

Marmalade Lane - CB4 2ZE

New-build cohousing development combining environmental wellbeing and community

Meet your hosts at Marmalade Lane

Completed in December 2018, K1 Cohousing on Marmalade Lane in Orchard Park is a development with very high environmental standards, a key aim of the members of the group, who were involved at all stages of the development. A twice winner of the Cambridge News Property Award for Environmental Build of the Year, Cambridge Cohousing Ltd is the residential management company, with all home owners as directors. As residents, the group have responsibility for the running of the community and the management of the buildings and extensive shared areas. In addition to their own home, residents have access to a large shared garden and common house, spare bedrooms, amenity rooms, office, laundry, workshop and gym.

Development consortium

This is an innovative 'enabled' cohousing build, the first of its kind in the UK. With the help of Cambridge City Council, who owned the land, the group produced a brief for developers prior to a developer selection process. With Cambridge City Council they went on to select TOWNhus, who are a collaboration between developers TOWN, in consortium with closed frame construction provider Trivselhus, and MOLE Architects, an Open Eco Homes sponsor. The build has been constructed by Coulson, a Cambridge based building company.

What is cohousing?

Cohousing communities are not communes: everyone has their own private home, their own front door and their own garden or balcony. But each household also benefits from extra shared facilities and spaces that allow – but don't require – members to do things together. Living in a cohousing community brings a few extra responsibilities, but many more benefits.

By pooling resources such as tools and equipment, and by acting collectively, cohousing communities gain more control over their environment. Residents of cohousing projects have a shared desire for the belonging, neighbourliness and mutual support which many people feel is missing from modern life, and contemporary housing developments. With a lighter environmental footprint, sharing resources also generally saves energy and carbon.

A number of the properties are being monitored under the Building for 2050 government initiative to assess the environmental efficiency of a fabric first approach to energy conservation and lower carbon build <https://www.buildingfor2050.co.uk/>. This project runs until March 2020.

More than just a house.

The development has 42 houses with shared facilities. These facilities have meant that many buyers have bought houses or apartments that can be more compact if they choose. The Common House enables residents to share meals and events, choosing to be social if they wish. Above all it is an intentional community of neighbours, welcoming and inclusive.



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How will the homes be low carbon?

The homes are constructed of highly insulated timber framed panels manufactured in the Trivselhus factory in Sweden. Wall, floor and roof U-values will be around 0.18. Factory manufacture enables high standards of air tightness to be achieved. Triple-glazed windows and doors will be built into the panels in the factory.

The grouping of the 42 dwellings into four 3-storey blocks gives compact building forms with a high ratio of volume to surface area, whilst still allowing for extensive glazing, giving light interiors and minimising the need for artificial light. South East and West facing glazing will enable the collection of solar heat during the winter months.

The homes will have a low requirement for heating which will be provided by air source heat pumps and ventilated by mechanical ventilation with heat recovery (MVHR). No gas is used on site; this is the choice of residents, who will be able to buy their energy from 100% renewable suppliers.

Appliances and lifestyle changes

Low-energy lighting is fitted, and water fittings have low water usage. Car parking is provided (1.25 spaces per household, less than normal standards) and the group expects to have a car-share scheme to make it easier for households to manage without cars. The development is well placed for public transport, being by the guided busway and with Cambridge North station within easy reach. There is extensive storage for bicycles.

Future plans

All roofs are designed to support PV panels, thus making it straightforward to retrofit PV later. Several households are already planning to install PV.

Photo credits: Jan Chadwick.

K1 cohousing on Marmalade Lane, CB4 2ZE 2019 Case Study 2
Open Eco Homes, openecohomes.org is a project of
Cambridge Carbon Footprint, charity number 1127376

Age: New build

Type: Terrace houses and flats

Wall type: Manufactured panel and CLT

Floor area: Varies

Cost of project: Not applicable

Occupants: 42 homes. Occupancy varies.

Key features

Insulation and glazing

- Manufactured, insulated panels
- High standards of insulation throughout
- Wall, floor and roof U-values ≈ 0.18
- Triple-glazed windows and doors built into the factory manufactured panels.
- South-, east- and west- facing glazing for winter solar thermal gain
- Large glazing areas for light interiors and to cut down on lighting

Heating/energy

- No gas on site
- Air source heat pumps
- Mechanical ventilation with heat recovery

Water

- Fittings chosen for low water use

Other

- Shared garden, workshop and common house

Key contacts

Contact: K1 Cambridge
www.cambridge-k1.co.uk

Developer: TOWN
www.wearetown.co.uk

Builder and panel house manufacturer: Trivselhus
www.trivselhus.se

Architects: Mole
www.molearchitects.co.uk

