

ENVIRONMENT BEFORE LUXURY IN BRITAIN'S SELF BUILD BOOM

Britain's growing legion of self builders are putting the environment first according to a survey released today. Eco-friendly features like wind turbines and solar panels top the list of things that people would build into their dream homes (42%). And that's good news for the environment with self builders now creating over 20,000 homes per year - more than the UK's largest commercial house builder.

Surprisingly, far fewer people would include ostentatious luxury features if they built their own home, with only 14% opting for a Jacuzzi and 13% interested in a gym. However the option of creating a better work/life balance by working from home was more popular, with 33% saying they would include a home office.

The YouGov survey was commissioned to launch the National Self Build and Renovation Centre, which opens in Swindon on 9 February. The 67,000 sq ft Centre will bring together under one roof for the first time all the products, services and advice required for self build or renovation. The survey showed that 42% of people were interested in building their own dream home from scratch.

Most Brits see no reason to move far when it comes to deciding where to build their own house. Just 15% said that they would build abroad while most people would not even move from the area they live in. Over 80% of Scots would choose to build in Scotland, 59% from the Northwest and 54% from Wales would opt to build in their own home region. The most likely to build homes away from their own region were people from the Midlands (70%) and those in the South East (61%).

When it comes to the inspiration to build a dream home TV property programmes are important with 34% saying they were an influence. But move over Kevin McLeod, even more people (39%) have specific design ideas of their own that they would like to put into practice.

Over 40% of people said they would like to build a modern style home, bucking the trend for period homes in the property market, which is largely dictated by planning laws. And an

Englishman's home might be his castle but we wouldn't like to live in one - just 3% said they would create a new home behind ramparts and a drawbridge. The survey also revealed some insights into lifestyles in Britain when it came to the homes people would choose to build.

- The top priority for people is relaxing with family and socialising with friends – 44% said that the living room would be the most important room if they built their own home.
- The perfect kitchen is most important for women (46%) but, perhaps with one eye on the telly and one hand on the remote, 48% of men opt for the sitting/living room.
- Food comes top of the list for those in Wales and the South West with 44% nominating the kitchen as the most important room in their dream home. People in the North West seem less fussy when it comes to food with only 26% agreeing.
- People in Scotland are most interested in working from home with 37% opting for a home office compared with just 21% in East Anglia.
- The North West appears to be the most exercise conscious with 22% interested in a home gym against just 8% in London, 9% in Yorkshire and 9% in Scotland.
- People in the North West are also the biggest cinema buffs with 24% wanting a home cinema against just 9% in the South.
- Conservatories are high on the list in East Anglia with 52% of people saying one would be a must. Only 30% of Londoners agree.

Raymond Connor, CEO of BuildStore, which is launching the Centre said: “Self build and renovation are already massive in Britain and set to get even bigger. Over 20,000 build their own homes each year. That’s nearly one in eight of all new houses built. Hundreds of thousands more are undertaking major renovation projects.

“This survey shows that we are opening the National Self Build and Renovation Centre at just the right time: everything the British are looking for in the home of their dreams will be there from environmentally friendly features to the latest in home designs. We hope it will inspire people to build or renovate their homes thanks to the advice and support available through all stages of the journey from finding land, organising finance to crossing the threshold for the first time.”

The Centre is open to the public five days a week from 9th February. Located off Junction 16 of the M4, it is within an easy 2 ½ hours drive for 25 million people. Tickets cost from £8 for a full day and are available now online at www.mykindofhome.co.uk. Demand for tickets for the

opening weeks is high and customers are encouraged to pre-book. Key features of the National Self Build and Renovation Centre will include:

- Educational Journey - life sized exhibits showing how a property is constructed from foundations to internal finishes
- The Renovation Zone - one of the worst wrecks you'll ever see is transformed before your very eyes
- Full sized Potton show house – the Ruskin design, one of six from the new Renaissance range of house designs from self build experts Potton.
- The Design Centre - hundreds of house, kitchen and bathroom designs all in one place
- The Trade Village - over 220 companies feature products and services covering everything needed to build or renovate your home
- The Finance Centre - staffed by specially trained advisors to help find the best deal to finance your project
- The PlotSearch Theatre – opportunities to learn about buying land or a property wreck - and search 6,000 plots and properties for sale
- Special Events and Seminars - a chance to learn everything you need for a successful project
- Design and Planning Desk - information on planning permission, property design and building regulations
- Trade Referral Desk - UK wide database of tradesmen from plumbers in Plymouth to electricians in Edinburgh.

- Ends -

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Notes to Editors

- Survey carried by YouGov, 12 - 14 December, 2006 - sample Size 2,142 UK adults