• DESIGN • PLANNING • BUILD • DESIGN • PLANNING •

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### 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



### Knowing where to start can be confusing Take comfort inside the Potton Library





How To Guides: Each stage of the self-build process explained

**Build It** 

 A standard stan Standard s

### **Budget Guide** with example build costs

Back issues: buildbeautiful magazine

Let Potton provide the comfort blanket for your self build

Build H

Start your self-build journey with a wealth of information to ensure you get off on the right foot. You can read, download and save all the above material.



Visit www.potton.co.uk/download

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### build beautiful



customers

have

worked

hard this

year to

deliver

another generation of beautiful

for everyone, be that a high-tech

this year the theme seems to be

houses, six of which are featured. We've

tried to make sure there is something

bungalow or an upside-down home.

complementary contrasts. Our six case

studies demonstrate a blending of old

inside/outside living. They achieve a

remarkable harmony that proves self

and new, rustic and contemporary, and

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.

and reman

Paul Newman

Self-Build Director

As you might already be able to tell,

elcome 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

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### Keep In Touch



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

elcome

Self-Build Director - Paul Newman

A message from Potton's

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

### **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 ecofriendly 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



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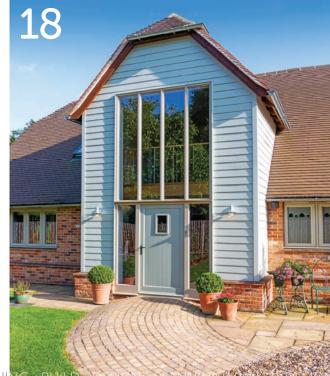
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**On the cover** A Cornish country mansion from Potton. See page 55.











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# 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 Self Build 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

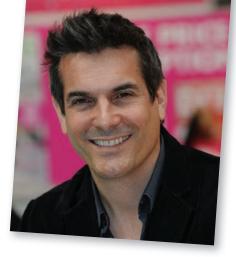
f you are one of the 60% of prospective self builders struggling to find a plot of land, you might be wondering how the big housebuilders seem to be putting up new homes almost everywhere. It can feel like developers have a monopoly on land, and in turn the market. However, tucked away in the new Government's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

6 Support communityled 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

66 *Register numbers continue to grow,* 55,000 people have signed up *over the first three years.* 99

READ MORE on page 12

### build beautiful

### CASE STUDY 01



### An Energy-Efficient Bungalow

**David and Gill Jay** wanted a challenge, so they bought the plot next door and replaced its tired bungalow with a new build full of interesting angles and high-tech solutions.

avid and Gill had lived in their Arts and Crafts house in Hertfordshire for 41 years when they decided that they wanted the challenge of designing and building their own home. "It took just one day to find the land as it was next door to our existing home," smiles David. This land was roughly <sup>1</sup>/<sub>4</sub> acre in size and housed a 1970s-style bungalow. It was a conservation area, but as the house was to be a replacement dwelling, the Jays were confident that they would receive planning permission. The couple purchased the plot in 2015 and immediately began considering what they wanted their new home to be like, settling on a high-tech eco home.

### **Project Facts**

Location: Hertfordshire Land Cost: £400,000 Build Cost: £743,000 End value: £1.3m Floor area: 195 sq m | 2100 sq ft Completion: November 2018 Potton: Building Regs, Building Structure



PERMINING BUILD DESIGN + PEANNING BUILD + DESIGN + REAMINING + BUILD + DESIGN + PLANNING + BUILD + DE

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### 66 We found the Potton service absolutely fantastic and very professional. 99

David had previously been in property development and had been involved in building a number of commercial properties, as well as three large house extensions, so he was no stranger to the construction process. He was very hands-on during the design process, admitting that "modern architecture has always been of great interest, so ideas have come from some of the great buildings I have visited or seen on TV programmes like Grand Designs".

The new house had to be built on the footprint of the existing bungalow and was limited to 2,100 ft<sup>2</sup>. This did not allow enough floor area for David and Gill, so they came up with the idea of a mezzanine overlooking the main living space to squeeze in an additional living area while still achieving the high vaulted ceiling they wanted. The Jays also desired a spacious kitchen/dining area opening out onto a













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.

6 We had excellent service and support from Kevin Hopton and we would most certainly recommend Potton to other self builders. 99

### Do One Thing: Join a Self Build Register

Did you know that the National Custom and Self Build Association (NaCSBA) has declared 2020 the year of self build? The time has never been better to start planning a home to suit your tastes, needs, and budget.

#### The Year of Self Build

Today there is more support for self build than ever, as the three traditional barriers of finance, land, and planning have eased significantly. In terms of finance, there are more mortgage products available, at the lowest rates recorded. If you're in Wales, you can take advantage of a brand-new £210-million investment scheme (https://selfbuild.wales/).

With regards to land, the emerging custom build sector offers a great route to living alongside likeminded people, with opportunities across the country. For planning, the Right to Build legislation requires all English councils to maintain a register of prospective self builders, and ensure sufficient plots are given planning permission to meet this demand. For those planning to self build, the best first step is joining the self build register where you want to live.

### Making Registers Work

The demand on self build registers must be met by local authorities, so signing up brings more opportunities. However, new research by NaCSBA shows that some councils are simply not doing what the legislation requires, while others are taking shortcuts to reduce their workloads:

**1)** Making registration more difficult. Although the legislation allows charges, a few councils now charge excessive amounts to join, and stay on, the registers.

