

improving living in scotland



The Homes for Scotland People Awards

Recognising talent and achievement

JUDGES' REPORT

09



the JUDGING PANEL

The Homes for Scotland People Awards 2009 were judged by:

MARY MULLIGAN MSP (Chair) - 1

NICK BARLEY – Executive Director, The Lighthouse - 2

KENNEDY FOSTER – CML Scotland Policy Consultant - 3

BILL JAMIESON – Executive Editor, The Scotsman - 4

GRAEME OGILVY – Director, ConstructionSkills Scotland - 5

HELEN STUART – General Manager, Scotland's New Home Buyer - 6



Chair's Introduction

Dear Homes for Scotland member

When I was approached to take part in the judging process, in fact to Chair the judging panel, I was delighted but also a little daunted! Although I have experience of housing throughout my political career, this is policy-based and not at all technical.

But then I remembered - with a father, brothers and cousins who all work, or did, in the building industry, maybe I did have some understanding if not expertise.

There were also a couple of other reasons why I decided I shouldn't be overly concerned. First, my fellow judges more than made up for any shortcomings I may have and I would like to take this opportunity to thank them for the dedication and commitment they showed throughout the whole process. Second, was because the Awards are for people and, as an elected representative, people are my business too and we share a common goal of building strong, sustainable communities.

Given the difficulties currently facing the industry, there may have been some trepidation about launching this year's Awards but we need not have worried as the nominations flowed in.

It was a pleasure working with both the Homes for Scotland staff and my fellow judges, who took their role very seriously indeed. At a time of such change and economic uncertainty, I believe we have chosen a group of people of whom the industry can feel very proud – people who went the extra mile and clearly demonstrate the passion and determination which remains within a sector so important to our country's social and economic wellbeing.

Mary Mulligan MSP

the JUDGING PROCESS

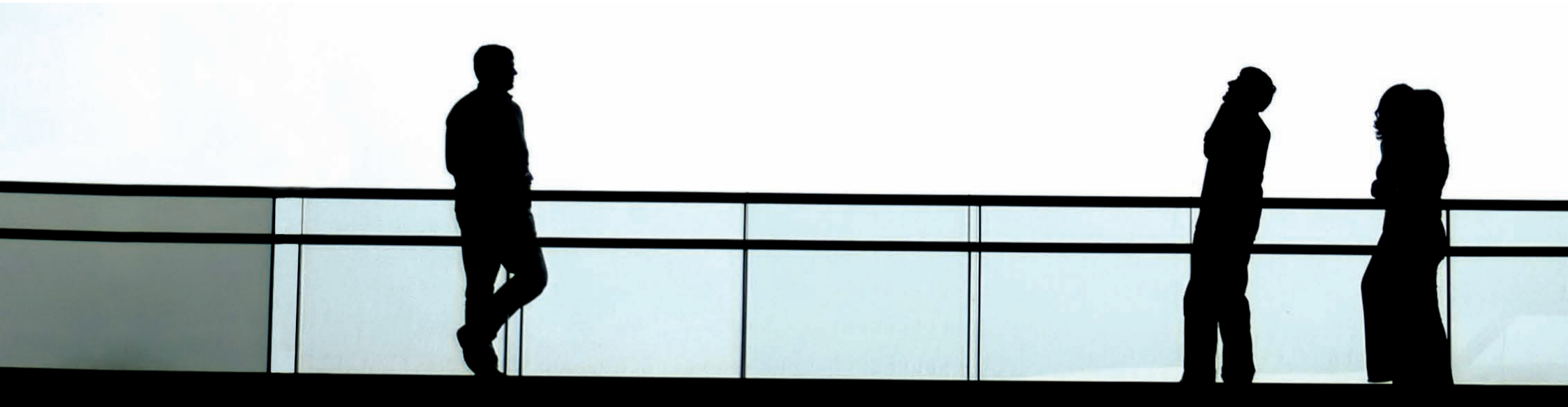
1. The Homes for Scotland People Awards were launched on 5 February 2009 with entries invited from home building and associate member companies in the following categories:
 - Construction
 - Customer Care
 - Architecture & Design
 - Sales & Marketing
 - Regeneration
 - Environment
 - Land & Planning
 - Industry Achievement.
2. The closing date for entries was Monday 9 March.
3. To be assessed on written submissions (with the option of also holding interviews if deemed appropriate by the judges), entries were limited to:
 - one side of A4 per nomination, clearly demonstrating why the nominee merited an award and encompassing both subjective assessments (such as on ability, capacity, character etc) as well as more measurable or quantifiable benchmarks (such as recognisable achievements)
 - a photograph of the nominee (including 300dpi jpeg)
 - a description of their role and a career summary
 - details of other points of contact who may be able to provide testimonials if required.
4. Standard marketing materials were not accepted.
5. Nominated individuals were to be employed by home building or associate member companies of Homes for Scotland.
6. With the exception of Industry Achievement, there was no limit to the number of entries from a member company in any category.
7. The judges were able, at their discretion, to amalgamate categories/reallocate entries to other categories as they felt appropriate.
8. The judges were able, at their discretion, to make commendations in any categories as they felt appropriate.
9. In total, 46 nominations were submitted. The judges met on Wednesday 11 March 2009 for a preliminary assessment of the entries and agreed that:
 - each category would be assessed by two judges with recommendations on awards and commendations to be considered by the rest of the panel at a further meeting on Wednesday 25 March
 - all judges would consider the Industry Achievement Award
 - each entry would be assessed against the following criteria:
 - skills and success
 - creativity and innovation
 - commitment and engagement
10. With the exception of two categories, where the judging panel sought to give further consideration, final decisions were reached on Wednesday 25 March without the requirement for interviews or site visits.

