

# MILLMOUNT NEWS AUTUMN 2020



THE REFURBISHED SWIMMING POOL OF BLYTH SPORTS CENTRE



# PHASE II OF BLYTH SPORTS CENTRE IN FULL SWING

The refurbished Swimming Pool



Brims Construction has started work on the second phase of the £5m, Blyth Sports Centre which will see the creation of a new and improved spa and new changing facilities with the reconfiguration of studio places amongst other improvements.

The first phase of our scheme, the refurbishment of the Swimming Pool and changing facilities, was completed before the Coronavirus pandemic, opening in early February, but the latest work has been delayed by the pandemic as JDDK Associate Director and Project Architect, Nicky Hodgson, explained, "It was quite a complicated project without the pandemic as the Active Northumberland brief was to keep as much of the Centre open to the public as possible whilst there was ongoing construction work."



The Children's Pool

"The public's safety was obviously paramount and the contractors have done a great job, but the need to now integrate social distancing measures has added a few other complications. It's a huge advantage working with the same team as the previous phase and the programme considers the public, the facility staff and the construction team's safety."

"We are now used to conducting site progress meetings remotely as part of the new way of

working whilst we can digitally deliver all the information required by the construction team. Social distancing will certainly extend the project but that is now just part of working in construction and is built into the planning."

Funded by Northumberland County Council as part of an ambitious £65 million countywide investment programme to upgrade and transform sport and leisure facilities, the work will also see the construction of a dedicated cycling studio, two additional new studios, a children's party area and new café and catering facilities.

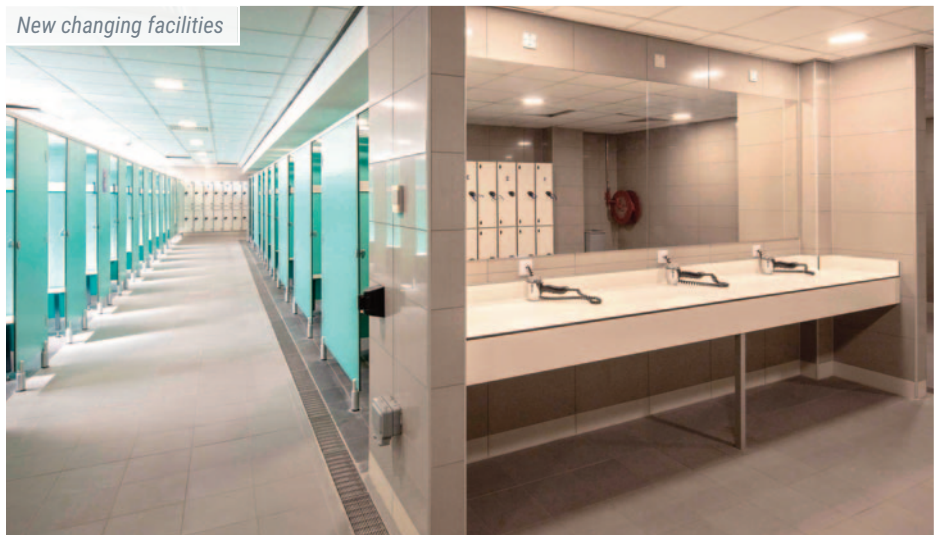
The second phase is due to complete next Summer with the final works to the soft play and central café facilities together with the integration of the gym to changing rooms and reconfigured reception due to start soon after.

Before the refurbishment project




Council Leader, Councillor Peter Jackson, added, "This exciting project is all part of our County Council's huge commitment to Blyth. This council is fully committed to improving leisure facilities and creating opportunities for people to be active and stay healthy. It's great news that such rapid progress is being made to update and upgrade Blyth Sports Centre and we are well on our way to bringing some fantastic new facilities to the local community."

New changing facilities





# HOW THE PANDEMIC COULD AFFECT THE DESIGN OF HOMES

A photograph of an elderly woman with short white hair, wearing a floral patterned top and purple trousers, standing on a balcony. She is leaning on a dark metal railing. The balcony has a wooden deck and a glass railing. In the background, there is a modern apartment building with large windows and a brick wall. The scene is brightly lit, suggesting daytime.

