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Universal, Person-Centered Interior Design Recommendations for Sunnybrook Assisted Living

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TITLE

**Universal, Person-Centered Interior Design
Recommendations for Sunnybrook Assisted Living,
Hendersonville, North Carolina**

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Interior Design**

HONORS PROJECT

Submitted to the Honors College
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fulfillment of the requirements for graduation with

UNIVERSITY HONORS

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Universal, Person-Centered Interior Design Recommendations for Sunnybrook Assisted Living Hendersonville, North Carolina

Initial Goals of My Re-Design for Sunnybrook Assisted Living:

Community Interaction and Activity

- ❑ Work in more Activity Spaces (multi-purpose rooms)
- ❑ Work in a space where multi-denominational religious practices can be held, storage for religious artifacts would be necessary
- ❑ Work in more Interaction Spaces (for community and resident interaction)
- ❑ Plan recommendations for animals and their care
- ❑ Add Plants to Interior and Exterior
- ❑ Expand part of adjacent Westin Woods Elder Park to serve as a dog park where residents can help walk community members' dogs and/or watch dogs play around the park.

Environmental Design Considerations

- ❑ Lower window sills to 30" Above Finished Floor so all sills give seated residents the opportunity to look out the window
- ❑ Personalized temperature controls in each room
- ❑ Add media screens throughout the building to post notices and messages rather than printing flyers and having to remove them
- ❑ Consider wayfinding and understandable directional signage
- ❑ Consider light quality and opportunities to bring in natural sunlight without creating glare issues. Windows may need to be expanded so base height is low enough for residents to look outside and for daylight to flow in at the 7' AFF height.
- ❑ Consider HVAC updates and air quality so air does not smell stale or circulate unpleasant smells as well as help with energy use throughout the building.
- ❑ Replace any flooring with appropriate material based on slip resistance. Consider dark and light values which could create visual depth issues for residents with visual issues (creating the illusion that flooring is not level and requires a step up or down to meet it)

Person Centered Design Theories and Practices

- ❑ Designate one wing to serve as the Memory Care Unit for residents with Dementia, Alzheimer's and memory loss

- ❑ In Memory Care Unit, add personalization for residents through storage niches by the front door of their rooms for old photos and knick knacks which they associate with themselves
- ❑ Dining Room serve meals made-to-order “restaurant style” giving residents the opportunities to make decisions about what they eat
- ❑ Give residents the opportunity and empowerment to choose for themselves such as when they get up in the morning, bathe, eat and what they wear, do as activities etc.
- ❑ Give personalization options for rooms such as a full selection of paint colors and the opportunity to bring in their own accessories if they meet Sunnybrook’s health and safety requirements (consider size, materials, fireproofing, easy cleaning for incontinence issues etc.)
- ❑ Make bedrooms and private living spaces separate similar to college campus dormitories modern designs to reflect on person-centered design
- ❑ Give staff a lounge to relax in since they often work long shifts
- ❑ Improve technology for residents
- ❑ Improve technology for staff, provide systems to cut down on file-based storage and provide keyed, locked storage for portable tablet computers

Added Revenue Creation

- ❑ Dining room opened later than currently to serve the community as a restaurant option

Changes made in Sunnybrook’s Recent Addition (Completed Fall 2013)

- *Therapy Dog added to facility to interact with residents*
- *Library/ Sitting Room added to main entrance*
- *Gardens re-landscaped and Resident-run Garden (used for fresh fruits and vegetables in the meals) expanded*
- *Temperature controls in each Room*
- *Tablet computers purchased for nursing staff to take on rounds, keyed/locked cabinet for these items acquired. All patient and resident files are under conversion from paper records to be digitally accessed through their server.*
- *Improvements in senior technology (Computers added to the Library), Wi-Fi Routers Installed throughout the building*

Recent Changes help complete these goals:

- ✓ Plan recommendations for animals and their care
- ✓ Add Plants to the Exterior
- ✓ Personalized temperature controls in each room
- ✓ Improve technology for residents
- ✓ Improve technology for Staff, provide systems to cut down on file-based storage and provide keyed, locked storage for portable tablet computers

First Floor Designer Recommendations:

New Addition: (Denoted in Drawings by Yellow)

For the new addition, leave this area the way that it currently is for the sake of the budget as well as it's wonderful features such as the large front porch, the Library and the Welcome Center Desk. The double-height atrium brings visual interest and modernity to the building.

