

Response to **Why does GOSH continue to develop the Gt Ormond St Site**

Summary

GOSH's document makes it clear that GOSH has no intention of leaving its current site, despite the fact that there is no space for expansion apart from upwards. Ever increasing amounts of space (to meet current standards) would be needed for any further renovation of a clinical facility (which must clearly be foreseeable). So the hospital will wish to build ever higher buildings on the site. That would clearly affect neighbours, but the trustees appear to be totally oblivious to the needs and interests of other occupants of the area - the trustees' wish to create a CCC is used to justify blocking daylight from neighbouring properties. And not only would neighbours be affected - an important heritage area would be ever more eroded by further high buildings.

This is not a sensible long-term plan for a modern hospital. Other more long-sighted trustees of hospitals have accepted that city centre sites are no longer appropriate for modern hospitals. This is particularly true of a children's hospital, where the patients need clean air and space to play out of doors.

It is accepted that moving the hospital to another site is not ideal, but nor would be building ever higher buildings on a very limited site in Central London. The logistics of moving patients, staff, supplies, waste etc would surely be ever more challenging; the traffic and pollution would constantly increase; and the damage to neighbours and to the heritage area would constantly increase.

History

The fact that the hospital has been on that site for 170 years is no argument for it remaining on that site indefinitely.

GOSH Now

No-one doubts the size and excellence of the hospital. The document states that children from outside London can access all 60 clinical specialities at GOSH. It does not state what proportion of patients require the attention of two or three clinical specialities.

The fact the GOSH's clinicians provide care in partnership with local hospitals raises the question whether the CCC is necessary – this process could develop further.

GOSHCCC is Necessary

This indicates that the current cancer care at GOSH is less than ideal, However no evidence is provided to show that there is a clinical need for the CCC in terms of children not being able to access appropriate care at any hospital in England/the UK.

Space for children to play The document claims that the new building will allow patients to have space on the roof to play. How much better to have larger areas at ground level in an area free from pollution?

It is noted that the school and activity centre will be at ground floor level, but will not benefit from outdoor space at ground floor level, and will suffer from pollution from passing traffic.

Knowledge Quarter One might have expected that the pandemic would have accelerated the use of electronic means of communication and collaboration.

GOSHCCC needs to be this size and Reducing the Size of CCC

No evidence is provided showing that all the space in the proposed new building is absolutely essential, nor that none of the facilities could be located (possibly less ideally) elsewhere. But the fundamental question is whether any improvement in the facilities to be provided at the site in Gt Ormond St justifies significant damage and harm to neighbours and to a heritage environment.

Prior Investment in the GOSH site

It is accepted that the hospital has spent money in building in the area, and that moving the hospital to another site would be very expensive. But perhaps the trustees should have been considering the limitations of the present site before making recent investment. And other hospitals have accepted the need to move to more appropriate sites, eg Moorfields, Addenbrookes, the Royal Free, the Charing Cross Hospital. Moreover selling the existing buildings would surely bring in some cash!

Transport Infrastructure and Ease of Access

The statement that excellent transport links exist for patients and staff to access the current site glosses over a number of problems:

- Yes there are mainline rail terminals reasonably close, but patients and families using rail must surely need to take a bus or taxi from the station to the hospital, and the slow-moving

heavy traffic in the area, most notably in Southampton Row, Grays Inn Road and Euston Road, must surely make the journey difficult;

- For those families choosing to drive there are problems in parking nearby.

Families and patients would surely prefer to drive direct from home to hospital, with easy parking, rather than travel by bus/taxi to the station, rail, then bus/taxi to the hospital, and then vice versa. And while using a car rather than public transport may be perceived to be politically incorrect, it must surely be understandable in the case of parents of a sick child. The convenience of the site is more for staff than for patients.

A further transport issue is the ambulances clogging Gt Ormond Street. Another, the existing danger, in particular for pedestrians and cyclists, at the junction between Gt Ormond St and Lamb's Conduit St.

The statement that “a new front entrance on the street after which it is named”, providing “an appropriate, confident, and outward physical representation of GOSH's value, brand and place in the world” not only indicates the trustees' focus on the hospital's status, it also demonstrates their lack of practicality: a new front entrance on Gt Ormond St would give rise to traffic, pollution and noise (affecting patients, staff and carers as well as residents, local businesses and other road users), and danger to pedestrians (including children going to and from school), cyclists and other users of a narrow street which is difficult to access. (It also departs from the earlier decision to have the hospital's main entrance on Guilford St.)