

Property news

Site managers are celebrating award honours

TWO Bellway site managers are celebrating after receiving industry recognition in the National House-Building Council's (NHBC) annual Pride in the Job awards.

Gary Sidney and Justin Williams work at developments in Arnold and Grantham. The pair each received Seal of Excellence awards, which are presented to the top 130 site managers across the country.

Gary, 33, joined the company five years ago. He is currently based at The Point in Arnold but secured his award for work on his previous site, Poppyfields, the former RAF Newton airbase near Bingham.

He said: "I've been recognised in the NHBC awards several times over the years, but it's always nice to be rewarded for your hard work, so I'm happy and proud to win an award this year."

Justin, 42, was recognised for his work at Aspire in Grantham. He joined Bellway two years ago and has several NHBC awards to his name.

He said: "It's great recognition for the site for me to win this award – this is our first full operating year at Aspire and our customer satisfaction levels are at 100 per cent, so everyone is really pleased."

"Working to keep standards consistently high is always a challenge but it is satisfying and it's brilliant to have everyone's efforts formally recognised."

To win an award, site managers must score highly for the quality of workmanship on their site at every



Gary Sidney



Justin Williams

stage of the build, while demonstrating excellent leadership, technical expertise and robust health and safety processes.

Lee Wilkinson, construction director for Bellway East Midlands, said: "I am extremely proud of Gary and Justin – it's wonderful to see all their hard work and the hard work of their site teams rewarded by the NHBC."

Open weekend at Miller Homes

IF you're serious about house hunting this year, start your viewing with an open house weekend.

Miller Homes is throwing open its doors this Saturday and Sunday between 10am and 5pm at its developments across the region – including Royal View in Berry Hill, Mansfield and Weavers Court in Castle Donington.

A range of properties will be available including the four-bed detached Mitford style home at Royal View (prices start at £269,950) while at Weavers Court, the Pushkin style three-bed house has prices from £194,950.

Stamp duty will be paid, while flooring and turf will be included on properties purchased during the Open House weekend. An independent financial adviser will also be on hand to help advise on any mortgage matters.

Paul Walters, associate director for Miller Homes Midlands, explained that buyers need to be quick to take advantage of these exclusive offers as only a limited



Miller Homes sales advisers Jan Palmer (left) and Belinda Kinch will welcome potential buyers this weekend

number of plots are available.

He said: "We have a range of properties on offer to suit all tastes and budgets and you can find out more about our part exchange package, which will help make the moving process even quicker."

Brisk sales at joint development

MORE than 200 people attended the launch of Barratt Homes and David Wilson Homes' new development at Woodhouse Park.

Seventeen homes have been reserved already.

Over the next three years, 290 two to five-bedroom homes will be built at the development on Woodhouse Way, near Nottingham Business Park. The first are due for completion in this month.

Jan Ruston, sales director for Barratt Homes North Midlands, said: "We are thrilled that so many people came to the launch event and that so many homes were reserved within the first few hours of release. If the launch success is

anything to go by, it is sure to become one of the most popular developments in our portfolio."

Steve Smith, sales director for David Wilson Homes, said: "Woodhouse Park is an excellent development and the fact that many have been reserved already shows that no-one wants to miss out on the chance to live in such a prime location, with excellent links into the city centre."

Barratt Homes are available to reserve from Bairstow Eves Estate Agents in Wollaton, and David Wilson Homes from William H Brown in Kimberley. Or call Barratt homes on 0844 811 3377 or David Wilson Homes on 0844 811 5544.

Minimalism goes out

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IF the dawn of a new year has inspired you to revamp your house then listen up, as Lisa Jepson of Willbond predicts the must-haves in bathroom design for 2015. Whether you want to add a few touches to brighten up your bathroom or you're ready for a full-on refit, this year's big bathroom trends can be adapted to suit you.

■ **Free-standing bath tubs**
Luxurious walk-in showers and wetrooms will continue to rise in popularity, but alongside this trend will be a call for more indulgent bathing – with free-standing options a key trend.

Glamour is in so don't hold back; look for ornate and opulence and create decadent luxury.

■ **Furniture**
Basins on top of vanity units have been a common sight for the past decade and will still be popular in 2015, but we're now seeing a return to elegant Victorian-style basins with feature legs. Charming old-fashioned, these also help give the appearance of more space and can be used effectively in contemporary or traditional styled bathrooms. If you have the space, consider two basins within the bathroom to give equal prominence to your partner's grooming regime.

■ **Tiles**
Say goodbye to those gleaming white metro tiles that we've been seeing for the past five years and say hello to a more natural look.

