



Malcolm Aiston, Associate Director of Estates & Facilities, Northumberland, Tyne and Wear NHS Trust

Project Name:	The Bamburgh Clinic, St Nicholas Hospital
Project Type:	Mental Health Centre (Medium Secure Unit)
Client:	Newcastle, North Tyneside and Northumberland Mental Health NHS Trust
Architects:	MAAP
Completed:	2004
Location:	Gosforth
Funding:	NTW NHS Trust
Value:	£22m
Procurement Type:	ProCure21
Awards:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 2006 Green Apple Awards – Award for Best Built Environment 2006 Building Better Healthcare Awards – Award for Best Patient Environment – Finalist 2006 Building Better Healthcare Awards – Award for Best Mental Health Design - Finalist 2006 Building Better Healthcare Awards – Award for Best Hospital Design - Finalist 2006 Building Better Healthcare Awards – Award for Best External Space - Finalist

Case note 03

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Introduction

Established in 2006, Northumberland, Tyne and Wear (NTW) is one of the UK's largest NHS Trusts. It provides a wide range of mental health, disability and other specialist services to over 1.4m people in the North East of England. Malcolm Aiston has worked for the Trust since its formation, adopting a senior role in its award-winning Estates & Facilities team. He is currently the Project Director for all its buildings delivered under ProCure21, with one of his most high-profile successes being the Bamburgh Clinic.

The Bamburgh Clinic is part of the St Nicholas Hospital complex in Gosforth. It was commissioned in two phases by Newcastle, North Tyneside and Northumberland Mental Health NHS Trust, which later became part of the wider NTW Trust. Designed as a flagship facility for new national standards of care, it comprises two in-patient mental health facilities. The first is a small Low Secure Unit in a refurbished Victorian building, while the second is an entirely new-build 41-bed Medium Secure Unit.

The £22m project was initiated by the Department of Health as part of a national pilot programme for the treatment of personality disorders. The brief for the Medium Secure Unit was to provide an appropriate physical environment for the delivery of innovative treatment models. The Trust wanted to move away from a traditional 'custodial' care approach and focus on recovery and social inclusion. This shaped the requirement for a sensitively designed building that could offer both a secure and therapeutic environment.

In keeping with the spirit of the MSU project, the Trust wished to adopt a collaborative approach to design and construction. The building was delivered via ProCure21 to an exceptionally tight 18 month programme. The standard of both 'process' and 'product' has been recognised in numerous award schemes, including the Building Better Healthcare and Constructing Excellence initiatives.



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Description

< *Bamburgh Clinic*
Photo: MAAP

The Bamburgh Clinic is laid out over two separate buildings. The Low Secure Unit is part of the Victorian estate of St Nicholas Hospital while the new-build Medium Secure Unit (MSU) occupies a brownfield site on the campus periphery. It is bordered by residential properties, a wildlife centre and a postal depot.

The MSU provides 25 'medium secure' beds and 16 beds for patients with personality disorders. Some service users have committed criminal offences and are prone to aggressive behaviour. Through detailed consultation and sensitive design, MAAP Architects have provided a facility that the community feels comfortable having in its midst while de-institutionalising the patient environment.

The plan comprises three wards in an L-shaped configuration with centrally located support functions. It draws a clear distinction between 'living' and 'working' areas, thus simulating real environments and promoting occupational healthcare. Each ward is made up of single-occupancy bedrooms, shared therapy and assessment areas and day spaces arranged around generous enclosed courtyards. Observation is inherent in the design, with good sightlines across the plan. Together with the courtyards, multiple windows introduce daylight and views. The centrepiece of the development is an open-sided multi-games 'sports barn' which provides a high site boundary. There is minimal security fencing.

The project uses energy efficient technologies and low maintenance materials. The prefabricated timber frame is exceptionally robust, has good acoustic insulation and readily incorporates recessed fittings for ease of servicing. It was ideal for the fast-track programme, having a 'dry construction' time of ten weeks. Locally sourced timber is also used for hardwood frame windows, cladding and courtyard furniture. Rainwater is harvested from one third of the roof area.

Using the NHS Environmental Assessment Tool, the building has achieved an 'excellent' rating of 77.92%. It is used as a case study by the SHINE network for sustainable healthcare buildings. Now in its third year of operation, it is in excellent condition. It has been cited as a factor in attracting new staff and reducing absence among the existing team. Crucially, it has significantly reduced incidences of patient aggression, with a 90% reduction in the Psychiatric Intensive Care Units (PICU).

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Procurement process



^ Bamburgh Clinic
Photo: MAAP

The Bamburgh Clinic's status as a pilot project meant that the NHS Trust was able to mobilise resources quickly. The Estates & Facilities (E&F) team wished to capitalise upon this potential for fast-track delivery without risk to design, build or clinical quality. With the support of the Department of Health, they chose to use ProCure21 for its notional ability to secure these outcomes and its focus on partnering.

In October 2004, the Trust approached the ProCure21 framework of 12 Principal Supply Chain Partners (PSCPs) to ascertain the general level of interest in the scheme. They received nine expressions of interest, from which they short-listed four bidders.

The next stage was to evaluate the detailed offer of the four short-listed PSCPs, appraising each bid from three perspectives: clinical; estates; and project management. Instead of submitting 'cold' documentation, the bidders were invited along to an 'open day'. They were given a 45 minute question and answer session with each of the Trust's three groups and a further 45 minutes to describe their offer and what they perceived to be the project's key drivers.

