

West Park Hospital Theatre Epsom, Surrey

Size of site

11.67 ha

Barriers/contamination

Blue asbestos.

Potential receptors

Other buildings within former hospital complex. Adjacent hospital facilities. Hospital workers, patients and visitors.

Key partners

- Strategic Risk Management Ltd
- DTZ Consulting
- Caswells Environmental Services Ltd
- English Partnerships
- Epsom and Ewell Borough Council

Reasons for selecting this project

- Mixed-use development and conversion of former hospital complex for residential, hotel and employment facilities; and
- Controlled removal of blue asbestos from former hospital theatre building.

Background

West Park Hospital, one of five Epsom Cluster Mental hospitals, closed in 1999. Some parts of the hospital will remain operational and in NHS Trust ownership for the foreseeable future.

The Secretary of State for Health sought to dispose of the surplus land and buildings, and a number of planning applications for redevelopment were submitted, revised and subsequently withdrawn. The site is currently designated in the Epsom and Ewell Local Plan (May 2000) as a Major Developed Site in the Green Belt.

English Partnerships acquired the site in 2005 under the Hospital Sites Programme. The theatre had been seriously damaged by fire prior to acquisition and it was discovered that the remains contained substantial quantities of asbestos.

Project

Strategic Risk Management Ltd were appointed to undertake a series of background air monitoring tests and report on the problem. It was immediately evident that the site represented a serious risk as large quantities of blue asbestos were exposed to the elements. The immediate recommendations were to isolate the area and take continuous air monitoring tests until the asbestos could be removed.

The scope of remedial works required was identified and five companies were invited to tender for the contract to remove the blue asbestos in January 2006. The contract was awarded to Caswells Environmental Services Ltd on the best and safest method of work, and the removal contract started March 2006.



West Park Hospital after the fire and before decontamination.

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Before any works could take place the surrounding rooms, corridors and ducting had to be stripped and decontaminated. Following this major scaffolding had to be erected to form an air tight air lock enclosure so the removal of the asbestos in the theatre could be started.

During the works, weekly management meetings took place attended by English Partnerships, the consultant and contractor to monitor progress on the site.

Work was completed in July 2006.



Blue asbestos in the rubble from the fire.

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25 tonnes of scaffolding tubing, including 2,000 boards, were used to enclose the theatre. Of these approximately 1,800 scaffold boards were individually wrapped and subsequently unwrapped of polythene to prevent asbestos contamination of the boards.

Achievements

The site is wholly contained within the Surrey Green Belt and, therefore, it was essential to retain as many of the existing buildings, prior to redevelopment of the site, in order to maximise the redevelopment and conversion opportunities.

The project removed 393 tonnes of waste using 172 sealed skips and 40,000 polyethylene bags from a constrained site, surrounded by other buildings within the former hospital complex.

Key lessons that can be utilised in other projects

- Asbestos can be removed from existing buildings even in constrained locations without demolishing the building; and
- The existence of asbestos does not prevent the reuse of buildings.



Post-decontamination.

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