

NORTH WESTERN HEALTH BOARD

Sligo General Hospital

CLINICAL SERVICES SUPPORT CENTRE

Project Briefing for Department of Health & Children

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To: Mr Denis O' Sullivan, Acute Hospitals Division

CC: Mr Richard O'Keeffe, Hospital Planning Office
Ms Ruth Barrington, Health Research Board

Background

Oct 2002 – SGH submitted a proposal to the DoHC to provide a research centre in a modular building. This was based on the Health Research Strategy 2001, and on the National Health Strategy, which indicated that capital would be made available for such research units at hospital locations. However, no capital funding has been allocated.

Oct 2003 – the Research and Education Foundation offers to advance the provision of research facilities at SGH by financing an appropriate building on the hospital campus.

The Research and Education Foundation, a registered charity incorporated in 1992, has previously provided the capital to develop the library and seminar facilities on Level 6. The Foundation generates income from subscriptions by members (mainly hospital consultants) and by obtaining research grants for specific projects.

Dec 2003 – Sligo Academy of Medical Studies meets formally. It has been formed to promote medical education in SGH, in particular the provision of clinical skills labs. To this end, it has established revenue-generating links with foreign graduate medical schools. Students spend one academic year (42 weeks) on a structured placement rotating through various specialties in the hospital. Currently 8 graduate students are in placements, producing revenue of \$150 each per week (\$6,300 each per annum). The number of graduate students is planned to increase to 28 when suitable facilities such as are proposed in this project allow. The revenue stream from this will be at least \$176,400 per annum (€150,000). In addition, the Academy is establishing links with the RCSI and other medical training bodies, which it is expected will attract further demand and revenue for the facilities to be provided at SGH.

The Academy proposes to advance the provision of these essential training facilities for medical students by entering into a partnership arrangement with Sligo General Hospital and the Research and Education Foundation, with a view to co-financing a building which will accommodate a range of training, research, education and clinical governance facilities. These facilities will be available for use by other hospital and health board staff, and by public and voluntary organisations. They will also be available for intern students of the new medical schools to be established in Ireland.

What is proposed

Accommodation to provide research, education and training facilities for students and staff at Sligo General Hospital, housed in a permanent building of approximately 2,000 square meters, over four floors. The building will be self-contained, but adjacent to and with direct access from the main hospital building.

Currently, facilities for research and education in SGH are limited to Level 6, which has a library and an AV conference room. These will be retained and linked to the proposed new Clinical Support Centre building.

The building will provide open-plan and flexible accommodation for the following purposes:

EDUCATION & TRAINING

Training - BLS/ACLS/PALS etc

Seminar rooms – for lectures/demonstrations (up to 45 people)

Breakout rooms – 4-6 people, for practice/study

Storage for mannequins and simulation equipment

Hospital accreditation requires all staff to have BLS training. The facility would also be available for training staff in Community Services and volunteers.

Skills Lab/Simulation Centre

Basic common skills training, with surgical orientation. Needs to meet requirements for individual specialties – Anaesthesia, Obs/Gynae, ENT, Eyes, Orthopaedics, General Surgery

Lecture/Seminar Rooms – multi-user

Reading/Study Room

Desks for Registrars – required by medical training institutes

Space for Tutors/Admin/Interviews/Storage

RESEARCH

Science Labs – bench facilities (Science for Health)
Research Fellows rooms – for senior research staff
Clinical Research area – phase 3 or 4 clinical trials, research nurses/technicians, etc
Desktop Research facilities (R&D)
Research Management – incl admin, storage, postermaking, photocopying,
meeting/lecture room,

CLINICAL GOVERNANCE

Clinical Audit
Clinical Risk Management
Clinical Co-ordinator
General Practice Training Support
Public Health Dept – Hospital Liaison/Specialist

These functions would relocate from elsewhere in the hospital, freeing up space for other uses.

COMMON AREAS

Reception, circulation
WC/Changing
Social/coffee
Display/poster/exhibition areas

Finance

The total project budget is €4 million, inclusive of construction, equipping and professional fees. This figure is based on a preliminary costing by the NDP office. The cost will be financed by the Research and Education Foundation on a 15 year repayment mortgage. The site will be provided free of charge by hospital, which will have a lien over the building to protect its interest during the mortgage term. At the end of the mortgage term the Research and Education Foundation would transfer the ownership of the building to the hospital free of charge. The disposal of the site by the hospital to the Research and Education Foundation will require approval by the Department of Health and Children, in accordance with recent guidance, and agreement in principle is hereby sought.

