

The Quarters, Colchester

Challenge:

The Quarters is a development of two-bedroom apartments and 2, 3 and 4-bedroom houses on the site of the historic Colchester Garrison. It is one of three developments on the 134 Hectare site by developer Taylor Wimpey, and part of a master plan that will ultimately provide in excess of 2600 residential units on the site, which has become available following relocation and redevelopment of the Garrison complex.

Solution:

To meet Colchester Borough Council's strategic plan for 'homes for all', with a variety of type, size and tenure, The Quarters provides a mix of 2-bed apartments and 2, 3 and 4 bed houses, in a style that both reflects the town's rich military history and sits comfortably within the ancient environment of England's first ever recorded town. The energy-efficient homes reflect a range of styles, with a mix of detached two and three-storey houses juxtaposed with terraces to create an interesting and varied street scene. Imposing 4-storey apartment blocks, strategically located to book-end streets and terraces, aid location and way-finding. A synthesis of classic arts and crafts features and historic detailing from the former Garrison buildings gives the development a distinct identity. Roofs of varied height, pitch and detail, some decorated by dormer windows, front facing gables, traditional casement windows and imposing red and buff brick facades, set against areas of contrasting timber panelling and renders, create an urban village character. Long mixed-height terraces, facades broken by front facing gables, occasional carriage openings and solid timber integral garage fronts and feature traditional Victorian stable-type chimneys echo the design of the Garrison's historic stable blocks. Whilst render panels and areas of timber cladding have been used to create features and to break up the massing of the terraces and individual buildings, brick has been chosen as the primary facing material, both to reflect the local historic vernacular and provide a high-quality sustainable finish to draw together the various disparate designs used across the scheme. For the latest phase of 146 properties, the architect has chosen a limited palette of red and buff bricks in keeping with the historic theme. The warm buff and yellow tones and lightly textured finish of Ibstock's Leicester Multi Cream Stock contrasts with the rich red of Leicester Red Stock, laid in traditional bond pattern, to create a simple canvas. Arched brick header courses to window heads and carriage openings and the occasional Juliet balcony provide the only adornment to the otherwise simple brick facades, enabling the high quality of the craftsman's art to shine through.

Architect: BDG Design South

Brick:

Leicester Multi Cream Stock, Leicester Red Stock