

PINK

STRIPES

Autumn 2021





A warm welcome

Welcome to Pink Stripes Magazine, a magazine brought to you by Eleven Consulting Group, home to Studio Eleven Architecture, Eleven Consultants and Ralph Charman Associates.

As we enter the later stages of 2021, we look forward to the world returning to a little bit of normality and we cannot wait to see you at our upcoming exhibitions and shows.

We hope this magazine fills you with information and inspiration for your project as we share with you some of our favourite projects from the past few years as well as sharing our teams' top tips for your self-build and renovation projects.

As a group, we ensure we deliver your vision for your project. As a multi-disciplinary design Practice with an in-house team of architectural designers, engineers and energy consultants, we can collectively create a design solution for any concept you can dream.

If you would like any more information, please feel free to get in touch and see how we could help you design your dream home.

We look forward to hearing from you soon...



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What is the difference between an Architectural Technologist and an Architect?

Whether you've made the decision to extend your home, self-build, construct a commercial building, or embark on a residential building scheme you will need the skills and expertise of an Architect or a Chartered Architectural Technologist.

Their job is to help you through the process from design inception all the way to the completion of your project.

What is the difference between the two?

Architect

The term "Architect" originates from the Latin architectus, a derivative of the Greek (arkhi-, chief + teckton, building) – Chief Builder. To be called an Architect in the UK you need to be registered with the Architect's Registration Board (ARB), an industry body protecting the interests of the public. Once an Architect is registered with the ARB, they must adhere to a code of conduct. They must also have adequate

professional indemnity insurance. Some Architects will go on to register with RIBA – The Royal Institute of British Architects. They also have a code of conduct members must adhere to. To be able to become a member of RIBA, an Architect must be registered with the ARB, in order to register they must have completed 7 years of training.

Architects can provide you with the knowledge and skills to see your project through from design concept to completion.

Chartered Architectural Technologist

A Chartered Architectural Technologist must become a member of The Chartered Institute of Architectural Technologists (CIAT). Once an Architectural Technologist becomes a member they also have to follow a strict code of conduct set by CIAT and have professional indemnity insurance. It takes an Architectural Technologist around 5-6 years to qualify. In order to become a member of CIAT, and use the letters MCIAT after their name, an Architectural Technologist needs to either complete an accredited degree, Higher National Diploma or the



S/NVQ4 in Architectural Technology. This is then followed by practical and evidence of experience and a demonstration of competence at a formal interview.

Architectural Technologists can also provide a range of packages using their skills and knowledge to guide you from design conception to the realisation of your project.

In essence, both professionals are more than capable of designing and delivering a completed project. In fact, their skills complement each other.

Architectural Technologists study the science behind architecture. They will design a building applying their knowledge of building science, engineering and technology in architecture.

Architects are design focused. They take a more holistic, artistic approach to designing a building.

That being said, in order to be a good Architect or Architectural Technologist, a professional would need to have a wealth of knowledge and skill in all of the above. There are Architects who approach design from a technical point of view, and Architectural Technologists designing projects on the cutting edge of architectural design.

So how do you choose who designs your project?

When considering which Practice you wish to use, research their previous work, meet with them to discuss your needs, ideas and budget and then decide what's right for you.

Check they are registered, have the relevant qualifications and adequate insurance.

For Architects, you can check they are registered on the Architect register at www.arb.org.uk

To check if your Architectural Technologist is a member of CIAT (MCIAT), check their register at www.ciat.org.uk ■

Dutch courage

Deep in the heart of the Fens, Nathan and Amye set out on a quest to build their forever home on a plot of land they had purchased, but they knew planners had refused planning permission on this plot before. It was going to be a challenge, but Nathan and Amye are not ones to shy away from this, knowing when they set their minds to it, together, they can achieve anything.





Purchasing the plot after years of looking at properties and never finding the right fit, Nathan has his heart set on an agricultural style building that could cater for his growing family, as well as an annexe for his parents.

Having worked with Studio 11 Architecture on previous developments, Nathan knew they had a strong reputation for gaining planning permission on challenging sites, so approached us to design his vision.

Kris, lead designer on this project had grown up in the area and knew it well, looking around the site, saw potential for drawing inspiration from the Dutch barn style architecture in the local area, built in the 1930's by the Land Settlement Association, bringing poverty-stricken families from the cities and giving them the opportunity to build a better and prosperous life on the masses of arable land in the Fens.

Merging this inspiration, with Nathan and Amye's desire for a bespoke Agricultural style building, Studio 11 Architecture got to work on designing a truly unique self-build project.

Kris and his team designed a vast, open plan space spanning over a footprint of 229sqm with double height vaulted ceilings in the living area and pods over-hanging the side of the building for the children's bedrooms. A steel frame was chosen to accommodate the couples desire for open plan living, meaning there are no visible supports and the entirety of the downstairs is a vast, open space. A piling solution was adopted to hold the sheer weight of the bespoke frame.

Planning permission was granted for a zero carbon self-build home on 6th March 2019 and work started on site in the September of that year.

Nathan had an ambitious target and budget for this build, drawing on his knowledge, contacts, resources and experience in the construction industry, he set out to complete the project within a year on a budget of £500,000 for the build.

Covid-19 hit during the build, making their challenging deadline even harder, however, Nathan and Amye were able to move in just two months after their ambitious target with work carrying on throughout lockdown and Amye sourcing furniture for their new home online. "We were very clear about the look we wanted which made picking things like the flooring and Kitchen really easy."

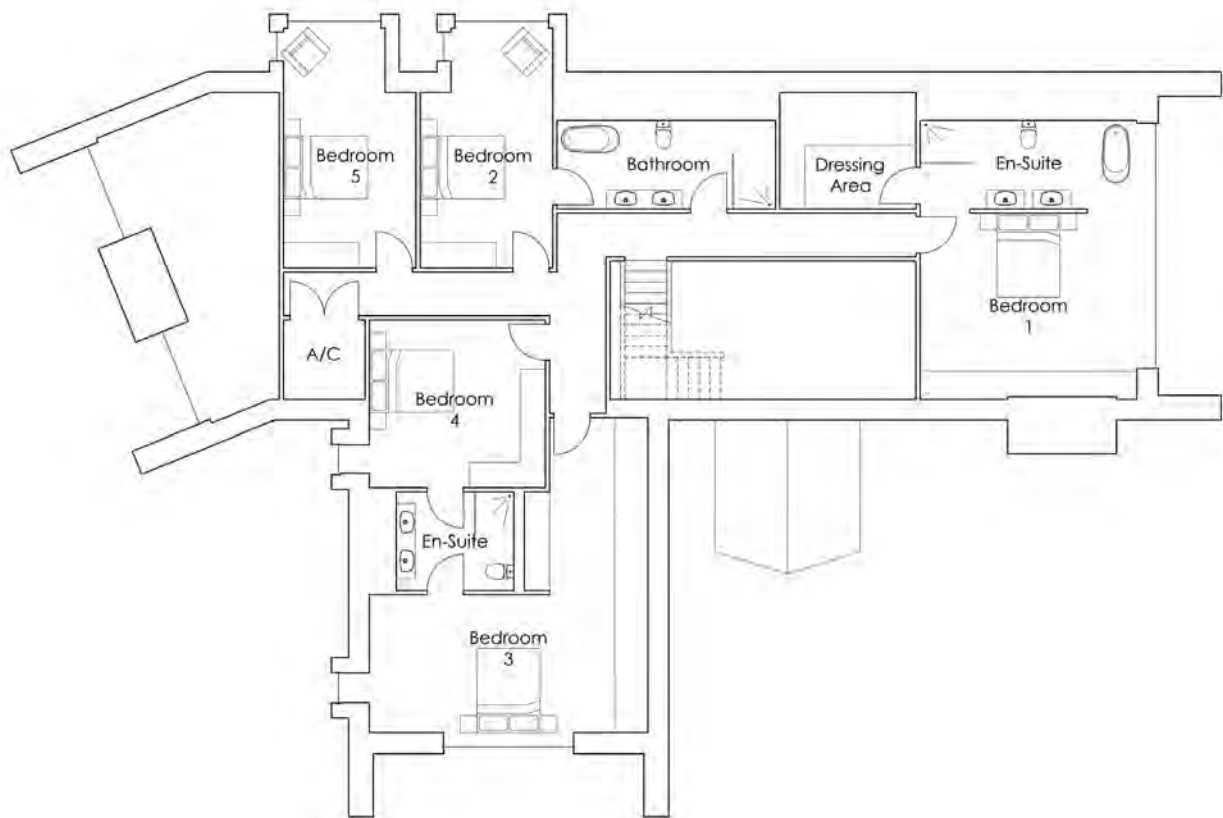
In the episode of Grand Designs, Amye jokes of her fears her colourful choice of dining chairs could look like "clown furniture" however, she is happy with her choice now they are in the heart of their home "They are a bit of fun in a house that is so black on the outside and so white on the inside" "they are completely mood enhancing – the colours make us smile as soon as we walk through the front door."

The space on the Ground Floor is free flowing apart from service areas, housing the Plant Room, Pantry and Utility which are cleverly hidden behind sliding barn-style doors.

