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\$158m plan to ease hospital beds shortage

Work will shortly begin to redevelop the Ruttonjee Sanatorium from an anti-tuberculosis institution into a general hospital.

Funds have been approved for the project, which will provide much needed acute beds for residents on Hong-kong Island.

The redevelopment will be carried out in three phases with completion scheduled for 1988.

The capital cost of the project is estimated at \$158 million, with the Government allocating \$127 million and the rest to be raised by the Hongkong Tuberculosis, Chest and Heart Diseases Association, which runs the sanatorium.

The 280-bed Ruttonjee Sanatorium will be upgraded into a 432-bed hospital, with provision for the bed-capacity to be increased to 600.

Plans for redevelopment of the sanatorium were considered and endorsed by the Medical Development Advisory Committee during recent reviews.

A spokesman for the Medical and Health Department said that the continuous efforts of the Government and the association, coupled with improved socio-economic conditions, had contributed to the decline in TB cases.

Having considered the future role of the sanatorium in the provision of medical care for the community, the as-

sociation proposed to redevelop the complex to provide supportive services to the Tang Shiu Kin Hospital.

Plans call for the new hospital to have 190 beds for TB and chest cases, 114 beds plus 50 day places for geriatrics, 64 beds for medical cases and another 64 beds for surgery, making a total of 432 beds, he said.

At present most patients treated at the casualty department at Tang Shiu Kin Hospital who require hospitalisation are admitted to Queen Mary or Tung Wah Eastern Hospital.

It was decided that a more comprehensive and systematic hospital support could be provided through the addition of acute beds in the redeveloped Ruttonjee Sanatorium, the spokesman said.

When the redevelopment project is finished, only patients requiring highly-specialised hospital care would be referred to Queen Mary Hospital, the island's regional hospital.

The first phase of the redevelopment project will consist of the demolition of several old buildings, temporary works, site formation and construction of senior staff quarters.

The second phase will involve the actual construction of the three main blocks of the new hospital, two of which will be 10 storeys high, building the main approach road and work on the garden.

The third phase will be the construction of the fourth block, which is expected to be completed by March 1988.

The redevelopment of the Ruttonjee Sanatorium will mean the entire profile of the institution will be changed, as the existing main building will be torn down and the new blocks located on the northern side of the hospital compound.

There will also be a new service road leading from Wanchai Road in addition to the widening of the existing access road at Queen's Road East.

A huge garden and staff quarters will be built on the site where the existing 100-year-old main building now stands.

The total area obtainable as a result of the redevelopment programme will be 33,880 square metres.