



Master Aesthetic Design Guidelines (MAD)

To be used in parallel with NCH Standards Documents

The intent of this document is to provide the interior design philosophies that maintain Nationwide Children's Hospital (NCH) environmental brand continuity.

All project partners are to collaborate to develop concepts and receive approval from the NCH Interiors Team prior to execution.

Nationwide Children's Hospital Engineering Services I Interiors Department
Ross Hall Room 4000 614-355-1600

Revision Date: **1/5/2024**

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The following related NCH standard documents are referenced to throughout the MAD and can be viewed [here](#):

Design Requirements and Finish Schedule, Interior Signage Guidelines, Exterior Signage Guidelines, Donor Signage Guidelines, Digital Signage Guidelines, Environmental Graphic Guidelines, Leased Offsite Guidelines, and Interior Furniture Guidelines

Introduction



When your child needs a hospital, everything matters.

To reflect the quality of care provided at Nationwide Children’s Hospital (NCH), brand aesthetic guidelines have been established to ensure that everyone...patients, families, visitors and staff have a similar experience in all locations.

This guide is featuring the Main Campus but is intended for use in the development of new construction and renovations for all of NCH facilities. It provides design philosophies, materials specifications and demonstrates applications by area. Consistent and intentional application of the brand palette and environmental graphics across a range of materials allows for adaptation to existing conditions, facility type, and budget flexibility.

To ensure maximal impact and overall alliance with the NCH brand aesthetics, this guide is to be used in collaboration with NCH Interior Designers and NCH Design Requirements Documentation.



Master Aesthetic Design Guidelines

Introduction

This should be read by all vendors

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NCH Interiors Guiding Principles

- Support Nationwide Children’s Hospital strategic plan
- Reflect the strength and quality of care provided
- Strive for ageless, timeless, child friendly designs that appeal to the child in all
- Be family centered, appreciating that families come in any different sizes and sensitivities
- Be sensitive to multicultural users
- Be open and inviting yet respect patient privacy
- Blend new and existing assets into a seamless setting
- Apply materials and color palettes consistently
- Integrate interior and exterior design
- Provide a variety of lighting options and incorporate natural daylight
- Be sensitive to acoustical concerns
- Consistently integrate furnishings, graphics and art
- Provide “Wow” and “Whimsy” positive distractions
- Support operational separations with “On Stage” and “Off Stage” principles
- Address the two most important planes for a child, the floor and the ceiling
- Incorporate visual queuing and wayfinding systems with consistent language and informational graphics
- Be safe for all our patient types
- Be maintainable, environmentally responsible and promote cost efficiency.
- Be forward thinking



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Guiding Principles

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Design Approach



The NCH brand aesthetic creates a seamless integration between site, architecture, and interior design by expanding upon a calming, yet whimsical, nature theme. This nature-inspired design aesthetic provides a timeless, beautiful, and family-friendly environment that lends comfort and support during time at NCH facilities.

The flora and fauna of Ohio’s seasons are the inspiration of the nature aesthetic that envelops and accompanies people through their journey at our facilities—from arrival and welcome, through major public spaces, corridors, lobbies and care areas.

The dominant representation of nature is created through graphic silhouette, a two-dimensional technique that is timeless and preserves authenticity, while leaving room for imagination and whimsy. This is generally achieved by creating a background environment of “white on white” or “shadow and light” that is accented by bursts of bright color and wooden elements that introduce warmth. Simple materials, clean details, intentional use of color, warm neutrals, and imagery are key factors in producing the aesthetic.

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Design Application



When you are at an NCH facility, it should have a comfortable, familiar look and feel with visual cues of the logo, color application, welcome desk and signage.

These philosophies encourage the operational division of “Onstage” vibrant public areas and “Offstage” neutral staff areas that is reinforced through the application of materials and colors.

Wayfinding is achieved through a series of gestures incorporated into the architecture and interior design including volume, lighting, access to day light, color application, materiality, and signage with consistent nomenclature and language.

Wood or wood like materials, are used intentionally at welcome desks, feature walls, doors, furniture and enhancements. This introduces a softer less clinical surface that invites one to touch and feel the natural familiar material. It is also a signifier of where to interact with others for information.

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Wows and Whimsy

Positive Distractions



Wows and Whimsy:

Layered into the design of all NCH facilities is the concept of “Wows” and “Whimsy.” These design details provide positive distractions for patients, families, visitors and staff and connect to the child in all of us. They are to feature central Ohio indigenous flora and fauna, seasons, biomes and indigenous backyard animals. We are proud to be in Ohio.

Wow are large gestures that are recognizable landmarks:

- Examples: exterior sculptures in the landscape, acorn bollards in the parking garages, trees in the Magic Forest, flocks of birds flying through an atrium, and Animal Friend sculptures.

Whimsy are details that are discovered through repeated exposure or extended dwell time in a space:

- Examples: animal footprints in the flooring, or playful “seek and find” figures hidden in the environmental graphics, children’s art in patient areas, for example: parachuting mouse, caterpillar on a slinky, etc.

