

# ICON

COMMUNICATION FUTURES - PART 2

zoephillips.160015099

## DESIGNING TO MEET

**NEEDS:** How can we  
think past  
generations,  
and design  
more  
inclusively?



ISSUE DJ41005

SPRING

( SEM 20/21 )

**louis  
poulsen**

**NEWS**

# The PH 5 Family Goes Monochrome

Originally Designed by Poul Henningsen

Design to Shape Light  
louispoulsen.com



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Matter Architecture's illustration of a new intergenerational scheme

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**INTERGENERATIONAL** living looks at how different generations may use the same space to interact, with the focus usually being on the young and the old. This is an important contemporary driving force in the world of design.

ICON's spring issue looks beyond that, arguing the focus should be less on age and more on the needs of individuals, avoiding making assumptions about the homogeneity of generations. This issue leads us through great examples of design concepts and looks to the future of designing intergenerational spaces and places.

In the past designers have labeled groups of people [the young and old] and given places definitions, but this is limiting and can make a place feel restricted. What is needed are environments flexible enough to allow for the rich variety of human experiences that allow us to nourish existing relationships and form new ones. In the current context of restrictions related to coronavirus impacting on how we all live including being required to spend more time inside our homes these issues are more pertinent than ever.

Filled with inspiring interviews that guide us through the meaning of intergenerational and what should come next. What does it take for a space to become age-inclusive, what are the principles to make it functionally work?

The principles set out should make us think about the **PURPOSE** of a space and what we can **LEARN** from existing models. To then think about the **INFLUENCES** of care needs that can lead us to **RE-THINK** how intergenerational spaces and places can be schemed through 'good design' to make meaningful age-inclusive environments.

Thank you to all the contributors, course tutors, friends and family who made this dissertation issue possible. And to you for reading and hopefully enjoying it as much as the pleasure from creating it. ♦

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Zoe  
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Editor

# ICON

Communication Futures

## Editor

Zoe Phillips

## Contributors

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# Contributors



**Stephen Burke** Co-Founder of United For All Ages [a 'think-do' tank] shares his wealth of knowledge and experience from working in the third and public sectors.



**Bella Kerr** from Generations Working Together shares her experience of working with intergenerational networks as well as her thoughts about care needs.



**Judith Ish-Horowicz** Co-Founder and Principal of Apples and Honey Nightingale shares her experience of co-locating her nursery within a care home.



**Roland Karthaus** Director at Matter Architecture shares his research on re-thinking intergenerational housing and the terminology used to describe generations.



# Designing with Purpose in Mind

Stephen Burke, founder of United for all Ages states that “All spaces can be intergenerational if they have the right purpose.”

Text by Zoe Phillips

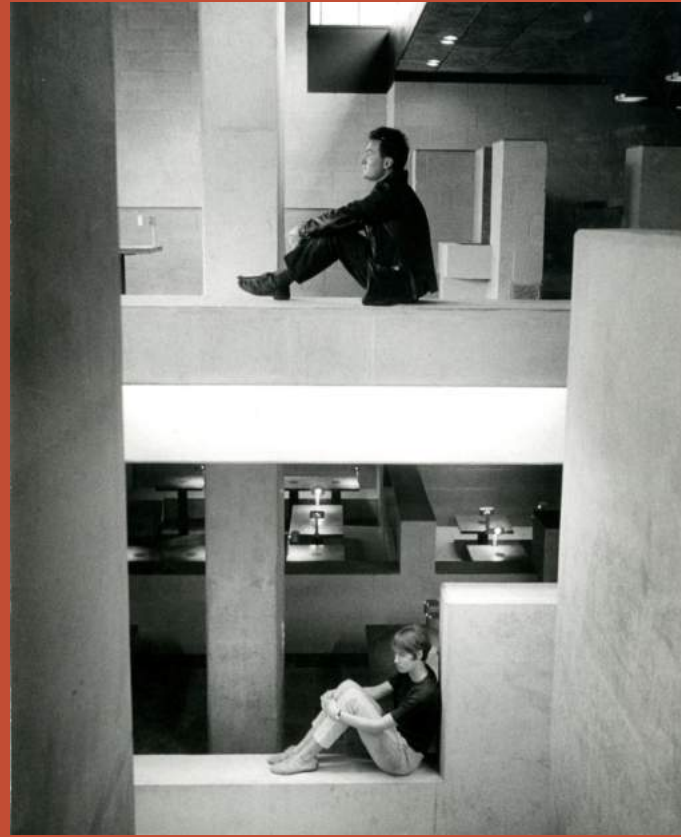
Photograph by Marko Milovanovic



**THIS PAGE** Student housing  
Weesperstraat, Amsterdam (1959-1966)  
by Herman Hertzberger



**OPPOSITE** Diagoon experimental  
housing, Delft (1967-1970) by  
Herman Hertzberger



**IN 2010 UNITED FOR ALL AGES** was set up as a joint venture social enterprise between Stephen Burke and his wife Denise Burke, with both having backgrounds in childcare and eldercare. Their prime principle was to focus very much on developing centres for all ages.

