

Ten Characteristics of

FUTURE PLACE

Places where People want to Live



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Foreword

The RIBA has produced an analysis, drawn from the professional advice of its members, in response to Sir Oliver Letwin's Independent Review of Build Out Rates. This has identified the necessary conditions for, and characteristics of, high quality new places where people want to live. The following RIBA report is the precursor to the Future Place project, a partnership with the Local Government Association, Royal Town Planning Institute and Chartered Institute of Housing, which will highlight exemplary placemaking practice around the country.

We hope that this analysis will reinforce the conclusions of the Letwin Review by providing valuable evidence and case studies demonstrating the relationship between design quality and the rate of supply in the delivery of much needed, well-built, affordable homes. Specifically, we commend and respond to the review's conclusion that:

"If either the major house builders themselves, or others, were to offer much more housing of varying types, designs and tenures on the large sites that matched appropriately the desires of communities, then the overall absorption rates could be substantially accelerated."

The Letwin Review stops short of identifying a direct link between improved design quality and increasing the rate of supply; this report picks up where the review leaves off by providing a blueprint for how to achieve this. We have identified a range of case studies which demonstrate what a successful place looks and feels like. From these, we have established ten characteristics of successful and attractive places, which put design quality at the centre, and can be easily replicated across the country. The specific characteristics of this design quality form the substance of the RIBA's response.

It is equally important to have the right environment for delivery that will make these places where people want to live possible. The necessary context for successful placemaking is often neglected, but only by addressing this can we improve both the quality of the homes we are building and the rate of supply. High quality design is essential, but it must be founded upon the right leadership, the right funding and delivery models, the right collaborative and innovative processes, and the right skills and resources. Accordingly, this document begins with the four major conditions necessary for successful placemaking, based on the most successful delivery models seen in both historic and recent practice.

We welcome the opportunity to have a more robust discussion about how we deliver the homes needed in this country. Improving design quality and increasing supply will be mutually reinforcing when managed in the right way. Changing our approach to achieving this is essential to ensure we build places that will last, and where people want to live.



A handwritten signature in black ink, which appears to read 'Ben Derbyshire'.

RIBA President Ben Derbyshire



Strategic planning and infrastructure

The focus of the current planning system is skewed in favour of increasing housing numbers at the expense of good design and creating sustainable, liveable places. This has inevitably perpetuated an environment of resentment towards development among local residents. Communities feeling locked out of the decision-making process is symptomatic of the wider problem where development comes forward only in the context of numbers of homes supplied.

However, a focus on design alone will not be sufficient. Before assessing the characteristics of what makes a successful place, we must first look at providing the necessary environment required to deliver strong, lasting neighbourhoods. We can look to lessons from the past for examples of innovative land development and public/private partnerships that prioritised good design and fostered strong new communities. These precedents suggest solutions for delivering homes at greater speed, while meeting the need for housing that people actually want.

The strategy requires a local approach, with an up-to-date Local Plan at its centre. This should include ambitious but realistic housing-supply targets informed by objective market need, clear demand and a sound assessment of an area's potential for development. As a starting point, local authority planning departments across all regions must be adequately resourced to develop ambitious plans. There is also a requirement for a clear framework demonstrating how Local Plans are supported by wider spatial plans, such as Strategic Economic Plans. The framework should set out a clear set of complementary holistic policy ambitions, developed for an area through the collaboration of different regional bodies.

Equally as important is planning for the infrastructure on which housing depends. Spatial modelling tools can help to ensure that the right development is delivered in the right place, by identifying where capacity exists to accommodate new housing. Specific consideration should be given to putting the necessary infrastructure in place to enable increased delivery of self-build homes. To support the development of transport and social infrastructure alongside new developments, a new, integrated approach to decision making is needed. At present, some of the rules set by HM Treasury and the Department for Transport, amongst others, prohibit local and regional authorities from building rail/transit links, affordable housing, new schools and health facilities, or even coordinating bus schedules.

This lack of coordination can significantly delay development and increases public concern about the impact of new homes on existing residents. If local people are to buy into our collective ambition to deliver successful places, they need to be secure in the knowledge that it won't have an adverse impact on their quality of life.

THE NECESSARY CONDITIONS FOR SUCCESSFUL PLACEMAKING

- An approved Local Plan
- An ambitious housing-supply target
- A clear set of holistic policy ambitions
- Well-connected transport offering a choice of modes
- Early provision of social infrastructure
- Cross-authority working
- Affordable housing and realistic viability assessments in response to local housing need
- Spatial modelling tools



Storey's Field Centre and Eddington Nursery by MUMA © Alan Williams

The first phase of the Eddington development will see the delivery of housing and community facilities including the RIBA Stirling Prize shortlisted Storey's Field Centre and Eddington Nursery by MUMA.

RIBA RECOMMENDATIONS

- Providing more clarity on how spatial plans relate to each other in the planning system. For example, how Strategic Economic Plans and Neighbourhood Plans relate to Local Plans.
- Requiring public bodies across appropriate market areas to agree a statement of common ground in relation to infrastructure before public funding is made available.
- Striking new devolution deals until there is a solution in place for every area of the country, and creating a pathway to deepening devolution deals to ensure powers can be as extensive as those held by the Greater London Authority.
- Creating an overarching National Spatial Strategy which includes consideration of how infrastructure and economic development can align with housing growth and the development of Garden Cities.
- Giving greater priority to localised investment in new transport and social infrastructure, including schools and play space (rather than allowing development to put a strain on existing facilities), increasing the likelihood of higher-density housing being accepted by the local community.

Leadership and engagement

There have been some inspiring examples of past collaboration between the public and private sector, in which housing has been delivered at the required speed and scale, within thriving, successful neighbourhoods. This requires a strong commitment from both sides, taking a long-term approach underpinned by high quality design.

The case studies in this report demonstrate that the involvement of a properly resourced and staffed public sector can drive up the design standards of their private partners, particularly when quality criteria are applied by the government/landowner and/or funding body.

An effective balance of power is necessary to ensure all partners are enabled to deliver while remaining accountable. This also requires strong leadership from within both the public and private sector. In some cases innovative partnering arrangements are needed, which optimise land-use, secure return on investment and embed environmental gains and social value in the public interest. Wider collaboration between relevant local organisations across the public sector, including health, education and others, is also essential to ensure adequate planning for the needs of new neighbourhoods. The principle of subsidiarity should be uppermost, ensuring that decisions affecting both quantum and quality of community design are taken at the right level.

Promoting the strong civic leadership necessary can only be achieved if those driving the process are supported in their role to ensure the quality of the built environment. This should start with a strong professional design team appointed at an early stage to work in parallel with the local authority planning department. However, there is still too often a notable gap in design expertise within local authorities, creating questions over responsibility for high quality design and details. Design review panels and design codes are integral tools for achieving certainty in the planning process, particularly for masterplans that involve a variety of different developers.

Extensive expertise still exists at the local level to champion design excellence if appropriately prioritised. To access these skills, we need to promote partnerships between planners and designers, centred on a localised approach and demonstrating a genuine understanding of the challenges and opportunities at each particular site.

