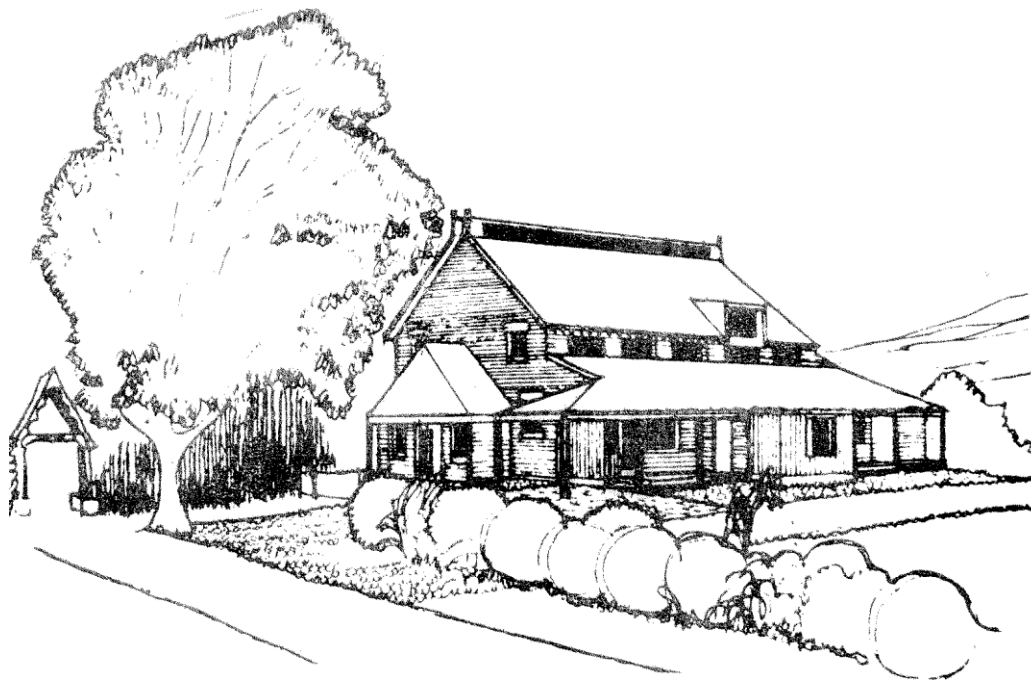


# **The History of Avonside House**

## **1975-2005**

**Chris White**



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## **Introduction**

Helping people with specific needs, such as the poor, the lonely or those who simply need a helping hand, has comprised a significant amount of work from the Church as it has sought to convert Biblical scripture into action. It is in this context of extending the work of the Church into the community that Avonside House was formed in the mid 1970s. Although the clientele of this organisation has changed somewhat over the years, providing people in need with a sense of belonging and care has continued at Avonside House to the present day. This short history of Avonside House will explore how this organisation has sought to fulfil its objectives of helping people to find social acceptance and independence.

## **Acknowledgments**

I would like to thank Straun Duthie (former Curate of Holy Trinity Church, Avonside), Fred Murray (Chairman Emeritus, Avonside House Trust) and Graham Martin (Chairman, Avonside House Trust) for their contributions to this project.

Chris White,  
April 2005.

### **The Inception of Avonside House**

Avonside House was initiated during the early 1970s by Straun Duthie, a young Curate of Holy Trinity Church, Avonside, Christchurch. Duthie felt that it was the duty of the Church to become involved in current social issues. In particular, he was troubled by the breakdown of many families and the consequences that this had for young people. The possibility of the Church assisting young people to restart their lives after a family breakdown was especially appealing.<sup>1</sup>

In January 1973, Duthie proposed the construction of accommodation for young people of both sexes ‘who need the support of a community life because of the breakdown of family life or because of any number of dislocating personal problems’.<sup>2</sup> A meeting was held at the Avonside Parish Vicarage in March 1973 to discuss the possibility of constructing ‘youth flats’ adjacent to the Holy Trinity Church. Among those present were the Vicar of Holy Trinity, Merlin Davies, Duthie, the Diocesan Registrar, JC Cottrell and the former Mayor of Christchurch, Ron Guthrey.<sup>3</sup>

