

# i-build

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June 18 Issue 47

**+ WHAT DO THE RHI REFORMS MEAN FOR GSHPS AND YOU?**

**+ DISCOVER HOW A SUBSCRIPTION TO A WINE CLUB LED ONE COUPLE ON AN UNEXPECTED RENOVATION JOURNEY**

**20+**  
Delicate duck egg blue accessories to add some sophistication to your interior

**COVER STORY:**

## WHY YOU SHOULD CHOOSE WOOD

*A round up of some of the biggest wood floor trends to watch out for*



### NEON LIGHTS

How to add this fun, quirky trend to your self-build



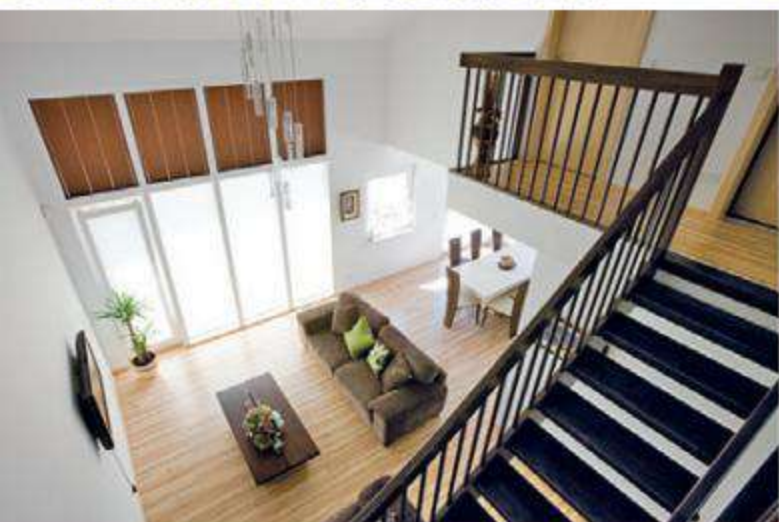
### DINING TABLE DECISIONS

Top tips for picking the best table to complete your dining room



### OUTBUILDING TIPS

Why you should consider a timber frame for your outbuilding



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**Cover story:**  
Kährs rounds up some of the biggest wood floor trends to watch out for.  
See page 36.



## Welcome to the June issue of i-build

Self-building is about creating your dream home from scratch, being involved in every decision from the brickwork to the placement of the rooms. But what do you do if your existing home is almost perfect? You don't need to knock everything down and start again to create something truly beautiful - your dream home could be just a few tweaks away.

This month, i-build explores two projects where homeowners decided to renovate rather than rebuild. On page 18, Melinda Swan explains how buying her husband a subscription to a wine club as a Christmas present was the catalyst for their first renovation project in a Victorian-style house in Radipole Road, Fulham. Not only is the refurbishment gorgeous and filled with light, it also hides an impressive room deep in the basement. Meanwhile, on page 23, retired couple David and Frances Turner showcase their smart and simple solution to create a reflective space within their home for study and reading. After living in the property for just over 40 years, over time, the couple have improved and extended their home to suit their growing needs. But now,

with everyone moved out, the pair decided to create an intimate space just for them.

Elsewhere in this issue of i-build, Ryan Abell, owner of Abell Building Services, describes when it can be more advantageous to use a small house-builder for custom house projects, on page 14, Wharfside helps you decide on the best dining table for your brand-new self-build - for advice and tips, turn to page 32 - and on page 42 discover how easy it is to incorporate a walk-in wardrobe into your build, no matter how small the space.

I hope you enjoy this issue. Don't forget, if you're coming to the end of your self-build and would like us to feature your home as inspiration for other budding house-builders, then please do not hesitate to get in touch. Alternatively, if you're about to embark on your self-build journey and would be keen for us to document your progress, do get in contact.

Paige

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## Editor's picks

Frame Technologies has been awarded the highest accolade by the STA: See page 50  
Milbank Concrete Projects launches the revolutionary 'WarmFloor Pro': See page 51  
A discussion on why you should harvest rainwater: See page 49





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Image ©LisaSarah

## Delightful duck egg

If you're finally at the stages of adding the interior finishing touches to your self-build, maybe you should consider duck egg blue as your accent colour of choice.

This shade promises to sit beautifully in your brand-new home no matter which room you plan to use it in. This versatile colour is not only capable of being warm and inviting, but it is also a cool and calming hue too - meaning it'll be ideal for whatever ambience you're trying to create. Equally at home in a country kitchen, an elegant French-themed bedroom, in a rustic context or a calming tone children's room, this soft, appealing shade works beautifully as both a backdrop and a feature shade. This colour promises to work seamlessly as a neutral too. Far more exciting than beige, a touch warmer and friendlier than white and a little less of a statement than grey. Perhaps try teaming this hue with a handful of eye-catching metallic pieces to give a luxurious and sophisticated feel.

1. Albert cluster pendant lamp, MADE.COM, £79
2. Albert pendant lamp, MADE.COM, £49
3. Metal table with shelves, Melody Maison, £99.95
4. Xavier Pauchard Tolix-style stool, Cult Furniture, £59
5. Five-drawer tall boy, FloraFurniture, £312.95
6. Glazed resin scalloped design picture frame, Gisela Graham London, £18
7. Garden birds patterned coffee cup, Sophie Allport, £7
8. Vintage-style jug, The Contemporary Home, £13.50
9. Indoor watering can, Annabel James, £17.95
10. Jenkins table lamp, MADE.COM, £39





- 1. Curtains in duck egg vintage linen, £275
- 2. Lazy linen in duck egg, £20
- 3. Lazy Daze pillowcase in duck egg, £25
- 4. Cloud sofa, £1320



## Loaf

Loaf makes laid-back furniture and accessories for people to really lead happier, more relaxed lives. Loaf is a champion of serious quality and good old-fashioned craftsmanship.

i-build loves...

## Fabulous throws

Throws and blankets are the perfect way to bring texture, a pop of colour and a luxurious edge to an interior scheme in any room in your self-build.



- 1. Worcestershire duck egg blue mottled throw, Persora, £30
- 2. BRONTE luxury mohair throw, Black By Design, £79
- 3. TWEEDMILL throw, Black By Design, £58.95
- 4. Luxury mohair throw, Annabel James, £85





# Bee original

Get ready to 'bee' inspired by this charming trend that's all the buzz.

Image ©Sophie Allport



1

## Cute candles

Infuse your new self-build with this glorious fruity fragrance, evocative of summer gardens, made with pure essential oils. Hand-poured natural 100% natural plant wax candle with cotton wick, in recycled glass holder with bee motif.

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

2

## Gorgeous jug

Elegant and modern, this bee design glass jug is both decorative and useful with a beautiful shape and gorgeous handle. Perfect for displaying flowers or serving a refreshing drink in warm weather, this multi-functional accessory will look gorgeous in your self-build kitchen.

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



3

## Wonderful wallpaper

'Bumble Bee' features an enchanting myriad of bumble bees and is sprinkled with polka dots. The design will continue to inspire a beguiling sense of playfulness in any room in your new home.

([www.farrow-ball.com](http://www.farrow-ball.com))



4

## Pretty prints

Made up of pretty hues and botanicals, this print will look lovely in any room. This brightly-coloured bumblebee print will be a fantastic focal point in a plain white interior scheme.

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

5

## Beautiful bee print

Inspired by bees buzzing around a garden, this range of homeware and kitchen essentials is a gorgeous design. The bee motif sits on a pale green background making a subtle but gorgeous design statement.

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



6

## Decorative and practical

This cute beehive will stop your doors banging in style. It's both decorative and practical and will liven up any room. It features bees on a pale green background.

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





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# Get all your ducks in a row

These cute interior pieces are a great way to add a touch of quirky countryside to your self-build.

Image ©Cuddledry



1

## Charming watering can

This charming watering can in a bronze colour is designed in the shape of a duckling. Ideal for watering your plants, it can also be used as a windowsill ornament or a sand-filled doorstep. ([www.annabelljames.co.uk](http://www.annabelljames.co.uk))

2

## A timeless classic

This duck decanter is a timeless classic that is guaranteed to set the scene and create smiles at your dinner party. The duck's head is hinged at the back of the neck to enable filling. Just rinse it out with cold water after use.

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



3

## Quite quirky

Vanity mirrors don't come much cooler than this bronze duck feet vanity mirror. With its quirky duck legs and feet and bronze finish, this standing mirror is surely the fairest of them all. Not just reserved for the bathroom though, this beauty would make a wonderful addition to a mantelpiece or shelf.

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



4

## Award-winning wallpaper

Featuring the popular duck design based on the original artwork of award-winning Artist Hannah Dale, this beautiful quality wallpaper is available on a 10 x 0.52m roll and has a vertical pattern repeat of 52cm.

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

5

## Super surreal

This surreal but functional coffee/side table made from batch-dyed polyethylene has its head ready to hold anything from remote controls, smartphones, books, magazines and drinks and promises to look quirky and stylish whilst doing it.

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



6

## A duck collection

Quirky runner ducks cover a soft blue background in this collection from British Homewares Designer Sophie Allport. The range includes fine bone china, kitchen textile essentials, bags and accessories, meaning there really is something for every interior in your new home.

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





## LEVATO MONO

### Porcelain paver system and coordinating internal tiling

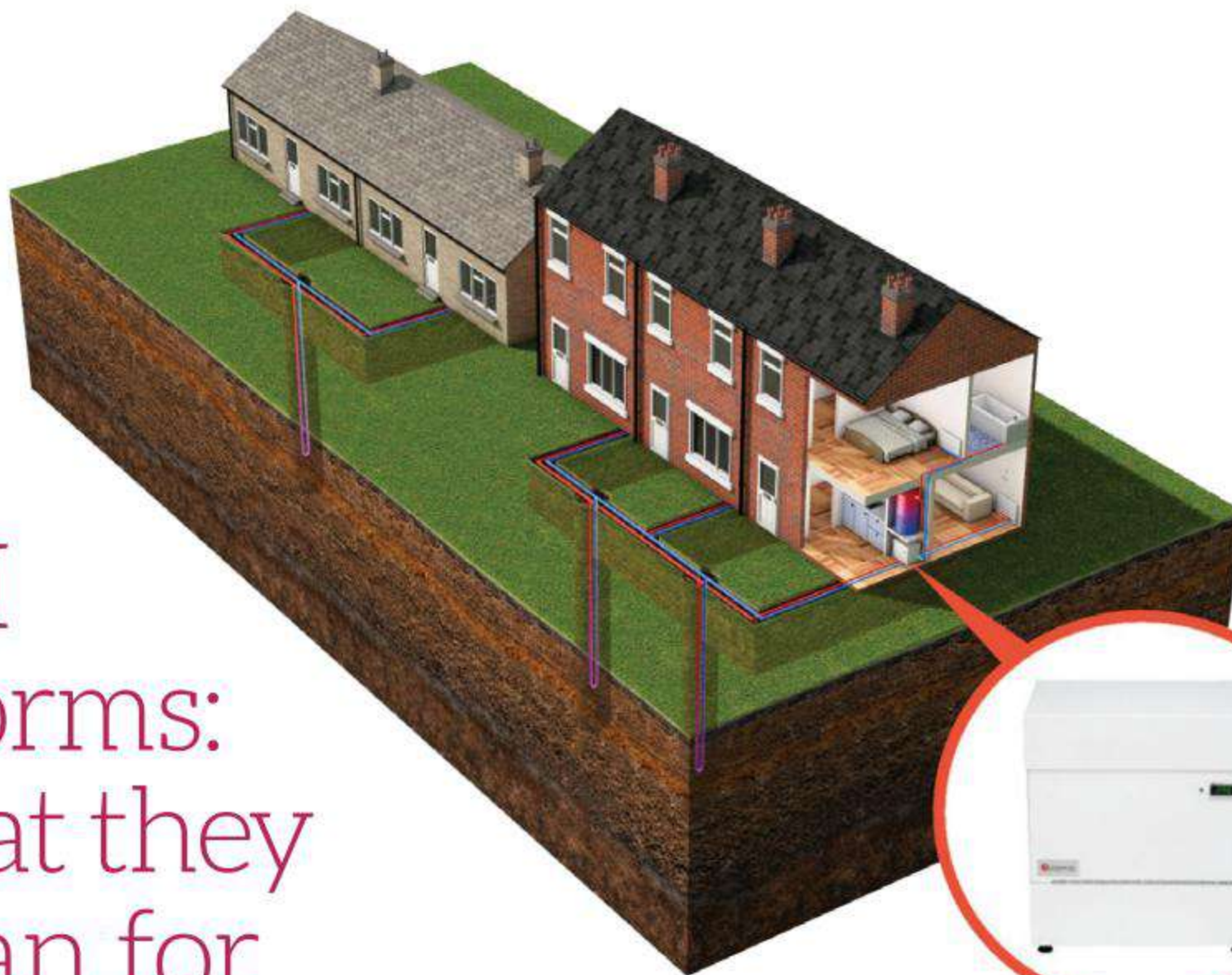
The Deck Tile Co's new website [www.surface360.co.uk](http://www.surface360.co.uk) now has +150 colours and finishes in their Levato Mono 20mm porcelain ranges plus co-ordinating internal tiling – enabling seamless visual transition between internal and external spaces.