NECESSARY CONDITIONS FOR SUCCESSFUL PLACEMAKING

- Demonstrable civic leadership
- Cross public sectoral participation/collaboration/partnership
- Private sector participation/collaboration/partnership
- Excellent stakeholder engagement
- Strong commitment by both public and private sector to embrace high quality
- A professional consultant team selected based on ability and quality



St Chads by Bell Phillips Architects © Kilian O'Sullivan

Gloriana, the company set up by Thurrock Council to kickstart housebuilding to meet local needs without undercutting the market, is funded by a mix of equity and debt. The company was sold council land at a commercially valued rate. Gloriana borrowed against council tax income, repaid loan interest through rental income and debt when homes at St Chads were sold.

RIBA RECOMMENDATIONS

- Empowering local leaders to shape their local housing market by taking control over requirements for affordable housing, including the tenure composition for new developments (social rent, affordable rent, living rent, shared ownership, Starter Homes) based on local housing need, rather than fixed national targets.
- Supporting local authorities in carrying out their role in safeguarding the quality of the built environment, and their duty to refuse applications on the grounds of poor design, including at appeal.
- Funding design awareness training for planners and local councillors to deepen understanding within the public sector about the long-term benefits of quality design, and help to promote leadership in this area.
- Reinvigorating local authority planning departments as the career choice for young planners seeking to make a difference to the local community, including supporting initiatives such as the recently launched Public Practice, a scheme for planners based on the Teach First (in teaching) and Frontline (in social work) model.
- Permitting Local and Combined Authorities to make design review a mandatory requirement for developments above certain thresholds or in particular circumstances – ideally all developments of 20 homes or more.
- Providing developers with clear design-related expectations and standards. Where appropriate, design codes should be developed to create mandatory standards, as part of a permission in principle approach.

Land assembly and stewardship

With value for land that has planning permission continuing to dwarf the value of agricultural land, strategic land assembly can be a major challenge. A process needs to be established for assembling sites and managing land development that is rebalanced in favour of the public interest and quicker delivery. Local authorities should be supported in engaging effectively with stakeholders in the land-assembly process, with compulsory purchase orders (CPOs) available as a last resort.

Development agreements need to be appropriately demanding to avoid delay and uncertainty in projects further down the line, and to ensure that every party is held accountable. Making the best use of the land available requires more enlightened stewardship from both public and private developers. There needs to be a re-think of our approach to valuing land so that social and environmental returns, as well as land scarcity, are given equal, or higher consideration over economic return.

This will provide a greater focus on the long-term benefits of development to the public sector and ensure that standards of delivery and quality are not driven down by a single-minded focus on best price; poor quality housing costs more to individuals and society in the long-term. This was a founding principle of the Town Planning movement.

More innovation is required in the way that land is brought forward. The dominance of the major-volume housebuilders has created a very narrow market offering, in which a largely homogenous product is delivered at a cautious rate to prevent supply from outstripping demand. By diversifying supply, we can broaden the level of demand for new-build housing as it becomes accessible and appealing to a greater proportion of the population.

An effective stewardship model is to sell groups of plots of land that are suitable for a range of different types of developer, diversifying the market by allocating land for SME, community-led and custom-build developers alongside the majors. Through reviving the market for small-scale builders across the country, especially with a planning focus on the small sites that are unappealing to the major developers, we will create a more locally attuned market and a more resilient residential sector.

NECESSARY CONDITIONS FOR SUCCESSFUL PLACEMAKING

- Plan-led approach
- Provision for long-term public or enlightened private stewardship
- Commitment to management arrangements and stewardship in perpetuity embedded in planning conditions
- Appropriately demanding development agreements
- Land vesting and stakeholder engagement (use of CPO as a last resort)
- More innovative ways of bringing land forward and incentivising the use of small plots
- Innovation in valuation practice; embracing a longer-term approach to investment in placemaking focused on best value rather than best price (accounting for sustainability)
- Using a land stewardship model – selling groups of plots strategically – in a way that appeals to smaller builders and breaks up the dominance of major housebuilders



Timekeepers Square by Buttress

Timekeepers Square was delivered by the English Cities Fund, a joint venture between Muse Developments, Legal & General and Homes England, as part of the wider Salford Central Masterplan, the city's largest ever planning application. This 20-year regeneration initiative has the capacity to provide 849 new homes and 11,000 new jobs.

RIBA RECOMMENDATIONS

- Measuring the value of social and environmental return and giving this equal consideration to economic return. This includes considering the long-term impact of a proposal on the public sector to ensure that inappropriate development is avoided.
- Encouraging local authorities to consider partnering arrangements where land and ownership is retained by the authority, possibly in the form of Community Land Trusts, to ensure long-term best value for those assets.
- Introducing a presumption in favour of retaining public land and of land owned by government departments being offered first to local authorities, Local Development Corporations or Community Land Trusts (CLTs) – in partnership with housing associations and developers where appropriate. Where public land is released, it should be on a principle of best value not best price.
- Mandating the parcelling up of sites into smaller developments by different developers across a wider range of dwelling and tenure type.
- Encouraging and acknowledging the role of numerous small sites within the housing allocations of a Local Plan, rather than viewing them as windfall sites.
- Encouraging local authorities to use their compulsory purchase powers (paying compensation at existing use value plus a modest premium) where appropriate and only where negotiation has failed.

Innovating the design process

We need to innovate in our approach to the design process to make discovering new homes a delightful and enjoyable experience that captures the public imagination. To do this we have to ensure that the contributions of a range of disciplines are integrated into the design process at an early stage. From urban designers to interior designers working alongside architects and sustainability experts, good design results from engaging the right professional teams as early as possible in the process.

Capturing the public imagination also requires a greater effort to engage the wider community. This must be done in a way that allows people to genuinely contribute to shaping the homes in which they will eventually live. Public consultation often occurs too late in the design process to enable local people to input. This leads to resentment towards development, as the community feels that they haven't been listened to, or will not benefit from new development in which they have no stake. It is just as important to make sure we communicate with people in an engaging and accessible way which encourages participation.

It is now possible and affordable to digitally model and test places before we build. The tools available have advanced dramatically to the point where we can now submit full virtual versions of proposals in context. These can be accessible through a web browser, a television, as an augmented reality preview on site using phones or iPads, or projected at consultation events, planning committees and even explored in virtual reality. Digital technology can also be used to enable comments captured from a local community through consultation to feed back into the design process.

Innovation also needs to be promoted through the design and construction process. Offsite construction or design for manufacture and assembly has the potential to deliver development more quickly, with reduced impact on the local environment, and to far higher standards than is possible with traditional building methods. It can also create improved working conditions, avoid seasonal disruption of site work, and has the potential to stimulate and diversify entrants into the construction industry, attracted by highly skilled technical roles. Meanwhile, open source architecture has the potential to make well-designed homes even more accessible and affordable in future by providing broad access to plans for pre-fabricated buildings using digital construction techniques. Public bodies need to take the lead in digital design and construction, investing in and driving a more innovative approach to placemaking.

Whatever the construction method, learning from successes and mistakes through monitoring and Post Occupancy Evaluation will continue to improve the energy performance of new homes and how they work for the people living in them.

