

Built for wellbeing

One family opted for a fresh start by replacing a rundown bungalow with a modern barn

WORDS CAROLINE RODRIGUES PHOTOGRAPHY EDMUND SUMNER



IN BRIEF

LOCATION Near Guildford, Surrey
TYPE OF PROPERTY
Detached new-build
BEDROOMS 4
PROJECT STARTED
December 2019
PROJECT FINISHED March 2021
SIZE 215sqm
BUILD COST Around £615,000

Horizontal cedar boards contrast with vertical black composite cladding on the exterior

After a year of house-hunting it dawned on Emma and Neil Jenkins that building their own home was the only way to get what they wanted. So when they found a 1970s bungalow close to where they lived near Guildford in Surrey, the couple bought it with a view to redeveloping the plot. Their sons Sam, 15, and Jake, 13, were able to stay in the same schools, and the family moved into the bungalow while they lined up an architect and went through the planning process.

Company directors Emma and Neil, both 48, were undeterred by the fact that it had taken the previous owners at least two years and two attempts to get planning permission. 'The bungalow is in a greenbelt and conservation area, with neighbouring Grade II listed buildings, but we felt hopeful because a precedent had already been set by the previous planning application,'

says Emma. Though it would have saved time to use the existing plans, the couple decided against it. They didn't like the complexity and potential cost of the proposed building's mock Arts and Crafts style, preferring the idea of something more modern.

After meeting four architects, they eventually selected John Wilson of Foundations Architects. 'We liked John's portfolio and were impressed by the fact that he'd had success with the local planners,' says Emma. John proposed two different designs and, since Neil preferred one and Emma the other, they compromised, resulting in a home that Emma describes as a modern barn. It has a T-shaped footprint, with a double-height kitchen and living area at the top of the T, and a two-storey intersecting part containing a snug and four bedrooms. Planning constraints restricted the height, but John managed to fit three



LEFT The front door is next to the turret, which is made from Staffordshire blue bricks for a contemporary look

ABOVE From the full-height atrium, one door leads to the study and another to the open-plan living space

When the couple asked if the chimney stack could be curved, John went one step further, designing a turret

of the bedrooms within the apex of the roof as well as including glazed doors on each gable to boost the amount of light that reaches this upper level.

When the couple asked if the chimney stack could be curved, John went one step further, designing a turret containing a study and one of the en-suite bathrooms. He did this without increasing the footprint of the building, something of an achievement given that this was also restricted by the planners. 'The turret is a nod to the traditional round towers found all over Ireland, my homeland,' says John. 'It ties together the living and bedroom wings as well as the double-height hallway.'

Once everything was agreed, the family rented a house across the road and demolition went ahead. The main contractor – who the couple knew from a previous >>

In a corner of the living area a Framery One soundproof pod from Welltek provides a quiet place to work



conversion job – laid the beam-and-block foundations ready for the timber frame. But then the site had to close for lockdown which, combined with Brexit, delayed the project by around five months. Once work restarted, Emma made sure she was on site every day to check progress. ‘The doors were on five-month lead times,’ she recalls, ‘and appliances were very difficult to get hold of, so we had to tweak the kitchen design. But we focused on the end goal of moving in and enjoying the space.’

Two distinct types of cladding wrap the building. Black composite panels, which the couple saw at a design show and admired for their modern, clean lines and eco credentials, contrast with western red cedar boards fitted horizontally and treated to protect the colour. ‘If it weathered to a shade of grey, we’d lose the great contrast against the black,’ says Emma.

‘During Covid, appliances were very difficult to get hold of, so we had to tweak the kitchen design’

Having lived in cold period properties, the couple wanted a warm house that didn’t cost the earth to heat – either financially or environmentally – so they installed an air-source heat pump to provide hot water and underfloor heating for the ground floor. They also added a mechanical ventilation with heat recovery (MVHR) system, which provides a gentle flow of fresh air and has proved especially useful. ‘We live near some fields, and the filters help keep out pollen, dust and allergens, especially around harvest time,’ says Emma. ‘It’s a bonus because there’s eczema and hay fever in the family.’ >>



ABOVE Sheer curtains on the sliding doors shade the living space. Emma sits in a Neuron Activation Pod (NAP) from Welltek, which allows the family to take short, meditative breaks throughout the day



There is no need for radiators upstairs as the whole house stays at a steady temperature. 'We have the wiring ready if we ever want to install electric ones, though,' says Emma.

