



CONTRACTS TO CREATE OVER 150 NEW HOMES GET 2020 OFF TO A BRISK START

Housing at Medburn
Park is progressing well

IT'S A HIVE OF ACTIVITY AT SURGO AS WE BEGIN A NEW DECADE WITH CONTRACTS SPANNING SIX SITES TO CREATE OVER 150 NEW DWELLINGS IN THE PRIVATE, AFFORDABLE AND CHARITABLE SECTORS.

In Sacriston, Co Durham, we have been appointed by Karbon Homes to build 19 two-bedroom bungalows for affordable rent at its Uphill Drive site. Valued at around £2.2m, we are hoping to start on site in February.

An earlier project for Karbon Homes, which we started in late 2019 will create 13 self-contained flats for use by Stoppagap Supported Housing for people in challenging circumstances.

Within the private sector, work is due to begin on the £3m Southfields development at Acklington for Buchanan Estates. Here, we are building 16 homes - six four-bed detached homes, eight three-bed semis and two two-bedroom bungalows - on the former site of RAF Acklington, which is 8.8 miles north east of Morpeth and within beautiful open countryside.

Our project for Willow Homes, on the £6.2m Nursery Gardens development in Stannington for 34 units, is almost 70 per cent through its construction programme. Sixty per cent of the first release of homes is now sold or reserved and the affordable element is due for market release imminently.

At Medburn, a much larger development of 50 executive homes with seven different house types built over four phases, we are now on the final phase with completion anticipated around early autumn. Some houses are already sold and occupied.

We are also making good progress on a £6m scheme in Ponteland which entails the refurbishment and redevelopment of 23 existing listed buildings to create 17 four and five-bedroom homes and six apartments/maisonettes at the top end of the market.

Martin Blight, director, said: "All in all, it's a great start to the year - if not the decade. We are delighted to be able to add to our extensive housing experience with this varied portfolio of North East projects.

"It is also pleasing that we can draw on our experience of working on listed buildings, which was a key factor in our appointment at Ponteland, where we are anticipating programme completion of current works by this summer, with future works moving into 2021."

A LETTER FROM THE CHAIRMAN

As we embark on a new decade, I make no apology for taking time to look back over the last decade and reflect on our achievements as a company.

The recession years, between 2008 and 2013, certainly took their toll on all regional businesses, but within the NE construction sector, it was particularly noticeable. Throughout periods of challenge, the strength of the bonds that unite the workforce, together with a positive team spirit, are paramount in keeping companies on track. This sense of purpose certainly got us through at Surgo.

It is therefore fitting that I pay tribute to the contributions made by the 11 members of staff whose long service awards during 2019 collectively amounted to an amazing 350 years of employment with Surgo! The loyalty demonstrated by our staff is gratifying and I would personally like to thank you all for your ongoing support.

I am also pleased to see that we acknowledge the contribution of John Robson and his small works team in this edition. Over a staggering 45 years with Surgo, John has continued to provide a tremendous service for his small works clients and the repeat business that comes his way is proof that his clients also rate him highly. Thank you 'Roxy' and senior quantity surveyor, Andy Rae.

There will always be challenges to face within the construction industry - whether financial, economic, environmental or skills-led - but hopefully, our close relationships both internally and externally with our supply chains, will ensure a bright future for the company.

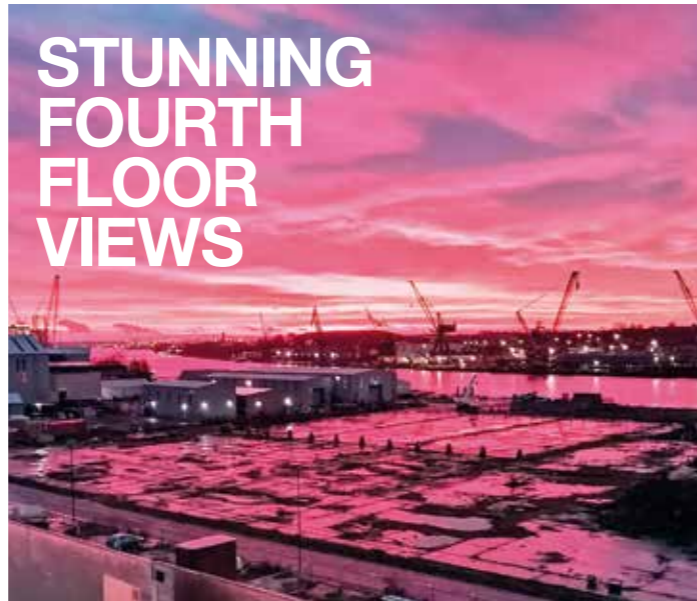
Best wishes and good health to you all in 2020.

Kind regards,

Ian Walker
Chairman



NEWS IN BRIEF



STUNNING FOURTH FLOOR VIEWS

Occupiers who are fortunate enough to move into the fourth floor offices in the newly refurbished Swans Centre for Innovation (CFI), Wallsend, will undoubtedly benefit from some of the most stunning riverside views when they take time to look up from their screens or take a stroll along the canopied balcony immediately outside the office windows where we have just installed the glass balustrade.

