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Why create Living Villages?

We are committed to creating an attractive lifestyle that is also environmentally friendly. Our neighbourhoods are designed to promote conviviality, neighbourliness and a feeling of belonging.

'We call it 'a sense of place,' explains Bob Tomlinson, the director of Living Villages, 'an identifiable neighbourhood that people enjoy and feel at home in. Unlike most developers, we design neighbourhoods for people, not cars.'

The Wintles (our Living Village in Shropshire) is a good example of a pedestrian priority zone, where the residents can enjoy a protected, shared space and children can play safely.'





The village green

Living Villages are neighbourhoods of between thirty and one hundred houses. We build them in clusters around a shared space, so that the residents can easily get to know each other. The houses are generally centred around a village green, and car ports are positioned behind the houses.





Each neighbourhood has a variety of houses in styles and sizes to suit different household groups.

They are very different from anything that you can buy from ordinary house-builders.

We use local materials wherever possible, and incorporate architectural features that reflect the unique character of the area.

The result is that although the houses are built to the most modern of designs, they have a traditional feel that blends well with the local architecture.





'People want to live in Living Villages not just because the houses are beautiful and built to an exceptionally high standard,' says Bob.

'They also love the friendly atmosphere. I believe that we've succeeded in creating a unique combination of ultra-modern, energy-efficient building techniques with the feel of an established traditional village.'





Getting it right

Our eco-houses start their life in the right place, facing south towards the sun. Where possible, we plant trees around the edges of the site to give the houses protection and to shelter the wildlife habitat. There are also allotments for people who enjoy growing their own produce.

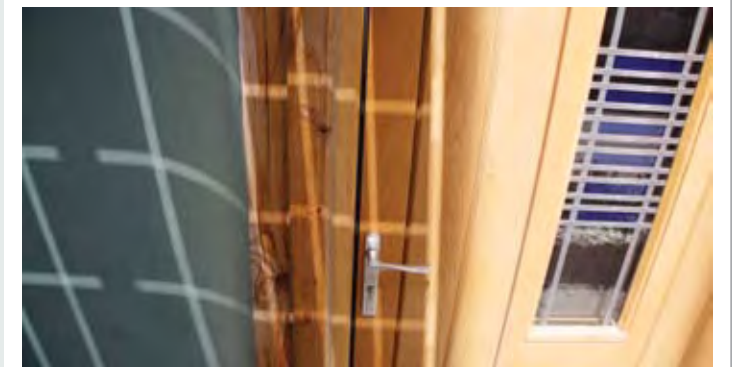
Our houses

Our houses range from two-bedroom cottages to three-storey, six-bedroom houses. Each one is unique. Features include oak flooring to the ground floor, provision for a wood-burning stove, and a choice of kitchens, bathrooms, floors and tiling.



Typical specification

- *Super-insulated engineered timber frame structure together with passive solar gain and internal thermal mass heat store*
- *High-performance draught-proof glazing and heat exchange units to further reduce energy use*
- *Active solar panels for hot water heating*
- *Optional photovoltaic solar panels for electricity production*
- *Highly efficient condensing boilers provide under-floor heating to ground floor and bathrooms*
- *Houses are plumbed ready for water recycling*
- *Natural, local and reclaimed materials reduce embodied energy use*
- *Non-toxic paints and varnishes*
- *Central vacuuming unit can also benefit allergy sufferers*



Mediterranean atmosphere

All our houses have large windows and many have sun spaces and internal balconies. The sunlight flooding into the houses and the warm, dry interiors give the feel of a Mediterranean climate.



A real fire

For cold spells, our houses are fitted with central heating systems. We've also installed flues for wood-burning stoves.



Free light and heat

We face the houses towards the sun and use high performance windows to draw in as much light and warmth as possible. We make the most of this free energy with high levels of insulation, draught-free building techniques and solar panels.



Heating and ventilation

Where fitted, mechanical heat recovery systems extract the warm, moist air from bathrooms and kitchens and take the heat out of it. The stale air is vented outside, then the collected heat is transferred to fresh air coming into the building and distributed to the bedrooms and living rooms at a constant, comfortable temperature.



Anti-allergy benefits

Air intake filters prevent dust from entering with the incoming fresh air, and the internal vacuum-cleaner systems extract dust from the house and vent it to the outside – particularly beneficial for asthma and hayfever sufferers.

Eco-friendly building

Producing and transporting building materials burns energy, so we use locally-sourced materials wherever possible. We use timber from sustainable sources and reclaimed building materials such as bricks, slates and roof tiles.



Flexible living

Living Villages houses are designed to be flexible and are ideally suited to those who want to work from home. Internal spaces are designed so that they can be used in a variety of ways to suit different requirements. The neighbourhoods are wired for broadband and other technological advances.



Quotes from Living Villages residents

"I believe that if you're going to make sustainable housing catch on, you've got to make it look sexy. Living Villages makes a very important contribution in that respect."

"We have an open studio at the top of the house. We had the option to use the space like that rather than have four bedrooms. It's a lovely creative space. A visitor once stood in the studio and said, 'You could never get depressed here.'"

"You can sit up on the top floor and watch the play of the light as it comes in from all the way round; it's magic, truly beautiful!"

"I've built four or five thousand houses in my time, but I've never wanted to live in a new house before. But these don't feel like new houses – with all the natural materials there's a lovely soft feel to them. This is the most beautiful house I've ever lived in."

"We love the house – and it's certainly doing what it says on the tin. Having been in our energy-efficient home for fifteen months, we are experiencing real savings on fuel."

"Living here has exceeded our expectations. It's so light and comfortable, with a nice ambient temperature. The heat exchange system is very good – it always feels warm when you come into the house. We have a log-burning stove for the winter evenings."

"The house is a lovely, calm, quiet place to live in. It's warm and cosy on frosty mornings, and the air quality is fantastic."

"I love my house – for such a small house it's very spacious. It's a bit like the Tardis. All my visitors comment on how the windows are angled to bring more light into the room, little details like that. And there's a lovely sun room. The loft conversion has made another massive room."



