



TEAM STRUCTURE:

Architect: MODE 1 Architects

Interiors: Residents (Self-Build Group)

Contractor: Higgins Construction PLc

Structural Engineer: Dewhurst McFarlane & Partners

M & E Engineer: Mendick Waring Ltd

Quantity Surveyor: Baily Garner

Employer's Agent: Baily Garner

Housing Association: Presentation

Contract Value: Approx. £1.7million

ANGELL TOWN SELF-BUILD ECOHOMES, CROWHURST CLOSE, BRIXTON, LONDON, SW9

Site

The ten unit EcoHomes sit on a tight brownfield site within the Angell Town housing estate. This was notorious in the 1980's for its high level of crime and drug abuse. The homes are a part of the regeneration of the estate, which began in the early 1990's.

Design Objectives

There were numerous objectives to fulfill when it came to developing the EcoHomes. They were designed to be identified as part of the estate, whilst still retaining their own unique character. They were designed to be modern, comfortable, flexible homes for living in, allowing residents to feel comfortable and at ease, as well being able to put their own mark on their property.

To prevent the return of the crime and vandalism associated with the original estate, Mode 1 Architects employed the 'Secured By Design' scheme, laying out a set of guidelines which allows the potential of crime to be 'designed out'. This includes a 'defensible space' to the front of each property, as well as a high level of street visibility to deter would-be attackers.

As the name implies, the ecological impact of the homes was also a major design factor. This not only means the use of the latest environmental technology, such as solar hot-water panels and rainwater harvesting, but also basic good design, such as high levels of insulation, a south-facing orientation and a glass sun-lounge in each property. The project took part in the EcoHomes Assessment, where it received an 'Excellent' rating for environmental sustainability.

Materials and Appearance

As previously mentioned, the homes were designed to fit-in whilst at the same time stand out from their neighbours. This was achieved by following the basic London terraced street pattern, only with a modern twist. The use of traditional London stock brick references this traditional building method, whilst the use of timber cladding and terner steel for the roofing places the scheme very much in the 21st century.

The homes have a generous number of good-sized windows, which allow plenty of natural light inside. Each unit also has a balcony on the first floor, as well as a small private garden, sheltered from the street. This private, exterior space is crucial in an area as urban and built-up as Brixton, allowing residents to relax in the open-air, without having to leave their own homes.

Special Details

A major part of the design process of the EcoHomes was the close consultation with the residents, allowing them make the major decisions which would affect how their homes are designed. The resident 'Self Builders' appointed a design co-ordinator to liaise with Mode 1, ensuring that their ideas and views were taken into account.

The contractor, Higgins, provided the residents with construction training, teaching them invaluable building techniques and learning new life skills. Therefore, as well as choosing their own internal fittings and finishes, they were carrying out on-site jobs, such as decorating, and fitting out their own kitchens and bathrooms. Such 'hands-on' experience awards the residents with a real sense of ownership and pride in their homes, ensuring that they will take good care of them in the future.

