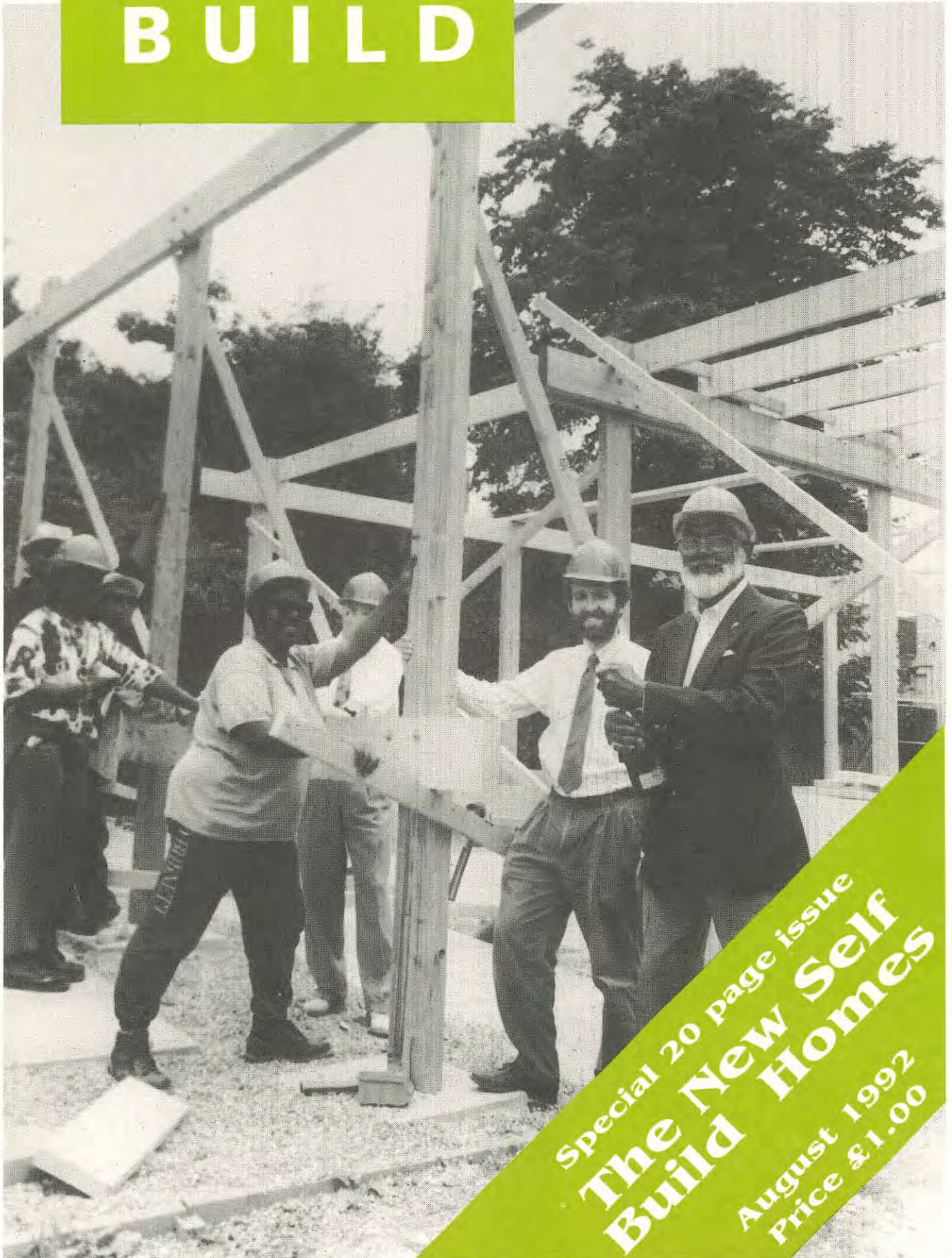


YOU BUILD

THE NEWSLETTER OF
THE WALTER SEGAL
SELF BUILD TRUST

8



Special 20 page issue
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August 1992
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Fusions Jameen self builders celebrate with 'Eastenders' star Tommy Eyle

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The Walter Segal Self Build Trust

The Walter Segal Self Build Trust is a registered charity offering information, advice, support and training to people, especially those on low incomes and in housing need, to build decent homes for themselves and to community and environmental groups who wish to use the Segal method for their buildings.

We have been in existence for 4 years and have now completed our initial development programme aimed at fostering and supporting self build groups throughout the country. This has been done by coordinating potential self builders, sympathetic local authorities and other landowners, financial institutions and knowledgeable architects and others involved in the issues of housing, training and community initiatives to create a national network.

Following the very successful Segal method schemes involving council tenants and those on waiting lists which were supported by Lewisham Council in the late 1970's and early '80's, the first of the new generation of Segal method self build schemes have recently started on site in Birmingham, Greenwich and Lewisham.

Five more are due to start during the current financial year, with around 100 houses being built. Not a great deal but an indication of what can be achieved with the support of organisations such as ours.

In addition other areas of the country are now taking up the issue notably in Aberystwyth, Brighton, Bristol, Colchester (where the Council wants to develop a scheme for people with disabilities), Daventry, Devon, Harlow, Islington, Leeds, Leicester, Sheffield, Tower Hamlets, Walsall and Wrekin where groups have formed or local authorities are taking the initiative to tackle the housing problem.

Many of these are at a very early stage and have a long road ahead of them, but with the help of the Trust, they will achieve something they thought that they would never have – a home which they designed and built themselves.

As Barry Sussman of the SeaSaw self build group in Brighton put it: "I'm 50, I don't earn enough to buy a house, I have no building experience. And yet I can build my own home using this method.

