are already thinking about preparing their homes for the festive season, and eco-friendly wood finishes expert, **Osmo UK**, has a wood finish to ensure all Christmas guests are impressed with your kitchen worktops. Worktops are prone to spillages, scratches and water damage, resulting in a dull, tired-looking surface. By investing in a high-quality finish, wooden worktops can get a new lease of life. Osmo UK offers an interior wood

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Fantom Magnetic Door Stop introduced to range

Leading provider of sliding door hardware systems – **P C Henderson** - has partnered up with Fantom to introduce a new magnetic door stop accessory to its range of products. The Fantom Magnetic Door Stop is an innovative door stop solution which uses a neodymium magnet installed into the base of the door to pull a floor pin up and stop a door in the open or closed position. The accessory has been expertly designed to offer a more discreet and concealed alternative to a traditional door stop and is set to be extremely popular across the DIY, building and construction markets. Andrew Royle, Sales and Marketing Director at P C Henderson, commented; "What's great about Fantom is that, unlike conventional door stops, it offers a completely concealed finish meaning no trip hazard and a cleaner finish. The striker plate is fitted underneath the door and the stop sits completely flush to the floor - meaning there's no unsightly hardware on display and all moving parts are hidden". "We're noticing more and more that our customers are coming to us expecting a full hardware solution - beyond our traditional sliding door hardware offering. As a result - we've introduced Fantom to our range and will also be offering our customers with a new, extended collection of handles and flush pulls in October 2019". The Fantom Magnetic Door Stop can be used on a number of surfaces including carpets, tiles, concrete and wood and is available in a variety of finishes.

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Staying safe & secure

Secured by Design (SBD)'s Emma Snow explains the benefits of the police-backed product certification system, and gives some tips on how you can ensure your home is as secure as possible

Secured by Design (SBD) is the national police crime prevention initiative. Over the last 30 years, SBD has worked with national and local government, the police service, the building and construction industry, manufacturers and standards authorities to introduce crime prevention measures and techniques to the physical security of buildings and their layout and landscaping, to deter and reduce crime.

However, you may not be aware that the initiative's principles for designing out crime are just as relevant to the individual home builder and home improver as they are for large multi-home developers. The SBD Self Build 2019 Design Guide provides a wealth of useful information and guidance to make your home safe and secure without adopting 'fortress' type crime prevention solutions.

The housing boom of the 1960s, 70s and 80s led to homes being built quickly and cheaply, often without any basic security. A sharp rise in burglary resulted. To combat this, the police service set up SBD in 1989 to incorporate crime prevention into the built environment.

SBD requires security-related products to be sufficiently robust to withstand attack from an opportunistic criminal, and therefore capable of deterring and reducing crime. Better quality means products last longer too.

More than one million new homes have been built to SBD's crime prevention standards with the latest research studies showing reductions in crime of up to 87 per cent every year compared to non-SBD developments.

SECURITY STANDARDS

SBD requires products to be security tested and certified in order to meet its Police Preferred Specification standard. This is important because testing alone means that a door or window may have been security tested just once, some years ago.

Products that have been security tested and certified by an independent, third-party certification body accredited

by the United Kingdom Accreditation Service (UKAS) will be required to have ongoing re-testing of the product and inspections of the manufacturer's production facility. This means the correct processes, product quality and performance are maintained at the highest levels to the present day.

Companies that achieve Police Preferred Specification can become a member company and use the SBD logo for sales and marketing purposes. SBD currently has more than 800 member companies with 5,000 products in over 30 different crime categories including doors, windows, external storage, bicycle and motorcycle security, locks and hardware, asset marking, alarms, CCTV and many others.

SBD believes certification, especially for products like doors and windows, has been a significant contributor to a 64 per cent fall in property crime in England and Wales between 1995-2014/15 (source: Office of National Statistics).

HELPING YOU MEET BUILDING REGULATIONS

The SBD Self Build Guide 2019 applies to creating a home for your own occupation, whether it's a new or refurbished scheme. Building in accordance with the Guide will help you to discharge the security conditions and requirements of the planning authorities and building control professionals across England, Scotland and Wales who will seek to establish that relevant legislation has been met. You are also encouraged to apply for the Secured by Design Self Build Award certificate to evidence that you have met your formal planning obligations.