Although these small rooms are more true to the traditional nursing-home design modeled after hospital rooms, it is financially savvy to keep a few of these small rooms for residents looking for that type of residence. These rooms may be able to cost less for residents who need a more affordable option but are very interested in living in Sunnybrook. These rooms may also be suitable for someone who needs full-time nursing care while they go through rehab after an injury or surgery and are intending to return home after they have rehabilitated themselves.

Side note: Advertising this "rent while you rehab" service to local hospitals may be a wise recruiting tool for potential new residents, even if someone only stays for a week and then goes home, several years down the road they and their families may remember how nice Sunnybrook was and select Sunnybrook that as their new home.

Decks:

I do, however believe that it may be wise to exchange the stairs and/or add a ramp to the main deck and dining area deck for easier accessibility for residents in wheelchairs.

Deck 1:

I would like to see the addition of a wheelchair ramp at a 1/12 slope added on the South corner of this deck to allow for wheelchair users living in 126, 124 or 122 the access to the gardens and paths in the yard.

Deck 2:

Leave the stairwell next to room 125, move the current “main” stairwell to be next to room 138 which is Physical Therapy and add a ramp where the main stairwell currently is. By doing this, it creates easier access for public visitors who are coming to use the Physical Therapy center to get back to health (whether they are in a wheelchair or not) and it creates easier access for residents to roam around the Sunnybrook gardens and paths.

Bedroom Wings:

On the existing first floor many of the residences stayed essentially the same with the similar changes made to them. Rooms were designed previously in rows of 3 on each side of the hall down long corridors. Since the corridors had so many doors and this could make wayfinding very difficult for residents and guests. I am proposing that the middle room have the only entrance door for each side of the hall and serve as the central common room for those residents. The bedrooms on each side of the common room would stay nearly as they are with the bedroom door walled in and moved to have access to the central common room. Due to moving bedroom entrance doors some closets had to move as the bathrooms were left in their same locations and configurations. What were previously rooms 121, 122, 125 and 126 will still be double occupancy and these central common rooms are larger and intended to serve 4 residents. These suites would be ideal for couples or friends interested in sharing a bedroom. Rooms with access to the decks were still permitted access to the deck through their private bedrooms as well as through the central common room shared with their roommate(s).

Person Centered Design Theories on Bedrooms and Adjacent Living Spaces:

Bedrooms should be designed exclusively as bedrooms, not like hospital rooms, which are multi-purpose to serve as a living room/ entertaining space as well as the bedroom first and foremost. It can feel very much like a hospital if guests have to sit in seating meant for “patients” or on the resident’s bed. By giving these seniors a living room-like space separate from the bedroom to entertain or watch

television (also preventing them from spending all of their time in bed) they are less likely to become bedridden at a faster rate (Comings).

Like student dormitories on college campuses, this design of a centralized common living space with multiple bedrooms built off of it feels much more “apartment-style” than “hospital room style”. It has also been proven that seniors (especially those who are single or widowed) tend to do better with a roommate because both parties have someone to hold them accountable and take notice of any changes in their attitude, health or behavior. These spaces also become more desirable with an added living room and the affordability is added by sharing the space with a roommate (Comings).