NECESSARY CONDITIONS FOR SUCCESSFUL PLACEMAKING

- Consistent engagement with all relevant stakeholders from an early stage
- Interdisciplinary process
- Digital engagement
- Initiatives to support custom build
- Increased use of appropriate MMC (modern methods of construction) where they improve performance
- Post Occupancy Evaluation



Hanham Hall by HTA Design

The homes at Hanham Hall are built from energy efficient factory made elements which minimise waste. Prototype units were constructed by Barratts and tested for sound, airtightness and co-heating by Oxford Brooks University. Detailed energy monitoring of 11 house types and simplified energy monitoring of all homes was carried out. Annual resident feedback was captured by CIRIA over three years.

RIBA RECOMMENDATIONS

- Prioritising Building Information Modelling (BIM) and Modern Methods of Construction (MMC). Homes England must take a key role in facilitating this.
- Actively involving the local community in decision-making from the start. There must be meaningful engagement with the wider community, as well as detailed consultation where investment is made into capturing feedback and providing virtual versions of proposals in context.
- Encouraging applicants to engage architects, planners, landscape architects, urban designers and others at an early stage of a project. Local authorities must take a leading role in this.
- Reviewing Design and Build contracts and taking steps to address the risks and shortcomings of this form of procurement, including as a minimum retention of the design architect throughout a project, in a 'design guardian' role.
- Bolstering and refining initiatives to support self-build to make a greater contribution to the rate of supply. Currently self-build schemes represent a very small proportion of new homes built.
- Promoting Post Occupancy Evaluation to establish the effectiveness of design for residents and enable future improvements through lessons learned from collected data.

Defining the characteristics of places where people want to live

The right leadership, funding and delivery models, collaborative and innovative processes, and skills and resources are the necessary foundations for delivering successful places. Further to these conditions being established, a high quality masterplan is essential to describe in three dimensions the design principles for a site or sites. This plan must set out clear standards while allowing for the right level of flexibility to achieve controlled variety, and accommodate change over time. High quality masterplanning processes require a professional team with the right skills and experience engaged from an early stage, as well as local authority commitment and local community participation.

The purpose of this document is not to provide guidance on the masterplanning process itself; much has been written on the subject of good practice in planning and urban design including CABI's Creating Successful Masterplans and The Urban Design Compendium. There are also many historical precedents for local government and plan-led approaches to successful placemaking which are not covered here – including Bedford Park, London's first garden suburb by Richard Norman Shaw, and the products of Ebenezer Howard's Garden City Movement. Instead the ten characteristics that follow, and the supporting case studies, demonstrate and illustrate the ideal set of outcomes from the right delivery model and the right plan. Together they show why getting it right matters – not only to speed up high quality housing delivery in the short term, but also to ensure that new communities are economically, socially and environmentally sustainable in the long term.

The ten characteristics describe what great places are like and how they work for the people who live there. The sequence of attributes does, however, follow the logic of a good masterplanning and design process. They start with the strategic placemaking decisions which define the nature of development in relation to its physical and socio-economic context; describe the setting for new development emerging from the layers of existing landscape and built environment; consider the townscape and housing typologies which form enjoyable, diverse and inclusive neighbourhoods; and define the character and quality experienced through robust and authentic materials and details. The final two characteristics show how the places and homes described are future-proofed through sustainable and healthy design. Each of these themes is considered from two essential perspectives. First, from the perspective of 'Place', we focus on how new development is anchored in what is specific and unique to a location. Then, from the perspective of 'People', we articulate how a new community, street or individual home can fulfil the universal human needs to live productive, connected and healthy lives.

The ten case studies that follow represent a range of successful approaches to designing and delivering high quality new settlements across England. Their placemaking qualities have been recognised by awards, the trade press and in publications.



Eddington, Lot 1
North West Cambridge
Cambridge City Council

Architect: WilkinsonEyre with Mole

Developer/Client: Lynxvale Developments and the University of Cambridge

Contractor: BAM

Number of homes: 117

Tenure mix: keyworker accommodation for staff; accommodation for university postgraduate students

Type mix: 35% 1 bed; 27% 2 bed; 38% 2 bed duplex

Use mix and social infrastructure: new local centre; market square; primary school; community centre and nursery; GP practice; CHP energy centre; supermarket; local shops

Transport infrastructure: cycle and bus routes within the new neighbourhood and to Cambridge city centre

Planning: outline planning for 3d masterplan including infrastructure strategy and design codes; detailed consent for each lot

Funding and delivery model: self-financed by university bond issue for £350m at 3.75% in 2012 for repayment in 2052

Procurement: single Stage Design and Build with Novation at Stage E

Build out/sales rate: built in a single phase; units not yet sold

Design standards: Code for Sustainable Homes Level 5; BREEAM Excellent; Lifetime Homes

RIBA Awards: to be submitted 2019

Modern Methods of Construction: precast stairs; timber SIP panels

Community engagement: undertaken at masterplanning stage

Post Occupancy Evaluation: yes



Derwenthorpe Phase 1

Osbalwick, York
City of York Council

Architect: Studio Partington

Developer/Affordable housing provider: Joseph Rowntree Housing Trust (JRHT)

Contractor: David Wilson Homes

Number of homes: 64 houses (of a total 540)

Tenure mix: 40% social rent and shared ownership; 60% private sale

Type mix: 28% 2 bed; 34% 3 bed; 34% 4 bed; 4% 6 bed terraced, semi-detached and detached houses

Use mix and social infrastructure: community centre as part of a new energy centre

Transport infrastructure: homezones and mews parking; sustrans cycle path connected to York city centre

Planning: reserved matters application

Funding and delivery model: joint venture between Joseph Rowntree Foundation/JRHT and David Wilson Homes

Procurement: bespoke joint venture

Design standards: Built for Life Quality Mark; Lifetime Homes; NHF Standards and Quality in Development 2008

RIBA Awards: RIBA National Award 2017; RIBA Yorkshire Sustainability Award 2017

Housing Design Awards: Completed Winner 2013

Modern Methods of Construction: thin-bed masonry walls; Structural Insulated Panel (SIP) roofs

Community engagement: JRHT model/self-governing community

Post Occupancy Evaluation: 3-year research project by York University; Leeds Beckett University/UCL post-completion test



Timekeepers Square

Adelphi/Bexley Square
conservation area Salford City Council

Architect: Buttress

Developer/Client: English Cities Fund/a joint venture between Muse Developments, Legal & General and Homes England

Contractor: John Turner Construction Group

Number of homes: 36

Tenure mix: 100% private for sale

Type mix: 36 townhouses: 8% 4 bed; 53% 3 bed; 39% 2 bed

Use mix and social infrastructure: hotels; shops; restaurants; 11,000 jobs and public realm enhancements within the Salford Central masterplan

Transport infrastructure: 10-minute walk to Manchester city centre; regular buses; near Salford Central train station

Planning: Salford Central masterplan to regenerate 50+ acres including 849 new homes

Funding and delivery model: English Cities Fund investment vehicle using funding from L&G and HCA alongside Muse equity

Procurement: traditional

Sales rate: all sold off plan

Design standards: Code for Sustainable Homes Level 3; Secured by Design accreditation

