

selfbuilder + homemaker

JAN/FEB 2024

The feel of relaxation

Jorge Hernandez of Bathroom Brands Group explores texture in the bathroom

Practically perfect

Sometimes everything just goes according to plan, as Laura Shadwell discovered on a renovation in Hertfordshire

Ask the expert

The bottom line on navigating through structural flooring options, from EGGER's Scott Wolters

Sympathy for the details

How a couple achieved a sympathetic restoration of a Regency terrace in south London, putting attention to detail at the core

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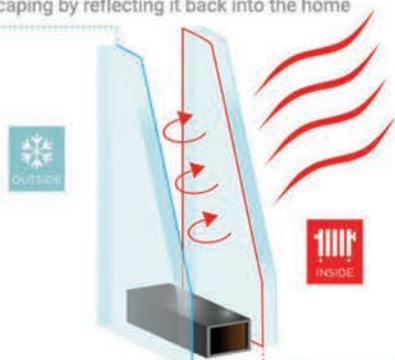
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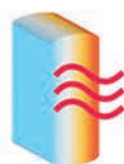
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PUBLISHER

Anthony Parker
aparker@netmagmedia.co.uk

MANAGING EDITOR

James Parker
jparker@netmagmedia.co.uk

ASSISTANT EDITOR

Tom Boddy
tboddy@netmagmedia.co.uk

EDITORIAL ASSISTANT

Laura Shadwell
lshadwell@netmagmedia.co.uk

STAFF WRITER

Roseanne Field

CONTRIBUTORS

Nik Hunter
Ewen MacDonald
Alexandra Pratt

STUDIO MANAGER

Mikey Pooley

PRODUCTION ASSISTANTS

Georgia Musson
Kimberley Musson

SENIOR ACCOUNT MANAGER

Sheehan Edmonds
sedmonds@netmagmedia.co.uk

ACCOUNT MANAGER

Nathan Hunt
nhunt@netmagmedia.co.uk

PR EXECUTIVE

Suzanne Easter
seaster@netmagmedia.co.uk

PUBLISHING ASSISTANT

Kim Neville
kneville@netmagmedia.co.uk

PUBLISHED BY

Cointronic House,
Station Road, Heathfield
East Sussex, TN21 8DF

ADVERTISING & ADMINISTRATION

01435 863500
info@netmagmedia.co.uk
www.sbhonline.co.uk

EDITORIAL FEATURES

jparker@netmagmedia.co.uk

PRESS RELEASES

editorial@netmagmedia.co.uk

REGISTRATION & CIRCULATION ENQUIRIES

info@netmagmedia.co.uk



FROM THE EDITOR...

We begin 2024 with some interesting innovation from the world of mainstream house-building, when it comes to achieving affordable low carbon homes. The Energy House 2.0 project has now been running for a year at Salford University, where in special test chambers simulating different climatic conditions, two prototype houses (by Barratt and Bellway) have had their fabric put through its paces.

Barratt Homes says that the just-announced first set of test data "indicate that the Future Homes Standard can be delivered at scale by 2025," but only "providing that the supply chain of key components can keep pace, and skills training is readily available." Although working with different parameters to most self-builds, it's a fascinating project showing how seriously the big firms are taking the task of building lower energy homes at scale.

The initial findings may not sound that impressive, until you compare them with the construction industry's terribly low baseline. The two homes had a "small" difference of "up to 8%" between their anticipated energy performance and their actual performance.

This makes them "among the most efficient that have been tested in research." That's because the difference between design and build can be up to a fairly staggering 140%!

JAMES PARKER

DATES FOR YOUR DIARY...

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**ON THE COVER...**

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Francois and Andrea found a shared joy in renovating and extending this elegant townhouse

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selfbuilder *Diaries*

After overcoming a rocky start, Kerri and her family are now making headway with a self-build in the Suffolk village they've lived in for years. She says the excitement and enthusiasm is building as their new home starts to take shape

We are the Morleys! I am Kerri, my husband is Tom, and we have two children aged five and four. We live in a quiet village in Suffolk where I have lived all my life. We love where we live, and have always said we want to stay in this area as it is near our family and friends, but having outgrown our current home we were on the lookout for our next adventure for several years (checking Rightmove daily). But we never found anything that made us want to make the move. Building our own home has always been a dream of ours, and something we had always talked about doing one day.

Cut to November 2021, and a plot of land went up for sale very close to our current home (around the corner in fact). There was a derelict house on the land, but the land already had planning permission. It was perfect. Exactly what we had been looking for!

The sale quickly went to sealed bids however, as it had a lot of interest, which worried us, but after a few anxious weeks we found out our offer had been accepted. There were many other complications when buying the land, from access queries to road ownership, boundary debates, and all the usual issues that can come up with a sale of property. But finally, in August 2022, the sale was completed and the land was ours.

The following 12 months was a time of many, many issues and a lot of stress. One of the first headaches was related to bats, and being told that we would not be allowed to knock down the existing property for a long period. We then found out the land had a final 'overage' on it which caused us some trouble in obtaining the self-build mortgage. But



after overcoming the many hurdles, the property was deemed unstable and a hazard to the general public! In November 2022 we were finally permitted to knock it down, and we didn't wait around. By December 2022 it was gone, leaving us with the perfect plot to build our home on.

By this time, we had completely changed the plans from what had been originally approved. We'd been liaising with an architect throughout planning and managed to finalise some new plans for a two storey, four bedroom, detached, chalet bungalow with an outbuilding to the front, and a gorgeous, south facing garden.

After submitting the plans, we were

asked to make a few changes, and reduce the footprint of the house slightly. After a few resulting tweaks, in September last year our plans were finally approved!

We already had our builders lined up and read to go, and a week later the work began – we broke ground.

So far, things have been going great. We decided to project manage the build ourselves to allow us to choose our own tradesman and source our own materials. My husband has mainly taken the lead in this role. I'm just patiently waiting for the time when I can start to make all the exciting decisions internally, particularly choosing our kitchen.

We didn't realise the true scale of the

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build until it began, and it certainly looks much bigger than it did on the architect's drawings, but watching things come to life over the last few months has been incredible! The children love walking over to the plot at weekends to see what has changed. We can now also see all the internal walls outlining the rooms – it's very exciting!

Looking ahead, we are hoping to be in

the position to begin the construction of the roof in early March, and get it water tight by April.

We are still in the early stages of the build, and we are under no illusion that we may run into delays throughout our project, but we are keeping everything crossed that things continue to go to plan. We're hoping that winter is kind to us and that we can be in the house for

Christmas 2024 – that's our aim anyway. We just can't wait to create something special for our family to enjoy for many years to come.

We'd love you to follow our journey on Instagram @4_downthelane. We have been documenting our journey so we have something to look back on, to remind us how far we've come, and how we made our dream a reality!

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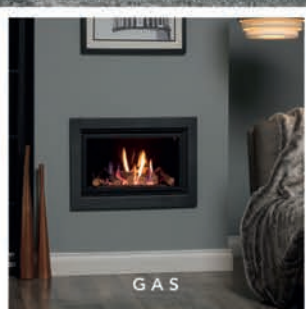
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Floored by choice?



To assist self-builders exploring the myriad structural timber flooring options out there, Scott Wolters of EGGER UK provides a brief overview of the choices and solutions



I'M LOOKING FOR A SUSTAINABLE SOLUTION, WHAT'S BEST?

Given the ongoing climate crisis, we're all keen to do our bit for the environment. For those building their own home, this can present the perfect opportunity to reduce your carbon footprint, by choosing building products and systems that offer a greener alternative. When looking for sustainable structural flooring, there is one clear winner – timber.

An inherently sustainable material, timber can be replenished without releasing unnecessary carbon, unlike other alternatives. Additionally, timber is ideal for recycling and reusing,

maintaining its strength and value over time. As a result, you will find many timber-based products often contain recycled wood and sawmill by-products, further enhancing its sustainability credentials.

If you're keen to go green, look out for manufacturers who source their timber from PEFC or FSC accredited forests local to their production plants, meaning that timber used in a flooring board is coming from a sustainable source.

WHAT DIFFERENT TYPES OF TIMBER STRUCTURAL FLOORING ARE AVAILABLE?

When it comes to timber-based structural

flooring boards, there are three main types. Firstly, there is uncoated, P5 chipboard, which is the base form of timber-based structural flooring systems.

Secondly, there are flooring boards with a peelable, film layer. This layer is designed to protect the board against moisture ingress and provides an additional barrier against moisture upon completion of the flooring. Once construction is complete, the top layer can be peeled off revealing the clean structural flooring system beneath, which will have remained free of plaster or paint stains from other works.

Finally, if you want to go a step further, consider a flooring solution that features a thermally bonded, hard-wearing and anti-slip surface on both sides of the board. This can again provide protection against moisture ingress during construction or even leaking pipes after the completion of works, as well as from damage or wear and tear from site traffic.

WHAT ARE THE APPLICATIONS OF EACH OF THESE PRODUCTS?

Each of the product types mentioned have their own 'ideal' applications. For example, uncoated P5 chipboard is great for both internal refurbishments (whether that be a loft extension or interior renovation) and new builds, as well as modular and timber frame constructions.

While chipboard with a peelable top layer should be considered for projects where the flooring boards are installed early on, such as in timber frame houses, where the flooring can often be left exposed to the elements.

Finally, a chipboard with a thermally bonded layer is perfect for those looking for a structural flooring system that can be left installed for long periods – up to 60 days. This is especially useful for self-build projects, where it can be easy to run over schedule or face delays. These types of flooring boards can prove invaluable in this scenario, providing peace of mind that the flooring won't suffer damage due to prolonged exposure to the elements.

This solution is best used in areas where there is an increased risk of exposure to moisture, such as in loft or basement conversions, and again in open or exposed environments. Underfloor heating systems can also be used with these types of floorboards, further extended their versatility.

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professional, it's good to know that timber structural floorboards are easy to fit. Generally speaking, there are two installation methods: either using a bespoke joint and joist adhesive, often supplied by the manufacturer, or through a combination of adhesive and mechanical fixings.

Look for flooring boards that are manufactured with a tongue and groove profile, ensuring a tight and reliable joint. When installing and laying the boards, each row should be staggered by roughly half a board's width, with the optimum configuration being the same as a brick bond laying pattern. All short end joints should fall on the centre of a joist, including on the perimeter edges.

Don't be afraid to be generous with adhesive – as a guide, bonding a board to the joist and the surrounding boards using the tongue and groove joint should require one bottle of 'joint and joist' adhesive per six boards. You should be able to see the adhesive foaming out of the joint once the boards are tightly butted together, as this works to enhance



the protection of the joint.

