

# Gurkha Temple, St. Athan's Defence Technical College South Wales

Designs by Scott Brownrigg, part of the Metrix team of architects which also includes HLM Architects and Capita Architecture.

Plans submitted by Metrix (a 50/50 joint venture between the leading facilities management company Sodexo and leading international provider of technology services QinetiQ) for the £700 million Defence Technical College (DTC) at the site of MOD St. Athan in South Wales include proposals for a Hindu Temple for the use of Gurkha and other Hindu soldiers, located at the development's main entrance.

The Temple will sit alongside a new Church and World Faith building in the site's multi-faith zone, reflecting the mix of religions represented within the UK Armed Forces. The Temple is intended to provide an inclusive place of worship for serving Gurkha and other Hindu soldiers attending the College and a community facility for their families.

Although designed to form an integrated composition with the neighbouring faith buildings, the Temple has been given a distinct and appropriate identity. The design is based on the traditional Hindu Temple (Mandir), located within a walled courtyard containing a symbolic sacrificial space (Maula), but the choice of materials and details will give it a contemporary appearance in keeping with the surrounding buildings.

A key feature of the Temple is its pyramid roof, with a large glazed lantern at the apex. The lantern will be lit at night to act as a beacon and to symbolise the emission of spiritual light from the building.

Internally, the worship area also serves an important social function as a meeting space for the Gurkha and wider Hindu community. To support this, the design incorporates a traditional tea-making room and servery.

Duncan MacRae, Director of Metrix Property, the arm of Metrix UK which will deliver the property development and construction of the future DTC, commented: "The Gurkha Regiment plays an important role in the British Army and we wanted to ensure that the

spiritual needs of its soldiers and their families were provided for. The Temple will hold a prominent position within the Defence Technical College, alongside the other faith buildings at the main entrance, reflecting the importance the UK Armed Forces place on religion.

"During the process of conducting our consultation on this specific aspect of



the design of the future DTC, Gurkha representatives set out that while the Temple is a Hindu one, and designed specifically for that faith, it is not exclusive and anyone is welcome to visit it and indeed participate in services."

The multi-faith buildings have purposely been located at the site's main entrance, outside the security wire, to allow and encourage members of the local community to use them alongside the servicemen and women attending the Defence Technical College.

On the 24 September, the Vale of Glamorgan Council resolved to approve the planning application for the Defence Technical College at MOD St. Athan and over the coming weeks both the Welsh Assembly Government and the MOD will complete the statutory processes required to formalise the consent. ■■■

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