

Project

**Problem**  
Wayfinding is a behaviour and is an important part of a person's everyday life as it relates to how someone orientates and navigates an environment. We rely on visual cues, memory, spatial orientation and calculated decision making skills to find our way in an unfamiliar environment. The ease at which someone can navigate a space can affect that person negatively or positively by increasing their stress levels, or by making them feel in control of the situation and therefore at ease. Hospital environments are large and complex, as many hospitals have grown in stages, leaving their layouts disjointed, complex and confusing. Wayfinding usually creates one solution or strategy for all situations. In a hospital environment this is not practical as different departments require different wayfinding strategies due to the complexity of the hospital layout as well as the different types of users, functions and emotional stresses found in the different departments of the hospital.

**Method**  
This research aims to understand the different users and environments of a hospital environment and the different wayfinding strategies that can be implemented to accommodate for all users in all areas of a hospital. This research will use a mixture of qualitative and quantitative data including informal chats, analysis of the existing wayfinding strategies and an audit of the existing signs in the chosen case study.

**Findings**  
The project discovered that one wayfinding strategy does not work for all areas of the hospital. The existing wayfinding strategies failed to accommodate for all users because the strategies used in the hospital didn't have a sufficient sensory range. A sensory range includes visual, verbal, textural and sound based wayfinding cues that when combined would accommodate for all users. The Wellington Regional Hospital's existing wayfinding systems focused mostly on visual devices to aid users. Apart from the information desk where volunteers give verbal directions. This meant that a portion of the hospital's users were accommodated for but for users with visual impairments, language barriers or for those who are illiterate the wayfinding systems become more of a burden than an aid.

**Practical Implications**  
A cohesive mixture of wayfinding strategies that improves the wayfinding of the hospital will not only help the users of the hospital but also the hospital itself. A better wayfinding strategy will reduce patient and visitor stress, benefit the hospital financially by reducing the amount of missed or late appointments as well as conveying a look of professionalism and high standards to visitors and patients.

Existing Wayfinding

**Sign Type 1**

Sign type one was used as a directional sign, used to direct people with the help of arrows to nearby departments. This sign type was found most frequently in communal areas.

**Sign Type 2**

This sign type is used to tell the hospital user what department or clinic they are at. This sign type was found above clinic and department receptions.

**Sign Type 3**

Sign type three is a directional sign which directs people to nearby departments. This sign type is used within departments.

**Sign Type 4**

Sign type four is used to indicate where waiting areas are within the different departments or clinics.

