



Spacious: The new homes at Wilmot Close. Photo Mike Coles

Holiday homes for life

By Daphne Chamberlain

When The Finchley Charities announced their new development adjoining Wilmot Close and Thackrah Close, N2, they described it as tranquil, spacious, light and joyful. Joyful is an unusual description of housing. So did *The Archer* find joy when The Finchley Charities Chief Executive Susan Faridi showed us round?

Listen to one of the new tenants. Mr Patel has moved into one of two adaptable properties designed for wheelchair users. In his previous home he was housebound. Now he told us: "I'm on holiday here! It was raining this morning, but I was out in my chair, zooming up the road!"

All paths are designed for wheelchair use, winding round attractive landscaping, including a 'wild' garden. Tree roots are smoothed over with permeable material, and there are seating areas and planters all around. Higher-than-usual walls block noise from the nearby North Circular.

Careful design

Susan Faridi emphasised

that the aim is to encourage a community where residents can join in social activities, enjoy a neighbourly chat, or relax in comfortable homes.

The inside of Mr Patel's new home is impressive too. Spacious and light, it has been carefully planned. The kitchen features adjustable surfaces. Worktops, sink and hob can be lowered and raised with the turn of a key, making them accessible to him in his wheelchair as well as to his wife, who needs them at standard height.

Facts and figures

The Finchley Charities set out to provide high-quality, easy-maintenance, rented homes for people over 55 years old who need sheltered

accommodation, but are able to live independently (if necessary with the support of a care package). Applicants should have limited financial means, and have lived in the Borough of Barnet for at least five years during their lives.

Already all the accommodation has been taken, and there is a waiting list. Applicants are either referred, or can refer themselves.

The development is known officially as 22-25 Thackrah Close, though there are 16 homes in total.

For further information, contact The Finchley Charities at 41A Wilmot Close, N2 8HP, tel: 020 8346 9464, or email info.thefinchleycharities.org.