

Somerset NHS Foundation Trust

Somerset Community Diagnostic Centres

Project date: 2024-25

Services: Strategic Property Advisory

Outcomes

1

Two premises secured
(Taunton and Yeovil)

2

Commercial wins (c.12
months rent-free + £239k
saving for Trust)

3

Planning advantage (Use Class
E avoiding change-of-use)

The challenge

Identify and acquire leasehold premises for ophthalmology diagnostics away from acute sites, prioritising ground-floor clinical accommodation, good circulation, public transport access and parking, within a compressed timeline.

We were appointed due to our lengthy and strong track record of finding and acquiring suitable premises, at pace, for the Trust.



The solution



Mobilisation and governance

We established clear project controls, including a PID and programme, and coordinated regularly with the Trust to manage progress and maintain alignment across clinical, estates, and operational workstreams.



Requirements confirmation and search strategy

We confirmed detailed clinical requirements and carried out a targeted Use Class E search across priority areas, strengthened by a comprehensive market sweep using specialist databases and local agent intelligence to create a robust longlist.



Market sweep and longlisting

Working closely with clinical teams, we shortlisted options using a structured scoring matrix and undertook inspections to test operational fit, followed by proportionate technical diligence such as surveys, access assessments, and Schedules of Condition.



Market appraisal and commercial terms

Market appraisals informed negotiations on Heads of Terms, securing strong value, commercial flexibility, and early-years affordability. We supported legal due diligence throughout lease drafting, searches, and title review, resolving site-specific issues as they arose to maintain momentum.



Tender management

Archus then managed the tender and appointment of the design and delivery partner and oversaw their work to ensure HTM/HBN compliant designs that could progress efficiently without requiring a change of use.



Project impact



Premises secured: the Trust confirmed Harrison House (Taunton) and 27a Vicarage Walk, Quedam (Yeovil) as the chosen sites and progressed leasing.



Strong commercial value: Archus secured c.12 months' rent free at Quedam and £239,000 rent-free at Harrison House, improving early-years affordability.



Reduced planning risk: Use Class E enabled healthcare use without a change-of-use application, accelerating acquisition.



Clear decision-making: a structured longlist/shortlist and scoring process provided confidence and enabled progression to lease sign-off.



Dilapidations protection: photographic schedules of condition reduced end-of-term dilapidations risk.



Ongoing delivery: Archus was re-commissioned in 2025 for Phase 2 at Quedam, negotiating the Licence to Alter and managing the conversion works.



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