RIBA Awards: RIBA North West Award 2018

Housing Design Awards: Richard Feilden Award Best Affordable Housing 2018

Community engagement: Salford Regeneration Forum; community events; partnership with local primary school; supporting Salford Lads' Club; local suppliers used



St Chads

Tilbury, Essex
Thurrock Council

Architect: Bell Phillips Architects

Developer/Affordable housing provider: Gloriana, Thurrock Council's wholly owned company

Contractor: Wilmott Dixon

Number of homes: 128

Tenure mix: fluid to allow changes during the development's life; currently a mix of market rent and social rent

Type mix: 45% 2 bed detached courtyard houses; 50% 3 bed terraced houses; 5% 4 bed terraced houses

Use mix and social infrastructure: linear park; central garden; dedicated playground; re-built academy school; existing nursery and local shops adjacent; town centre 5 minutes walk

Transport infrastructure: existing Tilbury Town railway station 10-15 minutes' walk; existing bus services adjacent; secure cycle storage; secure visitor cycle spaces in public realm

Planning: Thurrock Council Development Plan; Essex Design Guide; London Housing Design Guide space standards; single detailed planning application; one phase of development

Funding and delivery model: Thurrock Council's wholly owned company Gloriana's borrowing levels increased the quantum of development

Procurement: two-stage Design and Build

Design standards: Code for Sustainable Homes level 4

RIBA Awards: RIBA East Region 2018

Housing Design Awards: Project Winner 2015

Community engagement: Residential consultation events held pre-planning



Trowse Newton
Norfolk
South Norfolk Council

Architect: ADAM Architecture
Masterplanner: Colman Estate
Developer/Contractor: Hopkins Homes Ltd
Affordable housing provider: Flagship
Number of homes: 79 (Plot 14 is 4 dwellings)
Tenure mix: 91% open market homes; 9% rented affordable homes
Type mix: open market: 39% 3 bed houses; 28% 4 bed houses; 24% 5 bed houses
 affordable: 5% x 1 bed flat; 4% x 3 bed house

Use mix and social infrastructure: open space; S106 contributions to upgraded community facilities; education
Transport infrastructure: off-site highway works
Planning: site with existing outline planning permission
Funding and delivery model: private speculative housebuilder funded
Procurement: standard housebuilder build with sub-contractors



Abode
Great Kneighton
Cambridge City Council

Architect: Proctor and Matthews Architects
Developer/Contractor: Countryside Properties
Affordable housing provider: Bedfordshire Pilgrims Housing Association (BPHA)
Number of homes: 308 (phase 1) 136 (phase 2)
Tenure mix: 40% affordable 60% private for sale
Type mix: 1 to 3 bed apartments; 2 to 5 bed houses
Use mix and social infrastructure: Primary School within Abode Phase 1 and 2; wider neighbourhood of 2500 new homes; retail; and community facilities
Transport infrastructure: new guided bus and cycle way
Planning: reserved matters application

Funding and delivery model: Private/Registered Social Landlord funded
Procurement: Design and Build
Build out/sales rate: build out 2012-2018; sales rate 6 units per month, 23% per annum
Design standards:
 Affordable homes: Code for Sustainable Homes Level 4; Lifetime Homes; Design and Quality Standards 2007
 Private homes: Code for Sustainable Homes Level 3
 Wheelchair accessible units: Habinteg Standards
RIBA Awards: RIBA National Award 2015; RIBA East Building of the Year 2015
Housing Design Awards: Supreme Winner 2014; Graham Pye Award 2014; Project Winner 2012
Community engagement: public consultation
Post Occupancy Evaluation: interviews undertaken with residents (Housing Design Awards)



Horsted Park
Chatham
Medway Council

Architect: Proctor and Matthews Architects
Developer/Contractor: Countryside Properties
Affordable housing provider: Extra Care provider
Number of homes: 114 delivered units of 337 with outline consent
Tenure mix: 25% affordable; 75% private sale
Type mix: 2 to 4 bed houses; 1 & 2 bed apartments
Use mix and social infrastructure: mixed-used residential development with 9% Extra Care provision
Transport infrastructure: principal bus route to Chatham town centre
Planning: outline application for 337 units followed by detailed application for 154 units

Funding and delivery model: Private/Registered Social Landlord funded
Procurement: Design and Build
Build out/sales rate: build out 2010-2013; sales rates approximately average 4-6 units per month; 18% per annum
Design standards: Medway's Residential Design Guidance; Building for Life
Housing Design Awards: Completed Project Award 2014
Community engagement: public consultation attended by over 200 local residents
Post Occupancy Evaluation: interviews undertaken with residents (Housing Design Awards)



The Avenue
Saffron Walden
Uttlesford District Council

Architect: Pollard Thomas Edwards
Developer/Contractor: Hill Partnerships
Affordable housing provider: Hastoe Housing Association
Number of homes: 76
Tenure mix: 41% affordable houses including 12% shared ownership; 35% private sale; 24% units for aged 55+
Use mix and social infrastructure: local school redevelopment funded by homes; landscape and play area
Transport infrastructure: a network of paths, including a restored lime tree avenue; generous cycle storage within the development to encourage walking and cycling for residents and neighbours
Planning: full planning permission

Funding and delivery mode: the Quaker Friends' School, established on site in 1879, needed to release land (and funds) for redevelopment
Procurement: single stage Design and Build
Build out/sales rate: 25 units built per year over three years; phased sales over two years
Design standards: Code for Sustainable Homes: mix of Level 3 and 4; EPC Rating: B; Fabric first passive design
RIBA Awards: RIBA National Award 2016
Community engagement: Community concerns clarified early; pre-planning consultation events; local school community; public exhibition; individual meetings with neighbours and local interest groups



Hanham Hall
Near Bristol
South Gloucestershire Council

Architect: HTA Design LLP
Developer/Contractor: Barratt Homes
Affordable housing provider: Sovereign
Number of homes: 186
Tenure mix: 65% private for sale; 35% affordable
Type mix: 21% 1 bed flats; 28% 2 bed flats; 11% 3 bed houses; 36% 4 bed houses; 4% 5 bed houses
Use mix and social infrastructure: nursery; community hall; office and commercial spaces in grade II* listed hall; allotments; community orchard; meadows; greenhouses; extension of doctors' surgery
Transport infrastructure: green travel plan: local buses; national cycle network adjacent
Planning: full detailed planning application

Funding and delivery mode: English Partnerships (Homes England) site awarded to Barratt Bristol through the Government Carbon Challenge programme
Procurement: Barratt acted as contract manager
Build out/sales rate: sales 2012-2015; 6 homes/month, 19% average annual sales rate
Design standards: Code for Sustainable Homes level 6; Zero Carbon
Housing Design Award: Richard Feilden Award, Best Affordable Housing 2014
BIM: Full 3d site model
Modern Methods of Construction: 100% (Structural Insulated Panel)
Community engagement: two public consultation events 390 people; 101 written feedback forms
Post Occupancy Evaluation: detailed energy monitoring of 11 house types; simplified energy monitoring of all homes; resident interview/questionnaire annually for 3 years carried out by CIRIA



