

New life

for old

Jane Williams looks at a development which has breathed modern life into a fire-ravaged Essex mansion.

THE dream home for most of us remains a period property – with contemporary features.

And so modern housing continues to be influenced by Georgian and Edwardian styles and even Art Deco and Arts and Craft.

But the reality is, however, many

reproduction fireplaces and bay windows are crammed into a house, and nothing can quite recreate the atmosphere of the authentic period property.

One of the most effective ways in which developers can combine period exteriors with contemporary interiors is by renovating an older property.

A good example is the former manor house in Old Harlow, which is the centrepiece of the Mulberry Green development.

The original magnificent building, pictured above, was devastatingly damaged by fire seven years ago, but has come to life again as the setting of six luxurious two-



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bedroom apartments.

And, points out developer Bermac Properties: "Those features that could not be restored have been recreated to resemble the work of Robert Adams – the Georgian architect behind the original building – using traditional materials, skills and craftsmanship."

The result is rooms with sleek lines, settings for simple furniture, which recreate the elegance that was typical of the Georgian and Regency Period (1714-1837).

A home paying homage to its past glory



Every period has its own individual characteristic, and its own following.

Victorian (1837-1901) is consistently one of the most popular styles, covering such a large time span from 1837 to 1901.

It developed from the High Victorian style with rich furnishings and a multitude of furniture (some might say cluttered) to the Arts and Craft movement with emphasis on simple furniture in oak, elm and yew.

It all became more subtle during

the Edwardian era (1901 to 1910) when pastel shades and floral patterns led to the stylised flowers of the Art Nouveau motifs.

Then came the Art Deco years covering the 1920s and 1930s with strong colours and sleek lines and the appearance of chrome and Bakelite.

The introduction of mass-produced goods lead to the modernism of 20th century style, notably the distinctive pop art and bold styles of the 1960s.

Whatever the style, the period house needs to work for the family using it. So even the most

adventurous of interior designers usually advocates a basic backdrop – walls in neutral colours and floors using slate and other natural materials.

Those clean, clear lines are particularly important in the kitchen and bathroom, which need to be functional rather than purely decorative.

Property hunters may want a home which pays homage to its past glory, but they will need one which also makes a comfortable family home.