

# SELF BUILD

www.selfbuildanddesign.com

SEPTEMBER 2016 £4.25

# & DESIGN



## 30 AMAZING HOUSES

- \* RIBA House of the Year
- \* Passivhaus Awards

### SOLAR POWER

What to consider

## Bright idea

Creating a modern Suffolk barn

### HOT STUFF

Fireplace ideas

## 10

Top tips for your build

### History LESSONS

Extending a listed Cornish farmhouse

### Beginner's guide to MASONRY CONSTRUCTION

ARCHITECT ANTHONY HUDSON

# *An open* **MIND**

INTERVIEW: DEBBIE JEFFERY

## **Describe your childhood homes.**

I grew up on a Norfolk farm. We lived in a small farmhouse and I spent most of my time outdoors helping my father to build everything from pigsties to haystacks. I'd help with the harvest and make dens in the barn - it was an amazing introduction to making things. My family had been tenant farmers for 400 years, but my father was the first to actually own his farm. I think it was assumed that I would continue the tradition, but farming has changed radically in recent times, and as it was a small farm it just wasn't viable in the long term.

## **What inspired you to become an architect?**

I certainly had no thoughts about training to be an architect, and in fact went to Cambridge to study engineering. I didn't enjoy the course, though, and the architecture department next door seemed far more interesting, where people were producing fantastic models and drawings, so after a year I decided to change course. It was very easy to swap, and I instantly felt far more attuned to architecture.

It's a long process, and after studying for three years I spent two years travelling the world. Even at that point I wasn't totally convinced that I wanted to be an architect, but when I returned to studying for my Part 2 I worked for an exceptionally talented architect called David Lee, who was based up in the mountains of north Wales. We worked on some really lovely projects, which convinced me to continue.

After qualifying I worked for a Swedish architect in London for three years, and then in 1985 an architect friend of mine passed on some smaller jobs, and that's when I started working for myself and set up my own practice.

In 1994 I designed Baggy House on a clifftop in Devon, which went on to gain an enormous amount of press coverage and awards, and served to fully launch the practice. I put so much thought,

energy and effort into the design, and even now it has stood the test of time.

## **Why did you move the practice from London to Norfolk?**

It was a big decision to relocate, and I was terrified about doing it because this country is so London-centric. I hesitated for so long, and then in 2008 when I finally made up my mind the crash came and the recession started.

Somehow we managed to buck the trend and grew stronger, so it was the best move for the practice. It's a much smaller world in Norfolk, so you can have a clear marketing strategy and know your competition.

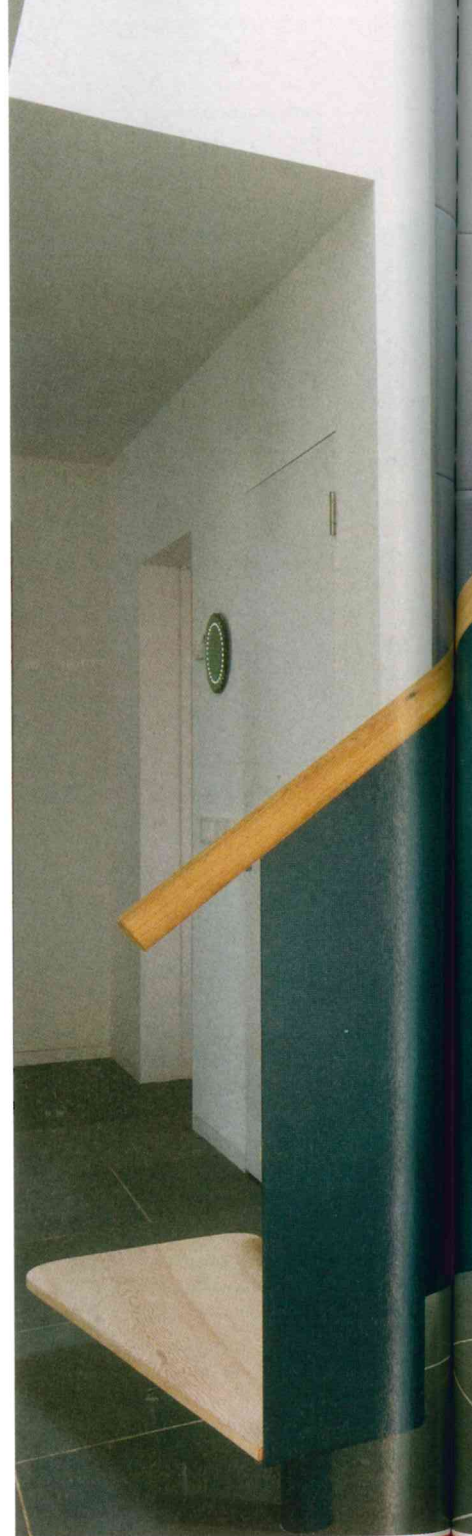
One of my regrets is that I've never worked for a large practice other than my own, and it's taken time to understand how best to run a business. Architects are generally more interested in spending time on projects rather than balancing the books. I'm still learning now, especially as in the last four years the practice has grown quite significantly from 10 to more than 20 people.