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Wows and Whimsy

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Animal Friends



Ionic to the NCH environmental brand are the beloved animal friends. Living only on Main Campus, the unnamed large-scale hand carved wood friends feature native Ohio animals in natural wood finishes with small splashes of color. Providing a “wow” positive distraction, they invite small children to engage their curiosity and encourage families and care givers to forget where they are for a moment. Created by a local Ohio master carving team, they are reminiscent of classical carousal animals in a realistic, but stylized form.

- Each animal friend has its own personality and is designed to be ageless, timeless and safe for our patients and visitors. They are typically the Welcome Greeter at a patient care building entrance, serve as landmarks along the PATH and can be found on inpatient floors.
- Small animal friends in brightly colored molded plastics can also be found on NCH Main campus and at some satellite locations. These smaller “whimsy “ unnamed native animals such as squirrels and birds can be found on countertops and flying overhead.
- They provide a connection back to Main Campus and the NCH environmental brand and provide positive distractions at a more easily repeated and budget appropriate scale.

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Animal Friends

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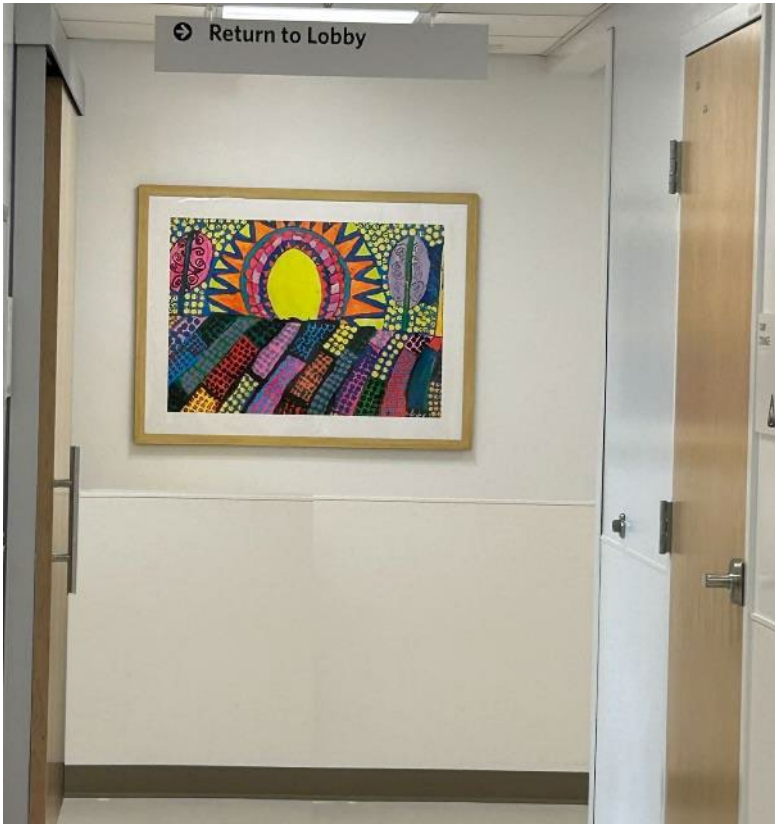
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Growing Gallery



The NCH artwork program is called “The Growing Gallery” and showcases central Ohio artists under the age of 21 and occasionally local professional artists with a direct tie to the Hospital. It is an important asset of the NCH environmental brand, providing a vibrant visual distraction and pops of color in patient care areas and reconnecting with children and families.

- Artwork is curated from NCH patients, local schools and artwork programs. It must not have any easily recognizable trademarked images or be a controversial subject.
- The artwork is digitally copied and returned to the artist with permission granted to reproduce for not-for-profit display. Occasionally original artwork is retained.
- A few areas of the organization feature professional artwork created by local Columbus artists, often who have been patients in our facilities, or have had children or other families’ members receive care at NCH. Working with local galleries, or the artists themselves, pieces are often donated, or provided at negotiated costs, to fit within the NCH project budgets.
- The heavy environmental branding graphics leaves precious few areas to display art and the Interiors team focuses on keeping it local and relevant.

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Growing Gallery

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Color Theory

The NCH two-part color theory is predominantly neutral with splashes of color brought in through wayfinding techniques, environmental graphics and artwork.

Color flow assignments are applied by building to align with campus which is established early in the conceptual design process.

Color Theory

The Neutral Palette



The Neutral Palette is a selection of warm tones used in various forms to establish a neutral base and balance and accentuate the saturated color palette.

Neutrals are used in the following ways:

- The flooring is a mix of warm neutral tones regardless of the material.
- The NCH signature anamorphic patterning that is reminiscent of a riverbed is to be installed whenever possible especially in building entrances and lobbies.
- Environmental graphics appear in a tone-on one silhouette form with the signature “leaf gust” and then colors crescendo into saturated portal colors.
- The upholstery on all furnishings is to remain neutral. Woods are in the warm tones of a clear maple.
- Offstage areas use the neutral palette.

