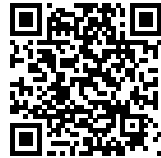




UNIVERSITY KEY WORKER HOUSING: 232 AFFORDABLE HOUSING UNITS

Posted on May 4, 2020 by martabuges



Categories: [Mecanoo](#), [Middle Density](#), [Project](#), [Territory and mobility](#), [Urban Paradigms](#)

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The North West Cambridge Development (NWCD) transforms a 150-hectare site of University of Cambridge farmland into a community with residential buildings, academic facilities, public amenities and open green space. Mecanoo worked alongside NWCD to deliver 232 affordable housing units for researchers and key university employees.

ISSN : 2575-5374

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New layer

Cambridge is a city contextualised through the layering of architectural inventions over the centuries. This has resulted in a unique composition of urban space, architecture and landscape. Mecanoo's design adds a new layer to this, building upon the rich traditions and collegiate character of Cambridge.

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Public - private

To create a strong sense of community the relation between the public and private realm has been carefully reconsidered. The characteristic Cambridge variation of enclosed and open spaces, alternating between formal and informal groupings of buildings, is a departure point for the design that activates the courtyards and creates different connections between the dwellings and the communal area.

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Courtyards

The two internal courtyards with lawn, flower fields, raised decks, planters, fruit trees and urban furniture are sheltered by galleries forming covered outside community spaces. Apartments are grouped around spacious central halls flooded with daylight, all leading to the courtyards.

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Communal identity

The central building is the visual and communal focal point of the development and acts as a spine to the site. Covered exterior space in the heart of the development forms a modern interpretation of the Cambridge colonnades and arcades. Locating the community facilities along the public route through the block facilitates the development of a communal identity, whilst reaffirming that sense of being part of a much larger academic collective.

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Sustainability

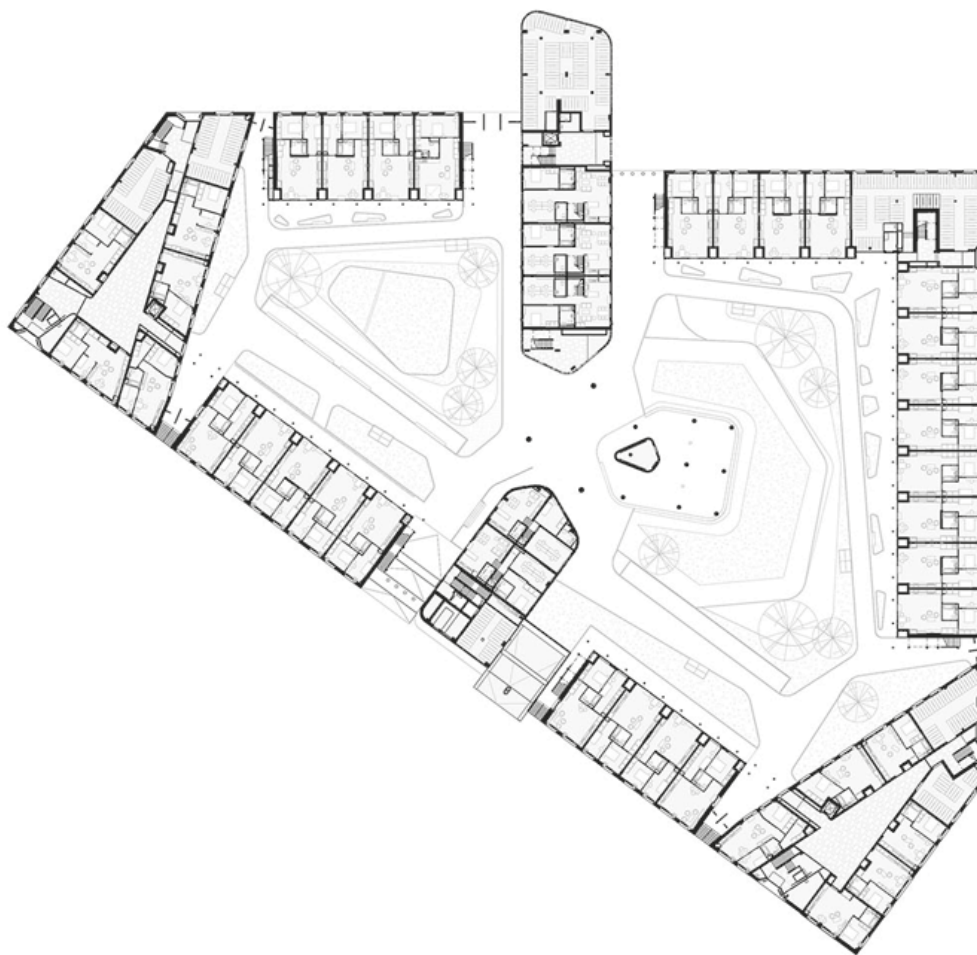
The design complies with Code For sustainable Homes Level 5. This was achieved by creating compact, efficient volumes with high performance Fabric Energy Efficiency, good internal daylight performance, bespoke assisted natural ventilation for night-time cooling, large array of PV cells on the roofs, district heating, a site wide rainwater attenuation strategy including a grey water system and collective gardens that increase the biodiversity.

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