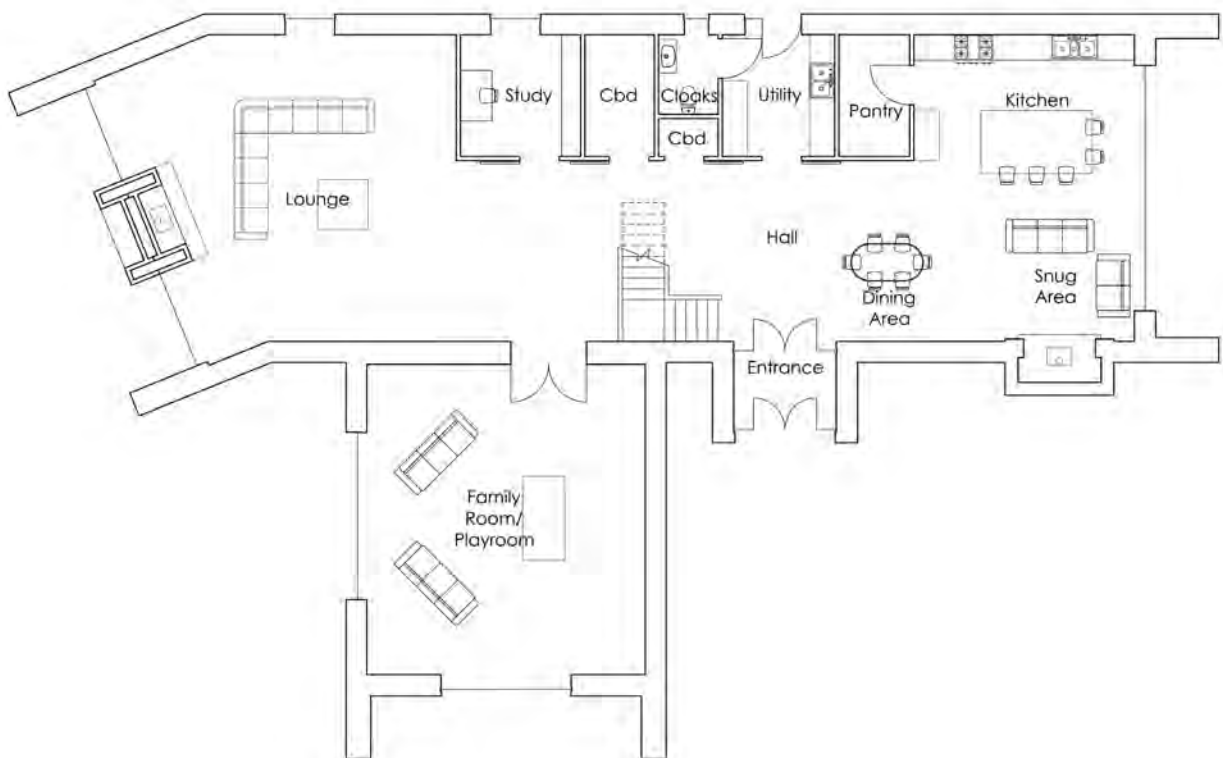
A bespoke steel and oak staircase follows the angle of the apex up to the first floor where Amye and Nathans suite houses a custom made platform bed with a half-height wall that doubles as a headboard and a touch of privacy in their open plan En Suite. A glazed wall looking out on to the stunning Lincolnshire countryside is also where Amye chose to place her free-standing bath – the epitome of opulence and luxury.







First floor plan



Ground floor plan

Nathans older children have an entire wing to themselves where both of their bedrooms access an En Suite and Niamh's Nursery cantilevers over the edge of the building in a lead clad pod. The older children's bedrooms have smaller pods where they can walk into their full height windows with views to the gardens.

The building is filled with interesting angles, making fun spaces. One of which is the void on the landing where the children can stand and look down into the living room, spying on their parents after bedtime. The design of the building allows for both single height and double height spaces on both the first and ground floor, giving the building a light, bright and spacious feel in what is already a large space, but the angles of the roof also give the building some smaller areas perfect for creating snugs and storage, perfects for family life.

The family have a large garden complete with play area and a swimming pool, where baby Niamh spent lock down learning to swim with her parents.

The large chimney breast in the living room has full height doors either side of it leading out on the patio area where the family have a comfortable seating area, where the large chimney also doubles up as a fire pit, making it a warm and inviting space for all the family to come together.

"We have watched this house grow from the ground up. It's huge and open but we don't see that on a day-to-day basis. What we see is our baby, our dog, our furniture and our photographs, and that just makes it feel like home." – Amye (read more about this project on page 57) ■

Floor Area: 466m²

Number of Bedrooms: 5

Location: Low Fulney, Lincolnshire

Construction Method: Steel Frame with Timber Infill Panels

Designer: Studio 11 Architecture

Structural Engineer: Waldeck Consulting

Planning Consultant: Parker Planning Services

Eco Features: Zero Carbon Home, Insulation Improvements, Ground Source Heat Pump, Mechanical Ventilation Heat Recovery, Photovoltaic Modules with Battery Storage

Completion: 2021





To move, extend or transform?

You love your home, the area, the local schools, maybe even the neighbours!

So what happens when you've outgrown your home or it no longer suits your way of living? Do you look to move and leave behind the memories, the wallpaper responsible for the three day fall out last spring? The garden you've cultivated? The windows you lusted for a year before they were installed? Or do you opt to keep all of that and make your home bigger and change the things you have fallen out of love with?

Extending and transforming your home opens up a world of possibility. It can give you the opportunity to create the perfect space for you and your family. New bedrooms, an open plan living space. The bi-fold doors every house on Pinterest has, looking out onto the garden. Sounds like the perfect solution, but where do you start?

How do you decide what you want? How do you apply for planning permission? Do you even need planning permission? Who is going to design this and make sure it works for you?

Hiring the right people for the job, is fundamental, if you choose to take

advantage of the full capacity of your chosen professional's skills and experience your extension or house transformation can be relatively simple as well as giving you everything you aspire to achieve.

Firstly, you need to work out your budget and establish your needs. From there, research and find a designer to help you achieve your goal. It is advisable to meet with more than one and explore your options. In your meeting, you will discuss your budget and limitations, consider whether you will need planning permission and time scales. A good designer will challenge you to evaluate how you currently use your home to establish whether it is possible to repurpose spaces within the house before considering extending.

It's worth noting that even if your extension or transformation doesn't require planning permission, planning authorities still require notification of your project.

When making the decision to appoint a designer, compare their experience and previous work, check all of your quotes are like for like and most importantly, make sure you are comfortable with the Practice, the person you will be working with and can establish a working rapport with them. You are going to be working with your chosen



designer and putting your trust in them to deliver your project. A good working relationship is vital.

Architects and Architectural Technologists can offer a full service to take all the stress out of building your extension or transforming your home. It means your appointed professional will take care of everything for you. Although it may seem like a significant investment upfront, experience has shown the overall cost of the project is much less than if the project is unsupervised. You only have to watch an episode of Grand Designs to see how quickly costs can spiral when home owners take on the challenge themselves.

Once you have instructed your designer, they will carry out a survey and complete drawings of your existing home. From these drawings and your design brief, they will then design your concept scheme, meet with you and develop the design until you are happy to move on.

Once the design is fixed, your designer will notify the planning department or make a planning application if necessary. Upon receipt of planning approval, your designer will then move on to the preparation of construction drawings and submit them to Building Control for approval.

Given that most modern extensions and house transformations include open plan living spaces, it is highly likely that you will require the service of a Structural Engineer who will have input on the construction drawings and work with your designer to pull together a cohesive design solution for your project.

Now we get to the fun part.... Your designer will meet with you to prepare your Building Specification and Schedule Document. You will get to specify your fixtures and finishes along with the general construction of your extension or transformation.

This document is then sent for tender, contractors hand-picked by your designer will give a quotation and your consultant will go through the range of them with you. Your designer will appoint the contractor you choose and administer the contract to completion.

Once your building is completed, your designer will inspect the building and instruct your contractor to carry out any remedial work to ensure the building is completed to the highest standard. There is a time period, usually around 6 months, written into the contract to completion where the contractor is liable for any other remedial works.



Near the end of this time period, your designer will make one final visit to ensure there are no further works needed.

It is also worth mentioning if you are funding your project through finance, your broker may require a Professional Consultant Certificate, as long as your professional designer is Chartered and has adequate professional indemnity insurance, they should be able to provide those for you.

Transforming or extending your home can be a good way to achieve the

space and feel of your dream home without having to compromise the location of your home.

It can also be a way of getting everything you wish for, that you may not be able to achieve by moving.

A good designer will always strive to push the boundaries, and by working together, you may achieve more than you ever anticipated and better than any house you could have possibly moved to, because its design is tailored to your needs and you have created it. ■

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Does the new Paragraph 80 mean it will be easier to build your dream home in the open countryside?

With 18 months of staying home behind us, and working from home now the norm, many of us are re-assessing where and how we want to live, for those of us who have been cooped up in a city pad, with only a balcony and a shared garden the size of a postage stamp, the idea of open space has in the past been somewhat of a dream, with planning policy making it an ambition of only those with the means to take significant financial risk to argue their case on why they should be allowed to live in the open countryside.

It all started back in 1997 when the then Labour Government introduced the Country House Clause known as Gummery Law which in its earliest form stated: *“An isolated new house in the open countryside may also exceptionally be justified if it is clearly of the highest quality, is truly outstanding in terms of its architecture and landscape design, and will significantly enhance its immediate setting and wider surroundings. This means that each generation would have the opportunity to add to the tradition of the Country House which had done so much to enhance the English countryside.”*

Alongside the Planning Policy, a Planning Policy Guidance Document was prepared (known as PPG7) which outlined the relevant criteria to meet the country house clause.

Successive Governments altered the guidance document until it was finally replaced by Paragraph 55 of The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF).

More recently, with updates to the NPPF, the essence of the policy has remained but the paragraph references updated. However, the latest version of the NPPF and Paragraph 80 does have some subtle amendments which has the entirety of the Architectural and planning world a little excited.

The criteria has changed with the Government trying to increase and improve housing provision nationally.

But what does this mean for the city dweller dreamers, families wanting more space and those who have always dreamed of living in the countryside but don't have a family farm to add to?



Paragraph 80 states:

“Planning Policies and decisions should avoid the development of isolated homes in the countryside unless one or more of the following circumstances apply.

- A) There is an essential need for a rural worker, including those taking majority control of a farm business, to live permanently at or near their place of work in the countryside;
- B) The development would represent the optimal viable use of a heritage asset or would be appropriate enabling development to secure the future of heritage assets;
- C) The development would re-use redundant or disused buildings and enhance its immediate setting;
- D) The development would involve the sub-division of an existing residential building; or
- E) The design is of exceptional quality, in that it:
 - Is truly outstanding, reflecting the highest standards in architecture and would help to raise the standards of design more generally in rural areas; and
 - Would significantly enhance its immediate setting, and be sensitive to the defining characteristics of the local area.”



Let's break this down.....

Paragraph 80 (a) relates to people who are working in the countryside so they can live where they work, examples of this would be farm owners or managers, people working within forestry or horticulture.

Paragraph 80 (b) is in relation to the retention and maintenance of a heritage asset or listed building.

Paragraph 80 (c) relates to the reuse of redundant buildings which are likely to be former agricultural barns, stables etc and is a policy which sits alongside the recently introduced Class Q permitted development rights which allow for the conversion of agricultural barns into dwellings without the need for full planning permission.

Paragraph 80 (d) relates to turning one large home into smaller homes or apartments, possibly a mansion or an old stately home

Paragraph 80 (e) is the paragraph that has us all a little excited. In the latest edition of the NPPF, the wording of this paragraph has been re-written to exclude the word "innovative" in an attempt to clarify the requirements for a new home in the countryside which are as follows:

The design is of exceptional quality

Meaning the design of your home will need to stand out from the crowd. However, it can be very difficult to define what "exceptional quality" of design is and the interpretation of this can be very subjective across different locations and different Local Authorities.

