



LIFE

A FRESH APPROACH TO BUILDING A COMMUNITY – PUTTING LIFE FIRST

‘Put life first in the design process’. It sounds quite obvious, but in reality this happens very rarely in planning. Very often it is incidental factors which make the greatest mark on the physical environment that is intended for habitation.

HOLISTIC APPROACH

Regulations, standards, market forces and so-called common practice, which in isolation make sense, also often produce a negative result when put together in one single environment. Things like standard floor plans, spatial standards, fire-regulations, vehicle turning circles, traffic regulations, parking requirements, can all have a huge impact on the everyday life of the people who would live there in the years to come. Many planning tools are more about risk avoidance rather than improving quality of life. The sound principles of individual standards need to be applied in a manner that makes sense when applied together as a whole.

SOCIAL SUSTAINABILITY

Aspects of everyday life such as children walking to school, knowing your neighbours, sitting in the sun, enjoying the wild aspects of nature, having enough

potential customers passing by your shop front, are seldom considered important priorities. However, these issues can have a huge impact on social sustainability in terms of vital social networking, health and well-being, economy and employment.

Sustainable means sustaining peoples’ lives, helping people ‘get by’ as well as ‘getting on’. Before writing any brief for buildings or even public spaces, it is essential to understand the needs for a dynamic, living community, not just dwelling, but social interaction and many different, essential activities, leisure and recreation, work and play.

HUMAN SCALE

The design of a new settlement would be based on the essential characteristics of people. The scale of the place would relate to the size of the body and respond to the senses. The design speed would be walking speed. The place would also respond to the basic social nature of people.

NATURAL SUSTAINABILITY

To be a sustainable place, the design must acknowledge the importance of the natural environment,

respecting the many forms of flora and fauna, as well as recognising that living along side these has a huge benefit of well-being for the community.

ETHOS

To be socially sustainable, there would be a strong community ethos, including and supporting the needs of individuals and families, as well as the many micro-social-networks that exist within a well-functioning society.

AFFORDABLE HOUSING

To be economically sustainable, all aspects of affordability (purchase or rental cost, as well as running and maintenance) of homes and business premises would be considered to ensure accessibility, employment and potential for innovation, growth and change.

INCLUSIVE

The challenge of building a new community is to be inclusive to all kinds of people and their activities by providing a strong framework, robust to the growth and change which are an essential part of life.





A street designed for people and public life



A street engineered for cars and speed, unsafe and unattractive for people



Built-form which promotes human interaction



Built-form which doesn't promote human interaction



A small-scale, multi-functional solution



A large-scale, mono-functional solution



Buildings which respond to their natural environment



Buildings which do not respond to their natural surroundings

DIFFERENT NEEDS OF A DIVERSE COMMUNITY

The design process must recognise the need for social sustainability – accommodating different needs throughout life, to make An Camas Mòr a place you could live all your life, but also accommodate the broad diversity of people that make up a living and working community. This diversity would be part of the economic sustainability for the project with as diverse a range of property types as possible.

DIVERSITY

For sustainability, it is vital that a community can accommodate a broad demographic spectrum in terms of age, education, economic and physical activity, skills and wealth. In the design process this means recognising the need for different household types and sizes, different income groups, different lifestyles, different needs and aspirations.

VARIETY OF HOMES

This in turn requires physically different home types, from extra large to extra small, detached and semi-detached, cottages, bungalows and villas, town houses and terraces, small flats, large apartments, duplexes and studios, as well as specific requirements for sheltered housing, retirement flats and special needs.

These different home types can be combined with different kinds of gardens and courtyards, decks and balconies, as well as different outbuildings, storage requirements and parking facilities with different architectural finishes, qualities and luxury.

The smallest units can give the first rung on the property ladder. The variety encourages moving up and down-sizing locally, allowing community patterns of acquaintance, friendships and family to continue.

