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Tower block opens its doors to new residents



By Janet Maitland

Two hundred people are by now expected to have moved into their brand new homes in East Finchley's newest tower block in Prospect Ring, which was completed at the end of June, exactly three years after it was given planning permission.

Before the first residents moved in *The Archer* was invited to take a tour of Gracie House, named after Gracie Fields who lived on The Bishops Avenue.

Each of the 50 flats is light,

Tenancies and rents
Barnet Homes said a few months ago that when tenancies were allocated, priority would be given to tenants already living on the estate who had an established housing need

because their current property was no longer suitable.

However, a spokesperson for OpenDoor, who own the building, said in June this was unlikely in practice because tenants moving to Gracie House would lose any protected tenancy they had and would have to pay an affordable, rather than a social, rent. This proved to be the case.

Some Prospect Ring residents have lifetime tenancies, but these are no longer offered. All Gracie House tenants have a shorthold tenancy, with a reassessment of their housing needs after six years.

Gracie House rent is £244 a week, which is classified as affordable as it is 65% of the market rent. The rent on a two-bedroom flat in the older blocks in Prospect Ring is just

Over the rooftops: This panorama of East Finchley from one side of Gracie House captures Norfolk Close on the far left, a direct view down Kitchener Road, the spire of St James's Church, Muswell Hill, on the skyline, with East End Road and East Finchley tube station to the right. Photo Mike Coles



Room with a view: Each of the 50 flats has a balcony

under £125 a week, including subsidiary of Barnet Homes and service charges. OpenDoor is a registered housing provider.



Ready for residents: A typical kitchen in one of the Gracie House flats

spacious and airy, and each has a balcony. All have triple-glazed windows, innumerable power points, the latest appliances, state-of-the-art fire safety systems and energy-saving heating and ventilation.

The majority of the flats have two bedrooms and are intended for four people. Five flats are for wheelchair users. There is space for more than 100 bicycles in the ground floor bike store.

Cars discouraged

Five of the flats are specially designed for wheelchair users, and each has its own disabled car parking space. However, other Gracie House tenants who own cars will not be able to apply for permits to park in the controlled parking zone (CPZ) in Prospect Ring. Instead they will have to use any available spaces in surrounding streets which do not have CPZ restrictions. Incentives for tenants not to use a car include the choice of a £150 Oyster card, £150 for a car club subscription or £150 in cycling vouchers.



Clean area: A Gracie House shower room

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