

Upfront

NEWS & EVENTS • PRODUCTS
• LAUNCHES • MISCELLANIES

Fitting In

Architects Sophie Goldhill and David Liddicoat (liddicoatgoldhill.com) designed their own award-winning 78m² home in North London. "Small house design can really focus the mind and provide excellent, perfectly formed, results," says Sophie



TRENDS

Let's Get Small

Are the days of trying to build bigger and bigger about to end? A growing movement aims to prove that, when it comes to house size, less is more

PHOTO BY TOM GILDON

Homes have long been seen as a status symbol — what could show off how well you are doing more than an enormous house (apart from one with an enormous 4x4 outside it, of course)? However, more and more people are now deciding that bigger is not always better — and choosing to build small. The motivation behind

this choice varies — from those who yearn for a more simple life, to those who are perhaps fed up with all their time and money being spent on a huge mortgage and ever-rising energy bills. There are also those who have environmental concerns on their conscience and feel that they want to use up less resources on building and running a large house.

Building small is not some new fad, it simply makes sense and a growing number of self-builders are starting to realise this, feeling that they would much rather spend time with their families or travelling the world as opposed to working long hours to fund a costly house — and the answer for many lies in downsizing their homes. ▶

Let's Get Small

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Advocates of small homes reckon that a family of four can quite happily live in a house of between 139m² to 186m² (the typical UK self-build is a little over 200m², while the typical new developer home is less than 90m²). Obviously some will ask why cram yourself into a smaller space if you can afford to build bigger, but scaling down your possessions is part of living a more simple life.

And big houses really are not all they are cracked up to be. To start with it can be incredibly hard to get the cosy factor in cavernous spaces. Time and time again in the magazine we see impressively big rooms and soaring ceilings, then somewhere we spot a little ill-placed sofa (which is probably in no way little) dwarfed by its surroundings.

The small house movement is already well-established in the USA, where there is even a Small House Society (resourcesforlife.com) who aim to offer support and advice for those wanting in on the concept of smaller and more sustainable living.

One leading advocate of the small house movement is British-born architect Sarah Susanka, author of *The Not So Big House* series, whose 'build better, not bigger' design principles see her writing, lecturing and presenting about building smaller — she has even opened a *Not So Big* show-house. Her books encourage readers to design homes that they can fully inhabit, and also show how incorporating only what matters can help change their lives.

"In my experience as an architect, a house in which every space is designed for



The 'Not So Big' movement's Sarah Susanka

everyday living is far more satisfying than one with unused formal space for formal guests who never show up," she says.

When designing a small house you need to think about what you really need. Of course you will need a kitchen and somewhere to eat, along with a living room. A downstairs WC and utility are also really musts for most of us (and minimum Building Regulations requirements). An entrance hall helps and for some a home office is essential.

"Designing small means prioritisation. It is vital to really think about how you live and what you want that smaller space to do. Be honest — don't kid yourself about being able to have everything, because you can't," says architect Sophie Goldhill, who, along with David Liddicoat designed and lived in the 78m² house that won a Daily Telegraph Homebuilding & Renovating Award in 2011. She also recommends including varied floor-to-ceiling heights to create interest. "We designed in fixed, wide areas of glazing. It makes more of the outside — we also tried to incorporate usable outside living spaces to stretch the footprint. In addition, we exposed the ceiling joists to get more out of the ceiling heights." Liddicoat Goldhill are currently designing a 44m² house (over three storeys) and "definitely detect a movement towards small homes."

Open plan spaces are essential, as walls and corridors only waste precious space. Good room division, in the form of partial-walls, storage systems and breakfast bars to name but a few, is vital for an open plan layout to work well — plus room dividers can double up as extra storage, which is always crucial when space is at a premium.



NEWS

Sunset Time

Just 30 days to go if you want to save on solar panels

Anyone wanting to secure a good return when investing in a solar PV (photovoltaics) installation on their home has until 1st July to do so, according to industry experts.

From then, the Government is set to slash the Feed-in Tariff subsidies available for domestic schemes of less than 4kW, from the current 21p to an expected rate of 15.7p — although it may be as low as 13.6p.

Currently, under the present Feed-in Tariff rate, the return on investment is more than 10 per cent and is index linked and tax free, fixed

Size Isn't Everything

Typical size of a new-build home

1. Britain	76m ²	8. Belgium.....	119m ²
2. Italy	82m ²	9. Greece.....	126m ²
3. Austria.....	96m ²	10. Japan.....	132m ²
4. Spain.....	97m ²	11. New Zealand	176m ²
5. Germany	109m ²	12. United States.....	203m ²
6. France	113m ²	13. Australia	206m ²
7. Netherlands	116m ²		

Source: Demographia



and guaranteed for 25 years. (The typical cost of a 4kW system is currently around £7,500, with typical annual income of around £600-800). However, when the rate reduces to 15.7p the potential return on investment will drop to between 4-6 per cent, as capital costs are unlikely to drop much more.

