

selfbuilder + homemaker

SEP/OCT 2023

Quietly elegant

Interior designer Gloria Sanchez offers expert guidance on how to create 'quiet luxury' in your interior

Dear Diary

In our Selfbuilder Diary, Nicole Collison introduces her distinctive renovation of a Grade II Listed barn in Kent

Grand ideas

Grand Designs Live gears up for its October show at Birmingham's NEC

Brushing aside tradition

Artists Pippa Young and David Mankin have harnessed their artistic flair to craft a strikingly minimalist marvel on the Cornish coast

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1. Leaving water temperature, when the outdoor temperature is between -15°C - 43°C. Results may vary depending on the actual usage conditions.

2. Based on internal testing of the EHS Mono HT outdoor units. The noise level is measured 3m away from the front of the outdoor unit, in an anechoic room with an outside temperature of 7°C. Results may vary depending on environmental factors and individual use.

*Efficiency ratio of heating output (capacity) versus power input (electricity). Internally tested under lab conditions based on EN 14511, results may vary depending on the actual usage conditions.

3. Based on internal testing on an EHS Mono HT outdoor unit (AEI20BXYDGG), compared to a conventional EHS outdoor unit (AEI20RXYDGG). Results may vary depending on the actual usage conditions.

The Quiet Mark certificate is applicable for UK & EU territories only.

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FROM THE EDITOR...

It is always a pleasure to bring you the fruits of self-builders' hard work in these pages. They endure the emotional rollercoaster so that we can have the slightly envious pleasure of seeing the amazing spaces and finishes they create on their plots!

This issue features a trio of minimalist homes with beautiful clean lines, sited as far apart as Berkshire, Aberdeen, and Cornwall. Different owners with differing priorities, but all looking for amazing spaces that make the most of their surroundings. Our final case study is a transformation of a turn of the century house, equally impressive in its own way.

By contrast, our relatively new addition of a Selfbuilder Diaries regular feature brings you projects which are in that exciting (and yet potentially terrifying for the owners) interim phase of drawings, planning worries and the final build itself. See page 6 for more!

We would love to hear from you if you'd like to take part and provide your own Diary, or alternatively you may have a finished build that you'd like to be interviewed about and covered in *Selfbuilder & Homemaker* (free of charge, of course!).

Please email jparker@netmagmedia.co.uk for a chat if you are interested!

JAMES PARKER

DATES FOR YOUR DIARY...

GRAND DESIGNS LIVE

4 - 8 OCTOBER, BIRMINGHAM
WWW.GRANDDESIGNSLIVE.COM

THE NSBRC SHOW

13 - 14 OCTOBER, SWINDON
WWW.NSBRC.CO.UK/WHATS-ON

NSBRC GUIDE TO SELF-BUILD PROJECTS

7 - 9 OCTOBER, SWINDON
WWW.NSBRC.CO.UK/WHATS-ON

HomeBUILDING & RENOVATION SHOW

3 - 5 NOVEMBER, HARROGATE
WWW.HOMEBUILDINGSHOW.CO.UK

**ON THE COVER...**

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Despite a host of unexpected costs, the Cliffords successfully melded contrasting styles to achieve their dream modernist home

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A leap of faith

Claire and Marco, being renovation novices, were sure they didn't want a 'project' house, but ended up taking a leap of faith to complete a build that transformed their site to realise its true potential

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Retreating to the city

For many self-builders, the big goal is moving from the city to the country, but a couple from the Scottish Highlands had the opposite aim in building their 'secret garden' home in Aberdeen

selfbuilder *Diaries*

Nicole Collison and her husband Rob, along with their two young daughters, are moving from the coast to the countryside, renovating a Grade II listed Kent barn in search of a rural dream in their home county



There were some tweaks to the floorplan we hoped to make, so our first job was to find a good architect

We're the Collisons! My name is Nicole and my husband is Rob. We have two young daughters (five and eight) as well as little Luna our Maltese. We decided to embark on this rollercoaster self-build journey at the beginning of 2023. For years we've had itchy feet and have wanted to move from our four-bed Victorian coastal home, in search of more outside space for our daughters and dog.

However, after countless house viewings over several months, none of which really hit the mark, we decided to change up our search and start hunting for some land to build our own home. We love where we live and didn't want to up sticks and move far away from family and friends, plus our daughters are both at a local village school, so we knew this constrained search wouldn't be easy.

After registering with every local land agent and online plot finder site (which we highly recommend!) we finally stumbled across a site in one of our favourite local villages – surely this was too good to be true? The morning my husband and I viewed the site for the first time in midwinter, the weather couldn't have been more horrendous – imagine torrential hail downpours plus howling wind! However, that did not stop my husband from falling in love at first sight and him putting in an offer there and then. Being soaked from head to toe, I on the other hand, would take a little more convincing.

Ever the optimist, once agreeing on a purchase price, my husband arranged for us to visit for a second time (on a much sunnier day) and the beauty of the site came alive. Fields and open space

for miles in all directions – once we saw our daughters walking off hand in hand through the fields, we knew we wouldn't regret our decision. The 1.5-acre site is surrounded by beautiful countryside including arable fields, with the bonus of a Grade II listed timber-framed Kent barn and various other outbuildings within the plot. The site already had full planning permission granted to convert the listed barn into a three-bedroom dwelling and demolish the tin-structured car port and rebuild.

There were however some 'tweaks' to the floorplan that we hoped to make, so our first job (after instructing our solicitor) was to find a good local architect to amend the drawings for us and resubmit them into planning. We ended up going with the architect who did the initial drawings when the plot was up for sale

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as he had a history with the site and was able to impart a lot of knowledge right from the get-go as to what was likely to be approved and what wasn't. As total novices to renovating a Grade II listed barn, we were happy to soak up all the advice from someone who'd worked on many similar listed barns and new-build barns in the local area.

We are looking forward to visiting some of these barns in the near future (a great learning experience if you're able to) – it's a great way to pick up some design ideas you may not have considered. We have now edited the initial floorplan and put it back into planning as a 'variation,' so fingers crossed that our dream design is

approved in the not too distant future. In the meantime, we continue to battle the solicitors to complete the land. To say it's been an emotional journey so far is an understatement, and we haven't even reached the build yet, so this route is definitely not for the faint-hearted! We've faced 'right of way' public footpaths through the centre of what will be our garden, bats supposedly roosting in the barn (delaying proceedings) and a list of pre-planning conditions seemingly longer than The Great Wall of China!

Nevertheless, we plough on, bashing down obstacles like a game of whack-a-mole – no sooner has one issue been resolved, does another rear its ugly head. Without repeating the mantra 'it will all be worth it in the end', I'm not sure we'd be this far down the line in one piece still. Looking to the future, we're excited to finally reach an exchange on the site, put up our fence/hedging and claim 'our land'. My husband's dreams will come true the moment he gets to sit on his very own 'ride-on' lawn mower, and make some serious stripes. Then it would have all been worth it. We've been documenting our build on Instagram (@thekentbarnproject) to have a safe place to save our memories as the restoration progresses. Give us a follow if you'd like to track our journey!



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Get your light right



With so many options available from so many suppliers, choosing the right rooflight can be a bit of a minefield. Here Paul Trace from Stella Rooflights answers the key questions you will need to consider when seeking out the ideal rooflight for your project, based on aesthetics and practicality



DO I NEED A PITCHED OR FLAT ROOFLIGHT?

The design for a flat rooflight is different to that of a pitched rooflight and a flat version will require a kerb/upstand section built onto your roof. If you have a sloping roof you can generally find rooflights that can be installed between 17 and 70 degrees. It is always important to know the roof finish and mention the pitch of your roof when talking to rooflight suppliers, to ensure you are quoted for the right product.

HOW BIG CAN MY ROOFLIGHT BE?

Modern glazing technology allows some very big areas of glass to be achieved, but if you are working with an older or listed property then it is advisable to use conservation rooflights and keep to smaller sizes. More modern projects are better served by more contemporary skylight designs which have much larger areas of high specification glazing, without the more traditional glazing bars used in conservation roof windows. Just remember that the bigger the glass area the thicker and heavier the glass will be, so you may need to crane your rooflight into position.

DO I WANT IT TO BE AN OPENING OR A FIXED DESIGN?

This will depend on whether you need the rooflight for ventilation or just for light. Having fixed rooflights quite often works out more cost effective because you can have larger pieces of glass without the overhead of the mechanisms. Some bespoke rooflight manufacturers

can produce frames which combine both fixed and opening casements.

HOW WOULD I LIKE MY ROOFLIGHT TO OPEN?

This will depend on whether you need ventilation or access to the roof. If you have other sources of ventilation then it is probably advisable and more cost effective to have a fixed (non-opening) roof light. Smaller rooflights tend to operate manually but if you opt for a large rooflight most will be operated with electric actuation. There are a wide variety of actuators available but typically a rooflight operates with a small cill mounted actuator to push the casement open. Larger bespoke rooflight designs can sometimes have concealed actuators to lift casements.

WHAT GLASS SHOULD I USE IN MY ROOFLIGHT?

There is no 'one size fits all' option for rooflights, so glass specification should be chosen to reflect your most important requirement. There are lots of glass options available for example, double/triple glazing, self-clean, solar control or toughened safety glass. Many standard off the shelf products do not offer such a high level specification as standard, so make sure you are comparing like for like when getting quotes.

It is important to check with your manufacturer that they comply with the latest Building Regulations (expanded on further below) and that the thermal performance (U-value) quoted is for the



There is no 'one size fits all' option for rooflights, so glass specification should be chosen to reflect your most important requirement



So glad we were introduced to the NSBRC - it has proved to be an invaluable source of knowledge, information & inspiration from trades, experts & fellow self builders. We have been twice & will definitely be back! — April 2023 ★★★★★

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whole frame, and not just the glass unit.

WILL LOCATION AFFECT THE PERFORMANCE OF MY ROOFLIGHT?

If your project is located near to the coast or in an area of high pollution, it can make a difference to the lifespan of your rooflight. This is particularly important if you are looking at installing a metal rooflight; always opt for 316L stainless steel. This may cost more initially, however you can be sure that your rooflight is protected, and will not rust. It is worth noting that mild and carbon steel rooflights rely heavily on the coating to prevent rust, so these are likely to require significantly more maintenance than a stainless alternative.

WHAT ARE THE RULES & REGULATIONS THAT APPLY TO INSTALLING ROOFLIGHTS?

The first thing to consider when installing rooflights is whether or not you need planning permission – especially if you live on an older property and require a conservation rooflight. In some cases, planning permission may not be required if the rooflights are not visible from the street and do not alter the external



appearance of the building. However, it is always best to check with your local planning authority before proceeding with any installation work.

After this, the next step is to ensure that the rooflights meet the requirements of UK Building Regulations. The regulations that are relevant to rooflights include Part B (Fire Safety), Part L (Conservation of Fuel and Power), and Part K (Protection from Falling, Collision and Impact).

Part B (Fire Safety) requires that rooflights be designed and installed in such a way as to prevent the spread of fire. This means that they must be constructed from fire-resistant materials and that they must be installed in such a way as to maintain the integrity of

the roof. If the building is listed, then it is important to consult with the local conservation officer to ensure that any proposed works are sympathetic to the building's historic fabric.

Part L (Conservation of Fuel and Power) requires that rooflights meet certain thermal performance standards. This means that they must be designed to prevent heat loss and reduce the need for artificial lighting during the day. If the building is listed, it may be necessary to use specialist conservation rooflights which are designed to replicate the historic appearance of the original rooflights.

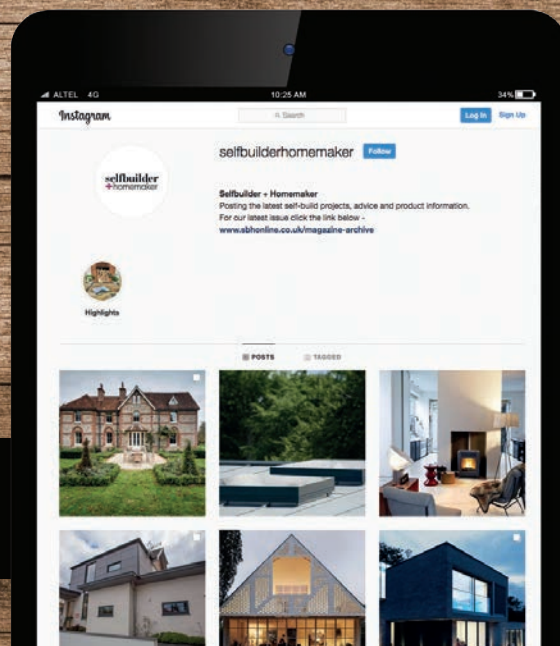
Part K (Protection from Falling, Collision and Impact) requires that rooflights be designed and installed in such a way as to prevent people from falling through them or being injured by them. This means that they must be strong enough to withstand the weight of a person, and that they must be designed to prevent people from slipping or tripping on them.

