

BREAKING NEW GROUND

Steve Gray visits The Vines at Mount Pleasant Park, near York. Could this be the perfect park when completed?

A revolutionary concept in residential living could soon change the face of the park home industry, if a project currently under way at Acaster Malbis, a few miles from York, is successful. The project, spearheaded by Arthur Holgate & Son, will not only see the installation of eight exclusive new homes, but will also result in the further transformation of the company's Mount Pleasant Park, with the establishment of a select development called The Vines.

Initially, it is perhaps difficult to see why the project is so radical, because the whole ethos of the scheme is very subtle and understated. Further study, however, reveals that the scheme is unique, drawing much of its inspiration from the utopian garden communities established at the turn of the century. It aims to create a link between interior and exterior surroundings to a level not achieved on park home sites in the past.

The Vines will not follow the traditional layout of a park home estate, opting instead for a more attractive approach, enhancing the natural beauty of the local environment and creating an effortless link between each home and its surroundings. Hedging will replace fences, utility services will all be located underground and there will generally be a high level of detail, incorporating several environmentally sustainable features.

Initially, the company hopes to site just eight new homes on The Vines and work is currently

below Natural surroundings are key to the plan

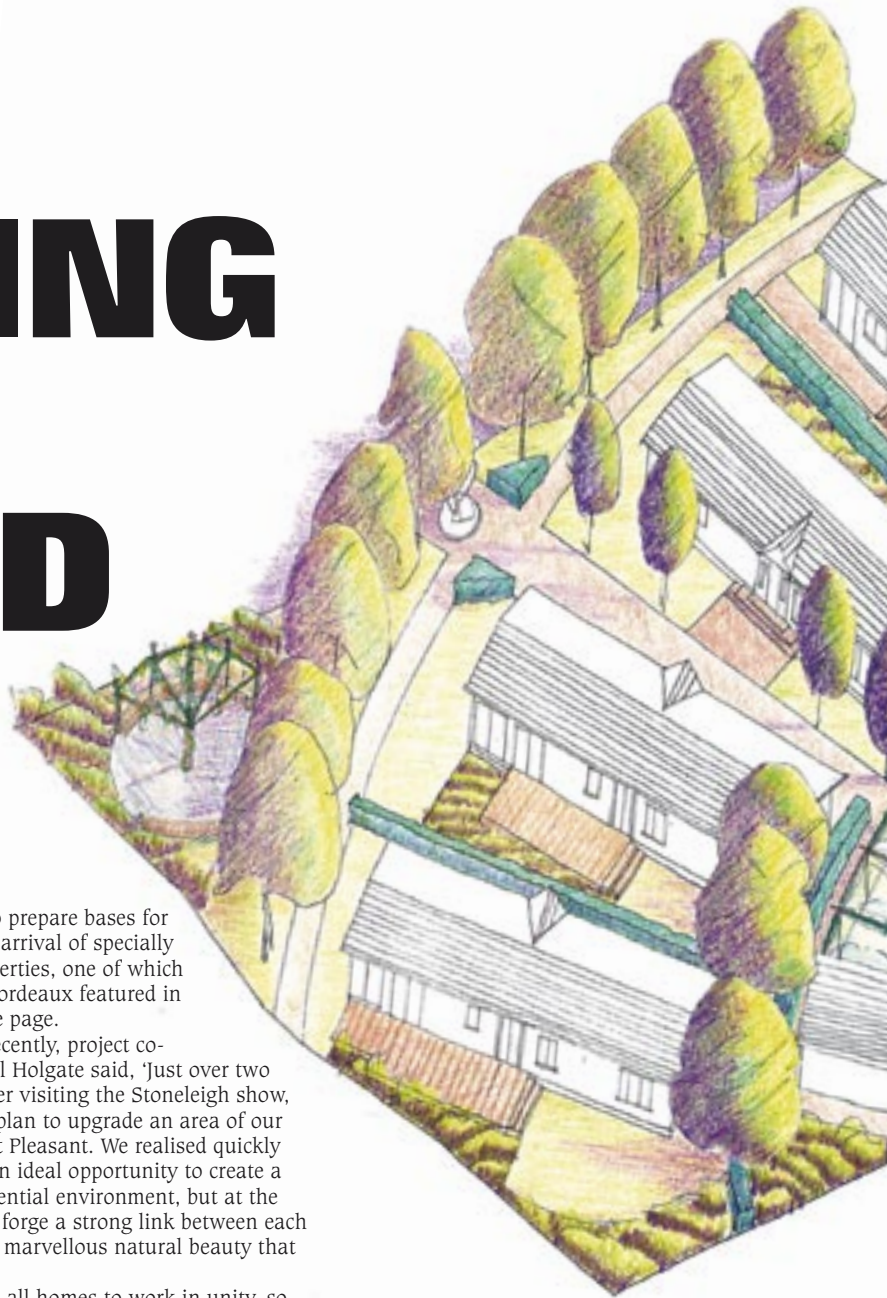
progressing to prepare bases for the imminent arrival of specially designed properties, one of which is the Omar Bordeaux featured in depth over the page.