2) Counting normal developments as 'self build'. Authorities must count how many plots were granted permission for self building, to compare against the register demand. Some are counting developments never intended as self build plots.

**3) Removing names from registers.** Councils are removing entries by changing the rules retrospectively,



By Duncan Hayes, NaCSBA

imposing large charges, or by using new data protection rules.

In m

NaCSBA is working to expose and prevent these bad practices, and we have already changed some councils' policies.

However, the registers remain the best way of ensuring authorities act favourably towards self building. Theoretically, you can join multiple registers and each adult member of a family can join. However, NaCSBA recommends sticking to areas where you would seriously consider building, and that just one household member signs up, to ensure registers reflect actual demand. If the council is charging and/or imposing restrictions on who can join, we encourage you to complain using the proforma complaint letter on the Right to Build Portal.

In 2019 councils were required to demonstrate the actions taken to meet the register demand. NaCSBA hopes that, by individuals continuing to sign up, the registers will become the tool that they were intended to be, helping more people achieve their self-build dream.

66 The NaCSBA is working hard to make sure local authorities stick to the letter of the law. 99

Find your local register at NaCSBA's Right to Build Portal www.righttobuildportal.org





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By Kelly Newlands, Marketing Executive & Copywriter

# 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





### Garden Plots

**Infill 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

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...

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. others, so if you can see evidence of them nearby, that's a great sign.

### Brownfield Land

As unappealing as it might first look, brownfield land is an excellent option. It's the term for land that has been developed previously. This previous development means that services and road access are already in place, and planning permission is likely to be granted because the site was home to a building before. They might come with some restrictions though, like maintaining the old building's footprint, so make sure you investigate thoroughly. Remember that agricultural buildings do not fall under brownfield sites.

### **Replacement Dwellings**

Fast becoming the most popular route to self building, building a replacement dwelling first involves locating a property with an existing, often dilapidated or otherwise unattractive house on it. If the price for renovation is higher than the cost to demolish and rebuild, or just more than what the property is actually worth, then a replacement dwelling is the way forward. Like brownfield sites, they are very likely to gain planning permission and already have service links. Often, councils allow a larger footprint for the replacement dwelling.

### And finally...

A top tip is to think creatively. Try and picture a site as it could be, not as it is. Obstructions like trees or walls might make the plot look a lot smaller than it actually is, and are generally quite easy to remove. Without wanting to sound like a parrot, maps are a great way to see the actual size and dimensions of a plot, as well as what kinds of developments, services, and potential hazards are nearby. Consulting a







planning expert is almost always advised; it might look like a nice plot to you, but it's wisest to get a professional to make sure that it's suitable for development before you purchase it. There are plenty of land opportunities out there, you just have to remember what (and what not!)

Next

to look for. Happy hunting!

### Attend our masterclass!

If you'd like to understand more about plot valuations and how to improve your chances of successfully acquiring a building plot, attend our Masterclass: How to Find and Appraise a Plot. Visit Potton.co.uk/courses to find out more

advice essential NSBR charge to Visitor own hold home, Open **Tuesday** to Sunday 10:00-17:30 **FREE entry!** 

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The home of Self Build Custom Build



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# Getting the Most Out By Graham Hughes, Self Build Consultant of Your SBC What can they do for you?



So you've managed to secure your plot and now it's time to make your self-build dream a reality. What's next? Well, after a few minutes of minor panic, take a breath, gather your thoughts and then pick up the phone. It's time to contact Potton and arrange a meeting with your Self Build Consultant.

otton's Self Build Consultants (or SBCs) have many years' experience working with self builders and their projects. An in-depth knowledge of the whole process helps to eliminate the concerns that clients can sometimes have at the start of what might seem like a daunting undertaking. Your SBC is one of the key relationships you will have at Potton and they'll work with you to manage the complete process:

### Planning Appraisal

It's critical to understand which parts of the Local Authority Planning Policy are relevant to your plot, in terms of the proposed house design, size and appearance. Your SBC will undertake a planning appraisal review to identify any key planning issues that need to be considered for your project.

### • Build Route Options

There are three main build routes clients choose when self building. These are selfmanaged, project-managed or turnkey. Your SBC will discuss each option with you to help you decide which is the best route for your budget and circumstances. Budgeting is also key to any successful

project, so at the outset your SBC will help you identify this based on your build route option.

#### House Design

Your SBC will work with you to establish your precise design brief, ensuring the proposed design meets your specific requirements, budget, plot, and planning policy.

#### Planning Application

When we have created your proposed house design, and it's exactly how you want it, your SBC will arrange for Potton's planning specialist to prepare and submit your planning application to your Local Authority for approval.

#### • Potton Package Specification

Your SBC will discuss with you all the possible specification options for your new house (e.g. your thermal performance requirements and our 'Weathertight' package). Once you have made your choices, your SBC will then work with our estimating team to confirm a fixed price costing to suit your exact specification.

#### Building Regulations

When your specifications are confirmed, your SBC will arrange for Potton's technicians to prepare and submit your project's Building Regulations, which will cover all aspects needed for approval.

#### Handover to Potton **Contracts Manager**

You're now ready for your project to start on site. Your SBC will introduce you to your Contracts Manager, who will then instigate the complete Potton process on site. Your SBC is still available to you, though, even if it's just for a chat about how things are going!

So, if you're planning to undertake your own self build, contact Potton to arrange an initial consultation with your Self Build Consultant and let us steer the project to success.

