

Welcome to our latest newsletter

I am pleased to share with you updates on projects underway or recently completed by our multi-disciplinary team here at Urban Design and Building Services (UDBS).

In the following pages, you will find details of the team's input into high profile developments that include restoration and renovation works at West Bromwich Town Hall, new affordable housing at Thorn Close and Whitgreave Street and details about the new Repairs & Maintenance contract with Dodd Group Ltd and GRAHAM.

With the refurbishment works at the Millenium Centre and a new leisure centre at Haden Hill, these are examples of how Sandwell council is investing in the future of the Borough – not only by building new sustainable facilities but by also updating and improving existing sites for the people who live here.

In showcasing UDBS's skills and achievements I thank everyone in the team for their continued commitment to delivering a great service.

Thank you for your continued interest in and support of UDBS.

Luke Dove

Assistant Director – Property, Strategic Assets & Land



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West Bromwich Town Hall

Highams Close



New affordable housing in Sandwell

The Highams Close housing scheme in Rowley Regis is nearing completion, marking the final stages of an exciting new development designed to address affordable housing needs in Sandwell.

Once completed, the scheme will deliver six high-quality dwellings for affordable rent. These include two semi-detached and four detached homes, each with four bedrooms, tailored for families looking for spacious and comfortable living spaces.

Urban Design and Building Services (UDBS) has proudly taken the lead as the main designer for this project, managing the architectural, structural, and landscaping

aspects. This collaborative effort is part-funded by Homes England and commissioned by Sandwell Council's Housing Partnerships Team. Welch & Phillips is driving construction as the main contractor.

For further information please contact:
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Haden Hill Leisure Centre



Planning approved for new leisure centre

Planning permission for the redevelopment of Haden Hill Leisure Centre has been approved by Sandwell Council's Planning Authority. Following a thorough review of the centre's design, it has been confirmed that the entire facility will be demolished and rebuilt.

The new leisure centre will feature a wide range of facilities, including a main swimming pool, a learner pool, two multi-purpose studios, a 100-station gym, a 27-station indoor cycling studio, a four-court sports hall, and a dedicated community room.

The £24m redevelopment is being funded by UK Government funding, Sport England, and Sandwell Council. Contractors Speller Metcalfe have successfully completed the design up to RIBA Stage 3. It was procured using Alliance Leisure, part of the UK Leisure Framework, which is owned and managed by Denbighshire Leisure Ltd.

The project is expected to start on site in Autumn 2025, with an anticipated completion date of Spring 2027.

Councillor Suzanne Hartwell, Sandwell Council's Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Neighbourhoods and Community, said: "I

am glad to see further progress on the Haden Hill site and look forward to it opening to the public. "Over the last decade, we have built five new leisure centres including the magnificent Sandwell Aquatics Centre. This investment at Haden Hill Leisure Centre will ensure we are maintaining our high-quality leisure offer to all residents of Sandwell across the six towns."

Lisa Dodd-Mayne, Executive Director for Place, Sport England, said: "Redeveloping Haden Hill Leisure Centre will give more people in Sandwell the chance to play sport and be active, helping them to lead healthier lives. Our work in Sandwell goes further – we're embedded in Sandwell and the wider Black Country, investing in and supporting the wider community and local organisations, to understand what is stopping people from being active and working together to deliver local solutions. This way of working is changing lives in Sandwell and local communities across England, making sport and physical activity something for everyone, no matter who they are or where they live."

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Whitgreave Street



Brand-new energy efficient homes

The design and project management of six new council homes has been undertaken by UDBS with programme management through Housing Partnerships.

The homes in a West Bromwich neighbourhood are providing much-needed housing for Sandwell residents.

Sandwell Council, with grant funding from Homes England, has delivered six spacious four-bedroom homes in Whitgreave Street, working in conjunction with SWG Construction.

These brand-new, energy efficient semi-detached homes perfectly blend modern living with sustainable features.

