



# PAST MEETS PRESENT

*Stewart and Olga Lund's newly built country home is the ideal mix of traditional construction techniques and modern-day comfort*

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## HOME TRUTHS

**THE PROPERTY** Green-oak-framed, contemporary house  
**LOCATION** Cambridgeshire  
**ROOMS** Hall, sitting room, kitchen/snug, dining area, study, mezzanine, cloakroom, four bedrooms (three en suite), bathroom  
**BUILT** 2014  
**PREVIOUS PROPERTY** 'Before we moved in here, we rented a four-bedroom Victorian farmhouse,' says Olga.

**SITTING ROOM**  
 This iconic 1960s fireplace creates a beautiful focal point. Gyrofocus fire, price on request, Focus. The Maharani coffee table, £225, John Lewis, is similar. Iron log holder, £60, Garden Trading, is a match. Try the Black Wavy 4 Way candleholder, £29, Inspired Interiors

**KITCHEN/SNUG**  
 The 7.5m-high ceiling and huge windows really make the most of the surroundings. Kitchen units fitted by Inner Project, price on request. Stovax Riva Studio 2 stove, from £2,425, Morley Stove Company. Try Pietra Serena stone tiles, price on request, Il Casone







**KITCHEN**  
A soft blue on the wall units breaks up the stark white elsewhere. Cook's Blue estate eggshell, £55 per 2.5 litres, Farrow & Ball, would work well here. Take a look at the Ovens 400 series, price on request, Gaggenau



**DINING AREA**  
Pendants help to mark out the dining space. The Crossley solid-oak dining table, £619, Oak Furnitureland, is comparable. For similar chairs try the Tuscan Claret leather dining chairs, £70 each, Top Furniture



**MEZZANINE**  
The vintage leather armchairs were found in Marylebone many years ago. Grace armchair, £299, Made, has this shape. Try the Scion Navajo cushion, £45, John Lewis. Balustrade, price on request, Stevenage Glass Company



**EN SUITE**  
The walls and floors of this shower room feature the same stone found throughout the ground level. The basin cabinet was made by Inner Project, price on request. Try the Provost showerhead, from £59, Bathrooms.com



**GUEST BEDROOM**  
Dramatic beams frame the bed, which is tucked cosily under the eaves. The Normandy oak sleigh bed, £499, Time 4 Sleep, has this look. Check out the blue, red and grey patchwork king quilt, £130, Notonthehighstreet.com



Stewart and Olga Lund had always yearned to build their own home. 'We wanted a modern, light-filled property in the countryside, with the open-plan feeling we love,' says

Stewart. Living near London was vital for work, so the couple rented in Hertfordshire while looking for the perfect site.

Searching online, they found three adjacent plots in Cambridgeshire, close to a commuter rail station, and they opted for two of them. The two-and-a-half-acre site came with three existing houses, plus barns, but the Lunds decided to demolish these properties and build their new home at the rear of the land, plus two new properties at the front. 'These are being built now and will either be sold off or rented out,' Stewart explains.

High on their list was a green-oak-framed structure, and once planning permission was given, the couple chose Carpenter Oak with architect Roderick James to carry out the work. 'They transformed our suggestions into a building that works really well,' says Olga.

With its steep, glazed gables, and mortice and tenon joinery, the house is airy and bright,

yet warmly insulated. 'The timber used throughout is green oak, which is cut from an oak tree that has been seasoned for less than a year,' explains Stewart. 'It is still moving, contracting and splitting and, being green, it is easier to work with. When it is dry, it becomes so hard it is unworkable.' Medieval buildings were constructed in the same way, without resorting to nails or glue, and the cracks and splits that result are all part of the charm.

To bring the house into the 21st century, the architect suggested SIPs (structural integrated panels) for the walls. These are well-insulated, strong, load-bearing panels that provide flexibility of design and can be erected quickly on site. 'The bonus is that the panels move with the oak frame, whereas bricks don't,' says Stewart. Internally, the walls were finished with a good sound-

**DESIGN TIP**  
*'Spend time getting things right at the design stage - changing things later can be costly'*

insulating material that doesn't need plastering. Outside is mostly clad in cedar, while a ground source heat pump provides eco-friendly, underfloor heating and hot water. In total, the build took just 10 months.

With regards to the interior, Stewart and Olga were largely in agreement, although Stewart insisted on two en suites for the master bedroom. 'I know how many products Olga has and how long she takes in the shower!' he laughs. The open-plan layout of the ground floor gives the Lunds all the space they desire. 'We don't like shutting ourselves off in little rooms,' says Olga. 'We like having light and space to breathe.' A keen cook, Stewart designed the state-of-the-art kitchen himself to provide a polished concrete worktop and space for his gadgetry, including a wine-storage system. 'But the built-in coffee machine was especially for Olga,' he says.

In terms of satisfaction with the build, there is virtually nothing that the Lunds would change. 'There are a couple of light switches that I would reposition,' says Stewart. 'Otherwise the house meets our requirements perfectly. We love the sense of adventure this move has given us.' 25



**MASTER BEDROOM**  
A mixture of different woods works well in such an airy space. The Keraton carved four-poster bed, £2,195, Lombok, is a match. The Fit table lamp, £39, Wayfair, is a similar style