



Department for
Communities and
Local Government

Starter Homes Design



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March 2015

ISBN: 978-1-4098-4555-3

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Foreword

This document is about helping to ensure we achieve high quality design in Starter Homes: good design matters to everyone and this involves achieving a baseline of good quality from the outset.



Starter Homes do not have to conform to these exemplars – that is not the purpose of this document. Where developers want to build something else, which is as good or better in design, and this is approved by local planning authorities this is acceptable. What is not acceptable is the approach that regards the appearance and design of the homes and communities we build as an afterthought.

This document sets out an initial set of exemplars and is the outcome of early work by the Government’s new Design Advisory Panel. I am delighted that the members of the Panel have worked with us quickly to set out what good design can achieve for Starter Homes.

Good design should be the default approach to deliver good quality Starter Homes. Developers should work with local planning authorities to deliver the high quality design we all want to see for Starter Homes. The Panel’s exemplars show good design in a local context. Proposals should include visual material, similar in scope to that set out in this document, so that communities can see the quality of homes being offered.

We hope that this publication will encourage debate and be a first step in developing an agreed design approach to delivering new, attractive Starter Homes and places that can meet the demands of modern life and stand the test of time.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Brandon Lewis', with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Brandon Lewis

Minister of State for Housing and Planning

Context

Starter Homes

The Government wants to see a new generation of high quality, low cost Starter Homes being built for young first time buyers at an initial discount of 20% so that more people can enjoy the benefits of home ownership. Good design is essential if we are to create sustainable places where people want to live, work and be part of the local community.

On 2 March, the Government introduced a new national Starter Homes exception site planning policy for England (through a Written Ministerial Statement) to make it easier to secure planning permission from local planning authorities for Starter Homes on under-used or unviable commercial or industrial land not currently identified for housing. The current Government's ambition is to deliver 100,000 Starter Homes through this important planning reform.

Under the national Starter Homes exception site policy, Starter Homes will:

- be offered by the developer to only first time buyers under the age of 40 wishing to own and occupy a home at a discount of at least 20% below their open market value;
- have a maximum discounted sales price of £250k outside London (£450k in London) to ensure that the Starter Homes are in reach of the typical young first time buyer;
- have resale and letting restrictions requiring the property, if sold, to be sold at a discount for 5 years after the first sale and not to be let until five years of owner-occupation by the purchaser; and
- be well-designed.

The exception site policy is clear that section 106 affordable housing and tariff-style contributions should not be sought from Starter Homes developments. Current Government policy is to seek to exempt Starter Homes from the Community Infrastructure Levy in the next Parliament.

Championing good design for Starter Homes

The Government believes that a Starter Home, even if discounted, must be of a design quality that supports the demands of modern life. Young people looking to buy for the first time have high expectations of the home they want and we want the new Starter Homes to be attractive, including visually, to buyers and communities. It is important that new Starter Homes aim to create well-connected, sustainable communities, establishing a strong sense of place. This will be achieved through well-designed buildings, streetscapes, green and other public spaces, responding to the character and identity of the local surroundings and materials and using good architecture and landscaping. The function, layout, size, shape, detailed features and materials of the buildings and spaces as well as their ongoing stewardship are also all important considerations.

Our National Planning Policy Framework and Planning Practice Guidance already encourages good design of both homes and the wider neighbourhood, and the use of design tools and processes such as master planning, design review, design codes and pre-application discussions to achieve this locally. Industry tools such as the housing design checklist, Building for Life¹², can also be valuable in guiding the development of well-designed new homes and a range of acclaimed and well-designed schemes are published on the Built for Life and Housing Design Awards websites.

The exemplar designs set out in this document show what good quality Starter Homes could look like. They are drawn from work by the Government's new Design Advisory Panel involving leading design and industry experts. They include well-designed housing schemes across the country which are already, or close to, being completed. The size and type of the homes include terraced and semi-detached houses and flats. The projects include a range of densities and building heights. And there are distinct design approaches, architectural styles and types of building materials.

These are intended as an initial set of Starter Homes exemplars for comment and discussion and we aim to engage with first time buyers, industry representatives and others with a view to developing and adding to them in the future. The aim is that these Starter Home exemplars can work alongside positive approaches on good design locally where these are in place. Local flexibility is important in recognising different design issues and requirements but developers should work with local planning authorities to deliver the high quality design we all want to see for Starter Homes. The Panel's exemplars show good design in a local context. Proposals should include visual material, similar in scope to that set out in this document, so that communities can see the quality of homes being offered.

