

build beautiful

ISSUE 6 POTTON.CO.UK



Potton Package

How we work with you...

A Modern Country Mansion



20

Things to Do Before Starting on Site

Potential of a Garden Plot

Designing the Wow Factor



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Welcome

*A message from Potton's
Self-Build Director - Paul Newman*

build
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“Welcome to the sixth edition of **build beautiful**. If you’ve stuck with us all this time, then thank you. If you’re new to Potton, then welcome. We’ve put together a wide range of articles that we hope you’ll find enjoyable, useful and, dare I say, inspirational? Alongside our usual work of designing and building houses, this year we’ve also been doing a lot of work behind the scenes...

If you’re already familiar with our Show Centre, you may be interested to learn that our beloved Gransden has undergone something of a facelift. Nothing too drastic, just a few licks of paint to brighten it up. If you haven’t been to our Show Centre yet, you can find all the information you need in the centre fold of this magazine. Not only is it home (pardon the word choice) to five fully furnished show homes, it also houses (there I go again) our Self Build Academy. Here you can go back to school – self-building school, to be specific. It’ll teach you all you need to know and more about the industry, including useful nuggets and what to avoid. Many of the courses are free and are run by expert

members of our team. More importantly, they all come with complementary refreshments to keep you engaged.

We have also been busy improving our package offering, to better meet our customers’ needs. Potton now offer a weathertight package, which will deliver your build to a secure wind- and rainproof stage – now all the more appealing given the recent wet weather!

I’d like to quickly take this opportunity to inform you (or remind you, if you are a past reader) of the Government’s Right to Build legislation. In essence, if you don’t sign up to your local authority’s register, then they will assume there is no demand, so won’t take steps to satisfy that demand and create policies around self and custom build. So, if you do nothing else, make sure you register your interest. For more information, turn to Duncan Hayes’s article.

Now, back to the magazine. For this edition, we have compiled a wealth of articles for your perusal, from more advice on Right to Build, to designing the ‘wow factor’, to the nitty gritty of achieving energy efficiency. The articles are interspersed, as always, with our Potton case studies. We and our

customers have worked hard this year to deliver another generation of beautiful houses, six of which are featured. We’ve tried to make sure there is something for everyone, be that a high-tech bungalow or an upside-down home. As you might already be able to tell, this year the theme seems to be complementary contrasts. Our six case studies demonstrate a blending of old and new, rustic and contemporary, and inside/outside living. They achieve a remarkable harmony that proves self builders are a resilient bunch, in the face of all the uncertainty over the past year. Now that we seem to be on a political plateau, hopefully the roaring 20s can usher in a new wave of self builders.”

Paul Newman

Paul Newman
Self-Build Director.



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Best Potton Home 2019

Once again, we’ve asked you to pick your favourite Potton home. We whittled it down to nine candidates and then let you take the reins. Over 1,200 of you voted, and it was looking like a close call, but ultimately one house won out...

Winner: With almost 17% of the overall votes cast, **Bob and Mandy Williams** were the worthy winners. They started with an existing Potton design from our Ideas Book, then customised it to meet their needs. The result is a bright white home that sits comfortably in the Cornish countryside, with extensive glazing and even a balcony to make the most of those views. We think you’ll agree that the Williams house makes a perfect **build beautiful** front cover.

Second place went to **Jane and David Newman** for their build in Hampshire. They turned their existing garden into a building plot for a new, future-



proofed home. The bespoke house includes a basement and triple garage, as well as eco-friendly technology meaning low running costs and a low impact on the environment.

David and Gill Jay took away third place. The Jays bought the plot next door to their Hertfordshire home, but as it

was a replacement dwelling, they were limited to a specific footprint size. Their architecturally striking solution features several wow factors including a sedum roof and a sliding glass wall, as well as a mezzanine floor to add extra space.

Kelly Moffat-Cohen,
Marketing Manager

The Potton Package

By Kelly Moffat-Cohen,
Marketing Manager

How We Work from End to End on Your Project

Our Potton Package covers not only the timber-frame structure but bookends it with a complete design and planning service. There is also the option for a weathertightness package which will complete the superstructure's shell.

Our **SelfBuild Academy** courses will help you find land if you have not already, and our in-house Planning Consultant will be on hand to advise. These courses are held at our **Show Centre**, home to five fully furnished houses for you to explore and maybe even draw inspiration from.

Meet with your very own **Self Build Consultant** who'll steer you through the process.

Now the fun bit! Our **architectural design team** can deliver house designs that range from tailoring an existing house concept to the completely bespoke. Already have a design? Send them over and you'll work with your SBC to turn them into a Potton home.

We can even **design your groundworks** to allow for a seamless transition between the





completion of the groundworks and the erection of the timber frame.

Our success in *securing planning permissions and meeting Building Regs* will put your mind at ease that your home is in the best possible hands.

Next, it's time for your *timber frame!* Once they're made in our factory, the frames are erected onsite by our expert team.

The *whole-house insulation kit* is the final element, complete with our premium Kingspan Kooltherm insulation.

And for those who want a little extra, we offer plenty of *joinery options* like windows, doors, staircases, roof finishes, and even additions like MVHR systems and underfloor heating.



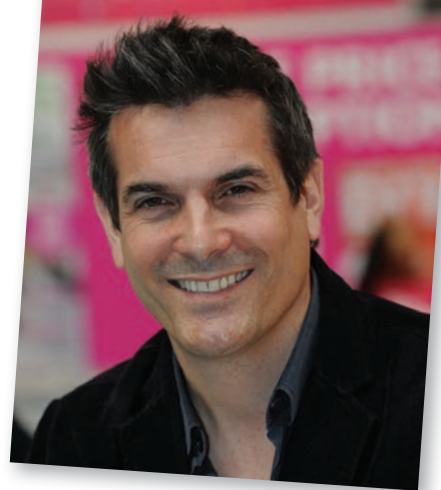
Our new *weathertightness package* makes the shell of your home complete and secure, not to mention protected from the elements.



Where to start...
If you're thinking about self-building then start with a visit to the Potton Self Build Show Centre in St Neots, Cambridgeshire. Isn't it time you visited?

Self-Build News

Michael Holmes, Chair of the National Custom and Self-Build Association, on the campaign to help more people fulfil the dream of building their own home



If you are one of the 60% of prospective self builders struggling to find a plot of land, you might be wondering how the big housebuilders seem to be putting up new homes almost everywhere. It can feel like developers have a monopoly on land, and in turn the market. However, tucked away in the new Government's election manifesto is a seed of change, a promise to:

“Support community-led housing by helping people who want to build their own homes find plots of land.”

The National Custom and Self Build Association (NaCSBA) – the self-build movement's voice in the UK – lobbied all

parties to change the planning system to open up the land market to individuals, groups and smaller builders, and will now support the Government in delivering on its promise and hold it to task.

