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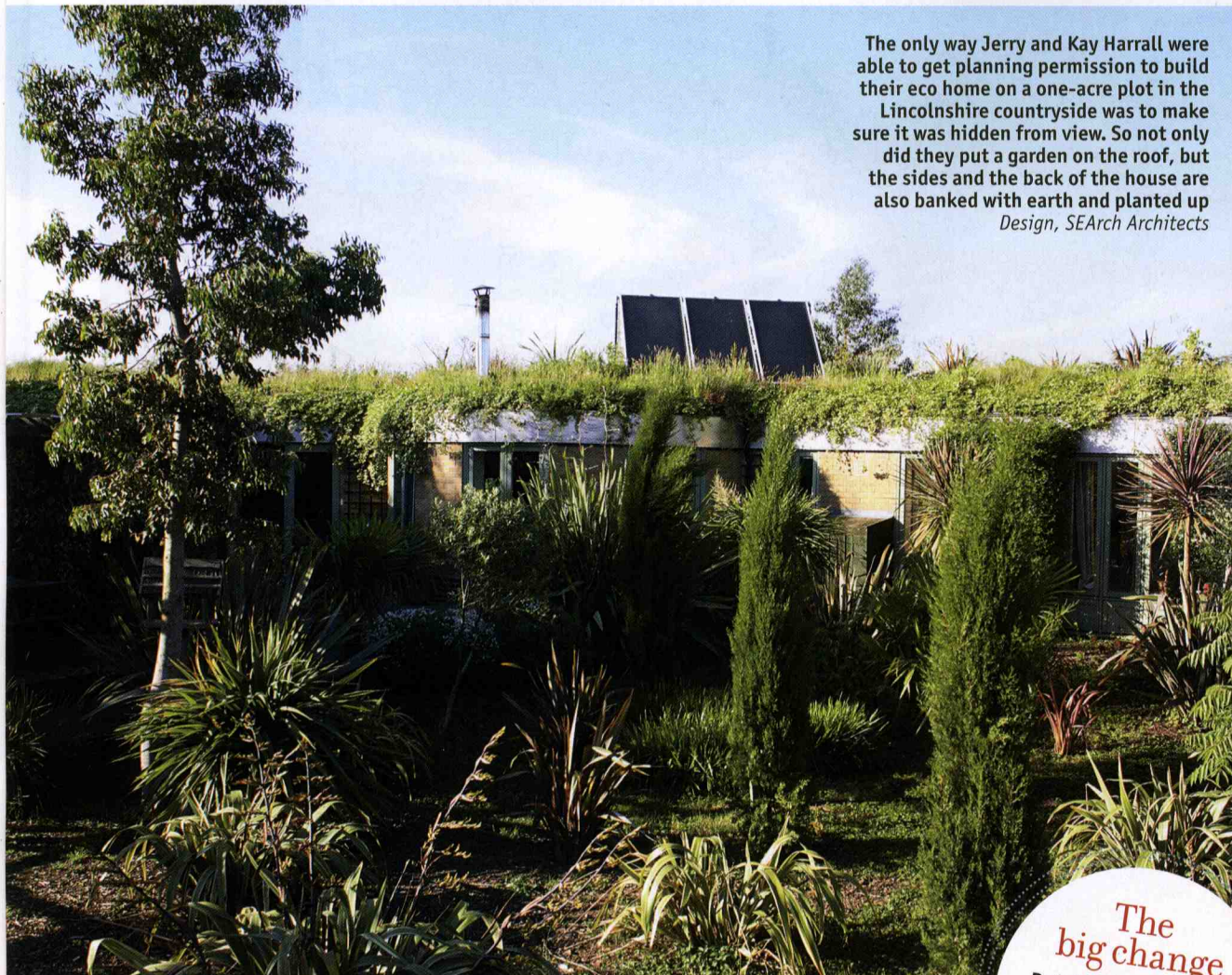
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The only way Jerry and Kay Harrall were able to get planning permission to build their eco home on a one-acre plot in the Lincolnshire countryside was to make sure it was hidden from view. So not only did they put a garden on the roof, but the sides and the back of the house are also banked with earth and planted up
Design, SEArch Architects



The big change
Building an eco-home from scratch and furnishing it with recycled pieces



‘Our home is almost invisible’

The Harralls built an amazing eco-friendly, earth-covered house that’s hidden by hundreds of trees and shrubs

❖ For stockist details, turn to page 209





One of the reasons for choosing concrete as the main building material for the house was that it absorbs the heat of the sunlight that pours in through the floor-to-ceiling windows at the front of the house. Jerry and Kay also just like the look of it. 'Some people might find the painted concrete block walls strange, but for us it's refreshing, clean and modern,' says Jerry. Even the flooring is concrete. It's been ground and sealed to give the impression of a smooth tiled finish

*Flooring, Concept
Flooring Technology*



Get the
Harralls' look
Turn to page 44

The glazed doors in the living room lead straight onto a decked area outside. 'The front of the house is virtually all glass so it always feels bright,' says Kay

Ten years ago, Jerry Harrall set himself a big challenge – to build his family an affordable and eco-friendly home. Set on one acre of land in Lincolnshire, the award-winning single-storey house cost £235,000 to build and four years to complete, but it was worth the wait.

