

Planning approval for new Usher Institute

A new building at Edinburgh BioQuarter, Little France which will house the Usher Institute for Population Health Sciences was approved by council planners earlier in the year.

International design practice Hassell drew up the plans for the new space which will be the research heart of the University of Edinburgh BioQuarter for around 600 academics and researchers. The researchers will work alongside private commercial bodies and development experts from Scottish Enterprise, all sharing knowledge among them.

The look of the 13,500 square metre structure is both tiered and linear, and the designers want to promote the use of stairs as the main means of getting about, so promoting healthy working. Internally there are three light wells forming large open circulation zones promoting “activity and interconnectivity”. The simple repetitive arrangement of the façade is meant as a nod to Edinburgh Castle.

The design for the ground floor is very open so that it extends from the public realm space beyond, connecting the users within the building to the rest of the BioQuarter.

The facilities include an 80 person learning studio, a flexible event space for teaching and academic conferences, meeting and interview rooms, and an outreach room for

community engagement. The innovation hub will have a digital screen wall to exhibit research to audiences.

Construction of the [building](#) will begin in July this year.

