

NEW AND RENEW

**An exploration into balanced architectural strategies
that can make the pediatric treatment experience
more children-centered.**

By Jingjing Liu

01 Introduction

- 1.1 Problem Statement
- 1.2 Research Question

02 Research Framework

- 2.1 Theoretical Framework
- 2.2 Relevance

03 Research Methods

- 3.1 Program
- 3.2 Client
- 3.3 Site

04 Design Brief

- 4.1 Program
- 4.2 Client
- 4.3 Site

05 Appendix

- 5.1 Bibliography
- 5.2 Figure
- 5.3 Research Analysis

01 Introduction

All too often, we have heard of all kinds of terrible childhood memories about hospitals: the unpleasant smell of disinfectants, endless crying, and indifferent treatment rooms. Our early impression of hospitals is filled with undesirable sensual fragments as kids are less disciplined with the notion of a healing process. The whole experience in a medical facility is a cognitive exploration for children, which could be very different from what adults percept. Therefore, the division between adult and pediatric healthcare departments is not solely about the pathological difference but also related to distinct environmental requirements.

1.1 Problem Statement

Pediatric facility design is a relatively young discipline compared to general adult healthcare space design. The domain of pediatrics was still beyond the general public's grasp 400 years ago. It was not until the 17th century that the pathological difference between adults and children began to draw greater attention from the medical experts to give specialized treatment.¹ The numbers of children's hospitals mushroomed in the early 20th century (Figure 1), and the pediatric autonomy only took shape around 30 years ago.² Therefore, despite the awareness of how pediatric hospitals should behave, its relatively short development history has resulted in a lack of thoughtful kid-centered design.

1.1.1 Unbalanced design

Pediatric healthcare facilities bear the responsibility of catering to young patients' particular needs. This responsibility refers to both the specific medical requirements for the children and dedicated attention to

their emotional and social needs. Evident as the principle might seem, the current implementation is somewhat unbalanced. Greater emphasis is placed on efficiency and technological improvement, similar to the general adult hospitals.

The ignorance of children's needs in hospitals has also drawn attention from the pediatric medical staff. The director of the department of pediatrics at the Dr. von Hauner Children's Hospital, Christoph Klein, expressed his concerns greatly:

"In German hospitals, we are much too focused on functional ways of thinking. Efficient processes and technological bio-engineering services are also important, but pediatric care should not be reduced to those aspects alone."³

The absence of holistic care for these patients became increasingly urgent. Meanwhile, the current design methods regarding children's needs are also rather discrete and rigid. Although some pediatric hospital designs pay attention to children's needs, most of the applied methods can be generalized into these two aspects: introducing colorful upholstery and adding extra activity space. These strategies are more recognized as an add-on to the basic design scheme to entertain children but are less considered as an integral part of the whole healing process at the beginning of design.

1.1.2 Personnel Shortage

The proper implementation of holistic care for young patients also relies heavily on specially trained, multidisciplinary caregivers. However, the recent pandemic has seen an aggravated personnel shortage in the current pediatric healthcare system. Introducing more digitally controlled methods may bring some alleviation, but it is important not to turn this solution-finding into a complete function-oriented game. The interface design and how are these digital elements positioned in the space should be thoroughly considered.

1.1.3 Problem Statement

Children patients are extremely sensitive to environment changes, and the generic hospital context can easily provoke their passive emotions.⁴ Research⁵ has shown that patients recovery benefits from a good state of emotions, therefore I would like propose the research question as such:

How can design approaches at different scales help improve the holistic experience of children in pediatric service?

The hope is that through the exploration into the holistic care for children, we interpret the idea of health in an even broader way.

1
Jacalyn Duffin, *History of Medicine* (University of Toronto Press, 2010)

2
Kate A Mazur, and Stacey L Berg. *Ethical Issues in Pediatric Hematology/Oncology*. (Cham: Springer, 2020)

3
Christine Nickl-Weller, and Hans Nickl. *Architecture for Health*. (Braun Publishing AG, 2021), 147

4
Nasab, Sara Nourmusavi, and Seyedjalal Mirbazer. "Ideal Physical Features of Environmental Design in Children's Hospital." *Facilities* 38, no. 5/6 (2020): 445–66.

5
Lamers, Sanne M. A, Linda Bolier, Gerben J Westerhof, Filip Smit, and Ernst T Bohlmeijer. "The Impact of Emotional Well-Being on Long-Term Recovery and Survival in Physical Illness: A Meta-Analysis." *Journal of Behavioral Medicine* 35, no. 5 (2012): 538–47.



Figure 1 The Royal Children's Hospital Melbourne operated in Carlton from 1876. This image presents the early model of children wards.

02 Research Framework

This research will look into the theories, methods, experiments, and precedents that deal with children's hospital design. The framework includes relative topics such as emotional design, spatial healing, children's cognition of space, children's reaction to the hospital environment, etc.

2.1 Theoretical Framework

When talking about the design of hospital space, Emotional Design is constantly brought up. According to Donald Norman, Emotional Design refers to the design that evokes emotion when the user interacts with the product.⁴ As studies have shown 'existing relationships between perceptual "signals" and emotional arousal,' Emotional Design of space presents significant potential to improve the psychological health of patients and further enhance the effectiveness of the therapies.⁵

Among all the patient groups, children are the most sensitive group to environmental changes. The alien hospital environments might easily provoke their fear, anxiety, anger, and sadness.⁶ Therefore an appropriate Emotional Design of hospital space can benefit these young patients significantly. With this said, experiments and research have been carried out to work directly with young patients to examine their experience and find out what they really need.

In an interview-based study that involves 255 children and adolescents, outdoor space falls to bring sufficient activities to the young patients due to the lack of entertaining design. Children of different group ages also showed distinct opinions toward the colorful upholstery. And the negligence of unwanted sound, smell, and temperatures also bothered these little patients.⁷ Patently these so-called

child-friendly hospitals are based largely on the adult assumption and do not cater to what children really need.

