



When Should a Cell not be a Cell?

Creating a Palliative Care Suite in a High Security Prison

Dr Rachel Forster – Co-Mission-d Art Group Tutor, HMP Wakefield



Project Background

Project Client = Care UK (Maxine Harrison – Head of Healthcare)

Original Brief = “Make a few pieces of artwork for the walls”

Problem/ Barrier = Is that enough to change the perception of ‘The Departure Lounge’?

New Brief = Full redesign of the room

Support = Regular visits from

- * Kim (Inpatients Matron)
- * Carol (PhD researcher, University of York)
- * Other Healthcare staff
- * Other prisoners in healthcare



Aims

- To discuss who the palliative care suite is/ should be for, using Foucault's principles of heterotopias as a framework.
- To highlight how this changes what the space needs to be.
- To demonstrate how the objects we designed support these different concepts.



Heterotopias

- 'Something like countersites'
- 'Effectively enacted utopia'
- 'Real sites, simultaneously represented, contested and inverted'
- 'Outside of all places, even though it may be possible to indicate their location in reality.'

Heterotopia of deviation

“those in which individuals whose behaviour is deviant in relation to the required mean or norm are placed.”

Heterotopias – Principle 1

Crisis Heterotopias

'There are privileged or sacred or forbidden places, reserved for individuals who are, in relation to society and to the human environment in which they live, in a state of crisis.'

Society they live in = the prison

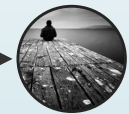
State of Crisis = terminal diagnosis



Society



Prison



Palliative Care

Heterotopias – Principle 1

'The Departure Lounge'



Who should a Palliative Care room be for?

Heterotopias – Principle 3

'The heterotopias capable of juxtaposing in a single real place several spaces, several sites that are in themselves incompatible.'

Space 1

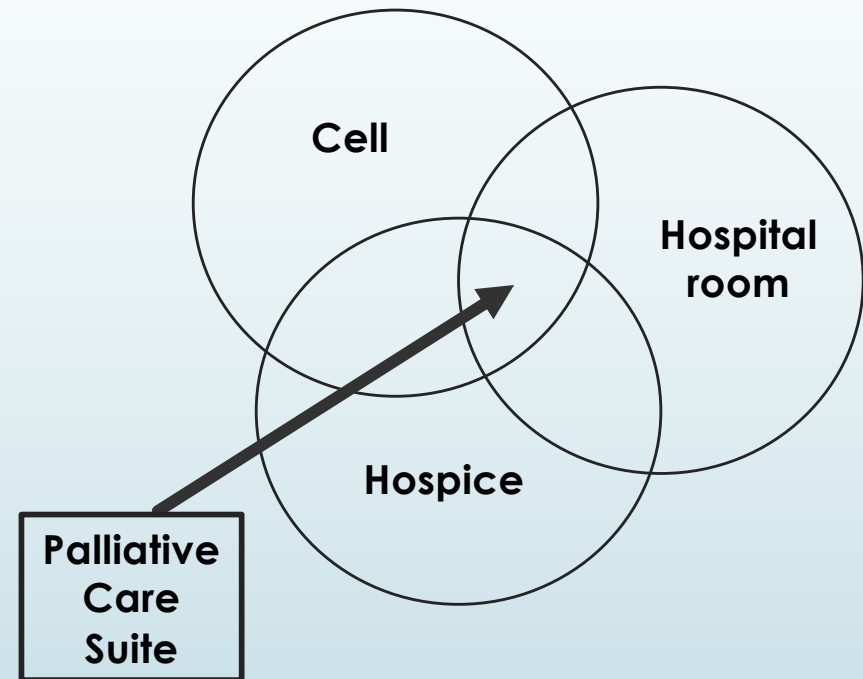
physical space = a cell in a high security prison

Space 2

Other space = a hospital room in the healthcare building

Space 3

Other purpose = a hospice room



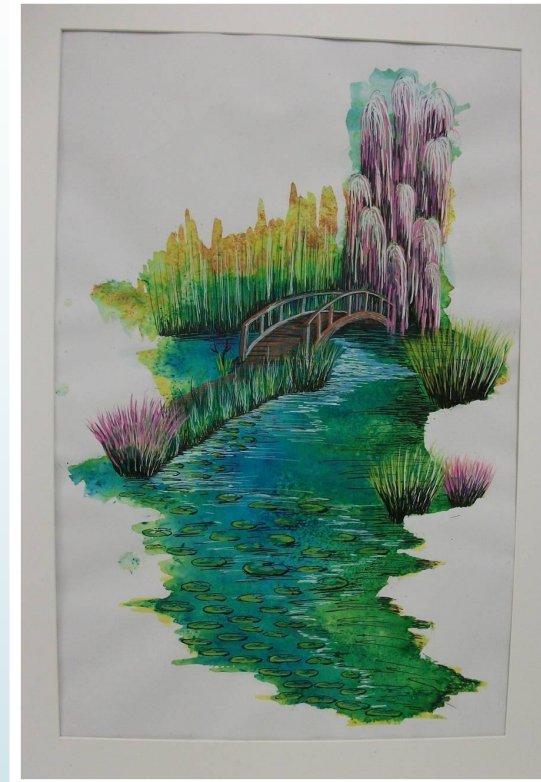
Heterotopias – Principle 3



‘Overcoming Prison Problems’

Awareness that primarily the room is a cell.

