

## PROJECT OF THE MONTH

### Positive projection by Belsize Architects

This five-bedroom Georgian terrace in a London conservation area has been completely refurbished by Belsize Architects. The practice transformed the interior spaces of the grade II listed property by remodelling the family home while retaining as many of its charming period features as possible.

However, it is the innovative work to the rear of the dwelling that adds real wow factor. The architects removed a lacklustre extension and installed two contemporary new additions: a ground floor enlargement, which houses the new kitchen and dining area; and below that, an impressive contemporary basement space.

Top of the owners' list of requirements was to have light-filled rooms that the family could enjoy year round. This request has been achieved through the addition of full-length glazed folding doors and panels, which allow both spaces to be flooded with daylight.

The choice of materials bridge the gap between old and new: a visual link is created by using red bricks on the new courtyard space and for the steps, which lead up into the garden. The colour of the brick is also picked up in the highly modern copper mesh panels that are sandwiched between the glazing on the upper level of the extension; the mesh also helps to create a little privacy amid all the glass.



For more information call 020 7482 4420 visit [belsizearchitects.com](http://belsizearchitects.com)

## Self build begins on Newcastle site

Work is due to commence on creating a range of affordable properties on 39 serviced self build plots in Newcastle. This project is the result of a housing initiative by the city council to offer locals an opportunity to develop their own homes. "We are leading the way up north when it comes to meeting people's desires to create the perfect dwelling," says John Eynon at Charles Church North East.

## 3.7m

homeowners claim their property has been negatively affected by works carried out on nearby dwellings. "If you want to start a home makeover project it is worth discussing the risk of damage to adjacent properties with your neighbours. It is also crucial to check if your home insurance policy covers this type of damage," says Nick Brabham, head of insurers Select Premier.

## Plymouth council to sell public land

Plymouth chief councillor Mark Lowry has signed off the sale of plots in 20 different locations across the city. The local authority has a register of 85 families wanting to construct a bespoke home and says that the move will support the creation of more self build houses. The council plans to release over 100 acres of land within the next five years and aims to enable people to construct 1,000 properties each year.

## A custom and self build mortgage scheme

Lloyds Banking Group and Capita Asset Services have joined forces with local authorities to offer self builders financial aid. The scheme enables councils to fund the projects and once they have been completed, the lender will pay the authority back and then provide the homeowners with a mortgage. "For those wishing to create their own homes, access to mortgages has always been a challenge because lenders, not unreasonably, insist on staged payments. This scheme reduces risk and guarantees that buyers will have agreed finance in place. It will help tackle the need for new homes," says Cecilie Booth at Capita Asset Services.

## industry news

### What's going on with Section 106?

Last month I was writing about the little victory won with the exemption for self and custom builders from the S106 agreements as announced by the Department for Communities and Local Government (DCLG). It seems the push back from local planning authorities (LPAs) has already started in earnest. A number of LPAs are unhappy with the situation as they stand to lose a lot of revenue and I've already seen letters and comments from those being affected.

Some self builders were quite rightly miffed that they had got planning approved in November 2014, together with a hefty S106 commitment to contribute to affordable housing or the like, only to find that if the decision had been delayed by a week or two, they could have avoided paying it. I think this falls under the general heading of bad luck and unfortunate timing. In this situation, I suspect that the only recourse is going to be a resubmission under the new rules, which will add time, cost and more uncertainty into an already stressful process.

However, I'm also hearing of far more disturbing instances where LPAs are simply ignoring the directive from the DCLG and relying on the fact that their adopted planning policies allow them to demand a S106 contribution. And because the announcement from DCLG is just policy guidance as opposed to law, they can safely ignore it and wait for the legal challenges to roll in. It's important to remember that the S106 exemption differs from the Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) exemption because the latter for self and custom builders is in fact statutory.

Going against government policy like this is an unusual route for the LPAs to take, but they are within their rights to do so. Their argument might well be that the need for affordable housing contributions outweighs the policy directive from the government. They will have to justify this and provide suitable supporting evidence against every application made, which will be a time consuming and expensive process when resources are tight. However, in many cases the sums of money involved are not insignificant so are worth pursuing; from the S106 agreements I've recently seen that affordable housing contributions can top £25,000 against an individual project.

If it all gets out of hand, the secretary of state William Hague could put his foot down and 'call in' a few choice applications to approve just to make his point. I suspect, however, that we will have to let bureaucracy take its time and await the inevitable legal challenges, subsequent appeals and escalation through the courts. A lengthy process that, hopefully, eventually finds in favour of the self builder thus establishing the case law. I know NaCSBA is aware of the problem and I'm sure they will be looking at the best way of addressing this issue.

## What's on?

**CLADDING AND SHINGLES**  
2ND - 4TH APR  
£300  
POWYS, WALES  
[courses.cat.org.uk](http://courses.cat.org.uk)

**GADGET SHOW**  
8TH - 12TH APR  
£17  
NEC,  
BIRMINGHAM  
[gadgetshowlive.net](http://gadgetshowlive.net)

**BUILDING WITH STRAW BALES**  
10TH - 12TH APR  
£160  
STANMER PARK,  
BRIGHTON  
[brightonpermaculture.org.uk](http://brightonpermaculture.org.uk)

**DIY IN A DAY**  
12TH APR  
£175  
LONDON  
[thegoodlifecentre.co.uk](http://thegoodlifecentre.co.uk)

**GREENER BUILDING**  
16TH APR  
£102  
LIVERPOOL  
[architecture.com](http://architecture.com)

**SOLAR THERMAL SYSTEMS**  
21ST - 26TH APR  
£700  
POWYS, WALES  
[courses.cat.org.uk](http://courses.cat.org.uk)

**ASK AN ARCHITECT**  
25TH APR  
FREE  
SWINDON  
[nsbrc.co.uk](http://nsbrc.co.uk)

**USEFUL + BEAUTIFUL**  
29TH APR - 25TH AUG  
£5  
Geffrye Museum,  
LONDON  
[geffrye-museum.org.uk](http://geffrye-museum.org.uk)

**RENEWABLE ENERGY EXCHANGE**  
30TH APR  
FREE  
BUILTH WELLS,  
WALES  
[rex.uk.net](http://rex.uk.net)

**COB BUILDING**  
1ST - 4TH MAY  
£400  
NORFOLK  
[cobcourses.com](http://cobcourses.com)

**TIMBER IN HISTORIC BUILDINGS**  
7TH MAY  
£85  
OXFORD  
[architecture.com](http://architecture.com)

**SELF BUILD COURSE**  
9TH - 11TH MAY  
£375  
SWINDON  
[nsbrc.co.uk](http://nsbrc.co.uk)

**THE FUTURE OF HOUSING**  
19TH MAY  
FREE  
LONDON  
[royalacademy.org.uk](http://royalacademy.org.uk)

**CHELSEA FLOWER SHOW**  
19TH - 23RD MAY  
£27  
LONDON  
[rhs.org.uk](http://rhs.org.uk)

**ECO WORKSHOP**  
23RD MAY  
FREE  
SWINDON  
[nsbrc.co.uk](http://nsbrc.co.uk)

**RHS SECRET GARDEN SUNDAYS**  
7TH JUN  
FREE  
LINDLEY HALL,  
LONDON  
[rhs.org.uk](http://rhs.org.uk)

**DECORATIVE HOME & SALVAGE SHOW**  
12TH - 14TH JUN  
£5  
CHESHIRE  
[asfairs.com](http://asfairs.com)

**HOME MAINTENANCE**  
13TH JUN  
£195  
CROYDON, SURREY  
[thebtc.co.uk](http://thebtc.co.uk)



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