

First images of how a controversial new 'village' for older residents in East Lothian will look

First images of how a controversial new 'village' for older residents in East Lothian will look have been unveiled.

The housing plans for the former Herdmanflat Hospital site in Haddington, will create affordable homes designed to support the county's ageing population.

However they face opposition from some local families and residents who are angry that the woodland surrounding the old cottage hospital buildings which became a popular walking spot during lockdown, are at risk of being lost.

A campaign to stop the plans was launched and a Haddington Community Woods charity established to work to retain the area but despite this East Lothian councillors approved the plans for the new homes with more than 140 proposed for the overall site and the loss of 211 trees although plans to plant more than 1200 new ones are included.

The site, described by campaigners as the 'green lung' of the local community, was sold to the local authority by NHS Scotland after the services at Herdmanflat Hospital moved into the town's new community hospital with the understanding it would be used for older people.

New housing will be aimed at residents aged 55 and over and designed to allow them to adapt their home as they age, to ensure they can live independently for longer.

Details of the first phase of the plan have been lodged with East Lothian Council planners showing how the first 51 homes planned for the lower end of the site will look.

A council spokesperson said the application followed three years of detailed surveys, initial design work and a three month community consultation period. They said: "The plans reflect and support the identified, urgent need for more affordable housing for older people across the county.

"The site will deliver a high quality, adaptable and sustainable housing development, while respecting the existing heritage, landscape character, green space and significantly enhancing access arrangements to and through the site."

The application can be viewed in the council's planning portal and a dedicated Herdmanflat web page has been set up on the council website at www.eastlothian.gov.uk/homepage/10516/redevelopment_of_herdmanflat

By Marie Sharp Local Democracy Reporter