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# RHI reforms: what they mean for GSHPs and you

The long-awaited reforms to the Renewable Heat Incentive (RHI) regulations have successfully passed through Parliament and came into effect on 22nd May 2018.

Impacting both the domestic and non-domestic RHI schemes, the reforms redress payment eligibility and introduce new policies covering metering of heat pump performance, tariff guarantees and shared ground loops, as well as extending the RHI's budget management mechanism until the end of 2020/21.

Kensa Heat Pumps, UK manufacturer of ground source heat pumps, and pioneer of shared ground loop system architecture since 2013, has summarised what the reforms mean for ground source heat pump installers and system owners.

## Shared ground loops (SGLs)

Without doubt, the most significant change is the decision to base non-domestic RHI payments for residential properties linked to shared ground loops on the deemed heat consumption taken from the property's Energy Performance Certificate. This arrangement mirrors previous policy for stand-alone ground source heat pump installations supported by the domestic RHI, and gives certainty to system owners.

According to Simon Lomax, Managing Director of the Kensa Group: "This refinement is long overdue. Thankfully, we can finally stimulate increased deployment in line with the ambition detailed in successive carbon budgets and multiple Government publications. In many cases, shared ground loop systems will benefit tenants who are living in fuel poverty as landlords can now invest with confidence and deliver systems which offer the lowest running costs. And the falling carbon intensity of electricity generation means the carbon emissions linked to ground source heat pump installations has never been more appealing with further savings forecast."

### Other changes to the non-domestic RHI include:

- *Introduction of tariff guarantees*

A tariff guarantee allows applicants to the non-domestic RHI to secure a tariff rate before their installation is commissioned and fully accredited on the RHI. Preliminary applications are now available for ground source heat pumps with a capacity of 100kWth or greater.

- Introduction of mandatory electricity metering for heat pumps in domestic properties on shared ground loop systems in the NDRHI.

Meanwhile, the domestic RHI features a number of changes:

- *Introduction of Assignment of Rights*

From June 2018, households can assign their rights to RHI payments to investors; the householder could benefit from a fully funded installation and low running costs, and an investor benefits from the RHI income.

- *Introduction of mandatory electricity metering for heat pumps*

As with the new policy under the non-domestic RHI for domestic properties on SGLs, this change is being introduced to help consumers monitor the performance of their heating system and to provide a better understanding of the heat pump system's electricity usage.

More broadly, the regulations reflect Government's intent to allocate more of the RHI budget to heat pump installations. As well as supporting heat pump technology, the regulations also impose more stringent eligibility criteria for many applications previously supported by biomass installations, including wood fuel drying, waste drying or processing, and domestic swimming pools.

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



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# When to use a small house-builder for a custom-built house

Ryan Abell, owner of Abell Building Services, describes when it can be more advantageous to use a small house-builder for custom house projects.

**H**ouse-building seems to continually be at the top of the agenda for the Government, but it is also a very popular way to invest money into something that is personal to you, or which will bring investors the greatest benefit.

## Building your own custom house

There are so many modern materials and techniques available when building custom houses today – the advancements have gone past solar panels and underfloor heating to now include cross-laminated timber and insulated windows. So, when building a custom-build house and leading the project yourself, you would want to make sure that any builders you use to help have the same level of commitment to your project as well as knowledge of the latest building techniques and the best ways to put them into practice.

## When a small builder is best

The best builder for a job always depends on the quality of the work the builder provides and their level of skill. However, there are two situations where I believe that a small house-builder may be the best option when it comes to building a single custom home.

The first of these is where you as an owner or property developer are relatively skilled yourself. You might not want a whole team of people to come in and help you and you may have sourced willing and able volunteers, but will still need some expertise to direct and project manage the build.

The benefits of using a small builder here is that small building companies have the flexibility to help where help is needed; to provide guidance and to upskill the other people working on the project, where time is allowed.

On the same note, there is the opportunity to bring in extra workers that the builder has worked with before if the project isn't progressing as quickly as anticipated, due to the lack of skilled workers. This can help a project to get back on track quickly, so that time and money is not wasted.

The other instance that I come across on a regular basis is where there are several mini-projects within the build itself. This could be phase one which needs to be completed by a certain date and then phase two that can only be started once there is budget available (perhaps depending on the sale of another property development). Working with the same builder on both stages can be preferential because they will have an existing understanding of how the owner wants to work and they will have had an opportunity to build up a working relationship, which enables a job to be completed more efficiently.

**Images:** Working with the same builder on both stages can be preferential because they will have an existing understanding of how the owner wants to work



In both instances, it is important to bear in mind that allowing a builder to have input into the build will always help. All too often have I been called in to repair something that another builder has done simply because they were following the orders of someone who knew what they wanted but didn't know the best way of doing it.

### Good things come in small packages

Not all building firms specialise in the same things – some will naturally prioritise larger jobs and may not have the capacity to spend time on project managing, advising or demonstrating techniques to property developers or DIY builders. Smaller building companies will usually be able to factor this in more easily. Chances are, the builder taking the instructions for the job will at least be part of the team carrying out the job so they'll be able to hit the ground running with the work and know what to expect.

You can also anticipate a degree of flexibility with a smaller builder. If you need them to recommend the best places to buy a certain tool or building material, or even need them to go and get this for you, then this won't be a problem. Whilst they're working with you, you are their priority and if you can carry on working whilst they're gone, they will be happy to keep things moving by sourcing products or even other specialists where necessary.

Similarly, if you need a small builder to switch jobs because you have a friend or family member who is capable of bricklaying every now and then, it's fine to ask your builder to turn their hand to another task. This is because it's almost guaranteed that a small builder will have learnt a full spectrum of construction tasks, rather than specialising in one aspect of the trade like bricklaying. They can be getting on with laying foundations, plastering walls or carrying out any number of tasks, just as professionally as a specialist in each area.

In short, a small builder will quickly become a hugely valuable part of your team, as someone who can get stuck into the full project and who will use their full breadth of skills, expertise and experience to their full potential. They're reliable, flexible and you'll also get to know them (and how they like their tea!).

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



# All the practical solutions you could want for your project will be at the Southern Homebuilding & Renovating Show

Latest figures released by Hiscox's Renovations and Extensions Report 2018 reveal that 14% of homeowners in the South East would prefer to renovate their property rather than relocate, with a fivefold national rise since 2013. For those who want to tap into this route, the Southern Homebuilding & Renovating Show is returning to Sandown Park in Surrey between 30th June and 1st July with practical advice, products and services to help consumers achieve their property ambitions.

**D**uring two packed days, visitors will be able to attend over 500 advice sessions and 20+ masterclasses on topics from myths on underfloor heating to choosing the right building contractor. In addition, over 220 exhibitors will showcase their latest products and services from an array of industries including architecture; design; financial topics; kitchens; bathrooms; doors and windows; lighting; heating; ventilation; planning permission and much more.

After a successful National Homebuilding & Renovating Show, Oakwrights Design Consultation Service will be offering free 20-minute consultations to visitors who want to discover more about the company's encapsulation service and bespoke oak framing. The design professional will also provide insight into blending innovative

technology with traditional skills and best practices when using oak materials.

All consumers who would like to run their project ideas past property specialists with years of experience can go to the Advice Centre for one-on-one impartial advice. Here, they will have access to the Ask the Builder area, where members of the Federation of Master Builders will be dishing out tips on what to look for in a builder. For first-hand knowledge on how to tackle building challenges and take plans from start to finish, visitors can sit down with reputable professionals from the Royal Institute of British Architects (RIBA) in the Ask the Architect zone.

Another feature at the Advice Centre is the Ask the Expert zone, which will encourage people to have a 15-minute consultation with some of the UK's most prolific property

experts including: Michael Holmes (Director of Content and Product Development for Homebuilding & Renovating magazine); Jason Orme (Editorial Director of Homebuilding & Renovating magazine); Allan Corfield (self-build expert of Homebuilding & Renovating magazine); Tom McSherry (finance expert of BuildStore) and Sally Tagg (planning permission specialist).

Sally Tagg and her team from Foxley Tagg will be at the Planning Clinic taking on the issue of planning permission. They will be offering specialist advice to visitors on the latest rules, regulations and caveats to be aware of, potentially saving self-builders time and money.

Standard show tickets are £8 in advance or £12 on the door (children under 16 go free). ■

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



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## Victorian property complete renovation – all thanks to a wine club subscription

When Melinda Swan bought her husband a subscription to a wine club as a Christmas present, she couldn't have foreseen that his hobby would play such a big part in a major home refurbishment.

**M**elinda and husband Chris, Managing Director of a trading company in the city, were looking for a project when they found their Victorian home in Radipole Road, Fulham.

"When we saw this house we knew straight away it was going to be fun and it was going to keep me busy for some time," says Melinda.

The front door with its beautiful leaded glass instantly gave them hope that they would find a traditional house that hadn't had too much renovation already. And they did. Owned by

a couple in their 80s, the house was still in its original state.

"The house was in the ideal location, but there was a huge amount of work to be done to get it just right and match our needs. Since the location was exactly what we wanted, we decided to go ahead and take on the challenge of turning the house into our dream home.

"The property had a good feel, but it had very little light and the flow of rooms didn't suit our needs. So, it definitely needed some changes if it was to be the home that we envisioned.

"It hadn't been touched for years. It was sold as a five-bedroom house but the rooms were small and poky. The boiler was in the dining room with a table in front of it where they used to sit," says Melinda.

"The coal bunker was still downstairs and when we took down the curtains a dead mouse fell out. They were elderly and hadn't had the energy or inclination that we had so it wasn't their fault and it was a bonus for us.

"We had always felt that we wanted to pursue our own project. As a result of years of travel and living abroad, we had accumulated and assimilated good ideas for incorporating into our London home. We wanted to bring these ideas together to make something unique to us – taking the best of what we'd seen and experienced over the years."



Although she had never done anything like this before, Melinda's first priority was to make the house light and airy.

"The watchwords throughout the project were light, bright and with a flow. I wanted light and more light. The rooms were very dark and I also wanted the house to flow and that meant taking out doors to open it all up."

It also meant taking out the first floor to create a stunning, show-stopping galleried dining room which is now bathed in natural light and perfect for entertaining.

"The original building felt unloved and needed to be invigorated to meet the needs of a family in the 21st century. Based on this, we 're-Victorianed' the entrance of the house but then modernised the inside.

"We only have one child (now grown up) and we didn't see the need to have a family room so we took out a bedroom and bathroom to create the height. The glass wall upstairs is at waist height and lets in lots of light from above. It was a bit of a folly really to suit the family but we absolutely love it and heating it is not a problem as we have underfloor heating throughout. Underfloor heating, below wooden floors or tiles, allows one to negate the need for unsightly radiators - and frees up a lot of additional space."

There are now four bedrooms and four bathrooms upstairs in the property and a side extension allowed Melinda and Chris to create a beautiful light and airy kitchen.

Chris' only request had been for a wine cellar where he could store and build on his collection which was rapidly growing after that fateful wine club subscription and so they dug down into the basement to create one, along with a utility room.

The cellar had to be sealed and a unit put in to keep a steady temperature for the 2500 bottles it now houses.

"We were so lucky to find this house. We didn't think there could be much left in London that hasn't already been renovated but this was untouched. It was like having a blank canvas," says Melinda who admits she would have felt guilty ripping out fittings that had been added recently.

She found Samir Ene (known as Sammy) on a website for master builders. His company, SDA Build London, is passionate about delivering high-quality specification, and to date has completed 65 projects in just over six years in and around the capital.

