

# ONESIXTHREE

SUMMER 2015

THE MAGAZINE FOR EVERYONE  
AT WILLMOTT DIXON



**NOEL JOINS  
THE SPACE  
RACE**

5 STAR RETIREMENT  
IN HAMPSHIRE

**P10**

BUSMAN'S HOLIDAY  
IN BOURNEMOUTH

**P16**

## SUMMER EDITION CONTENTS

- 04 REACHING FOR THE STARS**  
Building Europe's most important facility for satellites
- 08 ENERGY RISING**  
Rob Lambe discusses UK expansion for Energy Services
- 10 5 STAR RETIREMENT**  
A retirement village in Hampshire is defining how we build for the over 55s
- 14 BUILDING LIVES IN BIRMINGHAM**  
Partnerships' apprentice programme creates real legacy
- 16 BUSMAN'S HOLIDAY FOR CARDIFF TEAM**  
How we are transforming this seaside town
- 20 AV IS THE PLACE TO BE: HERE**  
The face of private renting is changing forever
- 23 INTERIORS FIT-OUT OF FARRINGDON**  
A facelift for Interior's Farringdon office
- 24 RIDING THE LONDON WAVE**  
A round-up of big projects in London
- 26 MAKING A MARK IN RICHMOND**  
Partnerships winning friends in West London
- 29 MARTIN SHOWS HIS WILD SIDE**  
Our link-up with the Wildlife Trusts to drive ecology best practice
- 30 SCHOOLS FLOCK TO SUNESIS**  
Tim Carey explains how Sunesis is now open to private companies
- 32 PETER'S LOVE FOR BEVERLEY**  
Peter Gleave shows off his large retail development in the historic Yorkshire town
- 36 COBHAM'S SKY-HIGH CHALLENGE**  
Delivering Southampton's largest regeneration scheme
- 40 HOUSING'S QUALITY ZONE**  
Housing's quality factory in Birmingham

Changing lives, improving our communities; Lisa O'Neill from Housing's Midlands and North team joins a pupil from Woodlands special needs school at the LCO's Foundation challenge to bring colour and vibrancy to the school's outdoor play area



## CELEBRATING OUR SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT ACHIEVEMENTS

### IT'S OFFICIAL: 2014 WAS OUR MOST SUSTAINABLE YEAR!

Every year Re-Thinking, the team which supports the Group in its sustainability work, produces a report which charts progress against our sustainability strategy. Director of Re-Thinking, Julia Barrett, explains more: "We should all be proud of what we have achieved. The biggest headlines were reducing our carbon emissions by 30%, retaining our carbon neutral status, diverting 96% of our waste from landfill, and 99% of staff completing the new on-line sustainability induction."

It's the latest milestone in the journey started over ten years ago to be the most sustainably responsible company in our sector. Julia continues: "This year we set a new record for community investment, with the value of our activities reaching £2.27m. We are also on track to meet our target of 'Enhancing the lives of 3000 young people by the end of 2015', which has only been possible thanks to the fantastic efforts of all our people who make an amazing contribution to our goal of enhancing the wellbeing of local communities."

### WHAT'S NEXT?

"We have exciting plans for 2015/16!" says Julia. "This includes a challenging target to reduce our carbon by 50% by 2020 and looking at how we can further reduce water usage and waste. We are also planning a forum in the first quarter of 2016 to help identify best practice and even more opportunities to grow our business through sustainable development."

In the meantime, 'Everybody plays a part', our 2015 Sustainable Development Review, will be out later in the summer alongside the Foundation Review containing lots of examples of the great work that sets us apart from others.

#### EDITORIAL SUGGESTIONS

If you have any news or feature suggestions for the next issue of 163, please send them to:

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Once you've finished reading 163, feel free to send your copy to Andrew; we'd rather you do that than throw it away!

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## INTERIORS SECURES FLAGSHIP PROJECT

### INTERIORS HAS WON ONE OF LONDON'S MOST PRESTIGIOUS CONTRACTS: CREATING THE DESIGN MUSEUM'S NEW HOME IN KENSINGTON.

Two years after chief operating officer Mike Hart said he planned 'to grow Interiors as a national player delivering large fit-outs', the team are in the national spotlight with one of the biggest projects let this year.

The Design Museum is moving from Shad Thames in Southwark to Kensington High Street and its team, led by Tony O'Shea, will transform a Grade II listed

building into its new home. It will place the museum at the heart of Kensington's cultural quarter close to Royal College of Art, V&A, Science Museum, Natural History Museum and Serpentine Gallery.

Mike says: "The quality of our team and our track record for turning listed buildings into modern spaces,

*"The quality of our team and track-record restoring listed buildings made us a compelling proposition"*

Mike Hart



Tony O'Shea is leading the team on site

fit for the 21st century, made us a compelling proposition. The client liked our pedigree and practical approach."

The scope of work includes new galleries with space to accommodate one permanent and two temporary exhibition areas, as well as modern learning spaces, a library, auditorium, office areas and a new restaurant.

Interiors fit out over 1 million m<sup>2</sup> of new space each year and as the company expands geographically, this is set to double over the next five years.

## GARRY'S BIM REVOLUTION



Head of BIM Garry Fannon

### WE'RE ENTERING A NEW AGE OF DIGITAL TECHNOLOGY WITH PROJECTS SET TO BE BUILT USING BIM.

The first big milestone was 1 July, with all new Scape projects to use Building Information Modelling (BIM) from this date with the target that 90% will be built using BIM Level 2 by 2017.

Head of BIM Garry Fannon is preparing the business ready for wider adoption of the computer modelling technology that will create better efficiency in building projects.

Garry says: "BIM will improve our profitability and reduce risk by creating efficiencies through the design, build and FM processes. The information we get from BIM

will allow our teams to deliver smarter, faster and better by giving a one-stop view of how all the intricacies of a project link together."

Garry is migrating the BIM Implementation Plan across Construction, Housing and Interiors on Scape projects in the first instance, with a wider roll-out to follow. "The focus is on embedding our BIM capability to ensure we can deliver full Government Level 2 BIM by next year," says Garry.



# REACHING FOR THE STARS



**BIRMINGHAM HAVE JUST HANDED OVER A WORLD-LEADING FACILITY THAT TESTS SATELLITES PRIOR TO BEING SENT TO SPACE. IT HOUSES THE LARGEST AND MOST SOPHISTICATED DESIGN, PRODUCTION AND RESEARCH FACILITIES FOR SATELLITES INCLUDING THERMAL VACUUM CHAMBERS, 15 CLEANROOMS AND LOW VIBRATION CHAMBERS. 163 MET THE TEAM WHO BUILT IT.**

Behind the normal façade is one of the most hi-tech and heavily serviced buildings imaginable.

The National Space Integration Facility, which Birmingham has built at the Harwell Science Campus in Oxfordshire, will be a world-leading R&D centre, recreating conditions in outer space with temperatures in some test chambers going as low as -260 degrees centigrade, almost 0 Kelvin.

Harwell is the nerve centre of the UK's space industry, home to the Rutherford Appleton Laboratory (RAL) – where last year's Rosetta comet landing was masterminded. The new facility Birmingham has built will be used for testing out new instruments for use on future satellite space missions.

Over 40% of the £21.6m build value of the project's first phase is accounted for by services, no surprise given the nature of the R&D facilities inside the building.

## “Intense design phase”

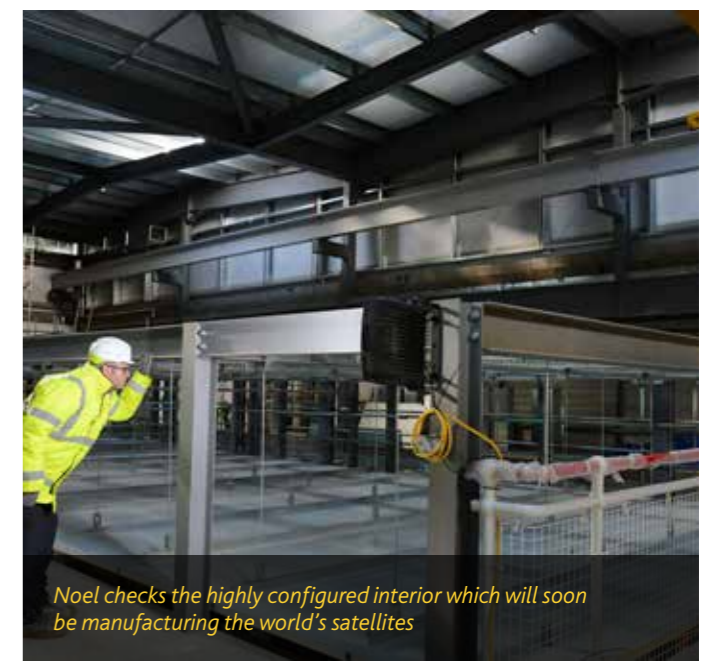
*Richard Clark*

The real story is Birmingham's involvement in such a complex project. “The tender came out in October 2013 and we were awarded the design-and-build contract a month later,” says Noel Cafferty, operations manager.

“When we were first involved, all we had to work with was a rough design – basic sketches of what the client wanted, showing layout of the main industrial areas, some desired interdependencies between their operations, and office space bolted on the outside.”



*The glass façade points towards a high quality interior that matches any research facility in the world*



*Noel checks the highly configured interior which will soon be manufacturing the world's satellites*

“We have had to develop that into a design, with our architect FDG, and then price all the work packages – in just seven months! So no pressure!”

Noel continues: “They are a very informed client. The programme has been very fast, but they have known exactly what they wanted, and there has been a strong team ethos.”

The design development phase was “intense”, according to senior design manager Richard Clark. “Essentially our engagement started at RIBA Stage 1,” he says. “We had to work very closely with the end-user, and flew through each of the first three RIBA stages on roughly a monthly basis. RIBA Stage 3 was signed off by the client in early February 2014, and the planning application was made that same month.”

