



## Quality design attracts downsizers

This case study looks at Halton Court, a 170 unit purpose-built housing scheme for people of 55 developed by Viridian Housing. Located in Kidbrooke Village on the site of the former Ferrier Estate in the Royal Borough of Greenwich, London, the scheme is part of a large urban housing development.

Whilst Halton Court has extensive communal facilities, it is not an extra care housing scheme, but a quality, 'care ready' housing led development targeting older people wishing to downsize regardless of care needs.

Designed by PRP architects and developed by Berkeley Homes, Halton Court won the HAPPI category of the 2010 Housing Design Awards.

Written for the Housing Learning & Improvement Network by **James Berrington**, Housing, Care and Support Consultant and former Senior Strategy Manager at the Homes and Communities Agency

October 2013

## Introduction

Halton Court is not an ordinary purpose-built housing scheme for older people; this stands out as different. It is distinguished by: award winning quality design; very generous private and communal spaces; the scale and range of facilities; a dense urban setting; located on a prominent site of a major regeneration scheme; prioritised for older people seeking to downsize.

Viridian Housing's Halton Court is a 170-unit scheme for over 55's, part of Kidbrooke Village, the regeneration of the now demolished Ferrier Estate in the Royal Borough of Greenwich, London. Halton Court provides part of the affordable housing contribution under the Section 106 Agreement for Kidbrooke Village. At design stage the scheme, designed by PRP architects, won the HAPPI category of the 2010 Housing Design Awards; it will surely be a very strong contender if submitted as a completed scheme in the 2014 Awards.

The scheme challenges the orthodoxy of large extra care housing schemes in that, although this is a large scheme with generous facilities, it is firmly a housing-led scheme rather than driven by social care. There are no requirements for residents to have any care needs to live here, and currently any care needs are met through domiciliary care services. Lettings are made through the choice-based lettings system of RB Greenwich's housing department rather than social care referrals from social services. However, the scale of this development will allow both on-site care and operation of the scheme to be developed on a more flexible basis than traditional extra care housing.



*Halton Court*

The design of the building replaces the long institutional double-banked corridors of many extra care housing schemes with apartments clustered around five naturally lit access cores, offering a quiet lounge and communal balcony on each floor. This also maximises dual and multi-aspect apartments, which at 70-84sqm (2 beds) are much larger than traditionally seen, and all have a terrace or balcony. Senior management from both the developer Berkley Homes and architect PRP were part of the HAPPI expert panel and there has been a clear and successful drive to match the best of the schemes visited in Europe as detailed in the HAPPI report.<sup>1</sup>

The HAPPI report raised the challenge that if you design housing targeted at people aged 55 and older that is attractive, of sufficient quality and helps maintain links and ties to family, friends and the local community then people will choose to move. Additionally, benefit will be felt in the local housing markets by freeing up much needed family homes.

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<sup>1</sup> [www.homesandcommunities.co.uk/ourwork/happi](http://www.homesandcommunities.co.uk/ourwork/happi)

Residents moving to Halton Court are making a conscious decision to change their lives and look forward as an ageing person, choosing a fabulous new home and lifestyle, rather than staying put, potentially lonely and struggling along in a too-large house. Lettings in the first two months since opening have been at double the rate anticipated by Viridian; Halton Court is clearly meeting the challenge set by the HAPPI report – if you build the right accommodation, people will come!



*Generous balconies*

## The site

Halton Court is a key landmark of the second of five phases in the £1bn redevelopment of Greenwich's Ferrier Estate, one of the largest regeneration projects in London. Completed in 1972, the 109-acre Ferrier Estate of 1,906 homes was initially popular, but increasingly became troubled, with high crime rates. LB Greenwich began plans to regenerate the estate from 1999 and received government approval in 2004. Demolition began in 2009, the first residents moved into the new homes in September 2010.



Halton Court

Kidbrooke train station  
(London Bridge 15mins)  
& bus stops

Kidbrooke Village Hub

Amenities including  
grocery stores, ATM,  
post boxes, pharmacy  
and doctor's surgery

*The position of Halton Court (black) within Kidbrooke Village*

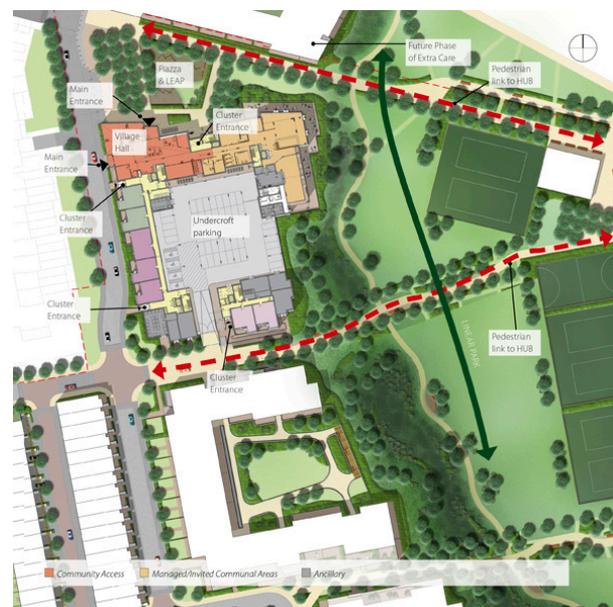
Berkeley Homes<sup>2</sup> is the Royal Borough of Greenwich's development partner and is developing the whole site; completion is envisaged by 2028. The masterplan for the overall site, devised by architects Lifschutz Davidson Sandilands, shows the range of homes and facilities that will make up the completed new Kidbrooke Village:

