



# CULLINAN STUDIO

## PRESS ENQUIRIES

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## PRESS RELEASE

# PUSH PULL HOUSE

Amersham, UK

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Cullinan Studio has completed a playfully creative, light-filled cross-laminated timber (CLT) and brick new-build family home in Amersham, Buckinghamshire.

The busy family, which includes two boys, two dogs and visiting grandparents with increasingly limited mobility, had been struggling in a flimsy, badly insulated, dark and inaccessible house with a poorly designed extension, which created a barrier to their much-loved garden. In redeveloping the site, the client had considered timber kit houses to maximise efficiency and reduce waste, and was committed to a sustainable timber home. Cullinan Studio offered a bespoke solution which met the sustainability criteria of a kit house, and ensured it was tailored to the family so that they can play out their daily lives as they've always wanted: in a spacious, naturally-lit home connected to their leafy, mature garden and surrounded by the warmth of the exposed timber structure.

The house is located in a residential area built in the 1930s at the end of the Metropolitan Line, known for its Arts and Crafts architecture. Today the 30s houses are fiercely protected, with any departure from imitative Arts and Crafts form and detail frowned upon by the local authority and its planning committee. The family's initial plans to rebuild proved challenging, but Cullinan Studio understood the priorities and passions of the family, and in conversation with local planners they have designed a new house that exceeds everyone's expectations.

The new two-storey detached house is redolent of Arts and Crafts architecture in its well-proportioned solid forms, steep roof and palette of sturdy materials. With an exposed spruce CLT structure designed in collaboration with solid timber specialists Eurban, the house echoes the Arts and Crafts ethos of simple forms created through truth to materials. However, unlike the Arts and Craft movement, which denounced industrial processes, Push-Pull House harnesses modern methods of construction with its use of machine-made CLT.

The design ruptures the volume of a traditional pitched house, pulling it into three parts and cracking open the roof to pour light into the heart of the home. The architects have pushed and pulled the footprint of the original house to better suit the family, orientating the new house towards the garden, making it a natural extension of their home.

The main volume of the house is symmetrical in plan with an entrance hall and stairwell slicing through the centre. The recessed entrance hall is flanked by two mono-pitched volumes, which are defined by a brick base of locally sourced Chiltern brick and lime mortar topped with black stained vertical timber panels. A sweeping grey tile clay roof completes the materials palette, appearing to float over the high-level eave windows which, in turn, allow views directly from bedrooms into the tree canopy while maintaining privacy towards neighbours.

The first floor has four corner bedrooms: the master bedroom and en suite bathroom, two bedrooms for the boys with a shared bathroom and ladders to high study ledges, and a guest bedroom with en suite. The eastern pitched roof slopes down to an open plan, single-storey volume containing a large ground floor kitchen and living and dining rooms. On the western side of the ground floor there is an accessible bedroom for visiting grandparents and a study and workshop. Beneath the large living area, the architects created a den in the basement for the boys to escape to.

The home is flooded with daylight from full-height glazing on the ground floor, top lighting from the middle hallway and clerestory windows above the hall. From morning to evening, the family enjoys sunlight sweeping across their home and garden. Cullinan Studio is passionate about reconnecting people with nature as a means to improve our health, wellbeing and creativity, and this house captures the spirit of their values.

Practice Leader Roddy Langmuir explains:

“Before we had built anything, we noticed that the family already had a favourite place in the garden, a place where the west sun swept round behind the north-facing frontage. By sliding the living room wing back into the garden we were able to catch this afternoon and evening sunshine. Free corners frame views out to the garden, allowing the family to connect to their garden and the tall trees of the street. Glimpses of changing weather and sky follow the family as they go about their day.”

Houseowner Veronica Steel, commented:

“One of the key elements of the design which I get so much pleasure out of is the high-level clerestory windows which frame beautiful views of the trees and changing sky, enlivening the interior like a mural.”

Overlapping voids and double-height spruce walls form a sequence of volumes so the living spaces flow together, making for a fun and sociable home. A storage wall built into the eastern stair displays the family’s books, ornaments and artwork, and mezzanine floors offer spaces for retreat with views back over across larger gathering spaces at the heart of the home.

#### NOTES TO EDITORS

<b>Location</b>	Hervines Road, Amersham, Bucks HP6 5HS (private)
<b>Internal floor area:</b>	503m <sup>2</sup>
<b>Construction dates</b>	Jan 2017 – Aug 2018
<b>Client</b>	Private client
<b>Architect</b>	Cullinan Studio
<b>Interior designer</b>	Wilkinson Beven
<b>Structural Engineer</b>	Engineers-HRW
<b>Services engineer</b>	Couch Perry Wilkes
<b>Timber engineering</b>	Eurban
<b>QS:</b>	Peter Gittins & Associates
<b>Project Management</b>	Sharman Whyte Ltd
<b>Contractor:</b>	GNC Construction Ltd
<b>Photos</b>	© Jim Stephenson

**Cullinan Studio**

Cullinan Studio believes that architecture is a social act, both in its creation and its impact on people and planet. Too often the built environment is unnatural, unhealthy and unfair. Cullinan Studio engages with organisations and communities, seeks local, low-carbon, non-toxic solutions, and strives to connect people to nature. Through that connection, the practice raises awareness and fosters care of the planet.

RIBA Royal Gold Medalist Ted Cullinan founded the practice in 1965 based on cooperative principles. The London-based architectural and masterplanning practice has created award-winning projects for Kew and Edinburgh Botanic Gardens, Cambridge and Warwick Universities, and the BFI, with Maggie's Newcastle epitomising the practice's natural design philosophy.

The studio works across all sectors and scales, from education to housing and workplace. Recently completed projects include 2019 Civic Trust Awards Commended Spring at Stonebridge Park, a housing regeneration scheme for Hyde Group, Wembley; RHS Garden Hyde Hall Hilltop Complex, Chelmsford; and the National Automotive Innovation Centre, University of Warwick, Coventry.

[cullinastudio.com](http://cullinastudio.com)

**Eurban**

Eurban is an independent UK-based company leading the field in the design, manufacture and assembly of solid timber structures. Their collection of completed solid timber buildings outnumbers that of any other UK company, and the company's in-house expertise spans both design and installation services.

In 2003, Eurban became the first to endorse cross-laminated timber construction as a high-quality, efficiency-optimised building system in the UK. This followed the use of the material in Switzerland during the 1990s, and its adoption in central Europe slightly later.

Recognising the extraordinary benefits cross-laminated timber could offer not only to the construction and design industries, but also to the aesthetics of the built environment, Eurban developed a unique design, manufacture and installation process which now serves a global market.

[eurban.co.uk](http://eurban.co.uk)



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