

The advantages of new homes



Guide

Acknowledgements

This guide was prepared by Richard Partington with illustrations by Victoria Kirk (Studio Partington).

Image credits

Derwenthorpe © Tim Crocker (p.3)

Derwenthorpe © David Wilson Homes (p.5)

Putney Plaza © Art Estates Ltd (p.6)

Courtenay Mews © Tailored Living Solutions Limited (p.7)

Staircase © StairBox (p.11)

Whitehouse Park, Milton Keynes © NHBC (p.14)

Edenbrook © Simon Winson, The Berkeley Group (p.15)

Source: Thinkstock (p.4, 9 and 10 Smoke detector)

Source: BG Electrical (p.10 RCD consumer unit & USB mains socket)

Front cover: Officers Field © HTA Design LLP

Note:

New homes come in a range of shapes and sizes and are built on a variety of different types of developments. For this reason some of the advantages referred to will not apply to new homes in every case.

NHBC Foundation

NHBC House, Davy Avenue, Knowlhill, Milton Keynes, MK5 8FP

Tel: 0344 633 1000 | Email: info@nhbcfoundation.org

Web: www.nhbcfoundation.org | Twitter: [@nhbcfoundation](https://twitter.com/nhbcfoundation)



In late 2015 the NHBC Foundation asked 2,000 people who had recently moved into a new home what they considered the advantages of new homes to be. Although the responses were many and varied, the majority were clustered around a small number of common themes – some relating to the home and others to the new community of neighbours and friends. Many responses also mentioned the peace of mind and benefits of buying a new home in comparison to an older home, which may not meet their expectations or comply with modern standards.

This guide illustrates the key themes from the survey, together with brief explanatory text. Some of the advantages will be very obvious to all, such as the fact that everything in the home is new, the home is a blank canvas ready to be personalised and there is no need for expensive home improvements. But many of the advantages may be less clear – such as the high levels of thermal insulation that are standard, bringing benefits of both improved comfort and lower fuel bills. Similarly, the safety advantages of modern wiring and the improved robustness of foundations on which new homes are constructed will not be immediately obvious.



A final important advantage frequently raised in our survey is the peace of mind provided by NHBC's warranty and insurance protection under Buildmark, from exchange of contracts through to a maximum of 10 years after completion.

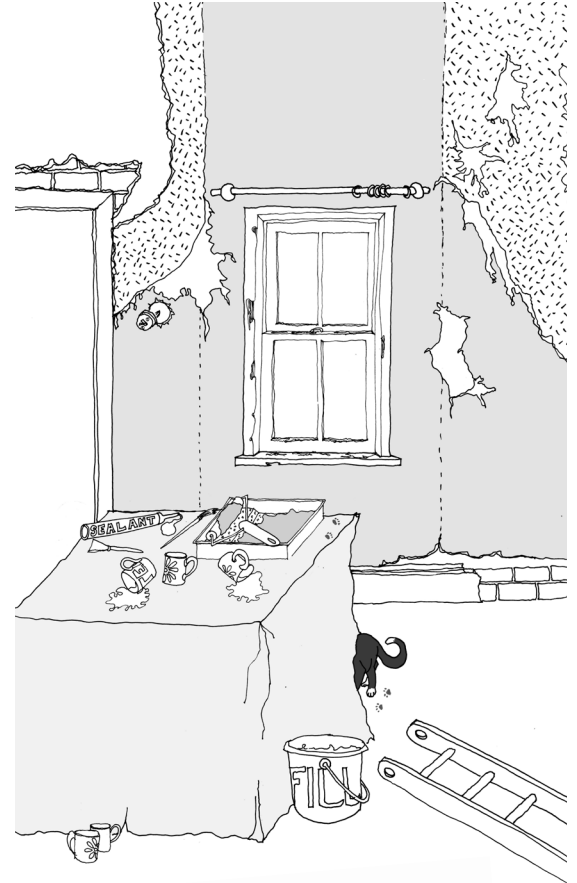
For further information about Buildmark please visit the homeowner section at www.NHBC.co.uk.

1. Ready to move in

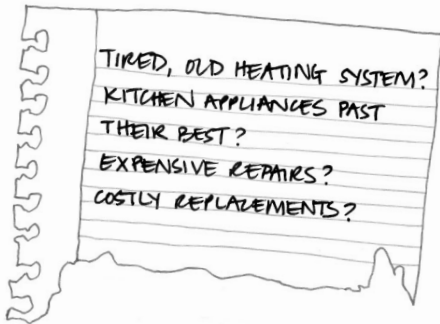


Enjoy your new home without the lingering worries of what might have been covered up or glossed over by the previous owners.

