

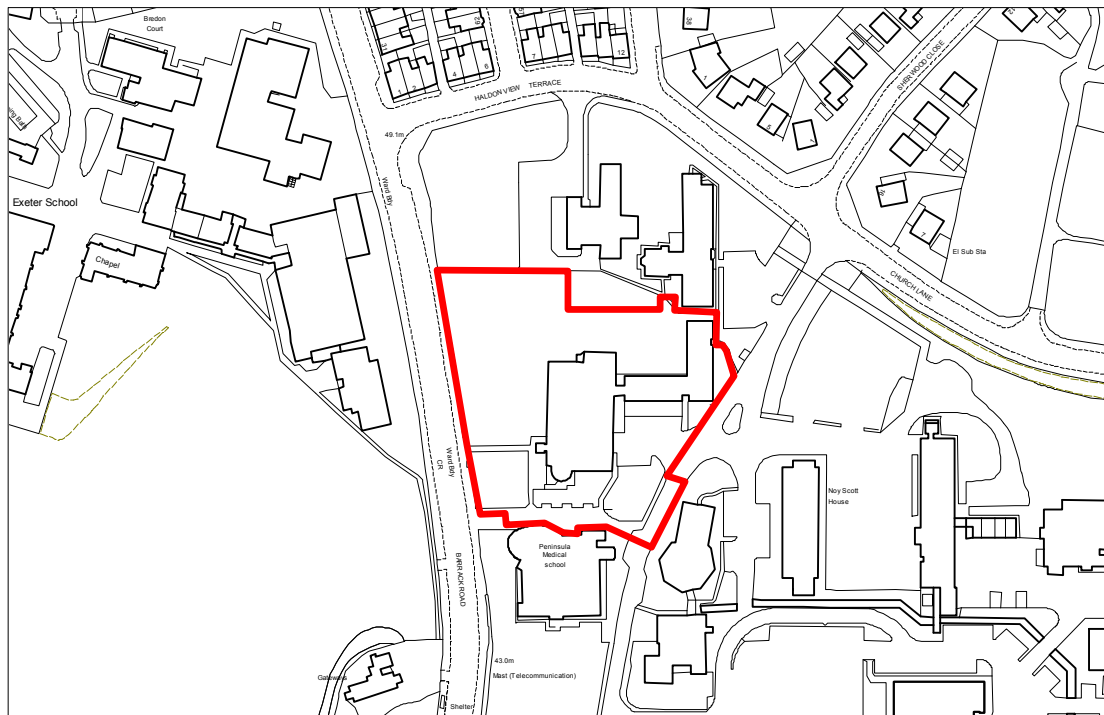
**ITEM NO.** 3

**COMMITTEE DATE:** 03/10/2011

**APPLICATION NO:** 11/1311/03      **FULL PLANNING PERMISSION**  
**APPLICANT:** Royal Devon & Exeter NHS Foundation Trust (Wonford)  
**PROPOSAL:** Demolition of existing Postgraduate centre building & redevelopment to provide a Research, Innovation, Learning & Development (RILD) centre over 4 storeys with associated landscaping and enclosed roof top plant

**LOCATION:** Royal Devon & Exeter Hospital, Barrack Road, Exeter, EX2 5DN

**REGISTRATION DATE:** 01/08/2011  
**EXPIRY DATE:** 31/10/2011



Scale 1:2500

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## **HISTORY OF SITE**

The whole RD&E Hospital complex has a lengthy history of development proposals none of which are considered directly relevant to this proposal.

## **DESCRIPTION OF SITE/PROPOSAL**

The application site comprises the site of the existing Post Graduate Education Centre at the RD&E Hospital. The site is bounded to the east by an internal access road serving the hospital site, to the west by Barrack Road, to the south by the Peninsula College of Medicine and Dentistry (PCMD), and to the north by other hospital buildings that sit between the site and Haldon View Terrace.

The existing buildings are predominantly single storey flat roof structures. Situated around the buildings are a number of parking areas and landscaping including some mature trees.

