

ENCOURAGING COMMUNITY LIFE

It is possible to encourage community life and make for a safer and more secure environment by considering 'life' at the start of the design process.

ORIENTATION

The orientation of buildings, the thoughtful placing of entrances and other openings and their particular design, as well as the placing of indoor activities in relation to outside spaces and the considered buffer space between public and private, all contribute to a well-functioning social network - the foundation of a sustainable community.

SURVEILLANCE

On a most basic level, it is vital to provide surveillance of all public spaces to ensure safety and security within the community. People should always feel safe when walking home after dark. Children should be able to walk to school and to friends' homes and be able to play in public spaces, while being watched by adults who know them, so that suspicious activity would be visible to neighbours.

THRESHOLDS

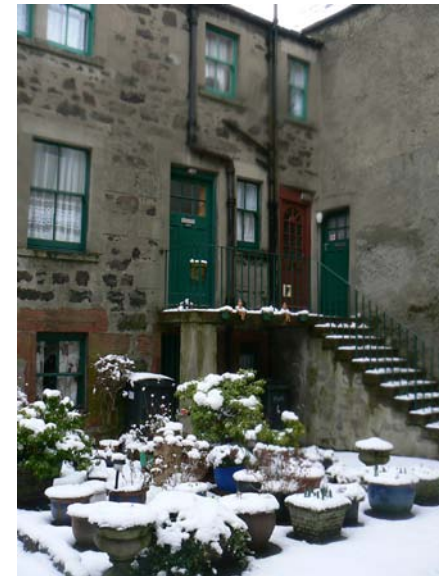
However, it is also possible to encourage community life through thoughtful design, even at the most modest level of neighbours knowing each other well enough to be able to recognize and greet each other. If there is a physical opportunity for people to spend time in or on the edge of public spaces, the likelihood of trust developing increases.

Apart from the immediate everyday pleasure of social contacts, small but vital social ties develop, which are essential to a sustainable community, e.g. neighbours knowing the old lady who lives alone, being able to leave a key with a neighbour, children knowing where to go in an emergency and so on.

PERSONALISATION

Part of this community life is allowing people to make their mark, expressing their personal pride in their home. This is particularly important around the entrance with individual name plates, decoration, flowers and plants. This not only anchors the residents to the place they live as they express their life investment in the place, it also sets the tone of the neighbourhood as being a place which is cared for. This would be vital for sustainable value.

The buffer spaces between private and public, and around the entrance, would also provide space for everyday personal property to be left out, e.g. things for outdoor use, outdoor clothing and footwear, sports equipment and toys. Apart from the practical advantage of being able to do this, it also sets a friendly tone celebrating the life of the place as well as expressing mutual trust between the neighbours.



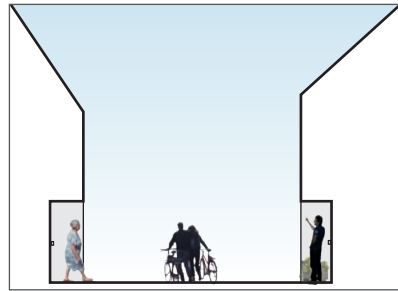
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SOCIAL LAYOUT



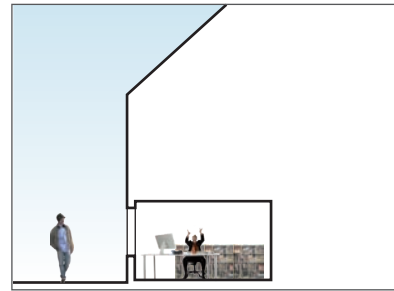
People scale

Dimensions of the in-between spaces would be small and appropriate to personal scale and walking speed.



Front to front

Entrances to dwellings would be orientated towards each other to allow people to meet when coming and going.



Home office to street

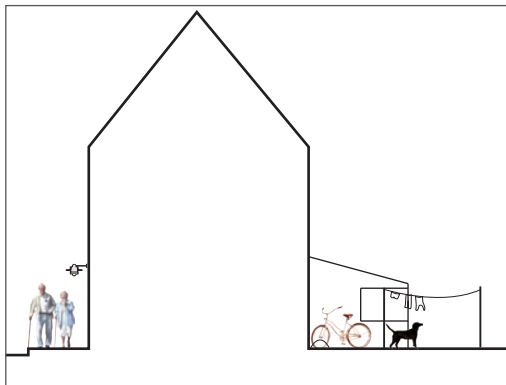
Home activities which have a somewhat more public character can be orientated to the street, giving life and daytime surveillance.