In an interview with Stephen Burke, I asked him “What would you like to see happen in the future?”. “To create a Britain for all ages sounds rather grand I suppose. This is about every level (local authorities, governments) within our country promoting a strategic approach to creating communities and countries for all ages.” It’s Burke’s aim to create 1000 centres across the UK by 2030. So far there are 100 centres in action, that are showing genuine models of interaction between generations. “It depends on how you define them because they’re a lot of community centres...I think are doing much of what we’re talking about” states Burke. But if it just depends on how we ‘define’ spaces that are

**“In-between, is everything that is in-between the official, all things that have a name that have a significance”**

IMAGES: HERMAN HERTZBERGER / JOHAN VAN DER KEUKEN

being used intergenerationally, it’s possible that we are giving spaces the wrong definitions. It could be argued that centres that intentionally bring different ages together, are the most known intergenerational shared spaces.

However, the majority of the UK population are encountering intergenerational spaces in everyday activities that have not been purposely designed or built for that exact type of interaction. “The habitable in-between space”. As Herman Hertzberger says “In-between, is everything that is in-between the official, all things that have a name that have a significance. When you say, “a house”, when you say “a shop” it has a name, it is a clear thing. But everything that is still open for getting significances is what you would call in-between.” The idea being that in the in-between spaces is where all the un-expected interaction happens making it ‘spontaneous’ - an act of informal contact. In relation to the ‘in-between’, ‘moving through the



physical environments of public spaces, people are also navigating social spaces. Our everyday interactions within these materially, socially, and psychologically complex environments need to be recognised by those involved in the planning and designing for people as they age.’ It could also be thought as ‘in-between the occasions’. Dr Rachel Pickles, Clinical Psychologist, who works closely with older people; “this could be further thought of as creating in-between occasions, for example what we do between meals, who we meet in the street on our way to the shops, who we talk to and meet and the relationships we make e.g., those walking dogs, pushing prams, on the school run, waiting in queues...” All of these small occasions are overlooked as encounters of interaction between people. Basing our main occasions on time and dates to create events such as [ dinner dates, play dates, celebrations, holidays...] that are classed as foundations to have intergenerational contact. ►





**‘Spatial Instruments’ that have been orchestrated to form places of informal contact adding the spontaneity of the unplanned**

How do we reflect and feel in the spaces we have encountered? or what is the purpose behind the space? “It’s about making it real for people; there’s a whole range of interaction, not just undertaking some nice activities but it’s actually having proper conversations between each other” says Burke. Conversations can happen in any space. There are many spaces open for opportunities to converse with one another but to purposely create a space that is about having ‘proper conversations’ detracts from the idea that these occur naturally. It becomes a planned encounter which can feel forced and unwelcoming.

Looking at the work of Aldo Van Eyck, Hubertus House which has been designed for children and their single parents looks at expanding spaces of circulation, which provides opportunities for ‘serendipitous meetings’ between the residents. The stairwells, doorways, elevators, balconies, loggias, corridors are described as ‘spatial instruments’ that have been orchestrated to form places of informal contact adding the spontaneity of the unplanned and the unknown events of social encounter. Essentially, they happen in the unclaimed parts of the building, these spaces are open to everyone and by purposefully calling them ‘spatial instruments’ we are defining them as connecting points of interaction between neighbours. This feeds the idea of acclimatising naturally occurring contact within a space that has been designed purposely for that type of encounter. ►

**THIS SPREAD** Hubertus House by Aldo Van Eyck, looking at the spatial thresholds that expands spaces of circulation and social encounters



IMAGES: MARKO MILOVANOVIC





**LEFT AND BELOW** Housing for the Elderly De Drie Hoven in Amsterdam [now demolished] by Herman Hertzberger

Herman Hertzberger has also been known for his open and inviting spaces. “We should make new algorithms, definite algorithms so that they can include this possibility of meeting each other.” Thresholds being part of that algorithm, allow for transition. How do we enter/exit with the function of moving through spaces of comfort to the outer spaces of familiar environments? By having algorithms of space, it allows us to individually create possible equations of our daily routines. The threshold being that key space of transition, who we invite in or a simple interaction of a passing greeting. Each day the routine could change and therefore it being a naturally formed equation of space. Another way we could apply Hertzbergers’ algorithm of space is to apply it to all the conventional spaces and places of daily life. It was Stephen Burke’s main point to ‘Mainstream intergenerational interaction’ so that nobody feels excluded from social engagements of day-to-day life events. As we age, to have these places of contact, it allows us to form emotional attachments. It’s important to have that sense of belonging in society especially when it could be our worst fear to be isolated and alone and not part of those everyday interactions.