The accommodation’s design was based upon new student accommodation at Ilam’s College House at the University of Canterbury. Duthie took photos of College House and displayed them for civic leaders, who supported the project.<sup>4</sup> It was originally proposed to build 20 flats on Church land next to Holy Trinity.<sup>5</sup> However, converting the Hall into accommodation seemed more feasible. For many years the Parish of Avonside Hall had not been fully utilised and had become ‘something of a white elephant’.<sup>6</sup> In addition, the Parish had recently sold some disused land and buildings, freeing up funds for the project.<sup>7</sup>

Providing self-funding accommodation for young people who had left home – a ‘home away from home’ – gathered momentum in 1973 when Archdeacon Davies raised the matter with the Standing Committee of the Anglican Diocese of

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<sup>1</sup> Interview with Straun Duthie, 13.9.2004.

<sup>2</sup> Proposal, S. Duthie, 17.1.1973.

<sup>3</sup> Internal Parish documentation, Church of the Most Holy Trinity, 27.3.1973.

<sup>4</sup> Interview with Straun Duthie, 13.9.2004.

<sup>5</sup> Diocese of Christchurch correspondence to the Parish of Avonside, 22.5.1973.

<sup>6</sup> Parish correspondence to Church & People, 4.11.1975.

<sup>7</sup> Interview with Straun Duthie, 13.9.2004 & Parish application to Department of Internal affairs, 19.12.1974.

Christchurch in May 1973. The Committee was sympathetic towards the project and encouraged the Parish to apply for a Parochial Loan, although there were doubts whether it was suitable for a Church Extension Loan.<sup>8</sup>

Negotiations concerning the feasibility of the project continued through the winter of 1973. At a meeting of parishioners held at Holy Trinity on Sunday 26<sup>th</sup> August, 1973 the Parish confirmed its resolution that the building of flats proceed and that it wished to apply for a privileged loan of up to \$40,000 from the Diocese.<sup>9</sup> The Standing Committee on 21<sup>st</sup> September, 1973 granted a loan of \$40,000 for a term of 30 years with interest at the rate of five percent for the first five years and then subject to review. This loan amounted to about one-half of the estimated cost of \$80,000.<sup>10</sup> The loan was increased to \$44,000 in July 1974.<sup>11</sup>

The Parish sought to gather the remaining funds from sources within the Parish and a further loan from the Diocese. Approval for work to go ahead on the project was given at a Special General Meeting of Parishioners on Sunday, 16<sup>th</sup> June 1974. During this meeting, a revised tender was received from T.E. Marriott & Son Ltd for \$76,396. The architect's and engineer's fees were calculated at \$5,800 and heating arrangements and initial furnishings costing \$5,000, providing a total of \$87,196, with a further \$5,000 for later furnishings. Work was expected to finish by February 1975.<sup>12</sup>

A number of changes, however, had to be made to these financial arrangements for the following reasons. Firstly, due to a ruling by the Diocese, the \$10,000 held in the Glebe Fund could not be used.<sup>13</sup> Secondly, the Parish of Avonside was no longer to have a curate, which had certain financial repercussions, and negated the necessity of having a flat for the curate in the plans.<sup>14</sup> Thirdly, delays in obtaining permits to proceed led to an increase in costs. Fourthly, Church Property

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<sup>8</sup> Diocese of Christchurch correspondence to the Parish of Avonside, 21.5.1973. It was later ruled that the scheme was not Church extension work as it was a commercial venture and therefore did not qualify for an Extension Loan, Diocese of Christchurch correspondence to the Parish of Avonside, 29.5.1973.

<sup>9</sup> Parish correspondence to Diocesan Registrar, 27.8.1973.

<sup>10</sup> Diocese of Christchurch correspondence to Parish of Avonside, 21.9.1973.

<sup>11</sup> Diocese of Christchurch correspondence to Parish of Avonside, 4.7.1974.

<sup>12</sup> Parish correspondence, 18.5.1974.

<sup>13</sup> Parish correspondence to Housing Corporation, 11.3.1975.

<sup>14</sup> Diocese of Christchurch correspondence to Parish of Avonside, 4.7.1974 & Parish correspondence to Housing Corporation, 11.3.1975. The flat was kept in order for a married couple who would be part of the community in a supervisory capacity.

