NEW BUILDS EXTENSIONS CONVERSIONS RENOVATIONS INSPIRATION

SELF BUILD & DESIGN

www.selfbuildanddesign.com
July 2020 £4.99

Place of sanctuary

Exceptional home built to enjoy wildlife views

HOME OFFICES & quirky spaces

Getting the best from your **PACKAGE COMPANY**

32 PAGES OF INSPIRING PROJECTS

- Reinventing a Cornish cottage for £110k
- Sympathetic conversion of a Welsh long barn
- Transformation of a cramped & dingy terrace
- Revival of a Sixties house with a modern twist

Kitchens

Beginner's Guide: Design, installation, worktops and dining tables

External cladding

Winning combinations to add kerbside appeal

PLUS Plots for sale | Legal advice | Planning clinic | Mortgages | Homebuilding news

OUT OF THE ORDINARY

Ian Graham and Rosemary Jackson have ensured their exceptional new home is quirky and unconventional, while meeting some very specific needs.

STORY: **DEBBIE JEFFERY** PICTURES: **TOM HARGREAVES**

Rosemary Jackson and her husband, Ian Graham, are self-confessed rebels, who shun the ordinary and seek out the unusual. But, when it came to building their own home, they were driven by an unexpected turn of events: Rosemary was gradually losing her sight.

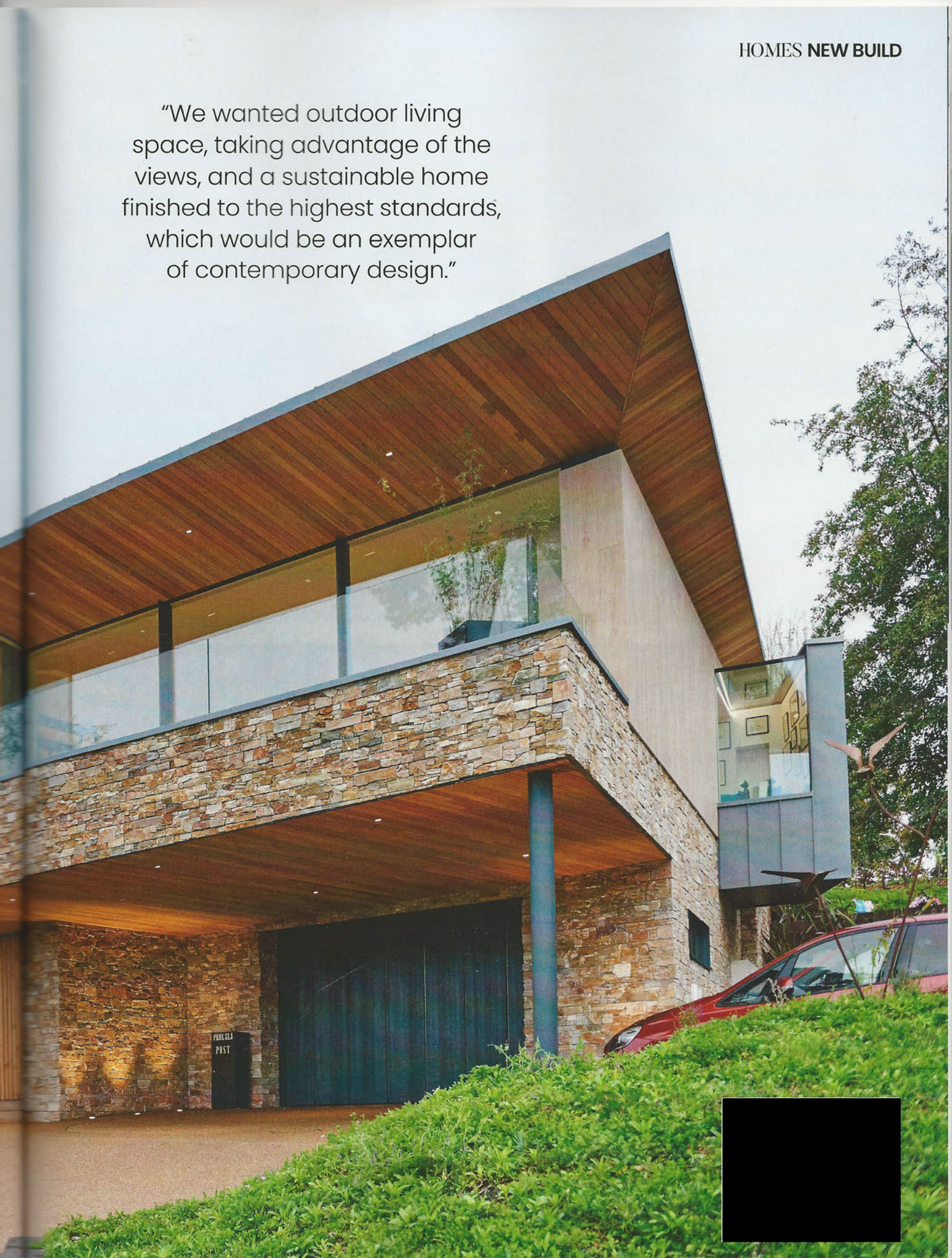
"It began in Asia, about 12 years ago, when I noticed that I couldn't differentiate the edges of stairs in hotels," she recalls. A diagnosis of macular degeneration led the couple to rethink their situation.