Paul Trace is a director at Stella Rooflights

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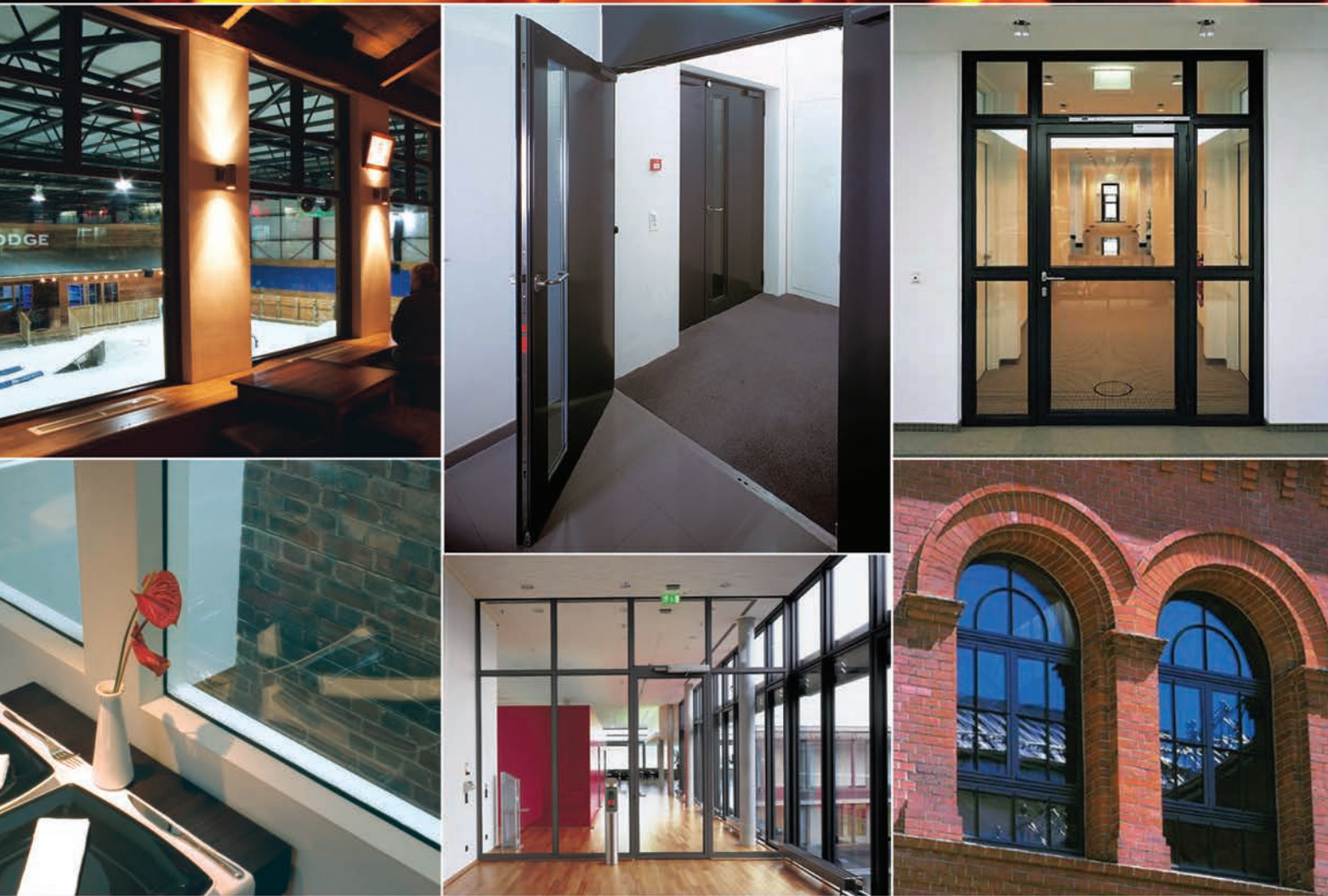
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EMBRACING QUIET LUXURY

Gloria Sanchez of Tailored Living shares her advice on cultivating subtle elegance to follow the trend of 'quiet luxury' in your self-designed interior

'Quiet luxury' is an aesthetic that captures the essence of subtle and toned-down elegance, using a preference for high quality, and beautifully understated designer pieces over the once favoured look of ostentatious opulence. Instead of screaming for attention, the trend for quiet luxury lends more towards key areas of interest that offer a more 'whispered' blend of personal style, taste, confidence, and restraint; be it across the finishing touches or general colour palette.

In fact, as interior designers we are seeing an increase in requests for a more luxury living experience with many requirements falling into the quiet luxury 'less is more' style. However, sometimes

the trend is a little braver and goes beyond 'neutral' interior decoration. This has stemmed from many of us now taking influence from having spent time abroad in luxury hotels, which pay close attention to having a welcoming homely atmosphere that is always signature in style.

Creating a tranquil oasis in your home that is away from the chaos of modern life is the real beauty of the quiet luxury trend, offering a cohesive and subtle interplay of colours and textures to create a soothing environment that promotes relaxation and more positive wellbeing.

I recommend a minimalist aesthetic and an 'eagle eye' for detail, as it is the extra finishing touches that will allow you to enhance the look and feel of the space. A strong use of natural materials and amazing craftsmanship will all add to this and create new design opportunities in the home for more specialist areas like a home cinema, gym, or spa bathroom.

By investing in high-quality, timeless pieces, you'll ensure your design choices remain relevant and able to endure changing trends for years to come. This approach helps create a more sustainable living environment, and saves you time and money in the long run, as you won't need to keep updating and refreshing the decor of your home. So why not embrace the quiet luxury trend in your home; It's a no brainer if you are looking to create a timeless interior design scheme – and here are some helpful tips:

Choose high-quality materials like marble, natural wood, silk, velvet, and leather to create a luxurious look and feel in your home. The contrast in finish,



colour and surface texture will all help to define a space while evoking a sense of character, which is more personal to you.

Embrace neutral tones like beige, cream, white, and grey; all are popular in luxury design schemes, creating a calm and sophisticated atmosphere, and a timeless foundation. By opting to decorate with neutral tones, you won't overwhelm the space, so naturally it will feel less cluttered. The trick when using the neutral colour palette is to watch out for undertones, as they are not always visible to the untrained eye. The undertones should always work together for the scheme to be cohesive, as well as help you to achieve either a warm or cool ambience.

Add texture to your interiors by incorporating plush rugs, textured wallpaper, and soft furnishings such as cushions and throws. The opulent nature of a heavyweight fabric like velvet is the perfect way to add a touch of luxury, but to ensure it doesn't become more





maximalist, be sure to opt for a muted colour palette like beige or cream for a quieter look and feel.

Metallic accents like gold, bronze, and silver can add instant glamour to a space. Incorporate them across your accessories like mirrors, vases and lighting, and when chosen in the same or contrasting finish, you will naturally create a design scheme that does not overlook the finishing touches. Don't be afraid to mix and match metals across the fixtures and fittings; when opting for the cooler metals, I prefer using nickel, as it offers a more subtle contrast when combined with warmer finishes elsewhere.

Investing in statement pieces like a chandelier, artwork, or an antique

piece of furniture to add character and elegance to the space. You could even base your entire scheme around your favourite chair, decorative lamp or designer storage by replicating the same design details throughout the decor such as the shape, time period or choice of material.

Layer the lighting in your space to create a warm and inviting atmosphere. Multiple light sources like table lamps, floor lamps, and pendant lights can add depth and interest. Remember the lighting control system is always an added bonus, as it will allow you to control the lighting in your home remotely or by voice control for ultimate convenience. Furthermore,

a smart lighting system will also allow you to create different scenes of tasks and mood lighting, so you can make the room feel cosier at night or when entertaining friends.

Quiet luxury is about being practical and considered with your design approach, so if you do have the extra space why not consider the luxury of having a cinema room or home gym? It is these added luxuries, together with underfloor heating, air conditioning and home automation, that will help to create a forever home that lives up to your needs and lifestyle.

Gloria Sanchez is the founder and director of Tailored Living

Creating a tranquil oasis in your home that is away from the chaos of modern life is the real beauty of the 'quiet luxury' trend



INTERIOR INSPIRATION: BEDROOMS

Given the need to provide both comfort and functionality, crafting a well-designed bedroom can prove to be quite a challenge. Here we present a collection of products to assist you in creating a truly inviting and efficient sanctuary that you love coming home to after a hectic day



1. If you want a bed with timeless style, the **Bucklebury Double Bed** by **Darlings of Chelsea** ticks all the boxes. With a slight curve and a slimline panel on each side of the headboard and slim angled feet, this bed complements both a traditional and contemporary interior. Mattress is not included.

Price: £1778.

www.darlingsofchelsea.co.uk

2. For instant impact in the bedroom or guest room, the **Marrakesh Bedside Table** by **Atkin and Thyme** is made from acacia wood with colourful woven cotton yarns on its single-drawer design. Inspired by the geometric patterns of Morocco, this woven bedside table is created by highly skilled artisans with each piece being totally unique.

Price £299.

www.atkinandthyme.co.uk

3. Instead of a ladder, the sturdy steps of the **Olivia Mid Sleeper Bed** by **Cuckooland** allows kids to head up to their cosy single bed. They also hold a surprise inside, lift the steps to reveal hidden toy storage boxes. At the end of the bed, the two open compartments can be used as bookshelves.

Price: £545.

www.cuckooland.com

4. This **Large White 7 Drawer Chest of Drawers** by **Melody Maison** is a stunning storage piece perfect for lovers of minimalist design and luxurious details. Crafted from manufactured wood and metal this chest comes with seven storage drawers and a gold metal frame.

Price: £269.95

www.MelodyMaison.co.uk

5. For the attic or eaves bedroom, or where space is a limiting factor, the **Oxford Low Wardrobe** by **The Painted Furniture Company** may be just the ticket. Measuring just 134 cm high, the wardrobe is available in three standard widths or can be bespoke sized to your exact requirements.

Price: £865.

www.paintedfurnitureco.co.uk

6. **B&Q's Valenca Satin White Dressing Table** features classic simple Scandinavian lines which complements most living spaces. With two drawers and a large top surface, the table offers ample storage to help you keep your room neat and tidy. Pair it with a mirror and a stool to make it the perfect furniture for your dressing room.

Price: £115.

www.diy.com



3



4



5



6

Meeting the Future Home Standard

Victoria Brocklesby, co-founder and COO of Origin, delves into the key question of whether triple glazing is needed throughout a property in order to meet the Future Homes Standard

As the UK continues to prioritise the 'green building revolution' and energy efficient homes, the Future Homes Standard deadline is rapidly approaching to raise the bar for new properties and home improvements. The new specifications, due to come into force in 2025, are designed to reduce the carbon emissions from homes by 75 to 80% compared to the old regulations. For self-builders and renovators, one crucial aspect to consider is the choice of glazing.

DO I NEED TRIPLE GLAZING?

The standard does not explicitly require triple-glazing throughout a property. Rather, the focus is on the entire building envelope.

On paper though, triple-glazing has a clear advantage over traditional double-glazing, especially when it comes to insulation. The use of three layers of glass is better at preventing heat from transferring into the outside environment as well as stopping cold air from entering a property. This means it helps keep homes feeling warmer in the winter and cooler in the summer, aiding in reducing energy bills which is a particular concern for many at the moment.

Although triple glazing can achieve lower U-values, it is possible to achieve excellent thermal efficiency standards with double glazing. Ultimately, there are other important considerations to weigh up before deciding between double or triple glazing.

SIGHTLINES

Double-glazed fenestration excels in offering slimmer sightlines, with the main benefit of being able to make the most of the surrounding views and allow lots of natural light to flow in.

However, the additional weight incurred by triple-glazing can impact

the maximum panel size possible depending on the system, and this is relevant, particularly for products like bi-folding and sliding doors. This means that instead of a few, wide panels, doors may have to be specified with a higher number of glazed panels to avoid them being too heavy to operate individually. With more panels, comes more frames, meaning that uninterrupted view and flow of natural light will be affected.

COST

When considering whether to opt for triple glazing, self-builders and home renovators need to balance the enhanced energy efficiency benefits with the associated costs. The price of triple vs double glazing is likely to be the biggest deciding factor between the two options. A triple-glazed unit can cost up to twice as much as a double-glazed alternative. So, the value added to the property through energy savings should be considered before committing to double or triple glazing.

IN CONCLUSION

While triple glazing wins for the long-term benefits of reducing energy bills and noise pollution, those who are looking to make a statement with large panes of glass or hope for a significant return on the investment in the short-term, may not reap the benefits.

The FHS does emphasise the importance of energy efficient glazing, but triple-glazing is not explicitly required; instead the standard focuses on achieving a certain overall level of energy efficiency for the entire building envelope, taking into account factors beyond just glazing. This means it is possible to meet the standards with a combination of high-quality double-glazing and other energy saving measures.



Triple glazing isn't explicitly required throughout a property; the standard focuses on achieving a certain overall level of energy efficiency

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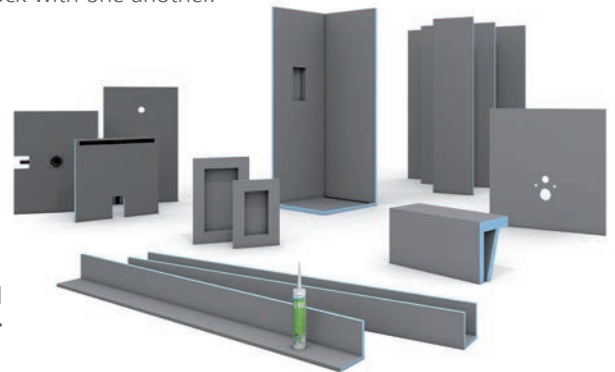


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Bring along your plans, ideas and questions and speak to an expert about your home project, or even the latest ways to decarbonise your home. Visitors are recommended to pre-book their appointments in advance on the Grand Designs website.

The wide range of subjects covered at the event are as follows: architecture, EV charging, finance, garden design, heat pumps, interior design, insulation, kitchen design, lighting, modern methods of construction, planning, project management, renovation, self-build, solar power, structural engineering, sustainable living, zero emission boilers, plus more.