“In parallel with the planning process, RIBA Stage 4 Detailed Design was progressed and submitted for client sign-off early April 2014.”

### THE PRICE IS RIGHT

Meanwhile, the pricing took place. “Once planning consent was granted, a series of early works costs were agreed so that enabling works could begin ahead of the main construction phase,” says Richard. “A key part of this was supply chain engagement on the key trade packages to enable a prompt start on site.”

During the design development phase, the client decided to split the construction into two phases: 1A, which will cost £21.6m and include the shell, core, and most building services and research facilities; and 1B, which will include further R&D areas plus offices.

Article continues ►



*The scale of the RAL facility is vast, with some areas three storeys high to accommodate the test chambers. Note the yellow gantry cranes, attached to the structural steel, which will be used by the client once the building is operational*

The team started construction of phase 1A in June 2014, with a target completion date of June 2015. The 7,500m<sup>2</sup> building is 17m high and comprises three storeys of varying layouts to accommodate the R&D facilities. Level one is effectively a mezzanine, with only a partial floor plate. Level two has a full floor plate. Level three is split between plant rooms and the roof, with the M&E plant prefabricated as far as possible to help accelerate the programme.

### SPACE TEST CHAMBERS

The two Space Test Chambers (STCs) on the ground floor, 5m in diameter and 15m long, will be full building height when completed. To accommodate vibration testing, each STC sits on a 300-tonne concrete seismic block. These are positioned on steel springs, which allow the block to move, ensuring 'vibration isolation' in the test chamber. The blocks are 5m wide and 15m long, and T-shaped in cross-section, with the 4m-deep 'foot' of the T running the

length of the block. "It acts in a similar fashion to the keel of a ship," explains Noel.

Each seismic block sits in a pit, with the concrete blocks designed and cast in situ by RAL's specialist contractor PES.

A big challenge for Noel was defining the interface between Clean Room Construction (CRC) and Briggs & Forrester. The latter's £6.7m work package included services design for the project, so it was a key player. "Understanding how the services interfaced was important," explains Noel. "CRC also carried out services installation as part of its contract, and the big issue was determining who did what. Essentially, CRC is responsible for all of the clean rooms, and Briggs & Forrester do the connections."

Noel's experience on science faculties at the University of Cambridge served him well and gave him an "understanding of how to manage lots of different M&E elements and their contractors", he says.



*Noel Cafferty's experience on science faculty buildings at the University of Cambridge helped in understanding the space facility's M&E requirements*

### BIM

Building information modelling (BIM) also helped in the planning of the services and the steelwork. "We produced and shared Revit models throughout the design process," says Richard. "This enabled key areas of design coordination to be considered early in the process, such as between the structural steelwork, overhead gantry crange, and M&E services.

"It also enabled the end-users to consider earlier on how some of their specialist equipment would satisfactorily be coordinated with, and installed into, the building post-completion."

"Clash detection exercises were run on the developing models, and elements of the design were adjusted – to eliminate clashes which might not otherwise have been spotted in time – to suit the fast-track procurement and installation programme."

The process has operated at BIM Level 2, though the next phase of the project may extend use of BIM further.

Noel adds that the steel contractor, Morgans of Usk, was "excellent" in responding to a demanding programme. "They were erecting the steelwork just a month after we had started on site," he says, "and it was very much a hand-to-mouth process."

The exterior design of the building has been influenced by what Noel describes as an 'outer space theme'. "They are fond of using dark blue and gold," he says.

The south and east elevations of the facility – essentially the front, where the reception atrium will be located – feature metal rainscreen cladding and curtain walling, with a brise soleil. On level three, there is 'desert gold' coloured cladding, which was originally intended to drop down through the other levels, behind the curtain walling.

"Budget constraints mean we'll be using 'desert gold' paint instead on the internal walls to create the same effect," says Noel.

### ENERGY BILLS

The Space Integration Facility has been designed to achieve a BREEAM rating of 'Very Good'. But in some ways that is incidental, given the running costs of the building. "They will have annual energy bills of £8m," says Noel.

This phase of the project finished in May. "The design development was completed for the whole building, but the client wants to revise it to get more out of phase 1B," says Noel.

The sky's the limit now for Noel and the team!

### PROJECT INFORMATION

PROJECT	NATIONAL SPACE INTEGRATION FACILITY (FIRST PHASE)
CLIENT	RUTHERFORD APPLETON LABORATORY (OPERATED BY THE SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY FACILITIES COUNCIL)
VALUE	£21.6M
CONTRACT	NEC OPTION A, DESIGN & BUILD
DESIGN PROGRAMME	NOVEMBER 2013-JUNE 2014
CONSTRUCTION PROGRAMME	JUNE 2014 – JUNE 2015
ARCHITECT	FAIRHURSTS DESIGN GROUP
BUILDING SERVICES	BRIGGS & FORRESTER
STRUCTURES	GRANVILLE

# ENERGY RISING

**WHILE COMPETITORS ARE SHRINKING, ENERGY SERVICES IS GOING FROM STRENGTH TO STRENGTH. WE ASKED MANAGING DIRECTOR ROB LAMBE TO REVEAL THE SECRETS OF HIS TEAM'S SUCCESS.**

## HOW IS ENERGY SERVICES GROWING WHEN OTHERS ARE CUTTING BACK?

The simple answer is that we have a great team that is determined to make a difference and deliver excellent service to our clients. We have been successful in winning some significant work, among them the two largest social housing projects in the country for Hull City Council and Bristol City Council, which will each account for around £10m of activity each year over the next 4–5 years.

Account development and repeat business is also important and the Green Services Hub, an OJEU-compliant framework run by Places for People where we are the sole provider, offers an excellent route for this. For example, having worked successfully on a small competitively tendered contract for the London Borough of Havering, they then decided to use the GSH framework to employ us on a programme of work that is worth around £7m a year.

Then there's the Arbed 2 programme for the Welsh Government which is opening doors to more work in Wales, and programmes for clients including the West Yorkshire Combined Authorities, the Association of Greater Manchester Authorities, Leeds Federated Housing Association and the Golden Gates Housing Trust.

Today our team is nearly 80 strong, compared to 20 in 2012.

## WHAT ARE YOU MOST PROUD OF?

The fact that we are doing good while doing good business.

I'm proud that our work is helping to address climate change by reducing the UK's carbon emissions whilst also improving the lives and the health of some of the most vulnerable people in the country. By insulating homes we are helping people to save



Rob Lambe

up to £40 a week on heating; that's the difference between heating or not for some people.

## WHAT DO WE DO THAT OTHERS DON'T?

I believe we are setting standards for low carbon retrofit. And it isn't just me saying that. Colin King, a recognised expert and a director at the BRE, visited our Llandysul site recently and was very impressed by what he saw. Our Alder Green Regeneration Scheme for the Golden Gate Housing Trust won the most innovative refurbishment/regeneration scheme at the 2015 Housing Innovation Awards.

The quality of low carbon retrofits currently being undertaken across the UK varies enormously and much of what is being delivered will lead to unintended consequences such as internal mould growth and poor air quality. We have a team of experts who approach the assessment of properties and the design of the solutions very differently, ensuring we deliver the appropriate solutions for the particular property. We also monitor properties after completion to establish how they are actually performing.

We are also actively involved in shaping the marketplace; working with a number of high street names including B&Q, Citizens Advice Bureau, John Lewis and the National Trust on the 'Big Energy Vision' we aim to help householders take control of their energy bills. I'm also working with the Government's chief construction adviser, Dr Peter Hansford, on a review of solid wall insulation.

## HOW DOES ENERGY SERVICES FIT WITH OTHER PARTS OF THE GROUP?

We provide diversity for the Group as well as complementary services enabling us to bid for works in partnership with other parts of the business. For example, we have recently worked with the Partnerships team in Birmingham to extend the scope of their contracted works to include external wall insulation to three existing tower blocks with funding secured through ECO.

We are also providing technical expertise supporting a wide range of projects in other parts of the business where energy performance is a key part of our delivery promise. These include Bicester Eco-town, Sunesis schools and the civic centre building in Keynsham.

## WHAT'S HAPPENING IN THE NON-DOMESTIC MARKET?

A lot less than we would like! But we keep looking for opportunities. I'm hopeful that the recent introduction of the Minimum Energy Efficiency Standard, which says that all private landlords' properties must be at least E-rated by 2018, will stimulate activity.

## WHAT ARE YOUR THOUGHTS ON THE RECENT ELECTION RESULTS?

The outcome provides a stable environment, though the Conservative manifesto was not as strong as others in relation to addressing the condition of existing housing

stock. It remains urgent that we address fuel poverty and energy security and UK/EU legislation provides a strong framework for climate change mitigation and carbon reduction, so the need to improve our building stock is greater than ever.

## WHAT PEOPLE ARE SAYING

*"Willmott Dixon Energy Services' input and deliverance into the project has been invaluable. The quality of their work has recently been acknowledged, as the project has won a national housing award"*

*Paul Lowe, Golden Gates Housing Trust*

*"I would like to commend your delivery team for their collaborative, hardworking approach to ensure the successful delivery of this project. They have without doubt gone 'the extra mile' for us and we have all enjoyed working with your team"*

*Sue Dixon, Places For People*

*"The house is a lot warmer, we don't spend as much on heating and use very little heating now. We are very pleased with the work and the workmen were excellent with no problems at all"*

*Mr and Mrs Powell from Llay, Wrexham*



Insulation being applied to a house in Leeds

## FAST FACTS

By end of 2015, Energy Services will have installed energy savings measures into 6,000 homes, saving about 156,000 tonnes of CO<sub>2</sub>.