Trustees indicated that the demands on its funds from other deserving causes meant that the Parish might face a reduction in the total amount of the loan. Finally, there were significant additional costs in electrical wiring, water supply, the fire alarm system and furnishings.<sup>15</sup>

The architects Pascoe, Linton and Partners were given the task of adding upstairs accommodation to the existing building, which dates back to 1913. It was appropriate that Simon Pascoe designed and supervised the transformation of the Hall, as he was the great grandson of Canon W.A. Pascoe, a former Vicar of the Parish. The under-utilised Church Hall was converted to provide a smaller hall for use by the Parish. A kitchen and living area on the ground floor and bedrooms above the Hall were constructed. A self-contained flat for the 'House Parents', which was originally designed for the curate, was included in the same building. Work was completed at the end of 1975 and Avonside House Hostel was opened in November 1975.<sup>16</sup>

The total cost of the project amounted to approximately \$115,000, with the building costing \$94,127.87 and furnishings and other costs \$20,000. However, any shortfall of funds was made up with an Education Department suspensory loan of \$35,000 from the Housing Corporation.<sup>17</sup>

### **Avonside House Opening: November 1975**

Upon opening, the Parish sought to provide self-supported, non-profit community living for up to 17 young people below the age of 23 in nine single rooms and four double rooms. The Parish aimed to cater for young men and women coming to Christchurch to live and work, especially those who were on their own for the first time, serving apprenticeships and other similar activities. Preference was given to those whose homes were outside of Christchurch. Due to the likelihood of students going home during the summer break and the consequential loss in rental income, preference was given to young people who were likely to be in Christchurch for a continuous and reasonably lengthy period. The facilities suited single people, although married couples could be accommodated, regardless of denomination. The

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<sup>15</sup> Parish correspondence to Housing Corporation, 11.3.1975.

<sup>16</sup> Pegasus Post, 12.11.1975.

<sup>17</sup> Parish correspondence to Housing Corporation, 11.3.1975, Pascoe, Linton & Partners correspondence to Housing Corporation, 8.12.1975 & Avonside House Management Committee Minutes, 12.6.1990.

residents, however, would have to accept the community's own rules and 'the overall right of the Vestry to maintain a socially acceptable group'.<sup>18</sup>

Providing accommodation for youth seeking a reasonable place to live, combined with companionship and a sense of belonging, became the central aims of Avonside House. Furthermore, it was eventually hoped that Avonside House would 'include some who have not found social acceptance elsewhere and who will benefit from the association with a community of young people'. The accommodation was to be self-supporting but non-profit making.<sup>19</sup> Although it was hoped that Avonside House would eventually 'take one or two people in need of more than just accommodation', the initial objective was to have the project stand on its own feet financially.<sup>20</sup>

After the completion of the new accommodation, Avonside House opened on All Saints' Day, 1<sup>st</sup> November 1975. In his remarks during the opening ceremony, W.A. Pyatt, the Bishop of Christchurch, commented upon a new emphasis in the life and work of the Church. Although the Church met many social needs, it now worked more to fill 'gaps' in the social structure which were not met at home or at the welfare level. Avonside House 'would meet a need among young people coming to live and work in the city, probably away from home for the first time, and finding security in a community with the opportunity of learning how to handle their freedom'.<sup>21</sup> After the opening ceremony, more than 100 people inspected the building and 'were impressed by the originality of the design, the brightness of décor and the high standards of finish and equipment'.<sup>22</sup> Reactions to the new project on opening day were very positive, with comments ranging from 'really good' to 'fantastic'.<sup>23</sup>

### **Transition to Intellectual Disability Residence: 1975-1980**

Avonside House became a 'home away from home' for young people staying in the city. There was, however, considerable difficulty in obtaining the 80 percent occupancy rate necessary for the project to remain financially viable. In particular, it

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<sup>18</sup> Avonside House Advertisement, no date & Parish application to Department of Internal Affairs, 19.12.1974.

<sup>19</sup> Parish application to Department of Internal Affairs, 19.12.1974.

<sup>20</sup> Parish correspondence to Housing Corporation, 11.3.1975.

<sup>21</sup> Parish correspondence to Church & People, 4.11.1975.

<sup>22</sup> Ibid.

