



## Village 135 is an extra care village of 135 apartments and community hub for Older People in Wythenshawe, Manchester

Village 135 has been developed by Wythenshawe Community Housing Group and received £5.19m funding from the Department of Health, through the HCA Care (now Homes England) and Specialist Housing fund.

This case study describes how the needs of the ageing population of Wythenshawe, Manchester are addressed through a built design over two sites and includes two existing residential tower blocks and a glazed footbridge spanning over a busy road.



Written for the Housing Learning and Improvement Network by **Damian Utton**, Director, Pozzoni Architecture Ltd.

July 2018

## Introduction

Village 135 is an extra care village developed by Wythenshawe Community Housing Group (WCHG) providing 135 two-bedroom apartments and a community hub for the ageing population of Wythenshawe, Manchester.

In conjunction with community level consultation, WCHG identified a need to provide suitable housing for older people in the Wythenshawe area. Village 135 caters for 24-hour on-site Extra Care to support residents' existing and ongoing needs.

Village 135 is much more than just housing; it has been recognized nationally as a one of a kind development, taking extra care to the next level. By providing these award-winning age-friendly apartments, residents can 'right size,' releasing other homes in the community for families and young people.

WCHG manages 14,000 properties providing homes for over 20,000 people across Wythenshawe. Village 135 creates housing to meet the needs of the local and wider community, increasing the population of this location and enhancing the urban landscape. This makes the facility central to the wider Wythenshawe Regeneration Framework



*Overview of the development*

Plan and an integral part of Wythenshawe Community Housing Group commitment to the Manchester Age-friendly charter.

Village 135 has been designed to HAPPI principles, Lifetime Home standards, Secure by Design requirements and has achieved a BREEAM Very Good rating. Village 135 offers bespoke care packages for each individual resident providing tailored services for existing and ongoing needs.

## Background

Village 135 is located in South Manchester in the Benchill area of Wythenshawe and includes two existing tower blocks (remodelled 2003-2005) on either side of Hollyhedge Road. The residents of the tower blocks are already an over 55's community and it had been an ambition for many years to develop a sustainable extra-care village on these two sites. The design is unique with both sites connected by a glazed footbridge spanning across Hollyhedge Road, providing ease of access for its residents.

The main development area sits between St. Luke's Church and an existing tower block, Hollyhedge Court. Across Hollyhedge Road is the second plot, located behind another existing tower block, Benchill Court. The building plots, existing tower blocks and the surrounding land are in the ownership of WCHG.

## Client brief and objectives

The client brief has been developed with Wythenshawe Community Housing Group and through detailed consultations with Manchester City Planning Department, Highways, Design for Access 2 specialists, Secured by Design officers, and various private consultants deemed necessary.

The brief required;

- 135 no.2 bed apartments – a mixture between 73m<sup>2</sup> and 63m<sup>2</sup>.
- Communal facilities for residents and the local community – reception, hairdressing salon, spa therapy room, bistro and social rooms and multi-purpose rooms.
- Ancillary services – office, staff room, scooter store, guest suite, assisted bathroom, kitchen, plant room and storage.
- All internal and external areas to be accessible for all. The interior spaces and layout had to be designed to dementia design principles ensuring layouts are simple to follow and interior spaces reduce any confusion to the residents, with way finding made clear.
- The external areas designed to ensure the integration of the developments communal areas with the existing local community; whilst providing a wide variety of spaces for a range of outdoor activities and opportunities to encourage people to be more active and engage with their surrounding environment.



Site plan

## Design response

### *Hollyhedge Site (North)*

The site is defined by the tower block with some small-scale development to the East side. There is an existing church on the North side with the roads defining the boundaries to the South and West side. The site area is approx. 9100m<sup>2</sup>.

### *Benchill Site (South)*

This site is defined by the tower block sited at the corner of Brownley Road and Hollyhedge Road. There is a health centre to the South and a car park to the East. The site area is approx. 4270m<sup>2</sup>.

The site location before development consisted of open, underused, external spaces; the two tower blocks, on a large roundabout and offices for Wythenshawe Community Housing Group in a converted pub.