What is clear is that both building design and landscape design need to work together to create an exceptional design. Any Paragraph 80 home needs to sit in harmony within the landscape and its immediate surroundings. One option for demonstration of exceptional design would be to use a Design Review Panel which is an independent advisory body made up of built environment professionals. A Design

Review Panel offers impartial advice and guidance on design issues and is a very good way of demonstrating to Planning Officers the exceptional design of your Paragraph 80 home.

Be truly outstanding

Whilst the innovation aspect of Paragraph 80 (e) has now been removed, this does not mean you cannot use innovation as a way to be truly outstanding and consideration should be given to sustainability methods, construction methods and the buildings response to climate change.

Reflecting the highest standards in architecture

Again, this is quite subjective but the essence of this is to ensure your home is truly bespoke and designed for the site and its local area.

Would help to raise standards of design more generally in local areas

The question here becomes how do we define the local area? Is it the nearest settlement, district or wider? In our experience, this is defined by the Local Authority but a reasonable interpretation would be the District. Basically, if you want to build your home in the open countryside, it has to be better than anything else in the District, and raise the bar. There is a very good reason why only a couple of hundred Paragraph 80 applications are made each year and of those, around only 50% are approved.

Would significantly enhance its immediate setting

This means the design of your home must talk to the landscape in which it is set. It must be designed with consideration and compassion to what is around it. A great way of helping with this would be to enlist the skills of a Landscape Architect to evaluate what would work best for your site.





One thing to remember is that not all settings are of a high quality and the introduction of a new home may, in fact in its self, significantly improve the immediate setting assuming that the home is designed to a high standard.

Be sensitive to the defining characteristics of the local area

The building should respond to the local area, firstly, you will need to define what they are, it could be that there is a certain style of architecture your design could nod to or locally sourced materials. In all cases, you will need to be able to demonstrate this to the local authority.

With all of this in mind, unfortunately there is no magic formula to ensure your home will be approved. A lot of the above is very subjective and is dependent upon the opinion of the Planning Officers and Local Authority planning committee members.

It is important that you engage the right consultants with the right expertise to argue your case well and trust they will design the right space for you.

Striking the balance between satisfying the requirements of the NPPF and designing the home you have dreamt of can be a very difficult task.

There may have to be compromise along the way to ensure you stand the best chance of getting an approval.

Taking on a Paragraph 80 House is still not for the faint of heart. However, the rewards are substantial. You can leave behind your cramped city pad or your conventional 3 bed semi in the suburbs and live the dream in your one off dream house in the rolling hills of the countryside. The road to making it happen may just be as bumpy long and windy as the single track road to your new driveway with lots of applications going all the way to appeal.

The removal of the word “innovative” may be one less hurdle to jump, but homes in the open countryside remain one of the biggest challenges architectural practices face. ■



Pretty in zinc

“Bekstone House is special. We dreamt about an individual build combining warmth, space and simplicity. Using our favourite elements during the planning stages we have achieved a captivating lifestyle. Self-building our forever home meant we could connect with a sustainable world bringing the indoor-outdoor living holiday vibe into a relaxed home life. This house is now our home.” – Caroline Sadler







Caroline and Jason, along with their two teenage children had always loved the idea of creating a home specifically tailored to suit their lifestyle and love of Californian living.

"We have been on holiday a number of times to California, and we love the lifestyle out there and the style of architecture, which is really modern. We decided to try and recreate that feeling when building our own house," Says Caroline.

Their Journey started in 2015 when they approached Studio 11 Architecture to design their dream home on a challenging plot in their hometown of Crowland, Lincolnshire. The couple purchased the plot after cycling past it, and tracking down the owner to strike a deal as they realised the potential the plot had, despite it already having a refusal for planning.

Caroline and Jason knew they had a difficult journey ahead of them to achieve planning permission *"We wanted to find a young, ambitious firm of designers who would not be fazed by a site outside of the current development boundary with no planning permission. Jason read an article in a local magazine about Studio 11, and how they had successfully gained planning permission on a difficult site, so we knew they would be perfect for our project,"* Caroline explains.

Creating their dream home was an easy process for them as they already knew exactly what they wanted – they longed for open plan living spaces filled with light and masses of glazing looking out to their garden and countryside views. They also wanted a gym, pool house and craft area to complement their lifestyle and give them a place to relax at home after a busy day running their business.

Studio 11 designed a building with a form and materials echoing the rural agricultural architecture surrounding the site. The proposed modern barn style home boasted the large open spaces, and vast glazed areas the couple craved with a modern mix of materials and sustainable elements.

After 6 months of discussions with planning officers, the application went to planning committee where 14 councillors discussed the proposals, after three hours of deliberation the planning committee delivered the best Christmas present in late December 2015 when they agreed that the design met the criteria of a paragraph 55 home (now paragraph 80) and resolved to grant Planning Permission (formally granted January 2016) – the first in the District! Paragraph 80 states

homes should only be considered if 'the design is of exceptional quality, in that it:

- is truly outstanding, reflecting the highest standards in architecture, and would help to raise standards of design more generally in rural areas; and
- would significantly enhance its immediate setting, and be sensitive to the defining characteristics of the local area.'

The planning permission came with strict conditions and even after granting planning permission, the project was closely monitored by planning officials to ensure the architectural quality and sustainability credentials were met.

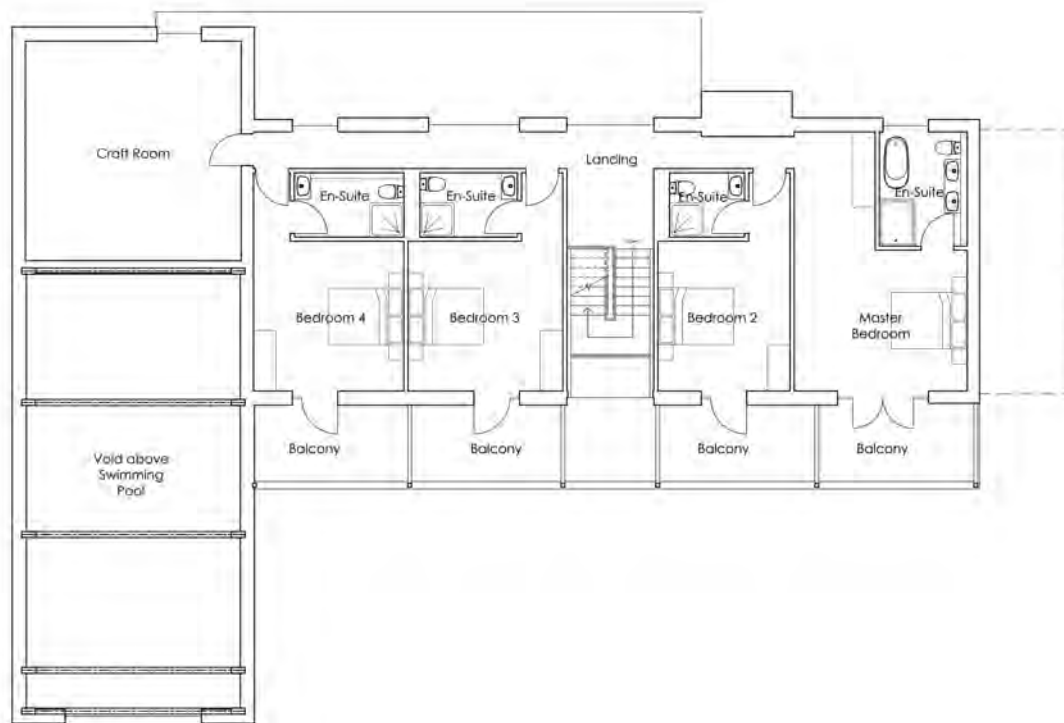
"Planning officers visited the site to check the materials we were using, and we had to build a wall with our chosen stone so they could approve the mortar – they rejected our choice, insisting it was darker." says Caroline

Among the conditions was cladding, which was to be in keeping with the agricultural vernacular of the area – Balau, a tropical hardwood, was chosen to clad areas of the main parts of the house. This was installed vertically and treated with oil to preserve the yellow hue.

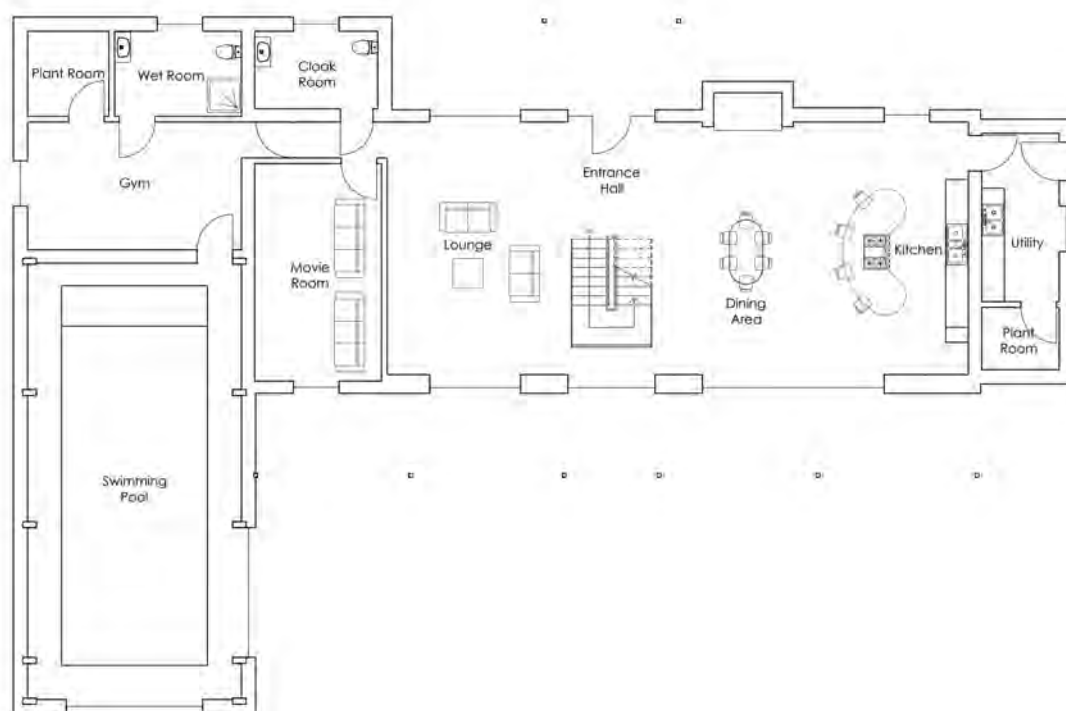
Bekstone Tumbled Buff, a local stone laid in varied course thicknesses, and zinc were suggested by Studio 11, to balance between a domestic home and the surrounding agricultural buildings.

