

Appendix 6 – Offer to Health Board

FFESTINIOG MEMORIAL HOSPITAL DEFENCE COMMITTEE

4th January 2008

For the attention of members of the Health Board and its Executive Officers

Listed below are just some of the decisions taken by you, as a Board, during the past three years, in relation to health issues in the Blaenau Ffestiniog area: -

- ❑ You used the resident physiotherapist's illness as an excuse for permanent closure of the physiotherapy clinic, despite much local protest.
- ❑ You presented a dubious and far from convincing argument for the closure of the Memorial Hospital (and this despite past assurances from other sources, including those of ex-Health Minister Brian Gibbons as recently as the 2007 Assembly elections, that the new Alltwen Hospital would only replace Bron-y-garth Hospital and Porthmadog Clinic).
- ❑ You ignored the concerns, the objections and arguments presented to you before, during and after the so-called consultation period (from local GPs, hospital staff, Meirionnydd CHC, MP and AMs, the Hospital Defence Committee and even one of your own Board members, not to mention the opposition demonstrated at public meetings, workshops, petitions and rallies). A weighty file of this correspondence is readily available as proof.
- ❑ Your Consultation Document 'Have Your Say' offered '*lack of patient privacy*' as one of the main arguments for closure of the Memorial Hospital; this at a time when Male and Female wards were located in different wings of the hospital and 50 yards apart.

And yet, your answer to this so-called 'problem' was to convert the Male Ward into a part-time physiotherapy unit and to move male patients into a ward adjacent to the Female Ward. Consequently, both sexes now have to share not only the same Day Room but very often the same wards as well. In other words, you have gone out of your way to create mixed wards, and to create a 'lack of privacy' that didn't previously exist! This can be construed as either sheer incompetence on your behalf

or a purely cynical attempt to strengthen your case and to pave the way for closure. Hopefully, you will tell us which one!

- ❑ We are particularly angered by the fact that your LHB Executive officers – all of whom are highly-paid public servants – should have assumed, from the very outset, that they were superior to public opinion, with a right to act autocratically.
- ❑ The removal of 5 beds from the Memorial Hospital has led to further bed-blocking at Ysbyty Gwynedd and Llandudno Hospital. Mr Michael Williams, the Minister's Independent Reviewer, was able to confirm this for himself when he visited the hospital, unannounced, some six weeks ago. At that time, as is usually the case, all 12 beds were occupied and as many as four patient-transfer requests from Ysbyty Gwynedd had had to be turned down in that week alone. Ysbyty Gwynedd's own records will prove that this was not an isolated example, and that the problem still persists to this day.

It stands to reason that pressing ahead with ill-conceived plans to remove all beds from the Memorial Hospital will only exacerbate the situation and it is already patently obvious that the new 30-bedded Alltwen Hospital, once opened, will not be able to cope with the demand, whatever your Board Executive may claim.

THE WAY FORWARD, AS WE SEE IT

- We are no longer able to dispute the serious lack of patient privacy that now exists at the Ffestiniog Memorial Hospital.
- Nor can you, as Board Members, dispute your responsibility and your guilt in this matter.
- The situation has to be remedied sooner rather than later and, in our opinion, this can only be done in one of two ways:-

EITHER (i) The Male Ward will have to be returned to its original location and a new building erected on site to house the physiotherapy unit

OR (ii) A new 4-bedded Male Ward will have to be built onto the existing building or close by, on the site of the present car park. (Both are viable options according to qualified building consultant advice.)

Since the Board is unlikely to approve Option (i), in view of the recent conversion, we would therefore press for the implementation of **Option (ii)** and enclose suggested plans for a new four-bedded ward with on-suite facilities. (the bed and facility lay-out can be adapted according to need).

Such an extension would entail the following structural alterations to the main building:-

- (a) Extending the main corridor. (This would mean losing two beds from the present Female Ward, but regaining the four-bedded ward next to it would more than compensate for this loss.)
- (b) Creating a connecting door between the old and the new building
- (c) Providing a brand new foyer and main entrance, as opposed to the inadequate single door entrance that is currently concealed behind an ill-placed and ugly fire-escape. (The enclosed artist's impression will give some idea of what the improvement will look like.)

