



Stretton Green, Cheshire

Delivering new housing sympathetically in a small, rural community

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In summary:



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Clr Howard Greenwood
Cheshire West & Chester Council

SURROUNDED BY FARMLAND & OPEN COUNTRYSIDE



8 BARN-STYLE MEWS PROPERTIES



ADJACENT TO CONSERVATION AREA



25% AFFORDABLE HOUSING



19 DETACHED MANOR HOUSES





Stretton Green is one of Redrow's most prestigious developments in the north of England.

It features a small enclave of 19 large detached properties, inspired by Cheshire's country manors, alongside a horseshoe of eight mews homes, in the style of the barns that once stood in their place. There are also six designated affordable homes, based on the designs of traditional farmworkers' cottages.

The planning and design of the 2.6 hectare development and implementation of the building works has been sensitive to its rural setting throughout, and is a splendid testament to the positive impact that a carefully considered development can have on small, rural communities.

From the outset, the location was earmarked for a brand new collection of homes, designed by Redrow specifically for this location, and taking their influence from the grand country properties in the surrounding area. The new designs were named the Country Collection and have

since been used in select locations in other areas of the UK where Redrow has identified a market for exclusive, large detached properties.

Alongside the 19 detached homes from the Country Collection, Redrow also created a courtyard of eight smaller homes on the footprint of the old barns, in an area of the development which forms part of the neighbouring conservation area. This helped to preserve some of the heritage of the site, which had once served as a dairy.

The new Stretton Green development replaced the redundant Stretton Dairy buildings, which were becoming unsightly, and brought a brownfield site back into use for the benefit of home buyers and those in the local community who were keen to see the land reused.



Location

The area surrounding the development is made up of open countryside, farmland and some residential homes that form a number of smaller village communities, including Stretton village, the core of which is a conservation area. Its largest neighbours are Stretton Lower Hall, a listed building, and Carden Park Hotel, Spa and Golf Resort. It is two miles from the village of Farndon, which has shops, pubs, cafes and community facilities, four miles from the larger village of Malpas and around 12 miles from the historic Roman city of Chester.

The site itself was previously occupied by a commercial dairy, including storage and office buildings, which had been extensively damaged by fire some years before and required demolition. The majority of the land was hard standing and the site had some industrial contamination that required remediation.



Considered planning

The rural location was considered in all aspects of the master planning, from the architectural design to the development layout, property spacing, garden sizes, ecological features, and landscaping.

There are definite influences of English architect John Douglas (1830-1911), whose eclectic architectural styles can be seen throughout North Wales and Cheshire. He is probably best known for his incorporation of vernacular elements in his buildings, particularly half timbering, influenced by the black and white revival in Chester.

Douglas' style has been adopted within many traditional and newer developments in the Chester area, however at Stretton Green his influence has been used in a more modern approach. Features include brick detailing, high quality sandstone plinths, headers and cills, wide barge boards, decorative ridgework and ornate finials. The use of distinctive pink sandstone in the homes and walls around the development fits with the widespread appearance of this material in heritage sites in the area.

Other materials used include weathered Cheshire brick, interlocking grey slate roofs to suit the local vernacular, solid hardwood doors and frames and hardwood windows throughout and naturally finished timber framing.



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The first aspect to get right was the product. Local consumer research showed a demand for larger detached homes in the area and our designers set about creating a new range of four and five-bedroom homes suitable for such a prestigious site. The result was the Country Collection, with each individually designed home taking its architectural nod from the impressive manor houses and country estates, which are so revered in this part of Cheshire.

“In keeping with the style of a traditional rural hamlet, the detached homes were plotted to make the most of the countryside views and around a central village green, each well-spaced from its neighbour, with its own large garden and driveway; all elements that enhanced the rural feel of the development. Where new homes backed onto neighbouring residential properties, landscape buffering was used to preserved privacy including tall hedgerows and mature trees. Around the site, the sandstone walls, beech hedging and iron railings added to the development's sense of 'belonging' in its setting.