Once your space has been filled with boards, all mechanical fixings, perimeter edges, cut edges and stairwells should

be sealed using the joint and joist adhesive to ensure a watertight seal. To finish, the excess adhesive should be removed using a scraper.

WHAT TYPE OF PRODUCT AND SYSTEM GUARANTEES ARE AVAILABLE?

Many structural flooring systems will come with a guarantee, each for differing lengths of time, providing you with peace of mind that the product is long-lasting and reliable, as well as the reassurance that any issues further down the line will be rectified.

There are a variety of structural timber flooring boards available to self-builders, each bringing its own value and benefits. As a result, it's important to consider the environment in which the flooring is being installed, as well as any other objectives you have for your new home, such as sustainability. If in doubt, you can speak to a manufacturer for further guidance and support.

Scott Wolters is building products sales director at EGGER UK



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BATHING IN TEXTURE

Jorge Hernandez of Bathroom Brands Group explores how applying texture can make it transformative in modern bathroom design. From fluted accents to intricate tiles, discover how tactile and visual approaches can elevate your space

Whether you want your bathroom to be a spa-like, relaxing sanctuary or a joyful space with vibrant hues and high-impact features, texture is big at the moment. As we explore what texture means and how it invites you into a space and adds a layer of depth and dimension, we are considering new ways to add texture to an overall bathroom design.

As we continue to move away from bathrooms being purely functional spaces, we are looking for more ways in which to personalise bathrooms and make them a place we enjoy. While many people focus on colour schemes and material finishes, they are now also experimenting more with texture that can both elevate a design and create an emotional reaction. From fluted drawer fronts to knurled tap handles and natural

stone finishes, there's something to suit every space.

Fluting in particular has been making waves in the interior design world of late, and the trend is here to stay. Mostly seen through the use of vertical shallow grooves, which not only add dimension when layered across a surface but also create an interesting look when light and shadows bounce off the material's edges, it adds a modern yet timeless touch to any bathroom design. The delicate, curved edges add warmth and softness to contemporary schemes, adding interest to a space.

Texture extends beyond the realm of touch, to include visual textures. Unlike physical texture and tactile characteristics of objects, visual texture refers to the illusion of texture within an image or material, and how shadow and light interact with the different elements within the design. An intricately detailed marble tile with decorative patterns and layered colours serves as a perfect example of visual texture – it captures your attention and introduces dimension to an otherwise flat surface.

USER INTERACTION

One of our main priorities when developing new products this year has been user interaction, especially when it comes to texture. We've been looking at ways in which we can add this element into bathroom designs – from tap handles to drawer fronts – as there is huge value in having texture on these 'touchpoints.' As designers we want to know that people aren't just enjoying products because of the functional value that they add, but also because of the design techniques and striking features that cause an emotional response.



When we see a heavily textured surface, we often have an instinctive urge to touch it and explore it, making texture an extremely versatile tool for designers looking to optimise and enhance the user experience.

VISUAL LAYERING

When it comes to designing a bathroom, I would start by considering the composition of the space and the style you want to achieve. For a cohesive look, you want to choose materials and colours that blend well and work together in harmony to create an overall aesthetic.

The best way to incorporate texture into any space is by subtly framing





certain areas that you want to stand out. Anything that has strong texture makes a statement and immediately draws in your focus, so it is important to layer both visual and physical textures to ensure that a space doesn't feel too busy.

One way to incorporate texture into a bathroom is by using it as a foundational element in the design, or the key element seen throughout the space in the form of a wall covering. For example, fluted tiles or a textured micro cement finish on the walls, floor and ceiling pairs well with clean lines and minimalist fixtures. An alternative to this is to choose a simple finish for the walls and flooring and make a statement with

textured brassware and visually textured wall finishes.

There is also a close connection between texture and shape. Soft silhouettes and fluid, curved features capture your attention and when paired with natural materials and muted, earthy tones, can help create a sense of calm and a soothing atmosphere. For a seamless design, these elements need to work together harmoniously to evoke the right emotion. We are seeing more and more Japanese influences in bathroom design like the wabi-sabi concept – a design aesthetic that finds beauty and serenity in objects and designs that don't have a conventional symmetry – perfectly

embodies this philosophy with the use of asymmetric shapes and layers of three-dimensional texture in design.

The bathroom is a functional space that is being used every day, so it's important to choose a style that is calming and makes you happy. As we move away from the utilitarian, uninspiring aesthetic and celebrate the beauty of texture, we start to add personality and character. However you choose to add texture to the bathroom, be bold with your choices to create a bespoke space that's unique to you.

Jorge Hernandez is product and design manager at Bathroom Brands Group

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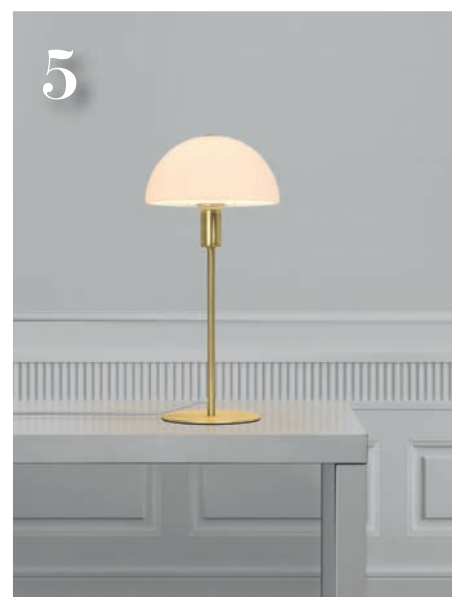


2

INTERIOR INSPIRATION: Home Offices

Whether it's a dedicated room or an office nook for occasional home working, striking your balance between comfort and professionalism in a home office can be challenging. Here, we've gathered an elegant selection of items to help you achieve an inspiring yet functional office space.

1. The Benia Iron & Reclaimed Wood Desk by Nkuku combines sustainable reclaimed wood with classic black ironwork to create a sublime rustic look. The reclaimed wood top brings texture and character, with distinctive marks from its previous use. An eye-catching criss-cross detail adds further interest and gives the desk a stylish utilitarian feel. Priced at £995. www.nkuku.com



2. Tan vintage faux leather, height-adjustable and curved armrests, the **Franklin** by **Cult Furniture** is a triple threat when it comes to office chairs. Featuring a curved backrest, padded seat and a black metal base on wheels – this is a classic style with a soft industrial touch. Working from home has never felt better! Priced at £169.
www.cultfurniture.com

3. Create the perfect home office space with the **Armstrong Industrial Desk** by **Funky Chunky Furniture Co.** With a handy drawer to store away the essentials, and a choice of two shapes in its black metal legs. Whether it's home-working, homework or reading a book, the desk will help you create the space all the family needs. Priced at £615.
www.funky-chunky-furniture.co.uk

4. With its cubed design, the **Ribbon Tall Bookcase** from **Vox** is the ideal way to display your books in style. Finished in an oak effect with slim black legs, this shelving unit is great for bringing

a contemporary touch to your interior. Not only a stylish storage solution, but a practical one too! Priced at £855.
www.cuckooland.com

5. The stylish **Ellen Brass & Opal Dome Table Lamp** by **Lime Lace** is a sleek design with a cool luxe look. With a nod to a minimalist and timeless Scandinavian design, Ellen fits beautifully into most interior schemes. The sleek opal glass shade adds an elegant contrast to the slim frame and contributes visual volume and a wide field of light. Priced at £71.45.
www.limelace.co.uk

6. **Shelved's Modular Desk Unit** creates the perfect compact desk with surrounding shelving perfect for storing books and files. The desk's compact footprint, sleek styling, and ample shelf space make it easy to blend into any decor, and is finished in white with white paneling. Priced from £888.80.
www.shelved.co.uk

A look at safety issues

Victoria Brocklesby of Origin discusses what features to look for in your doors and windows in order to achieve the critical security you need for your home

When undertaking a self-build project, it can be tempting to overlook home security in favour of more exciting aspects of the build, such as the aesthetics. But the security of your property is essential. Your home is where you rest, entertain, and maybe even raise children, so it's important it feels as safe as possible.

Here are five things to look for when selecting windows and doors for your project in order to ensure your home remains secure.

MATERIALS

When it comes to security, it's worth investing in strong, durable materials. Aluminium is one of the strongest options available, despite its lightweight structure. Plus, it's more resistant to warping than timber alternatives and its properties make it far more impenetrable than PVCu, which can rapidly deteriorate and become weaker over time.

LOCKS

Nearly a third of intruders break in by forcing the lock, so systems should lock at as many points as possible for the highest level of security. The minimum you should consider is three-point locking, but five or eight-point systems offer more robust security.

The cylinder/locking barrel is often the weakest area for doors. So, it's worth investing in a system that offers tamper-proof barrels. High-quality doors, such as those we make, will have tamper-proof options, including a 'three-star' barrel or a coded magnetic key, which will protect against snapping, picking, drilling, and bumping to provide ultimate security.

Origin doors can be specified with an eight-point locking system and three-star diamond cylinder for the highest level of protection and the assurance your home and family will remain safe.



For windows, the best systems will offer either the Yale Encloser lock or the Nemesis multi-point lock, which are both proven to boost security.

HINGES

Hinges can be a significant weak point on a door as they are typically positioned outside the home, making them vulnerable to burglars looking to break in.

The best hinges will be made from strong, corrosion-resistant metal, such as zinc, and will be fitted using special bolts and screws which make it more difficult for frames to be levered off the hinges.

FRONT DOORS

The majority of break-ins happen via the front door. Aluminium front doors with a secure locking system will offer a great standard, but this can be further enhanced by adding a security

bar restrictor to limit how wide the door can be opened when visitors ring the bell.

Spyholes also allow homeowners to identify a visitor without having to open the door, and can be incorporated into door knockers delivering a sleek and subtle finish.

CERTIFICATIONS

Trying to establish which doors and windows offer the best security features can be overwhelming, but third-party accreditations offer a quick way to identify true quality. The minimum accreditation to look for is PAS:24. For extra assurance, look for doors and windows that have achieved the police approved Secured by Design accreditation. This uses rigorous, independent testing methods to ensure doors and windows can resist attack.

