

CASE STUDY

Farrar Court, Irthingborough



A Spire Homes regeneration scheme in Irthingborough transformed from small bedsits in to desirable, high quality flats for the over 55's.

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The need for homes

The Farrar Court scheme was originally intended as a shared ownership option. However, in recognition of the financial downturn and the changing needs in this area, Spire Homes and Longhurst Group's development team, with the full backing of the local authority and additional funding secured from the Homes and Communities Agency were able to deliver high quality apartments for the over 55's.

The apartments overlook a beautiful landscape and meet the needs of the community; located in a very popular area, they have a fantastic feel and proved a popular choice with local residents when offered for rent by Spire Homes.

The original properties at St Peters Way were built when expectations were much lower; containing 20 very small bed sits with bathrooms shared between several flats. The building was built on several levels, making it hard for people with restricted mobility. As a consequence, many of the flats remained empty for long periods of time and it was exceptionally hard finding people who wanted to move in.

Beyond the brief

Spire Homes and Longhurst Group's development team commissioned a number of surveys to establish if the existing property could be refurbished to provide larger accommodation, but the layout of the property proved this to be a non viable option. The decision was taken to close the building and move any current tenants into nearby bungalows. This was back in 2006, but many former tenants are still neighbours.

As part of the closure, the Development Team commissioned Midlands Rural Housing to carry out a survey to establish the type of housing required to replace St Peters Way and which scheme would best benefit the local community in Irthlingborough. The project was a complete overhaul, demolishing the original site, and rebuilding.



Design and Sustainability

In keeping with the neighbouring church, the flats boast a sympathetic design. Bricks and roof tiles are of a similar shade together with brown timber-effect UPVC windows, as opposed to standard white. The properties have been constructed using a sustainable method of modern timber frame. Utilising a prefabricated timber frame helps to speed the building process up, accommodating other trades to start on site and results in budgets and programme targets being achieved.

A grant of approximately £1.1million was secured allowing the site to be developed to suit the current economic climate. The result of which has created high quality luxurious homes for the over 55's. With the additional funding, Interior Classics produced a high quality design providing a modern and comfortable living space.

Margaret Allen, regional director for the Homes and Communities Agency said: "We were pleased to support this high quality development, which is helping to provide a different lifestyle choice for local people as they age and is making a positive contribution to the local community."

Specific features for the over 55's were incorporated into the design of the build. An emergency call care system, Tunstall, was integrated in the building and wet rooms were built in some of the rooms to provide choice to potential residents. A scooter store was also included in the build.

Maximising build potential

Operating in an extremely challenging market, Spire Homes and Longhurst Group's Development team worked with architects, R H Partnerships. The surrounding area played a key role in the design of the scheme and allowed it to blossom, providing fantastic views of the church and countryside. Communal facilities, including a lounge and fully equipped kitchen were incorporated into the design and are available for the local community to utilise which enhances community spirit.

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The final scheme mix comprised:

Rented Units 16 x two bed flats
 13 x one bed flats

Timeline

2006	Feasibility - appraisal of dated sheltered scheme carried out by Longhurst Group's Development team & residents re-located
August 2007	Spire Homes board approve the new scheme
January 2008	Planning permission is received
February 2008	Old scheme demolished and new scheme starts on site
October 2009	Scheme is completed
3rd December 2009	Ceremony is held to mark completion