

Planning Statement

Mount Vernon Hospital, Ophthalmology,
Northwood, HA6 2RN

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1. Introduction

- 1.1. This Planning Statement has been prepared by Savills (UK) Limited on behalf of the NHS Foundation Trust (“the Applicant”) to accompany an application for Full Planning Permission for the proposed installation of an Air Handling Unit (AHU) to be located south of the Ophthalmology Ward at Mount Vernon Hospital, Northwood, HA6 2RN (“the Site”).
- 1.2. The Site is located in the Borough of Hillingdon (LBH).
- 1.3. This application seeks Full Planning Permission for the following development:

“Installation of new enclosed Air Handling Unit to the south of the Ophthalmology Ward.”
- 1.4. Based on the preliminary assessments, the introduction of an AHU will improve air quality, temperature control, and overall ventilation within the ward. Contributing to a safer and more comfortable operating environment.
- 1.5. This Planning Statement outlines the background information relating to the Site and surroundings and the proposals. This statement also provides an assessment of the proposals in relation to planning policy and other material considerations.
- 1.6. The following documents have been submitted with this Full Planning Application:
 - **Site Location Plan**, prepared by Ansell & Bailey Architects;
 - **Existing Drawings**, prepared by Ansell & Bailey Architects;
 - **Existing elevations**
 - **Site plan**
 - **Proposed Drawings**, prepared by Ansell & Bailey Architects;
 - **Proposed elevations**
 - **Site Plan**
 - **Detailed Drawings**, prepared by Air Handling Systems LTD; and
 - **Noise Impact assessment**, prepared by AuricL.
- 1.7. In addition to the above, a completed **Application Form** has also been provided.
- 1.8. In addition, the appropriate statutory application fee will be made under separate cover.

2. Site, Surrounding Context and History

2.1. Mount Vernon Hospital is located north west of Northwood in the London Borough of Hillingdon (LBH). Rickmansworth Road forms the eastern boundary to Mount Vernon Hospital, with the western, southern and northern boundaries largely screened by trees. The eastern site boundary also forms Hillingdon Council's border with the neighbouring local authority Three Rivers District Council.



Figure 1: Aerial View of Mount Vernon Hospital

2.2. The two main points of access include Rickmansworth Road to the north east and White Hill from the west. Mount Vernon Hospital features buildings ranging from one to three storeys, which have been developed incrementally over an extended period to address evolving clinical needs. Consequently, the Hospital is fragmented, with buildings varying significantly in their suitability for delivering contemporary clinical care. There are further uses and accommodation on site including catering facilities associated with the hospital, research facilities, a hospice, postgraduate medical centre and staff accommodation blocks. The part of the hospital subject to the proposals is an existing grass area located to the south of the Ophthalmology Ward, highlighted in Figure 2 below.

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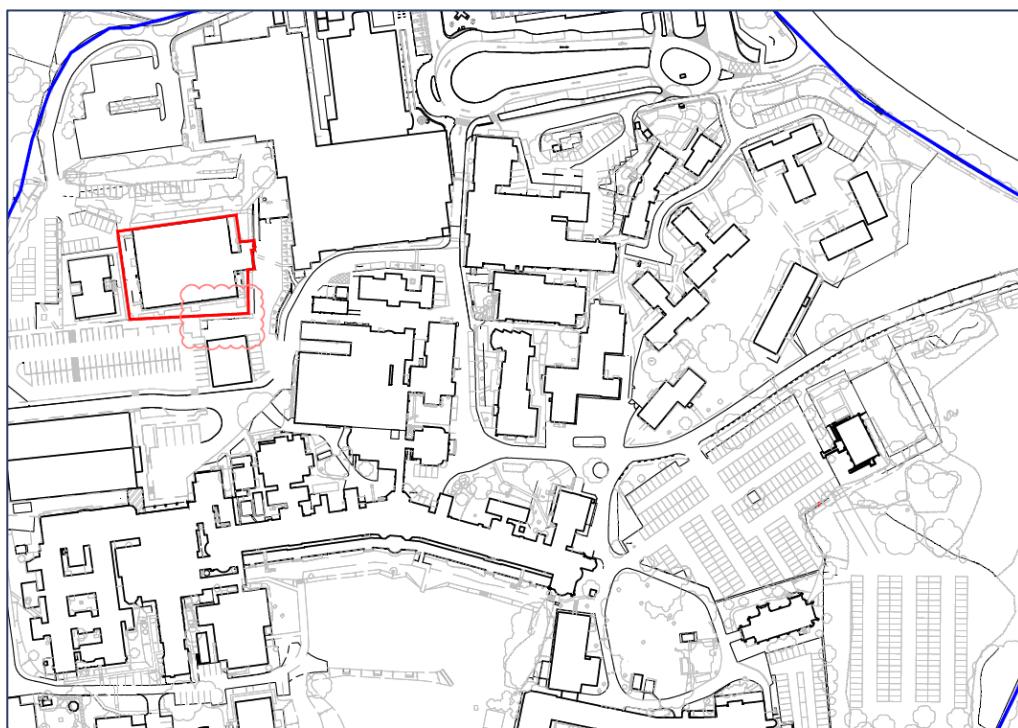