Every property is equipped with electric car charging facilities and solar PV panels, ensuring residents can enjoy eco-friendly living and reduced energy costs.

The development includes a landscaped communal area and convenient visitor parking,

making it ideal for families and guests to visit. In addition, the development features a new access road, bell mouth, turning head, pavements, street lighting and essential below ground drainage and car parking.

For further information please contact:
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Millennium Centre

Wednesbury community centre refurbishment

A new events space and cafe will be built as part of planned refurbishments to a community centre in Wednesbury.

The Millennium Centre in Friar Park Road, Wednesbury, will be renovated alongside a new events space for 150 people under plans backed by Sandwell Council.

The community centre currently houses a nursery and children's play area, dance studio, sports hall and meeting spaces but would be extended to make room for the new events space for weddings and parties, DJ sets and open mic nights.

A new cafe will also be built.

Sandwell Council was awarded more than £20m in government 'levelling up' money last year to make improvements to Wednesbury town centre and help build a new 600-home estate in Friar Park as well as improve the aging Millennium Centre.

The work to the Friar Park Road community centre, which was built in the 1970s and extended in 1999, has received the green light from Sandwell Council's planning officers.

Friar Park was earmarked for funding as a third of residents in the ward have no qualifications – the highest rate in the borough.

Works are due to commence during Summer 2025.

For further information please contact:
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Crosswells & St Vincents



20 new family homes in Oldbury and West Bromwich

Sandwell Council has worked with Seddon Housing Partnership to bring 20 new council homes to sites in Oldbury and West Bromwich.

This development was designed by Urban Design and Building Services (UDBS) in consultation with Housing Partnerships.

A total of 12 homes have been constructed at Crosswells Road in Langley, Oldbury with a mix of two and four bedrooms including three bungalows. The site was once used for a council-run depot.

Eight homes with a mix of two, three and four bedrooms have been constructed at a site in St Vincent's Crescent, West Bromwich where council-owned shops with flats above were demolished.

All the homes have Photo Voltaic (PV) panels installed to help Sandwell Council meet its carbon-neutral ambitions by utilising renewable energy sources. The roof panels also benefit tenants by reducing their energy costs. All properties include superior insulation systems.

Some of the homes built will include bespoke features to meet the changing needs of potential tenants. This includes features such as

wheelchair friendly access and downstairs wet rooms.

The recently completed homes will now be offered through the council's choice-based letting system.

The homes have been grant funded by Homes England and Sandwell Council with a total investment of around £6.2million across the two sites.

For further information contact:

UDBS_customercontact@sandwell.gov.uk



R&M Contract

Exciting Update from Sandwell Property Care (part of Corporate Landlord)

We're pleased to announce that, following their appointment from 1st April 2025, Dodd Group Ltd and GRAHAM have officially started their repair and maintenance work on Sandwell's non-housing properties.

Both contractors bring proven expertise: Dodd Group, headquartered in Smethwick, has been serving Sandwell MBC since 2015, supporting local apprentices and community initiatives.

GRAHAM is committed to delivering high-quality, value-for-money repairs across the borough.

Luke Dove, Assistant Director, said: "They've hit the ground running, delivering mechanical, electrical, and building works across the borough."

Alan Millar, GRAHAM Regional Director, added: "We're delighted to continue our partnership and provide high standards of service."

Matthew Lewis, Dodd Group's Divisional MD, commented: "It's great to support our local community and retain jobs for our staff and apprentices on their doorstep."

For more information about how Urban Design and Building Services can assist, contact:

UDBS_customercontact@sandwell.gov.uk



Brades Lodge



New classroom block

Work has now been completed on the construction of a new classroom block at Brades Lodge with Seddon Construction.

The newly completed classroom block adds essential space to the Brades School. The state-of-the-art facility features five

classrooms, including a general teaching classroom, science lab, art room, workshop and food technology space along with essential restrooms and ancillary rooms.

For further information please contact:
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Beever Road

New housing development in Tipton

Beever Road is a housing development in Tipton that includes 10 bungalows and 8 apartments. There is a mixture of adaptable and wheelchair-accessible units across the site.

