

DESIGN FOR
PLANET

Design
Council



TOWN

“We can’t dictate how people live but we can create conditions that encourage them to live as sustainably as possible.”

.....

Design for Planet is Design Council’s ambitious new approach to galvanise and support the UK’s 1.69 million-strong design community to address the climate crisis.

This strategic shift recognises the fundamental need to redesign our lives to save our planet, and champions the power and responsibility of designers to shape a better world.

Our Design for Planet case studies will showcase ten leaders in sustainable design from a diverse range of disciplines. They will explore the role of design as a powerful agent of change through sustainability and climate-action. We want these case studies to inspire and motivate the design community to prioritise the welfare of the planet in their own work and practises.

TOWN

Picture the scene: children play in a leafy, car free street of pretty homes while adults tend the vegetable patch in the tree filled communal garden, picking produce for a group meal in the shared hall later on.

This idyllic vision of neighbourliness and multi-generational living sounds almost too good to be true but the developers of Marmalade Lane, a co-housing scheme of 42 homes in Cambridgeshire, hope it's a taste of things to come.

Town pride themselves on producing one-offs that are an antidote to the frequently identical cookie cutter houses produced by many mainstream residential developers. Established in 2014, the company began with a determination to do things differently.

“We like to have a far more tailored approach,” says James Cox, Town’s development manager.

“We spend a lot of time in the town we’re working in, getting to know local people to really understand the area and create a place driven by physical context but also by what people want.”

Town collaborated closely with the future residents of Marmalade Lane through design workshops.

“It was a process,” says James. “The residents set a detailed brief and we worked with them to come up with the final result.”



.....

“We spend a lot of time in the town we’re working in, getting to know local people to really understand the area and create a place driven by physical context, and by what people want.”

JAMES COX
DEVELOPMENT MANAGER, TOWN





Half the battle with sustainable design is making the more sustainable choice an appealing one. Sustainable living seems perfectly palatable in the hands of Town. Attractive homes are set in compact communities with lots of green space and amenities; in short - places where people want to live.

With a variety of house types and styles on offer, Town aim to emulate neighbourhoods that have grown organically over time.

“They appeal to those looking to live in a real community, not just a house, says James.

“We take care to make sure that new developments respect, enhance and integrate well with the places they’re located in,” he adds.

It’s an approach they have replicated in other schemes in Wolverton, Milton Keynes; Tiverton, Berkshire and Beeston Park, Norwich.

Their homes take the high ceilings and generous windows of period properties, and combine them with state-of-the-art technology, ensuring they are efficient and cheap to run with a small environmental footprint. They are constructed off-site to high levels of thermal performance and feature mechanical ventilation heat recovery, and high-efficiency triple glazing.

Whilst the homes themselves are super sustainable, so are the communities. Through intuitive design Town gently nudge residents towards walking and cycling rather than driving; growing their own food; shopping locally and interacting with their neighbours.

“We can’t dictate how people live but we can create conditions that encourage them to live as sustainably as possible.

“We lay our schemes out to make walking and cycling an easy and attractive choice,” says James.

.....

“It was a process: the residents set a detailed brief and we worked with them to come up with the final result.”

Town have found that the community groups they work alongside tend to have the highest sustainability aspirations of all stakeholders.

“When we meet with the more challenging kind of stakeholders, whether that’s the Highways Agency or local estate agents, being able to say, ‘well, we’ve spoken with the future residents, and they have agreed that they’re going to have, for example, a reduced level of car parking,’ it does make the conversation a lot easier. Ultimately the work that we do is for the people that are going to be living there,” says James.

