



NOTTINGHAM ECOHOME U P D A T E J U L Y 2 0 0 3

Welcome to the first update of the website in nearly 4 years! This has been prompted by our recent talks given at the AECB summit, held at the Earth Centre, Doncaster in July.

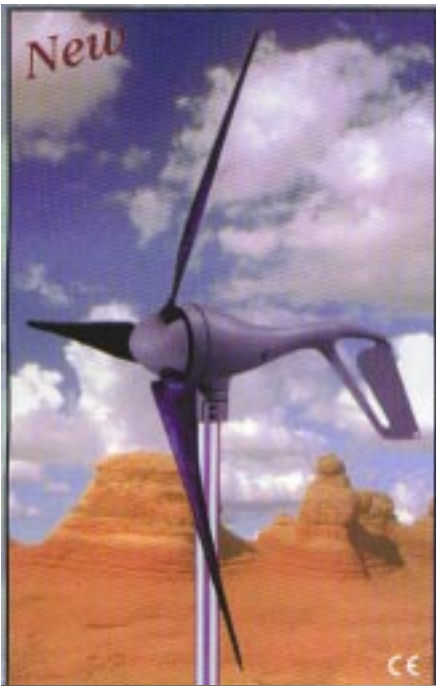
Knowing how many people visit our website, we felt rather embarrassed by how out of date it is, showing as it does the gory state of the refurb rather than reflecting the current state – which is quite pleasant! We are planning to update the site properly once the next wave of work – which will take the house to near completion – is out of the way. In the meantime, the notes from our two-hour workshop are available to download as a PDF (sorry no pictures).

The last five years in our eco converted Victorian home have seen periods of relative frenzy followed by exhaustion of our energy – and bank accounts!

The systems we have installed including rainwater collection, solar thermal and composting sewage system are all working well and the internal decoration is at last complete.

In September, once we have accrued more funds, we will be ready to install a wood-burning boiler in the cellar that will see us self-sufficient all year round in space and water heating. Before the boiler is installed, we will insulate the cellar ceiling using UK sheepswool and fibreboard. We will use a breathable air-tightness membrane under the wooden floorboards and joists, squeeze in the wool then cover with the board. We





will also install downstands along the walls, butting up to the boards to prevent cold bridging at the edges.

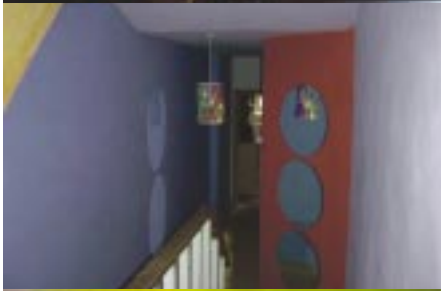
Alongside the wood burning boiler will be a super-insulated heat store that will hopefully mean we only have to load the fiery wood eating beast in the cellar, every two days, but we won't know until we test it. The chances are, our need for the system will be occasional rather than constant.

We will also be installing external insulation on the side and rear elevations, completing the thermal envelope and ensuring we make most efficient use of the wood we have already starting collecting. In some ways, this will be the flagship feature of the house – without it we can't really call it an eco house. It will improve the thermal efficiency of our walls by a factor of 9 and will drastically reduce our need for central heating.

Hopefully all this work will be complete before the nights really start getting chilly.

You would think that the prospect of having central heating in a house that is akin to a fridge in winter would have us jumping for joy. Our family, friends and visitors certainly will be, but we have got used to the cold – in a strange kind of a way. We have had very few colds and have got used to wearing lots of layers and covering ourselves in blankets and heating the room we are using at the time. We are a bit concerned that we will feel over warm – even though the boiler can be rated down from 28kWh to 14. We really hate visiting other houses that have the central heating blasting out at full bore, they feel so dry and make us very sleepy. We are





confident, however, that our intelligent central heating controller will give us precise control over the unit and keep it running at peak efficiency.

We will also be tackling our kitchen; although we make use of good quality second-hand units we are planning a modest corner sink/ storage unit made of reclaimed timber to increase workspace and replace the nasty temporary unit.

The garden will also be receiving a makeover – we're looking into a shed and some decking made of either larch or home grown western red cedar (we've found a small plantation near Wales which is gradually being cleared). We also hope to try some water-permeable hard paving which has recently come on the British market, but most of our garden will continue to be dedicated to the growing of food plants.

We have planned to install a couple of 1m diameter wind turbines fixed to the side of the building (one to each chimney stack). We need to investigate the Planning situation and if we encounter difficulties, a PV array hasn't totally been ruled out.

If you would like further information on our project or advice on your own, you can contact us by e-mail on gil@msarch.co.uk and penney.poyzer@btopenworld.com or use the auto reply facility on this site. You can also telephone us (see main site for details) if you prefer to have a chat about either the house or the architectural services we offer. Ecoteams (see PDF download for details) presently only operates in Nottinghamshire – check Global Action Plan website www.globalactionplan.org.uk for details of other programmes.