PUTTING THE GUIDE TO WORK

SBD suggests you consider your project through the eyes of an opportunistic criminal – they are likely to 'walk on by' if the risks of being seen and heard are too great. Let's start with your boundaries and work inwards towards the main residence using some of the points highlighted in the Guide.

OUTSIDE YOUR PROPERTY

Vehicle and pedestrian routes to your



Consider your project through the eyes of an opportunistic criminal – they are likely to 'walk on by' if the risks of being seen and heard are too great

home should be designed to ensure they are visually open and direct. A change in the colour or texture of the road surface or brick piers could mark the point where private ownership commences – making it more difficult for an intruder to justify their presence.

Walls, fences and hedges at the front need to be kept to one metre or less in height to maximise surveillance and minimise hiding places to ensure criminals are on view from the home and street. Alternatively, railings or picket fencing could be used.

At the rear and sides of your home, taller boundaries are recommended. Install 1.8 metre high fencing and top it with 0.3 metres of trellis to make climbing more difficult.

Side gates should be 1.8 metre high, robust and capable of being locked. They should be installed to the front



of the building line. Use prickly plants, such as pyracantha or climbing roses, to protect fencing, easily accessible windows, and drainpipes.

Gravel driveways or pathways can be attractive and help you hear the crunch of approaching footsteps. Strategically placed solar globe lights will provide low-level illumination at night as well as sculptural interest to borders. Low voltage dusk to dawn external lighting will provide added security.

YOUR PHYSICAL BUILDING SECURITY

SBD requires doorsets – door, frame, locks, fittings and glazing – which allow direct access into the home to achieve

Police Preferred Specification.

Easily accessible windows, including easily accessible roof lights and roof windows, are also required to meet our standards. Both door and window frames must be securely fixed to the building fabric in accordance with the manufacturer's instructions and specifications.

Garage doors can also be certificated to meet standards, or they may be considered satisfactory if an external 'garage door defender' type security product is fitted.

External containers designed for the secure storage of mopeds, scooters, motorcycles or bicycles and other

property must also attain Police Preferred Specification for a Self Build Guide Award to be made. If you choose to store these vehicles in a shed, they must be secured to a security anchor, which too must meet our requirements.

All member companies and their products that have achieved Police Preferred Specification, are listed on the website.

CONSULT YOUR LOCAL OFFICER

SBD also recommends you consult your local SBD trained Designing Out Crime Officer (DOCO), who works for your local police force. The DOCO will be able to advise you from the outset and provide additional site specific information, and their service is free.

HOMES 2019 GUIDE

If you are building your own home, refurbishing or developing a portfolio of homes to sell or rent you should also refer to the SBD Homes 2019 Guide.

SBD has a permanent display in the professional services hub at the National Self Build & Renovation Centre in Swindon. The website also contains lots of useful information.

Emma Snow is development officer at Secured by Design



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New QUATRUS sink for maximum space



BLANCO's stunning new stainless steel QUATRUS sink showcases the company's well-known intelligent design capability while making maximum use of the cabinet. The striking, modern rectangular bowl of the QUATRUS sink offers plenty of space for all the user's culinary and utility needs while leaving lots of free space in the cabinet. The large sink space is also perfect for today's clever taps; it can be fitted with boiling-water taps and filter taps to provide an optimal functioning kitchen and, to create a

spectacular focal point, homeowners can opt for an angular tap as the shape complements the deep rectangular bowl. Available in two different sizes, the sink design is the perfect complement in any kitchen scheme.

www.blanco.co.uk

Transform the kitchen Rosemary Shrager style!



Homeowners looking to update their kitchen and include a certain style or item and can be inspired by famed chef, Rosemary Shrager. Rosemary wanted to do exactly that and so called upon **Granite & TREND Transformations** to help transform two downstairs rooms, comprising of a kitchen and dining room, into an open-plan kitchen-dining-living combination. The design team at Granite & TREND Transformations recommended the new Arabescato worktop for the kitchen units, as

the colour matches the original marble, and slate cabinetry which echoes the dark veining in the Georgian slab. The units were designed with big drawers for plenty of storage space.

www.granitetransformations.co.uk

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