"I phoned him and asked for references, and I liked what came back and the work I saw. He was also good at listening, really listening, to what I was trying to convey," says Melinda. ➤

## The design

At the time Melinda owned her own company providing lifecycle management for pharmaceutical companies which involved a great deal of world travel and staying in hotels.

And as the work on the property progressed, all those years of travelling began to pay off.

"I realised how many ideas I had absorbed and filed away. Hotels are great for picking up trends and ideas to use in your own home. I had lots of creative examples filed away in my brain," says Melinda.

She says working with SDA brought home to her the importance of choosing the right building firm.

"They ticked all the boxes for us," she says. "Sammy and his team proved they could

work as a team in harmony with an array of experts such as architects, energy and lighting consultants and they were able to deliver a high-spec product at every turn. They found solutions to problems and alternative ideas when there were issues."

And, importantly, Melinda says they came in on budget and finished on time.

"It was predicted that the refurbishment would take nine months, and we were delighted that we were able to move in on the exact date that Sammy had previously advised. Unheard of, but so rewarding.

"We remained within the original budget for the build, but the furnishings I selected were not within the budget...one always finds something nicer at a higher cost."

"I worked closely with Sammy and amended the design brief as and when required. It's important with a project this size to have a willingness to be flexible if needed – you just don't know what you'll uncover. It's also important to listen to the advice of the experts you've engaged to ask lots of questions, so you understand the what and the why."

Although she was clear about what she wanted, the key to the success of the refurbishment, she says, was conveying her ideas and having builders who had empathy with what she was trying to do.

"If you have a good builder, you have to work at communicating with them – they are building your dream but that dream is inside your head and they can't know what you are thinking if you can't tell them clearly."

Despite that, she says she sometimes wondered what she had taken on.

"A lot of the time I was out of my depth and there were days when I thought we were all speaking a different language. I didn't always know what some of the phrases they use in the trade meant.

"So, I found myself Googling lots of words I didn't understand and I bought a raft of books about building techniques and Victorian properties," says Melinda.

"I spent hours on the internet and visiting sites to select products which would add to the build. I wanted to make my own decisions, understand each material and see it in 'the flesh' before making a final decision."

Although she wanted the builders to create her dream home, Melinda says she was also adamant she was going to remain sympathetic to the style and history of the house.

"I have always believed we are only ever caretakers of our properties, they will be here long after we are gone," she says.

"Sammy and his team fulfilled our dreams! It provides sharp clean lines, and has an urban feel, which is ideal for a London home. And yet still retains some of its original Victorian character.

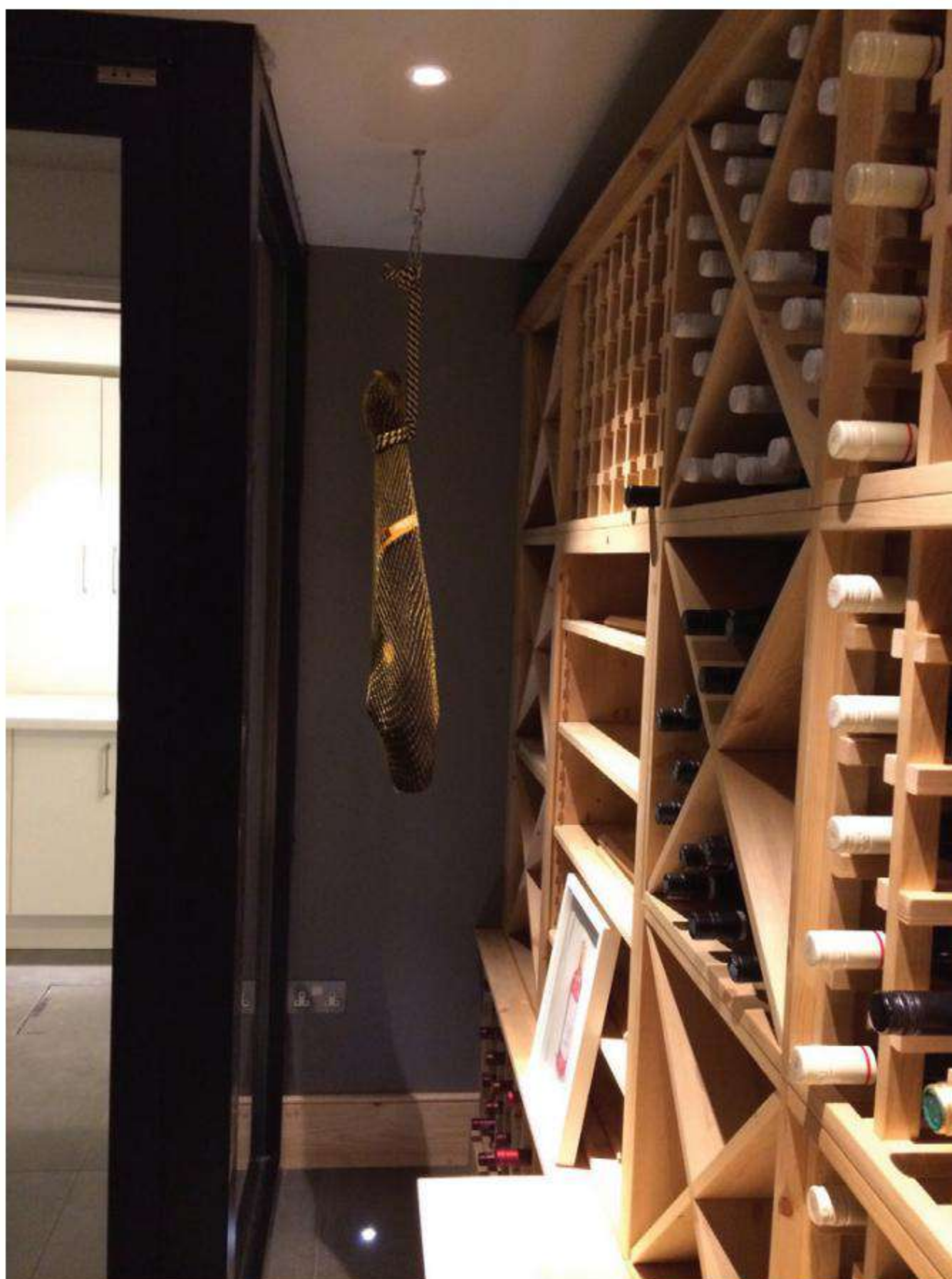
"We love the kitchen, with its mirrored skylight; the media room which has a lot of light flowing in from below from the gallery windows; the double-height dining room is a show-stopper and perfect for parties; the wine cellar a hit with men and perfect for pre-dinner canapes. Most of all we love the urban sharpness of the house."

Sammy, who started the business in 2011, says his company prides itself on good results which he says is down to proper consultation with his clients.

He says: "I consider myself a field person. I don't want to be in the office so I visit my sites every day and have weekly meetings with my clients. That way, there is less room for mistakes and every chance of getting it right."

Melinda advises: "Find the right builders and stick to your dream. Be brave and be bold; one doesn't often have the opportunity to get what you want." ■

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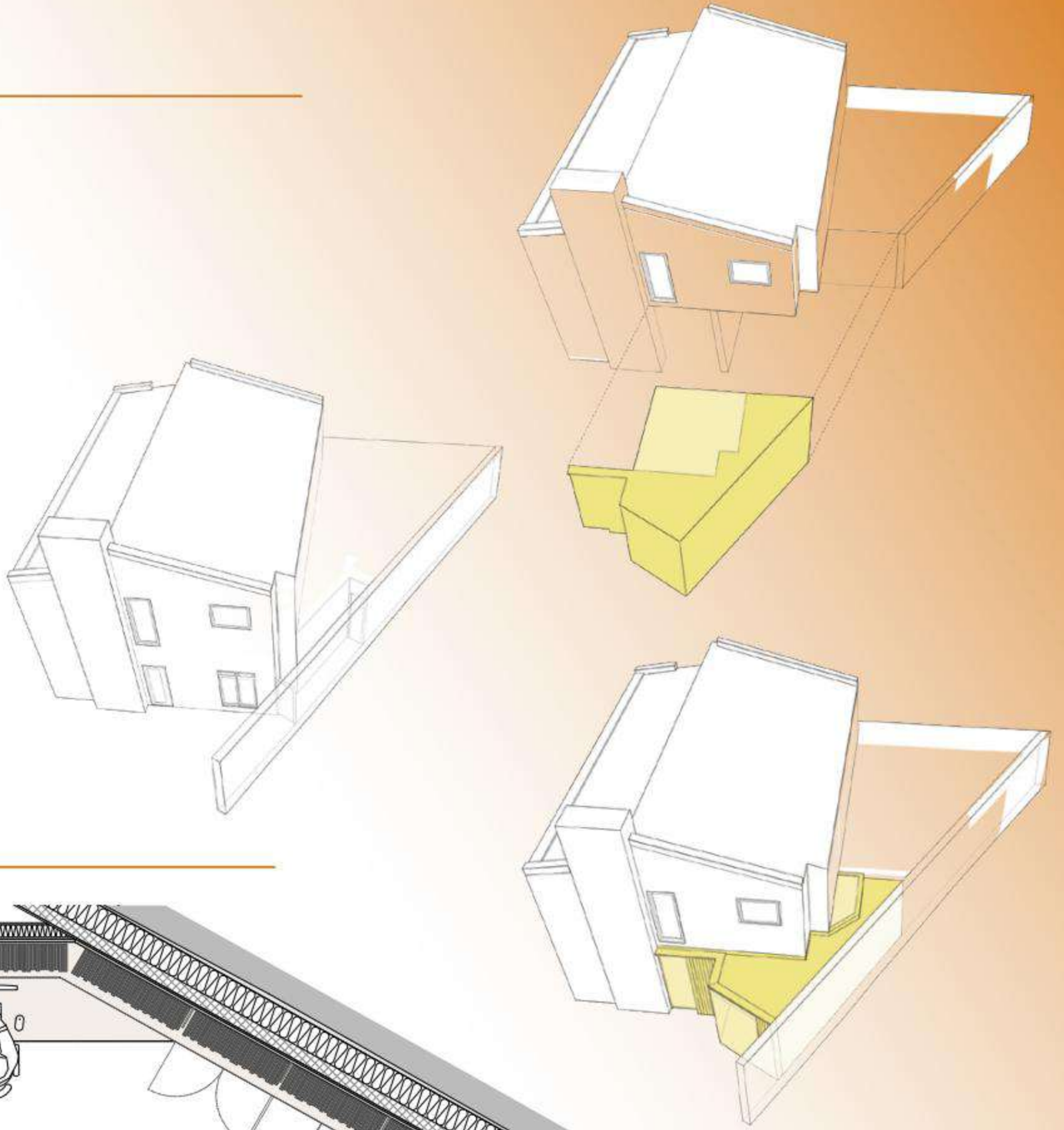
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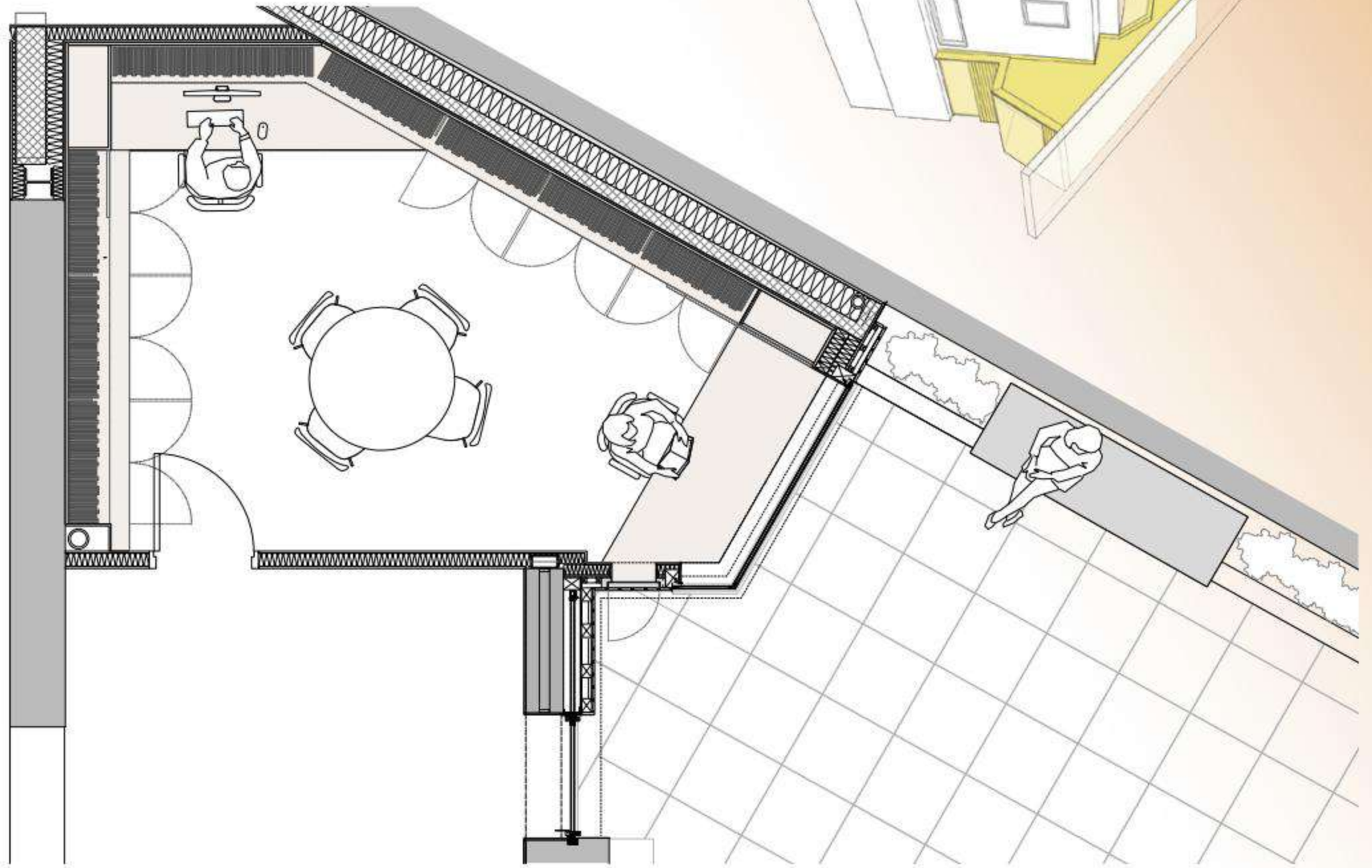
## *A reflective reading room*