TENURE

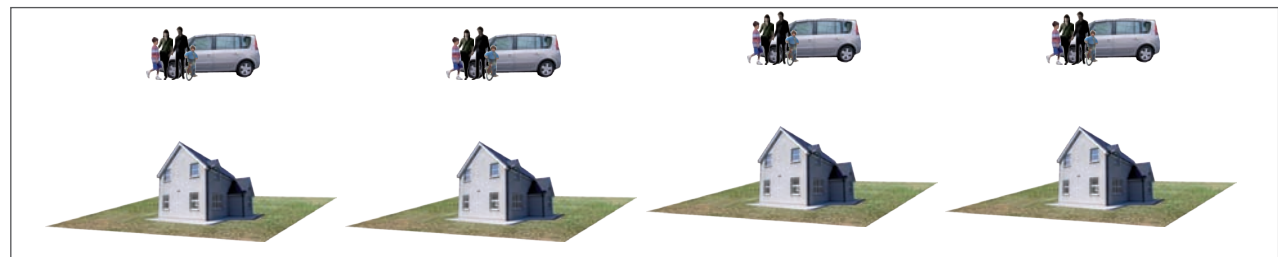
As affordability for local people would be key, as broad a range of tenure forms would be considered, with homes for purchase and to rent, as well as alternative models such as co-ownership and shared equity.

WORKSPACES

Additionally spaces for working, particularly premises for small businesses, offices and studios and workshops would be included within the settlement.



What should be on offer...



what is usually on offer.

EMPLOYMENT

The economy and employment would be central to the quality of life, ‘place-making’ and the sustainability of An Camas Mòr, while minimising the settlement’s physical and carbon footprint. Of key significance, the new development would be an essential part of the Highland contribution to the Government Economic Strategy, which focuses upon growth.

THE SOCIO-ECONOMIC CONCEPT

The socio-economic basis of the new settlement is the unique opportunity afforded by An Camas Mòr to provide both affordable housing and the attraction of higher income employment in the central Highlands. Through the creation of a well planned settlement and high quality of life, this would assist in the retention of the more highly educated people who have historically left the area for jobs elsewhere.

LOCAL JOBS

Creating a sustainable settlement would require many things, including providing the maximum number of local jobs, opportunities to live and work from home, reduction of travel to and from work, ensuring the highest energy efficiency and encouraging high value economic activities and investment, with the least carbon footprint via the latest environmental technology – developing a ‘green and clean economy’. Similar examples of this form of high value and clean economy are to be found in Scandinavia and the USA and also on a modest scale indications are that this strategy is working locally at the Forres Enterprise Park.

The development aims to build upon the existing lower value economic base in Badenoch & Strathspey, encouraging a more diverse range of higher value added businesses. Historically this has been constrained by the long-term shortage in available housing – particularly affordable stock – which An Camas Mòr would provide. Across the wider area this would raise income levels,

offer the opportunity to transform perceptions, attract new investment and also offer prospects of expansion of existing businesses.

EMPLOYMENT PROFILE + PROVISION QUALITY JOBS

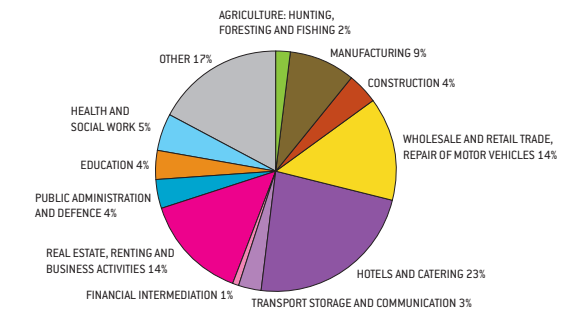
The aim would be for the balance of jobs and economic activities in An Camas Mòr to be towards high value, technology, innovation and research and learning, while the high quality of life would attract the self-employed and entrepreneurs looking for an excellent environment in which to ‘work, live and play’.

