

# 25 BEAUTIFUL HOMES

## COUNTRY CHARM

HOMES WITH LASTING STYLE

Traditional farmhouse  
Pretty cottage  
Inspiring barn

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## ROOM to EXPAND

REVAMPED HOMES FROM LONDON TO EAST SUSSEX





**SITTING ROOM**  
Positioned under the stairs, the woodburning stove gives a focus to this open-plan space. Morso 6140 stove, from £1,449. Stoves Are Us. Nordic log holder, £52.99, Barnitts. Sofa (left) reupholstered in Abraham Moon and Sons' Chelsea Stripe fabric, £49m, Hazel Rebecca. The couple's Chinese altar table (far right) is a treasured antique



After a lifetime of renovating period homes, Helen and Gordon Dougan decided they wanted

to design and build a modern eco house in which to spend their retirement. 'We'd built a holiday cottage on an island off the west coast of Scotland and had enjoyed the process,' says Helen, 'so we agreed that when we retired we would sell our home in Edinburgh and the holiday cottage and build a low-energy house to suit our needs.'

Although the Dougans sold the cottage quickly, they were in no rush to move out of the house in Edinburgh. Despite living there for 20 years, there were still a few things the couple wanted to do to it before putting it on the market. It also gave them time to find the right piece of land on which to build. 'We had only one stipulation but it was a big ask. We wanted a plot in the centre of a town or village on the east coast of Scotland,' says Helen.

After months of looking, the couple came across an advert for a plot in a conservation area in the centre of a small town. Situated 20 minutes east of Edinburgh, it's a place Helen and Gordon had lived in and loved when they were married 40 years before. The land was the orchard of the Georgian house next door, and coincidentally was right ▶

**NEW-BUILD**



**HOME TRUTHS**

**THE PROPERTY**

Low-energy eco house

**LOCATION**

East Lothian, Scotland

**ROOMS** Sitting room, kitchen-diner, study, library, cloakroom, three bedrooms (two en suite), dressing room, bathroom

**PREVIOUS PROPERTY**

'We lived in a four-bedroom Victorian terrace in Edinburgh,' says Helen.



# TOWN & COUNTRY

Helen and Gordon Dougan built their dream home on a plot with rural surroundings, in a charming Scottish town

FEATURE MAIRI MACDONALD | PHOTOGRAPHY DOUGLAS GIBB



**KITCHEN-DINER**  
Flashes of turquoise blue add vibrancy to the otherwise neutral scheme. Gloss Flint Grey units, price on request, Howdens. Yask Ypsilon oak table, £1,698, The Station Furniture Co. SM-2 pendant lights in Glossy Grey Blue by Gubi, £249 each, Moleta Munro. Frost leather chairs in Beige, £199 each, John Lewis



**FAVOURITE ROOM**  
'I love the open-plan layout downstairs – it's such a contrast to our old Victorian house'



2



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next to their previous neighbour. Although in the middle of the town, it had a countryside feel with established hedges and trees. More importantly, it also had outline planning permission for a four-bedroom eco house. 'It could not have been more perfect,' says Helen. Although the Dougans liked the plans for the proposed house, they understandably wanted to put their own stamp on the design. Together with the architect, Keith Renton, they finalised the drawings for an air-sealed, low-carbon eco house. It was important to them that low energy meant low bills and low maintenance but it was equally important that there was no compromise on the style, layout and quality of the build.

'We wanted a crisp, contemporary look using glass, metal and wood with a glassed-in area for a Scottish summer and good access to the decking and garden,' says Helen. 'As we were designing a home that would hopefully take us through to our old age, we thought it would be sensible to have a bedroom and en-suite wetroom downstairs, which were also wheelchair accessible. Our master bedroom upstairs was to have a high ceiling and accommodate shelves and a sofa.' On selling the house in Edinburgh, the couple rented a four-bedroom bungalow 10 minutes' walk from the site. There was plenty of room to store their furniture and it was close enough to oversee the project. 'After years of planning, the building phase went very quickly,' says Gordon. 'From the first spade in the ground to completion, the work took nine months, thanks mainly to our

building company, Craig's Eco Construction, who were fantastic. However, I'm glad we were close by while the house was going up. So many decisions had to be made every day – from where we put the sockets to the thickness of the engineered floorboards.' The Dougans' attention to detail and flair for choosing items that are both stylish and comfortable is reflected in this polished, grown-up, contemporary home. 'I'm so pleased with the finished house and it's thrilling to be finally in and settled,' says Helen. 'This place is everything I hoped it would be and more. Having spent so many years renovating previous properties and designing and planning this one, I'm looking forward to stopping. I'd like to just sit down in the library and read a good book.' 25



4

- 1 LANDING**  
A wall-hung Japanese kimono and Mexican blouse displayed on a mannequin brighten up this space. 172A pendant lights by Le Klint, £306 each, Moleta Munro. Denmark stained oak 18mm-thick engineered flooring, £28sq m, The Wooden Floor Company
- 2 MASTER BEDROOM**  
Helen and Gordon created a wall behind the bed to hide the doors to the en suite and dressing room. For a similar bed try the Chateau, £3,600, And So To Bed. Chinese-style tables, £149 each, John Lewis
- 3 MASTER EN SUITE**  
Natural wood and colourful tiles add character. Jasper Morrison WC unit, £824.91; basin unit, £1,540.49, both Ideal Standard. Original Style Half Field tiles in Jade Breeze, £72.20sq m, Tiles and Bathrooms Online
- 4 MASTER BEDROOM**  
The boat is from the Dougans' old holiday cottage. For similar yachts, try Shropshire Design, from £49. Blinds made in Harlequin Willow fabric, £39m, Hazel Rebecca