



Hambury Bottom, Lulworth Cove

Architect: RB Studio
Client: Private Client

This magnificent seaside cottage, offering 4 storeys of exquisite modern living, occupies a commanding position overlooking the beautiful oyster-shaped Lulworth Cove.

Instrumental in ensuring there was adequate ventilation as well as natural daylight in the accommodation that is housed within the void of this window-less thatched roof, were four deluxe rooflights from Glazing Vision. Products ranged from the fixed Flushglaze rooflight to the electrically hinged VisionVent Solo and SkyHatch rooflights, fitted with bespoke black-out blinds.

Approached by private road, this new 10 bedroom property, complete with stunning indoor pool and gym, is, as the architects RB Studio proudly describe, “a marriage of traditional and contemporary detailing”.

Enchanted by the spectacular location of the thatched cottage at Lulworth Cove, the client's initial intention was to simply extend and refurbish. Lovingly maintained by the one owner for nearly 50 years, the house still retained characterful period features such as the original fireplaces and flagstone floors, and a delightful outdoor pool set in landscaped gardens offered views out across the rural landscape towards the coast. In early 2015 an application to alter and extend the house was submitted by Woods Bagot to the local Planning Department, which also included provision for a new underground swimming pool to replace the outdoor one.

Although the initial building application was approved in the Spring of 2015, by early summer it had become increasingly clear to appointed architects RB Studio and to the client that a simple 're-configuration' of the existing house would compromise the full potential of the site and would result in an inferior design.

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Digging out a basin for the indoor pool would also be problematic, requiring heavy underpinning of the existing house. The brief to RB Studio was thus subsequently revised to involve a complete demolition of the house replacing it with a new build. This would provide increased accommodation yet still on the same footprint, as well as the modern, open-plan living that the client desired. The indoor pool and spa area, always part of the client's vision for the house, would also be more extensive. Mindful, however, that the site was set within an area of Outstanding Natural Beauty and a conservation area, the architects were keen to "ensure that the design of the new property would be a sensitive response to this context", and that it would also have the same period character as the original property.



Thatched roof requirements

Indeed, keeping a thatched roof was an integral part of RB Studio's intent, and a stipulation set down by the Planning Department. Options to incorporate dormer windows or a mansard roof were rejected by Planning so the architects settled on an unusual design, namely a central flat roof with a thatched roof perimeter. Having never designed a property with a thatched roof before, the architects sought guidance from a local thatching specialist, Rod Miller, who also recommended a special nano coating to them. This would be applied to the thatch to enable the thatch to shed water quickly and to inhibit the growth of moss and lichens. This type of treatment was prevalent in the Netherlands, and Miller was convinced of the value of its application for the Hambury Bottom house.

