For many individuals with a variety of conditions, specialized Assisted Living Facilities can offer a more dignified option and comfort ability to spend those final times in hands of professional care givers trained and focused in helping patients and family members to ease out such important period. My master project will be about Assisted Living Facilities specialized in the care and treatment of patients with Alzheimer’s disease. A center like this is supported by the principle of Healthcare. A combination of this typography and hospitality philosophy will provide the basis for the comfort of its users.

Since the beginning of civilizations, establishments to provide rest and care to travelers have existed in Europe, the Middle East and Asia. The Greeks and Romans were the first ones to create baths, mansions and villages for leisure, recuperation and healing. With the time, décor and design become crucial items as the built environment became an important aspect of the healing process, especially in patients with Alzheimer’s disease. On the other hand, the Healthcare industry has had a tremendous evolution since the times in which health problems were treated with home remedies; and physicians were only consulted in life threatening cases. The way the Healthcare system is designed in the United States has been the reason of many debates. The reason being for this is that almost all wealthy nations provide universal health care, being the US an exception to this. Different social, economic, political and cultural conditions are the main causes for this situation, but the cost is the crucial issue that interferes with a more public and accessible healthcare system in US. Even though Healthcare is seen as a human right by many, in the United States it is difficult to provide it to all.
The increase in the life expectancy has provoked an increased number of third age citizens, many of them suffering from Alzheimer’s disease. Since this is a disease that attacks the brain many of its fundamental symptoms are related to dementia, extreme memory loss and altered behavior. For this reason this type of patients need constant supervision. In many cases people that suffer from this condition find themselves in the need to enter ALFs for a variety of reasons. Either they don’t have a caregiver available at all or the caregiver is unable to provide the necessary care as, in the majority of cases, the caregiver has to work full time. Assisted Living Facility has become one of the most common methods to care for this type of patients and constitutes already an emerging industry in high rise.

The cost per capita for ALF residents is what worsens even more the situation. Some basic statistics that shows that Assisted living facility residents agree to pay a monthly rent, which can range from less than $2,000 to $6,000 a month. According to a 2012 MetLife survey, the average cost of an assisted living facility in the U.S. is $3,550 a month, or $42,600 a year. The highest average monthly cost was in Washington, DC, at $5,933 a month while the lowest was in Arkansas (except for Little Rock) at $2,355 a month. The previously stated figures show how inaccessible this kind of service may become for some.

As interior designers, we cannot resolve the cost issue, but we can focus on work on helpful designs, using the built environment as another tool or better called non drug treatment that mark a difference for these type of patients and Assisted Living Facilities residents in general. Interior design could be a valuable tool in the treatment of Alzheimer’s disease. Creating interiors with the adequate characteristics could make the care of these patients a way easier task for healthcare staff and family members and above all, increasing the quality of life of ad patients.
The project located at the city of Carvin, France was built in 2012. The clear intention was to provide the elderly with a contemporary, modern and dynamic environment that can be perceived even before entering the building by its exterior clean and simplistic lines. The building has a total of 125 beds. They are allocated as follows: 90 beds “traditional” accommodation, 30 beds in living, 5 Alzheimer patients.

Architects: PARALLELE
Location: Carvin, France
Area: 7400.0 sqm
Year: 2012
Photographs: Laurent Dequick
The City of Carvin has prepared a new urban plan which Parallel architect tried to reflect in this project.

- Create a building that is a life project, offering activities and multiple spaces for each hour, day, season.

- Highlight the many strengths of the site link with adjoining project views, street and square as possible (communication area), liaison with neighboring school. The following criteria have guided us in the development of this project:

  - Establish contact between the internal life of the institution and the City.
  - Optimization of operation
  - Streamlining the cost
  - Closeness of the land parcel
Parallel architects took the following considerations to use the space characteristics to contribute to the users well-being:

- Develop a series of outdoor spaces on a human scale: gardens, terraces accessible (from salons).
- Provide easy orientation for the visitor and user.
- Propose glass parts in the internal circulation to bring the landscape inside the building, and provide perspectives on the outside. The building is more transparent in all areas of life. The dining south area are protected from the sun by awnings, external blinds and air conditioning. Their situation gives them an exclusive view of the colorful gardens.
- Materialize and prioritize traffic to facilitate orientation. Color and designs soil attend the orientation. Axes, linearity circulations, breakthrough natural light.
Patients suffering from Alzheimer’s disease are incapable of performing their basic activities for their daily living due to the dementia the disease provokes. It has been demonstrated by recent studies than neutral colors, visual contact with the exterior and easy to navigate interiors can be key to alleviate their behavioral problems, the agitation and the anxiety patients with this condition often suffer.
The program of the building proposes a building of three levels. The whole unit has been divided into two separate masses allowing more visibility to the outdoors from a bigger number of spaces.