An elegant reading room has been created for retired couple David and Frances Turner in Belsize Park, north London. The extension is a smart and simple solution to create a reflective space within their home for study and reading. ➤

CONSTRUCTION



READING ROOM PLAN







**B**uilt from a folding facade of glass and oak cladding, Studio Carver delivered a spacious and light-filled extension within a confined north London garden that is a characterful addition to the property and sympathetic to the original house.

David explains: "We have been living in the house for just over 40 years and raised our three children here. Over the years, to respond to our family's changing needs, we've improved and extended the house but now we're both retired and are spending more time at home. We wanted to create a new, more intimate space just for us, somewhere we could work or read quietly but still be connected to the rest of the house and garden.

"We engaged the architectural practice Studio Carver to work with us on the project. Keith from Studio Carver had done work for my daughter's and son's families so we were interested in getting him involved at our house as well.

"We worked closely with Studio Carver from day one, developing the project brief, concept designs and all the technical detail. I worked as a Building Surveyor as a young man, so was keen to be involved in most stages of the project development."

The 6m<sup>2</sup> extension is designed around a large picture window projecting out into the patio and garden. The new study encloses against an existing garden wall with bespoke joinery and desks. The soft, minimal facade complements the brickwork of the 1950s property whilst oak lining internally establishes a peaceful continuity of materials inside. ➤





*“Externally, we created a new planter and seating area in our garden as part of the works. We continued with the same oak cladding along the planter which we feel stitches the building into the existing landscape.”*

*- David Turner, homeowner*



David continues: "We wanted lots of glass and designed the extension around a large picture window projecting out to the patio and garden. At the same time, we had to be mindful of the extension's southern exposure – so we had to be aware of too much glass and overheating."

"The new study encloses against an existing garden wall taking advantage of an underused part of our side garden. My wife and I have a large collection of books we have gathered over the years dispersed all over our house. We wanted to bring them all together into this new extension. Studio Carver designed bespoke shelving, storage and desk space that was carefully integrated in the building form. The result is a really seamless aesthetic, you don't know where furniture ends and building begins."

The interior of the reading room is created from tableau of oak timber, which form the ample shelving, storage and desk spaces in the study. The continuation of material creates a constant colour palette that blends textures from indoor to outdoor.

"We also wanted to ensure that the new addition tied in with the existing house, so we used some of the timber cladding on the extension to clad elements of the existing house," explains David. "I think this did a great job bringing old and new together. Using the same material inside and outside establishes a strong connection between inside and out, which was very important to us." ➤







Rather than break up the canvas of glazing with openings or adjustments, ventilation to the room is brought in via a slit in the adjacent oak cladding. This allows for an unobstructed stream of light to brighten up the home without the need for energy-demanding air conditioning.

An additional skylight at the rear of the study allows for more light to filter down into room, with glass and timber infilling the triangular gap between the existing building and garden wall.

Outside, oak clad planters extend along the garden wall and stitch the building into the existing landscape. The old bricks provide a textured and warm backdrop to the new oak lining, flowers and greenery. A small bench seat set on top of the planters allows occupants to sit amongst their flowers and rest against the old garden wall.

David adds: "Externally, we created a new planter and seating area in our garden as part of the works. We continued with the same oak cladding along the planter which we feel stitches the building into the existing landscape. The new planter and seat looks fantastic against the old brick garden wall. The contrast of old rustic brick and the new timber cladding is striking."

Studio Carver Founder, Keith Carver, says: "It was really exciting working with David and Frances who have raised three children in the house since the 1970s, improving and extending the property over time to adapt to their family's changing needs. Now both retired, this new change and addition creates a more intimate space just for them, for reading, work and reflection."

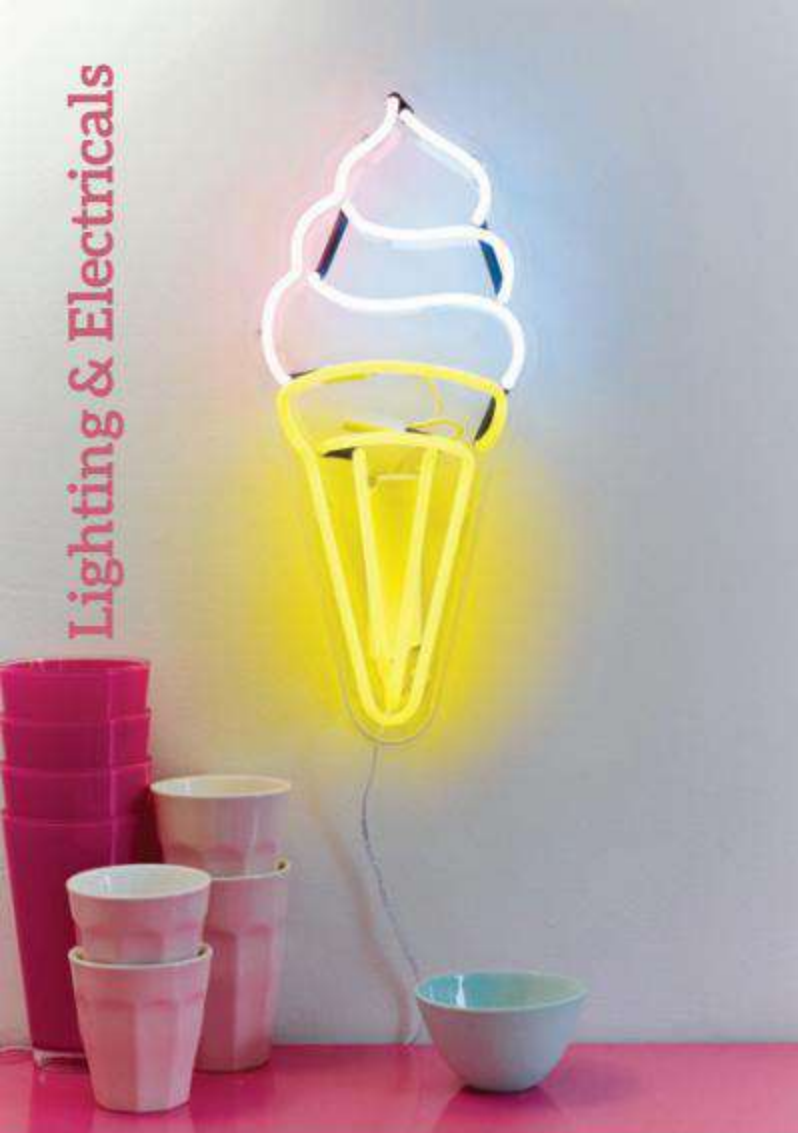
David says: "From the start, Keith was dedicated to having a thorough understanding of what we wanted from our new home office. Having worked with many architects in the past, it is rare to find one who really takes the time to listen to their client and who doesn't impose their own vision of the project.

"Keith's ability to listen to us, and his thorough understanding of the brief, has helped us to facilitate our lifestyle change of working from home, and created a pleasing addition to the house.

"The local community has really positively received the project. We were shortlisted for a Camden Design Award and Don't Move, Improve! 2018 Award. We have also just heard from Camden Council that they want to use the project as a precedent in their Design Guides as a good example of an alteration to an existing home where the extension is sympathetic to the original house.

"The finished project is more than we had ever imagined we could achieve in such a confined site. It has exceeded all our expectations." ■

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



# Five ways to add the neon trend to your self-build

Neon lighting and decorative accessories are both nostalgic and now, evoking retro charm and appeal while also being ideal for modern interiors. This innovative form of tube lighting was first introduced at the Paris Motor Show in 1910 by French Engineer and Inventor Georges Claude, also known as 'the Edison of France'.

Neon rapidly became popular for displays and signs in the 1920s and 1930s and is seen as iconic of those decades; during that period neon lights could be seen all over, with the love of these handmade lighting designs caught all over the world. Neon enjoyed a revival in the 1980s and during 2017 it emerged once again as one of the biggest current trends and has continued to grow in popularity. A must-have hit, neon shows no signs of fading. If you're looking to feature the neon trend in your home, why not discover five ways to enhance your interior for special occasions or all year round, with bold and bright neon lights and home decor.

## Neon table lamps

An instant way to add a cheerful burst of colour and illumination, neon table lamps with bases will look brilliant on any table, desk or other surface in your self-build. A choice of neon table lamp designs is

available to suit many individual interior styles and colour schemes, while you may wish to combine neon with other current trends by choosing a cool neon cactus or flamboyant neon flamingo lamp.

## Neon lights for party decor

Neon lighting can be a perfect way to add to the ambience while entertaining guests at home or hosting parties. A neon 'party' sign will help people relax into the party mood as they arrive, while neon 'bar' signs will show where they can get a refill, in the kitchen or wherever the drinks can be found.

## Child-friendly neon-effect lighting

If you're looking for a child-friendly way to add the neon trend to your self-build there are many neon lights that would add a dreamy, whimsical look and a warm, pleasant glow to any child's bedroom or playroom.

## Neon signs for specific rooms

While many neon lights will look great in any room of your brand-new self-build, you may wish to find the perfect neon sign for a particular room. A neon 'hello' or 'welcome' sign would be ideal for a hallway or entranceway, while a stylish 'boudoir' neon sign will make the perfect finishing touch to a bedroom or private dressing room. For the living room, a freestanding neon 'lounge' sign is sure to make the room feel even more homely and relaxing.

## Fun neon home decor

### For a modern look

If you're looking to add a fun and quirky twist to your self-build decor, neon lighting designs are a great way to do this, whatever your interior style or decor scheme. For those who would like a pet but without the responsibility, mess or noise, why not add a neon animal into your home.

### For retro charm

For those of you with a sweet tooth, there are an abundance of fun food-related neon home decor additions with a distinctly retro feel that are sure to make you smile.

Hurn & Hurn hopes this feature has been illuminating and has given you a little taste of the extensive range of neon lights and decor designs available, plus inspiration and ideas about how to add the neon trend to your self-build. ■

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## Dining tables: which one is right for your self-build?

The dining table can often be a place which is most visited by the family - if you get it right. They are hubs of conversation, delicious celebrations, and most importantly, keep you all together in the room for hours when in great company.