## **Describe your current home**

When we moved to Norfolk we bought an amazing Queen Anne house just outside Norwich, which we restored and extended. My wife and I also have our own development, Barsham Barns, where we converted seven barns into self-catering holiday cottages.

Once the children had grown up our house was too big, so we sold it and moved into rented accommodation so that we could look for a plot of land on which to build a new house. Having designed so many modern homes for clients, and loved them all, I can't wait to build one for myself.

Our architecture is so driven by plot and context that my own home would be heavily influenced by the outlook and orientation, as well as being light and highly energy efficient. My wife won't like this, but I'd also want to experiment with some new ideas and explore non-standard techniques.



*Anthony Hudson* is an award-winning architect who in 2002 founded Hudson Architects, now one of the UK's leading architecture and design practices. The company has produced an impressive portfolio of critically acclaimed projects throughout the UK and worldwide, including a number of iconic homes which respond sensitively to their settings. Anthony has lectured at a number of universities, and his projects have gained a worldwide reputation for exploring innovative design, techniques and materials. ([hudsonarchitects.co.uk](http://hudsonarchitects.co.uk))

using benign, non-toxic materials. Humidity is something the English have never been very good at controlling in homes, and with our climate it's really crucial.

Passive houses are also a big trend, although I'm not absolutely convinced that they're always the best solution, because of their reliance on machinery which has to be maintained. Homes need to breathe, and I'm a believer in a more low-key approach.

**Do you have any tips for selfbuilders?**

First of all I'm obviously going to recommend finding a good architect, who will think holistically, and design for the future. The practice published a book of illustrated essays called *An Open Mind* which is all about being open to possibilities in the design process and not being too prescriptive. Working with



**Top & above:** This contemporary family home overlooks St Ouen's Bay on Jersey, and replaces a drab bungalow with a superior contemporary scheme.

**Left:** Chantry Farm is a conversion of two adjacent Grade II listed timber-framed barns into a single family home.

clients is about listening and then adding to that, rather than closing anything down.

**Who or what inspires you?**

There are buildings right through the ages which are a constant delight to me: Hardwick Hall - an Elizabethan country house in Derbyshire - and Jacobean buildings in Norfolk with amazing spaces. The home of 19th-century architect John Soan in Lincoln's Inn Fields, which is now a colourful museum, and the work of Prussian architect Karl Friedrich Schinkel, as well as Corbusier and Frank Lloyd Wright.

**What are your future plans?**

There are three or four new houses currently on the drawing board, and we're just going out to tender on a house in Somerset under Paragraph 55, which is a planning clause which allows outstanding houses to be built in the countryside. It should be the most energy-efficient house we've ever designed. Le Petit Fort, one of our houses on Jersey, has won a regional RIBA award this year and we're looking forward to seeing if it wins a national award.

