

## The Orchard – Enhanced Medium Secure Mental Health Unit at St Bernard’s Hospital, Ealing



### Successful innovations/ technology

The Orchard provides high levels of therapy in a non-oppressive environment, coupled with effective observation of patients. This innovative approach creates a safe and pleasant working atmosphere for The Orchard’s 200 staff.

The ward design and the shape of the patient bedrooms and en-suite bathrooms allow for patient observation and give a balance between private and shared spaces. The nurse bases overlook the open plan living areas and the patient sleeping areas. The splayed internal bedroom walls and built-in furniture provide staff with comprehensive views into the patients’ private spaces. Open and light shared spaces are associated with intimate quiet rooms and group therapy rooms.

The colour and lighting schemes were developed in close consultation with the staff and patients. Natural light is brought into deep plan ground floor areas through roof lights in the first floor courtyards. Large windows in the open plan spaces throw light onto coloured feature walls, and connect with the outside.

John Corlett, Director of Estates, said, “The establishment of the project team with the PSCP, Trust Project Manager and clinical staff working out of the same offices, contributed to the overall team effort. Cost pressures early on in the design stage, that required a significant amount of value engineering, were addressed in a collaborative manner with a common objective by all involved.

**“The completed facility is a testimony to the commitment and dedication to those involved in the project. I’m sure it will make a very positive contribution to the way we deliver care and therefore the lives of our patients.”**

John Corlett, Director of Estates.



A new mental health unit for women patients for whom current medium secure services are not appropriate has been built within the campus of St Bernard’s Hospital, Ealing.

### Overview

Completed on 29 June 2007, The Orchard addresses the recommendations of The Department of Health’s consultation paper ‘Women’s Mental Health: Into the Mainstream’.

The Orchard is designed specifically for women who require enhanced levels of treatment within a medium secure setting. It provides a medium secure service for 15 patients and a women’s enhanced medium secure service (WEMSS) for 45 patients, catering for a complex range of security and treatment needs. Patients will be admitted

from high secure, low secure and psychiatric intensive care units. Of the three national pilot WEMSS developments, The Orchard is the largest.

The Orchard has a clear model of care underpinning the philosophy of treating women patients in the least restrictive environment with a focus on dynamic care planning and active engagement.

The environment is designed to be positive, safe and self-affirming, enabling patients to heal and recover from severe abuse and trauma.

### Principles and objectives

The opening of The Orchard in September 2007 marked the end of women patients being detained in Broadmoor Hospital – the women patients currently in Broadmoor will

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## Achievements and benefits

move to this service or to Rampton Hospital in Nottinghamshire, another ProCure21 scheme.

The West London Mental Health NHS Trust and Kier Health – their Principal Supply Chain Partner (PSCP) – worked well together, completing the project on time and under budget at approximately £26.8m.

Due to the sensitive nature of the scheme the project team and the Trust worked in total partnership to develop innovative solutions to areas that could put patients at risk. A two-day ‘best practice’ visit of seven secure mental health facilities was organised by the PSCP to develop lessons learnt. This, together with continual access to the clinical user groups, has helped the PSCP to fully understand end user needs so that the final solution was tailor-made.

As a ProCure21 scheme, the PSCP led planning consultations within the local community, together with discussions and the necessary applications and approvals from the local planning authority.

The Orchard contains seven wards, three at ground floor and four at first floor level. The accommodation is arranged in two distinct square forms of brickwork and render, with open courtyards at first floor level. The two squares are divided by a central glazed atrium, and the whole unit is set within secure landscaped gardens.

The façade reflects the desire to avoid an institutional feel. Small light-coloured windows set within panels of coloured render contrast with larger dark-coloured windows elsewhere, breaking up the brickwork.

Created with the character of a commercial high street, the atrium allows patients to leave their home, the ward, and go ‘outside’ for work, learning, shopping and to enjoy leisure activities in an outside garden area.

Central amenities, including a therapy room, sports and fitness area, and medical centre are separated from the wards giving patients a clearly defined alternative environment.

Internal areas have been designed around the Trust’s principal philosophy of care relating to the well-being of patients, staff and visitors, and in particular patients’ therapeutic requirements. Design of windows, doors and bedroom furniture has involved extensive research. Specialist suppliers put forward design solutions that address prime security issues – such as prevention from absconding and avoiding self-harm. A mock-up bedroom was constructed for clinical staff and patients to contribute their experience into choice of materials and construction detail.

Commenting on the project, Kier Build design manager Paul Scoging said, ‘A key objective of the interior design is to minimise the impact of the physical security and safety measures, and to create a supportive therapeutic environment.’



## Major issues

- Because of the mixture of medium secure and enhanced medium secure services there was a complex range of security needs.
- The dry-lined construction is reinforced with plywood sheathing to prevent the risk of patients creating voids within the fabric. The dry lined construction was tested on rigs for robustness and building potential.
- The entrance procedure for staff and visitors is simplified by a reception area for visitors, who are escorted into the building through a sliding-door airlock, and a separate access route for staff via secure revolving doors.
- Hand-made steel windows are used throughout the building with differing types of glazing specification dependent on the level of security required and the risk of self-harm.
- Materials were chosen to minimise the risk of self-harm. Products and components (ironmongery, floor finishes, glass blocks, glazing, sanitary ware, built-in furniture and the design of windows and doors) were scrutinised by the design and clinical teams with this in mind.