"I needed light and contrast to be able to see properly, and although we loved our home (a 21st-century extension of a 300-year-old cottage in a coastal village near Plymouth), the dark finishes and steep garden made it likely to be increasingly unsuitable."

Rosemary calculated that she only had a few years before her deteriorating eyesight would make living in their home impossible, and the couple were keen to find another waterside home before that time. They appointed a property search adviser, and in 2015 they viewed and subsequently purchased a probate house with panoramic views over the rivers Exe and Clyst in Devon.

"We planned to replace the existing 1960s house with something radical and experimental, and appointed a

"We wanted outdoor living space, taking advantage of the views, and a sustainable home finished to the highest standards, which would be an exemplar of contemporary design."



EXTERIOR
The stone-clad home was designed by Barc Architects to be adaptable into old age, while having minimal impact on the local wildlife and environment.

London architectural practice to research the concept of a rotating circular design which would follow the sun," says Ian. "Planning approval was granted in 2017, but when we started to cost the project we had to admit that the concept was financially just too risky and the house would require constant maintenance, which we were not equipped to do."

Disappointed that their plans had been thwarted, the couple turned to award-winning Devon-based Barc Architects to design a more financially realistic solution, one which would still be ambitious and incorporate playful, quirky elements. Practice director Caroline Shortt worked with Ian and Rosemary's highly specific brief to design a static two-storey home which fulfilled their requirements.

"We're both retired, so the house needed to provide independent living for the rest of our lives," Rosemary explains. "We wanted outdoor living space taking advantage of the views, and a sustainable home finished to the highest standards, which would be an exemplar of contemporary design."

Barc Architects conceived a building which sits proudly in its landscape and is a tribute to modernity, while incorporating some unusual design twists. Splays and angles create drama throughout the house, which has non-parallel walls both inside and out. Nothing is symmetrical.

"We planned to replace the existing 60s house with something radical and experimental."

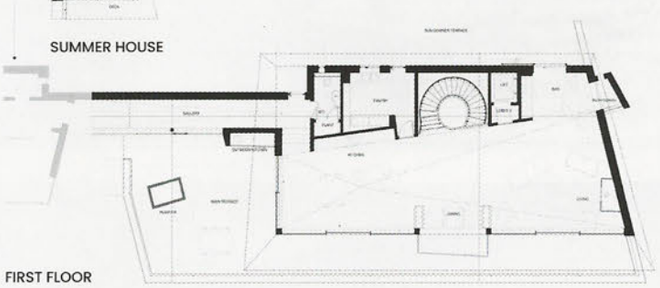
The reverse-level layout places living spaces on the first floor, with bedrooms and a home cinema below, and the house has been carefully designed to take full advantage of the amazing panoramic views to the estuary, while maintaining privacy from the road. The brief for a light house with little glare resulted in the integration of large overhanging eaves, which are a distinctive feature.

"We'd been very wrapped up in the idea of designing and building a really ambitious home, and we were delighted that our architects were equally passionate about the project," says Ian, a retired company director. "The Barc redesign was highly appropriate and distinctive; exactly what we'd hoped for."

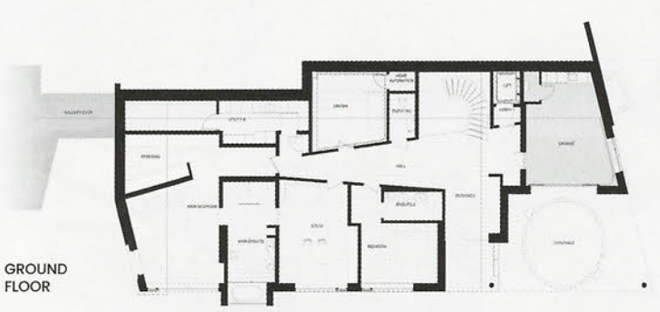
The floorplan

With a total of 600 sqm of internal and external living space, Sanctuary House is designed to maximise the views. The ground floor incorporates a main bedroom suite, guest bedroom and en suite, plant and utility rooms, a cinema room and garage. On the first floor, an open-plan living/dining/kitchen space predominates, with a bar area and a cosy pop-out seating space. There's a pantry, plant room, a lift, WC and a long art gallery leading to the summer-house.

