

CHARNLEY FOLD

This innovative service situated in a newly remodeled facility will support older people with a range of mental health needs to maintain their independence. It has an 'open door' policy aiming to provide a flexible environment that is as unrestrictive as possible. Charnley Fold provides a **range of services** including:

- A ground-breaking health and well-being centre and support facility for older people provided by established voluntary sector organizations
- Advice, information, carer's cafe, carer support services
- A community based assessment, diagnostic and treatment service
- A flexible care service to work with patients and their carers at an early stage of being diagnosed with dementia
- Specialist staff including: psychiatrists, psychologists, social workers and other therapists who provide a range of support services in the local community
- An enhanced day care service for older people with complex mental health needs



The Stroll



The Country Side



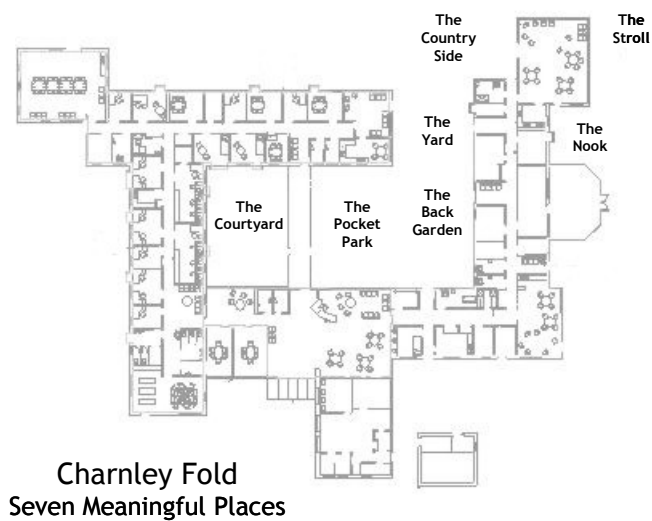
The Back Garden

DESIGN

Chalfont Design advised on the renovation of the building and the outdoors. Taking a person-centred approach, this care environment is designed to integrate people and place in ways that lift the **human spirit**. A successful design should stimulate a person's interests and enhance their ability to engage with and enjoy their surroundings. Some people for instance may enjoy familiar domestic activities such as pottering in the garden, feeding the birds, pulling weeds or watering tomatoes in the greenhouse. Others may simply want to sit and watch, take a snooze or take a walk. Dr. Chalfont designed the environment at Charnley Fold to provide many ways for people to meet, share, grow and enjoy life. The design of the outdoors and the integration with indoor rooms will:

- Support the holistic care & health of the individual - physical, mental and spiritual
- Enable people to maintain relationships - with other people and with nature
- Stimulate people to become creatively engaged and to pursue personal interests
- Promote gardens, nature and outdoors as tools for communication and wellbeing
- Promote personal freedom by providing direct, easy and safe access to outdoors
- Provide pleasurable sensory stimulation during conversation, activities or solitude

Specific design **elements** were used to reach these aims. Interior spaces were opened up to maximise daylight, natural ventilation and views out into the gardens and beyond. Spaces were designed and furnished to support a range of activities including active and passive, solitary and group, productive as well as recreational activities. There are many **circulation loops** connecting the indoors and the gardens, so people are encouraged to look out onto and to visit the outdoors. One unique innovation is the creation of **7 Meaningful Places** (see below) based on archetypes of normal familiar outdoor places with practical names that older people may recognise as meaningful. Examples include *The Pocket Park*, *The Back Garden* and *The Stroll*.



Another example of encouraging movement and 'flow' is the wooden picket **garden gates** near the greenhouse. Their presence invites and encourages people to use them. In many ways care environments disable movement. The gates encourage movement because they offer a person some control over their environment. There is real flow from two **water features**, a bubbling boulder fountain high enough to touch, and a flow form which swirls energetically creating amazing patterns.

Water at Charnley Fold is a metaphor for healing energy, transformation and the flow of life.

The **planting** is not a typical institutional landscape with large quantities of 'Tesco parking lot' shrubs. Instead there is a diversity of plants to stimulate curiosity and provide year round interest. The planting is sparse so it grows to maturity not needing to be pruned or removed. Plantings will never require an electric hedge trimmer! Plant choices are non-prickly, non-toxic and harmless if touched or eaten. Importantly, planting areas have plenty of spare room for people (service users, family carers and staff) to plant what they like. In other words the garden is not 'done'. It is begun and will evolve as people participate in making it (or simply watching it) grow. If you spend all day in a place, why not make your mark on it? All interaction with the garden is welcomed and encouraged! Through people engaging with the garden it will become meaningful - the starting point for a therapeutic environment. www.chalfontdesign.com

ETHOS

Caring for people with complex needs requires a very diverse environment with spots that are perfect for each individual. This takes time to develop by engaging the people who come to the facility over time in the garden in ways that are meaningful to them. Everyone comes with a story in life and quality care unravels the sometimes encoded messages in order to find the authentic person. The job then is to shape the environment (both social and physical) around supporting that person in their need to reach a place of balance in their life. Gardens are always in process (ignore TV make over shows and high profile garden shows). Whether or not an outdoor area becomes a successful therapeutic environment depends on the amount of time invested in place-making - the process of making places meaningful. A garden in a facility is a failure if it is not enjoyed by people who attend. Caring for individuals is more difficult and less satisfying if the garden plays no role. Needless to say, the person with dementia will suffer more ill-being and less delight if they are denied the healing power of the natural world. Charnley Fold is pioneering the role of nature in mental health supported by the existing body of knowledge in horticultural therapy and the very best of dementia care.