

NEW YORK PUBLIC LIBRARY ASTOR, LENOX AND TILDEN FOUNDATION DUTCH BOY QUARTERLY

DEVOTED TO PRACTICAL AND TECHNICAL DISCUSSIONS
OF PROTECTIVE AND DECORATIVE PAINT COATINGS,
BUILDING MATERIALS AND OTHER LEAD PRODUCTS

Published and copyrighted by NATIONAL LEAD COMPANY, 111 Broadway, New York, N. Y.

VOLUME I

1923

NUMBER 1

The Use of Color in Fifth Avenue Hospital

A FEW weeks ago a New York newspaper contained an item to the effect that a jurymen fainted when he heard the word "hospital" spoken by the lawyer for the defense. Upon being revived he promptly fainted again when the word happened to be mentioned a second time. Our deduction is that this impressionable jurymen was acquainted only with the hospital which still clings to the use of chill-inspiring white on its walls. If his experience had been with institutions such as the new Fifth Avenue Hospital, instead of fainting he would have beamed with pleasure at the memory.

The staunchest devotee of white in the hospital would almost certainly find his convictions slipping from him once he visited the recently built Fifth Avenue Hospital at Fifth Avenue and 105th Street, New York City. Those who have all along felt that color rightfully belonged there would find their beliefs emphatically upheld. For in this hospital black white is conspicuous by being absent.

One senses its modernity immediately upon entering its spacious, circular high ceilinged lobby.

No disagreeable odors assail the sensitive noses of the newly-arrived

patient nor does he see

anything to re-

mind him that he is ill.

On the side of the room

is a polished glass

door which opens to admit him

into a small, daintily fur-

nished reception room

whose walls are painted in

shades of buff and tan.

Over the windows are curtains to

match the walls and a wine-color-

ed carpet is on the floor.

The furniture, of taste-

fully designed wood, is

finished with a deep rich

tan, striped with light yellow.

In this room it

would not be surprising if the patient should feel

that he is merely paying a social call. On other

floors there are small reception rooms decorated in

blue and gold.

There are no wards in the Fifth Avenue Hospital. They are relics that have been discarded along with frigid white walls. Instead every patient has a private room with a spotless private bathroom. Every room is an outside one. This is made possible by the plan of the building which resembles a gigantic X. A nurse standing in the center can gaze down all four halls without stirring.

If the patient only half believed that he was making a visit before, he must surely be convinced of it when he is shown his room. Absolutely nothing about it smacks of the old-time conception of the hospital. Certainly the pleasing gray and blue furniture does not. The bed is no white-enameled cot, but is an artistically designed modern model, painted in the same French gray and blue. There is a restful blue rug on the floor and the mohair curtains are tan with blue stripes. The walls are painted a pleasant buff with trimmings of tan. In short, the room is furnished with the taste displayed in a first grade modern hotel.

Each detail has been carefully planned to impress the patient agreeably.

By the inviting aspect of the room he is made to feel that perhaps a hospital isn't so bad a place after all. So far as his physical condition will allow he becomes serene and is thus in the most favorable state for recovery.

Especially is this true of the maternity cases to whom an entire floor is devoted. It is obvious that in the prenatal period the patient should be entirely free from a depressive environment.

To force her to gaze at

tedious white walls and frosty white enameled iron furniture during the long period through which she must wait might easily result in dangerous melancholia. And after birth it might well be the reason for the often-time puzzling cessation of the flow of milk.



Typical Private Room for Patients in Fifth Avenue Hospital

The prospective mother need never fear that she will be subjected to any such dreary influences in the Fifth Avenue Hospital. Furniture, curtains, walls and rugs are all one harmonious unit.

Tho everything in the room is gay, nothing is vivid or irritating. The color scheme is similar to that used in the patient's rooms on the other floors.

A most interesting feature on the maternity floor is the nursery. Its tiny newly-arrived occupants are not ignominiously thrust into baskets on gas pipe shelves as in many less enlightened hospitals. No indeed. Each is placed in a commodious fibre basket that rests on a framework that can be rolled around like a tea wagon. Each basket is bordered with pink or blue depending on the sex of the infant, and besides it is gayly adorned with pink rabbits or blue swans. The nursery itself is painted a rich tan and again in defiance to hide-bound tradition there are curtains on the windows.

