



“We rebuilt a 1970’s bungalow to create the Georgian-style farmhouse we’d always dreamed of”

If you can't find the home you want in the right locations then period-style self-build may be the answer

Nigel Armstrong and his family were living in a characterful, restored 1920's property in Hampshire when they found their new, perfect home five miles away. Surprisingly, it was a 1970's chalet bungalow. “When we first saw the house we were extremely excited at its potential,” explains Nigel. “It sat in a large plot of land with fabulous views of the open sky across to Kingsclere Downs.” Their plan was to build a new home in a style that was fitting of this glorious setting. As Nigel says, “we took the plunge not knowing for sure whether or

not we would be granted planning permission for the transformation we had in mind, but the gamble paid off.”

As the bungalow was in poor condition when the Armstrongs moved in, Nigel says that they had to “waste quite a lot of money smartening it up so we could live in it while we waited to find out whether we would be given planning consent.” This involved redecorating the main living areas and adding a downstairs shower room. They also moved a number of walls and a chimney breast, which was in the middle of the sitting room. These

would all be altered again if permission was granted, but there were also other changes which would remain permanently.

Back in Time

One of these was the addition of the barn which provided the family with somewhere to store furniture and, later on, building materials. Its construction threw up some interesting discoveries, as Nigel recalls. “When we were having the footings dug out, we came across numerous pieces of WWII gas masks which had

“We were inspired by the elegant architecture of the Georgian period to create rooms which were tall, spacious and filled with natural light”

By George

Homes built in the popular style between 1710 and 1830 are universally admired for their fine proportions. The high ceilings and large windows common to Georgian properties are among the period features which many home builders today, like the Armstrongs, incorporate into their designs. Other desirable details which became particularly popular at this time include double-hung sash windows, six-panelled doors, oak floorboards and mouldings like dado rails.





...en buried there," he says. "It was a bit eerie, according to our neighbours there had been lots of my manoeuvres in this area as we are not far from Greenham Common - a former military airfield used by both the British and Americans during World War II and the Cold War."

Nigel believes that their 1970's bungalow had placed a couple of farm cottages and that there had been some type of smallholding on the site for a few hundred years. "There was also an old well, which the previous owners had used as a garden feature," he says. "However when we discovered that it was at least 25m deep, we decided to cover it to protect the children and family pets. Future owners will be able to uncover it again if they wish."

Keeping Up Appearances

Keen to choose fittings to suit his home's period style, Nigel opted for cast-iron radiators. Many salvage yards have a good stock of originals and there are companies selling expertly refurbished models ready to use with modern boilers. It is also possible to buy convincing reproduction designs. Choose between traditional metal finishes and those painted subtle heritage colours.



The Old Radiator Company theoldradiatorcompany.co.uk





Grand Designs

The year after first moving in, the Armstrongs obtained planning permission for their new build. They immediately relocated to rented accommodation nearby so that work to transform the 1970's structure could begin. They designed their new home themselves, choosing a Georgian farmhouse style. "It is important to us that our property fitted in with others in the local area," Nigel explains. "Our design also enabled us to have the high ceilings and spacious

In the Detail

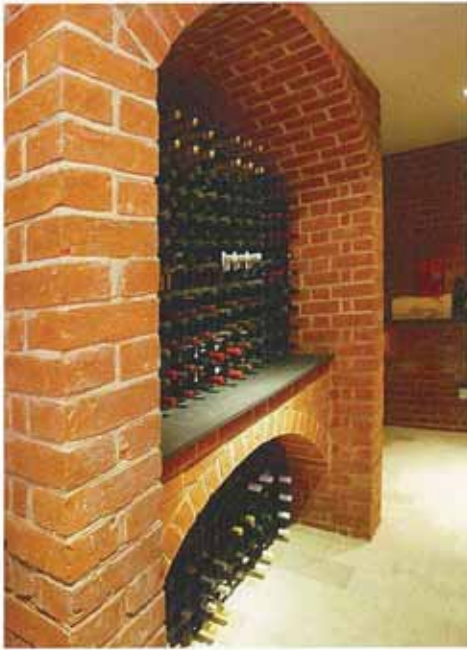
The Georgian period was a golden age for applied moulding. However many new owners of properties of this date find that these features have been damaged or lost as a result of neglect or 'modernisation'. Where this is the case, and of course in Georgian-style new builds like the Armstrongs', their restoration or re-installation can markedly enhance a plain room.

Styles dating from the early 1700s were inspired by Ancient Rome and Renaissance Italy and were large and exuberant, a good example being the egg and dart design. From the 1770s mouldings were subtler in keeping with the new enthusiasm for Neoclassicism led by architects like Robert Adam. Graceful gentle curves and beading were then popular styles.

If you are thinking of reinstating mouldings, it is a good idea to ask to look at originals which may survive in neighbouring houses. Also bear in mind that their intricacy depended on the room's importance, so areas with a humbler function such as the top floor of the house would have featured simpler designs than spaces like a drawing room. The styles used in farmhouses and cottages would also have differed to those in smarter townhouses.



Photo: Decor Inspiration.com



“We used traditional techniques and materials so many of our visitors have been convinced that the house has stood here forever”

rooms inside that we wanted.” The rear section of the house was purposefully given a more eclectic look to make the building appear as though it had evolved over time.