SUMMER HOUSE



FIRST FLOOR



GROUND FLOOR

IN DETAIL

PROJECT

Architect Barc Architects: barcarchitects.com
Structural engineer Airey and Coles: aireyandcoles.co.uk
Mechanical and electrical consultant SDS Engineering Consultants: sdsolution.co.uk
Quantity surveyor Hosken Parks: hoskenparks.co.uk
Building intelligence, including digital weather station Intelligent Abodes: intelligentabodes.co.uk
Landscaping, paths, steps County Grounds Maintenance: countygroundsmaintenance.co.uk
Mechanical lead contractor including MVHR, air source, ground source and underfloor heating Radiate Plumbing and Heating Ltd: radiateplumbing.co.uk
Electrical lead contractor Wannells Electrotechnical Systems Ltd: wannellsltd.com
Various installations JJ Carpentry & Building Ltd: 07717 899170
Painting and decorating CCG Decorators: ccgdecorators.co.uk
Landscape design Rosemary Jackson with help from Hugo Bugg Landscapes: hugobugg.com and Hannah Martin Garden Design: hannahmartindesign.co.uk

STRUCTURE

Steelwork Kenex Engineering Ltd: kenexengineering.co.uk
Roof coverings A&S Roofing Systems: 01837 810287; Hodge Single Ply Roofing: hodgesingleply.co.uk
Glazing IQ Glass: iqglassuk.com
Windows Keller AG: kellerag.com
Coloured Thermocromex one-coat render Masons Mortar: masonsmortar.co.uk
Stone cladding Tier: tier.co.uk
Upper floor pivot doors JKP Joinery: jkpjoinery.co.uk
Composite decking Cladco: wpc-decking.co.uk
Helical staircase Bisca: bisca.co.uk

FIXTURES AND FITTINGS

Tiling, kitchens, sanitaryware, Krion counters Porcelanosa: porcelanosa.com
Wall, door, and glass graphics Ashley House Design: ashleyhousedesign.co.uk
Lift Nova Lift Co Ltd: liftman.co.uk
Summer-house kitchen Culshaw: culshaw.co
Corten external screen and benches Matt Dingle: mattdingle.co.uk
Corten water table and house sign Enscape: enscape.co.uk
Electric blinds Lutron: Lutron.com
Blade light fittings iGuzzini: iguzzini.com
Pendant light fittings Tobias Grau: tobiasgrau.com
Underfloor heating control Heatmiser: heatmiser.com
Air source heat pump Mitsubishi Electric: les.mitsubishielectric.co.uk
MetaFocus 6 gas fire Focus Fireplaces: focusfireplaces.com
Internal and external tiling The Caledonian Tile Company: the-caledonian-tile-company.co.uk
Internal doors Linvisible: linvisible.com
Renewables – PV panels, inverters, Tesla Battery, Zippi EV charger Sungift Solar: sungiftsolar.co.uk
Car turntable Spin-It: carturntables.co.uk
External doors Deuren: deuren.co.uk
Biometric front door Topic: topic.at
Garage door Guttomat: guttomat.at
Bespoke furniture Woodbrooke Exeter: woodbrooke.co.uk
Handmade curtains and blinds Christine Finch: canlfinch@hotmail.co.uk
Dressing room and other fitted furniture Presotto: presotto.com
Boiling taps Quooker: quooker.co.uk

In August 2017, planning consent was granted for the new 475-sqm house in just three weeks, as a variation on the original rotating design, and building work commenced in January 2018, with a main contractor employed to undertake the challenging project.

"We rushed to start, before full construction drawings had been developed and costed. As a way of reducing our financial risk, we agreed fixed fees with all professional team members, with full disclosure of construction costs, which we'd then reimburse every month," says Ian, whose mantra throughout the build was 'no surprises'.

Despite this, the project overran both in time and money. "As practical completion approached, we decided to take over the final elements of project management ourselves in order to reduce our costs," explains Rosemary. "We also managed the external landscaping and site clearance."

The existing 1960s house was demolished, which involved professional asbestos disposal, and an earth bank in the garden was retained, which affords privacy to ground-floor rooms.

"The bund was carefully designed at the perfect height, so we can lie in bed and look out across our wild flower meadow to the coastal view without being seen by passers-by," says Rosemary.

A steel frame skeleton for the new house stands on standard concrete strip foundations, and was chosen for strength, build speed and to allow large open spans internally. This was infilled by concrete blockwork, clad externally in a palette of lime render, contemporary Tier stone-cladding panels and large-format porcelain plank tiling, which has also been used for decks and internal floors.

