

**Somer Community
Housing Trust**
Bristol & Bath

Sector: Social Housing
Low Rise
Refurbishment



Client:
Somer Community Housing Trust

Building Type:
Unity & Cornish

Project Size:
Over 4,300m² on 84 Properties

Product:
External Wall Insulation
& Render Finish

Project Background:

Structherm has been working closely with Somer Community Housing Trust since its formation in 1999, when it took over Bath & North East Somerset Council's properties in a stock transfer. The trust owns and manages around 9,700 homes in Somerset, Wiltshire, Gloucestershire and Bristol. Many of the properties are of non-traditional construction which often suffer from structural and thermal problems.

Since 2005 the trust has been using Structherm external refurbishment systems to bring hundreds of its homes up to Decent Homes Standards. The most recent projects being in Bristol and Bath, consisting of 21 Unity properties and 63 Cornish properties.

Client Requirements:

The trust wanted to determine if any of the properties were structurally defective so they could make a decision on the best system for externally refurbishing them. Their other main requirement was to improve the thermal performance whilst ensuring the external appearance suited each location.

Design Solution:

Inspections of the properties were carried out by structural engineers to determine if the existing columns were in fact defective. Fortunately the findings were positive and the columns were found to be in relatively good condition.

The decision was taken to remove the existing outer cladding panels from both the Unity and Cornish

properties and to remove the brickwork at the top of the gables on the Unities. This revealed the inner brickwork and load bearing columns to which a new block infill was constructed. The Structherm High Build External Wall Insulation System was then installed to the new block work.

The high build system was made up of a 90mm thick layer of Expanded Polystyrene insulation, a layer of base coat render applied in two coats of 3mm thickness with polypropylene reinforcing mesh embedded.

To complete the system a traditional Macerend brick effect render was applied to the Unities to compliment surrounding privately owned properties that had brick cladding. For the Cornish properties a traditional block stone effect render was applied using Yorkshire Stone colour for the brick face layer and Halifax colour for the mortar layer.

Results:

- Thermal performance has improved greatly with the U value dropping from 2.06W/m²K to 0.32W/m²K for the Cornish properties and from 1.38W/m²K to 0.35W/m²K for the Unity properties.
- The properties cost less to heat to a comfortable level and thus CO₂ emissions have significantly reduced.
- The aesthetic appearance of the properties has greatly improved with the refurbishment programme also including new windows doors, soffits, fascias and downpipes.