Starter Homes Exemplars

Terraced

Type 1: Two storey

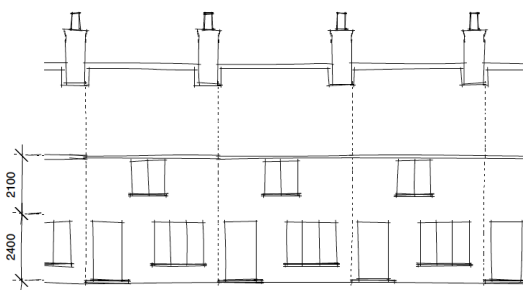
Size: 67 sq m / 720 sq ft

Description: 2 storey, 2 bed

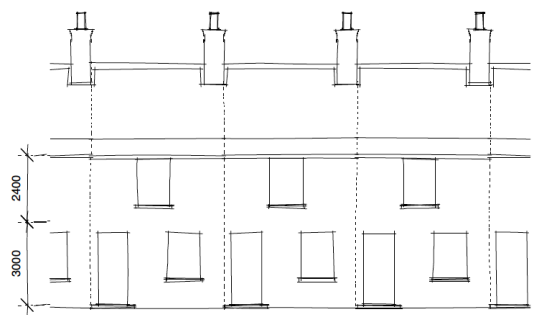
Project location: Poundbury, West Dorset

Architect: Craig Hamilton Architects

Developer: CG Fry, Guinness Trust



Indicative Elevation, low massing 1:200



Indicative Elevation, tall massing 1:200



Part of a walkable neighbourhood with well-connected streets, the house elevation is simple with non-aligned windows giving a less formal feel.

The windows can have flat arches, gentle arches or full arches. Materials can vary from a more generic render (which can be plain or coloured to give variety), or locally found materials or bricks can be used.

Type 2: Two storey

Size: 94 sq m / 1011 sq ft

Description: 2 storey, 2 bed

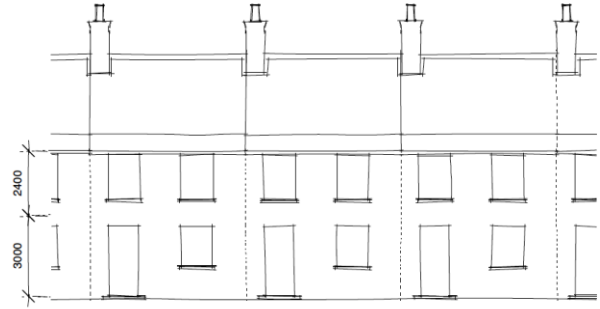
Project location: Poundbury, West Dorset

Architect: George Saumarez Smith, ADAM Architecture

Developer: CG Fry, Guinness Trust



Indicative Elevation, low massing 1:200



Indicative Elevation, tall massing 1:200



Part of an integrated mixed use settlement with a clear structure based on walkable neighbourhoods and connected streets. Each of the streets has a defined character and range of densities from more rural to more urban and from less formal to more formal.

Variety is provided by changes in colour or material rather than changing the building types.

