



**PRESS ENQUIRIES**

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**PRESS RELEASE**

## **UNITY PLACE, SOUTH KILBURN, LONDON**

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Unity Place, a characterful multi-architect regeneration project in South Kilburn for London Borough of Brent, is now complete. The latest phase in Brent's multi-phase 2,400-home South Kilburn regeneration masterplan, Unity Place has been designed by Feilden Clegg Bradley Studios, which developed the masterplan vision for the site, with Alison Brooks Architects and Gort Scott, and landscape architect Grant Associates.

Commissioned in 2013, the development provides 235 exceptionally bright and spacious homes for Brent's social tenants in a cluster of mansion blocks arranged around planted courtyards.

Unity Place replaces an inward-facing 1960s 'Bison Block' tower and four-storey walk-ups above an abandoned parking podium. The new redevelopment restores the character and scale of this north London neighbourhood and demonstrates how an appropriate level of density can be achieved without building above eight storeys.

Unity Place consists of mansion block and villa typologies typical of the local area, to re-establish the area's historic 19th century street plan, re-integrating the site and its communities into the wider South Kilburn neighbourhood. The scheme is oriented around a reinstated route to the Grade I Listed St Augustine's Kilburn Church, a landmark recognised for its architectural heritage and social role in the community. The clusters are arranged around a sequence of green spaces from Cambridge Gardens to Carlton Vale, which includes a new civic square and public play space for the local community, with parking relocated underground.

The development, which ranges in scale from four to eight storeys, features multiple entrances as well as front doors which open directly on to the pavement to activate the street and neighbourhood, and ensure the permeability of the block. Street-level apartments are set back from the street with a terrace, and apartments on the upper levels benefit from broad balconies overlooking their internal courtyard.

The majority of the homes at Unity Place are dual aspect to optimise natural cross ventilation and provide safe overlooking to the communal gardens. The scheme features an underground energy centre to enable a site-wide combined heat and power (CHP) system, which is supported with green roofs, a high-performance envelope and mechanical ventilation with heat recovery (MVHR) to reduce heat loss and energy consumption.

Unity Place was designed as a tenure-blind, mixed-tenure scheme, including market sale units. GLA funding has enabled Brent Council to retain 100% of the units as social housing, aimed specifically at existing residents of the borough.

### **Curlew House, Florican House, Puffin House, Lorikeet House**

**Feilden Clegg Bradley Studios** is the masterplanner of Unity Place and the architect of Curlew House, Florican House, Puffin House and Lorikeet House on the east and south boundaries of the site.

Drawing on the 'order' of some of the local and heritage architecture, these blocks are distinguished by a clearly defined base, middle and top. The base is characterised by legible entrances and projecting brick detailing. The middle banding is defined by a solid punched window elevation up to the fourth floor. The upper levels of the buildings are articulated with inclined façades clad with terracotta tiles, large setbacks and vertical brick piers to reduce the overall massing and provide interest at an urban scale. A limited palette of robust but elegant materials was specified across the development, bringing consistency to the scheme within the variation in design.

At street level, highly glazed communal entrances afford views to private courtyards, and individual front doors provide activity as well as passive surveillance. The introduction of maisonettes at ground level minimises the number of bedrooms at street-floor level, while providing larger units with greater amenity spaces and better access to shared gardens.

### **Peacock House, Condor House, Hornbill House, Macaw House, Turaco House and Kiwi House**

**Alison Brooks Architects** has designed a cluster of three modern mansion blocks that build on the repertoire of forms that the practice has designed in its two previous South Kilburn projects, Ely Court and Kilburn Quarter. Their scheme consists of a six-storey mansard roofed mansion block facing Rudolph Road; a four-storey mansion fronting the new public play space; and a third, flatiron villa, fronting Cambridge Gardens. Together the three buildings provide a total of 84 dual aspect light-filled homes and a council-staffed community hub at ground level.

The scheme is distinguished by its exuberant Rudolph Road frontage punctuated by framed porticos and balconies that dance across the elevations, mimicking musical notation. In contrast, its courtyard façade features broad balconies in mint green glazed brick to capture and reflect sunlight. Characterful mansard roofs clad with terracotta are a response to the tapering neo-Gothic spire of St Augustine's Kilburn Church opposite, as well as mansard roofs of neighbouring Maida Vale. Façades are punctuated with two-storey volumes, forming porticos and balconies which establish human scale and vertical rhythm across the elevations.

