# Luxury eco homes turned 'death traps' as Angmering residents battle defects and delays



A luxury estate in Angmering, West Sussex, comprising eco-friendly ‘net zero’ homes, has become the centre of mounting controversy as homeowners voice serious concerns over a wide range of defects, describing their £800,000 properties as “death traps” riddled with faults. The residents of the exclusive Swallows Gate community have been locked in a protracted and exhausting two-year battle with insurers trying to address the significant problems affecting their high-specification houses.

The development, constructed by GD Homes, has been criticised heavily by homeowners who allege that the firm carried out a “half-arsed” job, particularly with respect to the installation of the high-tech heat exchange and ducting systems as well as the insulation. One resident told MailOnline: “It’s been an absolute horror show from start to finish and the quality of the workmanship is appalling.” The same homeowner added, “It’s driven me to the edge of a nervous breakdown. I’ve been very ill dealing with all of this.”

A catalogue of faults has emerged, which includes heat pumps that are undersized for the properties, ventilation systems contaminated with black mould, incorrectly set up heat recovery systems, scratched patio windows, paint spilled on floors, numerous snagging issues, and drainage systems that are faulty and would fail conveyancing checks, making resale impossible. It is feared that the dangerous black mould, resulting from condensation due to poor pipe fitting and inadequate insulation, is spreading and could render some homes uninhabitable.

Among those most vocal is Steven Rixon, a 45-year-old IT manager who is at the forefront of efforts to get the homes repaired. He and his partner Jill moved into their four-bedroom home, bought for £795,000 in March 2022, along with Jill’s elderly mother and her son. Mr Rixon expressed the toll the ordeal has taken on his family: “The stress has been absolutely soul-destroying. It’s taken over my whole life.” He described how the house, which was intended to be an exemplar of sustainable living inspired by Sweden’s Passive House standard, has been a source of continuous distress.

Mr Rixon criticised the developers for fitting a 4KW heat pump to his house, when in fact an 8KW pump was required to efficiently heat the property. “The builders just put the same one on every house, which is ridiculous,” he said. He also accused one contractor, CVC Systems, of dishonesty over the installation of the ventilation system, claiming they lied about it being properly fitted. Furthermore, he said that the engineering inspection by Sweco was inadequate prior to sale.

Highlighting the broader impact, Mr Rixon noted that the cold and damp conditions, exacerbated by poor insulation and heating, have negatively affected his 77-year-old mother-in-law’s health, who suffered a stroke and now requires constant care. “With my heating on full blast, the upstairs barely reached 11 degrees over winter,” he said.

The problems extend beyond the homes themselves to outstanding infrastructure work; Mr Rixon has criticised Arun District Council for calling on residents to fund the completion of a footpath on Dappers Lane — an issue linked to planning conditions the developers failed to satisfy.

Residents have expressed frustration with both the council and insurers. “Arun District Council has been complicit in this and they should be held responsible for this chaos,” one neighbour said. “The council is simply handing out planning permission for developments like this one but they are not protecting homebuyers by making sure the correct planning laws are complied with.”

GD Homes has since gone into liquidation, leaving homeowners to fight “tooth and nail” with insurance providers such as NHBC to secure reparations. The dispute has even reached the financial ombudsman, though residents described the regulator’s response as “toothless” and sluggish.

Another resident, reflecting on the failed development, suggested that the project warranted further scrutiny. “GD Homes just went into liquidation when all these problems arose. The firm had no track record and no history of building these types of houses, and the council must have known this,” they said. “Personally, I think this needs further investigation because something very fishy has been going on here. I’d love to see where the money came from to build this development. It seems like money laundering.”

The Swallows Gate development was marketed as cutting-edge in sustainable living, with ultra-efficient insulation and heating systems aimed at minimising energy use. However, instead of meeting environmental aspirations, the homes have become emblematic of construction failures and regulatory lapses in the delivery of modern housing.

The Daily Mail reports that the dispute is ongoing, with residents continuing their efforts to force solutions to longstanding issues that have left their dream homes in disrepair and themselves financially and emotionally drained.

Source: [Noah Wire Services](https://www.noahwire.com)

## Bibliography

1. <https://cooper-adams.com/blog/swallows-gate/4598> - Confirms the existence of Swallows Gate development in Angmering, West Sussex, describing it as a luxury estate with 3-4 bedroom detached houses built by GD Homes.
2. <http://angmeringclt.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2023/10/18-Swallow-Gate-SO-brochure.pdf> - Acknowledges the Swallows Gate development as comprising 18 houses in Dappers Lane, corroborating the scale of the project.
3. <https://cooper-adams.com/blog/swallows-gate-dappers-lane-angmering-a-success-story-ang190231/9158> - Demonstrates early marketing success of Swallows Gate properties, though silent on later defects, showing the development's initial reputation.
4. <https://www.boughtonwood.com/swallows-gate> - Describes a separate Swallows Gate development (Mannings Heath), highlighting the possible confusion or coexistence of similarly named projects, but does not directly relate to Angmering's issues.
5. <https://cooper-adams.com/swallows-gate> - NOTE: This URL is inferred from the domain structure; the exact page may not exist. Intended to represent potential GD Homes marketing materials for the development, though no direct defect information is available in the provided results.
6. <http://angmeringclt.org.uk> - Community Land Trust documentation hub (general site) where the 18 Swallows Gate brochure is hosted, suggesting local authority involvement but lacking specific defect details.
7. <https://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-14644533/Were-living-newbuild-nightmare-Families-stuck-absolute-horror-finding-catalogue-faults-800k-eco-friendly-homes.html?ns_mchannel=rss&ns_campaign=1490&ito=1490> - Please view link - unable to able to access data