

City Hospital, Truro



Securing appropriate planning consent

Located in the city centre of Truro, a 6.4 acre major residential redevelopment of the former City Hospital delivered through a best practice partnering framework to ensure the delivery of new affordable housing, in excess of local plan requirements, and to include the conversion of the Grade II listed infirmary building to 19 apartments, 150 contemporary new-build apartments and 22 family houses

Partners and stakeholders include:

Devon and Cornwall Housing
Westco Properties Ltd
Midas Homes Ltd
Carrick District Council
Harrison Sutton Partnership
Levigne Lonsdale Landscape Architects
Carrick Design Review Panel
Cornwall County Council
Truro City Council
Truro Conservation Advisory Panel
Truro Chamber of Commerce
Truro Civic Society
Ward Williams Associates (Employers Agent)
Peter Brett Associates (Highways Engineers)

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Carrick District Council approached DCHA in November 2003 with an opportunity for a back-to-back purchase of the site from the Royal Cornwall Hospital Trust for redevelopment to housing to include 45% affordable homes. The site was an important site for the city but had lain derelict for over five years. No planning permission existed at the time of purchase, which was completed on 31 March 2004.

Early in the design process, it was agreed that the original hospital building, (Grade II listed and within a conservation area), should not seek to replicate the adjoining development, but should stand alone within a complementary high quality contemporary scheme. Harrison Sutton Partnership were appointed as lead designers due to their expertise in innovative design, their reputation for high quality award winning design solutions in sensitive locations and their expertise in public consultation.

The design group adopted a consultative approach throughout the design process to ensure the effective and timely delivery of much needed affordable housing in Truro. For a major city centre site without a planning history, this was a very fast track approach and was only achieved through consultative working. Public consultation events included exhibitions and the findings and comments received were incorporated into further design elements. In addition, presentations were made to Carrick District Council, Truro City Council, Carrick Design Review Panel, Truro Conservation Advisory Panel, Truro Chamber of Commerce and the Truro Civic Society to ensure the engagement of all stakeholders early in the design process.

Overwhelmingly the results from all consultation were positive and supportive of the proposals. A planning application was made in March 2005 with approval received in May 2005.

Outcomes

Through the coordinated and committed working of the partners to achieve an appropriate planning consent, the delivery of 191 homes within a high quality design setting, of which 86 homes are for affordable housing, has been ensured. The development has also proved to be the catalyst for the regeneration of the wider Infirmary Hill area.

Demolition and site clearance commenced in September 2005, with the first properties due for completion in February 2007 and project completion anticipated July 2010.

Lessons learnt

The consultative approach was a principal driver in securing the planning consent within a short timescale, and is a process that is to be adopted for all future schemes.

During the consultation process, concerns were raised by the community for the long-term management of a large number of affordable homes in the city centre. Such concerns were overcome during the consultation process though the demonstration of the robust management regime to be adopted that will ensure the integrity of the development and wider neighbourhood is maintained.