



Millmount



Robert Burns Dick

Millmount: A Short History

Since 1991, JDDK has been based at Millmount, our imposing turn-of-the-Century detached house off the Cowgate roundabout at the end of Newcastle's central motorway. The house was built in 1908 by Robert Burns Dick, a partner in the prestigious Newcastle architectural practice of Cackett & Burns Dick, as his private home and included superb gardens, which would unfortunately, be taken by the motorway in the mid 1970's.

Mr Burns Dick was responsible for designing the towers of the Tyne Bridge (reputedly modelled on ancient Egyptian temple entrances, but also a scaled down version of his original even more grandiose design!) and the famous Spanish City at Whitley Bay.

The architect retired during the Second World War and the house was sold to the City Council who converted it into a nursing home for 'retired gentlemen' which it remained as until closing in the mid-1980's.

David Kendall and Jane Darbyshire then bought the almost derelict property in 1991, converting it into offices for the fledgling practice. Whilst the ground floor remains almost untouched in form (although greatly in function, hopefully), with original features retained wherever possible, such as the beautiful stone floor, timber wall panelling and glazed tiling in the toilet, the first floor was opened up to form almost open plan offices. We still have visits from the Burns Dick family to look over the property and can report that they're happy that Robert's heritage is being well looked after!

SUSTAINABLE HOMES ASSESSOR

Congratulations to Helen Fairmaner who has recently qualified as an assessor for the Code for Sustainable Homes.



Congratulations to Helen Fairmaner

Although the Code was actually launched in December 2006 to replace the existing EcoHomes scheme, with mandatory compliance for Housing Associations and other RSL's (Registered Social Landlords) for some time, compliance only became mandatory for all house builders on May 1st last year. Helen commented, "The Code basically measures the sustainability of every new home and sets minimum standards of energy and water use at each of six levels and, as such, provides valuable information to home buyers, much as the HIPS standards do for older homes, and offers developers and builders a valuable marketing tool which can differentiate them from their competitors in terms of environmental responsibility and sustainability."

"In practice, the assessment process is in two stages – a Design Stage Review, based on design drawings, specifications and commitments, which results in an Interim Certificate, and then a Post Construction Review based on site records and visual inspection which results in the awarding of the Final Certificate."

"Although similar in many respects and certainly in its primary aim of protecting the environment, to the

old Ecohomes Standard, the Code sets new mandatory minimum levels of performance across six key issues: Energy Efficiency/CO2, Water Efficiency, Surface Water Management, Site Waste Management, Household Waste Management and Use of Materials. In addition, the Code has a scoring system of six levels. The different levels are made up by achieving both the appropriate mandatory minimum standards together with a proportion of the 'flexible' standards. Code Level 3 is approximately equal to the Ecohomes VERY GOOD score, whilst Code Level 6 is basically a recognition of the 'Holy Grail' of sustainable building in producing a carbon neutral structure."

For further information on the Code For Sustainable Homes, please visit, www.breeam.org or www.communities.gov.uk/planningandbuilding.

People's Passions

VIVA LA DIVA

Sometimes you work with people for years but you never really get to know them and what they do outside a work environment. If we all knew each other a bit better, it might make communications a bit easier, so here's the first of an occasional series which highlights just what JDDK staff get up to in private...

7.00pm to 9.00pm on Monday night sees Nicky Watson at the Sage in Gateshead, performing with the Sage Chamber Choir.

The Choir is a four-part choir of around 30 singers, rehearsing and performing a broad range of accompanied and a cappella repertoire from around the world and from every period in history. The Choir performs a concert at the end of each term in a different venue around the region. It is a very active, lively choir and spontaneous singing opportunities both in and out of the building are a regular feature.

