

Enabling Design



THE OPTI-HEALTHCARE CLINICS INCORPORATE DESIGN ELEMENTS SUCH AS CARPET FROM **COLLINS AND AIKMAN**; JUVENILE TABLES AND CHAIRS FROM **FIXTURES FURNITURE**; ADULT SEATING FROM **BIEFPLAST**; PLASTIC LAMINATE FROM **NEVAMAR AND PIONITE**; PAINT FROM **BENJAMIN MOORE**; LIGHTING FROM **PRESOLITE, REGGIANI, AND PEERLESS**; SILK PLANTS FROM **BARLYN DESIGN**; VERTICAL BLINDS FROM **HUNTER DOUGLAS**; DRUM TABLE FROM **ARNOLD**; CABINET HARDWARE FROM **FORMS AND SURFACES**; VINYL WALL COVERING FROM **VICRTEX**; GLASS BLOCK FROM **PPG**; AND FILE CABINETS FROM **STEELCASE**.

In 1991, Dr. Martin Hamburg, executive director of Developmental Disabilities Institute (DDI), then known as the Suffolk Child Development Center, decided the lack of medical care for the developmentally disabled and mentally retarded population he served could no longer be tolerated. The 550 children and adults who were part of DDI's network of Day Treatment Programs and residences were underserved medically, and it was difficult to find physicians to treat this primarily Medicaid-eligible population.

Not satisfied with just providing for his own group of clients, Hamburg approached two other organizations that served similar popula-

Landow and Landow Design Six Facilities For Special Needs

tions and found that they were experiencing the same problems. With a base population of almost 1,500 in the three organizations, DDI set about to construct a network of Medicaid-eligible clinics that would specialize in the treatment of developmentally disabled

and mentally retarded individuals. Hamburg later identified a total population in Nassau and Suffolk Counties in New York, of approximately 27,000 potential clients.

As a result, officials at DDI decided to construct five facilities in Suffolk County. The five recently-

completed Suffolk sites, called Opti-Healthcare Centers, provide complete medical and rehabilitative services, and are designed to high architectural and technological standards. While they were built to meet the special needs of the handicapped population, the centers also offer a range of services—medical, dental, and therapeutic—to other under-served individuals. (A sixth clinic of 17,000 square feet, to be located in Westbury, NY, is currently in the design stage.)

SETTING SITES

The Lake Success, NY-based firm of Landow and Landow Architects—specialists in the design of
(Continued overleaf)

SHOWCASE

(Continued from previous page) health care facilities—was engaged to provide architectural and interior design services for the projects. DDI planners decided to build state-of-the-art facilities, but they wanted each site to have a human touch,

rather than the institutional, impersonal clinics that formerly had been built to serve Medicaid populations.

The project began with an analysis of available locations. Two of the Day Treatment Programs run by DDI were located in buildings in

Smithtown, NY. DDI wanted these buildings to serve as sites for two of the clinics, since all of the participants at these locations would also be served by the clinics. "The unfortunate problem was that every inch of space in both buildings was fully

utilized for other purposes, and zoning restrictions precluded any additions to the buildings," says Lloyd Landow, president of Landow and Landow.

