

“COWS COME RIGHT UP TO THE FENCE AND LOOK OVER, SO WE DECIDED TO NAME THE NEW HOUSE BOWJI, WHICH IS CORNISH DIALECT FOR COWSHED.”

In brief

PROJECT New build
LOCATION North Cornwall
COST £250,000 with planning
SPENT £300,000
WORTH £650,000+

NEW BUILD



EXTERIOR
 The unique, cedar-clad home has a sedum-planted roof and enjoys countryside views. A large, stone sun terrace stretches across the length of Bowji.



Taking the **long view**

Built overlooking rolling pastures, dotted with grazing cows, this unique cedar-clad house was specifically designed to preserve the view.

Story: **Debbie Jeffery** Photography: **Latitude50**

Terry and Gilly Knight had absolutely no intention of building a new house, but when the piece of land next to their home came onto the market, it already had planning permission for a property which would have blighted their outlook.

The couple, who are in their late 70s, decided to act to save their view, buying the plot and undertaking a self-build project to create a single-storey house which hunkers down into the peaceful country landscape.

The Knights were originally drawn to their tucked away location, standing alongside lush countryside and just a short walk from the golden sands of Daymer Bay in north Cornwall.

“We discovered that the 1930s chalet bungalow on the site had no foundations, so what started out as a renovation turned into a new build, as we had to demolish it and start again,” says Terry. “We successfully applied for planning permission to build a New England-style home with grey timber weatherboarding and fairly traditional interiors.”

Terry and Gilly, together with their visiting children and five grandchildren, spent several years enjoying the home they had built back in 2004. The previous owner had retained the bottom half of the garden, with the agreement to offer the Knights first refusal should he ever decide to sell. When he



died, however, the plot came onto the open market in 2015, complete with planning consent for a house which would have obliterated the couple's outlook.

"Out of the blue, we were faced with the prospect of someone building an architecturally bland two-storey house right on our boundary, that would completely block our outlook across the fields," says Terry. "We took the decision to buy the land ourselves and use it as part of our garden, so we cleared the site and grassed it over, making a wonderful cricket pitch for the family."

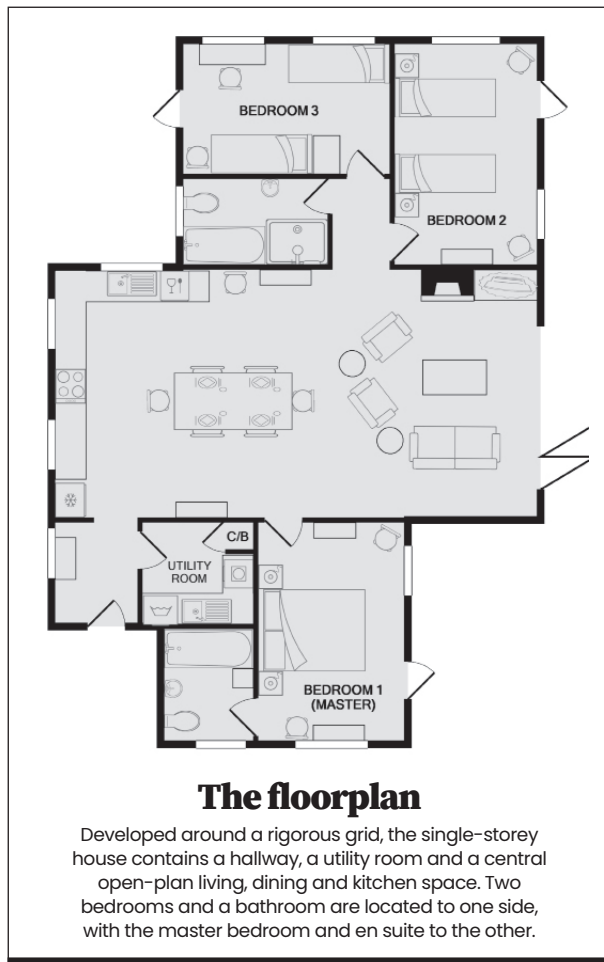
Years passed, and then Cornwall Council began to consider implementing a residents-only home ownership plan in the area, as they had done in St Ives, which would mean that any new-build properties could only be sold to full-time locals.

Terry and Gilly therefore applied for a new planning consent, working with St Albans-based architectural practice Milligan Knight Architects to devise a low maintenance single-storey house for the site.

