



Design for Dementia  
**Dementia and Design**

Colin Smart - Architect



# Me

- Architect
- 30 years designing for people with disabilities
  - Physical
  - Sensory
  - Learning
- Community architecture and “estate regeneration”
- Older persons – Extra Care since 2000
- Basically designing buildings so people can live their lives in them as best they can

# Agenda

- Introduction - ~~Design for dementia~~ – Design for people with dementia - my thoughts on current situation
- A look at what is about – what advice is there publicly available for design for dementia
- The importance of proper design for people with dementia
- Dementia checklists
- Design for Dementia in practice
  - Key requirements for a building suitable for people with dementia
  - Live examples of these key requirements
- Recap
- Current projects
  - How they fit in with the key requirements
- Summary



# “Dementia Friendly” is the current Buzzword

- Lots of experts in design for dementia
- Lots of checklists being produced as “guidelines” to ensure design is “dementia friendly”
- Lots of people ticking boxes but not quite knowing why they can tick the box
  
- I am not an expert in dementia design
- I do like to think I am something of an expert in creating nice places for people to live
  - And if they help people with dementia then that is a bonus

What is there about on design for dementia?



# Internet search – care homes and hospitals

- Lots of before and after pictures and testimonials such as
  - “are passionate about maintaining the feel and appearance of the unit”
  - “seeing our patients interacting with this environment, being able to choose between sociable and quiet areas, indoor and outdoor spaces ..... it feels like we have been able to make a difference”
  - “I liked the little lounge – nice and quiet, and the snug with the fire and sofa”
  - “if we could only change three things, these would be: signposting using accent colours, creating a central social space, and improving the lighting”
  - “on a daily basis we see the most fabulous, positive results created by the new environment”
  - “the whole experience has opened my eyes to the importance of art, colour, light and the general environment in improving patient care”
  - “I couldn’t believe it when I saw it. It’s like going into a posh hotel. It cheers people up no end”
  - “ I now see things from a different perspective, and can be justly critical of environments, recognising the inextricable links between health and wellbeing and the spaces we live in.”


- They are all nice places to be

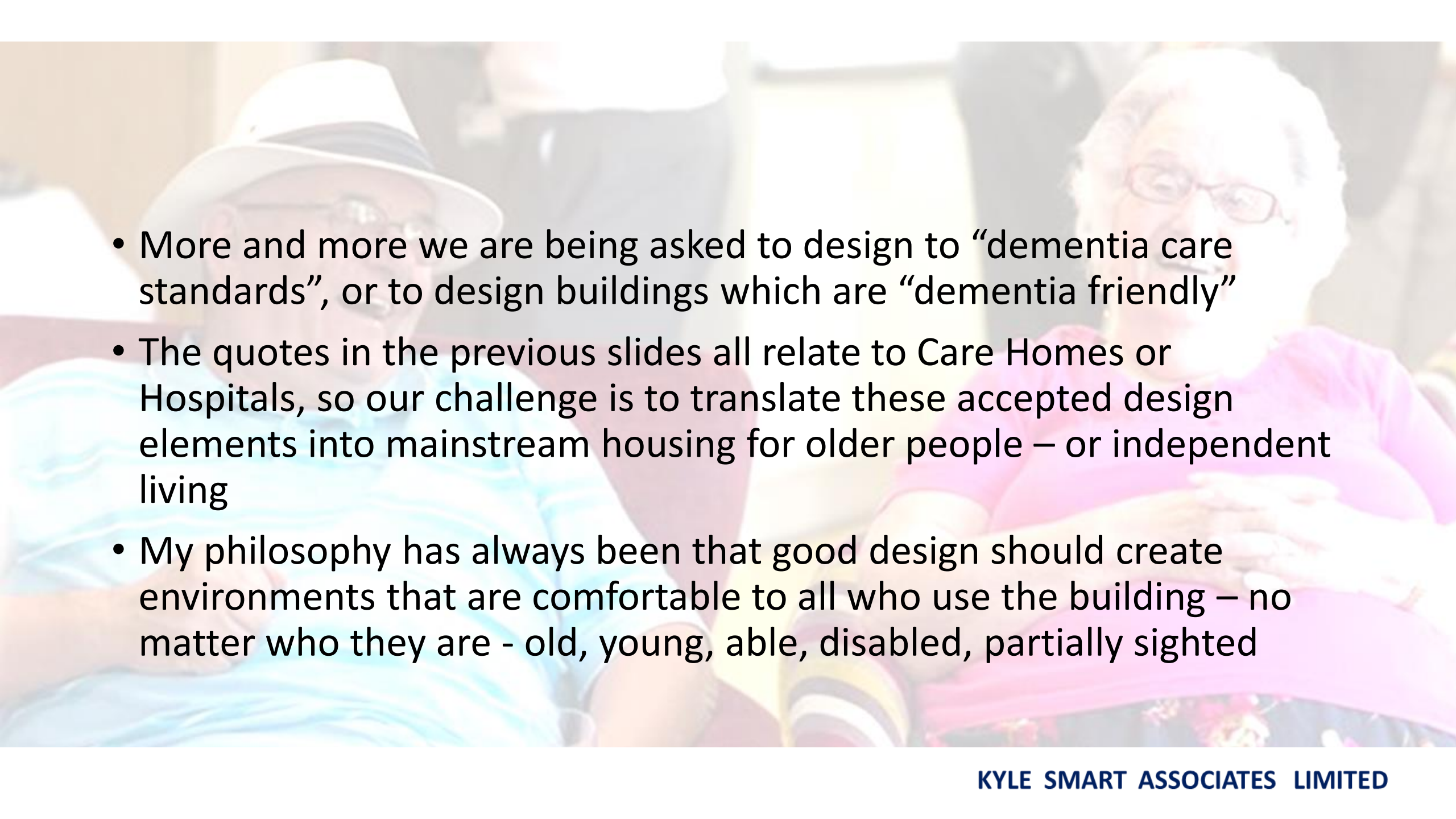


# The Importance of Design

- Lots of talk about
  - Sensory, mobility and cognitive impairments
  - Importance of lighting
    - “good lighting in buildings can help people to see what is around them”
    - “Poor lighting can increase anxiety and may lead to trip and fall accidents”
    - “A room is not a room without natural light”
  - Importance of colour and contrast
    - As you age, your eyesight can deteriorate
  - Importance of getting outside
    - Fresh air makes us feel better and relieves stress of everyday living
  - Importance of orientation and signage
    - we all get confused in unfamiliar areas – the impairments of dementia are usually in memory so this can be magnified and more stressing
  - Importance of communal areas
    - We are social animals and need others to make us feel the person we are
    - People are different and have different needs
- If a building is badly designed so that most of us without dementia feel anxious, lost or disorientated – the impact upon people with dementia can be profound
- These are all well established factors which make successful places for people with dementia




- 
- A photograph of two elderly individuals sitting in chairs and laughing. The person on the left is a man wearing a white hat and a light blue striped polo shirt. The person on the right is a woman wearing glasses and a pink top. The background is slightly blurred, showing other people in a social setting.
- So we know design is important for people with dementia
  - Fact

- 
- More and more we are being asked to design to “dementia care standards”, or to design buildings which are “dementia friendly”
  - The quotes in the previous slides all relate to Care Homes or Hospitals, so our challenge is to translate these accepted design elements into mainstream housing for older people – or independent living
  - My philosophy has always been that good design should create environments that are comfortable to all who use the building – no matter who they are - old, young, able, disabled, partially sighted



# Dementia Checklists

- Often handed to me after the building has been designed and asked to tick the boxes
- Full of misinterpreted ideals
  - E.g. bathroom must be visible from bed
  - Mustn't have mirrors
  - Orange is the best colour for walls
- Increasingly being owned by Contractors
- Danger of tick box design rather than from the outset
  - “How many of these do you want to achieve, because I don't think you can afford to meet them all”
- Do you want a Care Home or a place for people to live?
- Do not design by checklist – if you must use them, use them as a tool for assessing how successful a design is – after it has been designed in principle and while you still have time to influence the design – as a team tool, not a criticism tool

- 
- A photograph of two elderly individuals sitting in a room. On the left, a man wearing a white hat and a light blue and white striped polo shirt is seated. On the right, a woman with short white hair, wearing glasses and a bright pink short-sleeved shirt, is seated and smiling. The background is slightly blurred, showing other people and what appears to be a window or doorway. The overall lighting is bright and indoor.
- Right – off my soap box and on to the pretty pictures
  - Design for dementia in practice
  - How do we therefore design for dementia in Extra Care Housing?
  - What, if anything, is special?

A photograph of two elderly individuals sitting in chairs and smiling. On the left, a man wearing a white hat and glasses is seated in a maroon chair, wearing a light blue and white striped polo shirt. On the right, a woman with glasses is seated in a chair with a colorful striped armrest, wearing a bright pink short-sleeved shirt. The background is softly blurred, suggesting an indoor setting like a community center or care home.