EMPLOYMENT SPACES

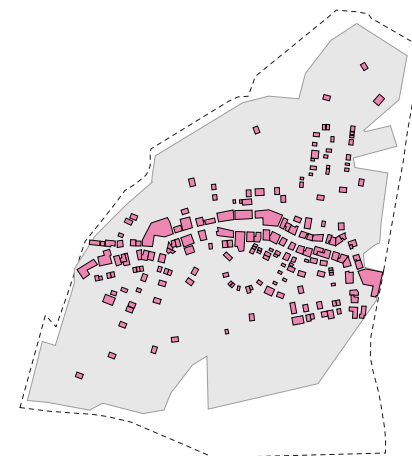
Employment would be provided throughout the settlement and in particular be concentrated around the High Street, where ground floors would generally be 3.5m high to provide suitable spaces for shops, studios and workspace; and buildings would also extend to the rear to provide workspace. The house designs would encourage home working, as well as live-work units; a primary school and retirement home(s), would also be accommodated. Another key feature of the settlement would be its mixed-use nature, encouraging and featuring ‘exemplar’ buildings, providing opportunities for show-casing carbon-neutral and energy efficient building techniques and energy efficiency. Larger scale manufacturing, factories, or large scale distribution businesses and related employment would not be proposed in An Camas Mòr.

Employment space would extend to 15,560m²; with employment estimated to be some 1,300 jobs – 56% within people’s own premises and 44% in other premises, shops and commercial facilities. Some 430 of the economically active would be those who require affordable homes, drawn largely from the existing population in Badenoch & Strathspey and also those who are essential workers. In the medium term many

of the jobs would be for residents, encouraged to set up and operate businesses and to live and work in close proximity and there would also be interaction between An Camas Mòr and other neighbouring communities. Some residents would travel into and leave the village for work, but this level of net out-commuting would be minimal. With very few places being more than 5 minutes walk from the High Street, a very high proportion of internal transport would be on foot and by cycle to Aviemore.



An Camas Mòr - Predicted employment by Industry



Workplaces would be concentrated in the High Street area, but there are also possibilities for home offices, small businesses and workshops throughout the site.

MOBILITY & ACCESS

An Camas Mòr would be an inclusive environment, one which can be enjoyed by everyone, regardless of age, gender or disability. The everyday traffic, people simply 'getting about', is what makes a place live, whether it involves walking, cycling, taking the bus or driving a car. Mobility and access are vital to the social and economic sustainability of a community.

ALL FORMS OF MOBILITY

Therefore, any plan must consider firstly who needs to access the place and what their specific mobility needs are. A sustainable community has to accommodate all forms of mobility and consider any conflict that might arise between these different forms.

HUMAN SCALE

Recent planning has given priority particularly to motor vehicles. This is worthy of note since motor vehicle technology, vehicle dimensions, accepted vehicle speeds, accepted driving behaviour and even social status are constantly changing, yet the dimensioning and engineering of spaces to accommodate motor vehicles has a permanent and often unchangeable result. This is in sharp contrast to people whose dimensions, speeds, requirements and accepted behaviour remain constant and unchanged over thousands of years. Therefore, it might seem appropriate to make people with their size and speed the standard for designing and dimensioning rather than the motor vehicle.

WALKING

Clearly the most sustainable form of mobility is walking. Unlike motor transport, walking causes no hazards, uses no fossil fuel, does not pollute, takes up very little space and has great health benefits. The idea at An Camas Mòr would be to encourage walking by simply making it the most efficient and attractive option. This

can be achieved with short walking distances, including occasional short cuts for pedestrians and by making the pedestrian feel important by being given an attractive environment with good walking conditions. In contact with other forms of transport, the pedestrian would be given priority. Most importantly other forms of transport would be slow, making the pedestrian both feel and actually be safer.

