

MINISTRY OF WORKS

LAMBETH BRIDGE HOUSE, LONDON, S.E.1

RELIANCE 7611

PRESS NOTICE

Ext. 1450

M.O.W./P.O./158/45

Note to Editors

ERECTION OF DEVELOPMENT GROUP OF

HOWARD HOUSES AT WOOLWICH

The erection of the development group of Howard houses at Woolwich is being carried out, among other things, to ascertain the cost and economic speed of erection of a house by this method of construction. Throughout erection every action will be timed and noted.

It is therefore desirable that work shall not be frequently interrupted and that the operatives shall not be continually distracted.

The Ministry of Works wishes to offer the fullest possible facilities to the press to cover this important work which is of great interest to the public - but the nature of the work makes it desirable that visits to the site be regulated in such a way that the timing is not continually thrown out of gear.

The press is, therefore invited to co-operate by making regular rather than sporadic visits to the site and to this end it is suggested visits should take place between 11 and 12 noon each Thursday, when those responsible on the site will be pleased to show the press what progress has been made and to answer any questions.

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28th June, 1945.

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WORK STARTS ON FIRST GROUP OF PERMANENT PREFABRICATED HOUSES

Work started to-day (28th June) on the erection of 22 semi-detached and terrace "Howard" houses - the first group of Britain's post-war permanent prefabricated dwellings to be built for occupation.

This morning Mr. Duncan Sandys, Minister of Works, accompanied by General Sir Frederick Pile, Director General, Ministry of Works, visited the site in Alnwick Road, Woolwich, to watch the initial stages of this important development in house construction.

As Mr. Sandys has stated in the House of Commons, it is the Government's intention to supplement the traditional house building programme with permanent houses. The object is to secure a substantial reduction in site man-hours of building labour, and to spread the housing effort over a wide range of materials and manufacturing capacity. *prefabricated*

Development is being pressed forward on a dozen or so of the most promising of these non-traditional systems of house construction. The work is being undertaken by the firms themselves, with the advice and assistance of the technical staff of the Ministry of Works.

It is, of course, impossible, by theoretical calculations alone, to estimate with any certainty how many man-hours any particular system will in practice require. The Minister has, therefore, arranged for groups of 50 or more of each type selected by the Burt Committee, as being technically sound, and which appear promising from the point of view of saving labour, to be constructed in different parts of the country.

In the case of the "Howard" house sufficient progress has been made to enable a "pilot" order for 3,400 houses to be placed, with the object of getting production under way. Small scale production has started and arrangements are in hand for the houses to be delivered to local authorities to form part of their housing programmes. These houses will normally be erected by local contractors.

The "Howard" house, sponsored by the firm of John Howard & Co. Ltd., Imperial House, Dominion Street, E.C.2., is steel framed with specially treated asbestos sheet or other suitable form of cladding. The type now being erected on the Woolwich site was designed by Mr. Frederick Gibberd, F.R.I.B.A., A.M.T.P.I., the London architect.

Erection of the 22 houses is expected to take 10 weeks. There will be no effort made to create a speed record for their erection. Nor is it the purpose of this development to crowd men onto the site. Indeed the aim is to economise in the use of man power on the site. Much of the preparatory work for the "Howard" house, which in a traditional house would be site work, is carried out in redundant aircraft factories by women with a fine war production record. In this way it is possible to supplement the building labour force and to utilise on house construction labour not previously associated in any way with the production of the building industry.

The whole kitchen, complete with service pipes, cooker and other components, is constructed in the factory, delivered to the site as one section and swung into position by a crane as one of the first stages of erection. Apart from this rather bulky load the components to be carried from factory to site constitute easy loads.

