

News

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Work gets underway on building over 250 new homes at Bristol's Wapping Wharf

Construction work is underway on creating over 250 new homes at Wapping Wharf by Bristol Harbourside, widely regarded as one of the city's most exciting new neighbourhoods.

Following ground preparation works, and with the construction of a retaining wall to support the historic Bristol Gaol well underway, work is now progressing on the new homes.

On Friday (14th September) concrete was poured for the first section of the first floor superstructure, which will make up the ceilings of the ground floor apartments and the floors of the first floor homes. By the first half of 2019, passers-by will see the building take shape on the city's skyline.

To mark this landmark moment, the main partners behind the project gathered to celebrate and took to a digger and help get this phase of work underway.

Wapping Wharf Living, a joint venture between developers Umberslade and Muse, 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.

International infrastructure company Balfour Beatty, which is building this phase of the regeneration scheme, has been working closely with the Wapping Wharf Living team for the past 18 months on the delivery of the project and has been on site for several months, preparing the way for the emergence of the new homes.

Phase two will consist of two blocks of residential buildings, providing 256 homes. Most of the one, two and three-bedroom apartments will be offered for sale on the open market, with 93 being sold to Sovereign Housing Association, 49 of which will be shared ownership housing and the remainder for private rent.

Duncan Cumberland, residential development director at Muse Developments, said: "It's very exciting to see further progress at Wapping Wharf and come together with partners to mark this latest phase, which will continue to build a vibrant, new community in Bristol.

"Bringing the best of the public and private sector together has enabled us to create a scheme that both blends well into the local landscape and has an affordable element, making these homes accessible to all."

Stuart Hatton, managing director at Umberslade, said: "Wapping Wharf has won a place in Bristol's heart in a way we only dared dream of a few years ago. So I'm really excited to be getting underway with phase 2, creating more much-needed homes. This second phase will see Wapping Wharf continue to evolve as a creative, dynamic neighbourhood that honours the spirit of Bristol."

Catherine Dixon, senior specialist, Infrastructure & Complex Projects, at Homes England, said: "We are proud to have been involved in building a new neighbourhood, and this loan is a great example of the Home Building Fund's objective to support and create more SME developers to help diversify the market. The Homes England loan will transform phase 2 of this site into 256 family homes.

“We are committed to working with partners to secure the delivery of new homes where they are most needed and are pleased to have funded this project as part of Homes England's commitment to increasing the supply of affordable homes.”

James Gibson, development director for Sovereign Housing Association added: “The first phase of Wapping Wharf was a huge success for us, providing housing for market rent. We’re understandably excited to continue our successful working relationship with the other partners to create homes for market rent and shared ownership in such an exciting and well-connected area. It’s great to be able to offer additional quality homes in such a top choice location for local people in housing need.”

The early 19th Century, Grade II listed Gaol Gate and gaol wall structures, which have already been stabilised, will act as a pedestrian feature entrance to the residential buildings, which will reflect the history and character of the area. Four new retail units (comprising 659m²) will be created along a new road being constructed through the centre of the site.

After completion of these first 256 new homes a further 81 affordable homes will be constructed separately as part of phase two. This is in addition to the 49 in shared ownership being provided through Sovereign. Taken together, this means 38.5% of the total number of new homes in phase two will meet the local authority’s definition of affordable.

Cllr Paul Smith, Bristol City Council commented: “The new phase of development at Wapping Wharf is an example of what can be achieved when developers, partners and the Council work closely together to meet Bristol’s housing needs.

“Providing nearly 40% affordable housing - significantly more than was required in the planning consent - is quite an achievement for the developers and partners, and sets the bar for what is possible on a city centre site.”

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 new 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.

Mark Brazington, Balfour Beatty project and operations director, said: “We are delighted to celebrate this major milestone with works now underway to the first residential apartment block in one of Bristol’s most exciting new neighbourhoods.

“Utilising our extensive knowledge in delivering residential schemes locally in Bristol, and more widely across the UK, we are looking forward to providing Wapping Wharf Living and the local community alike with a first class facility, linking the south of Bristol with the city centre.”

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 homes are set to come on the market in 2019 but prospective buyers can register their interest at www.wappingwharfliving.co.uk.