


Woman on a *mission*



In just 10 months property developer **CHARLIE GREIG** researched, created, developed and brought to market Cub – the most highly accredited building system in the UK today. The modular, carbon-neutral housing concept incorporates new building methods, proven sustainability and exceptionally low running costs. Designed to Level 5 of the Code for Sustainable Homes, Cub launched at the Ideal Home Show last year and has become a permanent exhibit at the BRE Innovation Park. Charlie also went on to develop The Pod-passiv shelter, a prefabricated sustainable building, supplied in kit form, which offers a semi-permanent solution to housing needs in disaster zones.



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CHARLIE GREIG – *Cub designer*

WHAT ARE YOUR MEMORIES OF CHILDHOOD HOMES?

My mother was a teacher and my father was an exuberant actor with his own repertory company, so we moved towns with the plays they were performing. I went to 14 schools and have lived in 52 homes all over the country – from Scotland to the Isle of Wight. We often arrived mid-term in school when all the friendships were established, and I was always the strange new girl with a different accent. I guess that's what helped to make me so tenacious. The houses we lived in ranged from a stately home to a two-up two-down with no bathroom in Boston. My fondest memories are from when my parents owned Pegasus Riding Stables in the New Forest, with 150 acres of land in a tiny village. It was absolutely beautiful there and I used to ride to school on my pony. We lived in a grand old coach house which had beautiful parquet flooring and high ornate ceilings. The family stayed there for about three years until I was eleven, which was a long time for us, but after that move my parents split up so it was a huge change for the whole family.

HOW DID YOU BECOME A PROPERTY DEVELOPER?

I had no real qualifications and absolutely no idea what I wanted to do, but on my sixteenth birthday I decided to move to the bright lights and excitement of London and set off to work as an au-pair. I was always quite bizarrely dressed and became very interested in fashion. By the time I was 18 I was attending London fashion shows, buying collections and shipping goods to stores across America. Then I set up a company with my father, representing young British Designers in North America. In the 1980s, I launched my own label, Ici La Fille, but due to the decline in the dollar the company was forced to close and I lost everything I owned, including my home and car. Based on this experience I tailored the range to create a lower price label, called Sub Couture, designing, selling and distributing worldwide.

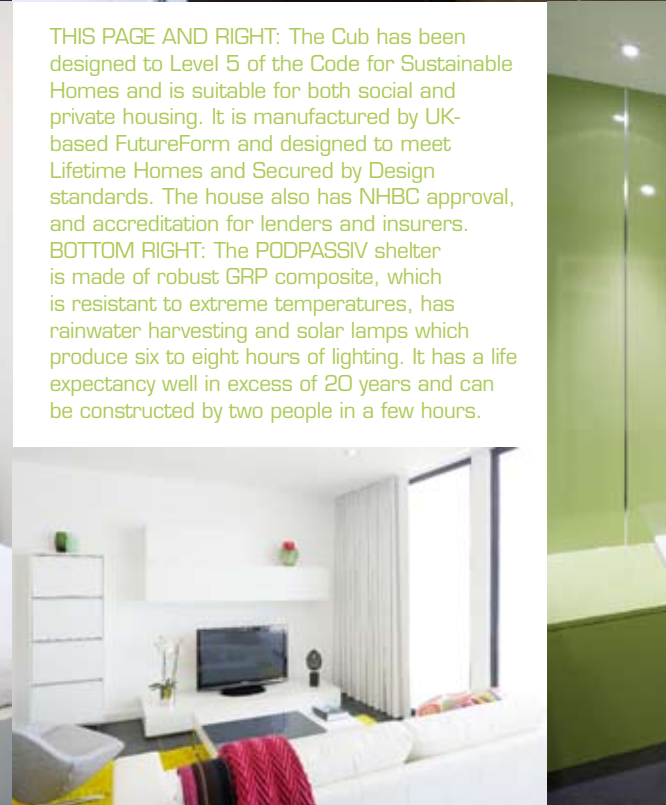
At 30, I met property developer Mark Greig, the father of my daughter, Tatum Storm. I sold Sub Couture and exchanged the world



of fashion for property. We worked together for about eight years, including building a six bedroom villa for ourselves, which took three years to gain planning permission. The marriage ended in 2001, when I was 39, but by then I'd learnt so much about the building industry I was able to carry on and create my own property portfolio. I was also commissioned to design, build and run projects for high profile clients including Emma Bunton and Leslie Clark.

HOW DID CUB COME ABOUT?

I created my own Miami-style villa with a pool in north-west London and introduced eco-friendly technology such as heat pumps and solar glazing. This started me thinking about sustainable, affordable housing. I wanted to come up with a concept to challenge traditional building and design methods which took into consideration the various issues that we face in society today. In particular, traditional construction →



THIS PAGE AND RIGHT: The Cub has been designed to Level 5 of the Code for Sustainable Homes and is suitable for both social and private housing. It is manufactured by UK-based FutureForm and designed to meet Lifetime Homes and Secured by Design standards. The house also has NHBC approval, and accreditation for lenders and insurers. BOTTOM RIGHT: The PODPASSIV shelter is made of robust GRP composite, which is resistant to extreme temperatures, has rainwater harvesting and solar lamps which produce six to eight hours of lighting. It has a life expectancy well in excess of 20 years and can be constructed by two people in a few hours.

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waste, disruption during build programs and encouraging sustainability once we are in our homes. These issues have been addressed by simplifying the process and offering a pre-designed building, produced off site.

