

Straw homes given go-ahead!



Planning permission has been granted for the first council houses in the country to be made from straw

North Kesteven District Council has approved the application for a two pairs of semi-detached houses to be built at West Grove, Martin.

These three bedroom family homes will look like conventional brick built properties, and be the first 'typical affordable council houses' to be built by a local authority using strawbale construction.

The houses have been designed by Amazonails from Todmorden, West Yorkshire. North Kesteven Building Control have been working with Amazonails on the project.

Locally sourced materials and labour will be used through a preferred contractor.

The properties will be built using straw bales as the structural element, which is unusual, but the most sustainable way of construction. Walls will be plastered with lime and have conventional windows and roofs.

Because of the high insulation values of straw – the properties will be up to three times better insulated than the Building Regulations require. They will not need heating systems, however, wood burning stoves will be installed for very cold weather.

Work is set to begin on the homes very soon, and once construction begins, people will have the opportunity to come and watch it take place. The council will also be working with the existing users of the site and will be talking to local people about the plans.

Leader of North Kesteven District Council, Councillor Mrs Marion Brighton, said: "I am very pleased that planning permission has been granted for the straw houses and I am very much looking forward to seeing them being built.

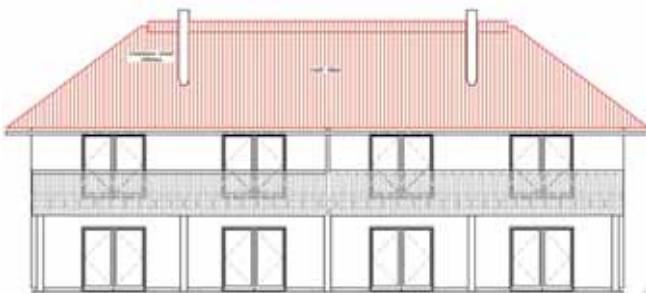
"The District Council not only hopes to share its expertise and knowledge with other organisations, but also with residents by inviting them to come and watch the whole process of the houses being built.

"BECAUSE OF THE HIGH INSULATION VALUES OF STRAW – THE PROPERTIES WILL BE UP TO THREE TIMES BETTER INSULATED THAN BUILDING REGULATIONS REQUIRE"

"The straw houses are the first of their kind to be used as social housing in the country and are one of the ways the District Council is providing much needed affordable housing."

The houses will be allocated through the normal North Kesteven District Council register and housing allocation scheme. As a pilot project, the District Council has set a budget of £110,000 per home.

This is approximately £20,000 less than a traditional brick-built property of the same size and design.



The new houses will be allocated through the normal North Kesteven District Council register and housing allocation scheme