# What does a building need to help people with dementia (better title than design for dementia)?

1. Familiar
2. Legible
3. Distinctive
4. Accessible
5. Safe
6. Comfortable
7. Allow Choice

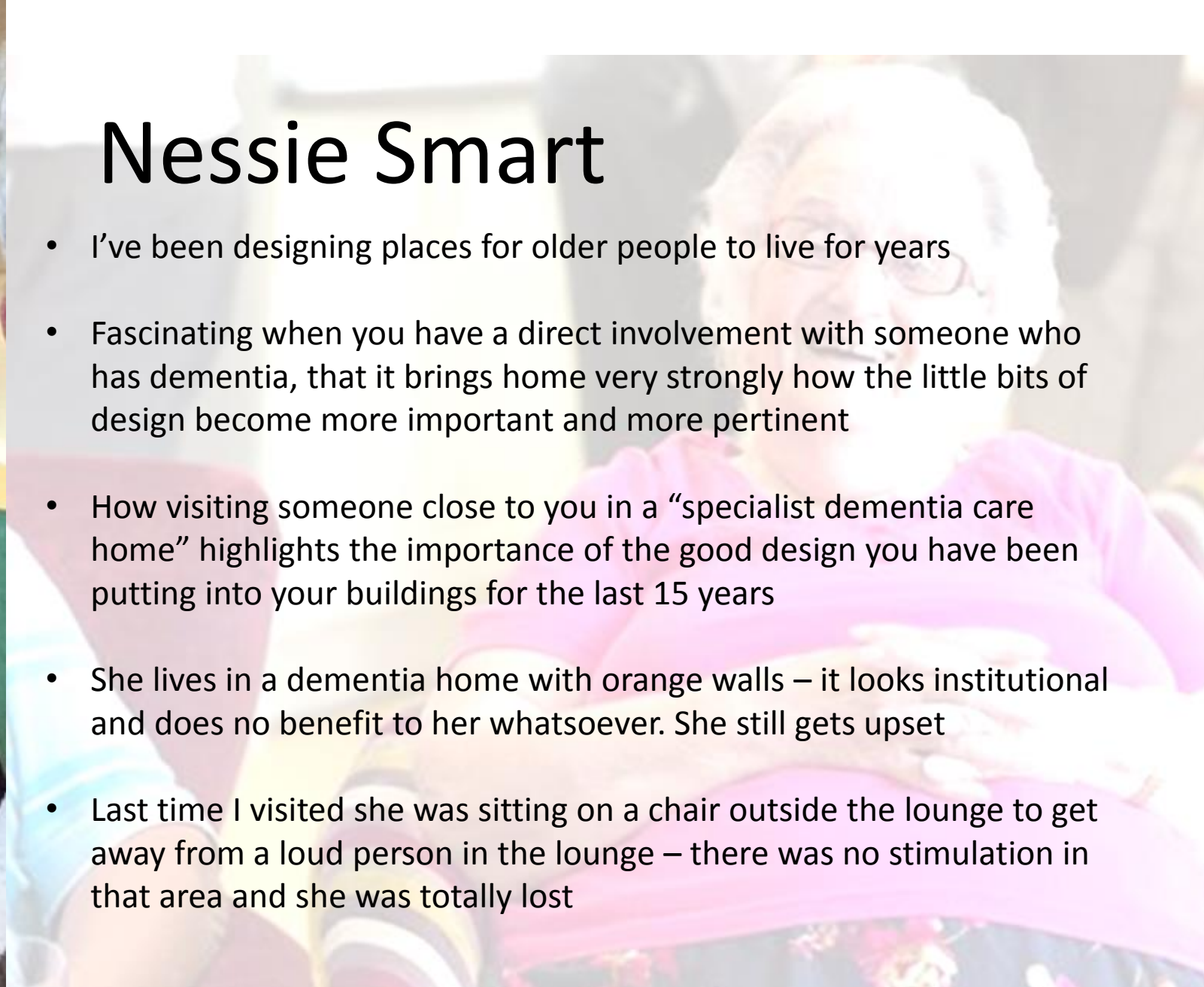
- We are all human beings
- We are all different
- So how can we stipulate, for each individual, what is
  - Familiar
  - Legible
  - Distinctive
  - Accessible
  - Safe
  - Comfortable
  - Choice
- How can we manage a checklist when we do not know who is going to live in the building we are designing?





# Nessie Smart

- I've been designing places for older people to live for years
- Fascinating when you have a direct involvement with someone who has dementia, that it brings home very strongly how the little bits of design become more important and more pertinent
- How visiting someone close to you in a "specialist dementia care home" highlights the importance of the good design you have been putting into your buildings for the last 15 years
- She lives in a dementia home with orange walls – it looks institutional and does no benefit to her whatsoever. She still gets upset
- Last time I visited she was sitting on a chair outside the lounge to get away from a loud person in the lounge – there was no stimulation in that area and she was totally lost





# What does Familiar mean?

- Memory boards?
- Reminiscing rooms?
  - Could work for some but did not work for my mum
- I think it means making a place where the individual can make it familiar– does not have to be old fashioned
- People quickly become familiar with where they live – or make it familiar
- Important that there are “cues” so they can choose what makes a place familiar – and cues so that they know where they are
- Memory boards outside doors may work for some but not for everyone
- Resist therefore putting shelves and “things” outside every door – only if it will benefit an individual
- Familiar does not mean that you cannot do something new – be brave and do not go into the past and make things old fashioned – the new generation of older people are here



Places can become familiar – if made nice








# My advice

- Give your buildings something memorable
- Give your buildings something that can be remembered – so people can choose themselves what becomes familiar to them
  - It may just be a familiar chair at a window
  - It may be a thirties style themed lounge
  - It may not be a thirties style themed lounge
  - It may be a photo of a relative
  - It may not be a photo of a relative
- Work with the people who live there – make the building flexible so it can adapt

# What does legible mean

- People know where they are – landmarks in an environment – and inside buildings
- People can see other places even different floors – the importance of Kinaesthesia – the pull of gravity on a body – a fundamental human requirement – to move up in space – climbing trees when young – we get a kick out of moving up and down in space
- People can see into rooms
  - Can't stress how important this is for people with dementia
  - If they can't look in they will miss out at what goes on in that room and remove their power of choice



Familiar  
Legible  
Distinctive  
Accessible  
Safe  
Comfortable  
Choice









# What does distinctive mean?

- Cues – orientation – to know where you are
- Something that you can latch onto to remind you where you are
- Be bold but not garish – Architects let your design flair take over
- Use double height spaces
- Use natural light to make areas clear and bright
- Use roof terraces
- Roof lights – bring in daylight to interiors and are distinctive

Familiar  
Legible  
Distinctive  
Accessible  
Safe  
Comfortable  
Choice



08/03/2015 14:55





**KYLE SMART ASSOCIATES LIMITED**

# What is accessible?

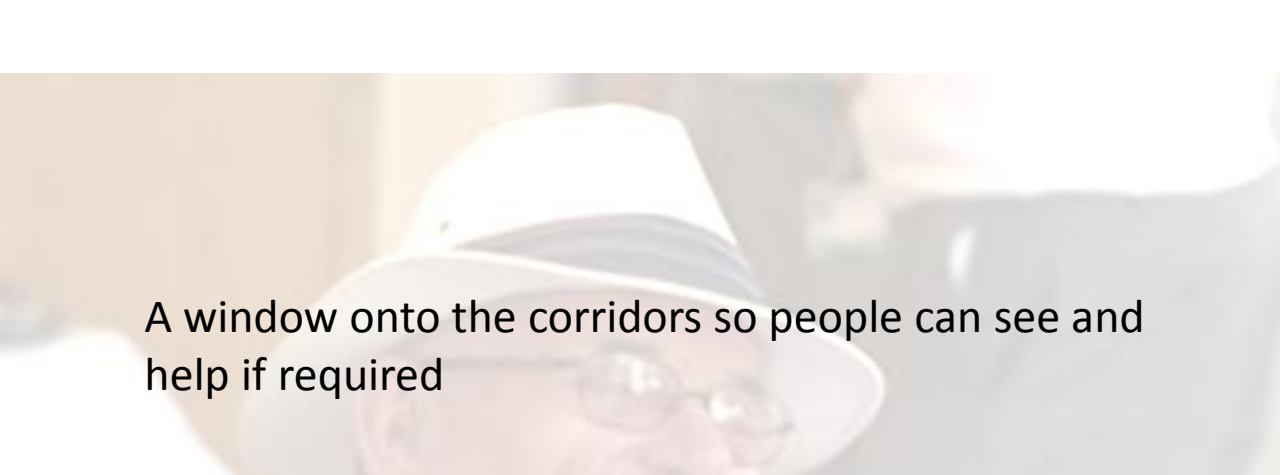
- Often come across this
- Confusion over wheelchair standards or not
- Simple – Lifetime Homes Standard – wheelchairs can access everywhere they want to
- Flexible layouts so they can be adapted to suit specific needs – avoid the temptation to accept internal load bearing walls in flats (to save money). It takes away flexibility in future and I am not convinced that it actually does save money
- Must be lifetime homes and cope as well as possible for any future eventuality, physical or mental
- Kitchens – normal height unless a specific requirement for an individual - ovens at waist level with side opening doors, deep pan drawers rather than base units, wall cupboards with drop down baskets – all so as to make them reachable – not rockets science but just a bit more thought
- I think however that accessible means the ability to choose where you access – and to have a choice of where to go
- However take care not to turn it into a care home – this is a place where I qualify to live and I don't want to live anywhere that looks institutional

Familiar  
Legible  
Distinctive  
Accessible  
Safe  
Comfortable  
Choice

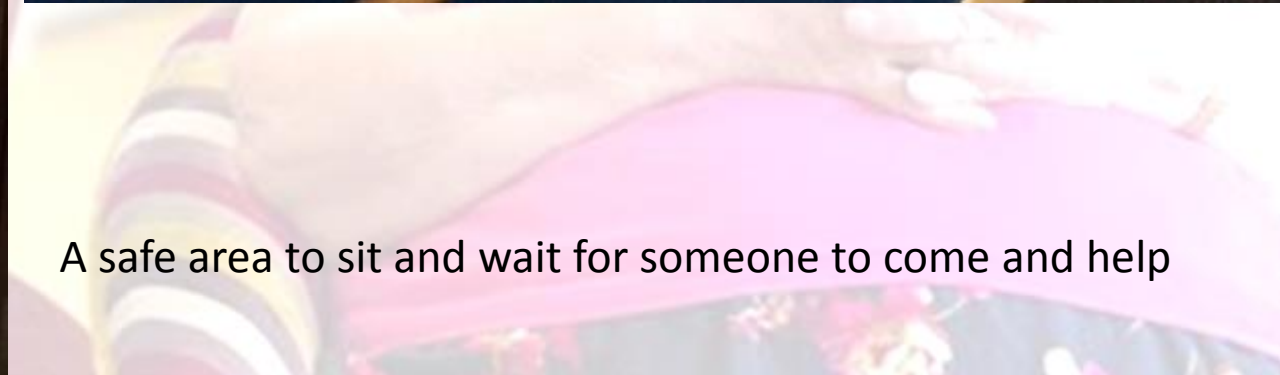


# Safe

- Not necessarily means security
- Means more that people feel safe – in a nice environment
- Also means that Care staff can do their job and provide the necessary care
- If people feel safe they will be encouraged to wander and become part of the community
- Allow people to look out for each other – people like to see what is going on



