

## Self Build Home Peeblesshire, Scotland

# Deeside Timberframe

building in quality



### Introduction

Donald Bisset not only did he take a break from his work inspecting oil rigs to concentrate on constructing the house, but he taught himself virtually every trade from scratch – relying on books and knowledgeable family and friends for support and advice.

The couple had been living in a classic Victorian tenement flat in Edinburgh, which had two bedrooms and two box rooms. Struggling to find anything suitable in their price range, they then started casually looking for a plot of land on which they might be able to build. The plot stands beside the River Lyne, just half an hour's drive from Edinburgh, in an idyllic setting overlooking the green in a thriving village community.

The plot had previously hosted a metal prefab house, which

had already been demolished. Planning permission had been obtained to build a larger replacement dwelling, but the Bissets wanted to make better use of the plot and employed an architect to revise this design. They had used the existing plans to secure their stage payment mortgage, and therefore needed to ensure that any alterations would not adversely affect the overall value of the finished house.

“We had to keep the same number of rooms, but it needed to be a family home which would be practical for young children.” A large bright reception hall with full-height bookcases was also high on the wish-list, as was a spacious kitchen/dining room and a separate lounge. The latter has been nominally divided into two sections, with a cosy seating area formed by low, squasy sofas around a raised fireplace, and a

play area for the children which also accommodates a sofa and Catherine's piano. Two skylights, windows and a door onto the deck outside ensure that this relaxing space feels like a brightly lit conservatory overlooking the river.

The stonework, rendering, tiling and plastering were completed by specialist subcontractors; Donald took on everything else, from roofing to plumbing, and worked endless hours seven days a week. Real stone has been used externally around the windows to create a traditional feel, in keeping with the largely Victorian neighbouring properties. This proved to be an expensive choice but – determined not to scrimp – the Bissets also chose solid timber Andersen windows. Somehow they still managed to stick to their original budget of £150,000, thanks to the huge amount of DIY labour.

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