

# March 2014



100

## OTHER WAYS WE CAN HELP YOU

### Homebuilding.co.uk

Our website archives a huge amount of content — from readers' homes and expert solutions to your problems, to advice features on all aspects of self-build and renovation

### Plotfinder.net

Looking for a building plot or renovation opportunity? Plotfinder.net is the UK's leading database of building plots. See page 62 for more, or visit the website

### Visit the Shows

Homebuilding & Renovating Shows provide an invaluable resource for self-builders and renovators. Visit [homebuildingshow.co.uk](http://homebuildingshow.co.uk) for dates and information

### My Building Project

Get a detailed estimate of your building costs and find a reputable tradesperson in your area at [mybuildingproject.co.uk](http://mybuildingproject.co.uk)

## HOMES

- 26 Framing the View** An eco-friendly oak frame build makes the most of its dream plot
- 44 Just Around the Corner** A new cedar-clad self-build on a tight corner site in London
- 66 Country Values** A beautiful new home in the Costwolds — built for just £135,000
- 100 Fifties Revival** One couple give a postwar home a complete eco overhaul in Devon
- 126 Life on the Edge** An architecturally outstanding self-build makes its mark on Jersey's coastline

## EXPERT ADVICE

- 36 Charlie Luxton's Home Truths** The importance of adopting a fabric-first approach in your project
- 39 A Beginner's Guide to Loft Conversions**
- 57 Timber Frame Innovations** Is this construction method the future of UK housebuilding?
- 75 How to Make a Sealed Bid**
- 79 Piers Taylor: More With Less** Why the simplest designs produce the best homes
- 83 The Costs of Updating Your Central Heating**
- 84 The Life and Work of Self-build Hero Murray Armor**
- 99 Self-Build Finance** A look at what's new to the market this month, and the latest mortgage table
- 111 Complete Guide to Roof Repairs**
- 118 Avoiding Common Self-build Mistakes** What to look for when hiring builders and subcontractors
- 123 Project Clinic** Our expert advises one reader on how to predict the cost of their new extension
- 139 Dealing with Damp** Beat it once and for all
- 156 The HB&R Build Cost Calculator**

*continues overleaf*



26



126



44



66



# AROUND THE **corner**

Adam Glabay and Shauna O'Handley have built a contemporary cedar-clad house — utilising every inch of a tight corner plot adjoining a Victorian terraced street

SELF-BUILD | LONDON | NOV 11 - SEPT 12 | SIZE: 100M<sup>2</sup>  
BUILD COST: £350,000 | PLOT COST: UNDISCLOSED  
CURRENT VALUE: £685,000 - £1,000,000

WORDS: DEBBIE JEFFERY | PHOTOGRAPHY: SIMON MAXWELL

The Daily Telegraph  
**HOMEBUILDING  
& RENOVATING**  
MAGAZINE  
**awards 2013**

WINNER:  
BEST INTERIORS





### **Exterior**

Velfac composite timber and aluminium windows were chosen for this new timber frame house — the small windows are recessed in niches along the south façade for maximum privacy. This self-build has been clad externally in untreated cedar boarding and has a stepped sedum and wildflower roof





### **Terrace**

Aluminium folding sliding glass doors (from Kloeber) feature in the kitchen and dining space and open this entire corner of the house to the sheltered terrace beyond





**W**alk along the typical Victorian street where Adam Glabay and his wife Shauna O'Handley now live and their new home is not difficult to spot. Situated at the end of a row of terrace houses in South London, this new timber house – which contrasts dramatically with its more traditional brick-built neighbours – wraps itself around the corner to maximise the tight, triangular-shaped plot.

Not only is the contemporary structure clad vertically in cedar, but its curved, sculptural design and lack of visible windows along the south façade has led passers-by to question whether the building is even a house at all. "Some people did wonder if it was going to be a public building at first," says Adam of the couple's new home.

As native Canadians, both Shauna and Adam grew up in homes built by their parents, and were familiar with the idea of self-build. "It's pretty common in Canada, and when we came to the UK more than 10 years ago, we renovated several one bedroom flats before deciding that we wanted to build our own house," Shauna explains. "We'd been looking online and saw a couple of other London plots with planning permission in the same price range, but this was our favourite."

