

News

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Next 250 homes 'top out' at Bristol's Wapping Wharf

Construction work has now reached a major milestone on creating over 250 new homes at Wapping Wharf by Bristol Harbourside, as the structures of the buildings reach their full height.

To mark this landmark moment, the main partners behind the project from both the private and public sector gathered today to celebrate with a traditional 'topping out' ceremony. To mark the main structures of the buildings reaching their highest levels, the final bolt was tightened into place on one of the rooftops and the partners signed their names on the steel rooftop structures.

Over the past few months, Abel Yard and Hope Quay, the two large buildings that will house the next 256 homes, have taken shape on the harbour skyline and the superstructures are now complete. Rising to five and six floors respectively, the development includes a range of one, two and three-bed apartments.

As work progresses, most of the windows are now in place, work to put the slates on the signature sloped roofs is well underway and the construction teams have started work on the interiors of the apartments, dry lining the walls.

Wapping Wharf Living is a joint venture between developers Umberslade and Muse. International infrastructure company Balfour Beatty, which is building this phase of the regeneration scheme, has been working closely with the development team on the delivery of the project for the past two and a half years.

In keeping with the historic dockside location and the phase one design, the new development has the same industrial wharf-like character. Many of the one, two and three-bedroom apartments have balconies overlooking the new street scenes or internal garden courtyards. Airy vaulted ceilings and terraces feature in many of the top floor apartments.

The restored early 19th century, Grade II listed Gaol Gate is set to become an impressive new public entrance to Wapping Wharf, opening onto a square, flanked by residents' communal gardens. Four new retail units (comprising 659m²) will be created along a new road being constructed through the centre of the site. The architects, Alec French, also designed the previous homes at Wapping Wharf.

The open market one, two and three-bedroom apartments were launched to the market at the beginning of September. A marketing suite and show apartment have opened along Museum Street at Wapping Wharf to give potential buyers a chance to see for themselves the internal finishes that will be used in the development.

Duncan Cumberland, residential development director at Muse Developments, said: "We're delighted to reach this landmark moment on the second phase of Wapping Wharf with the development reaching its highest point. It's also a perfect opportunity to come together with our partners to celebrate this important milestone at the scheme, that has accelerated the delivery of over 250 homes for the city, and further add to the eclectic, vibrant community here. It's these kind of strong, open partnerships, with a mutual understanding and a shared vision, that can achieve real, transformational regeneration.

"We've had an incredibly positive response to our recent market launch, particularly from local

people who are already familiar with Wapping Wharf and we look forward to welcoming them to their new home when the scheme completes.”

Stuart Hatton, managing director at Umberslade, said: “This is another key moment for Wapping Wharf and we recognise the commitment and hard work it has taken from the construction teams to get this second phase to this stage.

“I’m really looking forward to growing our neighbourhood and enabling more people to live here and enjoy what I believe is a very special part of Bristol.”

The mayor of Bristol, Marvin Rees, who secured the last bolt on the steel beam of the building’s rooftop, added: “The partners here behind Wapping Wharf are helping us solve one of Bristol’s biggest challenges. Delivering homes is the key policy tool for us for social justice, health and education outcomes and economic stability and I thank you for making this happen and being focused on delivery. I look forward to more cranes on the horizon.”

Wapping Wharf Living has secured £23.4 million funding from Homes England towards phase two, to enable the creation of over 250 new homes. The support comes from Homes England’s Home Building Fund, which provides loans to help unlock or accelerate the delivery of residential and mixed-use housing developments.

Of the 256 homes currently being built at Wapping Wharf, 93 will be sold to Sovereign Housing Association, 49 of which will be for shared ownership and the rest for private rent. The remaining 172 apartments will be for private sale. After completion of these first 256 new homes, a further 81 affordable homes will be constructed separately as part of phase two.

Gareth Blacker, from Homes England, said: “Homes England is hugely excited by the potential for new homes in Bristol and we want to use our land, finance and expertise to speed up the delivery of new homes. We have previously supported the award winning first phase of the Wapping Wharf scheme and the £23.4m loan through our Home Building Fund will help transform this stalled site, creating 256 new homes in the city centre.

“I am pleased we have also provided affordable housing funding to enable Sovereign Housing to provide 49 homes for shared ownership, in addition to the 81 affordable homes that will be provided by Liverty.”

Wapping Wharf is widely acknowledged as one of Bristol’s best-regarded new neighbourhoods, with nearly 200 homes already complete and occupied, alongside a new retail quarter featuring some of the city’s best independent shops, restaurants, cafes and other businesses.

The flourishing new dockside community includes the city’s first retail hub made of converted shipping containers, CARGO, which has become a major attraction for locals and tourists alike, reflecting the independent, creative spirit for which Bristol has become famous.

A pedestrian and cycle route lined with more independent retailers, Gaol Ferry Steps, has become a popular choice for people travelling and commuting between South Bristol and the city centre and a strong focal point for local people to gather and relax.

Dave Smith, Balfour Beatty’s Regional Managing Director for the South of England, said: “We are delighted to have accomplished this key milestone at Wapping Wharf. Utilising our wealth of experience in delivering residential schemes, we look forward to completing this exciting regeneration project which will provide the local community with a new neighbourhood in the heart

of Bristol.”

Tony Quigley, home ownership director for Sovereign, said: “We’re really excited to be involved in this second phase of work at Wapping Wharf, and the opportunity to provide affordable housing on this prestigious development is one we’ve seized with both hands. Ensuring that new developments offer a balanced mix of tenures is an essential part of shaping flourishing neighbourhoods, and opportunities like this one highlight Sovereign’s long-term commitment to creating thriving communities. Above all, we’ve genuinely enjoyed working with the excellent developers Muse and Umberslade and look forward to working on future projects together.”

Construction works on phase two are expected to complete in 2020. At the peak stages of construction, the programme will employ over 250 people, including multiple apprenticeship and graduate positions.

The new private sale homes have been launched to market, with more details available at www.wappingwharfliving.co.uk/