

On the edge

Adrian and Amie Cooper's idyllic seaside holiday home is the essence of laid-back living in the heart of Cornwall

A sedum roof provides a microclimate for insects and birds and a pleasant vista for the properties behind



AT A GLANCE

Names Adrian and Amie Cooper
Ages Mid-fifties
Location Cornwall
Property Self-build
Bedrooms Three
Bathrooms Four
Build started January 2016
Project finished February 2017
Size of house 227sqm
Build cost £550,000



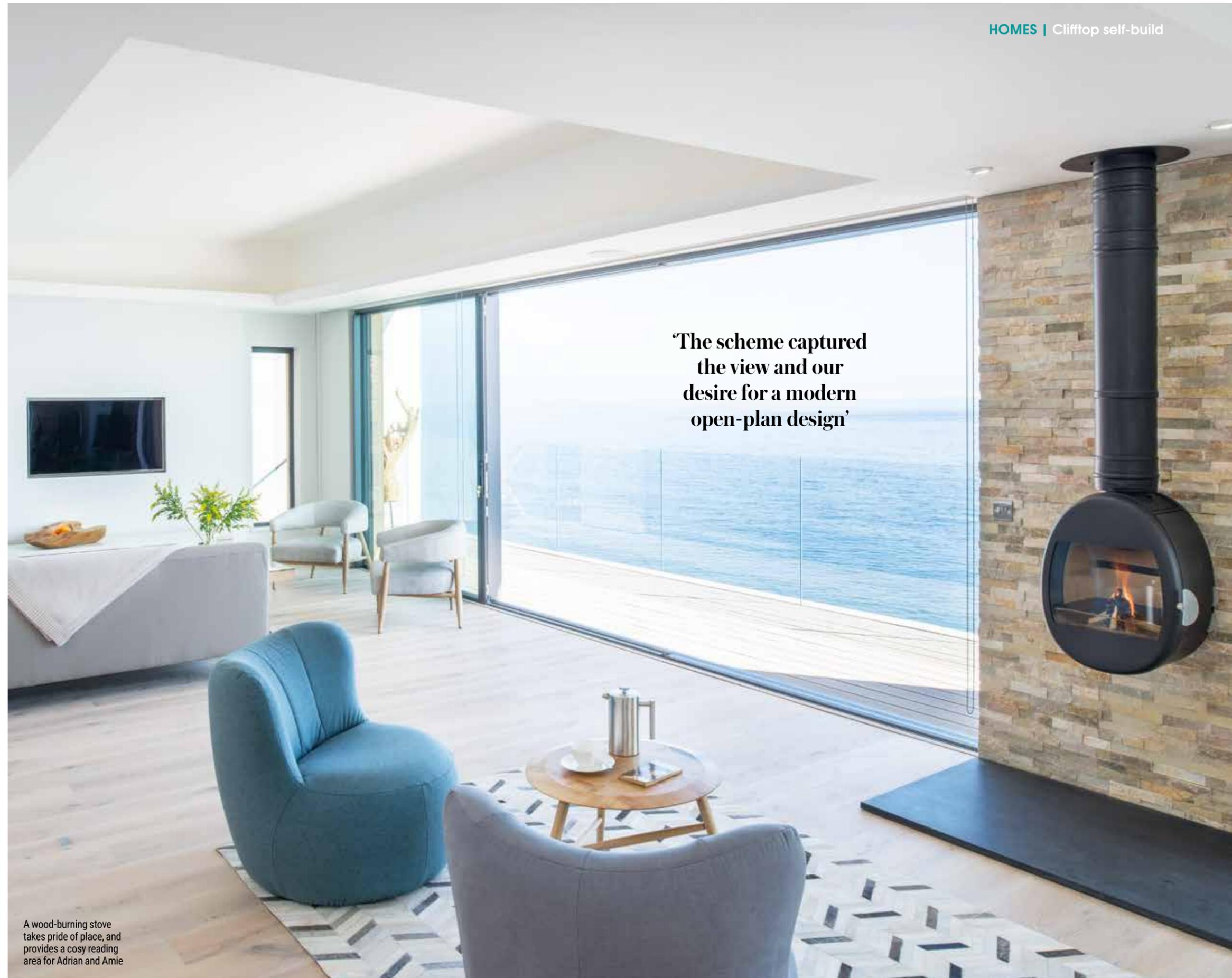
Set in picturesque south-east Cornwall, balanced on a cliff overlooking the sea with St George's Island to the west and Looe to the east, sits Sea Edge house. It's a stunningly modern replacement house by Kast Architects, designed initially for use as a holiday home and later as a retirement abode for couple Adrian and Amie Cooper. 'We purchased the house because of its south-facing position and stunning sea views,' explains Adrian. 'However, it soon became apparent that the original old and small dwelling couldn't be modernised.'