The house displays many examples of work carried out by skilled craftsmen using traditional techniques and materials. “We chose lime render for the exterior in order to obtain an authentic appearance,” says Nigel. “We also used reclaimed clay roof tiles and cast iron guttering. Internally we incorporated period features such as cast iron radiators, stone and oak floors, sash windows and mouldings. The overall effect has convinced many of our visitors that the house has been here forever, which is what we aimed for.”

Expert Advice

If, like Nigel, you'd like to learn more about architecture of the 1800s so you can apply it to your project, one good source of information is The Georgian Group. A national charity aimed at preserving buildings and gardens of this date, it produces a number of books on all aspects of these special buildings. Amongst other benefits, membership gives you access to an exclusive activities programme that includes visits to private houses not open to the public. Visit georgiangroup.org.uk for further details.



Family Living

Part of the planning consent was to keep the same footprint as the original bungalow, however the Armstrongs were able to completely change the internal layout. One of its prize features is a large two storey entrance hall with a wide staircase and double doors into the drawing room and two pairs of double doors into the dining room. “We wanted a very open-plan style,” explains Nigel. “When all the doors are open you can see right through the house, which gives a feeling of space and light. On the other hand, they can be closed to separate the rooms if required. It is a great house for entertaining.”

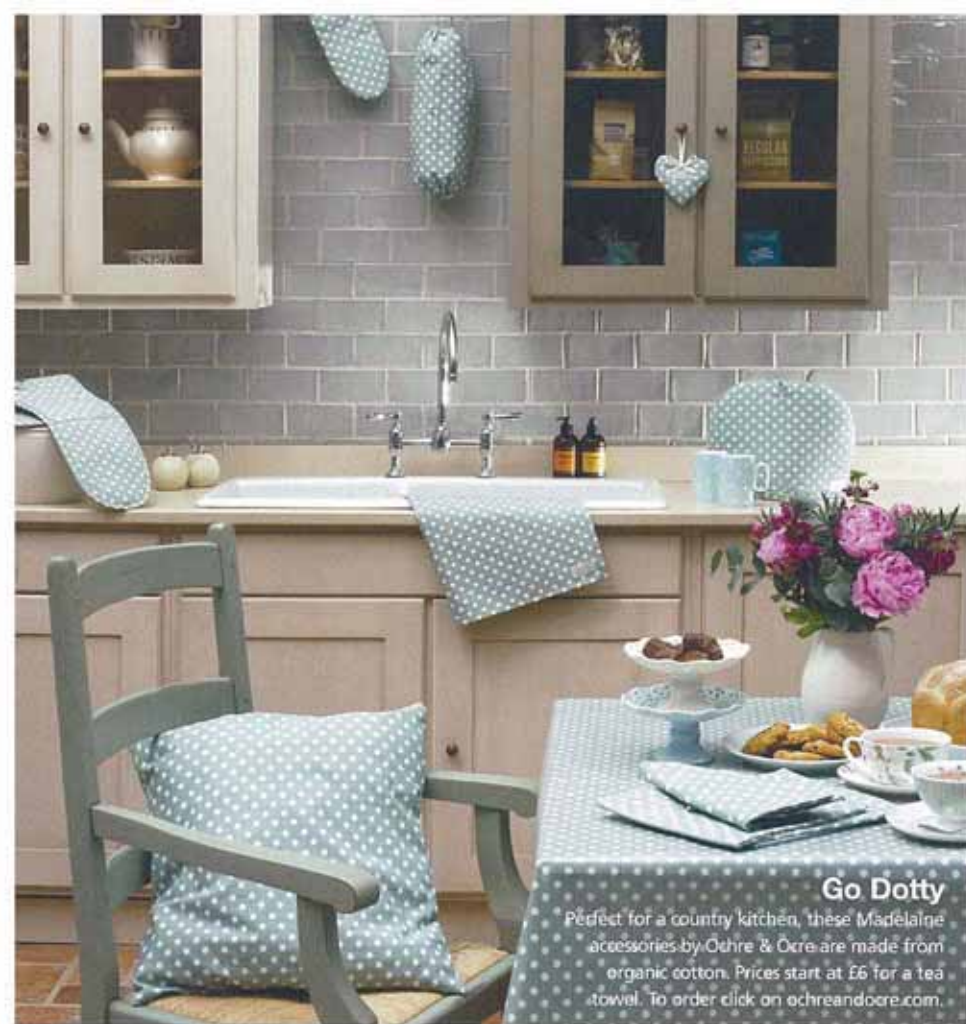
His favourite room, he says, is the kitchen. It too is spacious with huge folding doors which can be completely opened in good weather, making it feel like part of the garden. There is also an orangery at one end, which is glazed on three sides with traditional roof lanterns above. “We eat most of our meals here and there is a lovely old sofa which the dogs relax on. It really is the heart of the house with beautiful views over the gardens,” he says.

The family are extremely pleased with the project. Nigel describes the house as feeling “warm and homely, but also spacious and stylish.” They have spent a lot of time on landscaping the gardens. These are beginning to reach maturity and compliment the property perfectly.



Need to Know

The builders on this project, RW Armstrong, have a good reputation for specialising in the renovation, extension and refurbishment of period homes. They therefore had the skills to build a new home using traditional craftsmanship and materials to achieve a period style. To see other examples of their work visit rwarmstrong.co.uk or for further information call 01256 850 177.



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