CYCLING

Cycling would be encouraged, particularly to the neighbouring communities for accessing employment, services and other facilities.

PUBLIC TRANSPORT

To encourage the use of public transport, the distance to bus stops would be short, a comfortable and attractive environment would be provided for waiting, with bike parking (to encourage inter-modal change) and good connections to other forms of public transport (trains and buses in Aviemore).

DELIVERIES

A living community needs deliveries and services, most of which involve motor vehicles. Shops and businesses require regular deliveries, while dwellings require these less frequently. Service vehicles such as refuse lorries, fire engines and ambulances have specific dimensions which would be accommodated. What would be important is that an appropriate balance is made to achieve an acceptable level of servicing access without traffic engineering dominating the people scale environment.








CARS

Given the rural location and the need for longer multi-functional trips, it is accepted that using a private car

is an everyday part of the life of the community. The plan would not eliminate the motor vehicle, it would make almost every part of the settlement accessible and permeable to cars. What would be important is that the vehicle drives slowly, meeting with the pedestrian at the pedestrian's terms.

STREETS & BUILDINGS

The detailed design of streets would take into account the necessity for visual, texture and level differentiation of surfaces, with ramps as necessary. The maximum speed would be 20 mph. The design of buildings and other structures, including parks, is controlled by the Building Standards. All buildings would have level access at ground floor, with lifts as appropriate. All public buildings would be fully accessible.

	 4 mph	 2 mph	 10 mph	 20 mph	 20 mph	 20 mph	 20 mph
Potential	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Street life - Health benefits - Social contact - Non-polluting 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - An inclusive society (Children, old, people in wheelchairs etc) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Street life - Health benefits - Social contact - Non-polluting 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Sustainable - Social contact - Connection to other towns of sustainable mobility 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Some limited daytime street activity - Business 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Bring people in - Sense of security at night
Problems/ Challenges	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Safety - Local climate 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Safety - Space on pavement 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Safety - Climate - Parking 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Perceived inconvenience 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Blocking traffic - Noise - Fumes 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Over-dimensioning of street spaces to accommodate vehicles - Too much asphalt - Noise and fumes 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Noise and fumes - Speeding - Takes up space - Too much asphalt for parking
Needs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Safe and pleasant public realm - Proximity to services and amenities - Possibilities for staying and activities 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Level - Smooth surfaces - Visual clarity 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Safe routes - Bicycle service - Parking 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Proximity to bus stops - Good places for waiting - Possibility for easy change from car/ bicycle to bus 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Access - Loading space 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Space for vehicles 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Access - Parking - Avoid one-way and cul-de-sacs
Solutions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Shortcuts for pedestrians - Separated pavements or shared surface with flush curbs and calmed traffic - Good lighting - Many trees and other green structures - Benches, climate shelter 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Generous pavement - Ramps - Tactile paving 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Shortcuts and special routes for bikes - Bikeparking everywhere - Bikeparking at bus stops 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Short walking distances to bus stops - Bus stops with climate shelter and seating - Bicycle and car parking close to bus stops 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Deliveries on street - Possibly limited access times 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Alternative systems - Centralised recycling/refuse collection points - Smaller vehicles - Alternative technology 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Access through (but slow) - Parking anywhere (small scale solutions) - Permeable surface in car parks

ENCOURAGING NATURAL LIFE – CELEBRATING WILDNESS

In recent years, there has been a great deal of research and better understanding of ‘biophilia’, the positive health effects daily contact with nature has on people. At An Camas Mòr, there would be huge potential to include these health benefits as part of the lifestyle of living in the National Park.

There are two main aspects to consider when addressing the natural life (or wildlife) at An Camas Mòr. The first is the protection and improvement of natural habitat within the development area. The second is the enhancing of the experience and awareness of wildness for the people. These two aspects are vital to the whole ethos of living within the National Park.