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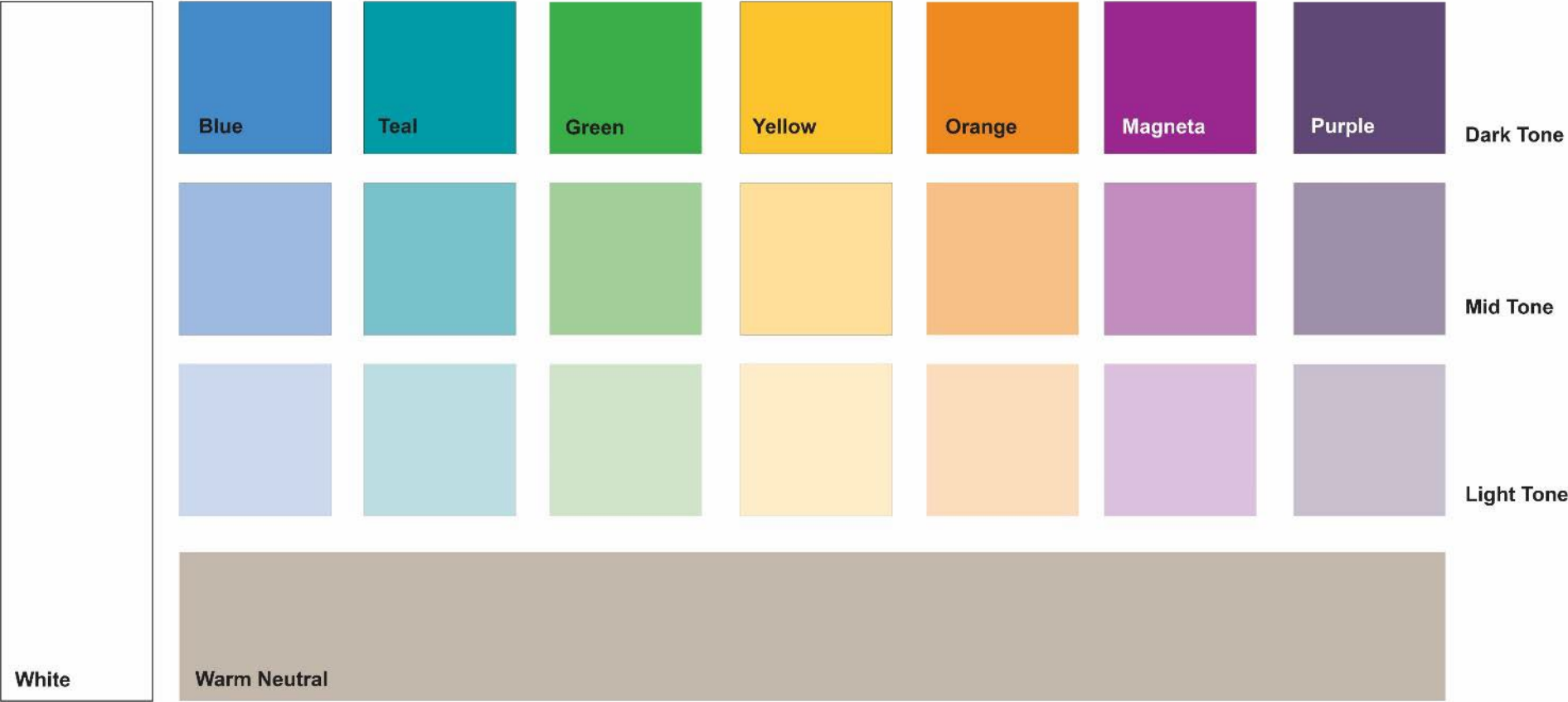
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Color Theory

Paint Palette



The Paint Palette consists of 7 colors in the paint palette that contrast with the base neutrals and are used intentionally to support intuitive wayfinding. The color saturation varies by area of application, based on whether the color is used for wayfinding portal identification, reception areas or accent walls. The neutral tone saturation does not change.

Accent Paint Applications

1. **Light Tone Colors** accent walls are to be used in patient care areas: inpatient rooms, exam rooms, and consult rooms.
2. **Mid Tone Colors** accent paint for onstage conference rooms, walls behind nurse stations and suite registration desks, break rooms and other larger spaces.
3. **Dark Tone Colors** are to be used for wayfinding portals, bulkheads, walls behind welcome desks on the first floor of main public buildings.