Grey has taken over as the main colour choice, particularly for sleek wetrooms and en-suites – with natural, stone-effect options in different shapes and sizes adding texture and warmth.

This combination is a good background for any accent colour, so use coral and mauve to help achieve that elegant look of 2015.

■ **Mirrors and metallics**
Create a sense of space with shiny metallics and gleaming, reflective surfaces. The bathroom has now adopted the popular interior trend of mixing old with new. Use finishes such as brass, chrome and copper to create the look.

For a quick fix that follows the trend and won't break the bank, try adding useful storage behind full-length mirrors or mirror-fronted cabinets instead of vanity units. This is ideal if you're on a budget and can't really afford a huge bathroom revamp – and it's practical.



Keuco Royal tall mirror unit, £662 at Willbond

■ **Furnishings**
Expect to see more furniture and furnishings generally in the bathroom as the trend away from the clean, uncluttered lines of minimalism continues.

Look out for ostentatious touches, such as the full-on use of dressing tables, shelves, bookcases, armchairs, and even wallpaper, to add a little character and style. All these elements combine to create a cosy haven more akin to a living room or boudoir.

■ **Lighting**
The continued focus on dramatic mood effects will see more pendant lights, chandeliers and ultra-chic hidden lighting using LEDs, accentuating architectural features and providing striking focal points.

■ **Remote-controlled showers**
These days, there's really no need to fuss around in the mornings trying to turn the shower on manually and/or adjust settings until you find the correct temperature and water spray setting. A new generation of clever remote-control systems and mobile apps lets you simply touch one button from the comfort of your bedroom and all you have to do is stagger into the bathroom and enjoy an instant, pre-programmed and pleasurable showering experience. What a divine wake-up call!



The traditional best hero. Roll-top baths can be bought from around £1,200



Waters wave bath, a high-ended slipper bath available at Willbond from £1,276



Imperial Oban metal basin stand £1,600 with Winchester basin £300, from Willbond

with the bath water

Su's top twelve tips on making the best of home improvements



Su Snaith, head of estate agency at The Nottingham, with some tips on improving the value of your house

WITH the Christmas decorations boxed away for another year, you may be looking at your house and its decor in a fresh light – especially if you have moving on your mind.

As arguably your biggest financial asset, it's in your interests to present your house in the best possible way if you want to get the best possible price, so some affordable changes and a spot of DIY could be just the trick to add value to your home.

Latest research (according to a Lloyds Bank survey) reveals that almost half – 44 per cent – of homeowners have completed significant home improvements in the past, or plan to in the future.

A third of respondents said they made changes to their homes to add value, with the average cost of these improvements £4,000.

Of this number, 29 per cent of the number of homeowners who had carried out work believed that it had added between £10,000 and £25,000 to the value of their property.

Su Snaith, head of estate agency at The Nottingham, said: "Some relatively easy but efficiently carried out improvements around the home could add instant value to your home."

Top tips for the new year:

■ 1 Spruce up your paintwork with a fresh, neutral look throughout, it's simple and effective.

■ 2 Hire a carpet-cleaning machine for the weekend and give your carpets a deep cleansing shampoo. You may want to leave this until any guests have left!

■ 3 Giving your kitchen a makeover doesn't have to cost the earth. You can give it a new lease of life by replacing cupboard doors, drawer fronts and worktops. This is far cheaper than a complete kitchen overhaul. The DIY stores often have sales at this time of year.

■ 4 Similarly, you can spruce up your bathroom cheaply if the sanitary-ware is left in the same position.

■ 5 Replacing the grouting around sinks and baths will give an instant brighter and cleaner look.

■ 6 Make sure the doorbell and smoke alarms are in good working order and replace the batteries if necessary – a small, but important point.

■ 7 DIY enthusiasts could sand original floorboards and either paint them or stain them; hiring a sander is not very expensive.

■ 8 With windows, focus on replacing any broken panes and repairing the frames. Repaint them then add new draught seals to improve energy efficiency and reduce noise pollution.

■ 9 Updating light fittings is pretty easy and may even give a whole new look to a room. Adding energy-saving lightbulbs will save cash too.

■ 10 Don't overlook the garage – statistics show that 55 per cent of us don't use the garage to park the car in. Try and keep it tidy and store all items on shelves to give an impression of space rather than clutter.



■ 11 It may not be typical gardening weather, but whatever the season it is important to show off your outdoor space. Make sure all tools and toys are packed away out of sight. A few colourful potted containers will help to cheer up the wintry outdoors.

■ 12 Last but not least, be prepared when your agent arranges a viewing. Tidy up as best you can and get ready to show off your home to its true potential... and wait for that all-important offer!