The proposal comprises the demolition of all the existing buildings on site and redevelopment to provide a new Research, Innovation, Learning and Development Centre. The building

extends over four floors with the plant area on the roof also enclosed. The building will have an overall gross internal floor area of approx. 7250 sq metres. Essentially the building comprises two wings on either side of a central area called the 'Hub'. The new building will facilitate the expansion of the current research activities undertaken by the Peninsula College of Medicine and Dentistry, and house a replacement and enhanced post graduate education centre. There are synergies between these two elements reflected by the creation of shared entrance/reception facilities, and a physical link between the proposed building and the existing Peninsula College of Medicine and Dentistry building at both ground and first floor levels. Associated vehicle and cycle parking would be distributed around the building, along with additional landscaping and pedestrian routes through the site.

### **SUPPORTING INFORMATION SUPPLIED BY THE APPLICANT**

The following documents have been submitted in support of the application:-

- Design and Access Statement
- Transport Statement
- Archaeological Assessment
- Ecological Impact Assessment
- Drainage Strategy and Flood Risk
- GeoEnvironmental Assessment
- Tree Survey and Arboricultural Impact Assessment

### **REPRESENTATIONS**

Three letters of objection have been received raising the following concerns:-

- Additional traffic generation associated with the large proposed building, and lack of parking provision (both vehicular and cycle), generating more parking pressure on surrounding areas.
- Overall size of building, proportion devoted to plant – consequent visual impact upon area, particularly in terms of diminishing visual impact of Victorian architecture of main Exeter School building, and views towards the Church and Haldon Hill.
- Scale of building being contrary to prevailing heights of buildings on the RD&E campus, and its general character
- Adverse impact of a building site upon students sitting exams in the school sports hall directly opposite the site (exams in Jan, May and June of each year), especially as school has no suitable alternative venue.
- Absence of a Green Travel Plan.

### **CONSULTATIONS**

Environment Agency - No objections

County Director for Environment, Economy and Culture - raises no objection to the proposal and recommending conditions relating to a Green Travel Plan and provision of parking facilities prior to the building being brought into use.

Head of Environmental Health - Requests further information in respect of potential noise impact, extraction equipment, and land contamination. Recommends that conditions be attached to any approval in respect of Construction hours, noise mitigation, odour control equipment and contaminated land.

### **PLANNING POLICIES/POLICY GUIDANCE**

Central Government Guidance  
PPS1 - Delivering Sustainable Development

## PPG13 - Transport

### Devon County Structure Plan 2001-2016

- ST1 - Sustainable Development
- ST10 - Exeter Principle Urban Area
- CO6 - Quality of New Development
- TR2 - Coordination of Land Use/Travel Planning
- TR3 - Managing Travel Demand
- TR4 - Parking Strategy, Stands and Proposals
- TR5 - Hierarchy of Modes and Transport Assessment
- TR7 - Walking and Cycling
- TR10 - Strategic Road Network and Roadside Service Areas

### Exeter Local Plan First Review 1995-2011

- AP1 - Design and Location of Development
- AP2 - Sequential Approach
- CS1 - RD & E Wonford Hospital
- T3 - Encouraging Use of Sustainable Modes
- T9 - Access to Buildings by People with Disabilities
- T10 - Car Parking Standards
- DG1 - Objectives of Urban Design
- DG3 - Commercial Development

## **OBSERVATIONS**

The main considerations in respect of this proposal relate to the design of the building, its impact upon the character of the area and long range views, its relationship to surrounding buildings, transportation issues, and ecological impact. The proposal replaces the existing Post Graduate Education centre buildings that are on the site and provides significantly improved and modernised facilities for the continuation of the existing activities undertaken within those buildings. It also links directly with the Peninsula College of Medicine and Dentistry and provides for shared use of parts of the new building, including reception/entrance facilities. As such the proposal relates to provision of an enhanced environment for the continued provision of existing activities on the site and is not directly linked to any increase in overall student numbers.

### Design

The location of the site some distance from the nearest domestic scale properties, coupled with the fall in the land from north to south (approximately 2 metres) means that a building of some scale can be provided on the site without direct harm to residential amenity.