Of course the babe is blissfully unaware of his charmingly decorated quarters but the mother on coming in is not. It helps to strengthen that feeling of content produced in her by her room and thereby helps to strengthen her.

Dr. Wiley E. Woodbury, consultant on hospital construction and the man largely responsible for the many innovations introduced in the Fifth Avenue Hospital told the writer that some one had breathlessly warned him that those curtains would catch dust. "I said that's fine," said Dr. Woodbury. "I'd much rather the dust settled in the curtains than on the infants!"

The curtains used in all the rooms are made of a stout mohair and go through regular sterilization processes along with the linen. Their color is not affected by the superheated steam.

For night lighting in the nursery, lights are built in the wall about a foot from the floor, rather than on the floor itself. This eliminates the possibility of short circuiting.

The walls in all the operating rooms are covered with a lustreless French gray tile. These extend

about six feet above the floor and from there up to the ceiling the wall is painted in a much lighter flat gray tone. The floors are tiled to match the walls. Dr. Woodbury is aware that in some modern hospitals a green tile is favored, but feels that gray is best.

The kitchen is in the basement. Here the writer thought surely he would find white. But no. The immense kitchen with its enormous stoves from which appetizing odors were arising, was painted a warm, semi-glossy cream. A most cheerful color. In the ceiling are suction devices which carry all odors from the cooking devices into the outside air, and thru other sources a constant stream of fresh air is brought into the kitchen. Not a hint of cooking odors escapes into the hospital itself.

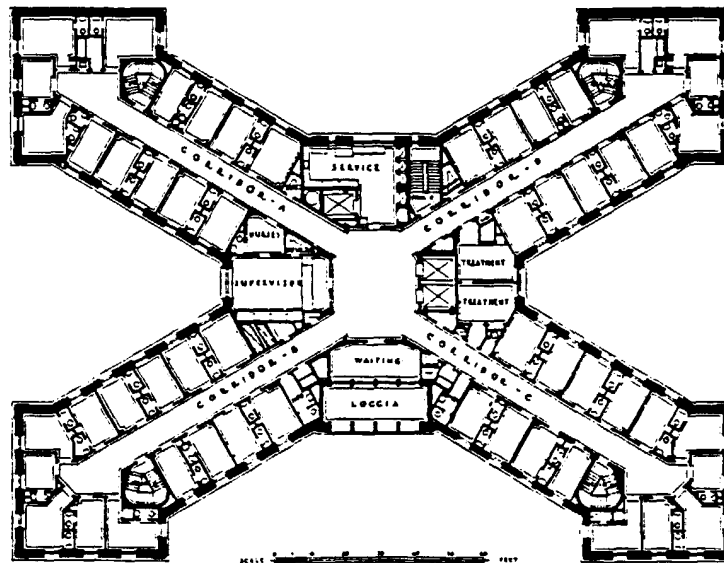
Here one may observe the dishes, neatly arranged on trays. Their whiteness is relieved by colored borders to conform to the color scheme used in the patients' rooms. It costs no more to do this, Dr. Woodbury pointed out, and it all helps in creating that general agreeable impression which definitely aids in recovery.

From the kitchen we went to the dining room of the pupil nurses. A thoughtful person conceived that dining room. If one were led there with his eyes shut, he would be sure, on opening them, that he had been brought into a fashionable Fifth Avenue tea room. The walls are painted in buff and tan tints. The square-top tables are finished in a rich,

dark lacquer. The chairs are a Windsor model, with frames painted a gray green, and spindles a harmonious yellow. The seats have a natural finish produced with a mahogany stained varnish.

From this brief sketch the magnitude of the departure of the Fifth Avenue Hospital from musty convention in the matter of decoration will be apparent. Dr. Woodbury's

ideas have been formulated as the result of a vast experience in his capacity of consultant on hospital construction. He has learned that color is a force which like many another, when skillfully handled can be made to render valuable service.



Because of this highly efficient floor plan every room in the Fifth Avenue Hospital is an outside room. A nurse standing in the center has an uninterrupted view of the four halls from this one position.