

DESIGN FOR LIFE

Wayne and Gerardine Hemingway's latest housing project aims to have people heading for the hills.

Their first development had people camping out overnight to secure one of their forward thinking homes, but can husband and wife design team, Wayne and Gerardine Hemingway, recreate that same magic on their home turf?

When Wayne Hemingway criticised the 'Wimpeyfication and Barratification of Britain' blaming new developments of 'soulless identikit housing' on modern developers, rather than run and hide, housebuilders Wimpey threw down the gauntlet.

They invited the pair behind legendary brand Red or Dead and now House of Hemingway, to see if they could do any better.

And it turns out they could. Working alongside Wimpey they came up with Staiths, a 750 house development in Gateshead that had people queuing overnight to snap one up and won a string of awards including Development of the Year in 2006.

Since then they have embarked on a string of housing developments including award winning ones in Kings Lynn, Maidenhead, Aylesbury, Dartford and Manchester.

Fast forward to today and the couple now hope to create that same excitement generated by Staiths with Green Hills, a development of 167 family homes and a proposed community building in Blackburn, where Wayne went to school and the couple opened their first factory.

"We have been hoping to get the chance to design houses in the area we grew up for some time, he said.

"Years ago we got close to getting the chance to work on another site but unfortunately it didn't come to fruition but Green Hills is worth the wait. This is a site with the scale and in a position to be able to deliver something wonderful and be a credit to a place that we owe a great upbringing to."





As before, they are teaming up with architectural practice, the IDPartnership, another husband and wife team who share their vision of championing quality of life, and Kingswood Homes, a Preston based developer.

And as with previous projects, Green Hills in South East Blackburn will incorporate the principles that Wayne and Gerardine first developed at Staiths following an international tour of exemplar housing projects.

They were particularly inspired by modern housing in northern Europe and the Nordic countries; ones that put people before profit and even ahead of architecture, by making the landscape, pedestrians, play areas and cyclists central to the design.

As a result, Green Hills will prioritise walking and cycling, with cars hidden away in garages or carports and greenspaces taking centre stage with two communal areas or 'village greens' for residents to share.

The rural landscape is also given prominence with the addition of green routes (walkways of naturalistic planting and landscaping) running

throughout, an area of woodland and the prioritisation of views to the West Pennine Moors and landmarks such as Darwen Tower.

"We have the ability on this site to make a home more than just a roof over your head," said Wayne.

"Green Hills Blackburn is blessed with views and access to magnificent countryside, parks and waterways. That ability to enjoy the outdoors can begin the second you step out of your door and will make a massive difference to the quality of life for residents."

Design details also take care not to compete but to compliment the semi-rural surrounding area with materials referencing the distinctive Pennine Lancashire stone walls and buildings and the area's agricultural heritage with houses arranged in courtyard formations as if in traditional farmstead.

"The design stems from our long term crusade to prove that through intelligent design thinking, creative use of materials and sheer hard work it is possible to deliver places to live that debunk the criticism that all new housing in this country is inferior to what was built in the past," added Wayne.

greenhillsblackburn.co.uk