The proposed community would be sympathetic with the surrounding natural environment doing the minimum harm to existing flora and fauna. For this reason the first principle has been to completely avoid the areas of greatest sensitivity, protecting these places of natural habitat. Then the principles set about extending the existing natural habitat as well as creating new habitat. This would be achieved by extending the wooded setting, creating dense and diverse shelter. Where possible isolated mature trees would be preserved with their immediate surrounding groundcover, to create micro-environments.

Additional habitat would be created with ‘biotope strips’ throughout the settlement. These would be thick belts of protected planting, composed of dense and diverse (predominantly) native stock. These would effectively form an independent network of nature corridors, accommodating a wide range of wildlife species. These strips would be interconnected with the help of ‘green crossings’ across the roads and streets within the settlement. The biotope strips would be leased to owners to give long term protection.

The entire settlement would be contained within a woodland setting, which would be a minimum of 30 metres deep. This dense and diverse woodland edge would be complimented with wedges of the same biodiverse character, penetrating deep into the settlement. These zones provide a vital buffer between the developed area and the surroundings, as well as giving a strong sense of connection to the landscape. Even within the inhabited areas, nature would be promoted.

An important aim would be to preserve existing top soil and ground cover during the construction period. This would make for a more gentle transformation of the site as well as leaving a natural foundation for future gardens.

The aim of habitat creation would be extended to and include buildings, allowing for sedum and turf roofs and even details such as bird boxes and bat boxes in private and public spaces.

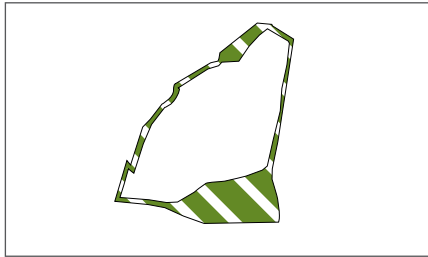
The improved shelter created by the increased wooded areas could be expected to have a significant, positive impact on the local microclimate. This would in turn improve conditions for wildlife habitat, people’s outdoor activity as well as potentially having a significant impact by reducing energy consumption and hence CO² emissions.

All of the above measures would also work towards a better awareness and appreciation of nature for the residents of An Camas Mòr. It is an important ambition of the project team to heighten the everyday experience of wildness, offering frequent ‘close encounters’ with wildlife and as a contact reminder of people’s fragile relationship with the greater environment.

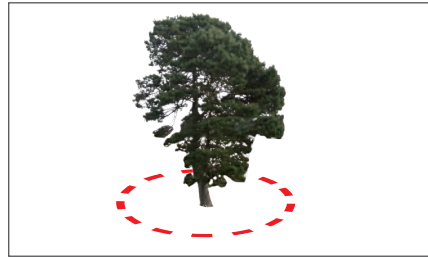


- SNH ANCIENT WOODLAND INVENTORY: LONG ESTABLISHED (OF PLANTATION ORIGIN)
- RETAINED AND NEW WOODLAND
- GREEN OPEN SPACE
- BIOTOPE STRIPS & STREET TREES

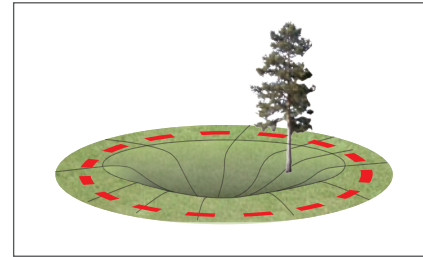
BASIC PRINCIPLES



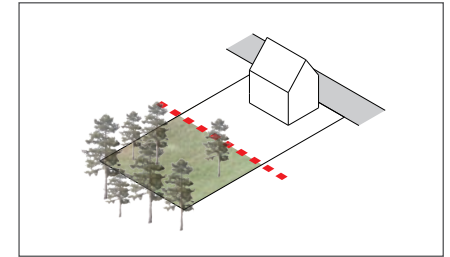
Avoid the sensitive stuff
The starting point of the plan would be to avoid any development in the areas which were deemed sensitive to change.