This amount of CO<sub>2</sub> saved would fill:

- About 35,000 Olympic sized swimming pools
- Over 915 Royal Albert Halls
- 80 Wembley stadiums
- 35 Great Pyramids of Giza

It is the equivalent of CO<sub>2</sub> produced each year by almost 20,000 UK citizens and by about 105,000 cars.

Team run... management trainee Chris Lloyd-Evans is quick off the mark, closely followed by James Lax and the Bishopstoke team



# 5 STAR RETIREMENT!

**OUR ISLINGTON HOUSING TEAM ARE BEHIND A BLUEPRINT FOR HOW RETIREMENT WILL LOOK IN THE FUTURE, WITH SELF-CONTAINED VILLAGES PROVIDING THE 5-STAR TREATMENT. 163 VISITED BISHOPSTOKE PARK TO FIND OUT.**

"Those are the biggest challenge here," says operations manager James Lax pointing up into the sky at a passing Flybe plane.

Working in the flight path of an airport might seem a crazy idea, but that is what James and the team has been doing at Bishopstoke in Hampshire, with the village 10-minutes from Southampton Airport in nearby Eastleigh; close enough to make hiring a tower crane a major issue!

Housing is completing phase one to build the retirement village for Anchor Trust. It follows a similar scheme nearly ten years ago called Denham Garden Village and the team have been on site for over 18 months dealing with a number of challenges that come along, none bigger than the need to hire a tower crane.



**"Being on the flight path was a huge challenge"**

James Lax

James adds: "When we did the core of the village, we needed to put a tower crane up and the negotiations took weeks. The tower crane was only 48-metres but the job was 78-metres as we needed to stretch across the centre of the site and the crane encroached on the flight zone for landing by two metres. When there's bad weather, planes need to use laser beams to land and that was the problem."

And bad weather there certainly has been at Bishopstoke Park. Six months after starting, Britain was hit by the wettest January on record with the south coast of England subject to deluge. Permission for the crane was given, but the sloping site threatened to turn into a quagmire.

### RESTORING A FORMER HOSPITAL

The need for such a long jib was necessitated by the ecological conditions on the near 15 hectare site, which was formerly home to the Mount Hospital. At the centre is a Victorian tower that had to be retained and the design needed to reflect this.

While Tyack developed the initial design and Urban Edge secured planning permission, Housing is building out the first phase on Bishopstoke Park under a design and build contract. Peter Kilby, senior design co-ordinator, explains; "There are so many finishes on



Best foot forward: James Lax in front of the new retirement village

the Mount from different bricks to different renders and Flemish bond and stretcher bond. The idea was to make it look as though it had been developed over time. We also have a new swimming pool attached to the Victorian tower, which we had to blend together."

Peter continues, "Anchor didn't want it to look like speculative-box housing; they wanted character and individual style, with even the flat types different. It's more about a sales type and a level of finish."

With prices starting at £250,000 and rising to £870,000 for a two-bed penthouse, it's certainly upmarket. The first phase comprises 72 flats for private sale, 19 close care units and 48 care beds and there are 94 different types of kitchen across these units.

Article continues ►



Wendy Jordan and Mark Clothier monitor quality



Chris Lloyd-Evans, writes, with Matt Liggett

### COMMUNITY FACILITIES

It's not just about homes; villages need amenities so that the over 55s living here don't have to travel far to get what they need. So phase one also comes with a swimming pool, Wellness Centre, a shop, library, hairdressers, juice bar and a ballet and craft room. All you need for a self-contained village!

Another focus was being sustainable, one of the reasons Anchor chose our team. With 98% of the waste diverted from landfill, allied to a number of other sustainable initiatives such as underfloor heating, this scheme is expected to meet level four of the Code for Sustainable Homes and to be rated excellent under BREEAM.

While permission was ultimately given for the tower crane, the construction team had to work around a giant copper beech in the centre. Like many of the trees on site, the copper beech was protected by a Tree Protection Order (TPO) and one of many that had to be saved.

"Following the tower crane, the ecological conditions were the next biggest issue," admits James.

### GOING GREEN

Before work could start, a Construction Mitigation Method Statement for the local council and Natural England had to be prepared. Then the team had to remove a swathe of grass snakes and slow worms. While this was being carried out, a reptile barrier had to be built around the site to stop the slow worms and grass snakes returning.

There were also three badger setts dotted around the site. "Badgers are a bit nomadic and can have four or five different setts and then migrate between them so we had to set up motion sensor cameras to find out if the setts were being used," explains James.

One of the setts was being used, so a badger ladder was installed so that the omnivores were not trapped.

With first phase completing shortly, the team hope to be appointed for the second stage, which is currently out to tender and features 78 units for private sale. This will start in September and, should our bid prevail, will offer far fewer hurdles than the initial phase.



The village will provide a five star retirement environment

### COMMUNITY WORKS

While working on the Bishopstoke Park scheme, the team has undertaken a number of community initiatives that saw the company win the 2014 Amazing Employer of the Year Award in Southampton's annual Amazing People Awards.

A large proportion of those came out of a relationship with a local skills provider called Solent Educational Business Partnerships (SEBP), which is based in Eastleigh. The relationship sprung out of a desire to find a productive solution to clauses in the Section 106 agreement on the planning permission for the project.

James explains: "That relationship with SEBP enabled us to engage with local schools and colleges and we did a lot of work-based experience with Eastleigh College."

Over a two year period, 16 young people worked with Willmott Dixon's supply chain on trades ranging from bricklaying to carpentry, floor and wall tiling, groundworks, dry-lining and painting and decorating.

The work with SEBP also extended to helping clear an overgrown former nursery near the construction site to provide an agricultural training base. Willmott Dixon's groundwork contractor Royland provided the machinery for the clearance, arboriculturalists Arborcall provided the labour and Willmott Dixon covered the cost of the skips.

***"That relationship with SEBP enabled us to engage with local schools, colleges and a lot of work-based experience with Eastleigh College"***

*James Lax*

"SEBP were over the moon," adds James. "They were desperate to clear the site but couldn't find anyone to do it."

The tower crane also provided an opportunity for Hampshire Fire & Rescue. Firefighters were invited onto the site on a weekend and given the opportunity to practice rescuing people from a tower crane. "They were really appreciative," says James, who also found himself recruited to take part in a form of business speed-dating at Swanmore College.

### PROJECT INFORMATION

PROJECT	BISHOPSTOKE PARK RETIREMENT VILLAGE
LOCATION	BISHOPSTOKE NEAR EASTLEIGH, HAMPSHIRE
COST	£28 MILLION (PHASE ONE ONLY)
CLIENT	ANCHOR 2020
DESIGN & BUILD CONTRACTOR	WILLMOTT DIXON
ARCHITECT	TYACK/URBAN EDGE
PLANNING CONSULTANT	PEGASUS
LANDSCAPE CONSULTANT	PORTUS & WHITTON
STRUCTURAL ENGINEER	FARROW WALSH
COST CONSULTANT	MACE
ACOUSTIC CONSULTANT	HOARE LEA
KITCHEN SUPPLIER	MOORES FURNITURE
LIFTS	OTIS



Just three of many apprentices Partnerships is equipping with lifelong skills; from left to right, Taylor Robbins, Ellie King and Chris Rowlands

# BUILDING LIVES IN BIRMINGHAM

**THERE IS NO BETTER EXAMPLE OF PARTNERSHIPS' DRIVE TO MAKE A TRANSFORMATIONAL IMPACT ON LIVES THAN IN BIRMINGHAM. THE COMPANY HAS GIVEN LIFE-LONG SKILLS TO OVER 60 PEOPLE WHO HAVE TRAINED AS APPRENTICES, SUPPORTING ITS WORK TO MAINTAIN 60,000 COUNCIL PROPERTIES.**



**Mick Williamson**  
"The talent is out there – we just nurture, support and develop it!"

Managing director Mick Williamson explains: "This is about more than repairing property, we have the scale to leave a lasting positive impact on Birmingham's growth. I'm passionate that we use this opportunity to enhance lives – not with gimmicks or box-ticking exercises, but tangible ways that support long-term job prospects.

"It gives me huge pride that so many people have grabbed the opportunity we have given them and are thriving in our business. The talent is out there – we help nurture, support and develop it!"

To illustrate this, 163 met three apprentices whose prospects have been transformed by Partnerships.



## CHRIS ROWLANDS A NEW LIFE

Chris is a building maintenance operative who was Willmott Dixon's Apprentice of the Year in 2014. From having few skills,

Chris, now 39, has really grasped the opportunities provided by Willmott Dixon, although he wasn't optimistic about his chances when he applied for an apprenticeship.

However, that outlook changed once in the interview. "The people who interviewed me listened to my story," he says. "I told them that I wanted to make a better life for myself and they seemed to be impressed enough to give me a chance," says Chris.

Chris is now studying an apprenticeship in plumbing, carpentry, painting and decorating, plastering and tiling and attends college one day a week. Now 18 months into a two-year apprenticeship, he finished his NVQ six months early.

"College is great. Willmott Dixon has given me a second chance at life so I just want to do my best."

Chris says he was apprehensive about how his work colleagues would view an older apprentice. Would they take him seriously? Again, he was pleasantly surprised. "It's a great place to work," he says. "They teach you and pass on all their knowledge to you."

In 2014 Chris won Willmott Dixon's Apprentice of the Year Award. "You get praised for your achievements here. The more you give, the more you get," says Chris. "After I won, they invited me to a team-building event, staying in a posh hotel. It was like a life I had never lived before."



## TAYLOR ROBINS THE DRIVE TO SUCCEED

Taylor Robbins is a first year apprentice, a young dad who wanted to put his drive and energy to good use!

He came to us via the Midland Heart 'Back on Track' programme offering apprenticeships to young people from disadvantaged backgrounds.

