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One of the few concessions to contemporary design is the bay window extension. A stainless steel chimney and flat roof are softened by the sliding oak windows that make the most of the southerly views.



Anthony and Jenny Hudson have converted two redundant brick barns to create elegant new accommodation that draws on its Norfolk surroundings.

Words: Clive Fewins Photography: Rob Judges

Award winning architect Anthony Hudson had seen – and disliked – many barn conversions in the course of his career. So when he decided to become a self-builder and purchased two redundant brick farm buildings at the rear of his Queen Anne farmhouse in Norfolk, he was determined to do something ‘different’.

If you are familiar with Anthony’s work, which is firmly in the Contemporary school – his most famous commission was Baggy House in Devon in the mid 1990s – you will not generally associate him with traditional farm buildings. However, like all architects, he has always had a deep fascination with textures and, as he is Norfolk born and bred, the style of the traditional buildings of that county is firmly ingrained in his imagination.

He therefore saw the conversion of the barns into overspill accommodation for family visitors and friends and also for holiday letting as a ‘fun’ project that would draw him back to his Norfolk roots. ▶

The unusual floor is called ‘Perstorp’ and consists of marble chips laid in resin, creating a chalk-like appearance.



Local Flavour

Converting barns using the local vernacular

Local Flavour

Single storey ►
Quaker Barn, the smaller of the two buildings, is used as a self-contained holiday let. The roof space has been left open to retain the building's original character.

"I have seen so many conversions remove the spirit of these lovely old buildings," he says. "So many of them end up completely losing their original charm and character. Generally this is because people will insist on destroying much of the original and covering up the rest."

Anthony has deliberately set about retaining what he calls the "strong forms" of the barns by only building one very shallow extension, inserting very few small new windows and making the internal layout fit neatly into the original structure. He has retained virtually all the original timbers and made sure as many as possible remain visible.

"My wife Jenny and I wanted to keep the feel of agricultural buildings and not domesticate Hall Barn or its neighbour Quaker Barn too much," Anthony says. "I did not even wish to use any modern rooflight systems, although I am sure this would have been permitted." Instead he used groups of overlapping glass pantiles – all reclaimed, as he could not find a manufacturer of new ones – with double glazed units beneath. At the same time he wanted to create interiors that were light and airy – and also to produce something that as well as being what he calls "a bit of fun," would satisfy him professionally.

Anthony could see that Hall Barn, the larger of the two, which had served as a cowshed and was open to the front, had the height to accommodate two upstairs bedrooms. There are two more bedrooms downstairs. ►

