



Bowthorpe Care Village, Norwich

Key details

Client

NorseCare Ltd

Date

February 2016

Project value

£16.5m

Form of contract

JCT Design & Build

Services

Cost management

Planning consultancy

Mechanical engineering

Electrical engineering

Architectural design

Project management

Landscape architecture

Overview

Construction of an £18.9m care village in Bowthorpe, near Norwich, has been completed with residents and tenants moving into their new homes at the end of April 2016. The project is an innovative partnership between Saffron Housing, NorseCare, the Homes and Communities Agency, Norwich City Council and Norfolk County Council.

The Care Village has been constructed on a 2.3 hectare site and consists of three main buildings: NorseCare's Mayflower Court: an 80-bed specialist dementia care home and The Meadows, Saffron Housing Trust's 92 apartment housing with care scheme. The village is part of the wider Three Score development site, with Norwich City Council planning to use the rest of the 32-hectare site to create 1,000 homes, community facilities and open space.

In planning the Care Village, NorseCare successfully bid for £4.2m of funding from the Homes and Communities Agency (HCA) and Department of Health in July 2014. Saffron Housing are landlords of the site and have invested £8.5 million in the scheme. The land at Three Score in Bowthorpe was donated free of charge by Norwich City Council. Plans for the Care Village were designed by architects Hamson Barron Smith, part of the NPS Group, with R G Carter appointed to turn these designs into a reality.

This project is the latest in the Transformation programme, set up between the Norse Group and Norfolk County Council when NorseCare was formed in 2011. The programme focuses on creating and replacing ageing care homes or enhancing existing environments within care homes owned by NorseCare. Current and future residents benefit from more modern and spacious environments, enabling NorseCare to provide better, more appropriate care. The programme enables the Norse Group to work together, bringing multi-disciplinary services together including property consultancy, architectural design, through to catering and facilities management services. In turn this continues to return millions of pounds in profits to Norfolk County, supporting thousands of jobs and underpinning the local economy.



“Most older people know the extent to which they can manoeuvre around their declining capacity. But if the housing that is on offer does not support their sense of self, and allow them to maintain control, they will resist it.”

Stirling University

The scheme is the first Housing with Care project to be delivered under the Building a Better Future strategy.

The aim of the development was to promote active ageing, with a central Village Hub providing living, dining and café facilities, meeting rooms, well-being and activity suites, hair salon, shop and treatment room.

Using thermally tight fabric, the team has produced a cost effective solution, reducing costs for clients and residents, while a HAPPI design sees balconies introduced to each of the Housing with Care flats, providing them with more access to outside space. The layout has also been designed to provide the space needed to carry out the best possible care for all residents, and ensure good quality of life.

Client requirements

In January 2013, Norwich City Council agreed to work in partnership with Norfolk County Council, NPS and NorseCare to provide a housing with care and dementia care facility on the site in Bowthorpe.

Through key stakeholder workshops, the following criteria was set for the Care Village:

- providing ‘person-centred’ care in settings which are familiar, whilst also promoting resident independence
- supporting the HAPPI Principles
- challenging the institutionalised perception of care housing, thereby raising the aspirations of older people
- working with Stirling University Dementia Services Development Centre challenging the HAPPI findings - “no longer practical, however desirable, to advocate all the facilities and amenities these projects have so brilliantly incorporated in the past”.

HAPPI Principles identify ten elements that are critical to achieving age-inclusive housing:

- generous internal space standards
- plenty of natural light in the home and circulation spaces
- balconies and outdoor space
- adaptability and ‘care aware’ design which is ready for emerging assistive technologies
- circulation space that encourage interaction and avoid an ‘institutional feel’
- shared facilities and community ‘hubs’
- plants, trees and the natural environment
- high levels of energy efficiency, with good ventilation to avoid overheating
- extra storage for belongings and bicycles
- shared external areas such as ‘home zones’ that give priority to pedestrians.

Requirements for bedrooms in the dementia apartments include:

- visible storage for clothes with clear panelled fronts
- careful use of textures and patterns
- window treatments designed to maximise light
- blackout facility to aid sleep
- ensuite clearly visible from bed position
- bed position clearly visible from entrance



Innovations

Research and knowledge is key. We are still learning so much about the requirements of people living with dementia, but utilising the research undertaken by Stirling University gave us a solid foundation for the concept development. For example:

- better use of space, with smaller spaces that create a domestic environment and familiarity for residents
- create a home, not an institution - internal spaces which place a strong emphasis on community, reinforced by shared spaces, shared experiences and shared value, but not at the expense of privacy
- provide an environment that promotes 'active ageing', giving residents the opportunity to use internal and external spaces whilst at the same time being part of the wider community
- working with commissioners and carers from concept design stage so that the design can respond to carers -(staff needs) as well as residents needs
- utilise assistive technology which provides a supportive environment but also promotes independent living.

Awards

Norfolk Association of Architects NAJCC Craftsmanship Award winner - new residential category