LIVE TALKS

The three theatres provide an entertaining and informative platform, with seminars and debates including:
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bills? How are modern designs and technologies evolving? How can you retrofit your home? Find the answers to these questions and more, as the experts take visitors through the latest developments in sustainability and ways in which you can adapt your home to be more eco-friendly.

The interiors stage – Learn how to upcycle, create a mood board and design your home, as the experts take you through their best tips and tricks.

OUTDOOR LIVING ROOM SETS

If you're looking for inspiration for your outdoor space, be inspired by the room set designs covering ideas such as an outdoor kitchen, spa, entertaining space and garden office.

KEVIN'S GREEN HEROES

Look out for the ground-breaking, planet-friendly products on display, chosen by Kevin McCloud, from small-scale start-ups to big businesses setting a green example for the rest of the industry.

MINI GRAND DESIGNERS

Grand Designs have challenged year 7 students at a local school to the NEC, to come up with a 3D model of the house they would like to live in. Using recycled materials and things that they have within the house, see the shortlisted entries on display at the show. Cast your vote for the project you would like to win at the show.

Article submitted by Grand Designs Live

WHEN & WHERE

Grand Designs Live is open from **10 am – 5 pm** each day.
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CASE STUDY

A CLEAN BREAK IN CORNWALL

When professional artists Pippa Young and David Mankin saw a sub-standard bungalow for sale on the Cornish coast, they decided to leave a lifetime of period properties behind and build a minimalist masterpiece

TEXT ALEXANDRA PRATT IMAGES ANTHONY GREENWOOD/DAVEY CONSTRUCTION







For most of their lives, artists Pippa Young and David Mankin enjoyed living in the type of period English properties which many would think of as the 'perfect' home. Yet, as the family nest emptied, the maintenance issues mounted.

"We'd had a life of restoring period homes, and we had 'refurbishment fatigue'," laughs Pippa. "Even minor jobs revealed all kinds of horrors." The idea of changing how they live began to grow in the couple's minds. "Years ago, we had seen a picture of a minimalist house and we said, 'One day, we'd like to do that'."

Their opportunity came when they discovered a 1930s bungalow for sale in their area. Thanks to being built using the sub-standard 'mundic' block common across Cornwall in homes built during the first half of the 20th century, the bungalow was not mortgageable. The problem lies in the aggregate used to make the blocks. Often, this included waste rock from mining, quarrying and even beach gravel combined with china clay waste, and the blocks deteriorated over time, leading to instability.

"The mundic meant only cash purchasers could buy it," explains Pippa. "Although there were still a lot of people interested." That high level of interest was down to the property's west Cornwall setting, offering spectacular views across the sea.

Having secured the bungalow, Pippa and David sold their home, moved into a rented cottage and began planning their new home.

"We had lots of ridiculously expensive ideas," laughs Pippa, recalling their initial thought to clad the house in bronze. Other extravagant suggestions fell at their first brush with reality. Yet, as professional artists, Pippa and David did have a clear vision of how they wanted

"It was the aesthetic that we were quite prescriptive about," recalls Pippa

their new home to look; clean lines, minimal detailing, natural materials and of course, putting those sweeping coastal views at the heart of the design.

Unfortunately, they struggled to find common ground with the first architect they approached and put things on hold until a friend suggested London-based architect Suzanne Brewer.

"We visited her home, and it was exactly the aesthetic we wanted. We had a shared vision," says Pippa.

Pippa and David took a belt-and-braces approach to the planning application, submitting pre-application plans for advice, and hiring a planning consultant. They wanted to demolish the old bungalow and replace it with a contemporary, four-bedroom, reverse-level home with plenty of glazing facing the sea.

"We were worried about building above the ridge line on neighbouring properties, so we dug down and designed a flat roof, but it wasn't an issue," says Pippa. "We could have saved money by not digging down."

Pippa and David were keen not to be forced into compromises on their design, so they had an open day to show the plans to local residents.

HIGH POINT

"When the windows went in; it became a house then, not a building site."

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As all the nearby properties are traditional bungalows, Pippa and David were afraid their contemporary home would ruffle feathers.

"As it turned out, we didn't have any objections and our home is now cited as precedent for new planning applications," says Pippa.

"Their first hiccup came when certain elements of the design didn't pass the weatherproofing standards for the area set out by Building Control. This focused on construction details relating to thermal bridging around the windows and the pocket doors.

"West Cornwall is in zone four, which has far more extreme weather than say, London." The issue was solved by Pippa and David commissioning local architecture firm Lilly Lewarne to finalise the necessary details, which were then passed."

Before demolishing the existing bungalow and starting their build, the couple were required to take deep core samples of the ground on the plot. This was due to the area's mining history. There is even a historic mine shaft in the next field. After extensive investigation, however, nothing was found except a large hole, probably once a cesspit and a concrete tank that was almost certainly used for water.

"There was no mains supply here until the 1950s," exclaims Pippa. "Imagine that!"

CONSTRUCTION DETAILS

Their structural engineer recommended local building firm Davey Construction, who constructed the house using masonry and steel. The idea of a 'green' roof appealed to Pippa and David, but it became one of the early thoughts that didn't survive an encounter with the budget. Instead, the couple opted for a standard

The interiors are, of course, all Pippa and David's work

membrane; a common solution for modern flat roofs.

While the couple left construction details to the experts, "It was the aesthetic that we were quite prescriptive about," recalls Pippa. These included the materials used to finish the house's exterior, which is predominantly stone clad, with sections of render and Kebony. Kebony is a softwood chemically treated to extend its lifespan to around thirty years. It is delivered as a rich brown, although it fades to a silver grey over time.

Kebony is also available in different profiles, so the couple chose to attach it vertically, with a routed line down the middle to further narrow the appearance of each strip.

Choosing the stone was critical to the correct finish, and Pippa and David's attention to detail meant they specified not just the colour, but also the quarry it came from.

"If you walk along the coast here, the rocks are all bluey-grey, with bright orange and sage green lichen," says Pippa. "We wanted to use local stone, as cheaper Welsh and Chinese stone is the wrong colour for this landscape. As artists, this matters to us!"

The couple's choice was Trebarwith Road Quarry, where two seams produce a grey/blue stone that yellows in time, and a rusty-coloured one. Combined, this stone cladding does a remarkable job of settling the house into

LOW POINT

"Struggling to find an architect who shared our vision."

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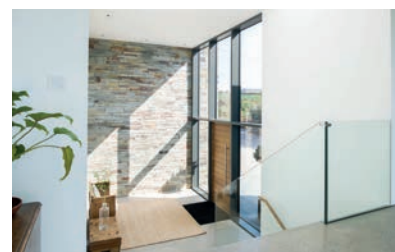
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the landscape.

As you would expect in this setting, there is a lot of glazing in the home. The couple had to opt for double glazing, rather than the heavier triple-glazed windows, as the panes are so large. The frames are marine-coated aluminium, an essential factor when building within 500 metres of the sea. The stand-out feature is the open corner facing the sea, the blue vista of the bay unencumbered by a supporting post. When the sliding doors are pulled back into their pockets, the roof appears to hang in mid-air, framing the view.

INTERIORS

The interiors are, of course, all Pippa and David's work. They were inspired by the Tate Modern Gallery in terms of the space and the pared-back details. Internally, there are frameless doors, shadow gaps in place of skirting boards, no thresholds and an overall lack of detail to distract the eye from the ever-changing view. "It's a living painting, and everything else is subservient to it," says Pippa. "The colours inside are in dialogue with that view."

While the paint choices are largely white, a significant part of the interior finish is, of course, the choice of flooring. Achieving their vision of a salt-and-pepper grey granite that wasn't overly shiny became a real challenge.

"I did a massive amount of research," recalls Pippa. Frustratingly however, the wrong colour concrete was poured without reference to her specification. Perhaps fortunately, it quickly became apparent a problem had occurred with the pour and the concrete floor had to be dug out. Pippa seized the moment and appointed an

The stone cladding does a remarkable job of settling the house into the landscape

independent contractor to lay the floors to her specification. The wide stairs, which carry visitors upwards from the grand, double-height entrance (also inspired by the Tate), are concrete, but they are an awkward shape to polish, so the steps were micro-topped with careful colour-matching of pigments. (Micro-topping is a polymer-enhanced cement that can be laid in an ultra-thin layer on a variety of surfaces.)

Downstairs there are two bedrooms and a convertible middle room which functions as an open plan snug and reading room, but can be closed off to make a third bedroom. Pippa and David's studios are at the rear, on the entrance level of the house. Throughout this level, the flooring is engineered timber, as this is better suited to underfloor heating than solid wood. The heating and hot water are provided by an air-source heat pump, as "We have no gas supply in the village and the plot wasn't big enough for a ground source heat pump," says Pippa.

Upstairs, the kitchen, dining area and living room are all one open-plan space. At one end of the room, the doors on the corner open out,

PIPPA'S ADVICE

- "If you are thinking of doing concrete flooring, do your research and get samples."
- "The most important thing is finding people you can connect with. Communication is key."

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converting that space into a terrace. At the opposite end of the upper floor, an elegant, galley-style kitchen with a 4 metre island. This sleek kitchen was designed by the local firm Treyone Kitchens, although Pippa couldn't resist tweaking the plans to remove a walled-off scullery.

"I wanted a clean space, with hidden handles and space for everything," says Pippa, who even has a drawer made especially for her spice collection; they are keen cooks. The countertop was a personal triumph for Pippa – she chose Corian, which being a man-made material made it possible to have a single 4 metre length with no joints. She managed to source it herself, bagging a £3,000 discount.

ON REFLECTION

Reflecting on the project, Pippa thinks that they would have benefitted from her sourcing more things directly. This also tied into to the other thing she wishes she had done differently; "I should have project managed it myself," she admits, ruefully. With her skills from her design career, she believes she would have been able to stay on top of even this huge job.

"If I did it again, I would be less starry-eyed about 'experts' and I would have rolled my sleeves up at the start. Experts don't know what is perfect for you."

In the end, Pippa still had to get stuck in when the expected completion date began to drift.

"We had been in the [rented] cottage for three years and I'd had enough," Pippa recalls. "I scheduled deliveries of furniture etc. for the last week, but I ended up having to oil the

The stand-out feature is the open corner facing the sea

downstairs floor myself. I skinned my ankles on it, but I had to do it. The builders were still sweeping out as we were moving in with the boxes."

Once in, the couple found, like many self-builders, that the landscaping also needed to be done. And they found it wasn't going to be quick or easy. "We asked our main contractors to do it, but due to Covid restrictions it took another 10 months," says Pippa.

Yet now, the experience of living in their new home and enjoying those views has been almost overwhelming. "I love coming home after a trip," says Pippa. "It feels like a zen space. It is exactly as we wanted it to be, and I have to pinch myself sometimes. In fact, it has turned us into hermits, as we don't want to leave!"

That is perhaps the best testament to the impact designing and building your own home can have on your life and sense of well-being. And even the small details bring Pippa joy.

"I love the space and even the nerdy details, such as the concrete floor. I also love the sense of peace and the calm I feel here. This house has come out exactly as I saw it in my head, and it is wonderful!" ■

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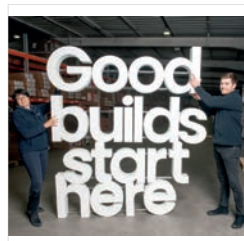
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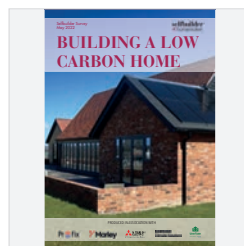


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Multiple roles for Marmox Thermoblock in stylish property

The construction of a truly individual new home in West Sussex is making use of **Marmox** Thermoblocks to tackle the issue of cold bridging, both around the building perimeter and to protect the ground floor slab where it spans a substantial basement structure, containing both the plant room and a wine cellar.

The six-bedroom and five-bathroom dwelling is being built by Grangewood Southern Ltd. on behalf of a private developer, with Fusion Brickwork being the specialist sub-contractor responsible for installing the 140 mm wide version of the Marmox Thermoblocks as part of an unusual wall construction, which features an inner and outer leaf of concrete blockwork faced with random natural stonework. Some 250 of the 600 mm long by 100 mm deep composite units have been installed using the Marmox 360 sealant to secure the overlapping end joints.

The Project Manager for Grangewood Southern, Alex Hall, commented: "I hadn't personally used Thermoblocks before, but they are very easy to install and offer very good loadbearing capabilities. With a high insulation value and an amazing compressive strength, they are ideal for carrying the dense blockwork and also forming the top course of the basement which occupies about one third of the total ground floor, which is 25 metres long by 13 metres wide."

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CASE STUDY

A SUNNINGDALE SUCCESS STORY

Despite facing a host of unexpected cost issues from subcontractors, Julie and Michael Clifford successfully melded contrasting styles to achieve their dream modernist home in a highly desirable part of the south east

TEXT TOM BODDY IMAGES JULIE CLIFFORD



Situated in the affluent and scenic 'super village' of Sunningdale, Berkshire, sits a contemporary new home boasting an unorthodox exterior. Despite the design differing from its nearby traditional counterparts, both planning and local residents were in full support of its bold design.

It took two long years for Julie and Michael Clifford to search for a suitable site for their next project, and it was only because of Julie's connections working for a large interior designer that they found one. "You don't get many shots at land in Sunningdale," says Michael, "you either wanted to buy it or you didn't. It's not like there's 10 other plots to choose from." When the opportunity arose, the couple quickly jumped at the chance.

