

Sustainable Homes

Web Site Launched for a new Millennium

Changing times...

Hurting towards the new millennium, times are changing at Sustainable Homes. Sadly this is my last newsletter as National Co-ordinator of the project before moving on to pastures new. Fear not, though, as Sustainable Homes will continue to go from strength to strength. Plans for the next 12 months include a second National Conference, from April should you require any information on the Sustainable Homes project please contact Martin Rowbottom at Hastoe Housing Association, details on the back page.

Wendy Shaw



THE HOUSING CORPORATION

Sustainable Homes and this newsletter are supported by an Innovation and Good Practice Grant from the Housing Corporation

Sustainable Homes has gone high tech. Anthony Mayer, Chief Executive of the Housing Corporation, officially launched the Sustainable Homes Website on Monday 8th February 1999 at Hastoe Housing Association's head office in Teddington.

From the website you can now download all the current Sustainable Homes information. You can even download these newsletters direct to your PC! Other information available includes policy papers, forthcoming seminars, the noticeboard, good practice case studies and the EcoDatabase. The EcoDatabase, produced in conjunction with ECD Energy and the Environment, was launched simultaneously and you can find out more about it on page 4 of this newsletter.

From the Sustainable Homes website there are also links to other useful environmental sites.

In addition to the continuing support of the Housing Corporation thanks should also go to the following organisations for sponsoring the website :

- Anchor Trust
- Devon and Cornwall Housing Association
- Hartvale Housing Group
- London and Quadrant Housing Trust
- Moat Housing Group
- Nottingham Community Housing Association

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Anthony Mayer surfs the Sustainable Homes Website

Sustainable Homes Website can be found at

www.sustainablehomes.co.uk

Register for the Sustainable Homes Notice Board on the website and leave any environmental queries or requests for advice. The noticeboard is intended to be used as a forum for Housing Associations to share ideas and experiences on environmental issues.

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New Wave Bill

The water industry is about to face one of its biggest changes since the 1920's. Several factors are 'driving' this:

In some parts of the country the price of water is becoming comparable with that of energy. The regulator (OFWAT) is seeking more efficiency through less leakage.

The Government is demanding greater environmental consideration and customers are becoming more aware of their vulnerability.

Two important initiatives are being taken this year:

The Water Industry Bill is likely to be law by the summer and appears to be passing smoothly through parliament.

The Water Bye-laws are also likely to be in force this year (but there are some problems with detail). What is particularly important about them both is that they will have a significant impact on the design and management of all forms of housing.

Keep an eye out for the forthcoming Affordable Water Newsletter for more details of this legislation.

WEB Site Launched

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Their sponsorship will ensure that the website will be kept running and well maintained for the next 2 years. Thanks also to Servite Houses and Hyde Housing Association for their contributions to the project.

I hope that you will visit the site regularly and make full use of the noticeboard facility.

Please e-mail us with any comments and suggestions, for example other sites that we should link up with, maybe even your own organisation's website.

From Grey to Green

A group which has spent many years campaigning to have their grey, run-down, deck access maisonettes redeveloped to provide decent homes, is not the most likely candidate to embrace a new technology. The history of housing in the UK is littered with examples of innovation which failed to live up to expectations and became early candidates for regeneration.

However CDS Liverpool, working with a group of local residents, have come up with housing which addresses many of the environmental issues which are a concern at the end of the 20th Century.

The residents and CDS worked together to replace the five storey 1960's maisonettes with a low-rise development of houses and bungalows utilising the Ecolite form of timber frame construction developed by the architects Architype.

This utilises timber I beam sections in the structure, maximising the use of small dimension lumber and recycled sawmill waste to produce environmentally friendly components with low embodied energy. The I beams enable the houses to be designed with a clear span structure, ensuring that future alterations are relatively easy to carry out.

The cellulose insulation results in a significant reduction in heat loss and the houses could have been heated with the option of simple gas convectors.

Whilst the original residents were



Site visit at Harlow Park, Liverpool

The potential saving in water costs is significant. Monitoring will see how this works out in reality and how the running costs and maintenance charges compare with the savings on water bills.

Many of the resident groups which have been involved in redevelopment schemes in Liverpool have opted for a site design reflecting the 'Brookside' approach to planning. The sense of security and community reflected in the cul-de-sac design was a natural response to years of living in run down and anonymous local authority housing. At Harlow Park the residents and CDS have adopted a different approach with the new housing placed along the existing street frontages and the internal site space is given over to a mixture of communal areas and private gardens. The new street elevations are faced with recycled brick, whereas the internal garden elevations are in timber boarding, more accurately reflecting the timber structure of the houses.

