

# insideout

the journal of the Higgins Group

issue 3



**Award winning Staff**



We are also very proud to have award winning members of staff on our team.

Polly Moona was announced 'Resident Liaison Officer of the Year for the London and South East Region' at the TPAS Awards and she will now be going forward to represent the Company at the National Awards. James Mooney was announced as an Award Winner of the Construction Works Project and was one of nine chosen to receive an Award for being excellent in their chosen field.

We would like to say 'thank you' to everyone who has been involved in these award winning projects and look forward to continued working relationships.

**On the cover...**

**ICE Stevenage**  
see article on page 4



# 9 months 9 awards...



**From the beginning of 2008 ..... 9 Awards, what an achievement!**

Higgins as a Group has been celebrating since the beginning of the year.

The extremely hard work that all team members put into their work at Higgins has been evidenced by the number of Awards that have been won this year.... and we are only just half way through!!

Higgins Homes have been cleaning up at national industry awards ceremonies and have been acknowledged at two separate awards for its dedication to building innovation and high specification homes in fantastic locations. The Orchard, Crawley, won best development for family living at the Daily Telegraph/Your new Homes Awards. It also achieved a Platinum Award for Community (houses) and the coveted People's Choice Award at the HotProperty's Award ceremony, with Uber, E17, picking up the Silver Award in the Commutability category.

The Considerate Constructors Scheme has been presenting National Awards since 1998 and the standards required to win an award gets tougher

each year. Of over 6500 registered sites nationally only the top 7.5% are selected for awards Higgins Construction is amongst that 7.5% with three of our schemes winning awards.

**The awards:**

- National Regeneration Awards - **Regeneration Contractor of the Year**
- National Regeneration Awards - **Best Community Regeneration Project**
- TPAS Awards - **RLO of the Year for London and South East Region**
- The Daily Mail UK Property Awards - **Best Development in Sussex**
- The Daily Mail UK Property Awards - **Best Apartment in Essex**
- Daily Telegraph/Your New Home Awards - **Best Development for Family Living**
- HotProperty Awards - **Platinum Award for Community (houses)**
- HotProperty Awards - **People's Choice Award**
- HotProperty Awards - **Commutability Award**

Photo: taken on site under the preserved oak trees on the award winning Orchard Development in Crawley.

'Higgins constantly incorporate new design concepts and modern technology within it's homes and it is fantastic to be acknowledged for our efforts. We take great pride in the quality and craftsmanship of our developments, so it is immensely gratifying when our hard work is recognised.'

# ICE refreshingly different

Stunning architecture that cuts a dash on the skyline



Stevenage is well known as being the first of the 'New Towns' established around London following World War II. Following the devastation of the Blitz, the Abercrombie Plan was devised to create a series of new towns around London, and the modern town of Stevenage was built alongside that which already existed. The two areas of Stevenage have slowly been merging over the years and now the gap is being bridged by Higgins Homes' new landmark development, ICE, which is positioned between the two areas

and continues the million pound facelift that Stevenage is experiencing.

ICE is Higgins Homes' largest development in Hertfordshire and comprises 238 contemporary one, two and three bedroom apartments and penthouses.

There is a wide variety of architectural designs in the area. ICE builds on this with its own unique style incorporating glazing, staggered roofing and curved zinc finishes. With eye-catching looks and aesthetic perfection, ICE, is a shining example of inspirational, cutting-edge design. Its

“At Higgins Homes we aim to create properties that exceed expectations and embody excellence. ICE is no exception. It's a synergy of trendsetting style and supreme comfort”  
**Martin Higgins,**  
 Director

striking façade cuts a dash on the skyline, naturally and harmoniously blending with its surroundings. Sleek lines and neat symmetry give a sense of continuity, while dynamic contours give the development a futuristic feel.

The design concept for ICE combines a desire to please the eye with a commitment to practical functionality. The development also incorporates a central courtyard enhanced with raised planters and a water feature, creating a link with the natural world. Yet what ICE is really about is contemporary urban living, and this is reflected in its stunning good looks.

As you'd expect, the apartments at ICE offer a premium specification with interiors designed and finished to the highest standards. Each apartment has been designed to provide supreme comfort and to meet the needs of today's homeowners.