Parking space: An estimated five parking spaces would be lost in the development but, if other available space were utilized on site, then even this should not happen. In any case, anyone acquainted with the hospital and its surroundings will know that in addition to adequate parking space adjacent to the Health Centre there is also available land at the rear of the X-ray clinic, a mere 100 yards from the hospital (the equivalent of the length of one of Ysbyty Gwynedd's connecting corridors!)

ESTIMATED COST

The example plan submitted shows a 4-bedded ward with an area of roughly 70 square metres. Working on a generous estimated cost of £2,500 per metre square (the official Departmental Cost Allowance Guide quotes £2,326 per metre square), then the total cost of building the new ward should not exceed **£175,000**. Allowing a further **£120,000** for alterations to the existing hospital building, (this, again, a more than generous estimate), the total cost of the project should fall well short of **£300,000**.

OUR COMMITMENT

In conjunction with the Memorial Hospital's League of Friends, we are willing to commit ourselves to raising half the above amount - **£150,000 – towards the development.**

We trust that you will give this proposal serious consideration at your next Board meeting.

Yours sincerely,

Geraint V. Jones

(Chairman of Ffestiniog Memorial Hospital Defence Committee)

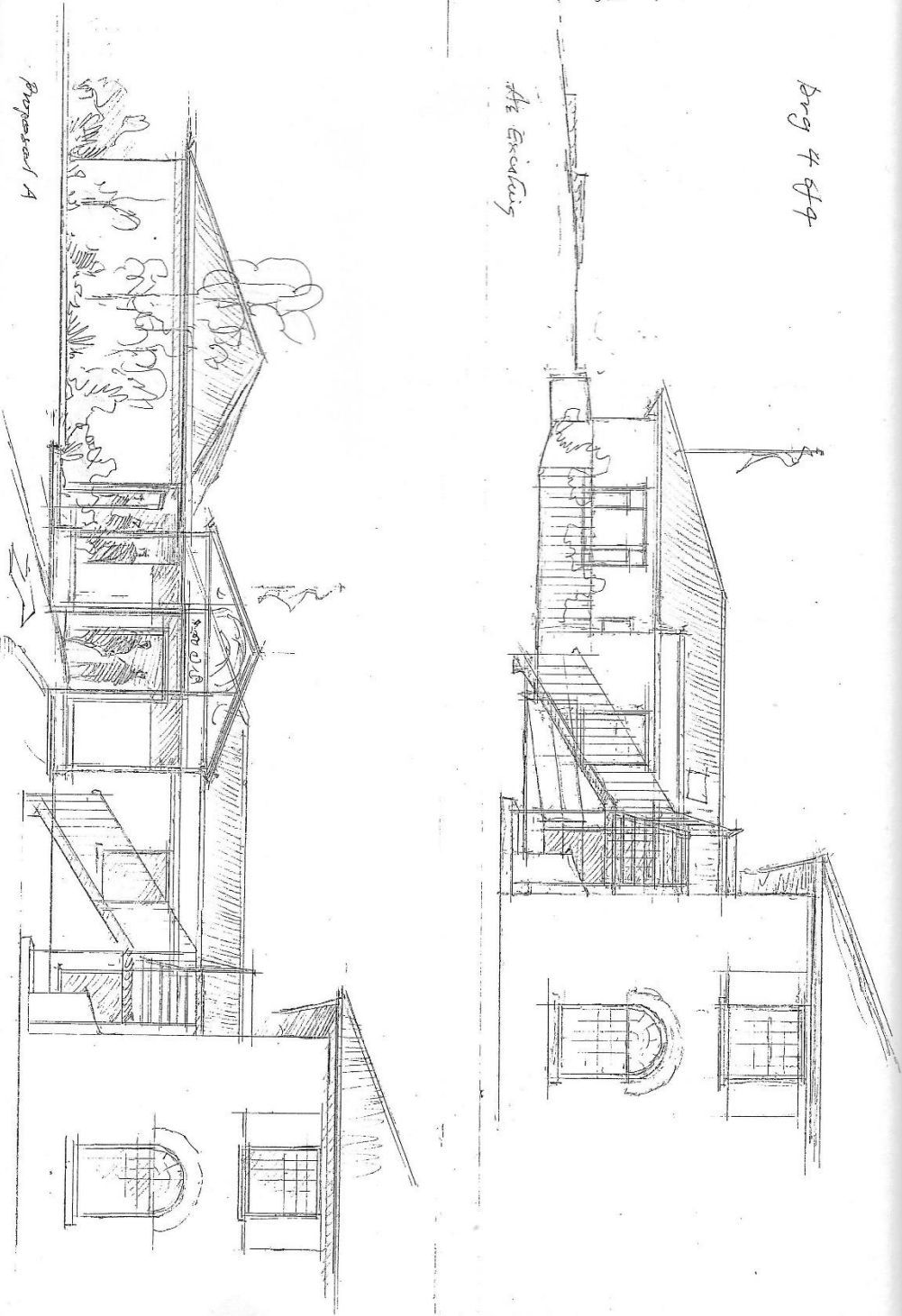
Copies to: Health Minister Edwina Hart
Pat Billingham, Chief Officer Meirionnydd CHC
Elfyn Llwyd MP
Lord Dafydd Ellis Thomas AM
Gareth Jones AM

