



A Forest Creation By Katy Morris

Nestled amongst organic farmland in the New Forest is a very unusual house. Its design has many influences as diverse as eastern culture, farm buildings and even grain silos. But all these come together to create a stylish effect.

The house consists of three buildings linked by glass walkways. There is a main living space, a bedroom area and a tower.

The two main buildings have Swiss chalet style roofs. Traditionally used in alpine climates to stop snow sliding off them, here they are used to shelter the windows from the midday sun.

The bright colours are reminiscent of agricultural or industrial structures, and the ventilators on the roofs are similar to those used on farm buildings. The tower resembles a Campanile, or bell tower, popular in Italy but also found in Hampshire.

As a group, the buildings echo the shapes of a farmyard, but the details give them a contemporary feel.

The house, which featured in Channel Four's 'Grand Designs' series, was very complex to build and went through several different designs before the final one was built.

Architect David Underhill, helped the couple

who own the house, Lizzie and Mike, develop their ideas and produce the impressive end result.

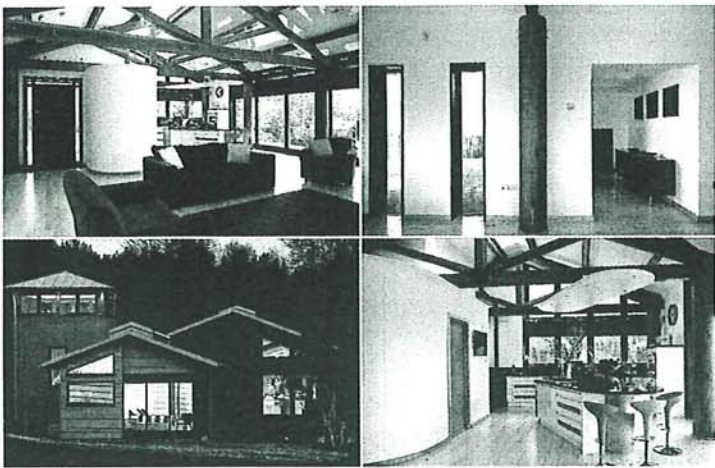
The couple first talked to David at his stand at the New Forest Show. They already owned the plot of land and were planning to demolish their existing house to make way for a new one.

Their original plan was to build a Haiku house, a building built on a platform and supported by poles. This type of house is all timber, so the couple thought it would be appropriate for the New Forest.

But they were told they could not build the house, so they enlisted David's help to see if they could win round the planners to a different design.

David then had to undertake the difficult task of designing a house that Lizzie and Mike would like, but would also get planning permission. David says:

"I was caught between two opposing forces; the conservation officer who wanted a picture postcard collection of farm buildings and a client who



wanted to get into the 22nd century as soon as possible."

David decided to use the conservation officer's idea of a group of farm buildings, incorporate a Haiku house and make the design more contemporary. The main building was to have one room, a large open plan living space.

Mike and Lizzie only wanted one bedroom and this was designed as a small but solid stone structure, the design influenced by farm buildings often built for animals. David says: "This building was to be deeply rooted while the Haiku house floated above."

Also part of the design was a tower. David sought inspiration from the local area and was influenced by the tall conical shapes of the grain silos he saw dotted around the New Forest. The tower was to have a glass roof where Mike could use his telescope to look out at the stars. David planned to clad the outside in corrugated steel.

Unfortunately, this design didn't get planning permission either, but it did lead to the design of the house that was eventually built. The tower became square rather than round, but other aspects of the design including the grouping of the buildings, stayed.

Mike and Lizzie hired a project manager to manage the complicated project, Graham Davies. Mike then worked closely with him to produce an interior with amazing attention to detail.

A high-tech central computer was installed. This runs the lights and the audio-visual systems and means that the interior is free from messy cables.

In the main room wooden poles contrast with the uncluttered white walls and large areas of glass make the room light and airy.

In the kitchen there is a curved black topped unit and a black Aga, giving it a very individual feel.

David is pleased with the way the building has turned out, but is also especially impressed with Mike's interior. He says: "I think great credit should be given to our clients for producing a very good interior. We set out the vision, but they were responsible for setting out the details."

