

HEALING ARCHITECTURE

Construction Specialties 02

THE BENEFITS OF HEALING ARCHITECTURES



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THE POSITIVE SIDES OF HEALING architectures are being increasingly touted, whether in the field of medicine, among architects or even hospital material suppliers.

And it's much more than a fad. This holistic concept of healing environments presents major advantages across the board. Patients of course stand to benefit, but so do visitors, healthcare staff, administrative and technical personnel and even the buildings themselves (through their longevity).

This article will take you through the advantages of healing environments and the well-founded reasons for hospitals and healthcare establishments to seriously consider them.

WHAT IS A HEALING ARCHITECTURE?

Healing architecture is a movement that acknowledges the effect that buildings have on our sense of comfort, well-being and health.

The phenomenon is particularly prominent in neighbouring Scandinavian countries and the US. It is also gaining ground in many European medical centres and in Switzerland.

« Healing architecture is a contemporary movement that acknowledges the effect that buildings have on our sense of comfort, well-being and health. »

The science seems to back up this phenomenon: several scientific studies have underscored how our environment impacts our health. And it would indeed seem that architecture has a stimulating effect on us, even providing substantial therapeutic qualities for healthcare establishments.

To consider a given piece of architecture as a healing one, it must satisfy a range of criteria:

- Make the most of natural light, which stimulates healing,
- Keep noise to a minimum to avoid needless stress,
- Ensure patient comfort and the ability to control their environment,
- Use colours and materials to create an inviting, relaxing, secure and hygienic environment,
- Allow in fresh air,
- Use nature as a cure for stress (view looking out onto nature, the inclusion of nature inside, access to gardens, etc.),
- Use art as a distraction therapy,
- Give patients the opportunity to enjoy privacy and places in which to socialise so they can alternate between calm and social support,
- Provide orientation.

But how can a type of architecture that combines these different elements benefit healthcare establishments?

HEALING ARCHITECTURE AND A HOSPITAL'S LEVELS OF PERFORMANCE



Orbis Medical Centre in Sittard (The Netherlands)



Maggie's Centers (UK)

There is a clear correlation between the design of a hospital, how it operates and its levels of performance. If the design observes the basic premises listed above, you can achieve a certain number of positive effects.

Firstly, as illustrated by many scientific studies and our introductory article on healing architectures, it has been proven that hospitals designed with due care help reduce a patient's feelings of stress, anxiety and fear. Healing architectures affect the length of a hospital stay and the amount of medication taken because they also positively impact healthcare establishments and staff performance levels and morale.

After all, these performances are crucial to directors of healthcare facilities. They can be analysed in the form of a Balanced Score Card, an analysis based on a

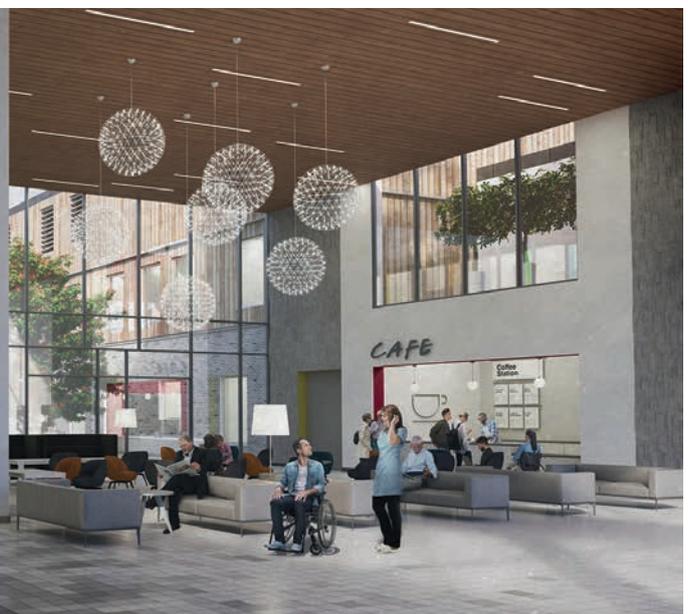
series of key performance indicators (KPI). These KPIs include lengths of stay, bed and/or room turnover, the amount of medication a patient takes per stay, the cost of medication per patient, the rate of readmission, user satisfaction, and even bed occupancy rate.