Back in 2016 the 'Right to Build' legislation seemed like the solution that would-be self builders had been waiting for. It required all local authorities in England to grant planning permission for enough serviced plots to meet demand (calculated by the number of people signed up on local registers). Councils were to allocate potential development land as serviced plots, encourage developers to incorporate plots on larger strategic sites, and to create plots on publicly owned land, alongside positive planning policies. Three years on, and disappointingly few councils have followed the law. In fact, actions by some councils have

actively discouraged it. Despite this, register numbers have continued to grow, with 55,000 people having signed up over the first three years.

Importantly, there is a growing body of planning appeals decisions giving weight to serviced plot applications in areas where the council has demonstrably failed in its duty to meet demand. This will be aided by Government publication of official register numbers for each council. For details, visit www.righttobuildportal.org.uk

In Northern Ireland, it's historically been easier to find an individual plot, so a lot of its new homes are self built. Scotland is considering introducing self-build registers, and its new national planning policy guidance now requires councils to assess demand for serviced plots. Of all the home nations, Wales looks to be the most progressive with the launch of 'Self Build Wales', an initiative enabling the public sector to provide serviced plots and an equity loan scheme (via local councils and the Welsh Development Bank). This will make self building an option even for first-time buyers. Pressure is now on England's Government to follow by introducing a Help to Build equity loan scheme, a version of the Help to Buy scheme, tailored for custom and self build, which would help thousands of people with smaller deposits build their own home.

Michael Holmes has been the chair of the National Custom and Self-Build Association since 2014 and is Director of Content for Homebuilding & Renovating



“Register numbers continue to grow, 55,000 people have signed up over the first three years.”

**READ
MORE**
on page 12



living area to accommodate their large family, as well as several high-tech features. For the design work, the Jays collaborated with long-time friend and Architect Richard Mitzman. In 2019 Richard was given an RIBA regional award for an offsite manufactured timber-frame building, Canonbury Courtyard House in London, which is a testament to his architectural skill. David was so keen to get involved in the design work that he even made a scale model of the house, which proved extremely useful when considering all aspects of the build. The build began in October 2017. A major factor was to ensure a highly efficient construction method with low running costs. Tom Allen, one of Potton's Self Build Consultants, helped the couple find the best solution. The couple were quite involved in during the build; they used a main builder and a project manager, but David carried out some of the internal joinery work. Gill worked extensively with interior designer Sina Capaldo choosing many of the finishes and fittings. The system of the eye-catching sliding wall was designed by David himself. The Jays finished their home in November 2018, having managed to stick to their initial build budget. A big concern for David and Gill was being as environmentally friendly

as possible. To this end, their new home has an air-source heat pump and heat recovery system. The FLEXTRON photovoltaic roof crowning part of the property is virtually invisible, resembling a traditional zinc roof. A sedum roof pairs nicely with this on the largest roof section, adding yet more visual appeal. The combination of these items greatly helped to reduce utility running costs. As David says, "we targeted an SAP rating of 92 and actually achieved a 97". The OFGEN annual energy £778 per annum is actually slightly more than the current estimated annual electricity bill. From the outside, the house is architecturally striking, with the roofs offset from each other and glazing allowing you to see right through the upper floor to the other side. Inside, the modern bungalow boasts two bedrooms with en-suite shower/bathrooms, a mezzanine floor and an outside veranda. The mezzanine not only adds design interest but, because of the glass balustrading, it flows into the rest of the room. Most important is the kitchen/dining area, which David and Gill wanted big enough to accommodate their 23-person-strong family. They've certainly achieved this, and with the sliding painted glass wall system they can separate the living room from the kitchen/dining area

to achieve a cosier, compartmentalised space. This sliding system includes three panels of fused glass depicting the 'Tree of Life' by glass artist Lisa from bespoke glass art company 'The House of Ugly Fish'. The panels establish a gentle colour palette of calming blue and green, which is carried through on the furniture cushions against the neutral tones of the furniture. The ability of the large open-plan living area to accommodate a lot of people was put to the test when David and Gill hosted a party for all those involved in the build process, to thank them for taking part in building their dream home. It passed with flying colours. Having settled into their beautiful new home, the couple look back on the project: "We found the Potton service absolutely fantastic and very professional. In the rare instance of a mistake being made, the corrective action taken was immediate and perfectly executed ... a sight of a great company ethos.

“ We had excellent service and support from Kevin Hopton and we would most certainly recommend Potton to other selfbuilders. ”



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 Edinburgh (EH15) 0131 337 3434 - Glasgow (G4) 0141 404 7744 - Glasgow (G11) 0141 337 1435
 Glasgow (G76) 0141 644 1435 - Harrogate 01423 701 200 - Horsham 01403 790 812 - Ilkley 01943 817 477
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 Newcastle upon Tyne 0191 286 0514 - Newmarket 01638 560 778 - Oxford 01865 952 998 - Penrith 01768 895 566
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 Stourbridge 01562 887 212 - Tain 01862 893 436 - Warrington 01925 636 997 - Wirral 0151 342 7442

What Exactly is a Plot?

When people think about plots of land, they tend to picture rolling fields in countryside settings. You might be surprised to find out that this often is not the case. In fact, almost all of those fields will never get planning permission. Why? Read on and find out...

The Settlement Boundary Rule

The golden rule is that if it's outside the settlement boundary, and there's no path leading to it, then planning is unlikely. Maps of the area will show you exactly where this line ends – find them on your local council website. If you've found a plot right next to the boundary, and there's a road and pavement connecting it back to the settlement, it's worth an enquiry. If it's half a mile away down a beaten track, it's probably a no go. You could check the status of their five-year land supply if you really can't find any plots within the boundary, but this is unlikely.



Open Fields?

A picturesque square of countryside just outside a settlement would make the perfect plot, right? Well, no. Unfortunately, if it looks like a field... it's probably a field. Anything with horses, sheep, or cattle is a definite no, and an area of field outside the settlement boundary is probably just

that, a field. While you might think it's not being used, it could be arable land used only seasonally for farming, or fallow land left to re-fertilise. Alternatively, a lot of green spaces are now protected as green belt land, meaning they have to remain undeveloped. Councils are very reluctant to approve new builds in countryside

because they want to preserve this greenery. Basically, there are a lot of other (and easier) ways to find plots that are far more likely to get planning consent...

Infill Plots

These are strips of land sandwiched between two existing houses. So, they're in a developed area, with services and road access nearby – already much better than a field. As long as they're not part of a green corridor (an area reserved to preserve animal habitats), then this is an excellent choice.