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Paul Sinclair

Technical Director for Redrow Homes
(North West)

Considered planning



Inside the homes, entrance hallways open onto impressive open plan reception rooms and family areas, while bi-fold doors blur the lines between inside and out, opening onto broad terraces and secluded gardens. High ceilings, oak panelled internal doors with antique brass ironmongery, ceiling roses and Belfast sinks are all reminiscent of traditional features found in the manor houses of Cheshire, while modern country kitchens and fully fitted boot rooms are designed for rural living.

The design of the eight mews-style homes on the horseshoe-shaped footprint of the existing old barns was one of the most challenging aspects of the development. The old barns were grade II listed, due to their association with Stretton Lower Hall, and in a conservation area. Redrow initially worked extensively on plans to renovate the buildings and create six new homes, in consultation with English Heritage and Conservation Officers from Chester West and Cheshire Council.

However, further surveys revealed the buildings were unsuitable for conversion, so plans were revisited and revised to enable brand new properties to be built on the same footprint as the barns and in a similar style to the old buildings, that would satisfy all those keen to preserve the site's former history. The resulting designs have done just that, conserving the heritage of the former grade II listed barns, while providing eight new and modern homes fit for purpose in a range of two, three and four-bedroom designs.

The development won the Gold Award at the 2013 What House? Awards for Best Exterior Design and was Highly Commended in the Best Development in Cheshire category at the UK Property Awards 2015.



Preserving local ecology



A major consideration for any development, particularly those in more rural settings, is the ecology of the land. Redrow undertakes extensive surveys prior to a planning application being submitted to ensure any impact on local wildlife and habitats is minimised.

At Stretton Green a brand new habitat was created for great crested newts under licensing by Natural England. This included a newt pond and appropriate planting, all in a designated elevated area, surrounded by newt fencing. As part of the licencing agreement, a 30-day monitoring period was adhered to, during which time any newts found on the wider site were moved to the new habitat thus preserving the species' long-term future at the location.

Redrow also undertook a barn owl survey on the site and provision was made for nesting birds and bats on site in the form of retaining existing mature trees, new native planting and the installation of a number of bird and bat boxes.

Community benefits

As well as reviving a redundant former industrial site, Redrow's development at Stretton Green has provided additional benefits to the local community. Council tax revenue from the higher band new homes will help to sustain services in the wider area, while local spending by the new residents will provide a boost to the economy, including many of the smaller, independent businesses that operate in the surrounding villages.

The developer's delivery of 25% affordable housing, made up of six units on-site and a contribution to off-site provision, has gone some way to meeting demand for lower cost homes in the area. This was an increase on the 23% agreed for a previous planning permission acquired by another developer for the site.

Prior to the development, there was no access to sustainable public transport. Redrow has introduced a footpath from the development to the nearest bus stop to link it with the wider community.

Further to this, a section 106 contribution towards play provision enabled nearby Clutton CE Primary School to benefit from a new multi-use games area. The 33m x 16m facility, which is open to the community outside of school hours, was funded through a £32,426 contribution and designed by both the school and the council.



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“Because of the Section 106 provision negotiated between Redrow and the Council, the local primary school received valuable funding for a new multi-use games area that's also available for use by local people outside school hours. The delivery of this scheme clearly demonstrated the commitment of the Council and Redrow to see improvements that would benefit the school and all members of the local community.”



Howard Greenwood
Farndon Ward Councillor
Cheshire West & Chester Council.

Summary



Redrow's carefully considered approach to planning and designing this project has resulted in a development that not only blends well with its surroundings but enriches the area for all residents.

As summarised in the planning officer's report at the time: "Through the removal of unsightly former dairy buildings and through a sensitive redevelopment scheme, it is considered that the proposals preserve and enhance the character and appearance of the conservation area, its setting and the setting of the neighbouring listed buildings."

By following this same approach through to implementation, the completed development is like no other the home builder has created.

Redrow has transformed a "vacant and visually blighted" site, into a superior residential scheme, proving that sensitive redevelopment in rural regions can blend seamlessly and enhance the area for the benefit of the whole community.



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It's a very exclusive development, with bespoke country house types, designed specifically for this location, and barn-style properties that preserve the heritage of the site. We're very proud to have created such a unique development befitting of this fantastic location that will stand the test of time.

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Jason Newton
Sales Director for Redrow Homes
(North West),

redrow.co.uk

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