Village 135 creates a landmark building, responding to the diverse architectural scale in the vicinity, the height of the existing tower blocks, the removal of the roundabout to facilitate the Manchester to Airport Metrolink line and the replacement of the pub/office building with the new Manchester College building.



*Footbridge connecting the two sites*

The scale and mass has been informed by the siting of the buildings in relation to the tower blocks and orientation:

- The Hollyhedge building is split into three blocks. Block A contains 31 no. apartments and is five storeys high, Block B contain 50 no. apartments and is eight storeys high; both are linked by the two-storey hub which also connects to the footbridge. Block A at five storeys high provides a comfortable street elevation and allows western light into the courtyard garden. The adjacent Hollyhedge tower block is 12 storeys high.
- The Benchill building contains 54 no. apartments and is both six and four storeys high. The larger section at six storeys is designed not to overshadow the adjacent neighbourhood, retail units or courtyard garden. The smaller block provides a more domestic street scene at four storeys.
- A glazed footbridge connects both sides of the site, allowing easy access for all to the full range of facilities, including the community hub facility, to create an inclusive and sustainable

'village'. The footbridge presented a challenge as none of the team had experience of such structures. Extensive research and consultation with the local authority planners and highways established requirements and legislation and the design and construction proceeded accordingly.

There were no significant statutory planning issues encountered although a considerable amount of planning documentation was required, given the size and scale of the scheme.

## Design Features



*Typical apartment layout*

### **Generous Space Standards and Flexible layouts**

Village 135 has been designed to meet with; Manchester City Council's Design for Access 2 guidelines (<https://tinyurl.com/designforaccess2>), Lifetime Homes and Standards and Quality in Development. Meeting with each of these standards ensures the living spaces are generous in size and are designed to meet the differing needs of the residents.

All of the apartments are designed with two bedrooms, a living/dining area, kitchen and an ensuite 'Jack and Jill' shower room. The apartments have the flexibility to use the second bedroom as a study, dining room or extra space for the living room if so desired.

### **Maximise Natural Light and Ventilation: Daylight into circulation spaces avoid internal corridors and single aspect apartments**

The scheme has been designed with the use of sun path analysis to ensure overshadowing is limited and apartments are orientated to capture the optimum natural light that the layout allows for.

The majority of apartments enjoy either an east or west aspect or both. The few north facing apartments have angled bays to capture light from the west and extra windows have been situated in the rooms where apartments are on corners to gain a second aspect and gain more potential daylight.

Apartments have a kitchen window to the corridor which provides both a second view and will bring in borrowed light, from the naturally lit corridors, to the main living area.

There are large expanses of glazing to the apartments having both low cill and high head heights to capture the natural daylight and provide unbroken views when seated, in bed or standing.



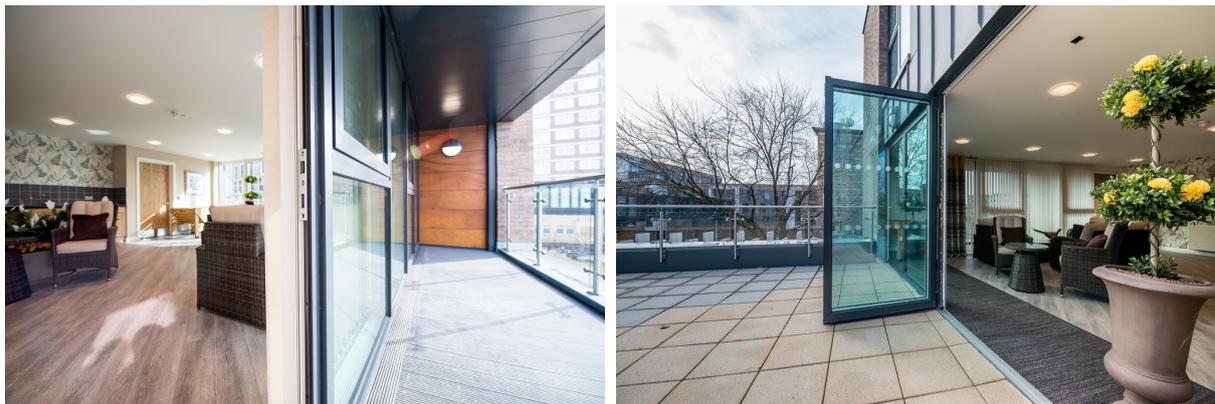
*Apartment interior*

Whilst single-banked corridors would be the ideal, site constraints and economic factors resulted in double banked corridors. However, there is variety within the corridors and glazed ends for daylight and ventilation. Ground to third floor from the Benchill (South) site are single banked corridors, maximising natural daylight and ventilation.