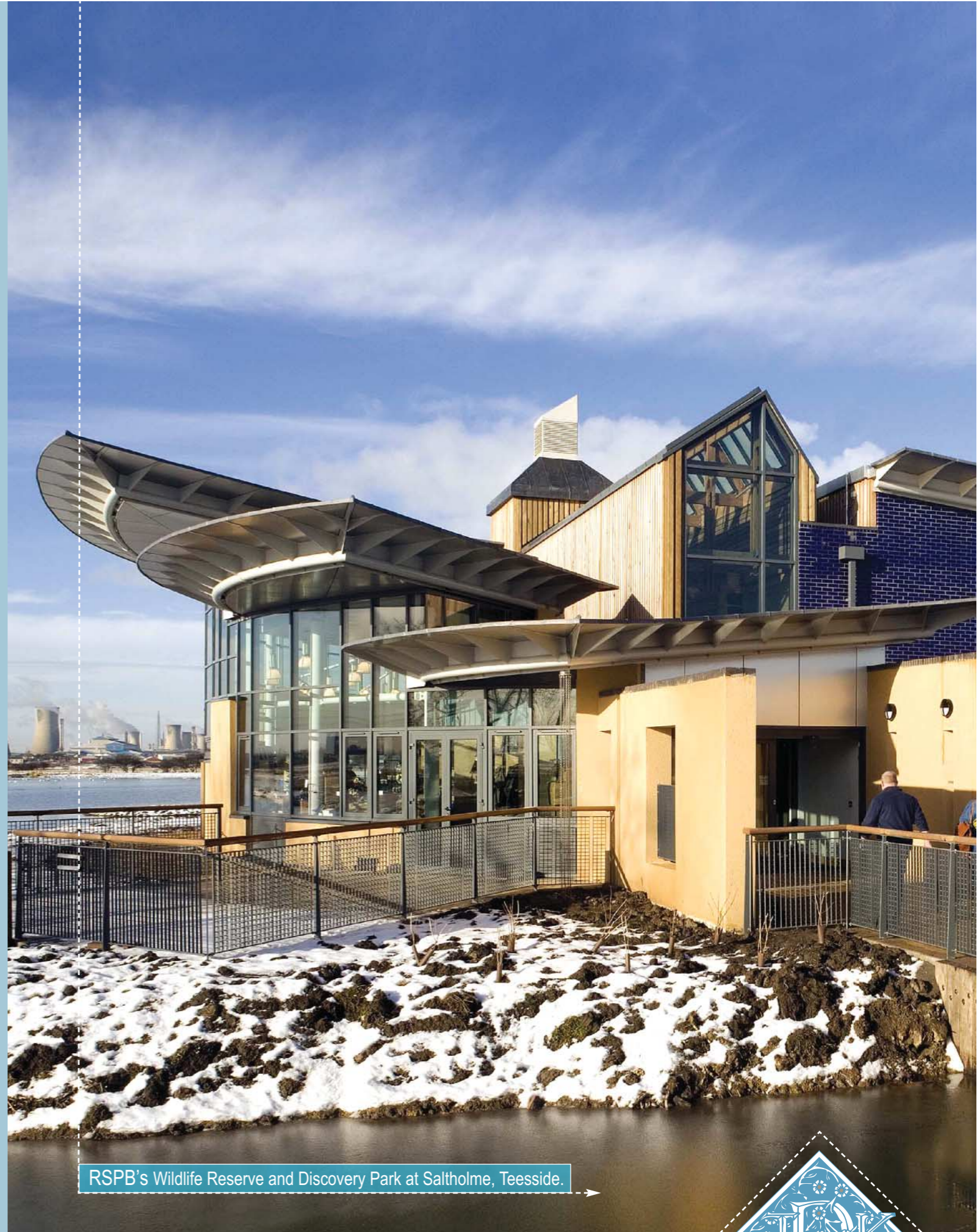


Nicky Watson

Nicky commented, **"It is great fun with an excellent leader and members from all sorts of backgrounds and locations. We've sung all over the region but my favourite venue still remains the Sage as the acoustics are so good."**



The Sage Chamber Choir as seen by Gemma Watson, age 6 ½



RSPB's Wildlife Reserve and Discovery Park at Saltholme, Teesside.



Celebrating our architecture & people over the past 21 years

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Swing Bridge Proves a hit at Saltholme

Andy Hay, RSPB Wildlife Warden, closes the swing bridge to the Wildlife Reserve and Discovery Park at Saltholme, Teesside.

One of the many features of the RSPB's new £4.5m Saltholme International Nature Reserve on Teesside which is attracting interest is the unique pedestrian swing bridge to the Wildlife Reserve and Discovery Park.

Designed by Principal Architect, Alison Thornton-Sykes, and Project Architect, Tony Reynolds, the pedestrian bridge crosses a man-made water course, part of the transformation of 1,000 acres of former industrial land into what is now the largest wetland creation project in the North of England.

The 6m long bridge rotates 90 degrees from the building's bank to form a security feature when the Centre closes at night, as Tony explained, "The Centre is in quite a remote location and whilst vehicular access is controlled through a security gate, we needed something to partially isolate the building at night which would also fit into the natural landscape and came up with the swing bridge concept. It has echoes of an earlier technology."

