



Sustainable Business Awards for the South East 2003

Case Study - Crest Nicholson

Company Background

Crest Nicholson is a residential development company which has consistently achieved excellent economic and social performance. In 2001, the company won recognition from the Royal Town Planning Institute (RTPI) for an urban regeneration project at Ingress Park in Kent, recognition from the Commission of Architecture and the Built Environment (CABE) for aspects of its community and environmental planning, and design practices.

The company recognises its responsibility to raise awareness of the habitat losses and positive wildlife opportunities that may arise during the development of land.

Crest Nicholson has demonstrated a commitment to sustainable development over the last few years and has recorded this in its Social and Environment Report 2002.

Sustainability Initiatives

Based on Crest Nicholson's activities and its potential impacts, the company has produced a policy with overarching sustainable development objectives. The policy commits to 'protect the natural environment'. To date Crest Nicholson's design and build practices have maintained a clear score on environmental prosecutions, including those relating to habitat and wildlife.

Key Achievements

- Crest Nicholson's Company Architect has donated 'time in kind' to contribute to the Building Research Establishment's 'Eco Homes' rating steering group which includes measurable objectives and targets on 'land use and ecology'.
- Forming and maintaining corporate partnerships.
- Employing consultants to conduct biodiversity assessments.
- In May 1999 the company created a unique home for wildlife out of a small area of land behind its head office in Weybridge. It also encourages its customers to enhance existing wildlife and habitats within their gardens.
- Protecting biodiversity and off-setting habitat lost.

Resource Efficiency

Crest Nicholson has been formalising its environmental management systems to improve access to and analysis of information. Targets will be set in March once the analysis is complete and a waste minimisation strategy will be implemented to assist in achieving them.

Crest Nicholson tries to reuse or recycle material on site. This is demonstrated at the Ingress Park development where:

- Local secondary aggregate was used to reduce impacts of primary aggregate depletion, aggregates tax and



Restoration of Abbey at Ingress Park, Dartford, Kent

transportation. It was used to raise the site level above the flood plain, having the additional benefit of reducing impacts of climate change.

- Old pier timber was recycled as street furniture.
- Demolition rubble was reused for road and pile mat foundations.

Other initiatives include:

- Refurbishment rather than demolition to conserve resources and reduce carbon emissions.
- Provision of suitable storage for residential recycling.
- Mobile phones and paper are recycled.

Energy Efficiency

Crest Nicholson maximises opportunities for energy conservation and reducing carbon dioxide emissions in balance with economic and social constraints. Its target is to achieve carbon dioxide emissions of less than 60kg/m²/year.

The company installs double glazing, low energy lighting and energy efficient boilers as standard.

Water

The company specifies water conservation devices. It provides rainwater butts, plants drought resistant plant species and provides moisture retaining mulch.

The company uses low-flush urinals, cistern inserts and push taps.

Social Responsibility

The CEO and Board have established a 'Committee for Social Responsibility' which reviews the company's activities including land buying, planning, design, procurement and build.

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Corporate Partnerships

Since 1999 Crest Nicholson's Southern Region has formed a local partnership with Surrey Wildlife Trust (SWT). The agreed biodiversity policy is as follows:

- To give SWT preferential membership to new Crest Nicholson home buyers.
- For the SWT to provide biodiversity surveys and reports for Crest Nicholson.
- For Crest Nicholson to sponsor a SWT gardening leaflet for its homebuyers.

Raising Awareness

In April 1999 Crest Nicholson donated funds to the National Office of the Wildlife Trusts to support them at the BBC Gardeners World Show.

In June 1999 the company launched its preferential discount scheme for homebuyers to raise biodiversity awareness through free local group and 'Wildlife Watch' membership. This permitted free entry into nature reserves and opportunities for participation in conservation work. Copies of SWT's 'Nature Line' and 'Nature World' magazines were distributed to homebuyers.

By the end of 2000, 24% of the families buying Crest Nicholson homes in Surrey took up Wildlife Trust membership. The company aims to improve this initiative and record awareness raising performance for reporting purposes.

In October 2002 Crest Nicholson made a donation to the SWT for educational IT equipment at the Nower Wood Reserve.

Biodiversity Awareness

Crest Nicholson employs consultants to assess the biodiversity on almost all of its major projects prior to development. It encourages its landscape architects and customers to implement wildlife gardening to offset some of the habitat lost and to add value to the environment.

By increasing the percentage of brownfield developments from 60% in 2000 to 80% in 2003 Crest Nicholson is creating opportunities to enhance biodiversity.

Biodiversity surveys typically identify areas of conservation sensitivity such as ancient woodland and hedgerows, heathland, chalk downland or open water and wetland.

In May 1999 one of the first SWT habitat and species surveys was conducted within the grounds of the Crest House Head Office in Weybridge.

Crest Nicholson aims to increase the use of SWT's expertise on its larger projects. The most recent survey conducted by SWT was for the proposed Camberley Town Centre Development.

Wildlife Gardening

In May 1999 a unique home for wildlife was created on a small area of land behind the Weybridge Head Office in Surrey.

To encourage customers to enhance existing wildlife and habitats in their gardens, the SWT and Crest Nicholson Partnership produced 'Gardening for Wildlife'.

Ponds and water features are encouraged, as are the sensitive selection and distribution of plants and habitat boxes. Precautionary advice is given on the use of garden chemicals, water, peat and ornamental stone.

Crest Nicholson has a sustainable development strategy for high density, mixed-use urban development that ensures protection of existing ecological features by making effective use of the building footprint.

Other cases of Crest Nicholson's biodiversity protection and enhancement include:

- Repton Park - enhancement and opening up of 235 acres of ancient woodland and 95 acres of open parkland, pastures and historic gardens.
- Ingress Park (CABE & RTPi award winner) - habitat conservation, bat protection and the opening up of riverside and woodland trails.

Protecting Biodiversity and Off Setting Habitat Lost

In 2001 SWT identified 10 hectares of wetland (Papercourt Lock) for wildlife and biodiversity reserve status. Crest Nicholson donated funds towards the purchase of the land as a way of off setting some of its CO₂ emissions and habitat loss.

In 2002 Crest Nicholson contributed funds to a SWT proposal for the acquisition and wildlife management of a site of special scientific interest at Send near Woking.

A significant donation was made to SWT in May 2003 towards the purchase of the 47 acre site bordered by the River Wey and the River Wey Navigation.

Crest Nicholson also donates to charities such as:

- Shelter, with which it has a three year partnership, and has taken part in the 'Three Peaks Challenge' and a golf event.
- The Natural Step Pathfinder Work Programme.

Crest Nicholson is a member of FTSE4Good that aims to set a global standard for Social Responsible Investment.

Supply Chain Management

Predominately economic, technical and quality considerations are used as criteria for sub-contractor and supplier selection. Crest Nicholson is now supplementing these by assessing the environmental impact of products and services.

Awards

- Planning and Urban Design Award, 2001, RTPi.
- Architecture and Urban Design Citation, 2002, CABE.
- Best Brownfield Development, Gold Award, 2001, Silver Award 2001, What House.
- In 2003 the company was a double 'Green Leaf' Award winner. The Tree Council recognised Crest Nicholson's Ellenbury Park (Maidenhead) development for the 'protection of mature trees', and Basted Mill (Kent) won an award for the conservation of ancient mill water features and the opening of a woodland valley walk.

Contact

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