Anthropologist Leng Leng Thang theorises that the potential spaces of everyday life can work as ‘Intergenerational contact zones. She asks us to ‘Imagine living in a place where you feel alienated from the mainstream of life?’ As part of that research a seventy-five-year-old woman, living in a gated senior community in the US feels as though she is segregated from the mainstream of life. “To be ‘just like everyone else’” Thang explains that it ‘projects the desire to



**By having algorithms of space, it allows us to individually create possible equations of our daily routines**

**“To bring people together in purposeful, mutually beneficial activities which promote greater understanding and the respect between generations and contributes to building more cohesive communities”**

belong to an age-integrated mainstream environment where meeting people of other generations is part of everyday life. In such an environment, naturally occurring opportunities for intergenerational interaction would also involve the relational aspect of supporting and caring for each other’. The same lady interviewed, further expresses “I am longing, longing to walk to the corner coffee shop, to hear the sound of children playing, dogs barking. I want to eat at the corner café, see young people in love, walk to the library, catch the BART (Bay Area Rapid Transit) into the city, watch the mothers with their children in the pram, young families, teens in the latest, wildest outfit. Think about the communities that are whole. We need each other, we can learn to care about each other, support the young and the old.”

The ‘corner coffee shop’ and the ‘corner café’ being clear places of significance to this lady. The importance showing that they are this lady’s self-selected spaces of encounter. Although it is thought that the premise of the corner shop/corner café is ‘an informal micro-institution for a group of the city’s circulating elderly – an unnoticed geography in the perpetual flow of the urban sphere’. Meaning the reoccurring activity of going to the ‘corner store’ brings people a fulfilment of their day, especially to those older in age. It’s a routine; a daily trip to grab a coffee and newspaper with the impending interactions of the journey to and from home. Maybe being the only point of interaction, they get in a day. “Having a café or similar place where people can mix and eat on neutral territory and do things, we all need to do... the need to eat and drink is almost the glue that brings people together.” Adds Burke.

It’s no secret that the high streets of towns and cities are becoming quieter and quieter, with boarded up storefronts neglected and left to vandalism making them places of avoidance. It was mentioned by Burke

that “Every local community, every neighbourhood has public or former public spaces and buildings which are either shut up or underused”. By re-engaging ourselves with underused spaces we could be giving ourselves more neutral territories just like the example of ‘the need to eat and drink’. This builds prospect for more occurring opportunities of intergenerational contact to happen at the earliest of opportunities “To bring people together in purposeful, mutually beneficial activities which promote greater understanding and the respect between generations and contributes to building more cohesive communities.”

Even though a ‘Britain for all ages’ is Burke’s ideal for the future, there is the possibility that by through purposeful design it could be achieved. There is inspiration all around us to form better ways to create eloquent places of encounter. To grasp an understanding of the type of spaces that the Burkes’ are aspiring to create I asked Stephen “What motivates and inspires you about intergenerational work?”

“Apples and Honey Nightingale is a good example; it is just the difference it makes to individuals... I think we tend to focus on the old and the young but there are quite a lot of people in the middle as well... it helps improve the quality of care, so improving it changes the nature of the care home, and of the children’s experience of better learning, better care and so on... tackling some of those wider societal issues like ageism, loneliness and depression.” The care home nursery is a classic model of intergenerational interaction that looks at the future of care, with their co-located activities encouraging schools and universities to also have an involvement especially with older people’s housing and care schemes to help tackle social and economic issues like loneliness, ageism, care, health, housing and learning. We really should reevaluate the quality of living and consider how we could all [with purpose in mind] live more intergenerationally inclusive. ♦



# WHAT CAN WE LEARN FROM APPLES AND HONEY NIGHTINGALE ?

Words by Zoe Phillips

Judith Ish-Horowicz, founder of Apples and Honey Nightingale, discusses how sharing the space enhanced the lives of those attending the Nursery and those living in the Care Home.

An 'invasion of space' is how Judith Ish-Horowicz joyfully describes the coming together of Apples and Honey Nursery and Nightingale care home. It became the UK's first nursery to be co-located with a care home. By re-locating the maintenance department, the bungalow was converted into the new on-site nursery.

In an interview with Judith, she was asked "What would you advise about designing a building/space to co-locate people from different generations?" "we actually moved into a very well-established organisation ... I'd built up a relationship over the years

through my original nursery, we've had this relationship which had expanded until I said, "look please can we open on your site" ... although it meant that we moved into an organisation that had its own way of working, 'invading their space', making it much more complicated and difficult to change people's mindsets, especially when the mindset of the organisation was the care of the elderly."

'Invading space' could be a pioneering direction of change that is proving to be societal benefit especially to the residents of nightingale care home. They still have their private spaces and the option to join

in activities, giving them opportunity to choose to be part of the wider society once again. No drastic changes had been made to the space so the change of 'people's mindsets' is merely the function of interaction of different generations coming together.

Judith further elaborates that "the ideal is to actually open something that has been custom built...all the stakeholders to everybody who actually has a say about what their needs are, and they all understand the needs of the other organisations and it's not a competition...we have a priority, but you've come together under one place."





**ABOVE** A garden environment was recreated at every level to create a 'home-in-a-garden' experience for the residents and staff

**FAR RIGHT** St. Joseph's Home central garden courtyard just outside the red-brick chapel

St. Joseph's home [based in Singapore] is a prime example of a team working together to form a new environment, with early year's providers and the care home directors coming together as equals so that the identity can be built on the premise that they are going to be intergenerational.