“ICE is a very contemporary development and consequently attracts a high level of interest from young professionals. Two different style show apartments have been designed as a fun example of how our homes can be personalised and changed. It will be interesting to see which of the two apartment's appeals most to visitors, and it could even affect the way we design future interiors. Having never developed anything in Stevenage before, we wanted to create something memorable, and I think we have achieved it!”

**Jeremy Marcus,**  
 Sales and Marketing Director of Higgins Homes



“ICE is Higgins Homes' largest development in Hertfordshire and comprises 238 contemporary one, two and three bedroom apartments and penthouses.”



## Project Update

### First Homes in London to be delivered to Level 4 - Vale Street

Higgins Construction are working in partnership with L&Q Housing Association to provide 60 quality homes for general needs rent and shared ownership which will include a high percentage of large family homes and apartments on the Vale Street development (as featured in the last edition of InsideOut).

Lambeth Borough Council has identified this project as the borough's key sustainability demonstration project.

We are delighted to announce that after much hard work by L&Q's regional development team, the L&Q centrally



based Product Development Team, Higgins Construction, Hunter and Partners, Stock Woolstencroft and Wessex Engineering Services, the scheme will provide the first homes in London to be delivered to Level 4 of the Code for Sustainable Homes, a major achievement.

### New Show Homes



Higgins Homes are pleased that two of their prestigious developments have successfully launched their Show Homes.

**The Forum** is an ultimate 21st Century lifestyle in a prime residential area close to the centre of Colchester which offers 3 bedroom semi detached houses and 2 bedroom apartments designed to offer a sense of open space. These homes have exceptional finishing and meticulous attention to detail making them truly desirable homes.

**Vogue 1** has a selection of one and two-bedroom apartments and two and three-bedroom duplex penthouses



located in a vibrant corner of Whitechapel. The opening of the Show Home on this development shows the bold design statement of the exterior that complements the stylish finish of sharp clear lines and natural light. Vogue 1's good taste and cutting edge style homes offer the opportunity for residents to buy part of London life.

### Angell Town

“Regeneration is not just about leaving a legacy it's about continuing that commitment.”  
**Bryan Sabin**  
 Higgins Construction

Higgins has worked on the Angell Town Estate since 1990, when the pilot mixed use project and the first block of residential refurbishment was undertaken. The comprehensive regeneration of the estate began in 2000 and Higgins concluded the construction works in 2006.



Our liaison team worked very closely with residents and built a strong relationship with the diverse community. Higgins developed special community projects targeted at different age groups on the estate and sponsored the estate football team at the time.

2 years on we are continuing this commitment with further sponsorship to the football team confirming that Higgins are truly committed even after the construction is completed.

“It's easy for contractors to talk about supporting communities but Higgins also walk the walk” Thomas Esterine



## Using technology for a competitive edge

The internet is a key source of information that is used every day.

Higgins are in the process of implementing flexible internet based systems to ease the sharing of information and to simplify the way we work together with our clients, partners, sub-contractors and suppliers.

### The new systems will cover:

- Electronic Content Management
- Integrated Construction Management
- Collaboratively Enabled Telephone System

These will make our processes more effective and efficient while maintaining accuracy and quality.



### Richard Higgins comments;

“We understand how important it is for our Clients, Partners and Suppliers to find it easy to work with us, making efficient use of technology will ensure we are a leading contractor in this area, IT will simplify and aid the communication and information sharing process”.

### Fact file

#### Did you know on average?

- 90% of data in a company is unmanaged
- Only 15% of e-mail that comes into an organisation is useful
- 80% of e-mails are spam and this is increasing

### Electronic Content Management

This enables Higgins to manage, understand and share information we have throughout the business, this will;

- Help unlock the reserves of knowledge throughout the business enabling staff to share information
- Allow information to be easily accessible
- Automate time consuming processes
- Develop further to allow others outside of Higgins access to the information
- Be fully auditable, with automatic document version control

- Project planning and control is more efficient as real time information is held on the system at all times
- Full property information is held in the system and is easily available
- We can interface with our clients systems, this has been carried out on our Greenfields project in Braintree
- Residents will soon be able to securely access their information over the internet