Figure 2: Site location plan (Ophthalmology Ward outlined in red)

- 2.3. The Hospital is bordered to the north by a line of trees, beyond which lie agricultural fields, a small residential development, and a public house. To the east, the Site is adjacent to Rickmansworth Road, with the urban residential area of Northwood situated beyond, comprising of low rise two and three storey housing. Surrounding the developed area of Mount Vernon Hospital are several agricultural fields, a sport facility, and a pre-school nursery.
- 2.4. The Site is served by five bus routes which enter the Hospital, whilst a further bus route is accessible on Rickmansworth Road. The bus routes provide access to Harrow, Hanwell and Ruislip, as well as Chorleywood and Abbots Langley.
- 2.5. The Site lies within the Metropolitan Green Belt in its entirety, and is adjacent to two Nature Conservation Sites of Metropolitan of Borough Grade I Importance. The Site falls within Flood Zone 1 and therefore has a low probability of flooding. Mount Vernon Hospital contains the following listed buildings, neither of which are in close proximity to the proposals:
 - Grade II Listed Building – Mount Vernon Hospital
 - Grade II* Listed Building – Mount Vernon Hospital Chapel

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Figure 3: Aerial photo with listed buildings and Site highlighted

Planning History

2.6. The Site has an extensive planning history, with over 100 applications associated with the Site according to the Council's online planning register. Whilst the Site is located in the Green Belt, various developments have been approved on the Site in the past 20 years through supporting justification that the proposed development is on previously developed land, it forms infill development, as well as the demonstration of special circumstances through the identified need of specific clinical buildings from the Trust. The details of previous key planning decisions have been set out below.

Reference	Description	Decision	Date
3807/APP/2019/286	REPLACEMENT AND UPGRADE OF THE MECHANICAL VENTILATION SYSTEM SERVING THE RADIOPHARMACY WITH ASSOCIATED SCREENING	Approval	25-01-2019
3807/APP/2017/741	ERECTION OF A SINGLE STOREY DETACHED BUILDING FOR USE AS A SKIN CARE UNIT.	Approval	01-03-17
3807/APP/2005/865	ERECTION OF A SINGLE STOREY EXTENSION TO EXISTING PHARMACY DEPARTMENT (INVOLVING DEMOLITION OF REDUNDANT TEMPORARY BUILDING)	Approval	17-03-05
3807/APP/2004/2725	ERECTION OF A SINGLE STOREY ANNEXE TO LESLEY HARRISON BUILDING (INVOLVING DEMOLITION OF TWO EXISTING STORES)	Approval	05-10-04
3807/APP/2004/1513	ERECTION OF SINGLE-STOREY BUILDING (INVOLVING DEMOLITION OF EXISTING BIO-ENGINEERING BUILDING)	Approval	03-06-04

3. Proposals

- 3.1. This section sets out a summary of the proposals. Further detail is set out in the accompanying architectural drawings, prepared by Ansell & Bailey Architects.
- 3.2. As shown on the existing and proposed drawings, the proposals seek to install a new enclosed AHU at ground level to south of the Ophthalmology Ward at Mount Vernon Hospital. The AHU will be placed at a slight angle relative to the ward building. It would be sited on an area that has grass, some small shrubs and paving. Figure 3 below illustrates the position of the proposed AHU in relation to the building.