In another study that explores the ideal physical features for children in hospitals, 16 drawings and 24 interviews from the children are analyzed. The preferred features are play places, happy light color, television, painting, and the curve form of the building.⁸ Apart from some dominant entertainment elements, fancy lights and spatial forms are also more favorable to the children.

The studies that involve direct conversations with children provide a useful guideline for later design exploration. However, it is worth noting that these spatial features are already handled as discrete categories when the questions are delivered to the children. Children were asked about their opinions towards each of them but not the whole perception. This, in a way, hints at a lack of holistic consideration toward children's experiences in general.

Currently, the design of educational facilities seems to have more explorations regarding the children's experience. These projects are also potential precedents to analyze. In a school project (Figure 2) by Lundaard & Tranberg Architects in Copenhagen, the designers emphasize that 'materials and technical solutions take on meanings when carefully placed in a context.'⁹ And they envision a poetic educational experience within the building:

'Hopefully, they experience a sense of calm here as they touch the columns, experiencing the cool, pleasant surface of concrete cast in smooth for work. As they play over the course of the day, perhaps they follow the rays of sun traversing the spaces, reminding them of the way light falls in a natural landscape.'¹⁰

Can medical facilities also become so poetic regarding the children's experience there? Can children have their own building in the hospital? The answer awaits us to explore.

2.2 Relevance

As mentioned in the problem statement, there have been criticisms about the over-function-oriented design in German pediatric facility design. Children are not ‘small adults,’ and children’s hospitals should not be a simply scaled-down version of adult hospitals. As the environment impacts the patients during their recovery process,¹¹ it is meaningful to explore what is a more favorable environment for young patients specifically. With German pediatric medical facilities already in the lead from the technological aspect, attention to holistic care would be complementary. Therefore, this research may help find a way toward a more children-centered holistic design for the next generation of young patients.

Additionally, this research is an acute response to the current burdensome situation of Berlin’s pediatric healthcare system. The precarious conditions have recently prompted the Berlin Children’s Hospitals Initiative (IBK) to send another open letter to the Federal Health Minister, Berlin Health Senator, and the management of Berlin’s pediatric hospitals.¹² The recent pandemic has aggravated the extreme staffing shortage and precipitated the dysfunction of the pediatric medical system: beds remain vacant despite the high demand because of the insufficient medical and nursing staff.¹³ Part of the research will look into the digitalization and integration of patient monitoring, which may help alleviate the scarcity of staff to some extent. Meanwhile, if the space allows the patients to understand the healing process better in general, caregivers may spend less energy on appeasing children’s emotions and focus on the most demanding situations.

4

Donald A. Norman. *Emotional Design: Why We Love (or Hate) Everyday Things*. (New York: Basic Books, 2004), 101.

5

Marco Maiocchi, and Zhabiz Shafieyoun. *Emotional Design and the Healthcare Environment*. Research for Development. (Cham: Springer, 2022), 10-11

6

Sara Nourmusavi Nasab, Amir Reza Karimi Azeri, and Seyedjalal Mirbazer. “Ideal Physical Features of Environmental Design in Children’s Hospital.” *Facilities* 38, no. 5-6 (2020): 446.

7

Jo Birch, Penny Curtis, and Allison James. “Sense and Sensibilities: In Search of the Child-Friendly Hospital.” *Built Environment* (1978-) 33, no. 4 (2007): 405-06.

8

Nasab, “Ideal Physical Features of Environmental Design in Children’s Hospital.”

9

Lundaard & Tranberg Architects, “Tenderness,” in *Connectedness: An Incomplete Encyclopedia of the Anthropocene*. Views, Thoughts, Considerations, Insights, Images, Notes & Remarks., ed. Marianne Krogh. (Strandberg, 2020), 358.

10

Ibid.

11

Roger S. Ulrich, “View Through a Window May Influence Recovery from Surgery,” *Science* 224, no. 4647 (1984): 420-421.

12

“Catastrophic Situation in Berlin Children’s Hospitals,” Carola Kleinert, and Markus Salzmann, *World Socialist Web Site*, October 3, 2022, <http://www.wsws.org/en/articles/2022/10/04/Lyon-o04.html>

13

Ibid.



Figure 2 Kalvebod Fælled School, Copenhagen, by Lundaard & Tranberg Architects.

03 Research Methods

3.1 Program

To investigate a rational breakdown of programs, I will select and analyze precedents of both general hospitals and children's hospitals. By comparing the differences among these projects' program bars, we can develop a proper program breakdown that guarantees the essential operation of a hospital. Within the rational frame, the portions will be later adjusted so that it is more gravitated to the space that engages more with the experience of these young patients. Additionally, kindergartens and primary schools will be specific precedents as they involve children's needs and experiences.

3.2 Client

Positioned as an academic hospital affiliated with a higher education institution, universities with advanced medical disciplines are the main potential clients for this project proposal. Additionally, it is also essential to consider the administrative departments that engage with the well-being of children as secondary clients. Societally, NGOs and charity groups may also play a role.

3.3 Site

The search for the site would be the intercross result of two parameters.

The first parameter involves the preferred environmental context for hospitals. Places with less air and noise pollution, views towards green and good mobility, present more potential to develop health-related facilities. These factors would be an essential step for the project to take on the character of a more patient-centered design.

The second parameter involves the societal context of Berlin. The aim is to help revitalize the Spree river environment, which has been relatively inactive these days. The choice of this culture parameter is due to its pertinence to the holistic care of children patients, especially on the urban scale. Adjacency to riverside bring potentials in developing the project with great connection to natures, which would be beneficial for the children patients.

