

insideout

the journal of the Higgins Group

issue 2





Welcome to 2008

We have entered 2008 and are looking forward to meeting the challenges and opportunities which lie ahead.

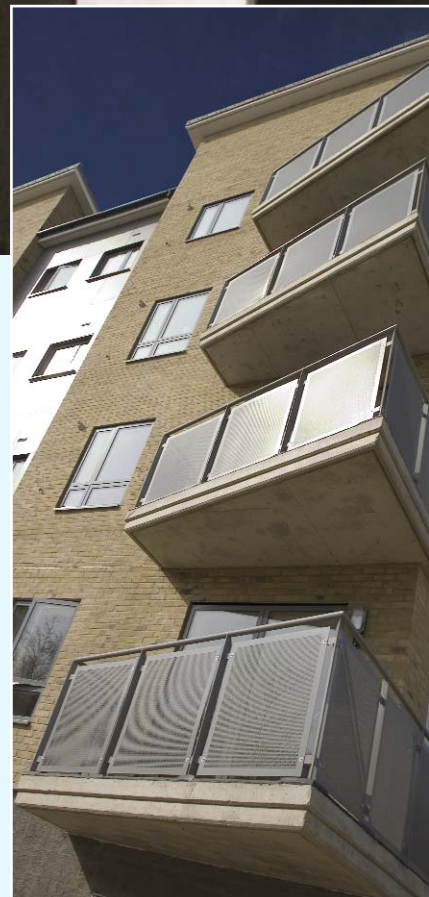
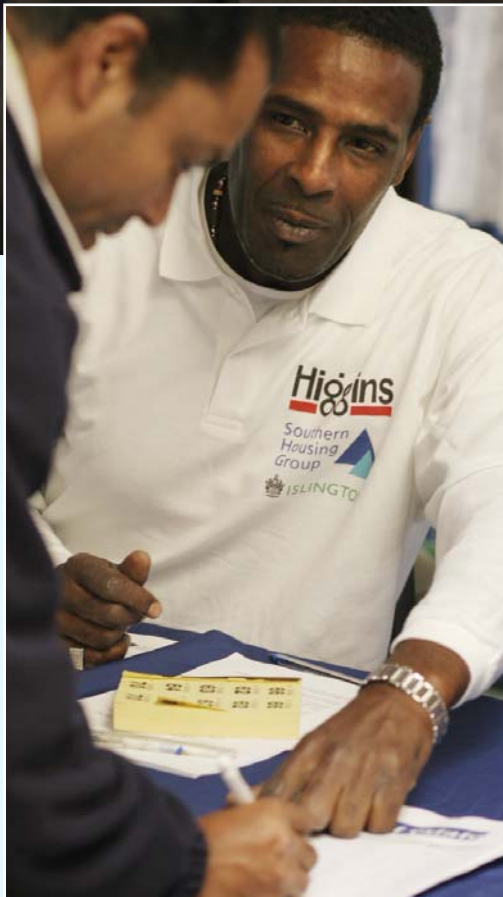
The Year has begun well! It is rewarding to see the commencement of our 4 year commitment to the regeneration of Stockwell Park with surveys commencing in January along with the beginning of our framework agreement for Greenfields Community Housing. Both these projects will have a positive effect on the residents and the local community.

Also hot off the press is our selection as developer/contractor for the St Johns school, Epping Site, which is a further example of Higgins Homes and Higgins Construction working together to demonstrate a winning combination.

Higgins Homes developments Uber and The Orchard have also been short listed for the Hot Property Awards. We look forward to continuing this success throughout the year.

On the cover...

Vale Street, Lambeth
see article on page 4





National Regeneration Awards...

At the recent prestigious National Regeneration Awards Higgins Construction received the award for both Regeneration Contractor of the Year and Best Community Regeneration Project.

Our previous victory in the 2005 Regeneration Awards was pivotal in our growth as a company, turnover having since grown to over £150M, with operations now stretching beyond Greater London into the Home Counties, East Anglia, Buckinghamshire and Sussex.

