

DAME ALICE COURT

Organisation

Bedford Borough Council

Dame Alice Court, Anchor Housing Association.

www.anchor.org.uk/our-properties/dame-alice-court-bedford

Acknowledgments

There are many partners involved in making it happen for Dame Alice Court, which was part of a wider Bedford Dementia Friendly Environment Project:

Bedford Borough Council (Adult Social Care Commissioning Team, Property Services Team, Home Care Team and their manager, Finance Team and Public Health Team)

Anchor Housing Association (Dame Alice staff and the site manager, in house surveying team)

Bedford Hospital (clinical staff from Harpur and Elizabeth Wards, Estates Officer)

Bedfordshire Pilgrim Housing Association (service and sites managers and staff, in house surveying team)

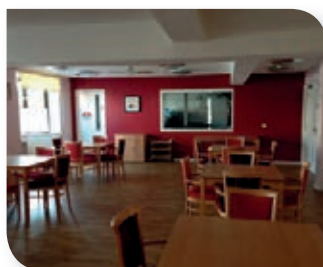
Ingleton Wood LLP architect, design and surveying support

Rempods and the Higgins Gallery in Bedford

Dame Alice Court site lead: Vivienne Cornelius. Project directors/managers: Sheila Hartnett (Bedford Hospital Trust) and Marek Zamborsky (Bedford Borough Council).



Dining room pre-intervention



Dining room post-intervention

The Challenge

Bedford Borough Council recognises importance of integrated community care for the local population with dementia. A lack of integrated care can inhibit people living with dementia's access to care and support, limiting their choices in care and resulting in crisis admissions to hospitals and care homes. Bedford Borough Council, Bedford Hospital Trust, Anchor Housing Association and Bedfordshire Pilgrim Housing Association worked together to create an integrated dementia-friendly design approach to improve the care pathway in the community.

Dame Alice Court (Anchor Housing Association), discussed in this case study, is one of the four selected sites.

- Built in 1993, comprises 39 flats.
- Sizes: studio, 1 bedroom, includes wheelchair standard properties.
- 24hours on-site care staff, non-resident management staff and community alarm service.
- Lift, lounge, dining room, laundry, guest facilities, garden, community centre, hobby room, activities room, shop, hairdressing salon, and assisted bathing facility.
- Situated centrally in Bedford town centre close to all amenities.
- New residents accepted from 55 years of age. Both cats and dogs are generally accepted (subject to conditions).
- Care provider: Bedford Borough Council.



Aim and objectives

The overall aim of the project was to improve quality of life for people living with dementia by creating synchronised and integrated dementia-friendly features across four selected sites in the community.

The main aim of case study was delivered by following objectives:

- improve quality of care for people with dementia by enhancing selected extra care schemes' environment (Dame Alice Court, Tavistock Court) and the local day centre (Goldington Day Centre);
- improve care for people living with dementia in Bedford Hospital in an environment that enhances their care;
- synchronise selected dementia friendly features across all sites to aid easy transitions;
- reduce unnecessary length of stay in a hospital;
- enable smoother "settling down" at home after episode of acute hospitalisation or in a hospital if hospitalisation is required;
- reduce readmissions to hospital;
- evaluate value of environmental similarities between acute and community settings; and
- contribute to the national debate about extra care housing and dementia.

The main types of stakeholder engagement, which shaped the project, were: on-going Bedford Borough's system wide partnership engagement delivering the Joint Dementia Commissioning Strategy (2011-2014); Sites' related bespoke engagement with residents, patients and service users via focused groups, surveys, residents' meetings, bespoke consultation with mature citizens' forum groups, and established communication channels such as service newsletters.

Key spaces

The main areas of refurbishment included communal areas, corridors and their décor, restyling of hairdressing room, studwork in various places, automatic skylight opening, a self-cleaning glass canopy in the garden, new sanitary ware in communal bathrooms, new higher kick plates to all front doors, all new door furniture and new zip boiler for communal lounge. The communal areas and lounges had new pictures installed which included local scenes. New furniture was purchased throughout the scheme. The other areas of main refurbishment were renovation of the flooring in the dining room plus carpets to the ground floor and first floor lounges and main entrance. The project also included some external work to the garden with on the pathway which was extended so that tenants could walk all the way round the building. There was a new shed and greenhouse purchased as all the flowers are grown on site by a 'resident gardener'.

Key interventions and their innovative nature

The introduction of reminiscent areas which did not previously exist was key innovation. In consultation with residents, the project utilised empty spaces across the scheme to introduce music area, film area, replica of a local shop, and memorabilia area. Suitability: mild and moderate dementia stages.