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Paint Applications

Accent Paint Examples: 1 - Light, 2 - Mid, 3 - Dark

Color Theory

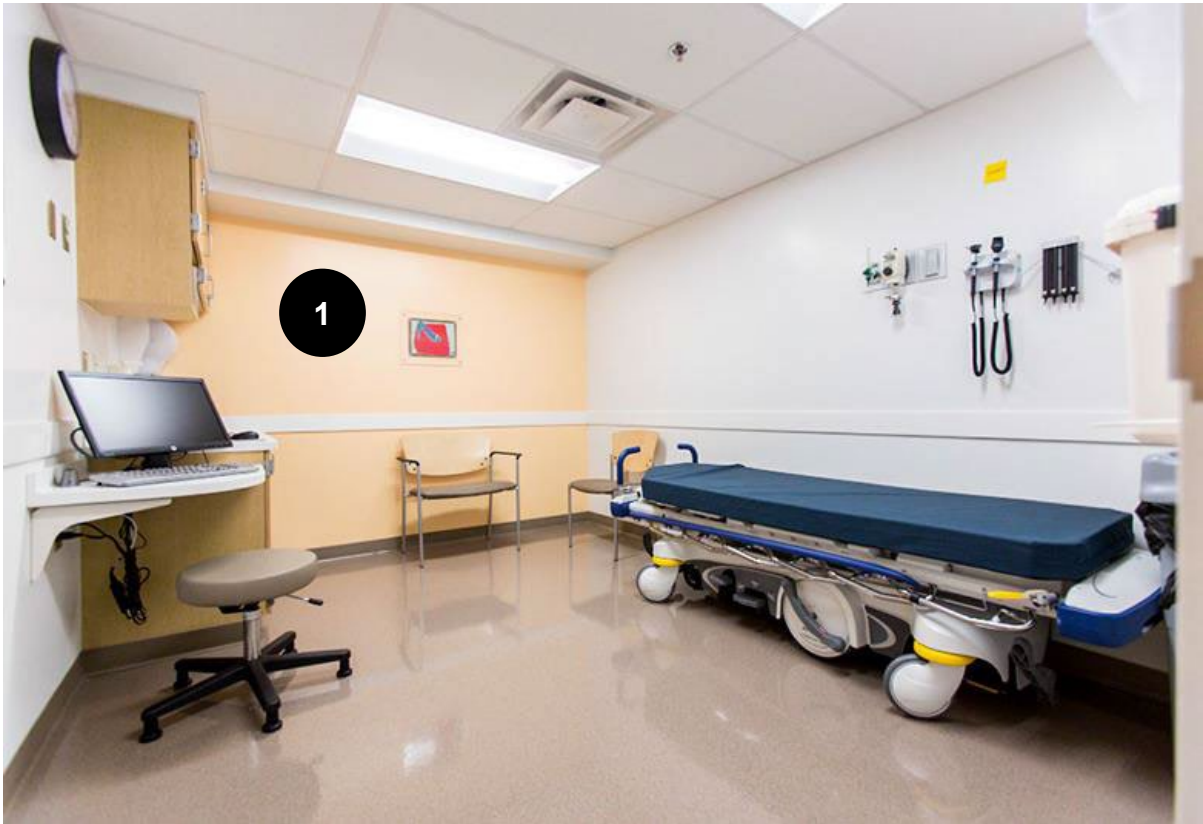
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Color Theory

Digital Palette

Progression of color applied to a gust.



The system allows for additional colors beyond the Primary Palette to be added to achieve the natural progression of visual flow and balance in the space. Additional colors should be sure to flow in line with the standard palette and be closely curated within the brand experience and FF&E finishes to ensure a cohesive result.

The Digital Palette is used to produce digitally printed wallcovering and applied vinyl decals. This palette closely coordinates with, but does not exactly match, the paint color palette. There is an additional dark blue and pink tone that creates a seamless transition of colors across the colored gust.

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Environmental Graphics

Environmental graphics are used to create a sense of place and provide a color-based wayfinding system that features local Ohio flora and fauna.

Environmental Graphic Samples



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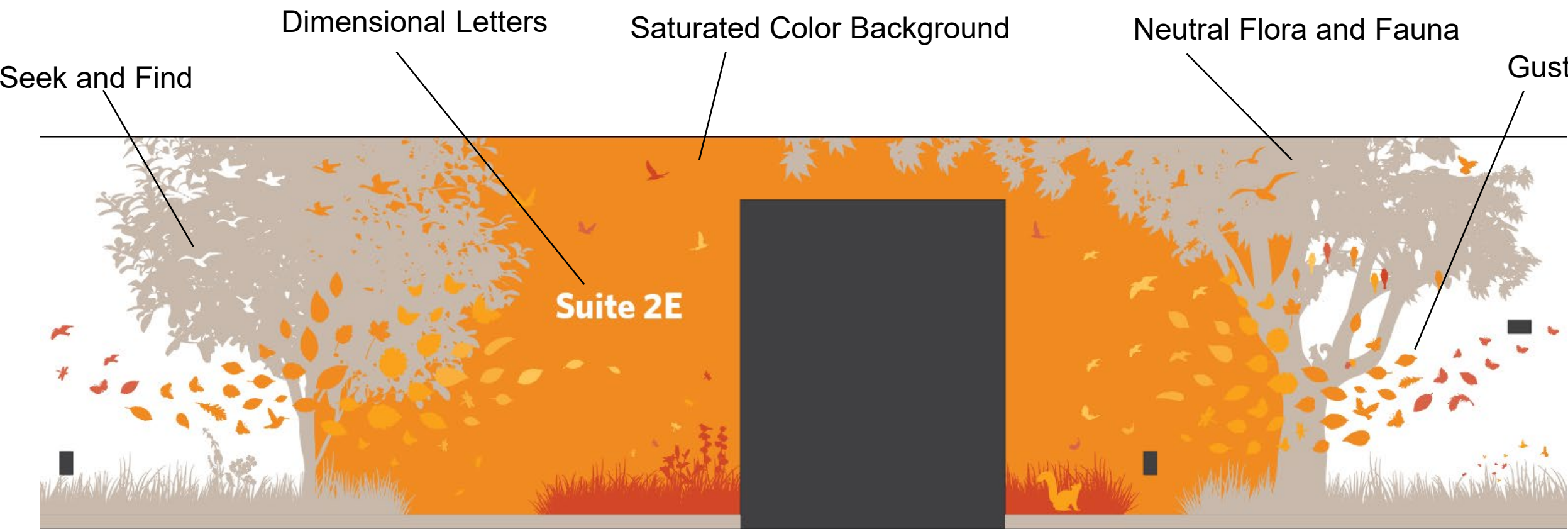