- 4,000 new mixed tenure homes
- 300,000 square feet of commercial and retail space
- New primary school (re-provision)
- New community facilities
- Integrated healthcare facilities
- Sports pitches and leisure facilities
- Hotel
- Eight hectares of new public open space (including the entirely new Cator Park)
- New transport hub including a new station and bus exchange at Kidbrooke Station
- A 59 bed registered dementia nursing home run by Sanctuary Care, which opened in 2006.

A useful summary of the masterplan and regeneration of Kidbrooke Village has also been produced by URBED.<sup>3</sup>

### Halton Court - location

Halton Court sits on a strong pedestrian route through Blackheath Quarter (one of four neighbourhoods that form Kidbrooke Village), which passes the scheme through a public 'piazza'. The piazza will create a joining space with a second scheme for older people of a further 133 units which is envisaged will have complementary communal services to Halton Court, creating a community of 303 flats for older people. It is anticipated that the large number of residents coupled with older people from the wider community will sustain the wide range of facilities and services. This second building will be constructed as part of a later phase in the 'village' construction.



The building faces onto the landscaped Cator Park, which forms a 'green river' through Kidbrooke Village and is part of the overall 55 acres of green open space. A short 300 metre flat walk straight across the park leads to what will be the heart or 'hub' of Kidbrooke Village based around a revamped Kidbrooke Station (15 minutes to London Bridge). Being built as

<sup>2</sup> [www.berkeleygroup.co.uk/property-developers/berkeley/developments/kidbrooke-village](http://www.berkeleygroup.co.uk/property-developers/berkeley/developments/kidbrooke-village)

<sup>3</sup> [www.urbed.coop/projects/ten-group-2012-2013](http://www.urbed.coop/projects/ten-group-2012-2013)

the next phase of development, this will include grocery shops, ATM, restaurants, community facilities. The Primary Care Trust facilities and dental surgery will also move there.

The masterplan had originally placed the accommodation for older people at the edge of the overall Kidbrooke Village site; however, insight learned from the HAPPI report and in particular the scheme at Grongingen<sup>4</sup>, suggested that here was a great opportunity to place the scheme at the heart of the new community.

*The idea is that the older residents can live closer to amenities and are therefore better able to remain active. At the same time, because they are at home more during the day, they bring more life and spirit to the centre during working hours.*

Berkeley Homes – Kidbrooke Village a Place in the Making<sup>5</sup>

A ‘village’ hall community facility for Kidbrooke Village, planned to be a stand-alone building, has been brought into the overall Halton Court building. This hall now juts out into a public ‘piazza’ on the north side of the building and is accessed through the main public entrance to Halton Court.

*The distinctive massing and elevations of the Village Hall add to its civic presence and provides a recognisable point of reference.*

CABE – London Design Review<sup>6</sup>



*Kidbrooke Village hall, to the right of the main entrance to Halton Court*

The scheme architects, PRP, worked with the overall master-planning architects to ensure that the appearance of the building as a whole fits with the overall Village design plan. This means that whilst a distinctive and commanding building, it is not seen as ‘different’ or obviously for a specific client group.

<sup>4</sup> [www.youtube.com/watch?v=\\_TdH6TLZ\\_Tg](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=_TdH6TLZ_Tg)

<sup>5</sup> [www.berkeleygroup.co.uk/media/pdf/d/4/kidbrooke-village-place-in-the-making.pdf](http://www.berkeleygroup.co.uk/media/pdf/d/4/kidbrooke-village-place-in-the-making.pdf)

<sup>6</sup> [www.designcouncil.org.uk/our-work/cabe/review/review-library/london-design-review/kidbrooke-phase-2/](http://www.designcouncil.org.uk/our-work/cabe/review/review-library/london-design-review/kidbrooke-phase-2/)

## Layout - public and communal facilities

Visitors are welcomed into a double-height entrance foyer by a hotel-like concierge's desk (staffed 24 hours a day). The entrance hall gives access to the village hall for the wider community and also to a wide range of communal facilities: internet suite; hairdressers/barbers; staff offices and the on-site waiter-serviced restaurant for residents, their friends, families and the wider community. There is also a fully licenced bar which serves snacks throughout the day and evening. The restaurant is run on a commercial basis, and is not a condition of tenancy or part of the service charge (helping keep charges to residents down), but also incentives for the caterers to work hard to maintain quality and attract custom. The hairdresser/barber and therapy room will be available for freelancers to rent and residents will pay on a pay-as-you-go basis.