### **Book an appointment** at our Show Centre

If you've identified your building plot, book an appointment to meet our Self Build Consultants at our Show Centre to discuss your new house design. Call 01480 403285 to book or visit www.potton.co.uk

• PLAN

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CASE STUDY 02

### A Contemporary Country Barn

Isabel and Terry had always dreamed of self-building, so when the perfect plot appeared just a stone's throw from their current house, they leapt at the chance. The fruit of their labour was definitely worth the strict planning conditions!

sabel and Terry Cross had considered self-building for some time, having perused plenty of self-build magazines and researched timberframe companies. From all this they concluded that Potton would be the ideal option, both because of Potton's reputation and the proximity of their factory. But the Crosses had no plot, so the idea was put on the back burner.

Until 2014, that is, when some friends of theirs offered them the chance to purchase a half-acre plot. Though it had no planning permission, it was close to their existing home in the Cambridgeshire location they loved, and they began discussions with the council. The following year, they attended all the available courses at the Potton Self Build Academy in St Neots which they found very beneficial. Isabel recalls that "it was reassuring to find other practical and enthusiastic people, and that they were no more experienced than us!"

Finally, the purchase of the plot was carried through in August 2016, and with it, the couple's self-build journey had begun.

66 We settled on a Potton barn style which appealed because we wanted an open and spacious feel ... The designs gave us a basic idea that we could adapt to suit us and fit our social lifestyle.

### **Project Facts**

Location: Cambridgeshire Land & Build Cost: £550,000 End value: £600,000 Completion: April 2019 Floor area: 210 sq m | 2260 sq ft Potton: Architectural Design, Planning & Building Regs, Building Structure

SELFBUILD

During the process, Isabel and Terry sold their previous home and moved in with their son and his family in the next village. This mean they were close by and also gave them cash funds that meant some stages could move on very quickly. The conditions of the Local Authority were difficult, as the couple were building in a











conservation area, which meant that in addition to the usual required surveys the couple also had to present biodiversity and aboricultural 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

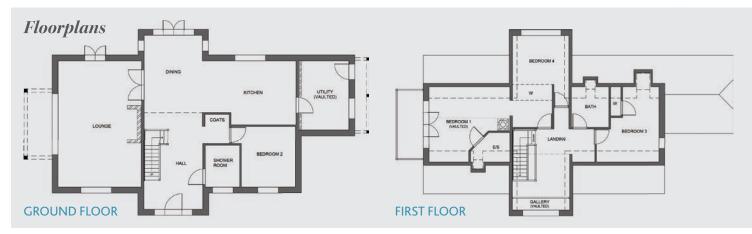


lot of the second-fix carpentry himself, including the oak stairs and balustrade.

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:

### 6 We are delighted with the house and have to pinch ourselves every day. The plot and location are to die for... we love it." 99



## Is My Garden Big Enough to Build a House?

Many people are put off garden developments by the perceived requirement for plots to be 'big'. In fact, gardens of almost all shapes and sizes offer potential. The key is ensuring our approach is rigorous enough to address any planning requirements, while simultaneousl producing a comprehensive design, including landscaping, that maximises the opportunity.

he best advice when looking for comparisons is to understand what developers do. Detached homes on big estates built by mainstream housebuilders tend to occupy plots of around 0.08 of an acre (323m<sup>2</sup>). You only have to visit their show homes to realise that this offers room for an 80m<sup>2</sup> footprint (roughly 160m<sup>2</sup> over two storeys), room for a car and small lawn on the front, and a small rear garden. For comparison's sake, a standard tennis

court is 23.7m x 11m (260m<sup>2</sup>). Essentially, if you have the space for a tennis court, then you have enough for a house.

The key is to think about the minimum size requirements for the 'site' elements of a house. These are amenity space (including gardens, driveway, storage) and, of course, the space for the house footprint.

#### Garden: 100m<sup>2</sup>

Our expectations of amenity space provisions and size vary hugely. Think of

the difference between the small yards of urban terraces and the rolling manicured gardens of rural estates. It's important here to consider the individual site, and also the reason you're considering self building. For instance, many people looking to self build on their garden are empty nesters, looking to downsize from a larger property and release some value. While gardening might be a key activity, the appeal of tending to large lawns might not be what it was. Therefore, a private landscaped garden



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could easily be acceptable, with the space less than 10x10m – still a significant size!

#### Parking/Driveway: 120m<sup>2</sup>

Space for parking, even if tight to the house, is considered essential by most homeowners (and, in most situations, many planning departments). The typical small driveway for two cars would usually require space not only for parking but also for turning. This would take up about 15m x 8m (120m<sup>2</sup>).

#### House Footprint: 100m<sup>2</sup>

Not all houses are long, rectangular and low in form. Some of the more interesting homes incorporate flat roofs to minimise ridge height while simultaneously maximising useable volume. Often these dig down, with a basement level providing a two-storey home without the impact. Self builders have very different expectations, with typical floor areas for smaller homes being around 150m<sup>2</sup> (sufficient for a couple, but less so for a family). That means allowing around 100m<sup>2</sup> of the garden for the home's footprint (homes are usually measured from the inside of the exterior walls, with walls being around 300mm thick).

66 You can quickly see how a new house with relatively modest spatial aspirations might quickly swallow up 320m<sup>2</sup> or so of a garden.

There are ways to address these issues though – particularly in terms of the allowance for the new house's garden – and the footprint of the house could play a role.

