



Heather House - Maidstone Borough Council

THE PROJECT

The project involves the demolition of existing structures and the design and construction of two new sites, bringing much-needed housing and a community centre.

Site 1: Residential Housing

Design and construction of 11 new residential homes. Of these, 4 are government-backed First Homes scheme, while 7 are allocated as affordable rent.

Site 2: Community Centre

Development of a new community centre adjacent to Parkwood Recreational Ground. The centre is designed to become a hub for the local community, providing:

- > Changing rooms, showers and toilets
- > A Changing Places WC
- > A sports hall
- > A bar and lounge

The scope of works also includes the installation of new utility connections and the delivery of all associated external works, ensuring both sites are fully integrated into the surrounding environment.

OUR ROLE

FFT is providing Principal Designer, Employer's Agent, Quantity Surveying and Clerk of Works services, overseeing the project from contract finalisation to completion.

Having joined the project post-tender, we quickly resolved contractual matters to ensure a smooth transition to site. Since then, we have closely monitored the progression of planning discharges to maintain compliance with planning requirements, whilst also managing weekly Clerk of Works inspections at Heather House via a specialist consultant.

Throughout the project we have worked closely with the client, professional team and contractor to prepare a robust defects management plan, ensuring efficient delivery.

CLIENT

Maidstone Borough Council

LOCATION

Maidstone

PROJECT VALUE

£4.6m

DATES

November 2023 - Ongoing

SECTOR

Housing and Commercial

SERVICES PROVIDED

Principal Designer
Employer's Agent
Quantity Surveying
Clerk of Works

THE CLIENT

Maidstone Borough Council is the local government authority for the borough of Maidstone. Their aim is to make Maidstone a place people feel they belong, whilst placing the needs of people and the environment at the heart of what they do.





CASE STUDY

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We led on Health and Safety (H&S), approving the Construction Phase Plan, issuing the F10 notification, reviewing the design and signing off the H&S file. Alongside this, we maintained a strong presence on site, attending regular visits, chairing monthly meetings and reporting on progress. Our monthly reports include detailed cash flow forecasts and anticipated final costs, ensuring clear visibility of the programme and budget.

CHALLENGES

Delays arose early in the project due to archaeological finds during excavation, which required additional monitoring and a revised scope of works. This led the contractor to apply for an Extension of Time under the JCT D&B contract. Our role was to review the application, assess what additional time was fair and reasonable, and evaluate the contractor's claim for associated losses, ultimately reducing the client's exposure to risk.

Various design issues arose during the contract works that required client input. One significant challenge was refining and agreeing on the foundation design. After reviewing the contractor's proposed options, including piling and a strip-fill/piling hybrid, we advised the client to adopt a full piling solution across both sites. This recommendation simplified the approach, mitigated delays and enabled a quicker build process while resolving outstanding design matters.



ADDED VALUE

Planning approval for the project required a range of measures to safeguard the surrounding environment. FFT has overseen the integration of these requirements, which include ecological enhancements, preservation of potential archaeological findings, careful consideration of external lighting design and strict controls for works adjacent to the ancient woodland.



THE OUTCOME

The residential site is now in occupation, with very good feedback received on the quality of the homes. Defect reporting has been low among residents following the first 3 months of occupation.

The community centre, which will be rented out to a local rugby club, is anticipated for completion in March 2026. This includes a sports hall which will provide an indoor training facility for the club. The bar/lounge area installation is underway, and once completed, it will be a central space for community events.



Dan Willis of FFT has been instrumental in helping us deliver 11 new homes — including 4 First Homes and 7 for social rent — along with a new community centre. Throughout the project, Dan has been thorough, proactive, and consistently focused on protecting MBC's best interests. His professionalism and attention to detail have made a real difference to the successful delivery of this scheme.

Lauren Webster, Development Project Officer at Maidstone Borough Council