

From the ground up

Barry and Jenny Tape have transformed a dilapidated coastal bungalow into a spacious and highly practical family home

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FACT FILE

NAMES Barry & Jenny Tape
OCCUPATIONS Chartered architectural technologist & doctor
LOCATION St Agnes, Cornwall
TYPE OF BUILD Renovation & extension
STYLE 1980s bungalow with contemporary addition
CONSTRUCTION METHOD Traditional block with cavity
PROJECT ROUTE Self-project managed
PLOT SIZE 0.35 acres
PROPERTY COST £350,000
BOUGHT May 2015
HOUSE SIZE 340m²
PROJECT COST £231,500
PROJECT COST PER M² £680
TOTAL COST £581,500
BUILDING WORK COMMENCED September 2015
BUILDING WORK TOOK 34 months
CURRENT VALUE £850,000

Barry and Jenny Tape spent the best part of a year hunting for a renovation project that suited the needs of their growing family. As a chartered architectural technologist, Barry had always liked the idea of taking on a scheme of his own, but living in sought-after

The back of the property features plenty of glazing and a crisp white rendered finish

Before the project

St Agnes, Cornwall, meant opportunities like this were scarce on the ground.

The pair had been living in a historic two-bedroom miner's cottage, but it offered no room for expansion. Since Jenny was

pregnant with the couple's second child, they desperately needed more space. As local plots were rare and property prices were high, the Tapes' natural choice was to find an old building they could transform into their dream home. "Our only real desire was for a large garden and more bedrooms," says Jenny.

After a lengthy search, everything ended up falling into place in just two days. By chance, a new client of Barry's mentioned that she was inheriting a local bungalow, which she intended to sell. It seemed like it could be a potential lead. "On the same day, we received a call from the estate agent who valued our house. He told us that he knew a couple who were interested," says Barry.

In less than 48 hours, Barry and Jenny received an offer on their cottage and, after organising a viewing, placed their own on the bungalow. "We paid the average of the valuations of three estate agents," says Barry. "We wanted to avoid it going on the market."

The couple's new home was located a 15-minute walk from the centre of St Agnes. It was rundown and outdated, but its large garden and prime position ticked all their boxes. "We knew a lot of work would be required," says Barry, "it just needed some love."

A simple plan

During the initial viewing, Barry had taken the bungalow's dimensions and drawn up initial floorplans, showing Jenny similar properties as an idea of what their remodelled home could be. "We knew we needed four bedrooms and off-road parking, and we liked the idea of an open-plan family room," says Jenny.

The couple lived in the property for four months while Barry put together the designs and secured planning. "Barry was confident he'd get approval for the scheme because he knew the local area," Jenny explains. "We submitted a very robust application that was difficult for the council to be able to refuse."

The idea was to dissect the bungalow, utilising the existing foundations and parts of the walls. A further two storeys would be added above, plus a small porch at the front, to quadruple the floor area. "Instead of trying to establish something new, we simply used the footprint we already had," Barry explains.

The original dwelling was constructed from traditional masonry, which Barry was keen to replicate. "The old and new blocks would fit together perfectly, meaning materials could be recycled," he says. The pair looked to reuse existing walls and window openings in order to preserve load paths and avoid creating new foundations.

“We wanted the structural support in the kitchen to be a feature. I love its honesty. It holds up the house and tells the story of our build”

This economical approach meant they could invest in high quality Scandinavian fenestration and some additional insulation instead.

