

CONTRIBUTORS

CLAGUE ARCHITECTS

Design-led solutions to the big challenges

How to deliver jobs and houses are big challenges facing Kent. Andrew Clague, Senior Partner at multi-disciplinary practice Clague Architects in Canterbury, considers the question.

The issue that we must confront is the population of Kent and Medway will rise by almost 400,000 over the next 15 years. The challenge is how and where can we create the 170,000 new jobs to support 178,600 new homes?

What is needed is a holistic approach to Town Planning, designing these new communities. This can only be achieved by cohesively master planning places where people want to live, and where businesses can move to and grow in. This critically involves designing in education, retail and healthcare provision from the outset.

Housing-led

We've recently been appointed to create a vision for a mixed-use master plan in Corby, Northamptonshire, for Urban and Civic. This new community will consist of over 4,000 new homes, and importantly includes new schools and a commercial element to create a sustainable new 'urban extension' to Corby.

Our master planning team continues to work across the south-east with many of the nation's developers. Our scheme for Countryside Properties at Horsted Park in Chatham won a Kent Design & Development Award, also the mixed use development at Lady Dane Park at Faversham, where 200 homes for Crest Nicholson and the Vinson Trust are shortly to start on site; the commercial development was for Quinn Estates.

Small is beautiful

With local authorities under growing pressure to meet housing targets – particularly in light of the recently revised NPPF – there is increasing interest in dividing up larger developments into smaller schemes to bring them forward quicker. A great deal of design and technical aptitude is needed to quickly and appropriately deliver these schemes.

Our work with a number of smaller regional housebuilders is demonstrating the success of this approach, including Esquire Developments and Brookworth Homes, helping to bring forward a number of smaller sites. Most are under 25 units, which helps address the national housing shortage by quickly delivering new homes to match demand.

In the mix

We are encouraged that the Government is showing a renewed interest in the mix of residential development, as this is the only way to ensure that communities are sustainable.

Our experience in the affordable sector, including almshouses, is receiving significant attention from social housing providers and the wider industry. Our work on the 24 specialist apartments for the Royal British Legion Industries in Aylesford, saw the £4m project shortlisted for RICS and LABC awards.

This forms Phase 1 of the charity's new £18m Centenary Village in Aylesford. Our master plan was recently approved by Tonbridge & Malling Borough Council and will provide 100 homes across a range of types and sizes, new assisted living accommodation and a community hub.

Commercially-minded

Commercial developers are readily coming forward as well. Our design for Connect38 in Ashford is an 80,000ft² office

and retail development for Quinn Estates, and the first part of the Ashford Commercial Quarter. It has been very well received with more than 75% already let. There also remains a strong need for small industrial developments, with our commercial team working on a variety of schemes across Kent. We are confident that the demand for this type of development will continue to increase in the coming years.

Stronger together

Kent's home-grown talent has the skills to make it the place we all want. This requires that investors, developers, Town Planners and architects collaborate closely and sensitively with our communities.

The scale of growth required to satisfy demand is enormous. If we are going to deliver it we will need to work together, and quicker, than ever before.

Andrew Clague

Senior Partner, Clague Architects



Horsted Park scheme, Chatham.