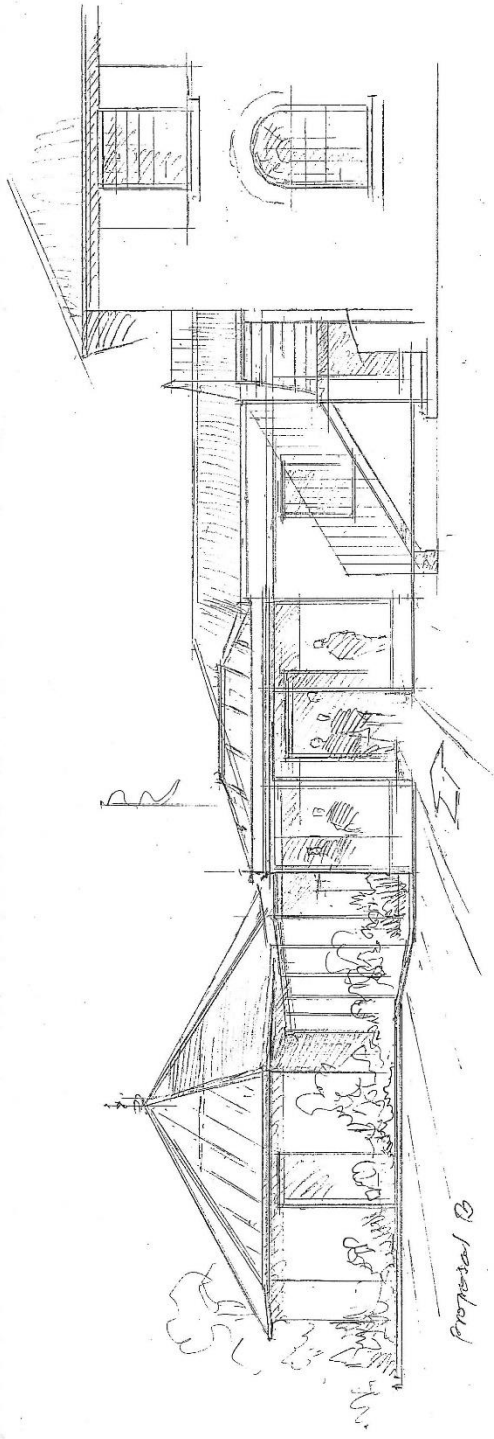
NO RESPONSE

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The Excavating

Proposed A





Proposal B

- 1 I much prefer the Octagonal design. A lot larger than the rectangular one, it fits the site better, allows more light into the existing building, & makes best use of the surrounding views.
- 2 It would be a modern eco-prefab quickbuild in steel & glass. Once alterations to the existing building had been carried out & its groundwork done, the new structure would be assembled on site, complete with planting in a matter of weeks.
- 3 The whole design right from first sight would be inviting & reassuring. I think it should be more than just a physio annex. It should be a sunny & uplifting place suitable for... yoga, dance & other healing activities.

Falcon 19 Oct 07