The scale of the new building has been considered in the context of the immediate surroundings and its role as a landmark building for education and research. The building has been designed as two wings sitting either side of a slightly lower central hub. The largest tree on the site has been retained and used to create a focal point and arrival space at the entrance to the building. The main bulk of the building sits between this arrival feature and Barrack Road and is located forward of the building line established by the existing PCMD building. At its closest point the building is just over 3 metres back from the boundary with Barrack Road. The two wings are staggered either side of the central hub, and to help reduce their massing and visual impact upon Barrack Road, incorporate sloped facades. The visual appearance of the building on Barrack Road is considered very important in terms of creating an image for the building. For the most part the existing hedge is retained along this frontage to provide a visual edge from the road and footpath and as an important element of the existing biodiversity of the site. At the point closest to the 'Hub' the hedge will be removed and a lower boundary in the form of a Devon Bank introduced to allow views into the building and the activities within the 'Hub' (this will contain a small cafe/dining area). The

building will incorporate supporting structures to facilitate climbing plants colonising this facade of the building.

The main wings of the building will be faced in masonry with a mix of smooth and textured finishes while the central 'Hub' will be highly glazed with vertical timber solar shading. Other materials will include timber infill panels and curtain walling, with a flat roof concealed behind parapet features.

#### Impact upon character of area and long range views

In early discussions regarding this project the need to consider the potential impact on locally important public views, and the prominence of the building in longer range views was highlighted. St Michael and all Angels church in Heavitree, with its tall tower, is a prominent feature from within Heavitree and adjoining conservation areas and from areas of the city further afield. The proposal, however, results in the proposed building competing for attention with the tower in various views. Certain views will also be blocked and whilst the tower will still be visible from certain directions, its historic pre-eminence in the townscape will be eroded.

The proposed building would also have a significant impact on views from adjoining roads and residential streets, including Baker Street, Haldon View Terrace, Church Terrace, Sherwood Close and Church Lane some of which are within and adjoining conservation areas. At present the landscape plays a significant part in these views with trees being prominent. The scale of the proposed building would result in a new dominant feature in the townscape, changing the balance between natural features and built form.

The proposed building would, furthermore, have a significant impact upon the existing streetscene of Barrack Road. Currently, in the views north and south along Barrack Road the landscape, notably hedges and trees, plays a prominent role. Existing buildings and car parks are generally well set back from the highway allowing planting to flourish and providing an attractive setting for buildings as well as screening to car parks. The proposed building is much closer to the highway, allowing only a minimal strip of land for low planting and insufficient space for trees.

The prominence of the building from more distant views towards the site has been considered, in particular from Quarry Park Road and Ludwell Hill. This has demonstrated that the building will either be screened from view by the existing substantial buildings forming the hospital complex, or be read against other buildings with the view of the hills beyond seen above the building.

#### Relationship to surrounding buildings

The site for the proposed building is surrounded either by other existing buildings on the hospital complex or by roads (internal access road to east and Barrack Road to west). The nearest residential buildings to site are a couple of isolated dwellings on the opposite side of Barrack Road (at least 50 metres away), the terraced properties in Haldon View Terrace (55 metres away) and those on the end of Sherwood Close (55 metres away). Directly opposite the site on the other side of Barrack Road are buildings forming part of Exeter School.

Compared to the existing single storey structures the new building (extending to 4 storey plus plant) will become a far more visually prominent feature in the locality, both in terms of views into the site from the surrounding properties referred to above, and as a component of the street scene along Barrack Road. As such it will inevitably reduce the views from those properties in a southerly direction over the city and beyond to the Haldon Hills. The protection of such private views is not a material planning consideration however, the physical relationship of the proposed building in terms of massing and potential impact on privacy of surrounding properties is a material consideration. Given the distances between the site and the surrounding dwellings it is not considered that the proposal would give rise to

any significant overlooking/privacy issues. Likewise, whilst the height and massing of the building, is significantly larger than existing buildings on the site the distances between it and the residential properties ensures that the relationship is not overbearing. The impact of the proposal upon other buildings within the hospital complex, and the school buildings opposite the site, are also considered acceptable.

The applicant has been made aware of the specific concerns regarding the potential impact of construction works upon students sitting exams in the nearby school hall and is believed to be in direct discussion over this issue.