*Double-height entrance foyer*



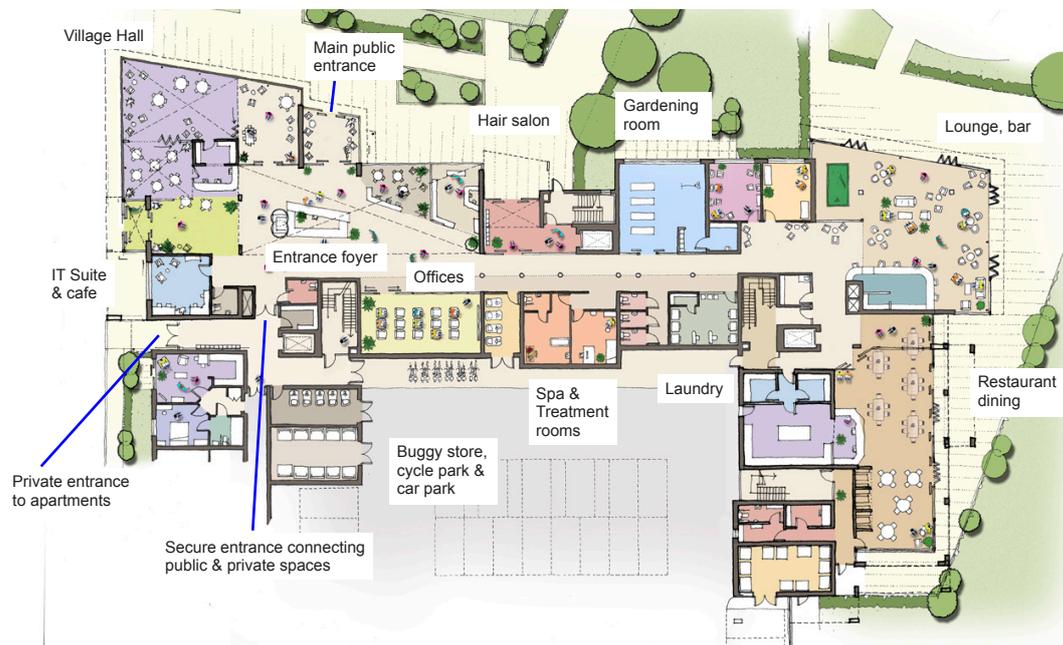
*Lounge/restaurant and bar*

Viridian anticipates establishing a 'Friends of Halton Court' membership scheme for non-residents of the local community who may wish to use the restaurant and bar. This will contribute to the commercial success of these facilities, increase the vibrancy at the scheme and also provide opportunities for potential future residents to learn more about the scheme and facilities before moving in.

For residents keen to do gardening, there is a potting and planting room in a large multi-purpose hobbies room. A treatment room and a spa assisted-bathing suite for residents, who buy-in services such as massage, chiropody or acupuncture, are also located here on the ground floor. The outward-facing communal and public facilities at ground floor should ensure there is a vibrancy about the scheme and it becomes part of community activity, not separate from it. The restaurant and bar spill out onto terraces overlooking Cator Park, contributing to an external view of a dynamic, lively and inviting place, attracting potential residents, but also interest from the local population.

The rooms and spaces on the ground floor, as designed by PRP architects, allow for flexibility. The initially intended purposes were designed based on PRP's experience and the views of RB Greenwich, but this was some time before an owner/manager was appointed. Once Viridian

was identified, they were able to influence the roles and purposes of these spaces in the later stages of the development. It may be that over time, as residents inhabit and use the spaces, the purpose of some of these spaces will further evolve to reflect their views and changing needs.



*Ground floor communal facilities*

The range of communal facilities for residents here at Halton Court may seem extensive, however due to the large number of homes, and areas such as the village hall open to the whole community, the ratio of space given to communal space compared to flats is comparable to Viridian’s traditional sheltered housing schemes. This reflects the findings of the HAPPI2 report<sup>7</sup>, which suggested reduced communal facilities in smaller schemes, but a wider range are sustainable in the largest schemes.

## ‘Village’ hall

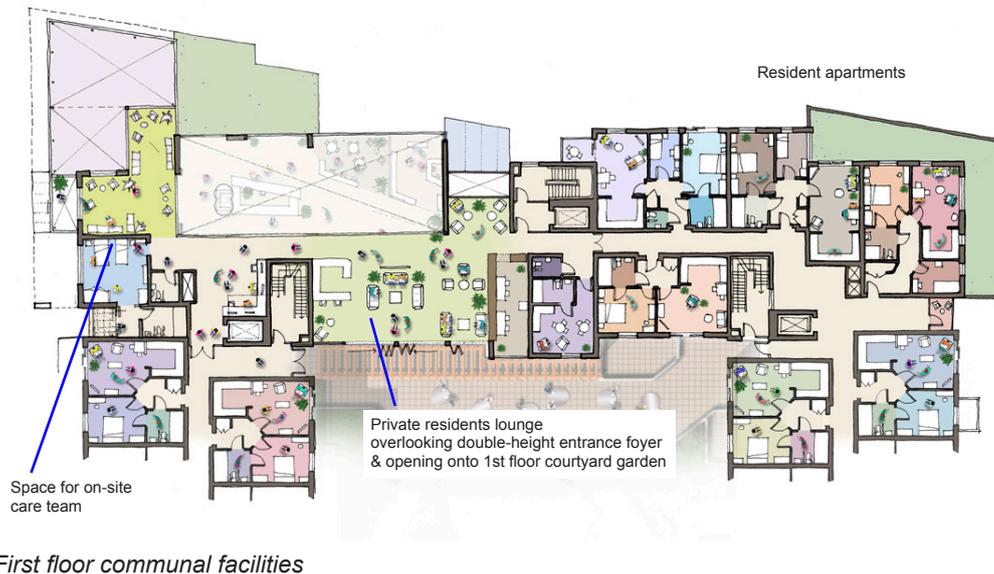
The ‘village’ hall will be available for all residents of Kidbrooke Village to hire for private functions at discounted rates, with catering provided by the on-site catering company. Business rates will apply for hiring for meetings and conferences. Viridian aim to work closely with local organisations in the borough to offer a range of health and social activities for residents and the local community. In addition, insisting that any catering for the village hall must be booked through the on-site restaurant will help to create the level of business that the restaurant needs to ensure that it can operate free of service charge subsidy.

