# Avanti Architects enhances London Borough of Redbridge with innovative mixed-use affordable housing scheme on Little Gearies Estate



Avanti Architects has completed a significant affordable housing development on the Little Gearies Estate in the London Borough of Redbridge, delivering 103 new homes designed to integrate with the existing post-war community fabric. Originally conceived as a ‘hidden homes’ scheme operating under tight budget constraints, the project evolved into a more expansive plan that distributes housing more evenly across the estate, enhancing the urban environment and community cohesion.

The Little Gearies Estate, characterised by three repetitive three-storey brick blocks aligned parallel to the main high street, previously suffered from bland architecture and an environment disrupted by uncontrolled parking. To address these issues, Avanti introduced new blocks between the existing buildings to instill order and created traditional streets that clearly delineate vehicular access and parking areas from private rear gardens. This approach not only improves functionality but also places placemaking at the scheme’s core.

Two new six-storey apartment buildings at the front of the site increase the scale along the high street and create a new urban square. These blocks are carefully positioned around mature trees, with cantilevered sections that define the square and connect pedestrian routes across the estate. The housing mix includes one-, two-, and three-bedroom flats within these apartment blocks, complemented by four-bedroom townhouses arranged in terraces bookended by four-storey blocks featuring striking gables. The four-storey blocks also contain maisonettes on their lower floors with flats above, achieving a well-balanced density.

A notable feature of the project was the use of below-ground radar surveys to accurately map the roots of existing trees, allowing construction to occur in close proximity without damaging the mature landscaping, preserving the green character of the site. The external appearance of the buildings benefits from a material palette that juxtaposes brickwork on the terraces with rainscreen cladding and terracotta tiles on the apartments. The design includes recessed balconies and projecting dark elements to infuse the buildings with visual dynamism.

Sustainability is central to the new development’s design, with all buildings being entirely all-electric and heated via air-source heat pumps, contributing to the borough's environmental goals. The scheme required only minimal demolition—specifically, the removal of garage blocks and one small residential block comprising three homes—thus avoiding costly and complex resident relocations and additional construction phases.

Planning consent was granted in 2021, alongside another housing scheme for a different council-owned estate within Redbridge. The project started on site in 2019 and reached completion in April 2025, with Hill Group serving as the main contractor.

The development has garnered positive feedback from both the client and public officials. Stuart Bryce, former head of capital delivery for the London Borough of Redbridge, hailed the project as exemplary local authority infill housing, recognising its thoughtful architectural integration and sensitive placemaking. Tom Copley, London’s Deputy Mayor for Housing and Residential Development, emphasised the scheme’s alignment with the mayor’s ambitions to increase the supply of genuinely affordable homes across the capital.

This development on the Little Gearies Estate demonstrates how high-quality, high-density affordable housing can be achieved respectfully within existing communities. It marks an important step in contemporary housing delivery that respects heritage, enhances urban form, and prioritises resident experience and sustainability.

### 📌 Reference Map:

* Paragraph 1 – [[1]](https://www.architectsjournal.co.uk/buildings/avanti-completes-103-affordable-homes-for-redbridge-council), [[2]](https://nla.london/projects/little-gearies)
* Paragraph 2 – [[1]](https://www.architectsjournal.co.uk/buildings/avanti-completes-103-affordable-homes-for-redbridge-council), [[2]](https://nla.london/projects/little-gearies)
* Paragraph 3 – [[1]](https://www.architectsjournal.co.uk/buildings/avanti-completes-103-affordable-homes-for-redbridge-council), [[2]](https://nla.london/projects/little-gearies), [[5]](https://www.architectsjournal.co.uk/buildings/avanti-completes-103-affordable-homes-for-redbridge-council)
* Paragraph 4 – [[1]](https://www.architectsjournal.co.uk/buildings/avanti-completes-103-affordable-homes-for-redbridge-council), [[2]](https://nla.london/projects/little-gearies)
* Paragraph 5 – [[1]](https://www.architectsjournal.co.uk/buildings/avanti-completes-103-affordable-homes-for-redbridge-council), [[2]](https://nla.london/projects/little-gearies)
* Paragraph 6 – [[1]](https://www.architectsjournal.co.uk/buildings/avanti-completes-103-affordable-homes-for-redbridge-council), [[2]](https://nla.london/projects/little-gearies)
* Paragraph 7 – [[1]](https://www.architectsjournal.co.uk/buildings/avanti-completes-103-affordable-homes-for-redbridge-council)

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## Bibliography

1. <https://www.architectsjournal.co.uk/buildings/avanti-completes-103-affordable-homes-for-redbridge-council> - Please view link - unable to able to access data
2. <https://nla.london/projects/little-gearies> - Avanti Architects has successfully delivered 103 new affordable homes on the Little Gearies estate in Gants Hill for the London Borough of Redbridge. The project, completed in April 2025, includes a mix of one, two, and three-bedroom flats, as well as four-bedroom townhouses. The design integrates new blocks between existing buildings to create more order and introduces traditional streets to separate car access and parking from rear gardens. The development also features two new six-storey apartment buildings positioned around existing trees, defining a new urban square and connecting access routes through the estate. The project was completed in April 2025.
3. <https://www.architectsjournal.co.uk/buildings/avanti-completes-103-affordable-homes-for-redbridge-council> - Avanti Architects has completed a 103-unit affordable housing project on the Little Gearies Estate in the London Borough of Redbridge. The development includes one, two, and three-bedroom flats, as well as four-bedroom townhouses. The design introduces new blocks between existing buildings to create more order and traditional streets to separate car access and parking from rear gardens. Two new six-storey apartment buildings are positioned around existing trees, defining a new urban square and connecting access routes through the estate. The project was completed in April 2025.
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