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The Portal



Portals signify the entryway to a destination. They are composed of the elements listed below and identified above.

- Saturated color is used at the entrance flanked by neutral colored flora & fauna or tone on tone graphics. Colored gusts are used to transition between portals.
- Large white dimensional letter signage is installed on the saturated background color.
- Entrance openings and door frames are to be white.

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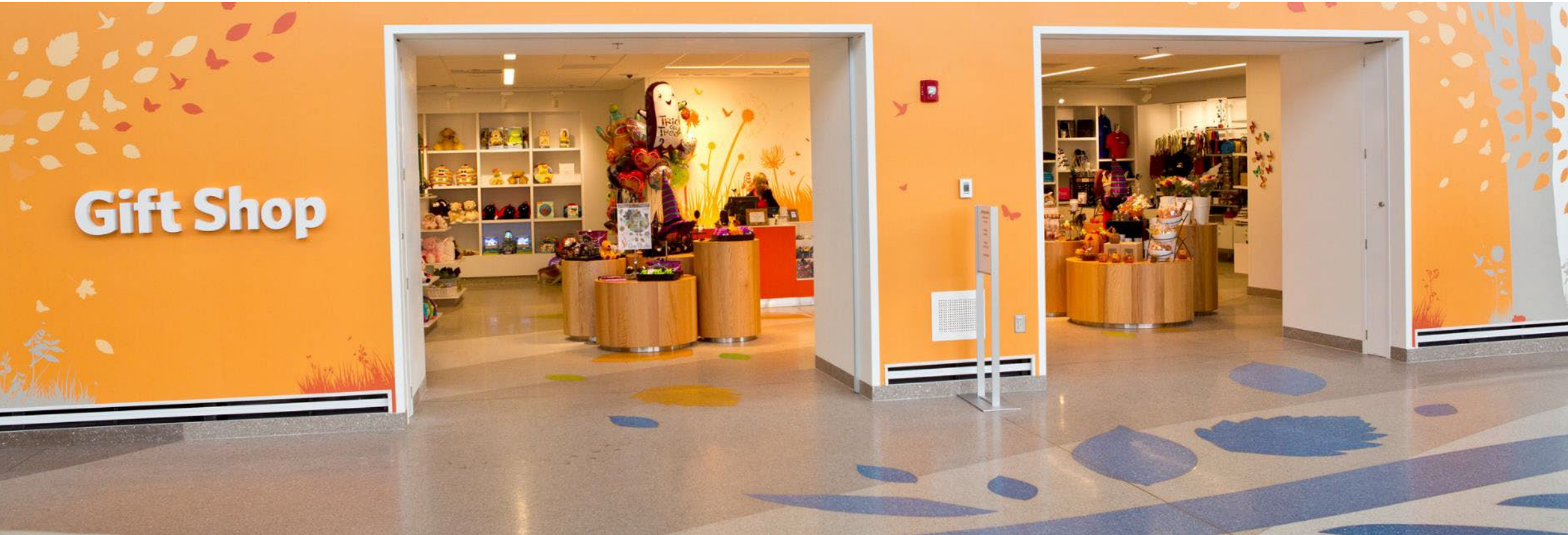
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The Portal

Samples from main public areas.



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The Portal – Suites

Samples of the portal applied to Suites



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The Portal – Elevator



Elevator lobbies are transitional spaces and can be thought of as a **neutral portal**. The neutral palette is used in most areas with supporting color wayfinding on the floor.

- The wall perpendicular to the elevator doors should be dark neutral paint. Elevator door surrounds are to be kept white and free of visual distractions.
- Floor path and burst should be included to reinforce wayfinding, and Digital Signage should be used on the accent wall or next to the elevators on the first floor of main public buildings.
- To maintain a consistent interior look, all elevator cabs should use neutral carpet with maple laminate walls, stainless-steel trim, and indirect lighting.