'In Singapore, social and community facilities and services are catered to the residents' needs and provided close to them.' The idea being that the services [Childcare centres, kindergartens, senior car services, family service centres...] are planned 'close to informal social and recreational spaces, such as children's playgrounds and fitness corners, enhancing opportunities for spontaneous interactions between the old and the young generations in the community.' The creation of that community 'thinking of people from birth to death' being the viewpoint of living. "From the birth of a healthy baby, to how close would the primary school be and the next school... transport for people



**BELOW** St. Joseph's Home full view of the garden including the nursery play area

who then have to go off to work. As people are ageing, they'll need more sheltered accommodation as well as needing that nursing care at the end. It's all the boundaries of a community right up to the palliative care," says Judith.

It wasn't long after St. Joseph's recent development of their outdoor playground that Judith received an invitation to visit "They were very excited as they had just purpose built some amazing outdoor equipment that they wanted to have the children and the residents there using at the same time... it would go around and round, a bit like a mini roundabout. There were special straps that would hold the wheelchair in, and I thought [this is amazing!]. However, when I came back to Nightingale, they exclaimed in horror "But their balance is so bad already" the idea of spinning... seesaws and things like that, of course this is cultural but there was a very different approach to what is intergenerational outdoors and what is safe." ►

IMAGES: AARON POCOCK



**'Enhancing opportunities for spontaneous interactions between the young and the old'**





It is key that having garden space/outside space is an important daily activity but with Judith's more gentle approach to intergenerational activities [sports days, gardening, walking] it allows the children to use up their energy as well as the residents taking part.

"If they don't have a space to work off their energy and deal with all development, it would otherwise not be a safe environment... Within our play area [the way it's setup] is we've got the nursery and the use of a quite a large piece of outdoor space which we have railings around to keep the children safe... there's a path that the residents have a way to walk around all the building grounds and a lovely little Rose Garden that has obviously been dedicated on.

They managed to design it in such a way that we could still exit out into our playground." The garden space also offers social and quiet spots, with benches dotted around to provide rest spots as well as places to sit and admire the scenery. And that's not the only enjoyment, there's animals who also reside there too. From rabbits to guinea pigs, fish and an aviary, the children and residents are able to interact and share experiences with one another broadening the scope of generational activities.

With the adaption of the bungalow, it seems like it's been an easy transition for Apples and Honey nursery to form and be part of nightingale care home. And so, I asked Judith "How do you think existing buildings/

spaces/services can be used differently to allow intergenerational interaction?" "Nightingale is a very old building, having opened in 1906, obviously things have changed but it has the space. In a care home you need to have room for wheelchairs, for walkers, room for people to move. When you look at the space that we need for a nursery, it is very different, and we moved into a small bungalow. We thought 'this is fantastic' and then as soon as you put the furniture in, some tables and some store cupboards and then you get the children in as well there's hardly any room for anyone else so almost all our activities have to be in the main building" says Judith. However, geographic separations help maintain boundaries between the shared space and private space for the residents. The resident's home and with Apples and Honey Nursery having their own nursery space, it gives the residents a transition period and a routine to which they can prepare for. "As we take the children from the nursery into the activities in the larger spaces, we're singing as we go along. People who are not involved in the activity, people who may be bed bound or even un-interested or they can't, and you can't obviously do every activity with everybody. They have to be smaller groups to create relationships. They can still hear the children; hear the laughter and they don't feel like they are cut off. They feel like they're part of it so that works well but you need to have a large enough space to be able to do things that safely and to be

IMAGES: JUDITH ISH-HOROWICZ



**FAR LEFT** Rose garden and playground just outside the nursery

able to move and many homes are not big enough for that" Says Judith.

Like Judith says, not all care homes have the ability to co-locate with a nursery due to space and it often limits the pace of change to creating more of these environments that are clearly beneficial to all who are involved. There are many more opportunities to come from creating a purpose-built environment and so out of interest I asked Judith; "If you could design purpose-built accommodation for different generations to share, what would you include/think important?"

"If you're thinking of it for the young children, you know that the logistics you have to have changing mats... facilities for young children to be kept clean... space for children to be running around as well safely, but you need this space for residents to be able to manoeuvre. As we were talking about before you need storage as you're actually going to want to use equipment and I'm thinking of play equipment, ►



**ABOVE** Activities hub in Nightingale, which includes arts and crafts, pottery making and cooking facilities

**RIGHT** Looking into the Apples classroom, that is vibrant with colour and activities



**BELOW** Lounge space for baby and toddlers



learning equipment, musical equipment. One of our favourite activities has been with the exercise classes, that also includes the equipment of things like parachutes.” says Judith. In addition to what Judith said, when designing spaces for the interaction of the nursery kids and the residents of the care home, storage spaces are key for creating a well-built environment. It is evident with all the fun activities, that they need the max amount of storage as it benefits the function of play and learn. Also improving the safety of the space, with less chances of accidents for both the children and residents.

Due to the different care needs of the children and residents, the facilities to support don't always act in the residents or children's best interests.

As expressed by Judith “ the residents actually have a team of therapists...obviously, all the facilities for extra support will be for the residents, it wouldn't be for

**TOP RIGHT** Interactive library outside the cafe

**RIGHT** Nightingale cafe looking out onto the garden area



the children but there are lots of children who do have physical issues. We do need some form of help like speech and language and you wouldn't normally get that in the speech and language therapists who you would have in the home, they would be looking at things like swallowing issues and things that deal with the residents...they wouldn't be looking at what happens in children.”

