

## Wichelstowe Blog June 2017 – Space and light....

Another key planning milestone has been achieved this month with the canal improvements in the District Centre receiving detailed planning permission. Our attention has also moved to the delivery stage with preparations underway to start the tender process for the road and canal contractors. With so much activity planned to be underway by the end of the year we have also been speaking to the various developers involved to ensure we coordinate all the development work.

Preparations are continuing on the school site with archaeological trenches being dug to investigate the areas which were previously inaccessible. Once these are complete there will be a short pause whilst all the planning, legal agreements and contracts are put in place, but we are anticipating that school construction will start on site in August.



The most exciting progress this month relates to our plans for the first housing parcels which will be either side of the canal, to the north of the Waitrose store. We have decided to deliver these first houses ourselves working with architects and a main contractor in order to deliver a quality product that is a bit different to the types of new housing being delivered elsewhere in the town.

The plan is to build the kind of homes that people really want. Research shows that people value space, light and flexibility when buying a home and we're making sure that we do this by building bigger properties with larger windows and making the very best of the fantastic canalside location with its unique views.



This will be one of the highest density areas of the site, close to the District Centre and other facilities, making it an ideal place to start building a sense of place, community and identity. We're excited about the potential of Wichelstowe, but we are also proud of Swindon and of the great heritage of terraced properties in Old Town and the railway village which have influenced our layout.

Traditional terraces are very popular because they offer great space, more light and give the ability to adapt and extend. Our designs have therefore looked to keep the best of the traditional designs but bring them up to date to support modern ways of living.

One interesting fact we have uncovered when developing our plans is that the British property market tends to market homes on the basis of the number of rooms rather than the actual size of the properties.

Our research has identified a vast difference between the size of two and three bed properties being delivered and we will therefore be including the square meterage (and square footage) of all our properties so buyers are as informed as they can be when making a purchasing decision. Some new build housing is designed to just meet the minimum space standards but in these first parcels we have looked to exceed this and deliver more spacious homes.



We are still refining the plans but these illustrations give a sneak peak as to the sort of designs which are emerging. The planning application will be submitted in July so we will provide a fuller update next month. Watch this space!

Now that we are getting closer to the first houses coming out of the ground we have also been reviewing the Wichelstowe branding and marketing strategy. The original Wichelstowe brand was first developed in the early 2000's and we have decided to give this a refresh to coincide with the start of the next phase of development. You will start to see this appearing over the coming months and we will provide a further update in next month's blog.

Finally, we wanted to provide some advance warning that we will be closing a section of the footpath along the canal during July, south of Beavans Bridge. It is proving increasingly difficult to maintain the ecological fencing with the amount of public access in this area and we have had to take this decision to minimise the risk of the fencing being damaged. This will be a short term disruption to enable this section of canal and footpath to be improved which will allow the route to be enjoyed for many years to come.