After purchasing the plot, the couple sold their flat in North London and moved to live with friends during

## ***"We renovated several one bedroom flats before deciding that we wanted to build our own house"***

the 11-month build. "I have to admit that our lack of experience made the whole process pretty terrifying," says Adam, who works as a computer programmer.

Given that timber buildings are widespread in Canada, the couple decided that their new home would be timber framed. "We looked at having a factory-built frame but struggled to find a builder who would erect it, so we ended up having it stick-built on site," continues Adam. "Our builder was recommended by the architect, and they managed the project between them — although we got more involved as the build progressed."

Once the highly insulated timber frame was complete, it was then clad externally with untreated cedar, impregnated with fire retardant and then fixed to battens. "We wanted the timber to fade and silver so that it would mellow into the plot," explains Adam.



### ***Open Plan Living and Dining Room***

Underfloor heating has been installed beneath engineered oak flooring throughout the open plan ground floor, which overlooks the rear terrace.

Adam and Shauna crafted some items of furniture themselves, including the dining table







## AN AWKWARD PLOT

Shauna and Adam met with their neighbours at a street party two years before building work started on site — and kept in constant contact during the project, which helped to maintain a good relationship with all concerned. Despite its unusual appearance, and the fact that the structure adjoins what was previously an end-of-terrace property, the neighbours' reactions were surprisingly positive.

"Our house steps down, so it's lower than the others, and the majority of the windows face on to the internal garden which is around one metre below pavement level, so we're pretty private and don't overlook anyone," explains Adam. "It was quite a challenging design for first-time self-builders, and having a good team of people to support us was critical."

Originally the site of two lock-up garages, the urban infill plot

had already been granted planning permission for a highly contemporary house, which appealed to Adam and Shauna. "It really makes the most of the tiny scrap of land and takes its cues from the characteristics of the plot with its angles and curves," says Adam. "We purchased the plot with an approved design in place by architect Nagan Johnson and retained Red Squirrel Architects to implement it and make any subsequent changes."

Excavating the site to lower the new house created footings reminiscent of a muddy swimming pool filled with rain, and the side wall of the neighbouring house needed to be underpinned to avoid the possibility of subsidence. A raft was constructed over concrete strip foundations, which were engineered to accommodate the clay soil, and a steel frame was erected to support part of the new structure.

"Choosing a considerate and respectful builder was important because we were building so close to other homes, and we were really lucky to have such a great contractor because we didn't want to fall out with any of our new neighbours," says Shauna.

Some disruption was caused by building on the junction of two roads, and working on such a small site brought specific problems regarding access and storing materials. But, overall, the build ran smoothly and was carefully coordinated by the contractor.

"It wasn't an obvious plot of land to build on, but in many ways the constraints have helped to shape the house," explains Adam. "As a result, we don't have any standard-shaped rooms — and we even used full-sized paper cut-outs of beds to make sure everything would fit — but for us, it's all part of the charm."



### Staircase

Rising up from the open-plan living and dining room, the bespoke staircase was designed by the architect and built with square-edged oak treads together with a simple glass balustrade (which was purchased locally from Glass London Ltd)



"The planted roof was a condition of planning and of our lender, the Ecology Building Society, who only lend on properties and projects that respect the environment," recalls Shauna. "The lower kitchen roof is visible from one of the bedrooms above, and the wildflower sedum mix means that we have small, multi-coloured flowers growing up out of the green sedum."

"To be honest, we weren't familiar with the Ecology Building Society prior to purchasing the plot, but we met their criteria and we achieved the U values they recommend," she continues. "We installed underfloor heating on the ground floor, with radiators in the upstairs rooms because we wanted to be able to heat bedrooms quickly for short periods of time." Other eco credentials incorporated into the house include energy-efficient triple glazing (which also restricts the passage of sound), LED lighting and grey water recycling for flushing the toilets.

The interiors are a particular highlight, offering sleek contemporary furnishings within an open plan arrangement. Engineered oak flooring has been laid over under-floor heating in the kitchen, living and dining room. This space overlooks the sheltered outdoor courtyard through two sets of folding sliding glass doors — flooding the space with natural light. These open the entire rear corner

***"We relied heavily on the professionals to get the house watertight, but then we wanted to be more involved in the fun things"***

of the house to the decked terrace beyond, which effectively becomes another room when the weather allows.