It's important to consider our physical differences when designing a space especially for development of children and of the resident's bodily function to sustain mobility. There are things that we can take from Judith's experience [outdoor spaces, importance of geographic separation, large spaces for interaction including storage and also the physical and cognitive needs of children and residents]. We can use design to improve the quality of those interactions as well as making sure everyone's needs are being met. ♦



IMAGE: JUDITH ISH-HOROWICZ



# THE INFLUENCE OF PROVISION ON COMMUNITIES

Words by Zoe Phillips

"How can we care about each other?...  
How can we bring our communities  
together? ... It's got to be about bringing  
people together and about no one being  
alone"  
Bella Kerr - Generations Working Together





**LEFT AND BELOW** Natural light and green spaces are enhanced to initiate engagement and to make people feel 'at home'



**FAR RIGHT** Derwenthorpe in York by the Joseph Rowntree Housing Trust, a development of 483 properties



**T**he Lifetime Home, a concept by the Joseph Rowntree Foundation, has set housing standards to increase accessibility and to help improve possible adaptive solutions in the dwellings of occupants that have restricted mobility, temporarily incapacitated or who are disabled. As stated by the foundation 'the indirect health benefits for occupants therefore focus on the promotion of psychological wellbeing and activity. Ensuring that occupants can maintain a good quality of life means that the dwelling itself must be functional for all occupants.' Meaning 'functional for all'; is a dwelling that can easily adapt to the occupants' needs,

IMAGES: TIM CROCKER / STUDIO PARTINGTON

promoting this idea that anybody can come live there and offers the chance to form part of a stable and mixed community, leading to greater social inclusion. It was part of the Audit Commission's objective that local authorities would try to 'tackle social isolation and support independent living' in the elderly population.

However, to make the point that it's not just the elderly that faces social isolation or the only generation that needs help with independent living. It's important that we don't segregate the needs for each generation, disability, gender and ethnic groups when really, we could familiarise ourselves to the needs of individuals through the act of communication. To separate only

makes us more isolated. The lifetime home should be addressing all stages of ageing, from birth to death and the stages in-between to acknowledge the physical changes we all go through as well as the individual needs of everyone.

The main design objective of The Lifetime Home is to maximise the 'level of independence for occupants within the dwelling and the immediate external area.' An example being that occupants have the opportunity to return home after hospitalised care due to the space having adaptive features that can cater to their needs. Promoting a level of independence and quality of life which unfortunately can be hard to find. ►



**BELOW** Day carer Emma with Zoe Phillips' mother, Naomi. Emma is well known to the family and has become a good friend.



**RIGHT** Naomi ready for lunch. Food is puréed and a sippy cup with a straw to help her swallow, with a list of precautions on the table for the carers

Zoe Phillips' mother, Naomi, 50 years old with Multiple Sclerosis (MS) that was diagnosed while at university, leaving her unable to finish her degree. She was 29 years old when she had Zoe, but it wasn't till after that drastic changes with her prognosis started. She lived in a social housing bungalow in York, along with live in care staff. At 10 years old, Zoe moved to Scotland to live with family due to Social Services feeling that this would better meet her needs. Naomi's illness has progressed to the extent she needs all her personal care provided, her meals pureed, and spoon fed as well as requiring a wheelchair to move around. She can no longer use her hands to operate electronic devices such as television remote or mobile telephone, keypad for computers and so she needs assistance in all these matters.

It seems her most basic needs have been and continue to be met, as she receives adequate medical care, food and shelter. However, it could be argued that many of her other needs are not well met, such as the need for stimulation and time with family and the wider community. Currently she spends the vast majority of her time either in bed or sitting in wheelchair watching television and in the company of care staff.

To witness the progressive state was hard and impossible to imagine what it's like to experience it first-hand. Over the years Zoe gained a better understanding of her mother's needs. Naomi did not have a job and without Zoe there it's very difficult to imagine how limiting it must feel to not have those forms of relationships with 'work colleagues' or other 'parents' as part of her social network. It's as though her illness has confined her to this bungalow and with who can enter and exit. The carers do take the opportunity to take her out, but from experience this can be stressful, with time limits and little available transport [that can support her wheelchair], not to mention that Naomi gets travel sick. It would seem there are few in-between spaces and in-between occasions for Naomi and that this is limiting her quality of life.

In some ways Naomi is fortunate to be in her own home, but it's gotten to the point where whether this is a good thing needs to be questioned. It looks as though she's being kept in box without her social needs being met well – lack of stimulation, company, opportunities.

**"your mum needs stimulated and there are lots of people just like that, with long term conditions who are stuck at home who are still thinking...who still need to be stimulated"**

Bella Kerr



**BELOW** Naomi sat at angle to support her neck as she watches the TV

So, for her it's not enough to be 'in own home' if it can't truly cater to her living rights and needs.

