

Residential

40-Year Reflection

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Introduction

When Chris Potter and Rowland Holmes-Smith joined forces in 1984 to become P+HS Architects, many of the earliest schemes were residential extensions and conversions (including their own homes), with the odd pub or wine bar thrown in to keep the creativity flowing. These early schemes formed the foundations of our enduring relationship with residential development over the last 40 years. Since those early days P+HS have designed well over 500 residential schemes.

Residential design may not be seen as architecture with a capital 'A' however for those of us that work within the sector, we are immensely proud of the difference we make to people's lives, whether this be designing a scheme of 9 bungalows in the wilds of rural Country Durham, or 12 apartments with communal facilities to allow adults with learning disabilities to live in their own communities in Gateshead, or working with local authorities, developing extra care apartments for older persons to allow them to live as independently as possible but with support they require in the centre of Newcastle and Leeds.

And while the residential sector has changed massively over the last 40 years, P+HS Architects' core values have stayed the same – to create homes for people that enhance their lives.



In the beginning

The earliest residential schemes were small-scale extensions and conversions to one-off houses, many located in traditional villages in North Yorkshire, close to our founding office in Stokesley. These schemes were carefully crafted to ensure they knitted seamlessly into the local vernacular.

One of the first 'large' residential schemes was 9 houses for Kebbell Homes in Shincliffe, County Durham on restricted land behind a village farmhouse. Despite being over 30 years old the development today is still popular and looks great.

This began our long-standing relationship with Kebbell Homes, which is still going strong. We also began working with affordable housing providers back in the 1980's many of whom we still work with today.

Our approach has always been to design dwellings that are fit for purpose and meet the needs of the residents who are going to call those dwellings home. A great man once said, 'Old people can't carry soup'. This was not intended as a slur on the general older population – but a reminder that as architects we must consider our clients' needs when designing a place for someone to live, it's not about us, it's about them.

This thoughtful and considered approach has given us a broad range of experience across almost every area of residential design from the smallest scheme up to site-wide master planning for over 1000 houses and everything in between.



Affordable Housing/Social Housing

P+HS have worked with Housing Associations/ Registered Providers on schemes ranging from the redevelopment of small garage sites and conversions of listed buildings to large-scale regeneration schemes.

In 1993, one of the earliest urban affordable housing schemes we completed was St John's Gate in Middlesbrough for Home Group.

The scheme was won through a design-led competition to regenerate the former 'Rivers' area in Middlesbrough, replacing Victorian back-to-back houses no longer fit for habitation and was one of the first in the country to receive multi agency funding with P+HS being instrumental in writing the business case to secure this. Providing 111 much needed homes for sale, rent or shared equity, fully integrated and focused around a new town park, this regeneration project helped to rejuvenate a rundown area and won a Civic Trust Commendation and a BT 'Green City' Award.

As well as urban regeneration, our affordable schemes have helped to enhance lives in rural communities where there is an acute shortage of affordable homes for local residents.

Westfields is a small residential development for Broadacres on the edge of the village of Osmotherley, in the North York Moors National Park. The development was the result of several years of endeavour by the housing association, architects, local councils and involved significant community consultation to inform and involve immediate neighbours and the wider community in the design process from the start and is still considered to be one of the best schemes by the North York Moors National Park.



Affordable homes have always had to adhere to rigorous standards, over the years we have lived through and designed to; SDS, HQI (that was a long spreadsheet!), Code for Sustainable Homes, Lifetime Homes, NDSS, building for life 20, building for life 12 and now Building for a Healthy Life. We are now looking forward and anticipating the future trends in residential design and how this will impact our Housing Association clients.

In order to advise our clients, we have designed the P+HS standard affordable house types. Allowing us to fully understand the design implications of new legislation whilst gaining an in depth understanding of how this impacts the journey to net zero. Our residential leads presented our findings to our Housing Association clients at a series of knowledge shares which were well received, with further presentations planned. This understanding of our clients' needs and the pressures they face is why we continue to work with many of them 40 years on.

Care & Support/Extra Care

It is anticipated that by 2050 one third of the UK population will be over 65. P+HS recognise that providing homes for this sector of society is key to the residential sector. Designing older person homes and Extra Care housing is not new to P+HS. As far back as the early 1990's we worked with several clients designing sheltered accommodation and older persons bungalows. In 2000 when P+HS opened its Leeds office, one of the first schemes delivered was Rivendale Extra Care for Broadacres Housing Association in Northallerton.