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Glass Treatments



Applied adhesive graphics is used for visual distraction and privacy. The following are guidelines for frequent applications of dusted crystal film:

- **Onstage Glass Walls:** Graphics with color accents are applied second surface to windows. Graphic is executed with transparent center for visibility.
- **Conference Rooms:** For privacy, the center section should be covered, and the grass and tree canopy remain clear.
- **Offices:** A 48” band is applied 1st surface to glass front offices to add privacy and allow light to filter into the space. Applying the film on the outside of the room allows for the inside to be used as a writeable surface.

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Intuitive Wayfinding

Implemented in 2012, this forward-thinking wayfinding philosophy was a cultural shift for the organization which requires employees to be able to be fluent in both wayfinding and Facilities identifiers. Since 2016, new building construction projects have strived to combine these two languages.

All NCH facilities use a signage system that requires dual speak. This means that Staff (and Volunteers) need to understand both building identifiers: Facilities numbers and the Wayfinding system.

Intuitive Wayfinding in Major Public Buildings

Floor Treatments and Natural Light



The floor is a combination of warm neutrals (ranging from a darker warm grey to a light warm white) in an anamorphic pattern reminiscent of the topography of a river’s shore, sweeping out from the edges of the corridors. Epoxy terrazzo floor finish is used in the first-floor main public buildings.

- Whenever possible the concourses and main walkways of a major public building should be placed along a wall of natural light to support wayfinding and create a seamless transition from exterior landscape to interior environmental graphics.
- A colored path is used as a primary wayfinding system. Leaf Bursts indicate that there is a decision point and are used at the intersections of colored paths, elevators, Welcome desks, nurse stations, and corridor intersections. Reference the EGD Graphics Guidelines for art details.
- Animal footprints in metal inlay are added as an element of whimsy. As a rule, animal silhouettes are not used on the floors, just their feet to spark the imagination. **Butterflies are never to be put on the floor.**

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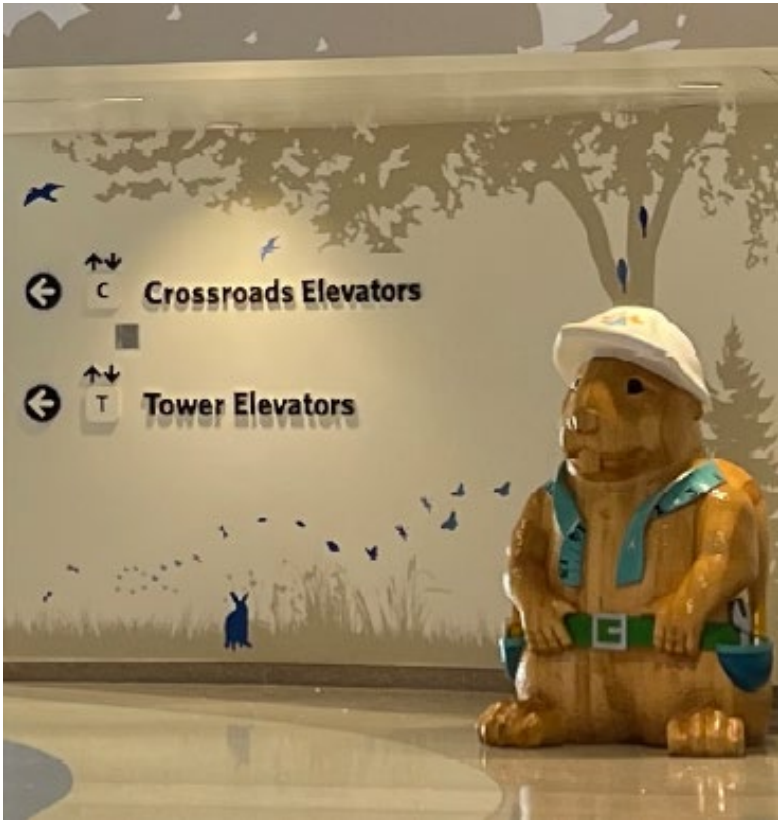
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Signage System



The NCH signage system is composed of a series of standard sign treatments using white and black materials with minimal embellishment. This is a strategic decision to allow the signage to clearly stand out when placed on saturated backgrounds or blank white walls.

- Logo signage is to be used as a part of the initial welcome sequence on the building exterior or behind the main reception desk.
- Reference the NCH Interior Signage Design Standards documentation for materials, nomenclature, sizing and standard sign types.
- All signage should adhere to ADA requirements, applicable codes and be developed with consideration and inclusivity of global cultures.

Master Aesthetic Design Guidelines

Intuitive Wayfinding

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Donor Recognition

Donor Signage



NCH Donor Signage is an opportunity to acknowledge the generosity of a donor with a permanent identifier that features the donor's name (individual or company) and selected elements from NCH environmental graphics. Neutral palettes are used in most cases to avoid potential conflicts with other corporate brands and allow for seamless integration into the NCH environmental graphics.

