

CASE STUDY



Newham Council in East London, under the aegis of its specialist property management operation, Newham Homes, is using ArtiCAD kitchen design software to help it achieve the government's Decent Homes 2010 standard.

Decent Homes 2010 Initiative

Launched in 2000, this central government initiative is committed to bringing all public sector homes up to an agreed standard within ten years.

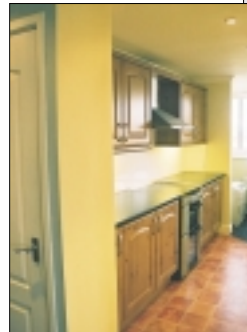
SIGNIFICANT FUNDING is being given to Councils to help them with their own Decent Homes activities. In the case of Newham, this involves inspecting and potentially carrying out remedial work on some 20,000 council properties.

Michael Wood, a project manager for Newham Homes, is responsible for overseeing the design and installation of new kitchens, bathrooms and central heating systems in many of the Council's properties. He is working closely with Karen Collinson, a property inspector and kitchen designer, who is on secondment to the Decent Homes project. He commented: "Before we had the ArtiCAD system, I used to take a carousel with four different half cabinet doors and a sample worktop mounted in a shopping trolley around to the tenants. As you can imagine, it was difficult for them to see how their finished kitchen would look from these small samples. Now with ArtiCAD we can produce individual plans, fully coloured designs and bird's eye views while the tenants watch. It's good for tenant relations and, of course, it is much more professional."

Starting work

Newham Homes started its own Decent Homes initiative in 2005. Twenty houses and a tower block have already been upgraded at the rate of one hundred and forty two dwellings in just twenty six weeks. Tenants are able to continue living in their property whilst the work is undertaken, or 'take refuge' in the specially prepared respite flat which is fitted out with a kitchen, bathroom and living room.

Although the use of the 'shopping trolley carousel' had served the purpose of showing tenants the four kitchen choices, it was clear - given the number of properties to be upgraded - that a better, more professional and more efficient approach had to be found.



Finding a better way

NEWHAM HOMES buys its kitchens from Stratford-based Newco Limited. Established in 1922, the company provides a workshop for both able bodied and disabled staff. It has built up a strong reputation in the supply of products for the social housing sector over the course of the last twenty years. Michael Wood: "Newco uses an ArtiCAD system which looked impressive to us not only in terms of the plans and graphics it could produce, but also its ability to automatically generate parts lists. We had previously considered using the kitchen package produced by AutoCAD, for which we were already trained. However, having seen what ArtiCAD could do for Newco, we took the decision that this would be the best option for Newham Homes."

A dedicated showroom

The internal structure of a two bedroom flat on the second floor of a twenty-storey 1960s tower block – David Lee Point – in Stratford was demolished, providing the space for Newham Homes to install a state of the art kitchen showroom. This is used to display the six different Newco kitchen ranges which are available to tenants of David Lee Point, together with work surfaces, sinks, taps and floor coverings. The ArtiCAD system was installed in the showroom, with a large flat screen monitor.

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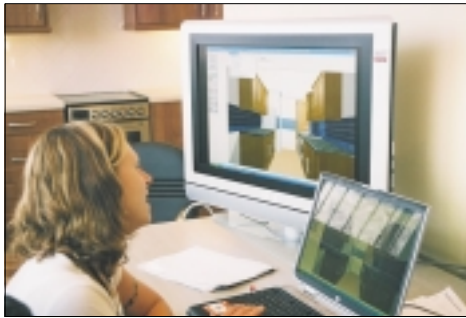


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Designing with the tenants

The team from Newham Homes visits each of the tenants to assess their existing kitchen and to see what appliances need to be catered for. A preliminary hand-drawn paper plan of the proposed new layout is produced during the visit.

AN APPOINTMENT is made for the tenant to visit the showroom to choose which of the kitchen styles – three Shaker and three Cathedral - they would like. Karen Collinson: “We take the tenant

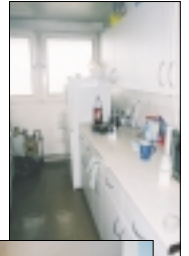


The use of ArtiCAD has provided Karen Collinson with a completely new perspective on kitchen design. Before starting on the Decent Homes project,

she had been used to inspecting and designing standard kitchens for largely unoccupied properties. “It’s great to have so much flexibility with the ArtiCAD system and to be able to offer so much

choice to the tenants. ArtiCAD measures everything so that I can see how the different units will fit into the space available. If I don’t like my initial design, it’s very quick and easy to move things around and try out different ideas. It’s brilliant.”

The combination of ArtiCAD and the specially designed showroom is proving to be a winner for Newham Homes and the Council’s tenants. The days of the cupboard doors on the shopping trolley – albeit one from Marks & Spencer – are long gone.



around the showroom, discuss the various options and then once they have made a decision, we produce the plan and design in ArtiCAD. Most appointments take about half an hour, and the tenants are amazed by how quickly they can see what their new kitchen will look like. Also, with the new Drag and Drop feature, we can make changes while they watch. It’s really easy to use.”

Michael Wood added: “I set up the camera view in ArtiCAD for one tenant who was having difficulty visualising what her kitchen would look like. She was so impressed that she said she could sit and watch it all day!”

Once the kitchen design has been signed off by the tenant, ArtiCAD is used to automatically generate a parts list which is sent to Newco.

Looking ahead

THE USE of the ArtiCAD system, combined with the showroom, is exciting interest within other Councils, who are faced with the same challenge of renovating large numbers of properties as quickly and efficiently as possible.

For the Newham Homes team, once work is completed at David Lee Point, they will be moving on to another hundred flats in the same area, before going to Docklands to tackle three blocks of seventy five flats. As well as using ArtiCAD for kitchen design, they may also start using it for bathrooms, especially in some of the houses where there is more scope for different layouts.



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