

RETHINK: *Needy young to gain after building is sa*

Home comfort from £330,000 axed scheme

by **SARAH WALSH**

Social Affairs Reporter

A housing project which closed after problems with vandalism is to get a new lease of life, providing homes for needy young people.

The £330,000 building was built at Greaves Street, Little Horton, in 1997 but owners Brunel Housing struggled to find tenants for it.

Now, the eight-bedded unit is being sold to the charity Impact, which already runs supported housing for young people in the area.

Nigel Delaney, chief executive of Impact, said: "This building is quite new and cost £330,000 to build, but the Housing Corporation has agreed that we can buy it at a much lower price because of our existing work in the area.

"There were some problems before and I understand the place was firebombed. It's been empty for about two years and

all the hassle has died down now. We can start afresh."

He said he understood there were problems with racial harassment between young Brunel tenants and members of the local community.

Margaret Street, the chief executive of Brunel Housing, said the problems took place before she joined the company but she thought they were largely vandalism.

She said she was delighted that Brunel Housing had been able to strike a deal with Impact and that the building could be brought into use once more.

She added: "This scheme was originally developed in 1997, and was developed as a young people's housing project.

"Quite early on, there weren't the high levels of lettings that we anticipated.

"We're excited because the sale goes through this week and hopefully the scheme will shortly be up and running."

She said the building had been empty and locked up for several months.

"One of the reasons for the delay has been to ensure there was proper community consultation because people have been concerned about what was going to happen to the building."

She said she was confident that Impact could succeed with the project where Brunel had not, because "Impact has a track record of working with young people and integrating them into the local community."

Impact has achieved dramatic results in transforming run-down housing into smart new homes for young people, with training opportunities and support workers on site.

They have renovated three local authority blocks at Crowther Walk, Little Horton, not far from Greaves Street.

They are Hazelbury Apartments, Bridgewater House and Shepton House which now have CCTV, new windows, showers and bright furnishings.

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