Last year, the Feed-in Tariff rate for domestic schemes under 4kW was slashed from 43.3p to 21p and, should the new rate fall as low as 13.6p, this would amount to a 68 per cent fall in the rate since December 2011 — plus, the rates are due to be reduced further in October. In early 2011, when the Tariff was at the higher rate, a 4kW system was costing around £12,000.

David Hunt, a director of renewable energy company Eco Environments, said that the reduction would “make a domestic solar PV scheme appealing only to the really green investors rather than those who are coming at it mainly for the eye-watering financial returns.”

Here Comes the Sun

Television presenter Kate Humble has recently installed solar panels from Solarlec (solarlec.com) on the roof of her Monmouthshire farm, which is to be used as a training centre, teaching rural skills and animal husbandry

IDEAS

Whither the Home Bar?



The New Going Out

Why bother going out to the pub when the pub can come to you? Home bars are available in modern — such as the Galaxy from Barmans (barmans.co.uk), £4,416 + VAT, BELOW — or traditional designs, and there are also companies specialising in equipment such as optics

The home bar. Clubby lighting, nibbles and booze, all without the taxi fare or babysitters — how could it ever have fallen from favour?

A chance to play at being Tom Cruise (or Bet Lynch, if the mood takes you) for the evening when friends visit — or even when they don't.

There are now all sorts of contemporary — and not so contemporary — home bars available but the home bar really does work best when a split-level design is employed, with just three or so steps leading down to where you keep the drinks from the 'ordering' area. This allows you to really get into the part, taking orders before trotting off down the steps and reappearing, drinks in hand.

Of course thanks in no small part to Pat Butcher and Del Boy, the home bar has been made a mockery of and has now been replaced with the far more socially acceptable wine cellar — just a variation of the split-level home bar in our view.

If you feel that your home will never be complete without a bar, however (and let's face it, what home is?), take a look at the ranges on offer from **drinkstuff.com** and **quenchhomebars.com**.

If you are looking for something a bit more traditional, try Victor Hall Antiques (**victorhallantiques.com**), who specialise in heavily carved canopy bars in mahogany and oak.



DIVERSIONS

“All Back to the Trailer”FAMOUS SELF-BUILDERS
1: PETROCELLI**He was busy laying his own bricks while solving top crimes****Anyone who needs convincing of just how cool self-build really is need look no further than Anthony**

Petrocelli, the fictional Italian-American, Harvard-educated defence lawyer, played by Barry Newman in the 1970s series. Having given up his fast-paced life in the big city, Petrocelli moved to the made-up small town of San Remo, Arizona, with his wife Maggie, where they lived (seemingly in the middle of a desert) in a trailer whilst building their own home, brick by brick (as featured in almost every episode).

Often annoying the locals with his city-ways (“Where the hell do you get off, Petrocelli, walking into San Remo like the King of Italy?”), Petrocelli usually ended up getting personally involved in his cases and was often unconcerned about whether his clients could pay him — which is perhaps why he was still building his house when the series got cancelled, over two years later.

PRODUCTS & TRENDS

“Ouch!”

Boiling water taps: time-saving convenience or menace to toddlers and old people? **Natasha Brinsmead** investigates

There is a gadget on the block which has its sights set on eliminating the good old kettle from our kitchens for good. But is it all it says it is? Anything that poses a threat to such a comforting kitchen mainstay is bound to be met with a certain amount of suspicion, but in theory boiling water taps sound like a great idea. The basic idea is that they supply instant boiling water through a tap, connected to a small tank hidden in a cupboard beneath the sink. The heavily insulated tank is linked to the water supply and heated electrically to keep it at 100°C.

The Quooker is one of the best known, made by a Dutch-based company. According to kitchen retailers as many as one in three designer kitchens now feature the gadget, with almost 10,000 of the taps installed last year.

Understandably, parents of young children may be worried



about the safety aspects of a tap which produces scalding hot water on demand. However, taps such as the Quooker have childproof push-and-turn handles, are height-adjustable and insulated — and anyway, according to RoSPA, 60 people are scalded by kettles in the UK every day, although some users have experienced issues with splashback on full flows.

Also, providing a small supply of pre-heated hot water (based on an immersion heater concept) is at best debatable in terms of energy efficiency compared to using an (even regularly overfilled) kettle.

