



Case Studies

Abode, Harlow

Abode at New Hall, Harlow is a progressive project that is delivering the high standards required by the Sustainable Communities Plan. It is located in the M11 corridor, one of the Government's four major growth areas.

The landowners New Hall Projects Ltd chose Countryside Properties for the excellence of their design proposals, following a detailed selection process.

Working with architects Proctor Matthews, we have introduced new ideas in design to provide a fresh, modern approach to house building that challenges preconceptions and provides homes which offer a better quality of life.

Whilst the architecture belongs to the twenty first century, the colours, texture, forms and use of materials reflect traditional local farm buildings and the surrounding landscape.

In July 2003 the then Deputy Prime Minister, John Prescott MP, visited abode to award the scheme with CABI's inaugural Building for Life Gold Standard.

The 106 houses and apartments have been created specifically for the project in two phases. Each type of home follows a base design form, with individual features adapted for each plot. Variation in orientation, layout and materials make each home unique. Homes are orientated to take account of solar heat gain.

Each home is designed to explore the use of space. Open plan layouts, rooms in the roof space, split levels, double height volumes, and even sliding walls in some homes, let rooms 'fold' into each other and allow residents to adapt their homes to suit their needs as their lifestyles change. The extensive use of glazing throughout the development means that natural light is allowed to define the interior of every home. Glazed projecting bay windows and conservatories on upper levels are some of the features.

The hierarchy of streets, lanes and mews incorporate 'home zones' where all residents are encouraged to enjoy the space and car parking has been absorbed within the homes to prioritise pedestrians and the streetscape.

In a scheme of high density such as this, it is important to create privacy for residents and this has been achieved through the use of private roof terraces, balconies with louvered screens and walled gardens.

In addition to the Building for Life Gold Standard, Abode has been named as the overall winner of the RIBA Housing Design Awards 2004. In 2005 it won a RIBA Award and was shortlisted for the Sterling Prize. It was the only housing scheme in CABI's Top 10 Architectural highlights of 2003 and it has also been recognised by the National Homebuilder Design Awards (twice) and the International Property Awards.

Work was completed on the second phase of 48 homes in 2007.



"This housing scheme creates colourful neighbourhoods without resorting to Poundbury-style pastiche. The houses are able to adapt easily to the differing needs of the families that occupy them. Countryside are to be congratulated on their enterprise."

RIBA Awards 2005

"I think you have got the wow factor here. I'm absolutely delighted to be here, to be associated with something of quality, something of excitement, something of design. I've got a vision now, I've just seen it."

John Prescott MP, former Deputy Prime Minister