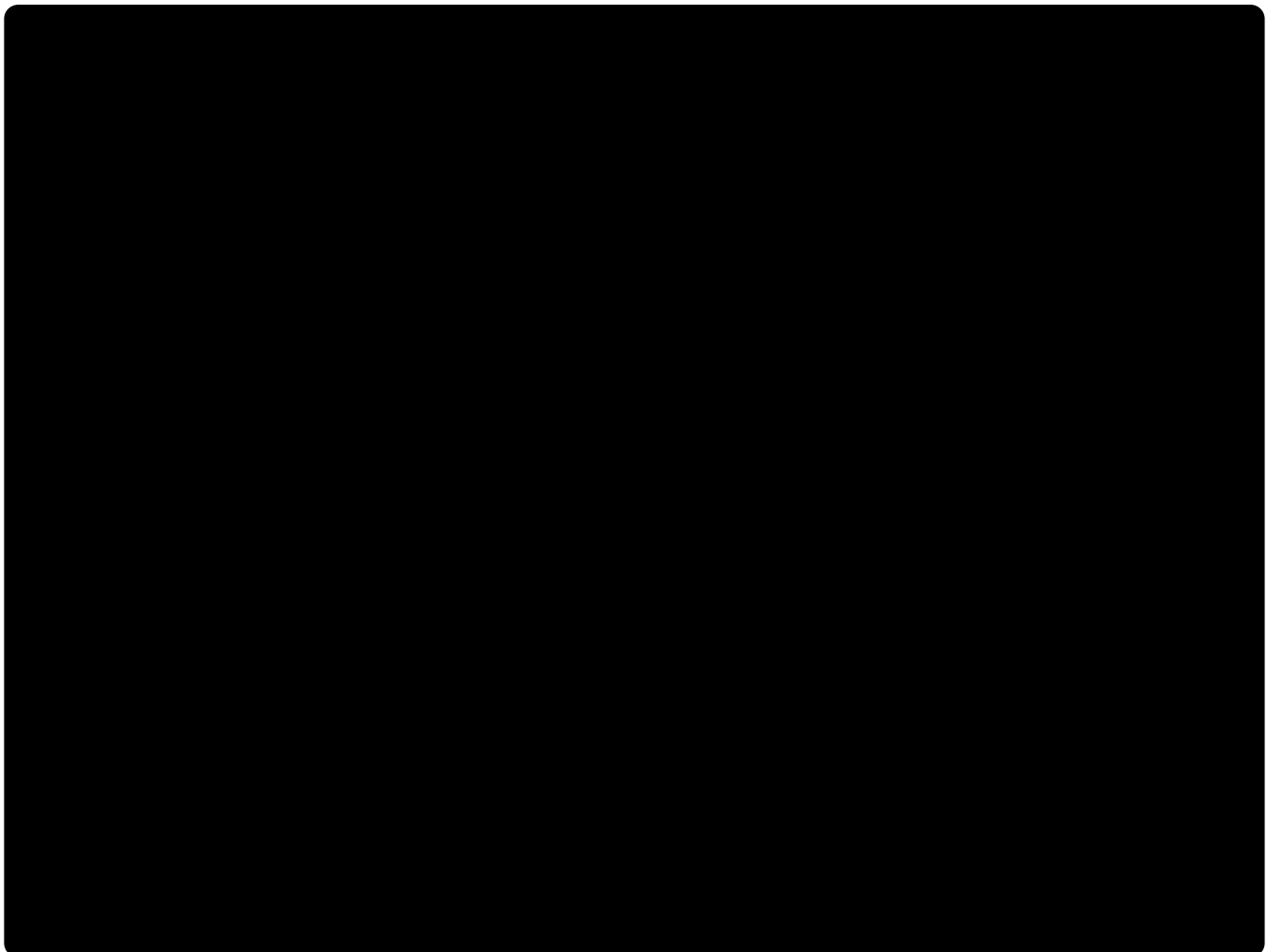
As a small developer, Town don’t have access to the big supply chains that larger developers do, so they rely on working in partnership with those who share their goals to help realise their sustainable design ambitions.



“When we bid for a site, we’ll go head-to-head with a volume house builder who will be able to pay an awful lot more for it than we can. But we work with landowners and councils that are passionate about the climate emergency and have similar aspirations to us. They want to spend more money on a better product, because they know that the environmental outcomes are as important as the financial return.”

.....

“We can’t dictate how people live but we can create conditions that encourage them to live as sustainably as possible.”





Design Council
Eagle House
167 City Road
London EC1V 1AW



info@designcouncil.org.uk



020 7420 5200



designcouncil.org.uk