



Reflection

OASIS FOR VITALITY

CENTRE OF ASPIRATION FOR THE RECOVERING

Inpatient Rehab Centre

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REFLECTION PAPER

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Complex Projects
Bodies & Building in Berlin

Project introduction

The goal of the done research was to propose an architectural framework for designing a rehabilitation facility in Berlin to provide patients in need with the greatest possible recovery experience. It also aimed to provide much-needed follow-up treatment for Berliner patients following acute hospitalisation, eliminating the need for unnecessary and costly hospitalisations and allowing for early releases. The framework was built around an examination of how architecture could influence the mental and physical state of recovering patients to improve their rehabilitation experience.

Based on this previously outlined aim of the project, it was driven by three primary objectives:

1. Provide for the best recovery rates possible, by specializing on long term, recovery care and by leveraging architecture's positive influencing potential.
2. Establish a specialised intermediate care facility to fill the gap between acute care and care at home.
3. Improve the recovery experience for patients in need of long-term follow-up care by leveraging architecture's ability to impact mental health positively.

The research aims to create an architectural framework for a recovery facility tailored to the patient's physical

and psychological needs. The goal is to improve integrated follow-up care in Berlin, reduce unnecessary hospitalisations, and enable earlier discharges. The study focuses on the architectural aspects of healthcare, with a particular emphasis on rehabilitation, which has been shown to improve long-term patient outcomes. (Inpatient Rehabilitation – Northern Colorado Rehabilitation Hospital, z.d.).

In order to set up this framework, the key question this thesis tries to answer is;

“How to design a health promoting inpatient rehabilitation centre for the recovering patient?”

Aspect 1 - The relationship between research and design

In my architecture graduation project, the relationship between research and design was critical. I had two full semesters to conduct extensive research, allowing me to develop a wealth of knowledge and clear goals before beginning the design phase. This extended research period provided a unique opportunity, as most university projects were shorter, resulting in a limited research scope. However, putting these goals into action proved more difficult than expected because healthcare facilities are inherently complex structures.

The studio's structured approach, which focused on programme, site, and client analysis, helped me to get around this complexity. This framework allowed me to thoroughly investigate all relevant aspects, ensuring that the information gathered was useful to the design process. The detailed analysis of the programme revealed insights into the facility's specific needs and functions, while the site analysis provided a clear

understanding of the contextual and environmental variables. The client analysis helped to align the design with the stakeholders' expectations and requirements.

With this extensive knowledge, my design goals were clearly defined. However, translating these goals into a functional building was a difficult task. The complexities of healthcare facility design necessitated constant reflection on the research to inform my decisions. The complexity of integrating various functions and maintaining a patient-centered environment increased the difficulty. It became clear that healthcare design must achieve a delicate balance between operational efficiency and creating a therapeutic environment.

The iterative process of revisiting research findings greatly aided in making informed and appropriate decisions. When I faced design challenges, reflecting on the research provided clarity and direction. For example, understanding the specific needs of patients and staff aided in the design of spaces that promote well-being and efficiency. The results of the programme analysis guided the spatial organisation, ensuring that all functional requirements were met.

Finally, this iterative approach helped shape the project into a cohesive and feasible design. Reflecting on the extensive research allowed me to stay true to the initial goals while adapting to the realities of healthcare facility design. The experience emphasised the importance of thorough research in architecture, particularly for complex projects, and demonstrated how a strong research foundation improves the design process.

Aspect 2 - The relationship between the graduation topic and studio topic

The connection between my graduation topic and the studio theme, "Bodies, Buildings & Berlin," was critical to the development of my project. The studio focuses on the interaction of three scales: the city of Berlin, the individual building, and the body of its users. This multi-scale approach was critical, especially since my goal was to use architecture as a tool to improve the mental health of patients in a rehabilitation hospital. Thus, understanding the interaction between the building and its users was critical.

This understanding is largely the result of research into biophilic and therapeutic design. These design ideas, which were in line with the studio's focus on the interaction between bodies and buildings, offered insights into the ways in which architectural features can enhance mental health and well-being.

