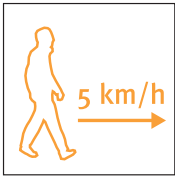
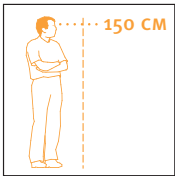


VISION & METHODOLOGY

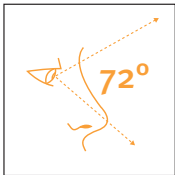
GEHL METHODOLOGY



WALKING SPEED 5 KM/H (4 MPH)



EYE LEVEL 150 CM (5 FEET)



VIEWING ANGLE, PROPORTIONS,
DIMENSIONS



SMELLING



HEARING



TOUCHING

THE STARTING POINT IS PEOPLE

The way Gehl Architects approach studying and planning environments always starts with people; thinking about how people live and work.

Despite all the advances in technology, especially in transport and communications which have drastically changed the way we live, people still function as they have done for thousands of years. Our bodies look more or less the same as they did thousands of years ago, we are the same size and our senses work in the same way. We are designed to walk and our senses function correctly at walking speed. We walk at approximately 4 mph and at this speed our senses perform in a way which allows us to relate to our surroundings and to other people.

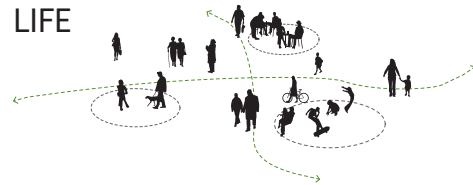
We are also social creatures, and study of the behaviour of people demonstrates that people are naturally curious and attracted to places where there are other people; to watch other people, to meet other people, or just to feel part of a social situation. To make a really good environment for people we must respond to these senses and social needs. We can design environments that are coherent, well proportioned and dimensioned to people-scale, appropriate for walking, attractive and appealing to peoples' senses.

Generally we should think of small, slow and low places. Smaller spaces respond to the physical size of our bodies, lower spaces respond to our horizontal field of vision and slower places respond to our natural walking speed and ability to process sensory information at this speed.

To enable and encourage social interaction, we need to make places safe and attractive, so that people want to spend time there and ensure that the environment is conducive to seeing, hearing and talking.



GEHL METHODOLOGY



TURNING THE TRADITIONAL PLANNING PROCESS UPSIDE DOWN

The Gehl 'upside-down' urban design method starts with defining the kind of public life we want to experience in each part of town. Following this we define the kind of spaces required so that life flourishes. Only then do we consider the buildings – making sure they support the spaces.

People, life and vitality are the biggest attractions in a community. We see it in where people choose to sit, where the most populated benches are located, how people choose to sit on pavement cafes facing the people walking by, rather than the buildings behind them. The biggest quality of a footpath café is simply the social interaction.

Community life is a most important quality, not only when it comes to the discussion of a single street, but also when discussing neighbourhoods and cities as a whole. Issues on life are related to the urban environment and the quality of the urban environment depends on the life and vitality of a place.

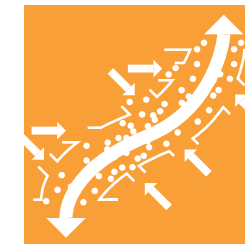
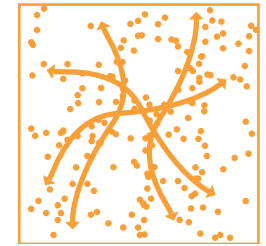
When developing a successful community, whether it is existing or new, life needs to be in focus from the beginning of the design process.

The conventional way of planning by focusing primarily on traffic and buildings needs to be turned upside down, to make people and community users more prominent in the planning process.

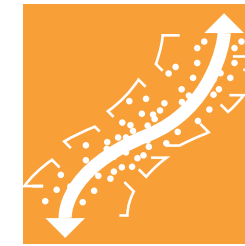
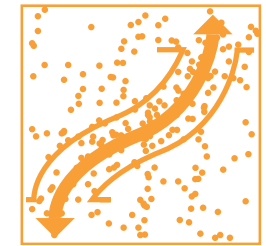
GEHL Architects have developed working methods for dealing with planning and urban design where the activities of the people within the communities are considered first. The quality of the spaces is analysed based on criteria developed from a people perspective and design solutions and recommendations for spaces, landscaping and buildings are based on these.