### Transportation Issues

Vehicular access to the site will be obtained via the existing internal access road that runs through the hospital from Church Lane and around the hospital buildings. Two access points from Barrack Road also feed onto this road. Existing car parking facilities will be reconfigured as part of the proposal with the overall level of provision remaining similar to that which exists at present. Cycle parking will be provided as part of the development in the form of a weatherproof cycle parking area for 36 cycles situated close to the main entrance to the building where it will benefit from a high degree of natural surveillance.

The submitted Transport Statement refers to a site wide Travel Plan for the whole RD&E Hospital that is currently being produced, and the University's adopted Travel Plan that also includes the Peninsula College of Medicine and Dentistry. There is a commitment to produce a Travel Plan for the RILD centre as a daughter document to the main Travel Plan for the hospital.

The Transport Statement suggests that the new building will generate in the order of 300 peak period movements with approximately 260-270 of these movements being by non-car modes. Consequently it concludes that there will be no material adverse impact resulting from any of the additional movements, and specifically, the very low vehicle impact is not anticipated to result in any perceptible change in local traffic conditions, even where junctions are currently very busy at peak times.

The Highway Authority have commented on the absence of a Green Travel Plan and suggest that implementation of such a plan is necessary to mitigate the impact of additional traffic that is likely to be attracted to the site as a result of the development. However this can be covered by an appropriate condition. The Highway Authority have also concluded that based on the submitted information the traffic flows associated with the development can be accommodated on the adjacent highway network.

### Ecological Impact

Whilst the existing buildings do have some landscape setting the proposal is seen as an opportunity to enhance the current ecological contribution of the site. Within the current site there are 4 main trees, 2 of which would need to be removed to facilitate the development. In the context of the overall development, and suitable landscaping being carried out as part of the proposal there is no objection to their removal.

As part of the development of the scheme an Extended Phase 1 Habitat Survey was carried out to identify if any protected species were present on the site. The survey found no evidence of protected species on site. It concluded that the trees on site were unsuitable for occupation by bats due to an absence of roosting opportunities within them. Likewise the existing buildings were considered unsuitable due to the lack of roof void or other suitable roosting opportunities within them. Given the isolation of the site within the surrounding landscape, and main roads bounding the site, it concluded the site was unsuitable to support dormice and unlikely to be used by badgers for commuting or foraging.

Overall the site was considered to be of low ecological value. The proposed landscaping will include a significant number of new trees, which together with other flora, will significantly enhance the ecological contribution of the site. Appropriate bird nesting boxes/bricks could be incorporated within the fabric of the building. A condition is proposed requiring submission of a Wildlife Plan for approval to demonstrate how the development will be managed in perpetuity to enhance wildlife opportunities on the site.

### Sustainability

The sustainability of the proposal has been considered from the outset of the project development and the it has been designed to achieve a BREEAM rating of 'Excellent'. Potential energy consumption has been reduced by giving careful consideration to the built form, coupled with incorporation of a Building Management System to make use of heat recovery and efficient operation of the building. The building has been designed to maximise use of natural daylight and ventilation, and thereby minimise heating and cooling needs. High insulation materials and orientation to maximise solar gain have also been incorporated into the building design. Materials to be used in the construction of the building will be specified to ensure low environmental impact. Consideration is also being given to rainwater harvesting, and water recycling for use on landscaped areas.

In addition to looking at the design of the building to make it as sustainable as possible it is proposed to incorporate renewable energy sources as part of the development. It is intended that photovoltaics and air source heat pumps will be used to meet 10% of the total energy use requirements associated with this building.

### Southern Area Working Party (17/08/11)

Members noted that the proposal would be determined by a forthcoming Planning Committee, and recalled the earlier presentation to Planning Member Working Group by the developer. Members noted that the consultation period was still running but expressed support for the proposal in principle subject to design considerations and the outcome of the consultation period.

### Conclusion

Consideration of this application was deferred from the last Planning Committee to allow the public consultation period to run its course.