KITCHEN Extra high ceilings provide a sense of scale and luxury on both floors, with the apex of the main vaulted ceiling being above the chef's table in the kitchen.

The stone-clad base of the building has a sense of solidity which is balanced by the transparency of the glazed pavilion above, and the complex steel-framed roof was finished in single-ply membrane and zinc, with distinctive larch soffits.

Sanctuary House was designed to surpass Building Regulations requirements in terms of energy efficiency, and incorporates photovoltaic panels, an air source heat pump, mechanical ventilation and heat recovery, an EV charging point, and a Tesla battery, with a digital weather station integrated into the heating, lighting and blind controls.

"From the moment we wake up in the morning and the blinds are automatically raised, we are cared for by the technology embedded into the design of the house," says Ian. "Our lighting, heating, MVHR, skylight and other devices can be controlled on iPads and iPhones, but it's all hidden away. For us, the focus was always the view, which drove the whole design."

Another critical macular degeneration design consideration was light levels. Non-glare glazing and oversized soffits to the south and east keep out harsh sunlight, and non-glare lighting was installed throughout, with DALI drivers for accurate control of lumens on all fittings.

The house was also designed to meet Lifetime Home standards, with a lift in the main house and a summer-house annexe suitable for a live-in carer, should the need arise. To ensure the couple will be able to remain independent, they specified extra-wide doorways for wheelchairs, with accessible bathrooms including Japanese bidet-toilets to reduce the risk of urinary tract infection. Outside, a turntable enables easier parking. The sliding door onto the main terrace is motorised, and instant boiling water taps avoid the need to lift kettles.

LIVING AREA
The steel frame of the house enables a large open-plan living area, which borrows the landscape though huge windows with only 19mm profile.

"Our thresholds are all completely level, with the same flooring inside and out, so there's nothing I can trip over," explains Rosemary. "We don't really have any blacks or greys in the house – surfaces are white matt, and the staircase treads have been inlaid with maple, which helps me to differentiate each step."

Rosemary and Ian travelled around the UK and Europe in the months leading up to the build, sourcing unique items such as their fireplace, which came from Montpelier in France, and hand-picking their kitchens, floor and wall tiling and sanitaryware at Porcelanosa's Spanish factories, which they visited several times.

Predominantly, though, they were determined to employ local trades and craftspeople, with around 80 per cent of development costs put directly into the Devon economy.

"We moved into the new house in June 2019 and feel exceptionally lucky to live here," explains Rosemary, a retired leadership consultant and qualified garden and interior designer. "We have a kitchen area, with fridges and sinks, adjacent to all main living spaces and a dedicated outdoor kitchen so that, as we get older, we don't need to travel too far to make a cup of tea! It's a very long house – 50m end to end – so it's all about convenience and practicality. Now, we're really making the most of the location and love spending time at home."

STAIRS
The helical staircase, made from wood, steel, glass and leather, has maple inlaid on every tread for visual contrast.

VIEWS
The house is designed to take advantage of the views – even the bath is sited to look over the wildlife sanctuary.

"Adopt lessons from other countries and projects, while researching new materials and technologies which will both integrate sustainability and future-proof your home."

Rosemary and Ian's top tip

ART
Bathed in natural light, the gallery corridor features work by award-winning artists.

ANNEXE
The summer-house annexe is separate but linked to the house.

FINAL WORD

What was the high point of the project?
Finding and then working with such a talented group of highly specialised local subcontractors and craftspeople, and now living with the quality of their work.

...and the low points?
Despite the plea for no surprises, at the beginning of second-fix we were advised by the main contractor that there would be a considerable time and cost overrun. By then, almost all second-fix items had been bought and we had virtually no financial wriggle room.

Your best buy?
The glazing, for the views – although at £225,000 it certainly wasn't a budget buy. We love Ikea, and did install some Ikea items such as the built-in wardrobe in the guest bedroom.

Biggest extravagance?
Space is our biggest indulgence. We could have built a far smaller house, but the 600 sqm of indoor and outdoor areas gives us many different places to use throughout the day.

SMART HOMES
SMART LIVING
SMART SERVICE

Specialists in smart home control & interiors including lighting design, automated blinds & curtains, multi-room audio, smart security and home cinemas.

Ask the experts, contact us today to get free specialist advice on the latest smart home control systems.

For more information call **Karen Chugg** on **01392 823398/ 07810 481717** or email **karen@intelligentabodes.co.uk**

intelligentabodes.co.uk

INTELLIGENT ABODES

VENUS WINNER Customer Service LOCAL BUSINESS WOMEN

RIBA Chartered Practice

barc architects

GET IN TOUCH
+44 (0) 1392 435051
studio@barcarchitects.com
www.barcarchitects.com