Victoria Brocklesby is COO at Origin

The best hinges will be made from strong, corrosion-resistant metal, such as zinc

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CASE STUDY

BOOKENDED SUSTAINABLY

A home sitting at the end of a famous Edinburgh terrace has undergone a contemporary sustainable transformation, seamlessly blending with the locality while exuding its own distinct allure

TEXT NIK HUNTER IMAGES WILL SCOTT PHOTOGRAPHY



HIGH POINT

"Achieving practical completion – and the high-end result."

LOW POINT

"The utter failure of any of the utility companies to provide a competent level of service!"

This self-build project sits on a well-known Edinburgh street, Circus Lane, that's much photographed and documented not only in Scotland, but throughout the world. Therefore, attempting a renovation here was not a proposition to be taken lightly. However,

in September 2021, architect Dugald Skene of DS Architecture was approached by a client who was keen to push the envelope, and had an interesting property for Dugald to look at.

Already an experienced developer, Dugald's client had bought what was a one-bedroom flat



and a garage in the street, with a wish to extend for his personal use. His brief was precise: "I wanted an attractive dwelling with three double bedrooms and a rear garden area, with the new build element providing a high-quality 'bookend' for the street."

The existing property essentially faced in one direction, onto Circus Lane, and was accessed by an external staircase on the rear elevation. The entrance was at the back of the property and was completely independent of the three garages below it.

Although the client owned the garage on the ground floor with the flat above, it was in the middle of the row which didn't provide Dugald with a lot of scope for design, as he recalls: "Every iteration we came up with didn't justify the cost, and the layout didn't flow particularly well either as the upper floor had to be split into

two. We weren't gaining much more than what was already there."

Fortunately, the client was able to swap the middle garage for the one remaining end garage which, if planning permission was granted, would allow for the demolition of two garages and the construction of a new two-storey building which would provide the aforementioned bookend to the lane.

Now that the space the architects had to work with was established – 150 square metres – Dugald knew that realistically he could achieve the three bedrooms that the client had asked for. "I approach projects with quite a pragmatic, problem-solving route to design. Here, I had very clear parameters to work within, especially physical ones, I knew I had to optimise what I could but there was no possibility of extending the site or the gable."



He started with the stairs: "When you're dealing with multiple levels and tight spaces the first thing to work on is the stairs. Everything else is going to revolve around that." There was also a small space to grow into at the rear of the existing property which had been a garden and was where the main access was located.

As the ground floor garages had been created out of former coach houses, the garages were taller than average. "In terms of the new design we were working in a small, tight footprint, and to get the stairs to work we couldn't make the first floor as high as the original flat was."

It's fair to say that the existing building informed a lot of what Dugald could and couldn't do and it was also important that the new addition on the end was quite subservient. Adjacent to another Edinburgh landmark – St Vincent's Chapel, nothing would ever be built beyond the end of the lane. "It was a unique challenge for a mews property as they're normally linear in design," explains Dugald.

Adding "They face one direction and onto a lane. This property faces in two directions. And the big challenge was how do we soften the corner; how do we make two key elevations work together as one?"

His solution was to make the corner as transparent and as light as possible. By installing floor to ceiling glazing on both aspects a view has been created through the building to the neighbouring street and the chapel.

"My idea came from a pair of mews properties that I designed for a gap site in a nearby street. It was an exercise in trying to modernise the vernacular a little bit. What does a modern Edinburgh mews look like?" The other issues facing Dugald were privacy and the proximity to other buildings and this previous project had informed him what could be achieved at Circus Lane.

However, while Dugald's plans were sympathetic to the locality, there was still a worry that the design would be too bold for



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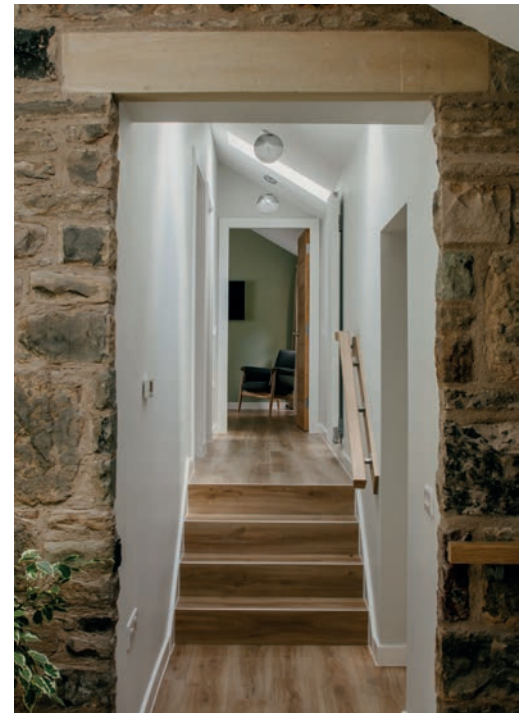
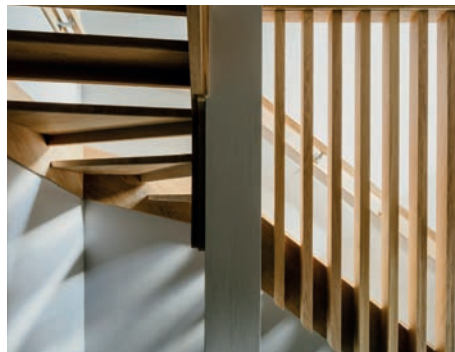
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the locality, but clear communication goes a long way. "Engagement with the residents was huge," he says, "and to be fair to the client, he really led the way. He contacted the resident's committee and he discussed with them what we were planning to do. He showed them everything before we submitted it." Surprisingly for such a prominent site, the plans were passed without a single objection.

"Early engagement with the resident's committee was positive and helpful," adds Dugald's client. "The builders (Carlsson Properties) were also key as they communicated well with the residents and kept the site secure and tidy. The builders, Dugald, and Graham & Sibbald (the project managers) all communicated well throughout the build."

As a result, work started on site in August 2022 and was completed by May 2023. The three-bedroom apartment follows the layout of the original flat in so far as there was a corridor that ran down the north side to link the rooms, but now there's a change of level, with one

bedroom on the left, a bathroom in the middle and a bedroom at the end. The new extension wraps around the back of the building which also allowed for a utility space. It is now a three-bedroom house with two bathrooms, a study, utility room and open plan living/kitchen/dining area, and an outdoor courtyard.

To maximise the interior floor space, the entrance has been relocated to the back corner of the building. The new extension incorporates a bedroom with a generous Jack & Jill ensuite which occupies most of the space of the right-hand garage below the original structure. "There were design challenges about how we approached this room externally. We didn't want the exterior wall to look like a garage door that had been blocked up, but everyone locally knew it was a garage, and we didn't want to hide that." They aimed to dress it up and make it coherent with the rest of the building.

As Dugald was able to claim a bit more of the outdoor space in the design, there was also room for a garden room/study. As this could

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have had an impact in terms of shadowing the neighbouring properties at the rear, Dugald had to illustrate to planning that there wouldn't be a hugely adverse effect by building a two-storey building up to the boundary. "I did several calculations and shadow diagrams to ensure this wasn't the case," he says. By building out further, he also created a small, enclosed courtyard, which is "very private and unusual to have in the centre of the city."

The client had also decided that from the outset of the project that the gas boiler would be removed, and the gas supply disconnected. The electricity supply was upgraded to three-phase to allow for the addition of car charging points in the future, and an air source heat pump was installed to power the heating. "In terms of reducing the carbon footprint, the choice of a Mitsubishi Electric air source heat pump made sense, combined with new glazing throughout," says the project's client.

Dugald continues: "While air source heat pumps are great in new builds, it's slightly more complex when you're retrofitting them to an existing building." However, when the original part of the building was being renovated there was an opportunity to strip back and insulate. "This improved on what was there before and ensures that the air source heat pump can be as effective as possible by keeping the fabric of the building as efficient as possible."

Underfloor heating was fitted on the ground floor, beneath a polished concrete screed floor. Dugald comments: "Underfloor made sense from an economical point of view, and with no radiators there's more space too."

Upstairs there are still radiators and timber floors. However, with the solar gain in the living space, heating isn't so much of an issue. "When you ascend the stairs you enter directly into the living/dining/kitchen space; there's no hallway or door to the staircase. It's a compact space but because it's open plan, and facing south it feels bright and spacious."

The client sourced the kitchen from The KBB (Kitchen Bedroom Bathroom Company) in Musselburgh, and recalls: "I visited a number of suppliers, but wanted one that was able to design and install the kitchen and utility room using their own skilled tradesmen. KBB were straightforward to work with, and worked well with our chosen builder."

As Dugald had shared computer generated images of the interiors, the client had a good idea of how the project would come together, however the finished result exceeded his expectations: "The kitchen/lounge space, once completed looked even more stunning than had been envisaged, as the outlook to the rear of Royal Circus is unobstructed and the light quality is great."

In this open plan area, Dugald was extremely

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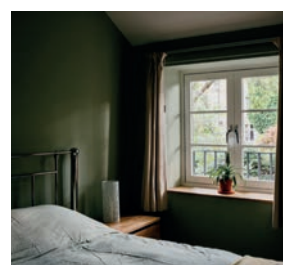
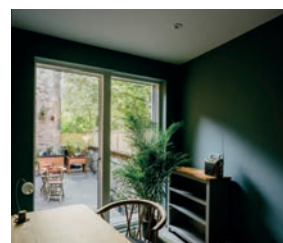
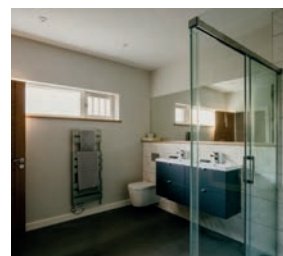
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conscious of how the design worked with the natural light, solar gain and privacy. To ensure they all complemented each other, he added two opening windows, and timber louvres have been fitted to provide shade, and privacy and add external interest. The Accoya timber railings also mirror the metal ones on the Juliet balconies (made by J Jordan Steel) and create a visual relationship with the garage door infill. "The client's priority was for minimal maintenance and being at ground level the timber will be subjected to weather, car pollution and sunlight, and the material we used is dense and stable."

To find a match for the external stone Dugald and his client visited Dunedin Stone at Macmerry. "We had samples of the original stone and although the new stone is a bit lighter just now, it will weather." However, it wasn't only a case of matching the stone, it was also important to try and replicate the sizes and courses too. "The original mews is a real mix of sizes and with the odd red or black stone thrown in. Also, because there are few apertures on the ground floor to provide privacy, we wanted to

ensure that the front elevation wasn't bland." He continues: "We added a little bit of relief with the stonework to mirror the elevation above and break up the wall visually by recessing the stone by 50 mm. The stonemasons weren't that enthused with that idea, but I think it works!"