<sup>23</sup> Avonside House Visitors' Book, 1.11.75.

was difficult to find suitable young people and cover increasing expenses with adequate boarding fees. Polytechnic students, with their limited income, restricted the possibility of board increases. University students were unlikely to be interested in boarding at Avonside House since the University of Canterbury had shifted to its rather distant Ilam site. In addition, some residents 'have not respected the reasonable rules of the establishment and have opted for flatting'.<sup>24</sup>

There was some dissatisfaction with Avonside House within the Parish. Not only was the facility financially unviable, it seemed to contribute relatively little to the welfare of the community. In a letter to the Diocesan Registrar, the Parish in 1980 outlined its reasons to consider changing the purpose of the facility. Firstly, the interest rate on the mortgage was raised the previous year and was expected to rise substantially the next year. Secondly, a number of slightly intellectually disabled people had become residents, and had found a stable and supportive home. Thirdly, the House Mother, Eleanor Smith, was qualified and experienced in this field of work after having worked with the IHC and at Cherry Farm.<sup>25</sup>

With these difficulties in mind, the Parish sought to 'slightly vary the availability of this accommodation from that originally envisaged'.<sup>26</sup> Enquiries by the Parish saw the New Zealand Society for the Intellectually Handicapped Children (IHC) interested in utilising the facilities. The Parish saw great advantage in this, as it would mean that there would not be any major structural alterations of the building and there would be regular income from the IHC. Moreover, accommodating the intellectually disabled would see residence for a relatively long period of time, thereby providing a steady income. The proposed income from the IHC would allow the budget to be balanced and enable Mrs Smith to be paid a part-time stipend. In addition, the IHC offered Mrs Smith staff support, relief during holidays and attendance at IHC staff meetings.<sup>27</sup> In return, Avonside House was expected to adhere to IHC philosophy and policy.<sup>28</sup>

In a letter to the Housing Corporation seeking to continue the suspensory loan, an initial placement of four intellectually disabled adults in a half way house situation

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<sup>24</sup> Parish correspondence to Housing Corporation, 18.8.1980.

<sup>25</sup> Parish correspondence to Diocesan Registrar, 1.9.1980.

<sup>26</sup> Parish correspondence to Housing Corporation, 18.8.1980.

<sup>27</sup> Parish correspondence to Diocesan Registrar, 1.9.1980.

<sup>28</sup> IHC correspondence to Parish of Avonside, 25.9.1980.



was outlined. This step was put forward by the Parish as remaining within the limits of the loan because it was still an educational exercise and still involved young people. However, the movement of IHC people through Avonside House would mean that some residents would not necessarily be young: 'although they may not always be young in years, they will still be young in intellect'.<sup>29</sup> The Parish felt that 'we would still be performing a worthwhile educational community service while allotting some of our accommodation to this field.'<sup>30</sup>

The placement of the four intellectually disabled residents was designed to prepare them for independent flatting in the community. In accordance with this aim, the residents were to be trained to do their own shopping, banking, laundry, gardening, cooking and 'generally cope with the normal daily life of a flat-dweller'.<sup>31</sup> In amongst her duties caring for the residents, the House Mother was to 'ensure and maintain a family atmosphere in the House with the intent that all residents shall come to regard themselves as a members of a family group rather than as inmates of an institution.'<sup>32</sup>

Avonside House thus became a 'halfway house' for 'disadvantaged and handicapped teenagers'. Many of the residents had spent much or all of their early life in foster care or in institutions like Sunnyside and Templeton Hospitals, and were thought 'ready to move into a less sheltered environment where they can be prepared for life in the outside world'.<sup>33</sup>

The Avonside House concept was thus a significant departure from an institutional focus for the intellectually disabled and promoted their integration as 'normal' people into the community.<sup>34</sup> As well as learning to cope with their daily household tasks, the residents were involved in community interaction. As a part of the normalisation process, the residents went to work, with the majority in 1981 having employment in the public sector; for example, one resident was employed as a gardener at Ferrymead while another was a labourer at Lane Walker Rudkin.<sup>35</sup>

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<sup>29</sup> Parish correspondence to Housing Corporation, 18.8.1980.

<sup>30</sup> Ibid.

<sup>31</sup> Parish correspondence to Diocesan Registrar, 1.9.1980.

<sup>32</sup> Internal documentation, Church of the Most Holy Trinity, no date.