If I didn't have this opportunity, I'd face an old age without anywhere decent to live and without security. The Segal approach makes it possible to look forward to something different."

News from the Trust

Mike Daligan reports on the latest developments



Trust director – Mike Daligan, local MP Joan Ruddock and self-builder Carolyn Wright enjoy the Fusions Jameen press launch

After four years of hard work, during which time we have occasionally despaired but never given up, the first of the new generation of Segal method homes since Walter's original ones are now on site in Birmingham, Greenwich and Lewisham. To say we are pleased would be an understatement!

Thanks go to all the parties involved, not least the groups themselves who have struggled long and hard to reach this stage. Add this to the creation of our national network, the training schemes we continue to run for self builders and architects, the "Guide to Self Build" and the report on Local Authority Support to Self Builders, and the Trust feels that it has now achieved its initial goals and is ready to move onto the next stage.

These housing schemes are important as they have been developed within a whole new legislative and financial framework, including revised building regulations and increased environmental concerns. In many ways they are firsts and certainly we hope they will be the first of many. At the same time our work with community and environmental groups is increasing and this has produced another first.

At Mill Lane in Camden a group of people with learning difficulties are building their own horticultural training centre. Their architect, Simon Yauner, has attended one of our architects' seminars and the supervisor, Steve Backes, has previously built another Segal method building.

Having visited most of these schemes in the past few weeks, I must say I was completely lifted by the enthusiasm and hard work shown by all concerned, undiminished by the years of negotiation and setbacks. It merely reinforced what we in the Trust have always believed and confirmed what Walter Segal himself experienced in Lewisham where he was amazed at the sheer wealth of talent shown by people who had never done anything like this before.

So, if all goes well, this year should see the start on site of another five schemes, producing about 100 Segal method homes in all. In addition a number of other local authorities, housing associations and groups are realising the benefits of Segal method self build and pursuing the option. We will be working hard to help them realise their goals.

cont.

News from the Trust

Community Buildings

Another area of our work which continues to grow is with community and environmental groups who need buildings. These range from simple meeting rooms for tenants' groups to quite sophisticated multi-use community buildings, such as the Calthorpe Project. Some of these groups are happy for a builder to erect their building; others, however, want to build it themselves. The Trust can help with this whole process from initial thoughts through to costings, budgetting, fundraising, programming, training, working with volunteers, and introduction to experienced architects and supervisors. Please contact us if you need any details, and see this newsletter for some of the groups with whom we already work in this way.

Training Schemes

The Trust has run training schemes both for potential self builders and professionals since it first started. In the case of the self builders, some of whom have been unemployed, we have managed to raise grants to fund this. Occasionally we are able to link a self build group with a community building scheme such that the former can take part in a training scheme on the latter's building. This is obviously to everyone's benefit.

This year, unfortunately, we did not run our usual architects' seminar due to the reduced demand as a result of the recession. This is a shame as it has always been something that we have enjoyed immensely. However, we have been involved in a training course for self builders at the Centre for Alternative Technology and a report on this is included in this newsletter. Another course for one of our self build groups, mainly long term unemployed people, is planned for September. Please get in touch if you would like to discuss your training needs.

Financing and Funding

Literally, as I write this another £6,000 arrives in the post to help us to continue our work. As our regular readers will remember, in our last newsletter I wrote about the difficulties in keeping the Trust going and how we operate on a shoestring budget with the minimum of staff and no reserves to fall back on. The situation has not changed; in fact, it has got worse and I find fundraising taking up more of my time than I would like.

Even as we go to press we face a shortfall this

year of £10,000 and although we do not expect to be in this position at the end of the year, the effort involved in fundraising does divert our energies from what we should be doing and makes planning for the future very difficult.

Yet plan we do. Despite our problems, the Trust is ready to take the next step in its development and plan for a more secure long term future. We aim to do this by widening our range of services, increasing our earnings by charging those organisations which can afford to pay for them, seeking sponsorship for items such as the newsletter, etc. We also have proposals to increase our staff to the grand total of two full time posts, organise a new portable exhibition, publish our report on Local Authority Resources for Self Build, run more training course and the 1001 other things that working for the Trust involves.

In addition we are exploring the possibility of setting up a national office for the Trust in a Segal method building from which we could provide a full range of services, training, demonstrations, library, conferences and seminars, etc. We estimate that this transition will take about 3 years.

We will, however, continue to provide a free service to the majority of our groups, ie those who cannot afford to pay. Throughout the year our support for these groups and projects takes approximately 2 weeks for each and will continue for up to 3 years.

If you know of anyone who could help to support our innovative work with people in need of all ages and abilities to create homes, community buildings, training and increased employment prospects, we would be more than pleased to hear from you.

In the meantime we rely on the support of our members and others. So, please join the Trust and encourage others to do so; organise a jumble sale, coffee morning, or sponsored event; buy a copy of our 'Guide to Self Build' or get your library to do so; take out a covenant or make a donation (no matter how small). It will all go to a really useful cause. Details of how to help are available on the back of this newsletter or from the Trust.

The Trust's Services

The Trust provides a range of services tailored to the needs of the organisations or groups requiring advice and information. For example, a group of people in housing need wishing to discuss the options prior to

approaching their local authority will have a different need from a local authority wanting advice on how to set up a self build group. Also the needs of housing groups are different to those of community or environmental groups.

We presently advise housing groups and organisations on the method of building, land acquisition, finance, costings, programming, training, environmental building, and the selection of an architect and supervisor. Community groups are similarly helped with these but are also advised on fundraising and the differences involved in using a contractor or volunteers to build, etc.

The Trust is shortly to produce a new information pack describing these services with costs where applicable. For details contact us at the office.

Conclusion

I think it fair to say that we are reasonably pleased with the results of our work to date. However, there is still a great deal to be done. The development period prior to going on site is still far too long, taking nearly five years for one group.

