

🏠 Britain's Best Selling Self-Build Magazine

# HOMEBUILDING & RENOVATING

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**INSIDE**  
YOUR STEP-BY-STEP  
SELF-BUILD  
PROJECT PLANNING

## SAVE 20% ON YOUR PROJECT

LEARN HOW TO RUN  
YOUR SITE LIKE A  
PROFESSIONAL  
p121

INSULATING OLD HOUSES  
EXPERT SOLUTIONS  
p101

THE NEW TIMBER FRAME?  
STRUCTURAL INSULATED PANELS  
p111

## Why Small is Smart

INSPIRATION  
DESIGN IDEAS  
FOR SPACIOUS  
EFFICIENT  
HOMES



**SELF-BUILD**  
Low cost, high design

**RENOVATION**  
Rescuing a period property

**CONVERSION**  
A bowling alley transformed

# Creating the Perfect Family Home

p22

STRIKING THE IDEAL BALANCE BETWEEN FORM AND FUNCTION

**PLUS:** Oak Frame Self-build | 100s of Plots for Sale | Roof Tiles  
Package Companies' Eco Credentials Compared | Beginner's Guide



## Perfectly Formed

It was the constraints of the plot size, rather than any particular desire to build a small house, that was the motivation behind architect Richard Dudicki's perfectly formed 98m<sup>2</sup> self-built home in Dulwich — but the end result is a perfect small family home. The two/three bedroom home is built over three storeys and contains an open plan ground floor space (only the WC is enclosed) with just one wall separating out the entrance from the living/kitchen space, bedrooms on the first floor and a private living space on the top floor, which opens out onto a fabulous roof garden. It cost £148,000 to build (in 2005) and follows many of the 'Not So Big' principles. [rdauk.com](http://rdauk.com)



Images: Tim Soar/Veloc

— which was set with a tablecloth, and what most Americans would consider a formal table setting. No paper napkins here. My friends' families lived much less formally by contrast, eating either at the kitchen island or the informal eating area. Meanwhile, the 'main' rooms, which were the largest and had clearly had the most money lavished upon them, sat idle, waiting for some apparently more formal folks to appear. Even the front entry hall — the foyer, as I learned to call it — seemed only to be used when salespeople came to the door. Anyone who was a friend of the family used the side door. It seemed like a strange arrangement but I assumed there was some explanation that I was not yet privy to.

Years later, after moving to Minnesota as a young architect, I started to work with people looking for a more personalised house than the ones they could buy from a

builder or developer. The almost universal problem, however, was that everyone seemed to believe their money would go further than was realistic. They wanted more house than they could afford. So, remembering my observations from childhood, I started to ask these clients what rooms they used least frequently. My thought was that if we could pare away the spaces that were rarely used, accommodating those functions in areas of the house that were used daily instead, we

### WHY BUILD NOT SO BIG?

- Smaller homes use less energy and are cheaper to run
- Smaller homes/rooms are cosier
- Smaller homes are cheaper to build
- Constraints on size tend to concentrate the minds of designers
- It's pointless building rooms you won't use and you'll enjoy the ones you do use more
- Smaller homes tend to be friendlier and less formal

Although this 'great room' — the informal centre-piece of the house and the first room in which to greet visitors — has a high cathedral ceiling, it is not an overwhelming space. The exposed rafters and pattern of woodwork above the fireplace break up the scale of the room