In the northwest corner, Kiwi House, the four-storey flatiron villa facing Cambridge Road, responds to its neighbouring 19th century corner pub and four-storey villas across the road with a calm composition of windows, cornices and recessed string courses. The scheme preserves as much of a street frontage as possible, and its 'flatiron' form permits surprising oblique views from the street into the scheme's central lushly planted court.

All of the apartments are dual aspect with generous 2.6m ceilings and full height French windows and at least two balconies per flat. ABA's designs share a robust, high performance palette of materials with FCBS and Gort Scott, to provide generous dwellings designed with community wellbeing as a shared goal.



### Maleo House, Dove House, Saxony House

**Gort Scott** has designed the buildings which face on to Cambridge Road on the south of the site, including a significant six-storey residential block with fifty units. The elevations have an ordered rhythm and the concrete vertical elements on the upper two levels of the building reflect the stone detailing on St Augustine's Church.

Wide entrances to the new residential block can be clearly identified from the street. They form a physical and visual link through to the shared, private garden courtyard beyond. Along Cambridge Road, balconies are recessed to increase privacy for residents and to complement flat-fronted, street-facing buildings in the neighbourhood, such as those along Princess Road.

Particular emphasis has been given to the corners of the building; a feature which is often used in the mansion block building typology and other successful corner buildings in the local area. The junction between Cambridge Road and the new play space is a key feature of the masterplan. It forms one side of the gateway to the play space and frames a view of St Augustine's Church.

The building and envelope have been designed to reduce energy demand. Thermal performance of the façade has been maximised and highly energy efficient building services systems have been incorporated, including MVHR units and acoustic vents. Gort Scott has made use of low-maintenance, high quality materials that are long lasting and robust.

During the design process, Gort Scott initiated the public consultation process with the existing residents of the estate, and the new homes incorporate their specific spatial and functional requirements.

### Site-wide landscaping

**Grant Associates** has developed the site-wide landscape design strategy, giving clear definition of public and private domains in a sequence of spaces which includes a public garden, private courtyards and privacy buffer planting at the street threshold of the perimeter streets. The public garden and play space at the centre of the scheme opens up the site with a pedestrian link to St Augustine's Church and invites activity from the wider neighbourhood. Two courtyard gardens offer a variety of outdoor experiences from productive growing, planting to encourage a sense of shared community, sensory garden and lawn areas, as well as doorstep play. Overall, planting is used to provide visual amenity at the same time as improving species diversity and offering a response to climate change through the use of shade providing trees, water sensitive urban design and sustainable drainage systems (SuDS).

#### **Press enquiries:**

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## NOTES TO EDITORS

<b>Location:</b>	Unity Place, accessed via Cambridge Road, Rudolph Road and Kilburn Park Road, NW6
<b>Site:</b>	13,080m <sup>2</sup> /1.3ha
<b>Buildings GIA:</b>	26,964m <sup>2</sup>
<b>Client:</b>	London Borough of Brent
<b>Architect &amp; plot masterplanner:</b>	Feilden Clegg Bradley Studios
<b>Consultant architect:</b>	Alison Brooks Architects (ABA)
<b>Consultant architect:</b>	Gort Scott
<b>Landscape architect:</b>	Grant Associates
<b>Executive architect:</b>	RM_A (stage 4-7)
<b>Energy consultant:</b>	Biodiversity by Design
<b>Code for Sustainable Homes assessment:</b>	Buro Happold
<b>Wind assessment:</b>	Buro Happold
<b>Structural engineer:</b>	Buro Happold
<b>Civic engineer:</b>	Buro Happold
<b>M&amp;E engineer:</b>	Buro Happold
<b>Flood risk assessment:</b>	Buro Happold
<b>Daylight &amp; sunlight:</b>	Buro Happold
<b>Archaeology desktop assessment:</b>	CgMs Consulting
<b>Heritage advisor:</b>	Heritage Collective
<b>Cladding:</b>	Montresor Partnership
<b>Fire engineer:</b>	The Fire Surgery Limited
<b>Contractor:</b>	Telford Homes
<b>Photographs:</b>	© Paul Riddle