- no structural repairs
- no nasty surprises; no need to put money aside to put things right
- nothing to do immediately
- reduced ongoing maintenance
- clean surfaces and straight lines
- a clean slate; ready to make your own



2. Everything is new



Appliances and systems in new homes are new and will work well for many years to come.

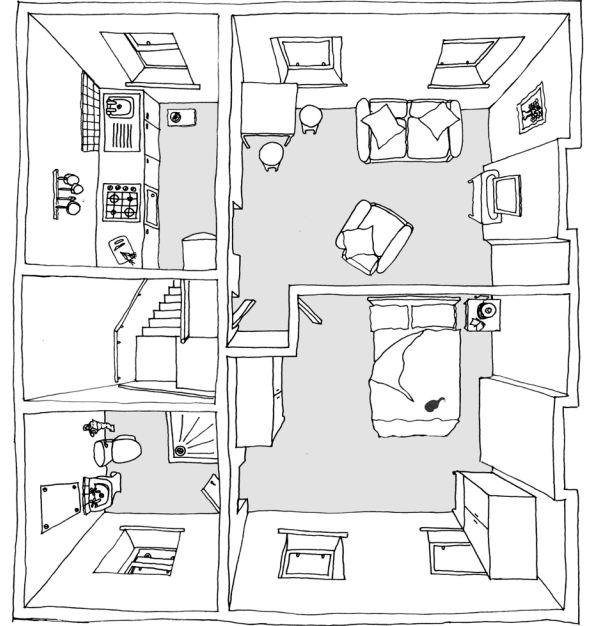
- new, clean, nobody else's dirt
- new kitchen appliances covered by manufacturers' warranties
- no unwelcome repair bills
- peace of mind

3. Modern layout



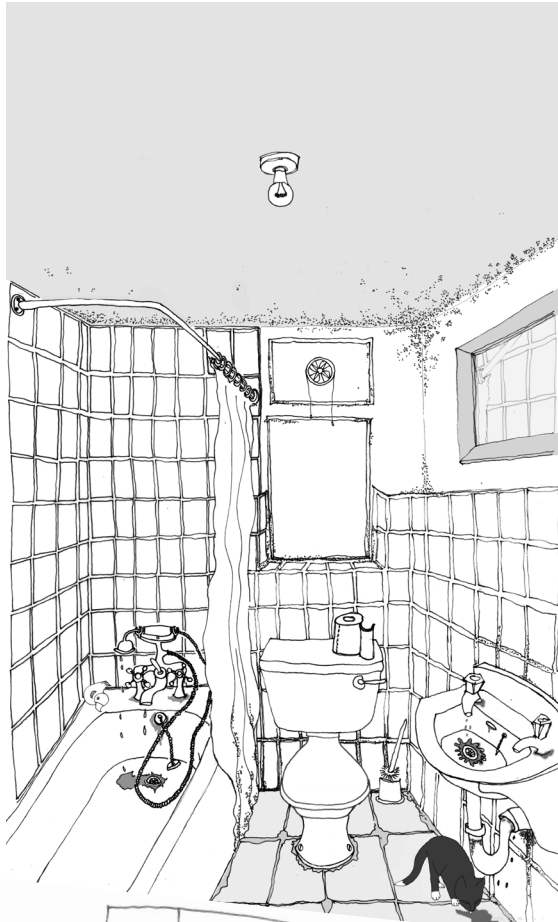
New homes use space efficiently and provide a good balance of living space, storage and bathroom facilities.

- modern design
- open layout
- well-proportioned spaces allow different furniture arrangements
- good natural and artificial light
- built-in cupboards and storage



DODGY CONVERSIONS AND
EXTENSIONS - A COMPROMISE
TOO FAR?
IN THIS FLAT, THE BATHROOM
CAN ONLY BE REACHED
THROUGH THE BEDROOM.

4. Modern facilities



LEAKY PLUMBING CAN
EASILY BE FIXED BUT A
POORLY LAID OUT BATHROOM
WITH INSUFFICIENT
VENTILATION IS HARDER
TO PUT RIGHT.
DOES THE GROUT AND
SEALANT NEED RE-DOING?



New homes have well laid-out bathrooms and a downstairs wc.