## Layout – private communal facilities

As one rises up the building, it becomes solely for the use of residents. On the first floor is a double-aspect private resident’s lounge and library, which looks down into the double-height entrance foyer and out to the piazza beyond. Looking inward, French doors open out into the central (residents only) courtyard garden. A guest suite available to rent for residents’ families and friends when visiting, is also located at this level.

<sup>7</sup> [www.housinglin.org.uk/library/Resources/Housing/Support\\_materials/Other\\_reports\\_and\\_guidance/Housing\\_our\\_Ageing\\_Population\\_Plan\\_for\\_Implementation.pdf](http://www.housinglin.org.uk/library/Resources/Housing/Support_materials/Other_reports_and_guidance/Housing_our_Ageing_Population_Plan_for_Implementation.pdf)

An unusual feature of Halton Court is the use of roof spaces as gardens, a welcome feature for dense urban schemes for older people. Whilst the scheme is large overall and internal spaces generous, its footprint is defined in the masterplan and has little space at ground floor beyond the building itself.



The first floor communal landscaped courtyard (or podium garden) at the centre of the building has seating areas and raised beds, is entirely secure and is a safe and sheltered private garden for residents, with views across Cator Park. The garden has a circular path, which means that residents can wander without hitting a dead end. This can be really important for people with dementia, as is the secure design of the garden. The courtyard cleverly hides the 44 parking spaces in an undercroft at Ground Floor where there is also generous storage for motorised scooters and bicycles.



*Podium garden at first floor*

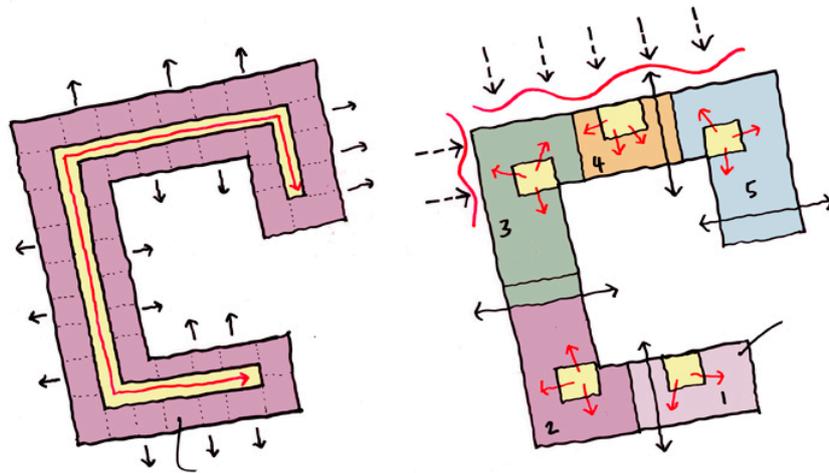


*Roof garden and winter garden*

Up on the fifth floor a large communal roof terrace, planted with raised beds and seating, has dramatic views across treetops to the London skyline beyond. Two winter gardens open out onto this garden, giving year-round enjoyment for residents.

Halton Court has moved away from an often-found orthodoxy in housing for older people of long double-banked corridors with single aspect flats, often artificially lit 24 hours a day. Here there are 5 vertical residential clusters based around lift cores. Residents can access their home through private entrances to each core at street level, or via the public communal entrance at ground floor.

All circulation cores are subtly colour-coded to assist wayfinding, naturally lit and offer quiet lounges or communal shared seating areas, with communal balconies. An internal corridor at first floor level connects all the cores and allows all residents secure access to the communal facilities.



