

TGH's New Building Combines Color, Space, And Light To Create A Tropical Oasis

Drive across the bridge connecting downtown Tampa to Davis Islands and you immediately feel the difference. The pace is slower, the atmosphere friendlier. There's a feeling of comfort, of leaving the city's stresses behind.

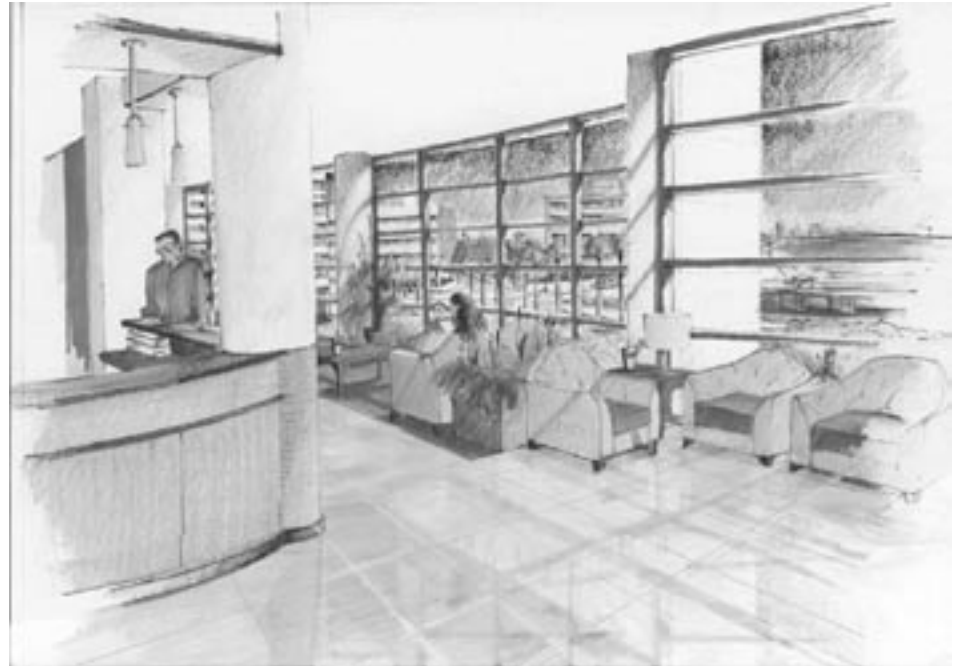
Tampa General Hospital, which sits on the northern edge of Davis Islands, aims to incorporate those same feelings of comfort and ease into the design of a new hospital building soon to go up on its northwest side.

Characterized by bright, open spaces, curvilinear designs, soft lighting, and tropical, soothing colors, the new building will be an oasis of healing for patients, their families, and their caregivers.

"It won't be your typical hospital building. You won't see the traditional hospital architecture or interiors," says Interior Designer Jacqui Russo.

Russo is the principal of interior design for Gresham, Smith and Partners, the firm that's designing the new building and its infrastructure. Russo leads a team of interior designers who are working on the building's internal image.

The image begins to take shape with the colors Russo and her team have chosen for the project. Forget the harsh white of most



An artist's rendering of a waiting room in the Vascular Center

hospitals; this building's interior colors will reflect its island location – with shades of sand, blues, greens, and tropical flora.

And instead of stark geometric designs, furnishings will be characterized by soft, rounded, curvilinear shapes, further adding to the soothing ambiance.

Numerous windows providing natural sunlight and the organization of space will provide a feeling of openness and light in the building, while high-end finishes, including art glass, porcelain tile, carpeting, wood, and specialty lighting will add to its soothing atmosphere.

The Feeling Takes Hold

The feeling of a tropical oasis begins to take hold as soon as you enter the Emergency Room lobby. The first thing you'll hear is the sound of water coming from a soothing water feature near the reception area.

The tropical island feel will also be immediately apparent in the Emergency and Trauma Center's public areas, including a crescent-shaped waiting room being designed to soothe worried visitors and keep them comfortable.

For example, rather than seats lined up in formation, chairs will be spaced around the room in clusters, subdivided by low walls and planters, establishing islands of seating to provide privacy and intimacy for individuals and groups.