This second victory establishes Higgins as the only contractor to have ever reclaimed the Regeneration Contractor of the Year title.

The award for Best Community Regeneration Project went to our Market Estate project, which we are carrying out for Southern Housing Group.

Seven years ago, a series of criminal incidents on the notorious north London estate near Caledonian Park, incited the local residents to voice a need for change in their community. Dark, secluded areas of this post-war development had become havens for gang crime and vandalism. The Project Team identified the necessity of rebuilding the community, not simply building new homes. The project has made a concerted effort to open up the estate with more street houses and play areas, and has seen the construction of 140 new flats and houses of mixed-tenure, alongside regenerated green spaces.

Crime has since diminished considerably, with a noticeable positive interaction between neighbours in its place. We are proud to have been able to work with Southern Housing Group

to engage the local residents in community initiatives and offer jobs to local youths, previously deemed unemployable yet now working as estate-based trainees and on work placements.

Fact file

Client

Southern Housing Group

Consultants

Architect - HTA

Engineer

Tully De'ath
M&E - ECC

Master Planner

Watkins Gray International

Employers Agent

Philip Pank Partnership



Key Sustainability demonstration Project **Vale Street** addresses climate change...

A clear demonstration of our commitment to the development of sustainable housing is Number One Vale Street.

This site was purchased by London & Quadrant Housing Trust from the London Borough of Lambeth in March 2006 for 100% affordable housing 'with low energy requirements'. Lambeth Borough Council has since identified the Vale Street development as the borough's key sustainability demonstration project.

Sustainability has been integral at every stage of the strategy and design of the innovative Vale Street project. This has been developed in conjunction with both planning and environmental departments, and by doing so this project has exceeded the Eco Homes Excellent accreditation.

To provide an opportunity to integrate a medium density urban scheme within a sustainable area this project has a mixture of housing types for both rent and shared ownership.

Our project team aims to reduce the energy demand of these homes through mechanical heat recovery and by super insulating the building fabric, in particular the external walls and the windows which will be triple-glazed and argon filled. These sustainable homes will retain warmth in the winter yet remain cool in the summer months thanks to careful selection of materials and a heavy masonry construction. 40% of the remaining energy will be supplied from renewable sources that



drastically reduce carbon emissions, with a communal bio-mass boiler for water heating, and solar photo-voltaic panels orientated to maximise the supply of energy during the winter months. Bio-diversity also plays its part in this project, with green and brown roofs having been included on the site.

The houses and apartments are oriented towards the open aspect of the site reflecting the need to maintain reduced glazing and some solar shading, and making use of passive solar heating in the south elevation whilst minimising any loss of heat on the north. The brick of these elevations ties in with the existing appearance of the suburban housing and incorporates sustainable lime mortar. Similarly, vertical timbers from renewable sustainable and accredited sources break up the mass of the blocks.

Sustainability does not stop at the buildings alone. As part of our

dedication to promoting an alternative sustainable lifestyle, several areas for parking bicycles have been included, and provision for a pooled car incorporated. In addition, box delivery points to the houses and apartments will be integrated into the layout as will extensive recycling facilities.

Fact file

Client

London & Quadrant HA

Consultants

Architect - Stock Woolstencroft

Engineer

Walker Associates
M & E – Robinson Associates

Employers Agent

Hunters and Partners

Kevin Murray – Head of Procurement, L & Q Group commented:

The Vale Street Depot site in West Norwood is a very important project for L&Q for a number of reasons.

Firstly, it will provide 60 quality homes for general needs rent and shared ownership including a high percentage of large family houses and apartments.

Secondly it has always been

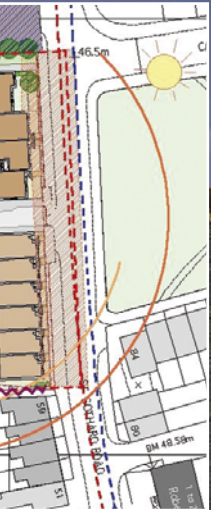
designed to meet high levels of environmental performance, being in excess of the EcoHomes 'Excellent' rating. The scheme has very strong green credentials including a bio-mass boiler and solar panels that minimises its impact on the environment and fuel bills for our residents.