Historically, pandemics have had far-reaching effects beyond the direct health of the population into additional and sometimes surprising sectors - the cholera outbreaks in C18th London were mapped leading to the discovery that the bacteria were water borne and transmitted through the public water supply, leading to the construction of modern sewage systems, whilst research into the air-spread Tuberculosis (TB) bacteria led to the realisation of the importance of cleaning surfaces.

So whilst the Covid-19 virus may not be completely understood yet, the indirect effects of the pandemic are already being manifested in all aspects of life from shopping to work, from travel to education and from leisure to the design of our homes.

Nicky Watson, Director of Newcastle-based JDDK Architects, explains how architects are focused on the design of spaces considering the lessons learnt by our present knowledge of this

*Provision of useable external spaces become more important when we are spending more time in our homes*

world-changing pandemic and begins with the design of our homes.

"The design of living spaces is probably the most important aspect of architecture for many people, especially considering most of us have spent the major part of the past four months in them and may well continue to do so. We are really interested in how we design living spaces and their localities in response to the restrictions imposed by, and the lessons learnt from, the virus to create homes for a future where the threat or reality of the virus remains.

"We need to think carefully about designs for new houses, however as apparently 80% of the homes we will be living in by 2050 have already been built, we also need to consider how we adapt and retrofit changes to existing homes. Changes to our thinking about the design of homes must also be achievable regardless of house type/size or tenure - whether the property is rented or owned. Practically, however, there's a vast difference to what can be achieved in a two-bedroom apartment in a 50-year-old tower block and a modern detached home but even the smallest changes can make a big difference to both the quality of our lives at home and controlling virus transmission.

"Our aim is to design homes that create more resilience to the spread of infection and support

differing and longer periods of occupation for different purposes, for example: working from home; home schooling; maybe accommodating more occupants as the family returns to the home as a refuge; and supporting multi generations with their own specific needs. Homes that are good for our health and wellbeing.

"Starting with the outside, external spaces are as important as the internal ones, as the pandemic has now proven the therapeutic benefits of nature and outdoor space, as well as its importance as a safe meeting, socialising and exercising place. The inclusion of easily accessible balconies, yards, roof terraces, communal or private gardens is key – ideally with covered areas to give shelter for year-round use, and if at all possible accessible to visitors without having to pass through the home. Communal outdoor spaces close to our homes will also become more in demand, designed to be used safely by a number of households at a time with landscaping separating larger spaces into smaller 'outdoor rooms'. They should also be away from busy roads, be able to accommodate communal activities, as our communities close to home perhaps become more important to us than our work-life communities, have safe enclosure for child safety and avoid being heavily shaded.





*Covered external spaces create places to relax and socialise in fresh air whilst being sheltered from the elements*



"Considering the layout of the inside of our homes – let's start at the front door. Continued contagion fears will raise the importance of the design of the home's arrival zone or entrance, ensuring that it is the barrier between the potential danger of outside and the home sanctuary. Space for removing and storing outdoor coats, bags and shoes should be allowed for and ideally somewhere close by to wash hands, or at least conveniently locate hand sanitiser – a well-positioned shelf will do. Defining this arrival zone can be done through changes in floor finish, partial enclosure with walls or glazed screens or where there is sufficient space the traditional lobby will be perfect to contain these functions. Incorporating a secure delivery area, accessible

from both outside and internally, would be a great addition, facilitating safe postal and other products delivery.

"We may see internal floor areas of new homes increase as they are designed to accommodate larger numbers of people for longer periods. Where this isn't the case, be it in existing houses or new ones, we need to be clever about designing so that the layout can be more flexible for the different and more intense uses the home may have to serve – living, work, leisure, education, exercise and as a sanctuary.

"Whilst open plan has been extremely popular in recent years it can have its drawbacks in terms of lack of privacy and acoustic separation for

home working and home schooling, so quiet work spaces should be included in house designs – this could be a separate room entirely – a study or snug space, or simply a defined area in a bedroom (alcoves are useful for this) or part of the open plan space that can be shut off temporarily with, say, moveable partitions. Noises from kitchens can be particularly disturbing to work so we may find increased separation of this space from other living spaces may be more of the norm in the future. Such separation is likely to also enhance the ability to maintain levels of hygiene where food is prepared, an important factor in mitigating virus transmission. And whilst we are in the kitchen – what about the ubiquitous heart of the kitchen, the island unit? A place to socialise, lean on, touch, leave the post, the homework and the school bag. None of which are conducive to controlling virus transmission when the same surface is used for cooking. Designs will need careful consideration to retain the ability to be social in the kitchen whilst retaining hygienic separation for food preparation.