Type 3: Two storey

Size: 81 sq m / 871 sq ft

Description: 2 storey, 2 bed

Project location: Bude, Cornwall

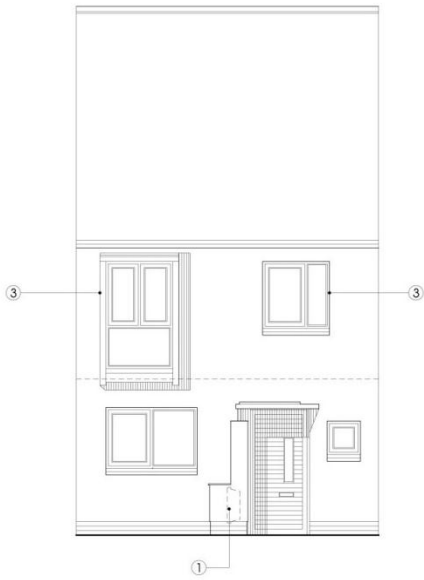
Architect: Trewin Design Architects

Developer: Guinness Trust, Midas Homes Ltd, Westcountry Housing Association

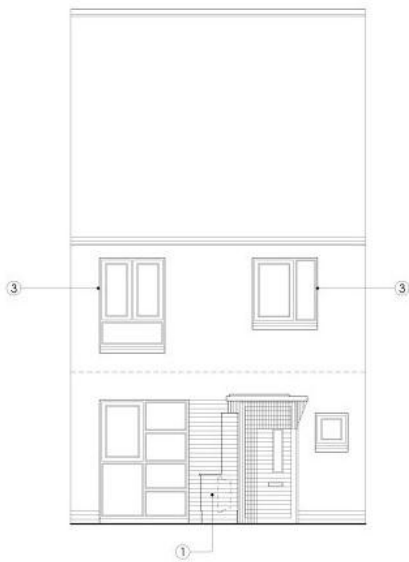


Based on local traditional buildings, houses are set out in a series of short terraces with landscaped parking courts to the rear. The street pattern supports and enhances existing well-used pedestrian connections and encourages walking and cycling.

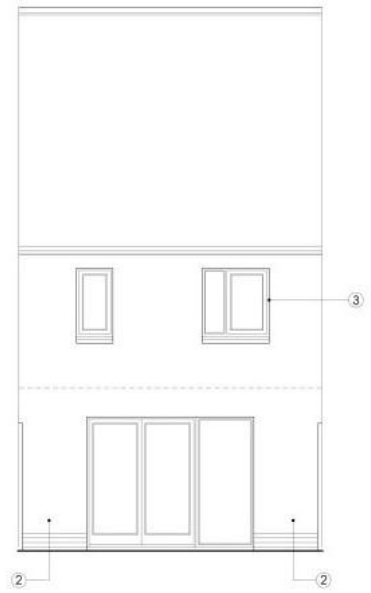
The palette of materials has been kept deliberately restrained and natural slate roofs, rendered walls and local stonework all feature alongside sustainably sourced cedar cladding and shingles.



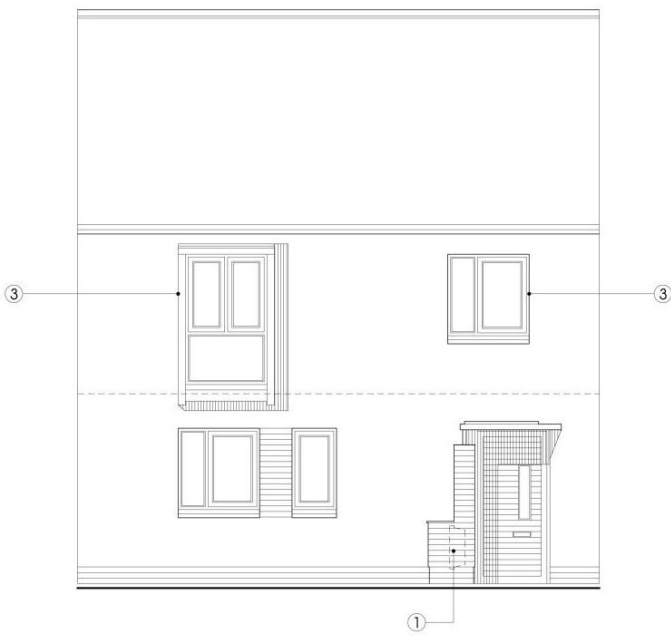
FRONT ELEVATION - OPTION 1
2BH/A(1)



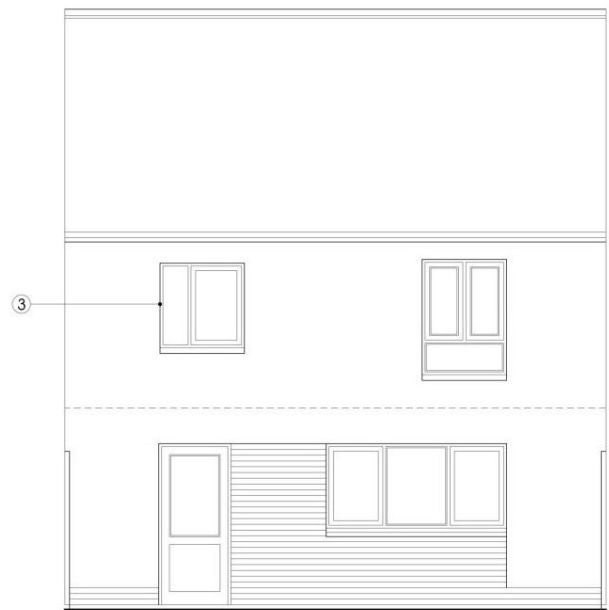
FRONT ELEVATION - OPTION 2
2BH/A(2)



REAR ELEVATION



FRONT ELEVATION



REAR ELEVATION

Type 4: Two storey

Size: 82 sq m / 882 sq ft

Description: 2 storey, 2 bed

Project location: Bicester, Oxfordshire

Architect: Farrells

Developer: A2Dominion



The development creates residential neighbourhoods with a mixed use – retail, community and employment – local centre.