Goals Met:

- ✓ Make bedrooms and private living spaces separate similar to college campus dormitories modern designs to reflect on person-centered design

Physical Therapy:

This has already been moved to the corner of this wing which I think was a great improvement for the floor plan flow overall. I would like to remove room 137 in order to expand the space for Physical Therapy. The reason I would like to expand this space is so that members of the community needing physical therapy services can also use this facility to get full use out of the physical therapy staff (or perhaps create jobs by expanding the staff to meet the needs of more clients). In bringing in members of the community, there will be more opportunities for residents to interact with community members and create less division from the outside world and less of a stigma of a “traditional” nursing home environment. By expanding this area, we are also able to let a portion of this facility function as a gym where residents can workout if the machines are not in use by those needing therapy.

- ✓ Category Goal Met: Community Interaction and Activity

Dining Room and Restaurant:

My recommendation would be that the dining style is changed to made-to-order (restaurant style) where residents can choose from a menu (substitutions can be made based on diet) giving residents the opportunity to make the decisions about what they eat. Daily specials would occur like a normal restaurant, and the kitchen would continue to use fresh ingredients from the garden. The hours of the dining room

would be expanded where community members could come in and have lunch or dinner in the dining room. This can be a great tool for interaction between the community and the residents as well as something to make families feel more comfortable when coming to visit a loved one. On top of all of this, this restaurant can be a money making venture for the facility whether diners come to eat in the Dining Room, out on the Dining Deck or have a meeting in the Activity Room upstairs catered.

- ✓ Category Goal Met: Community Interaction and Activity
- ✓ Category Goal Met: Added Revenue Creation

Second Floor Designer Recommendations:

On the existing second floor an activity space was designed by removing rooms 223, 224, 225 and 226 to serve the residents and the local community. This activity space has a kitchenette for groups serving food or beverages and several large storage closets designed for storage of chairs, tables and religious artifacts for religious services. There is a private restroom in the space as well so that non-residents have easy access to a restroom. This space has a private entrance via the current stairs or can be easily accessed from the central elevator down the hall. There has also been a folding wall installed for this space to have the option of being one large room or serving as two smaller spaces. This space can serve a variety of functions such as religious services of which the community is welcome to join as well as meetings for local groups (eg. Rotary, Boy/Girl Scouts, Community Groups for a small fee.)

Goals Met:

- ✓ Work in more Activity Spaces (multi-purpose rooms)
- ✓ Work in a space where multi-denominational religious practices can be held, storage for religious artifacts would be necessary
- ✓ Work in more Interaction Spaces (for community and resident interaction, especially interaction with children)\

Category Goal Met: Added Revenue Creation

In this same wing in Room 222 is a new Guest suite for family of a resident who may need very inexpensive (or free) overnight accommodations during a visit with a loved one.

Category Goal Met: Added Revenue Creation

This addition could be another revenue option if Sunnybrook chose to charge a small fee (such as \$20 per night, significantly less than a hotel or motel) or more generally as a recruitment tool because families would see the convenience and service as an added value.

Across the Hall, Room 221 has been redesigned from it's apartment-style resident room to serve as a staff lounge for those who work around the clock to keep this facility an amazing place to be. It was selected as it already had a kitchenette built in and it did not make sense to add resident rooms between two spaces intended for commercial use as those residents could easily be disturbed by added noise and unknown guests.

Goal Met:

- ✓ Give staff a lounge to relax in since they often work long shifts

Adjacent to this was the nearly unusable current Room 220. This space has been redesigned to serve as a coffee bar aptly named "The Coffee Bean" serving coffee, beverages and baked goods. This space would be renovated to store needed supplies such as beans and cups and refrigeration for dairy. A small bakery case would be installed. All bakery items would be brought upstairs via the elevator from the main kitchen downstairs but all coffee, bottles and blended beverages could be made at the small shop location. At lunch hour a cart of pre-made sandwiches could easily be brought up the elevator for the Coffee Bean to sell. Community members in a meeting in the activity room could be served a catered meal from the cafeteria without having to travel downstairs to the dining room.