"We relied heavily on the professionals to get the house watertight, but then we wanted to be more involved in the fun aesthetic things like the flooring, sanitaryware, light fittings and the kitchen, which we supplied," says Adam. "Some of this came from eBay, and we actually made items of furniture ourselves to save money — including the dining table and beds. We probably exceeded our original budget by around 10 per cent, but we kind of expected that anyway."

The original deadline of July 2012 came and went, but the couple moved into the completed house just a few weeks later. "There's not too much we'd do differently in hindsight because we had such a good team, and we're very pleased with the outcome," says Shauna.

"Despite being fairly well organised and doing plenty of research before the build, we were still surprised by the number of decisions that needed to be made. We would definitely consider building again though, because we've really enjoyed the process and now we know what to look out for in the future."

### Master Bedroom

Sleek, handle-free wardrobes were built by the contractor in the master bedroom and painted a caramel colour to contrast with the dark blue feature wall





## Adam & Shauna's Supplier's

<b>Original architect</b>	Nagan Johnson.....	020 7633 0200
<b>Project architect</b>	Red Squirrel Architects.....	020 8699 6766
<b>Building contractor</b>	PI & Co.....	07971 605926
<b>Structural engineer</b>	McHenry Structures.....	mchenrystructures.com
<b>Geotechnical survey</b>	Ground and Water Ltd.....	0333 600 1221
<b>Lender</b>	Ecology Building Society.....	0845 674 5566
<b>Windows</b>	Velfac.....	01223 897100
<b>Aluminium folding sliding doors</b>	Kloeber.....	01487 740044
<b>Roofing company</b>	Southern Counties Roofing Contractors.....	01245 241333
<b>Warranty provider</b>	NHBC.....	0844 633 1000
<b>Waste connection</b>	EJ Taylor & Sons Ltd.....	01621 828661
<b>Grey water recycling</b>	Aquaco.....	01892 506851
<b>Kitchen units</b>	Coloro Ltd.....	01942 717839
<b>Staircase balustrade</b>	Glass London Ltd.....	020 7635 8000
<b>Carpentry</b>	Scott Firth.....	020 7732 9145
<b>En suite shower screen</b>	Spiral Hardware Ltd.....	01842 811818
<b>Engineered oak flooring</b>	Jordan Wood Floor Warehouse.....	020 8684 3056
<b>Dining table legs</b>	Franz Faust Linoleumprodukte (Germany).....	08841 625617
<b>Dining table top and bookcase materials</b>	Whitten Timber.....	020 7732 3804
<b>Matt white mosaic tiles</b>	Walls and Floors.....	020 8788 5900
<b>Blue glass mosaic tiles</b>	Tile Supply Ltd.....	0843 2894 230
<b>Recessed LED lighting</b>	Online Lighting.....	0800 046 9041
<b>Pendant and exterior lighting</b>	Wayfair.....	0800 169 0423
<b>En suite shower heads</b>	Taps Empire.....	01708 874955
<b>Taps/traps/kitchen sink</b>	QS Supplies Ltd.....	0116 251 0051
<b>Aluminium downpipes</b>	Rainclear Systems Ltd.....	0800 644 4426
<b>Soft-close kitchen drawers, LED strip lighting and bedside flex reading lights</b>	M&D Components.....	01964 650865
<b>Kitchen appliances</b>	AO.com.....	0844 324 9222

### Kitchen

Adam and Shauna wanted a fuss-free, minimalist kitchen with no handles. Their chosen design has neutral dark grey-painted doors so that the room colour scheme may be easily changed in the future



## Floorplans

The unusual-shaped house has been designed with curves and angles to use every last inch of the compact site, which forms a juncture on the corner of two roads. The ground floor is predominantly open plan and tapers to a long narrow kitchen that opens on to a rear terrace through folding sliding doors. Upstairs, three irregularly shaped bedrooms – including a master en suite bedroom – and a family bathroom have been formed.

## What We've Learned

### What is your favourite part of the house?

It changes during the day depending on where the light is, but overall we love the main living and dining area – which was structured so that there are distinct zones within the open plan space. The niches on the south elevation are also a favourite feature, with aluminium copings at the top that finish everything off.

### Did you find anything surprisingly hard?

We kept looking at the rooms and thinking they would be too small – of course, they were fine once everything was completed and plastered.