- Donations are communicated through signage that uses a different set of materials and strategies. Donor names are not used for wayfinding or listed on building directories.
- NCH Foundation must always be involved in the development of all Donor Signage. Reference NCH Donor Signage Guidelines for specific details.

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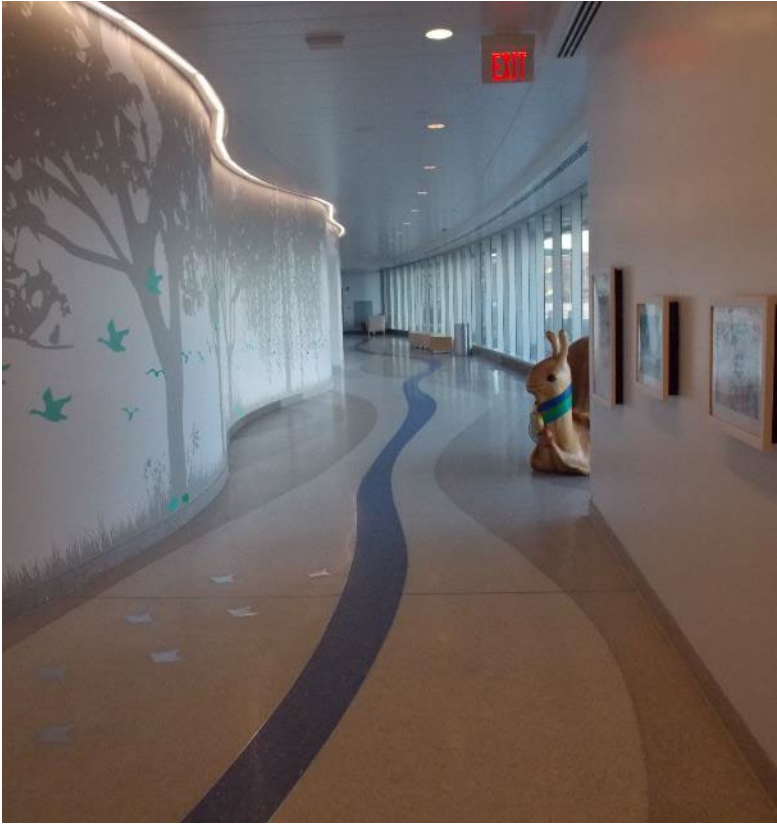
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Ceilings and Lighting



Ceilings are to be white and free from graphics. Natural light is to be featured whenever possible and is a foundational architectural requirement for the exterior wall of the first floor of any NCH building.

All NCH lighting is to be developed with energy efficiency and ease of maintenance in mind. See NCH Design Requirements for specifications and details. Lighting should be planned to provide general illumination and avoid hot spots. Recessed fixtures provide the bulk of the task lighting in most of the drop ceiling areas, ring lights are a common design feature. Custom lighting may be specified in certain areas.

- The architectural cove should be planned on the wall with environmental graphics to highlight that feature. The cove should be executed by extending the wall (and its treatment) above the ceiling and creating a space for the cove light source that allows for the light to reflect out without interruption. **Careful synchronization is required to ensure MEP does not interrupt the aesthetic of this critical architectural element.**
- Ceiling layouts should work to use full ceiling tiles whenever possible to allow for a calming patient experience and simplify replacements for NCH operations. Bulkheads are strategically placed to support this goal.

Master Aesthetic Design Guidelines

Intuitive
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The Welcome Experience

Consistency of the Welcome Experience across NCH facilities is a priority.

The Welcome Experience Parking



The first interaction with the NCH Environmental Brand for most visitors happens in the parking garage. Color is used to identify parking garages and is assigned early in the development process based on campus applications.

The key design elements include:

- Colored Portal to identify the main entry.
- Dimensional sculptures are used in key areas to provide positive distraction and intuitive wayfinding.
- All parking levels should match the color of the garage and use animal themes to differentiate floors.
- Consider extending colored wayfinding path to garage for pedestrian use.
- Butterfly wagon and wheelchair parking areas are to be provided.

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The Welcome Experience

Welcome Lobby



A signature design language activates the entry sequence through a clear, architectural statement at the greeter desk, signified by the welcome statement, Corian panel on the desk, lighting, and saturated color backdrop.

The key design elements:

- Focal wall of saturated color highlighted with lighting.
- Signage with an introduction of logo and building name at all main public buildings.
- Color-coordinated leaf burst on the floor in front of reception desk in all hard flooring options as well as the anamorphic floor patterning.
- Limit visual clutter by providing appropriate posting boards, literature racks and signage.
- Digital signage placements should be planned when laying out the space.

Welcome Desk Requirements:

- Up/ down configuration of the millwork to provide some privacy for the staff member and still maintain ADA counter heights.

