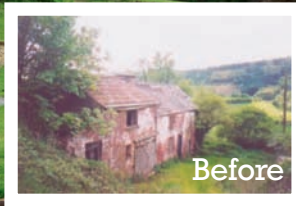


Cottage Re-Crafted

Careful restoration work breathes new life into a pair of damp, derelict foresters' cottages in the Forest of Dean



"The cottages were in a poor state — there was woodworm throughout and the wooden floors were rotten," says Lis Rowley, the patient owner of this pair of derelict foresters' cottages in the Forest of Dean. When Lis purchased an ex-RAF bungalow — which included the land on which the cottages sit — in January 2004, she spotted the potential. But the local planning department had different ideas: "In retrospect I was naïve in thinking that the planners would be pleased that I wanted to restore the two foresters' cottages and use them as holiday lets," comments Lis.

After two refused planning applications, a successful appeal meant that work could finally begin in January 2007. The first task was to address the subsidence. "The exterior wall (TOP RIGHT) was so badly cracked — due to subsidence caused by a well on neighbouring land — that it had to be underpinned." The original stone wall was carefully removed, underpinned and rebuilt by builder John Large of J & J Gloucester

Ltd Construction (01531 820319). John also wire-brushed all the exterior walls to remove the remnants of white paint.

The cottages enjoy elevated views over the rolling hills beyond, but the steep, rural site presented problems. "It was a difficult job — everything had to be transported down," says Lis. There were no services on site and access for maintaining a septic tank was limited. The solution was to pump sewage uphill to a tank away from the cottages.

Heavy rainfall also brought "spurts of water" downhill, causing water ingress. The levels were dropped during landscaping to allow water to drain away, meaning the cottages now remain dry during downpours. The ground floor was also tanked and the external walls treated with Raindance to prevent rain penetrating.

Inside, the walls have been insulated with plasterboard — "which John had to stick to the stone walls," says Lis. Woodburning stoves also keep the interiors cosy. 🏡

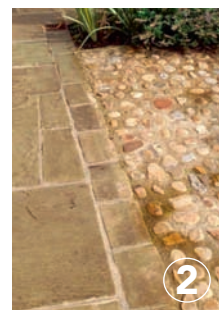
Dean Cottages are for let (deancottages.co.uk)

COTTAGE STYLE



Stable-Style Door

Lis specified timber window frames and doors — a fitting addition to a building within this wooded location. A stable-style front door — similar to the above, which costs just £233.91 at **Wickes (wickes.co.uk)** — lends to the cottage façade.



Reclaimed Pavers

Salvaged pavers are ideal for cottage gardens. "We reused a lot of the flags from the floors — they are now steps outside," says Lis. New, 'aged' or 'antique' pavers can look just as good. The above is from **Purpletree Products (01833 627000)**