Architecture and Design Scotland are looking at opportunities to create spaces and buildings to support the ever-changing models of care. A Caring Place is a report by A&DS that looks to enable user needs as the centre of their 'decision-making, service provision and investment' in the places they create. 'A Caring Place is an environment that provides comfort and confidence – a sense of place; things to do – a sense of purpose; that addresses a person's needs on a number of levels – sense of support; and that provides opportunities to feel validated – a sense of worth.' Diarmaid Lawlor, A&DS ►







**LEFT** PRP is working with Joseph Rowntree Housing Trust (JRHT) to replace Red Lodge, an existing care home/sheltered housing scheme in New Earswick, York

### **'A community of different tenures share facilities and services for mutual benefit'** Matter Architecture

If Zoe Phillips' mother was to regain a sense of purpose, it would impact her health in a very positive way. Just providing an opportunity for Naomi to move into a place that addressed her needs, would mean she could be fully supported for the rest of her life. The principle of Housing Choice identified as one out of ten principles by the A Caring Place report would be beneficial to her. For example, New Earswick, a village near Naomi would enable her to experience social connection through a self-governing community that was developed by the now Joseph Rowntree Housing Trust. Depending on the individual's circumstances, the mixture of tenures, rental, affordable and full market sale housing, could be designed specifically for all stages of life, creating inclusive solutions that include physical and learning difficulties rather than just focussing on the 'older people'.

There's a full range of community facilities within the village that promote invigorating activities that are at the occupant's disposal: a children's centre with library, sports and social clubs, parks and play areas... as well as the amenities of a doctor's surgery and a range of shops. At the heart of the village is the Folk Hall community centre that provides the main focus for the community's activities. Local organisations are welcome to host activities such as: Keep-fit, yoga, "Film at the Folk Hall", martial arts, Slimming World... Which all contribute to creating spaces that are diverse and encourage the enjoyment of the local occupants as well as the wider and outer communities too. ►





**LEFT AND BELOW** Cycle paths and play parks are also part of the landscaped grounds



**FAR RIGHT** A Plan View drawing showing 'a vibrant new social heart' which consists of lawns, allotments and the refurbished Folk Hall



Naomi already has a connection with the Folk Hall in New Earswick as she attends the MS society Friday lunch. It's a weekly routine which in some ways is great for her, to go and be with others who also have MS. Although not everyone feels the same about attending support groups... Bella reported that her mother had said "I don't want to go to a group full of people living with Parkinson's". She wanted to mix with people, she didn't want to be reminded of her illness and I think that might be true for a lot of people. There's always the opportunity for peer support from groups but people should not be defined by their illness.

IMAGES: PRP ARCHITECTS / JRHT

All of these facilities and services that the village offers to the residents are great and Naomi would be stimulated from just some of those activities. Even if she can't physically join in, she would be able to watch and still feel part of the activity. It's all about preference, to many it may be hard to understand the enjoyment of just watching an activity or to simply be a bystander.

'If we can come to understand gazing as a subtle, yet nevertheless meaningful form of social contact, perhaps we can imagine a more effective balance between organised forms of contact and those that more spontaneously follow from the design of homes

and the built environment.'

Even with my Naomi's current living arrangement, her view out of the window is obstructed by fabric films for 'her mothers' privacy'. The only meaningful contact she has is with the carers and even then, her view consists of the TV.

Zoe worries for her mother; her prognosis will be worse if all her needs are not being met. It's not enough that she is medically taken care of. Her mental health is deprived of social encounters and stimulative activities to the point that care staff say Naomi only ever really smiles at the mention of Zoe's name. ♦



# RE-THINKING

## intergenerational spaces and places

Words by Zoe Phillips

**WHEN ROLAND KARTHAUS**, director at Matter Architecture was asked by Camden Council 'If intergenerational housing is the answer, what's the question?'

He went on to explain "To me the question is what do we mean by generation." "I think the problem with defining people as generations, is then saying one generation has something to offer to the other generation - reinforcing those false distinctions of presuming older people need help with physical things and that they have some magical wisdom through the ages that they can hand down to the younger people." "It gives the motivation to create a better communication across the age range but without putting people in boxes and labelling for certain characteristics."

Re-Thinking Intergenerational Housing is a new idea of generational living based upon the existing model: 'people of different ages living together and sharing their skills and time'. Currently there are many projects looking at the 'old' and the 'young', setting this standard of what intergenerational living is. However, the research compiled by Matter Architecture suggests that 'participation can be shared amongst unrelated people, living independent, modern lives and benefitting mutually' all whilst not being labelled by their age. ►