We are currently refurbishing the 940 square metres of former office and residential accommodation to create flexible office space for up to 10 businesses, along with a new car park and reconfiguration of the reception area.

There's likely to be huge competition for a window seat!

SURGO SAFEGUARDS BADGERS

Surgo has enabled badgers to maintain their habitat near their development site at Medburn by joining forces with E3 Ecology (E3) to safeguard those that were on-site, after they were found to be close to piling work being carried out.

Instead of applying for a licence to move the badgers, Surgo and E3 designed a way of encouraging the badgers to find a new home. The process involved cutting down harmful vegetation, creating new doors for the new badger sett and using badger gates.

The process took about two months to complete and was monitored using cameras to ensure the sett was empty before we began the piling work.

We're now happy to report that the badgers have settled nicely into their new homes 300 yards along the hedgerow and construction work is proceeding well at Medburn!



Roxy and Stevie Reed at the Draeger site in Blyth

John Robson, affectionately known as Roxy - and renowned for breaking into song at the most unlikely moments - celebrated 45 years with Surgo in 2019 and has worked on projects for one of the region's foremost brands, Procter & Gamble, for every single one of them.

In fact, he was working on the tools when the company secured its first project - a lab and office refurbishment.

A familiar face at Procter & Gamble's Longbenton and Cobalt Business Park sites, there is little in the way of small works in which he has not been involved - screeding floors, cutting tiles for use in the test labs, re-roofing works, pipe boxing, erecting break out concrete upstands and hanging doors.

Supported by QS, Andy Rae and joiner, Stevie Reed, he has tackled some large works too, such as a full refurbishment of the Trident lab at Longbenton, which was a major undertaking and involved working with a carefully selected supply chain.

THE SMALL WORKS WIZARD IS STILL WORKING HIS MAGIC

His schedule is so busy that it is often difficult for Roxy to fit in a visit to head office.

Currently, he can be found at Blyth, installing pre-cast concrete trenches on behalf of his other big client, Draeger Safety UK, which manufactures medical and safety technology products used throughout the world. Draeger is installing a new conveyor system which requires new cabling for the power supply. With the internal works already complete, soon it will be time for the big switch on.

Most of Roxy's work comes through word of mouth - Arcinova (formerly Sanofi) is another client - and the small works team has also won a place on the MoD's Landmark Framework a few months ago.

Roxy has worked on projects for Draeger for 15 years and really enjoys it because Draeger treat him and the team as if they were their own employees, so Roxy always feels valued for his contribution and workmanship.

Over the years he has earned a solid reputation for his attention to detail and his reluctance to hand over any contract if there is the smallest detail not quite right - which is one of the reasons why he will soon be off down the road again, on Draeger's insistence, this time to Plymouth, to refurbish some office accommodation.



It looks like another busy year ahead for Roxy and his team!



Gillian Lamb (left) from F+G with Bernie Adams, Surgo's HR manager, (far right) plus representatives from Children North East.

SUCCESSFUL CHRISTMAS APPEALS

Thank you all for your very generous donations for our Christmas appeal.

A massive 347 food items were collected and 91 advent calendars so a huge **438** donations in total were made from everyone in Albany Court and from our sites. This number exceeded the 382 items collected last year and the Children North East charity was most grateful. The donated items were made up into food parcels and distributed to struggling families in the area.

Additionally, we raised **£355** through various fundraising activities to buy Christmas dinners for the many homeless and vulnerable people who attend The People's Kitchen in central Newcastle.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

THERE ARE SO MANY LONG SERVICE AWARDS TO ANNOUNCE SINCE OUR LAST NEWSLETTER, WE APOLOGISE THAT WE ONLY HAVE ROOM TO MENTION EVERYONE BY NAME.

M BRAYSON	30 YEARS
J CHARLTON	30 YEARS
K WARD	35 YEARS
S SHOEMAKER	30 YEARS
D THACKER	25 YEARS
J ROBSON	45 YEARS
T CLOUGH	25 YEARS
D WRIGHT	35 YEARS
P GRAHAM	35 YEARS
J ALEXANDER	30 YEARS
L DUKE	30 YEARS
I WALKER	35 YEARS

THIS IS AN IMPRESSIVELY LONG LIST OF LOYAL EMPLOYEES. THANK YOU ALL FOR YOUR SERVICE.



Chairman, Ian Walker, receives his long service award for 35 years

ARRIVALS

Throughout 2019 we added to our skilled on-site workforce with six new joiners, a labourer and a bricklayer.

RETIREMENTS

Two long-serving members of staff left Surgo recently. Harry Birkbeck, site foreman and Stu McDougal, senior site manager had both been with Surgo for many years - 29 and 37 years respectively. We wish them long and happy retirements.

STOP PRESS!

Surgo has been appointed by global pharmaceutical company, Merck Sharp and Dohme to undertake a factory refurbishment at its Cramlington site.