

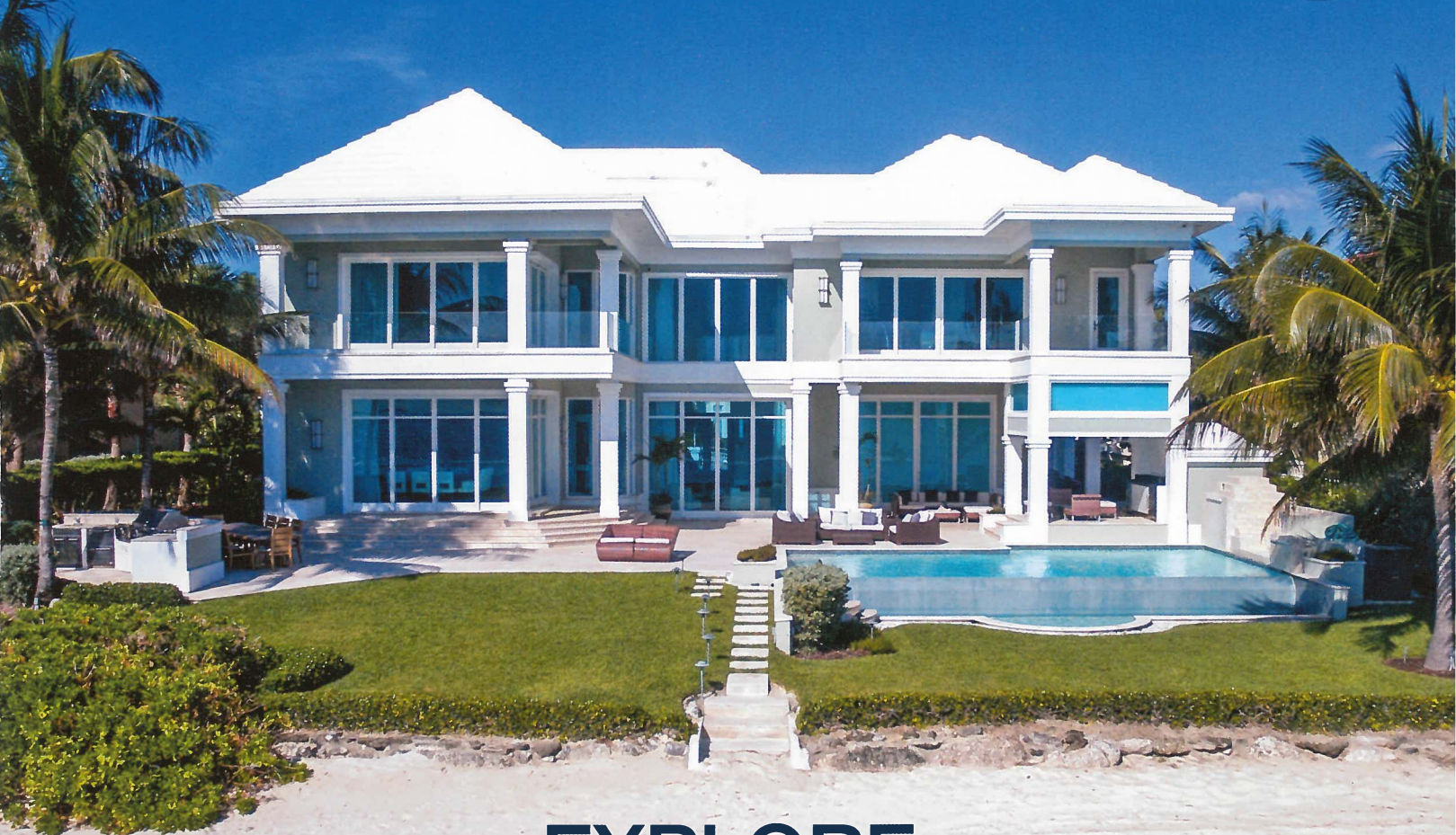
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AN ARCHITECT GRAFTS HIS MODERN WEEKEND HOME
ONTO A HERITAGE COTSWOLDS COTTAGE.

BY ELLEN HIMELFARB

Architect Richard Found built right up to the beech forest at the property's rear, so that the house appears to grow out of it. He matched the new home's thin, oblong dry-stone cladding to the local Cotswold stone of the original cottage so the overlap appears seamless. Terraces at every level trace the original stone retaining walls, which were displaced when construction began.