The proposed development will provide a high quality combined research and educational establishment that will help to further develop Exeter as a centre for undergraduate and postgraduate clinical education, training and research. It will provide a new landmark building of contemporary design that will add interest to Barrack Road. The scale and location of the building will alter the character of the surrounding area and impact upon the setting of adjoining conservation areas and in particular the setting of St Michael and all Angels church. The applicant however is working to a very specific brief which requires a certain quantum of floorspace and it is not considered that it would be appropriate or practical to seek a smaller building which would be more respectful of the setting of the church. The proposal has an acceptable relationship to surrounding residential properties and it is notable that no objections have been received to the proposal. The application is therefore recommended for approval.

### **RECOMMENDATION**

Approval subject to the following conditions -

**APPROVE** subject to the following conditions:

- 1) C05 - Time Limit - Commencement

- 2) C15 - Compliance with Drawings
- 3) C17 - Submission of Materials
- 4) C35 - Landscape Scheme
- 5) C37 - Replacement Planting
- 6) C38 - Trees - Temporary Fencing
- 7) H02 - Highways - Provision parking, etc
- 8) No part of the development shall be occupied until a Travel Plan (including recommendations and arrangements for monitoring and review) shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. Thereafter the recommendations of the Travel Plan shall be implemented, monitored and reviewed in accordance with the approved document, or any amended document subsequently approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority.  
**Reason:** To encourage travel by sustainable means, in accordance with Local Plan policy T3.
- 9) Construction/demolition work shall not take place outside the following times; 8am to 6pm (Mondays to Fridays); 8am to 1pm (Saturdays); nor at any time on Sundays, Bank or Public Holidays.  
**Reason:** In the interest of residential amenity.
- 10) The development hereby approved shall not commence until details of the proposed finished floor levels and overall heights of the buildings, in relation to an agreed fixed point or O.S datum have been submitted to, and been approved in writing by, the Local Planning Authority.  
**Reason:** In the interests of the visual amenities of the area and the residential amenities of the occupants of surrounding properties.
- 11) Prior to occupation of the development hereby permitted, the cycle parking shown on the application drawings shall be provided in accordance with details (including storage systems and means of cover) previously submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority, and the cycle parking shall be maintained thereafter.  
**Reason:** To ensure that cycle parking is provided, to encourage travel by sustainable means in accordance with Local Plan policy T3.
- 12) The development hereby approved shall not be commenced until details of all proposed boundary walls and fences have been submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. The dwellings shall not be occupied until these have been provided in accordance with the approved details.  
**Reason:** In the interests of the amenities of the area.
- 13) No development shall take place until a Wildlife Plan which demonstrates how the proposed development will be managed in perpetuity to enhance wildlife has been submitted to and approved by the Local Planning Authority. The Wildlife Plan will be expected to include the provision of integral bird nesting boxes/bricks within the fabric of the building. Thereafter the development shall be carried out entirely in accordance with the approved plan.  
**Reason:** In the interests of protecting and improving existing, and creating new wildlife habitats in the area.

- 14) No development shall take place on site until a full investigation of the site has taken place to determine the extent of, and risk posed by, any contamination of the land and the results, together with any remedial works necessary, have been agreed in writing by the Local Planning Authority. The building shall not be occupied until the approved remedial works have been implemented and a remediation statement submitted to the Local Planning Authority detailing what contamination has been found and how it has been dealt with together with confirmation that no unacceptable risks remain.  
**Reason:** In the interests of the amenity of the occupants of the building hereby approved.
- 15) The building hereby approved shall be designed and constructed to achieve BREEAM rating of 'Excellent' unless otherwise agreed in writing by the Local Planning Authority.  
**Reason:** To ensure that the development achieves a high level of performance in terms of sustainability.
- 16) The development hereby approved shall be designed and constructed so as to be capable of connecting to the proposed Local Energy Network scheme (LEN) for Exeter, so far as is practicable having regard to the technical information concerning the LEN scheme available at the time of the detailed design and construction of the scheme. The requirements of this condition shall only relate to works within, and up to the boundary of the application site.  
**Reason:** To ensure that the potential for the development to make use of a future sustainable source of energy is incorporated within the detailed design of the building in the interests of sustainable development.

**Local Government (Access to Information) 1985 (as amended).**

**Background papers used in compiling the report:**

Files of planning applications available for inspection from the Customer Service Centre, Civic Centre, Paris Street, Exeter: Telephone 01392 265223