Triple Glazed Aluminium windows were also a condition and an MVHR system, both improving the sustainability of the home along with a sedum roof on the garage, which Caroline has gone on to echo in a genius gabion bin store solution, topped with sedum. Caroline has a keen eye for interior design and had been designing her home for a long time *"We love interior design, so we were planning how the interiors would look before it was even built,"* says Caroline: *"We sat down with our two teenage children, deciding between us what we would like from our house. We loved spending time in Palm Springs in California, which has extremely modern, open-plan styles with flat roofs, and so the large doors opening onto the garden were really important. We managed to incorporate a flat sedum roof into the design too, which is great for sustainability as well as reflecting the southern California style we were trying to achieve. We made mood boards of ideas from our holidays, and then met with the architects as a family to design our one-off exemplar home."*





First floor plan



Ground floor plan

The L shaped floor plan accommodates spacious open plan living on the ground floor incorporating a Kitchen/Living/Dining Area, Movie Room, Gym and swimming pool, a double height atrium homes the bespoke steel staircase leading to the gallery style landing with a viewing platform, where full height glazing frames views over the countryside. Upstairs, on a slightly smaller footprint, there are 4 double En-Suite Bedrooms and a Hobby/Craft Room adjacent to the pool.

“We bought the Kitchen two years before it was installed, and the builder stored it for us. We enjoyed choosing the fixtures and fittings, using local companies where we could, although we still have some of our old furniture, because we want to make the right choices when we come to replace things.”

The Kitchen was sourced from a local kitchen supplier where the dark grey units contrast the white marble worktops that extend down the sides of the island peninsular to the floor in a waterfall effect. Spanish patterned tiles in the Kitchen differentiate the cooking zone from the open plan living space, with its polished concrete floor. Today, they are loving life in the open countryside and the end of their project is in sight with only the decoration of the Pool House to complete.

They have spent the last year of lockdowns falling in love with their forever home and finding their favourite spaces. For Taylor, the families beloved dog, it's the balcony, watching the sun set on the stunning Lincolnshire countryside. ■

To follow Jason and Caroline in their dream home, head to their Instagram [@bekstone_house](#)



Floor Area: 425m2

Number of Bedrooms: 4

Location: Crowland, Lincolnshire

Construction Method: Brick and Block

Designer: Studio 11 Architecture

Structural Engineer: Ralph Charman Associates

Planning Consultant: Waller Planning

Eco Features: Insulation Improvements, Air Source Heat Pump, Mechanical Ventilation Heat Recovery, Photovoltaic Modules

Completion: 2021





A class above the rest

If you have a disused agricultural building you wish to convert, the Government have in recent years assisted in this process.

The Government has set out a clear indication that they want to improve the quality and quantity of homes in rural areas. The introduction of Class Q Permitted Development Rights opens up the use of redundant agricultural buildings in many locations throughout the UK, allowing them to be converted into dwellings.

Class Q Permitted Development Rights for Barn Conversions means that you are not required to obtain full planning permission which is one of the complicated hurdles for creating a new home in the countryside. The Government's thought process in creating these rights was to speed up the planning process, getting new homes completed quicker and making good use of disused or neglected buildings. Their hope was to create new buildings of architectural quality



on the footprint of an unused structure. Under Class Q Permitted Development Rights, all you need to do is submit a prior approval application to regularise the conversion of the barn to a new dwelling. You must receive prior approval from your local planning authority before you undertake any work on converting the barn.

In order to meet the requirements of the Class Q Permitted

Development Rights, you need to be compliant with the General Permitted Development Order which, in general terms, allows for the conversion of barns within an agricultural holding to up to three larger homes with a maximum floor area of 465 square metres or up to 5 smaller homes each no larger than 100 square metres or a mix of both with a total of no more than 5 dwellings.

Alongside size requirements, your barn must also be able to meet the following criteria:

- The Barn must have been used in agriculture on 20th March 2013; you cannot build a barn and then convert it straight away, the barn needs to have been used solely for agricultural use for ten years prior to conversion).
- The barn must not be listed.
- The building must be structurally sound.
- The Class Q Permitted Development Rights allow for the addition of floors, internal walls, windows, doors and general construction to allow the building to be converted. However, where clearly new construction is proposed it is likely that the Local Authority would refuse permission.
- The design of the barn should reflect its original use meaning that the conversion should clearly reference its previous use as an agricultural building.
- The footprint of the proposed barn should not exceed the footprint of the existing barn you wish to convert.

The prior approval process allows the Local Planning Authority to consider the proposal and any potential impacts on transport and highways, noise, contamination, flood risk, and how these impacts could be mitigated. It also covers the general external appearance of the proposed barn conversion.

The Local Planning Authority has a statutory period of 8 weeks from submission of your prior approval application to give you their decision. If you don't seek approval for your barn conversion you may struggle to sell the home on in the future and you may be liable for enforcement action from the Local Planning Authority.

It's worth noting that not all barns or site locations qualify under the Class Q Permitted Development Rights. Where barns do not qualify, full planning permission would be required to convert the barn. For example, if the barn sits within an Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (ANOB), a Conservation Area, within the curtilage of a listed building, a National Park, a site of special scientific interest (SSSI) or a World Heritage Site.

Final thoughts...

Whilst there are some criteria that a Class Q barn conversion needs to adhere to, the potential hurdles are significantly less than submitting a full planning application for a barn conversion in the countryside, meaning their popularity in recent years has soared as a quicker and easier way to live in the countryside.

Whilst generally it is farmers who are obtaining permission to convert their disused barns, it is in most cases highly unlikely they will undertake the barn conversion. Once permission has been given, these barns are generally marketed as barns with permission for a dwelling.

However, one approach that people looking for a barn conversion project that would allow them to have input on design could be to agree a "Subject to Planning" deal with a local farmer which would see the farmer making the prior approval application but with you having input on the design of the barn. ■







We are a collective of creative designers producing distinctive, functional architecture with a commitment to sustainability.

We have the expertise and skills to take your project from conception to completion with a reputation of quality, design excellence and service.





Plan Perfect: An Interview with Tim Waller BA(Hons) MSc PgDip MRTPI, Director of Waller Planning

Tim began his career in local government, working for East Hertfordshire and South Cambridgeshire District Councils, on the preparation and examination of Local Plans.

Since setting up Waller Planning in early 2015, Tim has continued to work on a wide variety of projects, large and small, for a range of clients. These include both individual bespoke houses and major developments of several hundred houses, business parks and major mixed-use developments.

We put some questions to him to find out the importance of his role in creating the perfect planning application.



Why do I need a planning consultant? Surely I just discuss my project with my local authority planning officer.

Planning consultants have expertise in finding ways of making development happen, and finding solutions. Many local authority planners will simply tell you what the Local Plan's policies say, and they may either not be aware of other ways of doing things, or may not

feel they can suggest alternative strategies.

What qualifications does a planning consultant have?

A "Planner" is not a protected term, like an "Architect". But if a planner is chartered (a Member of the Royal Town Planning Institute), they will have MRTPI after their name; this means that they have demonstrated their competence and experience to a professional standard.

What services does a planning consultant offer?

This depends on the consultant and their expertise. At Waller Planning we provide a wide range of services, including the preparation of planning applications for anything from a single house to hundreds of homes, the promotion of land through the Local Plan process, planning appeals including hearings and inquiries, and helping to resolve enforcement problems.

What should I expect to receive from my planning consultant?

A planning consultant should provide a professional service, setting out their anticipated fees and prospect of success at the outset. They should also work with you, and on your behalf, defending your interests, and seeking the best possible outcome. We are particularly focussed on achieving both good quality developments, with a high standard of design, and also commercially viable developments, which can be delivered. We will push back against a local planning authority's requirement, where we consider this is justified, and necessary to defend a client's interests. The service we provide will depend on the client and their needs, and we are always focussed on these throughout a project, whether they are a private individual or a large company.

Will my planning consultant work with my designer?

We regularly work closely with designers. We do not try to design development for them, but we provide input at all stages of the design process, setting out planning and design considerations. We have in-house expertise in urban design as well as planning, which is often helpful when providing advice on design matters.

What if I don't agree with my planning consultants view?

We will set out our views, but the decision on what action should be taken is the client's. We will provide a professional service, and look to work with a client to achieve their goals wherever possible.

Why can my designer not make my planning application alone?

Planning consultants can provide valuable insight for planning applications which are both large and small. The extent of our involvement can vary, depending on the competency and experience of the designer. However, it is often valuable to engage a planning consultant at an early stage, to help avoid pitfalls, as the wrong approach to a project can often set it back, and even result in insurmountable obstacles.

Will my planning consultant have an input on the design of my home?

We would usually advise on matters that are relevant to successfully achieving planning permission; these could relate to a range of issues such as the design and appearance of the building in relationship to its context, the size of the garden, and the relationship with neighbouring properties.

What type of projects do you work on?

We work on a wide range of projects. The smaller projects are often the most satisfying, where we can for instance help to deliver someone's dream home – but we are equally comfortable working on projects for major residential and commercial proposals.

What is the difference between a planning application and a planning appeal?

A planning application is made to a local planning authority, and it is often possible to gain consent by seeking to comply with their adopted Local Plan, and / or by negotiating with them. We always seek to negotiate a consent first, and only go to appeal where necessary, so as to give our clients the best chance of success. However, we are experienced in appeals to the Planning Inspectorate, we have a good track record of success, and we are comfortable with all of the appeal procedures.

When is it worth doing a pre-application enquiry on a project?

We often advise that our clients engage in pre-application discussions, as this can be the best way of developing a consensus with a local planning authority, and ultimately achieving the planning permission our client is seeking.

If my project is refused what are my options?

That will depend on the individual circumstances, and it may be that either a revised application is required, or an appeal. In advising on this matter, we will always have the client's best interest in mind.

If I change my mind on the design of my home after I have received planning permission, what are my options?

That will depend on the extent of the changes that you require. It may be possible to address these by amending the existing planning permission, or a new application may be required.