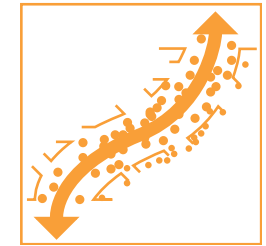
To assemble, not disperse



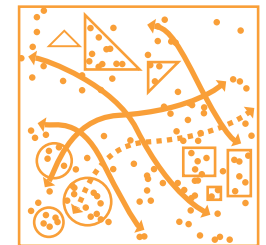
To invite, not repel



To open up, not close in



To integrate, not segregate



GENUS LOCI: A SENSE OF PLACE

People who choose to live in the Highlands do so because they love the landscape and want to live close to it. However, many new developments, typically cul-de-sacs with detached villas, divorce the inhabitants from this landscape because they use up so much land that the connection with nature is lost. The sprawl of such development makes for greater distances which encourage greater use of cars which in turn further divorces the inhabitants from their surroundings, as well as producing fumes and noise and allowing thousands of square metres to be lost to tarmac road surfaces.

To achieve a unique sense of place, the settlement is envisaged as a cluster of buildings in the forest, making a minimal footprint on the land, allowing the inhabitants to come together as a community and at the same time have close contact with and enable easy connection to nature.

Building in the Highlands would be a matter of combining both community and buildings to create a pleasant environment with a good local microclimate.

The centre of the community would be a high-quality public realm, which encourages people to walk and meet. The centre of the settlement would be more than just a long drawn-out strip of commercial buildings and services separated by parking, where the physical presence of cars dominates (noise, pollution, risk of accidents, sprawl increasing walking distances). Car parks and supermarkets may be part of our daily lives, but surely they should adapt to suit our environment – not our environment to suit them?

This is not about inventing something new, but working with the place, understanding people and the traditional building patterns and materials; working with the existing landscape and local climate to make a somewhere that truly belongs to this place.



Typical suburban sprawl destroys rural environments



Principle of village cluster respecting woodland setting

VISION

A SUSTAINABLE NEW COMMUNITY IN THE HIGHLANDS

Considering the exceptional location in the Cairngorms National Park, it was clear from the start that An Camas Mòr would aim to be sustainable. It has been important to consider sustainability in the wider sense of the word, including not only environmental aspects, such as energy and materials, but also social aspects of community, inclusion and economic aspects like affordability and employment.

The vision, discussed in consultations and meetings over many years, is for a 'Good Habitat for People'; a sustainable settlement of exceptional standard to meet their needs and aspirations. Central to the vision is the compact nature of the settlement, in a woodland to allow and encourage walking and a healthy life-style. The community's social needs would be met by the provision of affordable housing and housing of all kinds and tenures, including self-build. The provision of workspaces, offices, studios and live/work spaces within the settlement allows people to 'work, rest and play' without the use of vehicular transport. Commercial uses such as hotels, nurseries and shops would be encouraged. Community facilities such as a school would depend on numbers for their viability, but provision would be made for their good location.

The community's vision for the economy of An Camas Mòr is of somewhere largely self-sustaining, through the provision of suitable spaces for offices, studios, workshops and shops, on the ground floor of the High Street properties and the provision or ability to provide home working in most of the houses.

THE COMMUNITY

The starting point for building a new community is to make it a place for everyone, inclusive and welcoming for all, regardless of age, gender, income, local or incomer, single households or large families.

To make it accessible, An Camas Mòr has to be made up of appropriately designed houses – affordable for local people to buy and to run. However, it has to be more than just a housing estate – a proper village with useful facilities, work places and attractive spaces at its heart. High-quality and attractive streets and squares, parks and open spaces would be the places where residents can meet. Walking distances would be kept short increasing the likelihood of meeting neighbours on the street. Best practice for safety would be included with good lighting and passive surveillance of public spaces.