A window onto the corridors so people can see and help if required



A safe area to sit and wait for someone to come and help

**KYLE SMART ASSOCIATES LIMITED**

# Comfortable (wellbeing)

- Natural light
- Areas to stop and sit
- Views out
- Views in
- stimulation



Familiar  
Legible  
Distinctive  
Accessible  
Safe  
Comfortable  
Choice





**KYLE SMART ASSOCIATES LIMITED**



ATES LIMITED



# Allow Choice - a fundamental human right

- “Every choice you make has an end result”
- “Choice is what enables us to tell the world who we are”
- “Freedom of choice is more to be treasured than any possession earth can give”
- “You cannot think of any greater gift that could come to a man or woman than the freedom of choice”
- “Success and happiness are not matters of chance but choice”

- Give people choices of where they want to sit
- Give choices of what people look at



- Give people choices of joining in or not
- Give choices of getting away from noise – alternative places to sit



If you take away people's ability to choose you take away their quality of life



**KYLE SMART ASSOCIATES LIMITED**

# Recap – on designing to help people with dementia

- Safe
- Stimulating
- Lots of daylight
- Choices of where to go – or to escape from something you don't like
- Exploit views to a maximum – internal and external
- Avoid anything remotely institutional
  - Signs
  - Doors and screens
  - Ceilings in particular
- Avoid doing the same as you did before if possible
- Don't add things unless there is a specific use for a specific person





simple

Some current projects

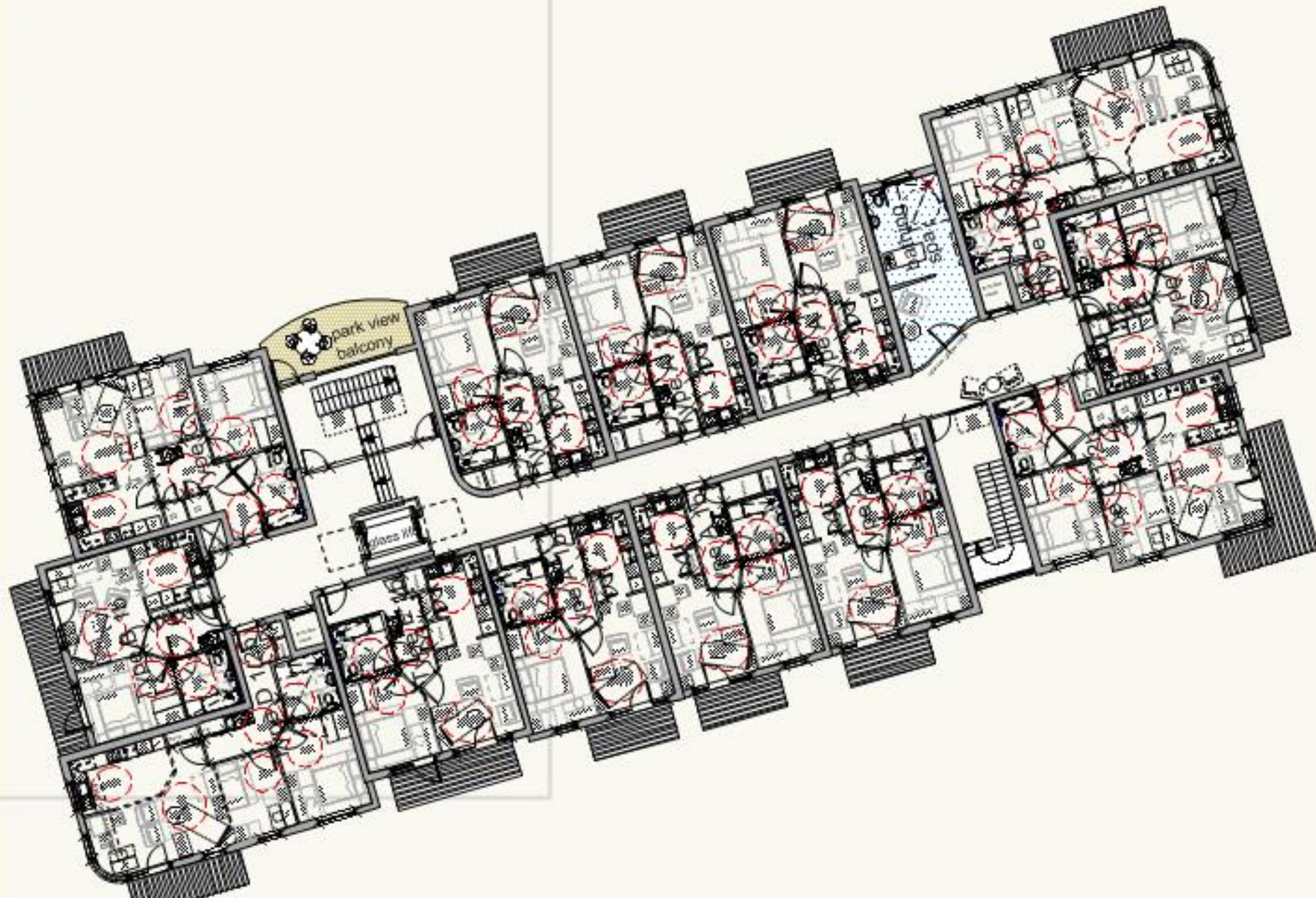


A background image showing two elderly people sitting and smiling. On the left, a man wearing a white hat and glasses is smiling. On the right, a woman with glasses and a pink top is also smiling. The image is slightly faded to allow text to be overlaid.

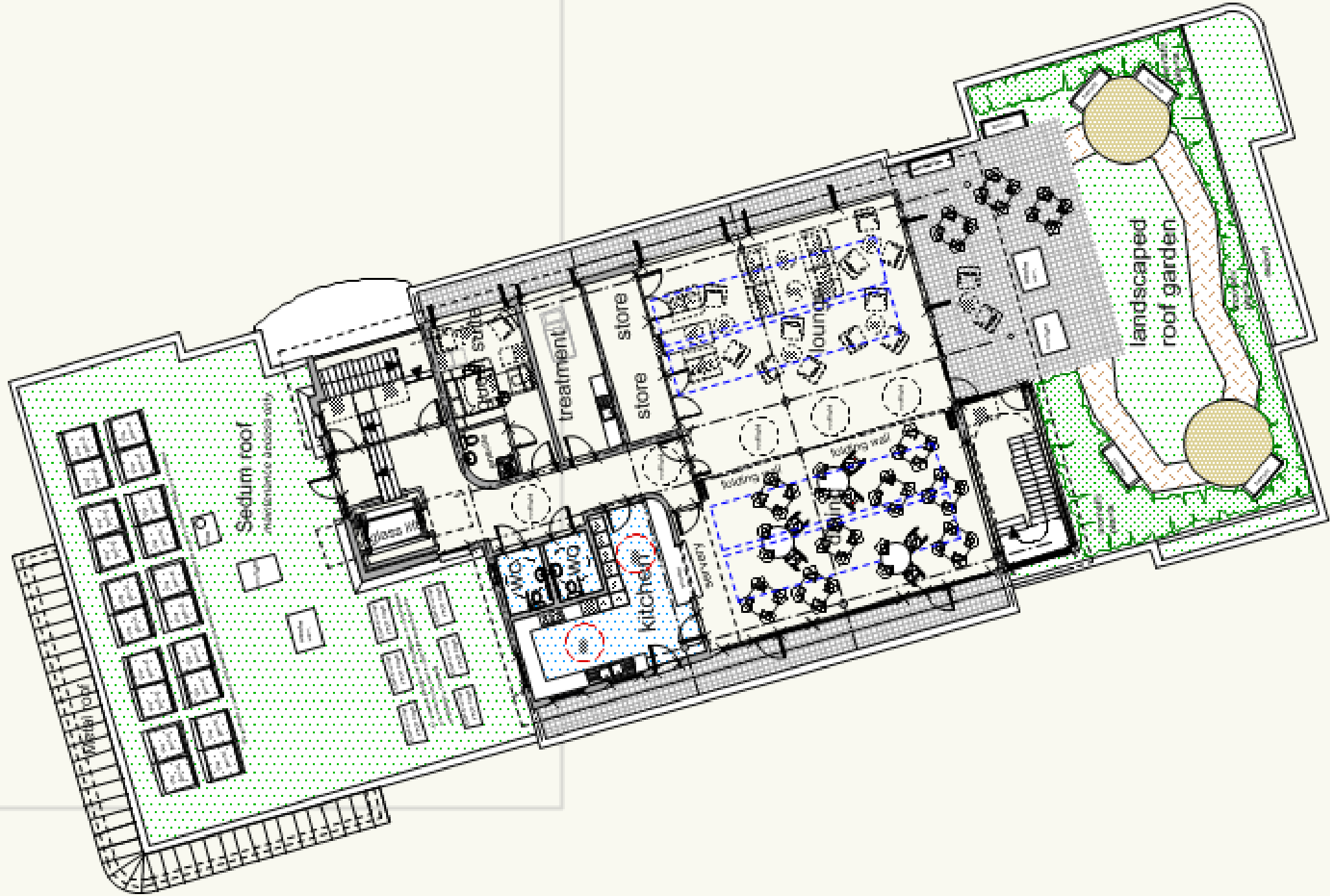
# Parkside View – St Albans

- 35 Apartments
- Tight site
- Limited room for communal facilities – HAPPI 2 concurs with our thinking that for 35 Apartments, it should not be a community hub as such
- But has a flexible communal lounge / dining area
- Has an escape room
- Has sitting opportunities
- Maximises daylight
- Maximises views in and out





