

HOME  
PROFILE

WHO LIVES HERE

Teresa and Anthony Ralph,  
founders of TG Designer Homes  
(tgdesignerhomes.com),  
and their children Zachary  
and Scarlet

THE PROPERTY

A contemporary single-storey  
home in Kent

KITCHEN/DINER

This open-plan space is  
sparse and linear, with  
bespoke oak units. An  
island with a built-in bench  
provides seating for the  
dining table. Bespoke  
**cabinets, bench** and  
**dining table**, all 3 Planks  
Joinery. Dining **chairs**,  
Kallevig →

A SMART NEW-BUILD  
THAT REFLECTS  
THE LANDSCAPE

Innovative in design and created using traditional building materials, this  
contemporary family home sits happily within an Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty

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KITCHEN/DINER

Under the vaulted ceiling, suspended woven pendant lights delineate separate zones within the open-plan space. Rattan **shades** over kitchen island, Amazon. Rattan **shades** over dining table, La Redoute



FIREPLACE

While solar panels and an air-source heat pump provide sustainable energy, the couple opted to have back-up heat from a woodburner. Stovax **log burner**, Heat Design. Bespoke oak **shelving**, 3 Planks Joinery



GLAZED BRIDGE

A glass bridge links the living space to the study, giving a clear view of the knapped flint wall. 'The bricklayers pointed the flint in the blocks to give the impression that it was a hand-constructed flint wall, and it looks brilliant,' says Teresa



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know the area quite well and years ago had stayed at the hotel next door to the plot before it reverted back to a family home,' Teresa says. 'A friend told us in passing that the land was up for sale with planning permission and, as we knew the location, we didn't hesitate.'

Permission had been granted for a Paragraph 79 house. This exemption clause to planning policy allows for innovative designs to be built on land that might not otherwise get permission. But, as Teresa explains: 'The existing design wasn't really our cup of tea. We wanted to create something we felt would be more sympathetic to the village setting, that would blend in rather than attract too much attention.'

Discussions with neighbours, the parish council and a planning consultant helped to prevent any unnecessary delays in obtaining consent for their new design. Keen to pay tribute to the traditional building styles of the area, they chose a timber-framed construction and flint blocks. 'The flint is a direct reflection of the beautiful church opposite the house,' Teresa observes.

Anthony project-managed the build and hired sub-contractors, because the couple wanted the house to be completed in as short a time as possible. 'We worked hard to ensure everyone communicated daily so we didn't lose momentum,' Teresa explains. 'Communication is the

chance conversation led Teresa and Anthony Ralph to a dream plot in rural Kent within an Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty. The couple weren't looking for a building project and were surprised to find such a lovely site with stunning, far-reaching views, on the edge of a pretty village. 'We

key to any successful building project, to ensure everyone fulfils their part of the schedule on time and doesn't hold up anyone else.'

The entire project was completed in just 10 months, although there were a couple of inevitable hiccups along the way. Part of the roof's zinc cladding was damaged by scaffolding and had to be repaired, and there was an issue with an underground utilities cable. 'It was the most frustrating aspect of the project and took months to sort out,' Teresa remembers. 'In the end I contacted the CEO of the company and he resolved my problem within two weeks!'

Solar panels on the carport roof and an air-source heat pump provide sustainable energy and reduce bills: 'The insulation and glazing are of a high standard, but we have a log burner in case we want background heat,' says Teresa. 'We chose polished-concrete floors throughout with underfloor heating. Although people often don't always realise it, concrete is actually warm in winter and cooling in summer.'

The interior has eight ground-floor rooms on three slightly different levels, with the kitchen, dining and living space the focal point of family life. Under the highest point of the roof, the vaulted ceiling of the living area rises to seven metres, with large windows that make the most of the views of the gardens and fields beyond. 'The dining table in the kitchen is the same length as the island so is a great space for large gatherings of friends and family,' Teresa adds. 'I'm a great believer in building in as much storage and furniture as you can to keep rooms looking spacious. We had a series of storage cupboards built along the spine wall.'

As both Teresa and Anthony work from home, they were keen to include an office. 'Having a private workspace was important to us, but we didn't want it to be completely disconnected from the house,' →



Teresa says. 'An office pod with a glazed bridge offered a solution and we lined the entrance steps with oak to add warmth and define the space as separate from the rest of the building.'

A simple colour palette features inside and out, with the pale concrete flooring flowing from the interior onto the patio areas and wrapping around the entire property, which contrasts with the black larch external walls and zinc roof. Inside, as Teresa notes: 'Using oak and concrete provides a sense of calmness and warmth. We then introduced different textures with furnishings and plants to make it feel like home.' This, combined with a cosy, family-friendly layout, gives a pared-back but welcoming feel.

Building in an Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty can seem an impossible dream, but Teresa is very positive about their experience. 'Getting permission for a Paragraph 79 house will require initial work in order to convince the council that the land could and should be developed and that your design holds merit.' And the family love living in such a contemporary building: 'Everyone has their own space, but we can all come together in the living area. From the barbecue terrace there are stunning views over the countryside, but there's also a covered terrace where we can have a glass of wine, chat or quietly collect our thoughts. Living here feels so relaxed and stress-free.'



### SITTING AREA

**Above** Natural cork wall tiles make a feature at the end of the room, adding character and texture, as well as providing a great acoustic layer for the TV. Cork **wall tiles**, Cork Store. Rattan **shades** over coffee table, Smithers of Stamford

### HALLWAY

**This picture** A simple colour palette teamed with a wealth of oak and concrete floors throughout brings a calm, uncluttered feel

### OFFICE

Floating ply shelving and drawers ensure the study is tidy and organised. Slot windows have been positioned at desk height. Bespoke **shelves**, **desk** and **drawers**, 3 Planks Joinery. Office chair, Ikea →

BEDROOM

This picture and below Wraparound glazing allows for wonderful views out over the Kent countryside, while a freestanding bath adds a sense of luxury. **Bed**, chest of drawers and rattan shades, all La Redoute. Green **cushions**, **throw** and sheepskin **rug**, all Made. **Chair**, Zara Home. Ibiza **cushion**, The Pillow Drop. **Curtains**, Novatec Blinds. **Bedside shade**, Ikea. **Bath**, Smallbone. **Taps**, Balinea



LIBRARY

With its rolling ladder, the small reading area is a break-out room designed to separate the main suite from the rest of the house. Oak shelving and ceiling panels create a den-like space. Eames-style **chair** and **footstool**, Decomica. Gladom **side table**, Ikea →

## EXTERIOR

The spectacular vaulted roof appears to twist as it diminishes from 7m to 4m in height. Extending over the terrace space, it creates shelter for the outdoor barbecue and dining area. Zinc **roof**, Zinclad. **Walls**, MKM Building Supplies



## BRIDGE

The 'floating' pod encasing the office was designed to resemble a staddle stone hut, which would have stored grain on stone stilts. A glazed bridge allows light to flood in. **Glazing**, Rhino Aluminium, fitted by Direct Fix. **Cladding**, Coopers Carpentry. **HB**