OBSERVATIONS

Overall, the judges considered the general standard of entries to be high and found the number of nominations encouraging in what is a difficult time for the industry.

Whilst the judges felt that a number of entries were outstanding in terms of clarity, presentation and the evidence submitted to support their nominations, they expressed some concern that others were distinctly lacking in these aspects and that the nominees in these cases were somewhat let down by the quality of the submission.

Should Homes for Scotland wish to revisit this theme in future years, the judges have suggested the development of a pro forma nomination form to standardise entries and help facilitate a better evidence base across all entries.



AWARDS & COMMENDATIONS

CUSTOMER CARE

AWARD WINNER: Ann Wojcik
After Sales Manager, Springfield Properties

SKILLS AND SUCCESS:

Ann's extremely well-written nomination demonstrated her clear successes through the use of client questionnaires. The average customer satisfaction rating in 2005/06 was 2.92, whereas this had risen in 2007/08 to an average of 4.64 on a scale of 1 to 5.

CREATIVITY AND INNOVATION:

Ann has not only implemented new management systems but she has clearly put these systems to good use in the delivery of excellent customer care strategies.

COMMITMENT AND ENGAGEMENT:

Ann has taken responsibility for her own training, emerging from a diverse background and a period of time in Canada, after which she returned to Scotland and since devoted herself to the home building industry.

The judges felt that this well-crafted submission demonstrated a real passion for customer care and that Ann fully deserves to win the Customer Care Award.

COMMENDATION: Mike Mullen
Site Manager, George Wimpey (East Scotland)

Strong testimonial evidence from customers resulted in an impressive 91 per cent success rating in a recent customer survey. The judges concluded that Mike can be thought of as someone who creates a community, as opposed to simply building houses.

““ The judges felt that this well-crafted submission demonstrated a real passion for customer care and that Ann fully deserves to win the Customer Care Award. ””



AWARDS & COMMENDATIONS

LAND AND PLANNING

AWARD WINNER: Brian Leith
Land Director, Miller Homes

SKILLS AND SUCCESS:

Successful land and planning work demands tenacity and dedication, qualities which Brian Leith clearly possesses in abundance. He used his diplomacy and negotiation skills to pursue a particular land acquisition project in the face of some exceptionally complex issues.

CREATIVITY AND INNOVATION:

What marked Brian out from the other submissions was his innovative approach to a particularly intractable problem over a particular parcel of land and its ownership. Brian spent time at the local library and pored over land registry documents to discover the true owner, employing a 'specialist historical site investigator' to complete the process.

COMMITMENT AND ENGAGEMENT:

Through his commitment, Brian secured a breakthrough that allowed the development to proceed against the odds. His is a compelling story to emerge from a sensitive development in a sensitive setting. Brian won people over at a crucial moment and the judges agreed that this singular success story is worthy of the Award for Land and Planning.

COMMENDATION: David Morgan
Land Director, Miller Homes

This was another outstanding submission resting on skills applied across the board to a whole number of problems and requiring dogged determination over a ten year period.

“What marked Brian out from the other submissions was his innovative approach to a particularly intractable problem over a particular parcel of land and its ownership.”



AWARDS & COMMENDATIONS

SALES AND MARKETING

AWARD WINNER: Margaret McMurdo
Sales Adviser, Persimmon Homes

SKILLS AND SUCCESS:

Margaret enjoyed exceptional success during one of the toughest years on record for Scotland's home building industry, achieving no less than 59 reservations and legal completions during 2008. A "true professional", Margaret's regional chairman states that if there is a site underperforming, he can confidently ask Margaret to get involved and sales will start to come through.

