

# **Rolle Main Campus - Planning and Design Brief**

## **February 2010**

### **INTRODUCTION**

The purpose of this Planning and Design brief is to operate as a blueprint, which will facilitate the holistic development of the Rolle site to provide an educational and community facility for the town of Exmouth and a contributor to the town's economic regeneration.

### **AIM**

It has been produced in order to guide new development on the main site of the premises of the University of Plymouth, which formed the Faculty of Education and Arts until July 2008.

### **OBJECTIVES**

- Provide flexible accommodation responsive to changing circumstances and contributing to the economic vitality and sustainability of Exmouth.
- Secure the educational facilities for the community.
- Integrate key-worker accommodation for those working on site.
- Provide market accommodation, in the mid to high range, to provide cash flow for the project.
- Ensure all development is carried out in a manner sympathetic to the site and its setting.
- Protect mature landscaping and provide guidance for suitable new landscaping.

### **PLANNING & DESIGN BRIEF**

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## **1 THE NEED FOR A PLANNING AND DESIGN BRIEF**

- 1.1 The Rolle Main Campus is located close to the centre of Exmouth and in that part of The Avenues bordered by Salterton Road, Fairfield Road, Portland Avenue, Douglas Avenue and Rolle Road. It is next to Trefusis Terrace, which is in the conservation area, and Portland Avenue, which is under consideration for conservation status. In the middle of the site is a Grade II listed building. There are several distinctive trees on the south and west boundaries, which are under Tree Preservation Orders.
- 1.2 The Avenues was, until 2002, a Residential Area of Special Character and is now the subject of a Design Statement, formally approved as Supplementary Planning Guidance in 2005. This design statement is currently under review with a view to strengthening it for inclusion in the new Local Development Framework. The benefits of the current Design Statement, which is valued by both planners and developers, can be seen in the improvement in building developments since it was adopted.
- 1.3 The other eleven properties owned by the University of Plymouth comprise Victorian and Edwardian villas, modern office accommodation and purpose-built halls of residence. These buildings are expected to be sold by the end of 2010 and will be covered by the existing Design Statement. A design brief is essential for the main campus to sustain the character of the area through a period of substantial change.
- 1.4 There is a need to guide this change so that it is achieved in a sensitive manner to ensure the protection and enhancement of the listed Eldin building, the continued use of the Owen and Daw buildings which are the best public buildings in Exmouth and the improved appearance of the whole campus through sympathetic building design and landscaping.

## **2 A BRIEF HISTORY OF THE MAIN CAMPUS SITE**

- 2.1 The site was first built on early in the 19<sup>th</sup> century when Louisa Villa was erected. In the 1950s Louisa Villa was demolished to make room for the new Rolle College of Education for the training of teachers.
- 2.2 For over sixty years teachers were trained on the Rolle College site in Exmouth. Originally opened as one of the post-war government's emergency colleges in 1946, Exmouth Teacher Training College became a permanent institution in 1948 when it came under the control of Devon County Council. It took the name Rolle College in 1951 after a family of local landowners, the predecessors of the Clinton Devon Estates.
- 2.3 At first the college was housed in the old Southlands School, a private girls' school established in the 1880s. Other villas in the vicinity became halls of residence. But the Victorian school's facilities were inadequate, so the school and other premises on the site were demolished to allow a major new building programme in the late 1950s and early 1960s. The Daw Building, opened in July 1959, became the heart of the new college and a wide range of other purpose-built specialist accommodation soon followed.
- 2.4 Originally training only women, Rolle admitted men students from 1966 and expanded rapidly. It was concerned exclusively with teacher education until 1978 when it diversified to offer other degree courses. It accommodated for over 1000 full time students and there was also in-service training for experienced teachers.

- 2.5 In 1988 Rolle College passed out of Devon County Council control and became part of Polytechnic South West, which in turn became the University of Plymouth in 1992. By 2008 all courses had been moved to Plymouth and the campus was deserted. The impact on Exmouth was a loss to the local economy, estimated at £5m. per annum.
- 2.6 In 2002 the University of Plymouth had obtained £2m public funding to erect an impressive theatre/conference/exhibition building at the main entrance. Later named the 'Owen Building' these are purpose built and, with ten excellent seminar rooms and direct access to the library, provide excellent learning and conferencing accommodation for sixth formers and adults.
- 2.7 The buildings are set within a fine late 19<sup>th</sup> century designed landscape with magnificent views to the sea and the estuary and hills beyond. They are surrounded by walls in the traditional design for The Avenues.

