

HOUSING

Private
Community
Developer





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01

Introduction

This brochure introduces our experience of housing and the principles that guide our work, illustrating how careful, context-led design can create places where people can live well and that people will value for generations.

The most successful buildings are often those that have been designed with the aim of providing a beautiful and supportive setting in which people can go about their daily lives. Our activities are framed by the places we inhabit, and our enjoyment of those places is shaped by the qualities of the architecture around us; the way the sun warms us through a window on a bright winter day, or a soft summer breeze moving through open doors from a garden, all contribute to the way we feel about a building and a place. The true character of a building emerges over time, through the lives that unfold within and around it. Buildings become loved not simply because of how they look, but because of the experiences they support and the memories they help create. As Christopher Alexander wrote in his book *The Timeless Way of Building*: “The life and soul of a place, all of our experiences there, depend not simply on the physical environment, but on the patterns of events which we experience there.”

Successful neighbourhoods should be places where people feel comfortable and

secure; where children can play safely, with seating where people can meet and talk, where overlooking across- shared spaces brings reassurance rather than intrusion, and where neighbours look out for one another.

The homes themselves should support everyday life: filled with daylight, comfortable throughout the changing seasons, economical to run, and connected to gardens, trees and the wider landscape. These qualities rarely come from expensive materials or complex technologies. More often, they emerge from careful observation, thoughtful planning and a real sensitivity to how people live.

Every building influences the connections between people, within communities and with the natural world. Thoughtful design can strengthen those relationships, creating places that are healthier, more resilient and more enjoyable to inhabit over time.

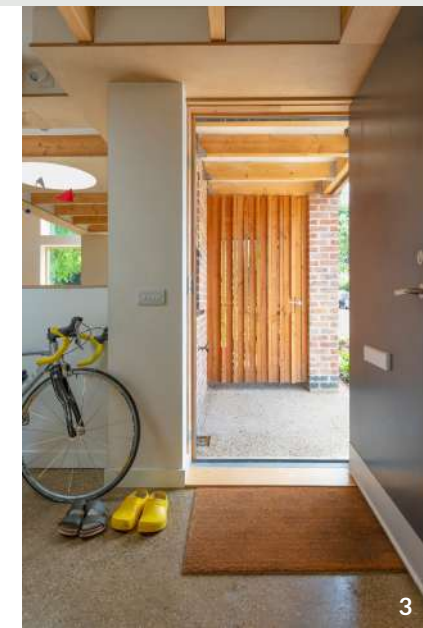
All photos by Richard Fraser, except where stated



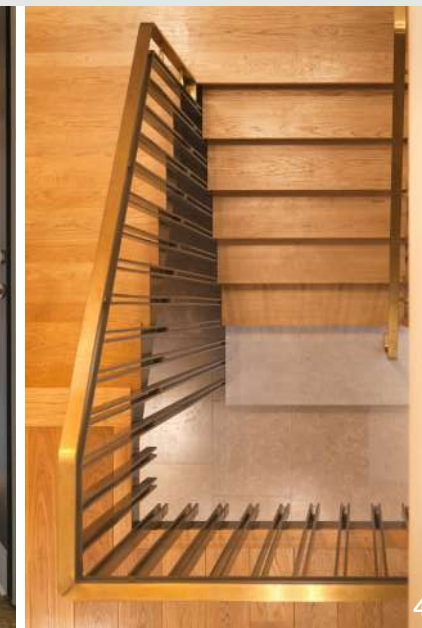
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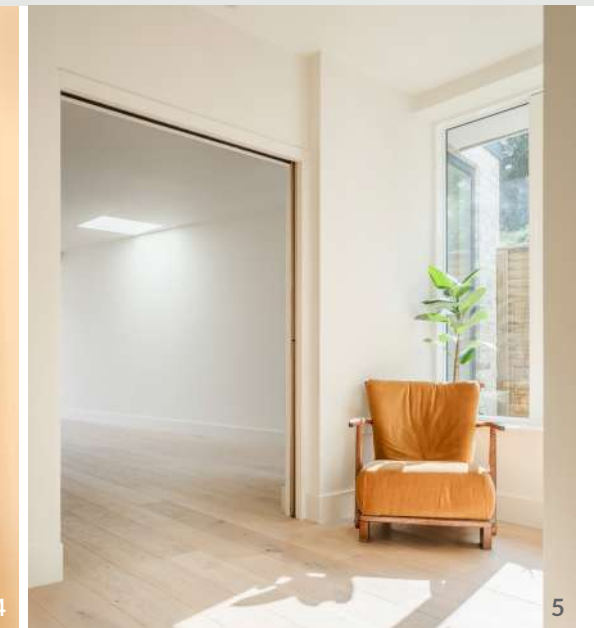
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1 Gillows, Norfolk (photo by Patrick Ward)