**B**ut how do you choose the right one for you? Tricky question; here, Wharfside discusses a few ways to make the big decision, and how to know when it's right for you.

### Start with the shape

If you love modern interiors, then rectangular tables are a wonderful start, but you can go further - how about modern additions which will make the dining experience even better, such as an extension which can simply glide open, without having to pull out all the chairs and use the dropleaf that is clunky and hard to pull out?

If you prefer a more retro-inspired look, then oval is definitely the way to go. It is one of the most common shapes used in retro designs, and the great thing about buying a piece inspired by the retro design era is that you will get the beautiful aesthetic of a retro piece, but the modern comforts of a piece which has been designed for modern living.

### Consider the materials

If you are looking for a wooden table, there's much more than oak to play with. Are you looking for a deep wood such as walnut or cherry, or perhaps you prefer a lighter wood, such as alder?



You can then look into the beautiful and easy to maintain, Corian. This material is extremely hardwearing, available in a huge array of colours, and looks stunning. Kitchens are where you will often see this material, on worktops, as they are fantastic for easy cleaning and stay hygienic.

Perhaps metal is an addition you wish to add? There are some beautiful ways to spot a modern touch of metal on a dining room table - the legs are often where the design favourite is used, so consider if you want to add the modern edge with metal legs on a wooden dining table.





### Will you have surprise guests?

If your dining room is a space for regular family meals, but is also going to host events that may need to seat more people, you may wish to invest in an extendable table. Now, don't worry, long gone are the days when this means a dropleaf which means everyone has to come together to put it all in place and pull all the chairs out awkwardly, just so you can seat two more people in the room. You can add multiple extra extending sections to some tables, which are easy to pull out, with just the pull of your hand.

Ultimately, you need to take a look, have a feel and ask yourself if the table is somewhere you will want to sit with your family, and have regular meals and catch up with one another after a long day. Is it a table you'd want to invite guests to come and sit at? When you get that feeling, you will know you have found the right one for your self-build. ■

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





# Oak-frame home office gives couple a room with a view

Nestled in the heart of the Sussex countryside stands a 16th-century cottage, complete with 10 acres laden with hidden treasures. The soon-to-be-owners of the property fell in love with the cottage immediately, blown away by its period features and charm, albeit its slightly modest size. As the years passed, the couple gradually extended the cottage, sympathetically adjoining more liveable space onto the property.

**A**s a landscape architect by profession, the owner naturally aspired to create something spectacular in the ample grounds that surrounded the couple's beautiful period cottage. An intricately-detailed herb garden and man-made lake were among the many attractive features – until recently, when a further project added more to this designed landscape.

Situated next to the cottage's detached garage was an old derelict shed. Originally it had served as an office when the owner's

design practice was first taking off. As the family expanded, the shed became a playroom, then as the children grew up, it stood unused and fell into disrepair. It was this shed and its location that became the perfect starting point for 'The Studio'.

Oak framing was always going to be a concept that the couple explored for the new venture. The oak beams were what had drawn the couple to the cottage initially, so it felt a natural decision to continue the theme as part of this collection of buildings.



In searching for suitable frame manufacturers, the couple came across English Heritage Buildings.

The brief for the building revolved around a light and spacious working environment. It also needed to be big enough to house a small shower room and kitchenette. The primary purpose of the building was to provide a dedicated home office, however, the couple were keen to explore a self-contained unit should they need to accommodate guests in years to come. Having collected many books over the years, the couple were also passionate about housing a special library area within the studio.



*Above left: In searching for suitable frame manufacturers, the couple came across English Heritage Buildings*



In the original plans, it was found that at one gable end there was a significant amount of wasted space. At the appropriate height, a special barn owl hatch – which complied with the Barn Owl Trust’s precise specifications – was created to encourage nesting.

In order to complement the stunning hues of the oak frame visible inside the studio, oak joinery was specified throughout. The south west-facing elevation was fitted with mullion-style glazed doors and four sets of mullion-style windows to not only allow in plenty of light, but to also make use of the afternoon sun and take in the stunning vistas of the garden.

Above, two automatic, weather-responsive VELUX skylights were fitted to promote ventilation and, again, enhance the natural light in the studio.

Great attention to detail was given to the electrical systems in the self-contained studio and the owners thought carefully to ensure these were properly integrated into the whole building. Underfloor heating now acts as the sole heat source for the building powered through an energy-efficient combi boiler. This boiler also delivers all the hot water to the washroom and kitchenette.

In terms of design and interior styling, the couple opted for a modern, refreshing scheme with minimalistic furnishings and soft shades, in contrast to the period charm of their relatively small cottage they have lived in for the past 40 years. This stylish theme, combined with the authentic twists and cracks of light green oak, have proved to work in harmony as the couple continue to establish their work setting.

Overall, the owners are happy with their decision to embark on their first oak frame project. Commenting on their experience, the owners explain: “Both contractors, Custom Build and ECJ (English Heritage Buildings’ approved carpentry contractor), worked exceptionally well together to create a product that was crafted and manufactured beautifully off-site. I would not hesitate to recommend English Heritage Buildings to anyone considering an oak-frame project.”

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

## The build

The footprint of the building was settled at 6 x 9m. Thanks to there being an existing building on the desired footprint, planning for The Studio was passed without any issues. This, in part, was helped by the specification of an oak frame, which was looked on favourably by the local council.

The existing shed was soon demolished and the groundworks commenced through another local company, Custom Build, which was recommended through English Heritage Buildings.

Careful consideration had to be given to the groundworks due to the gradual slope of the site. An intricately-detailed paving formation dealt with level changes and was laid alongside The Studio. Overhead – as a subtle way of connecting the studio to the main house – a pergola (also provided by English Heritage Buildings) was erected. This, again, reinforced the need for precision in the initial planning and preparation of the groundworks. As the frame was erected, the landscaping immediately followed. This enabled all works to mature and develop with synchronicity.



# Wood floor trends to look out for

Endless design opportunities means that wooden floors continue to be a popular choice for residential projects in 2018. With trends developing fast, it's important to think about which flooring trends may or may not work for your self-build project.

Here, Kährs rounds up some of the biggest wood floor trends to watch out for.

## Patterned floors

Patterned wood flooring never ceases to make people go "wow" when they walk into the room. There are plenty of pattern options available, including unique bygone-inspired Dutch and French patterned flooring, which has the power to transform a room instantly. And let's not forget chevron and herringbone designs, which continue to soar in popularity for their striking and classic look.

With patterned designs now available in ready-to-lay engineered formats, these classic patterns are easier than ever to install in the modern day and so are particularly ideal for self-builders.

## Dark floors

Over the past few years 'scandi-chic' light and grey floors have been the focus for most residential projects, and although these colours are still very much in demand, dark floors are taking back some of the limelight this year. Smoked oak and walnut designs in chocolate and deep ebony shades look great in a large space and achieve a certain look of luxury.



## Ultra-matt

This year, matt continues to go a step further with ultra-matt surface treatments taking the market by storm. Emanuel Lidberg, Head of Design at Kährs Group, says: "Traditional lacquer finishes reflect light which distracts from the floor's appearance. Our new, ultra-matt finish minimises reflections so that the wood's natural grain and tone can be appreciated to the full."

Ultra-matt wood floors are ideal for all projects, particularly spaces with abundant natural light, for example, with floor-to-ceiling glazing. The result is a durable floor with a look and feel of untreated, newly-sawn timber.

## Muted floors – natural and grey

Statement floors aren't for everyone, and might not work for a certain room. Natural and grey-tone oak floors give a minimalist and timeless base to complement other interior fabric, wall and decor trends which you may wish to include within your interior. 2018 is the year of dusky pink and bold purple shades for walls, and with interior trends constantly evolving, a more neutral floor colour can be a great option if you are looking for something more low-key, but equally as beautiful in your home.

## Rustic

Rustic wood floor designs have been popular for some time and there are no signs of this trend disappearing. Think distressed floors, with saw marks, lots of colour variation and heavy brushing, emulating the look of a vintage reclaimed board. Designs with hand-scraping and large natural cracks and knots are also increasing in popularity, as these really show off the natural beauty of wood.

## Eco-friendly

Perhaps the most important 'trend' of all, is that people are striving to be as eco-friendly as possible, and flooring is no exception. Engineered wood flooring is constructed with the environment in mind, with the top layer on show being the main wood species (e.g. oak) and layers underneath a quick-growing species (e.g. pine), thereby using less of the valuable hardwood surface layer compared to traditional solid wood flooring.

Kährs' dedication to the environment doesn't stop at multi-layer construction – Kährs is working with local, national and global organisations to ensure the forest stock is sustainable for generations to come. In Sweden, the total forest volume is 60% larger today than in the 1920s.

With plenty of on-trend flooring designs to choose from, make sure to also consider the practicability, maintenance and environmental ethos of the product and company. Kährs has a portfolio of over 200 engineered wood flooring designs, which are all easy to install, care for and made from sustainable material.

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



# Timber frame construction: create the perfect outbuilding

Long-since popular in the Nordic countries, timber frame construction is booming in the UK. A construction material at the forefront of evidence-led design, timber is sustainable, versatile and suitable for a wide variety of purposes. All this, as well as its unique performance properties and favourable costs and construction timescales, have made it a popular choice.

Increasingly, those seeking to create an aesthetically impactful, high-performing outbuilding for mixed uses are turning to timber to bring their vision to life. From pool houses and garages, to home offices, gyms and more; wood is the way.

## Why choose timber for your build?

Timber frame construction is the ultimate environmentally-conscious choice. As a 100% renewable building material, timber distinguishes itself from traditional rivals, brick and concrete, whilst also demanding far less energy to manufacture. A report by Wood for Good estimated that if all house-building targets in the UK were met with timber frame construction, the UK could become a carbon bank – storing 3.8 million tonnes of CO<sub>2</sub> every year; so in choosing a timber product for your build, you're doing something for the planet too.

So timber is green – this we know – but what else makes it ideal for your longed-for garden or games room? For many projects, cost is a crucial consideration and it's safe to say timber is usually a budget-friendly option when compared to brick and concrete.

The cost-effectiveness and speed of timber frame construction makes it easier and more feasible from a financial perspective to factor in other special design features and extra touches, such as, floor-to-ceiling windows. Also, if you love your new timber outbuilding and decide you want to expand it, it's more cost-effective to adapt.

Timber is also something we as humans respond well to, in that studies have elucidated timber's physiological benefits to humans; the presence of wood has been shown to reduce blood pressure and induce feelings of calmness. This makes timber frame construction an exciting and interesting choice for spaces used for leisure time or creating work environments.

## How does timber perform?

Timber is hygroscopic – improving indoor air quality by moderating humidity – making it a very popular material for buildings with sensitive contents, such as garages for your prized car or simply for keeping its occupants comfortable. Breathable and naturally-insulating, timber maintains a more stable temperature than concrete or brick, and is able to be fully draught-proofed.



Timber's cellular structure contains air pockets which limit the material's ability to conduct heat. Modern timber frame buildings are also capable of being fitted out with artificial insulation, supplementing these natural properties and already-low thermal heat transfer levels. This high-tech insulation is contained within the structure in the timber cavity, meaning that the walls of a timber frame building can be much thinner than concrete or stone, whilst achieving the same level of insulation – saving on vital building space.

Natural properties, combined with the use of innovative artificial insulation, mean that timber frame buildings are cooler in the summer and warmer in the winter. This saves on heating and cooling, thereby cutting your bills.

As an inherently more affordable approach, timber frame construction projects give more opportunity to experiment with the wealth of exciting techniques and aesthetic outcomes that exist. By allowing for enterprise with styles, it's possible to discover ways to further improve the user-friendliness and aesthetics – two hugely important factors in good building design. ■

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



# WarmFloor PRO

The insulated thermal flooring solution by Milbank Concrete Products, designed to save you **time** and **money**.

## What it is:

**WarmFloor Pro** by Milbank Concrete Products is a cost effective alternative over the industry leading competitor.

**WarmFloor Pro** works by combining rigid insulation modules (EPS blocks) which are laid inbetween prestressed concrete beams with an EPS top sheet, membrane and concrete screed to finish.

## How it works:

**WarmFloor Pro** replaces conventional concrete infill blocks with lightweight EPS blocks and top sheets to achieve a highly insulated floor.