If you had asked Taylor Robbins what he thought of college 12 months ago, the answer may well have been "not much". He never enjoyed school, didn't really see the point of it and consequently didn't get the qualifications he could have done.

It's a different story today. Taylor is eight months into a carpentry apprenticeship. "I've got people to support me, to make sure I'm doing the best I can," says Taylor. "I've got the drive to do well, to be successful and I can see something at the end of it."

When asked how his training is going, Taylor replies: "I'm really enjoying it, that's the best way to put it. My mentor - the person I work with every day - really wants me to succeed. He cares about what I do. And all the tradespeople at the depot are good people, they are good to work with."

Taylor still has to go to college, one day a week, but his attitude has totally changed. "I know that college is an important part of my apprenticeship and it has to be done. I used to wake up and think 'Oh no, I have to go to college'. Now I just think 'It's college today. Let's get on with it' – totally different"



## ELLIE KING DETERMINED TO WORK

Ellie King is a single mum who is working hard as an apprentice plumber. Last year she was highly recommended

by the UKCG national apprentices awards, a far cry from her days trying to get on the jobs ladder just a few years ago, before she got her big break at Willmott Dixon.

Ellie is not the sort of person who likes to sit around, so as soon as her daughter was old enough to go to nursery, she enrolled herself on an electrical installation course at her local college. "I didn't want to be sitting at home on my bottom," she says. "I enjoy working and you can always fall back on a trade."

Despite achieving NVQ levels 2 and 3 in electrical installation, finding a job proved difficult. "I couldn't find a job because I didn't have the site experience. And I couldn't get the site experience because no one would give me a job. I was going round in circles."

Ellie did a Prince's Trust course which included work experience and was placed with Willmott Dixon. "That's how I found out about their apprenticeship scheme," she says.

Though there were no electrical apprenticeships on offer when she applied, Ellie didn't let that stop her. "I was desperate to do something, so I broadened my horizons. I thought I'd learn another trade, and plumbing is a life skill," she says.

Comparing the two years studying at college and the two years she is spending learning via an apprenticeship, Ellie would recommend the apprentice route every time. "You are earning while you are learning and you get a qualification at the end of it."

It's not easy working a full day, and having to send her daughter to childcare before and after school, but Ellie says that even if she hadn't won the apprenticeship, she would definitely be working somewhere now, she just doesn't know where. And she may not have been able to pursue her plan to learn a trade.



Andy Jones, right, operations manager for our Bournemouth team, pours over a plan for the next development with Simon Shefford



# BUSMAN'S HOLIDAY FOR CARDIFF TEAM

**BOURNEMOUTH IS ONE OF THE NICEST SEASIDE RESORTS IN THE UK, SO WHEN YOU LAND OVER £50M OF WORK IN THE TOWN, THERE COULD BE WORSE PLACES TO WORK! 163 MET THE CARDIFF TEAM DELIVERING SEVERAL MAJOR PROJECTS.**

Until recently, the company had not had much of a presence in Bournemouth; now you can't go far without seeing our famous signs. Our place on the Scape framework has helped establish a real presence, with Bournemouth University one of the largest clients.

Operations manager Andy Jones explains, "We are involved in a diverse range of projects, from creating a tourist attraction by the pier to building large projects for the university and college. The activity means we now have over 20 staff working across four projects in Bournemouth."

## BIGGEST ROLL-OUT FOR TEN YEARS

Bournemouth University has just started its biggest estate renew in a decade, and our name was high on the list of contractors, not least because of the procurement benefits of using Scape. "The university came to us in October 2012 with a need for a new student centre that had to open by Easter 2015," says Andy. "If they went through the OJEU route, they wouldn't have had time and Scape got them through that process."

Andy is operations manager on the first of two schemes we are building for the university. From a former institute, Bournemouth now has a well-regarded university with 13,000 students across two campuses in Talbot Heath and the Lansdowne in central Bournemouth. It needed better facilities to attract more students, and that's where we come in, building a Student Centre and the Fusion building.

The team have been based at the Talbot campus for two years now. The first project was the new six-storey Student Centre designed by architect Saunders as a flexible learning space that was less austere than the library that adjoins the building on the third floor.

## WORKING IN LIVE ENVIRONMENTS

Working amidst thousands of students on a tight site that previously housed half a dozen car parking spaces and a handful of storage containers was a major challenge.

Andy explains: "It was the first new building on the campus for a long time so it was very important. We were working in the heart of the campus; the logistics were horrendous! There was maybe eight metres between the site and library and we also abutted a sports centre, which is where the students have exams."

Working silently is hardly practical, so some exams were transferred, while work was sequenced for other times to avoid exams. The team did such an impressive job that in April 2014 the university invited them to build the next part of what is a major development plan.

*"There was maybe eight metres between the site and library and we abutted a sports centre where the students have exams"*

Andy Jones



Bournemouth University is excited about its first project in 10 years, the six-storey Student Centre

This scheme is called the Fusion building and is one site now, delivering more teaching space, including seminar rooms and three new lecture theatres. Here, the team is led by Mark Pittman, with the same structural engineers (WSP) and mechanical & electrical consultants (Hoare Lea) as used on the Student Centre, with Building Design Partnership producing the design.

## BIGGER TEAM

As work has built up in Bournemouth, Andy drafted in more people, including some from Cobham, as well as 10 new staff.

Article continues ▶



The team behind the Student Centre inspect their fine work

Two giant steel leaves stand at the front of the pier, a permanent legacy for our role in Bournemouth's future



rarely worked. In 2005, a Channel 4 poll saw the IMAX come out as Britain's biggest carbuncle.

***"The clients we are working for have funding but limited time to spend that funding; Scape is ideal"***

Andy Jones

Two years ago, the council tore the much-loathed building down and Andy's team stepped in to put the finishing

touches to a job that includes a new tourist office and wet children's play area – and some giant steel leaves!

The two leaves are the eye-catching central point of focus and have already proved a popular addition. They form part of a new Pier Approach that is part of a longer-term council plan for the town's seafront and the leaves were complete for the town's annual 'Wheels' festival in May.

Yet Andy and the team are unlikely to say 'goodbye' to Bournemouth yet. The council has other plans and a second Fusion project at Bournemouth University is in the pipeline. A number of other major projects in the town are also bubbling away in the planning – so looks like our signage will be in Bournemouth for a few more years yet.

## WINNING LOCAL FRIENDS

Soon after establishing a presence in Bournemouth, Willmott Dixon became involved in a major community initiative, which also includes the town's successful football team and a number of other local bodies.

Two local clients, Bournemouth Council and the university, are also involved in the Green Goals scheme along with the local Castlepoint shopping centre, Eco Sustainable Solutions, the Green House Hotel, J&G Environmental, New Earth Solutions and W+S Recycling.

Green Goals is a community fund that was set up five years ago to aid environmental regeneration and offers grants of up to £1,000 to community groups for environmental initiatives such as cleaning up the beach. Larger grants of up to £5,000 are available for transport projects.

Willmott Dixon signed up in January 2014, when AFC Bournemouth commercial director Rob Mitchell – a driving force behind the initiative – said: "We have some very valuable environmental and sustainable transport initiatives being delivered across Bournemouth and Willmott Dixon's support will help us to further enhance what we do."

"It's evolved organically," adds Andy. "The clients that we are working for have funding but limited time to spend that funding. It's all been about getting money spent within the budget time-frames, and we are doing just that."

Another big project that came along is the Poole campus of Bournemouth & Poole College, building an applied science and digital centre to service a booming digital economy in the town. A recent report, Tech Nation, claimed that Bournemouth had the fastest growing digital economy in the UK with the number of digital start-up companies being formed surging by 212% between 2010 and 2013.

Work started at the college's Poole campus in North Road in March 2014 and it finished in late Spring this year. It was a referral from the university, as Andy says, "The university gave advice on where to find an efficient procurement route and excellent builder, the rest is history."

## NO EQUAL PIERS

Then came a fourth, highly unusual project, the smallest project in Bournemouth, but no less memorable as it involves helping to regenerate part of a site that until recently housed Britain's most hated building.

In 1998, a controversial £20 million IMAX cinema was built on the site of a derelict swimming baths by Bournemouth's pier. The 50 foot glass building blocked views of the sea. To make matters worse, the cinema only



Jon Scales, left, talks with Mark Pitman about the latest additions to Bournemouth Pier

## WILLMOTT DIXON'S BOURNEMOUTH PROJECT LIST

CLIENT	BOURNEMOUTH UNIVERSITY
PROJECT	STUDENT CENTRE
COST	£7.6 MILLION
OP MANAGER	ANDY JONES

CLIENT	BOURNEMOUTH UNIVERSITY
PROJECT	FUSION ONE
COST	£15.0 MILLION
OP MANAGER	MARK PITMAN

CLIENT	BOURNEMOUTH & POOLE COLLEGE
PROJECT	NEW ACADEMIC BUILDING
COST	£8.8 MILLION
OP MANAGER	NICK ROGERS

CLIENT	BOURNEMOUTH COUNCIL
PROJECT	PIER APPROACH
COST	£3.4 MILLION
OP MANAGER	ANDY JONES



*“As both rooms are the same size, there is no squabbling about who gets the small box room”*

*Simon Chatfield*

### TENANT DESIRES

What’s unique about AV and all Be:here homes is they are designed for renters not buyers. So the two-bed home has a huge living/kitchen area, unencumbered by the corridors and storage cupboards of units intended for sale. The arrival area is more like an American Condo system reception with open space as you walk in straight into the kitchen and lounge area. They also have two large, same-sized bedrooms branching off from either side, with each tenant having their own walk-in closet and bathroom behind especially sound-insulated walls.