2-3 Simple House, Cambridge

4 Seagraves, Boxworth

5 Trumpington Road, Cambridge

Haysom Ward Miller Architects was established in Cambridge over twenty years ago; the three current directors, Tom Miller, Rowan Haysom and Liz Miller, as well as retired director Patrick Ward, had all previously worked in other practices in the city. We have a great team of staff, including Hannah Verner who is an Associate Director.

The practice has developed a distinctive portfolio over the years, winning numerous awards at both the local and national levels. We specialise in delivering thoughtful and considered projects at a range of scales, for a broad variety of clients, including private individuals, developers, charities and community-led organisations. We have worked on projects spanning from individual houses to masterplanning neighbourhoods.

Our work is grounded in craft, context and sustainability. The environmental impact of our buildings is a core consideration throughout our design process, so sustainability is not treated as an add-on, but is intrinsic to every project. We aim to develop an architectural language that emerges from the specific conditions of each site, shaped by its physical, social and environmental surroundings. Through a responsive and iterative design process, we seek to create buildings and spaces that are beautiful, intelligent and deeply connected to their setting.

02

Placemaking

Buildings provide us with shelter from the world outside; to offer a sense of refuge, prospect and connection. These are fundamental human needs, and achieving them depends not on just cost but upon the careful art of placement, orientation and sensitivity to the character of a place.

Our work begins with observation. We study the landscape, history, patterns of movement and everyday life that have shaped a site over time. From this understanding we develop an architectural language that grows out from the particular qualities of that place, rather than applying a predetermined style. Design becomes a process of interpretation and translation: strengthening what already makes a place special, while repairing or restoring qualities that may have been lost.

Ultimately, architecture is about relationships. Strong relationships are important for our long-term happiness and wellbeing, and interaction with nature contributes to our physical and mental health. Every building we construct is an intervention into the social fabric of our community and imposition upon the earth, with the potential to degrade or enhance the quality of these relationships. So we should build sensitively, carefully, aware that we are creating new communities of people whose happiness and wellbeing will be reliant on the quality of these relationships which our buildings inform.



- 1 Lochside, Scotland (new build)
- 2 Stone Cottage, Drinkstone (extension and retrofit)
- 3 The Knoll, Bourn (extension)

03

Designing with communities

We see design as an iterative process of dialogue, interpretation and refinement. The people who know a place most deeply are those who inhabit it every day. Their knowledge of the patterns of movement, memories and shared experiences reveals qualities about a place that cannot be discovered through drawings or surveys alone. Our work with communities begins by listening. These conversations reveal what people value most, the quality of the relationships which connect their lives, and help us to shape proposals that emerge out from their surroundings rather than imposed upon them.

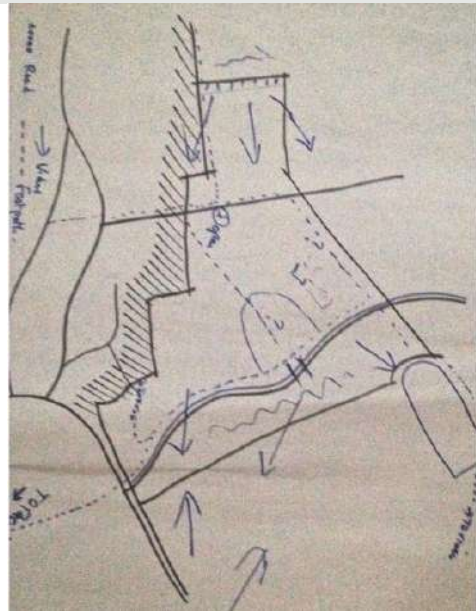
When people are invited to help shape the future of their neighbourhoods, development becomes something created with communities rather than simply delivered to them. The result is housing that is more highly valued and more deeply connected to the place and people it serves.

Masterplanning

Masterplanning is not done from above, poring over plans, godlike, deciding what goes where. Good planners need stout shoes, to spend time on site reading natural desire lines, movement and the overlays of time upon a place.

