



Good Practice

Objective

Straw Bale Social Housing	To provide an exemplar project using straw bales to build new social housing in rural areas.
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Detail

The council decided to pilot a project to see if Social Housing could be built using alternative, more sustainable methods of construction. Straw bale construction was selected due to its sustainable qualities and its relationship with the rural nature of the district. The homes are designed to level 4 of the code for sustainable homes and do not require a traditional wet heating system. This coupled with the high insulation values and air tightness of the properties should result in considerably lower running costs for our tenants.

The property services team have co-ordinated the project, tendering for contractors and carrying out project management duties. An external consultant was used for design, advice and guidance on the unfamiliar aspects of the build (straw bale construction, lime rendering etc.) due to the nature of the project. The designers and contractors have run training courses for the general public on site for straw bale construction and the site is open for visits. The project has required a high level of involvement and input at key milestones during the project (straw bale wall raising and general programming issues). When working with such schemes a higher level of input is required due to the relatively unknown nature of some of the building materials and techniques. Costs are comparable with that of traditional construction, however, it should be noted that the insulation values of the property are considerably higher.

Outcomes

The first pair of semi detached homes were under construction when a bid was put into the HCA as part of the LA newbuild funding programme. The Council received funding for 4 semi-detached properties in two rural locations.

The project has been successful in providing a sustainable home that has a lifespan of over 200 years, which is longer than traditional built properties and with cheaper running costs. Due to the design of the properties they fit in with the style of properties found in rural villages which is sometimes an issue.

The two properties have just been completed in Waddington and have been let for rent through our housing register. The next two rented properties are due to start work in Martin shortly.

Update – 2012 The 2 houses at Martin have now been completed and the 2 houses at Waddington jointly won the best affordable housing scheme in the East Midlands 2011.

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Rural Affordable Housing
Project

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