



Case History

The Apartment Project With 'Individual Front Doors' Bringing citizens back to their home town

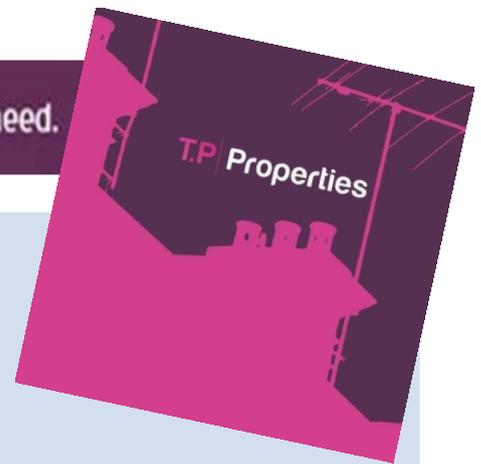
T.P Properties has always thrived when confronted with innovative housing projects, determined to make a difference to health and wellbeing. Having been an early pioneer of the 'apartment project model' to satisfy the holistic requirements of supported living, this new initiative was to provide an opportunity to bring together all historical expertise and knowledge to design a bespoke unit.

Commissioners in one region had gathered data and intelligence that concluded that many of its vulnerable population were being supported, at increased cost, out of borough. Not only were these citizens unable to participate in their environment of choice (i.e. their home town), but such ventures had a negative impact on the region's care budgets. They wished to develop a shared agenda between housing and the strategies for health and social care; in pursuit of which they visited the projects established by T.P Properties in a neighbouring region, for inspiration and best practice. Such research created the impetus for housing, public

health and social care partners to see that local, suitable and decent housing investment could improve not only budgets, but outcomes in areas such as independence, health and quality of life.

T.P Properties were enlisted to develop this multi-agency supported desire, steering it from concept to completion. The key stipulations of the brief were to:

- Provide quality housing for those who, from assessment, required single-person dwellings
- Create an architectural plan where each home had its own exterior front door, *and* be able to accommodate adaptations
- Consider within the design the quality of life and wellbeing for the designated vulnerable group, along with sustainable tenancies
- Develop an exemplar 'best value' model



The integrated working team was made up of commissioners, representatives from care, social services and health, occupational therapy, planning and building control, and T.P Properties with its development unit.

The local authority was open to the prospect of regenerating any suitable land and dwellings. However, due the property mix and topography, this sift proved fruitless. T.P Properties were able to enter into the purchase of green belt land that had planning permission to construct a residential care home upon it. The planning department suitably amended the class through 'change of use' regulations, and the project was defined to be of an eight month duration.

The programme of multi-agency meetings considered or achieved the following:

- T.P Properties appointed and project managed a suitable architect and building contractor. The designer chosen was experienced in care home design and was guided by the company to accommodate the needs of supported living, a market which had no formal regulation controlling plan development.
- As quality of end product was central to the brief T.P Properties' extended its usual operations to accommodate far more in terms of tenant and family engagement.

- The final stone build design ingeniously used the undulating terrain to not only provide the required 'individual front doors', but also create at the site's extreme a double storey block to carefully offer more dwellings. In addition, a horse-shoe shaped plan provided a sense of community, with sensitively planned communal gardens to offer opportunities for interaction and low cost maintenance. A self contained 'staff flat' enabled 24 hour support to be offered, with the added convenience of an intercom with tenants, and a monitored fire system.
- PACT community engagement was fronted by T.P Properties. As a result positive support was given by the locality. This assisted during planning, building and final tenant community participation phases.





- The project was primarily 'person-centred' around the tenants. Social services and health representatives had identified the future tenants, holistically considering needs and the 'mix' of the scheme. Individuals were drawn from a range of vulnerable groups including, mental health, learning disability, physical disability and autistic spectrum disorders. Such careful analysis provided void reduction; adaptations, furniture selection and decor could be built into the design from the outset.

Each apartment consisted of a:

- Unique exterior opening front door
- Vestibule
- Open plan lounge, kitchen and dining area
- Double bedroom
- Bathroom with shower (or adapted bathing facilities)

- Using the recommendations of suitable parties such as occupational therapy, aids and adaptations were considered, costed and adopted. Full use was made of fiscal housing and disability facilities grants to absorb such costs and thus reduce the housing benefit burden.
- The only hindrance to the project came from the matter of a public right of way which traversed part of the site. Whilst the local authority agreed to the rerouting of the path, an objection was made by a community group. After negotiations a suitable solution was found.

Whilst it has not been possible to accurately calculate the economic impact of this project, it without question exemplifies the affirmative action demanded by the [Marmot Review \(2010\)](#) of health inequalities. *'The collective view is that this project is a clear success; it primarily has reduced the number of people who have to live outside of their town to receive care, improving their community participation, independence and well-being'* says Barbara Graham, Managing Director at T.P Properties. *'It has also reduced support and health budgets, and hospital stays and readmissions. We have delighted in providing motivational care, sustainable tenancies and appropriate housing to vulnerable people. The new community is inclusive, and the town has socially grown, as well as realising substantial savings and improved outcomes.'*