Communal areas have been planned to enable direct access to South facing gardens and large areas of glazing have been designed to maximise the influx of natural daylight.

All windows have opening lights to allow for natural ventilation both in the communal areas and apartments.

### ***Balconies, patios and terraces***



*Apartment balcony and doors to communal roof terrace*

Where appropriate, apartments have been designed with Juliette balconies that are accessed from the lounge area. North facing apartments, where a balcony would not be used so much because of the aspect, bays have been provided to the lounge areas. For those residents that don't have balconies, communal balconies and garden terraces have been provided central to the scheme with southerly aspects. Whilst at ground level private gardens and terraces have been designed where space allows. Large communal public gardens have been sited central to the whole scheme, available for all residents and the local community to enjoy.

On the Hollyhedge site there is a second floor communal roof terrace and gardens.

### ***Circulation areas are shared spaces***



*Typical apartment layout*

Circulation areas have been designed to ensure they are well lit by daylight that will be supplemented where required by a carefully designed lighting scheme to enhance the ambience of different spaces and enable various activities to occur in the variety of spaces.

Special attention has been given to the interior design of all circulation

spaces to ensure they are both pleasant areas to be, but also to make sure wayfinding is clear and simple.

Corridors are wide enough for scooters to pass but not too wide so they feel uncomfortable.

## **Sustainability**

The Care and Support Specialised Housing Fund prospectus advises that the building design is required to meet the Core Standards of the HCA's Design and Quality Standards (2007) as a minimum baseline and bidders should demonstrate that they have incorporated these standards into the overall design approach which best meets the needs of their client group.

Village 135 achieves a BREEAM very good rating and complies with:

- HAPPI principles (<https://www.housinglin.org.uk/Topics/browse/Design-building/HAPPI/>)
- Building for Life (<https://www.designcouncil.org.uk/resources/guide/building-life-12-third-edition>)
- Lifetime Homes principles (<http://www.lifetimehomes.org.uk/>)

Supporting the concept of the building being adaptable to an individual's changing needs.

The following environmental design principles were followed:

- Passive environmental design principles, using a 'fabric first' approach i.e. high levels of thermal insulation and air tightness to the building envelope to minimise heat loss.
- Biomass Communal Heating System offering energy efficient and low cost heating and hot water provision.
- Steel frame and traditional masonry construction with high thermal mass.
- Many construction materials have an A+ Green Guide rating.
- Minimise reliance on energy-using equipment for heating, cooling, lighting and natural ventilation.
- Position of trees and soft landscaping on and around the development and within buildings to provide natural shading, insulation and air conditioning.
- Site layout and building design principles maximise the capture and use of daylight and passive solar energy, whilst avoiding excessive solar gain in summer.
- Energy and water efficient appliances and systems.



*Atrium in communal space*

A designated scooter and cycle store is provided with changing points. General storage within apartments is adequate for day to day requirements.

## **Priority to Pedestrians**

Car parking is available on both sides of the development. The entrance is located on the East/South façade accessed from the car park. Servicing to the building for deliveries/fire etc. are located to the North-East corner away from the main entrance and public entrance. There are no apartments facing the car park at ground floor level.

## Care Ready

Residents are provided with a flexible on-site care package. The scheme has been designed to meet Home for Life standards, so residents will not have to relocate in the future, should their care needs increase. They are encouraged to live as independently as possible with the reassurance of support and personal care when needed ensuring a high quality of life for older people by providing an on-site 24-hour care team and a range of facilities. Village 135 promotes a full and active lifestyle for residents, who can participate in a range of activities designed to enrich their lifestyle, build friendships and provide new skills.

