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The Most Sustainable Development In Europe: Chelsea Barracks claims eco title

Qatari Diar’s super-prime Chelsea Barracks scheme is one of only 16 developments in the world to achieve LEED Platinum certification for green building.



Qatari Diar’s Chelsea Barracks scheme has been awarded LEED Platinum certification for neighbourhood design. It’s one of only 16 schemes in the world to achieve the coveted eco-credential, and allows the property developer to declare its project “the most sustainable development in Europe.”

LEED Platinum certification is widely regarded as the benchmark for green building certification.

“Sustainability is an increasing consideration for modern prime residential buyers seeking low density, greener lifestyles within city centres,” explains Qatari Diar. “Affluent buyers actively seek that wellness-focused design is integrated into buildings and living spaces, along with access to amenities and nature. Achieving LEED Platinum ensures existing residents and future tenants will occupy healthy, future proof homes. It is the highest global standard of sustainability to be judged on and has set a new benchmark for developers around the world.”



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Designed by Squire & Partners, the Chelsea Barracks masterplan has transformed a 12.8-acre swathe of SW1 into a residential-led enclave, inspired by Belgravia’s traditional garden squares. Five acres of the super-prime site – some 40% of the total – have been devoted to green space, including seven publicly accessible gardens that are being planted with native species, culinary and medicinal plants (aping the nearby Chelsea Physic Garden).

LEED certification benchmarks were plugged into the project from its early planning stages. “Adopting these principles resulted in healthier interior and exterior spaces for existing and future residents,” says QD.



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Key factors that allowed Chelsea Barracks to achieve LEED Platinum status include:

- Accessibility to nature and spaces for social interaction for residents and the wider community
- The wide use of Portland stone; a sustainable material with a long lifespan and a much lower embodied carbon than alternative materials
- Generous daylight levels and connections to the outside through substantial windows and balconies
- Ample cycling facilities and electric charging points
- Sustainable landscape strategies included planting native species, increased biodiversity, and irrigation through water collection
- Installation of Green Roofs
- Aggressive recycling of greywater for WCs and washing machines and rainwater for irrigation.
- Sustainable lifestyles are ensured through equipping apartments with metering to inform owners of daily energy consumption
- Low carbon centralised infrastructure with CHP (combined heat power), GSHPs (ground source heating system) and solar PVs.

Tariq Al Abdulla, Chief Development and Project Delivery Officer at Qatari Diar, Europe & America: “Sustainability is at the heart of Chelsea Barracks and was a key consideration in the planning and implementation of the Masterplan. We are extremely proud to be awarded LEED platinum status which, as the first scheme in Europe to achieve it, is a testament to our commitment to creating a development that sets a new standard for sustainable living in London.”

“With residents settled in and the development evolving as it becomes rooted in the heart of the Belgravia community, we can see how the sustainable features and considerations positively impact the lives of both Chelsea Barracks residents and wider London. Future-proofed for the changing needs of the modern world, we’re looking forward to seeing how this will continue to enhance lifestyles for years to come and shape our approach to sustainable living in London and beyond.”

Henry Squire, Partner at Squire & Partners: “As the first project within Europe to

achieve LEED ND (Neighbourhood Design) certification at the Platinum level, Chelsea Barracks paved the way for integrating sustainability into masterplanning. The certification process we contributed to applies sustainable development thinking and practices across all aspects of masterplan and building design, including: permeable and accessible streets, urban greening, public access, open space provision, biodiversity and many other things leading to better air and environmental quality.

“Many of these things have now become a part of the standard vocabulary for developments, but at the time it was a new way of looking at masterplan design. To achieve LEED Platinum on the development required a focussed and holistic approach to every aspect of the public realm and building design. We believe that this process brought an additional quality to the masterplan and demonstrates that committing to this level of sustainability can deliver significant value to a project, as well as responding to the demands of climate change and reduced carbon emissions. It is a pioneering project and we are extremely proud of the result.”

First two images by Richard Bloom; second two by Jack Hobhouse

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