Garden Plots

Similar to infilling, they involve taking a portion of a property's garden, and again, services are already provided. Road access can be tricky; if there's no road to the rear of the existing property, you will have to build one alongside it to reach the new garden plot. There is also the problem of overlooking, so you need to make sure that the garden is big enough to accommodate a new house while allowing adequate room between it and neighbouring properties. Again, looking at maps will give you a clue as to whether or not a garden plot will be approved. Some councils look upon them more favourably than



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conservation area, which meant that in addition to the usual required surveys the couple also had to present biodiversity and aboriginal reports. Potton planning consultant Adrian Bussetil steered them through the rigorous demands and permission was finally granted in 2016. As a planning condition, they also had to allow for an archaeological dig.

The Crosses used a project manager to take them to the weathertight stage. Terry, who is self-employed, took three months off to be a part of the build, which allowed him to be onsite a lot. A craftsman of bespoke rocking horses by trade, Terry was involved in most of the practical work and decision making, and also kept the site tidy. He undertook a

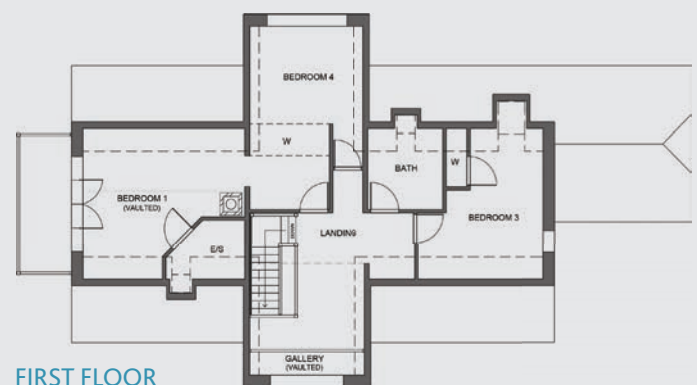
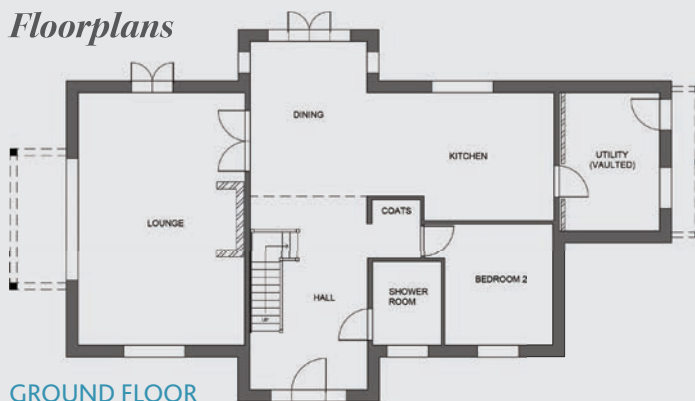
lot of the second-fix carpentry himself, including the oak stairs and balustrade. Isabel and Terry were so keen to move in that they did so while the home was still incomplete, in summer 2017. Finally, after the plot had been subjected to the archaeological dig which had drastically slowed the process, the completion certificate was signed in April 2019.

The Crosses wanted a 'contemporary country look' and that is exactly what they achieved. From the outside, the house resembles a barn, with pale cladding and vertical glazing separating the central section from the wings. Inside, the plentiful use of warm wooden tones gives the house a homely feel, which is only emphasised by the inglenook fireplace in the main living area. Living in their completed forever home for some time has allowed Isabel and Terry to fully appreciate what they made:

“We are delighted with the house and have to pinch ourselves every day. The plot and location are to die for... we love it.”



Floorplans



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CASE STUDY 03

“The Plot Found Us”

After unexpectedly buying a plot, and then (even more unexpectedly) deciding to self-build, Carol and Simon Green drew inspiration from the Ruskin show house. Their finished house proves that old and new can be a perfect match.



Project Facts

Location: Leicestershire

Land cost: £150,000

Build cost: £550,000

End value: c.£850,000

Completion: December 2017

Floor area: 300 sq m | 3229 sq ft

Potton: Architectural Design,
Planning & Building Regs,
Building Structure and
Potton Package

Carol and Simon hadn't considered building their own home until a trip to the National Self Build and Renovation Centre in Swindon brought them face to face with Potton's Ruskin. This show home would come to be the inspiration for the Greens' own self build.

The Greens had run an extremely successful decorative driveway and surfacing company, HMS Ltd., for over 25 years, which had recently been relocated from their home office to a nearby village. The farm land adjacent to the new office was about 1 acre, and had once been earmarked by a developer for six houses. When the developer stepped

back from the project, the Greens put in an offer in order to be able to control the use of the plot. In 2016 the sale went through, and the Greens found themselves the new owners of the land, which included an existing cottage that they initially thought they might rent out.

After visiting the NSBRC in Swindon, however, Carol was immediately taken with the Ruskin. Though they hadn't even planned on moving house, let alone building their own, this visit set the couple on the route to self-building. They applied for outline planning permission themselves, which went through very easily, before arranging to meet Potton Self Build Consultant Graham Hughes.



Come in for a cuppa...

The UK's only Self Build Show Centre boasts five stunning designs and is a must-see for any aspiring self-builder! Step inside to find out more...

...actly
...s and
...ally is.



The Wickhambrook

Our contemporary barn marries rustic exposed beams with extensive glazing to make the most of its vaulted spaces. A large garden patio accessed via bifold doors brings the outside in.



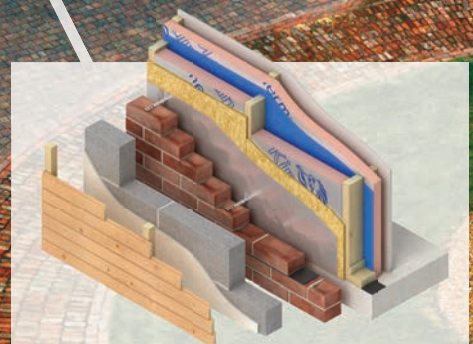
The Elsworth

The UK's first permanent show home built to Passivhaus standards. The butterfly design of the Elsworth roof commands attention, and its contemporary feel extends through to the open-plan interior.



The Caxton

Our modestly sized cottage, the Caxton is our smallest show home but is still bursting with characterful charm. Cosy features like an inglenook fireplace, dormer windows, and exposed posts and beams make it a popular choice.



The Build Centre

A chance for you to get up close and personal with our different build systems. You can examine our three different systems, learning about our energy efficiency and sustainability credentials.



The Milchester

Our Rectory-style property is the largest of our show homes. Its luxurious design echoes the Georgian period, from its exterior symmetry and sash windows to its grand dressing room and Shaker-style kitchen.



The Product Centre

This offers you a chance to browse the products of some of the companies we work in partnership with. Luxury windows, brassware, joinery, and more await!