The couple got in touch with Kast Architects to design a self-build property to replace the original run-down two-storey house, which wasn't taking advantage of the stunning coastal view. 'The firm had the vision to sketch an outline plan that captured the view and our desire for a modern open-plan design,' says Adrian. 'We also wanted a low-maintenance home incorporating low-energy features, to keep utility costs down and reduce its carbon footprint.'

Nicholas James of Kast and his team thoughtfully interpreted the couple's brief, designing a 227sqm house that maintains a similar footprint to the original dwelling and, while taking advantage of the plot's stunning vista, has a low-profile roof to ensure properties further inland maintain their outlook. The design placed the main living accommodation on the upper floor, where the spectacular views can be enjoyed from the living, dining room and kitchen spaces. The dining room has a framed view to the south and west, while the living room benefits from sliding doors opening onto a 10m wide south-facing balcony, where a suspended external staircase provides an easy link to the garden and alfresco dining area below. All the en-suite bedrooms are located on the lower floor, each with direct access to a southerly-facing terrace.

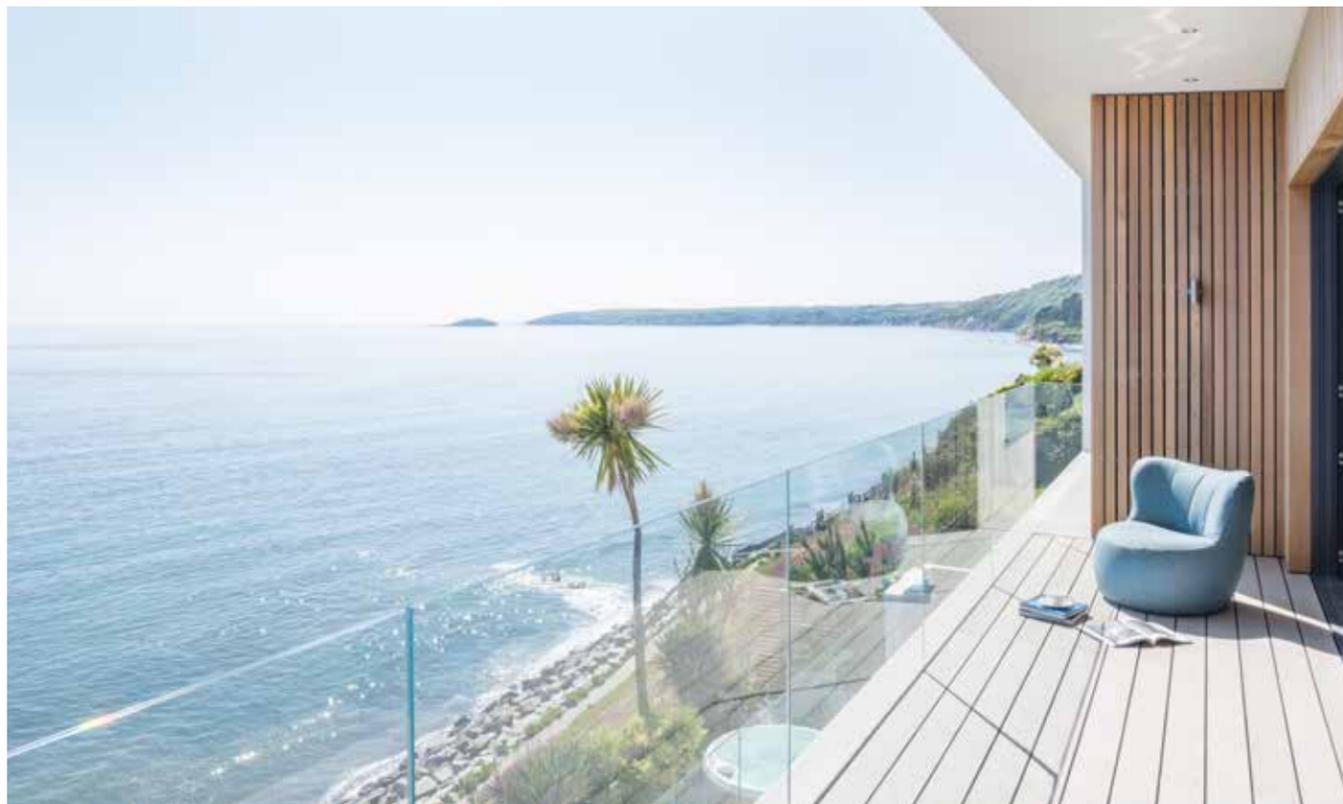
'The external staircase was an integral part of the design to allow easy access to and from the garden,' explains James. 'It helps finish the composition of the seaward elevation and adds drama to the overall scheme. The staircase frame is cantilevered and suspended steel, and gives the appearance of a lightweight structure that avoids touching the ground.'

