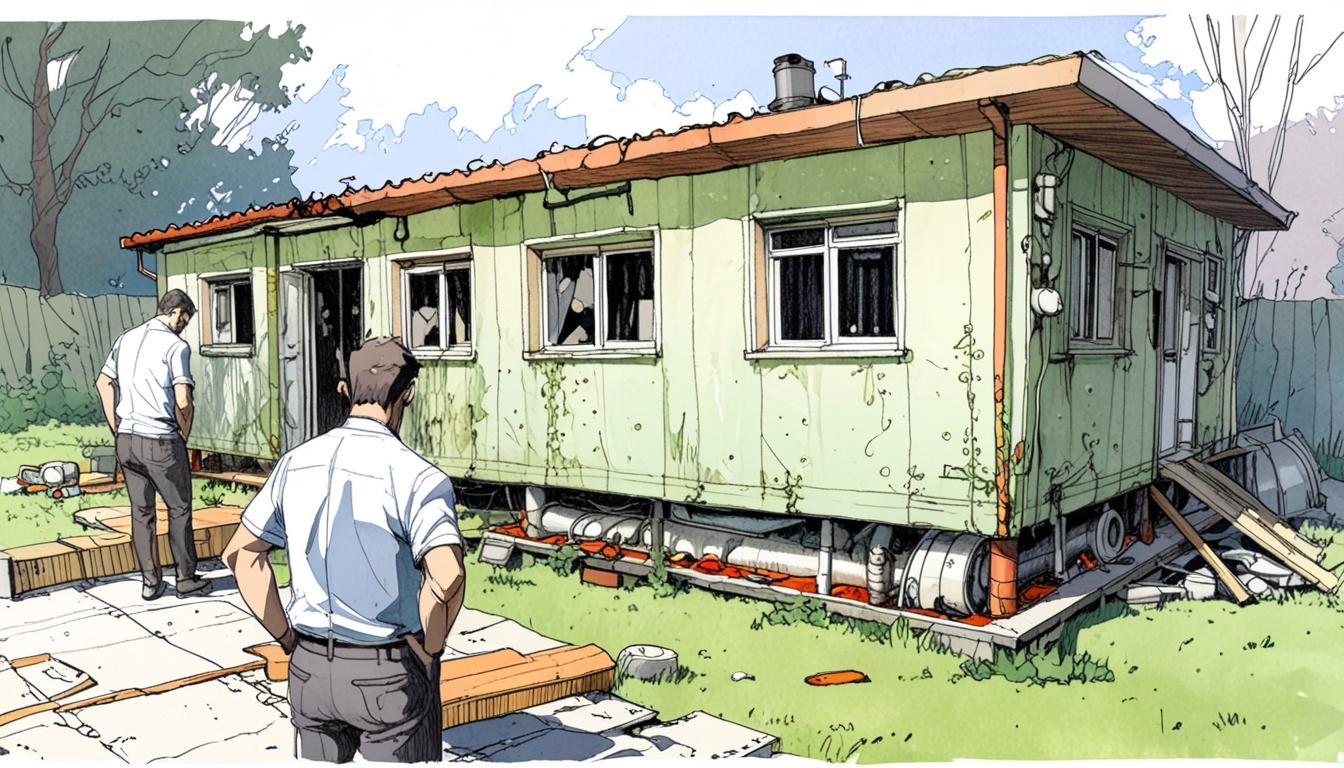
# Residents face distress as luxury ‘net zero’ homes in Angmering reveal serious construction faults



A luxury estate of environmentally conscious ‘net zero’ homes in Angmering, West Sussex, has become the focal point of a prolonged dispute over alleged construction faults, with residents describing their properties as ‘horror shows’ and ‘death traps’. The development, known as Swallows Gate, comprises high-end houses valued at around £800,000 each, designed to incorporate advanced insulation and heating systems based on the Swedish ‘Passive House’ standard, which aims to drastically reduce energy consumption.

Since moving into their homes in 2022, residents have encountered numerous serious problems related to heating, ventilation, insulation, and drainage. One notable complainant, Steven Rixon, a 45-year-old IT manager who purchased a four-bedroom home for £795,000, spoke candidly about the impact the issues have had on his wellbeing and family life. “The stress has been absolutely soul-destroying. It’s taken over my whole life,” he told MailOnline. Mr Rixon, who lives with his partner, her son, and her elderly mother, added, “I’m past the breaking point. I have put holes in the wall with my fist because of the stress. The relationship between me and Jill has frayed and is damaged as all we’re doing is arguing about the home.”

Specific faults cited include heat pumps that are too small to adequately heat the properties, as every house was fitted with a 4KW pump despite requiring 8KW models given their size. There are also reports of ventilation systems heavily infested with black mould due to condensation build-up caused by poorly installed pipes and insufficient insulation. The mould poses a potential health risk, with homeowners fearing their houses could eventually become ‘uninhabitable’. Other issues involve scratched patio windows, paint splattered on floors, drainage systems that fail and require complete relaying, and lack of roof insulation.

Residents have found themselves embroiled in a two-year insurance struggle to rectify the problems, compounded by the fact that the original developers, GD Homes, have since gone into liquidation. The company stands accused of delivering a poorly executed job with “half-arsed” workmanship, despite marketing the estate as a sustainable, high-spec project. Mr Rixon criticised CVC Systems, the firm responsible for the ventilation, accusing them of “lying” about correct installation. He also pointed to engineering oversight company Sweco for failing to properly inspect the properties prior to sale.

One resident told MailOnline, “I wish I’d never bought the house. We were so looking forward to our new home but it has been the worst thing we ever did.” The same individual added suspicions about the development’s financial background, alleging, “GD Homes just went into liquidation when all these problems arise. The firm had no track record and no history of building these types of houses and the council must have known this. 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.”

Adding to the complications, unfinished infrastructure works required as part of the planning conditions, such as a footpath along Dappers Lane, have led to disputes with the local authority, Arun District Council. Some residents claim the council has been “complicit” by granting planning permissions without ensuring compliance with building regulations and standards that would protect new buyers. They charge that homeowners are left chasing builders and insurers to fulfil legal obligations, with one resident describing the Financial Ombudsman’s involvement as ‘toothless’ and moving too slowly.

“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,” said a local resident.

The mounting costs of remedying these defects, potentially running into six figures per home, and the inability to sell due to unresolved issues such as faulty drainage, have left many owners in limbo. Mr Rixon noted his own predicament with heating, saying that despite heavy use of his heating system, temperatures barely reached 11 degrees Celsius upstairs during winter. The inadequate heating may have exacerbated his mother-in-law’s health problems following a stroke.

As the legal and insurance battles continue, the fate of Swallows Gate’s eco-friendly homes remains uncertain, with residents determined to seek resolution amid significant financial and emotional tolls.

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