As you can imagine, this list is not exhaustive. However, on a more serious note, these KPIs, a familiar sight for hospital directors, help measure the facility's levels of performance and profitability. It is precisely by setting targets based on these KPIs that healthcare facilities can rank amongst the very best.

The list of KPIs is long, clearly showing that hospitals are subject to rigorous performance and satisfaction requirements that must stand the test of time.



New University Hospital Monklands



THE BENEFITS OF HEALING ARCHITECTURES FOR USERS

A place where visitors feel less anxious

Hospitals do not always have a good reputation; no one goes there for the sheer pleasure of it. However, healing architectures can help restore the image of hospitals so that they become, above all, a place of life and healing, rather than a sad place where you only go for all the wrong reasons.

By replacing long corridors and their harsh lights with spaces that open out onto nature and let in natural lighting, hospitals become more pleasant, less terrifying places to be.

We mustn't forget that healing architectures must facilitate what is known as social support. As such, hospitals must not make visitors feel reluctant to come and enable

patients to welcome their loved ones in their room or common areas with ease. These spaces must guarantee a basic level of privacy. For example, they can have physical barriers or a musical backdrop.

Reassured patients who are less stressed and reticent

When the public views healthcare establishments in a positive light, people are less reluctant to seek treatment and get the care they need.

A healing environment can, to put it simply, alleviate the fears people have about going to hospital and encourage them to look after themselves.

Young patients

When it comes to children, being hospitalised – whether for a short or long time – often goes hand in hand with pain, fear and disruption.

Healing environments offer them a more reassuring setting with soft colours, works of art to look at, access to nature and even playful signposting suited to them. And so, unjustified fears, stress and temper tantrums vanish into thin air.

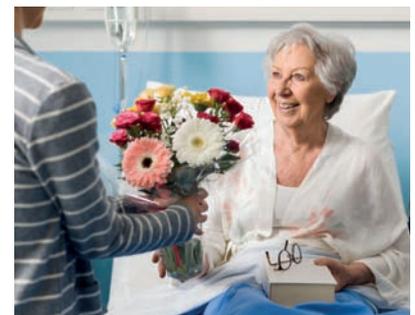
The Emma children's hospital in Amsterdam is a perfect example of this use of colours and signage.

As for the not so young...

The holistic concept of healing architectures helps patients feel less stressed and anxious.



Emma children's hospital in Amsterdam



After all, these feelings tend to affect a patient's physical state (high blood pressure, digestive problems, fatigue, irritability), sense of privacy and even well-being.

« Das Konzept der heilenden Architektur ist ein ganzheitlicher Ansatz, mit dem Stress und Ängste von Patienten gemindert werden. »



Ballymena Health & Care Centre (Northern Ireland)

A calming atmosphere

When coupled with an architecture that lets in natural light, art and nature, a relaxing, cosy atmosphere can help patients feel less oppressed and less stressed. Similarly, users experience fewer problems linked to high blood pressure when there is less noise.

As for hospitals located in urban areas, it is not always easy to provide patients with access to nature. However, there are alternatives in these cases, such as those developed by Acrovyn By Design®: innovative solutions that offer life-size reproductions of landscapes or textures and natural materials.

Signage and empowerment: an additional tool

Another surprisingly effective tool to help patients feel less disoriented is providing intuitive orientation and clear, easy-to-read signs. After all, being disoriented is a typical cause of stress that patients could easily do without.

And then there's the notion of empowerment. Let's look at why it's so important. By giving patients the greatest amount of control over their environment, they feel more at ease and calmer. They settle in, feel supported and stronger.