Their credentials for tackling this challenge didn't end with Julie's experience in the design world. Their previous residence, an oak-framed barn in Maidens Green, was their first self-build, and had been their cherished home for two decades. Experience, therefore, was firmly in their favour.

Although their two daughters had enjoyed a great childhood in that house, the Cliffords decided it was time to embark on a fresh and exciting new chapter in their lives. "There was no ulterior motive, we just wanted a new house," says Michael.

With a successful self-build already under their belt, the couple had a clear idea of what they wanted to achieve. Michael asserts their primary goal which was a contrast to their previous oak



What Michael and Julie thought were 'solid numbers' turned out to be cost variations that forced them to exceed their budget



HIGH POINT

"Having people around the other day for dinner for the first time was a high point for me. Seeing the super room being used, it just works so well for us"

— Julie

LOW POINT

"Moving in and still having people working hasn't been great. As it's been a terrible summer for weather, there is dirt everywhere which I'm constantly having to clean."

— Julie

Finding a balance between Julie's desire for maximalist luxury and Michael's preference for minimalist simplicity presented a challenge

home: "We wanted to build a modernist house, that was the key aim."

Their vision encompassed ideas such as the creation of a spacious communal area, which they referred to as a "big super room," and for each bedroom to have its own ensuite. In terms of the exterior, Michael was keen to explore the idea of a cantilevered house; "that was his big priority," states Julie.

Their interior inspiration drew heavily from the villas they had seen holidaying in Marbella, Spain. "There's a really strong modernist design over there," asserts Michael. "Over here we seem to just do pointy roofs and chimney pots, and build old Victorian-looking houses for some reason."

The couple wanted to steer clear of this traditional feel and avoid anything like a mock Victorian home. "We wanted something much more 21st century!"

However, this modernist vision contrasted with the existing century-old homes that graced the streets surrounding their chosen site. It was clear

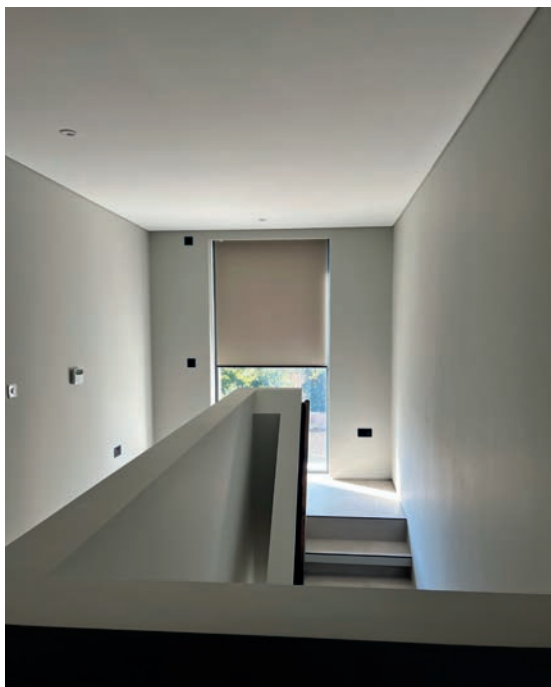
that their concept would make a bold statement within the local built landscape.

Thankfully, when the couple put forward their ideas to their architect Warren Joseph, owner of Ascot Design, he noted that the Royal Borough of Windsor and Maidenhead Council held a favourable view of modern architectural designs which aligned with their intentions. As Julie explains, "The two aspects fitted together seamlessly."

Upon submitting planning, both the council and local residents welcomed the concept with open arms and were "hugely supportive" throughout the process.

However, a minor obstacle arose due to the site's close proximity to protected oak trees. Yet, as Michael emphasises, by forging a close collaboration with the council, respecting their expertise, and adhering to the proper procedures, you can navigate these challenges and "work things out with them effectively."

The couple acquired the land in late 2020 and successfully obtained planning permission



during the summer of 2021. Despite enduring a significant amount of paperwork, they managed the process in a way that made it run smoothly, and they even found it fairly straightforward.

Breaking ground in April 2022, Michael and Julie embarked on the build itself. Even in the midst of pandemic concerns about being able to supply concrete, the Cliffords encountered no such issues, and "we used a lot of it!" says Michael.

FINANCIAL HICCUPS

Despite an otherwise seamless construction process, the couple faced some painful financial hiccups. "The biggest challenge for us was the unpredictability of British builders when it came to agreeing prices," says Michael. While their primary contractor proved to be "fantastic" and remained supportive throughout, some subcontractors delivered initial quotes that were wildly off beam compared with their final costings.

Michael sheds more light on this tricky issue, noting, "Without naming names, some individuals provided quotes based on the plans and architectural drawings, only to drastically revise them after visiting the site and realising

Sunningdale is an expensive place to live, often tripling the original figures."

According to the couple, Covid and supply issues were used as excuses to hike prices up; as Michael asserts, "We had no issue with getting anything." He adds, "It was clear that they were just being opportunistic." Michael offers advice to other self-builders here, emphasising the importance of selecting reliable professionals that "you can trust to price properly."

Despite the challenging price fluctuations, the couple acknowledges the exceptional quality of the work. "In a modernist home like this, you can't hide behind anything because everything is on show," says Michael. With intricate shadow gaps featured throughout the home, any mistakes would be clearly seen.

One fortunate aspect during the construction phase was how the family struck gold while the project took place, with a living situation that most self-builders can only dream of. "We amazingly managed to sell our old house to the neighbours and rent it back off of them until the project was finished," explains Julie. This provided them with the funds to carry out the project without the inconvenience of relocating.

While the family are still waiting for some of



the landscaping and finishes to be complete, the actual home itself has now been fully finished.

CONSTRUCTION & LAYOUT

The home has been constructed using 600 mm x 300 mm standard concrete blocks, which have formed distinctive white-rendered boxes that seamlessly stack together. This design effectively distinguishes between the upper and lower levels, where the upper 'box' extends further outward, resulting in a cantilevered section that envelops the house. The distinctive architectural design leads to a configuration where the upper level boasts a larger square footage compared to the ground floor. An abundance of variously-sized double-glazed windows and sliding doors offer extensive views of the nearby fields and trees. "We're so surprised with the amazing views that we've got from the upstairs," says Julie. "Every window provides the most amazing views, which we never expected!"

Given their family make-up, with two daughters aged 21 and 15, ensuring a functional living space was paramount. Upstairs, four bedrooms, each with its own ensuite, cater to the family's needs. "The girls already love it as they have their own bathroom as well as built-in furniture!" says Julie. One of the upstairs rooms is the spacious master bedroom, complete with

a built-in dressing area. The home's location also offers significant advantages for their daughters. "Previously, our home was on a little country lane with no nearby amenities. Now, the girls can walk into Sunningdale," explains Julie.

Downstairs, the expansive super room/kitchen serves as the social hub of the home, ideal for entertaining and cooking, according to Julie. This floor also accommodates an additional lounge, a generously sized utility room, and a restroom.

Another crucial consideration for the couple was sound insulation. They wanted the concrete floors to extend to the upstairs to prevent noise transmission. Julie explains, "In our previous wooden house, we could hear the girls returning home after an evening out. Now, you can't hear anything!" Underneath the concrete, underfloor heating heats the various rooms, adding to the comfortability of the home.

Even the staircase, which bears Michael's distinctive design touch, is constructed from concrete and, according to Julie, "it works really well."

INTERIOR DESIGN CHALLENGE

When it came to interior design, finding a balance between Julie's desire for maximalist luxury and Michael's preference for minimalist simplicity presented a challenge. Julie's company

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“We amazingly managed to sell our old house to the neighbours and rent it back off of them until the project was finished” - Julie

specialises in traditional interiors, so Michael's desire for this style was a departure from her norm. While the end result is very much a modern, clean aesthetic, Julie has tried to incorporate touches of warmth and comfort by throwing in some timber elements and textured fabrics. “We’re constantly trying to compromise between luxury and comfort,” asserts Julie.

Elements of walnut are dotted throughout the interior, while Julie has introduced two four poster beds, which Michael isn’t so keen on. However she defends her decision: “I was aiming for classic contemporary with those!” says Julie.

As the furniture from their previous cottage-style home couldn’t fit into the new spaces, it was sold – resulting in them having sourced an entirely new collection. “It’s wonderful to have all new furniture, the girls love it,” Julie adds. The home’s generous internal space totals around 275 square metres.

REFLECTIONS

With the project almost complete, the couple reflect on their journey and in doing so have some advice for anyone taking on a similar project. They emphasise the importance of making ample time to tackle questions and

deal with construction issues. According to Michael, this is crucial because you’ll likely encounter a barrage of queries every week, and find yourself delving into extensive research to source subcontractors, especially given the tight labour market. “It’s all been worth it, but it is a lot of hard work.”

Another valuable piece of advice, echoed by both, is the need for a substantial contingency plan. Despite Michael having earned the title of ‘Mr. Spreadsheet,’ given to him by his wife, even his meticulous planning couldn’t keep up with the fluctuations in project costs. “Prices are so variable, how can you plan without a massive contingency?” says Julie. “You just can’t.”

What they thought were “solid numbers,” had actually become unforeseen and dramatic cost variations, which ultimately forced them to exceed their budget.

Despite encountering what were some highly taxing challenges along their journey, the couple say their new home is nothing less than perfect. Julie is proud of their “quite remarkable” achievement, concluding that they’re so satisfied with their home that “even though we spent two decades in our previous one, we don’t miss it in the slightest.” ■

Haddonstone digs into archives



Haddonstone has undertaken many contracts where its workshops have been called upon to replicate architectural enrichments to many different ages of building. On one recent project, a client who Haddonstone helped to construct a Georgian style home 15 years ago required the company's expertise when it came to extending the property. Sean Rafter, director of Longdendale Construction, said: "Haddonstone was very responsive to requests and all of the deliveries arrived

on time; right through to the end of the job when we found we needed two extra units which were produced in very quick order. This was a very intricate job, and the client was as pleased with the end result as we were."

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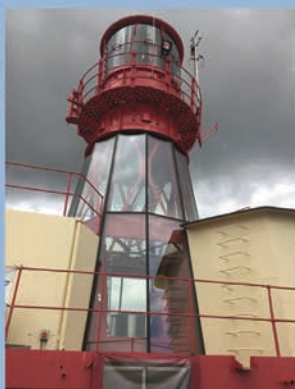
Double-leaf Aluminium Entrance doors now available

Hörmann UK have announced the addition of a double-leaf option to their range of aluminium entrance doors. The TopComfort Portal, offers the combination of a modern, high quality, secure door together with the opportunity to create a truly imposing entrance for any style of home. Constructed using high quality materials featuring a PU foam core within an aluminium skin and an aluminium frame as standard, TopComfort Portal provides long-term, operational stability. It also features RC3 security as standard, good acoustic insulation, and excellent thermal performance with a U value of 1.2 W/M₂K being achievable. A good-looking door is guaranteed with the solid door leaf being fully flush on both the exterior and interior of the door, together with flush fitting between the traffic and fixed leaf. Doors can be manufactured in widths up to 2,600 mm and heights up to 2,500 mm, with seven different door styles being available. The ability to create an impressive, custom-designed entrance is further enhanced with an extensive choice of handles and accessories, together with twenty-three preferred colour options including the ever-popular Anthracite grey and on-trend contemporary Black. The Hörmann group have recently announced that they are the first and only construction component manufacturer to offer CO₂ neutral garage doors, entrance doors and residential internal doors.

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We all know that colour can affect our mood and emotions, so when choosing colours for your home it makes sense to go with your instinct and opt for the colours you are naturally drawn to.

Cedral facades have been helping homeowners create beautifully stylish homes for decades, homes that not only look good but last a lifetime. The new Colour Collections offer an inspiring range of 21 stunning shades curated into 4 distinctive living styles, makes it easy to find your perfect match based on your personality and the things that matter in your life.

Cedral carried out extensive research with homeowners, industry professionals and colour science experts to create a colour collection designed for the way we live today.

The research showed where Cedral should add colours and which to drop and helped lead the way to introducing 9 exciting new colours.

FIND A COLOUR TO SUIT YOUR LIFESTYLE

Take our quiz to find your style personality, then match it to your perfect Cedral collection:

1. Do you live in a modern home

with clean lines and designer appeal? Are you a trend setter, always on the lookout for the latest styles? Perhaps your home is architect designed or maybe you just love clutter-free contemporary spaces.

2. Are you drawn to nature and the great outdoors? Do you strive to create an indoor space that's cocooning and welcoming? You may be a keen DIYer or home renovator and sustainability is key in your day to day life.
3. Are you a fan of traditional spaces, is your home your castle? Family values are likely to be very important to you and your home is an intimate space, calming and inviting.
4. Are you drawn to unique and expressive interiors, full of character and personality? You love to mix old and new to striking effect and create eye-catching living spaces.

Now find your best match colour collection:

1. The Design Collection - creates a modern impact using a

monochromatic palette curated to make bold design statements. This colour spectrum offers elegant black and white and a range of greys, from silver to steel and platinum.

2. The Natural Collection - works with shades drawn from nature to create homes in perfect harmony with their surroundings. This palette mixes a warm blend of earthy browns, sea blue, sand yellow and pearl grey.
3. The Classic Collection - the epitome of elegance, a harmonious palette selected to create calming and inviting homes to instantly lift the spirit. Shades are a classic mix of blue, green, grey, brown and subtle whites.
4. The Expressive Collection - a rich palette designed to complement and contrast existing materials to create unique and characterful homes. It fuses a unique blend of metal green, brick red, walnut brown and distinctive greys.

