

\$250m hospital plan gets the green light

By HALIMA GUTERRES

The Medical and Health Department is pressing ahead with a \$250 million expansion programme for Queen Mary Hospital.

The plan — the most ambitious in the history of the local medical service — will boost the hospital's total bed capacity by one third.

Sources yesterday disclosed that two high-rise buildings will be added to the Queen Mary complex.

A 26-storey block is to be built on a site presently occu-

ped by staff quarters which will be demolished.

The building will accommodate a modern paediatric unit that will incorporate such facilities as isolation wards for infectious cases, special rooms where mothers can spend the night with their sick children, play areas, tutorial rooms, as well as interview and rest rooms for parents.

In addition, the existing hospital canteen located behind the casualty unit will be pulled down to make way for

that detailed plans have been made but refused to elaborate because these have to be cleared by the Finance Committee.

Sources said, however, that under the existing plan five floors in the 20-storey block will be built below ground level for use as car parks.

This building will be linked to the hospital's main block by a subway.

Another five floors will be taken up by the paediatric unit which will also house 154

beds, an intensive care unit, a day-bed ward and an outpatient department.

Conditions in Hongkong's congested paediatric wards with their lack of modern facilities have long been the subject of criticism from the medical profession.

Critics have accused the Government of ignoring the needs of sick children and it has been noted that even racehorses get better treatment than ailing youngsters.

But sources believe that the new paediatric unit will

contain all the up-to-date and sophisticated facilities that they have been calling for.

Another three floors in the building will be taken up by a psychiatric unit that will house 85 beds, an outpatient clinic, a day ward as well as various ancillary services such as psychotherapy rooms, an observation room and other facilities.

The rest of the building will be used to accommodate private beds, X-ray rooms,

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central supplies, library, canteen, offices and a training school for nurses.

The other seven-storey block proposed in the expansion project will be used for accommodating special units such as renal, burns, prosthetic, physiotherapy, occupational therapy, coronary, and neurology units as well as isolation wards.

It will also include a ward with 20 beds for patients to stay for day-long special investigations such as bone marrow studies.

Plans to improve and expand the Island's regional hospital have been under discussion for the past two years.

But it was not until recently that a geotechnical study of the slope in the Queen Mary grounds was completed and the go-ahead given for plans to be finalised.