

PROPERTY OF THE WEEK

Classical still has some clout

Anna Tyzack visits a new home with old values in Scotland



Classical-style architecture might not be hip or trendy, but it is still very much in demand. "Most people prefer traditional looking buildings to modern ones," says Hugh Petter of Robert Adam architects, a firm that specialises in traditional design. It was certainly Gavin Lickley's preference when he commissioned Petter to design six Arts & Crafts-style houses on the Avenel estate in Kilmacombe near Glasgow, which belonged to his father-in-law Wallace Forrester.

When Forrester died in 2001, Gavin and his wife Anne feared that whoever bought the estate would develop it. "Avenel is in the permitted development zone for the village," says Gavin. The existing house was no longer appropriate for modern living, but over the past four decades Forrester had created a woodland garden, which his family wished to preserve. "We decided to undertake a development project ourselves," says

Gavin. "This way we could make sure that what was built would fit in with the distinctive west-of-Scotland style."

Arts & Crafts was the obvious choice as Kilmacombe features some of the finest examples of the movement in Scotland, including Windy Hill by Charles Rennie Mackintosh. "Arts & Craft style does not rely on elaborate detail – the materials and the design have to stand out on their own," says Petter. The new houses at Avenel are of solid proportions, with steep gables, slate tile roofs and roughcast white render walls. "The idea was to create individual houses with common ground," says Petter, who collaborated with local architect Tom Robinson.

An acre of private gardens surrounds each house, which will also share Wallace Forrester's original three-acre woodland garden with brightly coloured rhododendrons and azaleas, and trout burn. The first house is now finished and Lickley estimates that by 2012 the project will be complete.

Despite their traditional appearance, the houses are fitted with modern gadgets, including underfloor heating, Poggenpohl kitchens, and electronic audio and security systems. "They are also extremely energy efficient, with ventilation and heat recovery systems," says Petter. According to Mark Lawson of The Buying Solution, period styles such as Georgian and Arts & Crafts appeal to buyers because they "work", in both appearance and layout.

Hugh Petter is now working on a pattern book for the Duchy of Cornwall's urban extension to Newquay. "Houses built using beautiful, natural materials don't have the luxury of being unsustainable," he says.

◆ Five-bedroom houses at Avenel cost from £1.5 million through Strutt & Parker: 0141 225 3880. Visit www.robertadamarchitects.com or www.avenelhomes.com

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