“Modern” is Richard Found’s stock-in-trade. As principal of the innovative practice Found Associates, he has revolutionized buildings for Saatchi, Selfridges and the great and the good of avant-garde London. Concrete interspersed with vast expanses of glass is the cornerstone of his business.

So when heritage authorities informed him he’d have to preserve the twee country cottage he had paid millions for—intending to raze and replace it with said concrete and glass—he became physically ill.

“My back froze. I could not move. My friend had to pass me [an ibuprofen]. I thought, oh no, I’ve just lost it all on a field.”

Found recounts this with the tanned, unbuttoned mien of a man who has turned a fiasco into an advantage. When forced to accommodate a gingerbread folly into an otherwise modern scheme, he did what innovators do: he innovated. And in the process he broadened the definition of what Found Associates can achieve.

This corner of the Cotswolds is beloved for its thick beech forests and limestone villages, which are unchanged after 200 years. It’s also beloved by Britain’s boldface names. Found and his wife, art consultant Jane Suitor, had been driving up from London for years to party with friends such as artist Damien Hirst

A low-slung fireplace runs half the length of the living room. “My wife is desperate to put a painting over it,” says Found, “but to me, the art is the view down to the forest.” The concrete envelope is a muted sand tone that blends in with the stone of the original cottage.



Above: Found snapped up this blanket of green in Gloucestershire, where aristocrats fraternize with actors, literati and royalty (the Prince of Wales owns a bolthole nearby). He built his house behind a 200-year-old stone cottage squeezed between a pond and an old-growth forest, and topped it with a green roof to blend into the landscape—“almost like the forest is growing over it,” says Found.

and art dealer Detmar Blow. It made sense to build a bolthole for themselves and their children, Olivia and Oscar, 13 and eight.

Because most land here is passed down through the generations, desirable property is scarce. One landowner's rare selling spree, however, resulted in this 16.5-acre parcel being advertised on the back page of the local paper. Shrouded by woodland and guarded by two ponds was a derelict, centuries-old game-keeper's cottage ripe for the wrecking ball. Where their friends managed Gothic estates swathed in tapestry, Found and Suitor imagined erecting an austere homage to artful country living bang in the middle of the clearing. Restoring the quaint lodge wasn't in their MO.

No sooner had they laid down seven figures than some neighbours rallied to slap the cottage with a Grade II heritage listing. It meant they couldn't as much as paint the front door.

When he had regained composure, Found approached the planning department with a scheme that thrust the cottage front and centre, but placed it within a minimalist setting that became the main event—like a backup singer who steals the show. Knowing it was the job of county officials to wrangle over every detail, he requested far more space than he needed. “If you go in asking for



Propping up the house with a 75-foot cantilever allowed this uninterrupted corner of glass, so that nothing comes between the family and their view to the outdoors. This clean aesthetic extends even to the Corian-topped kitchen island, where the taps are buried in the deep sink.

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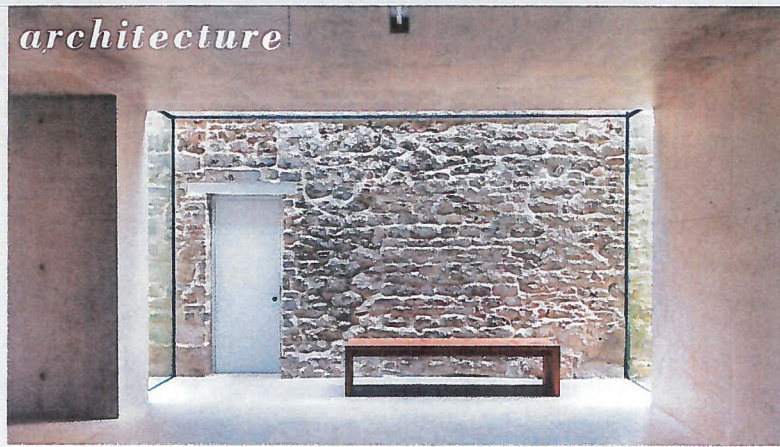


Opposite, top and bottom: Found designed three identical bedrooms in the new private wing, each with a 6.5-foot-square bed and an ensuite.