“When people are in here, they have their own self-contained bedroom,” says Simon, “and because both rooms are the same size, there is no squabbling about who gets the small box room.” The only difference between the two rooms is a “Jack and Jill” bathroom entrance into one toilet – so guests can use it without traipsing through someone’s bedroom.

### QUALITY AS STANDARD

The private rent units are being built at AV alongside Prime Place’s 105 market sale homes, aided by funding from M&G, which will own the asset, while Be:here is the brand that people will rent from.

This on-going presence means that Be:here has to think long term regarding repairs and maintenance. For example, the wood floor has a 20 year guarantee, the kitchen units have a thicker core and the carpet a thicker pile. Simon continues, “The ‘fully-furnished’ arrangement is different, with high-quality furniture from Habitat. The tables and chest of drawers are solid oak and the mattress in the bedroom is box-sprung. The sofas come with removable covers in case of the inevitable red wine spills. Tenants have an option to rent their flats furnished top to bottom - including linens, crockery, cutlery, cushions and pictures - or select from one of these packs.”

All flats also come with high-speed broadband (upgradeable to 1 gig) and electricity from green energy provider, Ecotricity, already installed - although tenants can obviously switch services.

Article continues ►

# AV IS THE PLACE TO BE:HERE!

**TENANTS MOVING INTO THE 158 HOMES NEAR EAST INDIA DOCKS IN EAST LONDON WILL BE PIONEERS - WHETHER THEY REALISE IT OR NOT. 163 FINDS OUT HOW HOUSING HISTORY IS BEING MADE.**

With the first two-bedroom flats open to private renters this summer, they will be the first homes to be built specifically for private rent. They differ from homes built for market sale, with the living arrangements geared totally around this more transient market.

Our company first started looking at the private rent market over five years ago. Such was the opportunity, we created Be:here with the aim of developing 5,000 units in less than five years. That was two years ago and there are now over 1,300 in the pipeline in London alone, with the first about to go live at Aberfeldy Village (AV). Not bad going!



*The first 105 homes in the market sale element of AV sold very quickly*

### HUGE POTENTIAL

“Regen could see the difficulties people were facing in their ability to purchase property,” says Be:here’s director for research and operations, Simon Chatfield, who joined the company two and a half years ago. “We looked at the US and saw how the model around home renting could be replicated here.”

Be:here didn’t rush in. Under managing director Matthew Pullen, it surveyed 8,000 renters with 120 workshops to find out what this market wanted from its landlords. Unsurprisingly, cost transparency, quality and flexibility came out as big issues. Another potential was getting institutional money involved in funding, with the income from renters proving a great source of non-cyclical income for pension funds.

The Be:here model was born and it secured its first deal at Aberfeldy Village in 2013, followed by another in Hayes the following year, with more in Brentford and Barking starting on site next year.



Big hubs like Canary Wharf are close to AV

***“It’s a completely different take on the market”***

Simon Chatfield

**EXTRAORDINARY SERVICE**

Where AV departs from the norm, is its approach to service, on-site maintenance and risk-management. The site’s property manager is in charge of a small team, including caretaker and deputy property manager engaged in keeping the lives and homes of renters running like clockwork.

Renters meet the Be:here team when they are shown around the flat. They also help them get settled and are easily found at the reception desk. They will take delivery of parcels, direct quick repairs and organise community events to help those neighbours who want to meet each other.

The service also extends to the sophisticated website through which people can rent. This has been created by a US firm called Yardi and allows the visitors to take a closer look at the location they are interested in, guides them virtually around the interior of the flats, displays the units available to let and their location within the development, lets them send an enquiry email and put

a £300 returnable deposit on the flat. With their details in the system, receiving ongoing payment is a matter of ticking a few boxes.

“It’s a completely different take on the market,” says Simon. “A brand and product designed and delivered totally bespoke.”

Currently, the flats rent at £1,000 for a studio, a one bedroom from £1,300 and a 70m<sup>2</sup> two-bed from £1,600 up. The prices have been set to match local market values.

Simon aims that with AV people will move to East India – and stay.



Simon shows AV’s position in London on the model in the sales suite

Executive administrator Catherine Fern takes stock of the first refurbished floor at Farringdon, not long now before the others follow!



# MAKEOVER FARRINGDON!

**IT’S ALL CHANGE AT OUR FARRINGDON OFFICE AS IT UNDERGOES A MASSIVE MODERNISATION.**

This is the first big refurbishment of the offices that have been home to Interiors since 2003 and will see a complete remodelling of the floors to create more space for an expanding team. Also, Hitchin will have desk space too in order to increase its presence in London following a series of big project wins.

When completed later this year, visitors will see a transformed office with impressive new reception, open plan work areas and top quality meeting rooms. It’s another reflection of Interiors’ strong growth which sees the company led by Mike Hart now one of London’s top five fit-out specialists.



Construction manager Sat Chima checks up on progress on the first floor as the Farringdon office gets a revamp



Judith Buckle checks out latest progress on building the new ground floor reception area

Hitchin operations manager Simon Wilson in front of Summit House, our latest project in London to transform tired offices into space for the 21st century



# RIDING THE LONDON WAVE!



Maple House: The wraps are about to come off Maple House, Hitchin's contract for Helical Bar to refurbish another large property in Shoreditch

## AS LONDON CONTINUES TO POWER AHEAD WITH THE BIGGEST SURGE IN DEVELOPMENT WORK FOR A GENERATION, OUR TEAMS ARE DELIVERING SEVERAL MAJOR SCHEMES IN THE CAPITAL.

Hitchin has two big projects in the city of London. Its latest is a £20 million contract to refit the 1980s-built Summit House to deliver 9,500m<sup>2</sup> of office space in Shoreditch. That building is a short distance away from its refurbishment of the 1960s Maple House on City Road to CAT A standard for Helical Bar. Nearby, Cobham's 13-storey Dorsett City Hotel on Aldgate High Street is also starting to take shape, while Interiors has transformed much of the Guildhall for the City of London.

In the case of Summit House, it's Hitchin's fourth project for the Low Carbon Workplace (LCW), a consortium that includes Stanhope, Threadneedle and The Carbon Trust. Working for LCW sees our teams skilfully convert offices to make them 50% more energy efficient than equivalent buildings.

Hitchin MD Chris Tredget explains, "Summit House is a defining moment that points to a rise in property owners investing to create low carbon office environments in London, driven by tenant demand and the upside in value. Clients are choosing us for this and other London projects for our skills and experience of working on constrained, high-rise commercial sites."



Cobham is converting the former Matrix building close to Aldgate East underground station into the new upper scale Dorsett City, London. This CGI shows the high-rise when completed



# PARTNERSHIPS

## MAKING A MARK IN RICHMOND



Caroline McGrogan

*“We are looking at how the teams are structured and asking whether there would be a more productive way to deliver”*

Caroline McGrogan

### AS PARTNERSHIPS' RICHMOND TEAM STARTS ITS SECOND YEAR OF THE CONTRACT, 163 MET THE TEAM.

There's a real buzz about Partnerships' office in Richmond. And it's not just because the team is preparing for an internal Four Star Audit the following week.

There have been changes here recently; with promotions and new opportunities as general manager Caroline McGrogan oversees our work to keep improving our service to Paragon Community Housing Group's residents.

Caroline, who joined Partnerships from a private sector FM provider a few months ago, describes her management style as 'hands on'. "For me, it's really important to work very closely with the teams to make sure that I know what the issues are, and that they are properly equipped to deal with those issues,"

says Caroline. "We are looking at how the teams are structured and asking whether there would be a more productive way to deliver."

This is an approach which has reaped rewards for the voids team (next page). "We're very proud of what they've achieved," says Caroline. "That's a real success story."

Another recent change in structure has seen the creation of the new role of Office Manager, with former customer and community partner Laura Murphy taking on responsibility for organising support for the supervisors and managers, including training, health and safety checks, and the vehicle fleet. "It's a key role," says Caroline, "And Laura is doing a really good job. It's making such a difference."



Willmott Dixon teams are a familiar sight in South West London

Article continues ►

## DIVERSITY AND FLEXIBILITY

Partnerships won the five-year contract with Paragon, which sees it handle around 21,000 repairs and 550 voids a year, in April 2014. But this wasn't a new patch for the business: it had been given an emergency contract by Paragon 18 months earlier, when the previous incumbent's contract was terminated.

"Getting the logistics right is crucial," says Caroline. Organising those 15,000 repairs on nearly 7,000 properties in the London boroughs of Richmond and Elmbridge with 25 operatives and challenging timescales requires some co-ordination.

"The process has to be automated," says Caroline. Partnerships is currently working towards implementing optimiser software at the branch to make the allocation of jobs more efficient. "We are fine-tuning the software at the moment but I expect that it will make a significant difference once implemented."

There are additional challenges here, too. "There is quite a diverse set of residents, and quite a large number of vulnerable residents," says Caroline, "people in supported housing, elderly residents and people with mental health issues. That means we have to be flexible enough to provide the service that an individual requires, depending on their need."

The Richmond team is also reaching out to vulnerable members of the community through its involvement with the Walton Charity, which provides grants and support for individuals and smaller local charities and organisations.

One project last year saw staff members working at a local allotment to rebuild a shed and improve pathways.

"We look for projects where we can play to our strengths, so that we can really leave a lasting legacy," says Laura.

This team also has strong links with Brooklands College and provides many work experience placements to students of various trades, and to others who come to site via the Job Centre or other routes. Apprentice admin assistant Richard Baker, the son of one of the Richmond repairs team, joined the office team having come for a two-week work experience stint.

There's plenty of positivity here. Laura sums up the feeling in the office. "We are in a good place as a team. We know that we have to support each other, and that feeds through into better results operationally."