04 Design Brief

The Charité Children’s Hospital and Pediatric Research Center is a healthcare facility project focusing on holistic care and experience optimization for pediatric patients. Apart from enhancing efficiency and corresponding to the updating medical technologies, it places emphasis on introducing a more user-centered spatial design from urban, tectonic, and interior scales as an integral part.

4.1 Program

4.1.1 Program Breakdown

The programs of the whole project can be categorized into five parts: children’s autonomy, medical service, public activity, research center, and back of the house.

While conforming with the rational division of a children’s hospital according to the precedents study this proposed program breakdown introduces a specific section for children. (Figure 3) It partially incorporates the wards program which usually is categorized into the medical service part. By combining the section of the ward with their activity space(Figure 4), the idea is to introduce some degree of children’s autonomy for them to explore.

4.1.2 User & Flow

The users’ flow patterns within the facility determine the positions of each program. While the outpatients usually follow a sequential pattern (Figure 5), the inpatients’ activities are obviously more ward-centered (Figure 6). In contrast, the flow pattern of doctors is more dynamically spread out over all the different sections (Figure 7). Therefore, certain programs need to be arranged with adjacency to others. The arrangement in these illustrations is a schematic proposal.

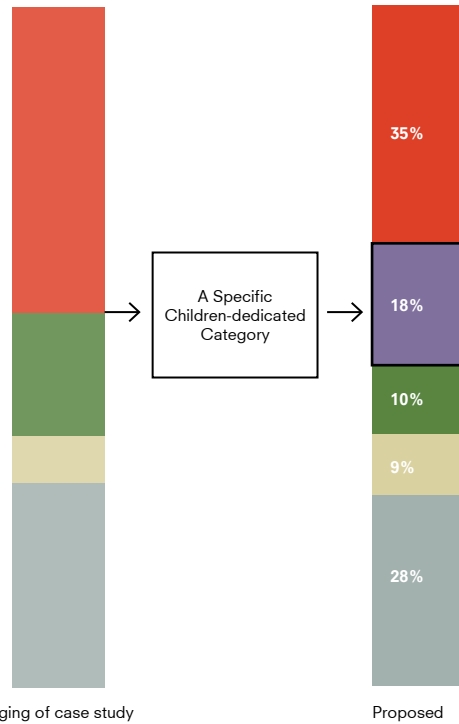


Figure 3 A specific section of program dedicated to children.

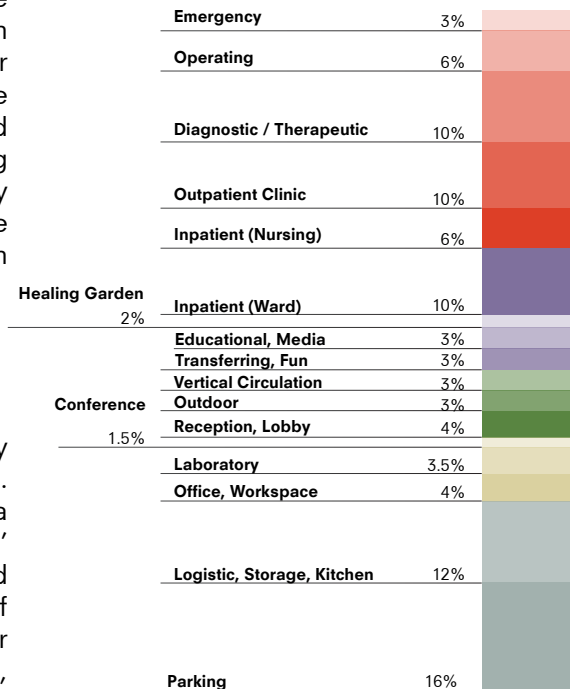


Figure 4 Program breakdown proposal.