Figure 4: Location of the proposed AHU (in blue)

- 3.3. The unit will measure 9000mm in length x 2150mm in width x 2650mm in height. The units total footprint measures 20.425 m². The AHU's exterior will be constructed with Goosewing Grey Coated Steel, and interior with coated steel, with polyurethane foam insulation inside. The roof type will be flat. The associated internal components and other specification details can be found in the Technical Specification document provided by Air Handling Systems LTD.

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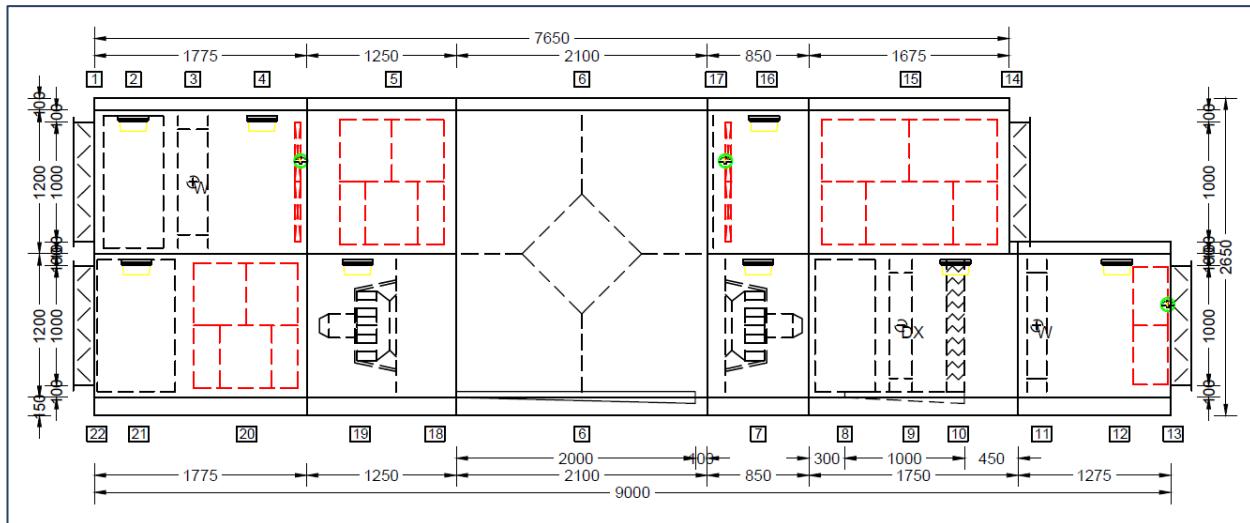


Figure 5: Side elevation showing upper and lower decks

3.4. Figure 5 above outlines the side elevation of the AHU, which will be split into two main sections consisting of an upper and lower deck. Detailed drawings with a key labelling each internal component are provided in the detailed drawing by Air Handling Systems LTD.

3.5. Installing the AHU outside the ophthalmology ward is essential for enhancing patient care and comfort. The AHU will ensure optimal air quality by filtering, controlling humidity, and maintaining consistent temperatures, which is crucial for sensitive ophthalmic procedures and recovery. Additionally it will improve ventilation, reducing risk of airborne infections and creating a healthier environment for patients and staff as per the HTM 03-01 requirements to achieve compliance.