It has always been our intention to do our best to shorten this by setting up systems which are easily replicable and we are working towards this. Unfortunately many of the factors involved are outside our control. However we will continue to exercise our influence towards this. It has always been an irony that the Segal method itself is relatively easy yet the organisational process up to

the start on site is incredibly prolonged.

So now we have the national network in place, the funding models available, the training courses, the professional advice and support, the supervisors and trainers and a national body to coordinate this, we need to ensure that self build develops to its true potential. This can be gauged by looking at other countries where ordinary people are enabled to make use of their labour to solve their own housing problems.

In Columbia over 500 organisations are active in self help housing and their members are building about 90,000 houses; in Stockholm, 12,000 families built their own homes under the City Council auspices from 1927 until 1976. Of these, less than one in one thousand failed to complete their houses after they had started on site and less than one in one hundred were more than two months late in completing, a record that compares favourably with the professional building industry. Lastly, in the USA, 20% of all single family houses are built by their owners.

So let's utilise that 'enormous wealth of talent' witnessed by Walter Segal and exhibited by those who are now building. Apart from the moral issue, it's a crazy world that has families living in bed and breakfast accommodation at a cost of £14,600 per year (London 1989 figures) when, excluding land costs, they could build their own homes for what this would cost over two years. What a beautifully simple way to help alleviate some of our worst housing problems and help people realise their own potential!

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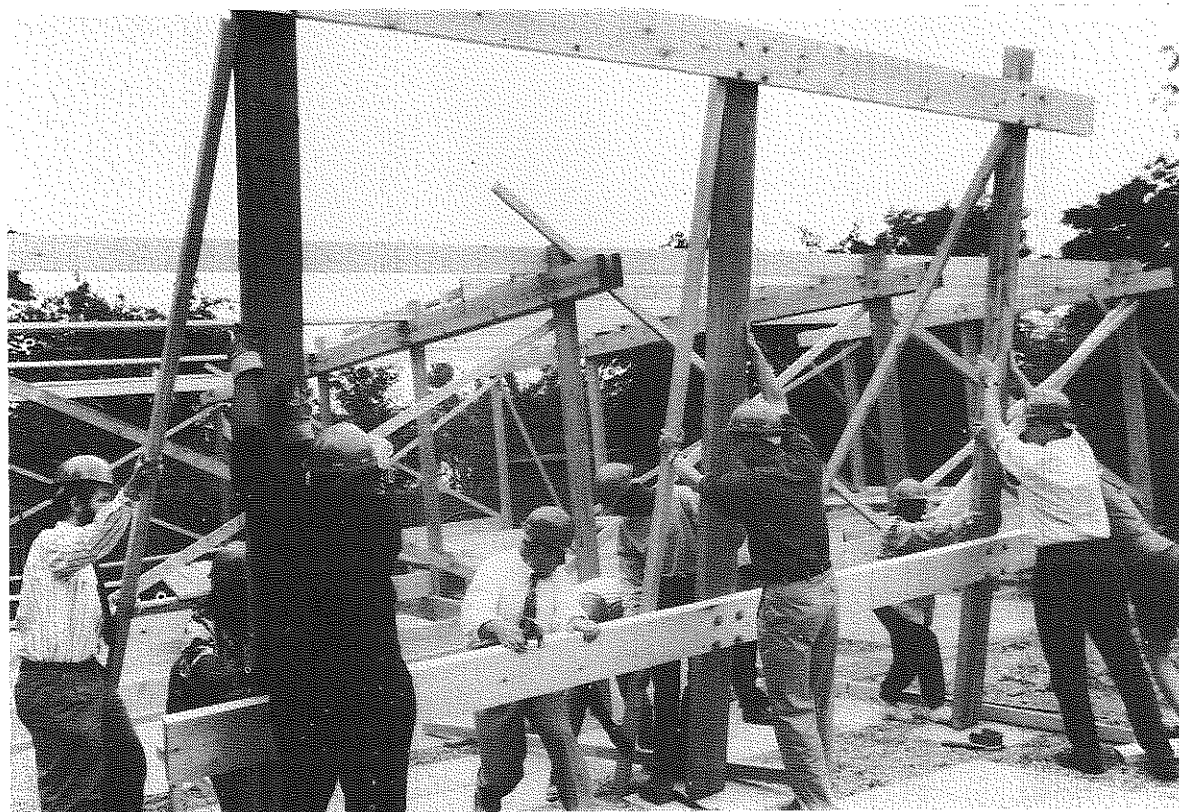
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The New Self-Build Homes

The Next Generation Segal Self-Build Start on site



Raising the frames at the Fusions Jameen press launch

Fusions Jameen Housing Co-op

We are delighted to report that the launch of Fusions Jameen Housing Co-op's new self build scheme took place on 23 June in Brockley Park, Lewisham, and was a resounding success. This award-winning Segal method self-build scheme is one of the first three to start on site since the original Lewisham Council schemes in 1979 and 1985, and marks the start of a new 'generation' of self-build social housing.

Fusions Jameen Black Housing Co-op, whose members include six single parents, four of them women, is building 8 homes under the 'self-build for rent' model devised by CHISEL, a secondary housing co-operative, with funding from South London Families Housing Association's tariff programme.

'Eastenders' star Tommy Eytel, who plays Jules Tavernier, joined the Trust and the self builders to raise the frames of their new houses. The group had already built the structure for one house over the previous 3 weekends and the start of the construction of this second house was celebrated with Tommy cracking open a bottle of champagne.

MP Joan Ruddock also attended the event to lend her support and Mike Daligan, director of the Trust, outlined the Trust's role and its success in promoting the Segal method as an innovative, accessible and cost-effective way of enabling people in housing need, with no previous building skills, to build their own homes.