"The quality of our home working and living spaces become more and more important when we are spending more time in them. Good levels of daylight, a source of fresh air and views to the outside are all key to our well-being.





Increasingly, therefore, spaces used in the day will be given the best aspect to achieve these requirements – maybe located on upper floors for example, where there are opportunities for better daylight and views, with sleeping areas on the more enclosed and often cooler ground floors.

“Bringing natural light into the home will be a priority throughout with as much visual connection to the external environment as possible and increased use of ‘garden rooms’ linked to covered external areas and conservatories so that the gap between indoor and outdoor is blurred and even internal spaces can be used for food growing.

“Increased and ingenious storage space will become a requirement. Not only reflecting a greater number of inhabitants, but also to facilitate spaces being able to have more than one function, for example a home school, and then an indoor gym, and then a TV Lounge. Interior furniture will be multi-functional too. For example, a sofa will fold away to make space for a gym mat, or a work desk hinged to the wall can be flattened when the family come together in the evening and so need more space. Increased storage in kitchens will be very helpful in managing problems of supply when we are making fewer trips to the shops so



*We are more relaxed when we are visually connected to nature*





buying more at a time – we predict the return of the old-fashioned pantry.

“Architects have learnt from the health sector where more consideration is given to the performance of finishes, with anti-bacterial materials for ironmongery and solid surfaces which are easily cleaned. Similarly paint on doors, frames and banisters etc (ie touch points) could have anti-bacterial properties.

“Whilst the time we are in our home increases we use more electricity and heat – so increased insulation and use of renewable energy sources, particularly solar power, will be critical in reducing the impact of fuel poverty.

Water supplies may also be limited or more expensive so rainwater harvesting and recycling

will become common as may the use of ‘living’ roofs to provide better insulation and carbon capture.

“The “Clap for Carers” has been a demonstration of our renewed appreciation of each other and our sense of community, also bringing us closer to our neighbours, who have become and will continue to be an increasingly important part of our social bubbles. Our homes and the spaces outside them will support greater (safe) interaction between us and our neighbours and members of our communities as well as provide private sanctuary. We will prevent the social isolation that a pandemic can bring by being able to see activity outside our front doors, we will have separated outdoor spaces that have visual and acoustic connections with others, as

well as shared outdoor spaces that will be designed to be suitable for all members of our communities– old and young.

“In the wider external environment, whilst the ‘Amazonification’ of our shopping habits looks set to continue to grow at the expense of city centres, there may well be an upsurge in smaller community retail hubs within easy walking distance with neighbourhoods relying less on cars and more on pedestrian and bicycle transport so car-free routes, wider pavements (for social distancing as much as increased numbers of pedestrians) and secure bike storage areas will be required. If car use does decrease, it frees up huge areas currently dedicated to car parking which can be redesigned for leisure and/or communal use.

## RIBA HOMEOWNERS SURVEY ON HAPPINESS THROUGH DESIGN

This summer the RIBA commissioned a survey of 1,500 homeowners, aged 24 to 64, from across the UK to investigate the impact of the coronavirus pandemic on how people want to live and work at home.

- 70% of survey respondents agreed that the design of their current home has affected their mental wellbeing during the pandemic
- spending more time in their current home has made people more stressed (11%) anxious (10%) and depressed (10%); they've found it harder to relax (9%) and it's negatively impacted their productivity (6%)
- the findings highlight that 23% believe a better-designed home will directly increase their happiness; they'd be able to relax more (31%) and sleep better (17%)
- 15% want to improve the design of their home to help them be more productive.
- (11%) believe making changes to the design of their home would help them to live more harmoniously with others in the house.
- (79%) identified one or more of the changes that they'd like to make to the design of their home after lockdown:
  - 23% of homeowners would reconfigure their existing spaces.
  - 20% want to create more space by extending their home
  - 9% would change their open-plan design in favour of creating separate rooms. Conversely, 14% would like to make their home more open plan
- 40% want more environmental-design features, including improving the amount of natural daylight, improving the energy-efficiency of their home, and improved sound-proofing between spaces
- 8% would like more flexible living by having rooms that can easily be divided
- 17% would create an office space so that they can more easily work from home
- 7% would want to be able to accommodate an extended family including parents, grandparents and grown-up children
- 12% need more personal space



