

Alzheimer's Home Finds Design and Durability

When the James L. West Center completely renovated its bathrooms on three floors of housing for residents with Alzheimer's, finding the right wall treatment was a particular challenge.

A PATTERN OF UNDERSTANDING

Three unique design patterns on three different floors were chosen based on the progression of Alzheimer's in patients at the James L. West Center.



MIMICKING THE TEXAS LANDSCAPE

The third floor, where Alzheimer's has progressed in the patients and residents more prone to behavioral issues, the color palette shifts to subdued dandelion patterns, which are rooted in the Texan landscape.

CHALLENGE: The Fort Worth, Texas facility was quick to reject anything that looked institutional in favor of creating a high-end, homelike setting. However, wheelchairs, walkers and pushcarts continually damaged walls in tight spaces such as bathrooms. Designer Stacey Brimmer of Schwarz-Hanson Architects, Fort Worth, was concerned that standard wallcoverings would be marred or punctured, but found that rigid wall panels were too expensive for a 60-bathroom project and too utilitarian for the freshly renovated, well-appointed interiors.

INFLUENCE: "The center's research showed that residents had enjoyed a high level of design at home, so James L. West wanted to replicate that in their facility," Brimmer said. "We also wanted to embrace the culture shift that has moved nursing facilities toward more patient-centered design."

CRITERIA: Finding an upscale wall treatment was hampered by durability needs. Further limiting product selection was a Texas regulation calling for non-absorbent finishes on some of the wall surfaces. Tile was considered but was costly and did not present the welcoming aesthetic the team envisioned.

SOLUTION: "We were trying to figure out how to dress up plastic wall panels when the design team presented a new durable but high-design option,"

said Susan Farris, James L. West executive director. The recommendation was VersaGuard, a flexible wall protection that is more durable than standard Type II vinyl wallcovering. Engineered to perform in extreme environments, it shields walls from the repeated impact of rolling traffic and resists tough stains such as iodine, ink and bleach.

VersaGuard's customizable designs moved the facility from what it admits was a "hospital-ish" look to a sophisticated, residential atmosphere. Three patterns were custom-designed to suit three floors that each cater to a different level of Alzheimer's. A cheerful, high-energy stripe and floral was developed for second floor bathrooms, where the facility's highest functioning patients reside. Since this is the first phase of transition, designers conjured a pattern that might be seen in a vacation hotel.

On the third floor, where Alzheimer's has progressed and residents are more prone to behavioral issues, the color palette shifts to subdued, peaceful colorations in a dandelion pattern rooted in the Texas landscape. A vintage silk fabric inspired the fourth floor's dragonfly pattern for residents with the most advanced Alzheimer's. The image strikes a balance of calm and reassurance for residents while projecting cheerful imagery for family members caring for loved ones.



DRAGONFLY PATTERN

The middle image—for residents with advanced Alzheimer's—strikes a balance of calm and reassurance, while projecting cheerful imagery for family members.



Project: James L. West Center
Location: Fort Worth, Texas
Architect: Schwarz-Hanson Architects

PRODUCT SPECS:

Product: VersaGuard
Material: Vinyl

Versa Wallcovering
versawallcovering.com
Circle 360

PROJECT SPECS