However, it's less likely to be the potential pitfalls that put people off rather than the price tag. The Quooker retails at around £800.

In an Instant

All four models of the Quooker (quooker.com) boiling water tap come with childproof push-and-turn handles. They are also height-adjustable and insulated



THREE OF THE BEST

Basin Taps



The Bol ceramic basin mixer is inspired by apothecary pestle and mortars. **Kohler, £554** (kohler.co.uk)



The Puravida wall-mounted mixer is suitable for installation at any height, from **Hansgrohe, £399** (hansgrohe.co.uk)



The Puravida Electronic bathroom mixer is automatically operated when users place their hands under the spout. **Hansgrohe, £669** (as above)

NEWS

Self-build's Day at No. 10

Housing Minister Grant Shapps reaffirms his plans for self-build – and promises to look again at CIL – at a special gathering at Downing Street



Cheese! Property TV personalities line up with aspiring self-builders (in T-shirts), the Housing Minister and NASBA chief Ted Stevens in Downing St., 19th April 2012. A spotter's guide to the celebrities (L-R): George Clarke, Tommy Walsh, Grant Shapps, Homebuilding & Renovating Editor-in-Chief Michael Holmes (pictured below, giving advice to self-builders), Tom Dychoff, Charlie Luxton, Kevin McCloud, Dan Cruikshank and Ted Stevens

Housing Minister Grant Shapps made the first signal of a desire to look at the impact that the recently introduced Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) is having on self-builders in a short Q&A with *Homebuilding & Renovating* Editor Jason Orme at 10 Downing Street in April.

Shapps, there to officially launch the Government's self-build initiatives as well as a new information site for would-be self-builders (selfbuildportal.org.uk), was asked to respond to *Homebuilding & Renovating* readers' concerns about the charges that some local authorities are introducing on new homebuilding (see homebuilding.co.uk/cil for more). He said: "I'm actually quite shocked at the charges in these cases. I don't believe that CIL was intended to have this sort of impact on self-builders. I will look into it and see if there's anything we can do to help the situation."

The launch featured several self-build TV personalities, including Kevin McCloud, George Clarke and *Homebuilding & Renovating* Editor-in-Chief Michael Holmes giving advice to young, would-be self-builders on how to get started.

Shapps revealed that at any one time up to two million people in the UK would like to build their own homes, but the majority are put off by difficulties in finding land and finance.

CIL is being introduced by most local authorities between now and 2014. *Homebuilding & Renovating* has been working with the National Self-build Association (NASBA) to address the issue.

Stop Press: In a visit to *Almere*, a self-built community in Holland in mid-May, Grant Shapps vowed to introduce significant concessions to reduce the burden that CIL is having on self-builders. More next issue.





EVENTS

Let Us See Your Home

We launch The 2012 Daily Telegraph Homebuilding & Renovating Awards

Have you recently completed your self-build, renovation, extension or conversion project? Then we'd like to hear from you. This month sees the launch of the Daily Telegraph Homebuilding & Renovating Awards, our search for Britain's best homes.

Now well into its second decade, the Awards scheme has highlighted the variety of projects people undertake to create their dream home. So regardless of the type of project you've completed – big or small, traditional or contemporary, simple or extravagant – we want to hear from you and are looking forward to seeing your project. *(cont overleaf)*

How to Enter

It's easy and free to enter your project in The Daily Telegraph Homebuilding & Renovating Awards. Simply visit homebuilding.co.uk/awards and fill out the simple online form (and upload a few photographs). Alternatively you can download the entry form at the same address. You can also email homebuilding@centaur.co.uk (or call 01527 834443) and we'd be happy to send one out to you.

Last Year's Winner

Our 2011 Overall Winner was a remarkable oak frame home largely hand-built – from no more than a scale model – by its owners in Suffolk. Inside it was finished in a striking collection of fittings innovatively sourced from salvage yards around the world

The Overall Sponsor



The UK's Leading Home Energy Company

Founded in 2009, Engensa is the UK's fastest-growing provider of home energy systems. On a mission to cut the nation's energy bills and protect the environment, Engensa's hand-picked experts have worked closely with thousands of homeowners to design, finance, install and maintain solar panel systems, heat pumps and energy efficient boilers that match any budget and style. With the highest customer satisfaction rating in the industry, over 90% of Engensa's customers would go out of their way to recommend Engensa to their friends or neighbours. For more information, visit www.engensa.com.

The Categories

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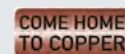
Swish Windows is a leading UK manufacturer of modern energy-efficient window and door systems. Through our network of installers we offer an extensive product range which includes A-rated double-glazed and triple-glazed windows and bi-folding doors, all available in our wide choice of coloured and wood-effect foils.