Using a broad scoring matrix, Laing O'Rourke was chosen as the preferred PSCP and invited for formal interview. Their appointment was confirmed just six weeks after they were first approached to express interest.

At the Trust's request, architects Reid Jubb Brown were retained for the refurbishment project, based on their long-term involvement with the St Nicholas Hospital site. The Low Secure Unit was completed in December 2004 at £70,000 less than the Guaranteed Maximum Price, with savings being invested in Phase II of the project: the Medium Secure Unit.

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^ Bamburgh Clinic
Photo: MAAP

The design of the Medium Secure Unit was awarded to specialist firm, Medical Architecture & Art Projects (MAAP). Although London-based at the time, MAAP soon established a presence in Newcastle, which they still retain.

Following appointment, the design and delivery process for the Medium Secure Unit was launched by a partnering workshop. This involved four main stakeholder groups: clinicians; supporting members of the Trust body (including the E&F team); design consultants; and the contractor. The aim was to establish what expectations the teams had about working together and to explore what partnership might actually entail 'on the ground'. People were asked to express their fears, as well as hopes, for the project. The workshop culminated in the agreement of a charter of shared objectives.

For strategic direction, the Trust established a high-level Project Board Team of four members. These represented the interests of the business case, the clinicians, the E&F team and the PSCP. They met for one hour every week from appointment to completion, with occasional input from a Department of Health architect.

The workshop format was rolled-out across the lifetime of the commission in a series of two hour sessions entitled "A day in the life of...". This gave clinicians and service users direct access to the design and construction teams, including consultants and suppliers. The brief evolved as, collectively, the team redefined how people might use the space day-to-day. The workshops were also a testing ground for new materials and products.

The final workshop took place between completion and occupation. Styled as the 'Bamburgh Clinic Experience', it involved a group of 40 volunteers from across the delivery team living in the unit for all – or part of – a five day working week.

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Summary



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Photo: MAAP

The design and delivery of patient-focused mental health facilities is a challenging commission for all concerned. Getting it right involves openness, flexibility and a de-stigmatised attitude to service users. The Bamburgh Clinic is an exemplar project because it has fostered this attitude from the outset, not just among clinicians and staff, but non-clinical areas of the Trust and the design and construction teams. The quality of the care environment is undoubtedly enhanced by the willingness of all stakeholders to explore what life might be like for users and to seek to improve it.

The client NHS Trust is well informed and knowledgeable and was probably more prepared than most for the project, especially given its Department of Health pilot status. The Estates & Facilities team have experience of a number of different procurement routes. When strategising for the Bamburgh Clinic they applied critical and contextual thinking. They needed to deliver the project quickly but to a high quality standard. They understood that ProCure21 would allow them immediate access to the delivery team and improved cost certainty.

When contacting the 12 Principal Supply Chain Partners initially, the Trust only supplied a one-page outline brief and asked for replies by the following week. In retrospect, this might have been too hurried a process without adequate input from clinicians. However, the evaluation of short-listed bidders on a tripartite basis was an early recognition of the different skills sets involved in designing and delivering an exemplar building.

Respecting the professionalism of others remained inherent to the process throughout the commission. It was fundamental, for example, to the progress made by the four Project Board members. These key players are all “can do” personalities. They made focused decisions and ensured they were actioned. They shared commitment, receptiveness to new ideas and – perhaps most importantly – a sense of humour.

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^ Bamburgh Clinic
Photo: MAAP

The partnering workshop acknowledged that ProCure21 was a relatively new phenomenon for everyone concerned and was going to be a steep learning curve. It shone a spotlight on preconceptions and openly addressed hesitation about the fast pace of the project. People became excited, not daunted, about the challenges ahead.

During the course of the workshops, the clinicians brought in ten years of experience of running a Medium Secure Unit and a clear idea of how they wanted to operate differently. The estates, design and construction professionals could apply this thinking to layouts (particularly the integration of courtyards), functionality and detailed design elements. Maintenance issues were addressed as challenges, rather than restraints, and led to the use of off-site components like the prefabricated timber frame. This was an excellent use of the benefits of ProCure21. Through early collaboration between designers and clinicians, the Trust 'bought' themselves time to test innovation without risk to budget or programme.

Using an established architectural practice with progressive ideas about designing for mental health and a track record on delivery was welcomed by all stakeholders. The opening of MAAP's Newcastle office was seen as further positive commitment to both the project and the wider community. It facilitated close collaboration with the client, users and locally-based consultants such as the mechanical and electrical engineer, CAD 21. This provided the Trust with continuity of service.

For their part, Laing O'Rourke invested savings from the Guaranteed Maximum Price (GMP) in the project's peace garden. A further 1% of the GMP went towards public art, but this was perhaps not as integrated into the overall design process as it might have been. The brief made no provision for the use of colour in the building, though this is now being considered.



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The building undoubtedly meets its brief to facilitate a step-change in the Trust's provision of mental healthcare. Its non-hierarchical plan – based on single rooms, shared treatment areas and a discreet relationship between staff and patient functions – de-stigmatises the environment, playing down any sense of “them and us”. It is sized and scaled to have a domestic feel, with a light and airy ambience. This reinforces the idea of it being a real space, which enables clinicians to deliver individual treatment pathways based on engagement and stimulation. External spaces which are meant for lingering not simply people-moving are crucial in this regard.

< *Bamburgh Clinic*
Photo: MAAAP