

25 BEAUTIFUL HOMES

PERFECT SPACES

*A new-build on the beach
Open-plan factory conversion
An extended 1930s terrace*

TRANSFORMED EDWARDIAN COTTAGE

*'It took 20 paint
colours to find
the right shade'*

THE SOURCE

*Simple design
ideas and
shopping tips
for every room
of the home*



Bright & beautiful

STYLISH HOMES FULL OF COLOUR



RECALL 3/3/16

Insight

PLAN A NEW-BUILD

The Denvirs bought off-plan, but if you want to build your own home, read this expert advice

There are many advantages to building your own home, just like the Denvirs have done. Good preparation is a key ingredient of success, however, and it's never too soon to start planning.

Get creative

Developing a new-build allows you to fully express your own design preferences, be they traditional, contemporary or cutting edge, so take time to clearly think about the look you want. Consider how you'd like to tailor your home to suit your lifestyle – whether you're working from home, living with teenagers and/or elderly parents, or in need of extra rooms.

Plan to include as many energy-saving features as you can, such as triple glazing, underfloor heating and an efficient boiler, as all these can save you money. But you'll need to plan for contingencies, as unforeseen costs may arise at any stage. Building a house can also take up to two years or more, so you'll need somewhere to live in the meantime. Finally, think about where your home will be located, and who will design and build it.

Finding a plot can take considerable effort, unless you're lucky enough to own land already. Contact local estate agents and landowners, network with family and friends, and search auction house websites. There are also various plot-finding services such as PlotSearch

on self-build portals like BuildStore (buildstore.co.uk). Alternatively, you could ask your architect to source the plot.

Commission an architect

Using an architect will help you solve design problems and make the most of your budget. Firstly, decide how much help you would like, from producing plans to supervising the whole build, as the range of services on offer varies from one practice to another. Get clear on your own preferences regarding design, light, storage and materials, and set a provisional budget before engaging an architect.

RIBA's *A Client's Guide to Engaging an Architect* (£10, RIBA Publishing) is useful. The first consultation is often free, so interview three or four practices before choosing one. Your architect will then ask you for a detailed brief, which will help them draw up the design for your home.

Obtaining planning permission can be one of the most challenging aspects, and an architect's help will be invaluable. Some people opt to design their own homes and only engage an architect to draw up plans to submit to the planning authorities, but remember, an experienced architect will know which features are most likely to be problematic. New-builds in built-up areas should have minimum impact on neighbouring properties, and plans may be more likely to be approved if they fit with local vernacular architecture.

EXPERT EYE *'When planning a new-build, make sure you have the three basics resolved – plot, architect and contractor. Ensure you've found a location to suit your needs, the best architect to interpret your requirements, and a professional contractor to complete the build. Otherwise the process will not deliver your dream house'*

KEVIN FLOWERS, TFQ ARCHITECTS



PROFESSIONAL ADVICE



'It's a good idea to commission your architect to find the plot for you, so they are involved from the start. The plot can inform many details about the build – how it sits in its

environment, what it might look like, and how the interior will connect to the exterior. Your architect will have an eye for how to utilise the raw ingredients, in terms of orientation, light, natural features and using local materials.

In National Parks and Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty, obtaining planning permission can be hard, so try to engage architects local to these areas, as they will be well practised in finding solutions to restrictions. In rural areas, wildlife can have an impact on your plans, and an ecology survey may pre-empt issues at this stage.

Plots near rivers and watercourses may present a flood risk. Carry out a postcode search on the Environment Agency's website.

Recommendations are a great way of finding out an architect's character and design abilities. Employing an architect is an investment that should save you making costly errors and bring value to the project.'

GAVIN WOODFORD, WOODFORD ARCHITECTURE + INTERIORS

ADDRESS BOOK

■ **Woodford Architecture + Interiors**
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Award-winning practice specialising in timeless architecture and interiors

■ **Royal Institute of British Architects**
020 7580 5533, architecture.com

The UK's professional body holds a list of chartered architects and offers information and advice to self-builders and homeowners

■ **Planning Portal planningportal.gov.uk**
The UK governments' official online guide to planning and building regulations for England and Wales