The Gransden

Full of character, the Gransden boasts all the charm of yesteryear with exposed bricks, posts and beams and a huge inglenook fireplace. Its welcoming embrace is the perfect place to house our reception area. This is where you'll find a Self Build Consultant who'll be able to answer all your questions.



The SelfBuild Academy

Our Academy offers a variety of courses to suit everyone, from those just starting out (or still only considering it) to those with plots, planning, or designs.



...And explore our
five show homes

Potton Self Build Show Centre

Mill Lane, Little Paxton, St Neots, Cambridgeshire, PE19 6EF

Opening Times:

Monday - Friday: 9am - 5pm Saturday: 10am - 4pm

Our Design and Planning Service

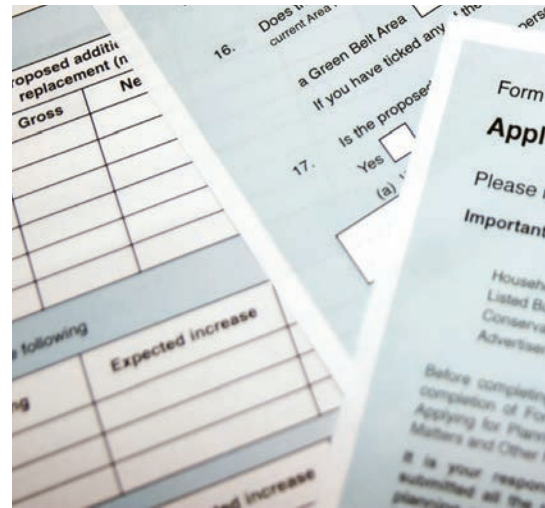
By Mark Day,
SelfBuild Consultant



Here at Potton we offer a comprehensive Design and Planning service, giving you the freedom to design the house that's right for you.

The house design is generally one of the things self builders most look forward to. It finally gives you the chance to fit a house to your needs, not the other way around. Design goes hand in hand with planning, and a successful planning application is only possible if customer needs, desires and budgets are matched with the policies of the local planning authority.. Luckily, we've submitted thousands of successful applications, so we know a thing or two about getting them right.

if you go for a lot of (muddy!) dog walks, it might be worth introducing a boot room to keep the rest of your house dirt free. We'll also keep the shape and size of your plot in mind, to make sure that the house we design is literally the best possible fit. Feeling overwhelmed by the seemingly endless possibilities of shape, style, layout etc? Our Show Centre will give you a good idea of the kind of things that work for you, and what you can achieve with us. We've also got plenty of existing house



“Your first step in the design and planning process is discussing your project with a member of our team.”

They'll go through what you need from the new house, including its specification (how well you want it to perform), aesthetic (how you want it to look), and, most importantly, function (how it will be adapted to your lifestyle). We might even come up with ideas you hadn't thought of. For example,





compiling a scrapbook of a few features or styles that you particularly like, or even getting just a rough idea of how you want all the rooms to flow. This will give our designer a direction to go in. This service is £5,400 + VAT + an application fee to the Local Planning Authority.

Of course, the external appearance of the house is crucial to a successful planning bid. We will go through the feasibility of your ideas with your plot and area in mind. Your desired specification will also be measured against your budget restrictions, to give you an idea of what's possible. If necessary, we will provide a free planning appraisal through our expert planning consultant, to make sure that the type of home you want to build will be accepted in your chosen location.

You'll be asked to obtain a topographical survey, which might inform your foundation design, house positioning, or dwelling size. Along with a street scene drawing, which will ensure that your proposal will fit in with its surroundings, this will form part of the planning application.

We'll meet with you to decide the detailed design brief, and will visit the site if necessary. Once the agreement has been committed to, we can commence the design process with a member of our design team. They will produce a preliminary iteration within 3 to 4 weeks, depending on the design's complexity. There are normally a couple of changes required to the design, which may take another 4 weeks. We want to get the design just right for you. If you really don't like what we've created, we can start again.

Once you're completely happy with it, the design is then sent to the planning consultant to raise the planning application. In normal circumstances, this only takes two weeks to submit. The application will be with the Local Planning Authority for a minimum of 8 weeks. A determination date will be given once the application has been validated. We have a very successful history of getting planning permission, so your building team should start breaking ground in no time!



designs in our Ideas Book, if you're the kind of person who needs something to get your creative juices flowing. We can design you a modified version of any existing Potton design that takes your fancy. Virtually any changes are possible to customise the house; adding an en-suite, knocking through a wall, or simply moving around the windows. For this service, we charge £4,000 + VAT + an application fee to the Local Planning Authority.

For other people, designing their own home means starting from a completely blank page. Our design team can create you a completely bespoke design tailored to your requirements. If you think this is the approach for you, it's worth



Discuss your house design with us

Get in touch to discuss your dream home with our expert SelfBuild Consultants, designers and Architects or arrange a meeting at our SelfBuild Show Centre.

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A Charming Forever Home

Project Facts

Location: Dorset
Land cost: £195,000
Build cost: £383,000
End value: £620,000
Floor area: 214 sq m | 2303 sq ft
Completion: August 2018
Potton: Architectural design, Planning & Building Regs, Building Structure and Potton Package

Having had some experience with renovation in the past, with their forever home **Michael and Angela** decided to take it one step further.

When they retired in 2003, Michael and Angela Romeril moved to Dorset. They had just bought a 17th-century thatched cottage in dire need of renovation. With the help of Angela's builder brother, they added an extension and modernised the property, while still retaining its original period features.

The Romerils were no strangers to construction, as Angela's father was also a builder. They had been looking at Potton's literature for some time, and after living in the same Dorset village for 15 years and needing to downsize from nearly an acre of garden, the couple decided that self building was the natural next step. So they visited various self-build exhibitions, where they met experienced Self Build Consultant Sean Adams.

“Sean was very intuitive and listened to our ideas for a future project. He had a lot of experience and we felt comfortable with him.”

Initially, the couple came across a plot but were unaware of its suitability, so they asked Sean to look over it when he was next passing, which he did. Unfortunately, the vendor unexpectedly reduced the size of the plot as well as

increased its price, so that particular venture was aborted. The Romerils were far from discouraged, though, and continued their hunt. A little time afterwards, Michael and Angela heard about a possible opportunity – a plot with an old bungalow that might be about to go up for sale. They managed to contact the owner to agree a price and begin the purchasing process. However, the owner was in his 90s and sadly passed away during the process. This meant a considerable delay in the completion whilst probate was granted. Luckily the owner's heirs wished to continue with the sale once the legal issues were resolved, something Michael and Angela still feel very fortunate about.



