

**SOUTH EAST ENGLAND REGIONAL ASSEMBLY  
REGIONAL PLANNING COMMITTEE**

**RPC SUB-GROUP – STATUTORY CONSULTATIONS**

Date: 10 December 2007

Subject: Planning application consultation ref A/07/107

Site Address:	St Peters Hospital, Guildford Road, Chertsey, Surrey
Proposal:	Outline application for redevelopment of part of the site (the 'Central Site') to provide 16,722 sq m of office floorspace (Use Class B1) with associated new access road, parking and landscaping.
Local Planning Authority:	Runnymede Borough Council
Applicant:	Ashford St Peters Hospitals NHS Trust, Surrey and Borders Partnership Trust and Surrey Primary Care Trust
Date consultation issued:	22 October 2007 All documents received 8 November 2007

Report of: **Regional Planner**

**Recommendation:**

The South East England Regional Assembly makes the following observations in relation to the application:

The borough council should be satisfied that:

- The proposed development is in accordance with guidance in PPG2 (Green Belts) to comply with the objectives of Policy E3 of RPG9 and Policy CC10a of the draft South East Plan;
- The additional employment land is required to meet the needs of the local economy in accordance with Policy RE5 of RPG9 and Policies RE2 and LF6 of the draft South East Plan;
- Appropriate measures, including an agreed travel plan, can be secured to promote alternatives to the car and encourage walking, cycling and the use of public transport in accordance with Policies RE5, T1, T10 and T13 of RPG9 (as altered) and Policies RE2, T1, T5 and T8 of the draft South East Plan.

If the borough council is minded to grant permission, it should address the following, through appropriately worded conditions and/or legal agreements to secure:

- The phasing and delivery of new or improved infrastructure to meet the needs of the development in accordance with Policies CC5 and LF5 of the draft South East Plan;

- An appropriate level of car and cycle parking to comply with Policy T12 of RPG9 (as altered) and Policy T7 of the draft South East Plan;
  - The incorporation of water and energy efficiency measures and the promotion of renewable energy and sustainable construction in accordance with Policies INF2 and INF4 of RPG9 (as altered) and Policies CC2, CC3, CC4, NRM1, EN1, EN2, W2 and M1 of the draft South East Plan;
  - Mitigation measures in relation to flood risk, air quality, noise and impacts on groundwater and archaeological remains and measures to protect and enhance the biodiversity assets of the site in accordance with Policies E1, E2, E7, INF1 and INF2 of RPG9 and Policies NRM1, NRM3, NRM4, NRM7, NRM8 and BE7 of the draft South East Plan.
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## **1. Purpose of Report**

- 1.1 The purpose of this report is to assess the proposed development against the Regional Spatial Strategy (RPG9 plus Alterations) and the draft South East Plan (March 2006) and set out the recommended consultation response for consideration and agreement.

## **2. Site Description and Background**

- 2.1 The St Peter's Hospital site extends to approximately 34.9 ha and is situated some 2 km south west of Chertsey near to Junction 11 of the M25. It is broadly triangular in shape and bounded to the north by Stonehill Road, to the south and east by Hillswood Drive and Guildford Road (A320) and to the west by a public park, Homewood Park beyond which is Hillswood Business Park.
- 2.2 There are two main accesses to the site located off Guildford Road to the south and Stonehill Road to the north. Bus services stop at St Peter's Hospital and link to Chertsey and Woking railway stations.
- 2.3 The eastern part of the site is currently occupied by the modern hospital development comprising approximately 19 buildings, including staff accommodation, internal access roads and parking. There are 21 buildings on the 'Central Site', including a boiler house, mortuary and staff accommodation, hospital office uses and uses associated with mental health services and the Primary Care Trust and associated car parking. Many of the buildings are considered to be surplus and in a relatively poor condition. The south western corner of the site is part of the public Homewood Park that forms part of the parkland setting for the Grade II\* listed Botleys Mansion to the south west of the application site.

2.4 The site is identified as a Major Developed Site (MDS) in the Green Belt under saved policy GB10 in the Runnymede Borough Local Plan, Second Alteration (2001).

