



ANATOMY OF A GRE

Jeff and Rose Tanner have built a low-energy home, designed to last a lifetime, for just £175,000 — here, they reveal the nuts and bolts of how it all works

Details Green self-build, Milton Keynes, Apr 2010 – Feb 2011
Project Cost £175,000 (£1,122/m²) **Designer** Tailor Made Design

Words: Mark Brinkley Photography: Darren Chung



EN HOUSE

A model low-energy home

The highly insulated timber frame structure, finished in rough coat render with a Spanish slate roof and triple-glazed Swedish windows, meets Level 4 of the Code for Sustainable Homes and is located on a former demonstration site of low-energy houses in Milton Keynes

Jeff and Rose Tanner are, in many ways, typical of today's self-builders, being a little older than they used to be (they are both nearing retirement) and, perhaps typically of their generation, worried about rising fuel prices too. So it seems natural that they would be interested in building a low-energy home.

Milton Keynes, where their new home is situated, has a long pedigree of promoting both self-build and low-energy construction. It has always prided itself on asking developers to beat the Building Regulations, and is home to a number of experimental low-energy homes. It has also hosted three national housing exhibitions, and the Tanners' house is actually located on one of these sites.

The plot had once been home to an information centre and in the intervening years it had fallen into the hands of English Partnerships, who decided to sell it off. For one reason or another, it wasn't terribly well advertised and rather than being marketed locally, it was auctioned off in London in February 2009. Jeff and Rose spotted the potential and won the bidding, picking it up for just £85,000 — proving that there are still some bargains to be had in the property market.

One of the requirements stipulated by the council was that the new house should meet Level 3 of the Code for Sustainable Homes, which specifies an energy-efficiency standard as well as a number of other factors. The Tanners had no problem with this as they wanted a low-energy house and they decided to set the standard somewhat higher at Level 4. "Early on, we decided that it would be timber frame because we thought that this would be the simplest way to achieve the insulation levels required," says Jeff. "We