Officers Field, Osprey Quay
Weymouth
Weymouth & Portland
Borough Council

Architect: HTA Design
Developer/Client: Zero C
Contractor: Acheson Construction Ltd
Number of homes: 77
Tenure mix: 70% private sale; 11% shared equity; 19% socially rented
Type mix: 4% 1 bed flats; 6% 2 bedroom flats; 29% 2 bedroom houses; 16% 3 bedroom house; 45% 4 bedroom house
Use mix and social infrastructure: public square; playing field; skate park; upgrade to local leisure centre; improvements to Victory Gardens; proximity to Chesil Beach and Osprey Quay
Transport infrastructure: local bus service and green travel plan in place

Planning: Regional Development Agency (SWRDA) masterplan for Osprey Quay as part of Outline Permission
Funding and delivery model: disposal through SWRDA Competition
Procurement: one stage Design and Build
Build out/sales rate: site developed in a single phase for London 2012 athletes' village
Design standards: Code for Sustainable Homes Level 4
RIBA Awards: RIBA National Award 2014; RIBA South West Award 2014
Housing Design Awards: Supreme Award 2012; Graham Pye Award, Best Place for Family Life 2012; Richard Feilden Award, Best Affordable Housing 2012
BIM: Full 3d site model
Modern Methods of Construction: 100% timber frame
Community engagement: public consultation 200+ local residents; 45 responses received

01 The right place for the right housing



Eddington, Lot 1 by WilkinsonEyre with Mole Architects © Jack Hobhouse

ESTABLISHING THE PLACE WHY IT MATTERS

Location is the primary influencing factor in the choice of a new-build home. This typically means a visually appealing setting in proximity to existing, enhanced or new essential local services – a good school, healthcare, green open space, shopping and employment opportunities – and an absence of factors which detract from, or foster a negative image of, an area. Convenient connections to sustainable local, regional, national and international transport links make a location particularly desirable. This physical connectivity to the surrounding context is the bedrock of successful placemaking and is critical to environmental, economic and social sustainability. Popular locations where people would choose to live – which have long established populations, well-built and well-maintained homes and an attractive overall environment – are unfortunately often the places least welcoming to new development at scale. The right sort of new housing – well designed, with a choice of types and tenures, and supported with high quality local amenities and appropriate facilities – is most likely to encourage the existing community to accept and welcome new development, and find favour with planners.

EDDINGTON LOT 1

Part of the North West Cambridge development – a 150-hectare expansion of the University to provide new affordable accommodation for increasing numbers of postgraduates and staff. This highly sustainable community of 117 homes will support the research and development community critical to the success of the UK economy.

New housing is conveniently located in relation to existing or new infrastructure and local assets and makes a virtue of existing constraints. Shops, green spaces and services – including schools, community and health centres – support the local economy, healthy activities and community life. Public parks, landscaped streets and squares are easily accessible by all. Both daily needs and leisure amenities are within easy walking distance. Car dependency is reduced to a minimum, and active travel (walking and cycling) is promoted in everyday life, benefitting both residents' health and the environment. Working with the existing, historic grain and road pattern, the new housing connects seamlessly to neighbouring places, town centres and the surrounding landscape.

The housing in the new neighbourhood is of a scale and type which reflects its location, with a higher density of dwellings in more urban environments or near transport hubs, reducing to single homes appropriate to rural contexts. Within a new settlement, the scale of buildings also reflects the diversity of uses or functions. Small and intimate residential homes along streets and lanes build up towards an active local centre, with shops and major civic buildings, where these are required. In this way, buildings, streets and spaces are scaled and clearly laid out to make the place easy to understand, navigate and move through for all members of the community and visitors. This clear hierarchy of public realm – from paths and lanes to garden squares and broad avenues – creates a legible and inclusive neighbourhood.

The built form is also configured to optimise solar orientation (access to sunlight and shade) and reflect the microclimate, creating the space and optimal environment for green corridors, habitats and active landscapes.



Eddington A large supermarket as part of Lot 1 creates an anchor for the diverse mix of uses throughout the area.



Abode At the entrance stand two apartment marker buildings set within a formal court – a reference to the urban form of Cambridge colleges.



Derwenthorpe A network of pedestrian and cycle routes cross the site allowing easy access between neighbourhoods and into the centre of York.

02 A place to start and a place to stay



Derwenthorpe by Studio Partington © Tim Crocker

FOSTERING THE COMMUNITY WHY IT MATTERS

A variety of consistently high quality housing types and tenures which appeals to an integrated community – from young renters and flat-sharers, to first-time buyers, families, empty nesters and older people – broadens market demand. People who would not currently consider a new home will do so if it is provided in the right neighbourhood context.

Neighbourhoods which incorporate a mix of uses and tenures, around spaces for social interaction, promote community inclusion, cohesion and resilience. Creating opportunities for local employment and enterprise, as well as flexible workspace and home-working, enables work in or close to homes. A diversity of uses ensures that streets and public spaces are animated with spontaneous local activity in the daytime as well as the evenings and weekends, helping to sustain local shops. When the mix is truly right, people can stay in the community through different phases of their life.

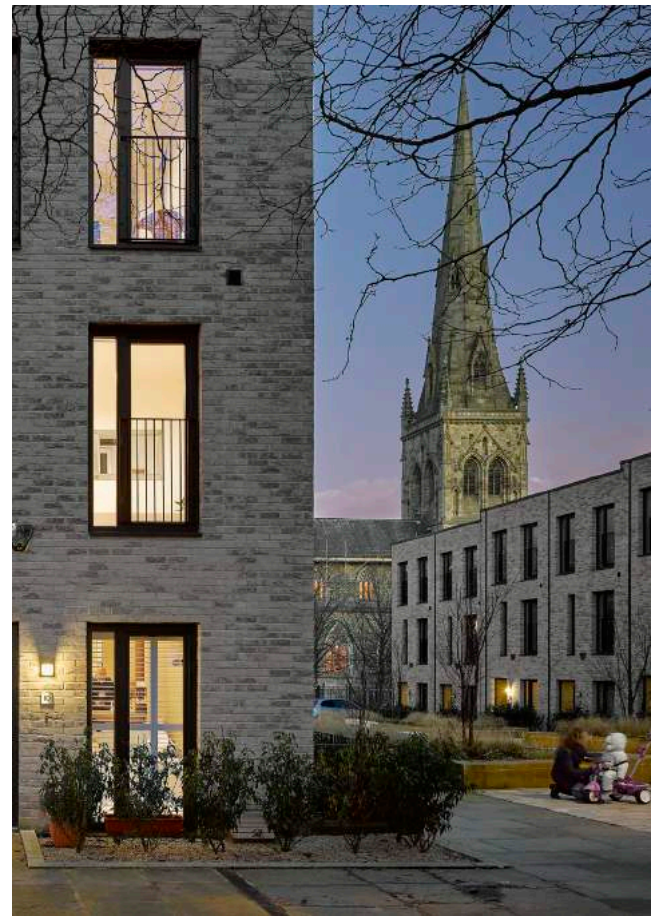
DERWENTHORPE

One of the first large scale low-carbon communities in Northern England, Derwenthorpe is a mixed tenure community of 64 energy efficient homes which extends and enhances the existing village community of Osbaldwick. “Community is the focus and inspiration, creating a beautiful sense of place and identity for those living there.”