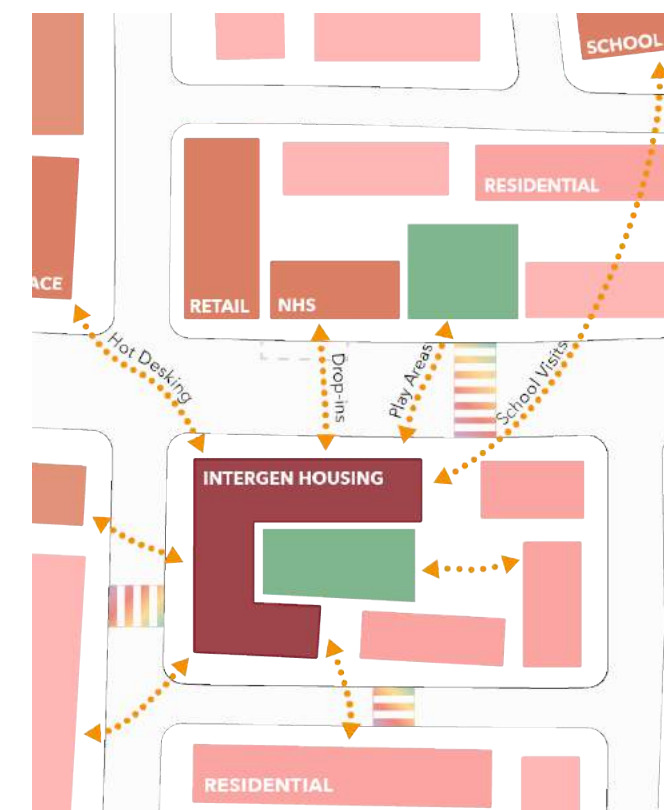




IMAGES: MATTER ARCHITECTS

**LEFT** A 3D representation of the location diagram

**BELOW** A proposed location diagram to show the opportunities to connect and enhance local networks



As Roland states “In the intergenerational model; the typical model is very much biased towards older people or people with care needs. It assumes that essentially younger people have more to give and older people have more needs, and it doesn’t recognise the needs of younger people. There’s a social need as a child and those needs are real needs, they’re quite substantial needs...at the social level if children don’t get those needs, then it affects their whole lives”.

Even though ideally intergenerational living is to solve generational disconnect, it has somehow turned into making assumptions based on how we should keep the elderly population integrated with the other generations as they are more prominent to being isolated and alone. But based on what Roland is saying we are failing to then recognise the needs of everyone else. With being so focussed on the outcome for the elderly, the current concept of intergenerational living may not cater to the needs of those who are younger.

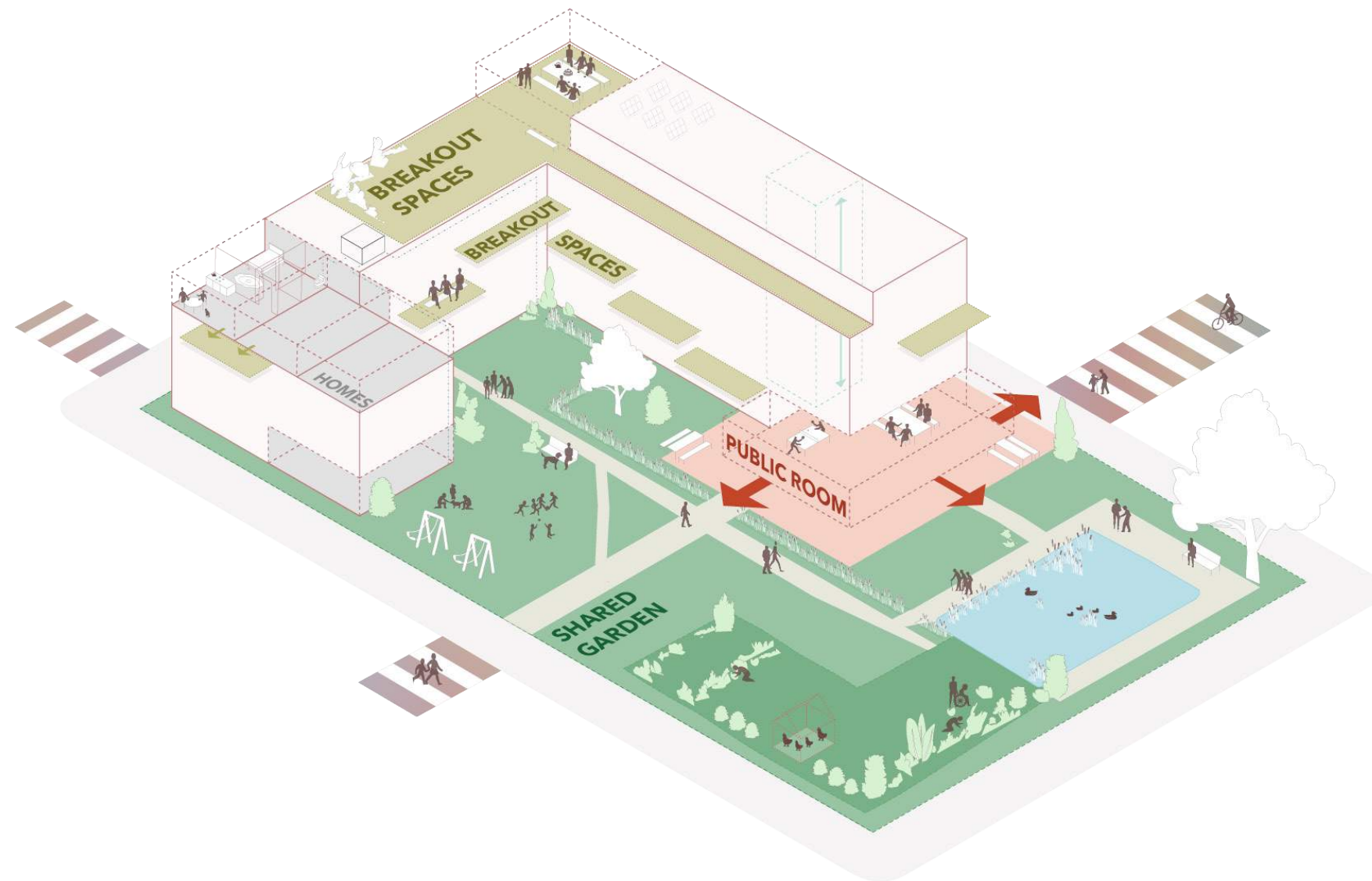
There is confusion between age-specific design and what is intergenerational design. The concern being that intergenerational design is being categorized by age-specific needs and to make the point that by labelling people by generations or age specifically then it’s not intergenerational spaces were creating. By labelling we’re still creating disconnect between everyone and therefore failing to create change, leading us to question; Where do we decide to draw the line between one generation and another when designing inclusive spaces and places and why are we calling it intergenerational?