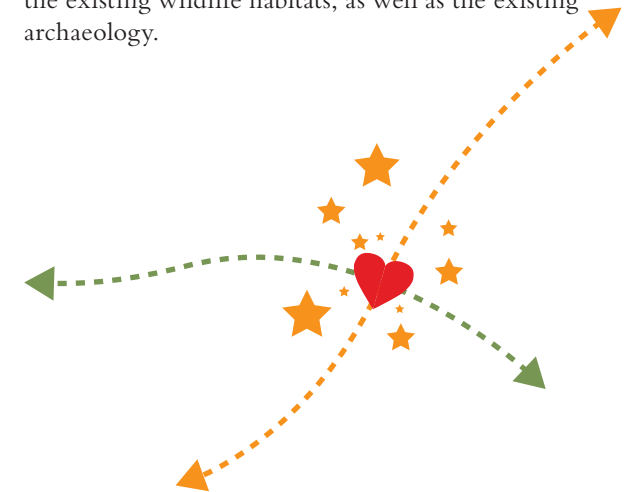
There would be a strong sense of identity for the village as a whole (based on a common design language) balanced with individual personalisation of each home. A carefully designed interface between private and public realms can make for better social interaction recognising the importance of things like porches and small front gardens, as well as carefully designed walls and fences ensuring privacy when required.

Considered phasing during construction could help the community grow naturally, with each phase including a wide range of home types to accommodate the different needs of a diversity of households.

THE HIGHLAND SETTING

The starting point is to respect the unique setting within Rothiemurchus in Badenoch and Strathspey in the Cairngorms National Park. The best way to respect the site is to limit the actual footprint of the settlement, to prevent unnecessary damage to other areas from sprawl and then work to reduce visual impact of new development locally and in the greater landscape, preserving and enhancing landscape views with careful design.

The plan would respect the culture of the place, the existing topography, the existing vegetation, the existing wildlife habitats, as well as the existing archaeology.



ACHIEVING SUSTAINABILITY

Sustainability is one of the most frequently used words today and it is often difficult to get a truly clear understanding of its full meaning and its consequences.

Making a new sustainable place is a complex challenge and at An Camas Mòr we have tried to use the term 'Sustainability' in the full sense of the word. We have considered An Camas Mòr from the point of view of environmental sustainability, social sustainability and economic sustainability as well as sustainable mobility and sustainable resource management.



ENVIRONMENTAL SUSTAINABILITY

- Build on as small a footprint as possible for minimum impact on the natural environment
- Preserve, protect and enhance existing natural habitats
- Create new natural habitats throughout the site
- Minimise visual impact in the greater landscape
- Create a good microclimate and shelter for flora and fauna
- Celebrate connections with nature
- Provide local drainage solutions
- Avoid light pollution



SOCIAL SUSTAINABILITY

- Promote An Camas Mòr ethos as a common interest for all
- Provide a diversity of housing: size, affordability and tenure types to accommodate as diverse a population as possible
- Accommodate a range of other non-residential uses – work, civic, education, services and leisure
- Encourage walking and meeting people
- Encourage neighbourhood responsibility
- Create attractive public spaces as community focus
- Promote health by making walking and biking easy
- Promote well-being by making meeting people easy
- Promote well-being by making nature visible and accessible
- Allow generational living
- Ensure a consistent and attractive built environment
- Allow freedom of expression within design guidelines that create value
- Provide space for nature and community including arts projects
- Create a sense of place



ACHIEVING SUSTAINABILITY

SUSTAINABLE ECONOMY

- Accommodate mixed economy with diverse activities from the start
- Allow for change of use to adapt to changing needs
- Make space for innovation
- Ensure a wide range of home types and tenures for resilience to market change
- Provide different kinds of workspaces spread throughout the settlement
- Include micro-economy of home workspaces and local sub-letting
- Establish and maintain standards to enhance wellbeing, behaviour and value



SUSTAINABLE MOBILITY

- Reduce reliance on private motor transport
- Create good connections to public transport network
- Make walking and cycling attractive and realistic alternatives to vehicular use
- Offer as wide a range of services and amenities available locally as possible
- Provide good internet connection
- Make it possible to work from home



SUSTAINABLE RESOURCE MANAGEMENT

- Minimise use of resources and energy in construction
- Minimise use of resources in running and maintenance
- Reduce waste of water
- Encourage composting and recycling
- Use renewable energy sources (possibility of district heating)
- Reduce Lighting pollution
- Take advantage of microclimate (wind shelter, solar gain)
- Provide space for fabrication to reduce builders' transport needs