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Choosing windows for sustainable homes

Low energy bills, more daylight, impressive insulation balanced by effective ventilation - when it comes to eco-friendly selfbuilding, choosing the right window system can make all the difference to comfort and performance. Which is why VELFAC windows and doors are installed in some of the UK's landmark environmentally conscious homes:

FOUR OAKS, SOMERSET

Built to Passivhaus principles, Four Oaks is a stylish, ultra-low energy three bedroom family home which achieves impressive thermal efficiency and air tightness. Large VELFAC window walls are vital to Four Oaks' performance and are combined with moving external screens to ensure every room is comfortable to live in all year round. When designing Four Oaks, architect Michael Williams, of MJW Architects, worked to a rigorous, low energy brief without compromising architectural vision - one reason why he chose VELFAC: 'The system delivers excellent thermal performance with a slim frame design,' he says. 'Many Passivhaus-certified window systems are 'chunky' in appearance whereas VELFAC windows maintain sleek and minimal sightlines even when units are triple-glazed. The system is also very cost-effective and comes with a warranty that other suppliers cannot match,' he adds.

PAVILION HOUSE, SUFFOLK

Pavilion House is a beautiful, minimalist 'inside out' home designed by renowned Danish architect Jonas Bjerre-Poulsen, founding partner of Norm Architects. The extensive front elevation, and the narrow sides, are entirely glazed in a combination of VELFAC fixed triple glazed units and large sliding doors, all fronting elegant kitchen, dining and living spaces. On the rear elevation large sliding doors are set between walls clad in local larch, providing bedrooms with access to a stylish terrace. Pavilion House was first conceived in 2013 when the previous owners asked Bjerre-Poulsen - then at the start of his career - to create a long, low building with minimal walls and maximum glass, where 'the



countryside could be the star'. Bjerre-Poulsen immediately specified VELFAC windows, both to sustain the minimalist aesthetic and deliver the insulation and air tightness required to ensure a 'glass house' would be both comfortable to live in and energy efficient.

TEN OAKS, HERTFORDSHIRE

Architects Kirkland Fraser Moor worked with owner Ian Mays (one of the founders and now retired CEO of RES, the world's largest independent renewable energy company) to create a 'climate restorative' zero carbon home with minimal visual impact on the surrounding countryside. The highly distinctive circular building - with an additional circular annexe - features VELFAC composite glazing throughout, specified for its low-U values and slim-framed, contemporary and sustainable design. 'VELFAC triple glazed units met our thermal targets while the narrow frame design increased visibility from within the house and brought more daylight inside,' says Ian. 'We considered installing locally-made curved windows, but VELFAC was more cost effective and delivered the performance we needed. The

sustainability of the VELFAC aluminium / timber frame was also important,' adds Ian: 'Every unit is almost entirely recyclable and it's also very low maintenance, which again supports our zero carbon ambitions.'

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Traditional chimney design required a minimum flue height of 4.5 m. In theory, this was enough to ensure sufficient natural flue draught to clear the products of combustion from a wood-burning stove.

Unfortunately, the chimney draught was never guaranteed and the provision often resulted in unsightly tall chimneys when appliances were installed in single-storey buildings and orangeries.

A recent change in chimney design (see source) states that a chimney can be designed using the calculation method in BS EN 13384-2005 which allows for the installation of shorter chimneys, provided sufficient chimney draught can be proved. A chimney fan will guarantee this chimney draught even on a shorter flue design.

[...] the calculation procedure within BS EN 13384-1:2005 can be used as the basis for deciding whether a chimney design will provide sufficient draught."

Source:
Document J Building Control
Combustion appliances and fuel storage systems
page 30 - §2.8 - "Height of flues"

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Open up the potential for big savings

Rachael Munby from Anglian Home Improvements shares her insights on how switching to energy efficient windows could help homeowners save up to £1,800 on their energy bills – while adding greater value to properties



With the cost of living showing no signs of abating, installing energy efficient appliances remains a key consideration for many homeowners. And, as the UK prepares for plummeting temperatures in the coming months, this is only set to increase.

One of the most efficient ways to retain as much heat in the home as possible is to invest in quality double-glazed windows and doors. It's worth noting that while some homes are already fitted with double-glazing, it doesn't necessarily

guarantee that they are thermally efficient. Valuable heat can still be lost through windows that have been poorly fitted, causing homeowners to produce more CO₂ as a result of making their heating work harder and longer.

For homeowners concerned about the efficiency of their windows and the additional money this could be costing them on their energy bills, they should consider exploring the most efficient windows from a trusted, experienced, and responsible window provider.

Energy efficient windows are expertly

designed to improve thermal efficiency and prevent warm air from escaping thanks to its latest technology, innovation and high performance, which ensure windows are airtight. For homeowners, this means more money in their pockets, as they could save up to £184.25 per year on their energy bills.

Making these upgrades also helps to protect the environment, as it cuts carbon emissions by up to half a tonne of CO₂ per year – to put this into context, one tonne of CO₂ is equivalent to the average emissions of one passenger on

Triple glazing comes in well above Building Regulations standards for energy efficiency; providing that units have been installed correctly

purchase decisions, and subsequently, the housing market.

To add to that, a low score on an Energy Performance Certificate could make it more difficult to sell properties. A Government report on property sales found that making energy saving improvements could increase the value of homes by as much as 38%.

The benefits of double glazing go far beyond energy and cost efficiency. Premium windows reduce condensation buildup on the inside of the windows through spacer bars between the panes and Low-E glass which reflects heat back into the room. In a similar way, energy efficient windows help insulate homes against external noise, so homeowners can enjoy peace and quiet.

These factors combined are predicted to cause a spike in the demand for energy efficient products, particularly in the self-build and renovation sectors – and could even be a more effective way to achieve greater energy efficient homes rather than building new properties.

Triple glazing may be a more desirable option for those looking for energy efficiency, as well as improved security. Triple glazing comes in well above Building Regulations standards for energy efficiency, providing they have been installed correctly. In

the space between the panes is an inert gas that increases the window's thermal performance. This gas has low conductivity – and is therefore more insulating, which further helps to reduce energy bills.

Energy efficient windows are undoubtedly a beneficial way to help construction workers, renovators and self-builders alike create the energy efficient homes that homebuyers want. For a seamless buying experience, there are companies in the market that have a team of highly skilled experts who are on hand to support every step of the process to ensure everything is precision-made, so you can be certain of a finished product that provides warmth, security, and savings without compromising the environment.

Anglian has calculated the estimated savings using the energy calculator developed by the Glass & Glazing Federation (GGF). A typical house upgrading from pre-2002 double glazed PVCu windows with gas heating to Anglian A-rated windows will make an annual saving of £184.25 and 0.47 tonnes of CO₂ and a saving of £1,842.50 and 4.7 tonnes of CO₂ across 10 years.

Rachael Munby is group marketing director at Anglian Home Improvements

a return flight from Paris to New York or driving 6000 km in a diesel car. With green, energy-efficient homes becoming increasingly desirable, this could have a significant impact on homebuyers'

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CASE STUDY

A LEAP OF FAITH

Renovation novices Claire and Marco were sure they didn't want a 'project' house, but they ended up taking a leap of faith to complete a transformation that realised the true potential of their site

TEXT JESS UNWIN IMAGES PHILIP WADGE ARCHITECTURE & CLAIRE HANDLEY





Claire Handley and her husband Marco initially dismissed their beautiful home in the village of Woolton Hill, close to the border of Berkshire and Hampshire, as “too much work” when they first went to view it.

Having previously lived in new builds and with no experience of renovation, the couple (who have two young sons), quickly turned their house-hunting gaze elsewhere.

Circumstances eventually forced them to reconsider and return to this early 1900s mock Tudor cottage, set on half an acre of land. “We were not intending to buy a project house at all, but we wanted to move to the area, and all the other houses we were interested in kept falling through,” says Claire.

“We took an architect with us for the second visit to get a sense of what could be done to open up and extend the property. The location is so beautiful, and we decided it was worth taking on because of the potential of the place.”

The couple took the plunge and agreed to buy Tile Barn Cottage – once part of an estate with a manor house, stables and coach house, but which was broken up into several separate properties in the 1950s – for £870,000.

However, last-gasp drama nearly saw them fall at the final hurdle. Claire reveals: “On the day the whole chain involved was supposed to exchange the couple we were buying from got cold feet and pulled out.” The couple had half an hour of “sheer panic” when they had to decide to pull the plug on the whole move or rent for a few weeks and try to get the deal back on track. “We did the latter and, thank goodness, it paid off.”

Another potential hurdle – getting planning permission – turned out to be straightforward,

and Claire believes this was just one of the advantages of choosing the right architect. The house isn’t listed, but it’s of historical interest and just inside the North Wessex Downs Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty. She says, “Our architect had previously worked for the local planning authority, so fortunately he was very aware of the hoops they needed to jump through.”

“That was brilliant,” she continues, “because as we went through the house renovation ideas, he was pointing out things we should – and shouldn’t – do. We were careful not to change the exterior appearance of the house too much, and limiting light pollution was something else we factored into our plans.” It was also important that the extension was in proportion – increasing the footprint by a bit more than a third to roughly 2,800 sq ft.

RENOVATION GOALS

So what did the couple hope to achieve with their renovation? Claire explains: “We’d fallen in love with the location, but to achieve our dream family home, the challenge was the fact that the existing house was too dark and enclosed inside – and we also wanted to extend the property.”

Central to their vision, says Claire, was the open-plan kitchen, dining and living spaces, with lots of new glazing installed to help bring in the light and make the most of views of the south-facing garden at the front of the property. They also wanted to create a new upstairs master bedroom.

At the same time as doing that, she says, they wanted to “retain some of the original period character of the house and smooth over an earlier 1980s extension, incorporating the whole

LOW POINT

“There was a period when we were living in the house without central heating, and delivery of our bifolds and new windows was delayed, so we had openings blocked up with plywood. By October it was getting cold and with young children that wasn’t great. The new kitchen wasn’t ready either, but a kind neighbour allowed us to use theirs for a week while they were on holiday. We sought refuge there in the evening for a couple of hours before returning to the chaos!”

— Claire Handley



HIGH POINT

"We'd been used to seeing day-to-day change, but I remember we went away for three weeks and came back after all the knocking-through demolition work had been done. That was a lot of change in one go – we saw the shell of the house in its final intended shape and size, and we were just blown away. It was a real wow moment when I really felt, yeah, this is going to be everything we dreamed it would be."

— Claire Handley

into one natural-feeling space."

There's no doubt, now the renovation is complete, that the couple have made their dream home a reality. At the very heart, literally, of the transformation is the removal of the stairway, WC and store cupboards that separated the front and rear halls. Three walls were knocked down and the staircase was repositioned by 90 degrees to create a new open and light-filled hallway, which allows you to move straight through from the front to the back of the house and also gives access to all the other ground floor rooms.

A two-storey extension to the west side of the house has been added, mimicking the style – including the hipped-roof form – of the older part of the property. Adjoining and connected to this extension, the house's old conservatory has been replaced by a single-storey glazed garden room with a pyramidal roof lantern.

The resulting increased floorplan at ground level includes north-facing functional spaces such as a utility room, a games/playroom that was once the old kitchen and an office or study for homeworking. Facing south towards the garden is the main sitting room and a wonderful open-plan area that includes the dining room, the kitchen and the aforementioned garden room.

Upstairs, the double-height landing (created by removing the old upstairs bathroom) at the top of the repositioned stairs benefits from a south-facing window. Two new dormer windows have been added to the south facade, flooding bedrooms with yet more light and giving the exterior a pleasing symmetry.

One of the existing bedrooms has been reconfigured into a smaller bedroom and a

"It was brilliant because as we went through the house renovation ideas, the architect was pointing out things we should and shouldn't do"

bathroom to create a hallway link to the new ensuite master bedroom in the west side extension. This bedroom also boasts a new south-facing dormer window which, like all the glazing throughout the building, features PVCu frames with a convincing wood-style finish in an agate grey colour.

PROJECT MANAGING THE BUILD

Despite not having previous renovation or construction experience, Claire decided to take on the project management of this house transformation herself. "That was definitely the right decision," she asserts. "In hindsight I'm not sure how we'd have done it without someone onsite every day – there were just so many questions and decisions to be made.

"It had its stressful moments but, overall, I enjoyed it. I have a professional background in project and programme management, so I'm



quite used to managing people, working to budgets and deadlines.”

She also has plenty of praise for their builder: “When you watch property shows on TV, the builder and the homeowner sometimes argue and the builder walks offsite or suddenly announces costs have doubled.

“There were things that cropped up, but the builder would sit us down and say ‘this is what’s happened, here are your options, what would you like to do?’ It was a partnership, with him walking us through the process in a really nurturing way.

“Our builder was just fantastic – we knew of him by word of mouth and he’d done work for a couple of neighbours and I’d seen it and been impressed. Our architect also recommended him.”

The family decided to live in the house during the renovation – which was “definitely a challenge,” says Claire, but she’s again impressed that the most disruptive part of the work, removing the staircase and walls at the centre of the house, took just three weeks. “We had to get out for that but, credit to the builder, he got it done over the school summer holidays, so we were on holiday for most of that time and then stayed at my mum’s house.”

When extending a property, getting the new to blend seamlessly with the old is always important. “Our builder was clever here, re-using old roof tiles that he had to remove for the extension so that the new dormers and much of the new roof look like they’ve always been there.” The couple’s choice of a new off-white render for both old and new walls also helped to unify the different parts of the project.