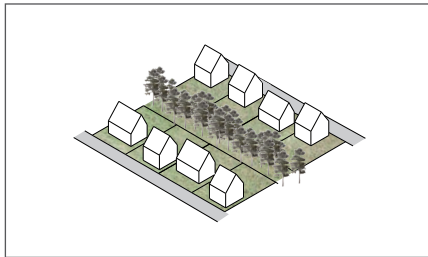
Retain mature trees
Mature Trees would wherever possible not only be kept but also celebrated in the plan.



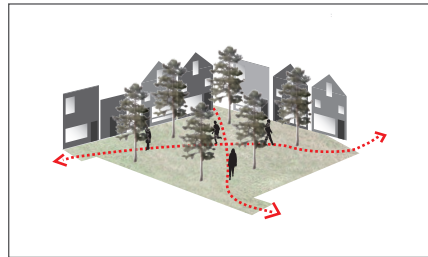
Celebrate topography
Distinctive undulations in the generally flat topography would be retained and used expressively in the plan.



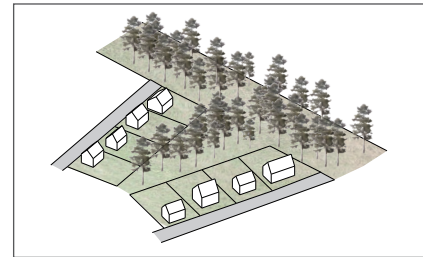
Back garden Nature Reserves
During the construction phase, as large areas as practical of topsoil as well as existing ground cover, plants and trees would be left undisturbed and protected.



Biotope strips
Throughout the development, there would be complex 'biotope strips' between property boundaries, made up of natural ground cover, indigenous plants and trees.



Characteristic Open Spaces
Throughout the new development, there would be open spaces with a character which celebrates the local nature.



Edges and wedges
Along all the edges of the new development as well as in special wedges which penetrate deep into the plan, there would be special nature zones (30m deep along the edges) with dense and diverse planting.



Green crossings
Extra tree planting where streets dissect the biotope strips, to allow continuous wildlife movement.



Heather



Scots pine



Birch



Juniper

ETHOS

LIVING IN THE NATIONAL PARK

The new community at An Camas Mòr would be promoted with a unique ethos, which would evolve and develop over time. The new community would reflect the purpose and aims of the National Park.

RESPONSIBILITY

It would be the intention that inhabitants and businesses would take appropriate responsibility for the local environment. This would include active participation in management and maintenance of public spaces, streets, trees and landscaped areas.

GROWING UP IN THE PARK

Local children, through schools, nurseries and clubs, would learn about the nature around them, using their surrounding environment as a classroom. Growing up in the park could potentially be the best childhood in Scotland. The children who grow up here would become the next generation of guardians of the park.

BUILD YOUR OWN DREAM

The new community offers the opportunity to build your own home. This is one of the best ways of ensuring future residents make a lifelong commitment to the settlement. Usually this type of activity is limited to the occasional detached house on the edge of town, but here there is an opportunity to build town houses or even apartments (perhaps in some kind of small co-operative).

INDIGENOUS BUSINESS

In the same way, the new community presents the opportunity to start new businesses. Local businesses based on indigenous talent are the best way of sustaining employment and economy.

MUTUALITY

The purpose of much of the management would be to ensure that neighbours' rights and amenities are protected, promoted by interpretation and backed by legal agreements made by each purchaser.

LIFE CYCLE

The management of waste, through minimisation, re-use, recycling and other means would be part of life in the park. Local composting and recycling household waste would be the norm. Local Recycling points would be part of the streetscape.