LIMITED





- Exploit views to a maximum – internal and external

- Stimulating
  - Colours in this instance

- Avoid anything remotely institutional
  - Signs
  - Doors and screens
  - Ceilings in particular



- Don't add things unless there is a specific use for a specific person



- Choices of where to go – or to escape from something you don't like
  - Different areas to sit













- Exploit views to a maximum – internal and external



- Avoid doing the same as you did before if possible



- Lots of daylight
  - Everywhere we could – had to fight for the glazed screens to the main stair and for these roof lights but well worth it



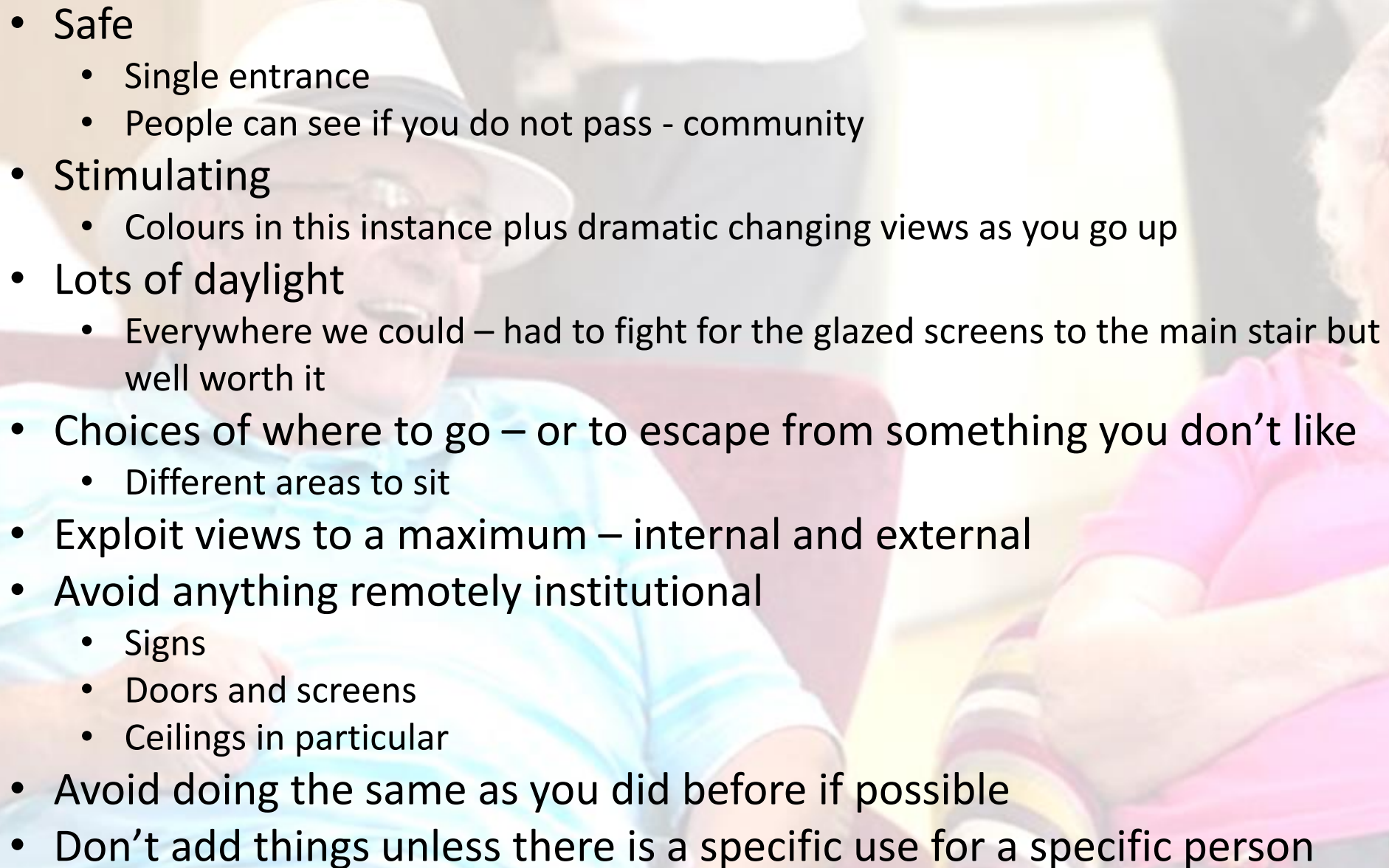










- 
- A background image showing two elderly individuals sitting and smiling. On the left, a man wearing a white hat and a light blue striped shirt. On the right, a woman with white hair and glasses wearing a pink top. They appear to be in a social setting, possibly a community center or a care home.
- Safe
    - Single entrance
    - People can see if you do not pass - community
  - Stimulating
    - Colours in this instance plus dramatic changing views as you go up
  - Lots of daylight
    - Everywhere we could – had to fight for the glazed screens to the main stair but well worth it
  - Choices of where to go – or to escape from something you don't like
    - Different areas to sit
  - Exploit views to a maximum – internal and external
  - Avoid anything remotely institutional
    - Signs
    - Doors and screens
    - Ceilings in particular
  - Avoid doing the same as you did before if possible
  - Don't add things unless there is a specific use for a specific person

- Familiar
- Legible
- Distinctive
- Accessible
- Safe
- Comfortable
- Allow Choice



# Prory View - Dunstable

- 83 Apartments
- Prominent site
- Extensive community hub facilities
- Mews and Lanes instead of corridors
- Shop
- Café
- Restaurant
- Wellbeing centre
- cinema
- Has various escape rooms
- Has lots sitting opportunities
- Maximises daylight
- Maximises views in and out



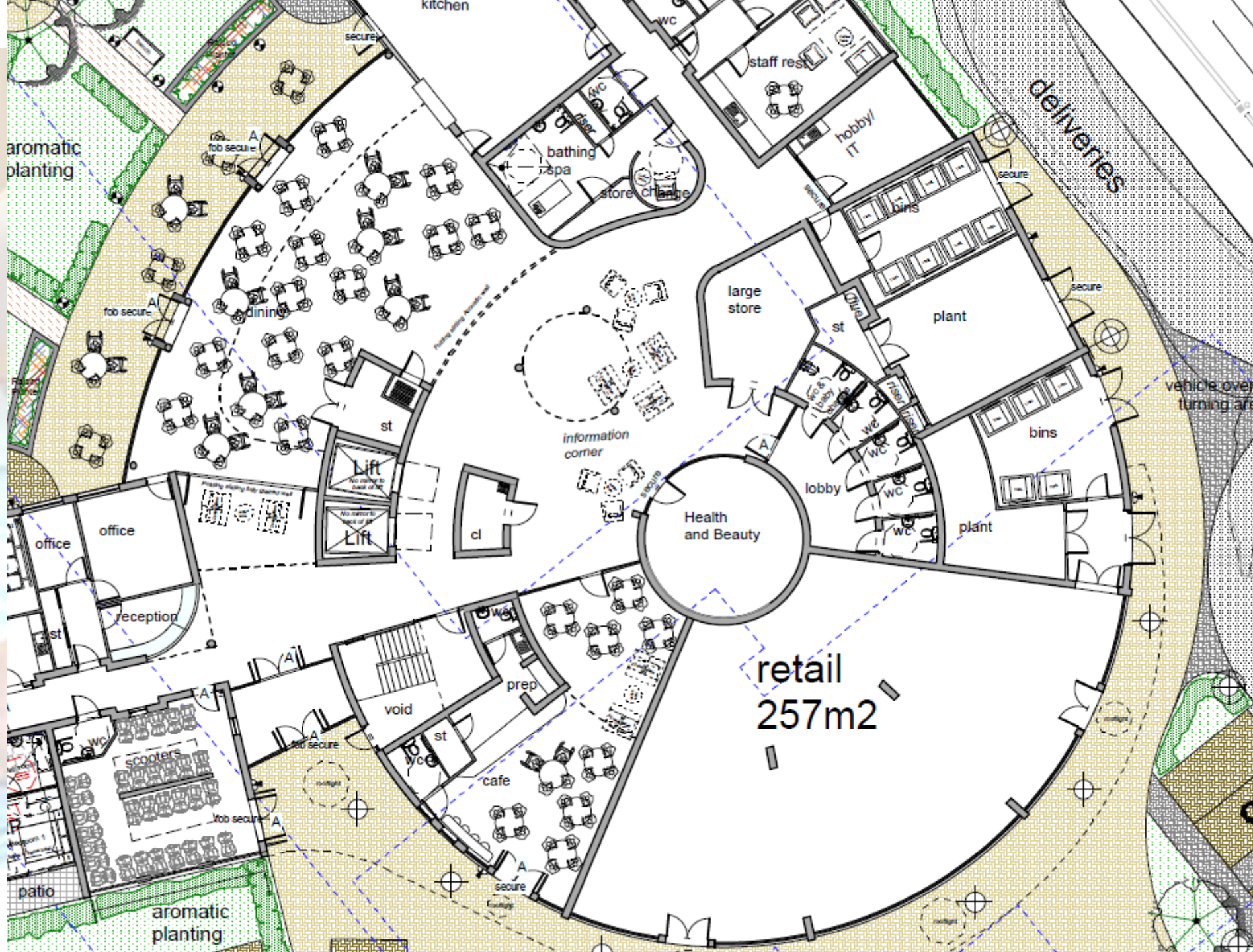
- Avoid anything remotely institutional
  - Signs
  - Doors and screens
  - Ceilings in particular