We need big hearts, to map the stories of the lives lived in a place, the memories and shared experience that reveal what gives a place its identity.

Masterplanning should be a collaborative process of discovery rather than prescription. Working alongside communities, we help to create neighbourhoods that are rooted in their local character, supported by those who will inhabit them, and capable of evolving over time.



01. Group mapping



02. Interpretation



03. Design development

Stretham
View along main street

04

Community Land Trusts

Community Land Trusts, or CLTs, give ordinary people the means to steward land for local wellbeing; developing and managing homes and other assets important to their local community.

Stretham & Wilburton CLT - Manor Farm, Stretham

The Parish Council had recently seen off a hard fought appeal for a new town of 4000 homes on the village doorstep. The process, however, had exposed what they already knew: that the village was losing its soul; the school, pub, local shop were all struggling, and the influx of Cambridge commuters was pricing local out, separating families and pushing key workers further away. New housing was inevitable, so rather than have it done to them, the village decided to do it themselves, and set up a Community Land Trust. The CLT, acting as the client body, were able to achieve real agency for the village, and define for themselves how their community might grow and evolve with a development of 100 new homes built over four phases. They have been able to create high quality, energy efficient housing around a new village green, including an extension

to the cemetery and a new woodland walk along the existing village edge. The process has been a catalyst to galvanise the community, and the affordable housing, managed by the CLT, will provide an asset base to secure economic and social sustainability for the village. The green spaces, water features and hedgerows will add to the biodiversity and environmental sustainability of the surrounding landscape.

The design brief developed through a community engagement process across various events where we were able to work with the local community to trace desire lines, map views, negotiate buffer strips etc, slowly work up a masterplan which feels embedded in the

landscape. The appearance of the buildings developed through this shared design process, rooted in a strong desire by the village to create a sense of continuity and connection between the old village and this new rural edge.

This process of land procurement and housing delivery offers an alternative approach for the creation of new housing. This project has had a significant influence upon our own research into the principles of urban design; the realisation that urban growth should not be something abstract and imposed, but rather is an emergent process, integral and intrinsic to its context and setting, and to the lives which give that space its form.



Other CLT work

Wilburton CLT: Planning application for 115 new homes, including a playing field, orchard, meadow, etc.

Kennet Garden Village: Early community engagement and contribution to the design code.

05

Almshousing

Almshouses are a charitable form of self sufficient, low cost community housing that is held in trust for local people in housing need, run by charities made up of local volunteers.

We have found working with almshouse charities to be particularly rewarding, with their strong focus on local communities, and a desire to do something positive to address an immediate need in a way which will have a long lasting outcomes for the whole community.

More's Meadow, Great Shelford, Cambridge - 21 New Homes

According to planning policy it can be acceptable to build housing in the greenbelt, but there are a few conditions: it must be affordable housing, there must be no site better suited, the need evidenced, and a design sympathetic to its setting. With the local community and the help of landscape architect Emily Haysom, we were able to re-imagine this village edge, not as something hard to be pushed out into the greenbelt, but as layers of overlaps, like the sweet spot in a Venn diagram, creating access for all



More's Meadow

- 21 new family almshouses
- 3.5ha. site
- Relocated allotments
- Community garden
- Picnic tables, play area
- Meadow with 250 new native trees
- Wildlife corridor with SuDS
- All open to the public
- Status: Complete

through permeable, biodiverse spaces with housing embedded in an accessible, green, vibrant landscape.

The development is a mix of one, two and three bedroom homes arranged in three curved terraces around a central green. Sloping green roofs nestle the terraces into the greenbelt setting. The remaining six acres of charity-owned land includes allotments, a community garden, a meadow, and a woodland area with 250 new native trees.

The decision to keep the central green car-free has defined the character of the place. The subtle placement of natural play features has given licence to the younger residents, signalling play. The central green feels like a live-in play park, alive with activity. Children leave their bicycles and toys out and treat the space as their own. Chairs

and tables have been moved into the front gardens, whilst the bench seating in the green is often occupied by the older residents chatting, watching the flow of the younger ones in, out, and through each other's homes.

Huggens College, Kent - 96 new homes

The development, within an collection of two and three storey buildings, are arranged to frame the shared public spaces which comprise a series of varied landscaped courts. Between the buildings and an ancient perimeter wall is a wider landscape of meandering paths through wooded areas, wildflower swards and landscaped gardens.