A Guide to the Planning Process



The Ten-Step Design and Planning Process

1. Establish your budget
2. Appraise the site
3. Develop design concepts
4. Check the proposal meets your budget
5. Appraise for planning (if necessary, hold pre-app with LA)
6. Develop the design
7. Prepare application
8. Submit and register
9. Planning approval process (8 weeks+)
10. Decision by LA Planning – if refused, appeal (within 6 months)

Building your forever home isn't as simple as coming up with a design and then just building it. Unless the design meets your budget, fits the plot constraints, and secures planning consent, your build won't get off the ground.

In some ways, the process for making this happen is simple; just take a step-by-step approach, ticking off the important checks as you go. Deciding whether your proposal is appropriate requires a series of subjective decisions.

The process starts with understanding your budget. When it comes to money, be honest, as there's no point designing a house you can't afford to build.

Understanding site constraints is key to meeting the budget and getting planning consent. The plot appraisal is also more in-depth than you'd think. Site investigations and surveys assess site size and consider any issues with ecology, flood risk or access. The broader scope is understanding planning constraints (like the design of adjacent buildings), how the proposal will fit into the street scene and whether there will be any loss of amenity to neighbours.

Once the plot has been fully understood, design concepts can then be worked up based upon your build budget. Don't underestimate the value of this stage – concept design should test your



expectations and, done well, will tease out design alternatives you might not have first thought of. Before evolving the concept design, always ask a planning consultant about the likelihood of securing a planning consent. If they have doubts, consider less contentious alternatives. If necessary, hold a pre-app with the local authority to

get their views, but be prepared to listen to their comments otherwise you're in for a tortuous planning process. Before completing the final set of planning drawings, ensure that the proposal meets your needs and budget. Now's the time to get things right, so read the drawings properly and take time to understand how the design will be built and at what cost.

The compilation of the planning application is next, including the necessary drawings and documents to support the proposal. These are then submitted and validated by the planning authority before entering the planning process. If the proposal has been well-considered, the process should run smoothly and consent should be granted in 8-12 weeks. Unfortunately, the planning system isn't perfect; under-resourced planning departments or contentious designs will add time. The issue of subjectivity can lead to differences of opinion about what you want and what the planning officer will support. Frustrating as this may be, a consent may mean a compromise...but not so far that your reason for self building is entirely lost.



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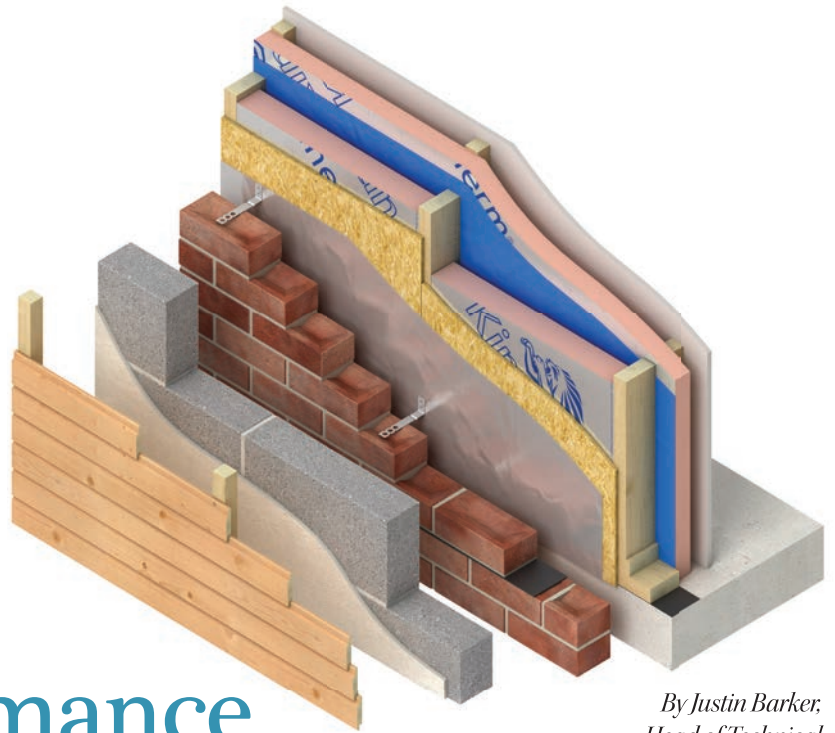
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The National Custom & Self Build Association campaigns to remove the barriers to more people in the UK building their own home. Look out for the NaCSBA stamp and be assured that you'll be working with a company you can trust.

- All members are committed to working with self-builders in a fair and transparent manner
- All members are funding the growth of the sector so more people can have an individual home
- All members are covered by NaCSBA's consumer Code of Practice – to protect you if things go wrong



A FULL LIST OF MEMBERS CAN BE FOUND AT:
www.selfbuildportal.org.uk/members



*By Justin Barker,
Head of Technical*

Improving Our Performance

The self-build industry is constantly moving forward, and at Potton we move with it.

We are now offering tested wall and floor systems to ensure your new home complies with all the latest thermal and fire regulations. One of our wall panel systems – Kingspan ULTIMA - has been through a rigorous technical assessment process carried out by the BBA. Included within the audit process have been regular factory and site surveillance visits to ensure that the wall panels meet all the latest regulations. A further development to ULTIMA is an urban alternative which gives added options for construction projects in high-density, built-up areas. Potton utilise the latest technology when it comes to floor joists. Open-web joists are provided to enhance design freedom on internal room layouts. The open-web joists also offer easy access for the installation of services within



the floor zone. If you are considering an MVHR (Mechanical Ventilation with Heat Recovery) system, then Potton will ensure this is co-ordinated with the joist layouts to provide a perfect but simple solution. Sitting on top of the open-web joists is a robust, high-performing Cabersshield Plus chipboard. This product

is at the top end of the decking market and has a surface specifically designed for the unpredictable British weather.

When it comes to your roof, there are a number of options available. Some designs lend themselves to vaulted areas, others create additional space using attic trusses. Potton use sophisticated design and engineering technology to create areas not found in traditional homes. These areas can be formed using the latest thermally efficient roof panels (Kingspan TEK), or via traditional cut roof methods integrating our newest high-performing Kingspan insulation.

In order to use all the new components on offer, the Potton design team liaises with the customer to offer the best solution for each individual dwelling. We will also liaise with MVHR, joinery, and stair suppliers to ensure that all the components fit seamlessly together during your build. It is essential to bring these elements together at design stage so that any potential issues can be resolved prior to site works commencing. Ultimately, with assistance from our skilled design team we can bring your new home to life.





were happy, Potton's technical team drew up the house plans, and planning consultant Adrian Bussetil made the final planning application on their behalf.

