

The lightness of being

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A celebration of its extraordinary riverside setting, this thoughtful newbuild in Hampshire is an example of how to create a home that is as sustainable as it is beautiful

SITTING AREA Curtains in Manuel Canovas' forest 'Tanya' stripe pick up on a 1970s Mario Bellini 'Camaleonda' green velvet sofa, from Anemone Interiors, and a vintage Danish daybed used as a coffee table. A 1960s Italian floor light with a lampshade from George Clark arches over a pair of Arnold Madsen 'Clam' chairs beside Lóránt Chován's painting *Mountain Landscape with House*

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'There is something about a wooden house that creates a sense of quietness and stillness,' says interiors consultant Carrie Dunlop of the home she shares with her husband James. 'We deliberately kept it quite low-tech - I didn't want a house that hisses and fizzes.' With one of the UK's most biodiverse and rare freshwater systems on their doorstep, the couple wanted to ensure that their new home sat lightly on the edge of the River Test in Hampshire. But when they purchased the plot in 2020, it had planning consent for a dwelling that didn't make the most of its extraordinary setting. The site is a verdant meadow, circumnavigated on two sides by the Test, a crystal-clear chalk stream that loops through the end of the garden and past the house, bringing with it trout, kingfishers, rare butterflies and a host of wildlife.

As the founder of an eponymous design studio and having lived locally since the age of 12, Carrie knew exactly what she wanted - a single-storey dwelling that would provide a contemporary take on the local vernacular. She enlisted the help of Andrew Wells, a director and co-founder of 3W Architects, to help realise the vision. 'The approach was to create a house that responded to its context, place and orientation,' he says. 'It needed an integrity that would make it feel anchored to the site.' Inspired by Nordic barns, with their distinctive, sturdy wooden cladding and functional pitched roofs, they sought to create something honest, considered and versatile.

Together they came up with an L-shaped design for the building, which was conceived as two interlocking barns with a connecting entrance hall. The open-plan kitchen, sitting room and dining space is in the longer part, along with the main bedroom and bathroom, and there are two bedrooms with en-suite bathrooms in the other, with a south-facing, sheltered entrance courtyard.

Carrie's desire to integrate the building with the landscape and bring the outside in reflects her early childhood spent in India and many subsequent trips to Africa, where entertaining flowed between the interior and exterior spaces. 'I envisaged winter around the open fireplace and summers spilling out onto the terrace,' she says. Huge French windows open onto this iroko-decked area, and the steps are flanked by teak planters and ironwork made by local blacksmith Philip Grob.

Each aspect has been designed with environmental principles in mind. The building itself floats above the ground on round, small-diameter concrete piles, which minimises the displacement of ground water, while also providing wildlife corridors under the structure. Guided by Passivhaus standards, the windows are triple-glazed in bronze frames, and the under-floor heating is driven by air-source heat pumps. 'The focus

SITTING AREA (above right and opposite top) Carrie designed the cabinetry that conceals a television and the Portland stone chimneypiece flanked by Porta Romana's 'Pip' wall lights. Lizbeth Holstein's *Lilypads* painting hangs near the kitchen. **HALL** Handmade clay tiles from Marlborough Tiles showcase an antique bench in Guy Goodfellow Collection's gold 'Persian Vine'. **KITCHEN** A mirror from Mayfly Vintage sets off DeVol's oak 'Haberdasher's' kitchen



