



FIRST LOOK

The almshouse reworked: St Clement's Heights by Pellings

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This redevelopment of 50 sheltered apartments in Sydenham, south London is financed by onsite private sale dwellings and designed to create a cross-generational community

Fifty new almshouse units for St Clement Danes Holborn Charity, designed by Pellings to HAPPI and London Design Guide standards, look to rework the almshouse model.

The project is focused around a square, with the almshouses situated at its head and a series of private dwellings lining the three remaining sides. The latter, consisting of a development of 26 apartments and 20 townhouses by Crest Nicholson, financed the whole development. Together, these private sale units and the supported living elements of the development are designed to read as an integrated scheme, and help ensure a mixed, cross-generational community.

The main almshouse building is configured to embrace its own private courtyard garden for the sole use and enjoyment of the older residents, while the rest of the site is accessible to all, including the public.

Architect's view

As a framework consultant to the Almshouse Association, we are often asked to visit interesting properties to provide property advice, and this was no exception. Unusually, the existing properties were built in the 1970s and comprised low level, low density, flat-roofed blocks, which had clearly reached the end of their economic life, largely comprising bedsit units which no longer met the needs of residents.

What was really striking though, was the exceptionally beautiful setting, the buildings nestled on a crest with far-reaching views to the City of London. It struck us that there was a real opportunity here to create a lasting legacy for our client, the St Clement Danes Holborn Estate Charity, and we set about developing ideas for a new HAPPI Standard facility, cross-funded by open-market sales of high quality townhouses and apartments.

By identifying a developer partner and agreeing a bespoke development agreement, the project started to take shape. We were adamant, that for the project to be a sustainable legacy for our client, placemaking needed to be at the core of the design process, so social cohesion has been created through the delivery of a modern interpretation of the traditional London square, at the same time as addressing the individual needs of the varied stakeholders. Each building on the site has a relationship both with the formal landscape at the heart of the site and the leafy edges of the tree-lined boundaries.

Older residents will have the opportunity to live as part of a new community of families and younger generations, in a safe and secure setting.

Neill Werner, partner and head of architecture, Pellings

Project data

Start on site April 2015

Completion Phase 1 October 2016 (final phase due to complete in Spring 2018)

Gross internal floor area 4,629m²

Form of contract Bespoke Development Agreement

Construction cost £7.2 million

Construction cost per m² £1,554

Architect Pellings LLP

Executive architect Crest Nicholson

Client St Clements Dane Holborn Estate Charity/Crest Nicholson

Civil engineer Robert Wynter

Structural engineer Withers Design

M&E consultant RHB Partners

QS Stace LLP

Clerk of works Pellings LLP

Landscape consultant Outer Space

Project manager Stace LLP

CDM coordinator CDM Risk Management

Approved building inspector NHBC

Main contractor Crest Nicholson

CAD software used AutoCAD











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