To meet the Coopers' brief for an eco-friendly house, the architects designed the property using a highly insulated >



'The scheme captured the view and our desire for a modern open-plan design'

A wood-burning stove takes pride of place, and provides a cosy reading area for Adrian and Amie



timber frame, with steelwork to help achieve some of the dramatic cantilevers. 'The simple plan and form of the building, coupled with overhangs for solar shading and the balance of glazing between the north and south facades, illustrate how the house was originally designed to achieve Passivhaus certification,' says James. 'During the detailed design and costing of the scheme the thermal performance of the property was reduced slightly, but it still exceeds building regulations requirements and performs to a high standard.'

An efficient thermal envelope, coupled with good levels of air tightness, have resulted in a house that is low-cost to run, with an air-source heat pump feeding the underfloor heating and photovoltaic panels helping offset any electrical demands. A sedum roof slows down water run-off, while ensuring a microclimate for insects and bird life, as well as providing a more pleasant elevation to the properties that sit behind Sea Edge. Externally the house is clad in western red cedar and a silicone-based render. 'This cedar is a durable and readily available timber cladding that will weather naturally over time, while the silicone-based render was chosen for its resilience in maritime environments,' explains James.

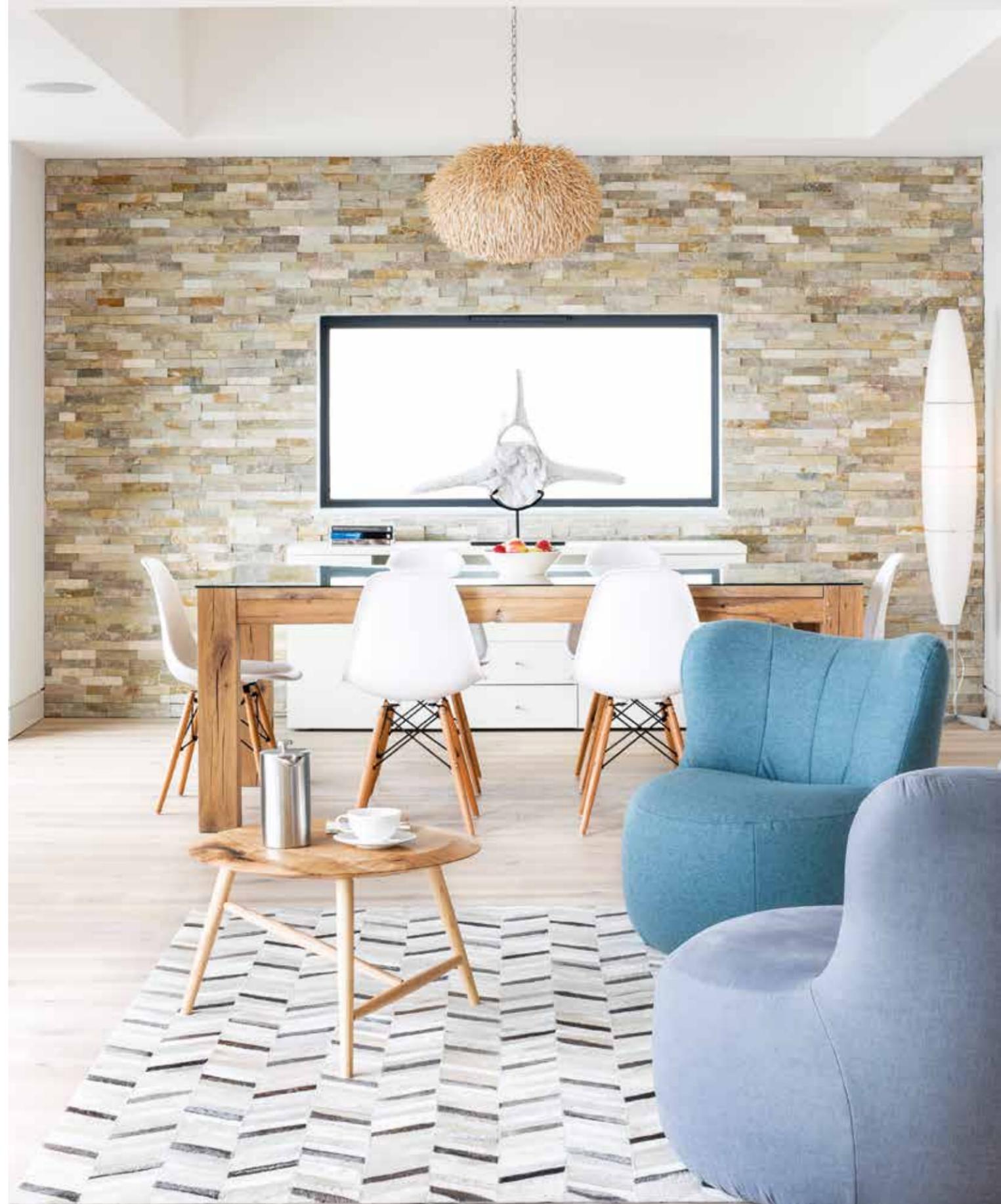
Planning permission was granted on first application in March 2015. 'Obtaining planning approval was simple. We had taken care to design a property that was respectful of its neighbours, avoided overlooking, and kept its overall mass to a minimum,' James continues. 'Cornwall Council was receptive towards our plans for a modern coastal house.'

James took time in compiling a full set of production information drawings and documents before putting the >

above The decking is a composite by Millboard, and the balcony and gardens are linked by an external staircase to provide easy access

left Externally, grey granite paving slabs have been used, with rounded pebbles lining the borders

right The first floor is the hub of the couple's holiday home, with a flowing space that includes living, kitchen and dining areas





The colour scheme and interior design have been kept neutral, with muted greys, blues and browns throughout