- extra bathroom facilities including downstairs wc
- water efficient; water-saving taps and fittings
- water meter for easy monitoring of water use
- safety measures to prevent scalding
- easy to keep clean
- good ventilation

5. Energy efficiency - cost



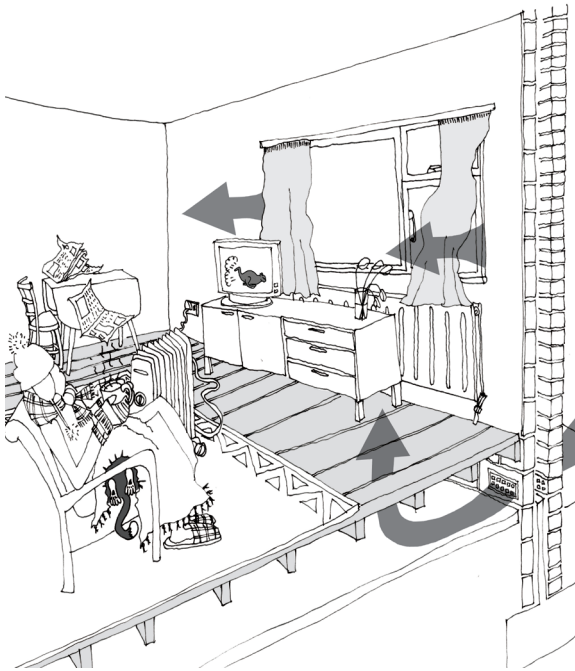
A new home built to modern Building Regulations standards will cost approximately half as much to heat as a Victorian home.

- **reduced bills for heating and hot water**
- **reduced electricity bills**
- **better standards of insulation, draught-proofing and improved 'airtightness'**
- **double glazing**
- **efficient controls (programmer, room thermostats and thermostatic radiator valves)**

Note: In this comparison, the Victorian home is the same size and has the same window area as the new home, but has uninsulated solid-brick walls, some single glazing and a gas central heating system.

Building Regulations vary throughout the UK and so the costs will be slightly different in Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland.

6. Energy efficiency - comfort



DRAUGHTS AROUND WINDOWS,
THROUGH FLOORBOARDS AND
UNDER SKIRTING BOARDS ARE
NOT ONLY UNCOMFORTABLE,
THEY ARE ALSO SIGNS THAT
A HOME MAY BE LEAKING
HEAT AND ENERGY.
WHAT IS IT COSTING?



With their better standards of thermal insulation and energy efficiency, new homes are cosy and warm up more quickly.

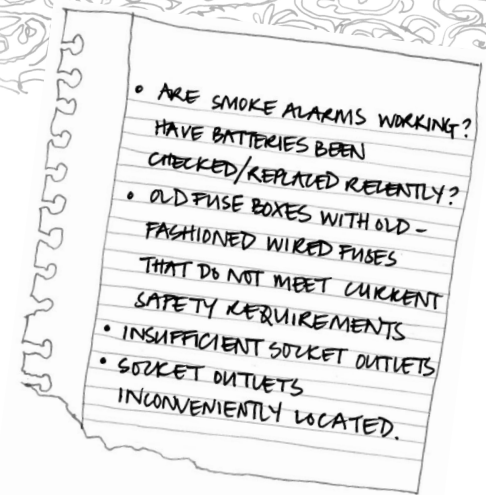
- draughts minimised
- unwanted heat loss reduced
- quicker warm-up time and improved control of comfort
- improved ventilation
- reduced risk of condensation and mould

7. Safety - smoke alarms and wiring



Mains-powered smoke alarms provide early warning of potential fire. New homes are fitted with residual current devices (RCDs) which provide additional protection against electric shocks.

- mains-powered smoke alarms interlinked throughout the home
- plenty of socket outlets located at an accessible height
- trailing wires reduced
- modern consumer unit with safety circuit breakers that can easily be reset



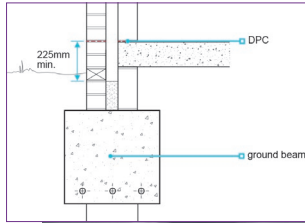
8. Safety - glazing and stairs



New homes are designed and built to modern Building Regulations requirements and have safety glass in areas where damage is possible or likely to cause an injury, for instance, in glass doors or low level windows.