What is a Section 106?

This is a legal agreement relating to the provision of funding for infrastructure, made necessary by the new development. It is not usually required for "minor developments", which in the case of residential development means those of 9 or fewer homes.

What is CIL?

This stands for "community infrastructure levy". It is a tax levied on new build development, to pay for the provision of new infrastructure, such as schools and roads. However, it is not required for self-build housing, where people will be living in the home as their principal residence.



We are a busy town planning consultancy, working on projects across England, and offering a wide range of services across the residential and commercial sectors.

www.wallerplanning.com

Surveying, a vital piece of the design jigsaw



Once you have your plot of land and have decided it is where you plan to build your dream home, there are a number of investigations we would recommend carrying out prior to us starting your design.

One investigation we would always look to do before starting any design would be a topographical survey, without the important information

gathered in this survey, designing your home would be very difficult and risky. In most cases, topographical surveys contain site constraint information which is crucial to developing a good design.

Once completed it will deliver a three dimensional digital representation of the area of land in question, showing an array of important features including but not limited to:

- Existing building positions
- Service cover locations and depths
- Highways and pedestrian footways
- Adjacent building heights
- Boundary locations
- Tree positions

The position and level of the detail shown on a topographical survey when being used for a new development, will usually be related back to the National Ordnance Survey datum. The datum is read as a height above mean sea level, recorded at Newlyn in Cornwall. Because this standard is generally utilised by the majority of surveyors, data may be compared to pre-existing surveys, local assets such as sewer manholes and local flood reports.

Without having this information considered during the design stage, (of either a single plot or large development), you would run the risk of the new development infringing onto other land, buildings at risk of flooding if not built to the correct level and it could even be undermined by extensive root systems if constructed too close to certain species of tree. It is also highly likely that the consultants you engage to design your new home would have insufficient information to allow them to complete their designs. Planning permission being granted without this information is also highly unlikely.

"Each plot of land or area of development is different, each client and their needs differ too, therefore the deliverables of a topographical survey are never static. Though they usually bear the same fundamentals, it is the responsibility of any survey company to be diligent in their methods, use up-to-date techniques and technology and ultimately deliver an accurate survey that can be relied upon as a starting point for any development." Says Carl of William Morris Surveys, a company Studio 11 Architecture have worked with on many projects, using his surveys to deliver accurate information enabling us to deliver the best scheme possible.

We put to him some questions we are frequently asked by clients:

I am building a new home in my back garden, do I need a topographical survey?

If you have appointed a competent architect to design your new home they would probably insist that an up to date topographical survey is carried out, as a starting point.

Would you recommend this service for an extension?

This would be excessive for a conservatory under permitted development, however, building something more complex may require information obtained from a topographical survey. Things such as party walls, boundary lines and current building size.

Why would I not get planning permission if I didn't have this information?

Planning permission being granted is dependent upon a range of considerations, an important one being that the development, great or small, is sympathetic to its surroundings. A three storey town house could be considered inappropriate next to and overlooking a single storey dwelling.

My designer says he cannot complete his work without a topographical survey, is this true?

This could be the case, some areas can have higher risk associated to them. Areas that flood periodically would certainly need a survey carried out, the architect would need to know ground levels and factor this into the proposed designs.

Can my designer start designing my scheme without this information?

Concept design could begin but being cost effective would mean having all relevant information from the very start.

How long should it take for my survey to be complete once instructed?

The demand of our services does fluctuate, that being said we don't like to be the bottleneck in any project. No longer than a couple of weeks and you should see results.

There was a survey undertaken on my site three years ago, do I need a new one?

If it transpires the day you break ground, that within the past three years considerable changes have occurred on site, consider weighing the cost of standing men down and re-design cost against that of a new survey. Better safe than sorry in my opinion.

What happens if the information on my survey is disputed?

The best thing to do is simply let us know, talk to us about any concerns. We are always happy to explain our methods and I am happy to say that our diligence in the field has kept us clear of any major blunders.

What insurances should my surveyor have?

A legitimate survey company should always be covered by professional indemnity, public liability and if applicable, employers liability insurance. Don't be afraid to ask the for a copy of their certificates and as a client, make sure the level of cover is fit for purpose on your project.

How do I know my surveyor is appropriately qualified?

Check for insurance - insurance underwriters are fairly risk averse and don't tend to hand out insurance to the unqualified or incompetent. Beyond that, check for professional body memberships and trading history.



Topographical Surveys

As the starting point of most projects, here at William Morris Surveys we understand the critical nature of delivering accurate survey results.

Rest assured that with our knowledge and experience, topographical surveys are carried out with the care and due diligence to allow our clients the best start to any project.



Engineering Services

Site engineering can include GPS/grid control, marking out and monitoring services.

As a part of this service we are happy to liaise with structural engineers and architects to ensure correct positioning takes place.



Measured Building Surveys

Included within the scope of a measured building survey are floor plans, elevation drawings and cross sectional drawings.

As with all of our services, digital plans can be tailored to meet the needs of the client whether the purpose be conveyancing, service mapping or building conversions.



Quantity Surveys

Our quantity surveys are based on a topographical site survey data. By utilising 3D ground modelling software we are able to deliver accurate volume information to our clients.

Cut and fill exercises can be costly, quantity surveys allow our clients to reduce estimating errors, and in turn save time and money.



As Constructed Surveys

This type of survey has several applications, including monitoring the progress of a large project and ensuring that discrepancies are picked up along the way.

Wall positions, drainage run positions, floor levels, anything that is critical in its position or level datum to the overall construction.



Laser Scanning

Once a premium service, laser scanning is being integrated more and more into the work flow of all survey types.

This includes measured building surveys, as constructed surveys, project monitoring with quality auditing as well as stockpile quantity and quarry surveys.

A house with a twist

In the heart of Hertfordshire's green belt lies a house with a literal twist!











Stay New Homes approached Studio 11 Architecture to design a large modern eco-home on land that was formally the garden of an existing property on the green belt of Hertfordshire.

"I appointed Studio 11 Architecture to carry out the detailed design on a high spec one- off home in Aston, Hertfordshire.

It was important to me that this project was as sustainable as it could be with a modern, eye catching design.

Studio 11 delivered above and beyond the remit of my brief. They created an inviting and inspiring space, provoking an indulgent lifestyle complete with a bar in the basement and light filled large living spaces.

The house is constructed in Insulated Concrete Formwork (ICF) and we used an air source and MVHR system to create an individual and energy saving home.

The grey slate and Siberian larch give a high-end finish, together with the sedum roof, glass bridge, and innovative design of the ground and first floor sitting at different angles mean this house definitely strikes you as a well-designed one-off high-end home with a literal twist!

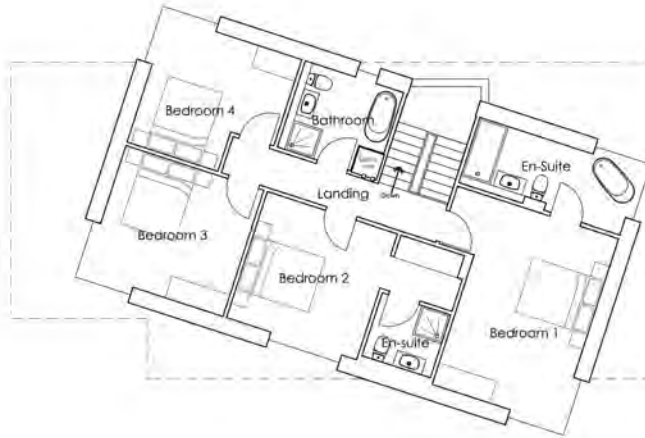
This project was not without its fair share of challenges but the Studio 11 Architecture team were great at coming up with practical and innovative design solutions for every hurdle.

This project is a testament to their skill and I have gone on to reappoint them for various other projects which are currently in the pipeline." Mick Sandford

The size of the site and the existing trees meant that the footprint of the house was constrained to a small area at the front of the site. This in turn meant that with a two storey building there was the potential for overlooking of the garden to the surrounding properties.

The design solution was to create a three storey home with two storeys above ground and a basement.

This provided the Mick with his required accommodation on the limited footprint available around the existing trees. The existing ground levels around the site were reduced to ensure that the new home did not dominate the surrounding properties and the first floor has been designed at an angle using cantilevered elements which reduces the potential for overlooking.



First floor plan

Floor Area: 274m²

Number of Bedrooms: 4

Location: Aston, Hertfordshire

Construction Method: Thermohouse ICF System

Designer: Studio 11 Architecture

Structural Engineer: Teicniuil-Priory Consulting Engineers

Planning Consultant: Studio 11 Architecture

Eco Features: Insulation Improvements, Air Source Heat Pump, Mechanical Ventilation Heat Recovery

Completion: 2018



Ground floor plan

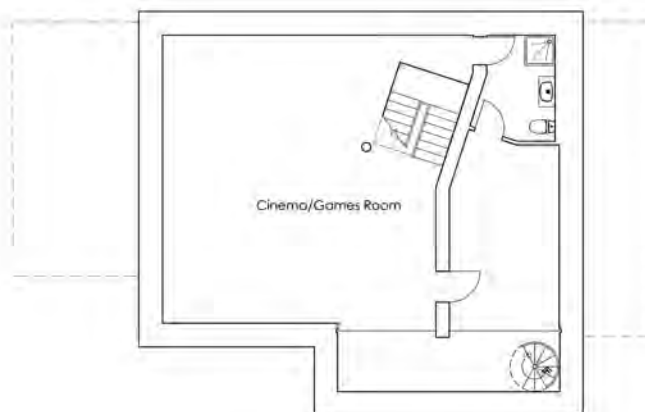
The split angle and change in materials from Siberian Larch to slate assist in reducing the scope of the building, and by incorporating a green roof, the building forms assimilate into the canopies of the trees surrounding the site.

The chosen construction method was Insulated Concrete Form Work, which provided speed of construction. To deal with the cantilevered elements, concrete floors and roofs were incorporated, creating a concrete 'box type' rigid construction.

Whilst this type of construction provides a good structural and thermal solution, it does have a downside in that all service penetrations need to be designed into the reinforced concrete and cannot be altered on site without significant effort.

This issue was exaggerated by the need to incorporate ducting for Mechanical Ventilation and Heat Recovery. Our solution to this was to design in service voids within ceilings and also vertical service risers to allow the distribution of services within each floor. This approach is unusual for a detached home as most services are normally chased into the walls and timber floors.