2.5 A location map is included in Annex I.

### **3. Details of the proposal**

3.1 The application seeks outline planning permission (with all matters reserved except for layout and means of access) for the redevelopment of the Central Site part of the site as follows:

- Use Class B1 (office) use – 16,722 sq m gross in two buildings (approximately 1,045 jobs);
- New vehicular access from Hillswood Drive
- 560 car parking spaces

3.2 The planning application is accompanied by several supporting documents including a Planning Statement, Design and Access Statement, and an Environmental Assessment including a Transport Assessment.

3.3 The supporting Planning Statement indicates that the objectives for the redevelopment proposals are “essentially driven by key NHS requirements to maximise the utilisation of hospital estates and capitalise the return on existing redundant sites” and that “capital receipts (from the disposal of the Central Site) will be wholly re-invested in essential hospital facilities and the Estate.”

### **4. Main Issues and Relevant Policy Considerations**

4.1 The following are the main regional issues associated with the application, along with the relevant Regional Spatial Strategy policies that need to be considered:

- The location of the proposal, with the following policies being relevant :
  - Policy Q1 of RPG9 and Policy CC8a of the draft South East Plan – urban focus;
  - Policy E3 of RPG9 and CC10a of the draft South East Plan – Green Belts
  - Policy Q5 of RPG9 and TC2 and TC3 of the draft South East Plan – town centres
- The provision of additional employment land, with the following policies being relevant:

- Policies RE1, RE4 and RE5 of RPG9 and Policies RE2, LFI and LF6 of the draft South East Plan – regional/sub-regional economy and employment land.
- Traffic and transport, with the following policies being relevant:
  - Policies T1, T10, T12 and T13 of RPG9 and Policies T1, T5, T7 and T8 – mobility management, parking and travel plans.

4.2 Other material considerations are:

- The identification of the site as a Major Developed Site (MDS) in the Green Belt under saved policy GB10 in the Runnymede Borough Local Plan, Second Alteration (2001).

## 5. Policy Assessment

### Location of Development and Green Belt

- 5.1 Policy Q1 of RPG9 and Policy CC8a of the draft South East Plan look to urban areas as the prime focus for new development and redevelopment to foster accessibility and avoid unnecessary travel. Policy Q5 of RPG9 and Policy TC2 of the draft South East Plan seek to make the region's larger town centres the focus for major new office development. The application site is located outside the strategic network of town centres in the Green Belt and is therefore inconsistent with these policy objectives.
- 5.2 However, the site is designated as a major developed site in the Green Belt under saved policy GB10 of the Runnymede Borough Local Plan, Second Alteration (2001) and as such there is no objection in principle to some redevelopment of an appropriate scale. In order to satisfy the objectives of Policy E3 of RPG9 and Policy CC10a of the draft South East Plan and Government guidance in PPG2 (Green Belts), any redevelopment should have no greater impact than the existing development on the Green Belt. Annex C of PPG2 sets out a number of criteria relating to the footprint and height of the development and the impact on openness of the Green Belt and the purposes of including land within it.
- 5.3 The accompanying Planning Statement states that the proposals, by replacing the existing 21 dispersed buildings with two, three-storey buildings similar in height and massing to some of the current hospital buildings, will lead to a reduction in built footprint and will enhance and increase the open aspect of the Green Belt in this location.

However, the overall amount of office floorspace on the Central Site will increase and the number of jobs accommodated is anticipated to rise from some 430 FTE to approximately 1,045 FTE with the majority of the future workforce expected to come by car leading to an intensification of economic activity on the site and higher levels of traffic generation and traffic impact than existing. The borough council will need to be satisfied that the scheme complies with guidance in PPG2.

### Employment Land

- 5.4 Policies RE1 and RE4 of RPG9 aim to ensure that the regional economy is supported and further developed so as to fully contribute to national growth and that it follows the principles of sustainable development. Policy RE5 of RPG9 seeks to encourage the better use of existing employment land resources and for precedence to be given to the re-use of developed land over the release of new land. The draft South East Plan recognises the London Fringe Sub-region as having a strong economy and the Plan's regional and sub-regional economic policy objectives seek to ensure that the economy is supported, to give priority to the efficient use of existing employment land to meet employment land needs and to promote increasing access by sustainable transport modes. Policies TC2 and TC3 of the draft South East Plan look to the strategic network of town centres as the prime focus for major new office development to meet identified needs.
- 5.5 The borough council will need to satisfy itself that additional employment land is required to meet the needs of the local economy. It will also need to be satisfied that appropriate measures to encourage access by non-car modes can be secured to be consistent with this aspect of regional economic policy objectives and regional transport objectives (see comments below).