Emma Children's Hospital in Amsterdam (The Netherlands)

Valais Hospital in Brig

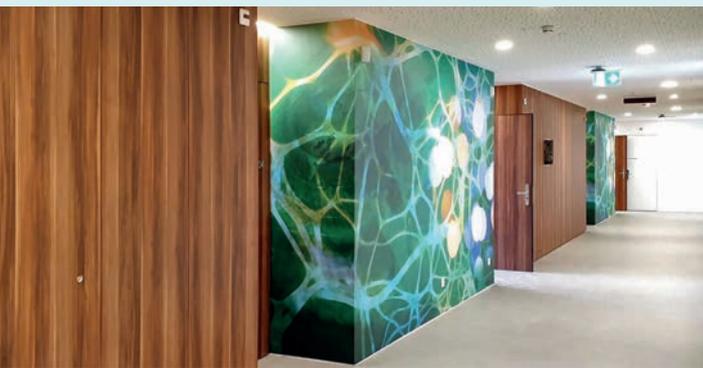
At the Valais Hospital in Brig (Spital Wallis - Spitalzentrum Oberwallis Brig), the wood textures of the Acrovyn® sheets not only protect the walls, they also add warmth and have a real appeal. What's more, the surfaces can be disinfected, meaning the most exacting standards are met.



Close-up of a Acrovyn by Design® wall protection depicting the colour and grain of wood

Zihlschlacht Klinik in Thurgau

At the Zihlschlacht Klinik in Thurgau, Acrovyn by Design® wall protection sheets depicting natural wood grain and imaginative illustrations in corridors stretching over ten metres in length makes the place more inviting. Meanwhile, the Acrovyn® wall protection sheets in a GP waiting room shown below depict a forest of birch trees for a reinvigorating feeling of immersion.



Sometimes all a patient needs to be happy is a remote control to adjust the lighting and brightness (lights and blinds), sound (music and TV), temperature, and the reclining position of their bed.

Controlling light



There are simple solutions for patients to have complete control over light and avoid glare in their room.

Many different companies make roller blinds, but they are all based on the same principle: heat screens. Using roller blinds, patients can control the amount of natural light entering their rooms and prevent glare. They are an excellent solution for hospitals that want to meet healing architecture criteria.

These types of blinds, initially designed for space travel, are composed of a polyester film that is both transparent and highly reflective. They adapt perfectly to a wide range of uses.





Kantonspital Baden (Switzerland)

Faster healing

Several scientific papers have shown that the different criteria for healing architecture have an impact on patients getting better.

These criteria include having access to nature, natural light, a view looking out onto nature (park, trees, etc.),

fresh air and even a calm environment. All these aspects seem to positively affect the healing process and time, and consequently, the length of hospital stays.

Given testimonials, healing architectures seem ensure greater compliance with a doctor's instructions and recommendations for rest and recuperation. That, in turn, means people get better quicker.



Inselspital Bern (Switzerland)

With distraction therapy, the patient focuses their attention on pleasant things and is distracted from their discomfort and pain.

Reduced levels of medication

Therefore, a suitable architecture can have a positive effect on a patient's recovery, the quality of their stay, their sleep cycles, and their perceptions of pain.

There is indeed a link between certain types of pain and stress. That's why patients in healthcare establishments that promote healing often need less medication.

For example, studies on patients under postoperative monitoring show that certain aspects such as having a view, access to natural light and seeing art affect the perception of pain. Patients with rooms that had optimal conditions often asked for smaller doses of painkillers.

It's what is known as distraction therapy.

By helping patients focus their attention on something pleasant, they fixate less on their discomfort and pain.

Combining white with colours from the NCS colour range is an excellent way of putting this theory into practice.

What's more, Acrovyn® helps you make your hospital a cheerful one through dashes of bright, fun colours. You need only take the example of this children's hospital in the USA that used the new palette of 36 nature-inspired colours.



Emma Children's Hospital in Amsterdam (The Netherlands)

Greater satisfaction

Healing architectures make hospital admissions more liveable; patients are more relaxed and satisfied. As such, their attitude to healthcare staff tends to improve.

This is doubly beneficial to hospitals. After all, happy patients and visitors are sources of

recommendation. They boost a hospital's reputation in its area, a quantifiable appreciation of the facility equivalent to several hundreds of thousands of Euros in the long term.

In the United States, HCAHPS (Hospital Assessment of Healthcare Providers and Systems) has

surveyed patients discharged from hospital through a customer satisfaction grid. This assessment form uses 27 criteria to evaluate satisfaction, from the likelihood of recommending the hospital to the quality of information and services, and so on. All this information is then used to rank healthcare establishments.