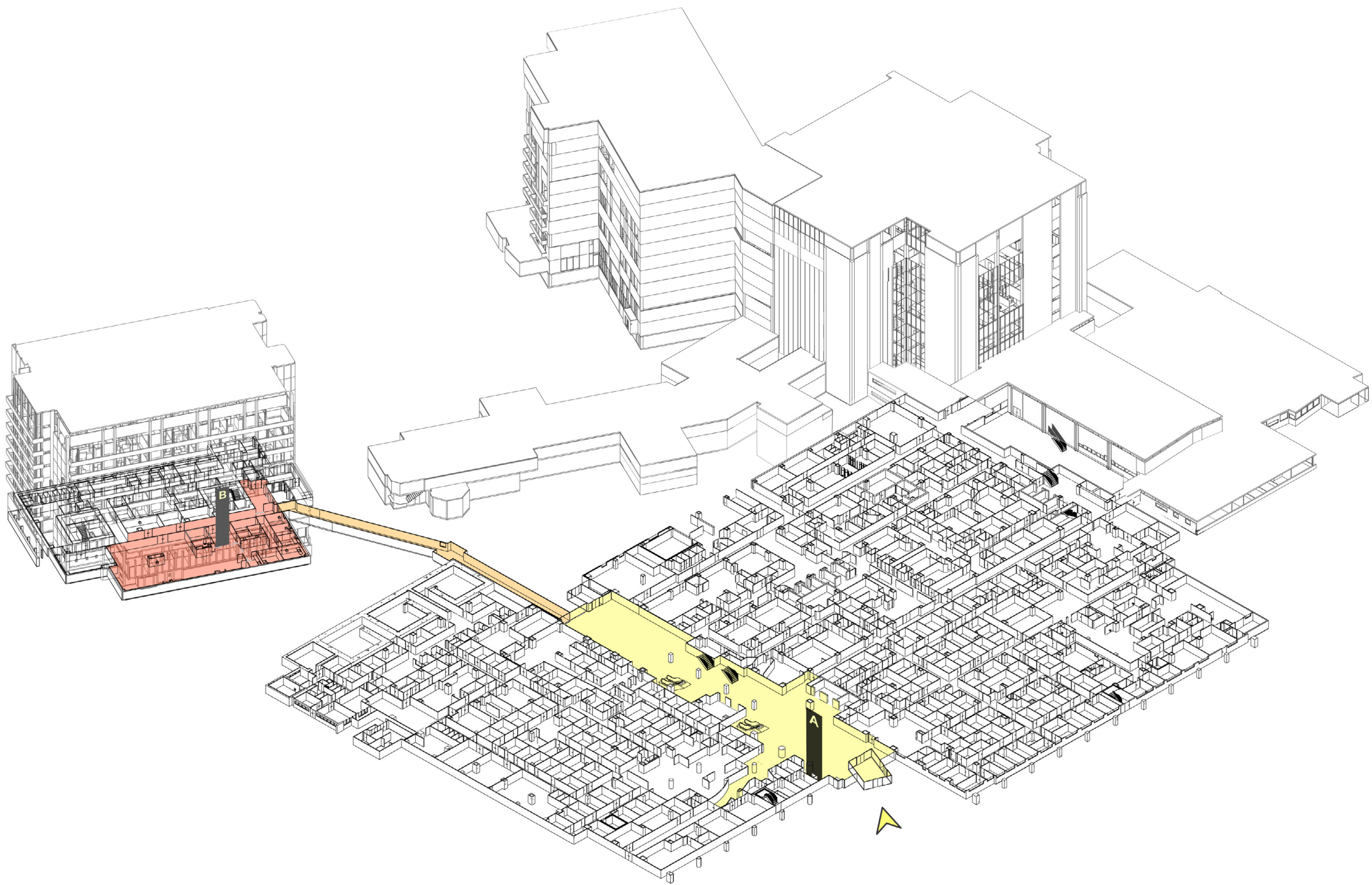
**Sign Type 5**

Sign type five is a directional sign. These signs are in confusing areas of the hospital as extra directional aids. This sign frequently directs to receptions, exits and to other hospital buildings.

**Sign Type 6**

The final sign type is sign type 6. This sign type is used to inform the users what level they are currently on.

PATIENT JOURNEYS

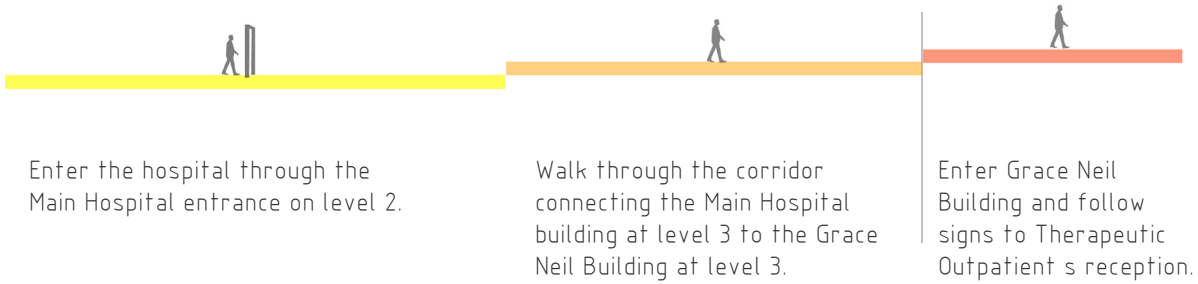


THERAPEUTIC OUTPATIENTS

Level C/3 of the Grace Neil Building

a large section of the level that the therapeutic outpatients department is on is unused. This creates an unwelcome feeling as you enter this floor due to the lack of personalisation and people. This atmosphere coupled with the floors poor lighting makes you instantly feel unsure about how to navigate the floor and where to go. There is a lot of wayfinding information in the form of signage around the Grace Neil entrance way from the over bridge and around the yellow lifts. The signage in the rest of the floor, apart from the entrance and lift area is lacking.

Route 1



- A** Point A  
Main Building and hospital's reception
- B** Point B  
Therapeutic Outpatient's reception