Designed by Architype Design Co-operative, the scheme incorporates 'green' construction techniques and has recently won a RIBA/NHBC/DoE Housing Project Design award for excellence. The scheme makes use of a sloping site provided by Lewisham Council (opposite the

original Lewisham schemes designed by Walter Segal himself) which would be difficult to develop conventionally. As most of the self-builders are currently on the council's waiting list, the scheme will also free space for other people in housing need.

All in all the day was a great success. The sun shone, large numbers of housing professionals, self-builders and friends enjoyed the opportunity to meet and exchange information and everyone went away inspired by the groups' achievements.

The Trust would like to thank Tony Tyle and Computer Cabs for their kind help on the day.

The other two pioneering schemes are Greenwich Self Build and Kings Norton Self Build in Birmingham. The Kings Norton group which has been supported by Birmingham City Council, was actually the first group to start on site, beginning work last August. One of the Kings Norton self builders describes the history of the group.

Kings Norton Self Build Group

The group was formed approximately 2 1/2 years ago after initial consultation with local residents from Kings Norton estates (Hawkesley, Pool Farm and Primrose), Birmingham City Council and the Walter Segal Self Build Trust.

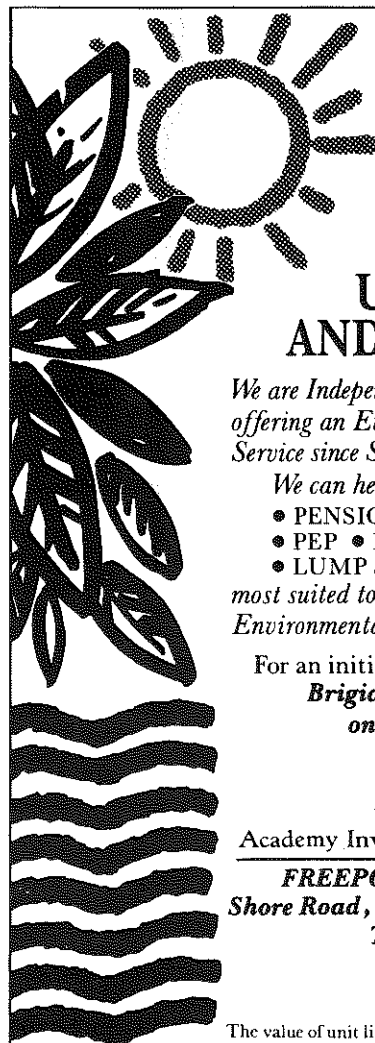
After a visit to Segal Close and other sites, further consultations took place and it was decided to set up a group of interested parties. After many meetings the Kings Norton Self-Build Co-op was eventually set up in December 1989 and it was decided to build 7 buildings on a site at Redhill Grove, Kings Norton with Architype Design Co-operative as our architects. After nearly 2 years, we were finally given the go-ahead to start on site in August 1991.

Our first task was to clear the site which was overgrown and had been used as a dumping ground. This took 3 weeks of very hard work using hand scythes to do the job. At the beginning of September last year we hired a contractor to install a road and mains services and this took 2 weeks to complete. Our next job was to mark out the positions of the houses which was not made easier

when we discovered that the road was not in the right place! After a lot of thought we got this problem sorted out and ten of us began work on the foundations. These took 2 1/2 months to complete due to the land being used as a site office when Hawkesley was built.

Our next task was the oversiting which involved slabbing around the dwellings, digging out inside the slabs and filling this with gravel. All the frames are now erected, we are roofing during June and hope to be completely finished by June '93.

Karen Dovey, KNSBG



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The third group is Greenwich Self Build, which has also recently started on site, and their Contracts Manager Gerry Murphy reports on progress to date.

Greenwich Self Build

Herbert Road Site

In January 1988 fourteen individuals in Greenwich, all council tenants classified as in need of more suitable accommodation and also keen on self-build, formed the Greenwich Self-Build Co-operative. The next four years involved many frustrations for the original members. So much so that of the five houses under construction at Herbert Road, only one will be occupied by one of the original group, all the others having left the group at various times during this period. Their places have been taken by other families nominated by Greenwich Council.

All the doubts and delays of innumerable meetings on funding, valuations, percentages, allocations and designs, with the housing association, Council, development, architectural and Housing Corporation representatives evaporated when, in February 1992, we actually got onto the site and dug the first bucket of muck from the ground with an excavator. During the first week, the self-builders' relief at actually being on site was visible and was reflected in their enthusiasm to make progress.

The official site opening took place on 16 March and was attended by the prospective

parliamentary candidate (duly elected on 9 April) Nick Raynsford. This was of interest to the self-builders as Nick had a good knowledge of the Segal method of construction and was keen to see the project succeed, having met Walter Segal prior to the original Lewisham schemes.

Although the group have the initial drive common to self-builders when starting a project, they are not hiding behind rose-tinted spectacles and are well aware of what has to be achieved in the months to come. Since going on site in late February, they have completed the 80 concrete foundation piles, 16 per house, topped with paving slabs, squared and levelled with the aid of a theodolite and lots of arm-waving from the budding surveyors in the group. They have also undertaken all the drainage works on site and have constructed a brick manhole, 2.6m. deep, ready for construction to the main sewer. The framework of the first house has now been erected and the group is currently raising the frames of the second.

We also made the bizarre discovery of a casket of bones which was unearthed during the digging! We contacted the Museum of London who came and investigated. The bones dated from 1700 and, much to our relief, turned out not to be human. They are now resting in the Museum.

Gerry Murphy Contracts Manager

The Trust congratulates all three groups on their success. In our next newsletter we will be bringing you details of more groups who will be starting on site this year as a result of the our work.



