

4/4/08

INNOVATIVE AFFORDABLE HOUSING SCHEME WINS MAJOR AWARD FOR ARCHITECTURE

Octavia Housing and Care's innovative Bourbon Lane affordable housing scheme in West London has won the Civic Trust Special Award for Housing, sponsored by English Partnerships. It also received a Civic Trust Award.

The design by Cartwright Pickard Architects in partnership with French practice B+C Architectes, is a radical move away from conventional housing design in the UK and incorporates a host of new ideas. It was the result of an international competition run by CABE and has already won a CABE award and a Housing Design Award.

Built by Como Homes and project managed by MDA Consulting, Bourbon Lane provides 78 much needed affordable homes for families and key workers, for rent and shared ownership.

The scheme was praised by the Civic Trust for 'creating an imaginative interpretation of the traditional London mews' and for being 'crisply detailed and impeccably built.'

The judges also commented, 'This is a lively and exciting approach to a very difficult public realm site. Bourbon Lane demonstrates how well planned landscape and architectural design can create an interesting, attractive and thriving neighbourhood. We hope this development will encourage such qualities in other social housing projects'.

Grahame Hindes, Chief Executive of Octavia Housing and Care, said, "This is exactly the sort of affordable housing this area needed. With a pioneering design, high environmental standards and a safe environment for children, this award demonstrates how Bourbon Lane is blazing a trail for similar developments around London."

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James Pickard, Project Director at Cartwright Pickard Architects, said, “We are delighted to receive this award. This was a challenging site and we had to provide a wide range of house types that integrate well into the existing urban fabric. The result is an innovative scheme that breaks new ground in urban design and incorporates a number of fresh ideas in the provision of affordable housing, and particularly the design of high density family homes, without the appearance of conventional social housing.”

The homes are arranged in eight low-rise blocks, which feature larch timber cladding, bold use of colour and dramatic overhanging cantilevers above the entrances. Each home is dual aspect to benefit from morning and evening sun, good natural ventilation and all the dwellings have either a garden, balcony or generous roof terrace.

The blocks are organised around a semi-public open courtyard to help create a sense of place and identity, and integrate the scheme with the adjacent shopping centre and existing listed housing.

Sustainability and energy efficiency were also strong themes in the design.

Environmental features include a combined heat and power system, which generates electricity on site and provides domestic hot water to heat radiators. There is a whole house ventilation system or continuous mechanical ventilation system within each dwelling with heat recovery, and interface units in each home to encourage residents to minimise energy consumption.

The scheme was built using modern methods of construction to improve quality and performance. A prefabricated cladding system reduced the need for scaffolding, reducing time on site, and improving air tightness and safety. This approach also allowed the windows to be pre-installed off site.

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There is extensive attractive landscaping throughout with both green spaces between buildings and planting to roof terraces, giving the appearance of a high specification private development. Pedestrianised 'Home Zones' allow children to play in a safe and secure environment.

-ENDS-

Editor's Notes

1. The project team:

Client:	Octavia Housing and Care
Architects:	Cartwright Pickard Architects B+C Architectes
Main contractor:	Como Homes
Project manager, cost consultant, construction supervisor, CDM co-ordinator:	MDA Consulting
Consulting engineers:	CampbellReith
Environmental and M&E consultants:	Atelier Ten
Landscape architects:	Grant Associates

2. The accommodation comprises:

- 45 affordable units for rent: 38 family homes and 7 one-bedroom apartments.
- 33 shared ownership apartments: 21 one-bedroom and 12 two-bedroom.

3. The Bourbon Lane project was the result of an Anglo French design competition to demonstrate best practice and new thinking in affordable housing, which was won by Cartwright Pickard Architects in partnership with French practice B+C Architectes, selected from a short list of seven. The project was run in parallel with a social housing scheme in Paris, and was a UNITE initiative supported by CABE and the Direction de l'Architecture et du Patrimoine (DAPA).

4. The project has already won two awards:

- CABE Festive Five Award for design champions
- Housing Design Award (project category)

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CPA/08/50a

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