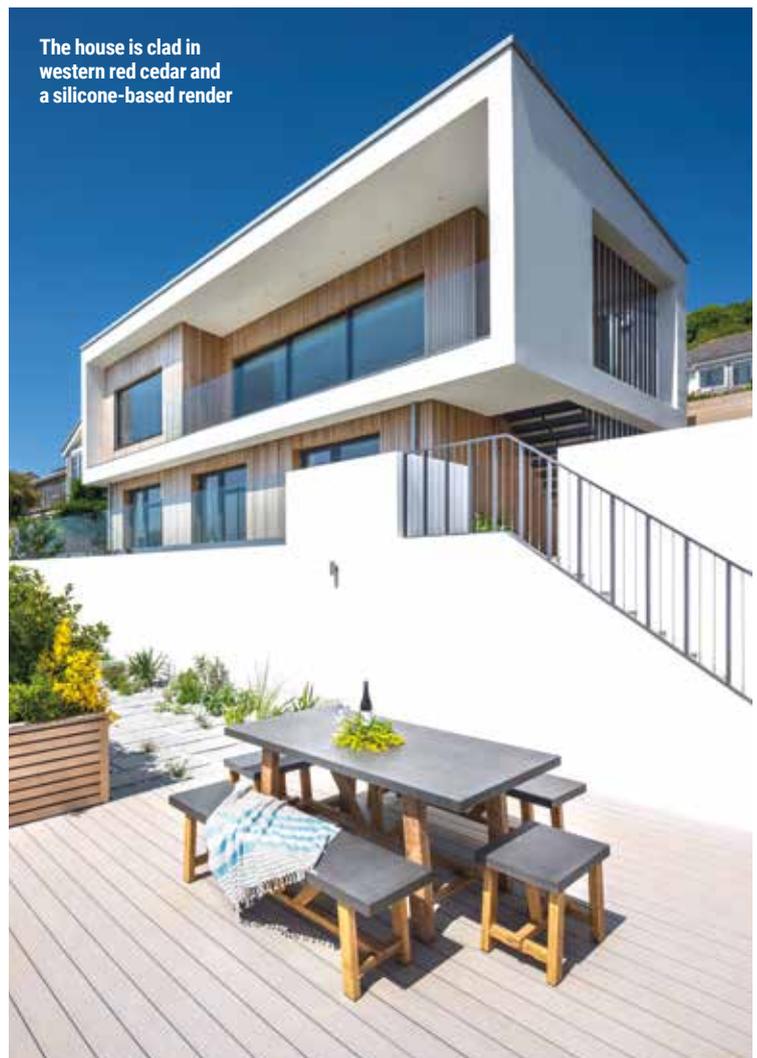
project out to tender, with the build beginning in January 2016 and taking just 12 months to complete.

Although the construction was challenging due to the tight nature of the site and access via a snug Cornish coastal road, it was fairly plain sailing, with Kast Architects project-managing the scheme in tandem with Fox Construction Solutions. 'Kast arranged planning permission and advised us on local builders and consultants,' says Adrian.

Walking into the new home, it's clear to see the property has an instant connection with the surrounding landscape. With glazed expanses in most rooms, you're never far from a stunning view of the sea. You enter the house on the upper floor, with a cloakroom and storage to your left and the open-plan kitchen, dining room and living area ahead. It has been carefully designed to create individual zones with subtle variations in ceiling profile and wall finishes to help separate the spaces. Walk down the stairs behind the lounge area and you access the sleeping quarters on the lower floor – a master bedroom, with a walk-in dressing room and en-suite and two guest en-suite bedrooms. There's also a TV room/guest space if ever needed, and a utility room.

Although the house itself is mainly white on the exterior, the interior has been decorated in a warm palette of muted greys, blues and browns to create an inviting, tactile feel, with Adrian and Amie working with interior designers 3idog to create the scheme. Exposed sandy-coloured split face wall tiles, patterned rugs, grey and blue upholstered furniture and feature lighting have all been used to create an effortlessly simple, yet welcoming home. 'The attention to detail has been more than we anticipated,' says Adrian. 'The end product speaks for itself and is a credit to all involved.' **GD**

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Project details

The low-down on this striking Cornish coastal property

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SUPPLIERS

PROJECT TEAM
Architect Kast Architects (01872 241 111; kastarchitects.com)
Structural engineer Entos Consulting (01872 554 031; entosconsulting.co.uk)
Interior designer 3idog (01872 264 899; 3idog.com)
Landscape architect Sam Ovens Landscapes (01503 492 702; samovens.co.uk)
Main contractor Fox Construction Solutions (07789 516 597; foxcornwall.com)
Electrical subcontractor I&D Electrical Services (01452 668 387)

STRUCTURE
Windows and doors Fenster (01626 353 371; fensteruk.net)
Sliding doors Uni-Slide (01626 353 371; uni-slide.com)

