

# CASE STUDY: DREAM HOME IN STONE

Architect Allister Godfrey, fresh from his 'Best Self-build Architect for Support' win for Wunschhaus at the Build It Awards, and interior designer Shoba Kumar reveal how the past has inspired the creation of this spacious modern home.



## Where is the property located?

**Allister:** Wunschhaus – dream house in German – is set back from Bampton's busy high street, one of the oldest villages in Britain. It is a quiet and secluded site in the conservation area. It was once part of the extensive gardens of an adjacent Grade II listed house.

## What was the brief for the house?

**Allister:** Our clients wanted to create a modern spacious home that's secure and filled with light. Having lived in different countries, they chose the UK to be the place where their dream should become reality. Much of the village is characterised by the remnants of late medieval burgess plots. Simple slate pitched roofs and long stone outbuildings are evident, forming a strong vernacular presence. Inspiration was drawn from the historic layouts, forms, and materials, particularly the Cotswold stone walls that bound and divide the site.

## What was the hardest part of the build?

**Allister:** We had some intricacies to contend with. For example, a large concrete swimming pool ended up as a basement wine store and the relatively tight access between existing buildings made for careful planning to get plant on site.

## What was your vision for the entrance?

**Allister:** There was a high stone wall that ran across the centre of the site around which the house is organised. The idea was to pass through the wall from the public area into an intermediate space – a quiet courtyard to prepare for the return home. A solid timber door was chosen to enhance the idea that once the door is closed, you're away from the day-to-day grind.

**Shoba:** The architectural landscaping in the entrance courtyard is gently lit with warm lighting. Coupled with the wood cladding and Urban Front door, it feels completely zen. It's impossible not to feel a wave of calm flow over you as you walk in.



## Why did you choose Corten for the gate?

**Allister:** We have used Corten for semi-rural properties several times and it's proven to be a material that weathers gracefully and provides the contemporary edge that benefits the design of the house.

## Why did you choose Urban Front's Neo V front door in oak?

**Allister:** The quality and style of Urban Front's doors were a natural choice to fit the brief and architecture. We chose the pivot option and I'm very happy with the result.

**Shoba:** I love the front door – the weight of it feels comforting and secure. It matches the aesthetic of the house and works so well with the cladding at the entrance.





### What's the relationship between the inside and outside of the property?

**Allister:** The house is organised around a naturally top-lit hallway that provides access to the private rooms. A short flight of steps leads to the principal bedroom, giving a sense of separation from the main living level. A step down to the living room, on the semi-public side of the dividing wall, reinforces a memory of the site's heritage.

In contrast to the expansive space of the main living area, other rooms are more contained and have discreet framed views of the landscaped gardens.

We deliberately restricted access to the garden to the principal living areas only. The living room has two completely glazed walls, and the corner opens to provide uninterrupted access to the terrace and garden.



### Can you tell me about the landscaping?

**Allister:** Rory Andrews Landscape Design created different zones around the house to reflect the different cardinal orientations and functions. For instance, the entrance courtyard has a single Amalanchier tree and a water table to create a calming space. In contrast, there is a shaded woodchipped area that is ideal for grandchildren to play in. When the garden matures, you will be able to see meadow style planting and a meandering grassed path in contrast to the formal planting outside the living area.

### How did you choose the external cladding and window colour?

**Allister:** The larch cladding was chosen for the wall of the entrance as echo to the vertical timbered doors that are evident with the vernacular typology. Urban Front's oak Neo V front door harmonises with the larch cladding yet provides enough visual difference to clearly be the entrance to the house. We wanted to move away from predictable window colours so, in conjunction with Shoba, we looked at options that would harmonise with the natural materials used on the rest of the house. We chose olive green.



**The larch cladding around the front door is echoed in the principal bedroom (see below left). Is it featured anywhere else?**

**Allister:** The larch cladding is also used outside around the covered terrace and inside it's featured in the principal bedroom and the cinema room. In these instances, the battens are veneered and fixed to a felt backing to help with acoustics.

**Shoba:** Bringing elements of the outside of the house inside felt like a natural decision and brought a cohesion to the design.

**Please tell me about the colour palette/materials chosen for the inside of the home.**

**Shoba:** The brief was to create a home that felt calm, tranquil and pared back. The colour palette comprises of neutral tones with black accents. The walls are all white, which means the rooms change colour and tone as the sun moves throughout the day. The kitchen is a dark mocha, which feels warm and inviting with the brown soft enough so that the dark tones don't feel out of place. Off white- and sand-coloured soft furnishings with earth toned accents create texture and points of interest. Wood is used throughout the house to soften the minimalist aesthetic.

**What's your favourite part of the build?**

**Shoba:** Surrounded by floor to ceiling windows, the kitchen looks over a courtyard, which has a water table creating an audio backdrop of gently flowing water. During warmer weather, the doors can be opened to create a wonderful outside living space.

**Allister:** I am particularly pleased with the way the house has come together as a composition, in no small part due to the design and construction team understanding the design and working well together.



## PROJECT DETAILS

**Architect:** Allister Godfrey Architects

**Lead Contractor:** Lemontree Property Improvements

**Design Architects:** Desai Chia

**Front Door:** Urban Front Neo V in oak with Option 11 handle

**SIPS design and installation:** Glosford SIPS

**Interior design:** Shoba Kumar Design

**Kitchen design and installation:** Hobson's Choice

**Lighting design:** Delta Light

**Landscape design:** Rory Andrews Landscape Design

**Photography:** Eleanor Walpole Photography