The age of the house and old-fashioned construction methods used to build it, such as

its single-skin brick structure, limited options for ‘green’ features but highly insulated new glazing and the installation of some underfloor heating have raised the building’s EPC rating from E to C.

Essential construction and renovation at the house were carried out between June and November 2021 but further work on a patio and the driveway, plus interior decorating, continued through 2022 and into this year. Claire adds: “Things still to do include more underfloor heating, putting up wall tiles in the kitchen, and there are lots of windows that don’t have blinds or curtains. They’re finishing touches, but they often take the longest time to complete because there’s so much personal taste involved.”

SQUEEZING THE BUDGET

In terms of budget for the renovation, the couple’s first estimate was around £200,000. Claire says: “We revised our expectations as we went along, and the final figure is going to be more like £320k if you include the new patio and driveway.”

She adds: “That £200K figure wasn’t anchored in reality. As novices at this, you don’t know what you don’t know, so we hadn’t thought of every single detail when we put our first budget together.

“One of the unnerving things about creating something like this is you pay upfront for designs to be drawn up by an architect before you have any idea of the affordability. You only get that when you take those drawings to a builder – and that is the point you know if you can make it happen or not.

The new-build part was probably the simplest bit, says Claire, but with the older bits of the house, they uncovered a chimney breast that

CONTACTS/ SUPPLIERS

ARCHITECT

Philip Wadge Architecture
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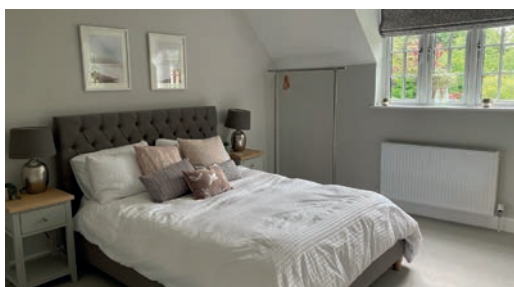
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was supporting a roof that they didn't even know was there. Layers of flooring were removed to find rotten floorboards that had to be replaced – these things are all extra costs.

"When budgeting we factored in the lowest estimate for everything, only to realise later that our personal tastes required us to pay a bit more – we didn't want the most basic kitchen, windows, flooring etc. So, you're kind of just feeling your way one step at a time and you are taking a bit of a leap of faith that things will turn out the way you envisaged.

"I do feel a bit lucky because our builder quoted for the work and then wasn't able to start for nearly a year through no fault of his own, but held his price even though the cost of materials had gone crazy. If we were looking to do the job now we'd probably be paying 20% to 25% more."

A mortgage has helped fund the renovation but Claire's confident the improvements have had a positive effect on the loan-to-value ratio: "We've not had an official valuation, but we know people in the industry and we look at other comparable houses, so we think the value is about £1.3 to 1.4 million now."

More importantly, Claire and Marco are pleased with the end result of the renovation. Says Claire: "You tend to be more critical of something when you've seen it built from scratch because you have a memory of perhaps the shortcomings in the way it was done, whereas anyone else coming into your house would just see the finished product and think it was lovely."

Claire's favourite part is the open-plan kitchen area as it's where they spend so much time with it having great access to the garden. "Our neighbours and friends love it too." She adds: "Our neighbours have been here 20-odd years, so they knew the old house prior to its

"The old conservatory has been replaced by a single-storey glazed garden room with a pyramidal roof lantern"

'rebirth' and they're very appreciative of what we've done."

The renovation has also reaped other results too: "It's given me a completely new perspective on my ability to do something like this," says Claire. "I recently helped to renovate another property and I really enjoyed doing that."

The couple are now thinking about buying somewhere as an investment in southern Italy – "We'd buy it as a shell and then bring it to a standard so we could it rent out as a holiday let," says Claire, "but that's just an embryonic idea at the moment." Alternatively, it could be something closer to home – they're certainly interested in property as an investment, buying something, doing work on it and then reselling it.

Looking back on the renovation, Claire says: "After owning new build properties, it was hugely intimidating to take on this project and I don't really know how we had the gumption to do it really. My husband has a very can-do attitude and he said, 'well, if other people can do it, I'm sure we can'."

They certainly did! ■

CLAIRE'S TIPS FOR SELF-BUILDERS

- "I'd urge people to take the chance and just go for it! At first, I was against the idea of a project having previously owned two new builds and having two young children and a career! But I got the bug, and the possibility to create something that was totally ours was irresistible."
- "Choose a builder who comes recommended locally. We had five quotes for the work but just two were recommendations, so we only really considered those seriously. Seeing the finished standard in someone else's home is a great endorsement and takes away the scary unknown dimension."
- "Always have a contingency pot – you never know what additional costs will arise. In our case it was rotten floorboards under layers of later materials."
- "Check and check again what's included in the quotes you get for work to be done. For example, bathroom fitting doesn't necessarily include the cost of tiling too – as I discovered too late!"



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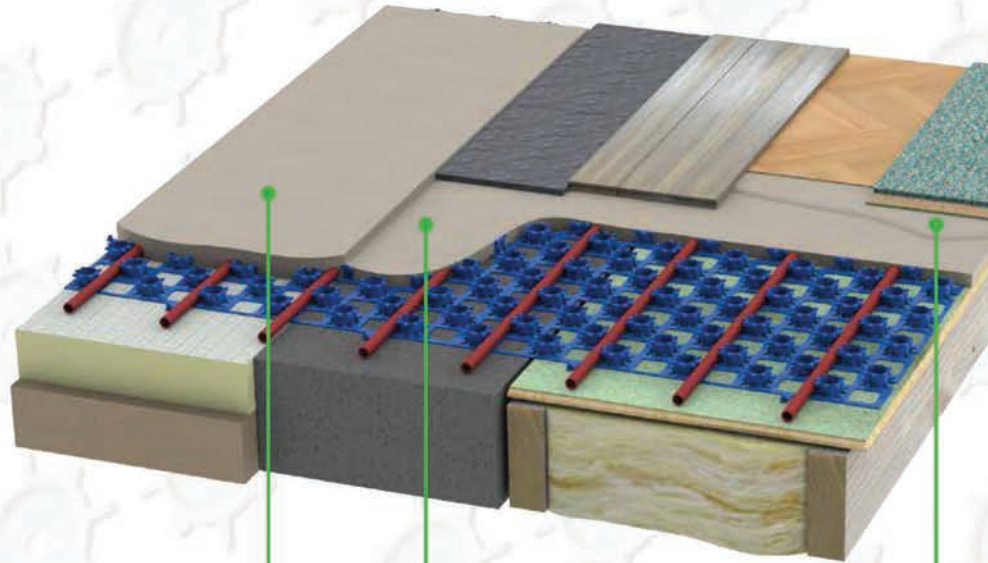
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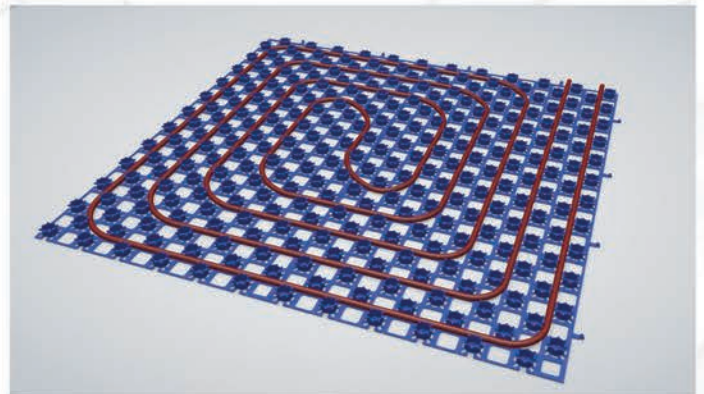
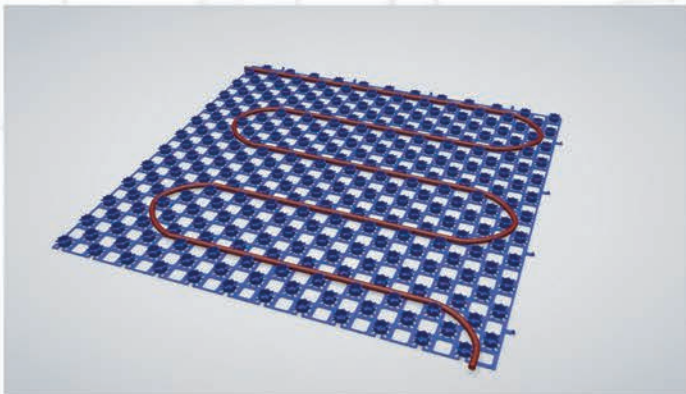
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A greener burn when you go off-grid

With solid fuel burning remaining in demand for home heating in rural and off-grid settings, Bruce Allen of HETAS and Woodsure offers guidance for more eco-friendly choices, while cautioning on the importance of maintenance

Solid fuel burning is undoubtedly high on the agenda when it comes to discussions on air pollution and indoor air quality, and rightly so. Poor burning practices have an impact on the air around us, and as we all breathe the same air, every individual's actions count, no matter how small.

The UK Government has made it clear that there are currently no plans to implement a ban on domestic burning in the near future. While this is comforting news for those reliant on solid fuel, it doesn't mean that stove owners need not take action.

While the ban is currently not on the cards for solid fuel burning, the government has been engaging in research on the topic heavily in the past year. The Environmental Improvement Plan 2023 clearly laid out legally binding actions, targets and commitments to drive down emissions and improve air quality in the home. They were as follows:

- An Annual Mean Concentration Target for PM2.5 levels in England to be 10 µg m⁻³ or below by 2040, with a new interim target of 12 µg/m³ by the end of January 2028.
- A Population Exposure Reduction Target for a reduction in PM2.5 population exposure of 35% compared to 2018 is to be achieved by 2040, with a new interim target to reduce by 22% by the end of January 2028.

The main way self-builders, homeowners and installers alike can help targets such as these be achieved, and improve air quality for us all is through their choice of



fuel and appliance. So what actions can homeowners take?

MAKE THE CLEANER CHOICE

Last year we launched our independent Cleaner Choice Scheme for UK biomass and solid fuel appliances. The Cleaner Choice appliance scheme offers a simple way to choose solid fuel, wood, or biomass appliances that are even cleaner to operate than current regulations require. In fact, appliances can only be approved if they beat current emissions requirements for Defra exemption by at least 50% ensuring environmentally responsible, and cleaner use.

Choosing appliances that are certified by the scheme will ensure that all legal requirements are met, but considerations surrounding the choice of fuel itself also need to be taken into account. Appliance users must be making choices to buy the right smokeless fuels and dry Ready to Burn wood fuel.

GET READY TO BURN

The Ready to Burn scheme ensures that it is easy for people to find the cleanest

fuels for use in their homes, and stay in compliance with Air Quality (Domestic Solid Fuels Standards) (England) Regulations 2020 that outlawed the sale of wet wood and house coal. Stove users can find the Ready to Burn mark for safer, cleaner domestic burning.

DON'T FORGET THE IMPORTANCE OF REGULAR STOVE MAINTENANCE

Maintenance is a key part of stove ownership that can help promote a greener lifestyle and an eco-friendly way of living. Keeping on top of annual services for solid fuel appliances is integral to their safe and efficient running.

We recommend that chimney sweeping is performed by an accredited company at least once a year, potentially more depending on the appliance and fuel being used. Choosing a sweep registered on the scheme means that owners can be confident that the sweep has obtained the necessary training to safely perform the task, and they will receive full proof and documentation following a successful sweep.

Our mission is to support cleaner and safer choices for the use of biomass and other solid fuels, appliances and associated technologies. I hope that with further education and knowledge sharing, we can preserve solid fuel burning for those who rely on it in rural and off-grid locations, without further harming the environment and the air we all breathe.

Bruce Allen is chief executive officer at HETAS and Woodsure

Maintenance is a key part of owning a stove – that can help promote a greener lifestyle and an eco-friendly way of living



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Pump up your indoor air quality

Clarissa Youden, associate director at Total Home Environment, provides a guide to ventilating an energy-efficient, airtight home, going beyond MVHR with heat pump ventilation technology

People spend 70% of their time at home, meaning they breathe over 10,000 litres of air per day. It's easy to assume that cracking open a window or two will keep the air inside a home pretty healthy. Sadly, that's not always the case and a lot of heat (that's cost a lot to produce), is lost in the process.

As homes are sealed and insulated more to keep the heat in and the cold out, the indoor air quality (IAQ) deteriorates. Unfortunately, lots of the items in a home leach out a cocktail of chemicals called VOCs (Volatile Organic Compounds) – things like carpets, curtains, sofas, laminates, cleaning detergents etc. Without controlled ventilation, most people will also live with high carbon dioxide (CO₂) levels indoors, without ever thinking about it.

The air humans breathe out is about 100 times more concentrated in CO₂ than in Earth's atmosphere and studies have suggested that over-exposure can reduce cognitive and decision-making performance by 50% or more at common indoor levels. High CO₂ levels during the night also result in restless sleep, headaches, a dry mouth and sensitive skin. But a solution is available.

HRV & MVHR

Heat Recovery Ventilation (HRV) is a system that facilitates a 'whole house' air change every two hours, without losing heat. It works by taking stale, polluted, moisture-laden air from kitchens and bathrooms via ductwork and ceiling terminals and replacing it into living and bedrooms with fresh, filtered air from outside. Up to 95% of the outgoing air's heat is recovered via a heat exchanger and transferred to the fresh incoming air. This heat recovery means less electricity, gas or oil is needed to heat your home. In summer, the heat exchanger within the unit can be bypassed, to enjoy cooler air overnight, where the humidity has been reduced. It has considerable benefits over other forms of ventilation

like extractor fans and trickle vents, as well as passive stack, positive input or mechanical extract ventilation.

