



Health – Watford AUU – Modular saves 6 months on site

“At a very early stage of the project Osborne added their experience and knowledge of off-site construction solutions to unlock a number of issues, including the need to deliver a significant construction project on a fully operational site within a very short timescale. If they had not been unlocked, the feasibility of the whole scheme could have been jeopardised.”

Sarah Wiles, West Hertfordshire Hospitals NHS Trust

PROJECT

Watford Acute Admissions Unit

CUSTOMER

West Hertfordshire Hospitals NHS Trust

LOCATION

Watford General Hospital

CONTRACT

Framework ProCure21

Need

As part of wider programme of 'Investing in Your Health' the West Hertfordshire Hospitals NHS Trust wanted to create an acute care unit at Watford General Hospital. The new Acute Admissions Unit (AAU) would enable consultant-led rapid diagnosis and treatment in a local setting to improve care and health outcomes for emergency patients.

The new unit would have 120 new beds over 3 storeys and include enlarged car parking facilities to manage the extra demand.

An essential requirement of the project was speed of delivery, but in a way that the hospital continued to deliver uninterrupted patient care throughout the build and that there was a smooth handover and transition of the new facility and equipment into clinical operation. This was critical to minimise disruption to services.

Solution

It was concluded, after reviewing various options, that the best way to balance speed with reduced disruption was to maximise the amount of work completed off-site using pre-fabrication and pre-assembly. This increased speed of operations on site and reduced trades in situ, leading to less traffic, noise, and dust.

In this instance, a full modular off-site solution for the building was deemed to provide the best solution as it brought many additional benefits to the scheme over and above the minimising disruption.

150 steel-framed modular units were manufactured in a quality-controlled factory environment and delivered to site complete with partitions, electrics, plumbing, sanitaryware and finishes already in place. This dramatically reduced the disruption to patients, clinical services, and the local community.

Outcome

Taking the decision to use off-site modular construction paid off by saving 6 months of site build time whilst reducing disruption to the on-going hospital operations.

The time savings were achieved through the ability to manufacture units in the factory environment whilst the ground works were taking place on site and move straight to fit out when delivered to site. The decision to use off-site manufacturing reduced the environmental impact in a nature-based production process reducing carbon emissions and material wastage.

An extensive and detailed phased handover period ensured that staff were fully familiar with the new building and the scanning and x-ray equipment to provide a 'soft landing' into service.

"We couldn't have wished for the opening of the new unit to have gone more smoothly than it has so far. We opted for a phased approach to ensure patient safety. David Gaunt, clinical director of emergency care