*Single aspect apartments off 'double banked' corridors (left) rejected in favour of a 'core & cluster' model (right)*



*Typical floor plan*

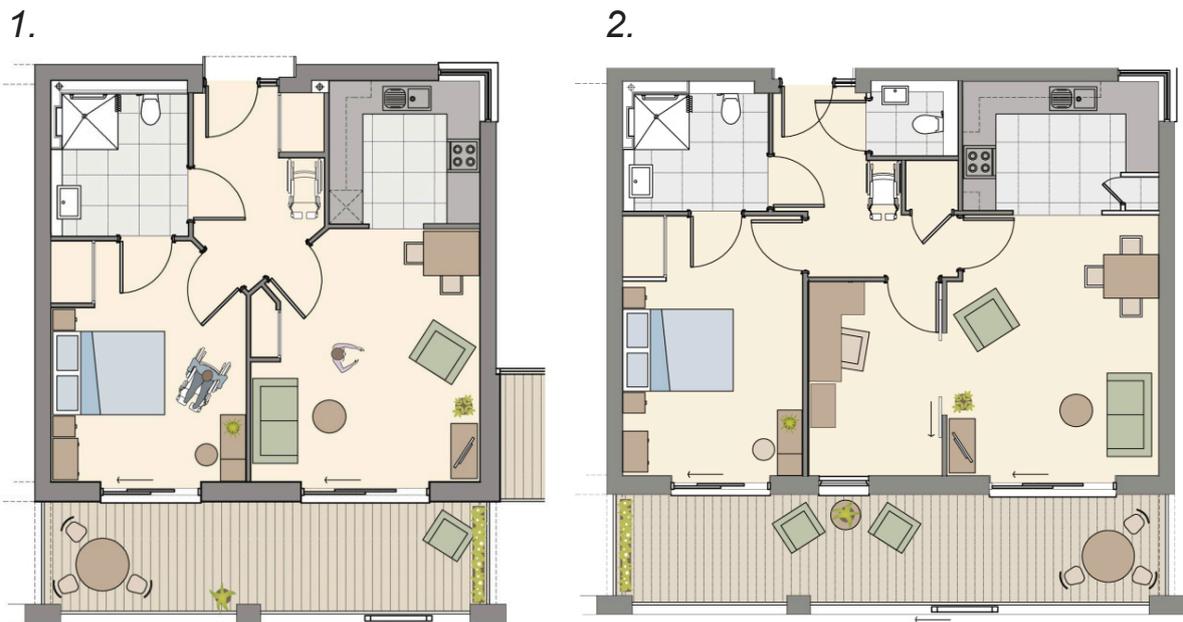
## Communal facilities - summary

- 24 hour concierge
- 'Village' hall
- Internet suite/café
- Hairdressers / barbers
- Waiter-serviced restaurant
- Licenced bar and lounge
- Potting and planting room
- Hobbies Room
- Treatment room
- Spa / assisted bathing suite
- Secure parking for 44 cars
- CCTV
- Buggy stores
- Secure cycle parking
- Large residents lounge
- Residents library
- Guest suite
- 2 large communal gardens at 1st and 5th floors
- 2 x winter gardens on 5th floor
- Laundrette
- Staff offices
- Care office

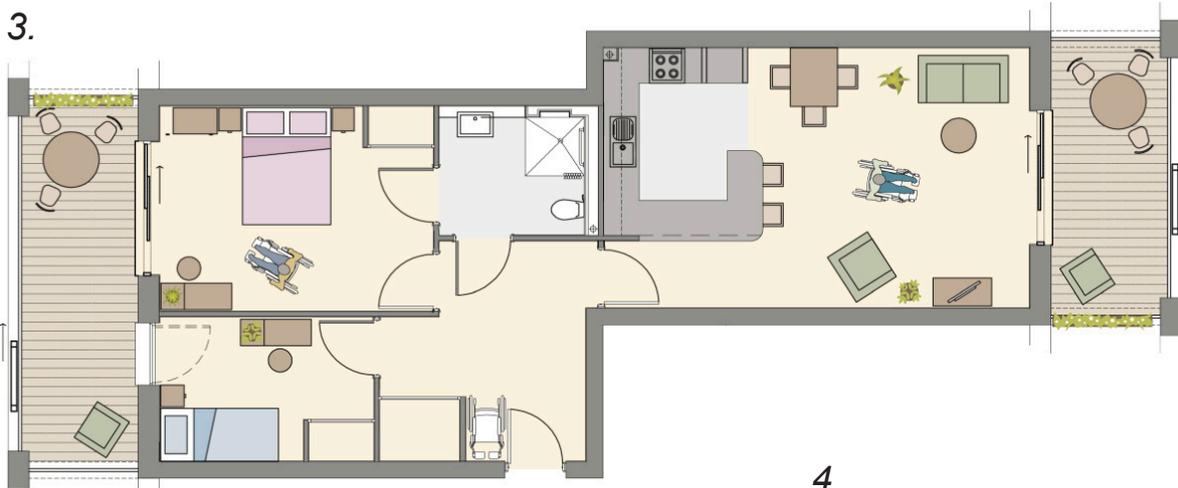
## Apartments

Apartment sizes are larger than expected (70-84 sqm – 2 beds) and closing off corridors to create the separate cores has allowed the provision of a number of dual aspect flats which have windows and balconies overlooking both the courtyard and also out from the building, allowing natural through-ventilation. Staggered in the external walls create more multi-aspect apartments.

