

Laurieston Regeneration (Phase 1A), Glasgow

Challenge:

Help to establish a modern, slick design for the 200+ new homes that have been built as a part of the Laurieston Regeneration project in Glasgow. Laurieston – adjacent to New Gorbals on the South side of the River Clyde – was historically an important and vibrant community in the city centre. The area was cleared of its fine sandstone tenements in the mid-twentieth Century in an attempt to rehabilitate the over-crowding and poor living standards rife in the area. Three of the four tower blocks constructed in place of the tenements were demolished in 2012 to make way for the project.

Solution:

Following their reinterpretation of the original masterplan created by Urban Initiatives in 2004, Page \ Park, together with Elder and Cannon, have completed 201 affordable rented homes in a new layout of streets and mews settings. At its simplest, it builds on the urban character of Glasgow, comprising clearly defined blocks to reinforce the grid-like quality of the city. Its character follows a contemporary tenement form, with a variety of housing types – apartments, maisonettes and terraced houses – exploiting the rich possibilities of corners, southern aspect and courtyard environments. Each of the blocks fronting Margaret Street are notionally made up of a pair of apartment blocks at four and five stories, accessed via common stairwells following the traditional ‘close’ model of the city. Along Margaret Street, Page \ Park have replaced the ‘bay’ window typical of many Glasgow residential blocks with balconies ‘excavated’ into the depth of the wall, whilst a series of connected pavilion blocks extends north along Gorbals Street in stepped formation. These ‘tenement’ blocks are a careful balance of bold sculptural moves and the subtle, tactile articulation of red brick (a mixture of three solid colours) and timber, set back from the street with hedges and gardens defining the threshold of each entrance. The terraced courtyard blocks employ a rigorous scale and proportion to control and order the elevations, with deep covered recesses defining the entrances. A considered and limited palette of robust materials including carefully selected brick and cedar define Elder & Cannon blocks opposite the pristine white brick of the Page \ Park terraces, together framing protected courtyards to encourage a safe and secure outdoor environment. Beyond the new urban edge formed along Margaret Street, Elder and Cannon’s 4-storey apartment block stands as an object perceived in the round within a new parkland garden setting. The architecture responds to each condition through a rationale of window/wall to the street and balconies to the park whilst a recessed zone at the building edge forms an external ‘room’ for ground floor properties. The project has achieved a BREEAM EcoHomes standard of ‘Very Good’, combining a very thermally efficient building envelope with heat recovery systems and low energy lighting to create warm, comfortable homes that are cheap to run. The juxtaposition of the work of two architects, within a masterplanning and landscaping framework which exploits the quality of groundscape in relation to the buildings, was key to creating a landmark for the future development of the Laurieston area.

Architect: Elder + Cannon Architects

Brick:

Nevado Gee