The couple put an application in for a residence that was larger than they needed, so that once they'd secured planning permission, they could focus on the spare rooms as and when money allowed. They knew their £200,000 budget was enough to make the new house watertight and decorate the rooms that they would use the most. Sitting on a road that mainly consisted of bungalows, there were a few objections about the proposed height of the revamped



The couple opted for laminate kitchen worktops instead of Corian, using the £3,000 they saved to insulate the ground floor



The home's structural support beam acts as a natural room divider and tells the story of how the building came together

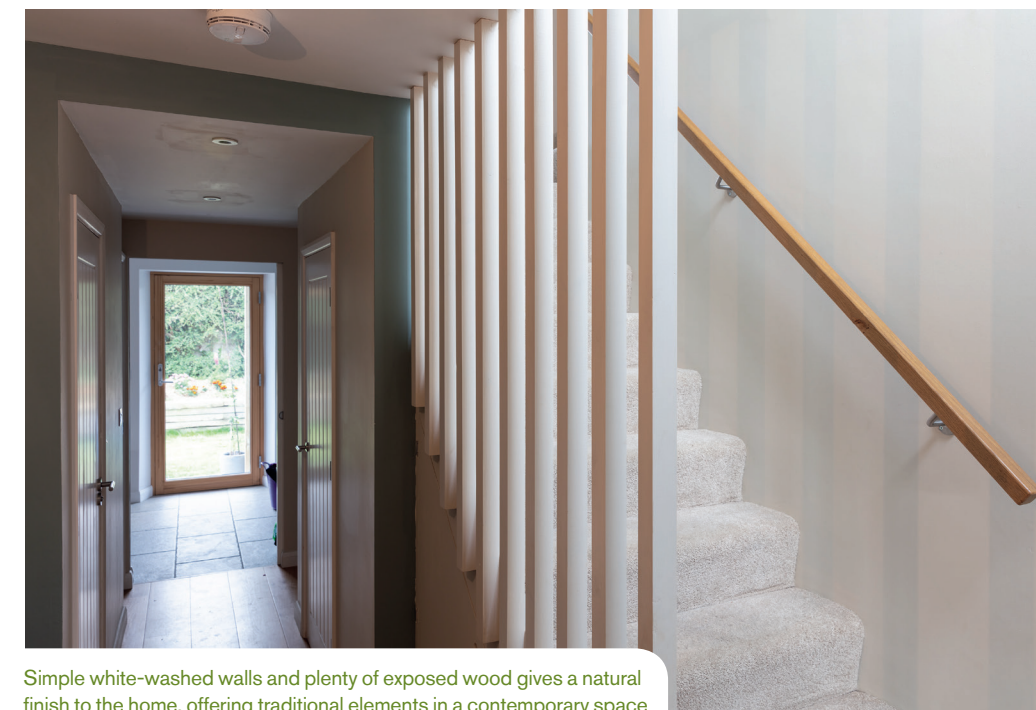
structure. Despite this, planning consent was approved in just five weeks.

So that works could begin, Barry and Jenny moved into a caravan in the garden, which eased a lot of pressure. "We wanted to be in the caravan before the birth," says Jenny, "and we were in just one week before our new son Barney arrived."

Storming ahead

For the build, Barry acted as main contractor and project manager; a role he had taken on before in his profession. "I felt confident that I could lead the works," says Barry. "Living on site made everything easier. I could keep an eye on all the progress going on and run things around my full-time business."

Since Barry had designed all the home's technical details, he could quickly answer any questions that arose during construction. After parts of the existing building were demolished, new walls were created from blocks made from the waste product of a local clay quarry. As he was on site from 8am until 11am most days, Barry was able to make sure that everything was running smoothly, refining design details as he went. The construction process was very efficient, which is something that Barry credits to his small team of excellent workers. "We worked with the skillsets of the trades, rather than fighting against them," he says. "We took our time and built at a slower rate, which meant that we retained tighter control of the quality of the output and the budget."



Simple white-washed walls and plenty of exposed wood gives a natural finish to the home, offering traditional elements in a contemporary space

While the project started well, the brutal Cornish weather caused some headaches. "A few storms were really memorable for us," Jenny explains. "Storm Barney came six weeks after the birth of our second child, who shared the same name! The caravan was bouncing in the wind. We questioned our safety that night."

While the couple were away for Christmas, another powerful gale hit St Agnes. "The roof trusses were on, but we hadn't filled in the gable ends," says Barry. "As the wind was blowing in a northerly

WE LEARNED...

