



Press Release

24 March 2014

Churchill Retirement Living WINS Planning Appeal for new development at The White Houses, 1-3 Church Road, Haywards Heath, West Sussex.

Retirement lifestyle specialist Churchill Retirement Living is pleased to announce that planning permission has been granted on appeal by a Planning Inspector for a 42, one and two bedroom retirement housing development, including communal features and Lodge Manager's office at The White Houses, 1-3 Church Road, Haywards Heath, West Sussex. The site is currently occupied by a redundant office building. The proposal will enhance this part of Haywards Heath by providing a well designed building with high quality landscaping close to the town centre.

Andrew Burgess, Director of Churchill Retirement Living comments: "The Inspector recognised that the Council's Space Standards should not be slavishly applied to retirement living developments as the Planning Officer and Mid Sussex District Council Planning Committee had demanded last year. The Inspector concluded;

The SPD states that it supplements existing planning policies in the local plan 'illustrating *their application and giving further guidance on good design and practice.*'³ The SPD does not form part of the development plan. Its purpose is 'to ensure that the floor area of new homes and of associated storage space in new residential developments and conversions in Mid Sussex are sufficient to secure a satisfactory standard of accommodation for their residents.' In my conclusion, and as it states, the SPD provides guidance and should be applied flexibly dependent on the individual circumstances of each proposal to which its terms are to be applied.

I conclude that the shortfall in room sizes proposed in this development as judged against the SPD would be acceptable in this particular instance. This is for four main reasons. Firstly, an allowance should be given to the floor space created by the communal areas to the quantum and in the ways set out by the appellant. Using this approach only unit would fall below the SPD threshold figure and that by a modest amount. Secondly, potential purchasers of the units would be aware of the room sizes before they decided to proceed. In my estimation many elderly people would favour minimal room sizes for a variety of reasons especially in the case of single-person households.

Thirdly, the profile of a typical occupant of a sheltered housing scheme would not be categorised by the description of the range of activities put forward in the SPD and which are prayed-in-aid as justification for a minimum room size. These include bringing up families, home working opportunities and providing for changing needs. I do not consider that, in the vast majority of cases, any of these activities are relevant to a sheltered housing development. Finally, as it states, the SPD gives *'further guidance'* and should be applied flexibly.

For all of these reasons I consider that the very positive planning benefits arising from the development outweigh any concerns regarding the room sizes in the apartments.

The site is located on a main road into Haywards Heath, close to the shops and amenities of the town centre and is well served by public transport and provides sufficient parking.

"This is our first development in Haywards Heath as well as our fourteenth planning approval in England since June. The construction will get underway soon with first occupations anticipated in summer 2015.

Andrew Burgess comments,

"It is crazy that we had to appeal and that Councillors did not recognise that our original scheme was appropriate for older people. Mid Sussex District Council have frustrated the development coming forward and delayed this development by nine months when there is such a desperate need for private retirement living housing in the district. They should be ashamed of themselves and apologise to Churchill Retirement Living for the delays and take a more balanced approach in the future."

The new development will follow the same highly successful pattern of all Churchill Lodges, providing high quality, self-contained homes in landscaped grounds. Owners have the benefits of a Lodge Manager, 24 hour Careline, Owners' Lounge, guest suite and laundry room. It is a lifestyle that is becoming increasingly sought after by people of retirement age, who enjoy freedom from household and gardening maintenance, and have the benefit of built-in sociability whilst still retaining their independence and privacy.

For more information on Churchill Retirement Living, please call 0800 458 1856 or visit www.churchillretirement.co.uk

Appeal Decision 21 March and Image attached

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Image of the proposed Churchill Retirement living Development in Haywards Heath