### Transport

- 5.6 Policy T1 of the Regional Transport Strategy (RPG9 as altered) and Policy T1 of the draft South East Plan seek to achieve a rebalancing of the transport system in favour of non-car modes as a means of access to services and facilities. Policy T10 of the RTS and Policy T5 of the draft South East Plan indicate that this should be through an integrated package of measures. Policy T12 of RPG9 (as altered) and Policy T7 of the draft South East Plan relate to parking and support maximum parking standards and the provision of sufficient cycle parking at new developments. Policy T13 of RPG9 (as altered) and Policy T8 of the draft South East Plan relate to travel plans and advice.
- 5.7 The transport assessment accompanying the application sets out that public transport accessibility to the site is limited and that the majority of forecast trips will be by car. Improved cycle and pedestrian arrangements are proposed as part of the scheme as is the preparation of a travel plan and these will be considered by the council and Surrey County Council as Highway Authority.

- 5.8 Based on the information submitted, however, it is considered that the proposal could do more to deliver a development which contributes to the rebalancing of the transport system in favour of non-car modes as sought by Policies T1 and T5 of RPG9 and Policies T1 and T5 of the draft South East Plan. This should include the consideration of a range of mobility management measures such as the pricing of car parking and incentives for car sharing and a travel plan that sets out arrangements to promote genuine alternatives to the car.

### Other Matters

- 5.9 In addition to the above, there are a number of priorities arising out of RPG9 and the draft South East Plan which can be dealt with by way of condition or legal agreement if the borough council is minded to grant planning permission. These relate to the following policy areas:

- Infrastructure
- Water resources and flooding
- Air and noise
- Natural environment
- Sustainable construction and energy efficiency
- Heritage

## **6. Conclusions**

- 6.1 The application site is identified under saved policy GB10 of the Runnymede Borough Local Plan, Second Alteration (2001) as a Major Developed Site in the Green Belt and therefore redevelopment is acceptable in principle, provided various criteria relating to impact on the Green Belt are met. Therefore, the borough council should satisfy itself that the scheme complies with guidance in PPG2 relating to major developed sites. It should also satisfy itself that the additional employment land is required to meet the needs of the local economy and an appropriate package of measures, including an agreed travel plan, can be secured to promote genuine alternatives to the car for employees travelling to work.
- 6.2 If the borough council is minded to grant planning permission, it should address the other matters identified in this report through the imposition of appropriately worded conditions and/or legal agreements to comply with the objectives of the Regional Spatial Strategy (RPG9 and Alterations) or the draft South East Plan.

## **7. Recommendation**

7.1 Members are requested to agree the following recommendation to the local authority:-

The South East England Regional Assembly makes the following observations in relation to the application:

The borough council should be satisfied that:

- The proposed development is in accordance with guidance in PPG2 (Green Belts) to comply with the objectives of Policy E3 of RPG9 and Policy CC10a of the draft South East Plan;
- The additional employment land is required to meet the needs of the local economy in accordance with Policy RE5 of RPG9 and Policies RE2 and LF6 of the draft South East Plan;
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If the borough council is minded to grant permission, it should address the following, through appropriately worded conditions and/or legal agreements to secure:

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- An appropriate level of car and cycle parking to comply with Policy T12 of RPG9 (as altered) and Policy T7 of the draft South East Plan;
- The incorporation of water and energy efficiency measures and the promotion of renewable energy and sustainable construction in accordance with Policies INF2 and INF4 of RPG9 (as altered) and Policies CC2, CC3, CC4, NRMI, EN1, EN2, W2 and M1 of the draft South East Plan;

- Mitigation measures in relation to flood risk, air quality, noise and impacts on groundwater and archaeological remains and measures to protect and enhance the biodiversity assets of the site in accordance with Policies E1, E2, E7, INF1 and INF2 of RPG9 and Policies NRM1, NRM3, NRM4, NRM7, NRM8 and BE7 of the draft South East Plan.

**Sue Janota**  
**Regional Planner**

Date: 10 December 2007

Contact: Sue Janota, Regional Planner  
T: +44 (0)1483 555238  
E: [suejanota@southeast-ra.gov.uk](mailto:suejanota@southeast-ra.gov.uk)