Partnerships has a five-year contract with Paragon to handle around 21,000 repairs and 550 voids a year



## MARTIN SHOWS HIS WILD SIDE



This poster highlights the value of our collaboration with the Wildlife Trusts

## HEROES OF THE VOIDS

A rethink in the way the voids team on Partnerships' contract for Paragon Housing is run has resulted in the average time it takes to turn an empty house round being slashed in half. It's an achievement which voids manager Phil Robinson is rightly proud of.

"We always keep in mind that this is somebody's home, and that they are waiting to move in," says Phil. "That's a real driver for us."

So how did Phil and the 21-strong voids team achieve this impressive feat? "We looked at the team we had and the people we had and tried to work out what their strengths and weaknesses are," says Phil. "Some people are naturally quicker than others so we put them on the short-term voids to get a quick turnaround. Other operatives are more methodical, so we put them on bigger, more complex voids."

Other improvements included providing a better stock of materials for the vans, which has improved efficiency and reduced journeys and carbon emissions, and setting up procurement deals so that goods can be sourced from fewer suppliers. Procedures and paperwork were scrapped and simplified.

"We changed every system we had in place over six months," says Phil, who officially took on the role of voids manager, a new post, at the beginning of the year. Phil's position of voids supervisor, one of three, has been filled by Jordan Whitham, previously a carpenter on the voids team.

"That's one of the things I like about working here," says Phil, who started out for Partnerships as a plumber. "They promote from within, so if you want to get on, you can do."

With clients and end-users conscious about how our operations could interact with their local wildlife, having access to the right skills to mitigate any impact is crucial. However, we also have the opportunity to create enhancements that make a real difference and support our lasting legacy beyond a project's completion.

Our company is a market leader in diverting waste from landfill, averaging over 90% on projects, and remains the only one in its sector to be carbon neutral. However, we never stand still as a responsible business!

Group environment manager Martin Ballard has struck an agreement that builds on our relationship with the Wildlife Trusts, to provide project teams with the expertise for managing impacts on local habitats. Martin explains, "This is a unique link-up to bring community and ecological value to our activities. Since we created the agreement last year, several projects have worked with the Trusts' team of local experts. Two examples are Carr Lodge in Doncaster, where we have developed a local habitat close to the school, and the Bicester eco-village, where the team has been able to plan a habitat enhancement for a local village."

In addition, under the link-up, we can access teams from the Wildlife Trusts' network of ecological consultancies to provide advice and services to nurture local habitats on projects, with local ecologists working side by side to ensure we enhance local biodiversity. Wildlife Trusts chief executive Stephanie Hilborne says, "Wildlife is not always built into developments and the construction sector has

a key role to play in restoring these connections. Our consultancies will work with Willmott Dixon to support its aims of building great places for both people and wildlife."

Martin adds, "This gives us a unique edge over other companies in how we make a lasting impact on the delicate eco-system around projects. We call on this expertise on new build, brownfield developments and refurbishment activities. Acting as the catalyst, we can work to bring together our clients and the county's Wildlife Trust to ensure that what we have established is carried forward, we hope for new and future communities in perpetuity."

Services will continue to be provided by four regional leads (see box), which will facilitate access to local consultants for each site. The framework is non-exclusive though Martin is keen to stress that having explored practicalities, the benefits of working with the Wildlife Trusts were clear, in addition to reinvestment for the local community and wildlife, as we already had existing relationships with several of the Trusts' ecological consultancies.

### WILDLIFE TRUSTS CONTACTS:

**NORTH**  
0191 285 4412  
**MIDLANDS**  
01676 525 880

**SOUTH EAST**  
01483 795 465  
**SOUTH WEST**  
01823 652 425

# SCHOOLS FLOCK TO SUNESIS

**FOR THE VERY FIRST TIME, A PRIVATE DEVELOPER HAS SIGNED UP FOR A SUNESIS OFF-THE-SHELF SCHOOL. WE CAUGHT UP WITH PRODUCT DIRECTOR TIM CAREY TO FIND OUT MORE.**

It's safe to say that the Sunesis idea – where buying a school becomes like buying a car – has been successful. Since its launch in 2011 with Scape, 23 schools have been procured this way.

That number could grow quite quickly as a new formalised agreement between our company and Scape means that private companies can now buy a Sunesis school, taking advantage of the ability to buy a set product for a set budget, delivered in a set timescale. This is particularly important for house builders who have to provide schools for section 106 agreements, with Berkeley likely to be the first to sign up to a Sunesis solution.

"This is a good solution for the developer and for the local authority involved," says product director Tim Carey. "When a developer has to make a commuted sum payment for a new school under a section 106 agreement, it's always contentious: the developer doesn't want to overpay, and the local authority wants to ensure it is getting a building fit for purpose. This way they're both happy."

*"We are striving to achieve a consistent product," explains Tim. "They have to look and feel the same. There will be differences of course: schools can customise to some extent, such as colour schemes and flooring"*

Tim Carey

## VARIETY THE SPICE OF LIFE

There are five schools in the Sunesis education range: Keynes2, Paxton2, Dewey, Newton and Mondrian. The first four are primary schools, Mondrian being a secondary school concept. There are also Sunesis leisure models. Up until now, all have been delivered under the Scape Framework, for which Willmott Dixon is the sole contractor.

Willmott Dixon and Scape developed the designs for the schools based on the knowledge and experience gained on designing and building a huge number of schools for different authorities. They listened to feedback, took the bits that worked, left out the bits that didn't and came up with models to suit different sites, teaching styles and budgets.

The rest is history, with Keynes – now in its second iteration – the most popular, followed by the Dewey and the Paxton, which has also been updated since its first design. Tim says, "We have delivered schools for 12 local authorities, all primary to date, providing new one, two and three-form entry facilities. We expect there to be demand for a Sunesis secondary school in coming years, once the population bulge reaches that age." Planning ahead, Tim explains. "We are developing the Mondrian; it's evolving to be a more flexible kit of parts that can be configured to match the site and the requirements of the school."



Developers are attracted to the simplicity and cost of Sunesis



Inside one of our latest Sunesis schools, Kempston Rural for Beds Borough Council

## NEW COMPANY

The new company, Sunesis Build Limited, owned 50:50 by Scape Venture and Willmott Dixon, can licence the Sunesis models to be built by others, with the approval of the Sunesis Build board. In Scotland and Northern Ireland, our Scape partners Roberstons and Farrans will build them.

Sunesis Build Limited will use the license fee it charges – which replaces the Scape Product Fee – for each school or leisure centre to be built to fund further development and to grow the market for the brand. Any profit left over will then be shared between Willmott Dixon and Scape.

Though Sunesis' new clients will be getting exactly the same benefits as its clients to date – a fixed price and duration – there is a slight change in the proposition, explains Tim. "Originally we were selling an absolutely fixed design. The message was 'order one or don't'. Now we are saying that, while we believe that the designs we have are the most efficient, if you want to make modifications we can do it for you, but there will be an impact; you won't have as much certainty."



Product director Tim Carey: "Focus on ensuring our offer remains the best, as opposed to concentrating on the competition"

*"We have delivered Sunesis schools for 12 local authorities, with more lining up to buy"*

Tim Carey

## AHEAD OF THE COMPETITION

Though Tim does acknowledge opening Sunesis up to the wider market gives competitors the chance to copy our designs, he believes that we have a pretty decent head start. "We need to focus on ensuring our offer remains the best in the marketplace, as opposed to concentrating on the competition," he says. "We have the benefit of the supply chain agreements, experience of delivery and we have the benefit of BIM models. We're already on the second versions of Keynes and Paxton, with a new version of the Dewey planned."

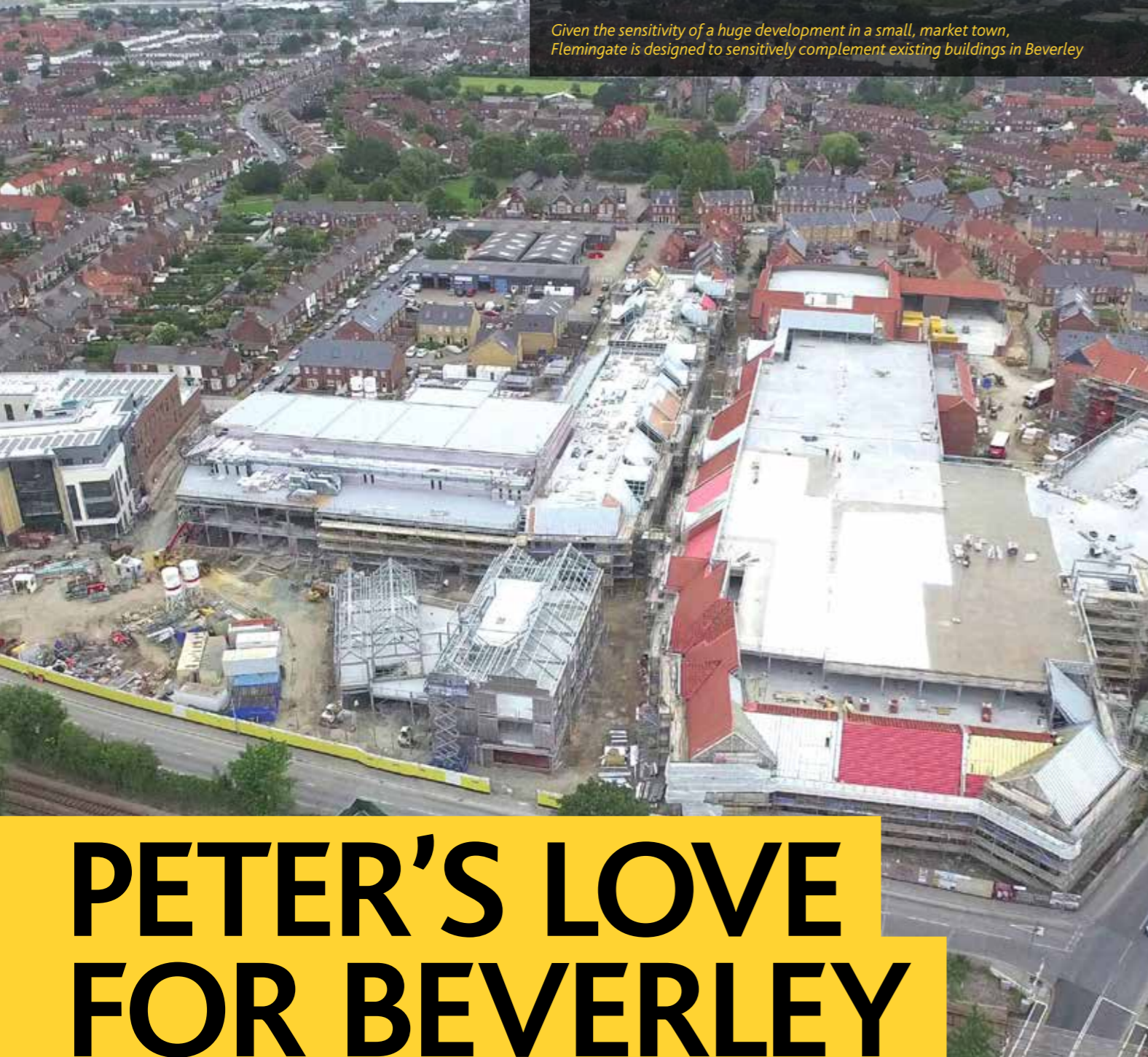
The supply chain agreements ensure that the Sunesis brand is protected – one of Tim's most important jobs. When the first few Sunesis schools were delivered, a performance specification was used, but that changed to a fixed specification with named suppliers; for example, one manufacturer supplies all the windows, which are then fitted by approved contractors.

