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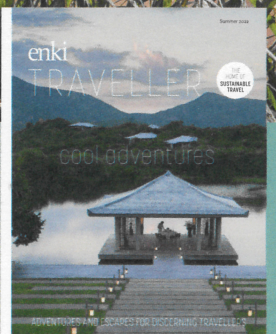
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enki TRAVELLER **LOOK** INSIDE

ADVENTURES AND ESCAPES FOR DISCERNING TRAVELLERS



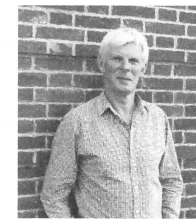




## INTERVIEW...

## Hudson Architects

Anthony Hudson talks about developing a pioneering new low-energy building method, frustrations with the planning system and how going back to basics is always sound advice



**How did it begin?** We're now in our twentieth year as a practice. We started life in London but relocated to Norwich in 2008 – and ever since I'm pleased that we've been able to go against the grain and demonstrate that great architecture can happen outside London. We've always been a design-focused practice, and initially earned our reputation and developed our skills via several very exciting one-off residential projects. Their clear design intent and execution then allowed us to expand into larger projects and other sectors – particularly education, cultural and public buildings – although we still love working on one-off houses and residential developments. I have always enjoyed projects that are opportunities to challenge orthodoxies – for example in the use of materials or the application of contemporary design in what would be considered 'traditional' settings.

**How do you push the boundaries of sustainability in your work?** We have established a sustainability group within the practice where colleagues are able to get together to undertake research and develop our collective knowledge, which can then be applied across our work. Our research has opened up exciting opportunities. We are very proud to be part of a pioneering project with architectural and academic partners in the UK and France to develop CobBauge – a new way of building with earth that meets modern building regulations and offers a 100 percent natural and extremely low-energy method of building. We've designed the first house for occupation in the UK using CobBauge. It has just

started on site and we're very hopeful that there will be further opportunities to roll out this contemporary application of an ancient technique.

**What other strategies do you use to achieve low-energy buildings?**

We always prefer to start with a passive, fabric-first approach that uses orientation, form and materials to reduce embodied and operational energy. Simple gestures – such as positioning glazing to both maximise daylighting and views – can be extremely effective. We prefer to use natural materials with low embodied energy wherever possible, and bring in technology where necessary to maximise low-energy operational performance.

**What do you think is currently missing from the world of architecture?** I have always found that planning consent effectively 'freezes' a design at a moment in time, and this can have a deadening effect on adaptability and creativity once work starts on site. Once you're on site you may find a different way of doing things, or need to do some fine tuning – and sadly our planning system doesn't have enough built-in flexibility to allow this to happen. It's very different with an internal refurbishment where you have much greater freedom on the ground, and I'd like to see a planning system evolve that balances necessary protections with greater flexibility.

**Has teaching architecture changed any perspectives you once had?**

Teaching is very enriching: it brings you in to contact with many different people, each with different ways of

thinking about architecture or approaching a brief. Similarly, as a practice, we seek to think laterally – encouraging a number of different approaches to a brief or a problem – and it's this that helps to ensure that the best design is tested and can emerge.

**What is the best piece of advice you've received as an architect?**

At Cambridge my tutor David Thurlow told me I should always draw – to never let the pen stop on the page (or the stylus on the tablet). It's sound advice – it gets the ideas flowing and helps you to be more fluid as a designer. I was also taught not to be afraid of mistakes or outlandish ideas: again very good advice that has encouraged me over the years.

**What's next for the studio?**

We are going to focus even more on embedding low-energy construction into our work. Our environment demands it and as architects we have to do all we can to make a difference.

[hudsonarchitects.co.uk](http://hudsonarchitects.co.uk)

"OUR PLANNING SYSTEM DOESN'T HAVE ENOUGH FLEXIBILITY TO ALLOW THIS"