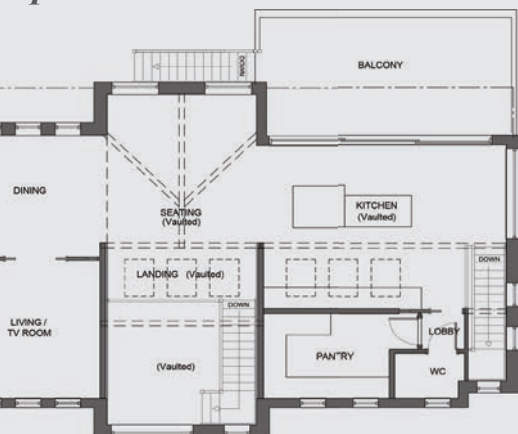
Foundations were dug in August 2016 and the Potton frame was complete by early October. The couple were lucky enough to find a cottage to rent just a mile from the plot, saving them living in a caravan over winter. This allowed Louise to visit the site to inspect progress and meet with the project manager on a regular basis.

The finished house is clad in render, cedar and red sandstone to mirror local materials. Perhaps the most striking exterior feature of the property is the spiral staircase. It winds down from the rear balcony to the ground below and blends into the house by using the same colour cladding. The interior gives way to neutral tones and clean lines. Thoughtful additions like pocket doors and glass balustrading allow light to travel through the space, affording the home that circulation space the Papworths wanted. Louise and Nigel found the process so smooth and enjoyable that they would definitely consider building again when they downsize in the future.

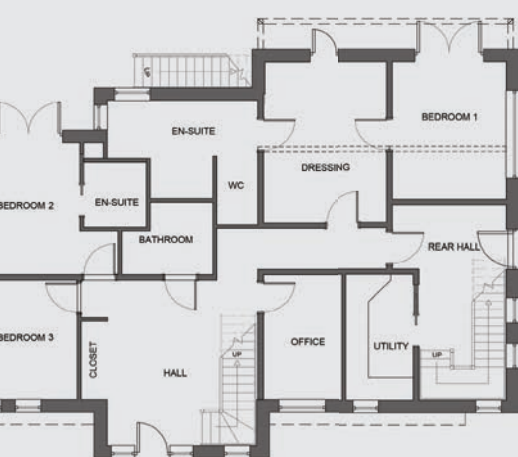
“Every single person we dealt with was professional, supportive, flexible and just really pleasant – always willing to go the extra mile to make sure things were absolutely right.”

orplans

FIRST FLOOR



GROUND FLOOR



The Papworths then went to their first ever auction. “That was the scariest day of my life,” recalls Nigel, who did the actual bidding. There was a reserve on the plot but Nigel stuck to the couple’s limit and their £330,000 bid was accepted. Nigel recommends auctions for self builders because “it is signed and sealed in a day ... the searches are all done so if you have the nerves for it we would certainly recommend that route.”

The plot already had detailed planning permission for a standard-looking 5-bed detached with a separate garage, so the couple were confident their own design would get planning. They had already researched self building and knew that they didn’t want to self manage. After visiting the Potton Show Centre and attending a Self Build Academy presentation, the couple were impressed with the effort that Potton goes to for clients and potential clients.

Louise and Nigel were very hands on with the design. “We pulled the design together ourselves on paper, down to room and window sizes, ceiling heights and external materials.” Exploiting the view from the rear elevation was the prime consideration, so they moved the main living areas upstairs. The plot orientation meant the rear of the house gets full sun for most of the day, so at the advice of Self Build Consultant Graham Hughes a deep roof overhang was added to ensure the interior did not overheat. Once the Papworths

Maximising the Value of Your Self Build

By Kelly Newlands,
Marketing Executive
and Copywriter

Most people who've done even a teeny bit of research into self building will have realised that the finished homes are generally worth more than they cost to build. In some cases, a lot more. While a lot of self builders will do so once, for their lifetime home, there are plenty who will, at some point or another, sell off their creation. With this in mind, it is only natural that they want to make a sizeable profit, in return for all their hard work. Whether it's for immediate gain or a long-term investment, it's worth bearing in mind the finished value of your project before you even start the process.

Location

This is absolutely key to a house's value. If you want to live in your new build for a while first, then choose wherever you want to live. If you want to sell it immediately, however, then you need to consider its location carefully. Building a huge house to an extremely high specification is all well and good, but if that house's location is in an industrial area, or an area with higher crime rates, or just an area where property prices are generally low, then you will have lost a lot of that house's value – this is 'overdevelopment'.

By contrast, the 'Waitrose Effect' essentially means that premium brands are found in premium locations, so nearby houses are more desirable. This does impact the price of plots considerably, though.

Overall Design

A key consideration is the simplicity of the shape you're building. A general rule



Did you know?

Potton's Guide Book includes a full breakdown of the construction cost of building each show home. This information offers a useful comparison for figuring out the likely build costs for similar house designs. Visit www.potton.co.uk/download

is that the more complicated the house's shape, the more it costs to build. An unusual house shape rarely adds much to a house's value anyway. In fact, the cost of an unusual shape can often outstrip the value it adds. The best advice here is to choose simple shapes (with corners rather than curves) and use the money saved to enhance other elements which will boost the house's value more considerably.

Internal Specification

This just refers to the quality of the interiors. If you're self building for profit only, and don't intend to live in the house at all, you might opt for porcelain instead of stone, for example. It still looks nice but is significantly cheaper. Kitchens and



A top-down view of a white bathroom sink set into a dark wood vanity. The word 'WOW' is written on the sink in large, stylized, pink and teal letters. On the floor, which is covered in white square tiles, the word 'WOWOVATION' is spelled out in large, 3D, purple and teal letters. In the top left corner, there is a small white cup with a toothbrush and a round container with a bar of soap labeled 'PATCHOULI'. In the bottom right corner, there is a small potted plant with dark green and reddish leaves.

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Building an Energy-Efficient Home

A house fit for the future

By Kevin Hopton,
Senior Designer

With increasing environmental concern has come an increasing desire to build homes that are sympathetic to their landscapes. Alongside achieving a clean conscience, building homes with a sustainable focus can also help your bank balance. 'Green' homes are often very cheap to heat because of superior insulation, and often generate some of their own energy. You've probably heard of some forms of eco-technology, like solar panels, but unless you've already done some research, others might be less familiar.

Regulations

SAPs are the energy calculations a building needs to meet to pass Building Regulations. These aren't only taken when the home is all new and shiny, either; energy calculations need to be determined in the design and the construction phases of a house to prove it is viable to build. From the get go, you need to think about how well your house is going to perform, rather than it being an afterthought.



A Building Regulations pass is achieved when both CO² and fabric energy efficiency measurements are equal to, or lower than, the targets. Two key considerations for passing Building Regulations are:

- Deciding how your new home will generate heating and hot water (affecting CO² output).

- Deciding how well your new home will be insulated (affecting 'fabric efficiency' – which is essentially how much heat is lost through your building).

