



PRESS INFORMATION

NEW ISLINGTON, MANCHESTER'S MILLENNIUM COMMUNITY

Update on Progress – February 2008

New Islington, Manchester's Millennium Community, is one of national regeneration agency English Partnerships seven Millennium Communities - New Islington is a partnership between Urban Splash, English Partnerships and New East Manchester Ltd together with appointed social landlord, Manchester Methodist Housing Association. The 30 acre site, just east of Manchester city centre is being radically transformed to a strategic and ambitious vision created by Will Alsop. A new canal and water park, over 1700 new homes, office space, a school, a health clinic, shops, bars and restaurants are planned to be created, using the world's best architecture.

"We know that this scheme is ambitious, it has to be, why strive to be mediocre? The residents deserve the best, they deserve choices, New Islington will be the best place in Manchester," said Nick Johnson, deputy chief executive, Urban Splash. "Even if we achieve only half of what we set out to do we will have succeeded. I believe we will create the best new development, new community, in the country."

Work started on site in 2003 to create the new canals and water park. Historically the area was filled with canals serving huge Victorian Mills but gradually from the 1920s to the 1970s the canals were filled in and the Mills demolished leaving a legacy of chemicals and metals in the ground. At New Islington sustainability has started literally from the ground up. Approx 100,000 tons of land has been decontaminated and re-used at the site to help create the walls of the new canals and the islands in the Water Park.

The water park is now physically complete and includes an orchard, mature Scots pines, public spaces, seating areas and several special features to encourage wildlife. The park now needs time to establish itself and it is expected it will open to the public in 2008.

David Chilton, senior regeneration manager of English Partnerships, said: "English Partnerships' Millennium Communities are all about building places where people will want to live. People need houses, but they also need space to enjoy life, and this water park will be the ideal place to do just that."

The first new homes in New Islington were completed in spring 2006. Islington Square, designed by FAT (Fashion Architecture Taste) working with the people who now live in them, the 23 houses make up the first phase of social housing, which is managed by Manchester Methodist Housing Association (MMHA). Following a RIBA competition FAT was selected unanimously by the residents and New Islington partners to design the scheme which has received a great deal of national and international acclaim.

Nick Johnson, director of development, Urban Splash said: "FAT's Islington Square is an important step for New Islington, it's rehousing the residents in these generous grand new homes, they're delighted - it gets up the nose of the architectural purists -which is exactly what we wanted. The critics are happy, the residents are happy and we're happy that it sets the tone for New Islington which is looking like a very special place in the city."

In March 2007, residents moved into the second phase of social housing, Guest Street. Designed by DeMetz Forbes Knight (dMFK), who were also selected through a RIBA competition and very different to Islington Square, Guest Street is a contemporary interpretation of the traditional terraced house.

The 14 houses are robust, light and comfortable and feature sedum planted roofing – a first for a UK social housing scheme.

Matthew Harrison, Director of Development for MMHA said: "We set out to make these houses really special – they're striking in design, brilliant in terms of practicality and modern living, environmentally-friendly and fuel-efficient. This is a fantastic follow-on from the success of our homes at Islington Square and will set a benchmark for the sort of quality that can be achieved with the right partners, planning and resident involvement."

Guest Street has been designed to receive an EcoHomes 'Excellent' Rating, in addition to a number of other energy reducing features including micro Combined Heat and Power (CHP).

Building work is progressing very well on Chips, the first homes for public sale at New Islington. Designed by Will Alsop, his first residential scheme in the UK, the 142 apartments are already sold and the building is expected to be completed in 2008.

Development partners Taylor Woodrow started on site in January 08 with its scheme Botanic, designed by Liverpool based architects shedkm.

Botanic features 200 residential apartments and ground floor commercial space and will be built by Taylor Woodrow's homebuilding brand Bryant.

The state-of-the art £6.5m Health Centre located on Old Mill Street, near the site of the former hospital, overlooking the new water park, is designed and built by construction company Laing O'Rourke in partnership with Manchester architects, Stephenson Bell.

The new facility will replace the current Ancoats clinic and will house two of the area's key GP practices. Other services will include minor injuries, family planning, podiatry, mental health services and a pharmacy. .

Eddie Smith, Chief Executive of New East Manchester Ltd said: "Urban regeneration is not just about building homes. It's about creating sustainable communities, so facilities like the Ancoats Health and Social Care Centre are vitally important. It's essential we continue to meet the health care needs of our growing population. This modern medical centre is a first class facility which will play a key part in the physical and social regeneration of east Manchester."

Self builders, architects and budding property developers were given a really rare opportunity to design and build their own homes at New Islington to create a remarkable new street as Tutti Frutti was launched at Grand Designs Live in summer 07.

