

**PLOT 26: The Hardcore Soft House**  
**STUDIOKAP AND O'BRIEN HOMES**

The Hardcore Soft House, is another property which will be on display and open to the public to view during Scotland's Housing Expo at Milton of Leys in Inverness throughout the month of August. The house aims to set new standards of architecture in Scotland by turning traditional house design on its head and challenging the norms of everyday house building.

The creation of Glasgow-based firm, StudioKAP, the Hardcore Soft House design uses an innovative and unusual approach, which sees the outside on the inside and vice versa. In simple terms insulation materials feature on the outside and masonry on the inside. This approach enables the property to adapt to the varying temperature swings during Scotland's unpredictable seasons.

With a clear eye on sustainability and energy efficiency, the house offers very high standards of air tightness to minimise any 'leaks' as well as a 'breathing wall system'. This system cleverly allows all moisture generated in the property through activities like cooking and bathing, to find its way out of the house to reduce the incidence of dampness or condensation build up.

The use of sustainable materials is key defining feature of the Hardcore Soft House. Recycled glasswool provides the property's main source of insulation while the ground floors are protected with a natural insulation made from clay pellets.

In line with a desire to make each Expo home as environmentally friendly and energy efficient, the Hardcore Soft House is designed to provide a substantial saving on standard running costs. This is achieved through an air source heat pump, which will power the hot water tank, underfloor heating and radiators. A small woodburning stove located in the living area provides an additional heat and creates the warm focal heart of the home. Not subject to the same price fluctuations as oil, gas and electricity, wood is a clean and safe fuel offering near carbon neutral benefits and sustainability.

For those living in the Hardcore Soft House, there is the added benefit of a more a healthy environment. The extensive use of natural materials plus the breathable external envelope will help to eliminate a stuffy interior often found in modern dwellings.

Natural daylight will flood into the property through the large windows, facing south to maximise both light and heat. A double height glass entrance hall draws heat from the sun during the day which is then stored in the property's walls and floors to be released back into the rooms at night when it is needed.

Perfect for modern family life, the home comprises an open plan layout to encourage a more integrated approach to living. With a focus on larger proportions there is also a strong sense of light and space. This can be clearly seen in how the double height entrance hall provides a link to the upper floor whilst the living room and dining area are accessed directly off this space. The lack of

restricted and enclosed spaces makes the Hardcore Soft House visually appealing and a space where people feel inclined to spend more time.

The Hardcore Soft House will be open to the public for viewing at Scotland's Housing Expo which will take place at Milton of Leys throughout August. The Expo will provide a vision for the next generation of Scottish housing and is based on an established model found in Finland and mainland Europe. It is set to put Scotland firmly on the map as an exemplar of sustainable living.

The houses and their contents will form a platform for showcasing the wealth of Highland and Scottish design talent, including interior and product design. The initiative also provides a 'test bed' for construction and technological innovation, which will inform Scottish house building in the future. The houses will inspire developers to learn new skills and source fresh ideas to incorporate into future designs, while demonstrating how new building standards can be met on energy efficiency and carbon reduction.

With kids getting in free of charge, the Expo event will offer a great day out for families, visitors to the area and anyone who designs or builds homes, or who has an interest in design and the whole idea of living in a sustainable and environmentally friendly way. There will be a different programme of events every day throughout August and will be free to children accompanied by adults.

For tickets and further information visit [www.scotlandshousingexpo.com](http://www.scotlandshousingexpo.com)