# Manchester gives go-ahead for gay refuge for older people



In a significant development aiming to support the older LGBTQ+ community, the site of the former Spire Hospital on Russell Road in Whalley Range, south Manchester, is set to be transformed into an innovative sanctuary for elderly individuals within the LGBTQ+ community. Following the Manchester City Council's granting of planning permission, construction work is anticipated to commence later this year on this pioneering project.

The proposed development seeks to provide a safe and inclusive living environment for LGBTQ+ people aged 55 and over from the Manchester area. The establishment will offer 80 one- and two-bedroom apartments, channelling efforts to combat social isolation and create a communal space centred on psychological safety.

Notably, actor Sir Ian McKellen, a prominent supporter of the Pride in Ageing Programme and patron of the LGBT Foundation, endorsed the project during a visit to the Russell Road site earlier in the year. Expressing his support, McKellen stated, "It's wonderful to see Manchester leading the way yet again. Our community deserves to be able to age in a safe and welcoming environment where we are accepted for who we are, and Russell Road will do just that."

The blueprint for the site not only includes the LGBTQ+ housing scheme but also incorporates a neighbouring development comprising shared ownership homes. This adjacent block will feature 40 one- and two-bedroom apartments designed to enable individuals to enter the housing market at an affordable rate.

Managed by Great Places Housing Group, with financial backing from Homes England and the Greater Manchester Combined Authority (GMCA) Brownfield Housing Fund, the initiative is praised for its low-carbon footprint. Among its features, the development will boast communal facilities such as lounges, treatment rooms, and landscaped gardens designed to foster a sense of community among residents.

Councillor Gavin White, executive member for housing and development at Manchester City Council, dubbed the approval a "celebratory moment" for addressing the need for quality social housing specifically tailored for the LGBTQ+ elderly. "We have helped build hundreds of Extra Care homes across Manchester in recent years to meet demand for older people to live in their later lives, many with care needs provided on site, but this is the first purpose-built LGBTQ+ majority Extra Care community in the UK," White remarked.

Paul Martin, Chief Executive of the LGBT Foundation, also commented on the project’s approval, highlighting its significance in addressing the unique challenges faced by older LGBTQ+ individuals. Martin underscored the vision of creating a safe and affirming environment that supports dignity and pride within the community.

Helen Spencer of Great Places Housing underscored the collaborative efforts that shaped the project. "Our Russell Road development is a significant step forward in providing high-quality, inclusive housing for members of Manchester’s LGBTQ+ community," she said. Spencer also noted the combined efforts with the Russell Road Community Steering Group, Manchester City Council, and LGBT Foundation in driving the project forward.

Source: [Noah Wire Services](https://www.noahwire.com)

## References

* <https://www.greatplaces.org.uk/?news=great-places-submits-plans-for-first-of-a-kind-purpose-built-majority-lgbtq-extra-care-housing-scheme> - Corroborates the plans for the majority LGBTQ+ Extra Care housing scheme on the former Spire Hospital site, including the involvement of the Russell Road Community Steering Group, Manchester City Council, and the LGBT Foundation.
* <https://housingdigital.co.uk/manchester-plans-first-majority-lgbtq-extra-care-scheme/> - Supports the details of the scheme, including the delivery of 80 one- and two-bedroom apartments and the sustainable building design.
* <https://www.manchestereveningnews.co.uk/news/greater-manchester-news/council-approves-ground-breaking-plans-30028670> - Confirms the council's approval of the plans and highlights the low-carbon features and communal facilities of the development.
* <https://www.placenorthwest.co.uk/south-manchester-lgbtq-extra-care-resi-plans-in/> - Provides details on the development, including the funding sources from Homes England and the GMCA Brownfield Housing Fund, and the adjacent shared ownership block.
* <https://www.greatplaces.org.uk/?news=great-places-submits-plans-for-first-of-a-kind-purpose-built-majority-lgbtq-extra-care-housing-scheme> - Quotes from Paul Martin, CEO at LGBT Foundation, and Helen Spencer, Executive Director of Growth at Great Places, on the significance and goals of the project.
* <https://www.placenorthwest.co.uk/south-manchester-lgbtq-extra-care-resi-plans-in/> - Mentions Councillor Gavin White's comments on the approval and the need for quality social housing tailored for the LGBTQ+ elderly.
* <https://www.greatplaces.org.uk/?news=great-places-submits-plans-for-first-of-a-kind-purpose-built-majority-lgbtq-extra-care-housing-scheme> - Describes the communal facilities such as lounges, treatment rooms, and landscaped gardens aimed at fostering a sense of community among residents.
* <https://housingdigital.co.uk/manchester-plans-first-majority-lgbtq-extra-care-scheme/> - Highlights the focus on creating a safe and inclusive living environment for LGBTQ+ people aged 55 and over.
* <https://www.manchestereveningnews.co.uk/news/greater-manchester-news/council-approves-ground-breaking-plans-30028670> - Details the neighbouring development of shared ownership homes designed to enable affordable entry into the housing market.
* <https://www.placenorthwest.co.uk/south-manchester-lgbtq-extra-care-resi-plans-in/> - Explains the collaborative efforts between Great Places Housing Group, the Russell Road Community Steering Group, Manchester City Council, and the LGBT Foundation.