THE NEXT STEP

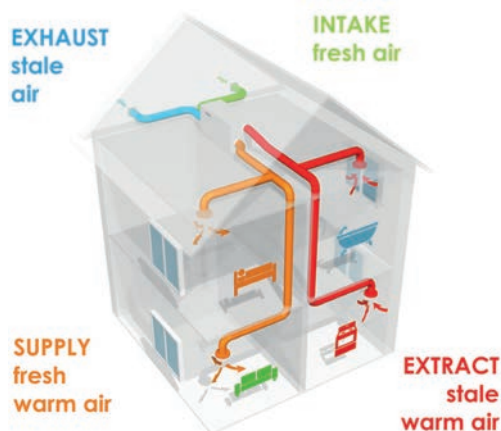
However, a further step in the sustainability journey can be taken with the Heat Pump Ventilation (HPV) approach, such as combining HRV with an integral heat pump. It requires no gas connection, expensive oil, pellet storage space, ground-drilling, radiators or underfloor heating. Heat is added to the fresh air supplied into habitable rooms of the house, via the 'veins' of the ventilation system – the ductwork, to provide highly energy efficient space heating. Multiple supply zones include

an individually controlled supply duct that utilises the cooler air before the heat pump gets involved, so the master bedroom could benefit from a lower temperature for example.

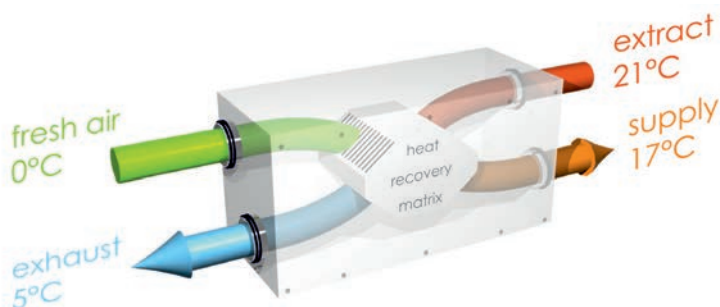
The beauty of this system is that in the summer months the heat pump can reverse automatically, to provide cooling and reduce humidity, so that a 4-5°C temperature reduction could be experienced. Not only is this economic, but it is healthy, as it doesn't recycle air like an air-conditioner.

EXTRA HEAT

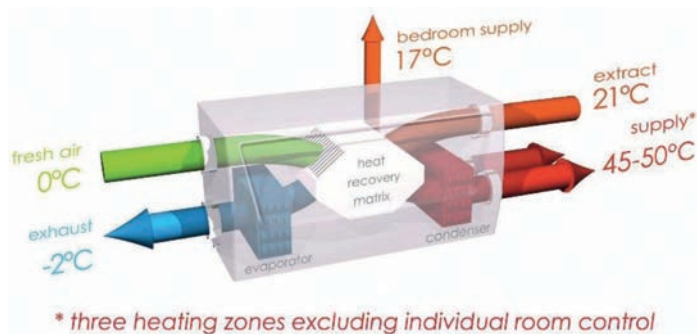
Additionally, if a room-by-room heat-loss appraisal indicates more heat is required in certain rooms than others,



How heat recovery ventilation works – here the unit is shown in a loft and is connected to ceiling terminals in each room by ducting, so you get a whole house air change every couple of hours without losing heat!



Typical temperatures achievable for fresh filtered air when recycling heat with HRV/MVHR



Typical temperatures achievable for fresh filtered air when recycling heat with heat pump ventilation.

but not enough to warrant the cost and hassle of a formal heating system, an HPV system can deliver. Supplementary heat can be added in innovative approaches so that there is more individual room temperature control with a quick response. This can be through the filtered air in each habitable room, where a standard ceiling terminal is replaced with a heated ceiling terminal that supplies extra, self-regulated heat. Alternatively, the HPV system can supervise a radiant heating panel, to bring a comfortable room temperature up to a 'cosy' one!

Despite this, it may still be handy to have heated towel radiators in

bathrooms and WCs and perhaps a small wood burning stove or focal point fire in a sitting room.

HOT WATER

Ventilation, space heating and cooling is all covered, without a large heat source, but how is hot water produced if there's no boiler? An HPW air-to-water heat pump forms part of the system – a 300L cylinder with an integrated heat pump – to provide all domestic hot water requirements energy efficiently. It can heat about 1,000L of water a day and has a secondary coil to provide heating for up to 20 m² of wet underfloor heating in a couple of

bathrooms if required. This heating and ventilating system is designed to be over 600% efficient in comparison to a gas boiler.

SUITABILITY

HPV (and HPW) systems are suited to homes that are to be built or retrofitted to Passivhaus/EnerPHit standards. However, the system may still be suitable if a home is well insulated and airtight with low U-values.

To ensure that heat pump ventilation is right for an occupier and their home, an installer should complete a room-by-room heat loss calculation. For this, floorplans, sections and elevations together with the U-values associated with the envelope of the home need to be supplied.

For townhouses and apartments a compact service unit could do everything that the HPV and HPW units do, but in a more compact form.

So while HRV/MVHR is great for ventilating a home without losing heat, is a 'formal' heating system required, with all the extra administration, installation time and trades on site, if a home is super-insulated and air-tight with a small overall heat loss? Or could heat pump ventilation be the whole house climate solution?

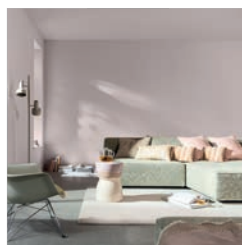


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Dulux unveils Sweet Embrace™



Dulux has announced its Colour of the Year for 2024, Sweet Embrace™.

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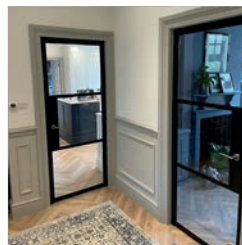
To complement Sweet Embrace™, Dulux is also launching three versatile colour palettes to provide self-builders with a wealth of colour inspiration when creating

beautiful spaces.

Please visit the Dulux website for more information.

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New dimension with interior steel doors



The owners of a large late-Victorian property in Surrey have completed the renovation and extension of their home by bringing style and light to the interiors through the installation of fully glazed steel-framed doors, supplied and installed by a member of the **Steel Window Association (SWA)**. The contract was carried out by Godstone-based Govette Windows, a long term SWA member. The client, Adrian Lees Jones, commented: "Four of the doors are installed in the old part of the house rather than

the new additions, and we've just ordered a fifth. The steel frames look completely different to timber or other alternatives, with slim sections, but have a really substantial feel, and they are very well made."

www.steel-window-association.co.uk

The future of green space heating

As the nation strives towards hitting net zero carbon emissions by 2050, the Heat Pump Association outlines the benefits and considerations for adopting heat pumps in our homes, and looks at current Government incentives

Heat pumps are becoming increasingly popular in UK homes, providing a sustainable, efficient and cost-effective heating solution. With the pressing mandate to achieve net-zero emissions by 2050 and the Government's ambitious target of installing 600,000 heat pumps annually by 2028, these systems are rapidly becoming the preferred choice for new-build heating.

To facilitate this transition, the government has introduced the Boiler Upgrade Scheme (BUS), offering grants of £5,000 for air source heat pumps and £6,000 for ground source heat pumps in England and Wales. The BUS is available for self-build homes provided they are primarily constructed by the first owner's labour or resources and that they have never been owned by a business or organisation.

For those considering a heat pump, several crucial factors require consideration. One is the installation cost, which typically encompasses unit installation, necessary groundwork, the hot water cylinder, ancillary components, and labour. It is advisable to solicit quotes from multiple installers and ensure they hold Microgeneration Certification Scheme (MCS) certification if wishing to benefit from the BUS grant. MCS is an independent accreditation body that verifies the installer is technically competent and that the heat pump they choose to install meets certain product standards.

Different systems require different considerations. Ground source heat pumps have a higher upfront cost due to the groundwork required for boreholes or slinky coils. Compared to air source heat pumps, these systems can achieve slightly higher efficiencies but also require more space. Larger heat pump systems will cost more so it is important that the heat loss of the home is minimised so that the optimum capacity



heat pump can be selected to avoid unnecessarily high capital costs and provide the most efficient heating system for the size and of the property.

Heat pumps operate at efficiencies of 300-400% and are a great option for homeowners wanting to create environmentally friendly homes. Recent studies also suggest heat pumps will increase the value of the property. Rather than burning fossil fuels like a typical gas, or oil boiler, heat pumps transfer low-grade heat from the outdoor air or ground, and step up the temperature via a refrigeration and compressor circuit to deliver warm water for your heating and hot water system. Properly sized and installed heat pumps are highly efficient and offer reduced energy consumption, improve air quality and diminish reliance on fossil fuels. For those who might otherwise have an oil or LPG boiler, a heat pump means no unsightly fuel tank, or arranging fuel deliveries in the depths of winter.

Another consideration that you as a self-builder will likely be contemplating is planning regulations. In many cases, the installation of a heat pump is considered as permitted development provided certain size and siting limitations and other conditions are met. If you live in a conservation area, then further requirements might apply. The regulations vary in each devolved nation, so it's best to check with your local planning department before proceeding. You should also inform your local district

network operator (DNO) before installing a heat pump. The DNO is the company responsible for bringing electricity from the network to your home and usually, your chosen installer will help you to apply.

A common misconception of heat pumps is that they are noisy. Ultimately, the perceived noise will depend on the heat pump running conditions, the acoustic environment, and the quality of the external unit. Ground and water source heat pumps are typically located inside your home in an insulated casing which limits any noise intrusion.

An air source heat pump outdoor unit typically has Sound Power levels between 55 - 75 dB(A) depending on the manufacturer and capacity. However, some external units operate as low as 40 decibels. For comparison, this is about the same as a quiet library! The running noise from an air source heat pump can be described as a low-level background 'hum'. All installers are required to carry out a noise assessment prior to installation of an air-source heat pump.

Once you have chosen your installer you may want to ask detailed practical questions about how long the installation will take, if you may benefit from changing electricity supplier to access a more favourable time of use tariff, and understand the heat pump servicing intervals. Another key question is whether the chosen installer can self-certify that the heat pump installation meets the Building Regulations. They will be able to do this if part of a competent person scheme.

Looking ahead to the future and considering the UK's legally binding net zero targets it is clear that taking steps to optimise the energy efficiency of your property will futureproof your investment, as well as reduce your carbon footprint.

Article by The Heat Pump Association

CASE STUDY

RETREATING TO THE CITY

For many self-builders, the big goal is moving from the city to the country, but a couple from the Scottish Highlands had the opposite aim in building their 'secret garden' home in Aberdeen

TEXT NIK HUNTER IMAGES JIM STEPHENSON



Russel Davies and Wendy Wilkie were living in a village in the Scottish Highlands when they made the decision to move into suburban Aberdeen. Their grown-up children had flown the nest and they were now looking for the facilities that a large town could provide.

However, their search proved that finding a plot of land in the city is more difficult than finding one in the country, and it took a while to find a site that was suitable. "The clients had approached us previously with a plot they had seen, but after some discussion we all agreed it wasn't for them and it took a while to find another site," remembers architect Andrew Brown of Brown & Brown Architects.

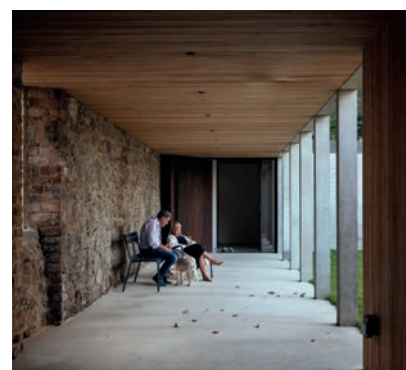
It took until 2018 for them to come back to Brown & Brown, but this time it was with a

"The further you progress through the house the more privacy you attain"

building and site that was well known to the architects. "I used to drive past the site most days when I lectured at the university, and I always thought it was a shame that nothing had been done with it," Andrew recalls.

Now, Brown & Brown had the chance to rectify this. The site, which consisted of a dilapidated





coach house set in its own grounds already had planning permission to be converted and extended. "The permission had been there for a long time, but there was a reason no-one had developed the site, as it would never remotely stack up to the spend and to what the final result was worth," explains Andrew. This was due in no small part to the actual condition of the coach house – which was now in a terrible state. All that was salvageable was the stone, and it would need to be entirely rebuilt in an appropriate way.

Brown & Brown started by looking at some retention plans, so they could figure out the best way forward and find a solution which was viable; one which would achieve the most from Russel and Wendy's budget. However, in the end, knocking the majority of the building down and starting again was the most sensible option.

Russel and Wendy's wish list was relatively straightforward, and their brief to Brown & Brown was to design a house that was predominantly for them, but was one that their family could come back to. Also having been used to living in a rural location, they wanted privacy from the busy road that ran down one side of the site.

"There were a couple of our designs that they had already seen, so we had a snapshot of what they liked. Beyond that, they wanted something that they wouldn't think of designing themselves," says Andrew.

The first consideration for Brown & Brown was what to keep and what to get rid of, and where to site the house on the plot to maximise the clients' privacy. "We wanted to create a barrier

between the road and the house, and to site the house further east into the plot so that it would get the evening light."

