

## **Derek Beauchamp Design Award 2017**

*The overall winner of the 2017 DBDW is:*

**Eastgate, 53 High East Street, Dorchester DT1 1HU** – Developed by Metis Homes

Eastgate comprises ten new dwellings and off-street car parking and occupies the site of the old White Hart Hotel adjoining Swan Bridge, within the Dorchester Conservation Area.

The development is on a prominent but constrained site, with significant historic and literary associations. It creates a memorable gateway to the centre of Dorchester. The view up High East and West Streets, from Swan Bridge to Cornhill and on the Top o' Town possess a distinctive urban character from one end to the other: the visual climax is created by the interplay of the St Peter's Church, the spire of All Saints' and Corn Exchange clock tower.

Redevelopment proposals have evolved over some 14 years through challenging and changing market conditions. An initial scheme consisting of three 'shops' and 12 flats was granted planning permission in 2006; permission for the present development was approved in 2011.

The scheme architects, Tarrant Hinton-based Western Design Architects, have been associated with the scheme design throughout and Eastgate is an outcome of a constructive dialogue between the original site-owner (Hall & Woodhouse Ltd), architects, local planners, the developer (Metis Homes) and others. The architects adopted a contextual approach to building in this urban setting and the scheme's design reflects a thoughtful analysis of the site and its surroundings. The High East Street frontage echoes the rhythm and vertical emphasis of adjoining buildings and the, visually critical, curved corner (the scheme's 'hinge') appears to have been inspired by the form of buildings on the opposite side of the road. This helps to create a very strong gateway to the historic core of the town. The smaller of the two buildings adopts the style of a converted mill comparable in character to other buildings adjoining the Mill Stream. The retention and public prominence of the White Hart within the development is welcome.

The review panel was unanimous in its decision that Metis Homes and its team should receive the Society's first 'Derek Beauchamp Design Award'.