Sustainable transport networks include a bus stop within 400m of every home, cycle and pedestrian ways as well as exceptional green infrastructure covering some 40% of the site (a town square, community farm, allotments, orchard and country park).

Street scale is 2–3 storey terraced groups of 3–5 houses creating intimate ‘home zones’ with high quality of streetscape, landscaping and shared open space. The house elevation has an intimate Garden Town cottage scale.

The Bicester house will achieve true zero-carbon emissions using high performance Sigma timber frame insulated panels. Renewable energy source solar photovoltaic tiles are installed on south facing roof slopes.



Type 5: Two storey

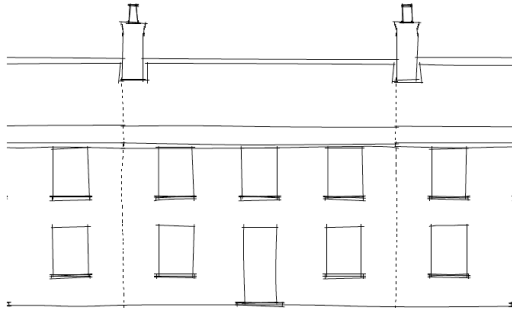
Size: 90 sq m / 968 sq ft

Description: 2 storey, 3 bed

Project location: Upton, Northampton

Architect: KRT Associates Ltd

Developer: Paul Newman New Homes, English Partnerships



Indicative Elevation, tall massing 1:200



Indicative Elevation, low massing 1:200



An urban extension based around walkable neighbourhoods. This home is brick with a traditional six pane over single pane sash windows and slate or black tile roof.

This double fronted house can be detached, semi-detached or terraced. The ground floor windows can be two part or three part. Lintels can be flat or arched, as shown above.