What no other contractor can offer is our track record, with happy customers, several of which have procured more than one school this way. Prospective clients can go to the website, see where the 23 projects are and even watch some of the live ones on webcam.

With the formation of the new company, that track record is only going to get more impressive.



Given the sensitivity of a huge development in a small, market town, Flemingate is designed to sensitively complement existing buildings in Beverley



# PETER'S LOVE FOR BEVERLEY



Likely lads: Peter Gleave, left, and Russ Parks are leading our team at Flemingate in Beverley

**BEVERLEY IN YORKSHIRE IS UNDERGOING THE BIGGEST CHANGE IN ITS HISTORY WITH OVER 200,000 SQUARE FEET OF RETAIL AND LEISURE SPACE. IT WAS ONE OF THE FIRST MAJOR SCHEMES IN THE NORTH OF ENGLAND TO RESTART FOLLOWING THE RECESSION AND AS 163 FOUND OUT, THE TEAM LED BY PETER GLEAVE ARE CREATING A STIMULUS FOR THE TOWN'S FUTURE GROWTH.**

Wykeland, the developer, had owned the site of a former abattoir and tannery for fourteen years before getting the green light on the £120m mixed-use Flemingate. It needed an experienced company to build it, and opportunity knocked for the Manchester office.

The ancient town has long been a favourite of the well-heeled, who take advantage of the regular race meets, the incredible minster and gorgeous countryside. It has a wealth of small, independent retailers and a market sitting along cobbled streets, but shoppers have had to travel to either Hull or York for the large chain stores. Not for much longer!

Economists estimate there is £1.39bn unspent in the 638,100 local shoppers' pockets. This explains why both the landlord and local authority were keen to overcome major obstacles to build this vast shopping centre with its 700 potential jobs in a highly sensitive location.

Nine years in the planning, Flemingate was no small proposition. When complete this December, the 16-acre site will house a cinema, a 500-space multi-storey car park, a 40,000 sq. ft Debenhams, 162,600 sq. ft of other retail, a five-screen cinema and 130 new homes and a college campus.

## SHOPPING CENTRE IN DISGUISE

Given the sensitivity of building such a huge development in a small, market town, the architects devised an ingenious ploy to disguise the six huge blocks. They created shop fronts projecting different degrees into the street and designed sloped mansard roofs to connect to the enormous stores. As a result, even the huge 500-space multi-storey car park will be hidden from pedestrians at street level when the project is finished.

Manchester developed design alongside the client as preferred bidder to reach a guaranteed maximum price (GMP) in March 2013. The shell-and-core job started on site in May 2014 after the team made £1.6m-worth of savings from the design to meet client's cost.

Operations director Peter Gleave explains, "The fragility of the medieval town-scape meant traditional continuous piling-driving down to 15m would risk damaging the structures. So, the team was planning to drill holes and pump in concrete instead, to reduce impact, but drill piles are slower to create, result in more construction waste and need a concrete works on-site and use more of the material."

Article continues ►



Sky view; pictures from a drone show Flemingate's scale with the minster in the background

## “We source bricks from local suppliers to keep better control over supply”

Russ Parks

In order to get the best of both worlds, the team measured the impact of vibrations on selected structures, and worked out that two-thirds could be driven in - saving a significant portion of time and money.

Peter, his construction manager Russ Parks and the team then worked with planning to reduce the number of feature dormers on the parapets - an original feature that matched the local environment but busted the budget.

### BRICKS, BRICKS AND MORE BRICKS

Bricks were another area where value engineering had to be carried out sensitively. Five different types of brick were required with one million bricks going into the project. The Council Planning Department needed to make sure facings blended with the 12th and 13th-century stock found

elsewhere around the town. But bricks are a highly volatile commodity at the moment, so the team held numerous meetings with Wykeland and planning in order to find an affordable yet acceptable product.

Russ explains “We are sourcing bricks from local suppliers in order to keep better control over supply, where prices have risen between 3–4% since the downturn. The demand is currently so great that pre-ordered pallets can easily be whisked from brick yards if subcontractors are slow off the blocks. And a lack of materials would obviously hold up the programme!”

The team mitigated this risk by pre-ordering 250,000 bricks and storing them in the frame of the multi-storey car park for fast access. Local supplier, SDS stored 150,000 bricks onsite as well.

### KEEPING IT LOCAL

This emphasis on local spend extends into the concrete suppliers with Robin Concrete from Hull, SJ Scaffolding from Lincoln and groundwork company Sangwin from Kingston-upon-Hull. Peter is passionate about going local, “There’s no point going to Cemex and waiting for

concrete,” he says. “Local spend means we can sort stuff out quicker, we are not transporting people and materials vast distances - so are saving on carbon emissions.”

Russ also adds, “It’s a very popular message when we say the money is going into their community. It’s a reinvestment cycle where the general public benefits and given that East Yorkshire is ripe for development, building up the local supply chain offers a guarantee of good resources on future jobs.”

### SATURDAY SUPERSTORE

The Saturday Surgeries are held once monthly by Russ and local residents can field comments. These are combined with a weekly letter drop that updates residents on progress.

Liaison with the local community helped the team work through potential issues around noise, such as power-floating (polishing) concrete slabs in an open-frame steel building. As a result of meetings, the team rescheduled the concrete floors to carry out work later in the day.

The result has been, says Russ, “very successful, and we have had a lot of compliments on what we do.”

than block wall and plasterboard. Success was achieved by “managing retailers’ expectations and perceptions of the product,” says Peter.

Keeping the multi-phased development on track (Debenhams is already handed over and others are to come up to week 73) is so important that Willmott Dixon has employed two architects on-site to ensure the details are correctly created and preventing snagging and other client disputes.

## “Local spend means we can sort stuff out quicker”

Peter Gleave

### £3.2M OF TURNOVER IN A MONTH

The project has sometimes hit £3.2m of turnover in one month with up to 200 people working at any one time. That they are keeping up to schedule is helped by the team’s use of Willmott Dixon’s Priority One tablet-based work sign-off system. Flemingate has been audited as one of the best sites nationally.

All permits, quality checking and other systems are signed off without paper. The benefit of this, says Peter, is that managers are not constantly back and forth to store chitties in the site office but out on-site.

“Productive man-hours are significantly increased and the reports pull in photos. The supply chain becomes more efficient. So the quality has raised as well.”

Beverley is more than just Yorkshire’s biggest mixed use development, it’s another example of our technical excellence and commitment to quality.



Getting set; Peter and Russ emerge from site after checking latest progress on a project turning over up to £3.2 million a month



The footprint for Flemingate is huge, covering 16-acres

### ALL ABOUT STRUCTURE

Apart from Block G, the hotel, structures are constructed of lightweight steel-frames with block work. The hotel is of wooden frame to allow completion within the short timing. Due to the nature of the building, brickwork is off the critical path and so internal fit-out is being carried out even though the brickwork has started.

But the lightweight steel frame construction stipulated by the client was not immediately pleasing to retail tenants, who were concerned that it would provide less security





## HOUSING AND COBHAM'S

# SKY-HIGH CHALLENGE

**WHEN A SKY-HIGH DEVELOPMENT IN SOUTHAMPTON THAT WILL DELIVER HOMES, SUPERMARKETS, CAFES AND PUBLIC AREAS NEEDED TO BE BUILT, IT WAS A CHANCE TO COMBINE ISLINGTON'S HOUSING SKILLS WITH COBHAM'S CONSTRUCTION KNOW-HOW. 163 FOUND OUT MORE.**

When it is complete, Crest Nicholson's £500m mixed-use Centenary Quay will comprise more than 1,600 homes, with the mammoth scheme carried out in eight phases.

It's currently on phase three, where Housing Islington is working with Cobham to create a new iconic structure on the town's skyline.

The £21m-value phase three includes a 350-space car park, Morrisons supermarket, two small retail units and 200 flats in three blocks. Cobham is building the blocks while Housing is fitting-out and finishing the first 100 apartments by late November 2015, while Crest fits out the remaining 100.

