

Southwest Centre for Forensic Mental Health Care

St. Thomas, Ontario, Canada

Designed by Parkin Architects Limited
in association with architects Tillmann Ruth Robinson
on behalf of St. Joseph's Health Care London



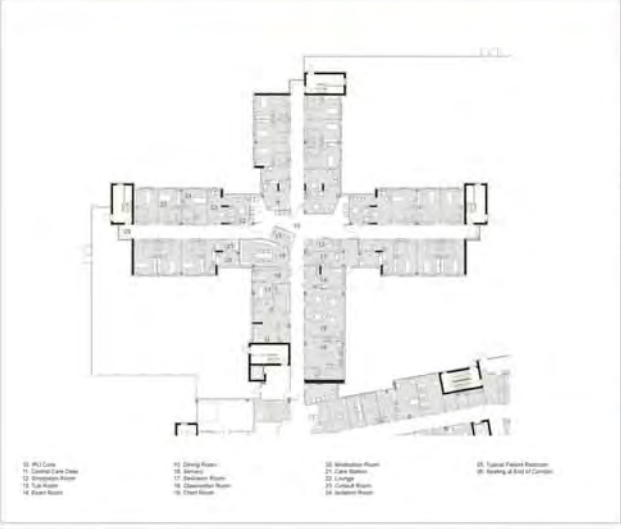
"When I see this building I am convinced that the individuals who will pass through here will be cared for on many levels. I hope these surroundings remind them that they are not abandoned or forgotten. When I see this building I know society has compassion."

- Former patient Brett Batten, speaking at the official opening of the Southwest Centre for Forensic Mental Health Care, June 14, 2013.



When I see this building I am convinced that the individuals who will pass through these walls will be cared for on many levels. I hope these surroundings represent more than they are not, and that they are not just a building. When I see this building I know society has progressed.

Former patient Brent Baden, speaking at the official opening of the Southwest Centre for Forensic Mental Health Care, June 14, 2013.



Southwest Centre for Forensic Mental Health Care St. Thomas, Ontario, Canada

- Client: St. Joseph's Health Care, London
- 235,000sqft (21,834sqm)
- 89 Medium Security Forensic Beds
- Occupancy: June 2013
- 3 stories
- Delivered as Public Private Partnership

St. Joseph's Health Care is committed to a Recovery Model of Care for their mental health patients.

The care providers working in a Psychosocial Rehabilitation (PSR) model assist patients in their personal journey beyond the stigma and limitations of illness and toward recovery. St. Joseph's was intent upon creating a healing facility that supported their care model in its philosophical realization as well as the physical environment. The design supports the PSR model and the clinical work undertaken by St. Joseph's. The environments were specifically designed to support the client's recovery and healing.

Daylight, Views & Courtyards

Instrumental in the design are views and daylight. The third floor glass provides virtually every room with a window to the exterior or 3rd storey atrium. This atrium has a beautiful natural light that penetrates to the core of the building. The space takes on the character of a city street, animating the downtown while introducing natural daylight. The semi-rural setting adjacent to a historic orchard provides a wonderful setting for the building. Each of the 3 inpatient units has its own dedicated outdoor courtyard which flows visually to the adjacent landscape.

Clarity of Organization

To assist patients in understanding their environment and to reduce stress, a very simple and clear building organization and circulation system were adopted. The 3 inpatient buildings are connected by the 3rd storey atrium space. The exterior design strategy overlaid the building's plan with a colour palette selected to reinforce the building organization. With blue/teal colours used throughout the north inpatient building and red/warm colours used in the south building.

Seamless Integration of Security

The design focused on de-stigmatizing the patients while creating a calm non-institutional character. The security desk at the main entrance bears more resemblance to a hotel concierge than a mental health security desk. Similarly, large expanses of glass and abundant natural light, in the building give a sense of openness and transparency. All corridors are straight providing visibility. The care desks have clear views along the four corridors of the inpatient unit. Supporting the architectural design is a sophisticated security system. The PSR model encourages patient progression through earned privileges, initially starting with long-term movement to their home unit. As they gain privileges they can access first the neighbourhood and finally the downtown zone of the building. With the use of bracelets, integrated with the security system, patients are allowed access through security doors for which they have the privilege to pass. Without the privilege doors automatically lock restricting patient access.

Summary

The design of the new Southwest Centre pushes the boundaries of this building type to focus on supporting the client's healing process in a building design that transforms lives.



Physical Integration of PSR Model of Care



Daylight Placement, Entrance and Outdoor Spaces



Colour Strategy



Primary Circulation Paths



Impact Design Community Building Change



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The Southwest Centre for Forensic Mental Health Care works with clients who due to mental illness have been judged "criminally not responsible" for their actions and are mandated a time of healing in the facility.

The care providers working in a Psychosocial Rehabilitation (PSR) model assist patients in their personal journey, beyond the stigma and limitations of illness and toward recovery. The building design symbolizes the clients' healing journey. It includes three main components: a "house", "neighbourhood" and "downtown" which represent patients' transition towards recovery.

Instrumental in the design are views and daylight. Virtually every room is provided with a window to the exterior or 3 storey atrium. This atrium has a beautiful natural light that penetrates to the core of the building. Each of the 5 inpatient units has a dedicated courtyard which flows visually to the adjacent landscape.

This design pushes the boundaries of this building type to focus on supporting the client's healing process in a building design that transforms lives.