Thirdly, it is one of the first projects being delivered on site under L&Qs Framework Agreement for

Construction and Regeneration Partners.

Higgins proved very competitive and were awarded the project following a 'mini-competition' with two other framework partners.

As time has advanced, Higgins has been a key team player working with the L&Q Regional staff and the Consultant Team and are well on the way to delivering a project all involved can be proud of.



“Our project team aims to reduce the energy demand of these homes through mechanical heat recovery and by super insulating the building fabric.”

Project Update

Braintree, Essex

Having been notified of our inclusion on the Framework for the Decent Homes for Braintree District Council Higgins Construction have been committed to working alongside our partners to prepare the contract to achieve start of the contract in January 2008, which has been met.

We had initially been working at risk, as up until November 2007 the client that we were preparing for didn't exist! Greenfields Community Housing has now officially been established and all of the housing stock from Braintree District Council has been transferred across. We can now start the work on the refurbishment to bring the properties up to Decent Homes standard along with our partner contractor Connaught.



Braintree, Essex



Denbeigh School site

Higgins Construction are delighted that we have been appointed by Affinity Sutton Housing Association as their main contractor for the £4 million redevelopment of a school site into 54 homes for affordable mixed-tenure and special needs in Milton Keynes. This is Higgins Construction's first scheme in Milton Keynes and delivers our business plan to extend into further areas

This unique timber framed design will involve the design of one house, two bungalows and 51 apartments rising to three storeys and is due to complete in March 2008.



This and the above images show Denbeigh School site before completion.

Fact file

Client:
Affinity Sutton HA

Architect:
Avebury International

Structural Consultancy:
Jacobs Engineering Group

QS and Employers Agent:
Davis Langdon LLP

FACT

People

We recognise that it is our staff who deliver our excellent services. With this in mind we are continually looking for ways to assist working parents or those returning to work, to ensure that we retain the high calibre of staff that we are proud to have as part of our team.

To assist working parents Higgins Group subscribes to the Busy Bees scheme for childcare vouchers. This scheme enables mothers and fathers of children up to the age of 16 to save tax and national insurance on most types of child care costs and all employees are eligible.

Flexible working arrangements enable more of a 'work life balance' and have made it possible for some staff to continue with their careers whilst spending time with the family.

“ **Anita Curtis, Higgins Construction said:**
‘Higgins have made it possible for me to return to work after having my second child Dylan (now 15 months).
I work on a part time basis with flexible working hours.
I enjoy the challenging role of mum to 2 kids and working in hectic Business Development’ ”



The Villas, Woodford Green

Planning permission has recently been granted to add a third storey of accommodation to this pair of semi detached houses. The Fairmont, a three bedroom house, will now measure 1180 ft² and include two en-suite bathrooms. The Larkspur, a four bedroom house measures 1405 ft² and also includes two en-suite bathrooms as well as two further bedrooms, and a 18'9" kitchen diner. Both have garages as well as additional parking spaces. The Fairmont is priced at £475,000 and the Larkspur at £550,000.

The Villas, Woodford Green



New River Mews computer generated image

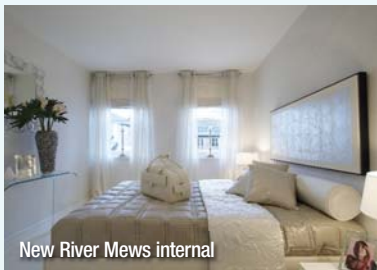
New River Mews, Broxbourne

This stunning, select development of contemporary homes in a beautiful location between the 'New River' and the leafy village green in Broxbourne is set to attract young professionals to the area.

The development of 13 three storey, three bedroom houses and 1 three

storey, four bedroom house harmonises with the varying traditional and modern styles in the area. A simple blend of brick, timber and stone at the front of the houses gives the development a robust feel which is softened with the gentle sloped roofing. The rear elevation is more contemporary, with large glazed areas to all three floor levels.

