

Self Build *& design*

BUILD A HOME OF YOUR OWN

www.selfbuildanddesign.com

**Design
Digest Special**

16 page supplement

Understanding

**Insurance &
Warranties**

How to build a new house with

**Instant
character**

September 2000 £2.75

PLUS plots ● new products ● advice





Page 25 **Market Survey** Reclamation

The subtle use of reclaimed building materials can give your new house instant character. In our market survey we look at the sorts of materials that can be used second time round and visit three houses where they have been used to good effect



Page 59
Island 2000

A group of selfbuilders on the Isle of Wight are realising their dream of owning their own home, thanks to their own endeavours and a new community selfbuild scheme. Bob Matthews charts their progress



Page 51
Warranties

Building your new house is one of the biggest projects you will ever take on, so it makes sense to insure its safe completion. Gerald Cole tackles the tricky subject of building insurance and warranties

Plus



Pg 13 **Cookers**



Pg 23 **Self build course**



case study **1**

Reclaiming *the secret garden*

Susan and Oz Mordaunt built their six bedroom house using new bricks and roof tiles but fitted it out with a plethora of reclaimed items, which create instant character and a feeling of opulence

With its tiled conical roof and curved brick walls the large sunroom is an attractive feature

"I always planned to build here," Oz Mordaunt exclaims. The site is part of a Victorian garden, situated on the edge of a picturesque Nottinghamshire village, which had been left to fall into disrepair for over fifty years.

"This is the first selfbuild we have tackled – we had lived nearby in the same village and owned the garden, which is situated some way from the old house, and I had a dream that I wanted to build a new home here," Oz continues.



The site is located outside the village envelope so it took several years to obtain planning permission for the project. However, Oz was able to overcome initial reluctance from the planning authority by gaining the backing of the villagers. "I explained to them that I intended to build something really beautiful and worthwhile and, as I have lived here for so long, they knew that what I said I meant, and wrote individual letters of support which I presented to the planners," Oz recalls.

The Mordaunts chose their architect after seeing a new house designed by Julian Owen, founder member of ASBA – Associated Self Build Architects. Julian undertook a site appraisal and developed the couple's brief, in addition to negotiating with the planning department and submitting the planning and building regulations applications. "He played a major part in the project, producing detailed specifications and undertaking the site certification, and it was vitally important that he could work well with us."

In order to maximise such a special plot it was important to build a suitably impressive dwelling. The new house needed to incorporate a design studio for Susan in addition to a large, imposing entrance hall, which was originally intended to contain a grand piano. This galieried area features an elaborate brick fireplace, reclaimed York flagstones and exposed oak beams with stags' heads on the wall.



"We wanted a kitchen with a sunroom off it which could be used as a large living area; a games room and separate dining room – everything just flows from one area to the next," Oz remarks.

The main staircase opens off the entrance hall, with a galleried landing overlooking this area. A special roof construction had to be devised by Julian Owen to allow as much space as possible throughout the first floor,

which consists of a warren of bedrooms and other accommodation, including a study and en-suite bathroom, all fitted into the roof space. The house also incorporates a series of outbuildings, a barbecue area and an integral double garage.

The Mordaunts, who rented locally during the build, decided to use new handmade bricks and roof tiles for their traditionally styled home; materials which are in

The house has been designed in a traditional style, using materials sympathetic to local buildings



Reclaimed flagstones sourced from all over Yorkshire are laid throughout the ground floor and overlain with oriental rugs giving the property instant character, as do the numerous hefty oak ceiling and wall beams salvaged through the local paper

sympathy with the local brick buildings. Oz asked York Handmade to make up a sample board of bricks with the mortar colour he intended to use and took this, and some clay roof tiles, to show the planners, who immediately agreed on the materials. "I ruled out using reclaimed bricks for the build as I was concerned that, when you visit a salvage yard, it is often difficult to tell if they will be suitable for external use, if they are porous or even meet current building regulations," he says.

The couple, who have five children, had a rough budget in mind but admit that they exceeded this figure building the 3,700 square foot house, which had a contract value of around £175,000. Oz, however, believes that his experience as a motor trader helped when it came to haggling for the numerous reclaimed materials he purchased.

"I actually made a lot of friends – buying and selling vehicles you get used to dealing with people every day of the week, haggling with them, having a laugh and making daft offers for things and I met some really nice people. There's definitely an art in haggling but it's not something that can easily be taught. You need to be confident and take control rather than letting the seller dominate the proceedings.

“Every single item in this house my wife and I have sourced although, fortunately we didn't have to undertake any actual dismantling ourselves - we wouldn't have known where to start!”