The development was designed by Urban Design and Building Services (UDBS) and was managed on site with UDBS serving as contract administrator, architect, structural engineer, and landscape architect. SMBC's Housing Partnership team, under Regeneration & Growth, delivered the project to support the council's need for additional social housing.

Historically, the site housed some prefabricated postwar dwellings, which were then demolished to make way for allotments. Following this, the site became an underutilised grassed area that was prone to fly tipping and anti-social behaviour.

As with several sites in Sandwell, the ground conditions and location of existing constraints

proved particularly challenging at Beever Road. For example, there were mineshafts, existing watercourses, and contaminated ground that required careful consideration as part of the design development.

The project was collaboratively developed with a very experienced project team to ensure the provision covered both the needs of residents waiting for housing and those of the local area.

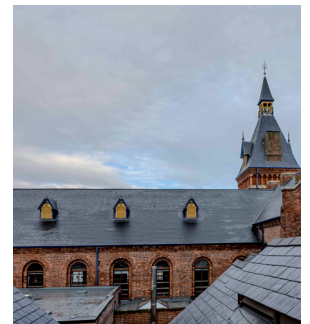
In addition to this, the project was designed with care for the existing setting, providing wildlife habitat areas, open swales, and 'protected' pedestrian footpaths to allow safe pedestrian movement around the newly formed street, with attractive planting for both visual pleasure and habitat creation.

The project was built on site by J. Harper and Sons Ltd. and was funded through both the HRA budget and grant funding provided by Homes England.

For further information please contact:
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West Bromwich Town Hall



Successful completion of the restoration and renovation!

The Victorian Society's Birmingham & West Midlands Group recently announced its tenth annual Conservation Award made to Sandwell Metropolitan Borough Council for this project.

The Restoration of the historic community buildings was completed by the people for the people.

www.victoriansociety.org.uk

Urban Design and Building Services (UDBS) had a quality control and monitoring role in this project. This means we liaised with the contractor on site to ensure the access improvements are fully compliant with current guidance on inclusive design. We also ensured that all the restoration works are appropriate for a grade II-listed building.

Sandwell Council appointed a contractor through the Constructing West Midlands framework to provide the design and building work needed. Thanks to scaffolding,

conservation architects have conducted closer inspections and detailed surveys to help determine the scope of the external restoration.

The works have been meticulously executed, preserving the historical essence while ensuring the structures are fit for future generations.

Councillor Peter Hughes, Sandwell Council's Cabinet Member for Regeneration, said in a media release: "The town hall and central library have long been at the heart of West Bromwich, serving as key cultural and civic hubs with the renovations complete these buildings are now ready to continue their legacy offering improved facilities and a welcoming environment for residents and visitors alike."

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Sandwell Aquatics Centre



Finalist in UK Active Awards

The new Sandwell Aquatics Centre was selected as a finalist for the UK Active Award New Build or Design of the Year.

Colleagues from Urban Design and Building Services, Sandwell Council and Sandwell Leisure Trust attended the prestigious event at The International Convention Centre (ICC) on 3rd October 2024. Although the entry did not win the overall award the judges recognised the overall outstanding design of this fantastic facility and the benefits that it has generated for the residents in Sandwell.

“A superb facility was built as part of the Commonwealth Games held in

Birmingham. This project focused on how to maximise the ‘post-games’ use of the site by the local community. As such engagement with local groups was undertaken to understand the needs of the local community. As such the design of the building is excellent with multi-cultural needs considered and separate entrances for school children created.”

Feedback from the judges.

For further information please contact:
UDBS_customercontact@sandwell.gov.uk.

ISO 9001

A mark of high quality: we're proud to have retained ISO 9001 for sixteen years running.

Urban Design and Building Services (UDBS) recently underwent a surveillance visit with the Centre for Assessment (CfA), a national provider of accreditation and certification for UK organisations. We're proud to have retained ISO 9001 quality management registration in all areas of our activity – for sixteen years running!