And the client agrees: "I would not say I was surprised at the end product having seen Dugald's portfolio, but I was pleased with his imagination and creativity and the speed with which he communicated. I think I'm most pleased with the overall quality of the finished building and the oak staircase! Dugald has created a spectacular building with its own style, and which is not a pastiche.

Dugald continues: "I was asked to make what's there better – a nice full stop to the lane. My client was clear about what he wanted, and it was a very effective working relationship between us but not at all restrictive." He sums up his pleasure in completing this scheme: "Coming up with a design and it then being executed exactly as you designed it doesn't always happen; it was a fantastic project to work on." ■



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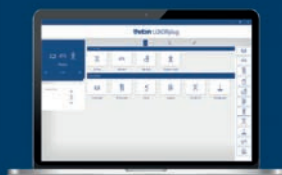
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CASE STUDY

PRACTICALLY PERFECT

Young newlyweds Euan and Fiona Coleman thought they had found their forever home, but once children arrived they reassessed their wish list of practicalities, which led them to embark on a renovation in Hertfordshire

TEXT LAURA SHADWELL IMAGES JWB ARCHITECTS





Soon after tying the knot, Euan and Fiona Coleman eagerly settled into what they thought would be their forever home in Essex. However, after the arrival of their first child and with a second on the way, it quickly became apparent that their house and its location couldn't cope with the needs of the expanding Coleman clan. Fiona elaborates further: "Once we had children, our requirements changed. And the lack of nearby amenities meant we had to drive everywhere, it wasn't convenient."

TICKING THE BOXES

The couple's wish list was fairly straightforward: a detached home with an open-plan layout, which would ideally be located in a community-oriented setting. Expanding their property search to Hertfordshire paid off; it didn't take long for them to discover an "almost perfect" property in Bengoe, a suburb of Hertford, which ticked most of their boxes. However, she says that buying it was a decision that was somewhat done on the hoof, "it wasn't something we planned, we just fell in love with the house and everything around it, and decided to take the plunge!"

Nestled along a small and quiet residential road, the property is surrounded by an

abundance of greenery, with gardens that also offered a good amount of privacy. From a practical standpoint, the property is within walking distance of the town, with supermarkets and train station – making the location ideal for Euan's London commute.

After securing the 1980s-built property, they engaged JW Bespoke Architecture and Interior Design to transform their vision into a reality via a full renovation. The house had five bedrooms, but the upstairs bedrooms were on the small side, despite the overall footprint being "actually quite large," says Fiona. They wanted to create six better sized bedrooms, "which we probably don't need, but we have large families, so it's three guest rooms."

Although new to home renovations, the couple were undeterred by the work involved. Luckily, the property had already had some planning permission in place; the previous owners had extended the ground floor but didn't get around to expanding the upstairs. "We saw the potential of what the upstairs could be," Fiona adds, which was a big factor that pushed them to put in an offer.

In an effort to speed up the process, the architect surveyed the house and drafted plans before the couple's purchase was completed. This approach, while somewhat unconventional,

HIGH POINT

"Seeing the floor to ceiling glazing installed in the downstairs open plan space; the majestic impact was immediate."



With the original utility room gone, the main downstairs space could be fully opened up, creating a stunning open plan kitchen/living room

LOW POINT

"The delay with the corner pocket doors in the open plan space meant we couldn't move into the house when planned as it wasn't water tight; they were eventually installed the day before we had to move out of our old house!"

posed a calculated risk for both the couple and the architect. Normally, it's advisable to live in the space for a while to understand their preferences when it comes to renovating. However in this case, they chose to take the plunge once more, and specify what they wanted up front.

As well as converting the five small double bedrooms to make three large doubles and three smaller double bedrooms, the architect redesigned the layout of the ground floor. Fiona recalls: "One of the things which I disliked in the original layout was how the utility room sat within the main living area, creating an awkward, unusable L-shaped space." The utility room was shifted to a smaller extension to the side of the house. With the original utility room gone, the main downstairs space could be fully opened up, creating a stunning open plan kitchen/living room. In addition, a spacious playroom was created off of the open plan living area, as well as a formal sitting room and office.

Initially, the planned work raised concerns nearby, primarily about the single storey extension being too close to a neighbouring boundary, and worries about the size of the upper extension, which could potentially overlook other gardens. However, after a planning officer came out to site and deemed

the design was OK, planning passed with no issues. When asked whether the couple were on good terms with their neighbours since moving in, Fiona laughs: "Yes we have enjoyed a few boozy evenings – everyone has been really friendly and welcoming."

A JUGGLING ACT

As the couple were still living in Essex while the building work was going on, they opted to have their architect visit the site regularly and keep them updated with the renovation. Euan and Fiona were able to pop to Hertford from time to time, and their builder – Bournes Projects – were great at keeping them informed about the progress. "In a way, there were three groups project managing our renovation – it worked really well," explains Fiona.

Having never taken on a renovation project before, the couple had no real experience of the work involved and the pitfalls that could arise on a makeover on this scale. Work started in April of 2022 and finished just shy of a year later, in March 2023. Fiona recalls that the only real stress came as a result of the big sliding pocket doors they wanted. These are a key feature in one corner of the open plan living space, but were delayed by a month, and without them being insitu, the property wasn't watertight.



Fiona pays tribute to the buyers of their former house for their patience: "We had already pushed back the moving date twice, but moving into a house that wasn't watertight with a one and three year old wasn't an option!" Fiona exclaims. Fortunately, the doors were installed the day before they completed on their previous home in Essex.

AN INSPIRED INTERIOR

With the build finally finished, they could turn their attention to the pleasurable task of designing the interiors. Euan and Fiona have created the 'wow' factor in each of the rooms by sticking to a simple palette throughout that complements the vistas onto the garden. "We aimed to create a traditional house with a contemporary feel. We have created green accents around the house, for example with some of the soft furnishings." Feature wood panelling lines the hall walls and flows into the downstairs cloakroom, complementing the

cabinetry throughout the kitchen, utility room, formal lounge and playroom. An independent kitchen design firm (Olive and Barr) – supplied and fitted the understatedly chic units.

The floor to ceiling glazing – supplied by EuroWindows UK & Maxlight – in the open plan kitchen/living room floods the space with light, successfully bringing the outside in. The choice of anthracite for the frames has a striking impact on the overall room decor – creating a strong frame for views onto the garden, and injecting a contemporary feel that the couple were striving for.

Upstairs, the master suite has large, sliding picture windows from Origin, again in anthracite, that open onto a Juliet balcony. Detailed wood panelling behind the bed creates a traditional focal point in the room, and little touches with lighting, furniture and art accentuate the window frames. The children's bedrooms have been individually designed with bright accents of colour and attractive murals.

FIONA'S TOP RENOVATION TIPS

- ★ "The relationship with your builder is key; you spend a lot of time in each other's company, so you need to feel comfortable with them."
- ★ "Renovations always take longer than you expect them to; plan for unforeseen delays!"
- ★ "Don't overthink decisions, go with your gut."



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Feature wood panelling lines the hall walls and flows into the downstairs cloakroom, complementing the cabinetry throughout the kitchen, utility room, formal lounge and playroom

The bathrooms have been carefully considered, again mimicking the colour scheme in the rest of the property. The result is clean, clutter-free lines, but with an element of warmth so as not to appear too sterile.

Gas central heating feeds the radiators upstairs and (wet) underfloor heating runs throughout the majority of the downstairs, with the exception of the office and formal lounge.

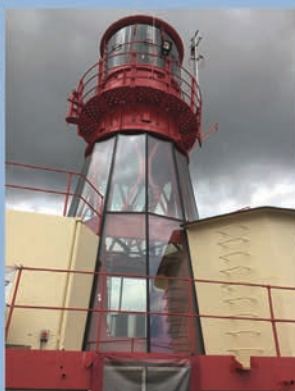
Outside is still a work in progress, however one little gem in the garden is a 'secret door' that leads onto Hartham Common. Fiona explains that this is probably her favourite external feature: "The biggest bonus is this little

wooden door, which gives access to tennis and football courts, a river, and a big playground. It feels like an extension of the garden and will be perfect for our children as they get older."

Compared to a lot of self-builders who take on a project of this considerable scope, Euan and Fiona's journey to creating their perfect home has been a case of relatively smooth sailing. She cites a friend who went through a similar renovation at the same time, but hated every minute. Fiona concludes: "Everything that could have gone wrong with her build did, and so I recognise we were very fortunate, as ours could have been a very different story." ■



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Don't kerb your enthusiasm for brick

Jason Hughes of Imperial Bricks explains how variations in brick colour, texture, size, and laying pattern all have a direct affect on the kerb appeal of your project, which impacts its future value



Choosing the right cladding material is one of the most important decisions any self-builder will make – whether that's constructing a house from the ground up, renovating an existing property or adding an extension to expand living space. Long-lasting, durable, and versatile for both period or contemporary builds, brick is one of the most popular options for developers and home renovators. Brick is perfect for the UK's climate, resisting both high and low temperatures without damage. And it works well with other methods of construction too, such as thin 'slips' applied using external cladding systems. But the main draw for most is the kerb appeal that using brick adds to the finished project.

As the facade is one of the first things anyone will see of your build, it's

important to research what's available – and appropriate. Bricks are usually around 6% of the total build cost (and many self-builders will spend more on their kitchen), but it's worth allowing a little extra budget to get the highest quality finish, which will undoubtedly increase a property's value.

LOCAL COLOUR

Start with the basics and research the right type and colour for the geographical area, period, and style of building. Brick colours, sizes and styles vary enormously across the UK, but your architect, contractor or local builders' merchant should be able to advise on local requirements, or you can ask a specialist brick supplier directly for recommendations and samples. Matching existing and/or local

architecture is particularly important for home renovations or extensions, or new builds in conservation areas. It's something many planning departments have strong views on!

On some occasions, conservation officers may request reclaimed bricks, but these are expensive and can be difficult to source in the quantities needed. The quality too can be unreliable – with damage and wastage more likely in storage or transport. There are now new handmade bricks on the market that can replicate the look of reclaims.

Handmade bricks will always trump machine-made bricks in terms of character and charm. Each one is unique, with natural texture and imperfections that help even new builds blend in with surrounding buildings.



SIZE & SHADE

The diversity in brick colours around the UK is down to the local clay. Even within a small area, the shades can change significantly. For example, London is known for its Yellow Stock bricks, but red bricks are also common in parts of the capital. Buff shades are popular in Cambridge, while in the north, rustic reds and oranges – and even blues – are traditionally found.