- safety glass toughened or laminated so it is less likely to splinter if broken
- stairs designed for safe, comfortable use
- handrails provided for safety
- balustrades and guarding meet safety standards
- doors do not open directly onto stairs

9. Solid foundations

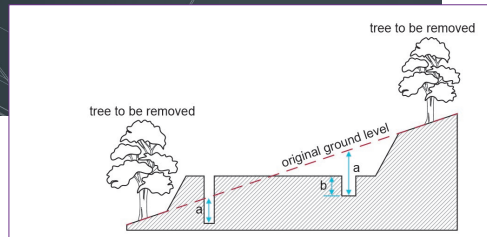
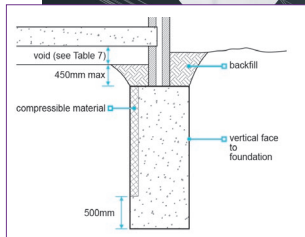


Building near trees
CHAPTER 4.2

Strip and trench fill foundations
CHAPTER 4.3

Raft, pile, pier and
beam foundations
CHAPTER 4.4

NHBC Standards



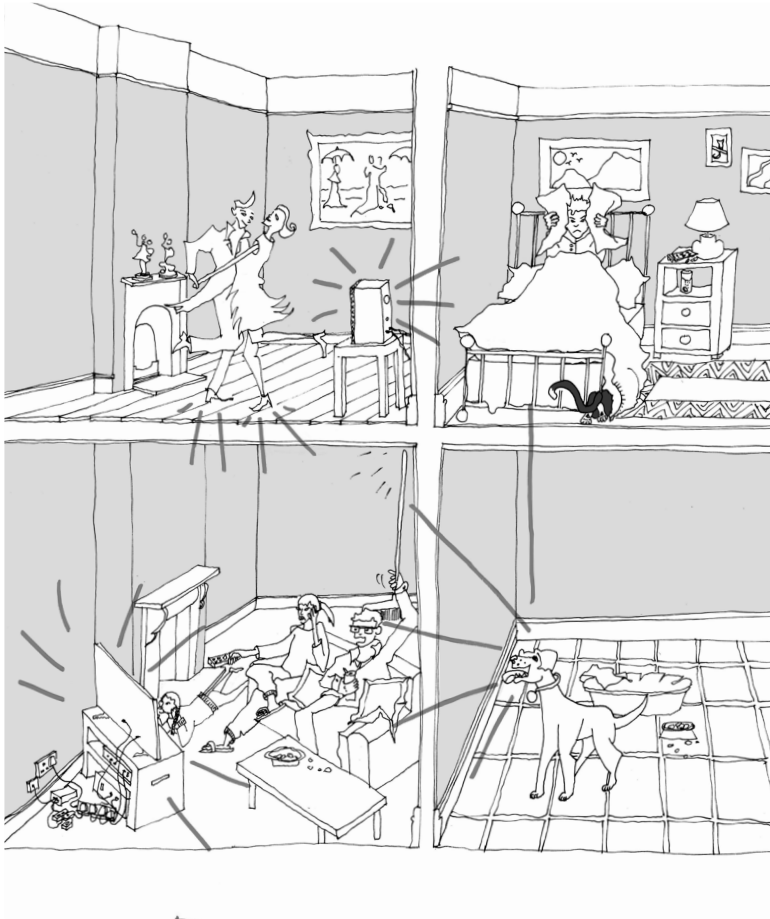
EARLY SIGNS OF FOUNDATION
MOVEMENT INCLUDE:

- CRACKED OR SLOPING
LINTELS ABOVE WINDOWS
- DOORS AND WINDOWS THAT
ARE HARD TO OPEN
- STRUCTURAL CRACKS IN
BRICKWORK AND STONEMWORK
- BOWING WALLS
COULD EXPENSIVE REPAIRS
BE REQUIRED?
COULD RE-SALE BE AFFECTED?

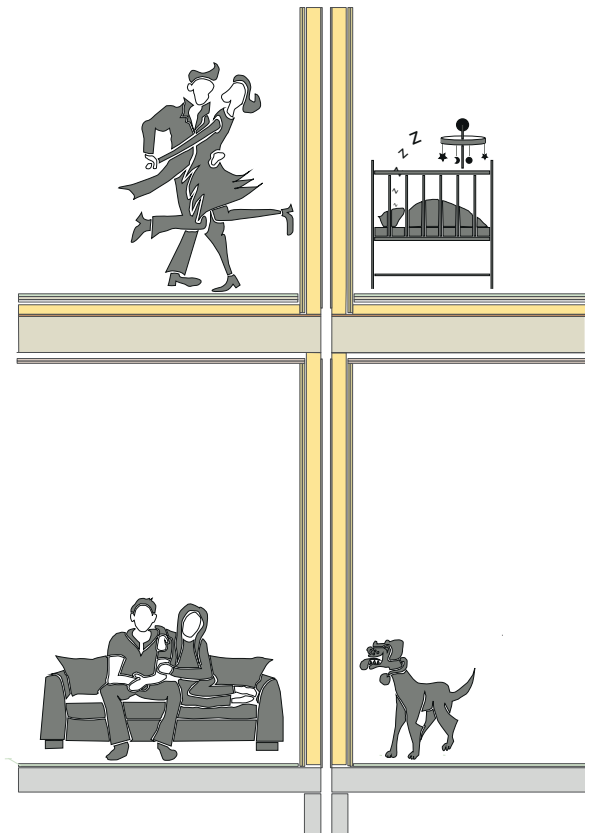
Modern Building Regulations and the NHBC Standards ensure that new homes are built on a firm footing.

