



Case Study



SAPPHIRE

UNCLE Southall, Merrick
Road (Former Esso Garage),
Southall

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Aspiration: maximising access and efficiency in a high-connectivity zone

Located close to the new Southall Crossrail (Elizabeth Line) station, the former Esso Garage site on Merrick Road offered an ideal opportunity to create high-density housing with strong transport links into central London and beyond. Built by Redrow, the scheme embraces contemporary design principles while delivering high-performance building methods through a combination of RC frame, SFS, and brick skin.



Constraints: Architectural rhythm and structural coordination

The building's architecture introduces variety and movement through the alternating rhythm of its balconies. While most are arranged in vertical stacks, the layout alternates—some stacks begin at ground level and stop short of the top, while others begin higher up and extend to the roof. This pattern breaks repetition and provides dynamic visual interest.

The first-floor balconies are especially large to provide generous amenity space. Rather than fabricating oversized single units, Sapphire supplied these as paired balconies joined on site—striking the right balance between efficient laser cutting, transport, assembly and crane lift practicality.





Streamlined by Sapphire

Efficient assembly and consistent drainage

Each balcony was fabricated offsite as part of Sapphire's Glide-On™ system and delivered to site fully prefinished. Cassettes included vertical bar balustrades, obscured-glass privacy screens, and aluminium decking. Crucially, the design adopted controlled edge drainage in line with BS8579:2020 guidance—directing rainwater to the front edge and away from the façade.

Anchors were two-piece systems cast into the RC slabs during frame construction. Balcony arms were installed from the scaffold, enabling the balconies to be smoothly glided onto place without impacting scaffold use or follow-on trades.

Design and installation integration

All balconies were finished in a dark grey tone to align with window and door frames and complement the brick cladding. Each Cassette® unit was precision manufactured to include all specified components—decking, drainage, vertical bar balustrades and fascia—eliminating the need for finishing work on site.

Privacy dividers used an obscured-glass infill, splitting shared first-floor balconies to provide distinct private spaces while retaining visual cohesion across the façade.



Specification highlights

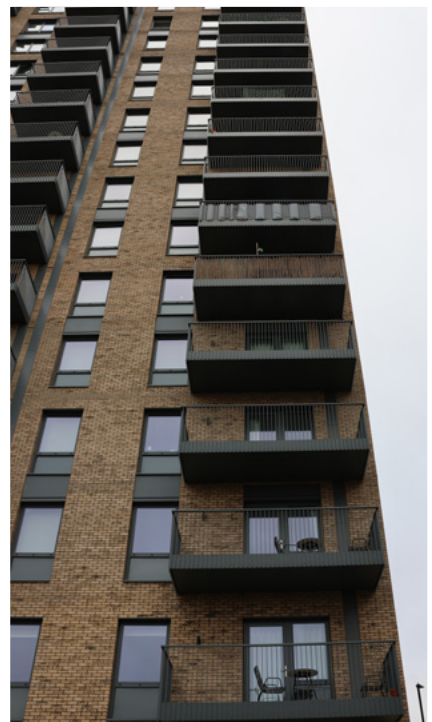
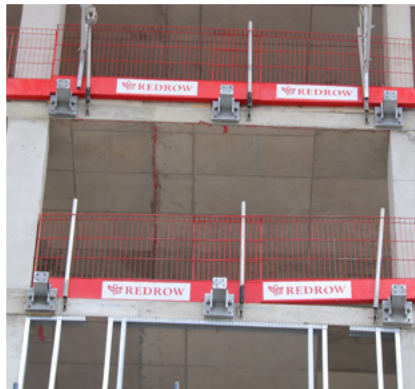
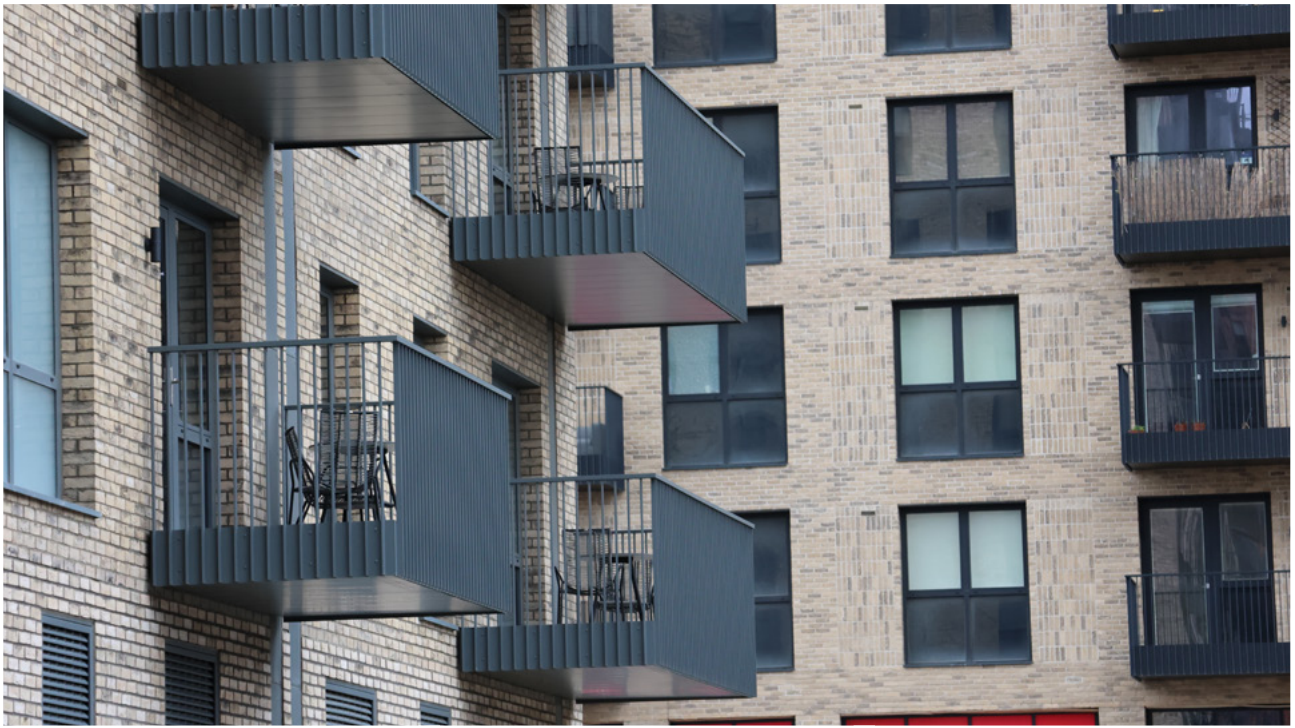
- Glide-On™ Cassette® balconies prefinished offsite
- Vertical bar balustrades with obscured glass privacy dividers
- Controlled edge drainage to BS8579:2020
- Two-piece cast-in anchor systems with scaffold-installed arms
- Alternating stack layouts to provide architectural variation
- Large first-floor balconies assembled from twin units
- Finished in dark grey to match fenestration and brickwork contrast



Challenges, Outcome & Value Delivered

- Varying balcony stack heights required careful coordination in design and manufacture
- Oversized balconies were optimised into paired units for efficient cutting, handling and lifting
- Scaffold-compatible arm installation allowed balcony fitting without disrupting trades
- Drainage designed to meet BS8579:2020, ensuring water management performance over time

Merrick Road's balconies delivered architectural rhythm, high build quality, and practical drainage—meeting Redrow's performance standards while supporting efficient delivery through offsite methods and on-site sequencing alignment.







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