#### **Other Considerations**

Access is another important factor – can



you create a driveway with direct road access, or will the new house share a driveway with the existing house? If the plot is to the rear of the existing house, is there sufficient width for a private drive? Contrary to popular belief, there is no regulated minimum drive width to backland developments – the requirement for fire engine access is avoided if the front door is within 45m of a small pump appliance.

Another worry for homeowners is the impact on the existing house's value. Losing part of its garden will have a detrimental impact, but the loss might not actually be as significant as you may think. It depends on many factors, not least the local market (in urban areas people expect smaller gardens), and the remaining garden size of the original house. Contact a local estate agent to discuss the implications – you might be pleasantly surprised.

The key, ultimately, is producing a clever design scheme. Garden plots have the potential to be great successes, as long as they're planned, landscaped, and detailed carefully. Skilled designers of individual homes, such as Potton, are able to come up with interesting solutions to these issues.

Attend our

masterclass!



If you'd like to understand more about potential garden plots and how to identify plots, attend our Masterclass - How to Find and Appraise a Plot. Visit Potton.co.uk/courses to find out more 22

### Designing the Wow Factor' By Vicky Corbett, Potton Architect

A wow factor is something unexpected, unique, and makes your home stand out. Designing your new home from scratch is an exciting but sometimes daunting experience, and most people have a lot of ideas.

Provide a start of the start of

### **Interesting Features**

There's a thin line between quirky and eccentric, and where exactly this line sits is subjective. Be bold, but be practical too! Slides, glass staircases, switchable glass walls, fish tank walls, and koi ponds in the floor are all requests that have turned out to be quite fun – some of them were from a James Bond collector. They might be a little too eccentric for most people, but that's the beauty of self build, as it allows individualism to shine through. Less eccentric ideas that are actually really practical too are a dog shower or a TV in the bathroom. A visual focus can be just as impactful as expensive additions. Making a feature wall from slate, wood or tiles is a good way to make a statement without breaking the bank.

### **Tech Features**

**Smart systems** – Although most technology dates quickly, smart homes are definitely the future. Investing in security is always a good idea, like including cameras on doorbells or













locking systems on windows. Bear in mind that most systems are better when they are not integrated, so updates can be made with walls remaining intact. Even little additions like USB charging ports in plug sockets can make a difference.

**Eco technology** – This is more relevant now than it ever has been. As most self builders design with the future in mind, it makes sense that the environment should come into this. Our timber frames are sustainably sourced, but many people are taking extra steps to be greener (and also to lower fuel costs!). The vast majority of our builds are now being fitted with underfloor heating, and a lot of people install air- or ground-source heat pumps. Solar panels are another popular option. This technology is not only eco-friendly, it could also save you a lot of money.

### **Good Ideas**

**Spectacular views** – Making the most of a view with the best aspect and favourite rooms will only add enjoyment. After all, that view might be the main reason you bought the plot! **Clever storage** – A tidy house is always impressive!

**Light pools/skylights** – Highlighting specific areas, like creating a pool of light over a stairwell or kitchen island, can be tremendously effective.

**Lighting** – This is as much art as your actual wall art – it also affects enjoyment of spaces, and can even make them appear bigger. Consider statement lights over areas like dining tables and stairwells, think about mood lighting around coving, not forgetting practical task lighting.

### Ideas That Are... Less Good

Jack and Jill bathrooms – These are good if you have a lot of floor space to work with. If not, then having two doors taking up wall space in a room where most objects are fixed to the wall might not be such a good idea.

**Massive entrance spaces** – These may seem like a good idea, and again they still



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can be if you have a large house footprint. But with houses that don't, a huge entrance will take up a lot of room for very little use. It's just a transition area really, so think carefully about whether donating it a lot of space is an enhancement or a waste. A good way to solve this is to make a feature staircase, which serves as both a centrepiece and a function.

### But remember...

Ultimately, it's down to you. Traditionally 'unorthodox' features like clashing colours/ patterns or mixtures of old and new can actually work really well with a deft touch. General guidance is just that, guidance. As the saying goes, rules are made to be broken. As long as you love your new home, that's all that matters!

### Discuss your house design with us



Get in touch to discuss your dream home with our expert Self Build Consultants, designers and Architects or arrange a meeting at our Show Centre. Call 01767 676400 or visit Potton.co.uk



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## "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 arol 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 selfbuilding. They applied for outline planning permission themselves, which went through very easily, before arranging to meet Potton Self Build Consultant Graham Hughes.

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### CASE STUDY **03**





Having lived in an old house for 18 years, the couple had come to love the more traditional styles, at least where exteriors were concerned. So, with Graham's help (and a visit to Potton's Show Centre), Carol and Simon began to build a better idea of how to blend old with new. They wanted to replicate the front elevation of the Ruskin show home so chose the same bricks and slate roof tiles. The inside, however, was to be a different story. The main requirements were light



and space: "we were not concerned with how many rooms or bedrooms we had ... We just wanted a light airy space with plenty of circulation space for when we entertain visitors," says Simon.

One of the main features the couple wanted to include was a large open-plan kitchen/dining area which would also incorporate the games room to allow free-flowing conversations. The main bedroom would have a vaulted ceiling, a large walk-in wardrobe, an en-suite, and an outside balcony to take in the surrounding Leicestershire countryside. The Greens also wanted a good-sized snug set away from the open-plan area, and the remaining three bedrooms would also have en-suites. Following their visit to the Gransden show house at St Neots, the couple added some non-structural posts and beams for aesthetics. Of their Self Build Consultant Graham, the couple remarked that he "kept going with the plans until we got them perfect." Once the design was finished, it was clear to see where the original Ruskin ended and where Carol and Simon's personalisation began.

