

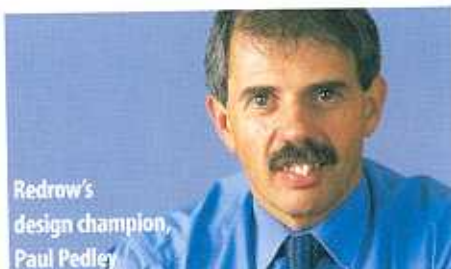
Housebuilders appoint design champions

CABE has launched a housing design champion programme, which has seen a number of volume housebuilders name board members who will be responsible for promoting good design across the industry (see box).

Following the appointment of executive deputy chairman Paul Pedley as its design champion, Redrow is now planning to establish a specialist urban design centre at its Northampton office to assess its housing schemes. Said Pedley: "The office will provide a broad skill base to allow in-house masterplanning, design code production and a consistent response to planning and urban design challenges."

At David Wilson Homes, a senior management team led by development director James Wilson will review the design standards of all of its housing layouts and disseminate the assessments throughout the business: "This year we will integrate the lessons from our Project:LIFE initiative, making space and light a priority," said Wilson.

CABE is now challenging other housebuilders to appoint board-level design champions. "Good design makes good business sense and housebuilders that are wising up to this will reap the rewards," said CABE



Redrow's design champion, Paul Pedley

chief executive Richard Simmons.

Housing and planning minister Yvette Cooper has backed the scheme. She said: "High quality design has a big impact on new homes and on whole communities. It is very welcome to see housebuilders stepping up to the challenge and raising their game on design."

- Redrow: **Paul Pedley**, executive deputy chairman
- Taylor Woodrow: **Graeme McCallum**, operations director
- David Wilson Homes: **James Wilson**, group development director
- Crest Nicholson: **Stephen Stone**, chief executive
- Berkeley Group: **Tony Pidgley**, md
- Barratt: **David Pretty**, chief executive

IN THE PIPELINE

CPS Leisure has been given the green light by Bassetlaw district council for the construction of 33 apartments. The £1.5 million scheme will be built at the former Trade & Labour Club, Westgate. Architect Bryan F Frewin is now working on tender documents and work is due to begin in early summer.

Warrington borough council has granted detailed plans for the construction of 24 sheltered flats. The £1.2 million scheme will be built at Sankey Manor, Vine Crescent, Great Sankey, Warrington. Warrington borough council and **Golden Gates Housing** are working on tender documents.

Brockwell Park Homes has won approval from Lambeth council to build 38 flats. The site is at Dohm House, Norwood Road in London and will run for approximately 15 months once a main contractor and start on site date has been confirmed.

Tenders are being invited for the construction of 201 sheltered flats at Buckshaw Village in Chorley. DLA Architecture has been employed by **Hica Life Developments** to design the scheme.

CSW Developments has submitted a detailed planning application for the construction of 32 flats in a four-storey building on Old Market Street in Manchester. Architect Nicol Thomas is designing the £1.5 million project.

Persimmon Homes has submitted plans for a residential development at Hillside Road in Bishop Auckland. The £6 million scheme proposes over 100 two and three-storey houses.

J Walters has submitted a detailed planning application for the construction of 192 residential units. Planning consultants David Shaw is handling the plans for the £12.5 million scheme at Electricity Co. & Dairy Crest, Wootton Road in Gaywood, Kings Lynn.

ISP Architects of Wrexham has submitted an outline planning application to Wrexham council on behalf of **GW Properties** for a residential development at Moreton Avenue, Johnstown, Wrexham. The scheme will not go ahead until late 2006/early 2007.

Dewhurst Dent has submitted plans to demolish Union Mill in Vernon Street, Bolton. Architects Stephenson Bell of Manchester is involved in the £6 million scheme, which proposes construction of 150 flats on the site.

Hartford Homes has been given full planning approval for its proposal to build 12 luxury houses on Ballakillowey Road site in Isle of Man. Plans were drawn up by Cornerstone Architect for the £2.2 million contract.

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Letters & opinions

Underground cowboys

I read with interest your March Supplement piece on basements. Brownfield and high density urban sites are indeed forcing the need for additional accommodation on the same footprint, and The Basement Information Group has shown in their current documents the cost analysis and benefits of installing basements in new developments.

But beware of the cowboy element that a new market attracts. My trade association, the Association of Specialist Underpinning Contractors (ASUC Plus), which represents engineered foundation contractors across the UK, offers a 12-year defects insurance guarantee on all work undertaken by our members. Not all contractors can provide proper warranty cover and with the advent of the government's Trustmark scheme, housebuilders must put the need to source approved warranty contractors higher up their agenda. You cannot leave it to chance.

Robert Withers, md, Withers Group

Unrealistic regulations

Is it me, or is the construction industry's growing obsession with health and safety procedures in danger of obscuring the stated goal of making construction a healthier, safer industry?

Regulations must be realistic. Unless they take into account the practicalities of the real world they run the risk of becoming irrelevant or, worse still, counterproductive. If you tie a workforce up in too much red tape, they will find a way of cutting through it; the law will be flouted and chaos will reign.

So what do I mean by unrealistic regulation? The new work at height regulations state a place is 'at height,' "if a person could be injured falling from it, even if it is at or below ground level." This is so loosely drafted that there is almost no limit to how it could be interpreted. You don't have to look far to find everyday examples of overzealous health and safety regimes possibly doing more harm than good.

Lewis Scremin, LCH Generators