

Case study: Bloor Homes



Custom ERP integration helps Bloor Homes drive nation-wide transparency and efficiency

Summary: Bloor Homes is one of the UK's largest family-run house-builders, with operations in seven regions around the country. With thousands of home plots to manage, spread across up to 80 sites at any time, it needed both transparency and confidence in the accuracy of its progress information from across the business.



It has chosen Powerproject coupled with Site Progress Mobile for that, specifically with the goal of achieving tight integration with its existing Eque2 ERP financials. A custom integration and close working relationship with Elecosoft delivered on that aim. The benefits have included significant administrative time savings, planning efficiencies and reporting accuracies, and helped the company to hit a record level of homes delivered.

Whenever a company decides it is time to shake up and improve a fundamental process with new software, selecting that solution carefully is essential. So, when Bloor Homes realised it needed to significantly change its programme and process management, it evaluated its options very carefully.

The company had previously used Project Commander to run each of its housing development projects individually.

"As you'd expect, we have found the licensing to be flexible, and the charges for professional fees are really reasonable. The financial gain we've had for what we've paid for this process with Elecosoft has delivered value."

However, Bloor Homes' executive management team wanted much greater visibility of activities across its sites, which were spread across seven regions, with up to 80 sites in operation at any point in time, many of which had hundreds of plots.

Nick Farrington, business systems analyst, took on the responsibility to facilitate and implement a project to deliver this. When he started the task in late 2017, discussions with Elecosoft were underway, with most requirements-gathering complete – but there remained an important barrier to resolve. Although Powerproject was known to be an industry standard for construction programming, it did not connect with Bloor Homes' Eque2 ERP solution, long-established as its financial management and forecasting system.



Elecosoft committed to build a bespoke web-based integration for Eque2, building on its existing COINS integration. Rapidly delivered, this enabled a successful pilot programme to be created for March 2018, followed by a smart rollout across the business so that all programmes were ready and running for the start of a new financial year in July.

Meeting the business needs

The desire from the top for better transparency and visibility across the business is now being fulfilled with the help of Powerproject. Bloor Homes now has 36 standalone Powerproject licences and four network licences, as well as 100 Site Progress Mobile licences. Construction directors in each of its seven regions are trained on and using the software, as are several contracts managers. Site Progress Mobile is also being used by site managers on all sites across the country.

Nick explained what had spurred the change. “Our leadership required a single version of the truth, and this was a major driver alongside the need to integrate with our ERP system (Eque2).

With Project Commander, each time a new project was planned people had to start from scratch, creating a new plan for each plot and then duplicating it however many times required. We needed a better way of doing that, as well as a web-based link between project planning and our financial systems.”

This has transformed the efficiency of the financial and practical planning of the many individual plots on each site: “With the integration between our ERP and Powerproject, we can simply push a button to automatically provision an entire site project plan. The construction team can then manipulate the plots where required” Nick continued.

Now that the company’s senior team has a deeper understanding of each site’s operations, it has enabled other efficiencies to be realised. “Before we had Powerproject, the construction team fed through basic information such as starting dates, spend and work in progress updates. We never had full visibility of what was happening, but now we have the information at our fingertips that has enabled things like a new order management system to be developed.”

Making progress

The significantly easier progress reporting and management that was enabled by coupling Powerproject and its Site Progress Mobile app was a welcome revelation: “The introduction of Site Progress Mobile’s field data capture ability was a massive bonus, saving time across the group.”

“Our consultant went out of his way to help me through big decisions... The conversation with the actual developer has been incredible too... Without these relationships the project could never have been successful in the tight timeframe we needed.”