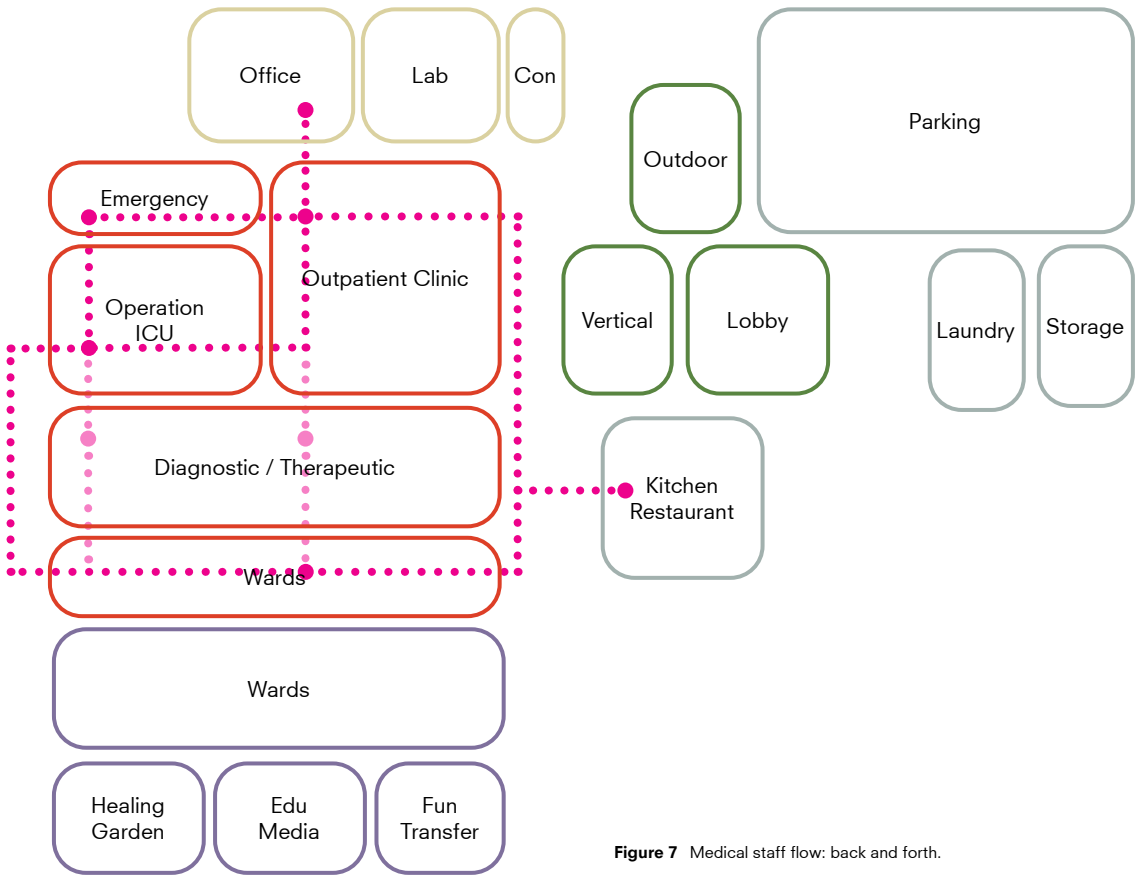


Figure 7 Medical staff flow: back and forth.

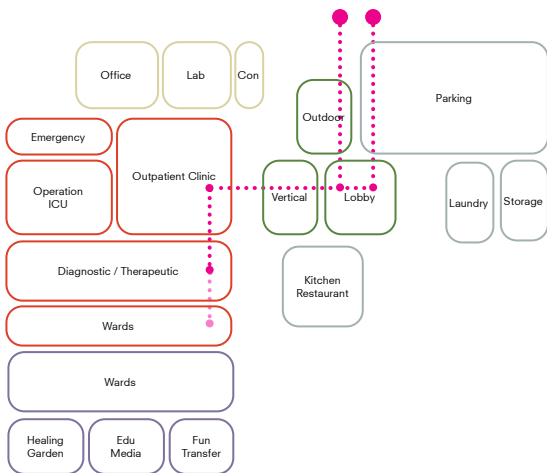


Figure 5 Outpatient flow: sequential.

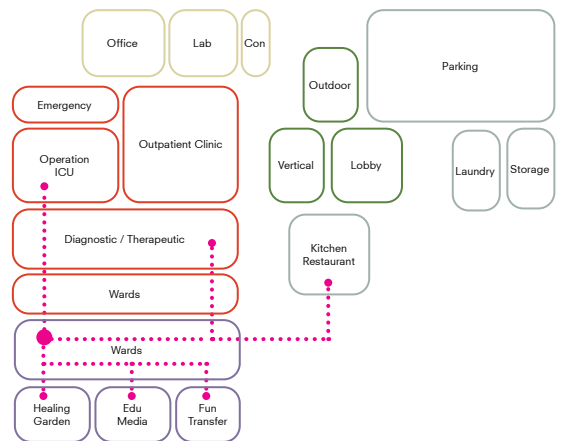


Figure 6 Inpatient flow: ward as the pivot.

4.1.3 Assembly Strategy

Due to the constantly-upgrading medical technology, hospitals go to obsolete faster and faster after their completion. Therefore, it is preferred to develop the spatial program based on a modular system. The study of each of the spatial requirements (see Appendix 5.3) results in a 1.5m x 1.5m grid system to implement all the variations of units in the medical facility.(Figure 8)

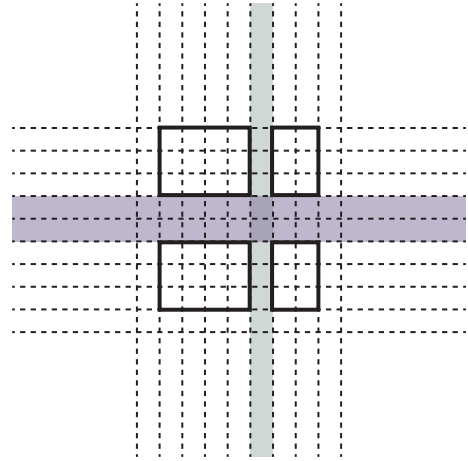


Figure 8 Aggregation based on a 1.5m x 1.5m grid system.

4.1.4 Key Space (Figure 9 & 10)

The key space study involves the ward and the outpatient clinic, which are two main programs that children patients spend time in. For the wards, the idea is to introduce a separate slice of space to accommodate

parents, and a balcony connected to neighbors and outdoor activity space.

For the outpatient clinic, the idea is to embed a more generous waiting area and separate doctors' circulation from the patients.

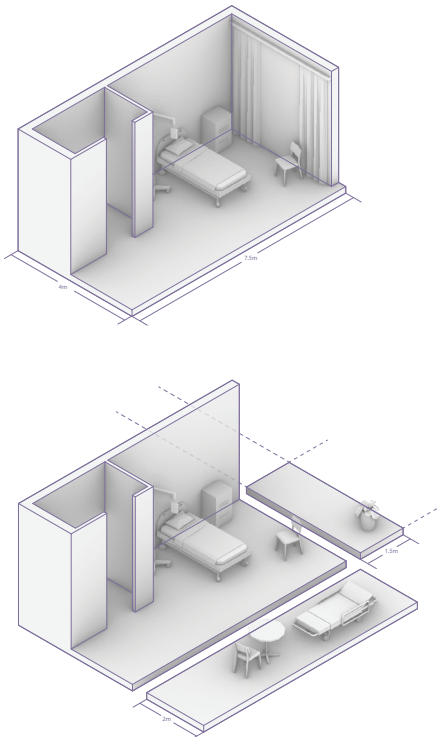


Figure 9 Proposed wards extension.

