

ABOUT THE MATER SITE



Tight squeeze: An aerial view of the Mater site



Plans: Architect Sean Mahon and project chief Eilish Hardiman

HSE PAYS STAFF OF HOSPITAL THAT DOES NOT EXIST

HUNDREDS of thousands of euros have been spent on wages for staff of a hospital that doesn't exist.

By Karen Rice

Head of the hospital that doesn't exist quits

Centre for sick children in crisis over resignation

by Eilish Hardiman

For the sake of children like my son, we MUST build our new hospital somewhere else...

by Ray Martin

CHILDREN'S HOSPITAL IN UTTER SHAMBLES

In a damning verdict, business mogul blames Harney and warns entire project is in jeopardy

by Eva Marie Gibney



No comparison: The proposed children's hospital in Chicago

Call to arms: How the Irish Daily Mail has campaigned for a change to the Mater site, which has been plagued by delays and is over budget

going into the car park, and a lane bringing ambulances into the children's emergency department. Then you'll cross the entrance into the Metro North, before you get to the hospital.

'For emergencies, you'll go to the emergency entrance, but it's temporary parking only, so dad will drop off mother and sick child and then he'll need to park. But he's gone past the car-park entrance, which is behind him. And because Eccles Street is one-way he can't turn back.'

PARKING

In Chicago, a comprehensive 88-page report on access to and parking for the children's hospital was commissioned and published in 2007, before the city council ap-

proved the plans. It recommended additional parking spaces beyond the more than 6,000 already reserved for patients and staff at the existing facilities and the new hospital.

A car park is now being built with 1,100 spaces for employees. The hospital is allowing around 2,500 parking spaces for patients.

In Dublin, parking is currently so constrained at the Mater hospital that staff are forced to leave their cars more than a kilometre away. The proposed NPH will have an underground garage with 1,000 parking spaces, but the hospital project's chief executive, Eilish Hardiman, has admitted under questioning by the Mail that only 60 per cent of these will be available for patients.

Parents of long-term sick children can expect to park for free, but all others will be charged.

SPACE

Despite having only a 1.8 acre site, the Lurie hospital in Chicago has the capacity to increase its 288 inpatient beds to 313. Many of the 23 storeys will house research and lab facilities, which can be moved if future expansion is needed.

The NPH in Dublin has little scope for expansion — there is a 445-bed capacity designed to meet projected 2021 demand. Clinical departments are being squeezed at the planning stage because of a lack of space at the 3.9 acre site.

Staff will be forced to 'hot-desk', which Dr Roisin Hayes, a paediatric radiologist at Crumlin, says: 'Physicians are worried. They [the NPH project team] keep promising the same space to different services.'

'They're using the term "hot-desking", suggesting that the renal serv-

ice will have this half of the third floor on a Monday morning and the infectious diseases service will have it in the afternoon, and you take your stuff with you.'

There is no room for an in-house sterile equipment unit, which will be located on the M50. This means every piece will have to be transported on demand at great expense. Nor is there room to store patient files. Instead, the NPH is set to employ a company to produce electronic files at an estimated cost of €150million.

FACILITIES

The Chicago hospital will be a centre of excellence on one site, with 1,100 paediatric specialists in 70 specialties, including lung, heart, skin, liver, brain, blood and infec-

tious diseases. It is located on the same campus as a school of medicine, is linked by a raised bridge to a maternity hospital and is close to an adult hospital and rehabilitation institute.

The NPH will be co-located with the Mater's adult hospital, which specialises in cardiothoracic care and oncology. Expertise in other specialties, such as neurological and burns care, are spread among the five other major Dublin hospitals.

Services will also be split with an 'urgent care centre' located at Tal-laght hospital.

The centre will close to admissions at 10pm, meaning hundreds of patients a month may potentially have to be transferred to the Mater's emergency department if they need further treatment.

Additional reporting by John Breslin