

Carnarvon Place NEWBURY

Local authority: West Berkshire Council

Client: Sovereign Housing Association

Contractor: Leadbitter Construction

Architect: PRP

Cost: £19m

No: 85 sheltered rented and 15 SO



The care theme continues in Newbury after Sovereign transformed the town's cottage hospital into a secure sheltered complex for the over 55s.

The site

Newbury's District Hospital site dated from 1885, with various extensions from the 1930s-80s. The local NHS planned to dispose of the site to pay for a new PFI hospital, and secured outline permission for 80 homes in 1998, with 20% affordable and 87 parking spaces.

In 2004, full permission was granted for 77 homes (avg 83 per ha), despite 150 objections, and the site was put up for auction. Sovereign paid £5.1m for the site, while Berkeley Homes bought a nearby NHS site. Town planners then agreed that we could migrate all the affordable onto a single site for sheltered accommodation.

Revised plans for 100 units were approved in September 2004, and after demolition and decontamination of the site, Leadbitter started on site in Spring 2005 on the two year build.

The scheme

There are two parts to the site. The 85 sheltered housing complex are mainly two bedroom to allow guests to stay over. All properties are wheelchair friendly with energy-saving showers, and scooter storage on all three floors. All properties have a camera entryphone system.

The central feature is an avenue covered by a 200ft glass atrium, but there are also three communal rooms, two landscaped gardens featuring public art. We achieved Secure By Design, and with an Ecohomes Excellent rating, Carnarvon Place is among the top 1% of greenest UK developments.

Separately, the hospital car park over the road has been redeveloped into 15 large shared ownership apartments with one parking space each. We also bought a nearby disused toilet block from West Berkshire Council, which was subsequently demolished and the area landscaped.

The first intake of Carnarvon Place came from three outdated sheltered schemes, where efforts were made to ensure the right moving package and support was in place for some vulnerable residents.

Completion date: Mar 2007