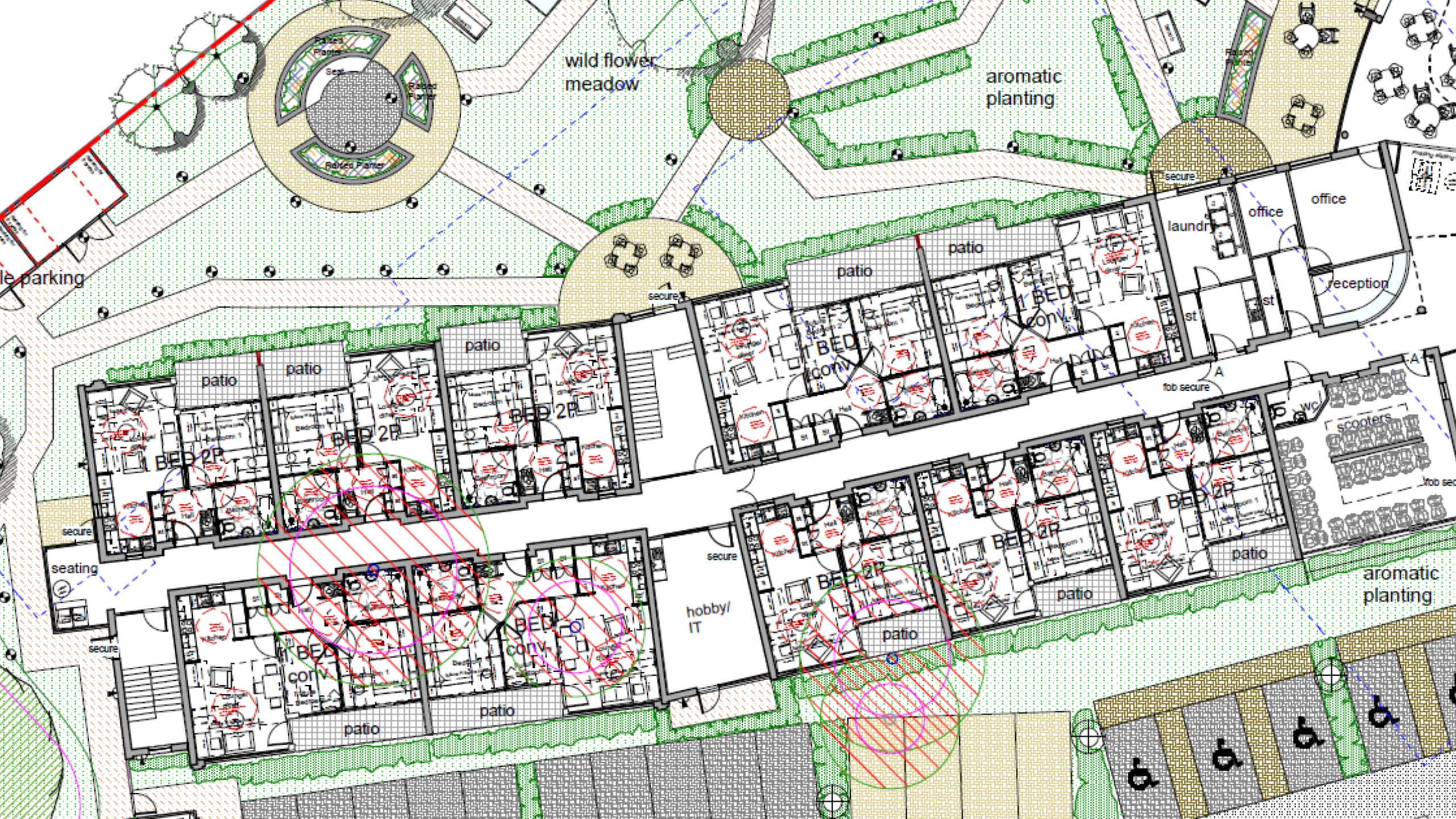


- Safe

- Single entrance
- People can see if you do not pass – community
- Progressive access for added security