Speaking recently, project co-ordinator, Paul Holgate said, 'Just over two years ago, after visiting the Stoneleigh show, we devised a plan to upgrade an area of our park at Mount Pleasant. We realised quickly that we had an ideal opportunity to create a superior residential environment, but at the same time, to forge a strong link between each home and the marvellous natural beauty that surrounds us.

'We wanted all homes to work in unity, so we steered away from the traditional block paving, gravel paths and pebble dashed garages. As a result, we approached our chairman Martin Holgate, who gave us his full backing, encouraging us to launch the scheme. We are aiming for a much softer appearance that will simply improve in the years ahead as it matures.'

WORKING WITH NATURAL SURROUNDINGS

In essence, the company is striving to create a park home estate that works with the landscape rather than against it. Indeed, it has incorporated several imaginative environmental features into the overall design to reduce the amount of impact created by the siting of new homes. Underground tanks will be located close to new homes, aimed to



above Eight new homes will be sited at The Vines

capture and harvest surplus rain water. Box hedges planted between each home will replace traditional fencing and improve irrigation.

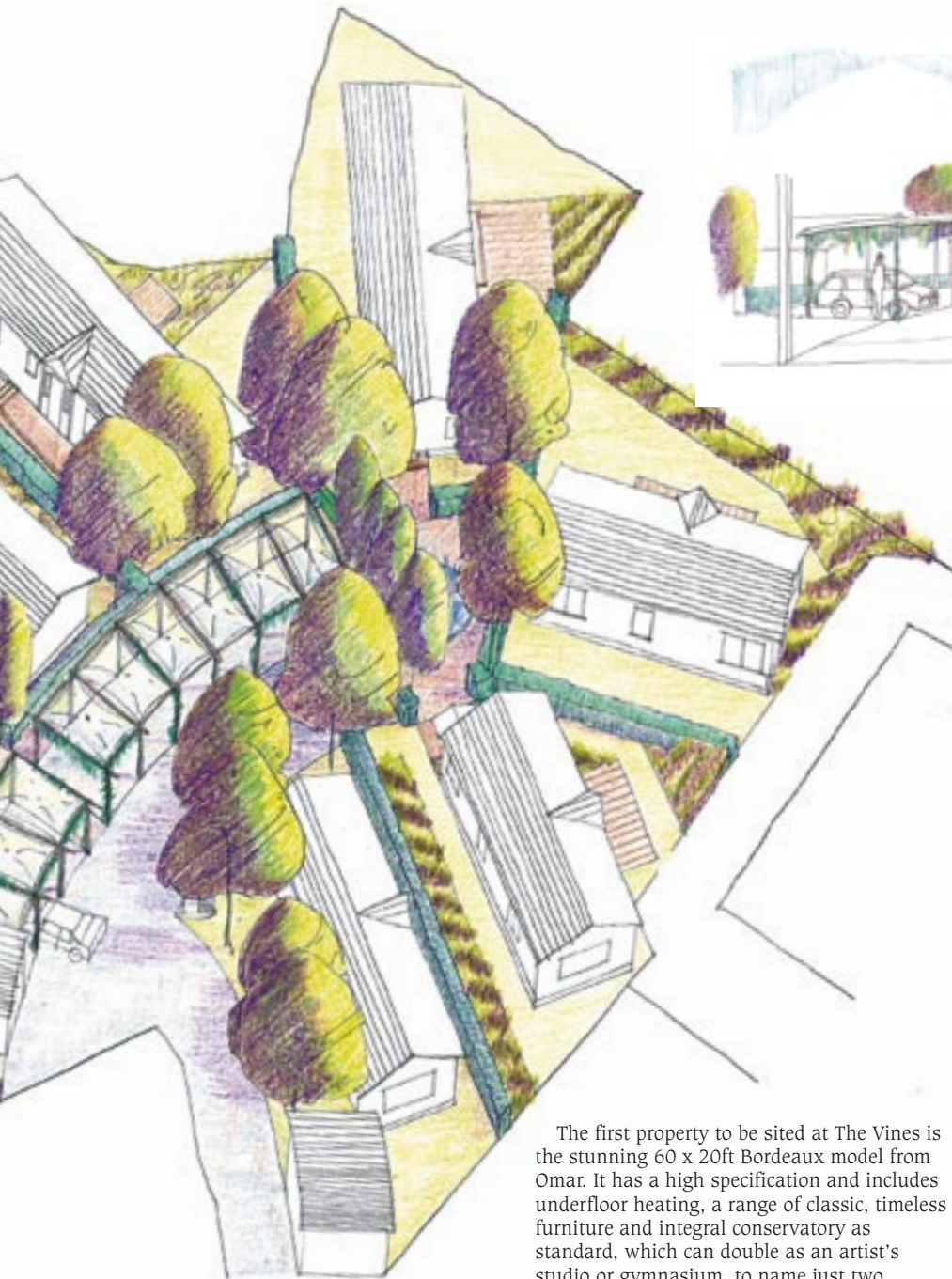
The company also intends to create a pleasing outlook for residents by installing a centrally located television distribution network, which curtails the necessity for unsightly television aerials spoiling the park's appearance.