The finished result is a modern eco -home which stands out from the crowd for all the right reasons, finished to a high standard and loved by both the designer and client. ■



Basement

Top ten tips for designing your eco home



Following the recent red alert warning on climate change, it is becoming ever more apparent we need to make changes to the way we are living.

Eco credentials are becoming a given standard when designing a new home with more and more clients choosing an eco home or zero-carbon

approach to building their forever home.

There are a number of factors to consider when designing these types of homes and the principles remain the same whether it's an eco home or zero carbon home. We talk to our in house energy assessor, Rebecca Baxter, OCDEA to find out her top ten tips for designing your eco home.

1. The orientation of your home

When designing your home, your designer should look at the orientation of your home to consider "passive solar gains" made by glazing. If glazing is designed in your home with this in mind, you can achieve a building that gains heat during the day and stores it for use at night.

2. Fabric first

A fabric first approach is best described as putting a jacket around your home, in the form of insulation. Zero carbon homes require super insulation to minimise heat loss and the commensurate carbon emissions. Another factor to consider would be how well your windows and doors perform thermally.

Most houses now have significant amounts of glazing and it would be contradictory to have super insulated walls with poorly performing windows and doors.

3. Air tightness

One area where buildings can be significantly improved is air tightness. Heating air within a building and allowing it to escape increases the demand on the heating system which in turn burns more fossil fuels. By simply improving the air tightness, you can significantly reduce the heat loss of your home. To achieve good air tightness within a building you need to ensure good craftsmanship throughout the building and ensure all building elements are sealed appropriately.

One thing to bear in mind is that it is possible for a building to be too air tight. Current building regulations require a minimum air permeability of buildings that are naturally ventilated and buildings below that threshold require mechanical ventilation.

4. Ventilation

Most buildings in the UK are designed to be naturally ventilated but when designing an eco or zero carbon home, there is usually an aspiration to achieve a very low air permeability. This means that some form of mechanical ventilation is required to prevent stagnation of air within the building and to provide its occupants with a constant supply of fresh air. The best approach for mechanical ventilation is a mechanical ventilation heat recovery system (MVHR) which provides fresh air to the building but also uses a heat exchanger to remove the heat from the air exhausted from the building and transfers it to the fresh air coming into the building. This reduces heat loss whilst maintaining comfort levels within the building.

5. Heating and hot water systems

Most houses in the UK are provided with a gas or oil boiler, which heats water that in turns heat underfloor heating or radiators. Gas is a fossil fuel and therefore significant amounts of boilers producing emissions is

detrimental to the environment. It is the governments intention that by 2030 they will phase out gas connections to new houses.

With that in mind, the construction industry have already started to look at alternatives and a good cost effective alternative is the use of heat pumps, usually either ground source or air source, but can also be water source, depending on the site location. Heat pumps are similar to refrigeration units, but in reverse. They take heat from their source (air, ground or water) to heat water or air, which in turn heats the building. It is worth bearing in mind that heat pumps are powered by electricity and therefore are best for the environment when powered by electricity generated by a renewable source.

6. Electricity generation

Generating electricity on site is a great way of giving back to the environment, especially if you are able to generate more than you use. There are numerous ways to generate electricity, but the two most popular solutions are photovoltaic arrays and small scale wind turbines. Both allow for the occupants of the building to use electricity generated on site and sell any surplus back to the national grid. To supplement the electricity generation, it may also be worth considering battery storage, which is especially useful if you have an electric vehicle where the electricity generated on site and stored in the battery could be used to charge your vehicle at home.

7. Embodied energy

Every material used in the construction of a building has embodied energy contained within it. Embodied energy being the energy required to manufacture or produce that building component together with the energy required to deliver and erect it. Commonly used building materials generally have a relatively high level of embodied energy. Examples of these would be concrete, brickwork, steel and plastics.

The balance of designing a home with the longevity to offset the embodied energy created whilst considering the most environmentally friendly choice of material that may not last as long is a challenging process which requires a lot of thought and research.

8. Water conservation

Depending upon where you live in the uk, the levels of rainfall will be different, however, it is always a good idea to minimise your water consumption.

The three most common ways of doing this are incorporating rain water harvesting for use in watering the garden and washing cars, incorporating grey water harvesting for flushing toilets and finally, designing in sanitary ware which restricts water consumption. As a result, not only are you doing your bit for the environment, you are also making a significant annual saving financially

9. Ecology

General housing does not take into account ecology in any way and in many cases, by implementing even very small measures we can improve the ecology of a site significantly. These measures could take the form of bird boxes, insect habitats or simply putting aside some of your garden to serve as a wildflower meadow.

10. Future-proofing your home

Our lives are forever changing, and if we wish to be truly eco in our approach to building our "forever home", we need to make sure your home can adapt as your needs change. This can include making sure rooms can be multi-purpose and change use easily, your home is easily accessible and services such as electricity cables can be easily accessed and moved. It may even be worth considering your choice of frame so that walls can be changed within the structure relatively easily too.



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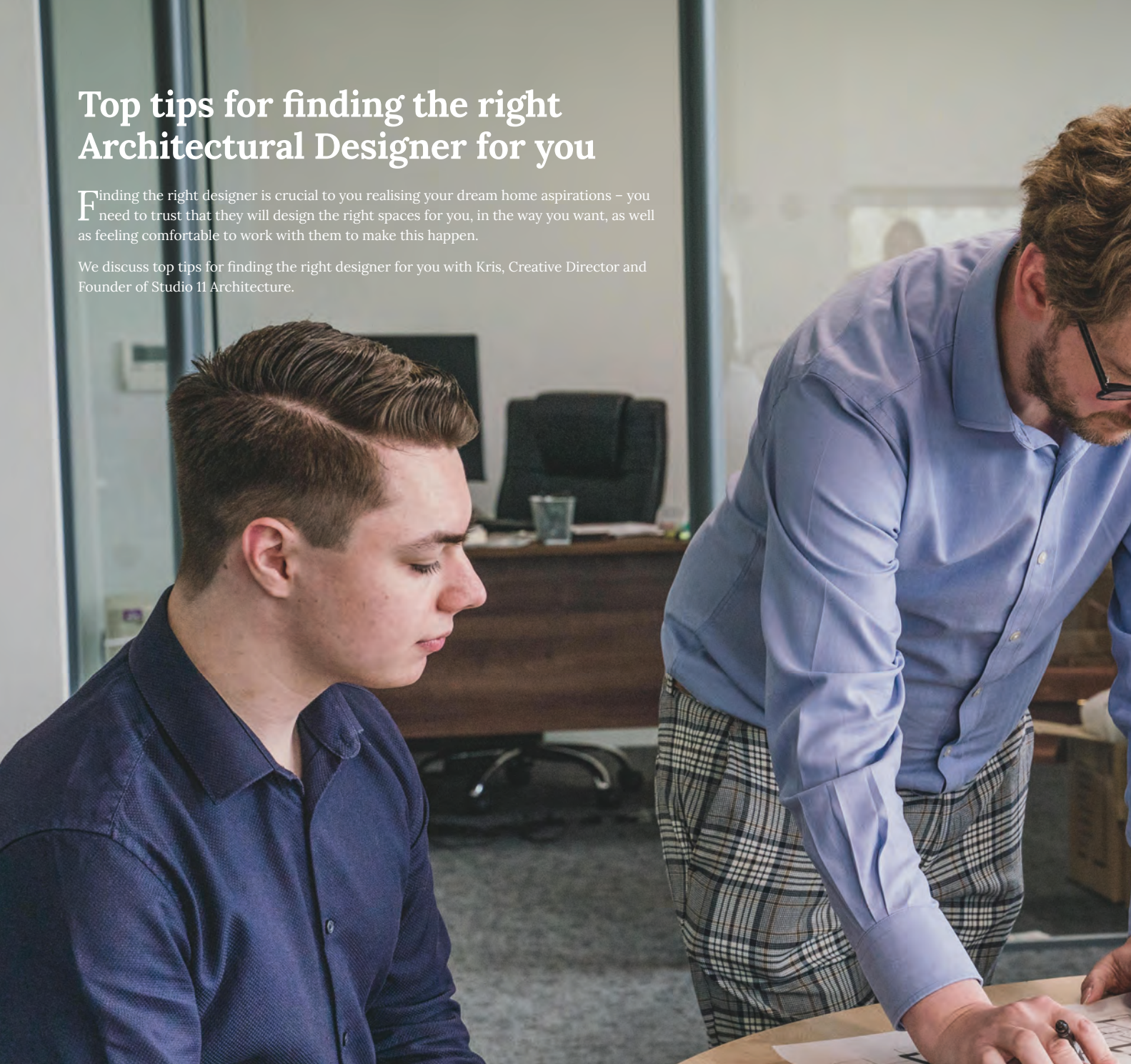
For your project

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Top tips for finding the right Architectural Designer for you

Finding the right designer is crucial to you realising your dream home aspirations – you need to trust that they will design the right spaces for you, in the way you want, as well as feeling comfortable to work with them to make this happen.

We discuss top tips for finding the right designer for you with Kris, Creative Director and Founder of Studio 11 Architecture.



Find homes you love

Find out who designed them and approach them – if you like a certain style of architecture and design, seek the people who work with those styles.

Meet them in person

Creating a good rapport with the person responsible for designing your home is critical. You need to be able to work with them, they need to be able to understand what you are asking of them in order to deliver what you are looking to achieve.

A good designer will push your boundaries and make you think outside of the box, they will ask you questions to make sure they understand you and your project fully, be sure to engage with them and share your thoughts and ideas, be open with how you use your current spaces so your designer is fully equipped with all of your requirements before they begin.

Meet with multiple designers

In order to feel completely happy, we would recommend meeting multiple designers so you feel comfortable you have seen multiple fee quotations and ideas, as well as designers so you are comfortable and certain in your decision that the designer you commission will be able to deliver the home you want.

Compare multiple quotes

Check you are comparing like for like quotes and they are offering the same level of service and deliverables.

Ask questions

Don't be afraid to ask anything and everything, interrogate designers and find out all you need to know before appointing them.



Choose an experienced designer

Make sure you choose a designer experienced in working with the type of planning application you wish to submit – check their track record in planning application approvals and make sure they have the relevant knowledge needed to make a good argument to the Planning Officers. Especially if you are intending to make a planning application that requires specialist knowledge of planning policy.

Check your designer is Chartered or Registered and have the relevant qualifications and insurances

Making sure your designer is Registered or Chartered ensures you they are skilled and qualified in their field. Ask what insurances they have, and make sure you are happy with their level of cover.