Desirable new housing is part of a 'complete place' which includes a mix of uses. As well as places to live, the neighbourhood offers places to shop, socialise and relax alongside places to learn and work. In contrast to a homogenous and lifeless 'dormitory' or estate, homes and essential neighbourhood facilities are clustered together, reflecting the daily social and economic needs of local people, and work as lively, self-contained 'villages'. Shared amenities and spaces support an inclusive community life and allow people to take collective ownership of the spaces between the buildings.

The neighbourhood offers a wide choice of new homes of different sizes to buy or to rent, to suit the needs, desires and pockets of a range of different household sizes and lifestyles. These include a range of genuinely affordable family houses, apartments for smaller households and specialist housing for older residents. This choice and mix of housing is 'future proofed' to accommodate inevitable changes in mobility, work patterns and technology over the coming decades. It allows people the flexibility to move over different stages of their lives without having to move away from the community.

There are no large clusters of single-tenure dwellings. Instead, a mix of types and tenures is integrated within the community cluster, where people can meet and engage with each other across social and generational divides in safe and inclusive streets and community spaces.



Timekeepers Square The public realm has been enhanced with new outdoor spaces including pedestrian, play-friendly, high quality, home zone streets.



Derwenthorpe Affordable homes are 'pepper potted' across the whole avoiding grouping of tenure and promoting equality and diversity.



Derwenthorpe "A socially and environmentally sustainable community including energy efficient homes, incentives for lifestyle change, the promotion of community participation and long-term custodianship."

03 A place which fosters a sense of belonging



Timekeepers Square by Buttress © Daniel Hopkinson

CREATING A DISTINCTIVE IDENTITY WHY IT MATTERS

Anchoring new neighbourhoods and homes to the surrounding local context through their design enriches the area and evokes a strong visual identity to which people respond positively. This fosters a sense of ownership and helps to establish community self-recognition. The resulting place is equally attractive and appealing to the existing local community and new residents, as well as reflecting the vision of the professional team of architects and planners.

TIMEKEEPERS SQUARE

A development of 36 terraced townhouses within the Salford Central regeneration scheme, which reinstates the area's lost urban grain, strengthening the setting of the church and defining a new pedestrian boulevard.

"The new housing creates a strong and delightful sense of place, intelligently exploiting the constraints of working within a Conservation Area."

The new neighbourhood has a distinct and beautiful visual identity that has evolved from its immediate and wider environmental, social and historical context, creating a coherent, authentic and unique sense of place. The inherent quality of the layout, the buildings, and the incorporation of trees and green spaces, helps to ensure that the area will mature and improve over time.

The setting and composition of the new housing respects and enhances the landscape character and existing built environment of a place, working with the grain of natural features, historic routes, watercourses and heritage assets. Properly considered, the layout of new housing creates a unified whole in which homes are integrated with new and existing landscape or townscape features.

The varied scale and composition of the buildings and spaces responds to the existing form and visual characteristics of the area which people value. Rooted in local identity, the form and character of the neighbourhood – its homes, gardens, streets, and parks – build on the layers of local history and the essential spirit of the place.



Officers Field The site makes the most of the challenging topography and maximises views towards Chesil Beach and the National Sailing Centre in Portland.



The Avenue "Retaining as many trees as possible has created a striking avenue of limes which form a now well used public route."



Trowse Newton The focus of the scheme is a crescent of houses at the end of the village street, incorporating the existing public house.

04 A place to live in nature



St Chads by Bell Phillips Architects © Kilian O'Sullivan

GREENING THE NEIGHBOURHOOD WHY IT MATTERS

Greening the neighbourhood promotes and enhances biodiversity, ensures the survival of important species and enhances quality of life. Distinct and well-managed landscapes create a high quality and visually rich neighbourhood that matures over time, influencing buyers in their choice of new home and contributing to its value. As well as meaningfully shaping the character of a place, green infrastructure brings both environmental and health benefits.

ST CHADS

Located in Tilbury, Essex, St Chads is a development of 128 new homes which fulfils Thurrock Council's aims of regenerating the town as well as providing new subsidised housing. A grid pattern of streets links into the existing mid-20th century street layout, and a diagonal linear park connects to surrounding farmland.

The natural world is a crucial part of a new neighbourhood. New housing sits lightly in the existing natural context, enhancing existing environmental features, habitats and biodiversity. Brownfield sites are transformed into valuable green infrastructure through full soil remediation, tree planting, biodiverse vegetation schemes and sustainable drainage systems. Extensive high quality landscape enhancements, water-management systems, planting and trees draw upon, and restore, local ecological systems. Green corridors enable wildlife movements, and are also a place for outdoor leisure activity.

Native trees and plants sustain biodiversity, as well as being visually attractive in all seasons – enhancing the streetscape and organically framing open spaces. At a practical level, planting also defines boundaries and provides shade, while promoting human health and wellbeing.

Everyone has access to nature and green open space in the new community. A variety of accessible green spaces from commons to parks, village greens, garden squares, shared gardens and allotments encourage community interaction, horticulture and active outdoor lives. Tree-lined streets incorporating green pockets become safe places where children can play outside.

Enclosed shared spaces or private gardens which optimise solar orientation can be enjoyed as an extension of the internal environment and encourage year-round outdoor living at every life stage; active gardens for play and hobbies, and productive gardens for growing.



The Avenue “The trees and landscape that were planted in 1879 have subsequently matured into a fabulous setting.”



Abode A series of parallel ‘landscape ribbons’ create pleasant shared spaces between the houses and provide a linear route through the development.



Derwenthorpe Existing hedgerows have been enhanced to structure the site and create ecological zones and amenity spaces threading through the development.

05 A place to enjoy and be proud of



Trowse Newton by ADAM Architecture © John Critchley

BUILDING AN ENGAGING PLACE WHY IT MATTERS

Neighbourhoods with authentic, tangible character and distinct streetscapes are appealing to a wider range of potential homeowners and residents. A sense of hierarchy, pattern, harmony and discovery helps to create a stimulating local environment and contributes to an uplifting day-to-day experience of living in a place.

‘Townscape’ is closely linked to the image and perception of historic towns and villages in the public imagination. When the height, scale, massing and relationships of buildings and groups of buildings, are designed to create engaging views, vistas and skylines, new settlements will quickly become places that people enjoy and are proud of.

TROWSE NEWTON

The new development of 76 houses and community facilities conserves and enhances the historic village setting, sympathetically integrating the new with the existing community. A pair of red-brick houses with Dutch gables mark the centre of crescent which encloses a new village green and creates a focus for community activities.

The varied scale and composition of the buildings, streets, and spaces in the new neighbourhood responds to the local context, historic form and regional characteristics. Given currency with fresh architectural ideas, this new 'townscape' experience offers a distinctive sense of place often absent from the standard new housing offer.

Built to townscape principles of hierarchy, scale, composition, vistas and elements of surprise, the new settlement creates visual interest for the resident and visitor. Buildings frame, reveal, or obscure formal and informal views. Larger houses and apartment buildings are positioned to capture attention, terminate vistas and balance the overall composition. Although diverse in scale and design, different sides of streets are in dialogue with each other, and the buildings and spaces come together as a coherent and humane place.