Hospital Consumer Assessment of Healthcare Provider Systems (HCAHPS)

Hospital Discharges July 2015-June 2016

HCAHPS (pronounced "H-caps") is a 27 question standardized telephone survey measuring patients' ratings of their hospital experience. The results are compiled into 10 separate core measures listed below. All results of this test are publicly reported at <http://www.hospitalcompare.hhs.gov>, where other hospital results can be found as well. HCAHPS allows hospitals to publicly report and compare their results locally, regionally, and nationally.

	UNC	Rex	Caldwell	Chatham	High Point	Johnston	Lenoir	M. Pardee	Nash	Wayne	NC Avg.	Nat. Avg.
% Patients who overall rate the hospital highly	80	76	68	85	68	75	67	72	64	67	72	72
% Patients who would recommend hospital to friends & family	83	81	65	82	69	73	64	73	58	60	71	72
% Patients given information about what to do during recovery at home	90	89	87	92	81	90	84	88	86	86	87	87
% Doctors who communicated well with patients	83	84	81	92	78	82	83	82	78	81	83	82
% Nurses who communicated well with patients	83	80	76	92	78	81	82	78	80	79	81	80
% Patients who received help quickly from hospital staff	68	66	66	85	62	69	63	66	66	65	68	69
% Staff who explained medicines before giving them to patients	67	65	62	76	62	68	66	65	64	64	66	65
% Patients whose pain was well controlled	72	72	68	80	71	72	73	67	70	68	72	71
% Patients whose rooms were kept quiet at night	64	59	65	80	56	72	61	59	54	62	64	63
% Patients rooms and bathrooms kept clean	74	63	74	86	70	78	72	81	65	71	72	74
% Patients who understood their care when they left the hospital	59	55	49	66	47	52	49	53	45	43	51	52
Overall Star Rating (1-5)	2	3	2	3	3	3	2	4	2	3		
Patient Survey Star Rating (1-5)	4	4	3	5	3	4	3	3	3	3		

 Highest Scoring Hospital
 NC Average
 National Average



Ronald McDonald House, Glasgow

THE BENEFITS OF HEALING ARCHITECTURES FOR THE HEALTHCARE FACILITY AND STAFF

A much more pleasant environment for healthcare staff

One of the keys to healing architectures is providing an enjoyable and functional place of work.

Providing a comfortable working environment, designed to improve communications and work, makes it easier to manage medical teams.

A happy healthcare workforce means (amongst others):

- fewer errors,
- lower rates of burnout,
- fewer medical leaves of absence,
- better levels of performance,
- fewer abandonments of post,
- less turnover.

As it currently stands, there are more vacant posts in healthcare teams than there are qualified candidates. Retaining healthcare staff is, therefore, a real issue.

Lowering staff turnover is essential to make it easier to manage hospital facilities and offer a better healthcare experience.

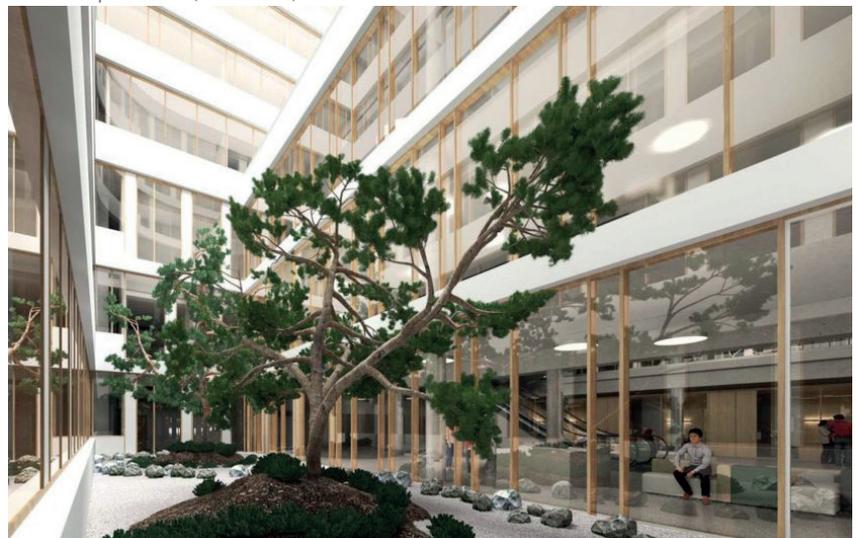
When it comes to deciding whether to leave their place of work, healthcare staff often cite recognition of their work and their day-to-day well-being as being more important than pay alone.