Category Goal Met: Added Revenue Creation

This addition could be another revenue option since Sunnybrook could sell coffee, beverages and baked goods from this station. This addition would be nice for the residents, their families, staff and guests. The atmospherics of smells of coffee and baked goods would be great to

perk up residents (especially those in the new addition in rooms 210 through 219).

On the rest of the second floor, Sunnybrook houses Apartment 230 and Rooms 231 through 236 which will now comprise the Memory Care Unit for residents with Dementia, Alzheimer's and memory loss. Apartment 230 will stay exactly as it is except for personalization options such as paint colors implemented by the resident; this space currently has a private bedroom, a kitchenette and is designed for a resident or a couple with independence.

The current footprint of Rooms 231, 232, 233 and 234 will be used for the private bedrooms of the residents in the Memory Care Unit. Outside of each room in the Memory Care Unit a Plexiglass -covered niche will be built into the wall and these spots can be filled with photos and knick knacks that the resident associates with themselves to help with identifying which one is their room and wayfinding. Rooms 235 and 236 will be removed to create a multipurpose living space for the Memory Care Unit residents and their guests/ families to enjoy.

Semblance of Place: Setting a Scene for Memory Care Residents

In a normal day in the Memory Care Unit Lounge Sunnybrook could meet the purposes of a living room and several spaces creating a semblance of place for their residents. Remnants of a car could be installed to create a place where residents could "drive" their guests or other residents somewhere like a date, to "work" or wherever their imaginations could take them. Ladies who enjoy cradling their baby dolls could "rock them to sleep" in a rocking chair by the digital fireplace. Another resident could play for others on the organ her favorite tunes from muscle memory. Under supervision others could be escorted outside to work in the garden.

Goals Met:

- ✓ Designate one wing to serve as the Memory Care Unit for residents with Dementia, Alzheimer's and memory loss
- ✓ In Memory Care Unit, add personalization for residents through storage niches by the front door of their rooms for old photos and knick knacks which they associate with themselves

Throughout the building certain additions should be made to improve the overall lifestyle including:

✓ **Add Plants to Interior**

By adding plants the space feels more like home and provides added health benefits such as oxygen and air purification. If a student-visit program is implemented, students will be excited to help the nurses by escorting the dog throughout the facility as well as helping to water the plants. Plants in personal bedrooms (on window sills or tables) are excellent for helping residents with the idea that they are caring for something rather than always being cared for. Residents realize that these plants depend on their care to live and this sense of duty can help residents live longer.

✓ **Add “modern” hand railings to all major hallways.**

Modern hand railings don't have to look like grab bars but rather like chair railing that tilts out from the wall which can both give the illusion of a finished space as well as provide support for those who may need it.

✓ **Lower window sills so all sills give seated residents the opportunity to look out the window**

✓ **Consider light quality and opportunities to bring in natural sunlight without creating glare issues. Windows may need to be expanded so base height is low enough for residents to look outside and for daylight to flow in at the 7' AFF height.**

By lowering sills to 30" Above Finished Floor, residents in a seated position (such as a wheelchair) can easily see out the window as well as tend to any plants that may sit on their windowsill. If there are also day lighting windows installed with the intention of having them at 7 feet Above Finished Floor for maximum day lighting potential less interior lights would need to be used. *If there is interest in operable windows without the concern of potentially falling out, windows that crank open only a few inches could provide a breeze without safety issues.*

✓ **Give personalization options for rooms such as a full selection of paint colors and the opportunity to bring in their own accessories if they meet Sunnybrook's health and safety requirements (consider size, materials, fireproofing, easy cleaning for incontinence issues etc.)**

Residents would have the power of choice (a large principle of person-centered design) to make their space feel like home to them. By giving them the opportunity to bring in their own personal items they can recreate scenes from their past homes but furniture is provided so that residents do not need to concern themselves with packing or moving heavy furniture but only items such as art and accessories.

Reference for changing current staff practices to help with the implementation of these new policies would be *Artifacts of Culture Change Tool*.