Was it your first build?

No, my wife Kay and I have built two houses for ourselves before,

so we knew what we were getting into. I also have practical building experience because I left school at 16 with just one O Level, and went to work on building sites for six years as a plasterer before returning to college and qualifying as an architect.

Three sides of the house are covered in earth - why?

We built the house on a field in the market town of Long Sutton

in Lincolnshire, and it took 12 months to get planning permission as the land was classed as open countryside. We were granted approval on the basis that the house would be almost invisible, so while the front has plenty of floor-to-ceiling windows, the sides and back have been banked in with earth and the roof and sides have been planted like a garden with ivy, so the house is →

Take the 60-second tour...

Who lives here Dr Jerry Harrall, a chartered architect and managing director of Sustainable Ecological Architecture Limited (www.searcharchitects.co.uk), his wife, Kay, and their children Penelope, 14, Royston, 12, and Molly, 11.

The home A single-storey, four-bed, self-build eco house in Long Sutton, Lincolnshire, built between 1998 and 2002.

The look Modern with concrete walls and floors.

Lessons learned 'You can have an eco-friendly life, but still have every mod con,' says Jerry.

Bought land for	Building costs	Now worth
£9,000	£235,000	£450,000

Building work..£165,000	Solar water heating
Garden£5,000
Bathrooms.....£15,000	Total.....£235,000
Kitchen	£10,000

THE LAYOUT There's a circular living room at the centre of the house with the family bathroom, TV room and four bedrooms off to one side. The fourth, main bedroom has an en suite and dressing area. The kitchen-diner, plus utility area, storeroom/larder and cloakroom are on the other side of the living room



ABOVE Keen to live a sustainable lifestyle, the Harrall family grow their own organic fruit and veg

LEFT The bespoke kitchen was designed by Jerry and made from recyclable aluminium. 'We chose aluminium because it's the only metal that's truly recyclable, but it does mark easily,' says Jerry



ABOVE The Harralls' water is heated by the solar panels on their roof, and although Jerry and Kay put in electric underfloor heating, the house is so well insulated they've only used it briefly on the coldest of days

smothered with foliage and virtually disappears into the landscape. We also planted over 12,000 hedging plants, shrubs and trees on the plot, which act as windbreaks on the open land and provide extra privacy.

Don't the earth banks around the house make it really dark inside?

Not at all. The large double-glazed windows at the front of the house let plenty of light in. And an added benefit of the earth sheltering is that it helps keep the house warm in winter.

Who did all the work?

The budget was tight, so it was vital that I did as much of the work as possible. Apart from employing an electrician, plumber and bricklayer, I did almost everything myself – from labouring for the bricklayers to decorating. I would be cutting

concrete blocks, which is the main material the house is made from, at 5am.

Where did you live during the build?

We all lived on site in a mobile home while we built the house. Caravan life with three young children was fairly hard work! Our youngest, Molly, wasn't even two years old when we first moved into the caravan.

So tell us about the house's eco credentials...

It's massively insulated – not only with the banks of earth on three sides but with a layer of polystyrene insulation – plus the concrete the house is made of soaks up and stores the warmth from the sun so we don't need central heating. We also have solar panels on the roof that help heat our water. The house actually costs less →

ABOVE It's not just the house that's eco-friendly: the furniture is, too. Most of it, including the table in the dining area of the kitchen, was made by local craftsmen using recycled materials. Even the walls are painted with organic paints
Furniture, Deryck Gilham. Paints, Holkham Linseed Paints

Jerry and Kay's bedroom is decorated in relaxing, earthy colours. 'Everything is done very simply,' says Kay. 'We wanted it to be a warm, serene space'

