

rosy IN THE garden

Overcoming planning setbacks, complicated groundworks and financial constraints, Denis and Lynda Hayward have built a charming new home in their garden

SELF-BUILD | OXFORD | AUG 08 - DEC 09
SIZE: 265m² | LAND COST: ALREADY OWNED
BUILD COST: £372,000 (£1,404/m²) | VALUE: £1.2M

Rear Elevation

A sleek roofline and minimalist exterior combine to present this building as a relaxed pavilion dwelling, rather than a typical bungalow. The geometric garden design both echoes the aesthetic values of the house, and fulfils Denis and Lynda's need for a low-maintenance outdoor living space



When Denis and Lynda Hayward bought their 1930s four bedroomed detached house on a third-of-an-acre plot in a popular residential area of Oxford back in 1997, they had no idea they would end up living in a smart, new pavilion-style house in the large garden.

"I'd always thought I could do a self-build, as we have renovated or worked on several houses in the past," says Denis, a retired photographer. "But that was 30 years ago. Perhaps there was a secret ambition lurking there, ▶

Kitchen

The simple, open plan kitchen/dining area occupies one end of the living space and opens into the courtyard garden

Living Area

A woodburning stove and internal chimney punctuates the main living space. Large areas of glazing, from Hazlemere, flood the interior with light and create the minimum division between the interior and exterior



but when we came here it was really for the garden and with no thought of doing a self-build.”

The situation changed in 2004 when the couple were both approaching their sixties and finding the garden rather too big. “Although nine years previous when we had come to the house we had enjoyed the garden to the full, it had become too much for us,” says Denis. “We found we were spending all the summer evenings, and even our holidays, working on it. It was becoming a real bind.”

In addition to this there was a strip of land 8.5 metres wide to the side of the house. It was very overgrown and out of keeping with the rest of the garden. “Everyone on our road seemed to be building extensions, so we thought that if we could build on this strip it would give us some relief from all the work and also provide some capital for the future,” explains Denis. Although it was “not a quality plot” because of its close proximity to the giant John Radcliffe Hospital, it was still in a very sought-after area of the city. “I also thought if the idea came to fruition it would provide a project for my retirement when that came along,” adds Denis.



Interior
The feature staircase in the dining room was specified from Spiral Staircase Systems. The house is made up of three linked and overlapping rectangular shapes, with an engineered oak floor giving a sense of continuity