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Marley Eternit is the leading provider of roofing and cladding solutions to the construction industry. Our unrivalled product portfolio includes all types of concrete and clay tiles, double and single lap slates, decorative cladding, profiled sheeting and a range of building boards.

RESIDENTIAL DESIGN SPONSORED BY COME HOME TO COPPER



Come Home to Copper (come-home-to-copper.co.uk) is a campaign aimed at informing self-builders of the benefits of using copper-containing products and systems around the home. Copper plays a major role in household services: in plumbing and renewables. In addition, copper – as part of the architectural design – will add quality to any project.

EXTENSION/REMODEL SPONSORED BY GLAZING VISION



Glazing Vision (GV) is the UK's largest manufacturer of innovative glass rooflight solutions. Founded in 1994, GV now supply their range of glass rooflights throughout the world. GV have featured on some prestigious buildings from the Eden project in Cornwall to Gleneagles Golf Course in Scotland.

The Categories

CONVERSION

SPONSORED BY SELF-BUILD ZONE



Self-Build Zone has been providing site insurance and structural warranties on every type of project since 2003. Our experience of the types of risks that people face when carrying out a major project allows us to provide exactly the right cover.

TIMBER FRAME HOME

SPONSORED BY UKTFA



The UKTFA is the voice of the timber frame industry, including designers, manufacturers, and those that sell to self-builders. The UKTFA is a valuable resource — putting you in touch with expert build partners that can assist you in developing your highly sustainable, energy-efficient and beautiful home.

INNOVATIVE HOME

SPONSORED BY

The Complete Stair Makeover Centre The Complete Stair Makeover Centre stair is a unique and complete stair tread and riser renovation system providing a practical laminate flooring solution for stairs which is durable and stain resistant, easy to fit and suitable for virtually all stairs types (complete with a ten-year guarantee).

BEST INTERIORS

SPONSORED BY CREDENZA



Credenza wood products direct (CredenzaDirect.co.uk) is a web-based retailer providing a range of home-enhancement products to complete interior projects in style. Our range includes radiator covers and cabinets, folding screens and room dividers, ornamental and decorative mouldings in a wide choice of styles to match both traditional and contemporary interiors.

ECO HOME

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The UK's Leading Home Energy Company

READERS' CHOICE

SPONSORED BY WINTHER BROWNE



WINTHER BROWNE
Radiator Covers & Cabinets

Winther Browne (wintherbrowne.co.uk) is the leading supplier of radiator covers and cabinets. We have built our reputation on the design and worldwide sourcing of our ranges. Our covers and cabinets are an ideal way to enhance the appearance of old or unsightly radiators and utilise dead or wasted space.

(continued from previous page)

It's easy and free to enter, and this year's Overall Winner – chosen by the judges from the category winners – will enjoy a sumptuous break at a Hotel du Vin of their choice (see right).

HOW IT WORKS

The closing date for entries is 31st July 2012. Shortly after that date, the judging panel will produce a shortlist of homes that will be visited in person. There will be a chance to see the shortlist and vote on a Readers' Choice Award during September, with the winners being announced later in the year.

Your project must have been completed within the past three years.

You can find out more on the Awards, and upload your entry form, at homebuilding.co.uk/awards.

The Prize



This year's Overall Winners will enjoy a luxurious stay at one of the 14 charming Hotel du Vin locations across the UK. From a Georgian house in Winchester to a Gothic Revival building just a stone's throw from the seafront in Brighton, the Hotel du Vin portfolio offers something for every taste. The prize includes a three-course a la carte dinner in the award-winning bistro with champagne aperitif and a bottle of wine selected by the Chef and a sumptuous breakfast the next morning.



Let Us Know

The National Home Improvement Survey aims to work out what the priorities are for people undertaking extension and remodelling projects

SURVEY

What Are You Up To?

Are you currently planning to extend or improve your home or garden? We'd like to know more

To gain a better understanding of the current state of home improvement in the UK, this year the National Home Improvement Show has joined forces with Toolstation to launch the National Home Improvement Survey 2012.

This survey aims to benchmark the priorities that people look for when it comes to improving their homes. Last year's results highlighted that females were more interested in insulating their home, while men

were most interested in outdoor entertaining spaces.

HOW TO TAKE PART

If you'd like to take part and have your say, visit nationalhomeimprovementsurvey.co.uk and follow the links. It's an online-only survey and will only take a few minutes to complete. There are 2,000 tickets up for grabs for the National Home Improvement Show which takes place in London on 28-30th September. ■