In 2009 Cub was conceived and was definitely influenced by my own home, with clean lines, lots of glass and an open plan layout. I went to Germany to research how they tackle modular construction and flat-pack homes. I chose off-site building methods

to create the infrastructure, which came via UK company FutureForm, who produce steel frame modular housing. I spent a whole year designing, visiting suppliers, working with code assessors and setting up the company. We're not a huge corporation, but a small team of creative individuals who have a genuine interest in how people live and in providing solutions for future building. I've invested everything I own in the concept – that's how much I believe in it!

WHAT MAKES CUB HOMES SPECIAL?

They are steel-framed, carbon neutral houses which compete on cost with traditional house building and demonstrate amazing green credentials. Cub buildings have been designed to be extremely airtight, well beyond Building Regulation standards, in order to reduce heat loss and CO2 emissions. All homes are fitted with exhaust air heat pumps, providing space heating, hot water and ventilation. Most (65-90 per cent) of the primary material, steel, is recycled. The walls are super-insulated and airtight to minimise heat loss, and PV panels come as standard. Not only will running costs be low, but Cub owners can also generate an income



from the energy they produce through the PVs. Rainwater is harvested and water saving devices are standard features, while A-rated appliances and low-energy lighting fixtures are used throughout. We worked within the guidelines set out by the Code for Sustainable Homes to comply with Level 5 certification.

ARE THEY SUITABLE FOR SELFBUILDERS?

Absolutely! Planning authorities love the fact that the buildings are carbon neutral and pre-certified. Cub houses can be clad in timber, brick or a fibreglass cladding and come complete with fitted kitchens and bathrooms in 51m² modules, so construction is extremely

fast. Homes are delivered within 16 weeks of the order and it takes about two days to put the building together, so within a couple of weeks it's ready to move into.

Selfbuilders are able to visit the show home at the BRE to learn about the technology. A Level 5, three-bedroom house has been designed so that most of the energy demand for heating, hot water and ventilation can be generated from solar panels. The annual fuel bill for this home could be as little as £56. As a general guide, a one-bedroom flat would cost around £100,000 and a five bedroom house around £300,000, and I'm currently looking for a plot of land where I can erect the two demonstration houses as my own home.



TELL US ABOUT PODPASSIV

I came up with the idea of sustainable relief housing in July 2010, with the specific aim of providing robust housing for families displaced through natural disasters, where supplies of electricity and water are unavailable. The →

INTERVIEW CHARLIE GREIG



ABOVE AND LEFT: This project was a new build property of six bedrooms, seven bathrooms and measured 450m². Its unique style mirrored destinations visited by Charlie throughout her life. Although built in 1998 it continues to be a modern representation of trends today.



LEFT: Charlie bought, developed and lived in the opulent converted ballroom of this grand stately home, which had 4.5 metre high ceilings which she panelled with Swarovski crystals and antique lace.



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Podpassiv shelter is a prefabricated building, supplied in kit form and made from composite GRP which is resistant to extreme temperatures and weather conditions, including earthquakes and hurricanes. They can be used again and again, and are able to be erected in only a few hours by unskilled labour using minimal tools. Rainwater is collected from the roof and channelled into the upper wall sections which is fed to an internal and external tap, and solar lamps in the roof produce six to eight hours of high illumine lighting per night from one day of solar charge. Tents and tarpaulins provide little protection and become

unhygienic, but Podpassiv shelters have a lifespan of at least 20 years and are also a quick easy solution for garden buildings, events, camping and site offices.

SUM UP YOUR STYLE IN THREE WORDS

Innovative, brave and tenacious.

WHAT ARE YOUR FUTURE PLANS?

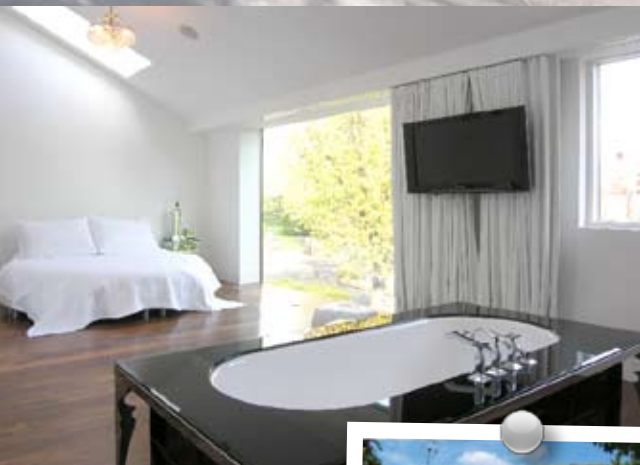
I'm currently advertising for staff and we're launching Podpassiv at the end of the year, when I'm going on a world tour with various versions of the shelter. I'm starting in a

prominent position in London and working my way across America, Japan and China doing live TV and media feeds from the Podpassiv, which will then be disassembled and moved on. I'm also doing a Big Brother style event in Singapore, which will involve living for three days in a transparent shelter!

TELL US ONE SURPRISING FACT ABOUT YOURSELF

I believe in destiny and am guided by my angels – I'm intent on making a difference.

www.cubhousingsolutions.com
www.podpassiv.com



Charlie Greig transformed a dull 1960s north London semi (right) into a glamorous Art Deco villa.

The distinctive, contemporary-looking property which – with its pristine white walls and frameless glazing – appears brand new. To the rear the effect is even more radical, with three storeys of full width folding glass doors overlooking a heated swimming pool and tropical landscaping reminiscent of a Miami beach-side home. Dramatic monochrome colour schemes were chosen for the interiors, with white walls throughout and robust slate flooring extending through the open plan ground floor and out into the suntrap garden to form a terrace around the inviting swimming pool.