wild flower meadow

aromatic planting

le parking

office office

laundry

reception

patio

patio

BED conv

st

st

patio

patio

patio

BED 2P

BED 2P

BED conv

BED conv

st

st

scoters

seating

BED 2P

BED 2P

BED 2P

BED conv

BED conv

st

st

scoters

hobby/IT

BED 2P

BED 2P

BED 2P

patio

aromatic planting

BED conv

BED conv

patio

patio

patio

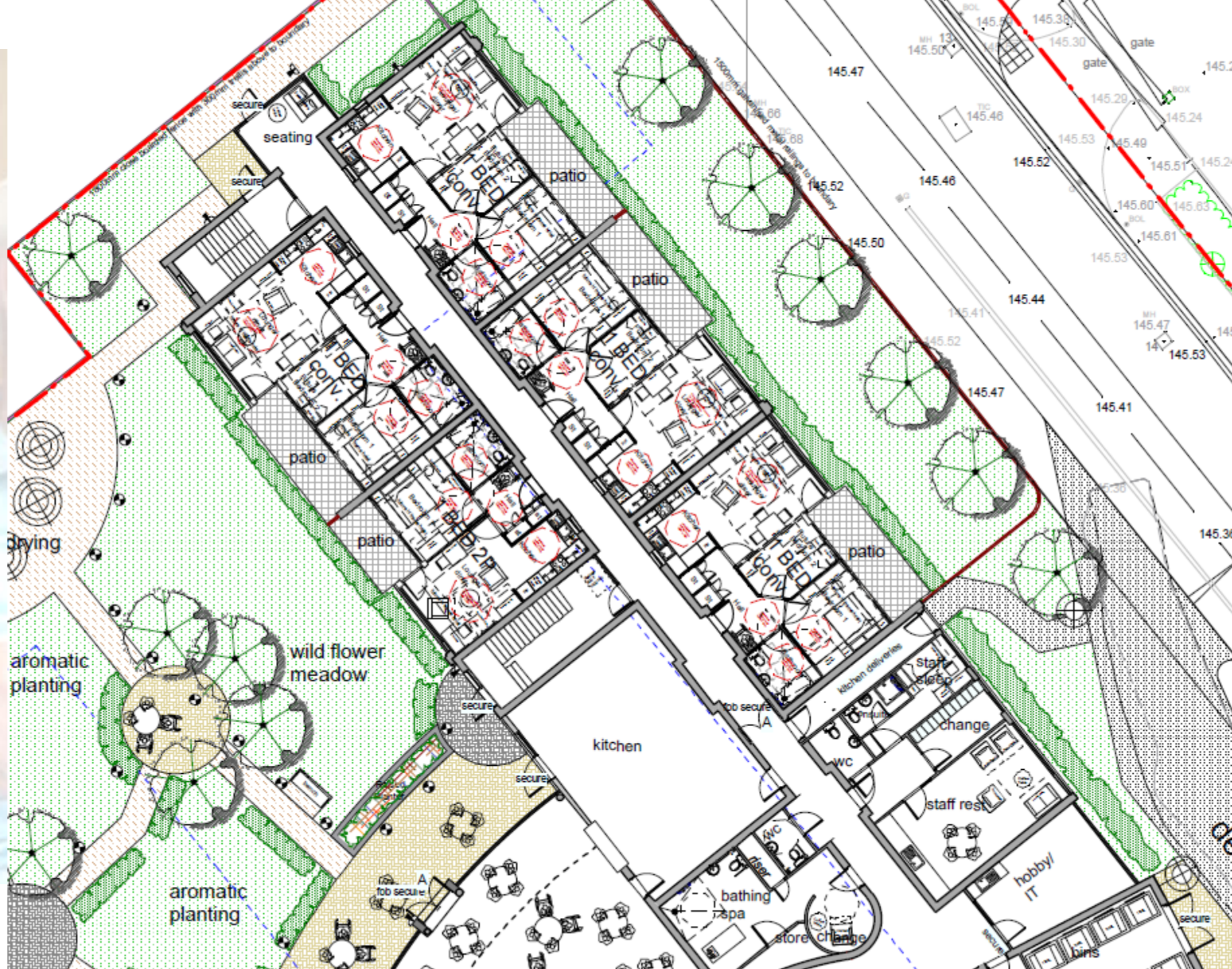
patio

patio

patio

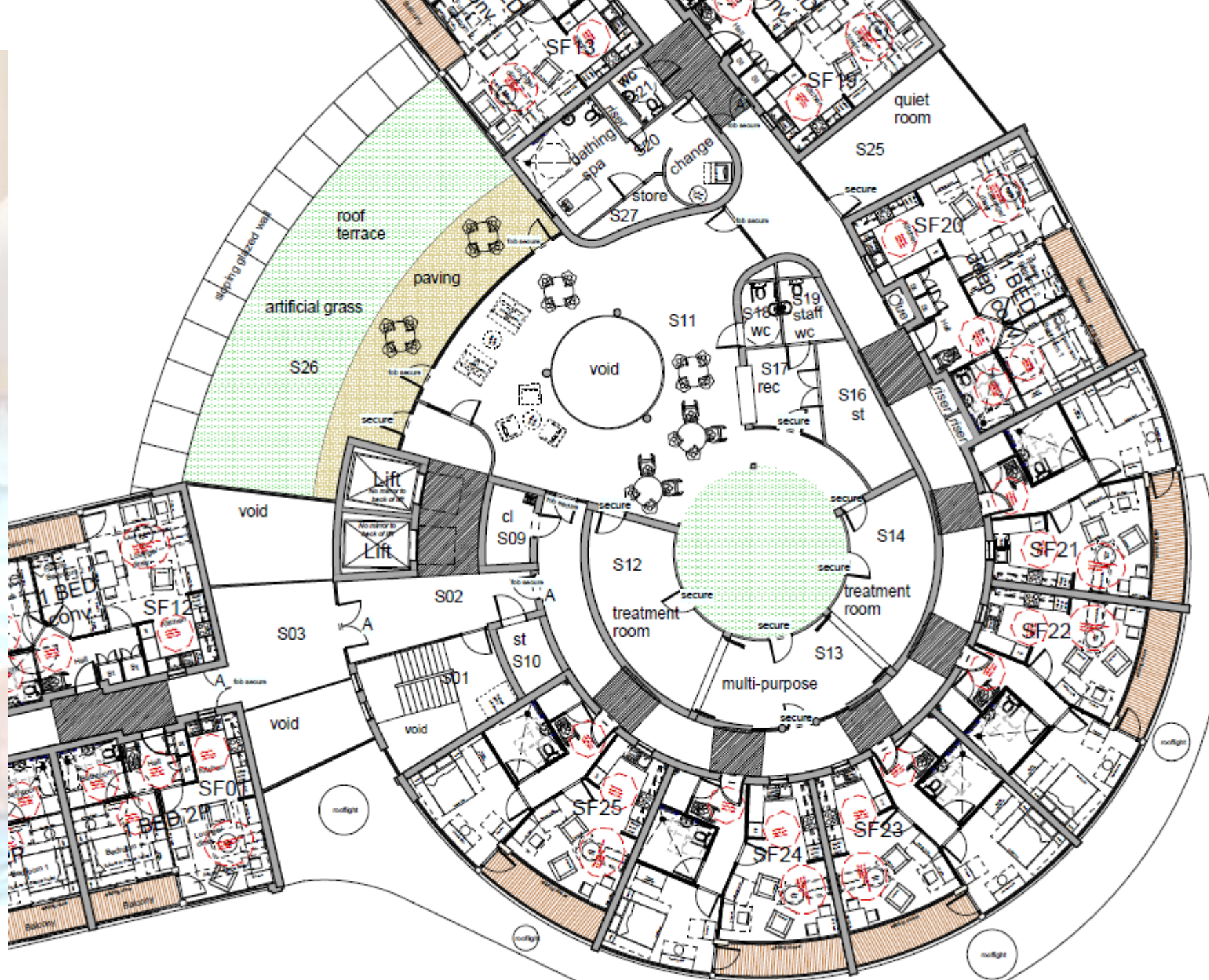
patio

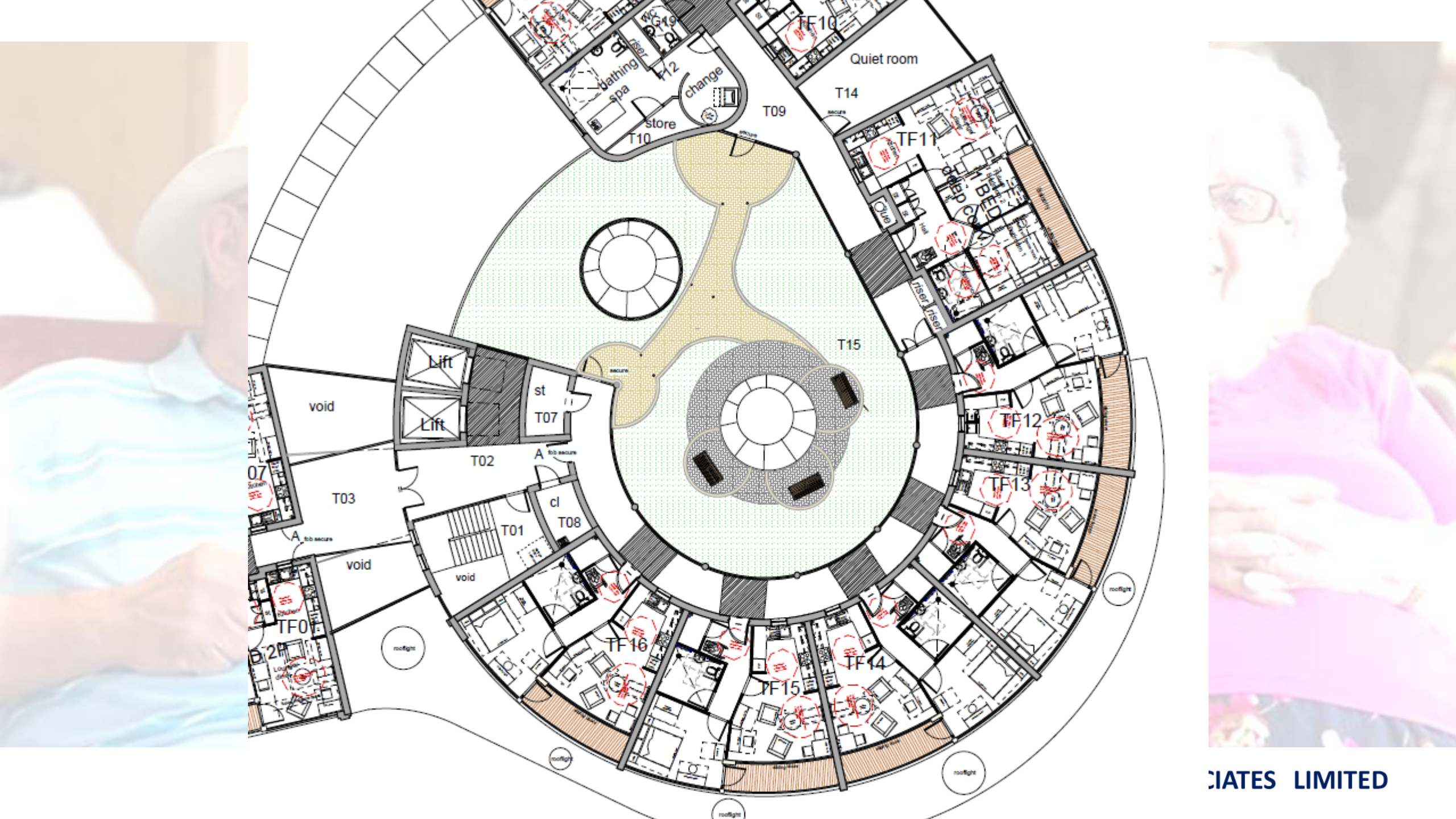
patio





- Choices of where to go – or to escape from something you don't like
  - Different areas to sit