**How do you like to spend your spare time?**

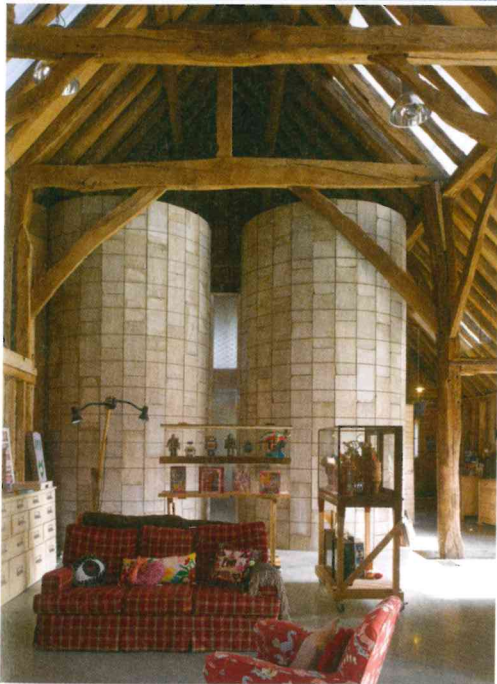
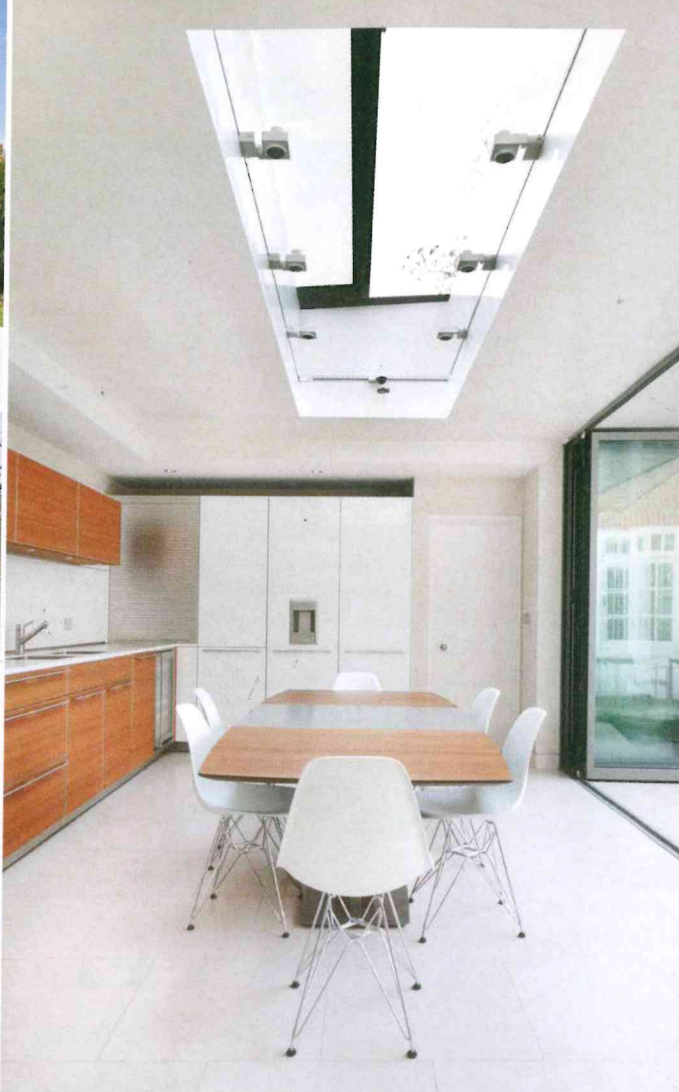
I love sailing, and one of the benefits of moving from London to Norfolk is that I can be out in a dinghy on the north Norfolk coast, which is bliss in summer.



**Above:** A contemporary extension to an historic family home, providing a seamless transition between the garden and the ground floor.



A new-build private residence in Norfolk, which pilots a prototype for cost-effective new-build modern housing.



**Top right:**

Remodelling of a London townhouse, which provides improved family and entertaining spaces, with a spectacular kitchen opening onto a courtyard at the heart of the house.

**Above & right:** Le Petit Fort is an outstanding new family home on the west coast of Jersey, set within the retained walls of an earlier building.

**Left:** Conversion of a large 16th-century barn on a working farm in Essex.