Type 6: Two storey

Size: 93 sq m / 1001 sq ft

Description: 2 storey, 3 bed

Project location: Derwenthorpe, York

Architect: Richards Partington Architects

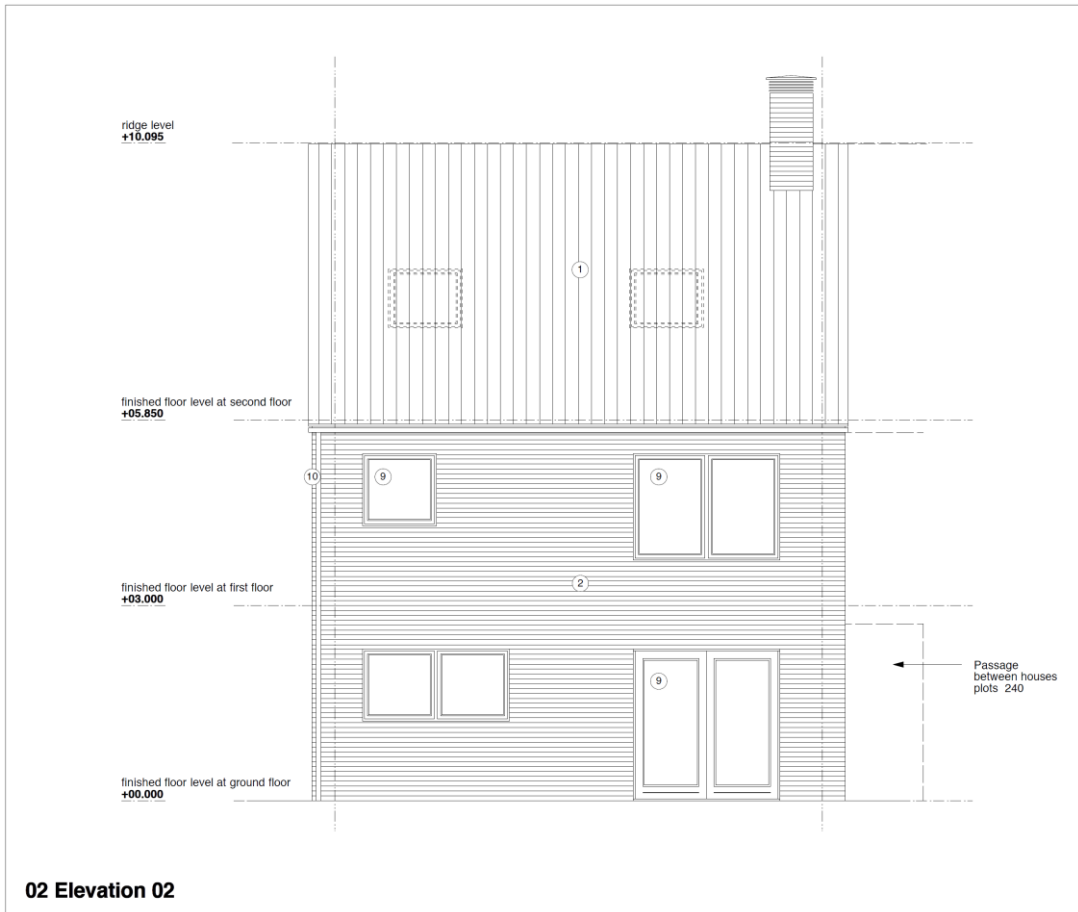
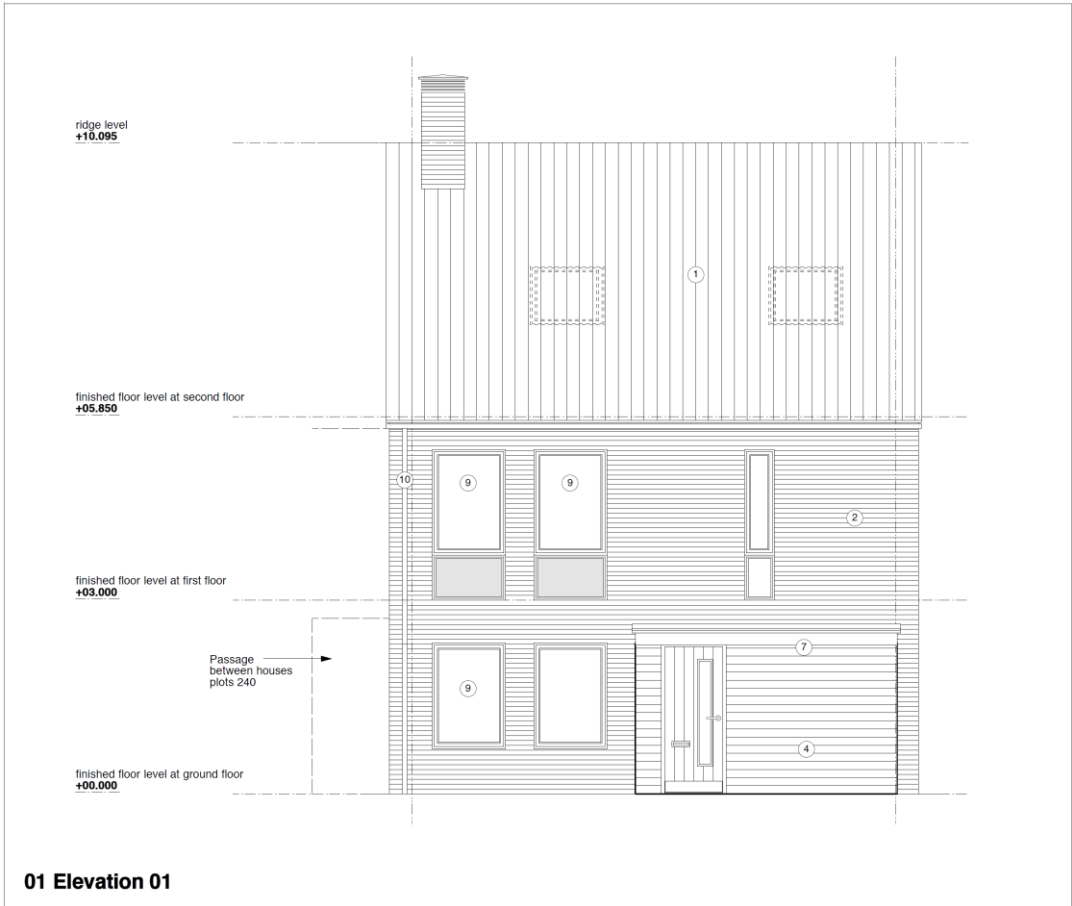
Developer: Joseph Rowntree Housing Trust, David Wilson Homes

