A Social Planner Thinks about Housing… on a New Suburban Site…

Something is happening that is not sustainable

A CRUCIAL POINT

The Complex Meanings of Housing

Meanings of Home 1

- Place where ones feels physically safe
- Place where one can act the way he/she wants and be him/herself
- Place where one feels comfortable bringing people in
- Refuge, place where one can get away from outside pressures, find peace and quiet, and be alone when desired
- Enough space and rooms for one's daily needs
- Place one can modify and personalise
- Place of love and togetherness, place where one can strengthen the relationships with the people one cares for

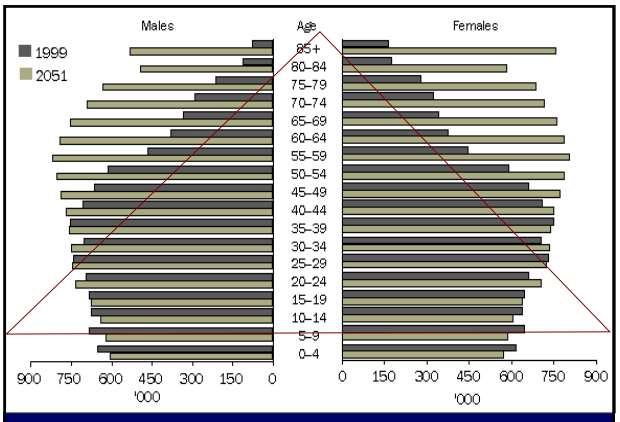
Meanings of Home 2

- Storehouse for meaningful objects and material possessions
- Place in which one feels familiar with the spaces, smells, furniture and objects
- Place that gives one a sense of belonging somewhere, of having roots
- Place to own
- Protection for one's savings
- Investment from which one can expect to make money
- Place that tells people one's status in society

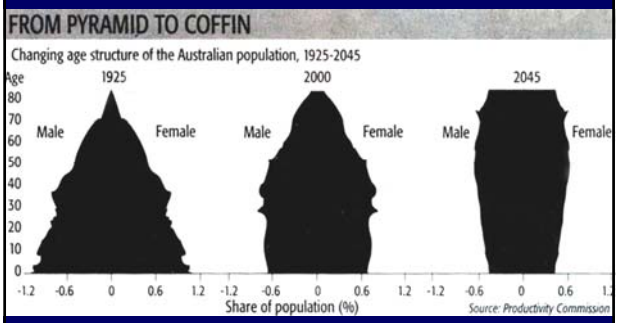
Source:

Carole Despres (1991). "The Meaning and Experience of Home in Shared Housing," in *Home: Social, Temporal and Spatial Aspects*. Proceedings of the International Workshop on "The Home Environment: Physical Space and Psychological Processes," Cortona, Italy, 23-25 May.

Demographic Realities



Age structure of projected population, Australia, 1999 and 2051



2006: approx. 40 % of Australian population > 45

Retirement: a continuum

- ❑shorter working hours
- ❑take a package + then consult
- ❑part-time consulting
- ❑home office

Other lifestyle changes

- ❑ Marrying late (or never)
- ❑ Smaller families
- ❑ Share households
- ❑ More single-person households
- ❑ Fewer children
- ❑ Divorce
- ❑ Not-so-empty nest; never empty nest
- ❑ Grandparents' full-time care of grandchildren
- ❑ Working from home
- ❑ Cultural considerations

Intergenerational change

Trends:

- Living longer and with disability

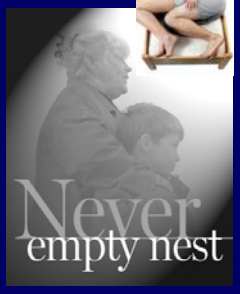
Implications:

- Extended family support
- Additional financial pressures

Diversity of families 1

Trends:
- Household numbers growing
- Changing household form
- Mothers working
- Not-so-empty nest

Implications:
- Physical separation between family members
- Support for family cohesion needed



Diversity of families 2

Trends:
- 75 years + to double
- Young people staying longer at home
- Families and boarders

Implications:
- Support services for older people
- Financial and emotional pressures
- Support programs for families

Future housing needs 1

Trends:
- Working from home

Implications:
- Planning and designing for homeworkers

Future housing needs 2

Trends:
- Changing family types
- Share housing

Implications:
- Universal / accessible design
- Boarder or family house sharing

Changing nature of retirement 1

Trends:
- Not leaving job after 25 years with a gold watch!
- Increased financial pressures on older people

Implications:
- Long work life = social and health problems

Changing nature of retirement 2

Trends:
- Changing nature of "retirement"
- Looking after grandchildren

Implications:
- Housing location and design
- Local amenities

Living longer, with disability

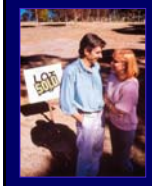
Trends:

- People are living longer
- Living with disability longer

Implications:

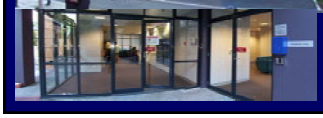
- Intensive health care
- Home-based care
- Nursing and care facilities
- Accessible housing

Who are our households?



