

Queen Mary's Hospital, Roehampton

The award-winning Queen Mary's Hospital at Roehampton breaks new ground in the design of adult, mental health, in-patient facilities in the UK. Uniquely, it provides mental health facilities that are integrated within a community hospital setting. A decision based initially on economics has come to signify a step change in attitudes to mental health, no longer the poor relation within the health sector.

The new hospital opened in March 2006, with the external works and parking completed in September 2006. The mental health facilities within the community hospital include an Addiction Treatment Centre, three 23-bed adult mental health wards, and Community Mental Health Team facilities.

Designed by Devereux Architects Ltd, under a PFI ("Private Finance Initiative") procurement route with consortia lead Catalyst, and main contractor Bovis Lend Lease, the new community hospital marks the regeneration of healthcare facilities on this historic and nationally-renowned site. Queen Mary's Hospital is one of the largest community hospital facilities in the country, and meets the requirements of the Government white paper on community hospitals.

Objectives of the Design

The objective of the design was to build a hospital that was not just a community hospital but part of the community. The requirement was to create lots of light and access to the outside world. The use of colour, light and open spaces give real hope that this hospital is a healing environment."

The new community hospital at Roehampton has been applauded for serving to de-stigmatise mental health services, by providing them as part of an integrated community hospital.

The design places the patient, staff and visitor experience as the main focus, with an internal environment that provides high-quality therapeutic care as well as maximising views, natural light and access to outside space. The mental health wards have been located on first floor, with bedroom areas set back from the main façade wherever possible, to provide maximum privacy along with enhanced outlook.

Each ward has its own garden terrace immediately accessible from the ward's day areas. The terraced gardens for the mental health wards at first floor level, provide a therapeutic environment whilst addressing the significant concerns of safety and security. The design of these areas was subject to lengthy consultation and fullscale mock-up testing with the mental health Trust, during the design development stage. These gardens are viewed as an extension to the internal space, and have been designed to facilitate easy access. They have been commended as providing some of the most accessible mental health garden facilities, with safety and security built in as part of the design of the garden. Indeed, nursing staff are entirely content to allow patients access to the gardens without supervision, such is the reduction in risk that has been achieved.

Throughout the unit, importance has been given in the design to creating the most appropriate internal environment, which provides interest and variety for patients. The use of interior and exterior spatial concepts, colour, texture, natural and artificial lighting and art have been combined to create variety, as well as providing stimulation and calmness.

The top floor of the three-part, four-storey community hospital accommodates the new mental health in-patient facility, enjoying spectacular views over the London skyline.

Image

The new hospital needed to portray the appropriate image to reflect the Trust's healthcare philosophy: how it values its patients and staff. It was also viewed as a Catalyst/BLL flagship facility and needed to reflect the ethos of Catalyst Healthcare consortia.

Key words reflecting the Trust's image included:-

- Quality
- Care

- Efficiency
- Friendly
- Welcoming
- Confidence
- Professionalism

The design acknowledges that the buildings we inhabit affect the way we feel, with the aim of achieving the correct ambience for all areas.

The key points considered in delivering the appropriate internal environment were:

- Maximising natural light
- Providing suitable ventilation, maximising natural ventilation
- Good aspects with views to external spaces
- Spatial concepts that are varied in height, shape and plan form
- Use of colour
- Use of texture
- Use of natural materials
- Carefully designed artificial lighting in association with services consultants
- Carefully selected artwork, sourced and installed by the Trust, sited to act as landmarks to help with finding the way
- Co-ordinated selection of furniture and furnishings, in association with equipping specialist
- Easily understood and co-ordinated signage
- Integration of notice-boards and places for temporary signs/notices

Mental Health Wards

All three wards are located at the first-floor level, with dedicated external spaces provided in the form of terraced gardens. The upper floor location provided some problems as well as some unique opportunities. Safety and security concerns lead to detailed testing of all perceived weak points, such as windows, anti-climb eaves and the garden perimeter walls.

Natural light has been maximised throughout, utilising side-lighting to corridors and roof lights wherever possible. This assists in ensuring that circulation spaces are well lit, feel homely and provide views out. The upper floor location minimises any potential issues of overlooking, and provides an unparalleled sense of privacy whilst maintaining outlook.

Each ward layout follows similar principles of grouping rooms by activity. The ward entrance areas include a lobby with a generous open-plan waiting area and two interview rooms. On entering the ward, the staff base is immediately visible, providing a sense of arrival and reassurance. Observation within a ward can be as much about staff being visible, as providing observation of inpatients. The staff base provides a central focus to the ward during the daytime. The main day facilities are arranged around this base, including an open-plan dining area and two sitting-rooms opening out onto the private garden areas. It has been a high priority that the patients need for personal space, and meaningful activity is catered for within the building.

The bed areas are arranged together, in three distinct groupings, including a male bed area, a female bed area and five 'swing' beds arranged around the night-time staff base to accommodate patient's of either gender. All bedrooms are in the form of single bedrooms with ensuite facilities. The bedrooms have been carefully designed to maximise observation from the door for staff, whilst maintaining privacy for patients. The bedrooms were designed above the current, recommended, single bedroom size, to ensure adequate space for daily activities including study and future flexibility.

Within the mental health wards, colours and materials have been selected to achieve a more homely environment balanced with the needs of addressing safety and security concerns.

Each ward has its own landscaped garden/courtyard terrace immediately accessible from the ward's day areas. These gardens were viewed as an extension to the internal space, and have proved to be very popular amongst the in-patients. They provide an open aspect with views into the landscape and surrounding area outside the unit's confines. All of the gardens are open to the sky, with a variety of perimeter wall screening including clear fixed panels, glass blocks, cedar boarding and facing bricks. The overhanging eaves serve to provide security and prevent climbing, as well as providing shelter and accommodating the main garden lighting. The gardens have been designed so that they can be used throughout the year.

Alan Hargreaves from Catalyst commented, "The hospital was handed over exactly one year ago on 3 March. It is an excellent building and the customers are, overwhelmingly, happy with it. It is operating well and obviously benefiting from the quality input."

All in all, the project is a great success!

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