

Parsons North, London – Building relationships

Cllr Rachael Robathan (Leader of the Council)

“I attended the ground-breaking ceremony for Parsons North nine months ago when the site was a hole in the ground, so it’s fantastic to see the progress that has been made in hitting this milestone, despite the huge upheaval from Covid-19. The team has worked extremely hard to keep on site and to continue building new homes which our residents desperately need” **July 2020**

PROJECT

Parsons North

CUSTOMER

Westminster City Council

LOCATION

London

CONTRACT

2 Stage D&B

COMPLETION

2021

VALUE

£27m

Need

UK councils are seeking innovative ways to meet the shortfall in affordable housing. Westminster City Council identified just such an opportunity for regenerating land occupied by a car park. Using a mix of social rent, private sale, and retail they have financed the Parsons North scheme to build 60 new sustainable homes with basement parking and retail units fronting London's Edgware Road.

The council are a repeat customer for Osborne, which demonstrates a level of trust in our ability to deliver this quality scheme. It was important for them that we worked together to add value, beyond the build, through local engagement and community investment. Something which was tested when the global pandemic hit in April 2020.

Solution

Managing public interfaces was critical on this scheme with three street frontages and an adjoining high-rise residential block. Careful planning and excellent communication was essential and Newman

Francis were integrated into the team as communication advisers.

The online newsletter has formed a central communication feature, along with face-to-face meetings and community events. When covid restrictions hit, we flexibly adopted phone calls which have kept people informed, particularly the vulnerable.

“The phone calls lately have been a personalised service and a real boost – they made me feel positive and not alone. I feel part of what is happening locally and my views are taken onboard”- A Local Resident

The first major activity was the demolition and the impact on our neighbours was at the forefront of planning. Real time noise monitoring with a 'traffic light' system was installed, and quiet 'munchers' were used to break concrete, along with acoustic screens. High-pressure water dampened the dust to keep nuisance to a minimum. A systematic approach we replicated on each activity.

A further priority for the council was increasing community investment particularly with the youth and the unemployed:

- In partnership with the council, a local employment and skills support

programme was launched for residents of the nearby Hall Park Estate.

- In support of the councils 'careers in construction' two students from King Solomon Academy had work experience placements on site.

“This week has been extremely helpful and has made me want to work in construction even more. I can't explain how much Osborne has influenced my work choices.” - Yaseen

Outcome

Despite the global pandemic impacts, Westminster City Council is set to replace a redundant basement car park with 60 sustainable mixed tenure homes in 2021.

The residential scheme will enhance the local environment with communal spaces, retail outlets and most importantly the inclusion of 16 affordable low energy homes which moves the council closer to their commitment for 1850 new affordable homes by 2023. Proceeds from the private sales will be re-invested in local housing.

Building upon our relationship, Westminster City Council have now appointed Osborne to create 77 new homes at Ashmill, Ashridge, and Cosway for local people.