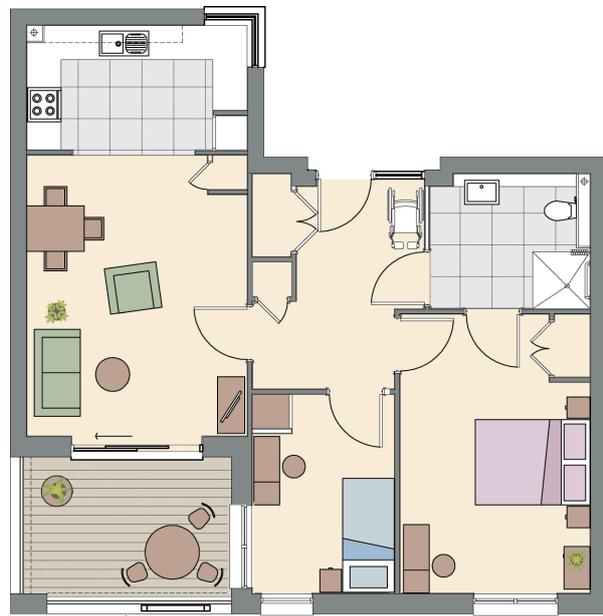
All apartments have generous spacious timber decked balconies or terraces with glass balustrades (10–12 sqm); what is rare is that these have sufficient space to accommodate tables, chairs and plants with easy circulation. A large number of these balconies are recessed into the building providing sheltered outdoor rooms. Sliding timber shutters allow solar shading.



3.



4.



1. Typical 1 Bed Flat 55sqm
2. Typical 2 Bed (2nd bedroom as study) 72sqm
3. Typical 2 Bed 'Dual Aspect' 72sqm
4. Typical 2 Bed Corner 'Dual Aspect' 72sqm

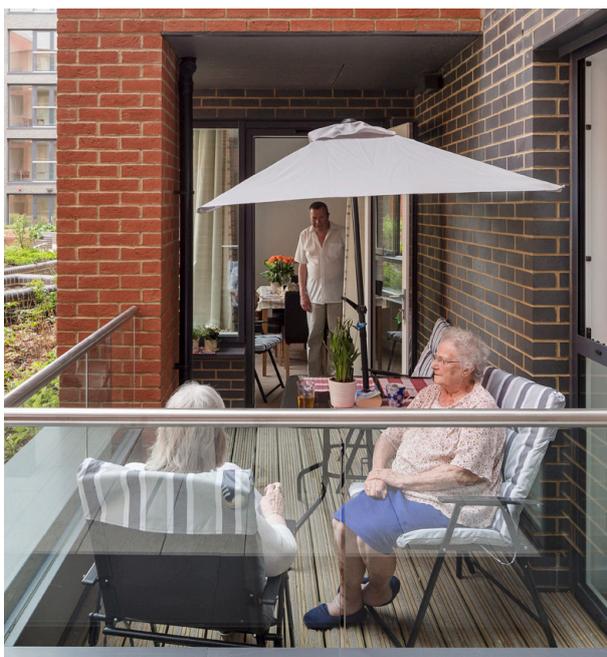
As you approach each apartment, there is a glass-fronted personal display cabinet outside the front door which can be personalised and help residents or visitors to quickly and easily recognise that they are in the right place.

Each apartment is future-proofed or care-ready, door widths and circulation spaces are suitable for wheelchairs, communal corridors can comfortably allow two wheelchairs to pass. All have walk-in wet rooms instead of baths, with access from both the hall and the main bedroom.

Kitchens are contemporary and fully fitted with granite-effect work surfaces; eye level fitted electric fan oven (side-hung) and ceramic hobs. Hardwearing broadloom textured fitted carpets to living room, hall and bedrooms and emergency call system is standard.



Flat interiors



Balconies

Apartments have space for washing machines to be plumbed in, tucked away in hallway cupboards, removing noise and disturbance from the open-plan kitchen-dining-living room. Additionally dirty washing is kept separate from food preparation in the kitchen. There is also a pay-as-you-go commercial laundry available on the ground floor with machines capable of handling large loads of bedding and sluice facilities, if needed, in an adjacent room.

There are 17 fully wheelchair adapted flats, a mixture of one and two bedroom apartments, with kitchen and bathroom components adaptable following a referral from an Occupational Therapist assessment.

## Apartments – summary

- 69 x 1 beds - 55 to 62 sqm
- 101 x 2 beds - 70 to 84 sqm
- Large timber decked private balconies or terraces to every apartment
- Most apartments, multi or dual aspect
- Glass-fronted personal display cabinet
- Wheelchair space standards
- Bathrooms fully accessible wet rooms with double access from hallway and bedroom
- Eye level, side-hung fan oven
- Ceramic hob
- Utility space for washing machine/dryer
- 'See in the dark' LED illuminated switches in the hall
- Emergency warden alarm system
- Personal letterbox
- Spy hole
- Generous storage within each apartment
- Well lit and ventilated apartments

## Sustainability

There is a district heating plant that provides all heating and hot water. Halton Court has its own biomass boiler but it is intended that there will be a district heating system for the whole of Kidbrooke Village, which the biomass boiler at Halton Court can feed into. This will create better economies of scale for residents. Heating and hot water bills are expected to be approximately £240 per year. This compares extremely favourably with average heating bills, which in 2012 were £587 (according to Uswitch). The scheme meets Code for Sustainability Level 3.