HEALTH AND WELL-BEING

Life in An Camas Mòr would enable an outdoor lifestyle, active sports and recreation, fresh air and physical activity, spending time outdoors in gardens and public spaces with walking and cycling being part of everyday life. Walking to school, to the shops and even to work would be encouraged to be the norm.

GARDENING & ALLOTMENTS

'Natural gardening', concentrating on native species would be promoted, tree species would generally be native to the area. Ground for allotments can be made available outwith the settlement boundary.

PETS

The influx of pets could have a profound effect on the local wildlife, therefore it would be vital that standards be set for pets and their owners. Cats can inadvertently cause a lot of damage. The use of bells and flashing lights on collars can be of great assistance in reducing such damage. Control of dogs and provision of proper facilities would be equally important.

CARS AND PARKING IN THE NATIONAL PARK

Limit the dominance of traffic and parked cars, encouraging more sustainable means of mobility. Apart from walking and cycling, using local public transport, connecting with regional public transport systems would be encouraged. Electric vehicles, particularly for services, would be encouraged.

LONG TERM INVESTMENT

An Camas Mòr would be attractive, high quality, well-designed, well-built and sustainable, in keeping with all the values of the National Park. It would represent a sustainable, long-term investment by its inhabitants and would be a significant contribution to all the Aims of the Park.



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

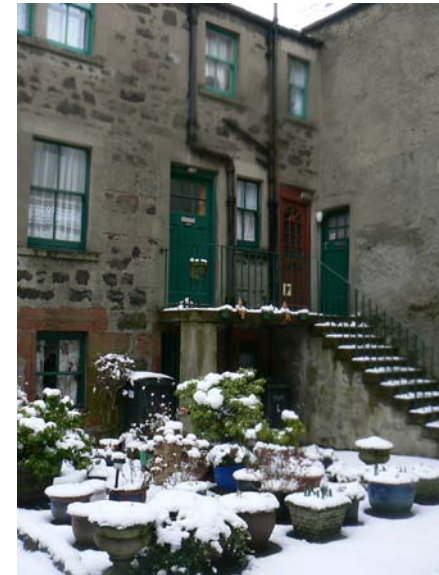
However, it is also possible to encourage community life through thoughtful design, even at the most modest level of neighbours knowing each other well enough to be able to recognize and greet each other. If there is a physical opportunity for people to spend time in or on the edge of public spaces,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



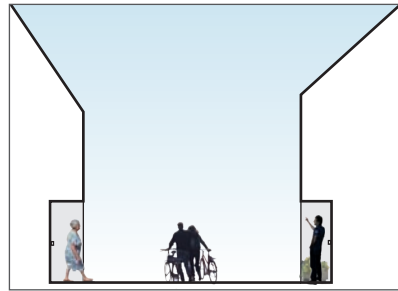
ENCOURAGING COMMUNITY LIFE

SOCIAL LAYOUT



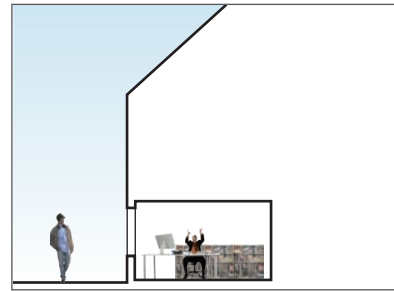
People scale

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

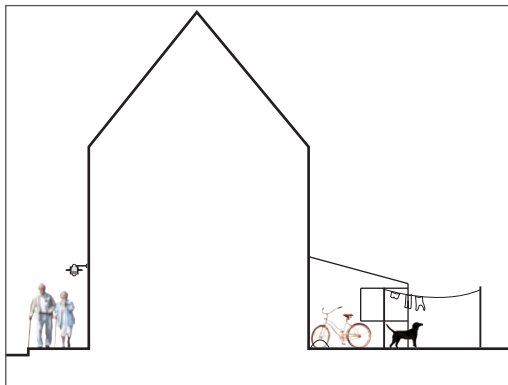
Home activities which have a somewhat more public character can be orientated to the street, giving life and daytime surveillance.