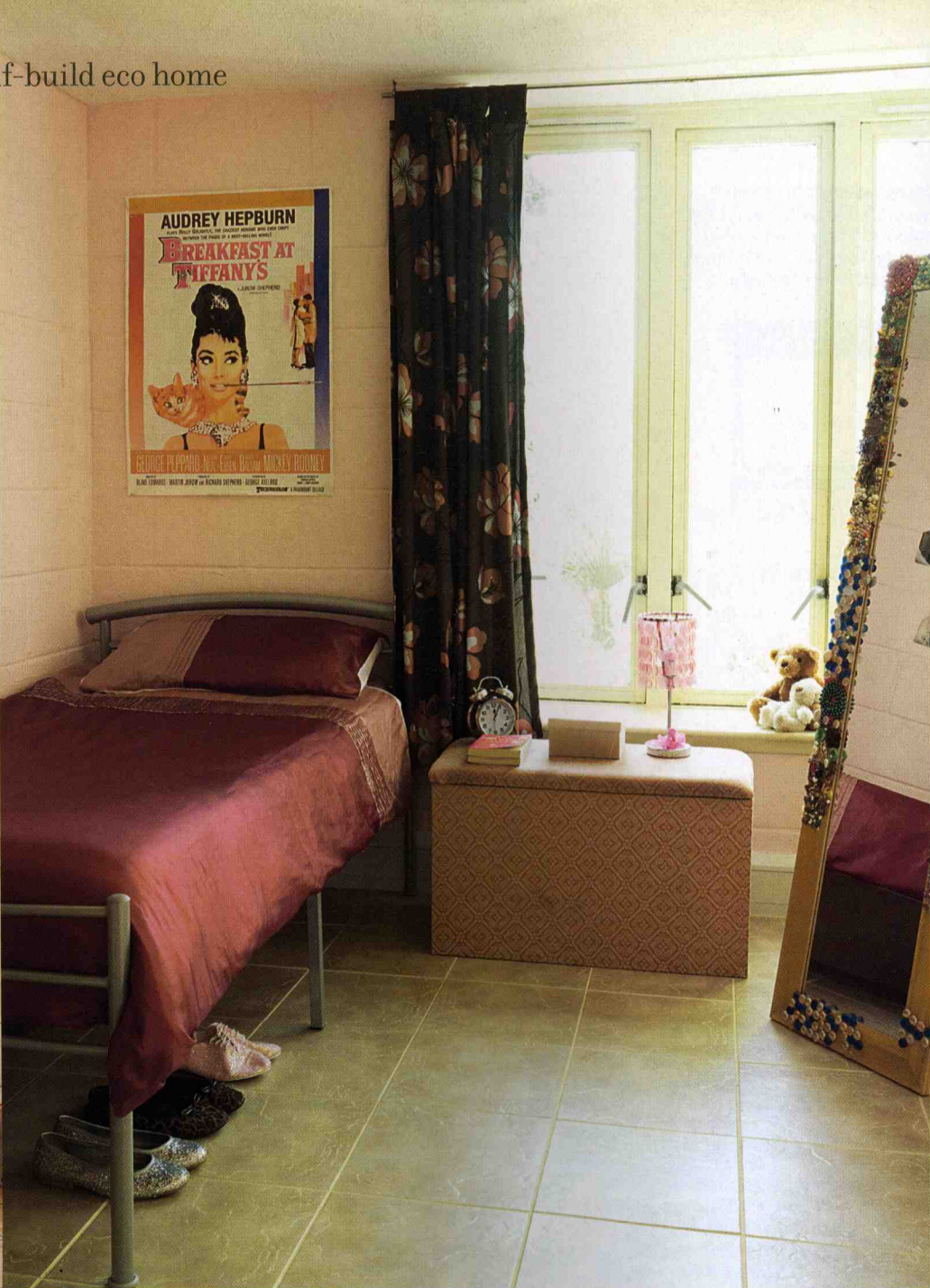


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Turn to page 44



BELOW A wooden plinth was made for the freestanding bath in the family bathroom to turn it into a fabulous centrepiece. A bright orange shower curtain completes the effect



ABOVE Daughter Penelope's room has been painted a soft pink for a girly touch. She added sparkle to the mirror by gluing beads to the frame

LEFT A bespoke wooden bench in the family bathroom provides a place for towels and candles to create soft lighting for long soaks in the bath

than £10 a week to run. Also, because it's made almost entirely out of concrete, we didn't use a lot of different materials on the build and when it came to decorating we used 'green' and recycled options, such as organic paints and furniture made from recycled and local materials.

Does an eco lifestyle mean no luxuries?

Far from it! Outside there's a tree house for the children, a gym and a basketball court, as well as a canopied eating deck and Mediterranean-style landscaped grounds with an organic vegetable plot and

orchard. It's an extremely beautiful setting and the house has every mod con, but without harming the environment.

You've put the house up for sale. Why?

We're selling the house because we have planning permission to build another eco home just across the road. It will be even more environmentally friendly than this house, generating its own power, harvesting water and managing its own waste on site. It's taken us a decade of research and is under construction at the moment. When it's done we'll all be moving in there. ❁

FEATURE DEBBIE JEFFERY STYLING EMMA CLAYTON PHOTOGRAPHS SIMON WHITMORE PLAN PERSONA-10