

# INNOVATION INTO SUCCESS

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# Five years on the road to drug discovery

SENEXIS LTD HAS NOW SPENT ALMOST FIVE YEARS ON THE BABRAHAM RESEARCH CAMPUS NEAR CAMBRIDGE. SENEXIS' CHIEF EXECUTIVE, MARK TREHERNE, DESCRIBES WHY SENEXIS DECIDED TO INITIALLY LOCATE TO BABRAHAM AND REPORTS ON SOME OF THE MORE PRACTICAL DAY-TO-DAY ASPECTS OF WORKING IN THE LABORATORY FACILITIES ON THE CAMPUS DURING A CRUCIAL PERIOD OF THE COMPANY'S EARLY DEVELOPMENT

SENEXIS IS a growing, small-molecule drug development company that is committed to revolutionising the treatment and diagnosis of diseases resulting from the inevitable process of ageing. It is advancing a pipeline of novel treatments for diseases resulting from the toxicity of amyloid-like proteins. The pipeline of products is currently focused on discovering potent and selective small-molecule medicines for the treatment of Alzheimer's disease.

Senexis was originally formed in 2001 to develop a series of patents on amyloid aggregation inhibitors, which had been independently developed in Manchester and Cambridge. Senexis was first established in academic laboratories at UMIST in Manchester, where the company raised seed funding in November 2002 from BTG plc and the Wellcome Trust Ltd.

Senexis moved from its academic roots in Manchester to its own facilities at the Babraham Research Campus, near Cambridge in 2004, where it has continued to build an experienced team and the infrastructure that is required to take



Senexis' registered office is Babraham Hall

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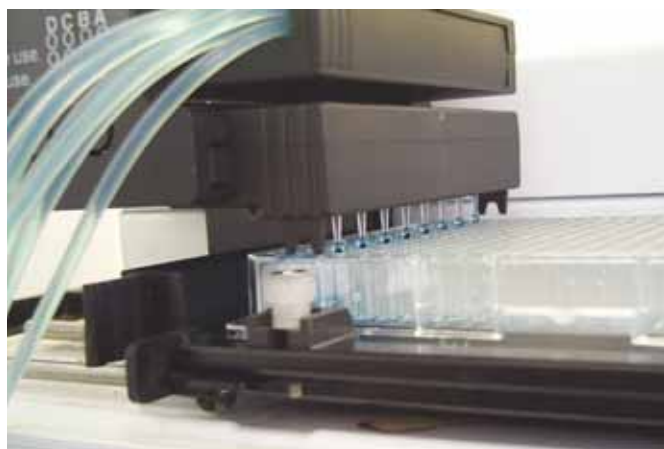
 <p>Castle House York Road Sheriff Hutton York YO60 6RZ</p> <p>Enquiries to Paul G. Walters Tel. 01347 878877 Fax. 01347 878878 Email <a href="mailto:pwalters@mss-cl.co.uk">pwalters@mss-cl.co.uk</a></p> 	<p>MSS is an established company providing clients with a total service for the design, construction and commissioning of controlled environments in the Life Science and associated industries.</p> <p>We provide bespoke solutions, from simple internal fit out of existing facilities to full turnkey projects, including M &amp; E services and laboratory benching with the option of modular or traditional host buildings.</p> <p>During our 25 years of operation we have earned a reputation for exceptionally high installation quality and the ability to meet the most exacting standards in clean technology.</p> <p>Our in house team of specialists, including architectural, mechanical and electrical designers, will work with you to assess your specific project requirements to provide a complete service from initial concept through to commissioning and handover.</p> <p>MSS are able to offer assistance in gaining FDA, Medicines Inspectorate, Home Office or cGMP approval.</p>
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To assist with screening, compound dispensing has been automated by using robotic liquid handling systems

41 compounds through discovery and into clinical development. To date, Senexis has raised £6.1 million.

The Babraham Research Campus is an ideal location for Senexis, as it brings together opportunities for academic and commercial collaboration. There are currently about 400 research scientists and staff at the Babraham Institute, and approximately 200 people work at 30 or so biotechnology companies, who are also located

on the Campus.

The juxtaposition of companies with the Babraham Institute has allowed Senexis to develop a number of synergistic relationships with the academic community on site. This synergy between the Institute's academic science base was an important factor that led to the company's decision to move to Cambridge from Manchester.

Senexis' research laboratories are located in Babraham's Bioincubator, which was originally established in 1998. The Bioincubator building currently offers 32,000 sq ft of combined laboratory and office accommodation on flexible, short-term leases that are compatible with the typical funding arrangements of start-up biotech companies. Senexis has now been established in a self-contained small operational base of 1,300 sq ft in the building, since June 2004. Senexis operates on a 'semi-virtual' basis, in which only the proprietary core in vitro assays are run internally. All chemical synthesis, on the other hand, is outsourced.

Approximately 75% of Senexis' rented space in the Bioincubator is set up for in vitro laboratory use, which allows Senexis to run its proprietary amyloid-aggregation screens and all the cell-based assays at the Babraham site. There are two separate tissue culture laboratories in the Senexis facility, which contain CO<sub>2</sub> incubators and Category II containment cabinets.

The tissue culture team grow the company's neuroblastoma cell

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Laboratory facilities are used for running the routine cell-free biochemical screens, such as amyloid-aggregation assays



lines, as and when they are needed for screening compounds, and the cells are otherwise kept in cryogenic storage when they are not in use. The remainder of the laboratory facilities are used for running the routine cell-free biochemical screens, such as amyloid-aggregation assays. Most of the assays are now optimised for screening with micro-titre plates, which are usually in 98-well or 384-well plate formats. To assist with screening, compound dispensing has been automated by using robotic liquid handling systems. To improve the quality of air handling in some of the laboratories, Senexis has retro-fitted air conditioning systems on the roof of the building.

In addition to the laboratories in the Biocubator, the Research Campus offers access to further shared central facilities that can be hired on an ad hoc basis, as and when needed. For example, Senexis has used the Institute's Biacore 3000, as a part of this arrangement, which has been used to demonstrate the binding of Senexis' compounds to amyloid. Computing support and a helpdesk service are also a useful bonus to early-stage companies, providing access to the Campus' central computing facilities that allow a secure and fast access to the internet through wide band-width links. The computing support service also provides ISP service level agreements and hosting domains for the Senexis website (<http://www.senexis.com/>).

The company's registered office is in Babraham Hall, which also has meeting room facilities and a refectory. Furthermore, the Campus has 24/7 security control provision, with CCTV coverage, which enables the security team to respond rapidly to any emergency on the campus. Those working on site have automated monitored entry, with access to the Campus outside normal working hours, which is an important consideration, particularly when maintaining cells in long-term culture. Importantly for growing companies with plans for expansion, the

new BioDevelopment buildings provide larger premises for companies requiring grow-on space on the Campus. They offer fully-fitted laboratory and office accommodation, also with flexible short-term leases.

The first of these buildings, Minerva, was completed in December 2004 and is fully occupied. Construction of the second building, named Meditrina after the Roman goddess of medicine, commenced in September 2006 and offers 20,500 sq ft of laboratory and office accommodation in units of 1,000 sq ft, which are let as individual or multiple units on flexible terms to suit growing biotech companies.

In conclusion, Senexis have spent a productive and happy five years at Babraham and the company is pleased that it decided to locate there. The company is now looking forward to further expansion on the Campus over the next five years.

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