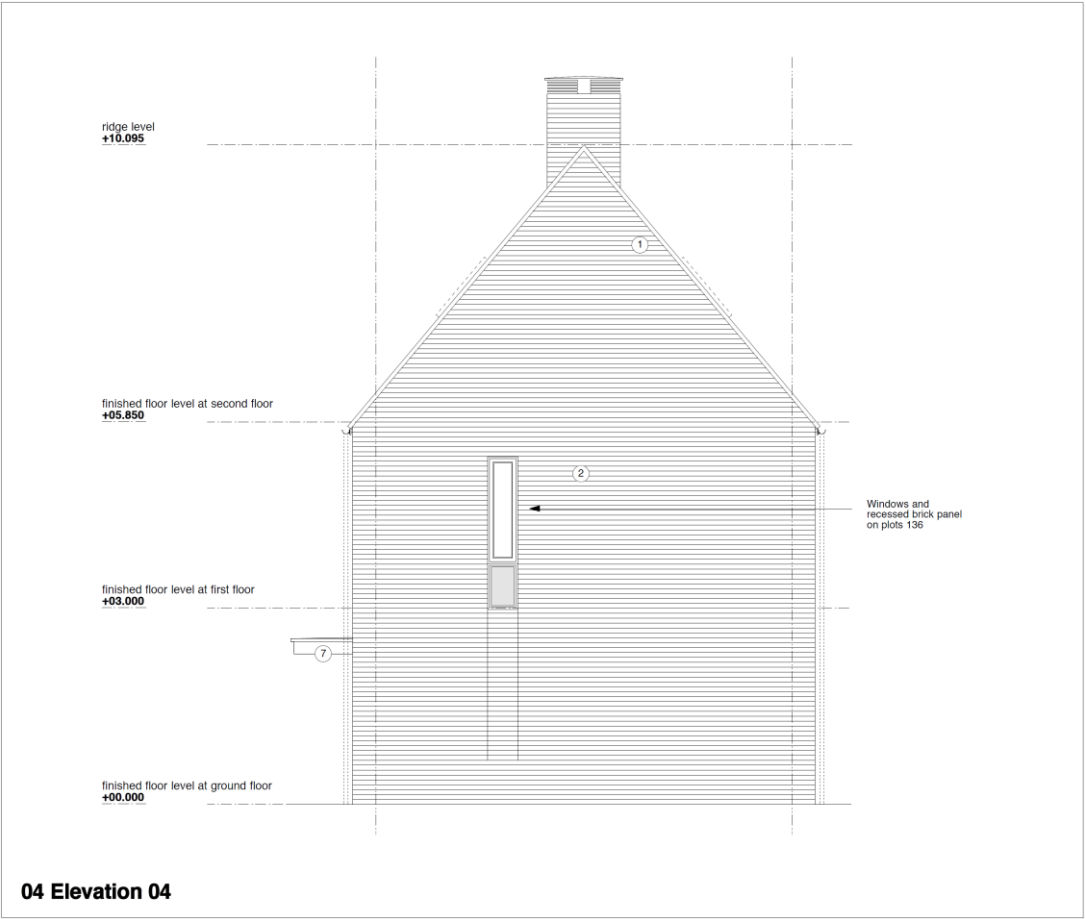
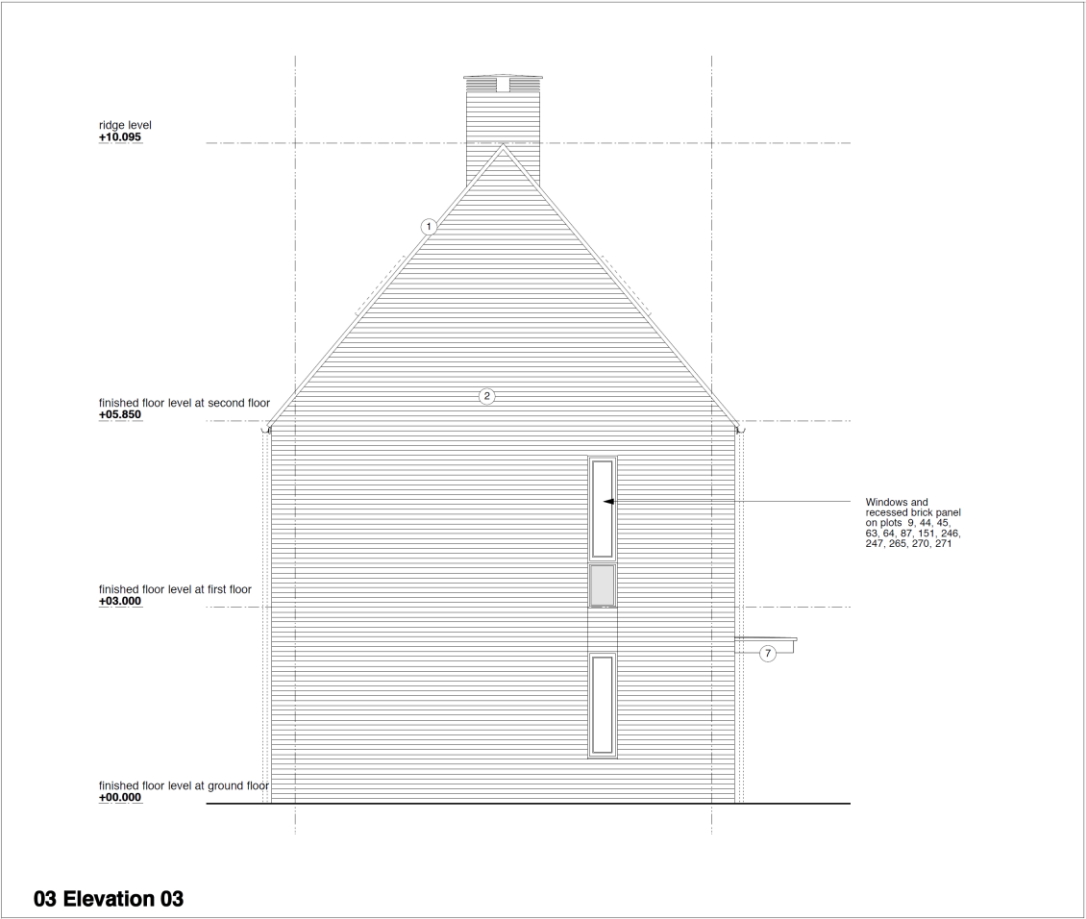