## Care and support

This is not an extra care housing scheme, although it does have many of the communal facilities associated with extra care, this feels more like a great retirement living scheme. The flats and the scheme are 'care-ready', as recommended by the HAPPI expert panel, but there is no care team based on-site; this is firstly an independent living housing scheme. Access is via RB Greenwich's choice-based lettings scheme rather than via social services following a social care assessment; you do not need to have a care need to live here, just be over 55.

In time it is likely that Viridian will want to have a care provider on-site making an on-site care offer available if people want or need this. As the care office and facilities are on the first floor they are not visible to the public parts of the building on the ground floor and so should prevent an on-site care team giving the building an institutional feel.

RB Greenwich has made it clear that priority will be given to housing association and council tenants who are living in family-sized housing and want to downsize to smaller, purpose-built accommodation. Only an excellent alternative will draw people away from a family house: generous space standards; storage in every flat; balconies and terraces; extensive communal facilities. Additionally, the knowledge that this is somewhere that people can age in place and remain for as long as they want, including should they become frail or in need of care. Viridian's own research echoed that of the DWP – that cash incentives do not encourage people to move. Here it is the quality of the housing offer made at Halton Court that has persuaded people.

Care is brought in on a domiciliary care basis as and when people need it. For example, whilst many people moving in have no care needs there are those that do, including one who receives 4 care visits a day. Viridian and RB Greenwich will be keeping this under review and consider if and when a 24 hour, or possibly a night only, care team is based at the scheme.

Being a housing solution foremost, the scheme has less danger of being turned into a de facto care home, as may be seen in other schemes where access is solely available to those who meet a minimum care need threshold, but increasingly are those with very high care needs, referred understandably by local authorities under pressure to meet the social care needs of the ageing population. Most older people are scared of moving into a care home and Viridian are very keen that this scheme does not follow the path of many extra care housing schemes for older people which become care homes by another name due the large volumes of high need residents.



*Halton Court from Cato Park*

## Key facts and charges

There are 69 one-bedroom flats ranging from 55 to 62 square meters and 101 two-bedroom flats ranging from 70 to 84 square meters.

A manager, two housing assistants, a concierge and a handyman/caretaker, manage the scheme; the concierge team of four provide 24/7 hour security for the building. Viridian plan to encourage residents to get involved in running groups and meetings, and offering attractive and sociable volunteering opportunities; for example, staffing the bar.

## Tenure

In agreement with LB Greenwich, tenants transferring from LB Greenwich properties will be given an Assured Tenancy; others will receive an Assured Shorthold Tenancy, which will default to an Assured Tenancy after 12 months subject to satisfactory conduct by the resident.

## Lettings

The apartment complex of 170 flats include 20 for shared ownership, the remaining 150 are for affordable rent

Three quarters of the first lets and relets are being made through the Royal Borough of Greenwich's choice-based letting scheme; the remaining 25% are let by Viridian. Priority for the rented homes is given to council or housing association tenants who are living in family-sized housing and want to downsize. Additionally, those being rehoused as part of the regeneration of Kidbrooke or the Woolwich Estates, or because of existing sheltered housing schemes being decommissioned are also prioritised.

Priority for the shared ownership homes will be for council tenants and RB Greenwich residents. Viridian report that a number of residents of Halton Court are returnees, having previously lived on the Ferrier Estate, and a number who originally had not wished to return are now interested in doing so having seen the quality of Halton Court.

## Affordable housing - rent

Due to generous funding from the Affordable Homes Programme, at the time of writing, rent levels are similar to Viridian's other established schemes for older people.

	<b>1 bed 2 person flat</b>	<b>2 bed 3 person flat</b>
Rent	£121.24	£133.02
Service charge	£55.13	£55.13
Total weekly charge	£176.37	£188.15

## Affordable housing - shared ownership

At the time of writing, prices start from £162,500 based on a 50 per cent share of a property with a full market value of £325,000.

*While retirees in the over-55 age bracket are not necessarily ready to settle into a retirement village, they are looking for security. We are currently working on a number of new developments to provide for those looking for an opportunity to secure a brand new apartment within a community that has all the facilities they need as they get older.*

Felicity Gentle, Development Sales and Marketing Manager of Viridian Housing

## Service Charge

The service charge includes service provided outside the individual's home:

- Cleaning and maintenance of communal areas;
- Grounds maintenance
- Refuse collection
- Staffing costs such as concierge
- Security systems including CCTV, emergency alarms
- Maintenance of lifts and door entrance systems

## Other optional costs

Meals in the restaurant will cost £4.50 with a choice of two options and light meals for £3.50, again with two options. Afternoon tea and light snacks are also available. Innovatively, Viridian is exploring the potential of a 'room service' meal option, which could be provided by the restaurant as a better alternative to 'meals on wheels'. This would benefit those residents who are unwell or unable to eat in the restaurant or cook their own food.

The guest room is available at £25 per night for one person and £35 per night for two.

There are 44 parking spaces at a charge of £25 per month.