The firm then came up with the idea of combining the stage in the

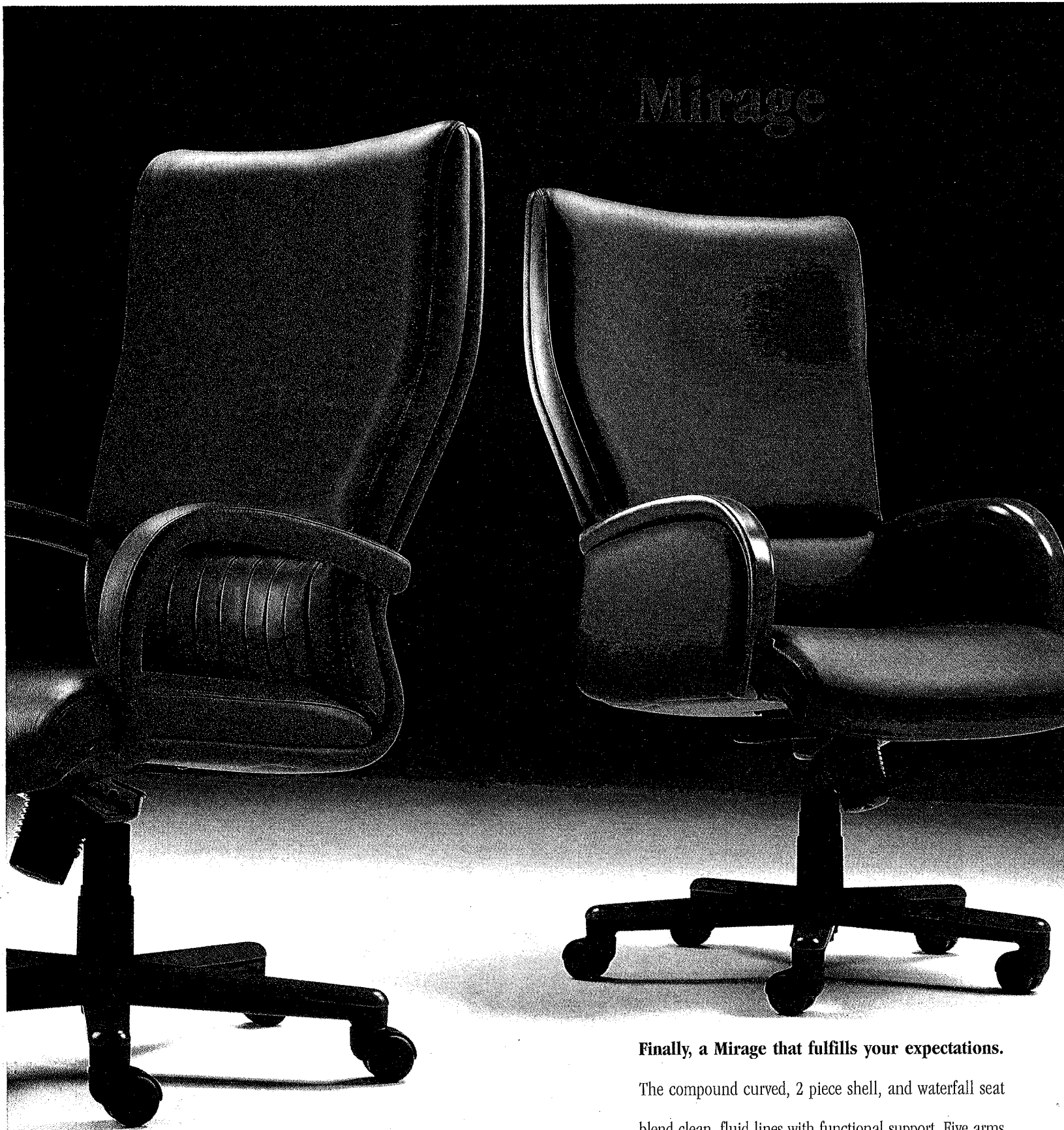
gymnasium with storage areas that ran the full length of the gym. This created a two-story space that yielded clinics of approximately 6,000 square feet each, allowing for medical and habilitative services in both locations.

One site was designated to include specialized dentistry facilities. The other would receive a complete radiological suite in addition to examination rooms, offices, treatment rooms, occupational and physical therapy rooms, counseling rooms, and general administrative offices.

One of the sister organizations of DDI had a need for satellite clinics at both of its facilities in Southampton and East Moriches, NY. These are the third and fourth DDI Opti-Healthcare clinics. The town of Riverhead was designated as the fifth Suffolk County site, and a decision was made to provide complete services at this location.

SPECIAL DESIGN

Landow and Landow planners were concerned with establishing circulation paths that would be interesting but helpful in wayfinding solutions, an important requirement for this population. "As the plan took shape, we constructed 3D
(Continued page 23)



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ENABLING DESIGN

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models on our CADD (computer aided design and drafting) system and conducted walk-throughs to test the functionality and spatial experience of moving through the building," explains Lloyd Landow. Special attention was given to providing points of interest, each with its own characteristics.

"We developed designs for sculptural reliefs, consistent in theme throughout the building, but varied to the point of providing identity for each location," says Marc Landow, who designed the reliefs.

Because of the clients' tendency to be rough on the physical environment, an extensive investigation was conducted to determine the most appropriate materials that would resist abuse. This included use of fiber reinforced concrete wallboard (instead of sheetrock) covered with both a synthetic acrylic and a coated vinyl wall covering. Floors were covered either in cushioned sheet vinyl with integral bases or with solution dyed carpeting. The architects negotiated with the carpet manufacturers on behalf of DDI and obtained a 10-year guarantee not only on the wearability of the carpet, but also on the ability to remove stains and odors.

