

A home for life

Jane and David Newman have built their forever home in part of their former garden.

STORY: LOUISE PARKIN PHOTOGRAPHY: STEVE HUGHES



IN BRIEF

PROJECT

Timber-framed new build

LOCATION Hampshire

COST Already owned

SPENT £550,000

WORTH £1m+



Jane and David Newman had lived in four houses in the Hampshire village of Bishops Waltham before deciding to build a new home in their garden. The couple have extensive renovation experience and had added an extension and basement to their previous home, but after their three children left home and their needs changed, they wanted a home that would be suitable for the years to come.

Their three-quarter-acre garden took a lot of upkeep, and by building on it Jane and David could create a new home as well as a more manageable garden. It was during their visit to the National Self Build and Renovation Centre in Swindon that they came across housebuilder Potton and their Ruskin show home, a permanent exhibit inside the centre. A follow-up visit to the company's show centre in St Neots provided enough ideas for the couple to start planning their new home, with the help of self-build consultant Sean Adams.

EXTERIOR

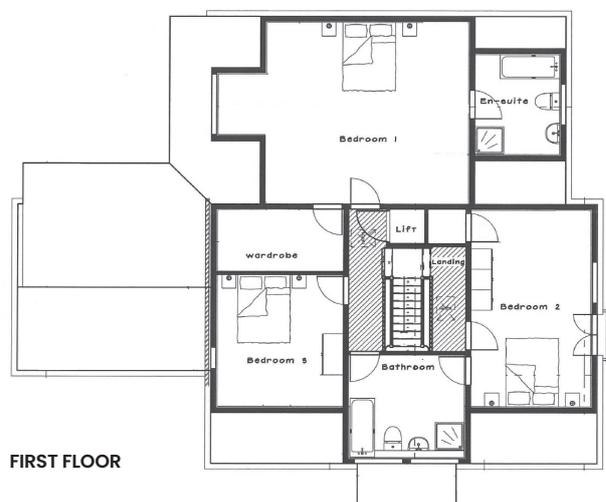
The timber frame is mainly clad in red brick, with vertical hung slate tiles on the upper level of the front gable to match the slate roof.



Using the generous dimensions of the rooms in their existing Victorian home as a blueprint, they were able to design a barn-style home with enough space for their living requirements, while providing facilities to suit them in later years, such as a lift, ground-floor bedroom and bathroom, and wide doorways for wheelchair access. "We have ageing parents, so these features will come in handy now as well as when we get older," says Jane.

"We considered living on site in a mobile home, but it wasn't really an option so we bought a small house in the village. We now rent it out."

FLOORPLANS



The ground floor has a large kitchen/diner/family room, with a separate lounge, dining room, utility, snug/fifth bedroom, and ground floor bathroom. Upstairs are the master suite, and two guest bedrooms that share the family bathroom.



KITCHEN

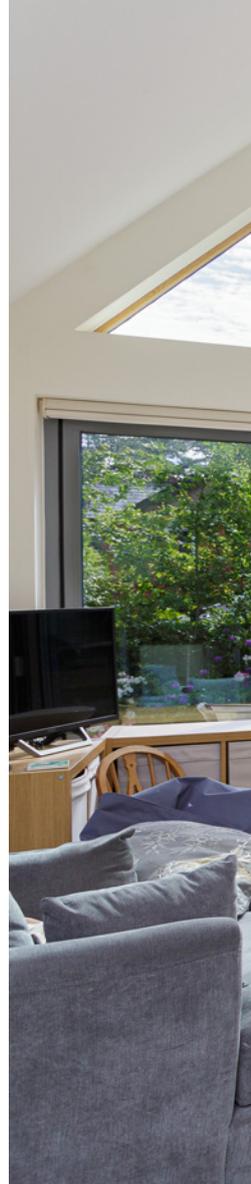
A pale aloe vera green colour has been used to paint the kitchen units. The island has a grey and black granite top and the perimeter units are topped with glossy black granite.

The new home is inspired by the voluminous spaces of converted barns, and includes a basement as well as vaulted ceilings in the main living areas. The couple engaged a project management firm, with a dedicated manager appointed to hire subcontractors and order materials, but Jane concedes that hiring a main builder to do the whole project may have been a better option. “We thought we would have more choice, and also save money but I think it might have cost a bit more, and a single point of contact would have been less stressful.”

A series of delays due to poor weather and questionable organisation of the workflow hampered progress from the beginning and Jane and David found some elements of the project frustrating. Delays in utility connection also meant sharing the builders’ water supply. “Get utilities organised as early as is possible, because we had frustrations with all of them,” is Jane’s advice to other selfbuilders.

Torrential rain caused flooding in the basement while wet weather delayed the delivery of the timber frame, and the roof took 14 weeks to erect, all of which added to the time scale. The most stressful moment came just as work began on the basement excavation. A stage-release self-build mortgage had been arranged through a Midlands-based building society, but the loan was withdrawn when questions were raised about the drainage system, which is shared with their old house.