### **3 BUILDINGS OF ARCHITECTURAL, HISTORICAL & OTHER INTEREST** (see Fig 1 – Rolle Layout)

- 3.1 The Eldin Building, used in recent years as the students' union, is a substantial Grade II listed building, a mid 19<sup>th</sup> century Gothic Revival House constructed in grey limestone with Beer stone dressings under a steeply pitched slated roof similar to other nearby buildings from the Victorian era.
- 3.2 Langstone House is a large Victorian villa, typical of the 1860's.
- 3.3 The Daw Building, built in 1959, is pleasantly designed and sets the tone for the main buildings. It houses an excellent library on two floors and integrates the Owen building with the refectory and social areas.
- 3.4 The Owen Building is a fine modern design. It affords an impressive first sight and reception at the entrance to the campus and comprises excellent facilities for conferences, performances, lectures, exhibitions, seminars, teaching and learning.
- 3.5 The Main (Administration) Building and Refectory are pleasantly arranged. The administration buildings comprise a realistic office environment for students of business, retail, travel and tourism, rooms suitable for tutorials or counselling and could also accommodate community facilities, including advisory and support agencies. The refectory could be adapted for training in catering and hospitality with restaurant service for up to eighty people.
- 3.6 The Dance Theatre is suitable for performances and there is a large Gymnasium, which could be used as a dance area with changing rooms and a fitness suite.
- 3.7 The modern Science Block comprises recently refurbished laboratories and other rooms, which could be adapted for science and technology.

### **4 SITE REDEVELOPMENT**

- 4.1 The buildings to be retained, apart from Langstone and Eldin, are ideal for educational and community use with the only significant refurbishment to the buildings being double-glazing, subject to detailed survey.
- 4.2 The Fairfield Building and Art Workshops are recommended for demolition and reconstruction for identified purposes as skill centres for training and retraining and for adult education.

- 4.3 The Eldin Building should be renovated and sub-divided into office space for rental purposes.
- 4.4 Langstone House should be assessed for its viable retention and it, or the land, be utilised for offices or quality residential accommodation.
- 4.5 The Spicer Building has fallen into neglect. It should be demolished and replaced by a well-designed block of flats to provide low cost accommodation for key workers on site, for students and for conference members.
- 4.6 The Stork Building has also been neglected. It should be demolished and, along with all other buildings in this part of the main site apart from the Science block, the Eldin Building and Langstone Villa, be replaced by mixed housing.
- 4.7 The Art Workshops behind the Refectory and Daw Building were poorly constructed. These should be demolished and replaced by purpose built accommodation for skills training and second-stage starter units for small businesses.
- 4.8 The areas released by demolition of the other buildings should be used for mixed housing development.
- 4.9 As far as possible, all development should be designed to be in keeping with its surroundings and in sympathy with The Avenues Design Statement where there is local impact.

## **5 THE LANDSCAPE CHARACTER**

### **5.1 Trees and Soft Landscaping**

- 5.1.1 The Avenues are characterised by street trees and the large number of specimen trees within gardens. The Rolle College site makes a positive contribution to this tree cover, with both trees on the street frontages and within the site. It is important that the majority of the existing trees are retained. A landscaping strategy will be required for the site which identify all trees to be retained together with a scheme for the to provide strategic new planting that complements the characteristics of the area.

### **5.2 Boundary Walls**

- 5.2.1 The site is enclosed by stone walls on the Rolle Road and Douglas Avenue frontages and on Fairfield Road. These are local features that contribute to the street scene. This is reinforced by similar walls on the opposite sides of these streets and elsewhere in the neighbourhood thus producing a visual harmony and sense of place. The walls must be retained and no new vehicular entrances should be crated on the Rolle Road and Douglas Avenue frontages. The

### **5.3 Paving and Hard Landscaping**

- 5.3.1 The existing courtyards, paths and paved spaces should be retained and reflected throughout the new developments.

### **5.4 Design and Layout**

- 5.4.1 All new building should be in sympathy with accord with the principles of the Avenues design statement.
- 5.4.2 The layout must retain the character of a series of buildings forming a campus, with appropriate scale, massing and design features. The existing courtyards, paths and paved spaces should be retained and reflected throughout the new developments, with demarcation by design.

5.4.3 A coherent lighting scheme should be produced, taking into account sustainability, energy consumption and design, minimising light pollution, avoiding spillage that would affect adjoining residences.

5.4.4 Any increase in parking spaces should be minimal and located unobtrusively.

## **5.5 Site Master Plan**

5.5.1 Before any individual development takes place an overall master plan must be produced. This will provide the strategic information and principles for vehicular access, pedestrian movement, layout, design, and landscaping. This is necessary to coordinate the various developments of the site and to establish the design principles.

## **6. PARTNERSHIP**

6.1 It is important that development of this site is conducted in partnership between EDDC, DCC and ETC in order to secure the best possible scheme for the buildings to be retained, the landscaped setting and the relationship to conservation areas and the nearby World Heritage Site.

6.2 Developers should be sought who will see this as an opportunity to contribute substantially to the community by the provision of education and community facilities under Section 106, in return for the support of the local community and the planning authority towards achievement of successful development of the whole site in good time.

Roy Pryke on behalf of SAD Design Group, Rolle Starter Group and Rolle Exmouth.

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Fig 1 – Rolle Layout