Huggens College

- 96 new almshouses
- New community rooms
- Caretakers lodge
- Guest accommodation
- Landscaped courts
- Status: Approval subject to S106



06

Brownfield and infill sites

Urban brownfield sites come with their own unique challenges, drawing out bespoke solutions to each particular constraint and teased out opportunity.

Developer housing

There is a process of refinement which comes with working with developers which we enjoy. Using their expertise of what is efficient, simple to build and unfussy in detail can, with a good designers eye, produce a clarity and purity which is often lacking in designs where there are fewer constraints.

The Mews, Histon Road, Cambridge - 18 new houses and nine apartments.

To avoid sprawl into and beyond the greenbelt we need to build compact efficient housing on every possible windfall brownfield site within the city. How do we stitch such developments into the historic fabric of the city, whilst still creating generous spaces, of appropriate scale, with access to greenery, and with a strong sense of community?

This housing development was designed with a focus on the external areas, so that the streets' primary purpose would be to function as a shared public place. Taking inspiration from traditional mews housing, the public spaces have a sense of intimacy



but with an outward-looking character. Generous bay windows animate the street to create active frontages over a street where pedestrians, cyclists, and cars share the same surface.

Parked cars are discreetly tucked away; sometimes behind set back gables, some within garage-fronted mews houses, and elsewhere within south facing front gardens. The streetscape is softened with edge strips of planting, while two shared green spaces can accommodate some larger trees and provides a place for children to play out and people to sit and meet.

The mix of dwellings, including apartments, semis, terraces, and detached houses, supports a broad demographic. This is people-centred housing, designed to encourage neighbourliness and a collective identity.

London Road, Harston - 8 new houses

This was a neglected plot at the junction of a busy traffic intersection, a gateway site in a rural village setting on the edge of Cambridge. A collection of homes have been designed to cluster around a layer of sheltering boundary walls, anchored with gables and chimneys which address the village setting whilst creating an internal sheltered world akin to a small hamlet. The enclosing walls establish the privacy and intimacy necessary for the shared space to be animated by outward looking active frontages and generous soft landscaping. Gabled frontages mark the individuality of each house, whilst a stepped colonnade playfully unifies the ground plane giving a rhythm to the entrance porches and fenestration.

The mix of dwellings, including apartments, semis, terraces, and detached houses, supports a broad demographic. This is people-centred housing, designed to encourage neighbourliness and a collective identity.



06

Brownfield and infill sites

Trumpington Road, Cambridge - 4 terraced houses

Set on one of Cambridge's principal southern gateway routes, this is a contemporary reinterpretation of the traditional English terraced house.

Along the southern boundary a gable fronted cottage sits up against the busy road; to the north edge a couple of small semis are set back behind a deep tree line. In response to these neighbouring edge positions, the homes step progressively back from the road. This layered frontage breaks down the scale of the terrace, giving each house its own identity and creating a distinctive vertical rhythm across the site. This is

counterbalanced with a horizontal layering of materials, with a palette of brick, light render and dark zinc, with overlapping entrance porches and sculpted roof forms. In plan, landscaped front gardens, cycle stores and shared forecourts create a gradual transition from the public street to private internal spaces. Inside the homes, glazed roof lanterns flood central circulation spaces with daylight. This is a contextual and contemporary piece of architecture marking one of the key entrance routes into the city.



07

High density sites

Kendal Court - 28 Apartments, Bishops - 38 apartments, Histon and Impington

A new high speed guided busway had recently been installed on the old disused railway line, reconnecting the village back into central Cambridge, bringing with it more commuters and further pressures for housing. The crossing, now forming a central node in the village, still had the feel of over-engineered railway decay, a soulless expanse of tarmac.

The Parish Council, backed by the village residents, had rejected previous proposals for the site, trying to hold on to the remnant of historic character of the place. As newly appointed architects for the site, before progressing any design work, we asked to meet with the PC. We tabled a new vision for the area: an imagined new village square, lined with cafés, bustling with people, their footfall bringing shops, filling the pub,