CREATIVITY AND INNOVATION:

The judges were impressed by the attention Margaret put into finishing touches – attending to the final detail of customer enquiries and showing great patience while customers deliberated over options and extras. So warmly is she thought of that she has even been invited to one of the homebuyers' weddings!

COMMITMENT AND ENGAGEMENT:

With 30 years' experience selling residential property, Margaret's loyalty is exceptional – she has even sold two or three homes to the same person.

The judges could feel the persona of Margaret coming through in the submission – and were almost persuaded to buy a property off the page! Margaret's charm, loyalty and exceptional sales success makes her – in the judges' view – a worthy winner of the Sales and Marketing Award.

COMMENDATION: Elizabeth Symonds
Sales Adviser, Miller Homes

This was a very strong nomination for someone who prides herself on her personal touch. Understanding that selling is as much about listening as it is talking, Elizabeth has an ability to sell different ranges of properties in different areas, demonstrating this over 19 years in the business. On her most recent site, as well as receiving calls for recognition from satisfied customers, Elizabeth achieved an average of 2.4 sales per month on a 67 property site – a total of 31 sales in just a few short months.

“So warmly is she thought of that she has even been invited to one of the homebuyers' weddings!”



AWARDS & COMMENDATIONS

ARCHITECTURE AND DESIGN

AWARD WINNER: Kenneth Cooper
Architectural Manager, Miller Homes

SKILLS AND SUCCESS:

Kenneth's nomination concerns the design of a small village extension, Howgate, to the south of Penicuik. Here, Kenneth has not only designed houses in keeping with the character of the existing village, he has also brilliantly created a sense of place by generating an excellent master plan that includes provision for pedestrians and the creation of a village green.

CREATIVITY AND INNOVATION:

Kenneth's innovative approach includes the placement of car parking facilities in remote screened courtyards and an arrangement with the local bus company so that residents can 'dial a bus'.

COMMITMENT AND ENGAGEMENT:

Kenneth has devoted himself to delivering this project at forensic levels of detail, and to do this he has had to go beyond the normal duties of a designer to persuade many local collaborators of his vision for the village. Above all, the judges felt that Kenneth has successfully created a settlement of the kind that the local community can genuinely feel proud of in every respect – a real achievement for any volume house builder.

“Kenneth has devoted himself to delivering this project at forensic levels of detail.”



AWARDS & COMMENDATIONS

REGENERATION

JOINT AWARD WINNER: Tom Gallacher
Development Director, Persimmon Homes

With submissions for both candidates powerful and impressive, the judges decided in favour of a joint award.

SKILLS AND SUCCESS:

Tom has won a series of awards, most recently the Homes for Scotland Innovation Award for Affordable Housing in 2007 for the Garthamlock regeneration project. This project was delivered despite a number of setbacks and required an agreed, pre-planned, cohesive approach by all partners.

CREATIVITY AND INNOVATION:

The financial structure of the Garthamlock project was striking. Revenue generated by Persimmon from the private sales units is effectively cross-subsidising the cost of the rental housing and obviating the normal need for HAG funding – the project being self-sustainable in financial terms.

COMMITMENT AND ENGAGEMENT:

Tom's nomination was bolstered by evidence of long service to the home building industry, particularly with council and housing association partners. He has been responsible, over a 47-year career, for the development of more than 17,000 homes.

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AWARDS & COMMENDATIONS

REGENERATION

JOINT AWARD WINNER: Ron Smith
Project Manager, Glasgow City Council.

SKILLS AND SUCCESS:

This nomination testified to Ron's fundamental work as project manager of the Oatlands project in Glasgow – one of the largest regeneration projects in the UK, involving the creation of more than 1,200 homes.

Acting as a champion and key ambassador for the project, Ron has been highly instrumental in its success from brief compilation to ensuring the smooth completion of legal agreements and brokering a number of solutions to challenging issues in relation to project risk and delivery.

CREATIVITY AND INNOVATION:

External parties can be a significant influence on any project's success. Recognising this, Ron has ensured effective communication between the various Council departments and many other agencies such as Scottish Water and SEPA, resulting in the swift resolution of many problems that could otherwise have frustrated this extremely complex project.

COMMITMENT AND ENGAGEMENT:

Throughout the project's development, Ron has maintained a hands-on approach and promoted a culture of open dialogue between all stakeholders. Key elements of his strategy include producing regular newsletters to engage the local community as well as the development of a dedicated website.

“Acting as a champion and key ambassador for the project, Ron has been highly instrumental in its success.”



AWARDS & COMMENDATIONS

CONSTRUCTION

This category attracted a heavy response – 16 entries in total – and the judges sought to focus on those submissions that showed innovation and distinctiveness of approach. In addition to declaring an outright winner, the judges singled out two further entries for commendation.

