

Todlaw Phase Two, Duns, Berwickshire
Affordable Housing



Car parking is tucked back from the street and kept towards the rear of the site. To help privacy first floor living rooms overlook mostly front gardens and ground floors look out towards the rear.



Most architects' repertoire of house types include flats, terraced, semis and detached houses but the unimaginatively named 'four in a block' typology is rarely plucked from any mental pattern book. Common place fifty years ago and rather neglected since, this new development reminds us of the neighbourliness of their carefully interlocking private boundaries.

These twelve flats for affordable rent, commissioned by Berwickshire Housing Association by the late Development Director Alan Stuart, are across the road from Oliver Chapman Architects' RIBA Regional Award winning supported housing for the same client in 2008. The earlier scheme's single storey semi detached, characteristically simple forms, careful eaves detailing and material palette is continued in this second phase, but adapted to suit these two storey blocks each of which contains four flats. Gaps between gables allow views of the agricultural Berwickshire landscape. Private gardens are at both the front for the upper flats and back for the lower flats, with living rooms directed towards the garden in each flat's ownership. Kitchen windows look out down the stairs and across the entrance paths.

Like the traditional houses in lowland and Scottish coastal towns as well as the sought after colony houses in Edinburgh, external stairs to first floor front doors articulate the form and their sheltered landings provide an opportunity for neighborliness. The external walls of each block are treated as two interlocking shells, an outer shell of dark blue

engineering brick facing the open landscape, and a softer larch clad shell relating to the supported housing across the road. The brick and timber surfaces are visually separated by the stairs to the first floor.

Cars are tucked between the gables up to the rear boundary of the site, allowing room for landscaping in front of the houses. In this way, the unsightly common arrangement of rows of cars parked between the back of the pavement and the front of houses, is avoided.

The houses are timber framed construction incorporating mineral wool insulation with timber joist and a dry lining system forming separating floors and walls. Ground source heat pumps provide both space and water heating to further reduce annual carbon emissions.

Annual CO2 emissions:

First floor flats- 15kg/m²;

Ground floor flats- 15kg/m².

Project Architect: Michael Collins, Oliver Chapman Architects

Client: Berwickshire Housing Association

Engineer: McKay and Partners

QS: D I Burchell and Partners

Contractor: James Swinton & Sons

Contract Value: £1,080,000

