

LizO'Kane
 Tips from TV's No.1
 house hunter

There is a real mind battle in Ireland over concrete build (what we call traditional) versus timber framing, which has been used for centuries throughout North America and northern Europe. It's a dilemma that presented itself to me recently, as my husband and I are about to embark on our own building journey and had to decide on the design of our home.

So, just before Christmas, I found myself on a trip to a timber-frame factory in Germany. I've always wanted to visit a timber-frame facility, probably since I saw the lorry from Germany arriving on the Channel 4 television series, Grand Designs, and 'clunk click', German efficiency had the house built, insulated and weather-tight within 48 hours.

Hanse Haus, the factory I visited, is an hour outside Frankfurt. I chose this one, firstly, because it has a presence in Ireland and therefore anyone interested in its products can visit some of its sites and finished builds. Secondly, your home can be a bespoke design, unlike other facilities whereby you go and choose your home from a dozen properties on show, a bit like the supermarket.

For me, being in the Hanse Haus factory was like being a child in a sweet shop. From the moment you arrive, you experience the whole operation from the slick, kitted-out administration building through to the factory floor. They start processing your house from the moment you sign off on your design with your architect and the Hanse Haus team.

Each section of the build is sliced as a panel, already fully insulated and ready to be assembled, like Lego. All the sections are numbered, put on a lorry and, hey presto, you have a structure waiting to be delivered. More importantly, this will be an efficient, sustainable house and, in most cases, will achieve a building energy rating of A1. Delivery of your new

home takes between 12 to 16 weeks. What I love about the Hanse Haus product is that whatever price you are paying for, the building includes everything. You've a choice of bathrooms, tiling, flooring, light switches, door handles, kitchen units, worktops and anything else you can think of. It is all done with military precision, for as soon as the house is erected, the next group of workers arrive to continue installing and finishing.

Danny McGeachan from Arklow, Co. Wicklow, opted for a wood build. He says: 'Using Hanse Haus to build my home was the most stress-free experience I've ever had.' His house is 223sq.m and the build cost was €1,850 per sq.m. That included full finish and fit-out as well as a geo-thermal heat pump. The speed of the build was also paramount in our decision making,' Danny says. 'Although they had guar-

anteed us a build time of eight weeks, they actually handed us the keys after just six weeks.' This concept is a one-stop shop for designing, building and kitting-out new homes and commercial buildings too, if that's what's on your mind. • *Ralph Martin, manager for Ireland, can be contacted on 087 920 7224 or visit www.hanse-haus.ie Liz can be contacted via her website www.lizokane.ie*



SOLID: Timber-frame homes are quick to build

Property of the week



SPACIOUS: The 242sq.m home

AREA: Ballybrennan, Enniscorthy, Co. Wexford PRICE: €375,000 (negotiable) DETAILS: six-bed bungalow, 242sq.m SELLING AGENTS: www.privateseller.ie, property ID No.6571

This architect-designed, brand new substantial family home of 242sq.m incorporates six bedrooms and four en suites as well as a family bathroom. The house sits on a site of almost three-quarters of an acre.

The property is 8km from Enniscorthy town centre and has easy access to amenities and public transport, yet offers privacy and adequate grounds without being isolated.

The finish includes full tiling and timber flooring throughout, a large family room, fitted kitchen and high-end bathrooms. Another added bonus is no stamp duty for owner-occupiers or first-time buyers. So, if you're looking for value in the southeast, be sure to inspect this home.

It is for sale through the owner, who you will deal with directly.

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