Friendly openings

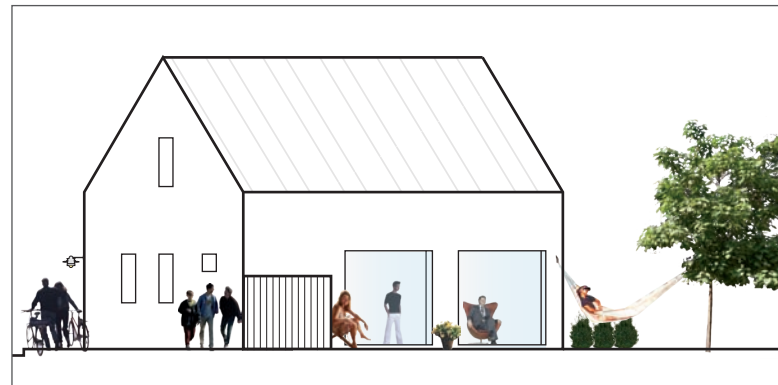
Openings which encourage interaction between inside and out, such as french windows and stable doors, would be particularly welcome.

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

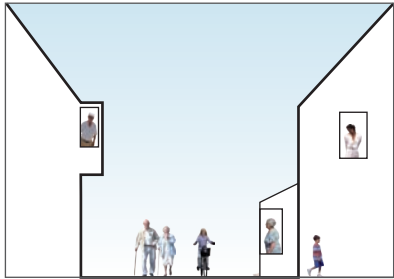
For reasons of privacy, there would generally be smaller windows towards the street, particularly at ground level, while there would be an opportunity to have much larger windows to the rear, towards courtyards and gardens.



Outside stairs

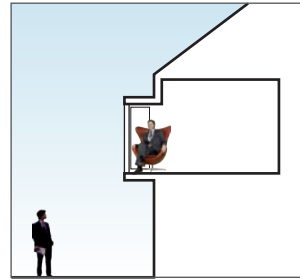
Outside staircases apart from making coming and going activities more visible, also become personal spaces for informal 'staying activities' like sitting in the sun or for personalisation with potted plants, etc.

SURVEILLANCE



Surveillance

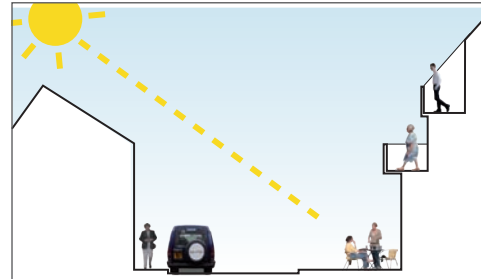
Every public space would be overlooked by a window. Bay windows give much better surveillance of the street than normal windows. There would be no blank gables.



Sitting space in window

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

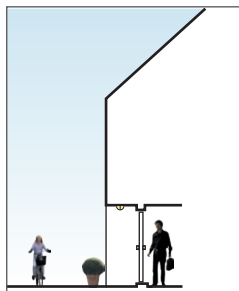
CLIMATE



Making the most of sunny aspect

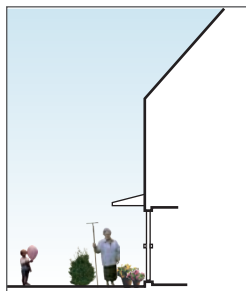
The buildings would adapt to the orientation of the sun, to make attractive places and spaces to spend time. Peoples' presence in these spaces in turn improves surveillance.

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.



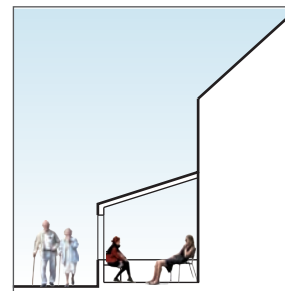
The front garden

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.