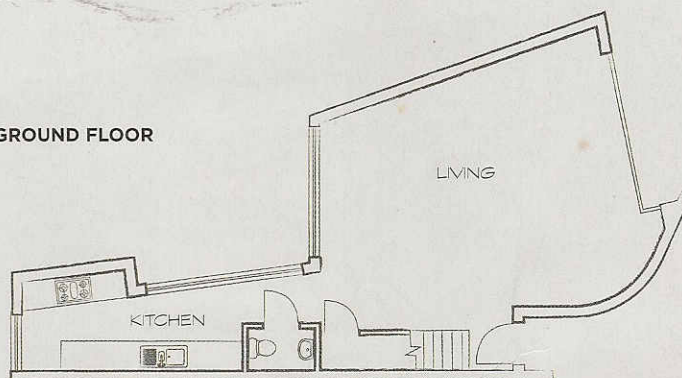
### What one piece of advice would you pass on to other self-builders?

Make sure you choose an architect wisely, hire a quantity surveyor, and also make a big effort to get on with your builder.

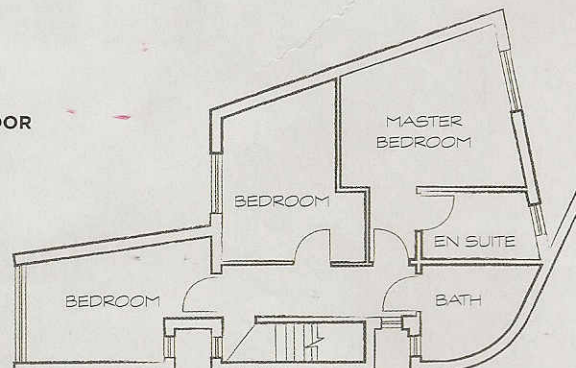
### If you could undertake the project again, what, if anything, would you change?

Once you find people you're happy to work with, you need to give them a certain amount of autonomy – nobody wants someone breathing down their neck the whole time, although by the end of the build we probably did become quite annoying!

### GROUND FLOOR



### FIRST FLOOR





# MCHENRY STRUCTURES STRUCTURAL DESIGN SOLUTIONS



As featured  
in this issue,  
page 44

Our talented engineers and CAD technicians produce high quality, clear & concise structural design documentation which minimises time in achieving regulatory approvals and ensures a fluid construction phase on site. Elegance in our designs & excellence in the quality of our documentation adds immense value to projects.

T. 0203 7194909 or 0798 162 9244 E. [info@mchenrystructures.com](mailto:info@mchenrystructures.com)  
[www.mchenrystructures.com](http://www.mchenrystructures.com)

## red squirrel architects

We are a friendly progressive chartered architectural practice with offices in South London & Manchester. We are committed to delivering projects efficiently and professionally.



[info@redsquirrelarchitects.com](mailto:info@redsquirrelarchitects.com)  
tel: 020 8699 6766

Contact us today to arrange a free consultation



[www.redsquirrelarchitects.com](http://www.redsquirrelarchitects.com)

# Finally, a mortgage built for self-build

THE NATIONAL  
HOMEBUILDING &  
RENOVATING SHOW  
NEC, BIRMINGHAM  
27-30 MARCH 2014  
STAND SH301

Because no two self-build projects are the same, neither is our approach to lending.

That's why our mortgages include staged draw-downs, tailored payments, a maximum loan to value of up to 90% and application fees of just £300. We specialise in lending for eco-friendly projects and our discounts reward sustainability and energy efficiency.

Finance built around you. At Ecology we've built our reputation on it.

0845 674 5566  
[www.ecology.co.uk](http://www.ecology.co.uk)

 **Ecology**  
Building Society

YOUR HOME MAY BE REPOSSESSED IF YOU DO NOT KEEP UP REPAYMENTS ON YOUR MORTGAGE. Our current Standard Variable Rate is 4.90%. The overall cost for comparison is 5.1% APR. Rates correct at date of going to print (1 December 2013). An early repayment charge may be payable if you repay all or part of your mortgage within the first two years. Authorised by the Prudential Regulation Authority and regulated by the Financial Conduct Authority and the Prudential Regulation Authority. Financial Services Register No. 162090. Ecology Building Society, 7 Belton Road, Silsden, Keighley, West Yorkshire BD20 0EE