### Integrated Construction Management

Is a property management system successfully used on our Decent Homes Projects. It is designed to be used by all staff involved on the project to organise and administer in a consistent process. As this is internet based it can be easily accessed by our clients, partners and suppliers. We intend to increase the use of the system across other areas of the business to enable benefits as below;

- The project is easily accessible by all involved

### Collaboratively Enabled Telephone System

Our system has the capability to connect to similar telephone systems. This will enable us to contact external clients in the same way as dialling an extension number in our own business. The benefits of this system are;

- Improved business efficiency
- Effective collaboration from any location
- Simplify telephone call handling
- Reduce the need to travel aiding our drive to help in the reduction of damaging CO2 gases
- Reduce the need on inefficient and overloaded e-mail
- Enable access to the systems from anywhere using the internet

## Higgins Partnership with Community Service Volunteers

Higgins Group PLC are involved in a partnership with CSV, the UK's biggest volunteering and training charity.

Since 2000 the Higgins Group has been involved in the development of existing and new CSV Springboard training centres across London. This partnership is enabling local young people to access employment and vital work experience opportunities, as well

as meeting the skills needs of the Construction Industry.

Training available at these centres has also been extended to cover not just traditional construction skills but also IT, Nursery, Childcare, Life skills, Mechanical and Electrical, Engineering and Catering.

An extremely successful and popular on-site Higgins/CSV Springboard Training and Learning

Centre was established on the Silwood Estate where Higgins was a partner in a major estate regeneration project with the London Boroughs of Lewisham and Southwark, London & Quadrant Housing Trust and Presentation Housing Association. This centre has given opportunities to many residents from the surrounding South East London area.





## Stars in our Yard

Higgins Group are proud to be sponsoring a new young people's community project launched across London and the South of



England by Dominion Housing

Group called Stars in our Yard. This project will focus on engaging with young people aged 8-18 years and promoting the development of young people's talents. The project will bring a six week programme of sports and dance sessions to thirteen neighbourhoods this summer.



Young people have been involved in the development of this project from the start, including naming the project, creating designs for the logo and choosing the style of the promotional flyers.

This involvement will continue through the delivery of the project and by using interactive arts and media based methods to consult we can make connections with young people on these estates. The information gathered on the estates can then inform future work and help design future projects.

This is an energetic community challenge project for kids, teens and families and following a series of sessions across the estates all neighbourhoods will come together at an event which will allow the young people the opportunity to showcase their talents.

## Higgins Construction invests in staff

“The successful growth of our business requires our people to grow with us. Business and people development is a two way street between both parties which, if successfully managed, not only leads to achieving awards such as IIP but also reflects in the high standard of service extended to our clients. A measure of the Company's service relationship with our clients is evidenced by the high percentage of repeat business both parties enjoy”

Chris Parle - Director of HR



As confirmation of the Company's long standing and on-going commitment to the development of its employees Higgins Construction have been awarded the Investors in People (IIP) standard. The Company was assessed as being 'particularly strong' in many of the IIP standards.

Benny King and his fellow Directors have applied the business principles & practises leading to the achievement of the IIP standard.

The award of the standard is not only testament to the Boards investment in our people, but also just as important, each and every employee's commitment to excellent business and people management practises.

The achievement of the standard is not a stand alone project or objective. The future needs of our business will ensure that adherence and on-going retention of the IIP



INVESTOR IN PEOPLE

standard is, and will be, an integral part of the Company's business planning process.

IIP epitomises the high performance standards set by the Company and delivered by our employees to our clients, for which we are rightly proud.

## Staff Recruitment Incentive Scheme

The sourcing of professionally qualified employees in the construction industry is becoming increasingly competitive. To supplement our people recruitment sources, Higgins have introduced a Staff Incentive Recruitment Scheme extended to employees who nominate suitable applicants for identified specific job titles.

The incentive payments range from £1,500 to £5,000 for each appointee - full details of the relevant jobs to which the incentives apply, plus payment conditions, are available from Human Resources.

Payments are made through the Company's payroll system and are subject to Tax & NI.

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