The design revolved around three key principles: maintaining the views from the couple's neighbouring home, creating connections to the landscape beyond, and providing a family-friendly contemporary house which would prove easy to maintain.

THE BUILD

The blockwork single-storey home was built in two stages – first the slab in the summer of 2018, with the main build starting in spring 2019.



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NEW BUILD

“The form of the building evolved from the first requirement of maintaining views over the house, but rather than a flat roof we mirrored the rolling hills beyond to create a ‘see-saw’ green roof, which is sympathetic to the landscape while creating generous vaulted volumes inside,” explains architect Simon Knight.

The floorplan was developed around a rigorous grid that helps bring order to the spaces and elevations. Rhythmic glazed openings have been introduced around the house which offer connection to the garden and the wider landscape.

“We loved the design, as it allows us to look out from our house over a green roof that blends into the grazing fields belonging to a local farmer,” says Terry. “Cows come right up to the fence and look over, so we decided to name the new house Bowji, which is Cornish dialect for cowshed.”

The planning application was lodged and approved in December 2017 but, much to everyone’s surprise, the council refused to grant the usual

KITCHEN

A simple, handle-free, dusk grey kitchen with a concrete-effect worktop was installed to one end of the open-plan space.



INTERIORS

A generous open-plan living, dining and kitchen area is flooded with natural light from full-height windows that look out across the sun terrace to the countryside beyond. The heart of the house contains a fireplace for a wood-burning stove.

three-year timescale. Instead, it stated: “The development hereby permitted shall be begun before the expiration of 3rd September 2018.”

“They would only give us the time left on the original application, which was just nine months,” recalls Terry. “We were shocked, but also determined to meet their requirements and avoid having to make a new planning application.”

Spurred on, the couple approached Wadebridge-based building company Dingle and Way, which agreed to start the foundations and ground-floor slab during the summer of 2018 to secure planning consent.

“We then wrote to the local authority, asking them to confirm that we’d satisfied their conditions, which they refused to do – explaining that we’d need to make another planning application to obtain a Certificate of Lawfulness,” says Terry.

Instead, the Knights kept photographic records and dated bills, before having a break from building over the



In detail

PROJECT

Architect Milligan Knight
Architects: milliganknight.com

Builder Dingle and Way Ltd:
dingleandway.co.uk

Structural engineer Horme Structural
Ltd: horme-structural.business.site

M&E consultant Hira & Khaliq:
hkassociates.co.uk

STRUCTURE

Concrete blocks Denis May:
denismay.co.uk

Doors and windows Camel
Glass: camelglass.co.uk

Insulation, cedar cladding etc
Jewson: jewson.co.uk

Aluminium guttering
Lindab: lindab.com

FIXTURES AND FITTINGS

Mist sprinkler South West
Sprinkler Systems Ltd:

southwestsprinklersystems.co.uk

Plumbing, air source heat pump and underfloor heating Nicholls Plumbing
and Heating Ltd: 07887 870055

**Kitchen and Eastbrook
sanitaryware** Tamar Trading,
Bodmin: tamartrading.com

Luxury vinyl flooring
Cliffords Flooring: 01903 716247

Bathroom tiles Crown
Tiles: crowntiles.co.uk

Indian sandstone terrace tiles
Travis Perkins: travisperkins.co.uk

**Bowji is available for holiday lets
from Latitude50: latitude50.co.uk**



winter months. In early 2019, they took the decision to complete the build, fearing that the slab could become damaged if too much time was allowed to pass.

“We had to change all the drainage and install a new septic tank to cater for both properties,” says Terry, who asked Dingle and Way to continue working on the project and complete the house.

Gilly was particularly keen to clad the exterior in cedar, which weathers to a soft silver-grey colour over time, and this has been hung vertically on the blockwork walls to create a contemporary look and make the single-storey house appear taller.