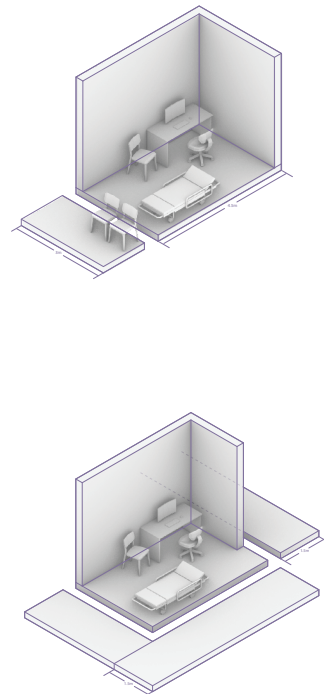


Figure 10 Proposed clinic units attachment.

4.2 Client

Charité – Universitätsmedizin Berlin (Charité – Berlin University of Medicine) is a large academic hospital affiliated with Humboldt University and Free University Berlin. The hospital currently has its pediatric department located in Campus Virchow-Klinikum. With the departments of gynecology, obstetrics, and the Institute of Medical and Human Genetics, it forms the largest medical center of the

Charité: CharitéCenter 17. This academic hospital, specifically its pediatric department, will be the main client of this project.

Meanwhile, the related departments of the government: the Federal Ministry of Health, along with the Federal Ministry for Family Affairs, Senior Citizens, Women, and Youth, will also participate.

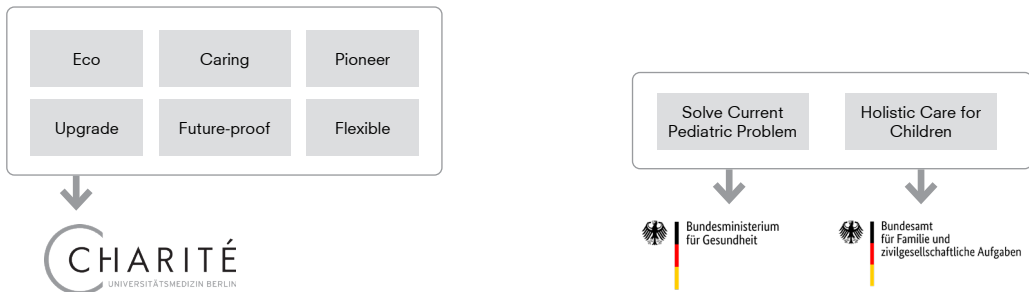


Figure 11 Clients ambitions



Figure 12 Visual interpretation

4.3 Site

The site is located in the Berlin Wedding District, next to the current Campus Virchow-Klinikum of Charité.

This triangular-shaped site faces rather different urban contexts (Figure 13) on each side. Therefore, the project needs to incorporate different responses to the features of each side.

Meanwhile, the site is embedded with a turning point of a tram route, which requires some buffer space for security reasons. Therefore the usable area would shrink slightly. (Figure 15)

The southern side is part of the Heiligenseer Weg (one of the 20 green main paths of Berlin) and faces the Spree river. (Figure 14) The strategy on this side is about continuing and even strengthening the ecological features to benefit the public more.

The northwest side faces a fast lane and looks into the Plötzensee park area. It is essential to

find ways to reduce the noise and preferably build a connection towards the exuberant green area opposite the road. (Figure 16)

The northeast side shares a public road with the current Charité campus. This project, as an extension of the campus, undoubtedly requires a smooth transition toward the larger campus area.

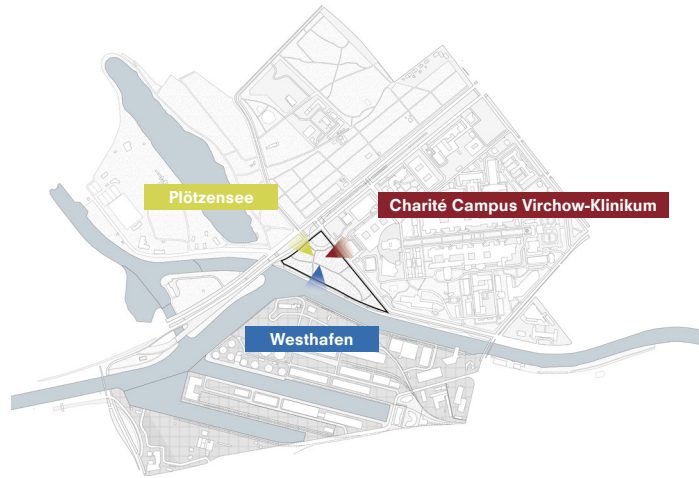


Figure 13 Site faces different urban contexts on each side.