What are ISO standards?

ISO stands for International Organization for Standardization. The ISO 9000 family is ISO's set of globally recognised quality management systems. ISO 9001 in particular ensures organisations meet all their statutory and regulatory requirements to give their customers and stakeholders consistently high-quality goods and services. It looks at several quality management principles, including customer focus, process approach, evidence-based decision making, and continual improvement.

UDBS and ISO 9001

For UDBS, maintaining an effective quality management system is vital to our work in designing and maintaining buildings for public-sector clients. We first achieved ISO 9001 registration in 2009.

Our commitment to retaining it has resulted in continuous improvements to our service delivery.



Following their thorough examination of all areas of our activity, the CfA assessor was happy that UDBS is continuing to demonstrate a thorough and effective quality management system, supported by clearly defined systems.

‘Commitment to high quality’

Luke Dove is Assistant Director – Property, Strategic Assets and Land. He said: “Retaining ISO 9001 registration since 2009 is an outward mark of UDBS’ commitment to high quality, customer satisfaction and continuous improvement. It also reflects the hard work that goes on from our team throughout the year, as we constantly challenge and analyse the services we deliver.

“Thank you to everyone for upholding this level of high quality – we can all be very proud of the service UDBS delivers to Sandwell Council and external clients.”

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Thorn Close



Refurbishment of apartments in Wednesbury

Work is complete on Thorn Close in Wednesbury, on the refurbishment of 28 apartments and the construction of four new apartments.

Urban Design and Building Services (UDBS) is proud to have had key roles in this project, providing architecture and landscape architecture services, quantity surveying and structural engineering support.

As well as creating four new affordable homes for Sandwell, this project has completely transformed the existing buildings. The external walls of the blocks received insulated, full-height rainscreen cladding – not only improving the look of the buildings but improving energy efficiency and helping to lower tenants' fuel bills.

The buildings also benefit from new entrance porches, a new pitched roof,

replacement windows and external doors, and improvements to balconies. Inside, there are improvements to communal areas and staircases.

Outside, the area around the buildings has been modernised to provide much-needed car parking spaces and a more aesthetically pleasing environment. Hard and soft landscaping works included planting, and the addition of cycle and bin stores.

Sandwell Council's Neighbourhood Services department is our client and SWG Construction Build & Renovate was the main contractor.

For further information contact:
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Social Value

BIG Thanks to our amazing contractors **Dodd Group Ltd, GRAHAM, HSL, Tilbury Douglas, Seddon, Interclass, Speller Metcalf, Harpers, Lift and Engineering Services**, who have donated 525 Easter Eggs between them to the Corporate Partnering Board's annual easter egg collection.

This initiative enables each child and young person in Sandwell's care to receive an egg during the Easter period.

Luke Dove, Assistant Director of Property, Strategic Assets and Land said "Thank you

to all members of staff and our contractors for their fantastic donations and taking the time to support this worthwhile cause, with a special acknowledgement going to the Post Room Staff for safely collecting, storing, and delivering the eggs to the Children's Trust. It is great to see us all coming together and in doing so ensuring that local disadvantaged children and young people across the Borough are able to share in the Easter celebrations."

For further information please contact: UDBS_customercontact@sandwell.gov.uk

Eggstra-ordinary effort by everyone!



Forge Mill Farm



Exciting News – Natural Play Barn is Open !

UDBS have worked collaboratively with a number of consultants to deliver a barn conversion at Forge Mill Farm, West Bromwich, that is now the home of a farm themed indoor adventure play area designed for children.

The project included full refurbishment and extension of an existing disused barn that now has new toilet facilities, classroom/ activity room, kitchen and associated external activity and picnic areas.

Due to the sensitive and remote location of the facility, liaison with National Authorities - National Grid and Environment Agency was essential.

Procurement and installation of the play equipment was coordinated and managed by staff at Forge Mill Farm.

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