

Newton Abbot in good health

The new £30 million Newton Abbot Community Hospital was awarded the 'Best Healthcare' project in the LABC South West Building Excellence Awards



Built to provide the town and the surrounding area with a state-of-the-art health facility, the design brief included in-patient accommodation and a stroke unit, an extensive range of outpatient clinics, a rehabilitation unit, a minor injury unit and a low-risk maternity unit.

Other facilities include a special docking station to provide future flexibility for expansion of clinical and diagnostic treatment, ward areas with T-shaped multi-bed bays to give each patient a window view.

Foundation design and construction was one of a number of difficult challenges as was every form of groundwork due to the location and the clay subsoil, especially in heavy rainfall. The ground works were carried out in a spell of exceptional rainfall, and with more than 60 days during the whole project effectively 'written off' due to bad weather, keeping to targets was a real credit to the site team.

Devon Building Control Partnership was first engaged in meetings with South Devon Healthcare Trust, developers, Ryhurst, builders, Rydon Construction and architects, Murphy Phillipps, some 15 months prior to work commencing – initially to discuss and agree the proposed building in principal, and then, progressively to deal with specific issues such as fire safety, access and energy efficiency. The advantages of early

consultation became apparent when the formal Building Regulations application process went extremely smoothly and quickly.

One of the significant issues to be dealt with at an early stage was to agree the fire strategy. The hospital contains an atrium located within the foyer area central to each fire compartment, which posed some interesting challenges with regard to unenclosed bridges passing through at first floor level, in total linking seven compartments. A fire engineered approach involving the principle of progressive horizontal evacuation and a system of smoke extraction was conceived to enable departure from guidance in HTM8.

A major factor in achieving the award was the superb running of the site by Rydon Construction. Particularly notable was the open and friendly nature of the entire site team.

The team maintained regular contact with Devon Building Control Partnership surveyors throughout the construction process, an approach common to all parties involved in the project.

The finished building is built in accordance with the original plans in almost every detail.

The new hospital opened to the public in January 2009.

“FOUNDATION DESIGN AND CONSTRUCTION WAS ONE OF A NUMBER OF DIFFICULT CHALLENGES”

