



Oak frame

# UPSTAIRS DOWNSTAIRS

JON AND NICKY HARVEY'S NEW BARN-STYLE HOME INCORPORATES A BEAUTIFUL OAK-FRAMED UPPER FLOOR DESIGNED FOR CONTEMPORARY OPEN-PLAN LIVING

STORY: ELEANOR WILDE

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**W**hen Jon and Nicky Harvey purchased a tiny 1950s bungalow on a four acre site in Hampshire their initial plan had been to extend and renovate the dated building to create a more practical country home.

The couple had previously been living in Hertfordshire, but when Nicky changed jobs they decided to move to the North Hampshire area to be closer to her work.

After spending some time searching for a project house, they had almost given up on finding a suitable property when they viewed the rather unattractive 100m<sup>2</sup> brick bungalow in its peaceful and secluded setting. "We could immediately see the potential, and began consulting local architects about building an extension," says Jon, an accountant. "It was only



when Robin Haddow of Haddow Partnership suggested the idea of demolishing the bungalow and building from scratch that we seriously considered a new build project instead.”

Convinced that planning permission would take some time to secure, the couple worked with Robin to design a fantastic contemporary new home for their rural site. The planners were surprisingly quick to approve these ambitious plans, however, leaving Jon and Nicky with an unexpected quandary.

“We’d never tackled anything like this before, and financially we just weren’t ready to proceed, so we carried on living in the bungalow for the next couple of years while we saved for the build,” explains Nicky. “Our plans had originally been for a modest extension, so it was quite a →



Upper Common Cottage was built as a replacement house on the site of a 1950s bungalow. The ground floor has been constructed in brick and block with an oak framed first floor, clad externally in stained weatherboarding, and a Brazilian slate roof. The design of the house respects the rural location and sloping nature of the site. The ground gently rises to the rear, where the Harveys have planted over 130 trees on their 4.6 acres of land and created a wildlife pond.

## Oak frame



ABOVE: The sitting room features an open fire framed by a contemporary surround. Beside this, the oak frame has been glazed to create a huge wall of glass. RIGHT: The first floor balcony runs the full length of the side elevation. This wraps around the rear of the property to form a terrace, which links to the sloping site by means of a bridge extension.



stretch to go from that to building a brand new four bedroom house."

The Harveys were in for another shock when they ultimately tendered for the build and received back quotes of almost double their actual budget. Realising that they would need to seriously amend the design if they were to stand any chance of building a new house they returned to Robin Haddow to revise the plans.

The result is a clever fusion of vernacular barn style and contemporary home, with the layout designed to optimise views from an open-plan living/dining/kitchen



on the first floor. This magnificent oak framed vaulted reception space enjoys southerly views across fields through a wall of full height glazing, which opens out onto a raised sun-trap deck.

"The slope of the site meant that building a reverse level house made perfect sense," Nicky explains, "and it also ensured that we benefit from the beautiful exposed oak timbers and hammer beam trusses in our main living room, which are an unexpected feature as you come up the stairs."

Once the new plans had been approved the Harveys and their two greyhounds moved into a caravan on the



site, ready for the builders to demolish their bungalow and begin excavating to reduce the ground levels by a further metre – ultimately lowering the ridge height of the new two storey property.

“Caravan life wasn’t as bad as we thought it would be,” Jon explains, “and we were both working during the day, which took us away from the site. We’re also very fortunate that, although we don’t have any immediate neighbours, there’s a pub just a short distance from our front door!”

The ground floor of the new house was traditionally constructed in brick and block, ready for the first floor →



ABOVE: The vaulted upper level features a fully exposed oak frame, with a galleried mezzanine study lit by rooflights making full use of the space  
LEFT: A mezzanine bedroom overlooks the living area.



oak frame to be delivered and erected by specialist company T J Crump Oakwrights Ltd. "We built in this way was so that we could have a concrete first floor for underfloor heating and better sound proofing," Jon continues.

"After visiting a number of oak framing companies and undertaking a great deal of research we chose Oakwrights, and it was fascinating looking around their factory where the frames are built. They proved to be a fantastic choice, and erected our frame in about a week, during really hot weather. For us it was probably the high point of the whole build."

The interior is light and airy, thanks to the generous glazing, which highlights the timberwork.



Soaring beamed ceilings and exposed timbers have been pegged and jointed in the traditional way, and the rich golden colour of the oiled oak creates a dramatic framework for the open plan living/dining/kitchen space. "We decided against cleaning or sand-blasting the oak because we really like the weathered appearance," explains Nicky, who works for a bank as head of risk financing.