"Working with the British Turntable Company, we installed a hand-operated turntable mechanism which requires minimal maintenance but is robust enough to swing the bridge back onto the land in the evening when the Centre is closed – it's actually the same turntable gear used by the Army to rotate their tanks for maintenance purposes."

"What we hadn't realised is what an attraction the bridge would be in its own right, especially to younger visitors, who are fascinated by it!"

The groundbreaking wildlife conservation and tourism project which opened on January 21, is expected to welcome over 100,000 visitors a year, and is a massive undertaking by the RSPB and the Teesside Environmental Trust, providing visitors with an unique opportunity to see wildlife and adding over £1m per year to the local economy.

At the heart of the Reserve will be the £2.1m Wildlife Reserve and Discovery Park, an innovative building which fuses 21st Century architecture to both modern and traditional materials and environmental principles of sustainable regeneration.

Kevin Bayes, RSPB Saltholme Project Manager, commented, "Saltholme is one of the RSPB's current three Urban Gateway projects, where important nature reserves are located close to large urban populations and is an extremely important area for migratory birds. The reclamation of this superb wetland area will give the people of the North East a world class facility right on their doorstep!"

Kevin Bayes, RSPB Saltholme Project Manager, commented:

"Together with our partner organisation, the Teesside Environmental Trust, we were always concerned about any building in such an environmentally sensitive area, so chose the JDDK design because it was not only a visually striking building and had clearly answered the brief, but also included very practical sustainable systems. It's a superb building at the very centre of this exciting project."

Doxford Park Transformation on Track

The third of seven phases of the £78 million redevelopment of the Doxford Park residential area in Sunderland is now on site as developer, Gentoo, continues the ambitious transformation of the former 1960's Mill Hill estate.

750 new homes are being created in the seven phases with the entire project running from the beginning of work to create the Masterplan in 2003, to final completion planned for 2018. The rolling programme of redevelopment will bring back traditional secure streetscapes with walkways providing links from the individual houses to education, retail and leisure facilities, whilst simultaneously giving safe pedestrian routes which are overlooked and supervised. Running through the whole area will be a linear park containing, a new Village Green and a Play Area to provide open spaces in what is in reality a dense residential area.

Our role has been not only for the creation of the Masterplan, but also the design of new houses and amendments to standard Gentoo designs to create stunning new residential areas which mix rented affordable housing with privately owned homes.

Helen Fairmaner, JDDK Project Architect, explained how good design had allowed Gentoo to achieve their aims in terms of housing density and quality, "Schemes like Doxford Park challenge the traditional perceptions of the quality of affordable housing by offering truly mixed tenure developments to provide sustainable communities, increasingly investing in good design to meet the



needs and aspirations of residents whilst still giving a housing density that enables the development to be commercially viable."

"We began work on this project in 2003 by looking at neighbouring areas such as Shincliffe, Ashbrooke, Whitburn and Roker to understand and demonstrate what made their layouts such a good place to live and gave the residents a sense of place and pride in their environment."

"Once Gentoo had agreed on the layout of the urban landscape, we began work on the house designs, most of which are adaptations of standard Gentoo house types to which we've added details to create an individual character for the area. Examples such as altering the roof pitches, particularly at gables, adding artstone

window surrounds and feature brickwork and alterations to porches and cills have made a huge difference to the external appearance of the homes, whilst we have also designed completely new house types in places."

"The differences between affordable housing and private housing are being erased, especially in schemes like this where the same developer is building homes for both rent and sale. Good design doesn't cost a great deal but does add incredible value to any scheme as increasing numbers of RSL's are discovering."

Doxford Park residential area.

Colin Wood, Gentoo Home's Development Manager, commented:

"JDDK have provided Gentoo with a vision that is delivering a spectacular development with the highest level of urban design. Each phase delivers a distinct character while relating to the overall development and includes quality public space linking the individual phases."



It's the little things that count



Designs develop a suitable "scale of space" that offers opportunities for privacy and cosiness as well as the larger spaces for more communal and social interactions.

Malcolm Aitchison, Project Manager at Newcastle City Council, commented:

"JDDK have been reselected onto the Council's framework for Children's Centres primarily because their work has been of such a high standard. They have a very high level of expertise throughout the practice, but what is particularly impressive is the access to Director level we receive so that we're always confident that the appropriate people will be available to handle any enquiry. They remain entirely focused on delivering the project from start to finish.