- Lots of daylight



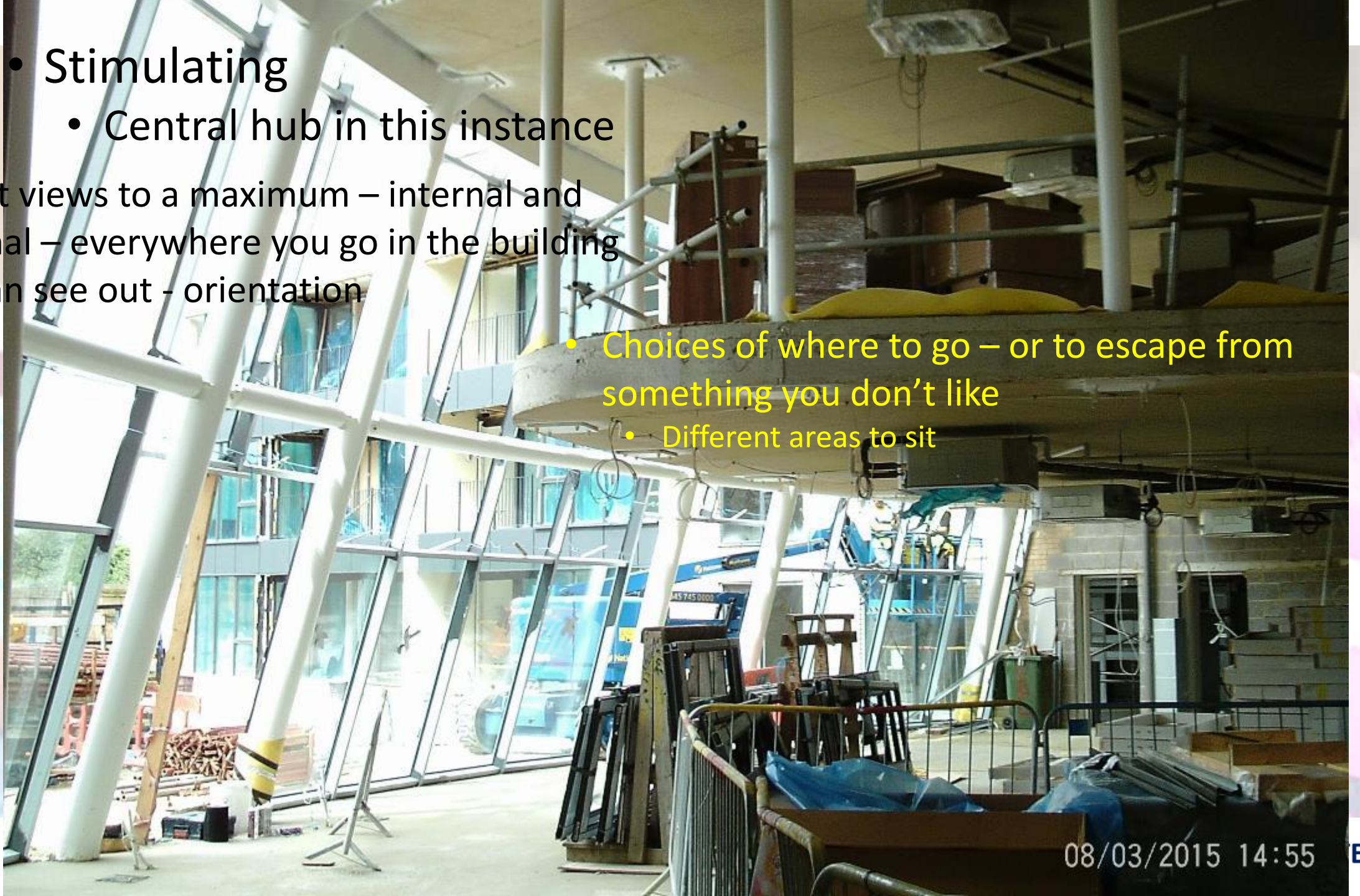




- Stimulating
  - Central hub in this instance

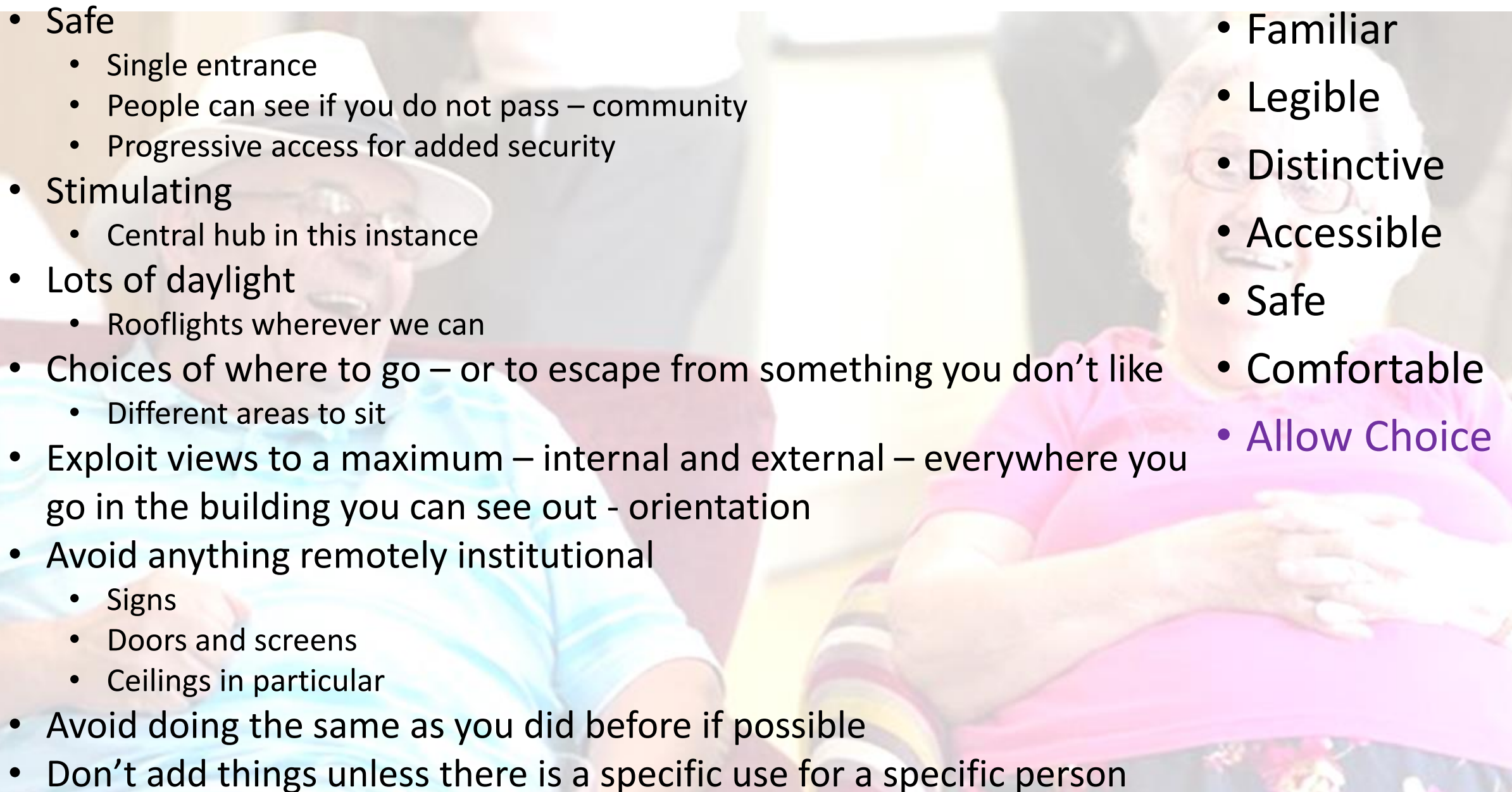
- Exploit views to a maximum – internal and external – everywhere you go in the building you can see out - orientation

- Choices of where to go – or to escape from something you don't like
  - Different areas to sit



- Avoid doing the same as you did before if possible



- 
- The background of the slide features a photograph of two elderly individuals sitting and engaged in conversation. On the left, a man wearing a white hat and a light blue and white striped shirt is smiling. On the right, a woman with short white hair, wearing glasses and a pink top, is also smiling. The image is slightly faded to allow the text to be the primary focus.
- Safe
    - Single entrance
    - People can see if you do not pass – community
    - Progressive access for added security
  - Stimulating
    - Central hub in this instance
  - Lots of daylight
    - Rooflights wherever we can
  - Choices of where to go – or to escape from something you don't like
    - Different areas to sit
  - Exploit views to a maximum – internal and external – everywhere you go in the building you can see out - orientation
  - Avoid anything remotely institutional
    - Signs
    - Doors and screens
    - Ceilings in particular
  - Avoid doing the same as you did before if possible
  - Don't add things unless there is a specific use for a specific person
- Familiar
  - Legible
  - Distinctive
  - Accessible
  - Safe
  - Comfortable
  - Allow Choice