# NEW ACCOMMODATION FOR SUE RYDER NEUROLOGICAL CENTRE ABERDEEN

The logistical challenges of the pandemic and the 'lock-down' of Aberdeen over most of the Summer, meant that we weren't able to photograph and publicise our £3.5m refurbishment project for the Sue Ryder Neurological Care Centre, Dee View Court in Aberdeen until now.



Sue Ryder Neurological Care Centre, Dee View Court in Aberdeen

The original Sue Ryder Neurological Centre at Dee View Court in the Kincorth area of Aberdeen, opened in 2003, as Scotland's only purpose-built neurological centre providing care and support for residential patients and temporary respite and outreach support for others with degenerative life-changing conditions affecting the brain and nervous system. However, with only 20 residential spaces in single rooms and a constant waiting list of over half that number, Sue Ryder were keen to develop the existing site, where they had close contact with the local community, by extending their facility to increase the number of rooms.

The glazed corridor links the new build two storey annex to a single storey extension and contains a conservatory



JDDK Project Architect, Sam Dixon, explained, "The existing centre was a single storey building based on the concept of six self-contained 'houses' with four en-suite single bedrooms and a communal lounge and kitchen. The refurbishment project has provided an additional single storey extension, and a new build two storey annex linked by a glazed corridor containing a conservatory."

The new building contains six high dependency en-suite bedrooms on the ground floor with a further six supported living units on the first floor, allowing independent living for residents but with the security of support from the centre if required. Large patio doors providing access into the gardens and also doubling as fire escape have been provided in each ground floor bedroom to create light airy spaces with a connection to the outside. The building is set into the existing sloping bank and appears as a single storey building from the surrounding residential properties.

Sam Dixon continued, "This fairly long design development period is not unusual for new capital projects within the charity sector, where decisions regarding significant construction contracts need to be delicately balanced against likely income and the potential to borrow. With Sue Ryder staff, we held public consultations in June 2015 to gain local opinion and again in November 2016 to seek comments on the scheme. The overall consensus was very positive with the planning decision in 2017 followed by a

The sheltered courtyard to the rear



considerable period of further consultation and fund raising before construction could start in July 2018 and completing in November last year."

"It was a challenging project with construction work carried out side by side with an existing and operational neurological care centre, but the end result has been worth the wait with Sue Ryder confident that their neurological care centre in Aberdeen not only meets their current requirements, but is flexible enough to allow them to provide high quality care for the foreseeable future."

**Pamela Mackenzie, Executive Director of Neurological Services at Sue Ryder, added,**

*"It was a pleasure working with JDDK Architects on the design of Sue Ryder Neurological Care Centre Dee View Court. The professionalism and expertise that they brought has been very welcome as we took on the task of the neurological care centre. It felt like a very comfortable partnership for us, with mutual respect on both sides."*



# WHITBURN TOWERS COMPLETES

Tolent Living Ltd have completed the construction of a £4.9m affordable housing scheme in Whitburn for South Tyneside Housing Ventures Trust which has been designed specifically for residents aged over 55.

Our design for the Whitburn Towers development offers 36 one and two bedroom apartments for affordable housing. The two and three storey development, built on the site of a former sheltered housing complex, Croftside Court, which was demolished in 2017, also includes communal areas, including a large common room and landscaped gardens.

JDDK Project Architect, Otis Murdoch, explained the scheme, "We've designed Whitburn Towers in accordance to the 10 HAPPI (Housing our Aged Population: Panel for Innovation) principles, which stress the need for space and flexibility with maximum natural light amongst other ideas with the buildings forming a sheltered south-facing communal courtyard. The apartments are generously sized with large windows and are as open plan as possible to allow for future adaptation depending on individual residents' needs."

"The building is accessed either by the welcoming curved ramps through the landscaped communal garden or through a small entrance door leading to

The sheltered south facing communal garden



a dramatic triple height staggered stair, which pulls in natural light from above and leads visitors and residents up to the apartments via generously wide corridors which all have external views."

