



Building Case Study

Residential Aged Care

Project Outcomes

- Establishing a clear design brief for the organisation, based on residents lifestyle needs and associated social issues.
- Revitalising an existing building by addressing a range of problems and shifting to a cluster-focussed design.
- Providing a process by which care staff could strongly direct the design.

The Project

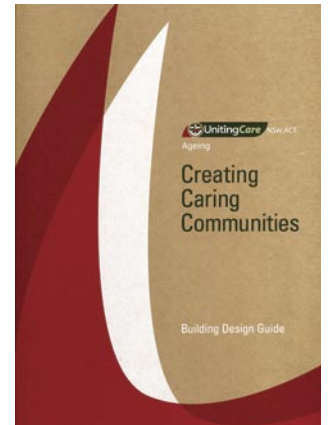
UnitingCare Ageing is one of the largest not-for-profit providers of residential aged care services in NSW. Due to an organisational restructure and a massive building program, UnitingCare Ageing approached *Constructive Dialogue* to write a *Building Design Guide* (“The Guide”) with the aim of supporting the development of better residential care buildings. *The Guide* brought together best practice from across the network and provided a process for ensuring architects are better briefed for projects. UnitingCare Ageing’s approach focuses on resident choice, community engagement and the creation of home-like environments.

Following the publication of *The Guide*, *Constructive Dialogue* has been engaged to work on Georgian House, an 80 bed low care facility. The aim is to improve the facility by creating better access to usable outdoor space, integrating a dementia specific unit and developing a series of smaller group clusters, each providing some living areas specific to that cluster.

The Guide (Initial Review)

The team convened to work on *The Guide* included care, property and business staff. Other personnel and consultants were involved through the consultative process, such as regional managers, chaplains, quantity surveyors, and kitchen suppliers. While many facilities were visited as part of a study tour, *Constructive Dialogue* staff spent extended periods in one facility to understand the life of that facility in more detail. Some issues that were raised by the initial studies included:

- **Small Groups:** The need to keep the size of groups of residents small (ideally working with clusters of fifteen to eighteen people).
- **Choice:** Staff aimed to provide a range of spaces for activities in order to allow residents to initiate activities to the level that they were able and desired.



constructive dialogue architects

level 1, 17 federation road
newtown nsw 2042
p +612 9516 4411

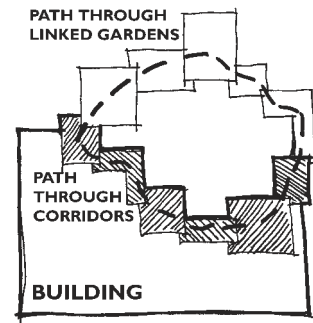
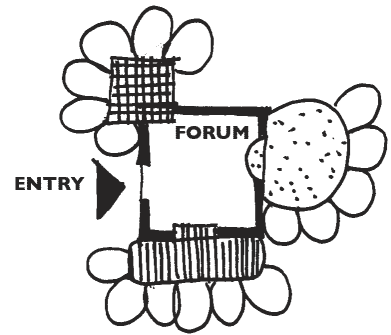
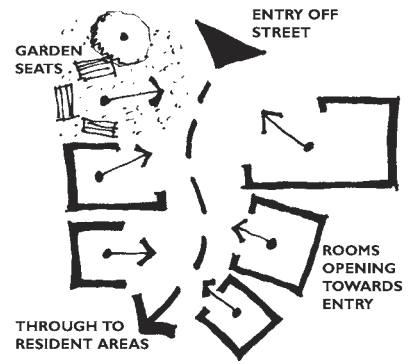
www.constructivedialogue.com.au
info@constructivedialogue.com.au

- **Connection to Community:** The importance of facilities opening to neighbouring streets to provide opportunities for engagement with the surrounding neighbourhood.
- **Orientation:** The importance of orientation and way finding around a building for residents and staff.

The Brief (Applied to Georgian House Hostel)

The project team established a set of spatial ideas that were relevant to all new facilities. These were then applied to the design of renovations to Georgian House. The design ideas in the brief included:

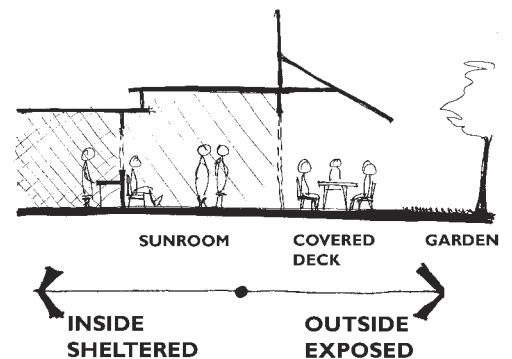
- **A String of Activities Lead into a Centre:** The entry establishes a critical relationship to the community. At the entry provide a group of spaces where activities happen adjacent to the street, oriented to draw the public in and provide an easy “outing” for residents.
- **Residential Clusters:** Create clusters of fifteen to eighteen bedrooms around shared living spaces dedicated to that group of residents. The shared spaces may be used for dining, meeting family, socialising or a range of activities. Each cluster should be within an area that is identifiably different from the other clusters.
- **Events along a Path:** Treat corridors as streets with varying widths that can accommodate both organised activities and smaller socialising in pockets of space. Support activities in corridors by opening some areas onto outdoor space, having paths lead to external areas and providing a range of places to sit that break down a journey. Paths should be visible from key staff points and each sitting place should have a view of a common room or other main area to provide orientation.
- **Layering the Edge of a Building:** The edges of buildings should be organised as a series of layers out from communal rooms to verandahs and finally the garden. The verandahs and other intermediate layers should be contained spaces with somewhere to sit. This can break down the barrier between inside or outside and also make it easier for people’s eyes to adjust to the light as they enter or leave a building.