Greenwich – Self-build Group with their (now) local MP Nick Raynsford

Self-build Training Centre



The Mill Lane self builders enjoy a well-earned break

The first Segal method self-build project by people with learning difficulties

One of the important things about the Segal method is that it offers the opportunity to people who have never done anything like it in their lives before to actually build. In the past these have been people who have wanted their own homes, with the community groups we've advised usually opting to have a professional builder erect their building. The possibility of a self built community building had always been around, however, and we now have a first in Camden where a group of people with learning difficulties are building their own horticultural training centre. This is the group's story.

Mill Lane Training Scheme

For some years now Camden Society for People with Learning Difficulties (CSMH – yes, the

initials don't match up, we know!) has wanted a building that could be used to run training courses in horticulture for people with learning difficulties.

We have a local architect, Simon Yauner, who advised us on the possibilities of self build, including the advantage of providing an opportunity for some of the trainees to participate in a building project. He investigated the different types of self build and recommended the Segal method to us. Subsequently he attending a Walter Segal Trust training course at the Centre for Alternative Technology in Wales.

Once the decision was made and funding was secured (the total cost of the project is estimated at £100,000, including materials and a 7 1/2 month contract for a site manager/trainer), CSMH went to the Walter Segal Trust for advice. As a result of this we approached three possibles and selected Steve Backes as a manager/ trainer. Steve had previously worked on Segal self build in Wales and at Surrey Docks City Farm.

A site was found at 160 Mill Lane in West Hampstead. This was part of an open space playground and was leased from the local education

authority. Work on the site started in April this year with Steve, Richard Arthur (the person appointed to oversee CSMH involvement who will subsequently run the centre), a carpenter and a few trainees. The first 6 weeks were devoted to clearing the site and pouring foundations (during which time it rained more often than not!). By mid-May the first timber had arrived on site along with a few volunteers who had heard of the project through local publicity and word of mouth.

June saw the arrival of the first of 3 international workcamps, organised by Steve through his involvement with International Voluntary Service, and this boosted the rate of progress considerably. This first group of 6, who will work on the site for 3 weeks, includes volunteers from Finland, Spain, France and the USA. Subsequent groups of ten will arrive in July and August.

Currently all six frames are up and the roof and floor joists are in position. Everything is in place to put together the materials which will create the turf roof, and with the enthusiasm and goodwill of our current volunteers, the continuing fine weather should mean that the building is finished on schedule. The project has attracted volunteers with an interest in learning building/carpentry skills and others more interested in working with the CSMH trainees. However the initial focus of most volunteers has blurred somewhat and some have found themselves drawn to other aims within the project.

Despite the usual logistical hiccups in materials supply, and the one-in-five days of rain, the atmosphere on site is wonderful. The site is open Monday to Friday from 9am - 4.30 pm and Sundays 10am - 4pm. Do come and visit and maybe even volunteer.

CALLING ALL MEMBERS!

Have you read the Trust's 'Guide to Self Build' for people in housing need? If not, why not ask your local library to order a copy? In this way, you could help spread the word about the Trust's work and raise some much-needed funds for us. The Guide covers all the stages involved in building your own home and comes in 6 easy-to-read pullout sections, with a year's free membership of the Trust included in the purchase price.

ORDER FORM

To the Walter Segal Self Build Trust, Room 212, Panther House,
38 Mount Pleasant, London WC1X 0AP. Tel:071-833-4152

Please supply copy/copies of 'YOU BUILD: a guide to building your own home' at £17.50 per copy. (Price includes post and packing and a year's free membership of the Trust.)

Cheques should be made payable to the Walter Segal Self Build Trust.

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Self Build for Rent

Choice, High Standards and Affordability

by José Ospina

Self build for rent is an exciting new funding model for the production of social housing. It thus offers new opportunities to local authorities and housing associations. It has been devised to be used under current Housing Corporation procedures with grant and loan funding currently available to Housing Associations. This means that it does not require special conditions and is not reliant on private loan funding or on securing discounted land from local authorities.

The main ingredients are:

- Housing Corporation Grant.
- local authority land.
- the self-builders' own labour.

There are now 5 self-build for rent projects under development in the South East using this model. Two of them, Greenwich Self Build and Fusions Jameen Housing Co-ops are actually on site; the latter recently having won an RIBA/DoE/NHBC Housing Project Design Award. Two more, Brighton Diggers Self Build Co-op and a second phase for Greenwich Self Build, are about to go on site and a fifth, Greenstreet Housing Co-op, is currently looking for land in Lewisham.

All these projects are using the Segal method of self build chosen by the groups for its simplicity, flexibility and high level of performance. Financially, the self-build for rent model has

enabled them to proceed, avoiding the pitfalls that have held back other self-build initiatives.

There are advantages both for self-builders and for Local Authorities in using this model:

- as with all Segal method schemes, the self-builders have full control over the design and construction of their own homes.
- although the houses will be in co-operative (not individual) ownership, self builders will be Assured Tenants, pay a discounted rent and receive 'Loan Stock' for the agreed value of their labour. This they will recoup in cash if they leave the co-op.
- If any self-builder does leave their tenancy, the property will become available to other people in housing need, possibly nominated by the Local Authority, at NFHA 'Indicator Rents'.

The model also has advantages in terms of 'value for money'. In essence, the housing association contracts a self-build co-op to build the scheme on the basis of a design which has been developed with the self-builders' full participation. To enter into this contract, the housing association agrees a 'notional contract sum' with the co-operative. This sum is related to the current cost of new buildings being carried out for the association by commercial builders calculated on the floor area of the scheme.

A free booklet on 'Self Build for Rent' is available from CHISEL.