Their ability to engage with all the participating groups whilst remaining focused on the actual clients' needs is particularly useful to us as is the fact that they can take direction as well as producing innovative solutions to the challenges.

In truth, most of our projects are not straight forward and will always involve late changes to design or specification and JDDK accept this – they see the whole picture and what the project will mean to the various groups and never lose sight of that."

Over the past 10 years or so, we've been successfully involved in over 45 commissions for the design and construction of education facilities, primarily for the Early Years or Primary age groups, for local authorities.

Whilst this might go against the general perception that, as a Practice, we're more usually involved in larger schemes for private clients, the work we do in the public sector, whether this be education projects for LEA's or social housing for Housing Associations and other RSL's, has produced some superb buildings and has helped to formulate highly effective and successful ways of working with multiple clients.

Nicky Watson commented, *"There is no magic panacea to education projects as each building will involve a different set of clients, who may or may not have had experience of construction projects, with different briefs on a different site, so it isn't just a question of placing a standard design at each location! However the one unifying factor of all these projects is the end user-children, staff and members of the community and these people are always at the heart of what we do."*



The architecture and physical environment should support the development of learning paths and encourage communication so that children can determine how they use spaces rather than have the spaces imposing use and mood.

Detailing in early years schemes is everything.



Paula Rae, Extended Services Operations Manager, Durham County Council, commented:

"I think what differentiates JDDK is their appreciation of the needs of 0-5 year olds and the incredible attention to details that results from this – small things, like the 180 degree door openings and finger guards, have a major effect.

It's their willingness to 'go the extra mile', whether this be in the building's details, or in understanding the needs of all the parties involved. Many of our Sure Start buildings are located on existing school sites where the Head Teachers' needs have to be considered to ensure the long term sustainability of the project.

We have been thrilled with the quality of their work and have received very positive feedback from the users of all their projects. We now regularly use JDDK buildings as the yardstick for the quality and standards we require on our projects."

A varied environment that will stimulate the children's senses and emotions.



Creating an environment that offers plenty of natural light but allows that light to enter into the space in different ways and will offer the chance to experience sun and shadow through the course of the day is also key.



Design details include 180 degree opening glazed doors that then clip securely in their open position and have full hinge protection to avoid trapped fingers, and the use of stable type doors into children's toilet.

We often include windows that give child height views in and out of the building as well as between the internal spaces of the building – not only between the spaces allocated to different age groups, but into such spaces as offices and kitchens as well. Such transparency not only offers educational opportunities but also allows the child to understand where they are within the bigger "family" or community of the setting.

PUBLIC SECTOR Education, community and commercial projects Since 2000

- 2009 Wheatley Hill Sure Start
- 2009 High Heaton Children's Centre
- 2009 Barnard Castle Sure Start Outreach Centre
- 2009 Laurel Avenue Children's Centre Extension
- 2009 Quality and Access for All Audits
- 2008 Northern Villages Children's Centre, Brunswick
- 2007 Regent Farm First School Extended School
- 2007 Interior Feasibility Study
- 2007 Masterplan
- 2007 St Cuthberts School Extended School
- 2006 The Grange Centre at Grange First School
- 2006 Sherburn Hill Children's Centre
- 2006 Sacriston Children's Centre
- 2006 Benfieldside Children's Centre
- 2006 St Oswald's Infant and Primary School alterations
- 2005 Barnard Castle Teesdale Sure Start
- 2005 Howlatch Children's Centre
- 2005 Woodham Burn Junior and Infants School
- 2005 St John's Sure Start
- 2005 Benedict Biscop Primary School phased alterations
- 2004 Stanhope Children's Centre
- 2004 Tudhoe Moor Children's Centre
- 2004 Laurel Avenue Children's Centre
- 2004 Wincomblee Workshops
- 2004 Sacred Heart Children's Centre
- 2003 Taylor Road Children's Centre - Sure Start Wear Valley
- 2003 NOF for PE and Sports at Walbottle Campus
- 2003 NOF for PE and Sport at Kenton School
- 2003 NOF for PE and Sport at Sir Charles Parson's School
- 2003 NOF for PE and Sport at Hawkhurst, Keilder
- 2002 Newbiggin Hall Sure Start - Newcastle City Council
- 2001 Sacriston Infants School Space for Sports and Arts
- 2001 Esh School Space for Sports and Arts
- 2001 Seaham Dene School Space for Sports and Arts
- 2001 Chillingham Road Primary School Space for Sports and Arts
- 2001 Wyndham Primary School Space for Sports and Arts
- 2001 St Catherine's Primary School Space for Sports and Arts
- 2001 Fame Primary School Space for Sports and Arts
- 2001 St Helen Children's Centre - Sure Start Wear Valley,
- 2001 Woodhouse Close Children's Centre - Sure Start Wear Valley
- 2001 Wooler Sure Start
- 2000 Blyth Sure Start