Above: Ensuite bathrooms are uncompromising in their minimalism. The Corian sink and bath appear as simple rectangular volumes with austere chrome taps. Everything is stowed away in a substantial mirrored cabinet.

Right: Sliding doors on the bedrooms disappear into pockets in the walls to remove the distinction between indoors and out.





CONCRETE THE MODERN WAY

Richard Found is one of a growing class of architects using concrete not as a means to an end but as an end in itself. Yet in his Cotswolds property, he has avoided the harsh grey tone found in art galleries and avant-garde retailers. With a local aggregate company, the architect designed a bespoke honey-coloured mix that almost perfectly matches the Cotswold stone of the attached heritage house.

Three-foot blocks of concrete tile make up the floors, ceiling and most walls in the new annex, creating a softer, warmer environment than most quintessentially concrete spaces. And visually, the custom concrete is less jarring than other materials. When you cast your eye through the space and out the windows, the concrete blends harmoniously with the traditional materials outside.

“I’m so pleased by how warm the concrete is and how it complements the Cotswold stone,” says Found.

Mixed from limestone, a plentiful material particularly in the Cotswolds, concrete is highly sustainable. Moreover, it is energy-efficient. Poured in place, it produces almost no construction waste, and it absorbs and retains heat, making the habitat less reliant on heating and cooling systems. Still, the warmth here comes as much from the sandy tone of the concrete—enhanced by recessed tube lighting—as its insulating properties. A vaguely mottled quality gives it personality and an earthy texture underfoot.

To hear him speak of it, you’d almost think Found was prouder of his flawless concrete walls than of the tracts of five-millimetre-thick windows facing the woodland. Long concrete hallways run the length of the property in each direction, but rather than break up the surfaces with art—of which there is no dearth in this household—Found has left them bare. **“I’m reluctant to drill any holes in it,”** he says.

His wife, the art dealer Jane Suitor, has brought in experimental art by friends such as Jeremy Deller and Glenn Ligon, but only to a few painted-plaster walls. In the spaces enveloped entirely in concrete—like the anteroom between the old and new wings (top)—the couple struggle to agree on a piece that won’t detract from the purity.

“We have continual arguments about putting in art,” says Found. The compromise, he says, would have to be a sculpture you can walk around.

“I love concrete, so why would I want to lose it all behind art?” —E.H.



The low-slung, elongated-T structure means you can only “read” one end of the modern construction at a given time, unless you’re looking at the scheme head-on. In contrast, the historic cottage at the centre is always in view.

In adherence with heritage regulations, the historic house is oriented perpendicularly to the new, so both front and back façades are unobstructed.



Left: Where a side door on the old house meets the new construction, Found created a glass antechamber topped with weathered stone. It provides a visual segue between the two. In the foreground is the turfed roof of the bedroom wing.

Below: An oak-panelled guest bedroom in the guest cottage is more obviously homey than the bedrooms in the new wing. Unable to build furniture into the original walls, Found added simple furnishings such as an Eero Saarinen side table and an Arne Jacobsen lamp.

Opposite, top: The media room is almost entirely concrete, including a poured-on-site desk that runs its length. Found's children often climb in through the 6-ft. window and over the desk to get in.

Opposite, bottom: The old cottage had a privy in a lean-to at ground level. Found created a modern bathroom upstairs to serve the two guest bedrooms. He sandblasted the black-painted wood beams and faced everything in oak.



what you want," says Found, "well, you're not going to get it." The two sides met in the middle, ostensibly, but the 5,500-square-foot extension was his ultimate wish. Altogether, the planning, restoration and construction lasted four years.

For six months builders picked apart the cottage, pulling out ivy, bolstering foundations, shoving sheep's-wool insulation behind wall joists, lifting up patchwork floors to insert under-floor heating topped with stone pavers. Ceiling beams inexplicably coated in black paint were sandblasted and wonky walls replastered. "The goal was for it to feel contemporary but at the same time respect the heritage," says Found. In place of a 1980s kitchen came an up-to-date version faced in oak with the same amber tone as the original timber. Upstairs is a bathroom with a free-standing tub where once there was no such convenience.

But the cottage, now merely a guest suite, was simply a warm-up.

It sat behind stone retaining walls, with a wooded incline in back, leaving little room for development. To get behind it, an

Continued on page 54