With Simon being born and bred in the area he had a number of contacts in the construction industry. This, coupled with the added bonus of being based

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Replacement dwelling





right next door to the site, led Simon to decide to project manage the whole process himself. Using school friends and other recommended contractors whose work he personally inspected meant the whole process was smooth, beginning in earnest in Spring 2017.

> Carol even goes as far as to say that the build was 'a piece of cake!'



The build took only seven months, however Carol and Simon wanted extensive landscaping on the large 1-acre plot so the garden could match their new home. As a part of this, Simon wanted a koi pond in the back garden to add extra flair. This idea for a modestly sized pond eventually turned into a lake, requiring 200,000 litres of water, and meant that the actual site was not finished until 2019. But Carol and Simon now agree it



was the right thing to do as it certainly gives the garden the 'wow factor'.

Just as Carol wanted, the front elevation of the house is a twin of Potton's Ruskin, a traditional-looking brick-clad exterior with an overhanging gable and feature window. Inside exposed posts and beams have been integrated into the modern, luxurious interior design. A marble kitchen countertop in the open-plan kitchen/living/ dining area firmly establishes the décor theme. Soft, crushed velvet furnishings continue this touch of luxury, from the dining room chairs all the way upstairs to the bedrooms. An air-source heat pump and underfloor heating both upstairs and downstairs means the house is not only aesthetic but practical and economical too.

For a couple who had no intentions of selfbuilding at all, Carol and Simon's achievement is quite something. Summing up their experience with Potton, the Greens said:

66 In a single sentence, Potton provided an excellent service from start to finish and we would definitely recommend them to other self-builders.







# Come in for a cuppa..

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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 and ally is. ISSUE 6 POTTON.CO.UK

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### 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.

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### **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.

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**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.



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### **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.

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### **The Milchester**

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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!

### buil beautiful

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### 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.

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# And explore our five show homes

### Potton Self Build Show Centre

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

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

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### Our Design and Ianning Service

By Mark Day, Self Build Consultant

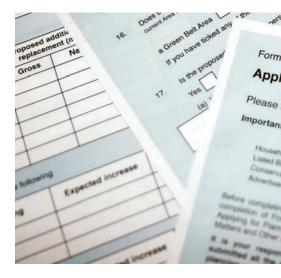
### Here at Potton we offer a comprehensive Design and Planning service, giving you the freedom to design the house that's right for you.

he 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.

6 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, 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









Please give details of the proposed development, includi to be used. (It is vital that a full and accurate description the possible including number of houses/apartment

P1

 ication for permission to develop land

 ead this page first.

 \* This form should NOT be used for the following types of application:

 \* Application - Form PHD

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 that consent - Form At

 \* Ass form, Sease read for following types

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



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!

### **Discuss your house design with us** Get in touch to discuss your

dream home with our expert Self Build Consultants, designers and Architects or arrange a meeting at our Self Build Show Centre. Call 01767 676400 or visit Potton.co.uk



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ELF-BUILD + RENOVATION + CONVERSION + EXTENSION

By Martyn Tharratt, Custom Build Manager

# Custom Build is Coming to Life

#### We're ready to provide fully serviced plots for you to commence your self-build journey! Here's a snapshot of what's happening...

Tadpole Garden Village, Swindon Leading developer Crest Nicholson has created 14 Custom Build plots at their prestigious Tadpole Garden Village development. An imaginative Arts and Crafts-inspired Design Code offers a fantastic opportunity for both traditional and contemporary bespoke designs by Potton. Plot purchasers have the advantage of a project-managed build route, including a Potton Package extended to deliver the house foundation and even an option for roof covering. Following the success of our September open day, our Self Build Consultant is meeting with excited customers who want to create and develop their dream home. The project manager will help arrange everything required to complete the build, making this the perfect option for both first-time and experienced self builders! Once serviced plots are created, the first customer designs will soon become onsite reality, and Potton will support the whole process to guarantee a successful build.

#### Bradley Farm, Hampshire

In the picturesque village of Bradley, landowner Paul Bliss is relocating his existing business to create 7 beautiful plots with opportunity for a mix of farmhouse, cottage, and barn dwellings. All plots are already reserved, and individual designs by Potton are progressing ready for planning application. This year will see the construction of access roads and serviced plots, followed by the house builds. Each individualised Potton Package includes an insulated timber frame, stairs, and external doors and windows to help self builders create an idyllic village development which beautifully complements the surrounding landscape.

#### Tail Mill, Somerset

Our Somerset project shows it runs in the family! After son Dominic's successful self build, Pat Quin followed in his footsteps in the village of Tail Mill. Since Pat approached us, we have worked in partnership to develop land adjacent to his existing business to create opportunity for 9 new plots. Working closely with Pat's planning consultant and South Somerset District Council, Potton have created a Design Guide that reflects the local heritage, vernacular, and material pallet. Potton's Self Build Consultant will help plot purchasers create and build their Potton home whilst taking advantage of the Potton Package.