Pollution (centuries of smog in London!), weathering, and the different firing and finishing techniques have a significant effect on the colouring of a brick. Blackened and authentically coal-spotted bricks can be added to a pallet of bricks to create an authentic 'reclaimed' look once they are laid. Replicating traditional clamp firing, which was used in Yorkshire and the north, creates mixed hues of brown, red, purple and yellow, where the bricks are stacked on top of each other.

Before 1965 all bricks were 'imperial' sized, so if you're repairing or extending a period property the bricks should be matched appropriately. But note that imperial sizes differ depending on the region, with bricks in the north traditionally larger (3 inches high) than those in the south (2 5/8ths inches high). If you're working on a new build,

Handmade bricks will always trump machine-made bricks in terms of character and charm

then a range of handmade bricks are also available in metric sizes, to fit with modern lintels and blocks. These can be aged and weathered (even 'tumbled' to soften the edges for a reclaimed appearance) to suit.

Brick slips for cladding are a further option, to 'reskin' a property, covering up inappropriate brickwork or unsightly rendering, or match existing brickwork on neighbouring buildings. Slip systems can also be used with timber framing for fast-track construction.

Finally, the pattern in which your bricks are laid (the 'brick bond') can have a major impact. The Flemish bond, for example uses alternative stretchers

and headers (the long and short sides of the brick) in each layer (or 'course'), while the English bond features a row of stretchers and then a row of headers. And brick 'banding' can introduce another brick colour to wrap or band around a property, adding visual interest.

ETHICAL TRADING & ACCREDITATIONS

Whatever bricks you choose, and whether they've been specified by an architect, recommended by a builder or builders' merchant, or you're sourcing directly from the manufacturer, it's worth checking their ethical trading policies, as well as quality accreditations. And also check that the bricks you specify are the ones you actually get!

All new bricks used in the UK should be UKCA/CE marked, and tested to meet EU and UK standards for freeze-thaw, water absorption, compressive strength, soluble salt content, and tolerance. Ideally manufacturers and/or suppliers should be Sedex-audited – the benchmark for ethical trading used by companies like Dyson and M&S – and their factories accredited to ISO 14001 (for Environmental Management) and ISO 9001 (for Quality Management).

Jason Hughes is managing director of Imperial Bricks

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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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The warm feeling of cost-efficiency

Dennis Milligan of the BFCMA explores the efficiency benefits of wood-burning stoves, how they work with heat pumps, and installation essentials



Heat pumps work best when they are running at a constant temperature. A stove can complement a heat pump in cold weather by quickly boosting heat. Wood burning stoves can also provide comfortable heating for the whole house in autumn, and spring when it is not cold enough to turn on the central heating.

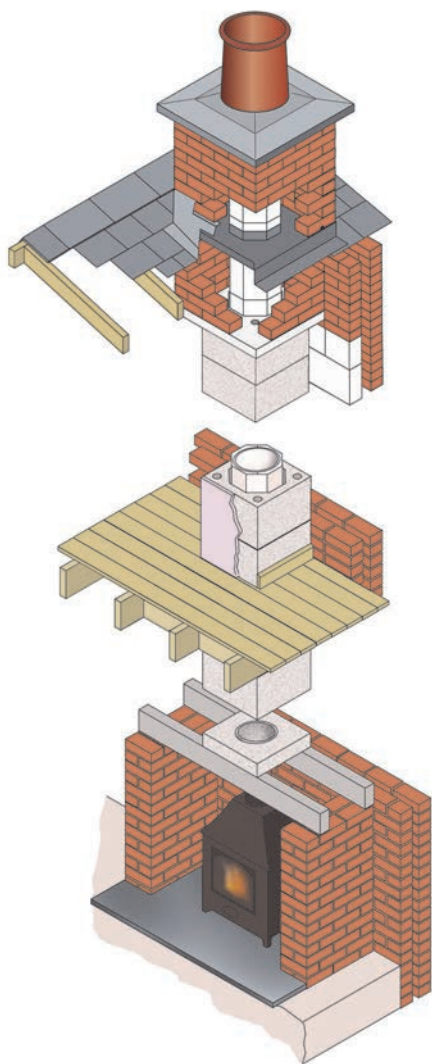
Heat security has also become an important consideration in severe winters. As a stove is independent of the

electricity supply, it can keep the house warm when the electricity is off. Stoves are regarded as secondary heating and as such are not included in the government's heating strategy.

Top on the list of reasons why people choose a wood burning stove is the visible warmth and comfort it creates. For many the stove is the focus of the room, with chairs and sofas arranged around it. Stove owners often talk about just how much they love the feel of

the heat that comes from their stove. Another important reason, however, is financial. With the cost-of-living crisis and high energy prices being experienced, homeowners are also choosing wood burning as a cheaper alternative.

When choosing to have a wood burning stove, it is important to remember that a stove requires a chimney/flue to transport the 'products of combustion' to the atmosphere. At the design stage, the route of the chimney/



clear example is a brick chimney with a stainless steel liner).

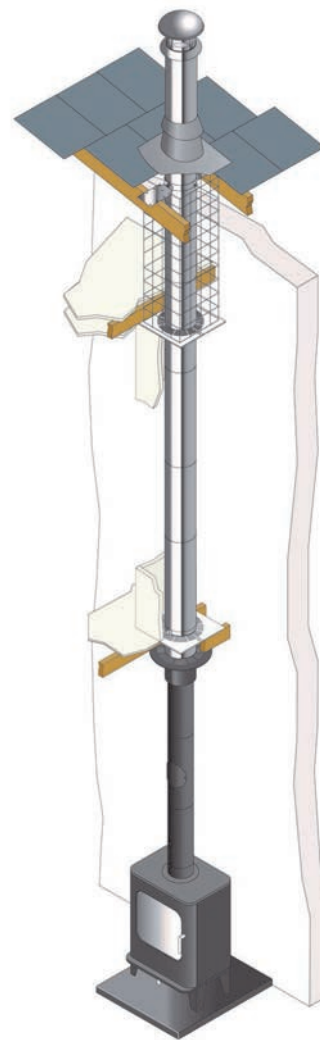
Keeping the temperature of the flue gases above the dew point is really important to allow the flue gases to freely escape to the atmosphere. Clay, concrete and pumice liners require insulation to be prepared and added onsite. Stainless steel system flues are supplied with effective insulation. Double wall pumice chimney systems have an air gap between the walls of the inner and outer blocks. This air gap combined with the natural insulating properties of pumice provides effective insulation along the length of the chimney.

Installing a stove and flue is not a DIY job. It should only be undertaken by a competent person, and the work must be approved by Building Control. England and Wales operate competent schemes which allow the registered installer to self-certify the installation. HETAS and OFTEC are two of the main companies running such schemes. Scotland and N. Ireland need to have competent person schemes and Building Control must inspect the installation.

Once installed, it is important to regularly sweep the flue. The frequency of sweeping depends on the usage of the appliance. However, as a minimum the chimney should be swept at the start of the heating season. A build up in soot can impede the flow of the flue gases and increase the risk of a chimney fire. Remember that it is necessary to fit a carbon monoxide detector in the room where the stove is installed.

Burning dry wood not only gives more heat into the room, it also reduces soot deposits in the flue and the amount of particle emissions (PM). The Ready to Burn logo guarantees that the wood is dry enough to burn.

Concerns have been raised about particulate emissions (PM) from wood burning. The Environment Act sets out the emission limits that wood burning stoves must comply with. Many stoves already produce lower particulate levels than the Defra limits and that is where the independently verified scheme, Clear Skies, can be of assistance when purchasing a stove. The Clear Skies scheme identifies stoves that not only meet the emission limits required by Defra but also stoves that produce fewer emissions.



flue within the dwelling might not appear as one of the key considerations, but it is important to plan how the chimney/flue will be incorporated in the house at this stage. The flue gases require a clear path to the top of the flue. A straight chimney/flue is always the best solution but where this is not possible, due to the construction of the dwelling, the number of bends should be kept to a minimum and not exceed more than four. The angle of the bends should be no greater than 45° from the vertical.

(The words chimney and flue are often used interchangeably. It is the inner tube that transports the flue gases. This is the flue. The chimney is the combined inner tube and the outer casing. A

Wood burning is a low carbon form of heating. Logs are generally the off cuts that come from pruning trees. Woodlands need to be managed to stay healthy and part of that management is pruning. Interestingly, burning wood in a modern stove can produce less carbon than if it were left to decay on the woodland floor.

The BFCMA is the UK's only Trade Association representing the chimney and flue industry and works closely with the Government, public bodies and other organisations to further the interest of the industry.

Dennis Milligan is president of the BFCMA

Interestingly, burning wood in a modern stove can produce less carbon than if it were left to decay on the woodland floor.

The artistry of modern wood burning stoves



Dik Geurts Oval Legs freestanding wood stove

DRU UK general manager Niall Deiraniya heralds their latest generation of designer stoves.

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In 2008, Dik Geurts introduced the Aruba, a spectacular elliptical stove that featured prominently in the BBC drama series *Hustle*. This has now been superseded by the Oval, which is available in freestanding, fixed and suspended versions with greatly improved performance and efficiency. Its sales this year have surpassed all expectations.

Odin, the circular equivalent of Oval, has proved equally popular, especially the Plateau model, which sits on a beautifully crafted log storage plinth for added visual appeal and practicality. Both Odin and Oval are available in single-sided or tunnel versions. This means you can locate them in a central position in the living space and enjoy them from anywhere in the room.

Two and three-sided designer stoves are always in great demand, with panoramic fire views that bathe the home in a warm glow. These come in the shapes of the Dik Geurts Bora Corner and Vidar Triple. Both models offer multiple variations in size and configuration with ample log storage opportunities.

The past couple of years has seen a huge upsurge in sales of designer wood burning models, as consumers become more adventurous in their choice of home heating appliances. Contemporary wood stoves, with their ergonomic designs, high efficiency and low emissions, will remain a mainstay of home heating for many years to come. We expect even more exciting developments in these products in the future.

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Dik Geurts Bora Corner Cubes 2-sided wood stove



Dik Geurts Odin Plateau suspended wood stove

ROARING INTO RETIREMENT

Embarking on the journey of self-building their retirement home along the south-west's Jurassic Coast turned into a decade-long adventure for two septuagenarians. The result surpassed everything they could have hoped for

TEXT EWEN MACDONALD IMAGES PHIL COFFEY





Former city dweller Alan Gore and his wife, Alison Taylor, embarked on a journey back to their coastal roots when they discovered an enchanting property during a stroll through a Saturday market in Bridport, Dorset. The home, displayed in an estate agent's window, boasted an expansive plot of land adorned with some breathtaking views that immediately captured the couple's hearts. "My wife said 'we've got to have that,'" Alan exclaims.

