MODERN LIVING

Seeking a change after living in a renovated 16th-century cottage for eight years, Jane Holland and Tony Sargeant decided on a Potton timber frame self-build for their modern new home

Jane Holland and Tony Sargeant moved back to the UK, after missing rural life, during a decade-long spell in Greece. Jane, who is from London, and Tony, who grew up in Cambridgeshire, found a village on the Cambridgeshire and Bedfordshire border that they loved, and bought a 16th-century cottage.

The property needed extensive renovation, which Tony tackled and completed within six months. The cottage was the pair's home for the next eight years, but they eventually decided that they'd like to update their living situation and move to a more modern home. Luckily, the cottage was situated on a large plot, giving them the opportunity to stay in the village and build a house in their own garden.

However, the site had many complications, which led the couple to seek the help of Potton, whose planning consultants were well equipped to deal with the challenges and guide the couple through the self-build process.

Gaining planning permission for the build was a frustrating affair, but the process became smoother after an unexpected change: "The turning point to the whole project was when the entire plot became included within the village boundary," Tony says. "After that planning was granted without a single objection."

The Design

"We had ideas of the type of house that we liked," says Jane. "The house is the first one that you come to when entering the village so we were conscious that it should complement the village surroundings but also be a unique, bespoke house. We had already decided on certain aspects that we wanted to include, including a huge triangular window in the master bedroom and long bifold doors at the rear of the house. These additions were to maximise the wonderful countryside views that are visible from the back of the house."

Their plans crystalised when they met Tom Allen – a self-build consultant at Potton – at a Self Build Academy event held at the Potton Show Centre in St Neots. Tom Allen worked with them to decide on the features that would turn the plans into a home.

"Tom added an artistic element to the architectural drawings," Tony says. "Tom can just look at a set of plans and immediately recommend changes that will enhance the final build. We were extremely impressed with his suggestions, and we implemented them all."

During the design stages the couple attended Potton seminars and met with others who were building their own homes. "We picked up new ➤

A Leap Forward

After living for eight years in a renovated 16th-century cottage, the couple opted for a modern kitchen in their new home. They didn't hold back on expenditure in the kitchen as the couple were keen to splash out on luxuries.

Project Notes

Homeowners
Jane Holland and Tony Sargeant
Project
Timber frame self-build
Location
Bedfordshire
Build time Six months
Size 164m²
Plot cost Already owned
Build cost £345,000
Value £750,000

SUPPLIERS

Timber frame
Potton: potton.co.uk

ideas and learned about new products. The seminars made us so determined and excited about our forthcoming project," Jane says.

They were keen to ensure their home used renewable energy, regardless of the budgetary implications. Tony and Jane used Screedflo – a floor base system whereby a self-levelling material is pumped from a lorry and dries quickly – and installed underfloor heating, powered by an air-source heat pump. LED lighting has been installed throughout. The couple opted for 15mm plasterboard, backed with OSB board to ensure firm fixings for wall-hung TVs, bookshelves and heavy pictures, while acoustic performance insulation and magnetic plaster was also used.

Following the erection of the timber frame, the project was completed in just six months. This time span included building the garage and the first stage of landscaping. The couple lived in their cottage next door throughout the whole build (the cottage has now been sold). "Every stage of the build was exciting — especially the land being prepared, the timber frame ➤

Enjoying the View

Jane and Tom were keen to make sure that they made the most of the views over the Bedfordshire countryside. The lounge at the rear of the house features large bifold doors, while the master bedroom has a striking triangular window (BELOW).

being erected and the window installation," says Jane.

"Potton and its team were extremely helpful and reliable," says Tony. "Potton's product is of superb quality and was delivered on all target dates. We were recommended different trades for each stage, and because they were so used to the Potton set up, the operation ran smoothly. If, in the future, we decide to build again we would not hesitate in using Potton. We highly recommend the company," said Tony.

The total build cost, including the garage, cobble-setts drive and landscaping was £345,000; the new 164m² home is valued at around £750,000. Tony candidly says that the pair "didn't hold back on expenditure" as they wanted to include many luxury items in the build, but that others could "save a lot" on a similar build without these luxury touches.

"At this moment, nothing would entice us to sell this house," Jane says. "We intend on staying here for life. We love the village and this gorgeous house with its amazing views. The location is so near to our essential requirements, like the railway station, St Ives and Cambridge. I just don't think we could match our desires anywhere else."

Though they have no wish to sell their home, the pair have already started on their next project: a second home in Greece. **H**