Three bedroom home (with a possible roof conversion) built as either part of a terrace or semi-detached. Large steep pitched roof, painted brickwork and striking dormer windows are features of this development. The houses are well proportioned with generous flexible rooms, designed to Life Time Homes criteria. High ceiling heights and full height windows make the inside of the houses feel spacious and light. Living rooms are dual aspect, bringing in light.

Different sized houses are used appropriately either to create enclosure and continuous frontages or to punctuate the streetscape and mark open spaces. Within the scheme are small public squares with benches and play areas. The beautifully conceived landscape conserves ancient hedgerows and species-rich grassland as well as providing swales and ponds.

An important feature of the development is the quality of the street, public spaces and landscaping. The foremost intention was to create a pedestrian and, in particular, a child and play friendly environment. The routes through the development are tree lined connecting a network of 'home zones'.





Semi-detached

Type 7: Three storey

Size: 105 sq m / 1130 sq ft

Description: 3 storey, 3 bed

Project location: Letchworth, Hertfordshire

Architect: Gary Young, Higgs Young Architects

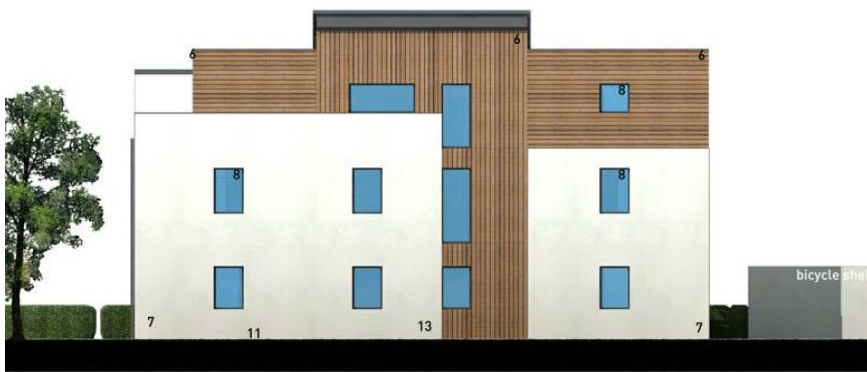
Developer: North Hertfordshire Homes



Photograph by Morley von Sternberg

Three storey street scale terraced houses create an intimate neighbourhood with a high quality of street, landscape and shared open space. Car parking is located on frontages, in garages and in rear car courts.