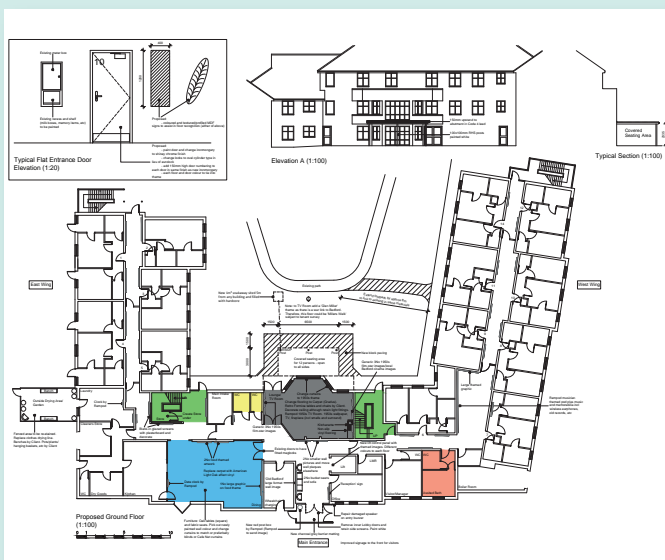
Way-finding and Signage – continuity of points of navigation. The scheme consists of three floors. The second and the third floor have a "theme" – music, film. Dementia-friendly signage was introduced combining text and picture, increased size of door signage, colour coordination and "colour blending". Suitability: mild and moderate dementia stages, general population.

Enhancing the physical environment to allow better nutrition. Complete dining area refurbishment, selected seating support (tables, chairs). Colour schemes to aide appetite (based on current research), selected crockery with dementia residents in mind (shape, contrast and colour). Suitability: mild and moderate dementia stages, elderly population without dementia requiring lower level of additional support with the food intake

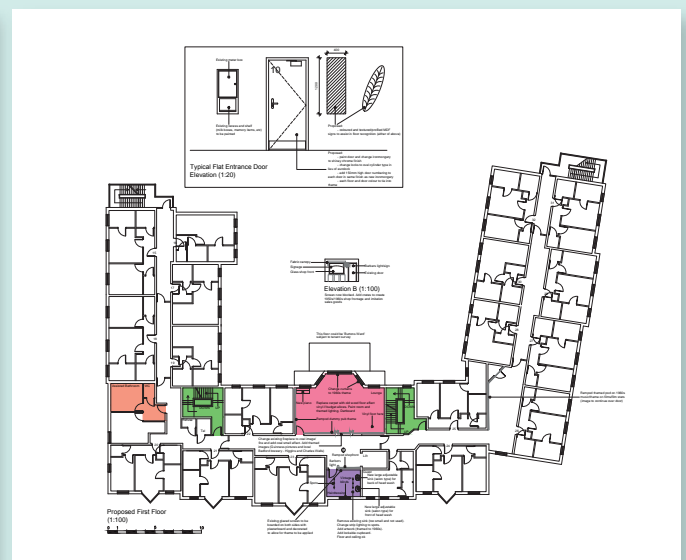
Reminiscence Pods. Worked with Rempods to install permanent rather than temporary reminiscence areas. Suitability: all dementia stages.

Encouraging independence. Dementia-friendly design floors as per EHE Kings Fund guidance, clocks with easy read time and calendar, more independent navigation and dining experience. Suitability: all dementia stages.

Artwork. Local images sourced in cooperation with The Higgins Gallery in Bedford. Suitability: mild and moderate dementia stages without mobility problems



Proposed ground floor layout



Proposed first floor layout

Contribution to the 12 principles



P2. Provide optimum levels of stimulation. Since the refurbishment of Dame Alice Court, there is now a regular themed activity afternoon to encourage those living with dementia to attend and talk about fond memories. Memorabilia and the various themed lounges have enhanced these events. There are various areas around the building to encourage stimulation: points of interest with artwork along the corridors; and a music area with musical instruments, books, games and various items of memorabilia. A sensory garden has been developed with raised flower beds for the benefit of customers who walk about and enjoy the vivid colours and smells. A new greenhouse has been built to enable flowers to be grown from seedlings. The hairdressing room is decorated in a retro style with Hollywood style mirrors and décor, and features reminiscent of the 1960's. The wall has feature wallpaper depicting a 'real life' street view of a salon – there is therefore no doubt what lies inside!