“Our lenders requested drawings of the drainage system, which of course we did not have, and so the lending was withdrawn,” says Jane. The



IN DETAIL

PROJECT

Designer Adams Planning & Project Services Ltd: adamspps.co.uk

STRUCTURE

Timber frame
Potton: potton.co.uk

FIXTURES AND FITTINGS

Sanitaryware Vitra: vitra.com
and Laufen: laufen.co.uk

Whirlpool bath Jacuzzi: jacuzzi.co.uk

Utility kitchen units
Ikea: ikea.com

Staircase Potton: potton.co.uk

Appliances John Lewis: johnlewis.co.uk

Wooden floor and porcelain tiles Porcelanosa: porcelanosa.com

Windows and doors
Kloeber: kloeber.co.uk

Wood-burning stove
Morsø: morsoe.com/en/

Lift Stannah: stannah.com

Blinds Hillarys Blinds: hillarys.co.uk

Paint Dulux: dulux.co.uk



STAIRCASE

The staircase has striking oak treads, risers, hand-rails and balustrades.



“What we have now is perfect for our needs... we are more than happy.”

couple had planned to live in their old house until their new home was completed, but they were forced to sell up to fund the work, paying for the basement construction out of their savings.

“We considered living on site in a mobile home, but it wasn't really an option so we bought a small house in the village,” Jane explains. “The project went on for 20 months in the end rather than the estimated 10 months so it was good we had somewhere to live. We now rent out that house.”

A few tweaks to the design were made as the shell of the house took shape, including the installation of a roof light to illuminate the landing. The basement is also smaller than planned due to the presence of trees in the garden, but is large enough to include a fourth bedroom and plenty of storage space.

The timber-framed home is clad in brick with a few small sections of vertical hanging slate tiles. There are three main elements to the internal design. Ancillary accommodation such as a ground-floor bathroom, snug (which can also be a ground-floor bedroom if required) and utility room, are at the front of the house, leading from the hallway. The kitchen/diner/family room is delineated by a different roof pitch, which is split close to the gable to allow an overhang to screen midsummer



LANDING

A celebration of wood includes an oak staircase, internal doors and an engineered oak floor.



sun, keeping the interior cool. Full-height glazing in the gable includes a bifold door, with another bifold around the corner, opening up two walls and forming a close connection with the garden. A further set of bifold doors open out from the living room onto the same patio, above which is a dormer clad in slate hanging tiles.

Jane and David chose a local specialist workshop to create their kitchen, inspired by magazine cuttings they had shown the company. Handmade in wood and finished with pale green paint, the kitchen includes granite worktops for the perimeter cabinets and the large island unit. It also includes a large larder cupboard. The utility room was fitted out on a tighter budget, with Ikea units costing a fraction of those in the kitchen.

A separate lounge and dining room are connected by an open space at one end. The lounge doors fold back to reveal the garden, while a wood-burning stove provides a cosy centrepiece for the winter months.





FINAL WORD

What was the high point?

Having put so much input into the project and then being able to see the end result has been a great experience.

And the low point?

The problems with the finances was a cause of ongoing stress.

Your greatest extravagance?

The tiles from Porcelanosa, and the Jacuzzi bath with jets. That was a bit of a luxury – and we hardly ever use it!

And your best buy?

The walk-in wardrobe – we bought a massive cupboard and David installed rails and fittings from Ikea. We are also impressed with the Ikea kitchen in the utility room. It's really good value for money.

Anything you would do differently?

We would use a builder, rather than a project management company. I think that would be much less stressful.



Jane's top tip

“Be very careful with your paperwork, and pay special attention to any VAT you may be charged. A new build is exempt from VAT for many items, and if it is charged incorrectly, it can be difficult to get it back.”

The porcelain floors are designed to look like wood.

Upstairs, the three bedrooms include a master en suite with walk-in wardrobe, and two guest bedrooms, one with its own connecting door to the main bathroom. This bathroom has vaulted ceilings, large windows into the gable and marble-effect porcelain tiles covering the walls and floor creating a luxurious look, complete with a Jacuzzi whirlpool bath and a generous glass shower cubicle.

David and Jane chose all the interior fittings, a task they found to be onerous towards the end of the project. “I think we underestimated the pressure of choosing everything,” Jane admits. “It's impossible to appreciate just how many things there are to choose and buy, and trying to make decisions to equip a house that is not built yet is really hard.

“There are quite a few things I would do differently, were we to build again, like having a fireplace for the stove, to make it more of a focal point in the living room, but what we have now is perfect for our needs, while being big enough for our children and grandchildren to stay, so we are more than happy.”



BEDROOMS

Three bedrooms upstairs and one in the cellar provide generous living space for visiting family. The master suite is very spacious and has a walk-in wardrobe and en suite.