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Clearing the way for better breast care

Deserted homes have now gone under the hammer to clear the way for a state-of-the-art new Breast Unit to serve the women of West Sussex.

The unit will house the West Sussex Breast Cancer Screening Service, which will work to ensure that all women of eligible age are offered screening for breast cancer every three years. The service will also provide for the assessment of women who have breast problems.

Contractors have now completed the demolition of house on the corner of Park Avenue and Homefield Road in Worthing, in preparation for the construction of the £7.7m facility

Building should begin in the autumn of this year, with completion anticipated by autumn 2013, and architects have produced designs to show how the new facility will look.

The purpose-built two-storey unit will a modern and comfortable environment for both patients and staff, and will offer an improved service thanks to the most up to date digital x-ray facilities.

The unit is a central part of the upgrade of facilities for the West Sussex Breast Cancer Screening Programme, which also includes digital imaging on all mobile screening units in the county.

Once completed, the WSBCSS will begin to extend the screening service to a wider age group, with the eventual aim of screening all women between the ages of 47 – 73 years rather than 50-70 as now.

Jeannie Baumann, Director of Clinical Services for Women and Children at Western Sussex Hospitals NHS Trust, said: "It is hugely encouraging to see that work has begun. This development is extremely important for local women - our screening service will be even better, it will be delivered in a more comfortable environment, and it will be available to more woman than before."

Lorna Miliffe, Radiography and Service Manager of the West Sussex Breast Cancer Screening Programme, added: "All members of the team are very excited by this project as it will be a wonderful step forward in enhancing the facilities available and the service we offer to women of this area."

Dr Olga Strukowska, Lead Breast Radiologist and Director of West Sussex Breast Screening Service, said: "This long awaited project is an exciting opportunity for the entire Breast Team to create a state-of-the-art Breast Service, which will not only improve the existing facility to serve the West Sussex women's population but hopefully enable us to become a well recognised teaching breast cancer centre as well."

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Media contacts:

Nick Brooks, Communications Manager
01243 831733