Heterotopias – Principle 3

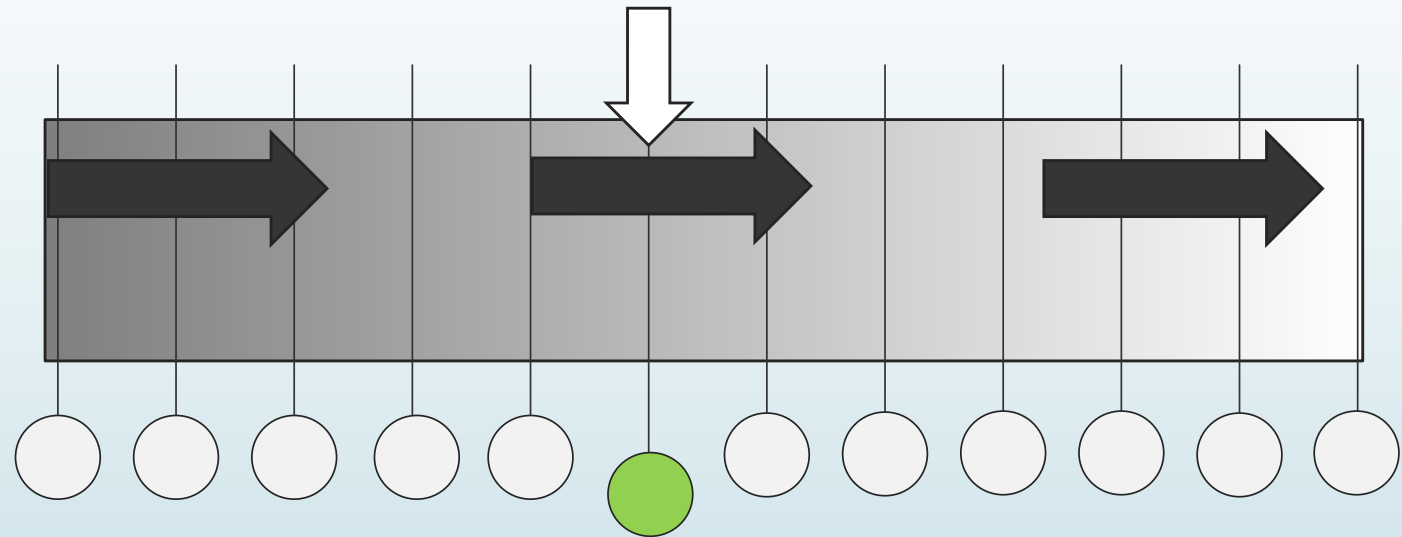


'Escapism'

Attempts to support people to feel like they are somewhere else, beyond the practical things the room is.

Heterotopias – Principle 4

'[Heterotopias] linked.... To time in its most fleeting, transitory, precarious aspect, to time in the mode of festival. These heterotopias are not oriented towards the eternal, they are rather, absolutely temporal.'



The life/ history of the space itself.

The festival = The process of dying.

Heterotopias – Principle 4



'All about me'

Objects to enable the individual to own/
personalise the space while they are there.



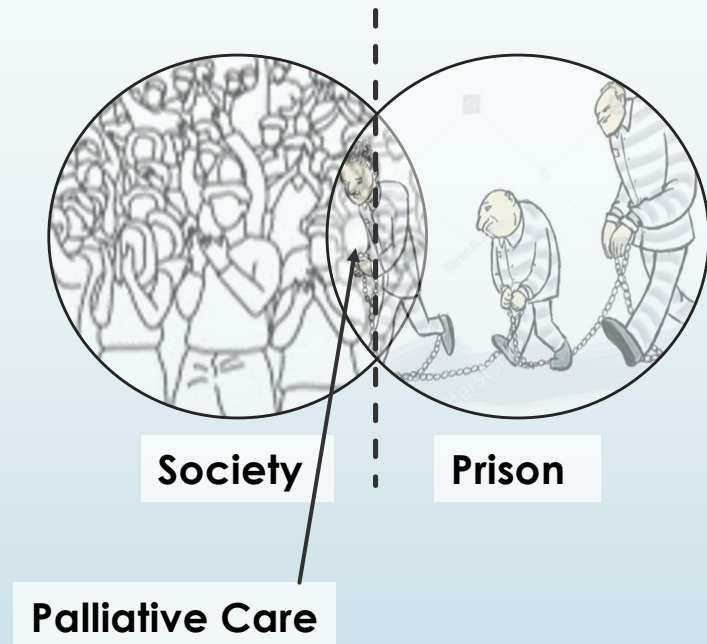
Heterotopias – Principle 5

'Heterotopias always presuppose a system of opening and closing that both isolates them and makes them penetrable. In general, the heterotopic site is not freely accessible like a public space.'

For the family of the individual

Hospice = accessible for family to visit

High Security Prison = not usually accessible beyond the visits room



Heterotopias – Principle 5



‘Home Comforts’

Make the room more like somewhere outside.
Objects you can't usually get in a prison.



Conclusions

Palliative Care Suite is not just about the patient
Staff, other prisoners, family, friends

Involve everyone

Objects are key

'We think with the objects we love; we love the
objects we think with' – Sherry Turkle

Look at the bigger picture –
A space is never just one thing.