# Village green lounge



# Church view lounge



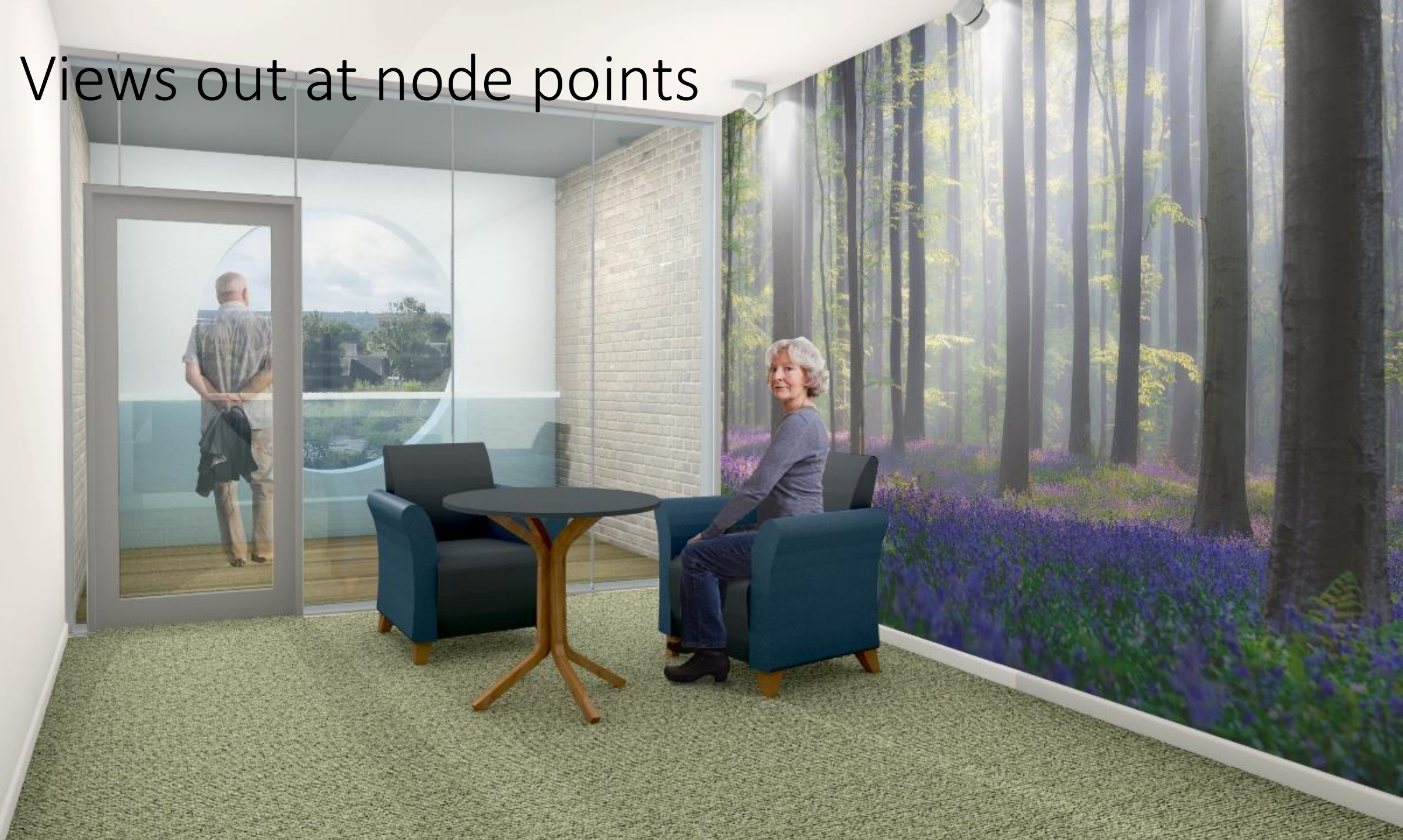
# Church view lounge







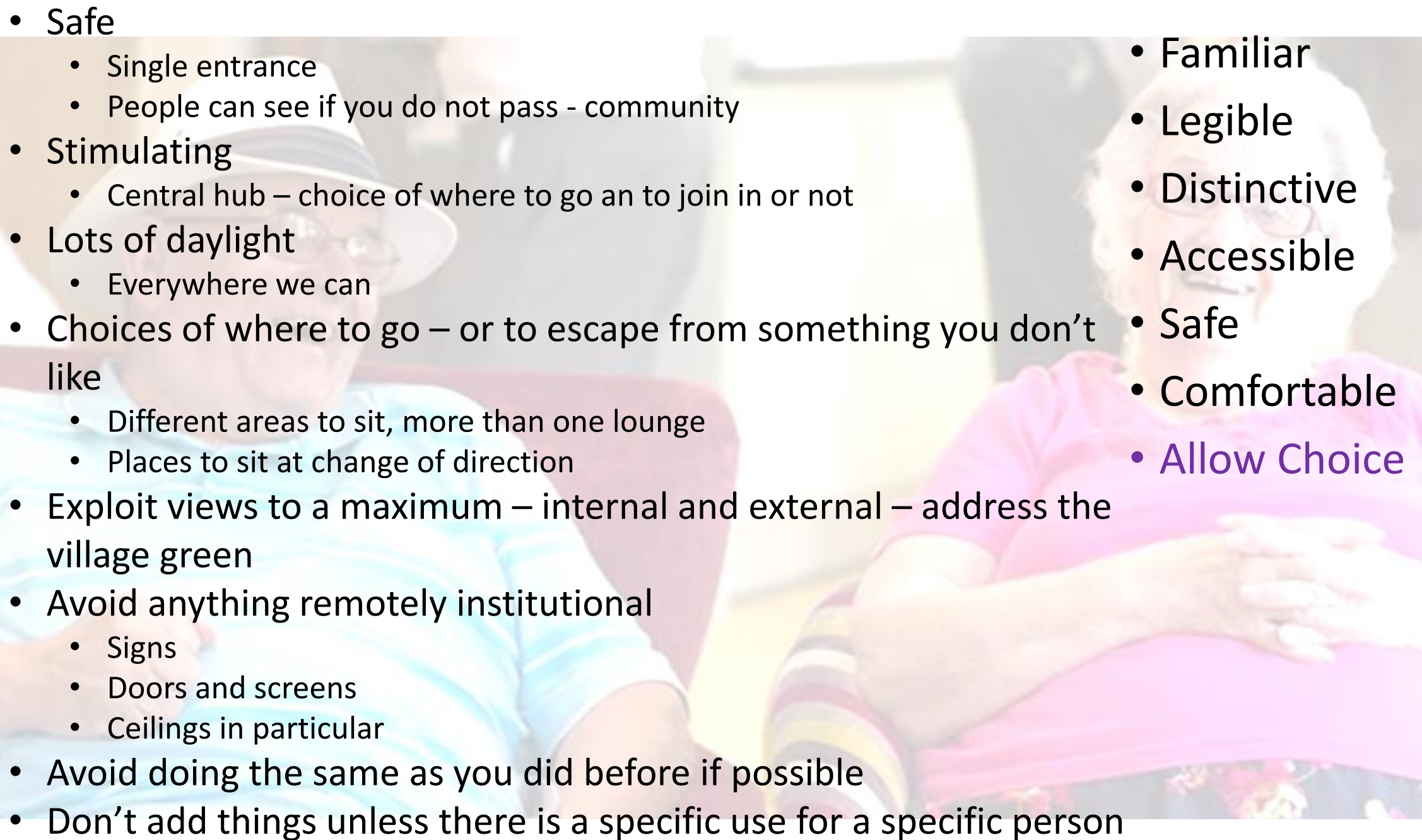
# Views out at node points



# Private Resident lounge





- 
- The background image shows two elderly women sitting in a lounge. The woman on the left is wearing a light blue and white striped shirt and a white hat. The woman on the right is wearing a pink shirt and has her hands clasped. They are both smiling and appear to be in a relaxed, social setting.
- Safe
    - Single entrance
    - People can see if you do not pass - community
  - Stimulating
    - Central hub – choice of where to go an to join in or not
  - Lots of daylight
    - Everywhere we can
  - Choices of where to go – or to escape from something you don't like
    - Different areas to sit, more than one lounge
    - Places to sit at change of direction
  - Exploit views to a maximum – internal and external – address the village green
  - Avoid anything remotely institutional
    - Signs
    - Doors and screens
    - Ceilings in particular
  - Avoid doing the same as you did before if possible
  - Don't add things unless there is a specific use for a specific person
- Familiar
  - Legible
  - Distinctive
  - Accessible
  - Safe
  - Comfortable
  - Allow Choice




# Summary - What are the important ingredients of good design and therefore good design for dementia

- Do not fall into the trap of believing that what you did last time, because it was successful, necessarily will be successful this time
- Make the building as flexible as possible – so it can change in the future and with the residents' needs
- Avoid the “ we always do this scenario”
- Avoid tack-ons just because someone suggests they are dementia friendly – understand and make your own mind up
- use the building to be dementia friendly and to allow the staff to work with the residents in a nice stimulating environment
- Use checklists to check that what the Architect is designing is stimulating – not to add things on after the building has been designed
- Allow the staff to manage the environment for residents rather than removing things such as mirrors – story about my mum's mum

- 
1. Familiar
  2. Legible
  3. Distinctive
  4. Accessible
  5. Safe
  6. Comfortable
  7. Allow Choice

Give your Architect a checklist if you wish, but:

- Make sure you work with them in the early design stages to assess how you want to deal with each item – let the Architect lead you
- But use the checklist as a reference point to make sure as the design develops that you are still on track - a team tool to develop

- 
- I have been on a journey – all our schemes are different– important to keep developing – resist doing the same thing every time – challenge yourself
  - Make nice buildings that are nice for whoever lives in or uses them – it should then be capable of being dementia friendly



• Le

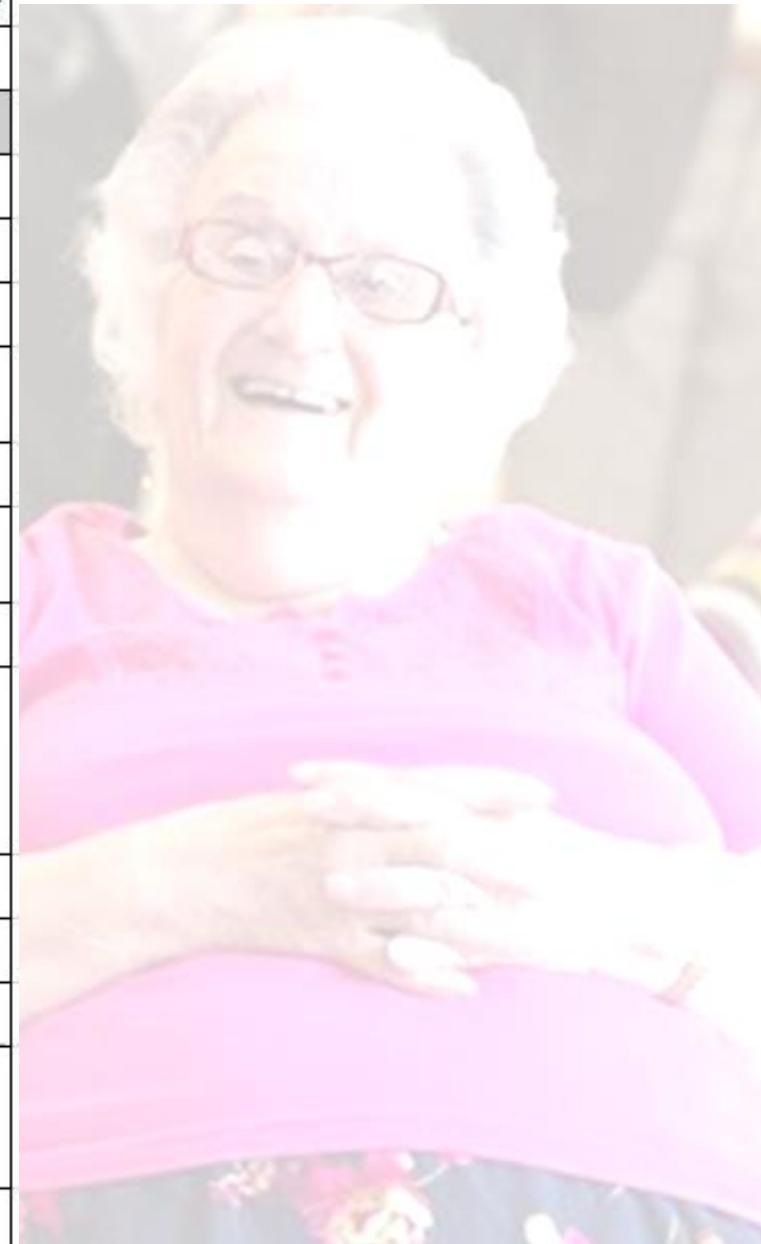


Thank you



KYLE SMART ASSOCIATES LIMITED

	<b>8.0 Design Checklist for Dementia Friendly Environments</b>	essential	consider
	<b>General</b>		
1	Level access throughout the whole building and outside areas,		
2	Good and appropriate lighting levels throughout, with as much natural lighting as possible.		
3	Natural lighting should be generally controllable to minimise glare and shadow contrasts.		
4	Visual clues throughout and visual links to the outside. There should be landmarks to assist people with finding their way around such as furniture, plants, wall hangings, artwork and generally items that are attractive and interesting.		
5	Provide colour contrast in wall and floor finishes.		
6	Provide colour contrast between doors, ironmongery, door frames and walls to distinguish them clearly. 30 LRV (light reflectance value) difference between finishes is recommended.		



# Design for Dementia

- Temptation to design for dementia in mistake for security
- Tendency for design to migrate to the old fashioned - assumption that older people prefer to live in old style properties
- Easy access and wayfinding throughout
- Open plan layouts increase visibility
- Fire doors not intrusive nor create barriers
- Natural light to aid orientation
- Interesting landmarks as cues to navigate environment
- No barriers to shuffling gait
- Corridors if dead end, end in area where someone can sit and perhaps read a book
- Contrast
- Matt finishes – non reflective glass or external lighting after dark
- Non institutional
- Choice
- Bright and well lit and controllable
- Circuitous external paths
- Barrier free
- Inside / outside relationship