'That' turned out to be home to a dilapidated three-bedroom house albeit sitting on an impressive plot of almost two acres looking across Charmouth Beach in West Dorset and Lyme Regis. The plot came with stunning views over the UNESCO Jurassic Coast World Heritage Site and designated Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty with a picturesque coast path only a few strides away.

The 96-mile-long Jurassic coast runs across Devon and Dorset and is named for the fossils found in the cliffs which date back to the Jurassic period (around 200 million years ago).

The spot of land they had chosen spans 185 million years of geological history. Coastal erosion – which has caused the moving of the coast path in from the sea front – has exposed rock formations as old as the dinosaurs. So it is no surprise that the geology of the plot was more than challenging. The cliff erosion is well-

known to locals, with the coastal path having to be moved back.

Before they made the purchase, the couple's first step was to order a ground survey which reassured them that the land wouldn't be falling into the sea for another millennium. Alan explains: "It was a very long process that lasted about nine years." Despite this lengthy process, Alan claims that it has been worth it!

The home sits between two fields from the sea edge. The original design was for an 'upside-down' house where the open plan living space was on the top floor and the bedrooms below, but the siting of the land in an Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty created limitations on the height of the house. Instead, the house now has been built as a single storey.

The new home follows the contours of the hillside and houses three bedrooms, two bathrooms, a study and a living/kitchen/dining area where the couple spend much of their time.

"We always liked the idea of building our own home because I think the homes you buy don't ever tick all the boxes about what you want in your living space," says Alan. "It's always been a fantasy."

One prominent challenge of the local geology was that it made the land very unstable for traditional building methods. The solution was to design the house as a 'floating house.' There are

FAVOURITE FEATURE

"The whole house. The kitchen and the cooking aren't tucked away in one part of the house."



BIGGEST CHALLENGE

"Kevin McCloud is absolutely right: building your own home is always going to cost twice as much."

around 30 six-metre piles sunk into the ground of green sand and clay, with a concrete slab laid on top.

KITCHEN

Alan is a serious foodie, and has substituted the lack of restaurants in this very rural area with a stunning kitchen set around a restaurant-grade stove. "I love my food and I love cooking, and the kitchen will allow me to become a much better cook," he explains. "I wanted a kitchen that enables me to do that but I didn't want to be relegated to a room in the house away from where people were."

He adds that many of the homes they have lived in were traditional terrace styles, with small kitchens tucked away and isolated. Their new home has a cooking eating and living space which is the hub of the home, happily sacrificing space in the bedrooms.

The couple, who are now in their seventies, also needed to think about their future needs. "We had to think about access and a lot of the house has been designed with that in mind." However, the only brief they gave to the architects was to maximise the living area.

"The architects have been brilliant," says Alan. "I can't overstate how happy we are with what they came up with." The "incredibly clever design" maximises all the spaces within the building, while carefully positioned skylights flood the interior with natural light. "It is just a very impressive layout."

Set on a sloping plot, the project (which they have named Modern Barn) is a cluster of three pitched volumes on a foundation plinth made from local Blue Lias stone. It is wrapped in larch timber and arranged along the site to minimise its profile and maximise space.

The spaces are linked together in a linear formation, connected via a central, stepped north/south axial corridor, producing views outward to the landscape at key moments.

The naturally greying timber cladding wraps over the roof, concealing the gutters for a sharp outline, while the larch batons create a similarly crisp and linear facade. The marine-grade glass and metal railings protect it from the elements of living by the coast.

Architect Phil Coffey explains some of the detailed elements of the build. The final design sits within the landscape to not detract from the surroundings. "Excavation was minimal to not disrupt the earth below." The house was also designed for minimum visual impact from the town and coast and to ensure the new home retained the scale and character of the existing building.

The clever arrangement of the louvres on both ends of the home creates a textured facade. Inside, the overlapping of the timber cladding with the primary glazed walls establishes a playful threshold that generates captivating shadows.

"The focus of the home is on sea, sunlight and warmth of materiality: this is a rich internal landscape in which to live," explains Phil.

The interior of the house is linked to the exterior by the use of similar materials. The house's oak panelling holds the warmth of the coastal light and provides a gallery wall space for the owners' vibrant print collection.

The interior is also a work of art, says Alan. The high ceilings and walls combine light oak veneer, plaster and neutral paint colours.

The modern high-spec kitchen looks like a showpiece that has never been used – but this couldn't be further from the truth, says Alan,



CONTACTS/ SUPPLIERS

ARCHITECTS

Coffey Architects
coffeyarchitects.com

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who proudly explains that his latest kitchen acquisition is a water bath. The bath and all the clutter of Alan's cooking gadgets and utensils are stored away in the nearby utility room. This helps solve one of the major issues of combining a kitchen with open-plan living.

He was very particular about the design of the kitchen, and admits he spent a lot of time searching for designs on the internet. In the end, the handles in the kitchen units were bought on Etsy and imported from Ukraine, just before the Russian invasion.

All the rooms are built up into the eaves leaving huge walls that allow Alan to show off his love of art with lots of colourful prints. Some of these modern contemporary British artworks include prints by Terry Frost and Victor Passmore. The couple also introduced colour through furniture and accessories – including scarlet sofas and teal dining chairs that match the colour of the units in the kitchen feature.

They also invested in a rug by Sonia Winner who makes brightly coloured, abstract textiles.

More items include the unexpected addition of Allison's collection of elephant sculptures.

The porcelain floor tiles that run throughout the house continue outside onto the terracing giving an indoor-outdoor living style, which is so much a part of living by the coast. Furthering the idea of indoor/outdoor living, large terraces line the east and south of the house.

Alan has also taken advantage of the possibilities of outdoor cooking. Outside the kitchen, a wide, walled-in area is dedicated to Alan's passion – hosting a good barbecue. A window has been strategically placed to serve guests with ease. Facing the sea, a similar stone terrace spans the width of the house, perfect for watching the sunset after the feast.

These terraces sit within a curated garden, inspired by a masterplan created by Harris Bugg Studio. Alan is also particularly proud of his kitchen garden – when the rabbits haven't emptied it of produces, it's put to good use in his dishes.

To complete the look, the garden is home to



The spaces are linked together in a linear formation, connected via a central stepped north/south axial corridor

a yurt where Alan and Allison, or their family guests, can sleep under the stars. The structure is made up of bamboo slats, mirroring the larch batons that make up the linear composition of the main house. Internally, upholstery in reds and yellows brings warmth to this great outbuilding. This is home glamping at its best.

But of all the possible favourite features, Alan's is a surprising one, which was born from a contentious planning issue. A set of more than three stairs in a home requires a bannister. The eventual feature chosen was a 'pig's ear' handrail almost hidden into the wall and barely mars the clean lines. "Health and safety requires that any more than three stairs require a handrail," says Alan. "But these are almost invisible."

"We often just sit on the terrace looking

out onto the view. You can see Lyme Regis on the next headland along, and see right the way round in the other direction. It's also unbelievably green.

"On a sunny day, the colours are Mediterranean. The sea sparkles and there's a little stream that runs beyond the terrace that the ducks come and take a bath in."

Modern Barn was designed with passive design principles to embrace the sun where it is useful, and protect from it when not. It incorporates south-facing glazing for warmth with solar shading in the summer, with solar panels sited away from the house producing up to a third of their electricity. Alan sums up: "It's exquisite. We made a few mistakes; most of which we have resolved. But overall, I feel like I have died and gone to heaven!" ■

Stelrad launches first 'green steel' radiator



Stelrad Radiators is going green with another UK powerhouse Tata Steel to exclusively offer the first 90% green steel radiator range. Tata Steel is supplying UK made 90% Carbon Lite steel to Stelrad within the radiator market, so that Stelrad customers can choose a Green Compact radiator range that contributes directly to a reduction in atmospheric CO₂ today and accelerates decarbonisation in the future. The steel comes with a certificate from DNV – Det Norske Veritas to prove the steel has 90% lower embodied CO₂ emissions. The process for producing the steel is called Optemis Carbon Lite. The new Stelrad Green Series comprises of 60 horizontal models from our Green Compact range.

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IronmongeryDirect's new electrical range



IronmongeryDirect has expanded its huge product range with the introduction of over 1,100 electrical products. Many leading brands in sockets and switches, lighting, heating, and ventilation are now available, to complement the company's existing portfolio and meet even more of its customers' needs. The new electrical range includes decorative sockets and switches from brands such as Knightsbridge and Eurolite, in a wide range of finishes that can be beautifully coordinated with IronmongeryDirect's wide selection of door and cabinet hardware. This includes the Knightsbridge 13A 2 Gang Screwless Flat Plate DP Switched Socket in matt black with black insert – a top-rated product for those looking for a great looking socket, at a good price.

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Hörmann UK have announced an exciting addition to their market leading range of sectional garage doors, the ART 42 Vitraplan which offers an eye-catching blend of transparency and reflection. Featuring surface-mounted, flush-fitting grey glazing panels the door provides the perfect design choice for exclusive, modern residential architecture. The ART 42 Vitraplan has been developed for the domestic market from a similar Hörmann industrial door which is widely used in high-end car showrooms. It is an elegant aluminium frame sectional door with concealed frame profiles in RAL 9005 Jet black. The large surface-mounted, flush-fitting grey glazing panels provide maximum light creating a modern, showroom style garage door combined with all of the market leading features and benefits of a traditional Hörmann sectional door. The glazing panels feature the unique Hörmann DURATEC scratch-resistant finish. DURATEC is an innovative surface coating, which protects the glazing panes from scratches and damage caused by cleaning and environmental conditions over the long-term, helping to guarantee a permanently flawless appearance. Available in widths up to 4,000 mm, ART42 Vitraplan doors are supplied with a Hörmann SupraMatic operator which provides quick and easy access via a hand-held transmitter or mobile phone using the Hörmann BiSecur app or Smart Home system.

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Futureproofing timber frame homes

Matthew Evans of Kingspan Insulation discusses how to ensure your timber frame home is well insulated so you don't lose energy efficiency benefits



Timber frame constructions are growing in popularity in the UK and now account for around 25% of new house builds. This route can offer several advantages over brick-and-mortar approaches, including faster and more reliable construction programmes, so it's unsurprising that many self-builders across the country are now considering it for their projects. When adopting a timber frame approach, it is important to carefully consider the choice of insulation as this can have a notable impact on the

floor space within your finished home, and how energy efficient it is.