The construction costs at £550 per m² were 2 - 3% above the normal budget which CDS would have expected for a scheme of this size and housing mix.

prepared to embrace much of the green agenda, only one was prepared to forego a conventional gas fired wet radiator heating system. This house will be part of the monitoring programme to see whether the gas convector heaters meet the expectations of comfort levels and economy.

In addition to the green construction and low energy design, particular attention was given to water conservation. All the houses have been fitted with low volume flush toilets, spray taps where appropriate and rainwater butts for garden use.

North West Water, has provided support to fit some of the houses with grey water systems which recycle bath and washbasin water to flush the toilets.

Family partnership homes to cut waste

Ealing Family Housing Association is involved in one of two new housing projects in the UK subsidised by THERMIE funding.

The Amersham Road scheme in Reading is a large new estate which was built by Ealing Family in partnership with Reading Borough Council, Ujima and Northcote Housing Associations.

The scheme provides 190 new homes for rent and shared ownership.

The estate also has a new community centre, a shop, play areas, garden allotments, recycling facilities, a local management service and resident caretaker.

Fifty of the new homes were built with enhanced energy efficiency specifications funded by THERMIE.

High levels of insulation to roofs, walls and floors including 250mm 'Warmcell' recycled cellulose roof insulation and 100mm polystyrene fully filled wall cavities.

'Passivent' stack ventilation which uses natural air pressure instead of electrical fans.

Efficient heating and lighting systems, including.

26 homes fitted with high efficiency Valliant gas combination boilers.

24 homes fitted with solar preheated domestic water systems with high efficiency Veissman gas condensing boilers and AGPO ZEN storage tanks.

Other environmental features include.

- Use of recycled materials for building.
- Recycling facilities within each house.
- Water conservation measures such

as reduced flush toilets and rain water butts.

- Limited damage to the site during construction.
- Increasing the ecological value of the site by landscaping and tree planting.
- Systems of monitoring energy savings.

Approximately 67% of the waste materials from the site were recycled by the contractor. These include paper, packaging, pallets, metals and plastics.

All of the original hard surfaces were reused for roads, parking bays, patios etc. and the site top soil was stripped, graded and re-used on the gardens.

The first of the THERMIE units were occupied in July 1998 and energy savings are being monitored for two years afterwards.

Sustainable Homes will produce information on these results when they are available.

All of these Thermie houses and the other rented homes in Amersham Road are being built to comply with the BRE Environmental Standard.

Beyond the mandatory aspects of the standard the Amersham Road scheme used

at least 50% recycled or reused materials in the walls and roof coverings; increased the ecological value of the site; included rain water butts and a house log book for each house to monitor energy savings.

So how much did all this cost? The extra cost of the innovative energy efficient works were covered by the Thermie Grant.

The additional Environmental Standard requirements cost an extra £325 per home.

For more information on this scheme contact
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Lift off for Enviro Housing EcoDatabase

The EcoDatabase is a database of environmental housing projects in the UK. The database includes background on projects, environmental features, the design team and further sources of information including contact details.

In the UK the number of environmental housing projects is growing, especially with high profile projects such as the Greenwich Millennium Village being undertaken. However, at present there is very little cross flow of information regarding these developments. For example where an environmental feature is found to work and the payback is low at present no one else knows of this.

ECD Energy and Environment in conjunction with Sustainable Homes and with funding from the Housing Corporation have recently completed an EcoDatabase. This database, which runs in Microsoft Access is a comprehensive list of environmental housing projects in the UK, Ireland and Europe.

The database, the first of its kind has been distributed to the major housing associations and is also available to purchase through

ECD Energy & Environment or

The database can be purchased at a nominal cost of £10 from James Walker, ECD Energy and Environment, 11-15 Emerald Street, London, WC1N 3QL. Tel: 0171 896 5721. Cheques should be made payable to ECD Energy and Environment.

Sustainable Homes.

The aim of the project has been to help with the dissemination of environmental best practice information.

Information on energy efficiency in housing has been disseminated well in the past few years through programmes such as Best Practice but there is still very little

knowledge available of innovative environmental projects.

This has resulted in innovative work being duplicated; slow take up of proven technologies, householders not benefiting soon enough and some key environmental issues being neglected.

The aim of the EcoDatabase is to combat this.

James Walker of ECD Energy and Environment said, "The number of people interested in the database has been very encouraging, it has provided the perfect way of supplying the industry with key data which had previously been missing – I think the quality of information provided indicates the growing importance of environmental issues within the housing market".

The benefits of the EcoDatabase are already apparent with the Database helping find funding for a proposed environmental housing project which includes PVs.

This linking of information is essential to ensure environmental design is not stifled but can continue advancing in leaps and bounds.

To this end, it is intended that the database should be updated and if any further examples are known please contact James Walker at ECD.



Launch of the EcoDatabase

Sustainable H 
*Promoting Environmental
Policies in Housing*

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