Luckily there are plenty of ways to build that not only meet Building Regulations but also save you money, and help the environment. Oh, and they also make for a nicer house to live in. It's a quadruple win.



renewable energy sources. UFH can be fitted throughout the house or on the ground floor only, with radiators on the floors above. UFH is so efficient that those selecting this second option often never even have to use those radiators.

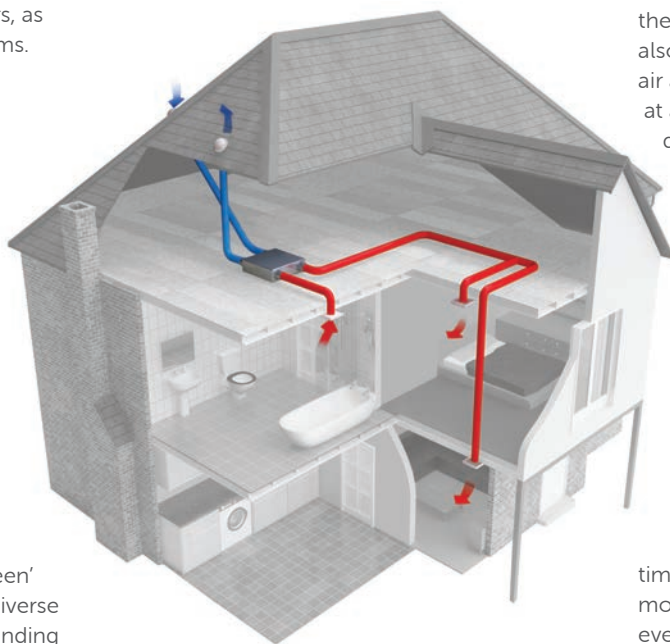
Solar Energy

Most people will have heard of 'solar panels', but did you know that there are actually two kinds? Solar hot water uses thermal panels to transfer the sun's heat to water, storing the heated water in a tank until it's needed. In summer these can supply almost all of your hot water, and the contents can be fed into most existing boilers, as well as through wet UFH systems.

In contrast, solar photovoltaic (PV) cells generate electricity. They bring the opportunity to sell excess energy back to the National Grid, which will dramatically reduce your payback time. Though they do not require direct sunlight to operate, the greater the light intensity, the more energy the panels produce, so their placement is crucial to their effectiveness.

Green and Brown Roofs

Solar panels aren't the only 'green' way to crown your home. Biodiverse roofs mimic the house's surrounding environment to reduce its ecological impact. Sedum roofs arrive pre-grown with plants specifically chosen for their ability to withstand roof conditions. All living roofs are fitted with drainage and built-in water retention to ensure plants are hydrated and healthy year-round.



MVHR

With high levels of insulation and airtightness come the risks of mould and stale air. Enter MVHR. These mechanical ventilation and heat recovery systems serve a dual purpose. As well as keeping

the air in a house fresh and circulated, they also extract warmth from stale, outgoing air and use that to keep the internal air at a constant temperature. Though designed to run 24/7, MVHRs operate at very low levels with minimal noise. And, if you are building a house to a Passivhaus level of airtightness, MVHRs are essential to maintain indoor air quality.

So Will I Pass?

With even one of these features, meeting Building Regulations should be a figurative walk in the park. Eco-technology has only improved over the years, and will continue to do so as its popularity grows further. As time goes on, governments will introduce more legislations to make new builds even greener. There's already a plan to phase out gas in favour of electricity by the mid-2020s for all new dwellings, so you'll just be getting ahead of the game. Even if you're not an eco-warrior, no one is going to turn down an opportunity to save money and create a nicer living environment at the same time!





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A Cornish Country Mansion

Bob and Mandy Williams, both now retired, chose to self build because they could not find a suitable house in the location they wanted. The result is a stylish replacement dwelling overlooking the beautiful Cornish countryside.

Bob and Mandy had already lived in Cornwall for three years on a small farm, and were initially just looking for a property that would be suitable for a holiday let. By the time they stumbled across their plot, they had been on the hunt for a couple of years.

In the end, it was down to luck; they just happened to be looking in an estate agent's window at the very moment a new sales card appeared in it. The details showed a beautiful 1-acre plot with an existing bungalow, and a large garden landscaped in the traditional Cornish style. The plot

came with existing planning permission for a large, very modern house which they thought was out of character for the area. Though the planning had now lapsed, the precedent was encouraging for the Williamses. After viewing the bungalow, the couple immediately saw the potential of



Project Facts
Location: Cornwall
Land cost: £770,000
 (inc. bungalow)
Build cost: £600,000
End value: £1.7m
Floor area: 370 sq m | 3982 sq ft
Completion: December 2018
Polton: Architectural Design,
 Planning & Building Regs, Building
 Structure, Potton Package



CASE STUDY 06

CASE STUDY 06

the site, and went ahead with the purchase. They put their farm on the market and used the bungalow as a holiday let until the farm sold. The couple knew that they wanted to knock the bungalow down and start again, and this led them in one direction...

Despite having no experience of self building, Bob and Mandy chose the self-build route after having been readers of self-build magazines over the years. Through this, they were aware of Potton, and had also visited self-build exhibitions where Potton had been present. The couple attended several of Potton's Introductory Self Build Academy courses, which are designed to equip self builders with the knowledge and confidence necessary to embark upon their projects. They visited the Potton Show Centre in Cambridgeshire to look around the five show homes. They particularly liked the Milchester show house but decided that its footprint was not right for their plot, so decided to take a more tailored approach.

After perusing Potton's Ideas Book, Bob and Mandy felt that the 'Waterford B'