**WarmFloor Pro** is suitable for almost any structure but is most commonly used in residential projects.

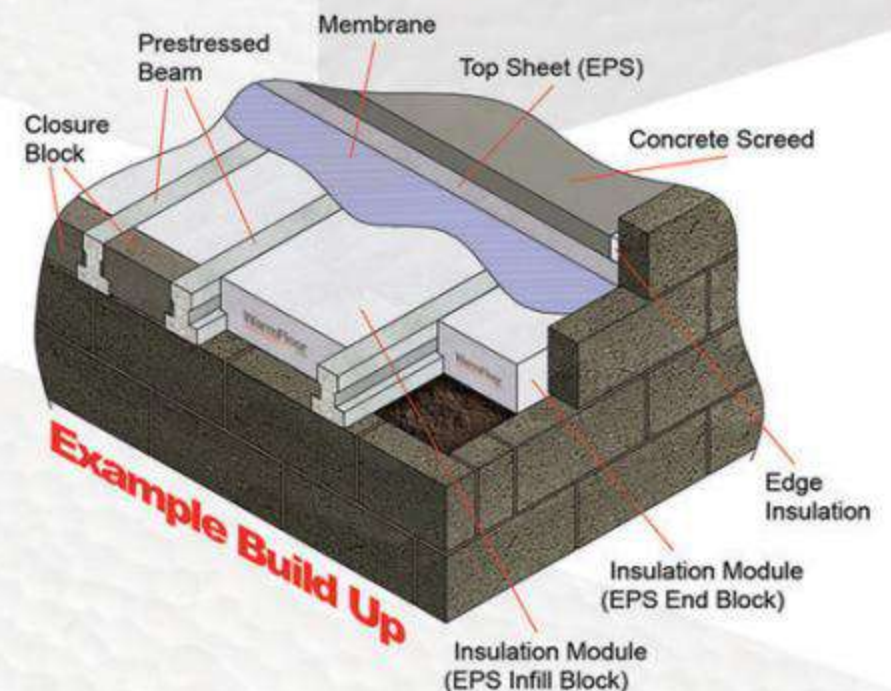
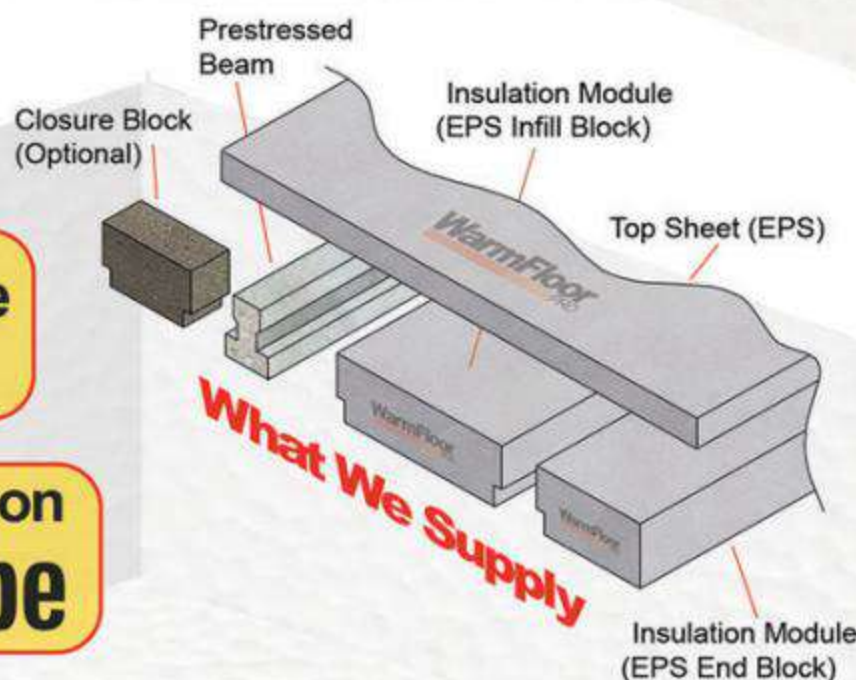
**WarmFloor Pro** offers a simple, cost effective, insulated flooring solution to self-builders and construction professionals.

## How it benefits you:

**WarmFloor Pro** can be installed in conjunction with underfloor heating systems meeting the demand for more environmentally friendly homes whilst reducing heating costs.

**WarmFloor Pro** is a highly effective, thermally efficient way of achieving and exceeding the thermal requirements of part L of the building regulations.

**WarmFloor Pro** is sustainable - meaning it will last the lifetime of the building. The compressive strength makes it suitable for both domestic and commercial applications and it is resistant to moisture and condensation.



Vist our website for more info!

Watch the video on YouTube

[milbank.co.uk](http://milbank.co.uk) | 01787 223 931 | [info@milbank.co.uk](mailto:info@milbank.co.uk)



# How to maintain your rooflight in three easy steps

A long, winding drive and a lush leafy garden. Light and airy bedrooms and spacious kitchens. We all have a 'shopping list' of what our perfect home looks like and it's a dream come true when you finally complete your self-build. After all the hard work you've put in, it's important to keep up the maintenance of your new home's features to make sure they last. Here, Express Skylights gives its tips on maintaining your rooflight.

When a feature elevates the aesthetic of your home to such high standards, it's only natural that you want to keep it in tip-top condition. While rooflights can be prone to dirt, pollution and rainwater, taking care of yours doesn't have to be a chore. Here's how to look after your rooflight to keep it looking as good as new, all year round.

## Check for leaks

Generally speaking, proper insulation is key to avoiding leaks and it's never too late to improve or add insulation to your home. The first place to start is in the attic, where most of the heat escapes. Insulating the attic will help to nip ice dams and leaks in the bud, improving overall airflow and protecting the windows in your home.

Specifically to rooflights, it's damaged tiles, windowsills or improper flashing that are the most common causes of leaks. If everything was installed properly when you got your rooflight, you shouldn't experience leaks. But, if you notice trickling water in heavy weather, it's time to call in a roofer.

## Keep it clean

To keep that glass gleaming you should be cleaning your rooflight every six months. Clean the inside by dusting away cobwebs or dirt then use a squeegee and soapy water to rinse. Avoid fibrous cloths and harsh chemicals to achieve a streak-free shine.

Self-cleaning glass can banish the faff of cleaning the outside of your rooflight. Most rooflights can be made with chemically-coated glass that allows water to run off more quickly – carrying away dirt to keep your rooflight in tip-top condition.

## Watch out for condensation

If you've been battling the recent 'beast from the east' or just the humidity of laundry day, contrasting temperatures can cause havoc for rooflights. When the temperature of the outdoors differs from the indoors, it can mean a build-up of condensation is created.

If left untreated, condensation can damage window frames, cause mildew and result in peeling paint. It also means your view will be spoiled by water droplets. To keep condensation at bay, invest in quality extractor fans and keep laundry on the washing line and off the radiators. ■

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







## Create a walk-in wardrobe in even the smallest room

Walk-in wardrobes have plenty of appeal when it comes to stylish storage solutions. From the fashion-obsessed to craft lovers, a space that allows you to get a complete 360° view of your possessions is perfect for everyone.



People often think that having a walk-in wardrobe requires lots of square footage or purpose-built space, but it's actually possible to create a small walk-in wardrobe that provides plenty of storage space.

As long as you can spare at least 1.4m in depth, your walk-in wardrobe can be just about any width. Any shelving or fitted units can then be added to the interior to give you an elegant and spacious storage solution.

Depending on the space you're working with, you may have to do a bit of DIY work, but for most spaces it's likely to be minimal. For example, if you have a room that is long and narrow, you can easily fit wall-to-wall sliding wardrobe doors at one end.

If you don't want wall-to-wall wardrobe doors, or the space is very wide, you may need to put up a partition wall to create the perfect space. By doing this, you have complete control over the size and shape of your wardrobe.

The first step to creating a small walk-in wardrobe that suits your budget, style and space is to do plenty of research. Looking at a range of designs and layouts will help you decide:

- What style of wardrobe door you like
- How many walls you'd like to store clothes against
- The type of wardrobe interiors you prefer
- How you can make the most of your space.

There are a huge range of sliding doors and room dividers on the market to help you create a walk-in wardrobe in your self-build, no matter how big the space is.

Once you've chosen wardrobe panels that suit your space and style, you can start thinking about the type of walk-in wardrobe interior you want.

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



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## How to build a slatted fence

For Christine and Jan of Little House on the Corner, a fence had never been much of a priority – whilst people could, of course, look over their wall and into their garden, they weren't too bothered. But they knew that it couldn't stay like that forever, so after considering many different options (and comparing what felt like hundreds of different prices), they opted to build their own slatted fence. Here, they talk i-build through the process.

Of course we considered installing a standard-style fence but we wanted something slightly more contemporary looking. Weirdly, we think that building our fence from scratch probably wasn't more involved than if we'd installed ready-made fence panels. I know that it sounds mad, but the part of this project that took longest was to install the fence posts. Nailing all of the slats to the posts only took about four-hours and I don't think that we would have been much faster if we'd fitted ready-made panels.

### 1 Dig holes

Measure the distance between the posts (ours are 1.2m from centre-to-centre) as exactly as you can and dig your hole. We ended up having to adjust a few that weren't exactly where they had to be.

We used a fence post digger which worked well, but don't underestimate the strength needed to use it, especially as the hole gets deeper.

Because we were building the fence close to the wall, we also had to remove bits of the foundations

with our hammer drill. It wasn't difficult to do but just meant that it took us extra time to get each hole dug to a depth of around 60cm.

### 2 Paint all timber

Because of all of the gaps between the slats, painting everything before you install it is much easier than painting it later.

### 3 Install the first fence post

Throw a handful of gravel into the hole (it'll help with drainage) and place a fence post into the hole and measure, measure and measure again.

You want to make sure it's the right height, and level on all sides.

Then nail three pieces of timber offcuts to the base to keep it in position, fill the hole with some water and add the postcrete. Don't even think about trying to level the post after adding the postcrete – it dries super fast and you just won't have enough time.

### 4 Install all remaining posts

Cut yourself a piece of timber which is the length of the distance between the posts (centre-to-

centre) plus the width of one post. For us, this was  $1.20\text{m} + 75\text{mm} = 1.275\text{m}$ . Attach it to the first fence post with a clamp making sure that the edge of the batten is flush with the outer edge of your fence post.

Place the second fence post into the hole (don't forget the gravel) and attach the other end of the timber batten to the outer edge of the not-yet-installed fence post.

Using this method for all posts will ensure that the distance between each post is exactly the same. It also makes it easier to level the post, as it's already held in place a bit and doesn't wobble around.

Then, as with the first post, check that everything is level and at the required height, before adding water and postcrete to the hole.

For us, checking the height was easy, as we were able to measure distances from our wall (which is level). If you don't have a reference point (your ground probably isn't level), you can use a long spirit level going from post to post (or a shorter spirit level on a flat piece of long timber), but I'd suggest adding a string line as a guide to work along.



1



2



3



4



5



6



## You will need:

- Post hole digger
- Nailer
- Spirit level
- Tape measure
- Clamps
- Paintbrush
- 2.4m fence posts
- Wooden slats
- Nails – make sure that you used galvanised ones otherwise they will rust in a matter of hours.
- Postcrete
- Paint

When setting out the post, we also used an offcut of timber that we placed between the fence post and wall. This way we knew we were keeping an equal distance from the wall with every post.

### 5 Post installation on a wall

Because of the layout of our wall, our first post is attached to our existing brick gate post and not fixed in postcrete like the other posts.

It was surprisingly easy to attach the post to the wall with the help of some fantastic little things called masonry bolts. We'd not heard of them before but basically, they allow you to drill into masonry without the need for wall plugs.

If you have a situation where you have to attach something to a wall, I'd definitely recommend them (We watched a few YouTube videos on how to attach a post to a wall and found this one super helpful).

### 6 Install fence panels

Most of the hard work is done now and attaching the fence panels was weirdly fun to do. It was so quick, especially compared to installing the fence posts, and you could really see the fence take shape in a matter of minutes.

Starting with the bottom row (again, we used our wall as a reference), attach the first piece of timber with your nailer. Make sure it's perfectly level, as this piece will be the guide for all others.

Once the full first row is installed, lay a placeholder piece on top of the panel. This will be the visible gap between the panels. We used some offcuts of wood that we still had lying around, but you could use anything as long as it's firm.

