

News

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'Topping out' heralds £27 million housing scheme in Bournemouth town centre



A traditional 'topping out' ceremony has marked the start of a year's countdown to the opening of a £27 million scheme providing new homes in the heart of Bournemouth.

Berry Court in St Peter's Road will create 113 one, two and three-bedroom apartments for the private rental market alongside new multi-level public and residents' parking.

It's the latest phase in the realisation of Bournemouth Council's long-term Town Centre Vision which has a focus on new homes as part of the town's economic regeneration.

The scheme is led by the Bournemouth Development Company, a public-private partnership between Bournemouth Council and Morgan Sindall Investments, and is being developed jointly with Radian.

On completion next year, the apartments will be available for rent to fulfil a recognised demand from people who are saving towards, or do not wish to commit to, owner occupation, or who simply want to rent a home in the town centre. The apartments will be owned by Radian and delivered through its private rental service SMART.

More than 50 guests including civic leaders, project partners and construction workers attended the topping out ceremony which marks the completion of the main, nine-floor building structure that has been under construction since summer 2016.

Duncan Johnston, Development Director, of the Bournemouth Development Company, said: "Berry Court is an exciting and striking scheme that continues the desire to build higher quality developments in Bournemouth. The topping out ceremony celebrates a significant milestone in its progress so far."

Berry Court replaces a council car park. As well as relocating all 155 public spaces that were available up to the start of construction, the new multi-decked parking will house spaces for use by the new flats.

Councillor John Beesley, Leader of Bournemouth Council, said: "Attracting new residents to come and live in the town centre is an essential part of the Vision. Berry Court will help us accelerate the delivery of much-needed new homes whilst

safeguarding public parking. This combination of activities will boost regeneration and secure long-term economic growth.”

Mick Sweeney, Interim Chief Executive of Radian, said: “Berry Court will provide our tenants with an attractive high-quality living environment. It’s a project that we believe will bring a host of benefits to Bournemouth town centre and those people looking for the option of renting locally. Our private rental service SMART recognises the need for quality homes backed by a quality landlord.”

The build has so far involved 15,000 tons of concrete, 7,000 tons of reinforcement and 460 piles. Up to 100 construction workers are on site on any given day.

The work is being led by the Poole division of main contractor Morgan Sindall Construction & Infrastructure.

Andy Duff, Regional Managing Director, said: “We are committed to contracting with the local supply chain and maximising the employment of local skilled and new entrant tradesmen and women, so sustaining and generating jobs in Bournemouth and the wider local area. In this way, Berry Court and our other schemes in the area are catalysts to support onward regeneration and economic growth.”

Among those attending the ceremony were the Deputy Leader of Bournemouth Council, Councillor Nicola Greene, and members of the project team including representatives of the Fordingbridge architectural practice BrightSpace.

The practice of ‘topping out’ is a traditional rite in the construction industry and dates back to ancient times. It is thought to have begun in Scandinavia with the placing of a tree on top of a new building to appease tree-dwelling spirits displaced by the work.