As an example, a scheme of 11 units in Brighton with a floor area of 513 square metres could have a 'notional contract' value of £312,930 based on a build value of £610 per square metre.

The finances of the scheme would be as follows:

Land (market value)	£125,000
Notional contract sum	£312,930
'Allowable costs'	£437,930

(The funding system then allows a maximum of 16% for 'on costs' to cover fees, development costs, etc.)

£ 70,069

TOTAL NOTIONAL COSTS **£507,999**

The Total Costs Indicator (TCI) for this scheme, however, is £672,000. The project is therefore 75.5% of TCI, which is a level of 'Value for Money' which conventional new build schemes only achieve on the basis of discounted land or 'mass' design and build packages.

However, in that 'notional contract sum' only about £232,980 are costs that will have

to be actually paid in cash during the development period. The rest represent the labour element, payment on which is effect deferred as it is only paid to self-builders when they redeem their 'Loan Stock'. This means that the cash requirement during the development period is only £428,049 (assuming all 'on costs' are spent).

Under the Cash Programme, the association receives the Grant percentage of the scheme TCI for every unit produced. In Brighton this is 58%. The association would therefore receive grant of £389,760 during the development period. This means that the borrowing requirement of the scheme will be only £38,289 - £3,480 per unit - making it a lot easier to secure private finance.

In effect the labour contributed by the self-builders and represented in Loan Stock (worth £79,950) replaces most of the private loan required. Rent on the scheme can therefore be set at genuinely affordable levels and can go towards management and maintenance, major repairs provision and the building up of a fund that will repay the 'Loan Stock' when required.

Segal Self-Build Course

by Cindy Harris of the Centre for Alternative Technology

We have been running Segal method self build courses at the Centre for the last 10 years and they are still as popular as ever. This year's course, held at the beginning of July, attracted 20 people from all over the country. Several of the participants were from existing self-build groups, one in Telford and another in Devon. Most excitingly, in the practical sessions, we built the first frame for the house in Bristol, a pilot project funded by the City Council. The Bristol self-builders – Leigh Harris and Simon Collins – attended the course and were delighted to help assemble the first part of their new home. We also re-erected our training structure and were able to start putting in walls and floor by the end of the weekend.

Pat Borer, CAT's resident architect, introduced the participants to the theory behind the Segal method and talked us through the plans. A guided tour of the buildings at the Centre helped put the idea in context by showing some completed Segal

method and other timber-frame buildings.

Other sessions included low energy building design, environmentally friendly building materials and financial models for self-build groups. There were opportunities for course participants to show their own slides, and we were treated to an interesting talk on mud architecture – probably the world's most common form of self-build – by Sumita Sinha.

At the end of the course, many of the participants expressed their appreciation, not only for the course itself, but also for the good food, stimulating company and the beauty and peace of the Welsh countryside.

For details of CAT training courses, please contact:

Lesley Bradnam, CAT, Llwyngwern,
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Book Review

The Self Build Book by Jon Broome & Brian Richardson
Review by Heather Strange

In his foreword, Colin Ward calls it a 'love story' and beginning with the reminder that 'in the distant past most people used to build for themselves', the following chapters carry a compelling message to us all to go forth and build. The book is about building but it is also about taking control of your own life; about having the confidence and determination to create for yourself a basic necessity – a home to live in.

Drawing on the inspiration of architects Walter Segal and Christopher Alexander, authors Broome and Richardson tell their personal Segal self-build stories. These fascinating accounts, from the thinking behind the designs to the excitement of putting them into practice, are dreams come true. The photographs, possibly the book's only weakness, don't do these fine houses justice. As an occasional visitor to Maureen's and Brian's lovely home in Herefordshire, I can personally speak of its harmonious and peaceful atmosphere.

The authors go on to describe six adventures in collective self build. The projects span the past 15 years and the self-builders range from unemployed

and homeless people and single parents to professionals. A section on materials assesses the merits, suitability, ease of handling and safety of each material. The maze of administrative bureaucracy is also examined as is professional advice, land purchase, finance, drawings and permissions.

The conclusion of the book comes as the threads are pulled together to lead the reader, step by step, through the construction processes involved in a Segal method building.

Combining simplicity, versatility, energy conservation and elegance, this kind of structure is built from wood and requires no previous building skills. And assuming self-builders count their labour in love not money, this way of building is cheap.

Nothing that I can say adequately conveys the spirit of the book. It is a uniquely important work at a time when traditional housing policies are unable to cope with changing needs and the problem of ever-increasing homelessness. Radical solutions are desperately needed and this book provides practical examples to inspire us all.

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Newcomers

The new owners of an original Segal house talk to Mike Daligan about their new home

Segal method houses have been around in their present form for over 30 years and indeed you could argue, as we did in our last newsletter, that there is little difference between Segal method houses and the classic timber framed ones, examples of which are still around and much sought after hundreds of years after they were built. (See photo below).

So despite the fact that the number of people who are homeless grows daily and that both self build and traditional timber framed buildings have a long and successful history, there is still a certain amount of scepticism about them, usually exhibited by organisations rather than self builders. In fact most people who want to self build take to the Segal method like a duck to water, become very enthusiastic about it and fight long and hard to be allowed to build their own homes. The resultant houses are a pleasure to visit, having been lovingly designed and built by their owners.

Despite this, we still get asked 'Do you think that this really is a possibility, will these houses last, and will anyone other than the original self builders want to buy them?'

It has to be said that many of the original self builders have not moved mainly because the houses are easily extendable to accommodate changing family circumstances. Rose and Terry Phillips, who used to live at 1 Segal Close, extended their house by 8 feet to give themselves an extra bedroom. The majority of this work was completed in an Easter Weekend at a cost of approximately £1,500. Indeed,

one of the benefits of a Segal method house is that you build (and, thus, only pay for) what you need and add when circumstances dictate. This is usually a lot less costly than moving!

