

## **Beer Community Land Trust**

### **The Old Social Club Development.**

The site of the Old Social Club became available in 2016 after the club closed. It was eventually purchased from the members in 2018 and the CLT would like to recognise the generosity of a small number of members who donated their portion of the sale proceeds back to the CLT.

We used a local architect to devise a scheme for this very constrained and difficult site. The final design consisted of two semi-detached blocks and a third block of two flats, one over the other, giving a total of six 2-bedroom dwellings. All houses and flats benefited from air source heat pumps and underfloor heating and fitted kitchens. The houses are 2 ½ bedroom, with the half being either an ensuite bathroom or baby cot room. Each dwelling has an allocated off-road parking space and access to a common outside area. Their biggest benefit is their location: they have sea views from some rooms and are within 50m of the village store, Fore St and the bus stop.

The initial plan was to rent three at affordable rents and sell the other three on a shared-ownership basis. All rentals have to go through Devon Home Choice (EDDC housing) because we received financial support from Homes England and from EDDC. We are however able to apply our Local Allocation Policy, which means preference is given to applicants with a local connection. All applicants have to apply through DHC/EDDC to confirm their housing need. While the initial plan was to sell 3 properties on a shared-ownership basis, only one has been sold to date. We are therefore considering renting the remaining two. However, this has significant financial implications, increasing our capital loan and interest payments. Over the next few months (Oct/Dec 2024) we will assess the most beneficial option to the community and to the viability of the CLT and update everyone. It should be noted that while we have a £1m+ outstanding loan, this is secured against a housing asset in excess of £2m.

The site was very difficult to develop, as it was very constrained, access off Berry Hill was restricted and the change in levels between the road and the site were extremely challenging. The site at the top end is 5m below the road and while our initial design included support for the road, due to the concentration of utilities in the road, DCC insisted on a more complex temporary and permanent design which escalated costs and time. COVID and then the Ukraine war caused delays and increases in material costs. While we had a fixed-price contract for the main works, there were material price escalators and exceptional work conditions which included the ground support works. The result of all this was that completion was delayed 18 months and there was a budget overrun. The project was completed in March 2023 with first tenants moving in in April 2023. The budget overrun was partially mitigated by additional grants from EDDC and Homes England.

The houses are a modern clean design, with reference to the typical street-side terrace houses found in the village with rendered walls and some natural flint stone walling. The houses are 3 floors, entering at the middle level into an open plan living room and kitchen with glazed doors and Juliet balconies overlooking the village. There are double bedrooms on the ground floor and top floor. The top floor cot-room has been plumbed ready to create a second bathroom if required. The flats are of similar size (85m<sup>2</sup>), each with 2 double bedrooms and family bathroom, and the upper flat has raised ceilings and glazed wall overlooking the village.

The project was designed by NDM Architects of Seaton and built by Whittaker from Honiton and funded through a development loan from EDDC and grants from EDDC and Homes England.



The old Beer Social Club



Constrained site work



The new retaining wall



The first foundations



Car park decking and house No 1



View up Berry Hill before completion showing flint walling



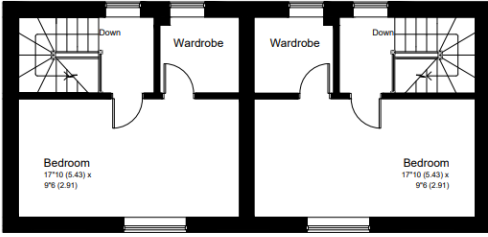
View down Berry Hill showing parking area



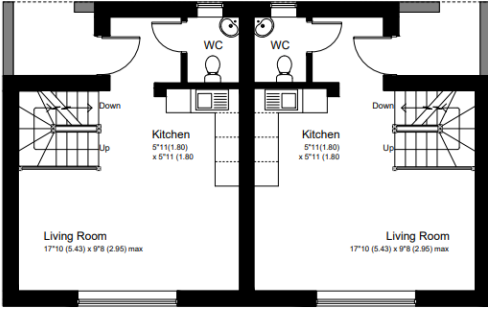
Fitted kitchen before flooring



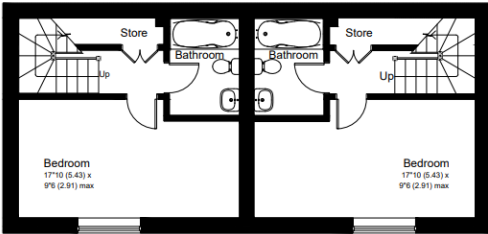
View from living room over village to the sea



First Floor

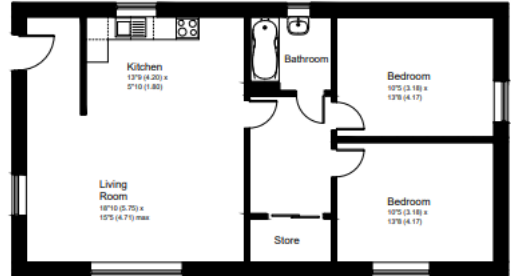


Ground Floor

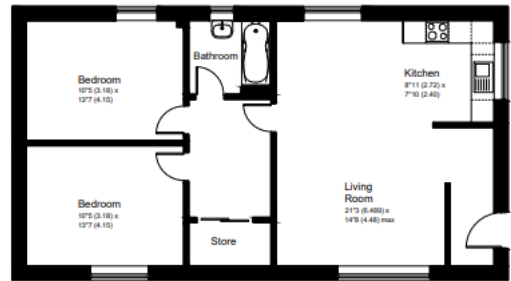


Lower Ground Floor

Units 5 & 6



Ground Floor (Unit 6)



Lower Ground Floor (Unit 5)

Houses

Flats