Tutti Frutti was a competition to offer twenty-six canal side building plots at New Islington. Twenty model entries were received and the judges were so impressed with the quality of the designs that each were selected as winners. The "winners" will "win" the right to purchase the plot of land and build their home on it. Each plot is 15 metres in length with widths S, M and L ranging from 4 metres to 5 metres.

Out of the "winners", one house will be selected as the over all winner and Urban Splash give them the plot for free!

"We love the idea of Tutti Frutti," said Nick Johnson, deputy chief executive, Urban Splash. "We know there's tons of people itching to design and build their own homes but finding the right plot can be the most frustrating part of the process. We've got lots of plots up for grabs at Tutti Frutti and as the name suggests we're looking for a real mix of styles, from the flamboyant to the quietly understated, anything really as long as it is fantastic."

Open architecture competitions have attracted some of the most exciting design teams from across the UK and the world to New Islington. Tutti Frutti is the seventh competition so far since the project was announced in 2000.

"New Islington is about ambition, it's about setting your standards high then beating them some," said Nick. "We've already seen the results of other competitions for the project win awards and international recognition, Tutti Frutti will hopefully do the same."

Around 4000 people came to enjoy a huge range of diverse acts from the edgy beats and raps at the Unity Radio Stage to the gentle folk music of Kate and Greg's Boat Band in the garden at the New Islington Festival on Saturday 1 September 2007. Taffy Thomas transfixed children with his magnificent story telling coat, while 100s of children of all ages explored our new canals in pedalos.

The rain stayed away and the grey clouds did nothing to dampen spirits! With over 70 acts performing a diverse array of music, art and fun which included acoustic singer songwriters, Japanese guitar heroes, saucy burlesque dancers, cheeky gorilla's, samba bands and St Joan's ambulance, Cotton Field and Old Mill Street were busy all day!

Check out www.urban-folk.com for pictures from the day

www.newislington.co.uk

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Notes to editors

The Millennium Communities Programme is creating seven innovative, environmentally sustainable developments in diverse locations across the country. Initiated in 1997 with the launch of a design competition for Greenwich Millennium Village in London, the programme aims to influence and encourage the wider building industry to embrace innovation and higher environmental standards. The other six communities being created through the programme are: Allerton Bywater near Leeds, New Islington, East Manchester; South Lynn, Kings Lynn; Telford, East Ketley; Oakgrove, Milton Keynes and Hastings, East Sussex. The programme aims to deliver over 9000 new homes by 2014. For further information visit www.englishpartnerships.co.uk/millcomms. Keep up to date on the latest Millennium Communities news by visiting <http://mcnetwork.englishpartnerships.co.uk/>

English Partnerships is the national regeneration agency helping the Government to support high quality sustainable growth in England by creating well-served mixed communities where people enjoy living and working.

In collaboration with the Housing Corporation, the Academy for Sustainable Communities and Communities and Local Government we are establishing the new Homes and Communities Agency that will begin operating in 2009.

For more information on our work, please visit www.englishpartnerships.co.uk.

Property developer **Urban Splash** has an established reputation as a pioneer of urban regeneration and advocate of modern design. The company was founded by Tom Bloxham MBE and Jonathan Falkingham in 1993 and since then has received 204 awards to date for architecture, design, regeneration and enterprise. Its mix of award winning residential and commercial projects include Timber Wharf, Box Works, Smithfield Buildings in Manchester and Match works, Tea Factory and Collegiate in Liverpool. Urban Splash is now expanding outside its established north west base and now have developments on site or in the pipeline across the UK including, Lister Mills, Bradford; Royal William Yard, Plymouth; Walsall Waterfront; Fort Dunlop and Rotunda in Birmingham and Foster and Partners designed homes at Altrincham, Cheshire. www.urbansplash.co.uk.

New East Manchester Ltd (NEM) is an Urban Regeneration Company - a partnership between Manchester City Council, English Partnerships and the Northwest Regional Development Agency (NWDA). It is NEM's role to implement the Regeneration Framework, secure the required public and private funding, lead on specific major development projects as well as co-ordinate the range of regeneration and renewal initiatives in the area.

Manchester Methodist Housing Association

MMHA's ambitious programme of regeneration and urban renewal sets standards that others try to achieve. Winner of the Housing Association Regenerator of the Year Award in 2004 and 2006, the organisation is committed to building cohesive, sustainable communities that have a positive impact on residents and the environment. Housing Corporation partnering status and the Association's work with more than 25 local authorities affirms its position as a major regional player. MMHA is part of Great Places Housing Group.