

Green 'community precinct'

An innovative new development is committed in its quest to be the highest green-rated subdivision in New Zealand.



Artist's impression of the first home designed for the St Kilda Waterways development.

St Kilda Waterways, just outside the town of Cambridge, is an 88 hectare residential property development that aims to combine energy conservation and sustainable design within a premium lifestyle environment. Everything from landscaping and on-site amenities to how the homes will be heated is taken into consideration in the creation of what developers hope will ultimately be a carbon-neutral development.

Co-founder Matt Smith says, 'We want St Kilda Waterways to be the highest green-rated subdivision in New Zealand. That includes ensuring each house is designed to the equivalent of a 6 Green Star Rating.'

Design Council approval process

New Zealand's Green Building Council is still finalising its rating system for residential homes, but Matt believes he's on the right side of global trends and is certain the homes in St Kilda Waterways will be leading examples for homeowners throughout the country.

Homes built at St Kilda Waterways will undergo approval by the development's design council. The council will work with homeowners from the beginning of their design and planning process to ensure house plans meet the development's energy-efficient principles. Minimum building standards at St Kilda Waterways will include:

- each home's main living areas to face north
 - walls constructed with 140 mm timber framing and R3.6 insulation
 - glazing to be R0.47
 - resource-efficient heating in all spaces
 - hot water technologies reducing primary fuel consumption by at least 50%
 - energy-efficient lighting inside and out
 - minimum 5 Energy Star rating for appliances.
- Each house will have a rainwater tank of at least 10,000 litres, a greywater recycling system and at least 1 kW of power generation (solar or wind). Site coverage on the average 1,600 m² site will be limited to a maximum of 700 m² so that the subdivision can remain stormwater neutral.

Getting the design right

A member of the St Kilda Waterways design council is Right House, also one of the development's main partners.

'Right House will ensure every home within our subdivision receives a certificate that rates the home on thermal performance, water conservation measures, appliances, energy consumption and solar gains,' says Matt.

'The integrated approach of the design council is not about being prescriptive or restrictive. It's about combining the skill sets of the future homeowner, Right House, the chosen architect, the chosen builder and the building

design guidelines to produce smarter, higher-value homes. Getting this design right will have huge comfort, health and financial benefits for each homeowner.'

Matt says the financial impact of his green building standards will only impose a 3-8% premium on building costs.

Inspiration from overseas

Matt has spent time researching developments in Australia, Europe, America and Canada. His plan is to take the best eco-development ideas he has seen and integrate them into Cambridge's environment.

One development in Canada has particularly influenced the way things are being done at St Kilda Waterways – Dockside Green in Victoria, British Columbia. Matt says this has combined the best of green building design with sustainable community design; the development is all about creating a great lifestyle and sense of community for the people living there.

'That's what we want to achieve at St Kilda Waterways. Our development is not just about building green houses, but creating a desirable community precinct that has a neutral impact on the environment,' says Matt.

For more information on St Kilda Waterways, visit www.stkildawaterways.co.nz.

St Kilda Waterways features

- 25 ha of lakes and reserves.
- 285 sections.
- Average site size 1,600 m².
- 7 km of cycleways/footpaths.
- Native plantings create ecological corridor to Mt Maungatautari.
- Non-gated, open to the public.
- Lakeside café.
- Children's daycare on site.
- Fibre optic cables to all homes.
- Community fruit tree orchard.
- All homes to have a minimum level of certification, measured by Right House.