



Co-operative Councils

Innovation Network

HOUSING

Norwich City Council

Goldsmith Street

Norwich City Council has a strong tradition of housebuilding and is committed to improving environmental standards.

In an era characterised by limited funds, stock transfers and land sales, and following Government changes to Housing Revenue Account financing in 2012, the council took the unusual step of developing new properties itself, engaging architects through a RIBA competition to fulfil its ambitions for Goldsmith Street.

Building these homes allowed the council to help replace stock lost through the Right to Buy, while providing much needed housing at social rents.

A total of 93 dwellings are for social rent, owned and managed by Norwich City Council. Each property has been designed to achieve ultra-low energy, Passivhaus standard, meaning residents can expect to save around 70% on their fuel bills for heating. This is one of the largest 100 per cent social rented Passivhaus schemes in the UK.

Each flat on the site has its own front door at street level and its own dedicated stair from there; there are no communal staircases or access galleries. This reduces service charges and means that people living in flats enjoy privacy from the moment their key is in the front door. Each flat also has its own outside amenity space.

Since completing in June 2019, the development and has won a number of awards, including winning the RIBA Stirling Prize.



History of the site

In the Victorian era through to the 1970's there were a series of terraced streets on the site.



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In the early to mid-1970's this area saw redevelopment to provide a county council care home, 25 city council owned sheltered housing properties and some light industrial units.

The sheltered housing units were very small, and the council took the decision to relocate the residents to other properties, decommission the dwellings and redevelop the area in 2007.

The council was working with three local registered providers to bring the site forward however, due to changes to national funding for social housing the scheme stalled.

Following the Government's decision around HRA re-financing in 2012 the council took the decision to take the development forward themselves and re-engaged the architects that had been selected through a RIBA competition.

This allows the council to help replace stock lost through the right to buy, whilst providing much needed housing at social rents.

The Scheme

A total of 105 dwellings will be for social rent, owned and managed by Norwich City Council.

The main site encompasses an area of approximately 1.2 hectares (3 acres) and is located east of Goldsmith Street, North of Midland Street and South of Devonshire Street, Norwich. This area will provide 93 dwellings.

Two smaller sites, on the corner of Midland Street and the car park on Exeter Street are also included, providing 12 dwellings, however these are currently on hold.

All dwellings are designed to achieve the certified Passivhaus standard. This will be the largest 100% social rented Passivhaus scheme in the UK.

Property mix of the main site (93) Property mix of phase 2 (12)

45 x 1-bedroom flats	11 x 1-bed flats
3 x 2-bedroom flats	1 x 3-bed flat
40 x 2-bedroom houses	
5 x 4-bedroom houses	

Key Features of the Scheme

1. 100% Passivhaus certified, this should ensure that residents save around 70% on their fuel bills for space heating helping to address fuel poverty.
2. 100% social rented to meet the annual housing need for 240 affordable housing dwellings for rent.



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3. High density and low massing. The design brief set a target of 100 dwellings but with no more than 4 storeys across the site. The design more than achieves this with a density of around 82 dwellings per hectare, with a maximum 3 storeys.
4. Each flat on the site has its own front door at street level and its own dedicated stair from there. There will be no common staircases or access galleries. This means that the occupants of flats, like houses, enjoy privacy from the moment that their key is in the front door and this also reduces service charges for tenants.
5. Each flat has its own outside amenity space in the form of back gardens for ground floor flats and balconies for upper floor flats.
6. Distances between properties both front and rear is 14m, mirroring the successful Victorian street pattern elsewhere in the City. The arrangement of houses in their section seeks to minimise overlooking by ensuring that all first-floor bedrooms look south. First floor rooms looking north are either bathrooms or stair landings and so do not present an overlooking problem.
7. Where possible bin stores have been incorporated in front gardens or dedicated communal stores with metal mesh doors.
8. Small architectural features have been incorporated to break up the elevation, such as raked out pointing to create fake windows and hit and miss brickwork to balconies.
9. The dwellings only have small gardens to reduce maintenance for tenants but additional green space is provided in communal areas along with an area of play for small children. Additionally, as part of the development improvement works have been carried out to the Midland Street green space including creation of formal footpaths and natural play equipment for small children.

Timetable

Start on site: January 2017
 Completion: June 2019

93 of the dwellings have been completed and handed over to the council between November 2018 and June 2019

Financial

Total Project Budget (for 105 dwellings inc contingency)	£17.3m (£2,200 per m ²)
Construction cost	£14.9m (£1,875 per m ²)

(Tender prices as at 2016)

Funding:

30% retained RTB receipts
 70% HRA reserves / borrowing

Consultation



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Public consultation was carried out in September 2014, prior to submitting a formal planning application.

1. Approximately 50 members of the local community attended the event, with 42 questionnaires returned to Norwich city council with feedback on the proposed scheme and whether the scheme would benefit the local area.
2. The vast majority of the local residents were in favour of the proposed development.
3. The general response was positive towards the scheme. The majority of the responses agreed that the development would have a positive impact on the surrounding area, which had remained vacant for a number of years.
4. After receiving feedback from local residents, the question was raised as to whether any of the flats were design to suit disabled members of the public. In response, 10% of the ground floor flats are to be designed to Lifetime Homes standards with a disabled car parking space within 10m of their flat entrance.
5. One of the main concerns raised by local residents was regarding traffic using the area as a cut through from Old Palace Road. In response to this concern the scheme now incorporates several 'build-outs' of the pavement to slow traffic and to prioritise pedestrians.

Awards

1. Housing Design Awards 2016 – project winner
2. The Times – top 10 architectural schemes 2018
3. CPRE Norfolk – Green Building of the Year 2018
4. BD Awards – Architect of the Year and Architectural Client of the Year 2019
5. RIBA (East) – Project winner, Special Award for Sustainability and Client of the Year 2019
6. Norfolk Construction Excellence Award for Sustainability 2019
7. RICS (East) – Residential award 2019 (will now be put forward for national award) and shortlisted for Regeneration
8. RIBA National Award winner 2019
9. Housing Design Awards 2019 – Good Neighbour Award and Overall Winner
10. RICS National Award 2019 for residential – shortlisted
11. RIBA Stirling Prize 2019 – winner
12. RIBA Neave Brown Award 2019 – winner
13. RIBA Client of the Year 2019 - shortlisted
14. AJ Architecture awards shortlist – housing over £10m category – winner announced 20 November 2019



Approved Scheme



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Architects images of final scheme at design stage



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Progress photos

January 2017



May 2019



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