Friendly openings

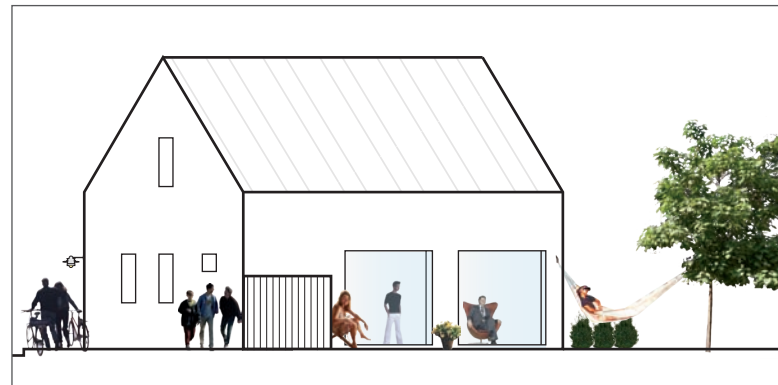
Openings which encourage interaction between inside and out, such as french windows and stable doors, would be particularly welcome.

FRONTS AND BACKS



Formal Front – Informal Back

Promote discipline of tidy ordered fronts which face public life, where the postman and visitors come, with hidden informal backs, with greater freedom of architectural expression as well as behaviour.



Smaller Windows to the Street-Larger Windows to the back

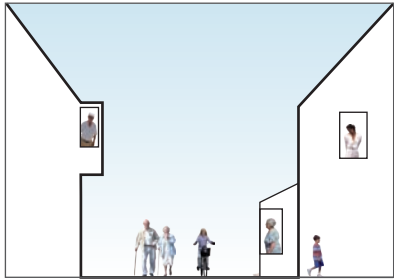
For reasons of privacy, there would generally be smaller windows towards the street, particularly at ground level, while there would be an opportunity to have much larger windows to the rear, towards courtyards and gardens.



Outside stairs

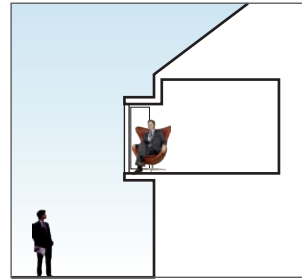
Outside staircases apart from making coming and going activities more visible, also become personal spaces for informal 'staying activities' like sitting in the sun or for personalisation with potted plants, etc.

SURVEILLANCE



Surveillance

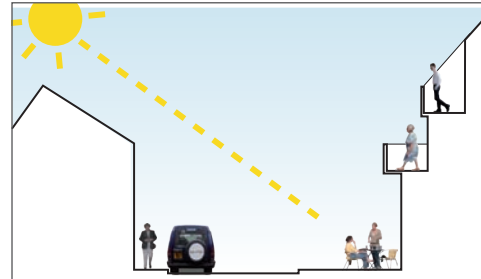
Every public space would be overlooked by a window. Bay windows give much better surveillance of the street than normal windows. There would be no blank gables.



Sitting space in window

To make the bay window really work, it would be possible to stand or sit in the window space.

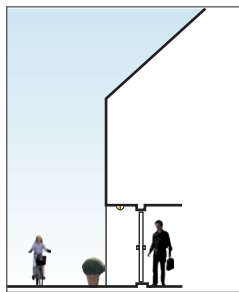
CLIMATE



Making the most of sunny aspect

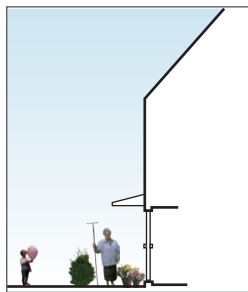
The buildings would adapt to the orientation of the sun, to make attractive places and spaces to spend time. Peoples' presence in these spaces in turn improves surveillance.

PRIVACY THRESHOLDS



Setback door

The setback door gives a better buffer towards the street, as well as giving shelter when coming and going. It also can be a place to sit and spend time as well as a place to leave possessions and to personalise.



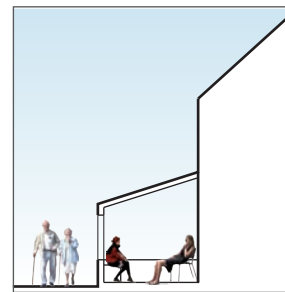
The front garden

The small garden gives a buffer towards the street without isolating the household from public life. It offers a space to spend time as well as express personality and pride.



Porches

Apart from the climatic advantage, porches give a good buffer towards the street and a significant space for personalisation.



Veranda

The most generous gesture to the street is the veranda, which apart from creating a strong buffer space, gives an attractive, sheltered space for spending time.