**Feilden Clegg Bradley Studios** is an architectural and urban design practice with an international reputation for design quality, for pioneering environmental expertise and a progressive architectural approach. The practice started small 40 years ago and continues to be committed to social and human values in their work and is experienced in designing for education, housing, masterplanning and urban design as well as places for art and the creative reuse of historic buildings. FCBStudios are proud to have won the RIBA Stirling Prize for Accordia, a scheme which is widely regarded as setting a new benchmark for housing in the UK and to have collected a total of 59 RIBA National Awards. We believe excellence in design can facilitate change, improvement and transformation in society.

The practice was founded with a specific ambition to produce environmentally and socially responsive design. This ethos has flourished and developed and FCBStudios continue to be at the forefront of low energy design and masterplanning, and through our knowledge of the performance of the buildings we have designed, provide solutions to support the imperative transition to a zero-carbon economy. This experience, and our skills, underpin our design approach to support clients who are demanding responses in the face of potentially catastrophic climate change and biodiversity loss.

**Fcbstudios.com**



**Alison Brooks Architects** is recognised as one of the UK's most influential and internationally acclaimed design practices. Founded by Alison Brooks in 1996, this London-based studio employs cultural research as both catalyst for community engagement and for new forms of architectural expression. The practice's built works demonstrate commitment to generous, inclusive city-building supported by a uniquely sculptural design language evident across their large scale masterplans and mixed-use developments, higher education buildings, private houses and public buildings for the arts. Alison Brooks sees architecture as both an enabling social art and a creative cultural dialogue offering new forms of civic identity. This has led to over seventy awards for design quality, including 2020 Dezeen Architect of the Year and 2020 BD Housing Architect of the Year. Alison Brooks Architects remains the only UK practice to have won the RIBA Stirling Prize, the Manser Medal and the Stephen Lawrence Prize. To add to this accolade, the practice was recently pronounced winner of the 2021 RIBA House of the Year.

Current large scale urban projects include flagship towers in King's Cross, Tottenham Hale and the Queen Elizabeth Olympic Park; a high-density urban quarter in Surrey, British Columbia; and two landmark towers in central Moscow. The practice's exceptional contribution to housing design includes Accordia in Cambridge; Newhall Be, Harlow; and three phases of the South Kilburn regeneration.

Education and arts commissions include the recently completed Cohen Quad, Oxford, and in Cambridge, the Centre for Research in Children's Literature and a college art gallery. Private houses continue to serve as a focussed platform for the practice's design research.  
**[alisonbrooksarchitects.com](http://alisonbrooksarchitects.com)**

**Gort Scott** is an architecture and urban design practice founded in 2007 by Fiona Scott and Jay Gort, committed to designing environmentally sustainable, healthy, characterful places for people to live, work, and belong.

Gort Scott has experience designing and delivering low energy, BREEAM 'Excellent' Outstanding rated buildings, and has accredited Passivhaus designers.

The practice is passionately engaged in questions of strategic, inclusive growth in London. Recent projects by Gort Scott include a 25-hectare area plan in Leyton including over 5,000 new homes, town centre and employment on the edge of the Lea Valley; and Pudding Mill Lane, a new mixed-use neighbourhood with over 900 homes, 36,000m<sup>2</sup> of employment space, associated community spaces and public realm.

Gort Scott's residential portfolio also includes 100% affordable housing developments for Pocket Living, PA housing and Ealing Council.  
**[gortscott.com](http://gortscott.com)**

**Grant Associates** is a pioneering international landscape architecture practice. Our work reconnects people with nature in insightful, delightful and distinctive ways whilst addressing the global challenges of urbanisation, the climate crisis and biodiversity extinction. Our design process is underpinned by a knowledge of human behaviour, nature and ecological science, combined with innovative design technology. We bring original thinking and creative collaboration, and we are exploring what regenerative design and the circular economy mean to landscape architecture. Our varied portfolio includes ambitious large-scale, landmark projects through to small, local ventures.  
**[grant-associates.uk.com](http://grant-associates.uk.com)**



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