When a vehicle is assembled in a factory a moving belt carries the growing construction to the men who assemble it. This system is not possible for permanent house construction, which demands a static site. Gangs of men each trained in a specific operation can be moved and are moved from house to house, however. And this is the case with the erection of "Howard" houses. Once the sites have been prepared and all is ready for erection to begin the first gang arrives, erects the steel frame of the first pair of houses and moves on to the next pair. Then another gang arrives and clads the house with asbestos cement sheets. Then a further gang completes the roof, and so on. Each operation is clear cut, the men are specialists and no time is lost on the site. Further, the steel frame is covered by the roof within 3 working days, thus enabling all later stages of erection to be carried out under cover, so that delays caused by bad weather are reduced to a minimum.

Full details of the design and method of construction are attached.

28th June, 1945.

THE "HOWARD" HOUSE

LIFE Permanent. Will qualify for Government Subsidy.

COST Between £800 and £900, according to the materials used for cladding. This excludes cost of foundations (which vary from site to site), drains, roads, paving, fencing and outbuildings.

DESIGN The house consists of two rectangles in plan:

- (i) the "Living Unit", with internal dimension of 21' x 17'6"; and,
- (ii) the "Working Unit" of 12'10 $\frac{3}{4}$ " x 6'11 $\frac{1}{2}$ "

ACCOMMODATION

Living Unit (i) Living Room. This is planned on two rectangles which may be separated if desired.

		Area
	(a) Living and Dining Room. 10'6" x 17'6"	184 sq. ft.
	(b) Living Room. 10'6" x 10'6"	110 " "
	(ii) Hall 10'6" x 7'0"	.73 " "
	(iii) Bedroom 1 14'0" x 9'0"	126 " "
	+ wardrobe	
	(iv) Bedroom 2 10'6" x 11'11"	116 " "
	(v) Bedroom 3 9'0" x 7'0"	63 " "
	+ wardrobe	
<u>Working Unit</u>	(i) Kitchen 12'10" x 7'2"	89 " "
	(ii) Bathroom 7'11" x 4'8"	38 " "
	(iii) W.C. 4'11" x 2'7"	13 " "

Space is provided for fuel and bin storage under a glazed lean-to roof by the kitchen door.

FRONTAGE 25 ft. Can be built in terraces.

FITTINGS Each of the bedrooms contains a built-in wardrobe and/or cupboard. The kitchen contains equipment similar to and as complete as that in the temporary house.

CONSTRUCTION

Generally. The house - except for foundations, drainage and site works - is a completely prefabricated one. The structure is carried on a light steel frame which is bolted to the foundations. The wall and floor panels and the whole of the kitchen unit are factory made and fitted into the frame.

Site Erection. The steel frame is first erected on the foundation slab, the asbestos roof is then fixed so that subsequent work can be carried on with some measure of protection. Wall fittings and floor panels are then fixed. The kitchen is installed as a single unit.

Floors. These are of timber with T. & G. boarding, with ceilings already fixed. Aluminium foil is fixed to the underside of the flooring on the ground floor.

Ceilings. Plasterboard or ceiling board fixed to the underside of floor and ceilings joists in the factory.

Walls. Both internal and external wall units may be of a variety of materials, framed in creosoted timber. In the houses at present under construction, specially treated asbestos cement lined with an insulating layer of felt attached by a bituminous solution is used for the external panels, while

the internal ones are of plasterboard or asbestos wallboard, backed by compressed woodwool covered with a sheet of aluminium foil. A plinth of pre-cast units faced with briquettes or tiles is provided externally. It is probable that the first houses of the main production will be clad with specially treated sheet aluminium.

This insulation provided by the walls is better than that of a normal 11" cavity brick wall.

Internal Partitions. These are of wallboard facing on 2" thick wood wool. The party walls are of two normal partition walls with a 3" air space between them.

Roofs. Ribbed Asbestos with felt underlay on light steel trusses.

Windows. Metal casement sashes.

Doors. Doors and frames are in timber.

Plumbing. The plumbing is fabricated in the factory and is enclosed in a special duct in the house.

Generally. This house is especially designed to reduce site labour to a minimum and is erected "dry" - the various units being designed to flash themselves. No special equipment is required. A very light crane is used for about 4 hours per house, but ordinary lifting tackle could be used instead.

28th June, 1945.