The building is also future proofed with the installation of cat.5 and cat.6 wiring with a central hub system to enable wi-fi connections across the site and scope for the utilisation of technology enabled care.

## Apartments

Tenure is a mix of 66 apartments for affordable rent, 39 apartments for shared ownership and 30 apartments for outright sale. The sizes of the apartments range from 63m<sup>2</sup> to 73m<sup>2</sup>.

## Community Facilities



*Hair & Beauty salon and Spa-Bathroom*

The Community Hub of approx. 2000m<sup>2</sup> includes:

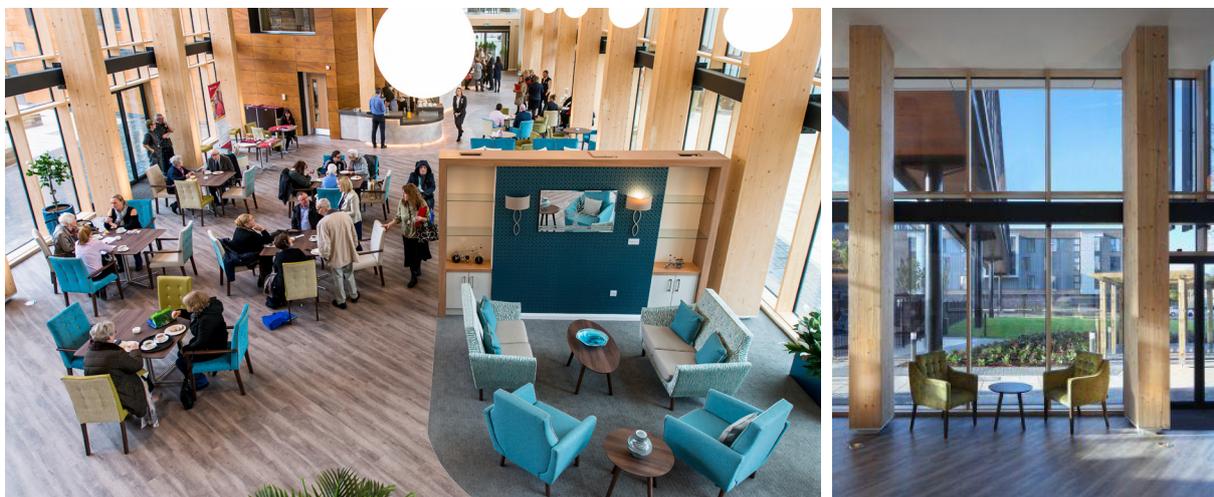
- On site Café/Bistro which is a focal point for scheme residents and the local community.
- Sensory landscaped gardens.
- Guest suites for relatives to stay over.
- Revitalising Spa-Bathroom.
- A number of luxurious assisted bathrooms.
- Hair & Beauty salon.
- Over 15 luxurious communal rooms spread over all four blocks encouraging residents to socialise and welcome family members.
- Indoor living garden with relaxing water fall feature.
- Laundry room.
- Roof terrace.
- Interconnecting bridge which connects both sites for easy accessibility.

The Community Hub provides the focal point for residents and the local community. It creates a visual and physical link between both the North and South garden spaces. Centrally placed, the Bistro provides a focal point to the scheme and ease of access to external areas. Both the North and South elevations have glazing that folds back to open up the bistro to the gardens providing an opportunity for outside seating.

In the landscaped sensory gardens a hardstanding turning circle for a fire engine was required but rather than a large expanse of empty tarmac, grasscrete blocks have been used to soften this area.

An Orchard is planned for summer where residents will be encouraged to get involved with gardening activities and a reason to be outside for the benefits of sunlight, fresh air and activity.

Village 135 facilitates integration with the local community (including the two existing, age-restricted tower blocks) with public access to the Bistro, Salon, Spa and Gardens. The security of Village 135 residents is addressed through natural surveillance and access control.



*Bistro with fold-back glazing*

## **Accessibility and Mobility**

Village 135 has been designed to achieve full mobility and access under Lifetime Homes for all residents ensuring the living spaces are flexible in design and are a generous size to meet the needs of the residents.