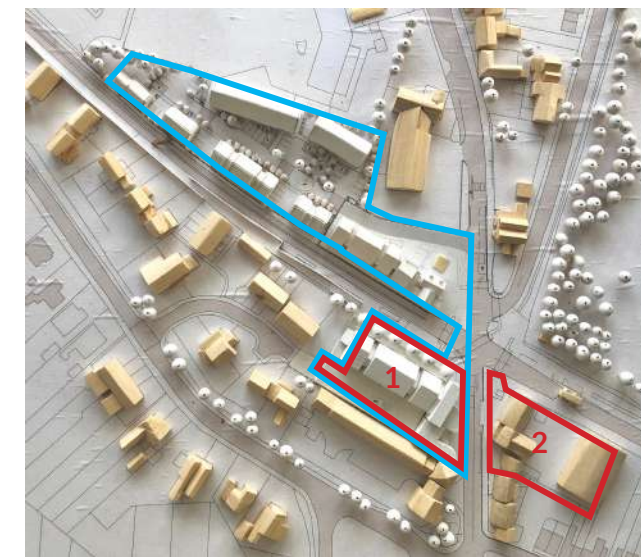
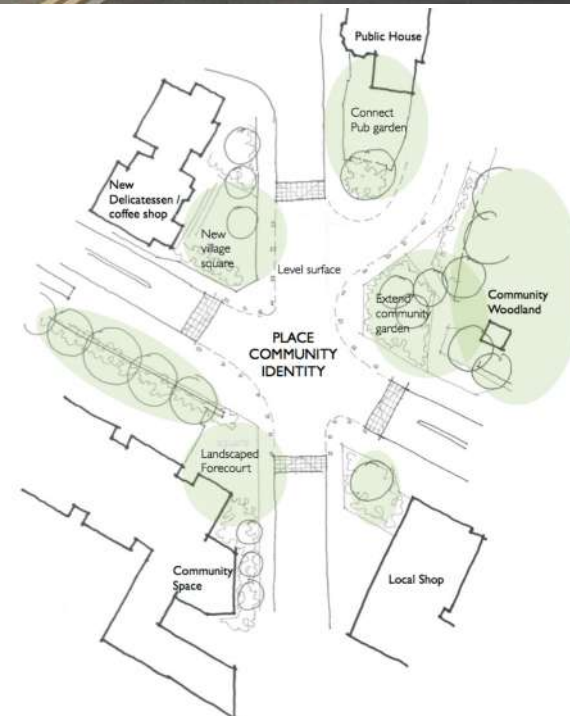
reviving the derelict station building, with cobbled areas and paving stitched between trees, framed with apartments full of young families and downsizing elderly residents.

Through a process of community consultation a vision for the area was written into the emerging neighbourhood plan. With support from the PC and with no material objections, our proposal for a four storey apartment building gained permission through delegated officer approval. This site is currently under construction.

We were subsequently approached by the County Council, having had their application for the site across the road dismissed at appeal, to see if we could apply the lessons learned to their site. This scheme (on Site 2) has recently been submitted for planning permission.



CGIs of Kendal Court: Kasia Kosturek



Histon & Impington

1. The Bishops Site

38 Apartments
Status: On site

2. Kendal Court

28 Apartments
Status: In for Planning

08

Existing and retrofit

The embodied carbon in a building amounts to almost half of its whole-life carbon footprint in an energy efficient building. By reusing and adapting what is already there, we can turn our focus on the operations energy.

Operational energy can be reduced through careful building orientation, high levels of insulation and airtightness, controlled passive solar design with the avoidance of overheating. Where possible, low-carbon heating strategies such as heat pumps are integrated to further reduce emissions.

We place strong emphasis on lowering embodied carbon by favouring the reuse and adaptation of existing buildings, minimising waste, and selecting materials with low embodied energy.

Occupant wellbeing is equally integral to this approach, to create healthy internal environments through good daylighting, effective ventilation, low- emission materials, and thermal comfort. Through this holistic process, we aim to create buildings that respond responsibly to their environmental context while supporting long-term health, comfort, and resilience.

Portugal Place, Cambridge

Portugal Place is a charming street of listed Georgian townhouses within a pedestrianised part of central Cambridge. Having been used as student accommodation for the past 20 years the house was much in need of renovation. The basement was unusable as a habitable space; the two subterranean rooms had little to no natural daylight, inadequate ventilation and were accessed via a steep and narrow staircase which led directly back to the ground floor living area. The kitchen, also accessed via a precipitous staircase, was small and disconnected from the dining and living room, which further

separated the house from its small external courtyard.

Our Client decided to pursue an extensive renovation to make the house suitable as a family home. The key architectural intervention was to open up the basement to the rest of the house and to open the internal spaces up to natural daylight. The new kitchen was relocated into the basement and the old kitchen area converted into a dining space to create a seamless connection between all the levels across a beautifully crafted spiralling staircase, opening up a light filled connection into the rear garden across each of these internal spaces.