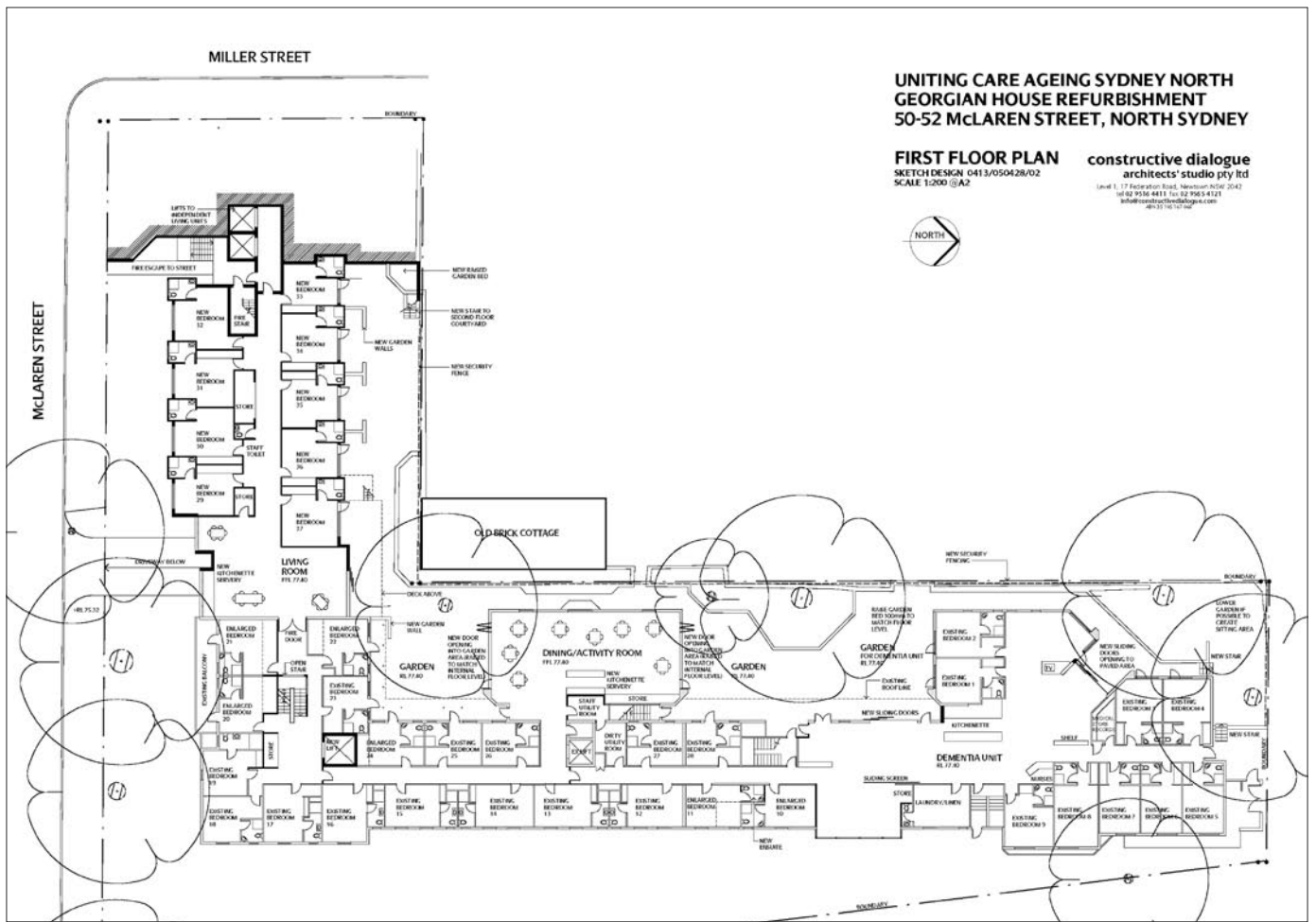


The Design

The existing Georgian House building has communal rooms on the lowest floor, with two levels of bedrooms above. The design sought to create a stronger sense of clusters on the upper floors within which daily activities could take place. The resulting design includes:

- **Courtyard Focus:** The development of courtyards through the concentration of communal rooms around the edge of the yards, focused on the yards.
- **Communal Activity Space:** A community centre on the lowest floor that could be used for large group activities by residents as well as acting as a base for other activities involving people from the surrounding community.
- **Continuity of Care:** Apartments above the facility create a stronger continuity of care ranging from self care to high levels of support.





**UNITING CARE AGEING SYDNEY NORTH
 GEORGIAN HOUSE REFURBISHMENT
 50-52 McLAREN STREET, NORTH SYDNEY**

FIRST FLOOR PLAN
 SKETCH DESIGN 0413/050428/02
 SCALE 1:200 @A2

**constructive dialogue
 architects' studio pty ltd**

Level 1, 17 Federation Road, Newtown NSW 2042
 Tel: 61 61 9536 4611 Fax: 61 61 956 4121
 info@constructivedialogue.com
 49532 161 12107



References

The following people would be happy to discuss this project further:

Marilyn Jolly

Executive Manger of Care, UnitingCare Ageing Sydney North Region
 Phone 02 8966 8042

Andrew Morgan

Manager of Property and Assets, UnitingCare Ageing NSW-ACT,
 Phone 8267 4368