Extra outdoor areas created by the shape of the building that come to reinforce the relationship Interior/Exterior.
This project consists of two buildings located perpendicular one another in a “T” formation. The longest part contains common and administrative areas as well as most of the bedrooms, which we can see in Figure 13; they all have a balcony which facilitates the interaction with Nature, well known to promote healing and well-being to patients.
This figures evidence the intention of the interior architecture of providing an environment easy to read and navigate using neutral colors, clean lines, good illumination and ample windows. The indoor pool in Figure 16 is used for hydrotherapy and leisure.
This Residential Home consists of:
- 60 bedrooms (of three different types)
- Areas for management
- Administrative services
- Staff facilities
- Living and activity areas
- Dining and service areas (kitchen, pantry, laundry and backing facilities)
- Health and Hydrotherapy areas
- Technical areas (storage rooms and garage)

Green areas involve the whole set integrating all the paths and shade lounging areas.

The shape of the building was conditioned by the construction site contour.

Linear Organizational System
This project is consist on the adaptation and reformation of an existing building in the city of Novelda, Alicante Spain. We realize that architecture can not cure diseases. But we can help, by our actions, contribute to improve the conditions in which Alzheimer’s patients and their caregivers day to day.

http://www.archdaily.com/450249/day-center-for-alzheimer-s-patients-luis-navarro-jover-carlos-sanchez-garcia-angel-martinez-garcia/
The linear organizational system as well as the clear signage design used by the architects has the objective to facilitate the orientation and circulation of the users. Figures 27 and 28 show the wide, free or clutter halls of the facility as well as the contrasting red color used to emphasize where doors and alternative routs are located, all fundamental qualities for legibility in spaces inhabited by Alzheimer’s patients.
The building consists on two floors proposing the following:

- adaptation and adjustment of the interior spaces to comply with the minimum requirements
- removal of architectural obstacles for better legibility and circulation
- construction of an annex building containing
  - stimulation classrooms
  - multipurpose room
  - dining room
  - gym

Linear Organizational System

Small “patios” to increase Indoor/Outdoor Relationship
This building, has been designed specifically for Alzheimer's patients, that is why the architects chose this privileged spot that offers views to the nearby small village and pine forest as well as the admired Loire Valley from the upper floors. The attractiveness of this views as supposed to constitute familiar benchmarks for disoriented residents. Legibility of the exteriors accentuated by the light arrangement.
The indoor areas reflect the homelike approach widely seen in projects oriented to host Alzheimer’s disease patients. In this case they have use distinctive colors (gold and pink) and a subtle pattern to create benchmarks for disoriented patients. All the areas in Figures 35 to 38 look well illuminated which is also fundamental for this kind of patients.
Figures 40 and 41 show the simplicity and calmed beauty of the light fixtures used. Also the rows of recessed lights along the hallways to contribute to way finding in Figure 39. Figure 41 show the generous spaces which contributes to the legibility of the space enclosed by wood paneled walls which adds warmth to the setting.
The building marked with the green arrow in Figure 47 is the one that occupy the patients rooms in this project. Again the intention of the architect is to provide as much as possible to the patients the possibility to interact with the exterior outdoor spaces. They have created a sort of an interior patio that allows also the possibility to wander (which is very common in patients with Alzheimer’s disease).

The disposition of the patients rooms in two buildings allows a higher number of windows increasing the flow or natural light and air (operable windows) throughout the space.
Based on the exploration of the four Precedent Studies previously exposed, some designing guidelines have surfaced, that I will make full use of when developing my project.

- Use of Linear Organization Systems to promote clear circulation
- Increase as much as possible the relationship Interior/Exterior in order to
  - Create flow of natural light
  - Create flow of natural air (operable windows)
  - Create benchmarks using attractiveness of the views to help orientation
  - Prevent disorientation in Time and Place
- Make appropriate use of color and pattern to create the “right” amount of stimulation
- Use of lighting as Way finding & facilitate circulation. Importance of Natural & Artificial light.
- Be aware of acoustics when selecting materials and place devices that help maintain the noise controlled
- Signage considerations (size/placement/illumination/amount)
- Privacy considerations. Layout & materials


Work Cited


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