P4. Provide a non-institutional scale and environment. As soon as you enter Dame Alice Court you are welcomed by a bright welcome sign, the sound of soft music from a retro music system with a sofa and chairs in the sitting area near the manager's office. There is an old fashioned pillar box where tenants can post their letters and various pictures of the local area. All seating areas in communal lounges are positioned in small clusters to encourage socialisation in an informal setting with a mixture of sofas and chairs in a combination of colours.



P6. Support way-finding and navigation. The creation of themed corridors supports way-finding and navigation. The themes chosen were music, theatre and the local area. Each floor had a name from these choices and the pictures were chosen to match the theme. All property front doors have large clear numbering contrasting to the front door to support orientation to the home. The new signage includes words and graphics to indicate the way to go and identify particular room usage.



P7. Provide access to nature and the outdoors. The communal lounges all have good lighting and overlook the garden to support connections with the outside and nature. The installation of a large glass canopy enables tenants to sit outside whilst enjoying the outside. There is also additional seating and umbrellas. The garden has a sensory area with raised flower beds with a circular pathway to encourage way-finding around the garden. There is also a greenhouse and shed area where all the flowers are grown from seedlings. There is an outside laundry area to hang washing and a seating area for those who want to be involved in pegging out their clothes.



P8. Promote engagement with friends, relatives and staff. Having themed areas has improved the communal facilities which promote more use by family and friends. The first floor lounge is called the “pub lounge” with a themed bar area, darts board and sitting area. This has promoted gatherings, and parties to celebrate birthdays and anniversaries in this area. The dining room is bright and friendly and is also frequently used for family gatherings. The TV “cinema” area is used on a one-to-one basis for when family members visit to spend time and watch a film together. The garden area has many flowers and plants which encourage wild life and a good opportunity for family to spend time together in. On the first floor, the hairdressing room has been renovated with a retro feel but with a modern twist which makes it welcoming for all those that visit it. On the second floor, there is a small room which has been named “Goldings” after a well know local shop - inside it has a selection of specialist dementia books to encourage stimulation and conversation. It also has memorabilia to bring back memories of items bought in times gone by. There is a guest room which can be used for relatives to stay.



P10. Promote privacy, dignity and independence. Considerations have been given to resting and break-out areas for customers to enjoy quiet time by themselves or with their friends and families. Clustered sitting, homely furnishings, themed lounge area all add to the dignity aspect of Dame Alice Court.



P12. Support diet, nutrition and hydration. A complete renewal and improvement of the dining area has been carried out. All dining room tables were renewed with rectangular tables to enable the person to feel comfortable in their own space whilst allowing 4-5 people to sit together and socialise at the same time. All chairs were renewed to an appropriate height. The flooring was renewed with a matt, non-slip and non-reflective wood style finish floor covering to be more appropriate to the dining rooms usage. Plain crockery with a high contrasted colour rim was purchased. A deep red colour was chosen following on from various consultations methods used to determine what would encourage eating and hydration. Pictures with the theme of food were used to encourage eating and also make it a homely environment. New blinds were put up with café style nets to give privacy but make it look inviting and homely. There is also a small kitchenette area in each lounge to encourage independent use for small events.

Benefits of the intervention

The project used a “before and after approach” to evaluate benefits as the project was not set up as an experimental design. Data collection and data design were managed by the project management group. Data analysis was performed by Bedford Borough Council’s Public Health Team, utilising the data available.

Data collection tools used:

- King’s Fund EHE Assessment Tool.
- Quantitative data were provided by the units involved in the project and relate to a period of 11 months before the intervention and 3 months after the intervention.
- Patient /Service Users’/Family feedback surveys; Staff focused groups.
- The Alzheimer Disease Related Quality of Life (ADQRL).
- Getting Value for Money from Construction Projects through Design (self-assessment tool).

As mentioned above, the project was not set up as an experimental design; therefore the data have variable level of validity and reliability, and variable effect of various sites.

In summary, following trends were observed from the data.

The results from the EHE King’s Fund assessment show that the refurbishments have made a difference to the environment as intended.

The response from client and family member questionnaires showed the changes had impacted on their experience. They found the general décor, signage and flooring had the most impact.

The staff reported that clients have more activities and seem to be more comfortable in their surroundings. The staff initiated additional activities with a specific focus to support and include those with dementia “Down the Memory Lane – Dame Alice Dementia-friendly Place). Staff observed that: residents with dementia, “come out of their rooms” and participate more in social life in the community which understands and accepts them. In addition, residents with dementia appear more settled, “not wanting to go home”, feel more safe – indication from ADRQL.