<sup>33</sup> Report by Michael Goodson, Parish Community Worker, no date.

<sup>34</sup> This process is now commonly termed normalisation in the field of intellectual disability.

<sup>35</sup> Parish correspondence to the Sutherland Self Help Trust Board, 11.10.1981.

### **Struggle for Survival: 1980-1994**

Although Avonside House worked with the IHC for some time, the involvement of the IHC faded during the 1980s. A Sub-Committee of the Parish Vestry still controlled the organisation, but was struggling for money during this period, particularly with the interest rate on the loan from the Diocese rising to 13.5 percent. Due to these financial problems, it proved difficult to afford the necessary improvements to the premises. Providing adequate furniture and redecorating was particularly problematic, especially with residents with psychological and behavioural problems often being very hard on their living environment.<sup>36</sup> In addition, apart from free accommodation, the House Parents received very little financial assistance from the Parish.<sup>37</sup>

Life at Avonside House during the early 1980s revolved around day-to-day living in a structured environment. There was an emphasis upon everyone 'doing their bit'. Saturday mornings involved everyone cleaning up, which proved to be an enjoyable communal working atmosphere. The residents and House Parents/staff also held internal meetings to discuss arrangements and provide the opportunity for everyone present to have a fair say. A set of rules also emerged:<sup>38</sup>

- No boys in girls' corridors/bedrooms
- Must do duties as rostered or make arrangements
- Must cross name off board if not in for tea
- Leave a message if home late
- No alcohol
- No visitors upstairs

A number of these structures are still in place today, albeit in a modified format.

Residency at Avonside House evolved during the 1980s into an environment for intellectually disabled young men. There was a high turnover of residents as many struggled to come to terms with living outside large institutions or home. Approximately three to five residents left or came to Avonside House each year. As a result of this situation, occupancy fluctuated between three to nine residents during this period and this had a detrimental effect upon the financial viability of Avonside

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<sup>36</sup> Parish correspondence to the Sutherland Self Help Trust Board, 11.10.1981 & Report by Michael Goodson, Parish Community Worker, no date.

<sup>37</sup> Report by Michael Goodson, Parish Community Worker, no date.

<sup>38</sup> Internal Avonside House notes by Jude A. Hills, 22.10.1983.

House. Staff numbers remained small, comprising the House Parents, the Supervisor/Manager and, subject to finance, a small number of paid caregivers. Unpaid volunteers from the Parish also made a significant contribution to the welfare of the residents.

During this period there was a general feeling that Avonside House was becoming rundown, both materially and with the residents.<sup>39</sup> At one stage there were rumours that Avonside House was to be closed or that it was to become an alcohol and drug hostel or doss house. The Supervisor of Avonside House, Peter Armstrong, refuted these rumours in an open letter that stated that the organisation was to continue providing accommodation for disadvantaged young men.<sup>40</sup>

Despite the financial difficulties, there was some progress with the development of the residents, albeit slowly. There was an emphasis upon teaching residents living skills that would enable them to live in the community, not just simply providing a bed.<sup>41</sup> The Manager reported that 'one of our residents now eats with his knife and fork and chews with his mouth closed. He also is more able to accept other people's individual abilities and disabilities. This has been a long process of two years in Avonside'.<sup>42</sup>

During the 1990s, Avonside House started to emerge from its financial difficulties. The organisation struggled financially until a bequest, left to the Vicar's discretion, was used to pay off the mortgage.<sup>43</sup> In addition, funding was on a more secure basis with the Ministry of Health funding each resident. Funding was also more secure by the fact that there was a 'full house' of residents than in the 1980s.

With these changes, staff pay conditions improved and more staff working longer hours were hired. The House Supervisor, initially employed on a part-time basis, took up a full-time position in the mid 1990s. By March 1996, 24-hour staff coverage to cover the House Supervisor's weekends off was introduced, along with staff working to cover the busy period between 4.30pm and 7.30pm.<sup>44</sup> In June the same year a rostered system providing 24-hour supervision seven days a week came

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<sup>39</sup> Avonside House Report to Vestry, Church of the Most Holy Trinity, May 1985.

<sup>40</sup> Avonside House Report to Vestry, Church of the Most Holy Trinity, January/February 1989.