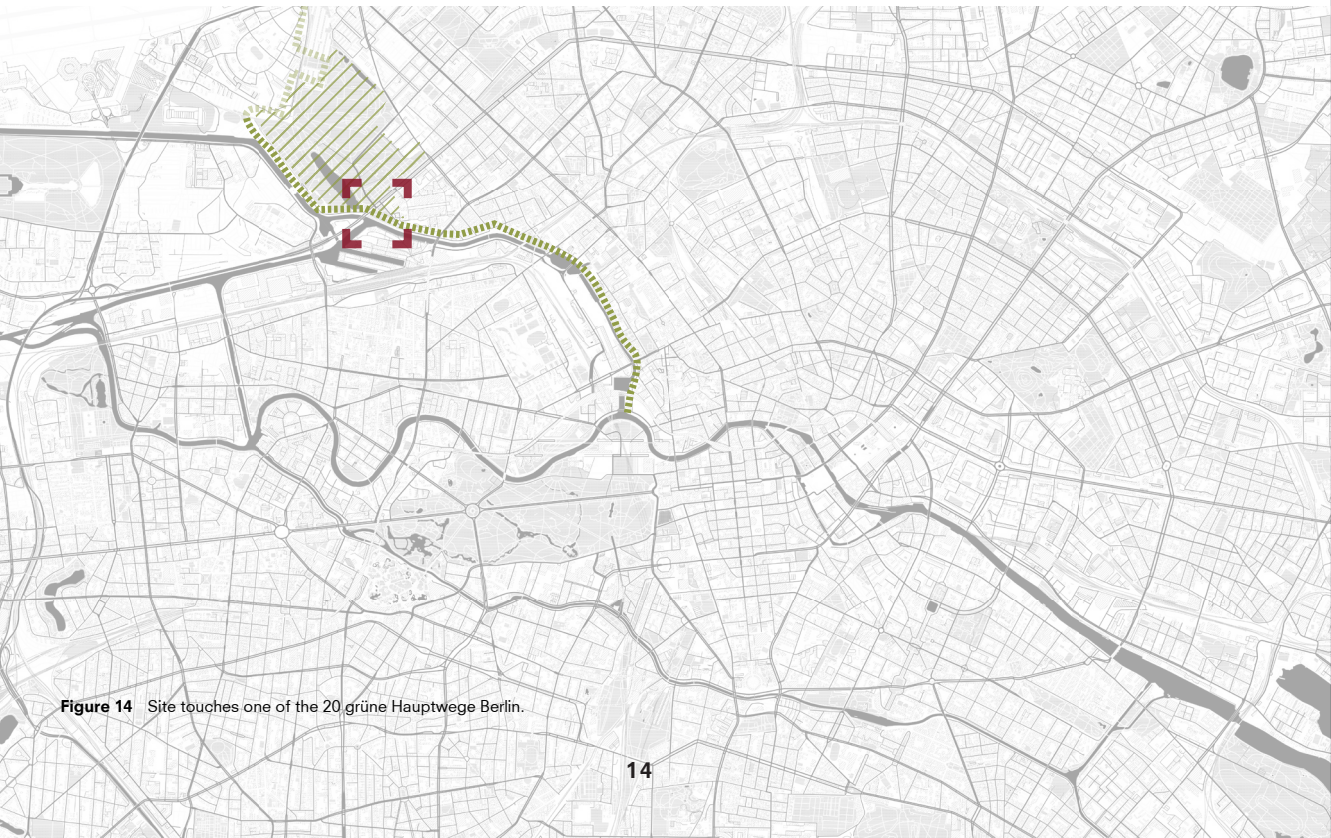


Figure 14 Site touches one of the 20 grüne Hauptwege Berlin.



(Continue) Figure 13 Site faces different urban contexts on each side.

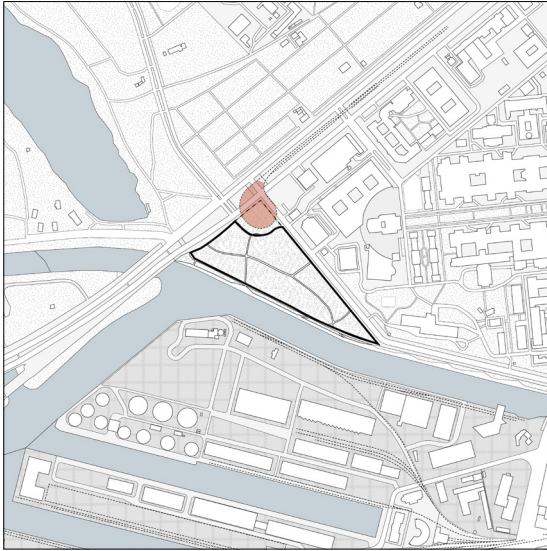


Figure 15 Ending of a tram route.

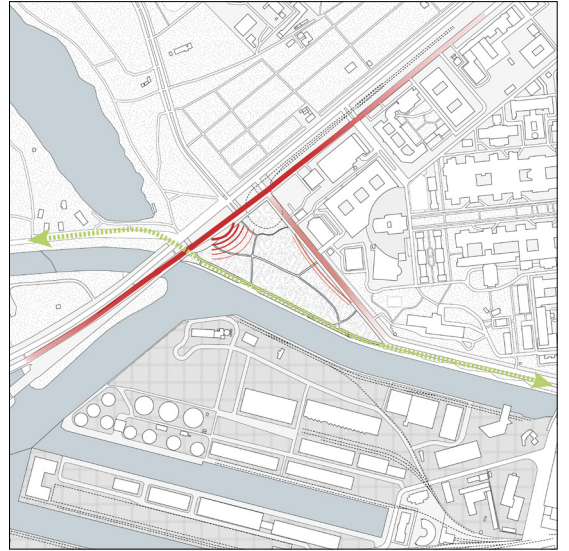


Figure 16 Each side requires offset.