The Harveys were happy to allow their builder to take the strain, and decided not to attempt too much DIY themselves – although Jon was responsible for fitting the new kitchen, with its large island unit which doubles as a breakfast bar and is trimmed in stainless steel.

"By this time we'd moved out of the caravan and were living in the house, making do with a microwave and kettle while Jon finished the kitchen," recalls Nicky. →

## Oak frame

"We agonised quite a lot over this space, and ended up sourcing good quality appliances from DeDietrich."

A great deal of attention has gone into completing the interiors, and Jon and Nicky spent hours researching products online and browsing shops and showrooms.

A consultant helped to advise them on how best to light the house, which also has CAT 5 cabling throughout, with wiring installed for a piped music system in the principal rooms. Bathrooms are tiled wet-rooms and underfloor heating runs throughout the house, which is painted white internally to emphasise the golden colour of the oak.

"Previously we'd been living in a period property, so moving into such a bright, modern, open plan home has been a welcome change," says Nicky. "There were a few minor problems, such as the original staircase not fitting, but overall the build was actually far less stressful than we'd anticipated and only took around nine months to complete. It's something we would definitely recommend, and the best thing about having so much exposed oak is that the older it gets the better it looks."

### BUILD COSTS

Builders:	£360,000
Oak frame:	£50,000
Fees:	£15,000
Garden:	£15,000
Other:	£20,000
<b>TOTAL:</b>	<b>£460,000</b>

### ★ THE BOTTOM LINE

Jon and Nicky paid £391,000 for the bungalow and 4.6 acres back in 2001, and a further £460,000 on the replacement house – which is currently on the market for £1.2 million with Strutt & Parker (01256 474647, [www.struttandparker.com](http://www.struttandparker.com))



### The floorplan

Four bedrooms and four bathrooms are located on the ground floor of the house, with a vaulted, open plan sitting/dining/kitchen upstairs and a WC and walk-in pantry. Stairs lead up to a raised mezzanine study/TV snug.

### WHAT WAS THE HIGH POINT OF THE PROJECT?

Taking a week off work to watch the Oakwrights' team erecting the green oak frame was amazing.

### ...AND THE LOW POINT?

Getting those initial quotes back from builders and realising that we couldn't possibly afford to build our first design was terribly disappointing.

### WHAT WAS YOUR BEST BUY AND WHAT WAS YOUR BIGGEST EXTRAVAGANCE?

The oak-faced internal doors were only around £100 each and are fantastic because they are great quality for a reasonable price. In some ways the oak frame was an extravagance – because oak is never the cheapest of building materials – but we absolutely love it and the exposed timbers give the house its character and wow factor, so it was worth every penny.

### IS THERE ANYTHING YOU WOULD CHANGE?

Living in a caravan teaches you just how little space you actually need, but we would still have liked a bit more storage in the new house. A vaulted ceiling looks wonderful, but it does mean that you have to forgo loft space – although we do have some under-eaves storage up on the mezzanine level and there are two barns in the garden.



### OUR TOP TIP

Plan everything well ahead so that you don't have too many decisions to make during the build. We saved a great deal of time and aggravation by not changing things as the build progressed.

### CONTACTS

**OAK FRAME** T J Crump Oakwrights Ltd: 01432 353353; [www.oakwrights.co.uk](http://www.oakwrights.co.uk)  
**ARCHITECT** Haddow Partnership: 01256 335000; [www.haddowpartnership.co.uk](http://www.haddowpartnership.co.uk)  
**BUILDER** Goodall Barnard: 01256 851155  
**HAMPSHIRE ATR MULTI RED BRICKS** Michelmersh Brick & Tile Co Ltd: 01794 368506  
**BEAM AND BLOCK FLOOR** Melton Concrete Products: 01249 463244  
**SANITARYWARE** Ideal Standard (UK) Ltd: 01482 346461; [www.ideal-standard.co.uk](http://www.ideal-standard.co.uk)  
**INTERNAL DOORS** Doors of Distinction: 01202 872211; [www.tranik.co.uk](http://www.tranik.co.uk)  
**APPLIANCES** DeDietrich: [www.dedietrich.co.uk](http://www.dedietrich.co.uk)  
**SELF BUILD MORTGAGE** Lloyds TSB Scotland: [www.lloydstsb.co.uk](http://www.lloydstsb.co.uk)  
**LIMESTONE FLOOR** Pisani: 020 8847 3406  
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