

WORK UNDERWAY ON NEW AFFORDABLE HOUSING NAMED FOR FORMER COUNCILLOR



Work has started on a new development of 15 affordable homes in Newton Abbot, to be named after the former Teignbridge councillor Brian Berman. Brian, who passed away last year, was a strong supporter of affordable homes for local people.

Berman Court is located in Clarendon Road, Newton Abbot, featuring 10 one-bed and 5 two-bed flats, all of which will be allocated to applicants on Teignbridge Council's rented housing list. The project is a partnership between Westcountry Housing a member of Westward Housing Group and Teignbridge Council, with local firm Coyde Construction undertaking the build. The £1.6M development is

being funded by a grant from the Housing and Communities Agency (£750k) and by Westcountry Housing (£850k). Completion is planned by January 2010. The development is named in memory of Brian Berman, who died unexpectedly in September 2008. He had served for many years as Teignbridge's Executive Member for Housing, before taking on responsibility for Communities and Regulation in April 2008.

The new development will place sustainability at its heart and will replace a row of largely derelict houses which had become uneconomical to repair. Designed by Exeter based architects, Highway Field Associates, the modern timber frame construction features high levels of thermal and acoustic insulation, water saving appliances and Photovoltaic roof panels to help the development meet the national Level 3 of the Code for Sustainable Homes, making them cheaper to run and friendlier to the environment.

They will also feature dedicated cycle storage and communal gardens within an enclosed secure courtyard. The finished result will be high-quality affordable homes in a modern building, making use of traditional local materials. It will complement the recent regeneration of the centre of Newton Abbot, which started with the ASDA development in 2005 and most recently saw the pedestrianisation of the Clock Tower area.

Teignbridge Council owned the land which Berman Court is being built on, and negotiated with Westcountry Housing to sell it to them to help ensure the provision of new affordable homes.

Cllr Ray Frost, Teignbridge Executive Spokesperson for Housing said:

"This excellent new development will be a fitting tribute to Brian Berman, who spent many years as Teignbridge Council's housing lead working tirelessly to help the council provide more homes for local people.

"We have an ongoing commitment to providing good quality affordable homes for those in housing need, and this development will make a huge difference to the lives of 15 Teignbridge families when it's complete.

"The moves to make the building environmentally friendly and fitting with the local character of the area are very welcome, and I look forward to seeing people enjoy the finished development."

Julian Tuck, Chief Executive of Westward Housing Group added:

"We are very pleased to be working with Teignbridge Council again to provide more, high quality homes for local people. These homes will be a proper tribute to what can be achieved even in these difficult economic times when organisations work productively together.

"Brian Berman will be missed, amongst other things, for his ability to make these things happen."

Hilary Berman, Brian's widow added:

"Brian cared passionately about the plight of young people today, and tried every way he knew to help them in these awful economic times.

"He also believed that having a share in property was seen to be a huge achievement to them, helping to boost self-esteem and thus motivation to do better in all walks of life.

"I know how deeply touched Brian would have been to know of this honour- he was outwardly a strong, unemotional man who never wasted words or expected a thank you, but if he ever got one, he was very moved. Brian Berman never considered himself as anything special - if only he had known how wrong he was."

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For media queries please contact:
Teignbridge District Council: Tim Borrett, 01626 215164 or
Tim.Borrett@teignbridge.gov.uk

Westward Housing: Vanessa Gray or Claire Slough, 01803 217500,
vanessa.gray@westwardhousing.co.uk

Notes to Editors:

Westcountry Housing is part of Westward Housing Group which provides more than 6000 affordable, high quality homes and housing related services across Cornwall and Devon. Westward Housing Group comprises Westcountry Housing, Tarka Housing and South West Homes (HomeBuy agency provided in partnership with Sovereign Housing Group). Please visit www.westwardhousing.org.uk for more information.

Photos

An accompanying picture is attached, along with an artist's impression of the final scheme.

Clarendon1.jpg - Helen Holgate (Wecountry Housing), Cllr Ray Frost (Teignbridge Executive Member for Housing), Julian Tuck (Chief Executive of Westward Housing Group), and Kevin Lovell (Site Manager for Coyde Construction) in front of the development.