Elevations and sedum roofs were constructed using highly sustainable materials and technologies - timber frame structure, hemcrete walls and a highly insulated roof with an irrigated sedum finish. Renewable energy sources including solar hot water and photovoltaic panels were used on the large south facing sloped wall to contribute towards reduced energy demand.



Flats

Type 8: Five to seven storey

Size: 49–51 sq m / 527–548 sq ft
69–75 sq m / 742– 807 sq ft

Description: 5 - 7 storeys, 1 & 2 bed

Project location: Islington, London

Architect: Porphyrios Associates LLP

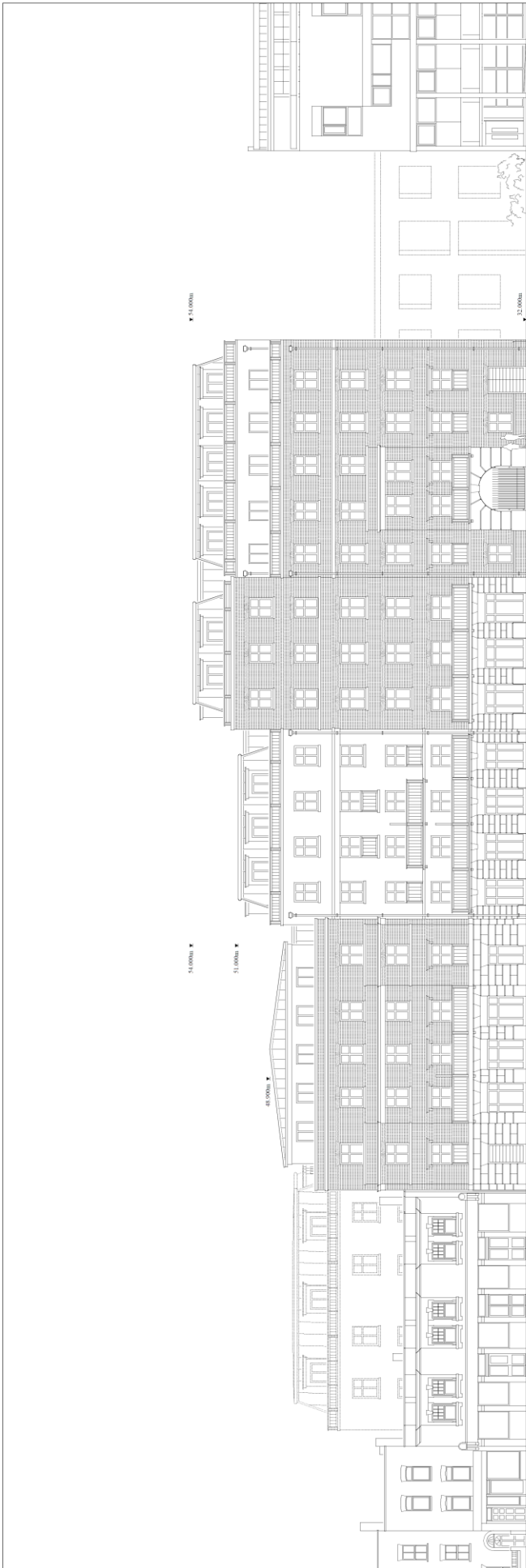
Developer: First Base, Southern Housing



A mixed-use scheme in north London including a range of apartments that blends traditional architecture with contemporary design. The buildings have been articulated by a series of discrete volumes that create an enclosed, secure, landscaped courtyard.

London stock brick, stone, render painted in shades of cream and off-white and metalwork on balconies have been used throughout the buildings.

These traditional materials will stand the test of time, and combine to re-energize the best of traditional London architecture.



BLOCK A1

BLOCK A2

BLOCK A3

BLOCK B

WEST ELEVATION



BLOCK B

BLOCK A3

BLOCK A2

BLOCK A1

EAST ELEVATION



For more information on Starter Homes go to:
www.new-homes.co.uk/starter-homes

If you have any feedback, email the team at:
StarterHomes@communities.gsi.gov.uk