#### Holywell Lane, Telford

Contractors are gearing up to construct a private development of 17 plots. Plot purchasers will engage with our Self Build Consultant to create contemporary, highly individualised designs to suit a variety of plot sizes, offering two- and threestorey options. Following installation of the Potton Package, purchasers can choose to engage with a project manager or turnkey contractor to build their home and, as always, Potton will be there to advise every step of the way.







#### Coming soon...

We hope to announce these exciting new sites, once Outline Planning Consent is granted, this year:

#### Bearsted, Kent

3 plots with an inspired Design Guide

Stonely, Cambridgeshire 8 plots to build Potton homes Great Gransden, Bedfordshire 38 plots and our new Show Centre 37



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

hen 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.

6 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.









In the meantime, the Romerils visited the Potton Show Centre in St Neots and the National Self Build and Renovation Centre over in Swindon, where they once again met with Sean. Once the 90ft x 60ft plot was purchased for £195,000 in July 2017, the pair could finally turn their attention to designing their new home.

Sean assured them that he would come up with a bespoke design to suit their needs, and the couple felt reassured that they had chosen the right route to self build: "We chose Potton because we liked their designs and we were very impressed with Sean's knowledge and helpfulness." Michael and Angela decided to take advantage of the full Potton service including architectural design



and a planning permission and Building Regulation application package. With the plot finally purchased, a planning application was submitted for them, and it was granted with absolutely no issues and minimal delay. The build began in



August 2017 and was completed just over a year later in August 2018.

The finished house sits comfortably in its setting. The red of the roof and brick is striking, an effect contrasted against the white render in between. A sleek kitchen and glass balustrading on the stairs and landing afford the home a modern feel, which still feels cosy thanks to the warm wooden tones of the floor and joinery throughout. The open-plan kitchen/ living/dining area extends out into a sunroom, complete with roof windows which allow the sunlight to flood in. A smaller snug at the front of the property is a cosy retreat. Looking back on their self-build journey, the Romerils feel happy that working with Potton enabled them to overcome the legal hurdles:

66 The service provided by Potton inspired us to begin with, and continued throughout to engender confidence. 99







# Pre-Apps: What are They?

#### By Paul Newman, Self Build Director

pre-app (pre-application advice) is an informal discussion with a planning officer that, as its name suggests, happens before a formal application is made. It offers the opportunity to gauge how the council might receive your planning application, and for them to recommend things for you to do before submitting it. Unfortunately, councils are allowed to charge for this service, with amounts varying in different locations. As annoying as this charge may be, it does mean you should get a more considered response.

Pre-apps can be useful in listed or conservation areas to assess what the council would like to see from your build. This may involve keeping to the local vernacular by using local stone cladding, for example, or adopting the styles of surrounding properties. A pre-app also allows you to get advance warning of planning conditions, like surveys, that might be flagged in the formal application. Completing these in advance of making the application can make the process smoother. Though some councils charge for pre-applications, the money saved on abortive work, by addressing issues before they are raised, could make up for this.

In the case of a tricky site (or planners!), pre-apps can be a good way to get planning officers onside. Notifying them early on about your proposed development and asking their opinion on what they'd like to see in the local area is a great way



to get them on board. However, make sure you follow through with any changes they suggest for the application, otherwise they will question why you didn't listen to them.

As pre-apps don't obligate councils to make a binding decision, though, and there can be a lot of sitting on the fence. You might be left no wiser to the success of your application or be told things you already know. Pre-apps will also add time onto the 8+ weeks of planning applications, so aren't the best option if you're keen to get started or your site is straightforward. Pre-apps come with no guarantees either; good feedback from pre-apps can still result in a planning refusal, and vice versa. They're the opinion of a single officer, not a whole council. If that officer changes, so might the verdict.

Pre-apps have their advantages and disadvantages so it's up to you. Some like the security they feel a pre-app gives them, believing it opens up a line of communication with the local authority that will, hopefully, result in more transparency. Pre-apps aren't necessities, though, and could cause more problems than they solve. If you're set on a certain design, it's probably best not to submit a pre-app, as it might suggest changes you really don't want to make. Projects can sail through planning with no need for pre-apps, others aren't so lucky. It comes down to whether you think one would be useful in your unique situation, or whether it's best to force a decision by submitting a full application. Luckily, here at Potton we can advise you whether a pre-app is right for your site.

build beautiful

By Mark Stevenson, Managing Director

### A Guide to the 4 Janning Jrocess

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.

n 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

8. Submit and register **9.** *Planning approval process (8 weeks+)* **10.** Decision by LA Planning – if refused, appeal (within 6 months)

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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- **1.** Establish your budget
- **2.** *Appraise the site*
- 3. Develop design concepts
- 4. Check the proposal meets your budget

The Ten-Step

Design and

**Planning Process** 

- **5.** *Appraise for planning* (if necessary, hold pre-app with LA)
- **6.** Develop the design
- 7. Prepare application





By Mark Stevenson, Managing Director

# **20 Things to Do** Before You Start on Site

Work out who's in charge! Make sure your builders know who to go to for decisions.

**O** Deal with any legal issues Get hold of your title deeds to check there aren't any restrictive covenants. If there's anything that looks suspicious, seek advice from a conveyancing solicitor.

#### Complete site surveys

This includes ground investigation, any hazards present, and a topographical survey to record boundaries and site levels.

Apply for services connections Before committing to the build. send out enquiries for the essential services to make sure they are both available and reasonably priced.

Decide your build route Self managed, project managed or turnkey? Do your research to find the one that's right for you and your circumstances.