INVEST TIME and expertise in the design stage. Find an architect who has created homes you admire and has knowledge of local planning policy and suppliers. Although up-front design fees may seem expensive, these will be a small proportion of your final costs.

WORK CLOSELY with trade and craftspeople that you trust – they're the ones that are going to build your home. Everyone has their own skillset, so select the right person for the right job, rather than choosing a contractor based on price.

DON'T BE AFRAID to take a hands-on role in your project. Learn new skills and save money along the way. From tiling to cleaning, the smallest task can make a great deal of difference.

YOU DON'T NEED huge rooms to make them functional; you can compact the design to save money. It's about using what space you have more effectively. A spacious family home can be created without building a really large property.



Above: The Snug Lounge is small and light-challenged, but vibrant wall colour brings warmth to a compact space

direction, it meant it was travelling straight through the house. The roof was grappling with the blockwork which caused the bricks to twist." The damage demonstrated the force of the local weather and the apparent setback turned out to be one of the lowest moments of the project. Fortunately, even though the couple had BuildStore's Buildcare site insurance in place, a claim was not required since the issues could be rectified quickly.

The Tapes wanted to avoid further delays, but miscommunication over window lead times meant that sealing the property had to be

postponed. "Getting the structure weathertight was our biggest task. We made temporary covers with batons and plastic film," says Barry, "The fenestration arrived one month late. That was exactly why we built with masonry, because we knew it could sustain all weathers!"

Blue skies ahead

Barry's design was based on Passivhaus principles, so the couple insulated the internal side of the new and old walls. They built a timber frame within the masonry, packing in a protective thermal barrier in the form of a layer of PIR insulation boards, which were factory seconds. "The sheets were a mix of brands and sizes, but it didn't matter because they were hidden," says Barry. The house is heated by two woodburners and remote controlled electric radiators, which learn lifestyle patterns for efficiency. "The property gets strong solar gains and is highly insulated, so for the majority of the year it costs us £9 a week to run," he continues.

To remain within their budget, Barry and Jenny only completed rooms that they intended to use straight away. In September 2016, after a year of building work, the couple moved into their newly remodelled home. In the kitchen, a gorgeous wooden beam runs the length of the room. "We wanted the structural support to be a feature. It's formed of two lengths of glulam with a metal flitch plate sandwiched in between," says Barry. "I wanted to create something elegant. All the nuts and bolts are exposed and I sanded and then lacquered the structure with wax. I love its honesty. It holds up the house and tells the story of our build."



well as the porch. "We were privileged to obtain a locally-sourced variety," says Barry. "We wanted grey stone, but few places supply it."

Barry managed to arrange a meeting with a local quarry master, who agreed that he would sell the couple 22 tonnes of the site's by-product. The material features gorgeous colours and sparkles in

the sunlight. Barry was keen to keep it in its organic state, hiring a nearby mason to hand-shape and dry-lay the wall. "It was an incredible moment when the scaffolding came down and the finished effect was revealed. It was definitely the highlight of the project," Barry says. "It felt like a celebration of what we had worked to create."

Seamless finish

The main family room forms the heart of the home. Bright and warm, the space is perfect for a busy household and is where the Tapes spend the majority of their time. The cosy snug is ideal for dark winter evenings, utilising bold colours to bring in warmth. With six new bedrooms, the home's interior is finished with simple, natural materials. "We didn't want it to be an exhibition

space. We wanted it to be functional and durable," says Barry. "Everything can be wiped down, even the floors."

Crisp white walls, warm ocean tones and natural wooded elements help create a fuss-free, contemporary interior, which is complemented by ample glazing to make the most of the Cornish sunshine. The reward for Barry and Jenny's hard work is the way the home brings the family together. "We now have an easy and sociable space to live with our children," says Jenny. "The fact we don't need to move house again is incredibly satisfying."

The attic storey features an independent living space, bedroom and bathroom



The attic has a separate self-contained suite with its own exterior access point. The one-bedroom flat is perfect for visitors and offers uninterrupted views across the surrounding landscape, thanks to a Velux Cabrio balcony. "When the top floor was complete, we realised we had 180° views for 40 miles," says Jenny. "We can also see Bodmin Moor and the sea from all the first-floor windows."