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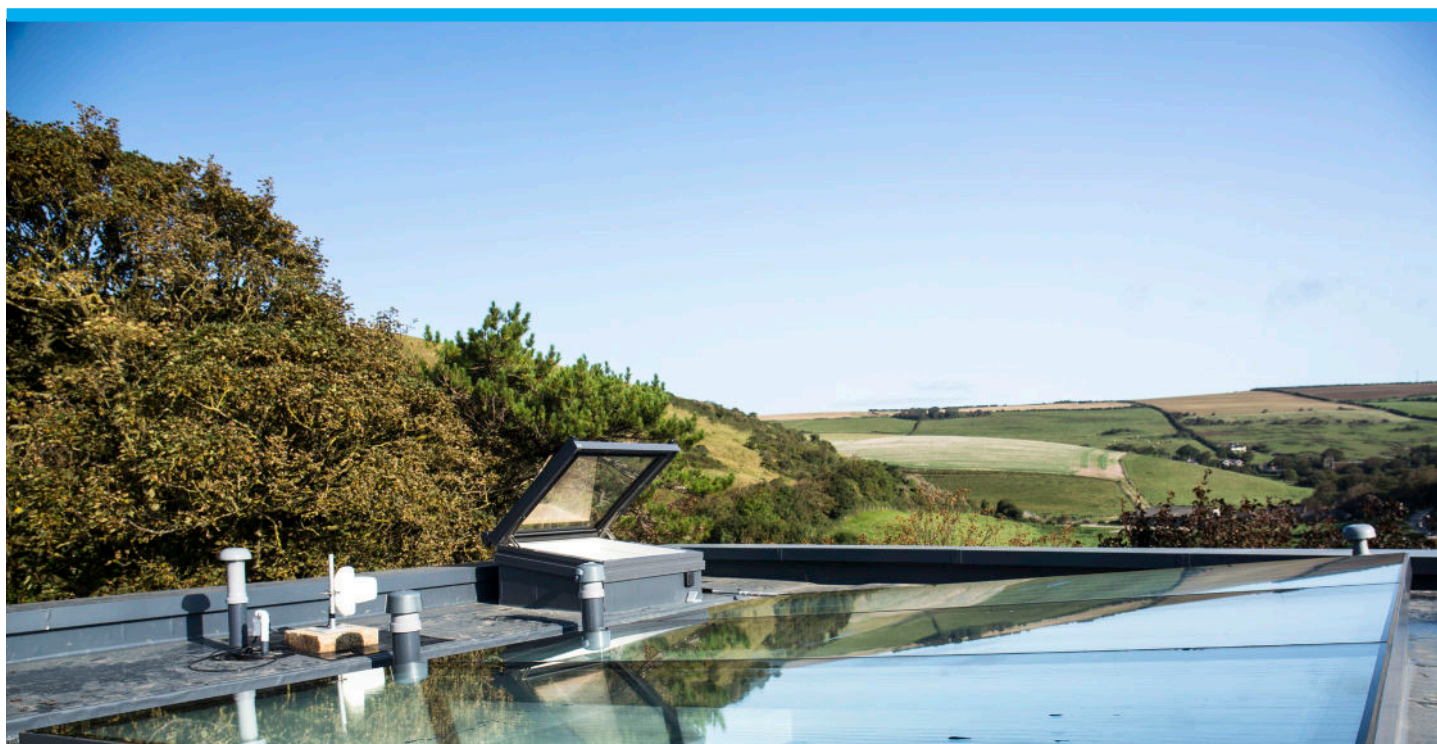
Once planning consent was granted, RB Studio appointed specialist building contractor, Matrod Frampton from neighbouring Wimborne, to undertake the construction of this property as complex engineering solutions were required to address the downward fall of the site, and excavate a basin for the intended indoor pool. The build was finally completed in late 2017.

Architectural challenges of implementing natural daylight

Assigning the second floor bedrooms to the void of the thatched roof presented a number of unique challenges to the architects. With its lack of windows the roof offered no source of natural daylight so the bedrooms and ensuite bathrooms would be reliant upon the installation of artificial lights. This was far from ideal. In addition, there would be no natural ventilation on this upper floor, which was hardly conducive to the creation of a healthy and relaxing sleeping environment.

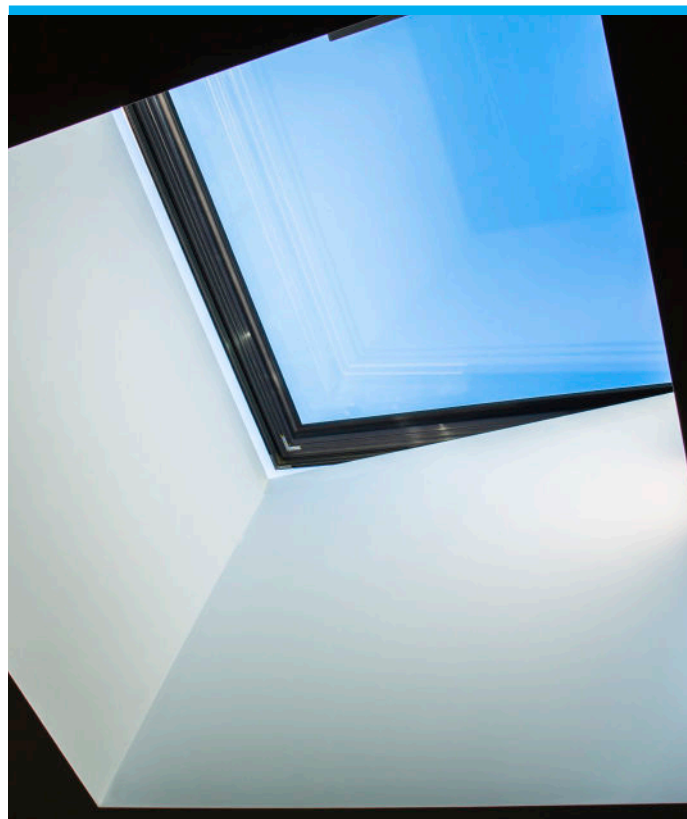
Furthermore, the local parish council, keen to ensure that its dark skies policy was respected, and concerned about potential light pollution, had raised strong objections to the provision and siting of glazing in the roof.

