



# A GREENER RECOVERY

— NHS CHASE FARM HOSPITAL —

## TECTONIC

THIS OUTSIDE SPACE CREATES A CALMING  
AND COMFORTING HAVEN, PERFECT FOR  
PATIENTS' AFTERCARE

**N**eurorehabilitation patients are at elevated risk of depression due to prolonged hospital stays. Stroke is not just a condition of the elderly – the ward also cares for younger stroke patients. Having a safe, engaging outside space allows patients more freedom during their stay, especially for family visits.

Tectonic's lead designer, Chris Valiantis, had in recent years been a patient in this hospital wing, and had many family ties to the hospital. As such, he wanted to give something remarkable back to the hospital, its patients and staff. The Royal Free Charity and NHS Trust's brief was for Tectonic to create a specialist garden tailored for patients as they underwent treatment and recovery.

### Design/build

This garden utilizes an organic and free-flowing feel, symbolising the gentle but steady progression of recovery for the hospital's stroke and rehabilitation patients. Tectonic designed the garden to help patients build muscle

strength and balance, enjoy therapy sessions in the fresh air and take part in horticultural activities. A dedicated patient gardening area was created to assist with regaining patients' motor functions, by using their hands to pot, prune and water plants.

Tectonic's creation is based on a Japanese theme and provides a haven for patients who are overwhelmed by noise from the busy ward. It incorporates a gardening project with raised beds to enable patients to participate in gardening – all designed to support recovery.

An existing day room, already utilised by patients for therapy, was extended outside for the continuation of the patients' gardening and horticultural activities. A green house and raised planters provide easy access for wheelchair users and a seating area for group discussions and meetings.

**Japanese tranquil zone**

As one progresses from the more organised therapy space into the centre of the garden, there is a free-flowing shift into a Japanese-style garden. As part of Tectonic's requirements for creating an 'exercise area' in this space, it used different flooring materials to assist the patients re-learning how to traverse a variety of different floor finishes. These included Marshalls Woodstone Sleepers laid on an arc and in-filled with white cobble stones, resin laid in a curved shape providing a clean stable walkway for patients and a timber-decked Japanese bridge spanning a blue slate area. The use of a fish pond with trickling water within the garden adds an element of peace. ▶

- 1 A patient and member of staff crossing the bridge
- 2 Lush tectureal planting around the pond
- 3 Initial conceptual design master plan