#### Finalise the build budget It goes without saying, but this is essential to a successful build.

Secure project finance Unless you're very lucky, you'll need a mortgage to fund your self build. Ideally get your offer before starting work to know you have enough funds to see the project through.

Appoint the warranty and **building control provider** 

Every self-built home needs a warranty in case of future sales. Without one, future buyers will have difficulty securing a mortgage.

**9** Address the planning conditions Take time to read the planning consent carefully and identify what needs to be done, and when. Bear in mind that the planning department will require 8 weeks to sign them off.

Claim your tax back! Great news – self builders can claim exemption from paying CIL (Community Infrastructure Levy), but you must do so before beginning any work on site.

Select your preferred build system

Think about how you want your home to perform. Plans will then be checked against Building Regulations before work begins to make sure you've passed.

Finalise detailed design Starting construction before you have a signed-off design increases the risk of things going wrong later. The groundworks design depends upon the house design, so work cannot begin until you know exactly what's going where.

Gather construction information It may sound obvious but it's much easier to spend time gathering all the necessary construction information before you start work. If you've got the information, you'll use it, which is much better than making it up as you go along.

#### Put together the build programme

Building efficiently requires a logical construction process to be followed. To minimise delays, work out what needs to be delivered when. This will ensure work isn't stopped unnecessarily because the windows haven't arrived, for example.

🗧 Finalise health and **O** safety arrangements Use a construction phase plan – you can find examples of these online.

Arrange site insurance There are plenty of different providers so do your research to ensure you get the best deal.

#### Set up the site

This involves managing access, welfare, and temporary services (e.g. water and electricity supply, first aid kits, toilets). Also think about site layout – where are you going to put that big pile of soil that's been dug up to make way for the foundations?

Set up site paperwork and record keeping

Ensure things are filed correctly and clearly. Remember, organisation is key.

Appoint key contractors and suppliers

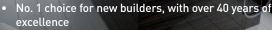
Choose people you trust – they are building your house after all!

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- 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 ISSUE 6 POTTON.CO.UK

# Improving Our Performance

By Justin Barker, Head of Technical

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

e 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 openweb joists is a robust, high-performing Cabershield Plus chipboard. This product



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

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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.

Photography: Matthew Smith Architectural Photography





## How We Self Managed By Mark Brinkley Our Build

n late 2014, my partner Mandy and I came across an abandoned warehouse for sale in central Cambridge, and we put in what turned out to be a successful bid for it. We could have chosen to develop the site in a number of ways, but we wanted to build a distinctive, contemporary house built with modern methods of construction, to make it easier to build. We also wanted to get the performance from the finished product that would give us a warm, comfortable home that would be a joy to live in.

We chose Mole Architects to design our home on what was to prove to be a challenging site with eight adjoining neighbours. We chose Potton to build a SIPs panel structure to deliver the quality we were striving for.

l organised the rest of the build myself, acting as project manager on everything

from demolishing the asbestos-laden warehouse to organising the laying of the lawn, some three years later.

I'd had some previous experience in the trade, including building a Potton house back in 1988, opposite Anglesey Abbey, but it was all a long time ago and I was essentially starting from scratch again with my contacts book. In fact, there were just two people who worked on the new house that I already knew. Everyone else was picked up either by interview or word of mouth. I was also able to spare a good deal of time as I could fit in my writing work as and when it suited the build. We were living in a rented house about a mile from the site and, during the build itself (May 2017 to June 2018), I was cycling in every morning to unlock the security fencing and get coffee underway for the workforce.







The house is situated on a narrow and busy one-way street and, for much of the time, I was acting as the site banksman (i.e. traffic controller), organising deliveries, cranes and skip exchanges, all the while keeping passing cars, taxis, cyclists, and pedestrians safe. Mandy and I actually got married during the groundworks stage and rewarded ourselves with a four-night honeymoon in Capri, but apart from that we were around throughout the build. No holidays until we finished!

Exhausting? For sure, but also exhilarating in that we created something very special on a difficult site and got it in on time and on budget. Well, almost. We were about a month behind schedule and a few thousand over budget.

Admittedly, I do have a background in building, and I have been writing about it since 1994, so I had a good idea what I was taking on here. But there was nothing that someone bright and enthusiastic, with the time to on their side, couldn't have organised. I also learned a huge amount, much of which went into the current (13th) edition of

the Housebuilder's Bible.

The Housebuilder's Bible is available to purchase at the **Potton Show Centre!** 



#### **Project Facts**

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Location: Cheshire Land cost: £330,000 Build cost: £580,000 End value: £1.2m (approx) Floor area: 232 sq m | 2497 sq ft Completion: 2017 Potton: Building Structure

# A Statement Cheshire House

Louise and Nigel wanted a house that was right for them, so with Potton's help built a modern upside-down house full of symmetry and thoughtful design features, not to mention that statement spiral staircase.

he Papworths had lived in Victorian and Edwardian houses over the years, but had always felt that most houses focus on cramming in as many bedrooms as possible. The couple, who do not have children, therefore felt that they wanted a more modern home that used most of its space for circulation and daytime living, rather than for bedrooms. The Papworths had designed their own holiday lodge in the past, so had a taste for self building. As Nigel says, "most detached houses are built for families

CASE STUDY 05

... We didn't want somewhere that gave up lots of room to bedrooms which were generally going to be empty."

The couple had been plot hunting for about four years, continually trawling Rightmove and searching around Yorkshire, the Lake District and Cheshire. They estimate having looked at over 20 plots, but none of them was quite right.