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The Welcome Experience

Secondary Lobbies



Secondary lobbies maintain the aesthetic of the first-floor Welcome lobby and are designed to accommodate appropriate budget parameters.

The key design elements are:

- Walkways should accommodate wagon, wheelchair, and stroller clearances and parking.
- Walls are to be predominantly white and have one mid tone accent wall or one wall with environmental graphics.
- TV monitors in all waiting areas should always be ceiling-mounted or freestanding to avoid disruption of the wall graphics.
- Flooring is to continue the anamorphic floor patterning in both soft and hard flooring options.
- Limit visual clutter by providing appropriate posting boards, literature racks and signage.
- Digital signage placements should be planned when laying out the space.

The Welcome Experience

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Variations

In this section we outline how different areas vary in their approach. In most cases these variations are due to the type of care provided in the space, or the property agreements in leased or partner host hospitals.

Behavioral Health Spaces

These images are all from the Big Lots Behavioral Health Pavilion



Behavioral Health

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The Abigail Wexner Research Institute Areas



Behavioral Health

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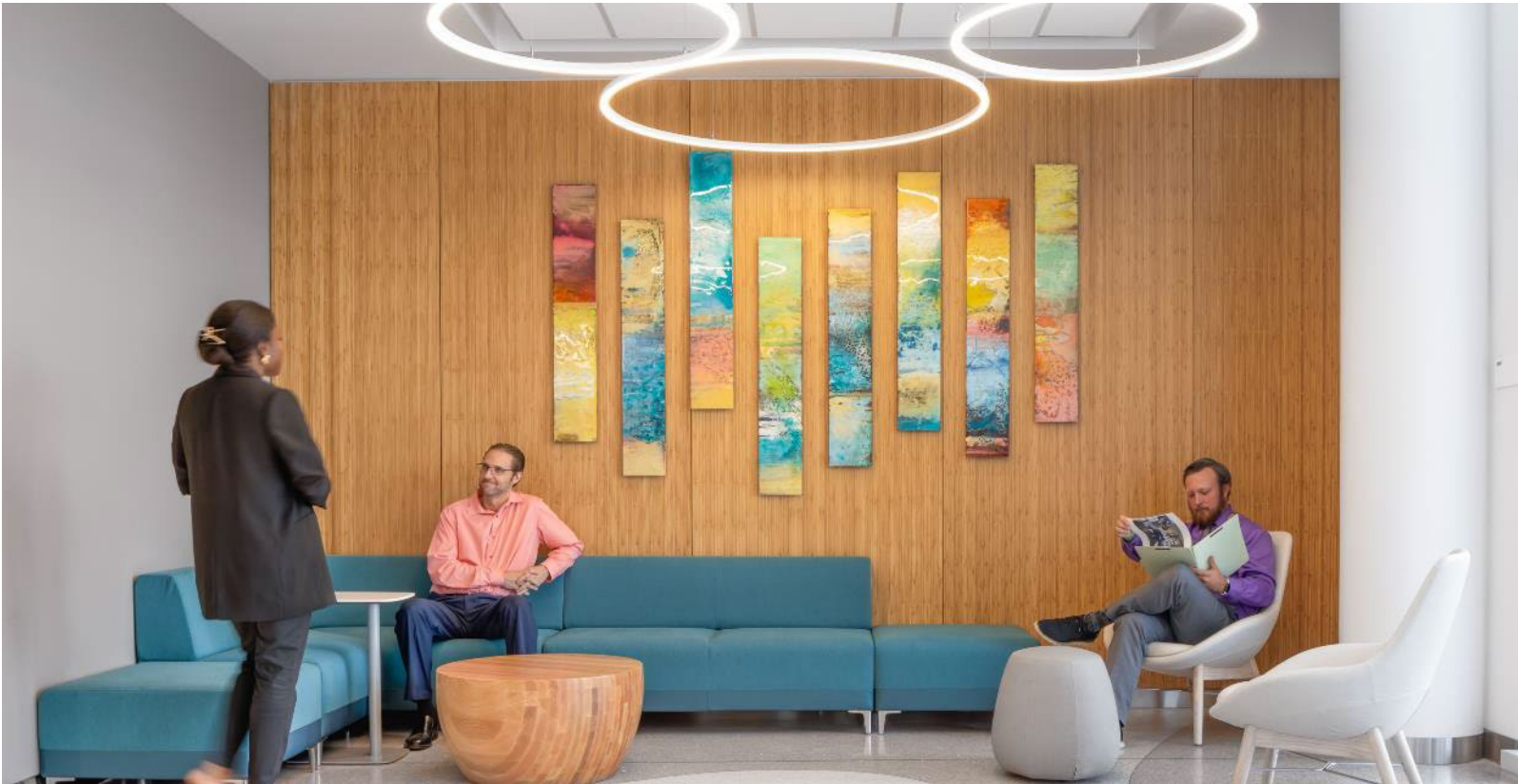


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Close to Home Areas

These images are all from NCH Lewis Center Emergency and Infusion Clinic



Close to Home

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