The scale, form and design of buildings clearly define public, communal and private spaces, and the settlement boundaries, helping people to understand the place and find their way around. Civic spaces where people meet, such as public squares or greens, are framed by larger, more prominent buildings, while residential streets have a more intimate scale, reflecting the pattern of day-to-day life. The new housing creates a sense of enclosure and a safe haven within the wider neighbourhood, nurturing social interaction in shared spaces which afford shelter, shade and sun where needed. These 'outdoor rooms' are flanked with a variety of familiar, tried-and-trusted or innovative housing types, creating an authentic neighbourhood mix to attract different kinds of resident. The external appearance of homes is consistent in its appeal and not distinguishable by tenure.



Officers Field "Simple pitched roof forms and self-colour render walls, set against Portland stone walls, offer a richness and layering to the ensemble."



Eddington A central energy centre is a distinctive element which references the tradition of Cambridge chimneys, giving a strong identity to the scheme.



Timekeepers Square "The light grey brickwork acts as a gentle foil to the listed sandstone churches, creating a harmonious composition and a light cheerful atmosphere."

06 A place with a choice of homes



Abode by Proctor and Matthews Architects © Tim Crocker

ACCOMMODATING CHANGING LIFESTYLES WHY IT MATTERS

Modern buyers and renters do not want to be passive consumers of standard one, two or three bedroom products. They aspire to a choice of house types, designs and tenures offering well-designed and flexible spaces that can adapt over time to suit diverse and changing lifestyles.

Although some homes need to meet very particular requirements, most can be designed to be more generally adaptable over time to respond to changing needs. Smaller homes may seem a natural response to the fact that more people are living alone, but creating larger homes that enable multi-generational sharing could encourage more of us to live together again while retaining independence. This future trend could enrich lives and respond more effectively to people's changing circumstances as they grow older. The pace of technological change also demands far greater flexibility in the range of housing solutions on offer today.

Empowering communities to participate in the process of designing and building out their own homes has the potential to produce higher quality housing that responds to local needs and therefore increases build-out rates.

ABODE

Abode is part of a major new housing and mixed-use development in South Cambridge. Two apartment buildings within a formal court mark the entrance. Beyond a series of mews terraces around 'Green Lanes' provide a range of two to five bedroom homes for both private and affordable tenures.

Both buyers and renters are able to choose imaginatively and well-designed flexible housing that can be adapted and extended over time to reflect different life stages. A variety of new-build home types draws on reliable and land-efficient typologies, and reimagines them according to 21st Century expectations and patterns of living. These include the kinds of homes people have enjoyed living in for centuries; the terrace, the townhouse, the semi-detached house, the mews house, the maisonette, courtyard housing or lateral mansion-block flat.

Although not yet mainstream, it is now possible for buyers who would like a greater influence over the design of their home to buy a 'shell' space based on the floor area they need, which they can fit out to suit the way they want to live now and in future. This trend started in urban apartments and is now becoming more common in the family home market.

Those buyers who want even greater control over, and creative input into, the design of their home, are beginning to opt for a custom-build solution, working with an experienced development team to make their home a reality. Digital modelling and visualisation tools have advanced to the point where it is possible for people to fully engage in the design of their future home. 3d digital modelling and virtual or augmented reality has the potential to empower customers in the decision-making process, allowing them to experience their home before it has been built, and experiment with different variations of the design before any construction cost is incurred.

Homeowners or community groups who want to take greater responsibility for a building project in exchange for greater affordability – by cutting out the conventional developer – are beginning to come together to buy serviced plots to undertake their own self-build or community-led projects where essential infrastructure has been put in place.



Derwenthorpe "The houses are designed to comply with the requirements of Lifetime Homes."



Officers Field The homes provide a modern take on traditional family homes in a variety of terraced, semi and detached types.



The Avenue "The lack of a pattern book allowed the architects to develop their own kit of parts, creating individuality and variety."

07 A place with unique and lasting appeal



Horsted Park by Proctor and Matthews Architects © Tim Crocker

BUILDING IN CHARACTER AND QUALITY WHY IT MATTERS

A choice of beautiful high quality housing which varies aesthetically but shares authentic character is more memorable and desirable for a wider range of potential tenants and buyers. It also helps to secure support from existing neighbours, and goes on looking good – and retaining value – for longer. ‘Kerb appeal’ is an influential factor in the emotive business of choosing a new home.

HORSTED PARK

Horsted Park is a mixed-use, mixed-tenure development of 337 homes. Drawing on the area's local heritage and semi-rural setting, the new housing typologies take their cue from the vernacular of Kent's agricultural buildings. Apartment blocks, 'courtyard' homes and clusters of detached and semi-detached dwellings resemble local farmsteads.

Inherently authentic, memorable and delightful, new housing has a locally-rooted character drawn from its surroundings, but also a strong identity of its own. These are not the standard residential house types which result in anodyne 'anywhere' places.

Unmistakably 21st Century and reflecting current lifestyles, technologies and environmental standards, these homes still display individual, and human, charm. A careful balance of standardisation with variety conveys a sense of unified vernacular. The homes share a common architectural language, good proportions, and a consistent palette of details and materials reflecting local traditions and sources where possible; especially where they reduce the carbon footprint in doing so. While meeting modern standards and expectations, their distinctive architecture is engaging and has an enduring appeal. A coherent sense of place still allows for individuality and playful detail, with the capacity to surprise and delight. Expressive elements include balconies, roof terraces and projecting bays. Windows are sized, arranged and detailed to create a pleasing balance of solid to void, contributing to the 'personality' of homes.

Durable and tactile materials such as brick and masonry – which go on looking good for many decades and even improve with age as finishes weather and mature – give the homes a discernible and timeless quality and enhance character. This character, coherence and material quality extends to the streets and spaces, creating an attractive and valued setting for homes. Well-chosen materials are also easier and less costly to manage and maintain in the long term.



The Avenue "The palette of materials is traditional but the detailing is modern and crisp."



Timekeepers Square "The landscaping is well designed and executed, with fine natural materials and good detailing."

08 A place where people feel at home



The Avenue by Pollard Thomas Edwards © Tim Crocker

GIVING FORM TO THE IDEA OF HOME WHY IT MATTERS

Perceptions of home are deeply personal but most potential occupiers will respond positively to good proportion, imaginative details, warm materials, and a sense of enclosure, seclusion and space when looking for a new place to live. Architecture plays an important role in giving form to the human need for shelter, as well as optimising sites and making the most of the budget to provide a home that will be enjoyed from the first day of occupation and for many years into the future.

THE AVENUE

The Avenue inserts 76 new homes into a conservation area in a historic market town and preserves a lime-tree avenue and a listed water tower, creating a beautiful setting. In addition to large detached houses, it includes affordable family houses and smaller homes for the over-55 market.

Recognisable symbols of 'home' appeal to the resident's imagination. Human-scaled windows and doors, warm materials and colours, chimneys, porches, metalwork, garden walls and paths convey warmth, shelter, privacy, safety, and retreat. Roofscapes create a sense of protective enclosure – sometimes coming so close to the ground that roofing materials are almost within reach. Front gardens invite neighbourliness and social interaction, while providing a buffer between the home and the outside world. These familiar signifiers of home are integrated without pastiche; these are not the hackneyed 'traditionally inspired local house types' but attractive, contemporary and sustainable homes.