- ✓ Give residents the opportunity and empowerment to choose for themselves such as when they get up in the morning, bathe, eat and what they wear, do as activities etc.
- ✓ Dining Room serve meals made-to-order “restaurant style” giving residents the opportunities to make decisions about what they eat

Again, provide residents with the power of choice to make decisions about their lifestyle. By letting them choose when to eat breakfast and what to eat for breakfast this person-centered care mentality helps Sunnybrook feel less like a hospital with its regimented structure and more like a home. **Menu and dining choices built to meet the New Dining Practice Standards by the Pioneer Network Food and Dining Clinical Standards Task Force.**

Providing even a small menu of options was surely something the kitchen staff was already doing without the structure of options each day. By giving the kitchen staff the opportunity for daily specials it provides them with more space for creativity and freedom as well as can help reduce waste on excess prepared items from the day before. This opportunity for creativity challenges the chef and helps improve the prepared dishes overall.

- ✓ Expand part of adjacent Westin Woods Elder Park to serve as a dog park where residents can help walk community members’ dogs and/or watch dogs play around the park.

By converting a portion of the adjacent Westin Woods Elder Park into a dog park, residents will have more possible interactions with animals

and community members. For those who may have difficulty interacting they can still enjoy watching the dogs run and jump bringing joy and variety to their lives.

- ✓ Consider wayfinding and understandable directional signage

Add extra signage in designated locations explaining where locations are to be found. Paint residential hallways different colors so that residents or guests know they should be in the “Blue Hallway” or the “Green Hallway” if they ever get lost so staff can more easily help them find their way.

- ✓ Add media screens throughout the building to post notices and messages rather than printing flyers and having to remove them

By adding television screens throughout the building to display messages, memos, events and other important notices there are much less paper and ink costs involved. By using screens, text would be able to be displayed larger, making signs easier to read for residents. A changing image also creates the opportunity for many images or memos to be on rotation, which easily could cover a full bulletin board worth of information. By using screens a more cohesive design is enforced and the walls become less cluttered.

- ✓ Consider HVAC updates and air quality so air does not smell stale or circulate unpleasant smells as well as help with energy use throughout the building.

HVAC and the circulation of “fresh” air is very important in a facility like this. With so many smells it is important to create appropriate atmospherics if this facility is to seem welcoming to the community. (The coffee shop upstairs will be a great addition because it will smell like coffee and sweet baked goods rather than traditional smells associated with a nursing home.) Often nursing homes and hospitals have particular smells associated with them and if people can come into the building and not smell highly sterilized smells or mixed food smells from the kitchen it becomes a more pleasant environment for everyone.

- ✓ Replace any flooring with appropriate material based on slip resistance. Consider dark and light values which could create visual depth issues for residents with visual issues (creating the illusion that flooring is not level and requires a step up or down to meet it).

Flooring must be considered so that any carpeting does not have patterns that can induce confusion for residents as well as colors that create depth issues (this is especially important for long spans of carpeting). Non slip flooring is likely already in all locations but must be continued as rooms are changed; good choices are very low pile carpet that wheelchairs can wheel easily on, and wood-look vinyl flooring that looks upscale, is extremely easy to clean has excellent slip resistance, and has a constant pattern that does no interfere with visual issues.

Conclusion: These Designer Recommendations make Financial Sense

A combination of small and large design changes will help make Sunnybrook one of the premiere Assisted Living facilities in North Carolina. By utilizing theories and practices from Person-Centered Care and the more specific Eden Alternative, Sunnybrook will constantly be at-capacity with an extended waiting list of residents. Although several rooms would be lost in my design I stand by this decision as these changes will greatly improve the quality of living and working at Sunnybrook. Due to the fact that suites now have the added amenities of common rooms, prices can be increased and further renovations and additions would be able to be financed. With the addition of other revenue producing spaces the facility will be able to turn a greater profit soon after these renovations are made and the community will have great respect and recognition for the facilities at Sunnybrook.

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