Then lay your second slat onto the placeholders, push it down firmly and nail into place. Remove the placeholder pieces and lay them on top of your new slatted panel piece. Add the next panel, nail it into place and repeat the process until you reach the top of your fence posts.

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



# Add sound and movement to your garden with a water feature

Whether you are trying to achieve a traditional, classical or contemporary style for your self-build garden, a water feature can add interest and intrigue. There are many varieties of water features available to suit all garden sizes and budgets.

**Y**ou may have an existing pond in need of an interesting focal point or maybe you are looking to create movement and sound in a courtyard garden – a water feature is a perfect solution for any garden setting.

Self-circulating fountains offer a water feature for any garden or landscape whether small or large. Available in a number of styles and sizes, self-circulating water features provide a beautiful focal point for small gardens, terraces and patios whilst looking equally at home nestled into the landscape of a larger garden.

## Romanesque fountain

This low-level-style self-circulating water feature adds an interesting focal point to both traditional and contemporary settings and is also suitable for interior schemes – bringing the garden into the home to achieve modern alfresco living.

## Napoli fountain

For a more elaborate self-circulating design, the Italianate style of a Napoli fountain is perfect for creating a statement focal point. Water cascades from a naturalistic bud into the top bowl before falling into the bottom bowl.

## Centrepiece fountains

Centrepiece fountains offer a versatile option for existing ponds or alternatively positioned within a pool surround. Whether you're looking for a fountain to be the focus of your new self-build garden or a subtle design, centrepiece fountains are available in many shapes and sizes.

## Something smaller

Smaller garden schemes may require something more modest. A smaller water feature can be positioned either adjacent to a pool or used as a centrepiece design to bring style and elegance to a classical or contemporary setting.

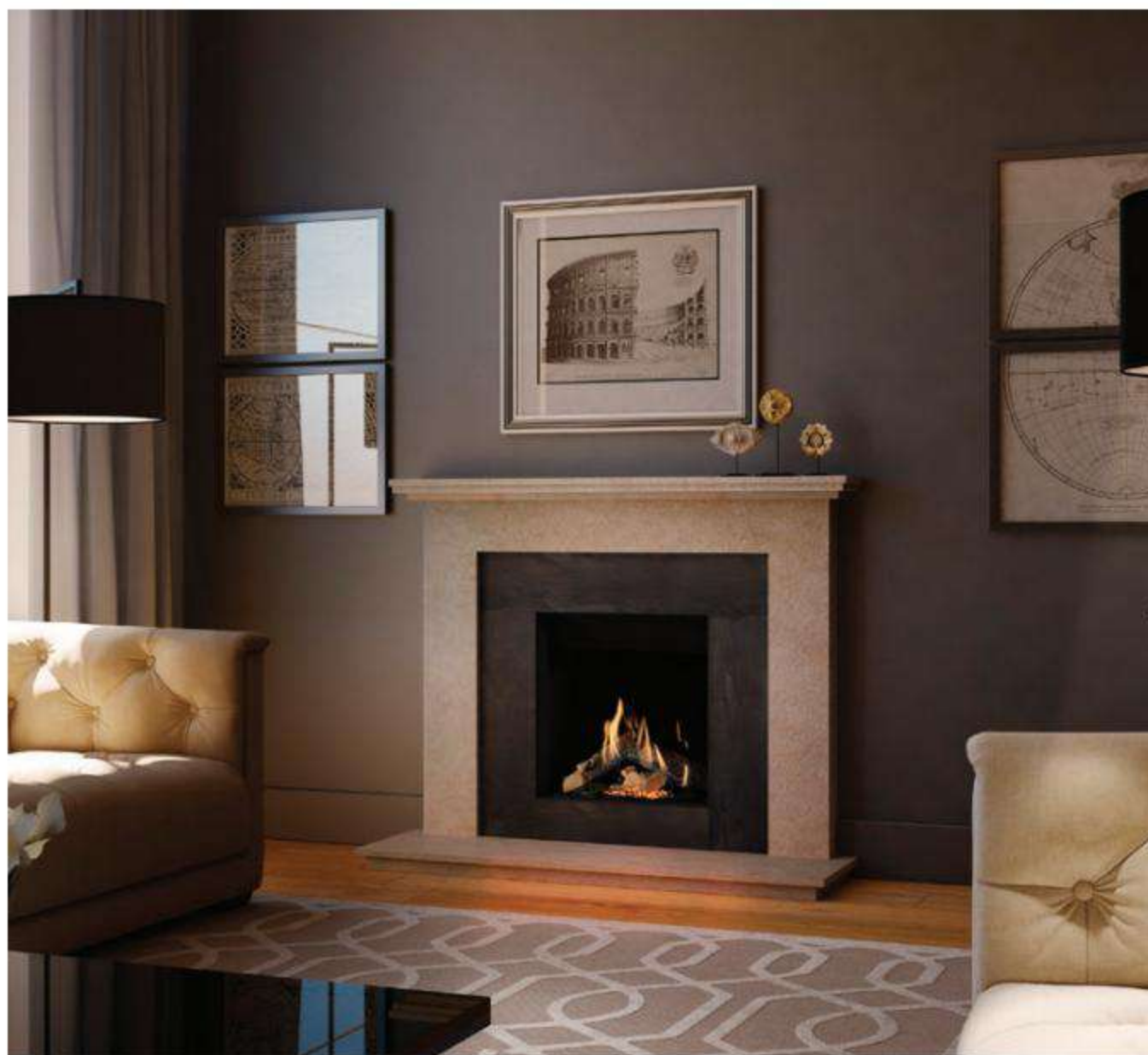
When space is an issue, a wall fountain may be better suited. There are many options available dependent on whether you are looking for a self-circulating design or a water feature positioned to add interest to a small pool or pond. A self-circulating design is ideal for adding interest to a patio or feature wall within a garden.

Many self-circulating designs are suitable for both exterior and interior, with many looking equally at home in an orangery or conservatory or positioned within in a garden or landscape.

Whether your garden is large or small there are many water features available to suit any garden design in traditional, classical and contemporary styles to suit your taste and budget. ■

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





# New DRU Global 55XT BF cavity wall gas fire

DRU Global gas fires make continental design and efficiency affordable to all UK homes.

**T**he most popular model in the range is the Global 55XT CF. It fits neatly into a Class 1 chimney and has an eye-catching log fire display.

Now, for homes with no chimney, the new Global 55XT BF cavity wall model is an ingenious way to transform a flat wall into an impressive fireplace, whilst saving valuable floor space.

It has an authentic 'camp fire' log set powered by the DRU Global TruFlame burner, which creates incredibly realistic high and dense flames and a comforting glow.

The interior of the fire is constructed from mirrored Ceraglass, which gives an impressive 3D-effect to the flames. These are regulated and adjusted using the programmable electronic remote control.

There is also the option of Clear View glass, which closely replicates the effect of an open fire. And with a maximum heat output of 3.2kW, it will keep an average-size living room warm without the need for additional central heating.

## Unique cavity wall installation

With its unique compact engine, it can be installed directly into an external facing brick wall, with no need for a false chimney breast and minimal building work. This means it can be incorporated into new-build schemes as well as retrofit situations.

At only 255mm deep, it is the slimmest and most flexible gas fire in the DRU Global range, with a C energy rating and 77% efficiency, complying with the new Ecodesign directive.

This stunning fire can be completed using any fire surround you choose using a standard 3" (75mm) rebate.

The snorkel-shaped balanced flue is designed to create sufficient draught in the system to maintain the impressive flame picture. It is inserted through the cavity wall, ending in an unobtrusive terminal on the outside.

The result is an immaculate gas fire with a seamless finish. It takes up less floor space than ordinary gas fires and provides an elegant feature in the living room.

## Efficient use of heat

Unlike ordinary chimney-based gas fires, the Global 55XT has a closed combustion system, using air from outside the building for convection and expelling waste gases through its concentric flue. This results in safe, comfortable and efficient heating.

The DRU Global 55XT BF is available from approved DRU dealers throughout the UK. ■

[www.drufire.com](http://www.drufire.com)  
[info@drufire.co.uk](mailto:info@drufire.co.uk)  
 0161 793 8700





## Why harvest rainwater?

Water is a more precious resource than you may have thought in Britain. Although it appears we have an abundance due to our temperate, rainy climate, per capita, London has less drinking water than Istanbul or Madrid. Past droughts and hosepipe bans have proved that Britain's infrastructure simply cannot cope with our increasing population's demand for water.



The water authorities realise that the current infrastructure will not provide the required demand in the future and have started to offer incentives in some areas for new-build properties that install a rainwater harvesting system.

The Water Regulations Advisory Scheme (WRAS) is a conformance mark that demonstrates that an item complies with the

high standards set by the water authorities. When choosing the right system for your project, ensuring that the product is WRAS-approved is key to ensure that it has undergone rigorous testing and received approval by the water authorities.

The water collected from the roof can be used for toilets, the washing machine and anything within the garden i.e. irrigation and car washing.

By using a rainwater harvesting system you will:

- Typically half your domestic water consumption, saving over 100,000L per year for a family.
- Save 50% on your metered water bills.
- Make your home more environmentally-friendly, using rainwater rather than using mains water that has gone through an energy-intensive filtration process, and pumped from miles away just to flush your toilet or water your lawn.
- Increase your chances of receiving planning permission (as environmentally-friendly plans are looked upon favourably).
- Protect your garden in a hosepipe ban. (As harvested water is exempt).
- Benefit from non-chlorinated, limescale-free rainwater. Helping plants grow, preventing toilet pan stains and protecting washing machines, whilst reducing the amounts of detergents needed.
- Prevent flooding. Rainwater harvesting acts as storm attenuation or SuDS. Alleviating stress on public drains.
- Benefit from surprisingly low running costs. RainWater Harvesting Ltd's award-winning Rain Director system is so efficient it costs less than 1p per person per day to run.
- Have minimal maintenance, typically just one visual filter check per year is necessary. Nothing needs replacing, nothing requires servicing.

RainWater Harvesting is proud to be one of the UK's leading manufacturers and suppliers of rainwater harvesting equipment.

During the last decade, its name has become synonymous within the industry for high-quality, technologically-advanced, British-made products. Its products have always differentiated themselves within the industry, with intelligent design and high-quality manufacture. Because the company engineers an original concept, develops it through CAD, tooling, build and takes the end product to market, nobody understands the products better.

The company's advancements such as the Rain Director and easy-to-install shallow dig tanks have made rainwater harvesting a better idea than ever. Making systems easier and more cost-effective to install, the smarter and vastly more energy-efficient to use.

Systems are provided as full 'turn key' kits, ready to install, delivered to your site with no hassles or unexpected extras. By holding all products ex-stock in the company's 60,000ft<sup>2</sup> premises, delivery is typically achieved within three to five days. ■

[www.rainwaterharvesting.co.uk](http://www.rainwaterharvesting.co.uk)  
[sales@rainwaterharvesting.co.uk](mailto:sales@rainwaterharvesting.co.uk)  
 01733 405111



# Presteigne timber frame manufacturer goes for gold

Specialist timber frame manufacturer, designer and supplier, Frame Technologies, has been awarded the highest possible accolade by the UK's leading structural timber body. Under a new protocol, Frame Technologies has been the first timber frame specialist contractor to be independently audited for the Structural Timber Association's (STA's) Membership and Quality Standards Scheme – STA Assure. The Presteigne-based company achieved 'Gold' status.

As the leading organisation representing the structural timber sector, the STA has recently advanced this scheme, which is designed to benefit both clients and members by promoting the differing accreditations and quality standards held by individual STA member companies. Offering reassurances to self-builders and the wider construction community that members meet or even exceed current legislation and regulatory requirements – STA Assure has been upgraded from self-assessment to an independently-audited scheme.

STA Assure has established three levels of membership: Gold, Silver and Bronze. The two top tiers have received formal

recognition from six of the industry's leading structural warranty and building control bodies. Manufacturing members of the STA, are put through the rigorous auditing process to ensure clients receive assurances that the company implements stringent management processes to ensure greater control over quality, productivity and predictability.

Managing Director of Frame Technologies, Simon Orrells, said: "As members of the STA, we follow industry best practice and our structural timber solutions are manufactured to exacting standards in our own factory in Presteigne, Wales.

"I am very proud that Frame Technologies has achieved Gold status in the STA Assure Membership and Quality Standards Scheme.