Housing for students

Student housing: Sydney University Village



Take ageing seriously

- Older people not a homogenous group
- Needs of older people and ageing in place not widely considered in:
  - site selection
  - site planning
  - building design
  - interior design or
  - on-site facilities and amenities

Design for diversity

- Most developments targeted toward narrow range of household types
- Ignore cultural diversity and life-cycle changes
- Some “features” in high-price developments inappropriate for range of household types

Pay close attention to acoustics

- Noise attenuation often poorly handled
- Acoustic problems
- Diminishes marketability

Take accessibility seriously

- Universal Design not widely evident
- Industry appears to be waiting for regulation rather than showing leadership

Accommodate predictable homeworking options

- **Hybrid** home/work arrangements
- Unsophisticated handling of homeworking requirements
- Small "home office" room
- Little understanding of working beyond traditional retirement age
- Few other facilities for homeworking

Previewing window, Uropa, Melbourne

Opportunities for "housebound" residents to socialise without being forced to do so:

The "Magical Mailbox"

Lost opportunity for socialising

Design in opportunities to reduce crime

Intentional "natural ladders"

Accessible ground floor unit, Pyrmont Point, Sydney

Support socialising with on-site community space and facilities

Provide generous on-site shared open space

- Many sites too small for shared open space and on-site community facilities
- Problem if gaps exist in host neighbourhood
- Inexpert design
- Privacy and territory problems

Two old dears on their own territory

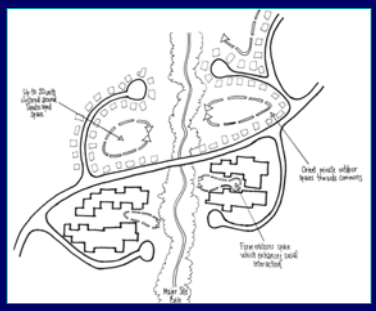
What does this mean to us?

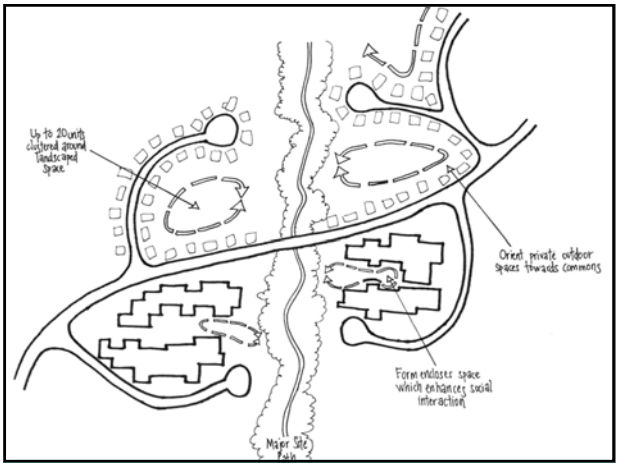
Hierarchy of Open Space

1. Private
2. Shared or Common
3. Public

Territorial Boundaries

Ensure space is perceived as **unambiguously neither private nor public**, but *shared*.

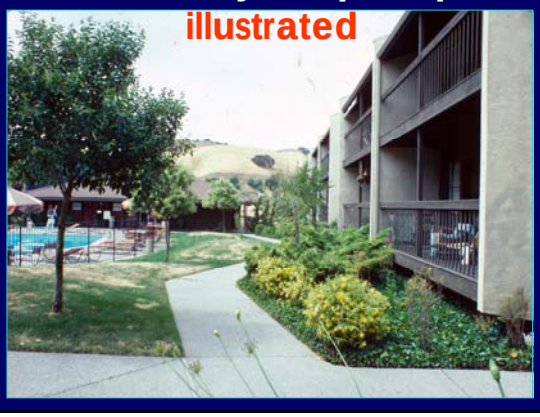




Visibility of shared space

Classic Australian problems of the 1960s and on...