Special attention was also paid to the use of color and reflective surfaces with regard to their effect on the client population. Indirect lighting was employed wherever possible to soften the environment, and

date ongoing use of the four Day Treatment Program locations. They held regular meetings with the owner and construction manager throughout the building period, because it was important to under-

cost approximately \$200,000 below the projected budget.

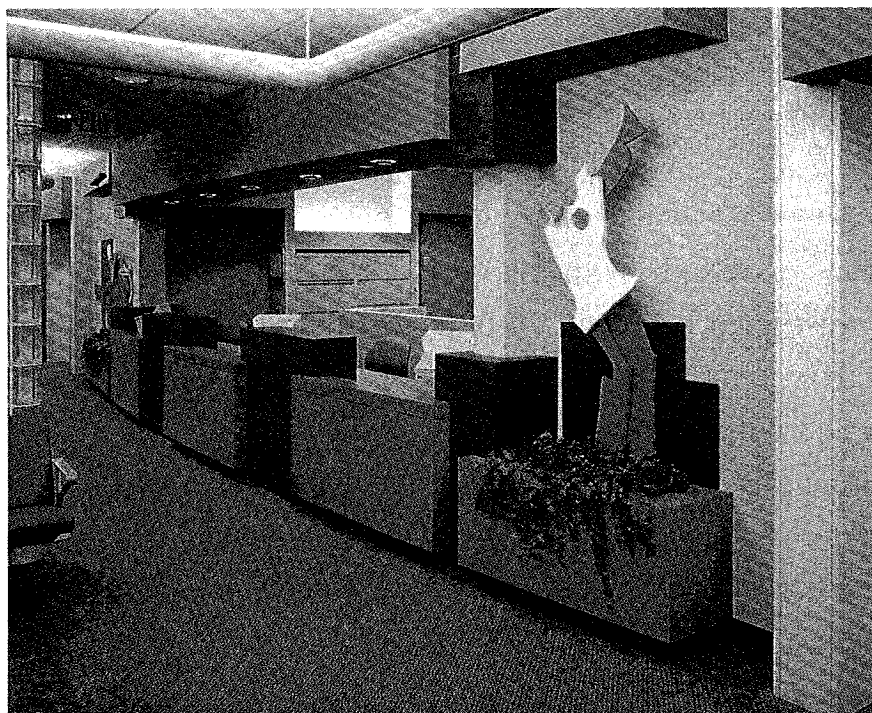
FILLING A NEED

The developmentally disabled and mentally retarded population is increasing as survival rates at birth improve and persons with special needs live longer. These persons live in a variety of settings including family at-home care, foster care, and group homes. Their common problem is in accessing medical, dental, and rehabilitative services.

Prior to the design and construction of the five OptiHealthcare Centers in Suffolk County, existing users and their families faced daunting financial and geographic barriers to receiving the care and services they required. In addition, there was a distinct lack of staff and adaptive facilities. Now fully operational and set up as "managed care" facilities, the DDI clinics offer the most comprehensive care possible to such a large population with serious disabilities. This is, in part, because of the clinics' well thought-out design—a design which takes into consideration not only its special clients, but also the staff who serve them and family and friends that support them. ■

—Robin Landow

Robin Landow is with Lake Success, NY-based Landow and Landow Architects.



A VIEW OF THE ADULT WAITING ROOM AND RECEPTION AREA. WAITING ROOMS WERE DESIGNED SO CLIENTS WOULD NOT BE ADVERSELY AFFECTED BY OTHERS.

task lighting was provided where high levels of illumination were required.

Landow and Landow designers set up a program for the construction of the facilities to accommo-

take the project without unduly disturbing the operations of the existing programs. The first stage of the \$10 million project consisting of the five Suffolk County clinics was completed with the construction

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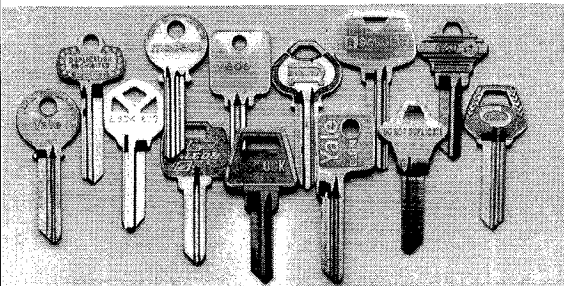
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