Opening doors to affordable housing

Leadbetter Construction is currently undertaking a major development of 81 new affordable homes for A2Dominion Group will regenerate the site at St Michael's Road, Middlesex.

The properties are being constructed on the site of a number of concrete 1930s and 1940s-built houses, which are being progressively demolished to make way for the new development, which comprises 22 flats in two blocks and 59 terraced houses, of which one will be designed specifically for wheelchair users. The houses range in size from one to four bedrooms, whilst the flats are a mixture of one and two bedroom sizes.

The project is being carried out on either side of the existing St Michael's Road, with the first phase, to one side of this road and comprising approximately half of the new properties, nearing completion. The second phase will then follow with construction commencing on the opposite side of the road. The regeneration process will also include the construction of a number of new roads and the installation of new services. All the homes are of traditional construction with brick and block elevations and upvc framed windows. Each terraced property will have private gardens, with communal gardens for the flats. Some of the parking is on-curtiledge, with the remainder located in communal parking courts.

The sky’s the limit

Heron Tower is one of the most important buildings to be constructed in London within the last 100 years, and will form the centre piece of Heron Plaza, a world-class financial complex in the City of London.

Designed by renowned architects Kohn Pederson Fox, and constructed by Skanska UK for Heron Tower Property Unit Trust, Heron Tower will provide luxury office space that will set a new benchmark of quality for offices of the future through the tower’s pioneering and visionary design. The 46 storey block is 202m (663ft) in height which is further extended by an elegant communications mast giving an overall height of 246m; upon completion it will be one of the tallest towers in the City of London.

Internally, 42,873sqm of net internal space will be made available, offering offices accommodation for 4300 staff. This comprises three basement levels, three concourse levels incorporating entrance foyers and retail areas, 36 storeys of offices rising from floor 2 to 37, a public restaurant, bar and conference area between floors 38-40 and six levels of plant between floors 41-46. Additionally, there will be the creation of a new pedestrian piazza in Houndsditch Street and two high speed double-decker glass lifts will give dedicated access from Bishopsgate to the Heron Tower restaurant facilities on the 39th floor. The state of the art lift technology being installed will provide an efficient passenger movement solution, allowing effective use of the building.

Main construction began on the Bishopsgate site at the beginning of 2008, and the development is scheduled for completion in the early part of 2011. Heron Tower has been created as an innovative space that responds well within its urban context, where the form of the building has been carefully articulated to generate beautiful views of the London City Skyline.

The entrance foyers and retail areas within the concourse levels, in addition to the new pedestrian piazza in Houndsditch Street, will bring a vibrant new dimension to the surrounding street scene and will enhance the public domain in the local neighbourhood.

Sustainability continues to be a key element within the design and construction of the development, with each elevation responding to its orientation. The Southern elevation incorporates
Innovative improvements for Suffolk's mental health facilities

As part of a pioneering £26.3m investment in mental health facilities in Suffolk, Suffolk Mental Health Partnership NHS Trust is developing a new low secure unit within the grounds of St Clements Hospital in Ipswich at a total cost of £4.2m.

Foxhall House, as the new building will be known, is part of a wider initiative within St Clements Hospital which will see a significant change in the delivery of inpatient mental health services. As the institutional style buildings are closed, the new inpatient service models place further emphasis and greater focus on providing treatments within the community in opposition to bringing patients into the hospital.

“The new facility will be located alongside some existing units providing rehabilitation type services,” Julie Todd, from Suffolk Mental Health Partnerships, explained. “However, it is likely that ultimately several of the old hospital buildings will be demolished and eventually sold as the way we service our patients develops and moves forward.”

Construction of the single-storey 980sqm building began in July 2009 by main contractor, Kier Eastern, in partnership with Devereux Architects and is located adjacent to the existing old low secure facility, which is no longer fit for purpose.

A two-storey office block that was originally part of Sampson House, also adjacent to the new build, had to be demolished to make way for construction to commence. However, upon completion, Sampson House will become the home of the community team involved with the low secure patients and a footpath will run between the new facilities for ease of access.

Internally, the building will comprise 11 en-suite bedrooms with associated day facilities to enable patients to conduct regular activities. There will also be a gym included in addition to laundry space, a library, treatment rooms and consultation and quiet rooms for therapy sessions to be undertaken.

The rooms will have a combination of loose and fixed furniture and Devereux Architects has designed specific feature wall treatments. As the institutional style buildings are closed, the new inpatient service models place further emphasis and greater focus on providing treatments within the community in opposition to bringing patients into the hospital.

“Heron Tower is positioned at the heart of the capital city and will undoubtedly become one of the world’s finest workspaces,” Gerald Ronson said. “The time capsule ceremony symbolises our commitment to creating world class office space incorporating visionary design and, as always, a strong focus on detail and consideration for the environment.”

Lee Polisano echoed this sentiment and commented: “Great cities are shaped by great buildings and Heron Tower will undeniably play an important role in shaping the future of the City of London. The architecture of the building, its contribution to the public realm and the internal organisation has been specifically influenced by its extraordinary island site and the need for a building this special within England’s capital city.”

Skanska, in collaboration with the client and architect, is working hard to deliver a total design, construction and building services solution.

“We are delighted to be working with Heron,” Mats Williamson, UK representative of Skanksa commented. “This will be the next iconic building London creates and a memorable landmark for many years to come. We are thrilled to be working on such a prestigious project.”
Within Heron Tower, the main passenger lifts will be Schindler 7000 Multi Deck Elevators, featuring Schindler ID Destination Control.

**How does it work?**

First installed by Schindler in the 118 storey ICC Tower in Hong Kong, Schindler ID Multi Deck provides the most efficient method of controlling elevators and maximising passenger movement in high rise buildings.

The Multi Deck Elevators at Heron Tower will provide the passengers with a unique travel experience. This starts when they pass through the security barriers where an integrated display will advise which elevator will take them to their destination.

The Multi Deck elevator system operates so that each deck of the lift serves either odd or even floors. For example, should the passenger wish to travel from the ground floor to level 12; when passing through the security barrier one of the lower deck cars would be selected. If the passenger wanted to travel to level 37, they would be allocated an upper deck car (upper lift lobby) which would be accessed by using the escalators.

The Schindler ID system is geographically sensitive, so it knows where the call was placed, taking this into consideration it calculates the time it would take the passenger to arrive at the allocated elevator. Should passengers wish to change their destination; this can be input at call stations in the lift lobby areas.

**What advantages will Schindler 7000 Multi Deck bring to Heron Tower?**

The Multi Deck elevators will move passengers from floor to floor in the most efficient way using both decks, providing superlative service to the 4,300 staff that will be working within the building.

With the majority of the Multi Deck elevators being glazed, passengers will benefit from the added advantage of spectacular views over the City of London whilst travelling to their destination.

Schindler are proud to be working with Skanska on the Heron Tower project.

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