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#7 JAN/FEB 2006

€6.50

£ 5.00 / CHF 12.50 / DKK 65.00

Start

- Tartu University College, Narva
- Cultural centre, Borgarnes
- Cruise-liner terminal, Valletta
- Entrance to municipal building, Hradec
- Tower complex, Tirana
- Tea pavilion and forest tower, Putten
- Vallecas housing, Madrid

Ready

- Bridges, Rotterdam
- Private house, Sigulda
- Micro-compact homes, Munich
- Two villas, Kungsbacka and Gothenburg
- Casa Castillo, Seville
- Church, Helsinki
- School, Hadsund
- Private house, Dublin
- Office and residential building, Munich
- Cedar House, Norfolk
- Housing, Prezov
- Cultural centre, Turnhout
- Double house, Athens

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Graz's Golden Nugget

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Cedar House, Norfolk

Hudson Architects have built the modern barn par excellence.

UNITED KINGDOM — TEXT: CORDULA ZEIDLER, PHOTOGRAPHY: STEVE TOWNSEND

The story of the Cedar House began with a picturesque site, next to a decommissioned mill. The plot of land is literally off the beaten track. Somewhere in Norfolk, thirty car minutes from the closest train station, it features a small stream and not much else. Before the Cedar House was built, the site was empty, save for a derelict workshop building. Engineer Alan Conisbee had discovered the plot of land and suggested it to a friend who was looking

for a retirement home. First there was talk about converting the workshop, but the client, along with architect Anthony Hudson, who was also brought on board by Conisbee, decided to embark on an experiment. They demolished the workshop and built a new house, much closer to the stream.

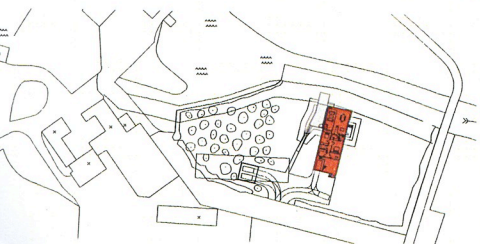
Anthony Hudson set up his practice in the 1980s and now has an impressively broad portfolio of private houses; he was lucky to find clients with a taste for all things modern, ranging from Le Corbusier to PoMo. He has built everything from a fantastically elegant white box on pilotis, colourful London town house extensions, and, most spectacularly, a towering home by the sea in Devon which evokes the peculiar shapes of Charles Rennie Macintosh's architecture but also has some of those over-the-top postmodern colours and forms. This, the Baggy House, earned Hudson and his practice a number of awards and placed him on the map. That was in 1994, but it took another five years before other projects followed. By now Hudson is well established; commissions for private houses

seem to land regularly on his desk and Hudson has also started on a few urban planning projects. Houses remain his specialism, though, and his skills in picking up on the traditions of the twentieth century without being plagiarist are convincing.

The Cedar House is somewhat different. Its design was informed by the special character of its site as much as by the stylistic preferences of its architect. The rectangular block sits on a flood plain and even though the last flooding allegedly happened as far back as 1912, new strict building regulations for the site were put in place in 2004. They meant that the building would need to be lifted off the ground. Hence the house sits on strips of masonry which allow water to run underneath it. The flood threat also dictated that the house should be high enough for an escape window above the maximum anticipated water level. The high-level window, together with a desire for tall rooms, led to a pitched roof – not exactly typical for Hudson.

This, and the use of a prefabricated construction system, resulted in a building whose proportions, long and bulky, give it the appearance of a barn. Ironically, Hudson is currently converting a number of Norfolk barns for residential use, but also ended up designing the new-built Cedar House with strong rural connotations.

On approach the most striking thing about the house is its continuous, reptilian skin which covers the roof and runs





↑ The terrace leads to the entrance.



↑ The sliding glass wall of the living room can be fully opened.
↓ View from north bank of the river.



↓ Over time the facade will change from brown to silvery grey.



↑ Protruding steel frames articulate the window openings.

