

Visit to Golding Homes Sheltered Housing, Rosemary Gardens, Maidstone

Our visit was on 17 March, and was co-ordinated in conjunction with Remade South East, who were running a sustainability event in Ashford on the same day.

The 18 new homes were constructed to Code Level 3 using Beco-form polystyrene blocks, some members relapsed into childhood Lego mode as soon as they saw the samples brought to site.

The design is quite brave for sheltered housing, with interesting mono pitched roofs, timber cladding and brick plinth. Each unit has a gas boiler and MVHR located in the roof void.

It was very useful having both Beco and the main contractor, Rydens at the meeting. Beco gave a presentation showing how their system can be used to achieve up to Passivhaus levels of insulation, using their PHI certified system. The system is extremely well designed, it can accommodate window rebates to reduce thermal bridging, every detail has been considered. Rydens reported that it was very efficient in use, with very little waste.

I am concerned that these systems use the two worst materials known - concrete and plastic, which many AECB members try hard to avoid. Jon Rowlands of Beco withstood my questioning, retorting that they are investigating alternatives to the 30N concrete through 2 universities. I felt it was a shame that none of the roofs faced south for future solar panel installations.

After the meeting 2 AECB members demonstrated their 'Eco-flow' system, which compliments Beco-type systems, reducing the volume of concrete needed in a floor. If these 'high embodied energy' materials are going to be used, then at least these two systems do so with great efficiency.



It was refreshing to hear the contractor state he would happily repeat this work again, and could easily achieve higher standards of airtightness, and that the client felt similarly.

Many thanks to Golding Homes and Remade for helping organise this visit.

Paul Mallion