

**Client:** St Modwen Yellow News  
**Source:** South Wales Evening Post (Main)  
**Date:** 06 July 2013  
**Page:** 10  
**Reach:** 36623  
**Size:** 670cm2  
**Value:** 2123.9

# Prince's close-up look at skills behind village

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**THE Prince of Wales spoke to craftsmen at a demonstration village in Coed Darcy — the vast former oil refinery its owners hope 10,000 people will call home.**

His Royal Highness toured the cluster of houses overlooking a lake at what was the most polluted part of the 1,060-acre Llandarcy site.

The homes have Welsh slate roofs, stone from the Neath Valley, lime render and sash windows, although the clay blocks that form the walls come from Germany.

Elsewhere the site is a work in progress, but it is already unrecognisable from the sprawling mass of BP chimneys, bunkers and refinery pipes which ceased functioning in 1985.

A development has been completed there by Atlantic Homes, with most of the 60 properties now occupied.

Landowner and master planner St Modwen, along with Persimmon Homes, is building a further 302 homes, 38 of which have already been sold.

The target for Coed Darcy over the next 20 to 25 years is 4,000 new homes.

Steve Burke, executive director and construction director at St Modwen, said: "Over the next few years there will be a ramping up of activity."

But he conceded that Coed Darcy — a £1.2billion project — needed shops, which would come in due course.

He also hoped to build one of four

schools planned for the site in the next two to three years.

"The site needs some retail, it needs a pub," said Mr Burke.

He insisted Coed Darcy was attracting more interest than had been anticipated and felt the residential market "is now a lot more active" than 18 months ago.

"We don't want a market that overheats," he said.

If all went to plan, Coed Darcy will be a self-contained community, with leisure facilities.

## Apprentices

A further 7km of roads will be built — one linking the site to Fabian Way via the new Fford Amazon road. Constructing the so-called urban village is expected to create 4,000 jobs.

The demonstration village visited by Prince Charles used a large proportion of local apprentices and skilled craftsmen, including stonemason Oliver Coe, of Abernant, Carmarthenshire.

"We did all the dressed stone, window surrounds and fireplaces," said Mr Coe, who also worked on Prince Charles's rural estate in Myddfai.

Mr Burke said he hoped the demonstration village would inspire future development at Coed Darcy but added that "commercial deliverability" was also key.

The Prince's Foundation became involved in the Coed Darcy concept in 1999.

Referring to the royal visit, Mr Burke said: "He was extremely positive that there had been a transformation of traditional Welsh design and construction methods."

On Thursday, the Duchess of Cornwall toured the LASA (Loans and Savings Abertawe) credit union and Maggie's cancer care centre, in

Swansea. St Modwen is also jointly developing Swansea University's new Science and Innovation Campus, east of Swansea docks.

**Royal appointment**

 See our picture gallery and read more about the royal visit online

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**LOOKING TO FUTURE** Prince Charles discusses the Coed Darcy scheme during his visit to the Llandarcy site.

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**BUILDING FOR FUTURE** Prince Charles takes a closer look at some of the bricks used for the Coed Darcy development.

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**PLEASED TO MEET YOU** The Prince inside one of the new homes.

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