A coffee bar area where visitors can sip complimentary coffee and tea at café-style tables will be located near the entrance to the ER lobby.

The ER waiting room will also have a children's area, a playful space containing

Bringing Healing Into The Environment

It's not just medicine and surgery that helps you recover from illnesses. Studies show your environment – what you see, hear, taste, touch, and smell – can substantially affect your well-being.

With that in mind, two Tampa General employees – Laurie Dixon, manager of Tampa General's Pain Management and Headache Program, and Biofeedback Therapist Ginny Dalton-Schuster – have been working with planners and designers to ensure that TGH's new building incorporates a healing environment.

“Studies have shown that well-designed environments can reduce anxiety, lower blood pressure, and lessen pain, while poorly designed or psychologically unsupportive surroundings can lead to a higher occurrence of delirium, elevated depression, a greater need for pain medication, and longer hospital stays,” Dixon says.

“So by providing a healing environment, Tampa General should see faster recoveries, reduced pain, fewer cases of infection, greater patient satisfaction, and reduced stress – not only among patients but also among their family members and among staff,” she says.

Dixon and Dalton-Schuster were charged about a year ago with guiding the project's design toward a healing environment. A lot of Internet research and hospital visits later, they've come up with numerous valuable recommendations – from the use of color and lighting, to the shape of furniture, the texture of furnishings, and the sounds and smells patients are exposed to.

“Colors can influence people's moods and trigger certain reactions in certain locations,” Dalton-Schuster says. “For example, studies show that shades of blue

can subdue aggressive patients in emergency rooms and that orange creates a feeling of wellbeing in social and dining areas.

“So while there will be consistent colors throughout the new building, different colors will be emphasized depending on the area. For example, the colors in the Women's Center will differ from those in the ICU,” Dalton-Schuster says.

The Healing Power Of Nature

The type of lighting is also a focus of the healing environment, with natural light heavily incorporated into the plans. Long recognized for its therapeutic value, natural light can have a major impact on the body's healing processes, Dixon and Dalton-Schuster say.

For this reason, every patient room will enjoy sunlit windows overlooking the Hillsborough River and downtown Tampa, and harsh fluorescent lighting will be minimized in favor of softer lighting options.

The shape of furniture to go into the building is also a factor in the building's design.

“Geometric shapes with their sharp angles can create a feeling of danger, while rounded angles soften things up more,” Dalton-Schuster says. For that reason, nursing stations and other accommodations will have soft, rounded shapes.

Nature, with its ability to soothe is also being incorporated into the project in the emphasis on wooden furniture, wood laminate and natural-looking flooring, stone countertops, and generous use of natural and artificial plants.

But the visual won't be the only sense Dixon and Dalton-Schuster are focusing

on. There are also sounds and smells to address, they say.

Sounds And Smells

Some sounds can promote the release of endorphins in the body, helping to create a sense of wellbeing and reduce heart rate and blood pressure. Other, more unpleasant sounds, can disturb sleep patterns, negatively affect hormone balances, and increase the heart rate, blood pressure, respiration rate, and even blood cholesterol.

“If you're in an ICU, the sounds of beeping machines and overhead paging can induce anxiety and interrupt sleep. We're looking at various types of equipment relating to that,” Dalton-Schuster says. “On the other hand, water sounds are very soothing, so there

See Healing,

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New Building Update
is published by the Strategic Services
Department at Tampa General
Hospital to provide information to
employees, physicians, volunteers,
and the community about the
hospital's expansion project.

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Foundation Kicks Off Capital Campaign's Public Phase

The TGH Foundation kicked off the public phase of its capital campaign, *Building On Excellence*, this past June with a special treat for approximately 150 prominent business and community leaders.

At a special reception in Tampa General's warehouse, invited guests toured six mockup patient and procedure rooms — all in the same dimensions and with the same equipment as those planned for the new building.

In each room, hospital staff were there to guide the guests and answer any questions.

"We were just so proud of the people who work for Tampa General, and you could see how impressed the guests were with the staff," says Danielle Wright-Landry, the Foundation's director of development.