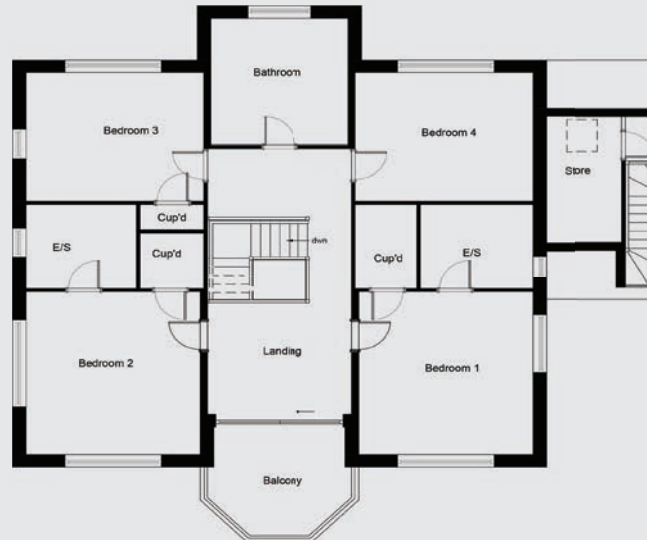
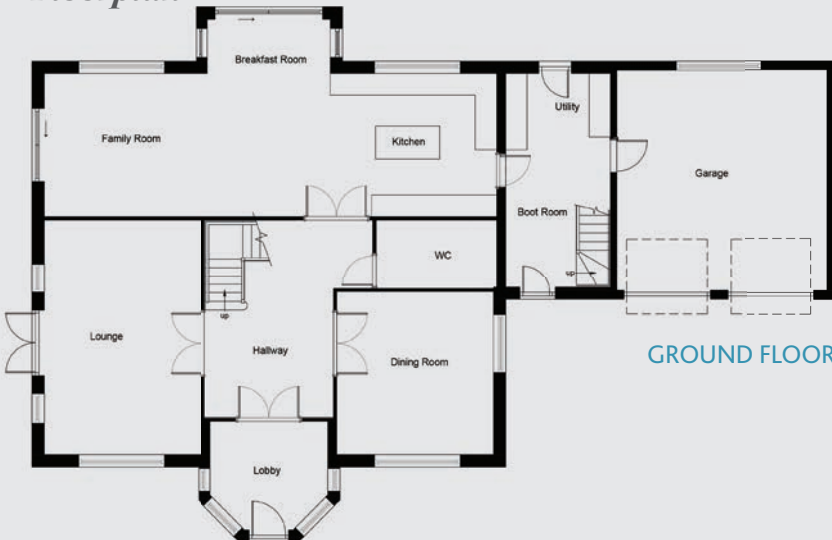
house would be a good place to start, but knew that they needed to make some changes. They wanted large windows at all elevations to really exploit the views, and clean lines both inside and out. With help from Self Build Consultant Sean Adams, the Williamses began modifying the concept house to fit their needs, and it soon became clear that they were no longer talking about a holiday let but instead about their future home. By the time the design was finished it was virtually bespoke, and passed planning

with no objections. By pure coincidence, one of the councillors on the site visit mentioned he had a Potton home, and invited Bob and Mandy to see it.

The build got underway in March 2018, with the demolition of the bungalow and the careful sectioning of the garden. Bob and Mandy were eager to retain as much of the traditional garden as possible, so it was protected from the demolition process. Watching a perfectly liveable home get demolished can be difficult, as Mandy recalls:



Floorplan

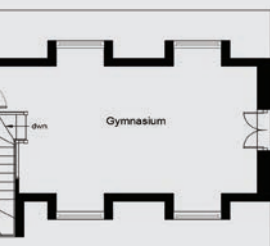


“ We had the most terrifying experience when we saw the brutality of the demolition process... We thought ‘what are we doing?’ But the feeling soon passed... Once the Potton timber frame was up, our mood quickly turned positive. ”



Bob and Mandy were very involved with product selection, especially with the exterior features. They were aiming for a house that was relatively traditional, but with a modern twist.

By December 2018 the house was ready, and is a testament to the couple’s wish to have it fit with its setting. The exterior is finished in a chalk-white, self-coloured render on block, and contrasts nicely with the pale grey accents from the roof and joinery. This roof slate was specifically chosen to compliment the overall colour scheme, and it’s clear to see why. The home is settled unobtrusively in its surroundings, just as Bob and Many wished. Inside, clean lines and a neutral colour palette add to the feeling of space, and generous amounts of glazing helps to bring the stunning surroundings inside. To this end, the home also features a balcony at the front elevation, edged with glass to allow an even greater sense of being immersed in the countryside. An air-source heat pump supplies the heating on both floors, creating a cosy environment with efficiency in mind. When asked about their experience working with Potton, Mandy said: “We would certainly recommend Potton to others ... we were very happy with the service they provided. There is a possibility of a future development opportunity on our site and we would definitely use them again.”



FIRST FLOOR



Welcome to Potton's Self Build Academy

The Potton Self Build Academy, located at our Show Centre in St Neots, gives you the opportunity to learn everything you'll need for a successful self build.



The Academy caters to any and all stages of your self-build journey, from how to find land to managing your build. The courses are delivered by our experts and will teach you everything you need to know (and more!) about the exciting world you're about to enter. It has continued to grow over the years and now boasts more than 10 different courses, events, and masterclasses...

Introduction to Self Build and Finding Land

What is it?

This is an overview of self building.

What does it cover?

After discussing why self building is an



increasingly popular way of getting on the property ladder, it covers topics like finding land, designing your home, applying for planning, and financing the build.

Who's it for?

Anyone considering self building and wants to know more about it, or anyone searching for a plot.

Masterclass on Finding and Appraising a Plot

What is it?

A masterclass into the finer details of plot hunting.

What does it cover?

It discusses how to locate a building plot and how to then appraise its suitability for development. Potton's Managing Director, Mark Stevenson, will take you through all the routes to finding suitable plots, as well as advising on things to avoid!

Who's it for?

Those who might be struggling to locate land or wondering if an area of land is suitable for building their home.

Granted Permissions

What is it?

A seminar advising on how to get your project moving after receiving permission.

What does it cover?

You'll receive helpful spreadsheets on budgeting and pre-start planning so you'll be able to get everything in place ready for the build to begin.

Who's it for?

Anyone who has had a successful permission.

The Design Process Explained

What is it?

A seminar on Potton's design process.

What does it cover?

It discusses planning and Building Regs,



forming a design brief and, of course, the creation of your design. The course also has a focus on energy efficiency, to cater for the increasingly eco-conscious.

Who's it for?

Those wanting to know what Potton can do for them, or for those curious about energy efficiency options.

Managing Your Build

What is it?

A seminar on all the different management routes available.

What does it cover?

This step-by-step seminar will cover all the different management routes for self builders, from project managing yourself, to appointing a project manager, to employing a turnkey contractor. It will show you how to decide which option is best for you, and it too will provide spreadsheets to help you with managing budgets.

Who's it for?

Anyone who wants to know more about the different build management options.

Fast Track Events

What is it?

A one-to-one with an expert to answer any self-build questions you have.

What does it cover?

This offers you the opportunity to sit down with one of our expert Self Build Consultants to discuss a range of topics, even just for enquiries about whether your plot is suitable. Our Planning Consultant will also be on hand to help with any specifics.

Who's it for?

Anyone interested in pursuing a self-build project. Whether you have land, house plans, ideas, or none of the above, we can help you.

Live Build Events

What is it?

A visit to a live Potton build site.

What does it cover?

You'll see first-hand the timber frame structure and any building work that has already been completed. It will also give you a good understanding of site layouts. These live builds happen in various locations around the UK and are led by a Potton Self Build Consultant and a Contracts Manager who can answer any questions you may have.

Who's it for?

People interested in seeing how building sites work.

As you can see, our Self Build Academy offers something for everyone. All the courses come with complementary refreshments, as well as the opportunity to explore our five fully furnished show houses to see what Potton could offer you.



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