

INSPIRING INDIVIDUALITY WITHIN HOUSEBUILDING

There can sometimes be the perception that all houses built on a single development have the same monotonous look to them. Andrew Prosser, General Manager at IG Lintels, explores the use of bespoke steel lintels and the creative opportunities they present in designing individual buildings.

Spurred on by the Barker Report into the UK's housing needs, local government policy aims to support and provide well-designed homes that people will want to mortgage or rent. The key aim is in providing value and choice along with the provision of high quality, sustainable communities that will continue to thrive well into the future.

With this in mind, designing energy efficient homes and buildings to cope with the housing demand requires maintaining the level of architectural design. The £38 billion Sustainable Communities Plan set out an ambitious vision for creating thriving and sustainable local communities for those living there. This overall impression has in-turn banished the idea that endless monotonous rows of new homes are an answer to the current housing situation in the UK.

Creating individual buildings on one site is a challenge faced by many developers. By using a selection of bespoke steel lintels, a developer can put the emphasis on creating inspirational buildings that differ from each other, without hampering the logistical element of construction. With a touch of creative licence, a developer can achieve a unique stamp on each house within a development through an efficient prefabricated and fastrack method of construction.

A structural member spanning an opening in a wall, steel lintels have many varied applications and advantages, providing the most versatile way of providing support. Depending on the size, shape and design, steel lintels are lightweight and available in any height, depth and span. The core is filled with CFC-free insulation and combined with a thermal break plate for added rigidity and structural performance, making the lintel both adaptable and, Part L compliant.

The variety of lintels and brickwork support systems available to developers caters for every style of domestic building. From gothic and parabolic arches to corner, bay

and sun lounge lintels, the immense selection illustrates the diversity and scope provided by steel lintels.

Used with both timber frame and traditional brick and block construction, the introduction of lintels on a site can significantly reduce the time taken to achieve an architecturally detailed result. For example; the numerous Brick Arch Sets, with bespoke brick-matching service, are ideal for fast build programmes removing the need for costly specialist contractors.

Meanwhile the corner lintel is supplied as a 'one piece' fully mitred and welded structural unit for easy and quick installation. Similarly a bespoke sun lounge lintel can increase the square footage of a house, while offering reduced build times and optimum performance. The 'one piece' unit removes the need for local engineering as it is designed and delivered to site ready for erection, allowing architects and developers to design the sun lounge to suit the property while keeping the costs sensible.

Partnering with a reliable supplier that places great emphasis on manufacturing, speed and delivery, can result in an extensive range of special lintels, which can be custom-made to the developer's own specification. From designing and manufacturing, custom made lintels can be as diverse and inspiring as the style of the developer and local vernacular.

With the right manufacturer, ordering special lintels can be efficient and hassle free, eliminating the expensive delays between site measurement, design and manufacture that can often occur. Special lintels can be designed and delivered simply and quickly to site helping to reduce overall time and cost.

As well as having many applications steel lintels can help the developer to create numerous inspirational architectural design possibilities to suit any building or house,. By incorporating a steel lintel into a construction process, a developer will be helping to support creativity in new builds, redesigning historic details using modern methods as well as leaving a signature on individual buildings. Steel lintels help create well-designed homes and developing sustainable and attractive communities.

For further information on Creative Lintel Solutions from the Keystone Group visit www.thekeystonegroup.co.uk

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