"The layout encourages circulation areas as shared spaces which offer connections to the wider environment encouraging interconnection, supporting independence and avoiding any feelings of 'institution'. All the apartments have access to private outdoor space (as well as communal) or have balconies with views over luscious landscaping or the coast and Roker Pier. It's been wonderful to see the project emerge, particularly the incredible views and variation of space when walking around the building."

Built on a slightly sloping site, the development steps down in the North east corner to sit

comfortably into the surrounding built environment, particularly the single storey cottages on neighbouring Bowman Street with the new roofscape reflecting the traditional features found elsewhere in Whitburn village.

**Peter Davidson, Chair of South Tyneside Housing Ventures Trust, commented,**

*"On behalf of the board at South Tyneside Housing Ventures Trust, I would like to thank and acknowledge the tremendous work delivered by the team in the completion of Whitburn Towers. We are delighted with the outcome, It's an amazing development that also demonstrates great collaboration from our partners at South Tyneside Council and South Tyneside Homes."*

Some of the JDDK cyclists



Congratulations to our two new Passivhaus Designers!



The EV charging point



## SUSTAINABILITY UPDATE

As part of our recently launched sustainability strategy, "20:20 – A Vision For Our Future", we committed the practice to continually increasing our knowledge and capability in sustainable design.

After an intensive training programme into the techniques of designing to the internationally recognised Passivhaus Standard, JDDK Director, Adam Vaughan, and Associate and Technologist, Tristan Cooper, have now passed

their Passivhaus examinations so that we can now offer Passivhaus design in-house.

We have also installed an EV charging point outside Millmount awaiting the arrival of new Electric Powered company car whilst once we were allowed back working from the office, over half of us regularly cycle into work – the steps may not stop Climate Change on their own, but every little bit helps!





# LIVERPOOL RUTHERFORD CENTRE OPENS

Our third Cancer Centre for Rutherford Health opened to patients in July after being approved by the Care Quality Commission to initially offer patients Systemic Anti-Cancer Therapy (SACT) services which includes chemotherapy, immunotherapy, targeted therapies symptom control, blood tests, oncology nurse consultation and supportive therapies. The centre will also offer MRI diagnostic services.

The facility in the Knowledge Quarter in Paddington Village will eventually offer comprehensive cancer services with plans to expand services later this year to include radiotherapy, MR Linac, mammography and ultrasound with high energy proton beam therapy coming online early next year.

The Liverpool centre will be the first in the UK to use an MR Linac machine, which combines an

MRI scanner and a linear accelerator, manufactured by Elekta. This delivers targeted radiotherapy that can treat hard to reach tumours. The centre is the fourth in the Rutherford network of centres we have designed in partnership with Desco and Fairhurst.

**Mike Moran, CEO of Rutherford Health, said:**

*"As a son of Liverpool, I am very proud that we are now in a position to start treating cancer patients in the city and the North West. The COVID-19 pandemic has wreaked havoc on cancer care services across the UK and we believe that this centre will be an important development in the fight against cancer."*

*"The centre is the latest in our state-of-the-art network of Rutherford Cancer Centres. We are delighted with the role that we continue to play in advancing cancer care in the UK especially when it comes to precision radiotherapy. Our goal is to ensure cancer patients throughout the UK can easily access the most advanced treatments without having to travel long distances or even abroad."*



Chemotherapy facilities

## MAMMOGRAPHY SUITE OPENS AT BEDLINGTON

*The Mammography Suite at Bedlington Rutherford Centre*



To meet the growing demand for such services, Rutherford Cancer Centres commissioned us to design a Breast Diagnostic One-stop clinic at their Bedlington facility.

The high specification Mammography Suite offers Mammography, Ultrasound and Biopsy and was completed in July following construction by Meldrum Building Services Ltd and equipment installation and clinical staff training by Hologic, the medical device company.

## REVIT VS REALITY

The accuracy of our Revit images can be seen here by comparing the original Revit design images with the actual interior of the new Liverpool Rutherford Centre.

(No prizes for identifying which is computer generated and which is actual, but the clue is in the vegetation...)