However, a couple of the original Segal method houses have recently sold and one of these, 7 Walters Way, was bought earlier in the year by Tony Byfield and Margje Byfield van der Lei. So the Trust decided to ask them why they bought this house and how they feel about it now they have had the time to settle in.

Tony is a London taxi driver and Margje a secretary for a Japanese company. Margje is Dutch and they met while on holiday in Greece. In their spare time they are successfully building up their own multi-level marketing business. Margje describes Tony as a fitness fanatic who works out at weights and aerobics nearly every day, while she says that she likes sport but prefers it to be slightly more recreational.

Tony had a flat in Barry Road, Dulwich, where he had lived for about ten years and which Margje shared for the last two. Unfortunately this was on a busy main road where there was a great deal of traffic. They saw the house in Walter's Way and liked it, being very taken by the friendly atmosphere, the freedom from traffic, and the green surroundings. Margje especially felt this was very important coming, as she does, from Friesland, a tiny village in the north of Holland.

Their initial impression was of a very comfortable and cosy house which felt like home. Since moving in these feelings have strengthened, especially since they have had the chance to put their own stamp on it. As Tony had a mortgage on their existing flat, he approached the building society, the Woolwich, who were very helpful in providing a mortgage on the new house after carrying out a survey.

Since moving in, they have already carried out some work on the outside of the house, removing the carport and altering the verandah. They also intend to change the driveway where the cab and their car are parked. Other than that, they say that the house suits them just fine but that it is good to know that it is relatively easy to alter and extend it.

They do say that they have a great deal of admiration for the original self builders who must have had a great deal of energy, determination, and persistence to complete such a marvellous scheme as Walter's Way and that everyone there has made them very welcome. They also hope that they will live there for a very long time! For our part, we would like to wish them every happiness in their new home.



Q. But do timber-frame houses really last?
A. This is a 16th century timber-frame council house in Lincoln.

Project News

National Federation of City Farms, Bristol

After many months of hard work, the Federation has managed to raise a large proportion of the costs of their proposed new national office. This building will act as a base for the Federation as well as being a practical demonstration of the environmental principles which it promotes.

The City Council are fully supportive of the proposals and have included them in their Unitary Development Plan for the city.

The Federation is now planning for a late spring start on site and may use the actual construction period to run a training scheme for other groups and self-builders.

East Hull Community Farm

Now that the local Education Department has agreed to let the Farm have the land plans can go ahead for this project. The group have chosen the Segal method for their proposed buildings and their architect, Hugh Massey, has attended a Trust architects' training course at the CAT in Wales.

Walker Riverside Activities Centre, Newcastle

Following a presentation by the Trust, the Centre has decided to use the Segal method for their proposed activities centre and to run it as a training scheme. They are aiming for completion in 1993 in time for the Tall Ships Race on the Tyne.

Huddersfield Community Farm

Again following a meeting with the Trust, the Farm is drawing up proposals for a Segal method building to incorporate offices, shop, cafe, toilets and a meeting room.

Maldwyn Nursery & Family Centre

A new community building using the Segal method is under construction at Newtown in Powys. Designed by Gwynedd-based architect Benedicte Foo with assistance from Pat Borer, the 350 square metre building is a new family centre and nursery for the Maldwyn Nursery & Family Centre. Funded by the Welsh Office, under the Rural Initiatives

Programme, the scheme provides a large playroom and ancillary accommodation for a day nursery, a large meeting room for the family centre, counselling rooms, a playdeck, kitchen and staff offices.

The accommodation is arranged on a steeply sloping site close to the centre of Newtown in 3 pavilions linked by a solar-trapping glazed conservatory. The building is constructed using a mixture of cross frames and purlin frames in soft wood. External cladding is of natural Minerit sheet with larch cover strips, while the main roofs are slated in Eternit 2000. The £136,706 project is being built by the local firm of Evans & Owen of Caersws.

Benedicte Foo, Project Architect

Phoenix House, Sheffield

Phoenix House is a drug rehabilitation project in Sheffield. Their present office accommodation comprises a Portakabin which has to be moved to make way for additional accommodation for the project's residents. The Trust has been helping them to develop proposals for new offices using the Segal method which will be built by the residents as part of their rehabilitation.

The local Planning Department was initially concerned about the idea of a timber-framed building in a conservation area but after seeing the design by Abakos Design Aid, they have now given planning permission. Phoenix House is now looking at a funding package to enable the scheme to go ahead.



Maldwyn Nursery and Family Centre under construction

Group News

Aberystwyth Self Build Group

Aberystwyth Self Build Group comprises five single people and one family in housing need. They have been meeting since late 1991 and have produced an excellent report 'Affordable Housing in West Wales' which was sent to Tai Cymru and Cymdeithas Tai Cantref, the local housing association. The result has been a working party leading to a proposal to build 6 houses as a pilot scheme. The Trust has been asked to make a presentation to help progress the scheme.

Brighton Diggers Self Build Housing Co-operative

The Diggers group was formed in the autumn of 1988 with the intention of providing, through self build, reasonably priced housing for rent. We plan to build 9 houses of various sizes on a site in Hollingbury, Brighton with a grant from the Housing Corporation.

Brighton Council sold us the site in May and have also given planning permission for the scheme. Our architects, Architype Design Co-operative, have submitted working details for building regulations approval and the groundworks sub-contract is currently underway. This should be completed by the end of July when the group will start building.

David Pickup, Secretary

Consortium Self Build Scheme – Hope for Hope Wharf!