AWARD WINNER: Paddy Malone
Contracts Manager, Mactaggart & Mickel

SKILLS AND SUCCESS:

Paddy has developed a highly-acclaimed “Best Practice” manual to assist in the construction process and help deliver the hand-crafted quality demanded both by his employers and customers. Paddy’s manual continues to be used and adapted to changing circumstances on an ongoing basis.

CREATIVITY AND INNOVATION:

Although its success has already been widely acknowledged, the judges agreed that Paddy’s approach in breaking down house building into manageable stages in order to control materials, workmanship and costs represents genuine innovation in this sector.

COMMITMENT AND ENGAGEMENT:

In seeking opinions from all levels of staff and sub-contractors on build procedures and recognising individual needs within a team, the judges felt that Paddy really went the extra mile in terms of organising the workforce and is fully deserving of the Construction Award.

COMMENDATION: John Maine
Managing Director, Springfield Properties

John is a true success story for construction: he established his own business before he went to university to study architecture and then returned to construction after completing his studies. The driving force behind the company’s move into construction and affordable housing, John now runs the largest private house builder in Moray.

COMMENDATION: Robert Teasdale
Manager, R&D Manufacturing, R&D Construction Group

Robert planned and developed a manufacturing facility for a range of products (including timber kits, roof trusses, kitchens, windows and doors) which have received acclaim for their quality and workmanship. Maintaining supplies to both internal and external customers under severe pressure, Robert has made a significant contribution to his company’s success. and affordable housing, John now runs the largest private house builder in Moray.

“Paddy really went the extra mile in terms of organising the workforce and is fully deserving of the Construction Award.”



AWARDS & COMMENDATIONS

ENVIRONMENT

AWARD WINNER: Liz Farrell
Land Manager, Mactaggart & Mickel

SKILLS AND SUCCESS:

Working carefully and methodically with the board of Mactaggart & Mickel, Liz has completed the construction of a new 'eco home' in Ayrshire which sets an important new benchmark for the Scottish home building industry. The house incorporates an array of energy saving devices, insulation, sustainably sourced materials and a ground source heat pump.

CREATIVITY AND INNOVATION:

Liz's main focus was on minimising the impact on the environment and increasing energy efficiency in line with her company's clear move towards Carbon Zero home building. However, to achieve this Liz had to be creative and tenacious – especially when it became clear that some technologies are not readily available in this country yet. She had to source a heat pump from Sweden.

COMMITMENT AND ENGAGEMENT:

The judges were highly impressed by Liz's systematic, logical approach as well as her honesty about the project's pitfalls. There is an important learning outcome – the property cost £40k more than budgeted to produce – and Liz will need to work on ways to ensure the financial viability of environmentally friendly homes in future. Nevertheless, the judges had no hesitation in awarding Liz Farrell the Environment Award.

COMMENDATION: Andy Pearson
Managing Director, Tweed Homes

Andy's achievement was all about his force of character – his enthusiasm and passion is infectious and he has made a real impact on his developments in the Borders through an extensive programme of tree and shrub planting. The judges agreed that plenty of people would be enthused by his example.

“ Liz had to be creative and tenacious – especially when it became clear that some technologies are not readily available in this country yet. ”



AWARDS & COMMENDATIONS

INDUSTRY ACHIEVEMENT AWARD

AWARD WINNER: Mike Walker
Chairman, Walker Group (Scotland)

Celebrating 40 years in home building, Mike founded Walker Group (Scotland) in 1969, has built the company and seen it through three recessions. As evidence of his commitment to innovation, he was an early pioneer of the use of timber frame construction which now accounts for almost 70% of new build output here in Scotland.

During periods of downturn and retrenchment he has shown true leadership, taking steps to minimise redundancies and setting examples from the top down.

In addition to the demands of running a successful business, he has championed the home building and construction industries, contributing to dialogues with the Treasury on industry matters and making important contributions to debates on subjects ranging from affordable housing to revisions to the planning system.

Past achievements include President of the House Builders Association; twice president of the Edinburgh and District Master Builders Association; past chairman of Lothian and Edinburgh Enterprise Ltd; past member of the Court of Napier University and past Lord Dean of Guild of the City of Edinburgh (1992-1996).

Previous awards include Commander of the Order of the British Empire and the Captain of Industry Award from Livingston Industrial and Commercial Association.

The case for this Industry Achievement Award was singular and compelling and is underpinned by testimonials from senior home building industry figures across Scotland.

“During periods of downturn and retrenchment he has shown true leadership, taking steps to minimise redundancies and setting examples from the top down.”



HOMES FOR SCOTLAND WOULD LIKE TO THANK THE FOLLOWING PEOPLE AWARDS' SPONSORS FOR THEIR SUPPORT:



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