

# Walton Court

## Vale of Aylesbury Housing Trust

**Services:** Project management, quantity surveying, architecture, CDM co-ordination

**Contract Dates:** August 2009 - Current

**Contract Value:** £7,000,000

### Project Overview

Walton Court Centre is a mixed use 1970s development serving the Aylesbury community. Keegans and sister company, ECD architects were commissioned to regenerate this area.

The ground floor of the development comprises of retail units, a public house, healthy living centre and a community centre. The first and second floors provide 37 apartments for 24 tenants and 11 leaseholders of the Vale of Aylesbury Housing Trust (VAHT) The isolation of the centre and its lack of security however had led to vandalism and anti-social behaviour caused by unwelcome visitors.

To determine the best way forward for the regeneration of this community, Keegans and our sister company ECD Architects have worked closely with the Trust and Centre residents through a series of consultation meetings, presentations and feedback sessions to agree regeneration plans. The proposals delineate a clear hierarchy of public and private space creating a safe and secure sense of neighbourhood for the residents. Relocation and redesign of the retail units provides a new high quality active street frontage for the centre whilst extension and upgrade of the community buildings encourages connection and interaction with wider community. The Conversion of

the relocated retail space into additional homes also provides much needed additional housing and further income for the estate.

The new build elements consist of 21 new residential units consisting of studios and 2 and 3 bedroom flats, a new extension to the community centre and infill of the healthy living centre.

Refurbishment works to the Centre's existing structure include external cladding with super insulation, door and window replacements and Decent Homes upgrades. These measures improve the Centre's external appearance as well as its energy efficiency.

As Project Managers, Keegans have provided the single point of Contact with VAHT's Project Managers in order to provide a seamless delivery of the multi-disciplinary design team role. This includes management of the Lead Designer, M&E designers, Structural Engineers and Landscape Architects. With Keegans acting as the main interface with the Client, we have encouraged an open and collaborative approach to design and delivery of our projects and ensured that the Keegans Project Manager takes a single point of responsibility of the project at all stages of the project from inception through to completion.

Keegans encouraged a very hands-on approach to consulting all



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stakeholders at each key stage of the project and we hold bi-weekly (or more frequent depending upon the nature of the project) design team meetings, monthly key-stakeholders design and co-ordination meetings, monthly minuted project team meetings and strategic client meetings. All of which feed into the key RIBA gateway stages, for example to assist the planning application process.

Keegans then produced a procurement options appraisal to advise the Client on the various procurement options, highlighting the risk and opportunities presented with each. We developed a detailed programme of pre-commencement activities to ensure the programme objectives, particularly the project completion date were met.

During the construction phase, we are holding minuted monthly project team meetings, bi-weekly design team meetings, residents core group meetings and individual meetings with the key retail managers for the project. Keegans then produce a monthly project managers report.

We hold regular risk and opportunities workshops, where Keegans update the Project Risk Register. We also hold regular strategic meetings, where Director level representatives from Keegans meet with Senior Client Officers to mark progress and to take on board any actions and deliverables to

ensure we deliver on all of the Client objectives.

### Key experiences gained

We have learnt of the benefit to include the residents and stakeholders at each key stage of the project. A number of challenges have been presented with the existing structure of the building, which have meant a number of changes to the programme have been necessary. However, by continuing with a proactive and regular dialogue with the occupants we have been able to ensure that they are kept abreast of the key project milestones as the project progresses.

### Lessons learnt and relevant to the services requested.

With particular reference to the new-build elements, we are ever aware of the Clients funding requirements, particularly linked to HCA funding of the new-build. The changes to the programme have meant that an extension on some of the new-build elements has been required, and Keegans as project managers have strived to ensure that as many of the new units are delivered within the funding timescales as possible to ensure the maximum grant funding is achieved.

This Project is currently on site on a tight construction programme. Both commercial and residential tenants will remain on site whilst works are carried out.