The hierarchy of open space illustrated



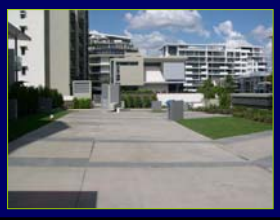
Shared open space
Uropa, Melbourne

www.hayball.com.au/2003/html/pro_residential.html

Recreation area, Uropa, Melbourne

Open space in award-winning private housing in Brisbane

Shared or public?



Private and not-so-private yards, Uropa

Privacy of back yards

Orient buildings to maximise solar passive benefits

- Poor delineation between private and shared outdoor spaces
- Poor handling of siting and design of buildings to achieve solar access
- Some south-facing units: high masonry walls block light into yards or units for most of the day

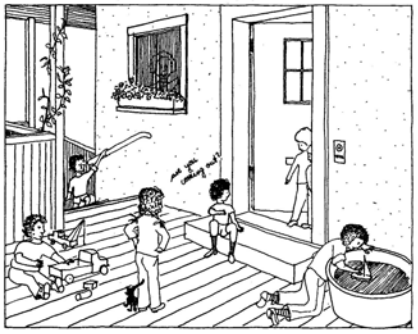
Site Planning

Orientation
of living spaces

Take children's play needs into account

- Apparent ignorance of children's outdoor play
- Young children (2 to 5) play within sight and calling distance of home
- Doorstep play much valued by supervising adults and children

Doorstep Play



In all cultures children aged two to five play most frequently round the doorway, staying close to home yet not *in it*.

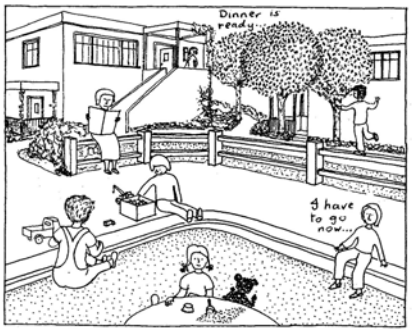
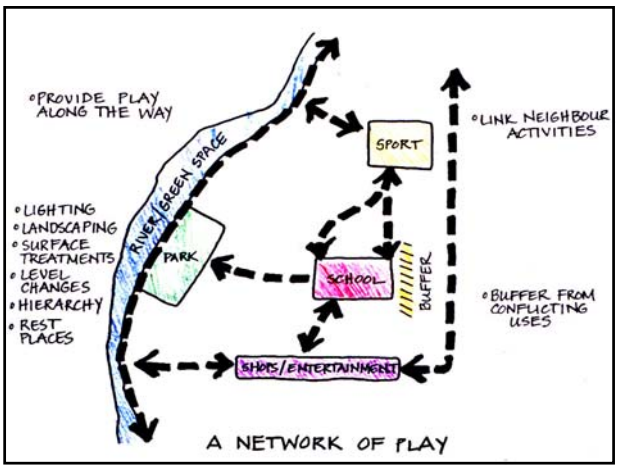
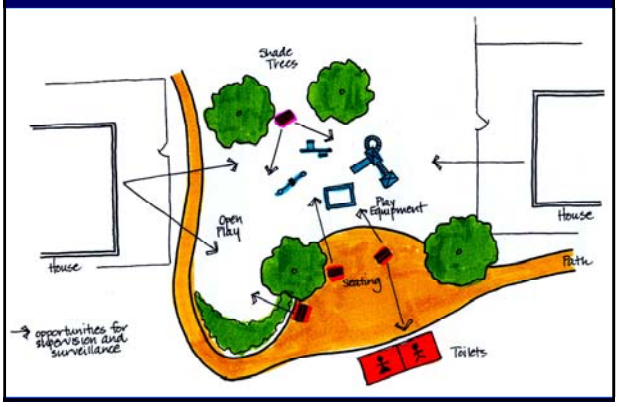


Figure 113. A play space for small children should always be sited within view of the dwelling to allow casual surveillance from home.



NEIGHBOURLY SURVEILLANCE



Households with children

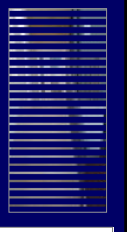
Don't let one solution become another problem

A problem:

- Large underground parking garages
- First habitable dwelling or building entryway situated above ground level (accessible only by stairs)
- reduces excavation costs

BUT

- creates significant accessibility problems



Embrace appropriate technology

- Rapidly changing technology
- Perceptions of "basic requirements" changing quickly

Do I have to live in a 'statement'? Can't I just have a home?"