"Every single item in this house my wife and I have sourced although, fortunately we didn't have to undertake any actual dismantling ourselves – we wouldn't have known where to start! The first things we bought were the York flagstones, which are laid in all the downstairs rooms: we travelled all over Yorkshire and obtained them from numerous salvage yards and sales. They are all the same sort of colour and texture – although you can tell where they've come from by the amount of chewing gum on some of them!"

The Mordaunts and two helpers put the stone flags on pallets after steaming and cleaning them – completing over three hundred yards in a day. "Salvage yards were charging between £40 and £60 per yard," says Oz. "The cheapest I bought were seven pounds per yard at an auction, and the most expensive cost £20." Oz scans newspapers and magazines to find out about auctions and demolitions but admits he's never used a computer in

his life and would not feel comfortable surfing the Internet, preferring instead the fun of travelling around and searching out items in person.

All the upstairs flooring is reclaimed pitch pine, sourced from a company on the Yorkshire border

which purchases wood salvaged out of old mills and cuts it to create tongue and groove boarding. Such quality timber at the right price had proved difficult to find, and Oz was able to collect the planks himself on his invaluable flat-back transporter. "Most people have got wagons and will deliver to you, and I certainly didn't attempt to move the flagstones myself," says Oz. "I used local companies from the Yellow Pages."

The worn flags are overlain with oriental rugs purchased at auction and give the property instant character, as do the numerous hefty oak ceiling and wall beams which the couple salvaged through the local paper.



Although these are actually non-supporting, they have been incorporated to give the impression that they are structural, load-bearing timbers rather than a tacked-on afterthought. Sue saw an advert for sixteen oak beams imported from France, all about eighteen feet long, which were offered at £150 each. Oz offered five hundred pounds for the lot, which he eventually upped to one thousand – making an overall saving of £1,400. “We cut the beams in half and set them in, surrounded with plaster to create the desired effect, and they really do make the house,” says Oz. “A whole, uncut beam, around eighteen feet high, supports the stairs and others were used as bressumers above the fireplaces.”

All the internal doors have been made for the house from reclaimed pine, with the same company fitting architraves, skirting boards, staircase and some kitchen cupboards in reclaimed wood.

“If we can buy something old for the price of something new we will always choose the older option, and we had hunted high and low for the right kitchen furniture before stumbling across Ambergate Country Furniture’s showroom which had exactly what we wanted.” Reclaimed granite salvaged from the front of a demolished bank has been inset into the kitchen work surface and even the pine plate rack is made from reclaimed wood by Ambergate.

New sanitaryware in Victorian style is joined by a 6ft 6ins claw foot bath which came from the Mordaunts’ old house. “I was walking past one day and saw that the new owners had thrown out the original cast iron bath from

the property,” Oz recalls. It cost him £400 to have the bath resurfaced and it is now fitted in the en-suite bathroom to stunning effect. “Although I had actually purchased some genuine Victorian hand basins from a country house sale six years ago, the reproductions from Victorian Bathrooms in Yorkshire were almost identical to these in style and were so convincing that I decided on the pristine option rather than the marked originals. I buy things because I like them and feel they will look right in the house.”

Stained glass costing £120 for the two large panels was purchased from a small reclamation yard in Nottingham, has been cut to size at the yard and now flanks the

The couple did not want a fitted kitchen as they had built up such a collection of old pieces over the years. Instead, they opted for a kitchen from Ambergate which uses lots of reclaimed materials including the granite work surfaces





The house has the feel and character of a much older property and every room holds a reclamation story of its own

front door – with additional stained glass made for the small arch top windows in the dining room, which feature a key and a lock to depict the name of the house: 'The Secret Garden'. The main driveway gate (circa 1840) stone sets on the driveway, copings and stone urns in the garden have all been discovered at reclamation yards and sales. "To be honest it has never crossed my mind whether anything has been stolen. I'd like to think that everything we purchased was legitimate but I suppose



Contacts...

Julian Owen: 0115 9229831
Tudor Roof Tiles: 01797 320202
York Handmade bricks: 01347 838881
ASBA: 0800 387310
Ambergate Country Furniture: 01173 852109
Victorian Bathrooms: 01924 267736
Woodthorpe Design, Paint effects: 0860 221957
Architectural & Historical Salvage: 01924 262831
Sherwood Forest Products Ltd., Flooring: 01909 733333
Neil Corden, Builder: 01636 831200

you never really know," Oz muses.

Susan and Oz managed the build themselves, employing local builder Neil Corden who has built a number of properties and was sympathetic to their requirements and happy to work with the reclaimed materials. "It makes a change to be able to use quality materials and we employed a very good joiner who could actually express himself," says Oz.

"Some of the old materials are more difficult to work with than new, and you have to allow a certain percentage of waste, but we think that the end results speak for themselves. ☑