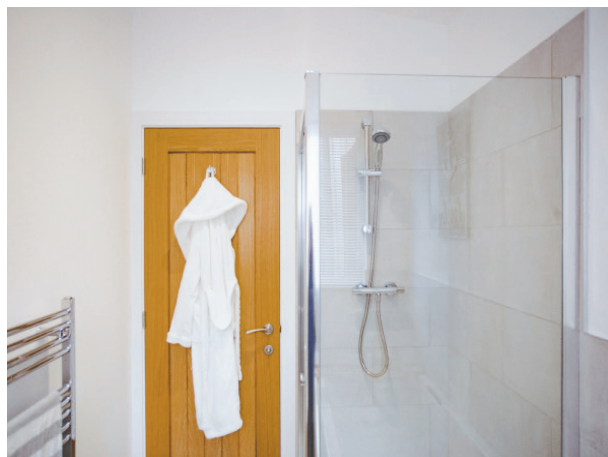
“The W-shaped roof is one of the most exciting features,” says Terry, who helped to project manage the build while living next door. “Originally, the design included concealed gutters and downpipes, for a sleeker appearance, but we worried that this might cause access issues if there were any problems and fitted a traditional external rainwater system instead.”

Another last-minute amendment involved some of the windows. Terry and Gilly were concerned that installing full-length glazing in certain areas, such as bathrooms, could compromise privacy – an issue cleverly resolved by inseting external cedar screens to the lower section of glass to create an attractive design feature.

An integrated covered entrance porch provides shelter and protection to the contemporary metal front door, which leads into a hallway. The generous

BATHROOMS

A family bathroom and master en suite have been fitted with simple white sanitaryware and plain wall tiles.



open-plan living, dining and kitchen area stands at the heart of the three-bedroom house and contains a fireplace for a wood-burning stove. Underfloor heating, connected to an air source heat pump, has been laid beneath luxury vinyl flooring throughout.

“We put the land into trust, with our children as beneficiaries, and invited them to take on the internal design of the house,” Terry continues. “Our daughter-in-law, Emma, took charge of the interiors and finishes – making curtains, choosing colours, and revamping furniture with new covers. She did a great job and made all the decisions regarding the kitchen and bathroom fittings, right down to where switches and sockets should go.”

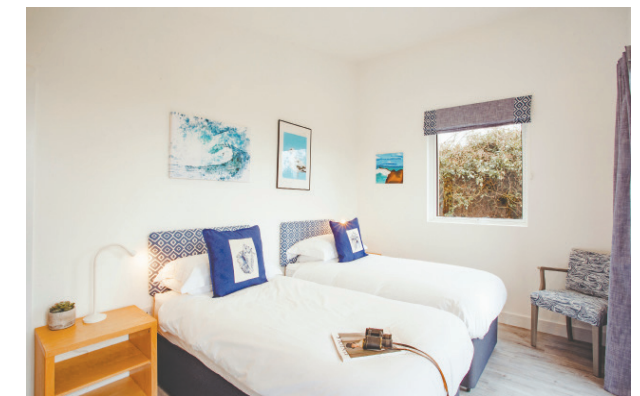
Exposed rafters in the open-plan living space were shunned to create a simple lighting grid, with downlights inset into the high slope of the ceiling. “I think the electrician went a little overboard with the number of lights,” laughs Terry.

“Because of its location at the end of a lane – more than 45m from the highway – we also needed to install a mist sprinkler system, at an unbudgeted additional cost of £5,000, because the fire brigade require a pump appliance to be able to reach all points within the property.”

Work was completed on schedule at the start of 2020, just as the coronavirus lockdown began, delaying the family’s plans of letting out Bowji to holidaymakers, as well as using it themselves. Now, however, the bookings are filling up as people increasingly opt for holidays in the UK.

“Despite the fact that Bowji stands immediately in front of our house, the thoughtful design and planted roof means that it doesn’t really impact on us,” says Terry. “It’s been extremely enjoyable working together as a family to build the house, knowing that we’re preserving our lovely outlook at the same time.”

NEW BUILD



BEDROOMS

The master bedroom suite is located to one side of the floorplan, with two guest rooms to the other sharing a bathroom. Touches of blue bring a fresh coastal feel, with all bedrooms enjoying views and access outdoors onto terraces.

Final word

What was the high point of the project?

Seeing the green roof for the first time, and the way it blends in with the surrounding fields.

And the low points?

Frustrations with the cost and time taken installing utilities, which came from the highway and across a neighbour’s land, and the additional cost of our mist sprinkler system.

Your best buy?

Our air source heat pump, which benefits from a government grant and serves the water and underfloor heating.

Biggest extravagance?

We used a local window supplier,



and in the showroom we saw a really contemporary metal front door on display that suited the house perfectly. Our bespoke cedar gates were also a luxury, but they give us privacy from the road.

And top tips?

Make things as simple as possible and stick to the plan!