Check their values mirror yours

If you are working with someone and putting your trust in them to design your dream home, make sure their values match yours – if

you are looking for an eco- friendly home and they have no work to demonstrate they share that value, likelihood is, they may struggle to design yours. Not only that, make sure they communicate with you in a way you like, the level of service is one you find acceptable and the delivery of their services works for you.

Make sure you are happy with their timescales

Most reputable designers will have a lead in time before they can start work on your project, make sure you are aware of them to avoid disappointment.

Be mindful of your budget

Your budget is yours, and it's your choice how you choose to spend it. Some designers you meet may be more than you intended to spend, but compromising on design is not something we would recommend when it comes to your dream home. Consider all aspects of your budget and be realistic when it comes to choosing the things that are important to you. ■



Self-Build – the importance of project management

Building your own home should be one of the most exciting experiences of your life – you've found the perfect spot for your forever home, better still, you have planning permission. You've already chosen the light fittings and where that amazing piece of art you saw at the exhibition last month is going to hang in your new Hallway.

Your budget is probably tight, taking on work yourself could be an option.... you don't really have any previous experience (if you are not counting the shed you put up in the garden with your Dad three years ago) but your friend works on a site and seems to know what he's talking about and he said he'd help you out if you needed it.

He said all you need is some drawings for the builders to follow and

you're on your way. So why do design companies seem so set on selling you the whole package?

On the face of it, taking on the project, laying the bricks for your future home with your own hands and conquering the construction world sounds like a great challenge and if it means you get some money left over for a holiday and a fully landscaped garden then it seems a little bit of a no brainer. If you are building a small box, we may tend to agree – most of the time your dream home is far more complex than that.

Once you have planning permission, it's all systems go! You know what you want, and you want to build your home and live in there, you have a date set in your head and you want to be in by Christmas so you can



show it off to your entire family. You have done some maths based on a blog you found on Google and it's achievable.

It's worth noting when you are doing this from scratch with no real knowledge of the industry, things can take a lot longer when you have to research and resource everything yourself. Taking risks on which companies and manufacturers to trust with your new home, can be daunting and overseeing everything is happening correctly when you may not know yourself.

Timing errors, delays in manufacturing, health and safety, building regulations, contracts, communication and specifications all lead to a massive headache. Giving all of these responsibilities to your designers may feel like its tightening your purse strings and may mean you can't afford the high spec work top you dream of in your new Kitchen, but it can be the difference between getting a kitchen at all in some cases. Projects can run over budget and time scale when they are not managed properly or unforeseen problems occur.

Stress is inevitable when miscommunication between contractors occurs and mistakes happen.

Your designers don't want you to face these problems. They have designed you the home of your dreams and want you to enjoy it, not resent it at the end of the build for the stress and money it drained. They want it to be the best it can be. They know what to do, should anything arise. They work in the industry with the contractors and manufacturers all day, every day and have insurance and contingencies should they need them. Meaning all you have to do is let them take the wheel and work out how you are going to enjoy your new home best. You can still have a hard hat when you visit site and if you really want to, lay a few bricks.

Whether you choose to take the project management package or not, you will end up with the home you always wanted. If you are taking it on yourself, you may be able to make a significant saving in cash, you just need to balance that against the time, energy, effort and sanity it will cost you in return.

We have all seen Grand Designs, Kevin sees the problems before they arise every time, so does your designer. The only difference is, if they are running the project, they can stop it before it happens. You will be



Most people have already busy lives with family and work, let alone a social life and fun. Running a self-build project from your home office in your lunch breaks, evenings, weekends and annual leave may seem like a fair trade off in the short term when you are trying to save money. We get it. Just remember.... life still happens around you and the people who need you before the project will still need you during, along with the contractors, manufacturers and lending companies.

The builder may have done "hundreds" of houses like yours before and blogs are so widely available with so much advice and great resources, surely nothing could go wrong, right?!

So, what happens when it does? Do you have insurances? Are your contracts water tight? Did you give them all of the correct information? Do you have the right documentation and back up to cover your back?

in by your Christmas deadline and things will run smoothly. If for some unforeseen reason, they don't, you have someone to moan about it to and it's their problem to fix, not yours on a Friday night after a really long meeting at work, when all you really want to do is eat takeaway and enjoy an entire bottle of wine.

Professionals are out there for a reason. The same reason you let a hairdresser cut your hair rather than do it yourself is the exact same reason you should let the designer run your project. ■

Spellbound

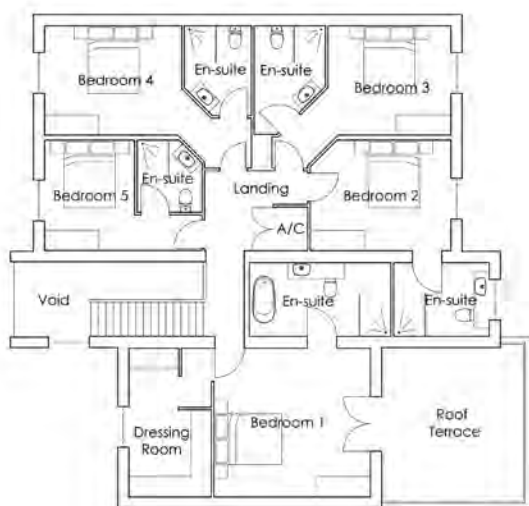
OSO Homes engaged Studio 11 Architecture to work alongside Waller Planning and design two modern dwellings that were energy efficient and also provided luxury living in the modest village of Spellbrook, in the Green Belt of Hertfordshire.



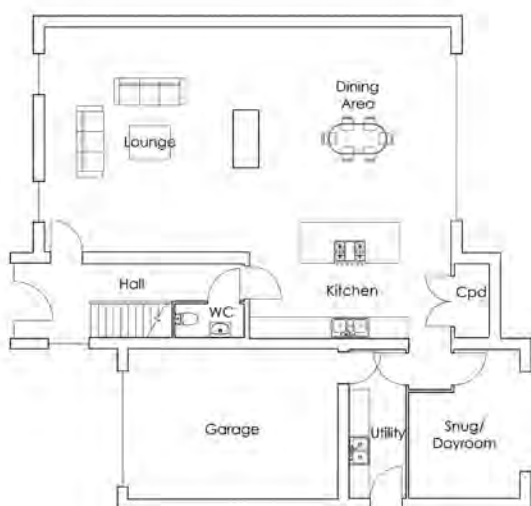








First floor plan



Ground floor plan

With a high specification interior, these homes are the epitome of luxury living and modern design.

Johnathon Gower of Studio 11 Architecture was Lead Designer on this very bespoke project and got to work straight away on designing a light and airy open plan scheme with traditional building materials used in a modern way, nodding to mid twentieth century domestic architecture with vaulted ceilings to the first floor and taller ceilings to the ground floor.



"It was a challenge to design a scheme that was modern but also sat well with the existing surrounding houses." Says Johnathon. "We decided to keep the scheme simple and designed both plots to be the same floor plan and footprint. The trick was to design a floor plan which reflected the constraints of both plots and we did this by using a grid approach to the floor plans with openings predominantly to the front and rear of the homes. We then supplemented these openings with rooflights and cloister windows providing light to the central core of the building."

OSO Homes were very keen to create a modern development but this needed to be balanced with the very traditional architecture of the surrounding homes and it was felt that the scheme should successfully reflect both. Studio 11 took inspiration from several mid 20th Century homes and developed the external appearance of the houses to incorporate glass walls, mono-pitch roof's with large overhangs and a flat green roof over the central core of the home.

Facing brickwork was chosen to compliment the surrounding buildings but rather than the traditional red or buff colour a grey was chosen which compliments the black aluminium windows and doors. A low profile tile was chosen to replicate a traditional slate roof but again used with a modern twist on a mono-pitch roof.

A planning application was submitted in 2016 with Waller Planning providing a substantial case for development within Green-Belt land and planning permission was granted for both homes in 2017. ■