The Green Shoots of Regeneration for Redcar Estate



Kate Bridger,
JDDK Landscape Architect,
commented:

Blayberry & Steeple Chase Street Scene

An innovative landscaping scheme is at the heart of a multi-million pound urban regeneration project for the former Blayberry Estate in Redcar, now known as Steeple Chase and owned by the Coast and Country Housing Association.

Designed by our own Landscape Architect Kate Bridger, in conjunction with the scheme's main architects, DKS Architects of Stokesley, on behalf of contractors, Keepmoat plc, the landscaping will see the production of a central east-west boulevard acting as a 'green lung' with the road flanked by upright trees and a mix of triangular raised planters and ground level planting.

The planting scheme extends into the 'Home Zones' – block paved access roads shared by cars and pedestrians. There is a colourful mix of both evergreen and deciduous species which provide an attractive setting for the development and careful selection of species sustains biodiversity. Native species such as birch and mountain ash attract birds and shrubs such as buddleia and lavender attract butterflies and bees. Once established, planting will be low maintenance, as Kate explained, "The landscaping adds real value and character, giving the estate a sense of place, and is very cost-effective."

"There is a danger in any housing development, whether it's a private or social scheme, that budgets are so tight that there's little left for landscaping, but on schemes like this, the Housing Association and their framework partner decided that landscaping would be essential to the success of the scheme."

"The central area will also be used for public art to be commissioned in consultation with the local community to form a hub of the whole scheme and really give a sense of place whilst a 'Green Street' to the south of the boulevard is designated for amenity use and will be a safe traffic-free environment overlooked by adjacent buildings."

Iain Sim, Chief Executive of Coast and Country Housing Association, added, "We are really excited about the Steeple Chase project and as an organization wanted to ensure that we complimented the high quality new homes with very high standards of environmental projects which would last and mature over time and thus help to create a great place to live and play. We feel that the design provided by Kate will achieve, if not exceed our expectations."

The Steeple Chase Estate development will begin in early 2009 and is due for completion in 2011.

"As a practice, we're probably best known for our own architectural schemes, but the landscaping aspects of our work, often as here, in conjunction with other architectural practices and particularly for regeneration schemes for Housing Associations and other Registered Social Landlords, is becoming increasingly important."

The ones that got away... NORTH SHORE



We'll be the first to admit that, like all practices, we don't always win all the contracts we go for, but sometimes, we think our designs are just too good to never see the light of day, so this feature will highlight those projects that, for one reason or another, never quite made it off the drawing board - OK, CAD screen nowadays...

A competition organised by developers Urban Splash for the Northshore area of Middlesbrough recently got us very excited. The brief was fairly simple – to design the layout and house types for a high density (60 houses per hectare) family housing zone that looks over the River Tees.

The competition attracted entries from all over the world with the shortlist featured in Building Design magazine. Unfortunately, our gallant team's quite

brilliant effort didn't make the shortlist, but we thought it was too good to forget about, as Alison Thornton-Sykes, Principal Architect and Northshore Team Leader explained, "We weren't successful, but aspects of the designs were very interesting and may well feature in future projects so it was certainly worth entering!"

"It was an interesting site on which we had to fit some 200 homes in a layout which gave the houses the best possible views and maximum sunlight in a real community – we used water courses with small bridges, plenty of landscaping but also roads with quirky changes in width designed to slow traffic down to give vehicular access."

"The rooms of each house were arranged around a courtyard and offered total variety in room arrangements and long term flexibility. These

narrow plan courtyard houses have rooms to the front and back with a staircase in the middle, additional rooms could be placed anywhere with the entrance to the front or the back, or even both."

"We called it the 'chest of drawers' principle as any room could go on top, below or next to any other and the physical façade of this was achieved by pulling out bay windows and balconies and pushing in doorways. We also had undercroft parking bays to hide the cars and roof terraces together with courtyard gardens and created imaginary inhabitants to show how the flexible layout could be altered to suit different lifestyles over time."

"All in all, the project was such fun and could be so useful to us in the future that it didn't matter that we weren't shortlisted!"