<sup>41</sup> Avonside House Supervisor's Report to the AGM of Holy Trinity Church, Avonside, no date.

<sup>42</sup> Report to Management Committee of Avonside House, November 1991.

<sup>43</sup> Avonside House Management Committee Minutes, 12.6.1990.

<sup>44</sup> Vestry Minutes, Church of the Most Holy Trinity, Avonside, 25.3.1996.

into effect.<sup>45</sup> The House Manager, who was employed part-time, and the House Supervisor were appointed in the mid-1990s and lived on site.

### **The Formation of Avonside House Trust: 1995-1996**

The imminent closure of Templeton Hospital by the late 1990s, which was part of the drive towards 'deinstitutionalisation', would mean that many more of the intellectually disabled would require homes out in the community. Avonside House thus began to think about expanding the services of the organisation. During a Forum held on 10<sup>th</sup> March, 1995 there was support for the idea of the Parish extending its services for the mildly intellectually disabled by building two to four units on part of the land behind the Avonside House Hostel. The units would allow a progression towards independent living.<sup>46</sup>

Due to the proposed expansion of Avonside House, it was decided that the organisation should be run as a trust. Trust status would allow the Parish Vestry to concentrate upon its core business and enable Avonside House to be run more efficiently, particularly in terms of governance and obtaining funding.<sup>47</sup> Responsibility for governing Avonside House Trust would be provided by members of a Trust Board. Under its Constitution and Rules, Avonside House Trust was incorporated under the Charitable Trusts Act, 1957 on 9<sup>th</sup> November, 1995.<sup>48</sup> In March 1996 Mr Fred Murray was appointed Chairman and held this position until 5<sup>th</sup> December, 1998 when the current Chairman, Graham Martin, was appointed.

One of the first tasks of the new Trust Board was to negotiate a lease for the Hostel (excluding the Parish Hall and Kitchen) and part of the adjacent land with the Parish. The lease was agreed and commenced in February 1996. As a part of this agreement, Avonside House became responsible for exterior maintenance as well as any internal upgrades.<sup>49</sup>

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<sup>45</sup> Vestry Minutes, Church of the Most Holy Trinity, Avonside, 27.5.1996.

<sup>46</sup> Memorandum from Sub-Committee of Avonside House Committee to Vicar, Wardens and Vestry, Church of the Most Holy Trinity, 27.3.1995.

<sup>47</sup> Report on the Structure and Administration of Avonside House, Avonside House Management Committee, 15.4.1988.

<sup>48</sup> Constitution and Rules of Avonside House Trust, 9.11.1995.

<sup>49</sup> Agreement to Lease, Church Property Trustees and Avonside House Trust, 1.11.1996.

A number of maintenance projects have been completed since 1996, including improvements made to the Hostel lounge, hallway, bathrooms, toilets, laundry and kitchen, a new Hostel roof, and the installation of a new fire escape and fire sprinklers for the Hostel. Some of these projects have taken considerable time, money and effort. The new metal fire escape, replacing a rotten wooden structure, proved to be a difficult task, taking two years to complete. The installation of the fire sprinklers also took some time and cost \$21,475.<sup>50</sup>

### **Expansion of Services: 1997–2005**

In view of Templeton's closure, Avonside House examined the possibility of expanding its services. Three options were explored: firstly, to build new accommodation on the land to the north of Avonside House; secondly build accommodation for House Parents on the same land; and thirdly renting/buying some of the local Council flats. With these thoughts in mind, Avonside House commenced discussions with the Southern Regional Health Authority (SRHA) in July 1996.<sup>51</sup> Suzanne Win, Manager, Physical and Sensory Disability, SRHA visited Avonside House, having a meal with residents and held discussions with the Trust Board.<sup>52</sup>

It was eventually decided to build on site just to the north of Avonside House. The development was split into two stages. Stage 1 would involve building a new House Supervisor's residence and enable four new residents to be accommodated in the old House Supervisor's residence. Stage 2 would see accommodation built for up to eight new residents.<sup>53</sup> The total cost of both developments was \$447,352, with Stage 1 costing \$183,046 and Stage 2 costing \$264,306.

Plans for the project were approved by the Avonside House Trust Board, Vestry, Parish, Plans and Sites of the Diocesan Standing Committee and the Church Property Trustees.<sup>54</sup> Avonside House was given approval to raise a mortgage from Church Property Trustees towards the end of 1996.<sup>55</sup>

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<sup>50</sup> Avonside House Trust Annual Report, 2002/2003.

