

North Eastern Property

The North East of England is a region of rich natural beauty, urban regeneration and historical importance. This month, we take a look at one of Newcastle's most prestigious new developments and an exciting collection of apartments in Sunderland.

Up-and-Coming Sunderland

A new gated development of apartments and penthouses close to Sunderland city centre has been launched by bespoke developer Thornsett Group.



Thornlea Court comprises 24 two-bedroom apartments and four three-bedroom penthouses as well as dedicated parking for each apartment. Located in Ashbrooke and just a few minutes walk from Sunderland city centre, the apartments range in size from 737 sq ft to 767 sq ft. The penthouses are from 1,119 sq ft to 1,205 sq ft and each has a spacious terrace while the ground floor apartments have their own private gardens.

"We are very excited to be active in Sunderland with its rapidly changing city centre," said Bernadette Cunningham, director of Thornsett Group. "The scale of the development will enable purchasers to have a real sense of community and we have provided car parking for each apartment so owners will have no trouble parking. The three penthouses are truly spectacular and offer a particularly glamorous home to a discerning purchaser."

The largest city in the North East, Sunderland is on the brink of large-scale regeneration which will eventually result in a vibrant, economically sound and socially inclusive environment.



Executive Homes for Less

Hailed as one of the North East's most prestigious mixed-use schemes, Persimmon Homes' new East Village development at Newcastle Great Park offers homebuyers more for their money.

The new homes at East Village are situated in the sought-after suburb of Gosforth, North Newcastle, and include a variety of three and four-bedroom detached homes from £224,950 and four-bedroom terraced properties from £214,950.

Following the success of Persimmon's Greenside and Melbury developments at Newcastle Great Park, the selection of six luxury executive house types now on offer at East Village provides an ideal fusion of practicality and cutting edge design for the modern family.

"The properties we've designed at East Village really do offer exceptional contemporary living at highly competitive prices in one of Newcastle's most popular residential suburbs," said Debbie Zaben, sales manager for Persimmon Homes North East. "All properties at East Village benefit from plenty of multi-functional space throughout, and many homes also incorporate our striking 'room in the roof' design – perfect for use as a guest bedroom, home office, gym or study."

Externally, East Village lives up to the modern homes, with contemporary courtyards, picturesque boulevards and plenty of landscaped areas.

For further information on East Village, contact the sales office on 07712 792745 (open Thursday to Monday, 11am to 6pm) or visit: www.persimmonhomes.com for further details.

Brendan Hackett, director of Hackett Properties which is marketing the development, said: "Investment opportunities in Sunderland are comparable with those in Eastern Europe, although a far safer option because of established infrastructure networks and a defined programme of regeneration. Apartment prices are on a par with those in Bulgaria and Estonia."

Apartments at Thornlea Court feature fully fitted kitchens, overhead lighting and integrated stainless steel appliances including a Bosch oven/hob and extractor, fridge/freezer, waste disposal unit, dishwasher and washer/dryer. The penthouses have similar appliances plus granite worktops, Siemens oven/hob and a stainless steel microwave. All apartments have telephone, television and satellite points in the reception and master bedroom, and intercom entry phone.

Apartment prices start from £154,500 and are available through Hackett Property. Call 0191 510 9950, email: enquiries@hackettproperty.com or visit: www.thornsettgroup.com for further information.



Prefab-ulous

They come in all shapes and sizes, are quick to construct and are a sustainable alternative to traditional bricks and mortar – could prefab homes be the future of UK housing?

By Jennie Musgrove



The new 'Zenit' range by Potton

The meaning of 'prefabrication' is 'to manufacture in standardized parts or sections ready for quick assembly and erection.' Ships, aircraft and all kinds of vehicles and machines can be prefabricated; so, too, can homes. If the idea of prefab houses conjures up visions of cheap and cheerful accommodation built as a temporary alternative to 'proper'

brick and block homes in post-war Britain, then think again.

From single storey summer houses to five-bedroom mansions with more than 10,000 sq ft of living accommodation – when it comes to prefab, the possibilities are endless.

"The only limitation to a prefab home is what can fit on the back of a lorry," said Mark Pryor, co-founder of Bright Build, a self-build company offering low-cost (from £932 per sq m / £83 per sq ft), mortgage-able, modular homes which take just two days to construct on-site. Of course, there's no limitation to the number of lorries that can transport a prefab home – so virtually anything is possible. The Bright Build show home illustrates the kind of modernist design the company can offer – sleek architectural lines, plenty of glazing to ensure a sense of openness, and cedar cladding to complete the look. Founded last year by Mark and his business partner David Lowne, Bright Build offers a bespoke service aimed at first and last-time buyers, self-builders and those seeking a holiday home, as well as developers. Combining their backgrounds in selling and hiring temporary buildings and high-end residential and commercial property, Mark and David set up Bright Build in order to produce prefab homes and buildings with a low environmental impact – and it looks like they're on to a good thing, as all the indications are that factory-made housing is the future. "Although we're Suffolk-based, we can build nationally and even internationally," said Mark. "The idea is that we will produce the house in factory conditions and then transport it by road and put it together on site. The modules are steel boxes, and are fully recyclable at the end of their lifetime."

"Prefab homes were only intended as a short-term solution in this country, but Bright Build homes are not to be confused with post-war buildings. They're prefab in the idea and construction method – rather than the end product."



The new 'Zenit' range by Potton

The Bright Build show home



The Bright Build show home

While Bright Build is just starting out as a contender in the self-build,

prefab property market, there are other companies that have been offering bespoke prefab homes for decades. Potton, a self-build company with more than 25 years experience of designing and constructing houses, is this year launching its latest range of house designs, named Zenit. Inspired by their predecessor the Lighthouse (a ground-breaking zero-carbon home which reaches level 6 of the Code for Sustainable Homes), Zenit homes offer contemporary design features usually only affordable to a privileged few. "These designs are based on extensive research and development into individual design requirements and energy efficient building technologies," said Zenit designer Sean Adams. "They include all the hallmarks of popular contemporary architecture with galleryed hallways, vaulted ceilings and combinations of single, two and three-storey elements, to make wonderful, airy open-plan living spaces."

By combining a number of pre-designed and engineered elements, the houses can be built to exact bespoke requirement. As with the Lighthouse, Zenit homes will also be built to excellent levels of the Code for Sustainable Homes. So gone are the days of cheap, temporary prefab homes. The 21st century outlook for prefab is so far a positive one: they're low cost, quick to construct and environmentally friendly. If the current environmental and economic climates are anything to go by, the days of on-site brick and block-laying could soon be a thing of the past. ■

Zenit will be launched at the Homebuilding and Renovating show at the NEC March 19th – 22nd. The launch will feature computer generated animations including walkthroughs of the stunning interiors, giving visitors an idea of what it is to live in a Zenit home. Turn to page 51 for a chance to win tickets to the show.