This project is the first time Cobham has teamed up with Housing and Cobham construction manager Matthew Kemp calls it a great showcase for how we bring together skills from Housing and Construction for clients, similar to Tesco Woolwich.

### WORKING IN HARMONY WITH THE DEVELOPER

As Cobham completes the structural frame, a key area is to work seamlessly with Crest on things like M&E, water and gas. "We've got to have regular two way communications at site management level to ensure we don't interfere with each other's respective work," Matthew says.

"Crest is used to dealing with smaller subcontractors," says Matthew. "So we needed to be robust and forthright in our approach."

This meant bringing any issues into the open as quickly as possible. So the team encouraged the client to look three months ahead and raise items before time using a

"client issues tracker." This covers sequencing, commercial and logistical items. As such, it is up to Crest to identify the owner and problem and force the closure date.

"We are saying to them, 'help us to help you,' says Matthew. "It makes the project work better and helps everyone work in a robust and professional manner."

An example of the type of issues solved ahead of time was the creation of the 80x3m canopy over the entrance to the apartment block which the team took care of in exchange for work on a drain which had not been fully taken account of in the plans.

Further challenges arrived in the form of working with the concrete frame built by another contractor. An extra process of checking was needed to make sure that everything was corrected, with Cobham allowed an extra month to go through the process and come up with solutions. They discovered, for example, that some slab edges were in the wrong place and needed to be ground down.

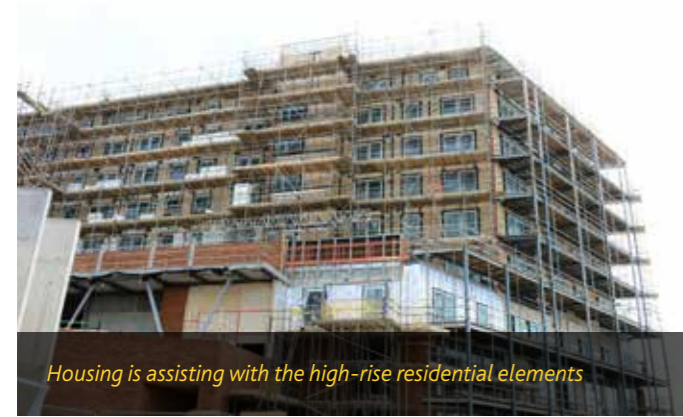
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Richard Weaving, right, and Mircea Lucescu run through quality checks

*"We are saying to them, 'help us to help you'. It makes the project work better and helps everyone work in a robust and professional manner"*

Matthew Kemp



Housing is assisting with the high-rise residential elements

### PACKAGES LARGE AND EXPENSIVE, SMALL AND INTRICATE

Meanwhile, the logistics are mind-boggling. There are 20 phased handovers covering 20-30 different areas of work. And where some packages are small in value, they remain fiddly and detailed. For example, a management suite in the centre of the development contains items such as fire alarms and access control.

"Whilst piecemeal, they are absolutely key to completion of the project - so we can't take our eyes off these sections," says Matthew, who formed an effect relationship with Housing's Clive Lewis and Rob Jackson.

The biggest technical challenge is to build the blocks of flats on the top of a large supermarket due to be fitted out in July.

## "We can't take our eyes off these sections"

Matthew Kemp

"Four huge tower cranes on site once made things easier, though it is true their terrific lifting power was somewhat impacted by the extreme winter winds coming off the sea. Above a certain wind speed, the operators would have to stop work. Perhaps half of work days were lost this way," says Kemp.

However, since these cranes rose up through the roof of the supermarket, they had to be dispensed with in time. So the podium is where things start and end up. Even moderate damage to the roof could cause catastrophic leaks.

"We are not building from the ground, we are building from 6m up," says Kemp. "Every piece of material has to get up high and waste has to get down. It puts a huge strain on vertical logistics."

The Cobham team gets things up and down by using hoist and a load-bearing gantry moves materials up to where they are needed. Logistics get tight because, for example, one of the huge floor requires seventy pallets of plasterboard. As a result, 20 contractors might want to use the lift at any one time.

### AVOIDING LATE PENALTIES

The project has 31 sectional completions, each with a financial penalty attached. The largest of these is Morrisons which handed over on 10 July and would have seen a substantial financial penalty for each week missed trading days.

Crest's commercial savvy extends to realising the sale and rental value on flats as soon as they are completed from August - even before our team have left the development.

This also means that systems such as smoke extract, fire warning, chlorination, light and TV systems all need to be working from day one. There is a dedicated commissioning engineer to oversee this process and make sure all pipes and wires are in place. He is only responsible for, as an example, making sure the fire alarm is talking to do the door - and he doesn't get involved in day-to-day M&E.

For Cobham and Islington, the biggest risk of working where people live is ensuring residents are secure. Once the car park and stair cores are finished, access will be controlled through temporary fire doors. With two staircases in each building, one will be used for fit out ("light construction traffic") and the residents will climb the other. Flat-dwellers will be able to exit using a push-bar, making sure no one can get in.

"It will be tough," says Matthew. "But finishing the blocks and providing a phased handover is the crux of the project."

### FOCUSING ON DETAIL

The team's solution to making sure tight deadlines were met was to create the perfect programme for one particular flat (they are prefabricated and arrive as cassettes) and then track progress of the trades through a group of units.

This ideal programme was generated by carrying out numerous workshops the five main trades on the job, looking at all the steps involved from start to finish. The process involved numerous tweaks, drilling down to levels as details as whether a bath panel goes in sooner or later.

Once that was finalised, the live matrix began to track progress through grouped units. The results are displayed live via a networked computer programme so the construction managers can see how things are moving along. Each bar represents eight weeks and sequential trades are not allowed to begin work before the prior trade has been signed off.

"We closely monitor the programme and maintain the sequence. Because it's so detailed, we can jump on if things are slipping," says Matthew.



Matthew Kemp "Finishing the blocks and providing a phased handover is a crux of the project"

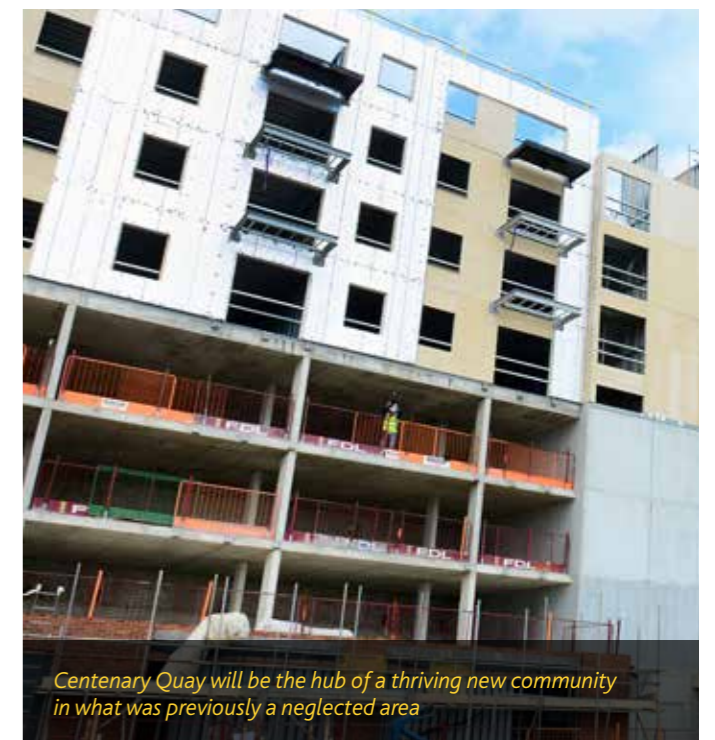
Further friction is eliminated by insisting on a design surgery with the architects one day a week. "They come down to site for a full day to work out the niggly details and minor drawing approvals," Matthew says. "We don't want anyone to feel alienated. We want them to feel welcomed and part of the team."

The obvious benefit is making the project easier and faster to build - by, for example, grouping the unifying coping details and soffits details into one or two types.

Come November, Cobham and Islington will be justly proud of the sparkling new settlement they have helped raise on the site of a former munitions factory.



The scale and size is one of the eye-catching features of Centenary Quay



Centenary Quay will be the hub of a thriving new community in what was previously a neglected area

## HOUSING'S

# QUALITY ZONE

**OUR 4LIFE ACADEMY IS AGAIN IN THE SPOTLIGHT FOR A MAJOR LEARNING INITIATIVE. THE FACILITY THAT TRAINS OVER 5,000 PEOPLE A YEAR IS NOW HOME TO A SERIES OF SPECIAL COMPLIANCE PODS CREATED BY HOUSING TO AID ITS FOCUS ON QUALITY FINISHES.**

Housing COO Charlie Scherer explains, "In our business, delivering a 'ready for occupation' product is essential, so these training pods allow our teams to focus on performance in key areas like bricklaying, drainage, bathrooms and kitchens. It's part of our determination to make our people the best there is in the house building industry."

Set up in a series of zones, each pod has life size mock-ups that are replicated on drawings uploaded to Priority1. By comparing the drawings and specifications with the mock-ups, delegates are challenged to identify defects and non-compliance.

Charlie attended a trial course in the Spring; "It's a sophisticated set-up, with conditions ideal for learning and sharing best practice. We have to meet exacting standards and this is very much part of my drive to produce faultless homes prior to client inspection."

### COMPLIANCE POD COURSE CONTENT

- The consequences of poor quality
- Case studies
- Responsibility for quality
- Practical fault finding sessions
- Ready for occupation
- Lessons learnt

*"It's a sophisticated set-up to ensure we are equipped to meet the exacting standards clients expect"*

*Charlie Scherer*



*Delegates are put through their paces on roofing, just one area covered by the compliance pods*



*Compliance manager Jo Weston, standing left, inspects the fault detection prowess of the latest batch of course attendees*