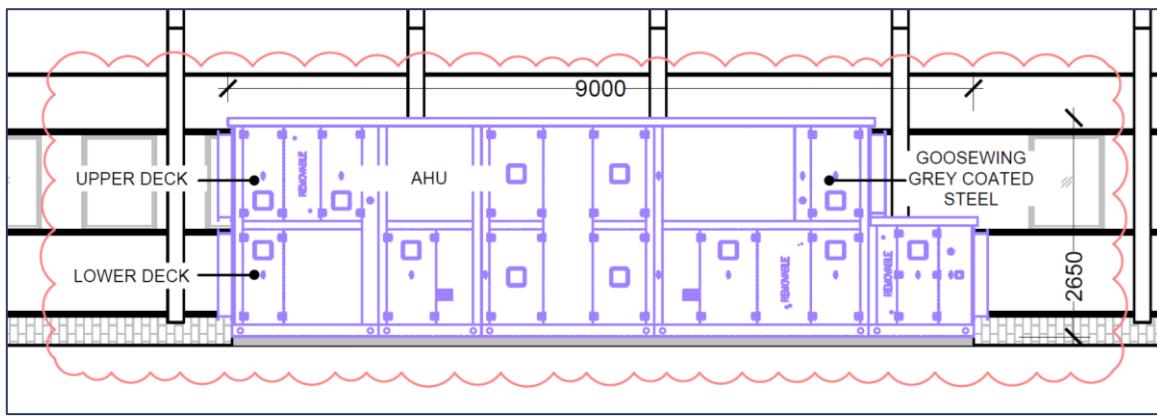


Figure 6: Proposed north elevation

4. Planning Policy Framework

4.1. The proposals for the Site have taken account of relevant national and local planning policy and guidance. This section of the Planning Statement sets out a brief summary of the relevant planning policy documents, whilst the following section demonstrates compliance with the policies contained within them.

Development Plan

4.2. Section 38 (6) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 outlines the requirement for planning applications to be determined in accordance with the Development Plan for an area, unless any material consideration indicate otherwise. This legal requirement is reiterated within the introduction to the NPPF.

4.3. The adopted Development Plan for LBH, in so far as is relevant to the proposals, consists of:

- The London Plan (March 2021);
- The Hillingdon Local Plan: Part 1 – Strategic Policies (“LPP1”) (November 2012)
- The Hillingdon Local Plan: Part 2 – Development Management Policies (“LPP2”) (January 2020)
- The Hillingdon Local Plan: Part 2 – Site Allocations and Designations (“LPP2”) (January 2020)

4.4. Other material considerations include:

- National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) (December 2024)
- National Planning Practice Guidance (PPG)
- LBH’s SPD “Planning Obligations” (July 2014)

National Planning Policy

4.5. The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) sits outside of the adopted development plan, but forms an important material consideration, outlining the Government’s planning policies. The NPPF maintains the presumption in favour of sustainable development at paragraph 11, which is defined at paragraph 8 as incorporating economic, social and environmental objectives.

Regional Policy

4.6. The London Plan, provides the spatial development strategy for London which deals with matters of strategic importance to Greater London. The London Plan is based upon three principle purposes for the Greater London Area: promoting economic development, promoting social development, and promoting the improvement of the environment.

Local Planning Policy

- 4.7. The Local Plan is the foundation for how development will be controlled in Hillingdon up to 2026. The two sections of the Local Plan forms LBH's future development strategy for the borough. Together they set out a framework and detailed policies to guide planning decisions and it is the starting point for considering whether planning applications should be approved.
- 4.8. The Local Plan Part 1 sets out the overall level and broad locations of growth for the plan period. It comprises a spatial vision and strategy, strategic objectives, core policies and a monitoring and implementation framework with clear objectives for achieving delivery. It was adopted in 2012 and the enclosed policies are supported by more detailed policies and allocations set out in the LPP2.
- 4.9. The Local Plan Part 2 comprises Development Management Policies, Site Allocations and Designations and the Policies Map. The Local Plan Part 2 Development Management Policies and Site Allocations and Designations were adopted as part of the borough's development plan at Full Council on 16 January 2020.
- 4.10. The Planning Obligations SPD provides guidance on the use of planning obligations in Hillingdon for those involved in the submission and determination of planning applications.

