



Home improvements to reduce carbon footprint

Residents of some 1,500 homes in West Cumbria are enjoying a more comfortable future with projected energy savings and better homes following a refurbishment programme featuring thermal upgrades using the PAREX THERM Mineral Render System.

The Parex high performance externally insulated system (EIFS) was specified for a three-year, £7.5million improvement scheme carried out by the Cumbria Housing Partnership a partnership of social housing providers, funders, contractors and suppliers in towns along the exposed west coast of Cumbria. It forms part of the wider Cumbria Cohesion which aims to significantly reduce carbon emissions in the region.



The system, which holds European Technical Approval, comprises a new render finish and 90mm of high performance insulation which is bonded and mechanically fixed to all external elevations, then base coated using a mesh reinforced, polymer modified, anti-crack base coat, followed by a finishing coat of spray-applied Parex EHI Mineral render.

Sub-contract application of the system has been carried out by local applicator JPL Plastering Ltd, based in Penrith.



The scheme covering Maryport, Cleator Moor and Workington is part of a wider project to achieve a low carbon economy in the region. The housing stock for improvement includes a mix of brick built and rendered semi-detached, quasi-semi homes and bungalows dating back to the 1950s. Although constructed with cavities, the energy performance was poor and many properties required extensive remedial work due to failing wall ties prior to the insulation system being installed.

Use of the PAREX THERM system allowed residents to remain in their homes during the work. The addition of EWI offers significant benefits and improvements for the residents, including the potential for lower fuel bills and more comfortable homes. The advantage to the partnership's housing providers – Home Group, Westfield Housing Association and Impact Housing Association – is improved housing stock and reduced future maintenance costs.

Harry Drennan, Procurement Manager for Cumbria Cohesion partner Home Group, with 600 homes now complete, comments: "This work has without doubt improved the appearance of the properties dramatically. The EWI system has held up well against the worst that the Cumbrian weather could throw at it, although the primary aim was to improve thermal efficiency."



A study is currently being carried out to assess the impact of the work on the thermal efficiency of the properties, although early indications are that the majority of householders are pleased with the improved thermal comfort and reduction in fuel bills.

CASE STUDY: Renders & Façade Systems

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Explains Harry Drennan: "In general the work by Cumbria Cohesion has had a positive impact and we have seen these estates become more popular as a result of the improvements with void levels reducing."

Harry Drennan adds: "Support from Parex has been very good, they have been involved from the very start of the project and have provided assistance, training and guidance throughout."

His view was echoed by Ray Austick, Contracts Manager for main contractor Seddon Construction Ltd, of Bolton: "We feel that they have been good suppliers and adapted their technical abilities to suit site-specific conditions and reacted quickly to any issues raised from the site team, so definitely a supplier with added value."

And the Parex EWI System? "The product has proved to be ideal for the Cumbria region with its resistance to the inclement weather during the installation process. Installation is relatively simple and an excellent finish is being achieved with the Parex products."

"Properties that were completed two years ago are hard to distinguish from those completed two months ago. Showing good continuity and a combination of quality product with good installation."

Parex supplied product to site via merchants Wolseley. Ray Austick commented "This has worked well, getting product to and from site on a demand basis when required, allowing us to keep the site tidy as most estates have minimal on site storage facilities."

Parex estimates that the improvements will result in typical energy efficiency enhancements of 20-30 per cent and as part of its service provision has sponsored ongoing training and technical support for staff at Lakes College West Cumbria to assist the college to deliver NVQ Level 2 to application company operatives in External Wall Insulation. The scheme meets the provisions of the Government's Green Deal and ECO initiatives and is part of the Cumbria Cohesion Project, a wider £22 million initiative aimed at achieving a low carbon economy. The scheme has also been part funded by the European Regional Development Fund.



PAREX MATERIALS USED

PAREXTHERM Mineral EWI System comprising of;

- Insulation adhesive - Maite
- Insulation - EPS70E
- Base coat - Maite
- Base coat mesh - 355 AVU
- Top coat - EHI GM



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