Externally, there is a level access approach from the site boundary and car parking areas to the building entrances. Two-metre wide paths have been incorporated on the approach and circulation around the building to provide suitable access for wheelchair / scooters and providing sufficient passing places. Any steps on circulation routes have been designed to ambulant disabled standards and there are alternative access routes with gradients not exceeding 1 in 20.

All entrances are accessible and clearly visible to help people with visual impairments and have level thresholds. Automatic sliding doors are installed to the main entrance doors with generously sized lobbies for wheelchairs and mobility scooters. Scooters can freely move around the site and buildings with a scooter store and charging points on the ground floor.



*Reception area*

The reception area has been designed to be suitable for wheelchair and scooter manoeuvring in front of the reception desk and a lower section to the reception desk for wheelchair accessibility.

The doors dividing up the corridors to the residential areas are on hold-open devices to aid in the manoeuvrability of wheelchair users and for residents with mobility or frailty issues, e.g. someone with arthritis may not be able to grasp a door handle.

All corridors and lobbies have been designed to have suitable widths and adequate passing places for wheelchair users. Suitable vision panels have been incorporated to all doors on the circulation and escape routes for people to see into the space beyond, avoiding the risk of opening the door onto someone.

The building holds seven staircases with six passenger lifts included which serve all floors within the building. Suitable

manoeuvring space has been provided in front of the lifts.

Ground floor apartments have access to the private gardens; the apartments to all other floors will have either a balcony or 'Juliette' style balcony to allow direct access to external space for light and views to enhance the environment within the apartment.

At Hollyhedge, Communal Lounge spaces are located on each floor level to provide interaction space. Those on the second floor open directly to the roof terrace above the "hub". Additional communal facilities are provided at first and second floor housing a multi-function space and IT facilities.

At Benchill, the vehicle entrance and car parking is provided to the rear/south of the site. There is a pedestrian access from both the car park and the main road. There is a three-metre defensible green space to all ground floor apartments.

## **Cost Effectiveness**

Village 135 represents a £24million investment, including £5.19m funding from the Department of Health, through the HCA (now Homes England) Care and Specialist Housing fund. Wythenshawe Community Housing Group owned the land that Village 135 was built upon so there were no site acquisition costs.

It was tendered through an individual OJEU procurement process, where the prices were justified, competitive, comparable and benchmarked to many other Extra Care schemes, which demonstrated that Village 135 represented best value despite the extensive additional on costs such as underground services relocation works.

Village 135 was built via a JCT Design Build procurement. The Design Build contract cost was £18.2million.

Robust value engineering sessions with all parties ensured the design, construction methodology and specification eliminated waste and maximised design and construction efficiency.

Two existing tower blocks on the site were retained and as these were occupied during the construction work, careful planning was required to minimise disruption and inconvenience to residents. Construction of the footbridge required off-site prefabrication and road closures whilst lifted into position.

Sales values of individual apartments have increased significantly from the original appraisal sales values due to the high quality design and finish and communal facility provision. Many apartments have been sold off-plan.

## Community Involvement

As part of WCHG ongoing commitment to measuring social impact as an organisation, Village 135 contributes to an improvement in the wellbeing of residents and WCHG are measuring this as part of their social impact assessment. Areas to measure include independence, quality of life, happiness, loneliness, isolation, financial management and involvement in activities.

Mr and Mrs Rawlings decided to move from Crewe to take advantage of Village 135, which also brought them closer to family and friends. Mrs Rawlings said:

*“It is exciting to see the mixture of tenure this development offers. I was born in Hulme and would have welcomed such a development when the area was cleared in the 1950s. We wanted to be closer to our family and Village 135 offers everything we need for the future. We have come to the unveiling and are amazed at the exceptional facilities on offer at five-star standard.”*

The Bishop of Manchester, Dr David Walker said:

*“Village 135 has provided job opportunities for local people, both in the construction phase of the development, and now it’s up and running. We are working closely with, The Manchester College in Wythenshawe to provide training and job opportunities in health and social care, catering, hair and beauty. This will provide services to residents as part of the community facilities in the salon, spa and bistro. We are very proud of this unique, ground-breaking development, taking extra care to the next level. I am proud to see the fruition of Village 135, which is directly addressing the gap in services for the residents. I look forward to continuing to work with WCHG on projects such as this, which are targeting community needs.”*

Furthermore, since the project inception in 2012, in-depth consultation campaigns at community level have taken place, to map local area feeling and feedback. Detailed discussions determined at every stage, the design process from siting to external materials and access strategies. Stakeholders include:

- WCHG local residents
- Wythenshawe community groups
- Manchester City Council
  - Social Services
  - Adult Care
  - Planning Department
  - Housing
  - Transportation
  - Landscaping
  - Environmental officers
- Public consultations events
- Greater Manchester Police- Crime Impact/SBD

Adjacent local businesses have benefited from the development due to the numbers of new residents in occupation and the erection of a new taxi office.

The adjacent South Manchester College is the provider of Village 135's Catering and Health & Beauty provision, providing services to residents in the beauty salon/spa and bistro. The Manchester College has put together a team, made up of colleagues and students offering guaranteed timetable of work experience, which is vital to their development, making them significantly more desirable as a candidate for potential employers in the area.

The location of the scheme complements local amenities as it is adjacent to a Health Centre and nearby local shops which include a post office, pharmacies, bakeries, newsagent / convenience store, local supermarkets, cafes and fast food shops. Bus services and the adjacent Metrolink Tram stop connect to Wythenshawe Town Centre, Wythenshawe Hospital, Manchester Airport, South Manchester and the City Centre.



*Footbridge to the Hollyhedge site*

## Team

- **Client:** Wythenshawe Community Housing Group
- **Architect:** Pozzoni Architecture
- **Building Contractor:** Galliford Try
- **Employers Agent / Cost Consultant:** Poole Dick Associates
- **M&E. Consultants:** ECS
- **Structural Engineer:** Sutcliffe

## Conclusion / lessons learned

The Community Hub has proven to be multifunctional and provides a platform for engagement between residents, the local community and meeting groups, including professional, external and church groups.

The facilities offer further engagement with the local community by hosting internal functions, such as birthday parties, anniversaries, funerals etc., external functions and allowing full access to the consultation room for the use of case conferences between professionals.

As well as providing opportunities for their residents, Wythenshawe Community Housing Group pride themselves on their successful partnership working with The Manchester College, who provide in-house services in the bistro and salon, providing regular training and work experience for students.

In addition to this, The Hub's communal rooms are regularly used by various stakeholders. These include church groups, partnership meetings (e.g. Manchester City Council, Human Support Group), internal meetings, the local library and private functions for residents.

The communal rooms offer a wide range of activities for residents and the local community, such as a games morning/evening, 'Keep Fit' classes, Tai Chi, bingo, chair yoga, quizzes and councillor services. Residents are given the opportunity to take part in holidays and day trips planned by members of staff. Recent trips have included excursions to Skipton Market, Cleveleys, Llandudno and Benidorm.

## Awards

Village 135 has won the following awards:

- Best Large Development: National Housing Awards 2017
- Best Independent Living: Pinders Healthcare Design Awards 2018
- Best Supported Housing: Northern Housing Awards 2018

## Note

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

## About the Housing LIN

The Housing LIN is a sophisticated network bringing together over 40,000 housing, health and social care professionals in England and Wales to exemplify innovative housing solutions for an ageing population.

Recognised by government and industry as a leading 'knowledge hub' on specialist housing, our online and regional networked activities:

- connect people, ideas and resources to inform and improve the range of housing choices that enable older and disabled people to live independently
- provide intelligence on latest funding, research, policy and practice developments, and
- raise the profile of specialist housing with developers, commissioners and providers to plan, design and deliver aspirational housing for an ageing population.

To view other examples of designing extra care housing, visit the Housing LIN's dedicated 'design hub' pages at:

<https://www.housinglin.org.uk/Topics/browse/Design-building/Design/>

## Published by

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 & @HousingLINews