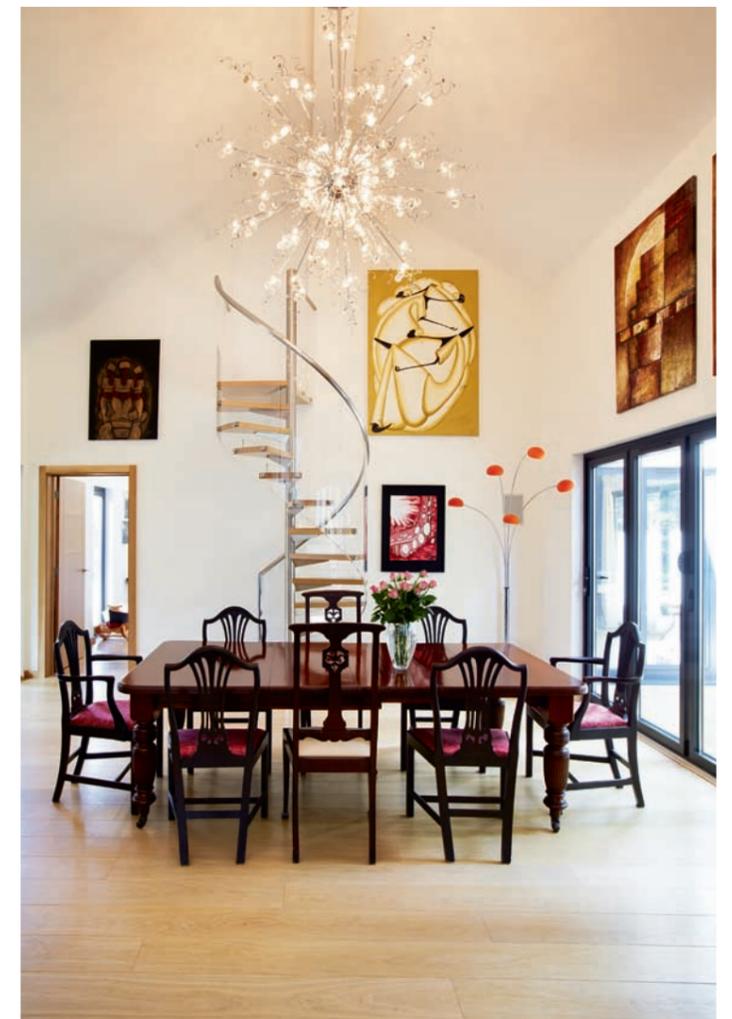
The Lowdown

DENIS AND LYNDA'S COSTS

Planning fees (including two appeals):	£6,100
Architects' fees:	£15,000
Utilities:	£2,800
Groundwork and foundations:	£83,500
Scaffolding:	£6,100
Zinc roof:	£26,000
Glazing:	£35,000
Timber frame:	£54,000
Electrics:	£9,000
Lighting and security:	£5,300
Plumbing (including solar panels):	£17,000
Bathrooms:	£4,500
Underfloor heating:	£4,100
Plastering, rendering and floor screed:	£19,700
Kitchen:	£28,000
Oak flooring:	£10,000
Oak doors and skirting:	£4,000
Spiral staircase:	£16,800
Additional labour:	£8,000
Hire charges:	£3,500
Miscellaneous:	£13,600

SUPPLIERS

Architect Neil Perry of Anderson-Orr.....	01865 873936
Planning consultants JPPC.....	01865 326824
Timber frame Solo.....	01892 771354
Rendering system SAS.....	01647 24620
Spiral staircase Spiral Staircase Systems.....	01273 858341
Engineered oak flooring ACH.....	01865 717200
Kitchen Johnsons Buildbase.....	01865 787700
Underfloor heating Nu-Heat.....	0800 7311976
Building supplies and equipment hire	
Blanchfords.....	01865 759200
Plumbing, underfloor heating and solar panels	
Ian Ross.....	01865 243950
Sanitaryware Headington Bathrooms.....	01865 762591



Courtyard Garden

The garden of the original house was large enough to accommodate the new property and a private outdoor area. The unexpected costs of extended groundworks meant the Haywards did most of the landscaping themselves



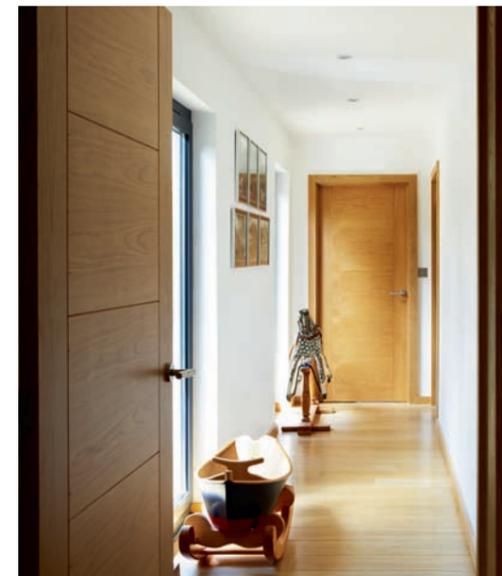
When the Haywards applied to Oxford City Council for outline permission to build a narrow house in the gap, it was refused on the grounds that such a house would be out of character with the rest of the road. However, they were told that an application for a garage with a studio room above would be welcomed.

When the couple employed planning consultants to progress the idea something completely different was suggested. The Haywards were advised to apply for permission to build two houses on the rear part of the garden using the spare land at the side as an access drive. The application was eventually refused because the scheme was considered to be backland development and contrary to the council's policy. Denis and Lynda appealed on the grounds that while their application might be contrary to one of the policies of Oxford City Council, it was broadly in keeping with Government policy. They failed again with scale and density cited as grounds for refusal. "This told us that one house on the plot might be acceptable," Denis adds.