This set Brown & Brown on the path to situate the build centrally in the garden rather than along its edge. Their vision was to build a house that was 'in' a garden rather than a house next to a garden. And while for some architects, the proximity to the busy road would have been a difficult challenge, for Brown & Brown it was one that they were keen to take on, as Andrew explains: "It's good to have a site where as an architect you have something to respond to, and for us it prompted us to think about a 'secret garden house.' The further you progress through the house, the more privacy you get."

To create the couple's home, the majority of the coach house was carefully dismantled, and the masonry reused to create a boundary wall at street level which would mirror the other properties in the conservation area: all had stone boundary walls running the length of the gardens. "This boundary wall was something that this site didn't previously have, and it was something that the planners suggested we could do to make a big difference in terms of how they viewed the design within the conservation area."

While the planners had been very supportive of Brown & Brown's plans in general, Historic Environment Scotland initially objected, not to the specific design, but to a new building in a conservation area in itself. "Fortunately, the planner we were liaising with had written the conservation area statement, and we were able to show her that what we intended to build

HIGH POINT

"I'd say the high point of the project was when we returned a few months after completion," says Andrew. "We could see Russel and Wendy inhabiting the house and making it their own. It's always exciting to see this, as the house sometimes evolves in ways you didn't envisage as the architect, and it's a sign to us that we've provided a home which people can enjoy living in."



LOW POINT

"It sounds cheesy, but asides from the few delays due to the pandemic there wasn't really a low point on this particular project. Progress was quite good throughout, and everyone involved on the job was a pleasure to deal with."

was better than what was there. In her view, creating this stone boundary wall would enhance the area and allow that plot to fit in with the others in the area."

CANTILEVERED SOLUTION

To marry the old and new in this location, the cantilevered design is arranged over two storeys and is tucked into the north corner of the plot to provide privacy and to capture the southern sunlight. One entire wall of the coach house was retained to create a modern colonnade, lit by the original window apertures of the coach house. The stonework that came down from the rest of the coach house was reused to build the stone elevations, the garage and the boundary walls at the side. Softening the austerity of the new build is a mature copse of trees in the garden. "The trees certainly make it feel like it's not a house in the middle of a city. If the trees weren't here, I think it would be a completely different design – they were certainly a blessing." For Russel and Wendy, they bring a bit of 'country' as well as privacy: "Living in the countryside, you get accustomed to a level of privacy and tranquillity and this house gives us this in an urban setting."

Internally, the layout is designed to be adapted for independent living later in life if so required, but also to serve two separate purposes on each of the two levels. "This property is designed so that Russel and Wendy could easily live on the ground floor and the first floor would become only for guests. Presently the principal bedroom suite is upstairs,

Brown & Brown also swapped around the usual layout of dining, kitchen, and living areas to defined kitchen, dining and living spaces with the kitchen in the corner anchoring the space

but the downstairs study could potentially become a bedroom."

The bathrooms are all wetrooms, which futureproofs the house, but is equally pleasing on the aesthetic front. "Using the micro cement on the walls as well as the floor is also easier to keep clean and requires no maintenance as there's no joins or grout."

Upstairs the principal suite benefits from a luxurious corner glazed bathroom overlooking



Knocking the majority of the building down and starting again was the most sensible option

the treetops and the second and third bedrooms share a Jack & Jill bathroom. At present, the third bedroom is used permanently as a gym. The interior layout has focused more on having a smaller number of rooms while making them better. "There's only Russel and Wendy living here and they don't need six bedrooms. It's about using the space for what you enjoy every day. Hence the gym, but if their children need to come home, it can be a bedroom again."

Downstairs the layout is functional and eye-catching with Brown & Brown meeting the brief of "something the clients couldn't design themselves". Access to the house is intriguing. You enter through a door adjacent to the garage which leads into the colonnade to the front door. "You 'turn your back' on your car and the street, and you start to experience the courtyard and then the house," explains Andrew.

At the front door are the practical areas with boot and coat storage, a utility room, a renewable heating plant room, and a shower room. This leads into a double height atrium which connects to the garden to the south and the treescape to the north. These large glass walls frame the heart of the home. Around the corner are the deliberately dark elements of the kitchen which was fitted by DK&I and contrasts

dramatically with the light-filled atrium. Brown & Brown also switched the usual layout of dining, kitchen, and living areas to defined kitchen, dining and living spaces with the kitchen in the corner anchoring the space. From here you head to the three-sided, glass sitting room, which gives the feeling of having walked into the garden.

Andrew says: "It was very important for us to ensure that the layouts and the spatial qualities met Russel and Wendy's specific requirements, and that the home reflects them and how they want to live."

KEY FEATURES

The focal point of the ground floor is the stunning spiral staircase – which Brown & Brown had included in their sketches from the very start of the project. "The two-storey atrium has a level ceiling at the top and it needed something in the space that ensured it didn't feel like a box," says Andrew. The birch plywood staircase was designed by Brown & Brown in collaboration with local craftsmen; bespoke cabinet makers Angus+Mack. The timber treads were individually cut, and hand layered to create the parabolic curve, which took three weeks to assemble.

CONTACTS/ SUPPLIERS

ARCHITECT

Brown & Brown
brownandbrown.studio

ENGINEER

Design Engineering Workshop
designengineeringworkshop.co.uk

CONTRACTOR

Coldwells Building Company
coldwellsbuilding.com

JOINER

Angus+Mack
angusandmack.com

FLOORING

concreto.uk
woodpeckerflooring.co.uk

KITCHEN

DK&I
dkandi.co.uk

LARCH

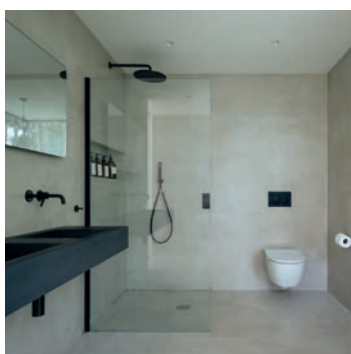
Russwood
russwood.co.uk

SANITARYWARE

kastconcretebasins.com
aquabella.com
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TAPWARE

Vado
vado.com



Having been used to living in a rural location, they wanted privacy from the busy road

The cabinet makers also made the custom-fumed, oak front door and the divider in the open plan kitchen/dining/living space. "It's an expansive space and Angus+Mack designed the divider with kitchen storage on one side, stereo storage on the other and a large planter along the top of it. I think it's about 7 metres long."

To ensure that the crisp clean lines of the open plan areas remain as such, Brown & Brown had a designers' trick up their sleeves. "There's a back kitchen behind the main kitchen that does all the heavy lifting; you can leave the toaster out and be messy! However, our clients are very disciplined, they've resisted the temptation to fill the spaces, yet it still feels lived in."

In keeping with the practice's approach to sustainability, Brown & Brown had to balance the expansive glazing with the energy systems they installed. "Every project we take on, we try to make as low energy as possible and the clients were open minded and interested in that." As a result, the house has been insulated to levels in excess of Building Regulations. A ground source heating system has been installed and a mechanical heat ventilation recovery system

recycles waste heat and brings fresh air in.

Perhaps surprisingly, the property is double glazed as opposed to triple glazed. However, as Andrew explains, "The house would have overheated. The amount of glass had to be balanced with the glazing to the north to allow the heat to escape. And we had to ensure that the heat pump and ventilation system worked in symbiosis with each other."

Working with contractors Coldwells Building Company and Angus+Mack, the build was completed in July 2022. "We started on site in February 2021 and there were a few delays due to the pandemic affecting supply chains, but our contractors were excellent, and we were only about two months later than we expected"

Russel and Wendy moved into Arbor House in July 2022, and it has surpassed their expectations. They sum it up as follows: "The architects have delivered a house which takes our breath away every day, and we realise this is a wonderful place to live in. The house allows us to enjoy the lifestyle we've long wanted, as including easy access to the city, and plenty of green space." ■

Okopod offers sustainable garden rooms

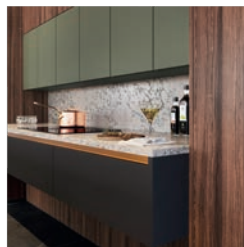


A fast-growing new timber building company is supplying clients across the country with sustainably-built garden rooms which employ **West Fraser's** SterlingOSB Zero as a primary material for fabricating the main structure and interior partitions. Okopod was established four years ago by James Home to manufacture stylish, high quality timber pods which can be used as home offices, additional semi-outdoor spaces or simply as a bolthole to sit and enjoy nature. SterlingOSB Zero is available in

a range of sizes and thicknesses as well as a T&G version ideal for flooring and decking applications. The high-performance panel product has also earned BBA approval and meets the requirements of NHBC Technical.

uk.westfraser.com

The height of luxury with Keller



Classic styles are still very much on trend, and **Keller's** all-new Marbling Moods kitchen is a clear sign that this admiration is unlikely to disappear soon. This kitchen maintains modern utility, form, and function alongside its retro design. The suspended cabinets are easy to access and emphasise spaciousness and accessibility, while the island, shielded in marble, features a sink for both classical style and pragmatic benefit. The Watford door blends well with the rest of the kitchen, thanks in particular to its handle-less design.

The colours in this sophisticated set take inspiration from polished 20th century style. Elegant walnut tones synchronise with fashionable olive-green matt lacquer for a nostalgically retro aura.

www.kellerkitchens.com

Prevent costly water damage by tanking

Since 2018 it has been a requirement under British Standards BS5385-Part 1 that all wet areas – domestic and commercial – should be protected with an adequate tanking membrane prior to tiling. A tanking system (waterproof coating) – such as **BAL** Waterproof 1C – should be installed onto backgrounds before tiling commences.

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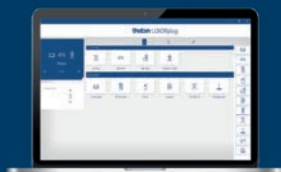
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Splashes of colour in the bathroom

Sophie Weston of Geberit explores some of the current interior styling trends – and how they can be recreated in your bathroom



People across the UK have adopted an 'improve not move' mindset this year as they make more savvy and sustainable choices when it comes to home improvements. The rise of Pinterest and home decor accounts on Instagram have inspired consumers to get more involved with the design of their homes and take bigger risks when it comes to the creative process.

TikTok videos are having a huge influence on inspiring DIY projects, especially among the nation's Gen Z and millennials. Seven in ten (71%) of Gen Z adults who will do DIY this year use social media as their go-to for DIY inspiration, along with 67% of millennials.

These factors have influenced our

interior themes in putting together Geberit's annual Inspirational Trend Guide. The bespoke annual report offers consumers insight, advice and inspiration bringing together real-world surveys, studies and research to deliver four key trends matched with products, styling tips and colour suggestions, all driven by market insights. Here are the four trends and more information on how to recreate them in your bathroom.

BOTANICAL RETREAT

The opening look, Botanical Retreat, speaks to the rise in 'maximalism,' biophilic colour choices and new rituals. It's all about plant-filled environments, lush greens and rich florals to create an

environment perfect for relaxation.

Styling tips for this trend include using an abundance of leafy houseplants; Calathea's Boston Fern, Spider Plant, Ivy, Cheeseplants within the bathroom. Include a tray or set up on the vanity with scented candles, bath salts, flower petals and botanical greens. Warm metallic accents are also important, think brushed brass and gold for accessories like mirrors, cosmetic trays, toilet roll holders and towel racks.

NORDIC CLEANSE

'Nordic Cleanse' is driven by the self-care movement, Ice Man Wim Hof and the healing benefits of frosty greens and icy blues. This look is therapeutic



summery, Reconnect offers self-builders ideas and inspiration for an earthy at-home retreat. The trend has a traditional artisan feel, with carefully crafted ornaments and eco alternatives being central to accessorising the look.

With environmental concerns front of mind, consumers are seeking to buy less, so good quality sustainable products that provide longevity are important here. Think beautiful amber glass or travertine refill bottles, woven jute, rattan or sisal for storage bags and baskets.

When it comes to embracing this trend, there are some essential styling tips to keep in mind. First and foremost, incorporating dried flowers, leaves, and grasses into your decor can effortlessly capture the essence of dry summer heat, infusing warmth and natural beauty into your living spaces. Also, consider using techniques like limewash effects, micro cement, or chalk paint to create a tactile backdrop for styling.

URBAN SANCTUARY

Finally, we have Urban Sanctuary, a look that embraces the Brutalist movement, mid-century modern style, and urbanisation. Bathrooms in this style are functional, and minimalist and celebrate the use of industrial materials, powder coated steel and concrete composites.



The colour palette is inspired by the urban environment; a blend of cool matt greys is combined with a deep and soft mint green, bringing a fresh contemporary feel to the bathroom. Grids and lines are important for surface patterns here, which can come through in accessories, towels or tiling.

Some of the tips to achieve this style include using functional accessories. Architecturally inspired fixtures and fittings such as thin metal framework that is slick, refined, and sculptural in form. Materials that can stand the test of time are important, such as concrete, speckled stone or terrazzo for a more contemporary look.

Sophie Weston is marketing manager at Geberit

and restorative, using subtle tonal combinations to create a calm and understated mood. The idea is to boost calm feelings and lower stress, making this trend the perfect bathroom environment to relax and unwind in after a long day.

To achieve the Nordic Cleanse look, incorporate rounded and curved forms into your decor. Layering textures, like placing towels over tiles, can look great. Plants are key to bringing the benefits of green spaces indoors, such as trailing ivy and eucalyptus.

RECONNECT

Reconnect is a reaction to slow living, harnessing natural materials such as clay and terracotta to inspire a warm Moroccan style bathroom. Breezy and

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