FABRIC FIRST

There are lots of costs to balance when building your own home. However, the insulation is one aspect that you need to get right from the start as retrofitting insulation later can be both expensive and disruptive. By ensuring your home is well insulated, you can avoid these headaches while helping to ensure your home effectively retains

heat – consequently minimising energy bills. A well-insulated building fabric is also essential if you are considering using a heat pump, as this technology performs most effectively at lower flow temperatures than a conventional gas boiler system.

The key measure of how well insulated the walls, roof and floor of your home are is their U-value. This value represents how well the complete construction resists heat loss. In the case of a timber frame wall, for example, this will factor

	Phenolic insulation between studs	Mineral wool insulation between studs
Construction	<ul style="list-style-type: none">- 20 mm cement render- 100 mm blockwork (1.13 W/mK lambda value)- 50 mm cavity- Foil faced breather membrane- 18 mm OSB- 120 mm phenolic insulation (0.019 W/mK) between 140 mm timber studs- 52.5 mm phenolic (0.019 W/mK) insulated plasterboard- 3 mm skim	<ul style="list-style-type: none">- 20 mm cement render- 100 mm blockwork (1.13 W/mK)- 50 mm cavity- Foil faced breather membrane- 18 mm OSB- 195 mm mineral wool (0.035 WmK) between 195 mm timber studs- 52.5 mm phenolic (0.019 W/mK) insulated plasterboard- 3 mm skim
Total depth	383.8 mm	438.8 mm

in elements such as the outer cladding, insulation, studwork and inner drylining. The lower the U-value, the more effective the construction should be at preventing heat loss.

A good starting point when setting a U-value for your project is the Notional Dwelling specification. This is an example building performance ‘recipe’ used as part of the checks to ensure a home is compliant with the energy performance targets in the Building Regulations and Standards. An energy assessor applies the targets to a theoretical building of the same dimensions as your home. From this, the software generates the performance targets that the actual building is compared against. While these U-values aren’t compulsory, they provide a useful guide.

As the Building Regulations and Standards are devolved, there are different U-values set for the external walls of new homes depending on where it is located. These are 0.18 W/m²K in England, 0.15 W/m²K in Scotland and 0.13 W/m²K in Wales. Keep in mind that

the lower the U-value of the walls is, the more well-insulated your home should be. As such, there’s no reason why a self-builder in England couldn’t look to meet the more ambitious values set by Scotland or Wales.

CHOOSING INSULATION

When insulating a timber frame wall, the obvious place for the insulation to be fitted is within the cavity between the studs. To comply with the updated Building Regulations and Standards, this cavity may need to be fully filled with insulation. However, doing this alone may not be enough to ensure your home is properly insulated. This is because the wooden studs are much more conductive to heat than the insulation. If not addressed, they will act as a path for heat to escape – essentially bypassing the insulation. To prevent this, a further layer of insulation could either be fitted across the external face of the studs (sheathing them) or on the internal face (typically insulated plasterboard).

Alongside deciding which of these

approaches to take, it is also important to consider the thermal conductivity (lambda value) of the insulation measure being installed. The lower this value is, the more effective the insulation is at preventing heat loss. In many cases, this may mean that a thinner thickness of insulation can be fitted, compared with worse performing alternatives, while still achieving the desired U-value. Phenolic insulation boards can achieve a thermal conductivity as low as 0.019 W/mK – this is significantly lower than some other commonly used insulation materials.

As an example of how the choice of insulation can impact your project, we carried out a comparison of a typical timber frame construction shown below. In each case, we considered the use of different insulation products between the studs while identical phenolic insulated plasterboard is fitted internally. Both constructions are designed to achieve a U-value of 0.13 W/m²K in line with the Welsh Notional Dwelling specification.

As you can see, by simply using the phenolic insulation between the studs in place of mineral fibre, it is possible to use slimmer 140 mm studs and reduce the overall construction depth by 55 mm. When every millimetre counts, this can help to make your internal living spaces feel more spacious without having to compromise on warmth or energy efficiency.

A MORE ENERGY-EFFICIENT HOME

Getting the fabric performance right from the start should be a top priority for any prospective self-builder. By using insulation materials with lower thermal conductivities, you can often achieve the desired level of insulation performance with a slimmer construction, maximising space within your home.

Matthew Evans is head of technical GB at Kingspan Insulation



Bare beauty with the new Urban Nude kitchen



Industrial kitchens are often designed in dark tones; yet the new Urban Nude kitchen from **Keller** introduces light shades such as sea salt, pictured here, from the trendy greige palette. It also highlights the beauty and versatility of glass units. Various new wood decors in ash tones have been introduced and designers can select from unicolour or wood decor melamine; for a more luxurious look, a lacquer colour and/or a stained veneer can be specified. The wine cooler is built into the back composite wall and is framed by sturdy fluted glass cabinets with LED lighting strips. The nude "sea salt" and coffee oak fronts are accompanied by tall fluted glass units with matt black alu frame and knob.

www.kellerkitchens.com

New 2024 Door Collection from JB Kind



JB Kind Doors launch their new 2024 Door Collection.

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JB Kind's new Door Collection brochure is sure to be a page-turner with style-conscious homeowners and self builders. View the online interactive brochure now at www.jbkind.com/brochure or request a printed copy.

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Riviera Home unveils Italian inspired wool carpets

Riviera Home is growing its collection of handmade wool carpets for 2024 with three new styles inspired by the beauty and history of Italy, which use texture and yarn to create a unique sense of luxury. Siena is a flat-weave textured carpet that uses 100% undyed wool. To create the stunning texture, Riviera Home's skilful master weavers intertwine contrasting undyed yarns. In three elegant colourways, every Siena carpet is a testament to the art of handcrafting and the natural beauty of undyed wool. Sharing similar Wilton textured weaves, Genoa and Turin show how wool yarns can be used to create captivating and luxurious contemporary designs. In Genoa, Riviera Home has used the richness and luxury of 100% New Zealand wool for a carpet of classic elegance. To create its striking texture, Riviera's artisans weave an intricate textured diamond pattern in a choice of four colours. Turin uses the same 100% New Zealand wool, this time in a textured basketweave design. The yarn's vibrancy of colour and the skills of Riviera Home's weavers bring a luxurious texture that exudes sophistication, again in four neutral and timeless colours. With the resilience and recovery of wool and the handmade quality of Riviera Home, investing in Siena, Genoa and Turin will see homes enjoy an enduring, luxury carpet that is undeniably refined. The Riviera Home collection is widely available through its Authorised Dealership network.

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CASE STUDY

REFRESHED REGENCY ELEGANCE

Francois Belot and Andrea Buscone found a shared joy in their sensitive renovation and extension of an elegant Regency townhouse in south London

TEXT ALEXANDRA PRATT IMAGES INNA KOSTUKOVSKY



It was December 2019 when London-based couple Francois Belot and Andrea Buscone bought a classic Regency terrace home in south London.

"We looked at a lot of townhouses, but many had already been extended and renovated. We found them to be cold, shiny and not very comfortable, with lots of low-quality materials," says Andrea, who runs his own property and concierge business in central London.

"This house had been rented to students and was good value, but the trade-off was the renovation. We saw that as an opportunity," adds Francois. "It meant we could choose finishes etc., and control the project, making it ours."

The couple has some experience, having renovated a flat together in the past, but this project was much larger, incorporating significant structural changes. The main elements of the





project, in addition to a general refurbishment throughout, were a new extension on the ground floor and the removal of a wall upstairs to create a new bathroom. These developments also required a new heating system and waste disposal solutions.

Although the original kitchen was at the rear of the property overlooking the garden, there was an internal courtyard on one side and a small utility room projecting onto the terrace. Francois and Andrea decided to replace these mismatched elements with one single, open-plan space. This full-width extension includes an open-plan kitchen, sitting room and dining area, which naturally draws you through and out to the walled garden.

"We spent a lot of time thinking about what we wanted," says Francois. "We know each other's tastes, and we have very clear ideas on design." After their first architect, who was based in Andrea's home country of Italy, could not commit to their project in the way they expected, Andrea and Francois turned to

London practice Atelier Ochre.

"They really listened to us, understood our priorities and provided solutions," says Francois. Atelier Ochre worked with the couple on the planning and building regulation permission, and there were additional constraints concerning the property's position within a conservation area. "We spent a lot of time thinking about flow and materials and our architect was responsive to that," says Francois. "Daryl was clever and innovative."

Andrea and Francois' brief was all about their desire to bring natural, soft light into the main areas of the house. They did this by introducing glazed, Crittal-style French doors and windows from the dining area into the garden. There are also two large steel framed skylights: one above the French doors and the second further away from the garden in the kitchen area. This lean-to skylight is above the original internal courtyard's position, mirroring the historic roof pitch, and it now brings light into the heart of the ground floor.

THREE TIPS

- * "Don't go crazy with a project like this, but don't be scared, either."
- * Choose the right builders and do your research.
- * Attend as many of the meetings as possible."



"Another priority was sightlines," says Francois. "I loved the idea of creating perspectives wherever possible. In fact, you can have a straight view from the entrance to the back of the house. It contributes to the flow and makes the floorplan instinctive." He says it also echoes the 'enfilade' floorplan of Parisian apartments, "where one room leads to another, without a corridor."

Andrea and Francois' brief also focused on natural materials and textured surfaces, including natural stone, marble, and timber, all of which reinforce the connection to the outdoors. Upstairs, they added a new, smaller, bathroom for guests on the top floor. A room on the first floor had been divided into two small bathrooms and Francois and Andrea re-instated that as one supremely elegant bathroom.

It is now the ultimate in luxury bathing, with a reintroduced fireplace, herringbone marble flooring and a beautiful freestanding bath by Renaissance. The room boasts a large original period window, and enjoying a bath while

looking at the trees and sky is one of Francois' favourite things about the house.

"It's rare to be able to look at the sky in London, and you can lie there and watch the sun coming up," he says. "Removing the partition has meant we have a nicer, bigger room. It's all about symmetry, and it was very satisfying to reinstate the original volumes."

Working with their architect, the couple took on management of the project. Andrea, who has some experience in project management, put together a tender and they considered up to twelve building firms. It was a very detailed process and Andrea did a great deal of work to reconcile the varying quotes they received.

