

Construction begins on Blackford's first affordable homes in 60 years

WORK is underway on the first new social rent affordable homes to be built in Blackford in over 60 years.

Cala Homes (East) has started the process of building 12 energy efficient apartments that it will hand over to Wheatley Group on completion.

Forming a key part of Cala's new development at the former St Crispin's School in Blackford, the collection of 12 affordable homes includes two three-bedrooms, four two-bedrooms and six one-bedroom apartments.

Due to be completed and ready for occupation from Autumn 2025, the homes will be available for social rent and will increase supply in the area amid the recognised housing emergency declared by the city.

Stephen Faller, Land Manager with Cala Homes (East), said: "This is the sixth time that we have partnered with Wheatley Group, bringing a total of 149 affordable homes through planning and into reality, with more in the pipeline. This demonstrates the benefits of new build housing, with this site alone contributing over £300,000 to Education and Transport infrastructure via Section 75 contributions as well as our own Community Pledge which we will be rolling out locally.

"We look forward to investing in more sustainable developments in the city to support the delivery of much needed homes across all tenures. We are pleased to be delivering a range of one, two and three bed social rent apartments which will provide a brand new and energy efficient home for a wide range of residents, including families.

“With the recent housing emergency declared by City of Edinburgh Council, we look forward to getting to the stage where we can hand over the keys to the families and individuals who can start a fresh chapter in their new home.”

Ian Murray, MP for Edinburgh South – who recently visited the site – said: “City of Edinburgh Council were right to declare a housing emergency in November. 5,000 households in Edinburgh face homelessness each night with our housing market being put under immense pressure from the cost-of-living crisis and the fallout of the pandemic.

“It’s very welcome that this site will contain affordable units to help with this housing emergency and I hope the success of the St Crispin’s site will encourage developers to work with the Council and Social Landlord partners to deliver the affordable housing urgently needed to help young people and families across our city.”

The homes will be managed by Wheatley Homes East, part of Wheatley Group.

It is the sixth affordable housing project that Cala has started with Wheatley Group in Edinburgh and the Lothians in recent years, and follows a major development of 57 affordable homes in Penicuik, that was visited and praised by Scotland’s housing minister, Paul McLennan.

Wheatley Group Director of Development and Regeneration Lindsay Lauder said: “We’re delighted to start work on this exciting new development on the old school site.

“This is the first time in 60 years new homes for social rent will be built in the Blackford area of Edinburgh, and these will make a significant difference to the local community.

“Thank you to the Scottish Government, City of Edinburgh Council and Cala Homes for their support in bringing these homes to life.”

The development is being funded by £1.3m Scottish Government funding, managed by The City of Edinburgh Council, and £885k from Wheatley Group.

Housing Minister Paul McLennan said: “The right to a warm, safe and affordable home is critical to wellbeing and is a right everyone deserves. Wheatley Homes East plays a valuable role in increasing the range of housing available to rent throughout Scotland.

“The Blackford development, which the Scottish Government has supported with £1.3 million of funding, will enable Wheatley Homes East to provide 12 new high quality, energy efficient homes in the south of Edinburgh.

“High quality housing is a key pillar of Housing to 2040, whilst also eradicating fuel poverty and homelessness and ensuring everyone has access to green space and essential services. Wheatley Homes East plays a key role in building high-quality homes and I welcome the start on site for construction of these new affordable houses in Blackford.”

Cala’s wider St Crispin’s Court development will provide a variety of three and four-bedroom townhouses as well as a mix of one, two and three-bedroom apartments.

The development, which is due to launch its first homes to market in 2024, is a continuation of Cala’s commitment to the redevelopment of brownfield land in and around Edinburgh, following on from a raft of award-winning developments in Leith, Trinity, Liberton, Queensferry, Ratho and Newington.

In keeping with City of Edinburgh Council’s CityPlan 2030 vision for housing, the development will contain a number of active travel measures, including extensive cycle storage for private and affordable homes, as well as EV charging provision.

As a result of Cala’s purchase of the site, last February saw

pupils and staff at the former St Crispin's School, which caters for pupils aged four-18 with additional support needs, relocated to a new £12 million school on the site of the former Burdiehouse Primary School.

<https://www.cala.co.uk/st-crispins-edinburgh>