Inside, homes are well-proportioned and practically laid out, providing the space and free-flowing plan that current occupiers have come to expect, while offering corners for retreat and privacy. Internal materials are particularly important in conveying warmth, quality and variety. Colour is a deeply personal choice, but homes respond well to individual decoration through good natural lighting and intelligent orientation. Rooms are well lit, benefitting from good views and fresh air, and the whole home is designed and constructed to sufficiently high standards.

Self-finished or self-built customised and personalised homes draw more deeply on what home means to an individual occupant, and add to the controlled variety of the streetscape.



Derwenthorpe The houses are light and well-proportioned with generous flexible rooms.



Officers Field "Houses exploit all sides to gain light and views, and reveal themselves as light-filled."



St Chads "All of the rooms are well-lit by huge windows, that are carefully laid out to frame long views and protect privacy."

09 A sustainable place for future generations



Hanham Hall by HTA © HTA Design

FUTURE-PROOFING A PLACE FOR TOMORROW WHY IT MATTERS

Environmentally sustainable places will not only play their part in a low-carbon future but will provide a legacy which coming generations will be proud of. In our own time, homes in healthy, clean, resource-efficient neighbourhoods in the right places are more likely to attract potential owners or tenants by costing less to run from the start and retaining inherent value in the long term.

HANHAM HALL

Hanham Hall is the first site in the government's Carbon Challenge initiative and one of the first zero carbon communities in England. 185 new Code Level 6 homes are proposed in former hospital grounds around a series of green spaces with allotments, orchards, hedges, ponds, cycle and walking routes.

The new community is a holistic place, future-proofed for coming generations, as well as working for the people who live there now. Homes are designed and built to last and accommodate future needs and technological innovation, as well as anticipating changing weather patterns. Flexible, durable and upgradable infrastructure, built form, building materials and energy systems create 'loose fit, long life' places and ensure that the adaptability and resilience of the settlement is not compromised in the long run.

Designed to high environmental standards using ambitious certification and benchmarking schemes which go beyond current building regulations (including Passive House, Living Building Challenge or equivalent to the Code for Sustainable Homes), the new settlement is resilient and responsive to environmental risks such as flooding, as well as being an energy-efficient and economical place to live. Energy from renewable sources is managed at local level (district or micro-grid) to minimise energy loss during generation and distribution. Wherever possible, innovative technologies are used for on-site energy generation and waste management to reduce reliance on mains utilities.

Ecology and biodiversity are integrated into functional and beautiful landscape settings. Permeable surfaces and sustainable urban drainage systems minimise run-off and the negative impacts of development on the local water cycles. Water harvesting and on-site ecological wastewater treatment process potable water from source to recycling.

The layout and design quality of the neighbourhood further promotes health and wellbeing. The local school, doctor's surgery, shops, bus stop and green space are only minutes away from where people live. Homes and schools are located away from sources of air and light pollution, and main roads are avoided. The compact neighbourhood incorporates an attractive, permeable network of streets and spaces, where walking and cycling are the first choice. It is easy and enjoyable for everyone to make local journeys without a car, reducing each household's carbon footprint and increasing exercise.

Local bus links to surrounding places, shared transport schemes and car clubs provide a viable alternative to car ownership. Innovative parking strategies, adaptable to future reduction in car-use, are in place. Where people do currently rely on cars, they are integrated visually into the streetscape.



Eddington A central Combined Heat and Power energy centre serves the entire development.



St Chads A linear park, arranged diagonally through the street layout, connects the new homes to surrounding farmland.



Hanham Hall Code for Sustainable Homes Level 6 housing is arranged around cycle and walking routes.

10 A place where people thrive



Officers Field by HTA Design © HTA Design

PROMOTING HEALTH AND WELLBEING WHY IT MATTERS

Spacious, well laid-out and well-designed home interiors appeal to home purchasers and renters and strongly influence the choice of a new home. Once living in a new house, good indoor air quality, space and daylight promote health and wellbeing. As well as minimising negative impacts on the environment, inherently energy-efficient new homes are also more affordable to run.

OFFICERS FIELD

Officers Field provides 77 much needed sustainable 2, 3 and 4 bedroom family homes in Portland. The development incorporates biomass district heating, wood pellet stoves and rainwater harvesting, as well as bicycle storage, mechanical ventilation with heat recovery, and high-performance windows suitable to the coastal location.

Homes contribute positively to the wellbeing of the people who live in them by creating healthier, more comfortable and more spacious internal environments. Healthy materials and finishes which do not harm the environment and health or degrade indoor air quality are used. Good design ensures spaces are naturally well ventilated, comfortable and benefit from clean fresh air. Where appropriate, mechanical ventilation may be used to filter out pollution and regulate humidity. Noise from local businesses, traffic, neighbours and family members in different rooms is minimised through effective acoustic separation, helping to ensure that a home is a calm haven.

Optimised solar orientation and window sizes mean that all living spaces benefit from good daylight and sunlight – which is physically and mentally beneficial as well as providing a source of heat. Appropriate shading solutions moderate glare and prevent overheating in summer. Homes, dual aspect where possible, have good views while maintaining privacy. The position of windows minimises overlooking and unwanted light from other homes, street lighting and local businesses.



Eddington All residential units meet Code for Sustainable Homes Level 5. Most are dual-aspect, with good day lighting, cross and natural ventilation.

Homes are 'smart', low-carbon and energy efficient. Following the principles of passive design, walls, roofs and windows are well-insulated and airtight, and constructed using materials which keep rooms warm in winter and cool in summer. Solar gain and natural ventilation are used as much as possible for heating and cooling. This helps to keep running costs low for home owners and tenants and avoids fuel poverty. Products and materials are responsibly sourced and the 'embodied' carbon used in extraction, manufacture and transportation is kept to a minimum to ensure that the housing has a neutral or 'net positive' impact on the environment.



Horsted Park Inside, generous living spaces are filled with daylight and sunlight.

Conclusions

The RIBA endorses the Letwin Review approach to increasing quality and supply through better placemaking, with a greater diversity of tenures and types of homes alongside improved planning, delivery and stewardship. We are pleased to share this prospectus for exemplary places in support of the solutions proposed to address the slow pace, and poor design quality, of much speculative new-build housing.

It is clear that business as usual in housing delivery is no longer good enough and that the time has come for change. In this document, we share our vision for increasing the supply and quality of the homes the nation needs. We now know what is required to achieve that vision.

First, local authorities (and other public sector bodies) need to be empowered through innovative and integrated land assembly, funding, planning and delivery models to bring forward sites and infrastructure for development by a range of builders. Second, design-quality must be embedded from the start through civic leadership, properly skilled and resourced planning departments, professional design teams, design codes and fully detailed proposals. Quality must then be maintained through continuous design review and delivered through whole life value-based procurement.

Unlocked by innovation and collaborative working, the necessary conditions for delivery and a quality-led design process are mutually dependent – and mutually reinforcing. We have a collective vision of the kinds of great homes and communities we all want to see. All that remains is to act on the accumulated evidence and experience to make the Future Places where people will choose to live.

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