

Two landmark buildings in Sheffield are in line for radical redevelopment. Peter Kay reports

Labour due to start on Jessop rebirth

THE rebirth of the old Jessop Hospital is due to begin soon. Demolition is scheduled to start in April of part of the former maternity complex, which is now in the hands of Sheffield University.

Lined up for clearance are the old laundry building, ante natal clinic and gynaecological wings at the Upper Hanover Street (ring road) end of the site.

Around October or November bulldozers are expected to move in on the St George's Wing, facing the former St George's Church.

All the buildings are relatively recent additions. The main Victorian and Edwardian blocks are listed and are in line for refurbishment to become part of the new university campus.

The university bought all the hospital buildings in the summer of 2001, a few months after maternity and gynaecological services were transferred to the Jessop Wing next to the Royal Hallamshire Hospital, as part of a masterplan for its central campus.

Plans to replace the old laundry with laboratories and offices for biological sciences – a 'bio incubator unit' financed by European funds – are in line for council approval on Monday with a view to construction being completed by July next year.

Council officers say it will be a "significant" five-storey development in a prominent location, though local conservationists believe it will be one or two storeys too high.

Otherwise no decisions have been announced on which academic departments will move into the Jessop complex.

The whole redevelopment programme will be rolled out in phases over a number of years.



Transforming the listed buildings will be a sensitive job – and the university has begun talks with the council, conservationists and English Heritage.

In the shorter term demolition of some of the structure is also less than straightforward because of the removal of asbestos, though managers hope it will not hold up the overall programme.

"The whole hospital complex is full of asbestos and we have got a programme for its systematic removal," said Tony Smith, director of facilities management.

"We have got some stripped out of the old laundry building and we have done some further surveys and we have come across some more asbestos we need to get out before we start the demolition. It hasn't come as a surprise."

●Above: the old laundry block.

CONSTRUCTION of another part of the new Sheffield University campus, a Learning Resources Centre, is expected to start around the middle of next year.

Government money has been secured to finance the £15m development, including a library, between Brook Hill roundabout, Upper Hanover Street and Favell Road, across the ring road from the former Jessop Hospital.

The university is aiming to have the complex, a joint venture by the university's library and department of corporate information and computing services, in use by the end of 2006.