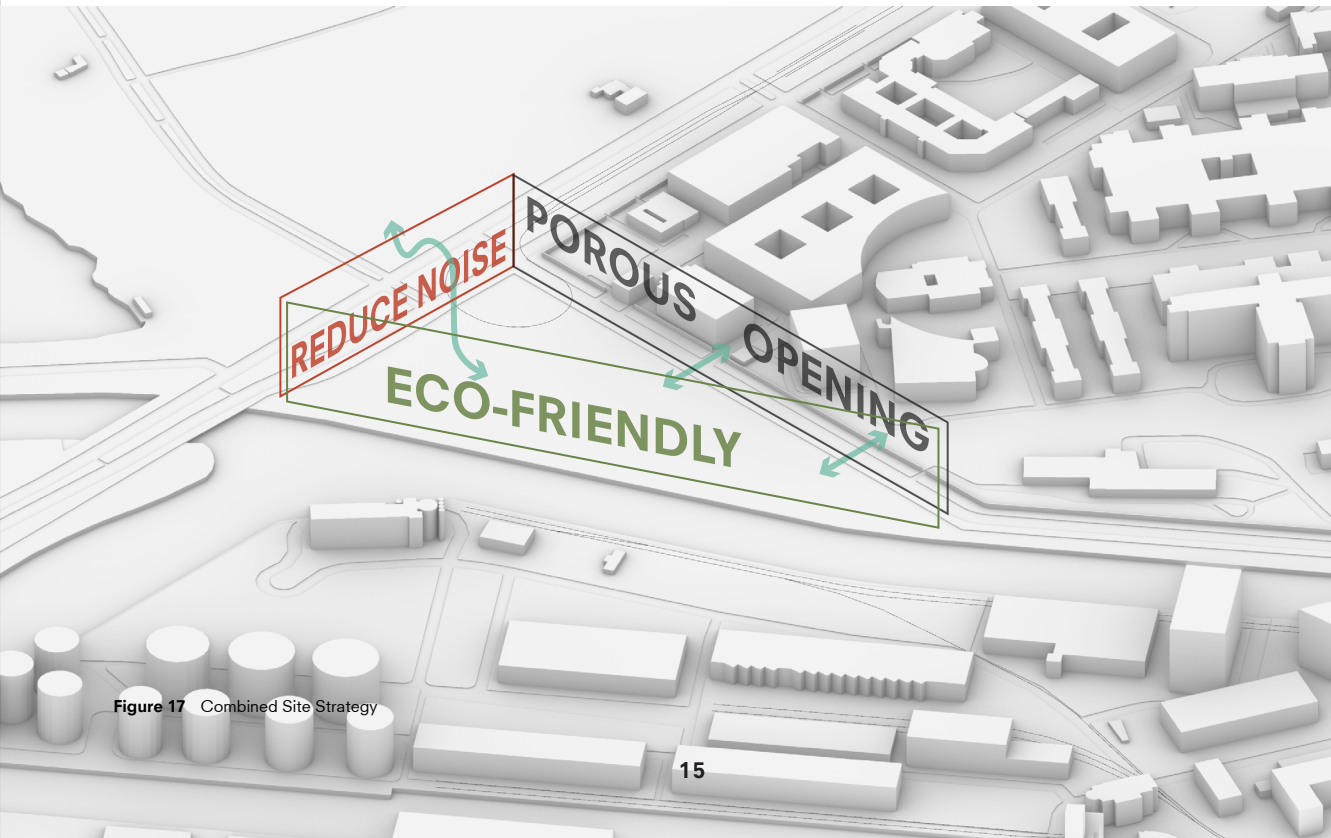


Figure 17 Combined Site Strategy

05 Appendix

5.1 Bibliography

- Battisto, Dina. *Architecture and Health*. Routledge, 2019.
- Birch, Jo, Penny Curtis, and Allison James. "Sense and Sensibilities: In Search of the Child-Friendly Hospital." *Built Environment* (1978-) 33, no. 4 (2007): 405–16.
- Charité – Universitätsmedizin Berlin. "History Overview" Charité – Universitätsmedizin Berlin, accessed November 12, 2022. https://www.charite.de/en/charite/about_us/history/
- Charité – Universitätsmedizin Berlin. "Facilities of Charité Center 17" Charité – Universitätsmedizin Berlin, accessed November 12, 2022. https://www.charite.de/en/charite/charitecenters/cc17_gynecology_perinatal_pediatric_and_adolescent_medicine_with_perinatal_center_and_human_genetics/
- Duffin, Jacalyn. *History of Medicine, Second Edition: A Scandalously Short Introduction*. University of Toronto Press, 2010.
- European Observatory on Health Systems and Policies. *The Changing Role of the Hospital in European Health Systems*. Edited by Martin McKee, Sherry Merkur, Nigel Edwards, and Ellen Nolte. European Observatory on Health Systems and Policies. Cambridge, United Kingdom: Cambridge University Press, 2020.
- Hopkinson, Michael; Kostermans, Cornelis P.. *Building for Health Care: A Guide for Planners and Architects of First and Second Level Facilities*. Washington, D.C.: World Bank Group, 1996.
- Jordan, Patrick W. *Designing Pleasurable Products: An Introduction to the New Human Factors*. London: Taylor & Francis, 2000.
- Kleinert, Carola, and Markus Salzmann, "Catastrophic Situation in Berlin Children's Hospitals", *World Socialist Web Site*, October 3, 2022. <http://www.wsws.org/en/articles/2022/10/04/Lyon-o04.html>
- Lundaard & Tranberg Architects, "Tenderness," in *Connectedness: An Incomplete Encyclopedia of the Anthropocene. Views, Thoughts, Considerations, Insights, Images, Notes & Remarks*, edited by Marianne Krogh. Strandberg, 2020
- Maiocchi, Marco, and Zhabiz Shafieyoun. *Emotional Design and the Healthcare Environment. Research for Development*. Cham: Springer, 2022. <https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-030-99846-2>.
- Mazur, Kate A, and Stacey L Berg. *Ethical Issues in Pediatric Hematology/Oncology*. Cham: Springer, 2020. <https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-030-22684-8>.
- Murphy, Michael P, Jeffrey Mansfield, and MASS Design Group. *The Architecture of Health: Hospital Design and the Construction of Dignity*. New York, NY: Cooper Hewitt, Smithsonian Design Museum, 2021.
- Nasab, Sara Nourmusavi, and Seyedjalal Mirbazer. "Ideal Physical Features of Environmental Design in Children's Hospital." *Facilities* 38, no. 5/6 (2020): 445–66. <https://doi.org/10.1108/F-03-2019-0032>.
- Nickl-Weller, Christine, and Hans Nickl, editors. *Architecture for Health: Architektur Für Gesundheit*. 1st ed, Braun Publishing AG, 2021.
- Norman, Donald A. *Emotional Design: Why We Love (or Hate) Everyday Things*. New York: Basic Books, 2004

Nourmusavi Nasab, Sara, Amir Reza Karimi Azeri, and Seyedjalal Mirbazer. "Ideal Physical Features of Environmental Design in Children's Hospital." *Facilities Design* 38, no. 5-6 (2020): 445–66. <https://doi.org/10.1108/F-03-2019-0032>.