Consortium is a co-ordinating agency for single homeless projects in south-east London. We are currently working with 10 young self-builders from special needs hostels in Southwark who want to build their own homes. This scheme is one of two pilot schemes supported by Southwark Council and developed by South London Families H.A.

A second stage has been reached for this scheme which will use a modified Segal method of building. The funding through SLFHA's cash programme is being secured, and all parties involved are proceeding to work up the scheme on a difficult site, Hope Wharf, in Peckham.

The self-builders will be trained through a customised package of training devised by Jarvis Management Training Ltd. South Thames Training and Enterprise Council have already been actively involved in getting the scheme off the ground and have indicated that funding for training may be available. Support for the self-builders will be provided by Consortium and resettlement skills

offered by the Housing Support Team of North Lambeth Day Centre.

Those interested in joining the scheme have begun to meet. There are still places available for single homeless people aged 18-25 who have a local connection in Southwark. Please contact Maureen at Consortium on 071-701-2209.

Maureen Kennedy, Consortium

Greenstreet Housing Co-op

Greenstreet Housing Co-operative in Lewisham is to receive funding from the Housing Corporation to self build 12 units for rent. We will be housing 30 local people. The construction will progress along traditional Segal lines with design adaptations by the community architects Potter & Holmes.

The co-op was established in April 1989 and our core membership of 7 people has lobbied everyone from the local community to the Minister for the Environment in order to realise our goal.

A feasibility study on the scheme was carried out in 1989, with £1000 funding from the RIBA, for a site at Ravensbourne Park, Catford. Subsequently we withdrew our outline planning application because of local opposition on the grounds of nature conservation. Even though Segal building methods and designs have minimum impact on the land, the restrictions on building within an urban area remain severe, despite the desperate need for affordable rented accommodation.

Our main objectives over the next few months are to secure a suitable site in Lewisham, so that building can proceed on schedule, employ a site manager and recruit new self-builders from the area. If you live in the borough and are in housing need – including existing council tenants and short-life licensees – and would like to build your own home, please contact:

Greenstreet Housing Co-operative
36 Ferguson House, Sparta St, London SE10 8DR

We would like to thank the Walter Segal Trust, our secondary organisation CHISEL, SLFHA and Lewisham Housing Committee for all their help and support. It's been 3 years of hard work and we are now looking forward to the most exciting part.

Jim Gettrup, Greenstreet Housing Co-op

Greenwich Self Build – Prospect Vale Site

The second Greenwich Self-Build contract is due to start on site in late summer 92. This will consist of

8 three-bedroom detached houses with pitched roofs. The initial members, again all nominated by Greenwich Council, are recruited and the remainder plus reserves are about to be introduced to the world of self-build.

Gerry Murphy, Contracts Manager

Harlow Self Build Scheme

Following a meeting with the Trust, Harlow Co-operative Development Agency initiated a self build group of long term unemployed people. A grant has been obtained from the European Social Fund to run a training course for the group. The Trust has also organised a training scheme for the group at the Centre for Alternative Technology in September.

The group comprises 15 members and they are presently learning business skills and gaining experience in manual trades. They are also looking at other self build sites and will shortly be visiting Segal Close to see the original Segal method houses there.

Sue Walsh, Harlow CDA

Leicester Endeavour Self Build Association

Following months of negotiations with the City Council over a 'market price' for the plot of land we were offered last year, an agreement finally seems to have been hammered out, at a price affordable to us. The delay has been (in part!) due to the nature of the site, which will require our properties to be built on deep-piled foundations. What we hadn't expected, however, was that these negotiations would be brought to a quicker conclusion by our appointing an agency to negotiate on our behalf. We therefore appointed the local District Valuations office to this job, banking on their knowledge of current sales in general, and this has done the trick for us.

Our timetable is now that of getting the final plans for the properties and the required foundations drawn up and submitted through the Planning and Building Regs. systems as soon as possible. At this moment, the overall intention remains to build 9 properties, a mixture of Segal method and traditional construction. Allowing for the time for this and administrative procedures, plus the time for a contractor to put in the foundations for us, we are hoping to be on site ourselves at the end of the summer.

Martin Field, Leicester Endeavour Self Build

St John's Self Build Co-operative

After 3 years, this group of 12 households – with support from the Isle of Dogs Neighbourhood of Tower Hamlets and help from Solon Co-op Housing Services – has now seen an allocation for shared ownership made for 1992/3.

The Neighbourhood will transfer this site for a nominal price and have asked that the group give equal opportunities in recruiting members and we have several black and Asian people active in it. The Housing Association Grant will be given to Boleyn & Forest Housing Society, who will own the land and develop the 12 new homes, which will be built by St John's Self Build Co-op.

Our architects, Architype Design Co-operative, will design the scheme in accordance with the needs of St John's members and Solon Co-operative Housing Services will help the co-op with its rules and the contractual arrangements with the housing association and architects. Winckworth & Pemberton will be giving legal advice to the co-op.

When the houses are completed, St John's will nominate its members for the shared ownership leases and will then manage the houses for Boleyn & Forest.

The adjacent part of the vacant site is to be developed by East London Housing Association although the scope for joint development is limited by the timing of allocations and cash. The group have now agreed the design for the whole site and have had one training session to look at individual house layouts. However, at £60 per week for a 3-bed detached house, the rent is higher than co-op members had hoped, although this has not discouraged them from going ahead.

They are now very close to submitting an application for project approval to the Housing Corporation, and the next difficult stage is to secure a long-term loan for Boleyn & Forest to fund the project.

John Clark for St John's Self Build Co-op

St. Thomas' Fund Scheme for People with Alcohol Related Problems

I was sufficiently enthused by my participation in the Trust's last architects' training course, that I went home determined to do something about it. As I am involved with the St Thomas' Fund, I approached them about a possible Segal method self build scheme.