5. Planning Considerations and Assessment of Impact

5.1. This section sets out the justification for the development proposals against the key planning policy considerations contained within the adopted Local Plan and the London Plan 2021 in addition to the NPPF, the Councils Supplementary Planning Documents and any other relevant material considerations. The Planning Considerations are set out under the following headings:

1. **Principle of Development**
2. **Design and Appearance**
3. **Impact on Neighbouring properties**
4. **Energy and Sustainability**

1. Principle of Development

5.2. Sustainability

5.3. National, regional and local policy generally emphasises the importance of sustainable development in a way which protects the historical environment of the area.

5.4. London Plan Policy GG6 (Increasing efficiency and resilience) sets out that development must seek to improve energy efficiency and ensure buildings and infrastructure are designed to adapt to a changing climate.

5.5. Objective 11 of the Local Plan Part 1 Strategic Objectives aims to address the impacts of climate change and minimise emissions of carbon and local air quality pollutants from new development and transport.

5.6. Policy DMEI 2 (Reducing Carbon Emissions) of the Development Management Policies sets out that all developments are required to make the fullest contribution to minimising carbon emissions in accordance with London Plan Policies.

5.7. The proposals seek to install a new enclosed Air Handling Unit at ground level to the south of the Ophthalmology Ward at Mount Vernon Hospital. The proposed works aim to improve the building's energy efficiency. Furthermore, the AHU is essential for maintaining indoor air quality and comfort by conditioning and distributing air throughout the building. Given this assessment, the proposals accord with London Plan Policies GG6 and Local Plan Policy DMEI2 and Strategic Objective 11.

5.8. Enhanced Hospital Facilities

5.9. London Plan Policy S2 states that development proposals that support the provision of high-quality new and enhanced health and social care facilities to meet identified need and new models of care should be supported, and that new facilities should be easily accessible by public transport, cycling and walking.

- 5.10. The proposed AHU will meet this objective by improving the internal environment of the Ophthalmology Ward for patients and staff and therefore enhancing this health facility
- 5.11. Greenbelt
- 5.12. Local Plan Policy DMEI4 states that inappropriate development in the Green Belt and Metropolitan Open Land is not permitted unless there are very special circumstances. Extensions and redevelopment are allowed only if they do not increase the impact on the openness and purposes of these areas, considering factors like the height, bulk and footprint of existing buildings, the proportion of developed land, and the visual amenity and character of the area.
- 5.13. The proposal to install a new enclosed AHU at ground level to the rear of the Ophthalmology ward is compliant with Local Plan Policies. The Site's extensive planning history shows that various developments have been approved due to the Site's status as previously developed land on the Green Belt and the identified need for specific clinical buildings. The proposed AHU unit, being a part of essential hospital infrastructure aligns with these circumstances and does not cause any impact on the openness of the Green Belt.

2. Design and Appearance

- 5.14. Policy D4 of the London Plan emphasises good design review and quality throughout the planning process to maintain design integrity from conception to completion.
- 5.15. Local Plan Policy DMHB 11 (Design of New Development) states that all development must be designed to the highest standards, harmonising with the local context, using high-quality materials, and ensuring sustainability. It should protect heritage assets, enhance biodiversity, and provide adequate storage for waste. Additionally, developments should not negatively impact the amenity of adjacent properties and must consider the potential for future redevelopment of adjoining sites.
- 5.16. The proposals comply with Policy DMHB 11 by ensuring the AHU is designed to the highest standards, and is in-keeping with the context of the hospital buildings and its supporting infrastructure. High quality materials that include Goosewing Grey Coated Steel will be used for the external enclosure, which is an appropriate finish for this type of infrastructure. Further to this, the AHU will also be screened by an existing timber fence that surrounds the ward. It would therefore appear as a discreet development from spaces within the wider hospital area. Additionally, the design considers future redevelopment potential of adjoining sites, ensuring sustainable and adaptable use.

