

DESIGNING OUR NURSING HOMES: NOW AND FUTURE

Evolution of nursing home designs

Nursing home designs have evolved to provide better living environments for residents and to strengthen the integration of nursing homes with the surrounding communities.

The changes in nursing home designs over the years include:

- Cluster-of-Rooms concept
- Salutogenic designs² to create a comfortable environment
- Variety of spaces for social interaction
- Creating a healing and familiar environment
- Creating a safe and walkable environment
- Fenceless design for integration with surrounding community

Designing Future-Ready and Sustainable Nursing Homes for Person-Centric Care Models in Communities' Research Study

The research study is an interdisciplinary project led by the National University of Singapore (NUS) in collaboration with geriatric care researchers, industry partners and agencies.

The primary focus is to recommend innovative design typologies for nursing homes that support person-centric care models, and are well-integrated with the surrounding communities in Singapore. Design firms were invited to translate research findings into architectural design concepts for future nursing homes. This exhibition illustrates how the preliminary research findings have been translated into conceptual design proposals by the firms. The research study is expected to be completed by the first half of 2020.

² Salutogenic design is an approach that focuses on design factors that support human health and well-being.

Part 1: Evidence-based research

The NUS researchers studied five nursing homes in Singapore to assess their physical, social and care environments. This included focus group discussions with staff and residents, and the observation of residents and staff to understand workflow, behaviours and interactions with their environments.

Part 2: Architectural design research

A Request For Proposal (RFP) was then called, and six design firms were shortlisted to propose design ideas for future nursing home typologies based on the design principles established by the research team. Based on their designs, two firms were selected to further develop the conceptual ideas.

Design ideas by the selected firms

The summaries of the design concepts by the selected firms are as follows. More details can be found at the exhibition. (Note: The design concepts are subject to further study.)

1. 'HOME+' by FARM Architects Pte Ltd & STUCK Design Pte Ltd

As we age, our bodies weaken and needs change. Yet, our notion of home remains the same. 'Home+' illustrates the evolution of nursing home designs, not necessarily into something more advanced, but a return to the fundamentals that make a home.

2. 'Kampong Spirit and Beyond' by Silver Thomas Hanley International Pty Ltd

The concept strives to forge new communities while integrating residents, staff, families and carers.

Key themes of the design ideas

- A. Shifting from traditional care models to person-centric care with designs that empower residents to express their choices, and to create a sense of familiarity and normalcy in their lives.
- B. Creating future-ready and sustainable nursing homes by introducing flexible bed configurations to respond to future needs and changing demand.
- C. Creating supportive and enabling environments through designs that allow for easy transition between different spaces, encourage movement and promote interaction among residents.
- D. Encouraging community integration through the provision of shared spaces for the neighbouring community.