Our experience in key sectors of residential and healthcare have ensured we have been at the forefront of developing new models of older persons living where health and social care are integrated. In 2015 we began working with Broadacres in Leyburn to create a new type of development providing a range of accommodation types to suit varying dependency needs of residents – from bungalows for independent living, extra care and dementia care accommodation. Our understanding of technical standards and accommodation types allowed us to design a flexible scheme where one type of accommodation could be converted to another should requirements change, thus future-proofing client's investment.



In 2017 we opened our Newcastle office and, developing a key relationship with Newcastle City Council (NCC), P+HS were appointed on several projects including the Annuity schemes. An innovative partnership the Annuity Lease Back Model (ALBM) enabled NCC to deliver much needed affordable homes for older people with minimal capital outlay. Two phases comprising 347 new dwellings were successfully delivered across 13 inner city and suburban sites throughout Newcastle upon Tyne.



As clients' needs have changed and models of older persons housing have evolved in response to social and political change, funding pressures and shifts in health and social care, P+HS have continued to be at the forefront of creating person centred extra care schemes for our clients. We also work alongside Housing Associations and Local Authorities on specialist care and support; we have extensive knowledge and experience in delivering wheelchair housing, specialist accommodation for adults with learning disabilities and autism, children's accommodation, and homes for vulnerable people – young adults at risk of homelessness, veterans with PTSD, and vulnerable women. All of these schemes make a huge difference to people's lives and we are proud of each and every one of them, no matter how small.

Private Residential

In line with tackling the ongoing housing crisis, which has been in the headlines for the past 80 years since Winston Churchill coined the phrase back in 1944, we work with a variety of housing developers to deliver private sale properties, predominately on sites that have a multitude of constraints.

Our relationship with Kebbell Homes, which started with Shincliffe, was cemented through our commission for the masterplan of Middle Deepdale, a new residential extension of 1200 new homes in Scarborough. The site has extended over the years, with the latest cell (HA8) being delivered today.

Strategic masterplans give us the opportunity to develop large scale sites with key design principles that create a sense of place and local identify, tackling urban sprawl. We have been involved in a number of Homes England bids for strategic sites, with our most recent success being Kirkleatham Phase 3 for our client Countryside Partnerships. This strategic overview often leads to detailed design, where we have the opportunity to develop house types that cater to the varying needs of local people.



Schemes that showcase the above approach include La Sagesse, a unique collection of 48 bespoke homes featuring renovated and newly built apartments, four-storey townhouses, refurbished and new lodges and luxurious detached homes. This historic site within Newcastle's Jesmond conservation area, was formerly home to La Sagesse Convent School. We developed a sensitive proposal to release funding and restore the Grade II* Listed Building whilst enhancing its setting. La Sagesse was the first development in the North East to win the coveted Built for Life award for design excellence.

We have also seen the appetite for mid and high rise accommodation return in recent years to allow for the efficient use of land, particularly in urban areas. We were appointed at Stage 4 on the Malings scheme in Newcastle upon Tyne to assist Gentoo in delivering an innovative scheme on a brown field site previously home to the Maling Pottery. Providing 1, 2 & 3 bed apartments, plus single 'tower house' dwellings the new homes aimed for a low ecological footprint, with highly efficient gas boilers, PV panels, green roofs, natural ventilation, high performance insulation and onsite energy production.



Looking Forward

We're incredibly proud of the legacy in residential design that P+HS Architects have delivered to date, much of which is testament to the extensive knowledge of our Managing Director Chris Dennis, who has been at the forefront of the residential sector for over 38 years. Our Residential Leads continue this legacy, advising our clients on emerging and new legislation and liaising with our enthusiastic and technically excellent architects, technologists, and assistants who work closely across the Practice, sharing a passion for residential design and creating sustainable, thriving communities.

It is this passion for enhancing the lives of residents that we are looking to develop within the Northwest market. The recent expansion of the practice via the opening of our Manchester office will provide us with the opportunity to connect with new clients based on our core values, offering us a common ground on which to continue to build successful working relationships, creating better homes for the future.

