

High quality, well designed affordable housing



PROJECT	Pointers Field
CLIENT	Norwich City Council
CONTRACTOR	Dove Jeffery Homes
ARCHITECT	Barefoot & Giles
VALUE	£700k
LOCATION	Norwich

"By taking on a business model for this development, we hope to create a robust and sustainable means of delivering and funding homes for Norwich well into the future. We will ensure that as well as homes being of excellent build quality, they will have eco-features, meaning they will be economical to run."

Brenda Arthur, Council Leader

‘Decent housing for all’

Norwich City Council needed an affordable way to deliver new affordable homes across the City. Changes to the funding regime for affordable housing meant that length and associated costs of building programmes were tightly controlled to make schemes financially viable.

The first project to make up this vision for the future was a block of 12 homes comprising 8 one bedroom flats and 4 two bedroom houses which had the added complication of being on a small site with limited access in close proximity to existing homes, maximising the utilisation of the available development land.

Scheme requirements included: appropriate design and protection of the natural environment; cost and feasibility; reducing energy costs for residents by achieving Level 4 of the Code for Sustainable Homes for the flats and Level 3 for the houses; a fast build time with minimal disruption and noise for neighbouring residents.

A design that exceeds quality and efficiency standards

The choice of the i-SIP System delivered by Innovaré to form the structure for the dwellings allowed the design to exceed the quality and efficiency standards required by building regulations while maintaining the tight budget.

Operating on a small site, in the vicinity of established housing, meant space to manoeuvre was limited. But with the use of offsite construction, site based activity was reduced, which in turn reduced building programme time, minimised risk and reduced overall waste. Offsite construction methods also minimised noise and disruption for local residents while standardisation, precise manufacture and fast installation of the elements resulted in a rapid build programme, satisfying both neighbours and stakeholders.

An additional unforeseen and unexpected benefit of the greater flexibility afforded by using i-SIP pre-fabricated panels was that the design for the 12 units created by Innovaré provided distinct character and unified the small new housing estate. The design came largely from a standardised Innovaré detail, but bespoke to the specific site and properties to allow for the clever value-engineered design to meet the needs of performance and cost, whilst implementing a more creative finished product.

The local community was supported further by using locally sourced labour. At least 10% of the workforce were people new to the labour market, either young people or those who had been unemployed.

Rapid delivery to meet local needs

The entire building programme lasted 6 weeks, resulting in a development of distinctive, attractive and energy-efficient dwellings. This and similar schemes, prove the worth of offsite construction in meeting the challenge of replenishing the UK’s social housing stock, in terms of rapid delivery, adaptability to changing market conditions (e.g. materials and labour shortages) and responding to local needs and circumstances.