The Building On Excellence capital campaign is aimed at raising \$10 million toward the project's \$130 million cost. So far, nearly \$7 million has been raised from TGH employees, physicians, boards of directors for the hospital and Foundation, and from individual donors.



From right, Claudia Mahoney, TGH's director of Women's and Children's Services, and Dr. Catherine Lynch lead guests on a tour of a mockup patient room for the hospital's new Women's Center.

With the public phase, the Foundation is focusing on generating community support for the project.

So far, the public phase has been a success. Some \$200,000 was raised during the kickoff event, and more donations are expected to come in from people who were in attendance.

If you would like to contribute to the capital campaign, please contact the Foundation's Mike Messano at (813) 844-1777.

Healing,

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will be some sort of water feature such as an aquarium or fountain on some of the floors."

The employees' focus on sound has even turned to the television sets in waiting areas. Their recommendation is to have the sets tuned to Tampa General's Relaxation Channel 82 and to pipe soothing music into public areas.

The sense of smell is another area they have focused on. With studies showing that unpleasant odors can increase heart rate and respiration, they are working with hospital

staff to reduce or eliminate patients' exposure to medicinal smells and the harsh odors of cleaning chemicals.

Patients and visitors are not the only people who will benefit from Dixon and Dalton-Schuster's work. The goal is to also provide a healing environment for hospital staff.

"Employees have the same high stress as patients, but in a different way," Dalton-Schuster says. "A healing environment, especially in employee lounges, aids in

decreasing burnout of staff and makes them feel appreciated."

Overall, the new building's healing environment will go a long way to enhance patient outcomes and staff morale, say Dixon and Dalton-Schuster.

"The architects and planners have gone out of their way to work with us so that we'll have something that over the years will still be inviting, that sets us apart, that says we have the patients' best interests at heart," Dalton-Schuster says.



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wall activities and games as well as a structure built to look like a beach house. Equipped with a TV, VCR and videos, as well as step seating for kids, the theater will be large enough for kids to sit inside and view movies. The house will be of an open design, allowing parents to see inside and observe their children.

The color scheme in the waiting room and throughout the ER will incorporate the shades of a tropical island and blue waters. This theme will be carried over into the adult and pediatric emergency care areas.

In the pediatric area, the designers plan to set a playful mood with design and color. Here, the space will be enhanced with the shapes of colorful sails on the walls. Other design elements will expand the nautical island scheme, Russo says.

“We want to create a playful atmosphere to calm the fears of children who will be coming here,” she says.

Calm And Relaxing

The Vascular Center on the third floor and the fifth floor’s Critical Care Unit will be similar to each other in design and mood, Russo says.

Every critical care room and most of the Vascular Center’s pre- and post-procedure rooms will have windows offering breathtaking views of the water and Bayshore.

Here, the goal is provide a calm, relaxing atmosphere in the patient rooms, the lobbies and the waiting rooms. The building’s tropical colors will be used but in more subdued tones, and waiting area seating will also be grouped into clusters to provide privacy for individuals and groups.

The fourth floor Women’s Center will have its own distinctive look. This area is being designed to incorporate a unique day spa theme, using cool colors, translucent materials, porcelain, wood tones, and mosaic glass depicting floral and leaf designs.

In the labor and delivery rooms, wood tones will be apparent in the wood-look floors and cabinets designed to look like bedroom furniture. The cabinets will keep medical gases and equipment out of sight until they’re needed.

Each room will have a huge window with an expansive view of Bayshore. Underneath each window will be a sofa that can convert into a bed for a guest at night. Wooden cabinets on

either end of the sofa can serve as end tables while also providing storage space.

Family Lounges

The Women’s Center will have two comfortable family lounges, which will be subdivided into two sections: a quiet space facing a window overlooking Hillsborough Bay and a place for families with children containing small-scale furniture and a play space with kid’s activities.

“The Women’s Center will have more of a unique identity and a special atmosphere. We wanted to create a state-of-the-art space but one that’s also a desirable place for women to experience childbirth,” Russo says.

All of these plans will be contained within a building whose exterior of glass, gleaming white metal, and sand-colored concrete will be a visible beacon to people throughout the area, Russo says.

“It will be a very unique and contemporary structure,” she says. “It definitely will be Tampa’s gem.”