## Learning points

### Understanding the 'downsizing' market

The recent Demos report *The Top of the Ladder*<sup>8</sup> (September 2013) highlights that 33% of over 60s want to downsize, which equates to 4.6 million people nationally. Many or most of these will be homeowners and Demos suggests that if those wanting to buy a retirement property did so, it would release £307bn worth of property onto the housing market.

Apart from the obvious gains to the housing chain, DEMOS also report robust evidence that retirement housing has a very beneficial effect on older people's health, wellbeing and social networks, and could save health and care services considerable resources. The equity released could help tackle pensioner poverty and have wider economic benefits. However, analysis by the think-tank reveals 58% of over-60s are interested in moving but feel restricted by a lack of suitable alternative housing or a fear of an unfamiliar environment.

The SHOP Resource Pack<sup>9</sup> (Strategic Housing for Older People), published by the Housing LIN and supported by the Association of Directors of Adult Social Services, provides tools for analysing supply and demand at a local level. The SHOP@<sup>10</sup> analysis tool shows a 27% increase by 2030 in the need for specialist housing for older people in the RB Greenwich.

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<sup>8</sup> [www.demos.co.uk/files/TopoftheLadder-web.pdf?1378922386](http://www.demos.co.uk/files/TopoftheLadder-web.pdf?1378922386)

<sup>9</sup> [www.housinglin.org.uk/Topics/browse/HousingExtraCare/ExtraCareStrategy/SHOP/SHOPv2/](http://www.housinglin.org.uk/Topics/browse/HousingExtraCare/ExtraCareStrategy/SHOP/SHOPv2/)

<sup>10</sup> [www.housinglin.org.uk/Topics/browse/HousingExtraCare/ExtraCareStrategy/SHOP/SHOPAT/](http://www.housinglin.org.uk/Topics/browse/HousingExtraCare/ExtraCareStrategy/SHOP/SHOPAT/)

## **Developer-led scheme**

The scheme was initially devised and planned by Berkeley Homes as part of the overall site and in conjunction with LB Greenwich. During the building process, the ownership was bid for by housing organisations. Viridian Housing won and therefore their involvement began when the building was nearing completion limiting the amount that they were able to influence the design and details, as much was already committed. Ideally, a manager/owner would want to be involved as early as possible or from the start of such a development to exert great influence on the design and finish.

Architects PRP designed the overall scheme within an envelope set by the master plan and without knowing the final owner/manager. PRP were not architects during the construction of the scheme. The flexibility PRP designed in terms of use of the ground floor spaces has given Viridian scope to plan services and facilities as they see appropriate.

## **Age-friendly design embedded in design thinking – a HAPPI approach**

The Chief Executive of Berkeley Homes was a member of the HAPPI Panel and was keen for his business to embrace the design principles at the heart of the HAPPI report. Working closely with PRP architects and staff at the HCA, Berkeley Homes altered initial plans to address HAPPI principles, for example re-siting the scheme from the periphery of the site to the heart; removing long institutional corridors; maximising dual aspect apartments and bringing the Village Hall within the scheme to ensure Halton Court became a vibrant heart to Kidbrooke Village. The successful application of HAPPI principles was reflected in Halton Court winning the Housing Design Award HAPPI category when at design stage.

As with all developments, there are lessons to be learned including ensuring that specialist design features are embraced early in the planning and build process. For example, ensuring there is a dropped edge to concrete floor slabs to allow level access thresholds to balcony doors. Additionally, specialist knowledge of components suitable for older people needs to be included at an early stage. Care needs to be taken with how older people can operate them when they may become frail and weaker; for example, heavy balcony doors.

Viridian and Berkeley are working together on a similar scheme as part of the regeneration of the Woolwich Arsenal area; here Viridian has been engaged at an earlier stage.

## Note

The views expressed in this paper are those of the author and are not necessarily those of the Housing Learning and Improvement Network.

## Acknowledgements

We are grateful to Viridian Housing for allowing us to feature Halton Court and helping with meeting production costs.

Thanks also to PRP architects and photographers (and copyright holders) Tim Crocker and Benedict Luxmoore for images.

## About the Housing LIN

Previously responsible for managing the Department of Health's Extra Care Housing Fund, the Housing Learning and Improvement Network (LIN) is the leading 'learning lab' for a growing network of housing, health and social care professionals in England involved in planning, commissioning, designing, funding, building and managing housing, care and support services for older people and vulnerable adults with long term conditions, including dementia.

For further information on this and about the Housing LIN's comprehensive list of online resources on capital and revenue funding specialist housing and opportunities for shared learning and service improvement, including site visits and network meetings in your region, visit: [www.housinglin.org.uk](http://www.housinglin.org.uk)

The Housing LIN welcomes contributions on a range of issues pertinent to housing with care for older and vulnerable adults. If there is a subject that you feel should be addressed, please contact us.

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Housing Learning & Improvement Network,  
c/o EAC, 3rd Floor, 89 Albert Embankment  
London SE1 7TP

Tel: 020 7820 8077

Email: [info@housinglin.org.uk](mailto:info@housinglin.org.uk)

Web: [www.housinglin.org.uk](http://www.housinglin.org.uk)

Twitter: @HousingLIN