Eight homes in the initial phase will be accessed by a network of purpose-built roads, but here again, in order to maintain the environmental harmony of the park, road building will be kept to a minimum. Properties are being sited round a central cul-de-sac, encouraging residents to enjoy the landscape by walking rather than driving through the development.

Arthur Holgate & Son has a specialist in-house team responsible for the construction of The Vines, ensuring that it can guarantee the quality of the workmanship. Once the initial phase of eight homes has been completed, it is hoped to continue this revolutionary design scheme throughout the park. However, this will be completed very gradually, in a series of individual projects, maintaining the status quo for existing residents.

Paul Holgate explained, 'The whole philosophy





above Attractive car ports will replace garages

behind this scheme is to prove that park home developments do not simply have to replicate an urban environment in a rural setting. There is a much more sophisticated level of operation that we hope will act as a catalyst for the industry as a whole, bringing a much needed change of direction that inspires more radical thinking among park home developers.'

SELECTING THE BEST HOMES

One of the most progressive park home companies, Arthur Holgate has a long history dating back to the 1950s, when caravan manufacture formed the major part of its business. Diversification soon saw the company move into the park home business and today it possesses three unique quality developments located in Scotland, the South Lakes and, of course, Mount Pleasant, which looks set to become its flagship park when development of The Vines is complete.

In an attempt to introduce an even higher standard of living to The Vines, Omar and Wessex have been selected to provide homes for this new project. The two companies are creating exclusive new homes for the park which have been designed to exacting standards, incorporating features specifically created for Mount Pleasant.

The first property to be sited at The Vines is the stunning 60 x 20ft Bordeaux model from Omar. It has a high specification and includes underfloor heating, a range of classic, timeless furniture and integral conservatory as standard, which can double as an artist's studio or gymnasium, to name just two options. The other models in the range are the Merlot and Sancerre, which will both have

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equally impressive internal specifications, having been created by the company's own dedicated design consultant.

With the aim of introducing a new level of internal sophistication, the Bordeaux will cost in the region of £300,000. While this might seem to be rather expensive, potential residents should note that the cost includes all fixtures and fittings, carpets, appliances and decorations, minimising the stress normally associated with buying a new home. A potential resident should have absolutely nothing to do when moving to The Vines except, of course, to put the key in the door.

Gardens surrounding each property will also be well established when a new resident

arrives. Consequently there won't be any necessity to remove barrowloads of rubble before you can try and cultivate the plot surrounding your home; all this will be done for you.

Situated in a wonderfully rural location, The Vines is in an ideal position for easy access to a host of local facilities, with the villages of Acaster Malbis and Bishopthorpe catering for everyday needs. The beautiful medieval city of York, with its vast array of shops, museums and galleries, is virtually on the doorstep. Cities like Leeds, Bradford and Harrogate are also within easy reach.

The Yorkshire Dales offer the prospect of a good day out and the region also boasts scores of National Trust properties; indeed; the whole family should find something of interest. The Heritage Coastline, centred on Whitby, is also relatively close to Mount Pleasant, so those keen to travel around the area need not feel isolated.

Residents who do not drive will be pleased to learn that a regular bus service links the park with York and surrounding villages, making it possible to live here without owning your own transport. A regular riverboat service also operates from a nearby landing stage and takes residents into the centre of York

Looking at the development taking shape at The Vines today, I find it exciting to picture how the park will look in coming years when the first eight homes are in position. The company's undiminished enthusiasm for the project cannot be denied and it seems reasonable to assume that The Vines will readily create considerable interest among potential residents and other park developers. Could this be the perfect park?

The company is receiving a steady stream of enquires at the moment and the first showhome is due to become available for viewing near the end of August.

Paul Holgate expanded, 'The company is determined to establish The Vines as one of the most innovative residential developments in the country. Environmentally, each home will work within its surroundings and break away from the normal arbitrary process of siting homes in uniform straight lines that are often such a feature of park development.

'We may not be the biggest company in the business, but we are obsessed with quality, which has become something of a watchword across all our parks. The Vines is just an extension of that.' ■

Contact details

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