- improved foundation design
- risk of structural damage due to trees minimised
- appropriate foundation design for the locality and the ground conditions

10. A quiet home



OLD FLOORBOARDS, UNCARPETED FLOORS, THIN WALLS BETWEEN HOMES AND OUT-OF-DATE STANDARDS.
WILL NOISE FROM NEIGHBOURS CAUSE DISTURBANCE?



New homes are designed and built to better standards with mandatory measures to minimise noise transfer between adjacent homes through walls and floors.

- adjoining homes separated by walls and floors designed to reduce noise transfer from neighbours
- internal walls and floors designed and built to reduce noise transfer between rooms

11. Security



Doors and windows now incorporate additional locks and security devices to keep intruders out.

- doors with securely fixed locks or 'multi-point' locking
- a door opening limitation device (or alternative)
- a door viewer or alternative means of seeing who is outside



WILL AN OLD DOOR KEEP UNWANTED GUESTS OUT?

- SURFACE-MOUNTED BOLTS ARE LESS SECURE
- NIGHT-LATCHES AND MORTICE LOCKS ONLY OFFER A SINGLE POINT OF CONTACT AROUND THE FRAME
- AN OLD, ROTTEN OR BROKEN DOORFRAME IS OFTEN THE WEAKEST LINK.

12. A new community



NO PROVISION FOR RUBBISH,
RECYCLING OR BIN STORAGE,
NARROW, UNEVEN PAVEMENTS
WITH OBSTACLES.
CONVERSIONS, ALTERATIONS,
RECLADDING AND UNSIGHTLY
'IMPROVEMENTS'!



Many people moving to a new development find that they meet neighbours with similar interests and aspirations. Good planning of shared spaces for leisure and recreation can help foster community activities.

- new friends and neighbours starting a new community together
- designed and landscaped shared outdoor areas
- safe play spaces

The NHBC Foundation, established in 2006, provides high quality research and practical guidance to support the house-building industry as it addresses the challenges of delivering 21st century new homes.

Visit www.nhbcfoundation.org to find out more about the NHBC Foundation research programme.

The NHBC Foundation Expert Panel

The NHBC Foundation's research programme is guided by the following panel of senior representatives from Government and industry:

Rt. Hon. Nick Raynsford

Chairman of the NHBC Foundation and Expert Panel

Jane Briginshaw

Design and Sustainability Consultant, Jane Briginshaw and Associates

Andrew Burke

Associate, Rickaby Thompson Associates

Richard Cook

Head of Residential Development, Lend Lease

Claire Curtis-Thomas

Chief Executive, British Board of Agrément

Hywel Davies

Technical Director, Chartered Institution of Building Services Engineers (CIBSE)

Andrew Day

Director, Architecture, Design & Sustainability New Homes and Communities, Countryside Properties (UK) Ltd

Russell Denness

Group Chief Executive, Croudace Homes Group

Michael Finn

Design and Technical Director, Barratt Developments plc

Cliff Fudge

Technical Director, H+H UK Ltd

Richard Hardy

Managing Director, BRE Global

Richard Harral

Head of Technical Policy, Building Regulation and Standards Division, Department for Communities and Local Government

Richard Hill

Chief Executive, Spectrum Housing Group

Neil Jefferson

Director, NHBC

Rod MacEachrane

Director, NHBC (retired)

Robin Nicholson CBE

Senior Partner, Cullinan Studio

Tadj Oreszczyn

Director, The Bartlett School of Environment, Energy and Resources

Geoff Pearce

Executive Director of Regeneration and Development, Swan Housing Association

Mike Quinton

Chief Executive, NHBC

Helen Saunders

Group Marketing Director, Crest Nicholson plc

Steve Turner

Head of Communications, Home Builders Federation

Andy von Bradsky

Consultant, PRP and Chairman, The Housing Forum

Karl Whiteman

Divisional Managing Director, Berkeley Homes

Tony Woodward

Managing Director, Kingerlee Homes

Neil Smith

Head of Research and Innovation, NHBC, and Secretary to the Expert Panel