

six of the best



GETTY IMAGES, ALAMY, PAUL RIDDLE, RICHARD DAVIES

Modern houses chosen by Alain de Botton



◀ **ACCORDIA HOUSING DEVELOPMENT, CAMBRIDGE, FIELDEN CLEGG BRADLEY ARCHITECTS** These are fantastic four-bedroom affordable houses that should become the model to replace Georgian terraces around the country.

▲ **DUCKETT HOUSE, NEW FOREST, JOHN PARDEY ARCHITECTS** John Pardey is one of the best, most reliable and cheapest architects of good housing. This house, done for the Duckett family, is full of light, space and hope.

We often hear it said that the UK doesn't build enough houses. But the news is worse. The houses it does manage to build tend to be phenomenally ugly and tinny, with tiny windows, fake-Georgian details, no space for storage and thin walls and floors. It wasn't meant to be like this. The potential of modern architecture is enormous. Why do we keep taking so much pride in our phones and so little interest in the abysmal quality of where we live every day?

The solution to Britain's housing problem lies in the public becoming much fussier about where they lay their heads, refusing to put up with the second rate — just as British food was improved by a generation taking on the lessons of celebrity chefs and refusing to wolf down the fatty, over-salted nonsense of the past.

Luckily, there are some very beautiful modern houses around the country. They should become the pin-ups of architecture that we look to for inspiration and start to demand from builders. Too often, people have sighed at the end of *Grand Designs* and assumed that beautiful modern architecture simply costs too much. It shouldn't. If you can get mass production going on a great design, costs can come down dramatically and easily match the Turkey Twizzlers that blight our landscape. The six houses here are ones that we should look to for inspiration

Alain de Botton's latest book, *The News: A User's Manual*, is published by Hamish Hamilton



▲ **THE LONG HOUSE, NORFOLK, HOPKINS ARCHITECTS** Designed by the same practice that did the 2012 Olympic Velodrome, this is a house with great views out to the sea and surrounding fields. Being there makes you feel good — and it's available for rent (living-architecture.co.uk).



▲ **DIRTY HOUSE, SHOREDITCH, EAST LONDON, DAVID ADJAYE** This house went up long before Shoreditch was trendy and shows how one can build something rough and tough in a beaten-up neighbourhood — and still come up with something completely beautiful and serene.



▲ **NEWHALL DEVELOPMENT, ESSEX, ALISON BROOKS ARCHITECTS** More fantastic, highly affordable family homes that are a thousand times better than anything many modern builders destroy our planet with. We want more of this.



▲ **WAKELINS, SUFFOLK, JAMES GORST** This shows what you can do when the budget is huge, but it has lessons for all housebuilders. Down with neo-Palladian country piles, James Gorst is the man for the future of grand rural life.