Floor Area: 286m2

Number of Bedrooms: 5

Location: Bishop's Stortford, Hertfordshire

Construction Method: Brick and Block

Designer: Studio 11 Architecture

Structural Engineer: Waldeck Consulting

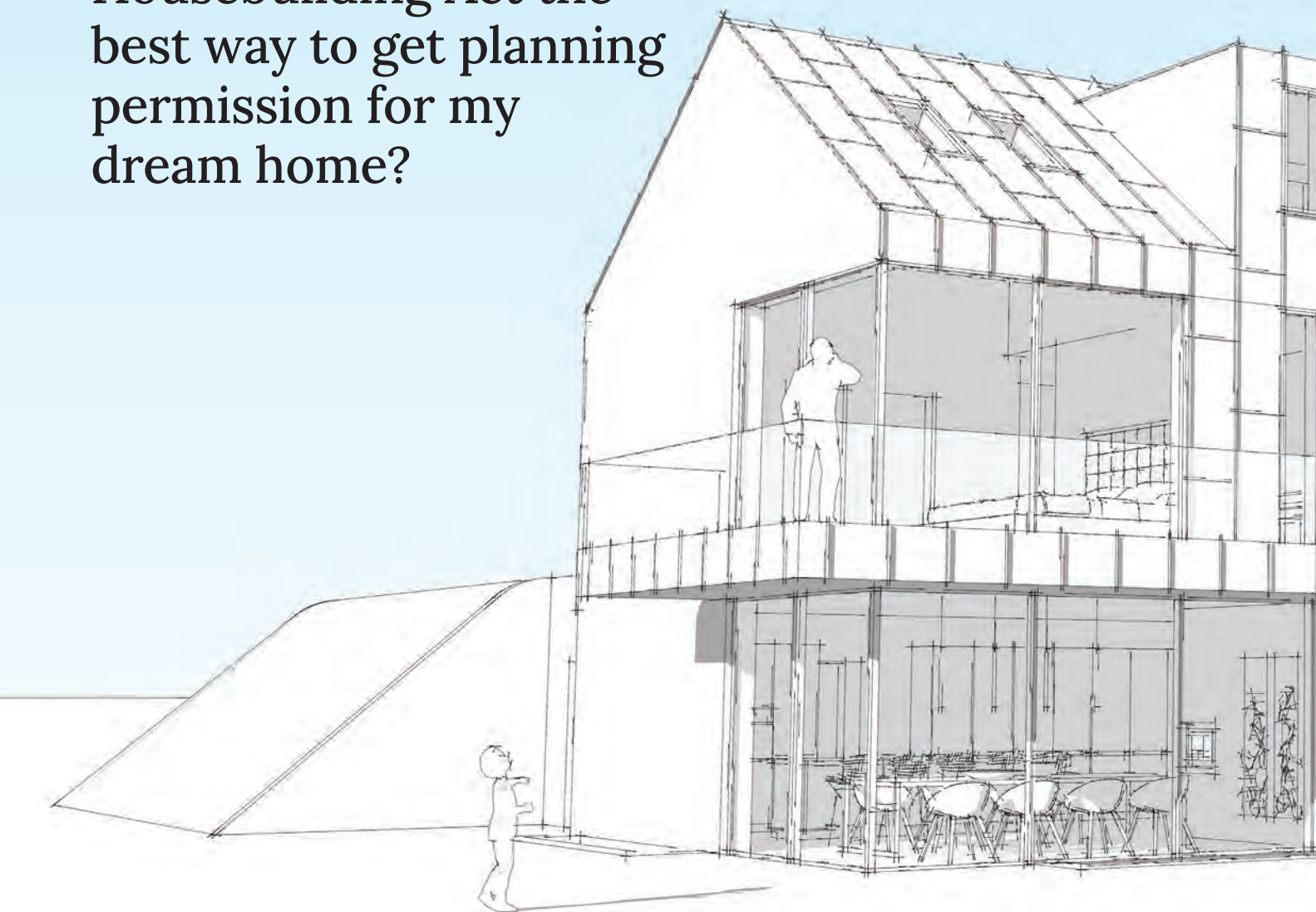
Planning Consultant: Waller Planning

Eco Features: Photovoltaic Modules

Completion: 2018



Is the Self-Build and Custom Housebuilding Act the best way to get planning permission for my dream home?



Being able to design a home completely tailored to your wishes in the perfect location for you is a dream that more and more people are able to achieve thanks to the Self-Build and Custom Housebuilding Act.

What is the Self-Build and Custom Housebuilding Act?

In 2015, an act of parliament was granted which put a duty on Local Authorities to maintain a register of people who wish to build their own homes.

This register is used by the Local Authority to determine the need for self-build and custom-build plots in the relevant district.

The Act requires Local Authorities to have enough provision for three years of self-build plots.

What is a self-build plot?

The Government's definition of self-build and custom housebuilding is: Self-build and custom housebuilding covers a wide spectrum, from projects where individuals are involved in building or managing the

construction of their home from beginning to end, to projects where individuals commission their home, making key design and layout decisions, but the home is built ready for occupation ('turnkey').

In essence, if you have the primary design input either by commissioning the design or by working with a company under a design and build contract, your plot would be appropriate under the self-build and custom housebuilding act.

Where can I find a self-build plot?

Some Local Authorities will have a register of plots granted planning permission in their District, there are also specialist websites and magazines that will give you help and guidance in purchasing the best plot for you.



I already own some land, can I get planning permission to build my own home on it?

This very much depends on the position of your land in relation to its nearest settlement.

If the plot is within the development boundary, it is likely (subject to design) that planning permission can be achieved without the need for this act.

If the plot is outside of the development boundary, there are two options for making a planning application; a Paragraph 80 home which is a new isolated dwelling in the open countryside, built to the highest architectural standards, or a self-build planning application if the local authority are not currently meeting the housing need for self build plots.

I have a large plot of land outside of the development boundary, could I get planning permission for multiple self-build plots on this land and sell them to other people?

This is becoming a more popular solution for land owners and or families that own land which sits outside of a current development boundary.

Sites with multiple self-build plots meet housing need and can offer a solution for families, helping their children on to the housing ladder by building on the family land.

It is also a good solution for modest pockets of disused farmland that cannot be utilised through the Class Q barn conversion approach.



How do I determine if my plot would qualify for a self-build planning permission?

This is very complicated to determine, but our recommendation would be to seek advice from an experienced self-build or Paragraph 80 designer or Planning Consultant with the knowledge and experience to advise you.

Does the design of my self-build affect the likelihood of getting planning permission in the same way a Paragraph 80 home would?

Technically no, however, local authorities will want the design of your home to make a positive contribution to the wider landscape and also, if possible, respond to climate change.

Does the size of my home affect the likelihood of getting planning permission?

No, however, it has to be appropriate for the size of the plot and the design.

How would I find a custom build plot and what does this entail?

A custom build plot is where a company has purchased the land and is offering a bespoke design and build solution to prospective owners. There are many companies that offer this approach ranging from plots on large sites through to Local Authority schemes of 5 or 6 plots.

The company will offer you the opportunity to customize your home from a selection of designs and options allowing you to create a home tailored to your needs.

Could I build a self-build home and sell it?

Yes, but you must have lived in the property for a certain period of time, stated in your planning permission before you can sell it. The purpose of a self-build plot is exactly that – a build for yourself.

What if my planning application is refused?

In the first instance, it is always worth trying to work with your local planning authority to amend the application to a position where they will approve planning permission.

However, if this is not possible, you can always appeal the refusal for planning permission with the Planning Inspectorate.

What if my local authority already has a sufficient supply of self-build plots?

This doesn't mean you cannot still apply for planning permission, but if your site is outside the development boundary, it makes the application more challenging.

How long can I expect my self-build to take?

If your project from a planning point of view, is pretty straight forward, you can expect a project duration of anything from 18 months to three years.

If your project is more complex, and requires significant input at planning stage, it is possible, your project could take anywhere from 18 months to two years simply obtaining planning permission.

What sort of costs should I allow for?

Alongside the normal construction costs for your home, you need to allow for land purchase fees, consultants fees, planning and building regulation application fees and also fees to either a warranty provider or your designer to produce Professional Consultant Certificates.

There will be items that crop up that you haven't budgeted for regardless of how well researched and prepared you are.

It is always worth while sitting down with your designer at the start of your project and discussing your budget in detail, so the designer can design your home with that in mind and talk you through the process. It is also always worth having a realistic contingency fund. ■

My Grand Designs journey

We spoke to Nathan about his Grand Designs Project to see what advice he would give to anyone looking to embark on a self-build project, and talk about the highs and lows of his Grand Designs Journey.





What inspired you to embark on your own project?

After looking at what was available on the market, in the area we wished to live, we came to realise nothing really worked for us, so designing and building exactly what we wanted for the whole family, seemed like the perfect solution.

What was the vision and inspiration behind your new home?

I always loved the idea of a barn conversion, but when you look at them, the spaces are smaller than I would have liked, it is harder to achieve open plan living on the scale we were looking for, and making a conversion as eco-friendly as we wanted would have been difficult.

I wanted the home to look agricultural and industrial, I didn't want it to look anything like a traditional home.

How did you approach finalising your design brief?

By working with Studio 11 Architecture to really narrow down what we were looking for; our priorities were large, open spaces suitable for the way our family live, lots of natural light, the agricultural, slightly industrial design and eco credentials to create a better environment for future generations and keep our living costs down.

How did you approach gaining planning permission?

By choosing the right people with experience and knowledge of making planning applications on challenging sites. I had worked with Studio 11 in my job as the Director of a housing company for a long time and we have a great working relationship. I had confidence in that, and we worked together to make sure the design of our home both suited us and ticked the necessary boxes to achieve planning permission.

How and why did you choose your plot?

The location was perfect, and close to everything we do, its rural, the views are incredible and it was big enough to achieve multi-generational living.

How long did it take to gain planning permission?

6 months from our initial pre-application enquiry to gaining planning permission.

How did you approach material and product specification?

The materials were mainly specified by the designer, but we worked together on the design brief at concept stage, so we were happy with all of the choices, and anything we needed to change along the way, for budget, for example, were always put past the designers for their input first.

What consultants did you use on your project?

Surveyor: William Morris Surveys
Architecture/Energy Consultant: Studio 11 Architecture
Planning Consultant: Parker Planning Services
Structural Engineer: Waldeck Consulting

Were there any challenging aspects to the project and build?

COVID 19 was by far the biggest challenge, but also working with multiple trades I work with on large scale residential housing, and changing our usual approach to be able to get our heads around this completely bespoke self-build and all the technical bespoke design features that go with that.



What was the biggest challenge of the project?

Timber frame inside steel frame, it was on a much bigger scale than anything I am used to, and when the rain set in, it was a constant worry it would get damaged.

Did you project manage the build yourself?

Yes, it's something I do on a residential scale, but this was something completely different to anything done before. It was certainly a challenge, but I enjoyed it.

Did you install any renewable systems?

Yes, we have a PV array, with battery storage, MVHR, and ground source heat pump. We achieve Zero carbon. The landscaping scheme was also designed to include ecological enhancements, including our on-site pond and insect habitats.

How long did the project take and was it in the timeframe that you originally predicted?

From starting on site, the build took 14 months, a little longer than I originally and naively gave myself, but I am still very pleased with the timescale overall.

Did you remain within the original budget and if not, what were the unexpected costs?

Covid 19 meant we spent more on contractors to get things over the line, tiling was also a significant expense. We were fortunate enough to be able to overspend on nicer finishing touches and general finishes as we plan to be here for a long time. Some may say my budget was very optimistic to start with though, so we were not too shocked we didn't come in quite on budget.

Is the final property everything that you hoped it would be?

Yes, and more. I was able to create a family home where multiple generations can enjoy family life together. Designing a home that is completely unique and tailor made to us is something I am very proud of.

Is there anything that you would have done differently?

I would have given myself a bit more time, we had a very tight timescale, but what we achieved is incredible.

What was the high point of your build?

Moving in and enjoying all of our hard work.

What was the low point?

When COVID 19 struck, the whole world stopped and it was a scary time for everyone.

What was your biggest extravagance?

The media and tech we have in our home.

What is your favourite material used in your home?

The larch cladding, it warms the building and from inside, is great to look out on to.

What is your favourite space in your home?

That's really hard! We love it all really, but the Kitchen is the heart of our home, and the open plan nature of the ground floor means it flows into the other living areas well.

What is the best design feature in your home?

My Chimneys, without a doubt.

What advice would you offer to anyone looking to self-build?

Be realistic, don't rush, it's all worth it in the end, enjoy it!

Amye and I worked together, and that took the pressure off me, I wasn't doing it alone. We shared the decision-making process and enjoyed the entire journey together. That, I would say, is the most important thing. It's not something you embark on every day, and not everyone is lucky enough to be able to do it, so we appreciated the opportunity.

Would you do the whole thing again?

Definitely! But not next week, and on a much smaller scale.

Read more about this project on page 6.