Risse, Guenter B. *Mending Bodies, Saving Souls: A History of Hospitals*. New York: Oxford University Press, 1999.

Sunder, Wolfgang. *The Patient Room: Planning, Design, Layout*. Basel: Birkhäuser, 2021.

Ulrich, Roger S. "View Through a Window May Influence Recovery from Surgery." *Science* 224, no. 4647 (1984): 420–421

Wheeler, E. Todd. *Hospital Design and Function*. New York: McGraw-Hill, 1964.

World Health Organization. Regional Office for the Western Pacific. *District hospitals: guidelines for development*. 2nd ed. WHO Regional Office for the Western Pacific, 1992.

5.2 Figure

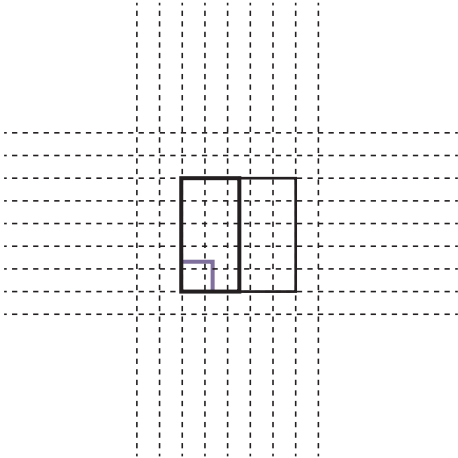
Figure 1. Adapted from: <https://archives.rch.org.au/photography-collection/carlton-wards/>

Figure 2. Adapted from: <https://www.itarkitekter.dk/kalvebodflledschool-en-0>

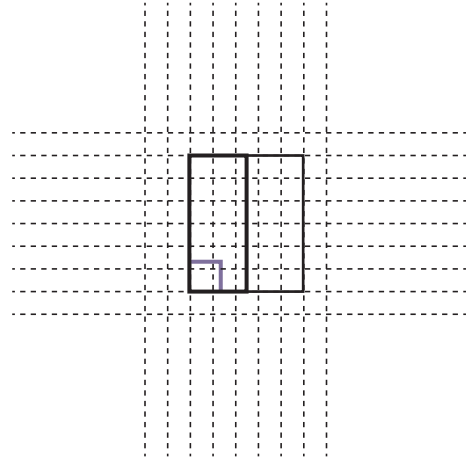
Figure 3 -14 Created by author.

05 Appendix

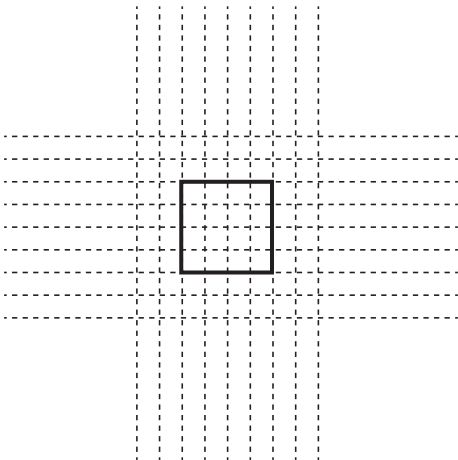
5.3 Research Analysis



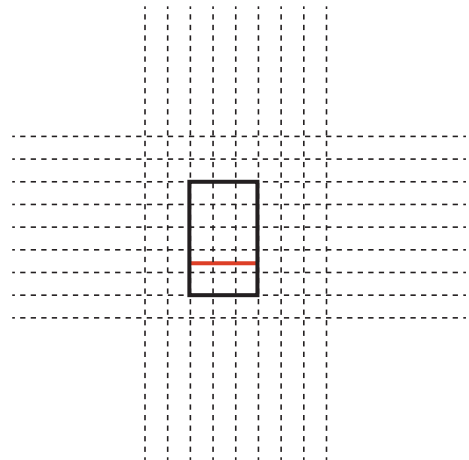
1-Bed Ward
7.5m x 3.75m



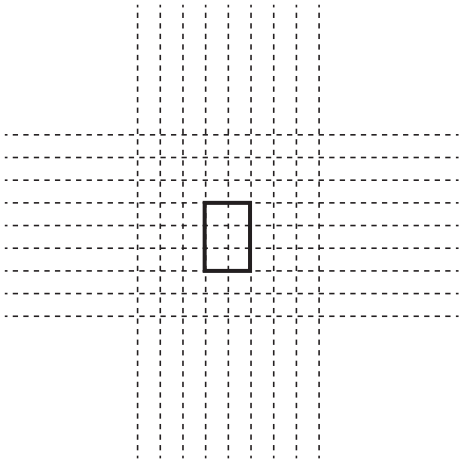
2-Bed Ward
9m x 3.75m



Surgery
6m x 6m

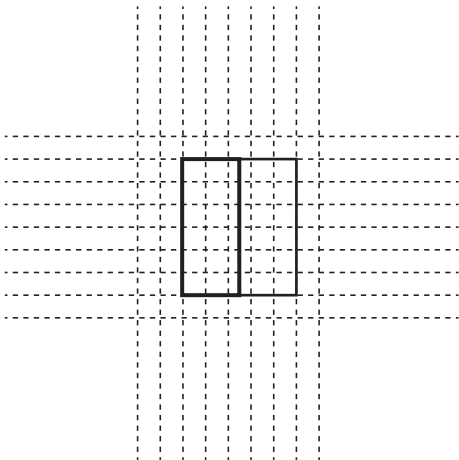


Radiology
7.5m x 4.5m



Exam / Treatment

4.5m x 3m



Lab

9m x 3.75m

05 Appendix

5.3 Research Analysis

