



## Developments vie for new environmental standard

📅 13th September 2016 👤 Austin Macauley

**The Building Research Establishment (BRE) has revealed the first developments in line to achieve its Home Quality Mark.**

Some 4,000 new properties are due to be assessed for BRE's [Home Quality Mark \(HQM\)](#) – described as a 'Michelin Star-style rating system that measures quality, cost efficiency and environmental impact'.

Viver Green development at Hincaster in Cumbria, made up of 22 luxury high tech homes and built by egg Homes, is expected to be the first to be awarded HQM accreditation.



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Viver Green uses energy-saving smart home technology with homes constructed with ‘sustainable low maintenance materials and feature eco-friendly landscaped front and rear gardens’.

It is believed to be one of the few developments in the UK to use Amvic Insulated Concrete Forms (ICF) for the property shells, consisting of high-density polystyrene panels with a solid concrete core. The design incorporates solar panels, battery storage devices and renewable Ecodan air source heat pumps via a partnership with Mitsubishi Electric.

BRE described the HQM as ‘a consumer-focused mark of distinction for new houses based on their quality, cost efficiency and environmental impact’.



As well as helping home owners to ‘gauge the efficacy and technological maturity of their properties’ it will become a ‘useful tool for leading developers keen to differentiate their homes in an independently verified way that consumers can trust’.

HQM judges properties on a range of performance indicators including air quality, ventilation, lighting, noise, temperature, energy costs, access to transport and local amenities, local and global emissions and the impact of the home’s construction.

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Those achieving the Mark are likely to be cheaper to run, have less maintenance, be well located and able to cope with a changing climate, said BRE.

Two other developments, from Wienerberger and ZED Factory, are currently being assessed via show homes at BRE Innovation Park in Watford.

ZED Factory, a specialist in zero-carbon development, is working on Newport Eco Village, a 'zero bills' development in Essex.

The latest scheme to embark on HQM accreditation is Lumiere Developments for The Beacon in Hemel Hempstead, pictured above, which claims to be 'the world's most sustainable residential tower.

It is believed to be the UK's only multi-dwelling EPC A+ energy neutral, zero emission building. The 17-storey apartment block will generate energy via SPV panels and ground source heat and will be the highest density solar farm in the UK at 10 times the normal density. It will also feature a roof garden, indoor arboretum and electric car and bike share.



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