Photos: Eloise Verdon

09

Refurbishment and change of use

Napier Street Apartments

This was previously a decaying 1980s collection of tired and drab commercial units squeezed unsympathetically into an area of dense Victorian terrace housing within central Cambridge. Dated geometric elevations of buff and red engineering brick, decaying single glazed windows, glass brick panels, and sharp pointed roof windows all contributed to this unloved pocket of decay within the historic street scene.

Piecemeal demolition allowed us to open up external spaces and create a route of inter-connecting courtyards through the site, bringing daylight and soft planting into the heart of this collection of buildings. The external skin of bricks was removed, with insulation, softer bricks and large areas of glazing all added to brighten and enliven the elevations. Studios and apartments followed roughly the footprint of the old units, sometimes spreading out across party walls, sometimes connected vertically, and

elsewhere popping up into an extra floor where appropriate.

A large basement covered most of the footprint of the existing buildings. This was the oldest element on the site, a remnant of an old industrial yard. By carving pockets of ground floor slab out of the studio units, a series of large light wells have been formed to connect the ground floor to the basement. Where possible the light wells are combined with roof lights to flood the spaces with natural daylight from above.

It is sometimes harder to reuse the buildings we have, and easier to wipe the slate clean and start again, but at Napier Street we have preserved the hidden layers of history within the site, mended what was broken, and banked tonnes of embodied carbon embedded in this historic piece of city fabric.



'Before' views
Views of internal alley and street
(Photos: Rowan Haysom)



'After' views
Views of internal alley and main entrance from street



09

Refurbishment and change of use

Fore Hill, Ely - Conversion of Office Building to 25 Apartments

Alexander House was a severe 1960s office building in Ely between the market square and the riverside. A repetitive line of bay windows jettied over the pavement as a single bulk of cantilevered mass. The dark brown brickwork added a brutalist touch to this unsightly, dull and imposing building, out of scale and out of character with the surrounding historic setting.

The challenge here was to find a way to break up the massing of the existing building, introduce a lightness and delicacy to the frontages which might reflect the scale of the surrounding buildings, with materials which would help the re-purposed building to settle in more comfortably alongside its neighbours.

The riverside was once a bustling commercial area, with an old tannery previously on the site. We were able to break up the mass of the existing building by altering the roof and bay windows to introduce forms reminiscent of these historic building types. The bay windows are enlivened with a lattice of surrounding timber structure, becoming balconies on the upper floors. This softens the street-frontage and introduces life and activity which will further animate the street scene.

We have reused what was there to create some lovely homes, and healed a decaying corner of the town.



1 'Before' image (Google Streetview)
2 'After' image - View from Broad Street
3 View down Fore Hill (Photos: Rowan Haysom)

10

About Haysom Ward Miller - Awards

- 2026** • RIBA East Award: More's Meadow
- 2024** • Greater Cambridge Design and Construction Shortlist: Best Conservation, Alteration, or Extension of an Existing Building (over £3m construction costs): Erasmus Building
- RIBA J MacEwen Award Shortlist: More's Meadow
 - AJ Awards: Shortlist - More's Meadow
 - LABC East Anglia Awards for Best Small Social Housing Development: More's Meadow
 - RIBA J MacEwen Award Shortlist

- 2022** • RIBA East and National Award: Stone Cottage
- RIBA House of the Year Shortlist: Stone Cottage
 - Grand Designs House of the Year Longlist: Stone Cottage
- 2021** • Almshouse Association Inspirational Housing Awards: More's Meadow
- RIBA East Award: Simple House
 - RIBA House of the Year Longlist: Simple House
 - Cambridge Design and Construction: Conservation under £2m Award- Portugal Place
 - Cambridge Design and Construction: Craftsmanship Award: Portugal Place

- 2020** • Architect's Journal Small Projects Shortlist: Simple House
- 2019** • Cambridge Design and Construction Award: Simple House
- 2018** • RIBA House of the Year: Lochside House
- RIAS Award: Lochside House
 - Architect's Journal House of the Year: Lochside House
 - Grand Designs House of the Year: Lochside House
- 2013** • Cambridge Design and Construction: Best Large Building Award: Coleridge Hall



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3



4

1-2 Accessible home, Barrington
3-4 Lochside, Scotland

All photos by Richard Fraser, except where stated