3. Impact on Neighbouring Properties

5.17. London Plan Policy D14 (Noise) sets out that noise impacts should be reduced, managed and mitigated by avoiding significant impact adverse noise impact on health and quality of life, and minimise the existing and potential adverse impacts of noise in the vicinity of new development.

5.18. Local Plan Policy EM8 (Land, water, air and noise) states that the Council will seek to ensure that noise sensitive development and noise generating development are only permitted if noise impacts can be adequately controlled and mitigated.

5.19. A Plant Noise Assessment Report, prepared by Auricl, has been submitted with this application. The Plant Noise Assessment Report notes that the nearest residential property to the site is understood to be located north west of the site, fronting onto White Hill, approximately 125m from the proposed location of the AHU.

5.20. The Report includes the measured plant noise calculations for the AHU and the proposed condenser unit. The Report concludes that predicted noise levels at the nearest noise sensitive properties achieve the London Borough of Hillingdon's requirements. In light of the Plant Noise Assessment Report, it is therefore considered that the proposals accord with London Plan Policy D14, and Local Plan Policy EM8.

5.21. Local Plan Policy DMHB 11 (Design of New Development) states that all development must be designed to the highest standards, and that development proposals should not adversely impact on the amenity, daylight and sunlight of adjacent properties of open space.

5.22. The proposal complies with Local Plan Policy DMHB 11 because the AHU's placement prevents any adverse impact on the amenity, daylight and sunlight of adjacent properties and open spaces. The AHU will be located beside the Ophthalmology Ward, which prevents any possibility for impact on sunlight and daylight being interrupted to any surrounding occupants. The AHU will not create any extra shade or shadows through windows to the ward. Additionally, the AHU's distance from any residential dwelling also ensures that daylight and sunlight will not be affected at these properties. It should also be noted that the AHU will be screened by a timber fence that will limit views of it from surrounding developments within the hospital estate.

4. Energy and Sustainability

5.23. London Plan GG6 (Increasing efficiency and resilience) set outs that development should minimise carbon emissions and contribute to a city wide reduction in emissions by adopting energy efficiency measures.

5.24. Local Plan Policy DMEI7 states that new developments should protect and enhance biodiversity. If unavoidable, replacements should be provided on or off-site. Developments near ecologically valuable sites must show no unacceptable effects and contribute positively. Proposals causing significant harm that cannot be mitigated will generally be refused.

- 5.25. Policy DMEI 7 requires new developments to protect and enhance biodiversity. The AHU will be screened behind an existing timber fence, minimising visual impact. There are no trees impacted by the development nor would any greenery of any material size of value be lost. The proposal therefore respects the Site's ecological value, making it compliant with the relevant policies.
- 5.26. Regulation 4 of the Biodiversity Gain Requirements (Exemptions) Regulations 2024, states that the biodiversity gain planning condition does not apply in relation to planning permission for development that does not impact an onsite priority habitat that is less than 25 square metres of onsite habitat that has biodiversity value greater than zero. The proposed scheme seeks to introduce an AHU that will take up 20.425 square metres and therefore is less than 25 square metres. In consideration of Regulation 4, a Biodiversity Net Gain Assessment will not be required as part of this application.

6. Conclusions

- 6.1. This Planning Statement has been prepared in support of a Full Planning Application submitted to Hillingdon Council on behalf of The Hillingdon Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust. For the site at Mount Vernon Hospital, Ophthalmology, Northwood, HA6 2RN.
- 6.2. The proposals seek Full Planning Permission for the Installation of new enclosed Air Handling Unit at ground level to the rear of Ophthalmology Ward.
- 6.3. The proposals will provide the following benefits:
 - Enhancing patient care and comfort.
 - Minimising airborne infections by improving ventilation.
 - Improving the energy use and efficiency of the ward.
- 6.4. NPPF Paragraph 11 requires that development which accords with the Development Plan be approved without delay. It is considered that the Full Planning Applications overall accord with the development plan when read as a whole.
- 6.5. The proposals comply with national, regional and local planning policy. Accordingly, we respectfully request that planning permission be granted.

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