

Drum Housing Project in Bo'ness, Scotland

Project:	The Drum Phase 3, Bo'ness
Project type:	Medium density 28 Units
Year:	2005
Client:	Stewart Milne Homes
Architect:	Malcolm Fraser Architects
Location:	Bo'ness, West Lothian
Context:	Suburban
Sector:	Private



Case Study Detail:

This project was promoted by the land owner, Grange Estate. Grange Estate is the Cadell Family who wished to see a quality development setting good standards of architecture and urban design rather than selling land zoned in the Local Plan to the highest bidder. Grange Estate prepared master plans and urban design frameworks for the project and design and bid competitions were held with targeted developers who were encouraged to select design teams from a preferred list. Three phases of development have taken place and the final phase is seeking planning consent (2009).

This project has won a number of design awards and featured in Scottish Government design planning policy guidance. While the density could be higher, the proposals reflect a pragmatic approach to high quality design given the constraints of planning and road engineering policies.

The project importantly demonstrates that there are some landowners who are motivated to see a project that reach high design standards in addition to just selling their ground. The project represents a good case study for those involved in delivering good practice new build housing.

Awards:

Saltire Housing Design Awards – The Drum Phase 3, Bo Ness

Award Project Summary (Saltire Housing Design Awards)

Maryfield housing development is situated in the town of Bo'ness in the East of Scotland. It has desirable views over parkland countryside with aspect to the Firth of Forth and Ochil Hills.

As such, it was landowner Grange Estates' wish that any development should be sympathetic to this environment and with their personal commitment to the quality of their legacy, have provided an aid to achieving added architectural design, both in terms of encouragement, a limited design competition and finance.

The winning proposal, evolved for, and with, Stewart Milne Homes and in collaboration with landscape architects Horner and MacLennan, was to develop a simple, affordable house type that offers the house buyer public basic, considered and modern planning.

The site is a happy one, suburban, in the sense that it is part of the low rise surround to an established centre, but garden suburb in its integration with the serpentine park that Grange Estate has created. The site is planned to maximise connections and views out to this park and the surrounding countryside; but is also planned round shared squares and landscaping, the whole integrated by pathways.

Each plot is then designed as a wee, integrative master plan. First, in place of the usual suburban house at a funny angle adrift space, the house is pushed to the north of the plot, it relatively urban tightness to this boundary allowing a large, simple, sunny and open garden to the south. The obligatory double garage is then placed to define a separate, hard landscaped courtyard, for washing, bicycles etc, and a car-mending space in front, the whole defined and linked by a tartan grid of pergolas and paths. A combination of garden walls, hedges and screens are arranged to create privacy and to shelter the outdoor spaces from the wind. The site plan, with its bigger squares, and the house plan with its simple homesteading layout responsive to the sun, were then integrated to generate the completed development.

There are 28, four to five bedroom houses of varying configuration.

The buildings have a simple and clear form. The house plan is simply organised around solar orientation and views. Utility rooms, stair and bathrooms are grouped around a service zone,

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