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## Photographing memory lane

13 March, 2008

By *Aris Minton*

**Ippolito Fleitz uses photos as personal and cultural reference points for care home**

Stuttgart-based Ippolito Fleitz Architects has taken a distinctive approach to the demands of elderly care with their design for the nursing facility of the Kreiskrankenhaus Schorndorf, a district hospital near Stuttgart, south-west Germany.

For the new 1200 sqm facility, Ippolito Fleitz's main concern was to promote the personal independence of its 33 residents. Built on one level, all rooms are wheel-chair accessible and easily located in one of two wings.



Residents' control of the space around them is emphasised at every turn. Carefully positioned seating islands or "niches" introduce a level of privacy into corridor areas. Each has two arm-chairs, a table and a lamp, and is contained by a translucent curtain.

Outside each patient's room, photographs from the resident's past are affixed alongside names. "Residents often arrive in nursing homes with very little around them to introduce them to others, and to help independence and interaction," says partner Peter Ippolito. "We've tried to create a caring and open environment."



The facility's main corridor features over 170 framed pictures making up an archive of individual and group memory, aiding both communication and identification. Including record covers from Beethoven to the Rolling Stones, poems, postcards and maps, the variety represents and reflects the uniqueness of each resident's life story.



Materials and colours were chosen to create a home-like, non-institutional atmosphere. Walls are painted in differentiated colours, or decorated with wallpaper. The oak furniture conveys a sense of home, and are complemented by greyish-brown linoleum. Recreation areas are highlighted with inlaid carpet islands.

Residents' choice is again stressed in the diversity of activities and spaces, including a restaurant, outdoor terrace, therapy areas and recreation areas.

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