The more relaxed doctors and nurses are, the more effective and

compassionate the care they offer to their patients. Job performance is more constant, and internal disagreements less frequent.

Staff are also less likely to make errors. Studies show that standardised spaces and good ventilation and lighting mean less distracted healthcare staff and fewer mistakes. If we put errors to one side, care is always of a higher quality when given by calm, content personnel.

Kantonspital Baden (Switzerland)



An attractive and profitable facility in the long term

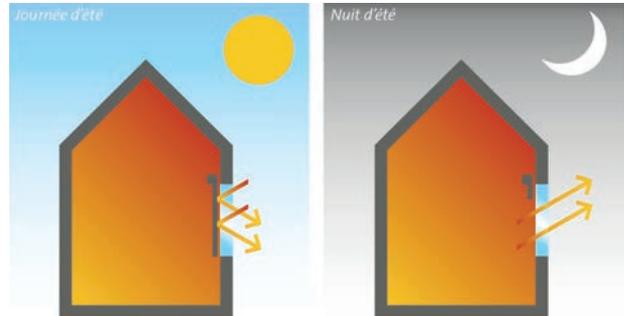
Healing architecture is not just a matter of well-being at work: it can also prove profitable in the long term.

While it's true to say that making changes to a facility to enable healing doesn't come for free, they can generate sizeable indirect savings.

Of course, it would be best to integrate healing architecture criteria from the get-go during building design. However, there are many creative ways of moving forwards in the field of healing environments, even if it's only through refurbishments.

One of the first points to consider in terms of savings is less power consumption. After all, healing architectures strive towards being energy efficient. Their designs are often more eco-friendly as they use more sustainable, natural and, at times, local materials. The new Baden cantonal hospital is a case in point as it was built using locally sourced wood.

The solutions put forward in this article, such as Acrovyn® wall protections or Acrovyn by Design® bespoke images, also guarantee environmental protection with safe, sustainable products. Take Acrovyn® as an example. It creates products with a safe



formula that have no persistent bioaccumulative toxic substances. It goes further still by offering a range of PVC-free products (we'll talk more about them in the next article to come).

Another important aspect to consider when it comes to the long-term savings generated by healing architectures is human resources, how the hospital operates, and its performance levels. Healthcare establishments can benefit from improved collaboration between different services by clearly organising spaces and promoting good communication. As such, your staff management costs will fall.

Lastly, shorter recovery times can improve bed turnover and help you accommodate more patients while offering the same quality of services and a more pleasant experience.

 The new Kantonsspital was built using locally sourced wood



A positive image of hospitals

We associate hospitals more with illness than with healing in our collective imagination. We absolutely must rethink healthcare facilities and how we view them.

Hospitals are vibrant places where lives are saved every day, operations take place, and patients need to stay for varying lengths of time. Therefore, we must design our hospitals to truly convey a positive, professional and caring image of hospitals as places for living.

With ever more mobility and the reality of medical tourism, having a solid reputation – both in terms of the quality of care you provide and the quality of your premises – is a real plus when it comes to asserting your values and know-how to as wide an audience as possible.

Of course, all pieces of architecture have their own identity and symbolism. It's not a mere question of simply putting a few materials together and adding a splash of paint. Architecture is never neutral; it has an impact on our lives.

Healing architectures, however, take you far further than you would have ever imagined. They can make you reassess the role of hospitals in your region and restore the profession of hospital staff to their former glory, something that is all the more important given the current climate!



Palomar Medical Center. Escondido, California



Palomar Medical Center. Escondido, California