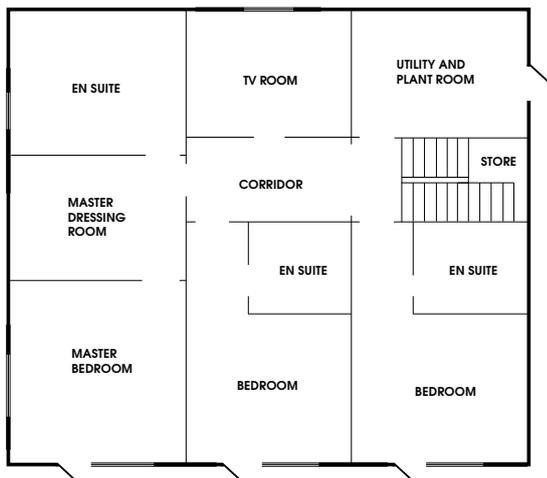
FIXTURES & FITTINGS
Exterior decking Millboard (024 7643 9943; millboard.co.uk)
Dining room split-faced wall tiles Mandarin Stone (01600 715 444; mandarinstone.com)



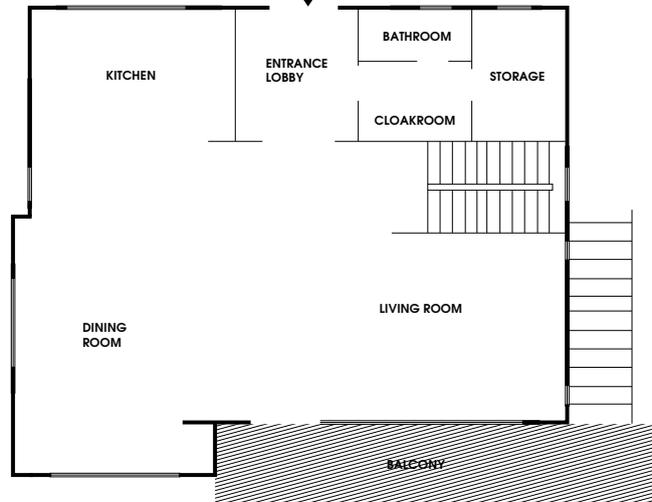
SPOTLIGHT ON GRANITE PAVING

The grey flamed granite paving slabs complement the light colour of the render, while the contrasting borders of rounded pebbles help to create pathways around the house. Granite is extremely hard-wearing and also suitable for areas that see a lot of water, as its textured surface makes it slip-resistant. Granite comes in a range of colours, but for a similar shade try silver grey granite paving from London Stone, from £37.80 per sqm. (01753 212 950; londonstone.co.uk)

FLOORPLAN



LOWER GROUND FLOOR



UPPER FLOOR

Style finder

Organic forms and a neutral palette transform this coastal retreat



IN DETAIL

EXTERNAL STAIRCASES

This external staircase leads from the top of the house down to the coastal path by the sea, and its open risers are designed to let light into the side alleyway. Outdoor staircases need to be resistant to the elements and come with non-slip treads. Try Stairplan (01952 608 853; stairplan.com) for a similar arrangement.

GET THE LOOK

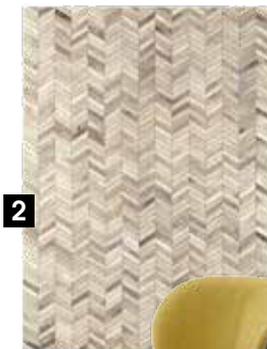
1 Tactile surface Vita Copenhagen Eos feather pendant shade in light brown, £99, Black by Design (01889 502 716; black-by-design.co.uk)

2 Parquet pattern Gaucho chevron rug, from £309, The Rug Seller (0161 876 4566; therugseller.co.uk)

3 Fire starter Scan 66-1 wall-mounted wood-burning stove in black, £1,965, Fireplace Products (01268 200 139; fireplaceproducts.co.uk)

4 Low lying Bao armchair by EOOS for Walter Knoll, £2,885.75, Aram (020 7557 7557; aram.co.uk)

5 Fluid shape Lacrima bath, £2,525, The Pure Bathroom Collection by Smiths Briten (0845 634 4321; purebathroomcollection.co.uk)



MATERIAL FOCUS



3D FINISH
Ledgestone split face tiles in Indian green, £39.95 per sqm, Walls and Floors (01536 314 730; wallsandfloors.co.uk)



NATURAL SHADE
Blue grass matt emulsion, £39.50 for 2.5L, Fired Earth (0845 366 0400; fireearth.com)



MODERN FLOOR
Charing Cross oak, from £98.18 per sqm, Ecora (020 7148 5265; ecora.co.uk)