The Foundation as a registered charity has received a quotation from a leading bank for annual mortgage payments (capital and interest) of €340,000 per annum on a principal sum of €4 million (at €85k per million).

The annual revenue accruing to the Foundation when the CSSC is commissioned, is projected as:

€50,000	Research grants – 10% contribution to cost of facilities provided (the HRB plan to increase the contribution to 20% in due course)
€130,000	Rent from Sligo Academy of Medical Studies, for training & education facilities provided to graduate/other medical students
€80,000	Rent from SGH for Clinical Governance space to be relocated from elsewhere in the hospital (c. 500 m ²). The vacated space can be used to accommodate functions (such as finance) which are currently housed in rented accommodation (i.e. cost neutral), or to expand clinical services in areas such as OPD.
€30,000	Fees from third parties for use of facilities e.g. for training, meetings, exams. (This would attract money which currently goes to e.g. hotels, in the absence of suitable accommodation in the hospital.)
€50,000	Sponsorship from medical equipment suppliers/pharmaceutical companies of exhibitions/presentations/conferences etc
€340,000	Total revenue

Thus it is expected that the Clinical Services Support Centre will be self-financing. Running costs (cleaning, utilities, maintenance) for services provided by the hospital would not be charged to the Foundation, recognising the qualitative advantages to the hospital of the enterprise.

Upside: the project cost of €4 million does not take account of capital contributions which may be received to mitigate the cost. Applications will be made to potential sponsors of the project, e.g. the Western Development Commission, Abbott Laboratories. To the extent that any of these secure funding, the net cost to the Foundation, and therefore the annual mortgage payments, will be reduced. In addition, revenues generated may be higher than estimated above.

Downside: the project budget of €4 million will be managed to ensure there is no capital cost overrun. Revenues may not meet expectations – though items 1, 2 and 3 are considered firm, and there is potential for higher income from research grants and Academy activities. The remit of staff managing research and education activity will include a focus on ensuring that revenue is maximised. In the event that revenue does not match mortgage payments in a particular year, the parties (Foundation, Academy and SGH) would agree a mechanism for apportioning the deficit according to its nature and their responsibility for it.

Location

See SGH site plan herewith showing potential development sites on the hospital campus, prepared by A&D Weijchert, Architects. It is proposed to locate the Clinical Services Support Centre at Potential Development Site 2 (outlined by a broken red line), occupying about half the footprint thereof.

This is the preferred location, because it is central to and directly accessible from the main clinical areas of the hospital. Apart from the self-evident convenience of the central location for staff and users, it is considered that centrality and easy access is of fundamental importance to the success of the facility for its intended research and education purposes. The ability of staff engaged on formal research and their research supervisors to access the Centre regularly and for shorter periods during their working day is critical to the success of their endeavours; similarly, staff engaged on project work or formal/personal study would be enabled to make more use of the Centre. In the absence of "drop in" access, staff would have to schedule fewer, longer periods for planned access to the Centre, with a consequent loss of flexibility and optimisation of breaks in their day. With the well-known demands on staff time in the hospital environment, the Centre needs to be as user-friendly as possible, and easy access is a critical element.

In addition, the CSSC would enhance the proposed site and the visual quality of the hospital generally by being located here. The site at present is unattractive, and there are no identified competing demands for it. As the CSSC will provide flexible floor space, it offers the potential to be converted to other uses in the long-term, should the needs of medical research and training outgrow the building currently proposed.

Conclusion

The project presents an imaginative solution to the need for enhanced research, education and training facilities at Sligo General. By generating incremental revenues it allows the provision of a high quality Clinical Services Support Centre without the need for NDP capital funding. The enterprise demonstrates the commitment and initiative of clinicians and other staff in raising the level of research and educational activity at SGH, with the overriding goal of improving the quality of care provided to patients at the hospital and in the region.

The approval of the Department is requested, for the disposal of the designated site at Sligo General Hospital to the Research and Education Foundation for the purpose of providing a Clinical Services Support Centre as described.

Attachments:

Site Plan of SGH, showing location of proposed CSSC (part of Potential Development Site 2)

Draft floor plan of the proposed CSSC