

The Stanmore Building opens: architecture, technology and art

10 December 2018



We opened our new Stanmore Building at the weekend (8-9 Dec), fusing the latest architectural design and health technology with contemporary art and poems to produce a stunning building that provides a unique environment for patients and staff.

The Stanmore Building offers the very best ward facilities for many patients and allows staff to work in an environment matching their skill and dedication. It comes after a thirty year campaign to replace many of the old ward buildings that date from World War Two.

The first in a major long-term redevelopment of our 100 acre site in north-west London, construction of the four-storey building began in August 2016 and was completed last month on time and within budget, with a major portion of the project funded by land sales from the hospital's large estate. The sold land will go on to supply much-needed housing in the local area. The Stanmore building accommodates:

- A 27 bed children / young people's ward, with embedded therapy and education functions, plus internal/external play areas to replace the current paediatric ward beds
- Two adult acute wards of 32 beds each, over two floors, with embedded therapies functions to replace several of the current outdated adult wards
- A 28 bed private ward. All profit from the private ward is reinvested back into the NHS.

- A spacious 50ft high atrium that will provide reception and waiting space with a coffee shop, children's activity centre within the entrance foyer fitted out with a range of interactive technological equipment for our young patients, visitors and families, funded by the RNOH Charity. These include light machines and kaleidoscopes plus a huge concave stainless steel mirror designed by Will Yates-Johnson - one of only three in the world – that creates a startling visual and aural effect.

Cutting-edge technology is also an integral feature of the Stanmore Building and this includes Vocera, a secure hands-free staff communication system, digital signage, a bedside patient entertainment system and a new member of the team, a 4-foot tall interactive robot called Pepper. Pepper will be based on the Children's ward and is able to converse with people, take instructions, play games and is even capable of face recognition and reading human emotions. This is a first for an NHS hospital.

A special feature of the Stanmore Building is the stunning art that adorns the main atrium entrance and the walls of the wards. In the atrium, a specially commissioned piece called 'Tribe' hangs from the ceiling. Designed and fabricated by Studio Roso, 'Tribe' is 33ft long and is made up of 50 colourful heads, modelled on a diverse range of RNOH staff and patients.

'Tribe' is part of a wider arts programme that also includes the art that decorates the walls of the wards, a project based on the successful book 'The Lost Words' by Robert McFarlane, published by Penguin. Macfarlane's words are presented in a beautiful book designed by Alison O'Toole with paintings of flowers, birds, fish and animals by artist Jackie Morris. The final artwork idea was to transfer some of the images and words from the book into the hospital environment. It was completed by installing eighty panels across all the wards with each floor colour co-ordinated. Macfarlane was specially commissioned to write a butterfly acrostic for the children's ward along with new poems and illustrations by Morris.

As Morris says on her artist blog "Each floor tells a story...the history of the hospital linked the outside, the natural world, to health. The site had been moved from central London to the greener edges of the city where the air was purer." The final result is a beautiful evocation of nature that transports the pastoral splendour of the hospital's rural estate inside the new building, transforming the long corridors and bare walls into a collage of colour and texture.

Rob Hurd, Chief Executive of the RNOH, said: "The Stanmore Building is the first step in an exciting future for the RNOH and builds upon an impeccable legacy of innovation in orthopaedics. The spacious new building, patient facilities and stunning art provide a fitting environment to deliver the best care and for staff to work in. The Stanmore name is known around the world for pioneering many of the now-standard procedures; we are setting the gold standard for clinical outcomes. The support and enthusiasm shown by the staff, patients and supporters – both past and present – has brought us here and I want to say, on behalf of the RNOH, thank you. Without them, we could not have done it. We intend to be here for at least another 100 years, putting patients first, always".



The Stanmore Building opening (click image for slideshow).

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