Berlin's urban structure and historical background also brought another level of opportunity and complexity to the project. The backdrop provided by the city's rich history emphasised the importance of fostering a healing environment. Incorporating biophilic design elements also offered a chance to improve Berlin's natural surroundings, which improved the general health of the city's citizens as well as the patients of the rehabilitation hospital.

In conclusion, the theme of the studio coincided with my graduation project, which allowed for a thorough approach to creating a rehabilitation hospital that not only enhances the physical and psychological relation between patient and building, but also blends in seamlessly with Berlin's urban and historical setting.

Body, Building, Berlin

Aspect 3 - Research method and approach chosen by the student in relation to the graduation studio

My graduation project's research methodology was heavily influenced by the studio's course structure. Every semester was broken up into five-week sections, each of which culminated in a progress presentation. Even though these presentation moments could be quite stressful at times, they ultimately helped me maintain my composure and organisation while offering insightful knowledge about the actual design process. I had to complete relevant steps in the graduation process because of the studio's structured approach, which began with choosing the type of building and continued with researching the programme, site, and client for this particular building.

The programme, site, and client research that took place during the first five-week segments of the programme resulted in the creation of a design brief for the P2 evaluation. Before entering the design phase, this methodical progression allowed me to establish a strong foundation of goals and knowledge. Healthcare facility design is a complex process, but the structured research approach made sure that the data collected was applicable to the design and offered a clear route forward.

The course structure continued to direct my work in the second semester as I moved from research to design and materialisation. The design was greatly influenced by the historical and natural context of the Berlin site, as well as research into biophilic and therapeutic design. During the design phase, I was able to make well-informed decisions and

ensure that the project aligned with my initial goals by reflecting on the research.

Overall, the studio's methodical approach and consistent objectives for presentations greatly aided in directing my study and design work, guaranteeing a comprehensive and well-thought-out architectural proposal.

Aspect 4 - Relationship between the graduation project and the wider social, professional and scientific relevance

The project proposes and develops an inpatient rehabilitation facility with a focus on health-promoting architecture in order to investigate the substantial impact that the built environment has on the mental health of its users. It was intended to strike a careful balance between patient-centered care and the innate efficiency of healthcare facilities, given the importance of good mental health in speeding up recovery while improving overall outcomes.

This goal is well aligned with the studio's theme of optimising the interplay between Body & Building and exploring this intricate balance. When the design is implemented well, it transcends the status of a structure and becomes a therapeutic element that supports the healing process of both personnel and patients.

This project is not limited to the healthcare industry; it has a broader significance for the architectural community. It seeks to draw attention to how design affects mental health through creating spaces that encourage recovery. The intention is to rethink the role of architecture as

a means of supporting recovery and healing by going beyond conventional bounds.

By tackling these facets, the project adds to the current conversation about how architecture can enhance mental health and patient outcomes. It illustrates how well-considered design can act as a catalyst for positive change, making it important in the architectural community not just from a social and professional standpoint but also from a scientific one.

Aspect 5 - Ethical issues and dilemmas you may have encountered during graduation

In the process of creating a rehabilitation facility in Berlin that promotes health for recuperating patients, I came across a number of possible ethical dilemmas that needed to be carefully considered. A major challenge was striking a balance between efficiency and patient-centered care. Efficiency and cost-effectiveness are frequently pushed for in healthcare facilities, which can occasionally conflict with the individualised treatment and assistance required for the best possible patient outcomes.

In addition, there were moral questions about autonomy and privacy of patients. Rehab patients may need some privacy and independence during their course of care, so it was critical to create environments that honoured their uniqueness and dignity while still providing high-quality care and monitoring. This was done by providing space for all specific age groups, specialized based on their wishes and needs.

There were also moral considerations related to environmental effects and

sustainability. As a designer, I had to think about how the rehabilitation centre would affect the environment down the road and try to keep its carbon footprint as small as possible while still providing for the needs of the staff and patients.

Ultimately, resolving these ethical challenges called for thoughtful consideration, reflection on the findings, and a dedication to maintaining moral standards all the way through the design process.