The open-plan living space is enhanced by double-height ceilings in the kitchen and seating areas. In between the two is a dining table with a low, cedar-clad ceiling creating a sense of intimacy and helping with the acoustics. 'It was very labour intensive to produce, but it's one of our favourite features,' says Emma. The separate snug, which opens off the hallway, is also on a cosier scale.

As Emma and Neil are the directors of Welltek, a company that aims to enhance health in the workplace, they were keen to include some specific items in their home. One of these is in the living room, where they enhanced the air filtration system with a large filter designed to remove potentially harmful particles.

Conscious that modern schemes can date quickly, Emma opted for a timeless palette of white, oak and black through most of the house. This, coupled with the expanses of glass, provides the perfect backdrop for the couple's mid-century furniture.

Emma and Neil appreciate the chance that they've had to build a modern family house. 'We feel more connected to one another and we all look forward to coming home,' says Emma. 'I'm not sure the boys will ever want to leave.' GD

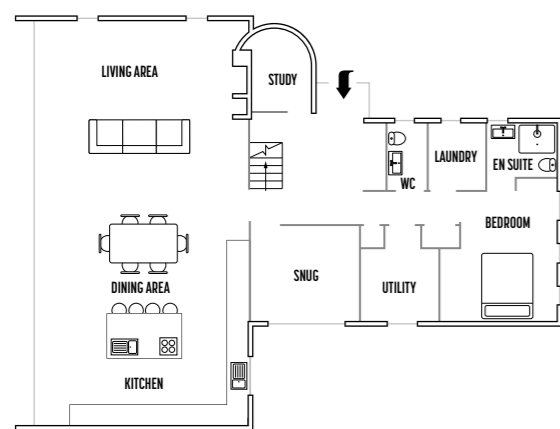
LEFT The cedar-clad island includes a hob and an integrated extractor, plus seating so the couple can chat to their guests while they're cooking

ABOVE The dark anthracite composite sink from Blanco and black Abode tap provide a visual link to the aluminium window frames

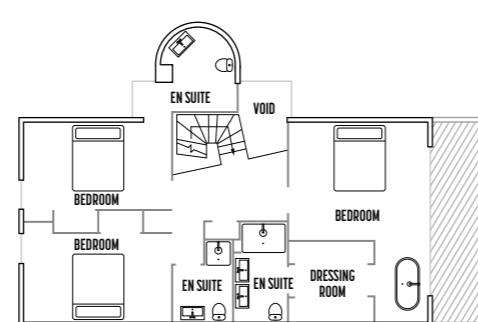
RIGHT Emma and Neil's north-facing bedroom has its own balcony so they can enjoy the countryside views



FLOOR PLANS



GROUND FLOOR



FIRST FLOOR

GD HOMES SURREY

Emma chose bespoke automated blackout blinds for the gable end window in the main bedroom



ABOVE A stone resin freestanding bath sits at one end of Emma and Neil's bedroom. The en-suite shower room is reached through the dressing room

SUPPLIERS

PROJECT TEAM

Architect John Wilson at Foundations Architects (foundationsarchitects.co.uk)
Construction FL London (flconstruction.london)

STRUCTURE

Timber frame Vision Development (timber-frame-suppliers.co.uk)
Windows and doors EuroWindows (eurowindows.co.uk)
Cladding Neolife (neolife.fr)

FIXTURES AND FITTINGS

Nibe air-source heat pump Green Square (greensquare.co.uk)
Lutron smart lighting Zenlux Design (zenluxdesign.com)
Kitchen Naked Kitchens (nakedkitchens.com)
Worksurfaces Caesarstone (caesarstone.co.uk)
Sink Blanco (blanco.com)
Bathroom fittings Lusso (lussostone.com), Vitra (vitra.co.uk)
Kitchen taps Abode (abodedesigns.co.uk), Quooker (quooker.co.uk)
Ovens, dishwasher and microwave Bosch (bosch.co.uk)
Fridge-freezer Samsung (samsung.com)
Hob Bora (bora.com)
Large-format floor tiles Marazzi (marazzitile.co.uk)
Engineered oak flooring UK Flooring Direct (ukflooringdirect.co.uk)
Decking Millboard (millboard.co.uk)

FURNITURE AND ACCESSORIES

Furniture, rugs and lighting Couch Potato Company (couchpotatocompany.com)
Wellbeing furniture Welltek (welltek.co)