LIZBETH HOLSTEIN, LILYPADS, ACRYLIC ON PAPER

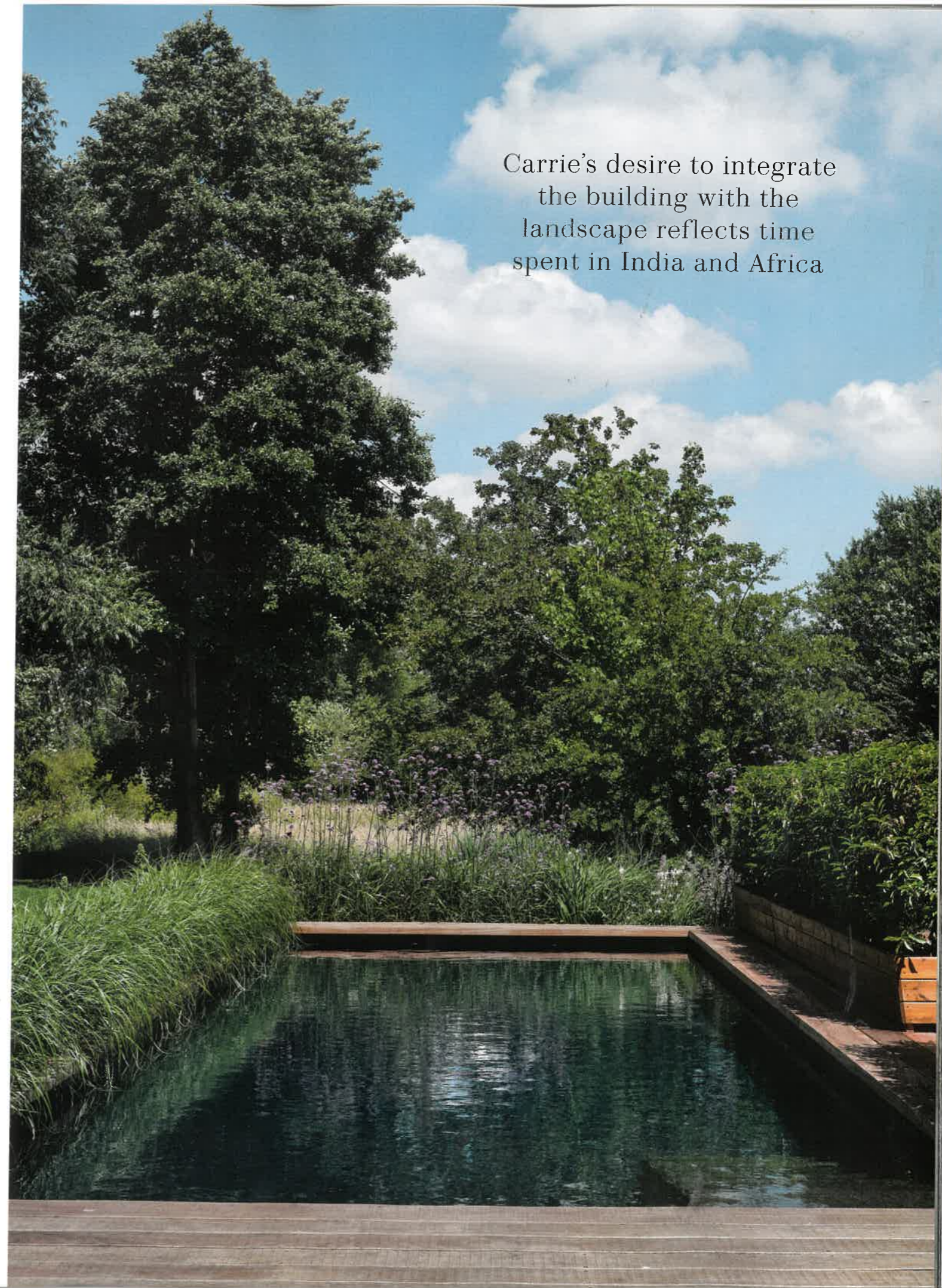


NIC FIDDIAN GREEN'S 'HORSE AT WATER', 2017, AND MARY FEDDEN'S 'SHELLS, FRUIT AND BOTTLES', 2009, ON OIL CANVAS

KITCHEN AND DINING AREA Nic Fiddian Green's silkscreen print *Horse at Water*, 2017, and Mary Fedden's painting *Shells, Fruit and Bottles*, 2009, are showcased by pale walls and oak ceiling panels. A vintage teak dining table is teamed with Hans J. Wegner dining chairs sourced on Vinterior, as was the vintage bar cart. Pooky lights and Lyngard's china 'Rialto' pendants hang above the DeVol island



MAIN BEDROOM The bed is layered with tactile pieces, including a Welsh wool blanket from Petersham Nurseries and cushions by Projektityyny. Lyngard pendants illuminate Lauri Hopkins' print *Black Dots*. A vintage Swedish chair and an Oka 'Rander' ceramic stool stand on a Moroccan rug, which warms and softens the polished concrete flooring by Lazenby



Carrie's desire to integrate the building with the landscape reflects time spent in India and Africa

was to get it right ecologically,' says Carrie, and each aspect has been fine-tuned: the insulation exceeds UK regulatory standards by 50 per cent. The home's orientation controls solar gain, maximises views and ensures privacy, which is important given its location behind Carrie's other business – Meadow, a lively café and gallery in the centre of Stockbridge.

The façade is covered in rainscreen cladding made of burnt larch – the wood is charred using the traditional Japanese *yakisugi* technique to create a dark, textured finish – uniting it with the dark tone and clean lines of the zinc roof. The outer layer of larch protects the main structure, while a ventilated cavity behind enhances its thermal efficiency and durability.

Inside, the palette is warm and similarly led by natural – and often reclaimed – materials. The walls are a soothing combination of beeswaxed plaster or tongue-and-groove timber panelling, both of which allow the building to breathe. 'The house derives much of its decoration and articulation by expressing rather than hiding its construction', says Andrew of the exposed superstructure and open-plan layouts. The beams, concrete floors and rough-hewn sandstone celebrate an honesty, logic and openness that permeate the house.

It was a mid-century Kerstin Hörlin-Holmqvist 'Paradiset' sofa in the main bedroom, with a curved back, tapered legs and sheepskin upholstery, that sparked Carrie's decorative vision. 'I wanted the house to feel timeless and enduring,' she says. In the sitting area, the green velvet of a vintage B&B Italia 'Camaleonda' sofa directed the palette of soft earthy greens, olives and terracottas, which mirror the views outside. The DeVol 'Haberdasher's' kitchen, with tactile tambour fronts and a patina-rich copper worktop, is the perfect complement.

Art plays a strong role in the house, often referencing the home's riverside setting, and a still life of shells and fruit by Mary Fedden seems to be made for the space. 'I love how the art further connects the house to the land,' reflects Carrie □

Carrie Dunlop Design: carriedunlopdesign.com

POOL (top left and opposite) Grasses and naturalistic plantings blur the edges of the freshwater pool by Biotop, blending it with the landscape. Garden designer Tamsin Miller Jones softened the lines of the house with perennials such as *Verbena bonariensis* and *Hydrangea arborescens* 'Annabelle'. **EXTERIOR** Three sets of double doors open from the living space onto the garden. Amelanchier trees and perennials, including *Calamagrostis* 'Karl Foerster' and *Nepeta cataria*, fill the planters by the steps. Adirondack chairs by Oakworld are perfect for poolside relaxing