Despite the refused applications the couple had what was effectively a free building plot. Pressing ahead would also mean they would not lose the £6,000 they had outlaid on applications and architect's fees to date.

"When local architect Neil Perry of Anderson Orr arrived on the scene we knew very soon that we had employed the right man," Lynda says. "He was able to understand all our ideas, including the visuals Denis had carefully prepared. He added some of his own ideas to ▶

"It would give us the chance to build the sort of house we would really like to live in during our retirement"



UNEXPECTED CHALLENGES

Despite being of mature years, experienced renovators, and long-time managers of the family budget, the Haywards were quite shaken when, on day one of the build, the cost of their groundworks and footings doubled from £32,000 to £64,000.

They had mortgaged their house with Nationwide under a self-build scheme. This provided a loan of £230,000 until they sold it and moved into the new house in the garden. In addition to this they had £60,000 of their own funds available. The rise in the cost of the groundworks and footings threatened to put all this into jeopardy.

Denis explains: "We had received a quote of £32,000 from our builder, Simon Perris, for the groundworks and footings. The problem was one of geology. The ground here is sand with pockets of clay, and when we started digging in the presence of the Building Control officer it was necessary to get down to the water table in order to prevent shrinkage. If the clay around the foundations should shrink in a hot summer the foundations could go with it.

"We had expected to go down 1.5 metres, but on three sides the water table

was 3.5 metres, and on the fourth we had to go down 4.5 metres. This is what doubled the price of the first stage of the build."

The money was needed immediately, and cut very deeply into their available funds. The knock-on effect was that the couple had to take out an additional loan (which came from the family) of £25,000 to finish the job before their house was sold and more funds became available.

In turn this resulted in Denis and Lynda doing a massive amount of finishing work themselves. This included all the outside finishing work, including laying out the garden, decking, constructing the driveway and concrete screen walls. This was in addition to all the inside finishing work. It added very greatly to the stress factor.

"We just found ourselves in one of those situations that can be encountered in any build," Denis says. "We were actually rather pleased with ourselves, because when choosing Simon we had found a man who proved up to the job. As we were, in effect, in his hands, we were fortunate that he was also a man whom we felt we could trust and whom we would gladly recommend to others."



produce a luxury timber framed single storey house with an extended, overhanging roof that had a large footprint, three en suite bedrooms and a modest courtyard-style garden,” adds Lynda.

“The scheme was totally different from anything we had originally envisaged,” Denis continues, “but we realised that it would give us the chance to build the sort of house we would really like to live in during our retirement, which was then only two years off. It was a big project, but it really was our last chance.”

The plan was finally passed on appeal. The whole process took two years. The house now features a zinc roof system with a solar array for hot water in addition to zoned underfloor heating, a woodburning stove in a large interior chimney stack, and a high cathedral ceiling over the main living spaces. It comprises three rectangular sections subtly juxtaposed, which makes it feel more like an elegant pavilion building than a bungalow.

Front Elevation

The zinc-roofed bungalow allows for volumetric internal spaces. Solar panels provide a large amount of the hot water required

“We put a huge amount of labour into the build ourselves, especially at the finishing stages when we did all the decorating, interior tiling and insulation, and much of the bathroom fitting and underfloor heating,” says Denis, who project managed the build.

“We employed builder Simon Perris, who was recommended by the timber framers, to do all the groundworks and foundations, but after that it was over to me. Over the years we have done a lot of research. I always knew I could project manage a self-build. I don’t feel a self-build like this is ‘real’ unless there is a lot of you in it — and there was!

“The stress levels were enormous — far more than we anticipated,” he continues. “It mainly centred on finance, and whether we had employed people who were reliable and up to the job. However, the satisfaction is huge. This house is unique, and we are going to make good use of it.” ■

Floorplans

This single storey home features open plan living to one end of the floorplan, with more private bedroom accommodation to the other. A large kitchen island and woodburning stove help to ‘zone’ the open plan living and kitchen area, which features folding sliding doors providing direct access to the landscaped gardens. The three bedrooms all enjoy en suite bathrooms. The staircase in the dining room provides access to storage space (not shown here).