The show houses launched on 16th February. Prices from £465,000



New River Mews internal



New River Mews internal



New River Mews internal



Spotlight



Higgins Homes has four fast-moving operations within the Company, below is an insight into each of them...

The Land and Development Team

The Land and Development Team headed by Steve Hancocks identifies opportunities, buys land and designs schemes.

Ross Morley is at the vanguard of this operation keeping in constant contact with land owners and agents. Jo Leedham drives the legal contracts and planning process and James Moodie is heavily involved in special mixed tenure projects, utilising project management skills.

Mike Hughes is ably assisting all in the department while learning his trade with Kelly Harbinson keeping the department running smoothly.

Each team member knows they have to be flexible and have the skills to adapt easily to the changing environment to continue to provide an exceptional service.

Commercial Department

Colin Thatcher oversees a variety of tasks, starting with the initial feasibility studies, in conjunction with the Land-Buyers, and with the help of Dennis Carter.

Colin Marshall investigates "buildability" issues, instigates site-investigations, and vigorously pursues the Statutory Authorities for information and services quotations.

Malcolm Wallace heads up the design-team, liaising with Sales, and hiring (and sometimes firing!) a myriad of Consultants, in order to create and distribute the design packages.

Dennis then assembles all the information available, and creates a Build Budget, and in conjunction with Colin, sets cost-targets.

Chris Miller and his team then procure the Subcontractors and Materials, monitor costs throughout the construction process, and settle Final Accounts.

Production Department

Phil Burrows leads the Production Department which is responsible for all aspects of the day to-day running of individual sites.

Along with Steve Boreham, Chris Dunster, Dave Wood (Contracts Managers) and David Bird (After Sales Manager) the Department looks after the delivery and customer care of private and RSL clients on developments from Colchester to Crawley.

Sales & Marketing Department

Headed by Jeremy Marcus, Sales & Marketing Director, the department splits into two distinct functions; Marketing and Sales.

Kim Bell leads a small dedicated team of marketing professionals and is responsible for overseeing marketing activities including developing creative campaigns for each new scheme, advertising, signage, show homes etc.

Kevin Bearne and Lisa Dunning manage a directly employed team of 21 dedicated full and part time New Homes Sales Negotiators and are responsible for achieving the Company's sales targets.

The department has established a reputation for innovation and originality, an example of which is the use of digital marketing - e-promos, e-shots and, of course, the company's award winning web site.

Each operation complements the other and the result is a development company that delivers creative, well designed homes to an exception standard that people want to live in.

Investing in Communities



Emergency Property Handover

Tsunamis, hurricanes and earthquakes are not something most UK property developers factor into their plans when thinking about the next building project. However, local business Classic Folios, which provides home handover manuals to over 185 developers across the UK, is about to change that.

Classic Folios has recently adopted the Rotary ShelterBox scheme as its corporate charity and, in partnership with Higgins Homes, has just handed over its very first Emergency Kit.

Each ShelterBox donated contains emergency aid for victims of disaster including a ten-person tent, thermal blankets, ground sheets, tool kit, cooking equipment and water containers.

Jeremy Marcus, Sales and Marketing Director at Higgins Homes commented; "We are delighted to support the Rotary's delivery of humanitarian aid through the ShelterBox solution. As a company with a strong social conscience it is fitting that we should be involved in providing shelter and supplies to people unfortunate enough to be in need of survival essentials."

As Classic Folios' Managing Director Tim Wood explains; "It's great to know we can provide something so practical to help people who have lost their possessions and their homes. Working in conjunction with our property developer customers to support the excellent work of ShelterBox, we hope to donate many more Boxes over the coming years.

Ride2work

Cycling is a great way to travel to and from work. It's quick, easy, convenient, great for the environment and great for you! And with the savings that the Ride2Work programme offers this economical form of transport has just become even cheaper!

To promote this scheme Higgins Group provides tax, national insurance and VAT savings for the purchase of bikes and certain accessories from £250 to £1,000.



Higgins Group

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Higgins