The solution put forward by the architects was for a series of rooflights to be installed in the central, flat part of the roof. Having specified Glazing Vision's products on previous projects, the architects were aware that the company not only offered a comprehensive range of rooflights to suit different applications but also, and crucially, that it could manufacture to bespoke sizes. They were confident that the Glazing Vision rooflights would meet the exacting requirements at Hambury Bottom.



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To ensure that there was daylight available in all 3 bedrooms on the second floor, a combination of Glazing Vision rooflights were installed, each measuring 1270mm x 1270mm. In 2 of the bedrooms there was an electrically hinged VisionVent solo (vent only) rooflight, whilst in the third bedroom there was an electrically hinged SkyHatch roof access rooflight. Common to all three rooflights was the slate grey exterior finish, designed to blend with the dark grey single membrane roof, and the powder-coated pure white finish (RAL9010) required by the architects for the minimalist internal framework in order to reduce the visual impact and ensure that the rooflights complimented the interior décor of the bedrooms. The sky, and the resulting light playfully animates these family spaces.



Providing ventilation to bedrooms

The 2 Glazing Vision VisionVent Solo (vent only) rooflights were specified primarily as a way of providing ventilation in the bedrooms, although the unobstructed views towards the sky were a not insignificant secondary consideration. Whilst available as a manually operated ventilation skylight, this particular type of rooflight was supplied to Lulworth Cove House, however, with the electrical hinge mechanism and remote control, deemed by the architects as offering the more deluxe, and easier-to-use option. The electronically hinged VisionVent solo (vent only) rooflight uses twindrive synchronised mechanics with encoder feedback to open automatically at the touch of a button – an intelligent wall switch is supplied as standard. State of the art electronics ensure a smooth, trouble free operation. Each side of the glass lid is supported by stainless steel hinges, meaning the unit is extremely stable when open. The rooflight cannot be back-driven, an essential safety feature welcomed by the architects.

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The SkyHatch roof access rooflight, like the VisionVent solo, is also available in a manually operated version, but for Hambury Bottom the architects again specified the superior, electrically operated mechanism, with intelligent wall switch. The SkyHatch Electric opens out to a maximum of 85 degrees providing a safe and reliable means of accessing the roof but can also be partially opened to serve as a ventilation unit too.

In response to the concerns of the parish council to the amount of light that might be emitted from the roof of the house, the architects needed a way of reducing the effects of the artificial light that might be seen coming from these 3 rooflights at night. Having had some experience of fitting blinds on the continent, the Glazing Vision factory in Norfolk precision-engineered bespoke exterior blinds for use with the rooflights at Hambury Bottom. At the touch of a button, they could also be controlled electronically from indoors.

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Natural daylight streams into central core of the house

Without doubt it is the super-sized Glazing Vision Fixed Flushglaze rooflight, positioned immediately above the central staircase up on the second floor that really adds drama to the interior of the house. Commissioned by RB Studio to a bespoke size of 34mm x 4200mm, it was supplied by Glazing Vision as a 3-part unit but still with the standard, minimalist framework, for which this product has become much sought-after by architects and developers alike. The sleek interior framework of this fixed Flushglaze rooflight maximizes the feeling of loft and airiness on this upper floor, and the slate grey internal finish (RAL 7015) seamlessly coordinates with the moody grey tones of the stairwell and landings.

Acting like a gigantic glazed canopy, this rooflight allows vast amounts of natural daylight and sunshine to literally flood into the house.



Shafts of light bounce off the walls of the stairwell, enhanced by the reflection from the glass balustrades on the landings, adding to the elegant ambience. Each landing is bathed in light, ensuring that these open spaces, intended as chill-out zones, are both inviting and cosy. And at night this fixed Flushglaze rooflight offers up a real treat – unfettered and mesmerising views of the starry Dorset sky!

In transferring the distinctive arts and crafts character from the old to the new cottage, RB Studio has ensured that Lulworth Cove House integrates seamlessly into the traditional architectural narrative of the local surroundings. For their client the house now offers the luxurious modern living that he had been seeking, combined with breathtaking vistas of the coastal landscape.

For more information on Glazing Vision's range of rooflights to suit a variety of applications, contact us on 01379 658 300 or request a CPD.