

HORATIO'S GARDEN

Planting hope for people living with paralysis



Horatio's Garden Oswestry Design Detail

The main focus of the garden will be a social area – a place to gather and share events music: art and cultural activities. Leading from this will be a light airy, contemporary garden room designed by Andrew Wells of 3W Architecture Ltd. Andrew has also donated his time to the charity on the Stoke Mandeville project and understands the complexities of designing a space to meet the needs of this group of patients. With automated doors, an accessible kitchen for patients to make hot drinks, a screen for cinema evenings and a wood burning stove for cool days – this will be the hub of the garden project. Patients will be able to use the room all year round as a place to share with families and experience a feeling of being away from hospital. Psychologically having a space which is separate from the spinal ward and feels like 'home' can be a huge boost.

The social area will be bounded by a rill so the sound of flowing water echoes throughout the garden. This is recognised to be an important calming sound and helps bring a peaceful atmosphere to the space. There will be a woodland pathway to explore and the road will be screened with a yew hedge giving privacy to patients in the garden and wards.

Bunny has created architectural private areas – where patients can feel surrounded and comforted by plants whether in a hospital bed or a wheelchair. These will be planted with scented planting and climbers with evergreen hedges to create structure.

The garden therapy area will have raised flower beds where the gardening team will help patients to grow vegetables and fruit – delights which can be picked and eaten straightaway – having fresh lettuce or herbs improves any NHS meal! The greenhouse will be a place of work for the head gardener and volunteers but also another space for patients to use for garden therapy but also as a social space.

Along the side of the spinal centre a wheelchair skills area will be developed so patients can practice in a safe area in close proximity to the ward. A children's play area will be carefully designed to create a space for patients families to enjoy. Visits for young children can be very difficult so having a dedicated space where families can do normal activities can be so important.

Throughout the garden the planting will be designed to give all year colour and interest. Wildlife will be encouraged with bird and butterfly boxes as well as appropriate planting.

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