

Media Outlet: 25 Beautiful Homes

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25 BEAUTIFUL
HOMES

25BH | WATER TOWER

GOING WITH
THE FLOW

Gerry and Susan Goldwyre created a seamless
run of rooms when designing the layout
of a dilapidated water tower

FEATURE JANE BOWLES | PHOTOGRAPHY NIGEL RIGDEN/ARCAID



HOME TRUTHS

THE PROPERTY

Converted Victorian water tower

LOCATION Edinburgh**ROOMS** Hall, sitting room,
dining room, kitchen, study,
cloakroom, two bedrooms,
bathroom**PURCHASED** 1987**PREVIOUS PROPERTY**"We lived in a mews house in
Edinburgh," says Gerry.

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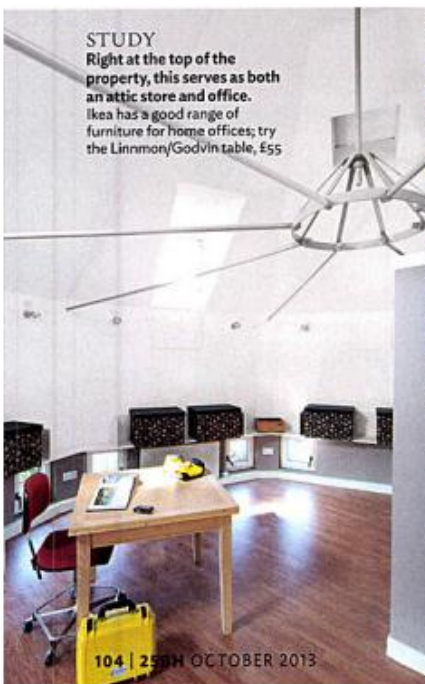
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Gerry and Susan Goldwyre's home – a converted Victorian water tower on the outskirts of Edinburgh – must surely be one of the most unusual residences in Britain. Yet they found it quite by accident.

'Susan spotted it in the newspaper one day, and as she read out the details, I could already see the completed conversion in my mind's eye,' recalls Gerry, who is an architect by profession. 'It was a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity to create a spectacular home.'

Originally built in 1879, and with stunning views of the surrounding countryside, the water tower attracted the attention of 200 would-be purchasers but, ultimately, only six offers were made. 'I think lots of people liked the idea of living in the tower but were put off by the sheer scale of building work involved,' says Gerry. 'There

was no structure to speak of, just a 120-foot tower with a huge water tank at the top.'

With years of experience as a builder and architect under his belt, Gerry felt confident to tackle the project, and he and Susan were delighted when their bid won.

Their first step was to draw up the plans. Gerry tailored the design to the couple's lifestyle, positioning the rooms they used the most in closest proximity to each other. The final design consisted of seven irregularly shaped rooms, built one on top of the other, linked by 92 steps. 'Living in a tower involves more time climbing stairs, but I've tried to minimise the amount of time we spend travelling between rooms,' says Gerry, who did much of the building work himself, assisted by friends and sub-contractors.

The renovation took just over a year to complete, and Gerry and Susan were thrilled

with the result. 'The upstairs living room has panoramic windows and on a clear day you can see for miles. It's amazing,' says Gerry. Several design judges agreed and the property went on to win architecture awards.

But in 2010 disaster struck, when the water tower fell victim to a flood. 'One of the pipes at the top of the tower burst and everything had to be completely re-fitted – it was heartbreaking,' says Gerry. 'But we used it as an opportunity to rethink the interior. We installed underfloor heating, along with a brand-new kitchen and bathroom.'

Since first buying the tower, Gerry has won the BBC's *Masterchef* competition and subsequently converted the cottage next to the tower into a private dining room for guests to enjoy his cooking. 'I can't think of a better place to live,' smiles Gerry. 'All of the work over the years has been worthwhile.' 5

FAVOURITE FEATURE *'That would have to be the sitting room balcony. We had a bit of a battle with the planners to be allowed to build it, but being able to step outside, enjoy the amazing views and feel so close to nature makes it all worthwhile'*

BATHROOM

Slick tiles lend a boutique hotel feel to this space. Renaissance corner bath, £500, Buyrite Bathrooms

**MASTER BEDROOM**

A dramatic grey feature wall adds depth and contrast to this simple scheme.

Farrow & Ball's Down Pipe estate emulsion, £34.50 for 2.5 litres, is a comparable shade. The Hemnes double bed frame would be a good alternative, £200, Ikea. For details of Gerry's architectural practice or private dining, visit gerrygoldwyre.co.uk



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