Finally, the couple found a plot. They were actually just about to sign for a different plot, nearer to their existing home, when they had one last check on Rightmove, and there it was. "We had seen a plot in this particular village previously, but it was a difficult shape and faced north, so we knew we liked the area." This new plot in Cheshire was around 1/3 of an acre and the site of an old plant nursery, which had been demolished. The plot was about to go for auction, so Louise and Nigel took the next day off work and went to see it, immediately realising it was perfect.





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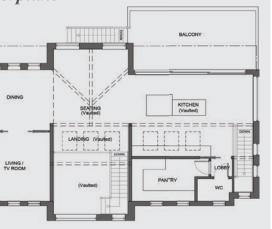






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ever auction. "That was the scariest day of my life," recalls Nigel, who did the actual bidding. There was a reserve on the plot but Nigel stuck to the couple's limit and their £330,000 bid was accepted. Nigel recommends auctions for self builders 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 Papworths then went to their first

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



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.

66 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.



### aximising the Value tree of Your Self Build By Kelly Newlands, Marketing Executive and Copywriter

ost 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



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

#### 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

bathrooms are where most self builders sink a lot of their interior budgets, but consider whether it's worth spending upwards of £50k on a bespoke kitchen or bathroom that *you* will never actually use. If you do intend to live in the home for a period, however, then make sure it is comfortable for you first and foremost.

#### Architectural Features

Going for a simple house design does not mean the inside has to be plain. Create points of interest with chimneys, rooflights, or even carefully placed cladding. Focusing these on the most visible points of the property – the chimney in the middle of an open-plan living area, rooflights over a kitchen island, vertical cladding on a protruding porch – will add value without breaking the bank. 'Kerb appeal' is important to consider here. The front of the house is, obviously, the first thing people see.

Spending a little more on the front elevation – a high-quality front door, bespoke glazing, interesting cladding or render – will pay dividends later when you come to sell. The front shot of a house is the main one listed on a property website, so if you're planning on selling your build, you need its front elevation to make a statement.

#### **Potential for Development**

The good news is that you don't have to do all the legwork yourself. Including features that could mark a potential for future development will instantly boost your property's value. One of the best ways to do this is making the loft area viable for conversion. A head height of 2.2 metres is the minimum required, and you could add dormer windows to make the space





even more attractive for later conversion. This is also applicable to garages.

#### Maximising Internal Floor Space

When it comes to valuing houses, size matters. Specifically, the internal size

– how big the rooms are. Opting for a slim, high-performance wall, as opposed to a thick structure like brick and block with comparatively poor performance, will increase the amount of internal floor space and therefore maximise value. But how much value could a few millimetres really add? Well, quite a lot. Assuming an 8m x 10m, two-storey house, with a slim wall system you're looking at a cool 9 square metres of extra space. Not bad considering the house footprint hasn't changed at all – this makes it a great option for people building with a restricted footprint size.

#### Next STEPS Visit the Potton Show Centre

If you're considering self building then a visit to our Show Centre is a must! Browse our five fully furnished show homes and explore our Product Centre. See page 28 for details.



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### Building an By Kevin Hopton, Senior Designer Energy-Efficient Home Ahouse fit for the future

ith 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.

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A Building Regulations pass is achieved when both CO<sup>2</sup> 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 CO<sup>2</sup> 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.

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#### Insulation and Glazing

Good insulation is critical for an energyefficient home; the better insulated a house, the more efficient it is. This by no means requires all houses to be built to the Passivhaus standard; you can still achieve excellent levels of insulation without meeting this level. Luckily for our Potton customers, timber frames are well-suited to high levels of thermal performance, and ours consistently outperform alternatives.

Windows and doors are also key in the insulation game. Poorly insulated glazing can severely affect your home's thermal efficiency – accounting for up to 20% of heat loss – so it pays to invest. We've all heard of double glazing, but in recent years triple glazing has become more popular.

#### Heat Pumps

The two main types of heat pump are air- and ground-source, and as their names suggest, they absorb heat from the air and ground. They cleverly condense this heated gas to a liquid, compress



it to further increase the temperature, and transfer this heat to water. This can then provide central heating, either through radiators or underfloor heating. Heat pumps need electricity to run, but because they're producing renewable heat, the energy output far exceeds the electricity input.

#### **Underfloor Heating**

UFH is the norm in most of Germany

and Scandinavia, and now almost all of the homes Potton builds have UFH on at least the ground floor. These systems require much lower water temperatures to heat rooms (30-50°C) than conventional radiators (60-80°C) because they are spread out over a larger area. UFH takes significantly less time to heat up a room, and is better at stabilising temperatures. Both types of UFH – electric- and hotwater based – can be linked up to











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. Ecotechnology 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.

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

BEST POTTON HOME AWARD 2019

#### **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 Potton: Architectural Design, Planning & Building Regs, Building Structure, Potton Package

CASE STUDY 06

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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 selfbuild 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:





66 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.







**FIRST FLOOR** 





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.".

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# 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.

he Academy caters to any and all stages of your selfbuild 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



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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 selfbuild 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.



## Meet with one of our Self Build Consultants at the... **Potton Show Centre**

*For more information please visit ...* www.potton.co.uk

### *Call us on* ... 01767 676 400

#### Potton Self Build Show Centre

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

**Opening Times** Monday - Friday: 9am - 5pm Saturday: 10am - 4pm