Every one of our self-build projects is unique, one of a kind and undeniably special. This is potentially the largest investment that our clients will ever make and, therefore, selecting their design and construction partner is a significant decision. This achievement will offer confidence to self-builders who are considering using one of our systems, knowing that we have been independently audited and come out on top."

Frame Technologies offers a wide range of timber frame services for self-builders, from full supply-and-erect packages to supply-only. With an extensive product portfolio, Frame Technologies is at the forefront of innovations in timber frame construction – delivering value, energy-efficient and environmentally-sound, solutions. Offering numerous benefits – timber frame construction is rapidly gaining traction within the self-build community. Speed and quality of construction, combined with improved levels of project efficiency and vast reductions in ongoing running costs, are compelling benefits to influence self-builders' specification decisions.

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



# Milbank Concrete Products launches revolutionary 'WarmFloor Pro'

Milbank Concrete Products based in Essex is one of the UK's leading manufacturers of precast concrete products with a focus on exceptional customer service.

Throughout the design, manufacturing, delivery and installation stages, Milbank offers one of the most comprehensive and professional service packages, providing a range of precast concrete products including: balconies, beam and block flooring, bespoke concrete products, ground beams, hollowcore flooring, helical stairs and stadia products.

Following on from market research and the identification of the need for an affordable, cost-effective and efficient thermal floor arrangement, Milbank Concrete Products has recently launched its new and improved insulated concrete flooring solution, WarmFloor Pro.

Reduced initial construction costs and an increase in energy savings make WarmFloor Pro a compelling alternative to a standard beam and block floor. In combination with its BBA certification and A+ Green Guide rating, WarmFloor Pro is proving to be a must-have addition to any new, eco-friendly development where keeping heating costs low is paramount.

WarmFloor Pro is suitable for almost any structure, but is most commonly used in housing, from single dwellings to complete housing developments. It offers a simple, cost-effective, concrete insulated flooring solution to self-builders and construction professionals alike. Without the need for any specialist tools or skills, installation of WarmFloor Pro is efficient and streamlined whilst minimising waste and emission rates.

WarmFloor Pro works by combining rigid insulation modules (EPS blocks) manufactured from lightweight closed cell expanded polystyrene which is laid in between prestressed concrete beams (either 155 or 225mm deep) with an EPS top sheet, membrane and concrete screed. If required, underfloor heating can be incorporated with the pipework attaching to the EPS panels before the concrete screed is applied.

As every building is different, Milbank is well equipped to design your floor to achieve the specific targeted U-values (reaching as low as 0.07W/m<sup>2</sup>K) together with the structural layout of the floor to suit. Milbank then manufactures the

## WarmFloor Pro benefits

- Easy to install – does not require any specialist tools or skills.
- Quick to install – each EPS panel is the equivalent length of five standard concrete blocks.
- Cost-effective – WarmFloor Pro is designed to save you money. Faster installation speeds combined with reduced waste and excavation removal allow for an increase in overall savings.
- Bespoke – a wide range of EPS panel depths and grades are available to provide the most economical solution for your development whilst maintaining the highest levels of thermal values.
- Sustainable – WarmFloor Pro will last the lifetime of the building whilst continuing to maintain its exceptional thermal performance values.
- Clean, safe and easy to handle – lightweight EPS panels only weigh around 2Kg.
- Underfloor heating compatible – heating pipework is simply held in place using plastic pegs that push into the EPS panels.
- Proven technology – now in use for over 10 years.
- Industry compliant – Milbank WarmFloor Pro is BBA-certified and has an A+ green guide rating.



concrete components and supplies the materials directly to you. WarmFloor Pro is currently available on a supply-only or supply-and-installation and installation basis using the company's vastly experienced installation teams.

[www.milbank.co.uk](http://www.milbank.co.uk)  
[estimating@milbank.co.uk](mailto:estimating@milbank.co.uk)  
 01787 223931

# Historic castle updated with Younique public toilets

Elvaston Castle, Derbyshire, is a Gothic Revival masterpiece. Designed by James Wyatt in the early 1800s, the original house dates back to 1633. Today, both the buildings and gardens are considered to be of special architectural and historic interest; the main castle building is Grade II\* and many other buildings within the Grade II\* registered park and garden are Grade II Listed buildings.

Nestled in over 321 acres of parkland and historical gardens, Elvaston Castle and its grounds were purchased by Derbyshire County Council in 1968 and it was the first country park to open in the UK. As part of a phased masterplan for the estate, the castle is undergoing a major redevelopment plan over the next 10 years to make it more sustainable and accessible. As part of this, the council specified Younique by Formica Group's digitally rendered panels for the washroom doors in the main castle building.

The public toilets were run-down and in desperate need of updating since their installation in the 1970s. Derbyshire County Council's conservation, heritage and design service set about designing the new washrooms, inspired by the castle's Gothic Hall, to improve the visitor access and experience.

The design concept incorporates the installation of a new sanitary pod in the original building with a back-to-back arrangement of water closets. Removing the dividing breeze block wall ensures



more light enters the space, helping to brighten the washroom. The removal of the wall also reveals the high ceilings and original cornices of the building, allowing visitors to appreciate the original layout of the room which was once the servants' quarters.

The Younique by Formica Group service provides the ultimate flexibility allowing architects and designers to create a unique pattern or design, capture a photograph or corporate logo in Formica laminate. The service offers both screen and digital print solutions to ensure the optimum replication of any design.

[www.formica.com](http://www.formica.com)  
[samples.uk@formica.com](mailto:samples.uk@formica.com)  
 0191 622 0096

# Gaia underfloor heating warms garden room in super-efficient home

An ambitious project by a Wiltshire couple, wanting to convert an unused void beneath their ultra-modern home into a comfortable garden room, has included the installation of the Hydronic underfloor heating system from Gaia Climate Solutions.

When the super energy-efficient home in Marlborough was constructed in 2014, the UFH specialist was contracted to lay its Hydronic pipework throughout the 4000ft<sup>2</sup>, two-storey structure. Two years later, though, the owners decided to open out the space which was effectively a sub-basement built into the rising ground of their back garden; and again called on Gaia's expertise.

The project was made challenging not only by the earthworks and structural alterations required, but also the property's near-passive energy

performance with heating and hot water demands being met by an exhaust air source heat pump.

Owner Keith Fryer takes up the account: "The garden slopes quite steeply down to the back of the house and, although one area intended as a cinema room had been given a small window at high level, the space which backed onto the kitchen had no natural light and was an empty void.

"A central supporting wall had to be replaced and hundreds of tonnes of soil removed for us to open up the space with sliding doors but it now provides us with a 400ft<sup>2</sup> garden room, linking



to the kitchen, which we can use all year round. In terms of the heating, we approached Gaia as the original installer and were very impressed with their expertise, the layout detailing provided, and the competitiveness of the quote. We felt Gaia was the right company to go with, while the installation team did a really good job, coordinating with our other sub-contractors."

[www.gaia.co.uk](http://www.gaia.co.uk)  
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# ROUND WOOD of Mayfield

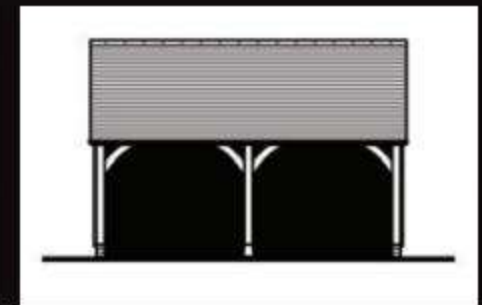
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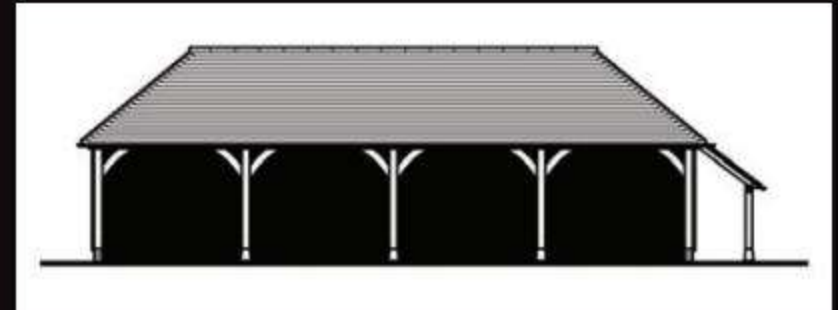
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## Best of both worlds with Caple's new DD935BK induction downdraft

With an all-in-one induction downdraft extractor hob, multi-award-winning Caple's new DD935BK is perfect for those who are looking for versatility from a major appliance in the kitchen. This model features 13 state-of-the-art power levels for keen cooks – 0-9, bake at 42°C, keep warm at 70°C, boil control at 94°C and a booster on every zone. However, what sets this induction hob apart is the high-performance downdraft extractor, which has been cleverly built into the centre of the hob. This features four speeds including a boost function with an automatic timer, which switches off 10 minutes after cooking has ended to help capture any remaining odour.



[www.caple.co.uk](http://www.caple.co.uk)  
0117 938 1900 [enquiries@caple.co.uk](mailto:enquiries@caple.co.uk)

## Your lighting solutions

If you are seeking to transform your home in a simple yet wholly artistic way true to your tastes, then consider relighting your home with Lighting Sensations. The lighting is designed to not only illuminate, but enhance the atmosphere of any environment. With access to a wide range of European and British lights, the company provides the best lighting facilities, aiming to provide beautiful and stunning lights that create relaxing and enchanting ambient moods. Whether it be for interior or exterior lighting, clients can turn to Lighting Sensations for innovative, stylistic and cost-effective ways to light up their space, their way.



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## TorFloor RdB chosen to heat renovated 1820s house

A recent renovation project carried out on an early 19th century townhouse in London's Holland Park area, has made use of the innovative new TorFloor RdB system, manufactured by underfloor heating specialist, OMNIE. The specification was the result of the project team's desire to reduce sound transmission between the different levels of the building, while taking advantage of the excellent heat delivery and other physical performance characteristics for which TorFloor has become renowned over the years. The RdB version is an ideal means of deriving optimum performance from heat pumps or a high-performance gas boiler. TorFloor RdB is a dry install where the panel doubles as the structural decking.



[www.omnie.co.uk](http://www.omnie.co.uk) 01392 363605  
[projects@omnie.co.uk](mailto:projects@omnie.co.uk)

## Vintage design with modern functionality – stunning new pendant hoods from BLANCO UK

BLANCO UK has launched the Pendant range of island hoods in answer to today's demands for the ultimate in kitchen focal points. Popular in modern kitchen design, Pendant hoods require no ducting as they are set up to recirculate the air. They also create an impressive focal point in the kitchen, provide ambient mood lighting, and look particularly effective in pairs over larger cooking areas or just dual sited over a single hob and island worktop. BLANCO's Pendant hood comes in five colours – Pewter, Matt Black, White, Rust and Copper – in an aluminium painted finish and has four speeds, operated manually and by remote control.



[www.blanco.co.uk](http://www.blanco.co.uk)  
01923 635200 [info@blanco.co.uk](mailto:info@blanco.co.uk)

## 'Belgium doors' from SWA members soar in popularity

Recently, members of the Steel Window Association have reported a resurgence in the popularity of steel framed entrance screens and partitions; normally featuring a pair of double doors, flanked by fixed lights, and referred to as Belgium Doors. Darren Lloyd of Govette Windows, an SWA member, reports: "We, and a number of other association members, have been asked to quote on these types of screens – for both interior and exterior use – over the last couple of years; and it seems they are really starting to make a comeback. This has applied to both new-build and refurbishment projects. We can compete on both price and performance with the steel option offering far better security and enhanced light transmission."



[www.steel-window-association.co.uk](http://www.steel-window-association.co.uk) 0208 543 2841  
[info@steel-window-association.co.uk](mailto:info@steel-window-association.co.uk)

## Ipswich Building Society launches revised self-build discount mortgage product

Ipswich Building Society has launched a new self-build two-year discount mortgage product offering attractive rates and an innovative 'reducing early repayment charge' feature. Available for new-builds, conversions and those undertaking a knock down and rebuild project – for both purchase and remortgage applicants – the new product is at the society's standard variable rate, currently 5.49%, with a discount of 1.39% giving a current pay rate of 4.10% for two years from completion (5.4% APRC). A completion fee of £1000 applies and loans are available up to 80% LTV, with a maximum loan of £500,000. An application fee of £199, CHAPs fee of £35 and a tiered valuation fee – based on final build value – apply.



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