<sup>51</sup> Vestry Minutes, Church of the Most Holy Trinity, Avonside, 29.7.1996 & Avonside House Trust Board Minutes, 31.7.1996.

<sup>52</sup> Vestry Minutes, Church of the Most Holy Trinity, Avonside, 26.8.1996.

<sup>53</sup> Vestry Minutes, Church of the Most Holy Trinity, Avonside, 4.11.1996.

<sup>54</sup> Avonside House Trust Annual Report, 1997.

<sup>55</sup> Vestry Minutes, Church of the Most Holy Trinity, Avonside, 4.11.1996.

By November 1996, Avonside House was guaranteed four ex Templeton residents, with a possible eight further ex Templeton residents to come.<sup>56</sup> A contract with the Health Funding Authority was entered into to provide 12 beds and the necessary care for the ex Templeton residents. In order to promote the services of Avonside House, Trust Board members and staff attended an open day at Templeton in January 1997. An Open Day was also held at Avonside House the next month.<sup>57</sup>

Building of the House Supervisor's residence was finished in September 1997 and three residents moved into the former House Supervisor's residence, looking forward to a more independent lifestyle.<sup>58</sup> Stage 2 took a little longer to complete, but was opened in February 1998.<sup>59</sup>

There was some disappointment, however, concerning filling the newly available beds. Although there were new beds available from September 1997, only two had been filled by March 1998, leaving 10 empty beds. Considerable financial strain was placed on the Trust due to the fact that the first residents did not move into the new units until June and August 1998. With the assistance of the Parish Vestry and Church Property Trustees, repayments of the capital on the mortgage were deferred for three months in order to help Avonside House through this difficult period. Despite eventually getting more residents from Templeton, Avonside House was only 85 percent full in early 1999 with 18 residents.<sup>60</sup> It was not until March 2000 that Avonside House was a 'full house' again, with 20 full-time residents and one regular respite resident.<sup>61</sup>

As the Trust grew with more residents and staff, additional pressures were placed upon staff and the Trust Board, requiring clarification around Management and Governance roles. A number of resignations from staff and the Trust Board occurred at this time, including the resignations of the Manager and Chairman. Later, in 2002/2003, the Management of Avonside House was restructured by Deloitte, Touche Tohmatsu and the position of House Supervisor ceased to exist, and a Manager was appointed. The concept of having staff living at Avonside House is no longer in operation.

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<sup>56</sup> Ibid.

<sup>57</sup> Vestry Minutes, Church of the Most Holy Trinity, Avonside, 5.2.1997.

<sup>58</sup> Avonside House Trust Report to Vestry, 8.10.1997.

<sup>59</sup> Avonside House Trust Annual Report, 1997.

<sup>60</sup> Avonside House Trust Annual Report, 1998.

<sup>61</sup> Avonside House Trust Annual Report, 2000/2001.

Avonside House has continued to expand and change in the last few years. With Unit 3, formerly the House Supervisor's Residence, vacant in 2003 new residents have been accommodated there with the aim of developing independent living skills. The garage of Unit 3 has been converted to create two additional rooms, which were ready early in 2005. Other residents have been accommodated in a nearby flat on Stanmore Road, thereby increasing the residents' capacity to become more independent.<sup>62</sup>

Another challenge has been to gain Certification via an audit by the Ministry of Health under the Health and Disability Sector Standards in August 2004. Certification, however, was made conditional upon upgrading the structure of the Hostel to meet the required standard in time for the next audit in 2006. Upgrading the Hostel is the focus of the current Avonside House Trust Board.

### **Conclusion**

Avonside House has changed somewhat over the years from a small residence catering for young people to a medium sized home for the intellectually disabled. For some people Avonside House has been a 'halfway house' that they have stayed at for a short period of time before they entered the community; for others Avonside House has become their long-term home. Despite these different expectations, some things have remained constant over the years. In particular, Avonside House has remained a caring community for those who are in need of some assistance and companionship in their lives. This philosophy of providing care in a home-like environment continues to the present day.

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<sup>62</sup> Avonside House Trust Annual Report, 2003/2004.