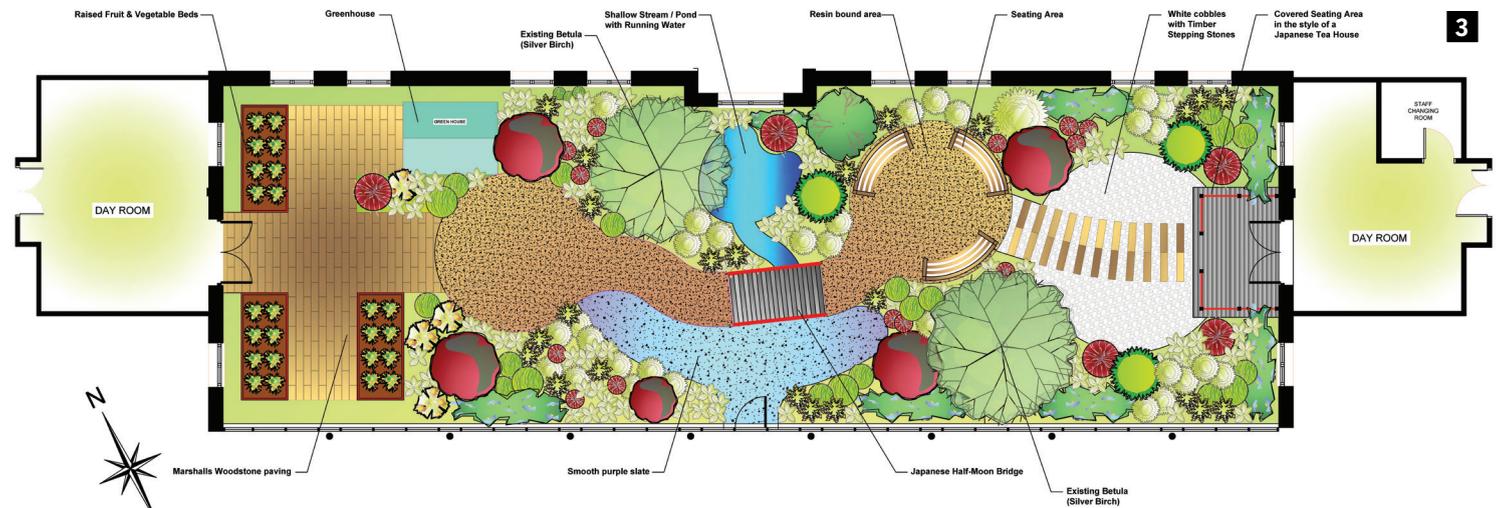
**PROJECT DETAILS**

**Project value**  
£65K

**Build time**  
Consultation, design and planning: 8 months; build time: 5 months.

**Size of project**  
272m<sup>2</sup>

**Awards**  
Gold Medal for Best Public Building Gardens



**COURTYARD GARDEN TO CAPETOWN WARD**  
*Conceptual Design*



At the other end of the courtyard is a modern timber representation of a 'Japanese Tea Room', where patients comfortably sit enveloped in a semi-closed structure, focusing attention inwards towards the garden, rather than feeling overlooked by the upper levels.

**Challenges**

The logistics of working in the middle of a hospital environment was challenging, as they were within internal courtyards with wards leading directly onto them. Tectonic had to satisfy a number of health and safety requirements, ensuring sound pollution and patient privacy was maintained at all times. All existing planting and paving had to be manually removed by hand from the gardens. Much of the unskilled labour force was from local workers kindly donating their time, including staff from Tesco, Sainsbury's, Metaswitch, Santander and the Masonic Charitable Foundation.

Over 120 working drawings were produced to ensure correct placement of the electrics, paving, resin, pond, planting beds, Japanese Tea House and bridge. Tectonic felt it imperative, as with its other specialist therapy garden, to have continued interest in maintenance and upkeep of the gardens. Tectonic, therefore, undertook a maintenance contract for the first 18 months, to ensure the gardens would develop and flourish.



- 4 Low level textural planting to allow view from glass corridor
- 5 Japanese Tea House with curved sleeper pathway set on white cobbles



**REFERENCES**

Custom designed and built Japanese tea house

**Tectonic**  
www.TectonicUK.co.uk

Western Red Cedar Roof Shingles  
**Kennings Building Supplies Ltd**  
www.erofs.co.uk

Custom designed and built Japanese-style half-moon red bridge

**Tectonic**  
www.TectonicUK.co.uk

Soil, Manure, Woodchip Mulch, Slate and Boulders

**Thompson of Crews Hill**  
www.thompsonsofcrews Hill.com

Main contractor for laying paving and Ronacrete resin bound surfacing

**Diamond Services South East Ltd**  
www.diamonddriveways.co.uk

Electrical contractors  
**Neotek Electrics Ltd**  
www.neotek-electrics.com

Resin edging  
**Everedge**  
www.everedge.co.uk

Paint  
**Crown Paints**  
www.crownpaints.co.uk

**ABOUT TECTONIC**

Chris Valiantis, of Tectonic, built a successful, 30-year career as an architect, specialising in large-scale commercial schemes around the globe, before going on to study landscape and garden design at Capel Manor. Chris then teamed up with Ollie Neaves, and they now have an award-winning company specialising in high-end landscape, design and installation projects across the domestic, commercial and public sector spheres.  
[www.tectonicuk.co.uk](http://www.tectonicuk.co.uk)