## AIRMILES ANDY

In the Spring 2020 issue of Millmount News, we'd mentioned our ongoing work for the provision of drawing services for Elekta, who design and manufacture the revolutionary Unity MR-linac system equipment amongst other state-of-the-art medical technology.

From the original European project in Belgium, we've now worked with them in 20 countries, ranging, alphabetically, from Austria to Uzbekistan, but in this digital age, never leaving Millmount!

Associate Director and Project Technologist, Andy Rutherford, would have covered some 46,000 miles as the Geordie google magpie flies (avoiding the Tyne Bridge road works!) had he had to personally visit each of the 20 sites.



Andy Rutherford

He commented, "In essence, Elekta provide a site layout into which we fit in a solution for their heavily shielded radiation therapy equipment which include the state-of-the-art linear accelerator for Proton Therapy. We also provide more construction-friendly information in a BIM/Revit format allowing the end user to navigate an interactive 3D model."

## LABC COMMENDATION FOR LONGFRAMLINGTON ECO HOME

We're delighted to report that Moor Croft, our low energy eco home at Longframlington, was highly commended in this year's North East regional LABC Northern Building Excellence Awards.

We're delighted to report that Moor Croft, our low energy eco home at Longframlington, was highly commended in this year's North East regional LABC Northern Building Excellence Awards.

Our design maximises daylight and the superb views across the Northumberland countryside and is based on a timber frame with triple glazing to give

a 'Fabric First' approach to energy efficiency. A high level of airtightness, complemented with a mechanical ventilation and heat recovery system gives fresh air throughout the home, and has helped it achieve an EPC rating of A.

The home uses a range of low and zero carbon technologies to reduce its energy consumption. Primarily, the house is heated with a ground source heat pump which is powered by two large arrays of photovoltaic panels. These also provide hot water during the summer months using a solar diverter.



Moor Croft, Longframlington

## CONGRATULATIONS...

...To Sam & Paul Dixon on the birth of Poppy on 19th June, a sister for Charlie.



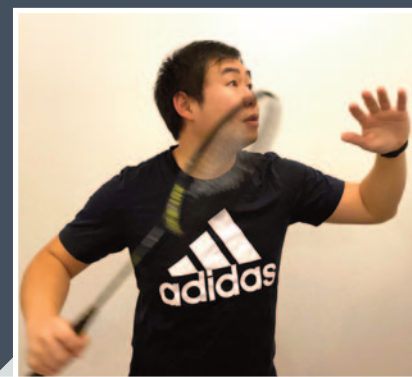
Sam & Poppy Dixon

To Clair and Nathan Sanders on the birth of Jacob on 29th July, a brother for Noah



The Sanders family

## PEOPLE'S PASSIONS GAVIN SMASHES ON COURT!



Gavin Wu

It was known in ancient Greece and Egypt with players hitting a feathered shuttlecock back and forth but it was the British Army officers in Imperial India in the late 19th Century playing the local game of 'poona' that gave rise to the modern form of Badminton, a game that Gavin Wu loves.

He explained, "In Malaysia, badminton is as popular as football is in the UK with huge crowds and matches on TV. So, like every other Malaysian, I had favourite players and began playing at my school becoming part of the Badminton Club at St Joseph Secondary School in Kuching playing two or three times a week and I went on to represent the school's club in the doubles."

"It's a great game that really keeps you fit. It mixes skills, tactics and fitness and you don't need huge amounts of equipment so I think it's an ideal sport!"

"The World Number One was also a Malaysian player, Lee Chong Wei, who dominated the game from 2008 to 2012 and I remember one incredible game held in my small town when he was playing Lin 'Super' Dan, another famous player, in the 2006 Malaysian Open Final. He came back to win when Lin Dan was just one point from victory – the country went wild and he went on to become the most successful Malaysian Olympian in history and a national hero."

"My father was a very keen player too and I used his racquet for many years until he bought me my own (I'll never forget it was a Yonex Muscle Power 45 for anyone interested!) for my 16th birthday."

"I don't play so much now but still enjoy regular games (when Covid restrictions allow) at Northumbria University's Sports Centre with friends – I haven't been able to raise much interest with my colleagues here at JDDK, but I'm working on them - I have heard that Andy is really good in badminton, the best in the office and I hope I can get him out for a game one day..."

## JDDK DISCOVER DESIGN DELIVER

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