"It meant we were very prepared," says Francois. "Andrea spent a lot of time researching the builders, including cold calling them to see if they picked up the phone. We also met ex-clients. It was a long and stressful process, but I can't recommend what he's done highly enough." The building firm they chose was local, offering that all-important flexibility. The



firm chosen (Dermarta Construction) wasn't the cheapest, but was the one in which they had the most confidence, which was rewarded.

"Andrea did 95% of the decision-making," says Francois, who works in banking and was unable to be onsite during the day. "We trust each other, and this creates savings and value in delivery, with no unnecessary delays or changes." Andrea, who has more flexibility as a business owner, oversaw day-to-day works on the property during the seven-month project, which was completed in 2022.

"And if the builders try to put up the costs in one place, then I say okay, so we will lose it elsewhere," adds Andrea. "It sends a message."

The construction of the extension was masonry, with steel-framed glazing in black. "We never considered using timber-frame," says Francois.

The couple also had to navigate council constraints put on them in the conservation area they were building in. These included keeping one side of the extension – where the utility room was originally placed – in traditional style, with a small window that matches the French doors stylistically.

The couple also discovered ways to be cost-conscious on their interior finishes, without compromising quality.

"Interior designers are very expensive," says Andrea. "Francois and I have the same tastes, so we were our own interior designers, and planned everything in advance. We also negotiated a lot of discounts on interior materials by selecting fewer suppliers during Covid, when the cost of

building materials rose by up to 40%."

One key area where they found savings was the kitchen. Designed in a classic galley shape, it has a long island forming one side, behind which is an open walk-through below the skylight. The kitchen cabinetry in 'charcoal' they bought is from British firm Howdens. This is then enhanced with a high-quality quartzite countertop with waterfall sides, fluted stone tiles on the walls and an American walnut floor.

"It would have been a messy gamble to ship everything in from Italy," says Andrea, who valued Howden's ease of installation, using local teams. "Very expensive kitchens have long lead times, and offer poor value for money."

Consistency was an important factor when Andrea and Francois designed their interiors.

"It was very important to us that the old part of the house should retain its character while being connected to the new part in a natural progression," says Francois. This can be seen in the colours, which are from a similar palette throughout the house, and the high-quality, natural materials chosen.

"We value natural materials in Italy," says Andrea. "You are more relaxed; you want to spend more time at home." Andrea took this to its logical conclusion when he chased the "right" reclaimed bricks from five different providers, even asking the postcode of the original house they came from to ensure consistency of the 'new' brick walls.

"He was told off quite bluntly by the people selling the reclaimed bricks," laughs Francois.

The couple also re-instated all six original

CONTACTS/ SUPPLIERS

INTERIORS & MATERIAL SELECTION

Andrea Buscone, KMIAI
Properties. Lettings, Sales
& Interiors

@KMIAI_Properties

ARCHITECT & INTERIORS

Daryl Fitzgerald,
Atelier Ochre
www.atelierochre.com

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fireplaces in the house, ordering new marble bullseye surrounds from Italy, well in advance.

"We had the flues opened before the spike in oil prices," says Francois. "But we'd had a bit of damp originally and our specialist said it was due to lack of ventilation. These houses were not designed to be energy efficient, but to breathe. The previous extension didn't allow air to circulate. Now, the damp is gone."

With a new water tank moved to the attic to allow for the new top-floor bathroom, they faced a logistical puzzle of where to place the waste pipes from the new bathroom on the second floor. Their location in a conservation area meant placing them at the front of the building was impossible.

"Our architect did a great job," says Francois. "He used an old boiler room and some structural design to allow the pipes to go out the back of the building. There was a lot of thinking behind it. We were fortunate we didn't have to cut through joists."

Getting the logistics rights was a challenge throughout the project.

"When you get a lot of materials coming in, it's better to get them in earlier, rather than later," says Andrea. "Once you miss your slot for delivery, it leads to greater delays. You need to stay in touch with your builders and fitters."

"We had the cast iron bathtub delivered and stored on the ground floor, and the builders had 'forgotten' to bring it upstairs in time," recalls Francois. "It is very heavy (250 kg), and very awkward to handle (as the bath gets very slippery in your hands when you sweat). The builders were ready to give up, as the bathtub also had to negotiate (vertically) the bend in the

Andrea spent a lot of time researching the builders, including cold calling to see if they picked up the phone

stairs. In desperation, Andrea asked around and two strongmen from the local powerlifting gym took up the challenge...and the bathtub finally made it up the stairs!"

Now the project is completed, Francois and Andrea couldn't be happier with the outcome. The new layout of their ground floor creates a magical setting for their regular dinner events, and even as an occasional film set or photoshoot location! Yet it is the details that make it such a personal space.

"We spent time in this house while it was unrenovated," says Francois. "We saw the good, the bad and the ugly. People get very emotionally engaged with these projects, and we were no exception. It was an adventure to renovate it, and this is our creation. The anticipation, the stress, and the decision-making all brought us closer together. It's an achievement."

Andrea agrees, saying: "Going back to a home that is part of ourselves – there's a real joy in that." ■



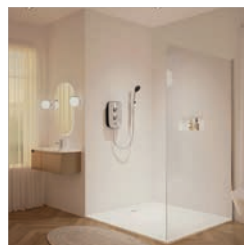
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Aqualisa introduces Lumi+™ electric shower



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Permeable paving: the driving force behind SuDS success

Chris Hodson of Interpave delves into the impact of soon to be mandatory sustainable urban drainage systems (SuDS) in new residential projects, and the transformative role that permeable paving plays

The wider application of concrete block permeable paving to reverse the flooding from the sealing-up of our towns and cities is heralded by new measures to implement SuDS in England.

For some 25 years it has been recognised that Sustainable Drainage Systems (or 'SuDS') are essential in curbing flooding and pollution from rainwater runoff. SuDS manages rainwater by slowing it down and cleaning it up – copying, as closely as possible, the natural drainage from a site before any building work takes place. They operate near the surface and close to the source of runoff, slowing the flow and providing additional benefits including clean water for wildlife, planting or recycling. Typical SuDS include living (or 'green') roofs and permeable paving, as well as planted features like rain gardens.

MANDATORY SUDS

The 2010 Flood and Water Management Act included provisions for mandatory SuDS on developments, controlled by new local authority 'SuDS Approving Bodies' (SABs). But these provisions were not implemented at the time in England – although they were in Wales – relying instead on planning policies to deliver SuDS. Recognising that the planning-based system has not worked, the Government is now implementing Schedule 3 in England to make SuDS mandatory – currently expected during 2024.

New SuDS standards and other changes will then be applied, and SAB approval will be required before construction of drainage systems on new and redeveloped sites. Single homes may well be exempt from SAB approval but SuDS could still be encouraged by





By 2055, it is estimated that 50,000-65,000 properties may be put in areas at high risk due to unplanned increases in impermeable surfaces, such as front gardens being paved over

other means, such as planning policies. This is an important step forward, not just in the fight against flooding but also in enabling the numerous multifunctional benefits of well-designed SuDS to be realised, particularly in response to climate change.

ACTION ON EXISTING PROPERTIES

The welcome move towards wider use of permeable paving will help to reverse the 'sealing-up' of our towns and cities, highlighted in the government's recent National Infrastructure Commission (NIC) report on reducing flooding from surface water. This recommends urgent action to move away from impermeable surfaces, both for new developments and on existing properties.

The NIC recognises that, by 2055, some 50,000-65,000 properties may be put in areas at high risk due to "unplanned" increases in impermeable surfaces, such as front gardens being paved over, which increase the volumes of water entering drainage.

PERMITTED PAVING

Installing drives or other paving anywhere in your garden used to be considered

'permitted development' – in other words, automatic planning permission. But these rights were removed some years ago from new or replacement paving unless it's permeable paving or drains onto a permeable area within the property. Otherwise, you will need to apply for planning permission, involving drawings and a fee, and with policies in favour of SuDS, the application should be rejected anyway. If you just go ahead without permission, this could result in local authority enforcement action or legal problems when the house is sold.

However, enforcement of these rules has been limited and now the NIC is seeking a review of options for resolving this issue and potential policy changes to prevent it from adding to the flooding problem. In addition, some water companies already apply 'area-based charging' to commercial properties where impermeable paving drains to sewers and Ofwat is encouraging trials with residential customers as well. We shall soon see a much wider application of permeable surfaces – notably concrete block permeable paving – reversing the sealing-up of urban areas we have seen.

MAKING THE MOST OF PERMEABLE PAVING

There is a wide choice of products available from manufacturers specifically for permeable paving, with more shapes, styles, finishes and colours than ever. Some products have the same performance as conventional concrete blocks and slabs: slip resistant, durable, strong and sustainable. The difference with permeable paving is joints filled with stone grit – but never sand (like conventional block paving) or mortar. This ensures that water will continue to pass through the joints over many years.

Concrete block permeable paving can be laid level and still avoids puddles without the need for drainage gulleys and pipes. It provides a safe surface for everyone, unlike gravel and other loose material. It can also provide a gradual supply of clean water for planting – particularly trees. In fact, it works in harmony with trees, allowing air, as well as water to reach tree roots, which grow downwards and don't damage the paving over time.

Chris Hodson is a consultant to trade body Interpave, part of MPA Precast

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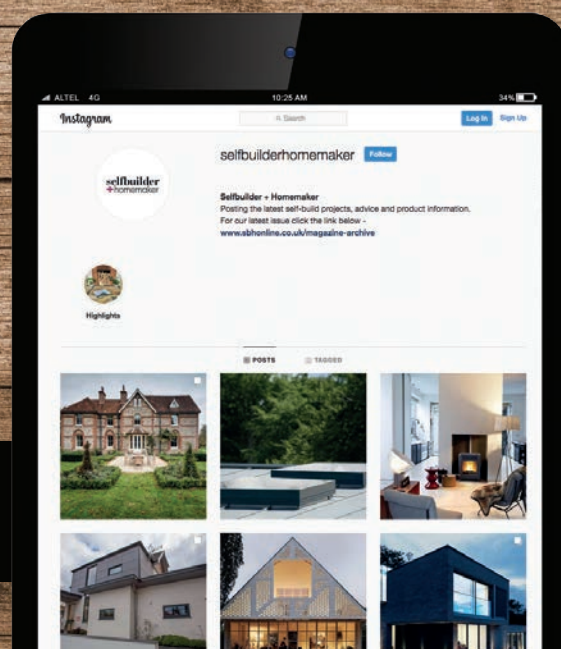
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