The front elevation is clad in timber, which has provided an easy and affordable solution to hide the unsightly facade of the original bungalow. Impressive stonework covers one side of the dwelling, as

closer look

Cornish dry stone wall...

In a bid to showcase local natural materials, Barry and Jenny sourced Cornish stone from a nearby quarry, using it to cover one exterior wall and the front porch. The couple are thrilled with the final outcome. "We wanted this grey stone because it features gorgeous colours, like quartz. When the scaffolding came down, the wall was sparkling," says Jenny. The material was kept as organic as possible, with skilled masons hand-shaping each rock and dry-laying them from the ground up. "The wall is a celebration of what we've achieved," says Barry.

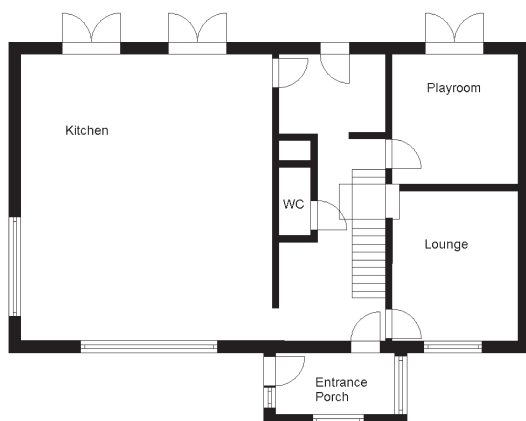


Stone cladding

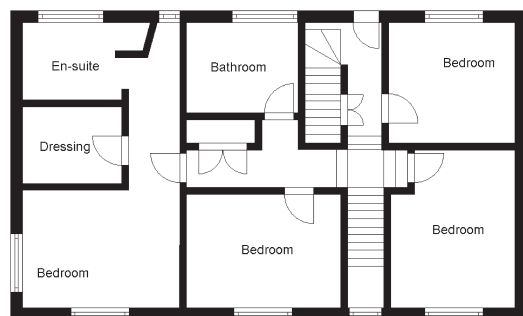


Floor plans

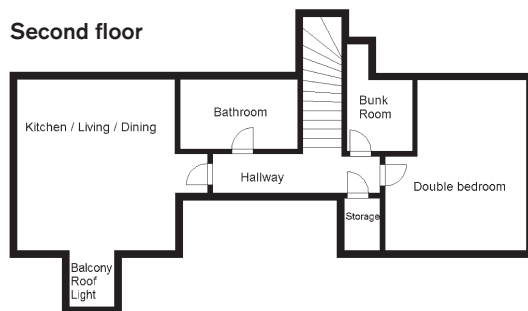
Ground floor



First floor



Second floor



House plans re-created using
Build It 3D Home Designer software.
www.buildit.co.uk/3dsoftware



TOTAL BUILD COST BREAKDOWN

Elements	Cost m ²	Cost %	Total cost
Preliminaries	£29	4%	£10,000
Foundations	£14	2%	£5,000
External walls and windows (incl. timber frame)	£142	21%	£48,250
Roof covering	£59	9%	£20,000
Internal walls	£26	4%	£9,000
Floor, wall & ceiling finishes	£59	9%	£20,000
Joinery & fittings	£118	17%	£40,000
Plumbing & heating (incl. kitchen and bathroom)	£109	16%	£37,000
Electrics	£56	8%	£19,000
Decorating	£15	2%	£5,000
Fees	£21	3%	£7,000
Woodburners	£20	3%	£6,750
External works	£13	2%	£4,500
Grand total			£231,500

Note: The costs shown here reflect the original prices for materials, labour and services at the time this project was undertaken. As a general guide, inflation in the construction market runs at about 3%-4% per annum.

Useful contacts



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COORDINATOR **BkT Architecture** 01872 211645 www.bktarchitecture.co.uk
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