By ‘re-thinking intergenerational housing’, it’s important that we consider as to what makes a space intergenerational. “There’s all these

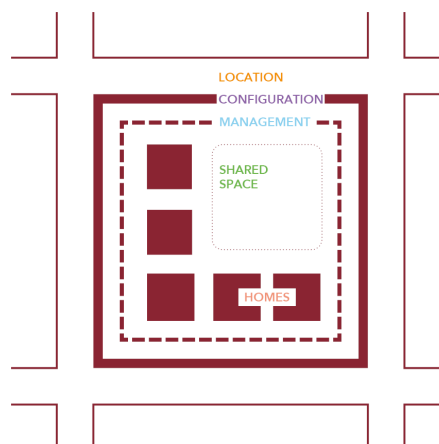
sorts of ironies built into the system and I think... it’s not about adding and a new kind of housing. The same applies to nurseries and children’s centres... they fundamentally have the same issues that we categorise a portion of the population, putting them in a box and treating them separately. You don’t solve that problem by adding another kind of box that you called ‘intergenerational’ it’s not another kind of housing, it’s the way that all housing should work and for that to happen there has to be a lot of changes to the way we design housing” says Rolland.

So, if ‘intergenerational’ is based on how the space should function, then we must consider a new approach to designing inclusive environments and determined the factors as to what makes ►





**ABOVE AND RIGHT**  
Illustrations of the principles



a space intergenerational. Matter Architecture states 'Housing cannot and should not determine how people live, but through good design, the architecture of housing can support and enable participation and interactions between residents. Four key areas of design are considered to be pivotal in this objective; location; building configuration; shared spaces; and homes.' These are principles that Matter have worked with to come up with proposals to fulfil 'A good design'.

IMAGES: MATTER ARCHITECTS

## 'Good design should be required in all housing, but key areas of design are essential to realising the benefits of intergenerational housing'

### LOCATION

The ideal in creating an inclusive space is to firstly look at locating where there are opportunities to 'connect and enhance local networks.' Addressing Matter's research 'Schemes should be located in areas with local facilities, public transport and amenities, to connect with them and act as a catalyst for community networks.' Although I must add that a lot of places are diverse in the sense that the amount amenities available vary as well as the services. With community effort it is possible to generate and find new opportunities to build a good provision within their location to make it inclusive. However, it all comes down to having a good social infrastructure where communication comes naturally, with people involved in building their local network.

### BUILDING CONFIGURATION

'Building configuration should provide permeable environments that enhance health and wellbeing.' Matter's research suggests that we must consider the relationships between 'public, communal, semi-communal spaces and individual homes' to optimise the relationships between residents and those who are part of the wider community. By designing 'good' configured spaces, it will optimise health and wellbeing of the residents and of the amenities available within the housing scheme.

### SHARED SPACES

Shared spaces are becoming crucial when designing spaces for intergenerational contact. People who live independently or those who don't have extended families or limited by disabilities and illnesses... would benefit immensely

to have configured shared spaces to socialise and participate in all forms of interaction. The research proposal states that there are 'three key types of shared space' and these are needed to support the relationships between the residents and community within the scheme. This consists of 'shared gardens, public rooms and breakout spaces', each with their own particular characteristics. It is thought that 'the public room and shared garden spaces will work best when linked with, or accommodating services and facilities, depending on the scale, whilst the breakout spaces must be informal, small and requiring minimal maintenance.' This all contributes to making age-inclusive environment that branches into the public realm to accommodate the need of escaping the walls of private space and to be accustomed to social interaction.

### HOMES

Housing should be made to be 'adaptable and facilitate independent living for longer', especially when the current housing market has become segregated. Like Roland says the existing housing has been focused on the characteristics of people to create specialist homes. But that solution is clearly showing a weakness in designing a 'good home' that is sustainable to house all family types including members with a disability or illness. So ideally a 'good design' should promote the health and wellbeing through the design and look to making homes more accessible as well as cater to working from home to keep up with modern family life. ►



**BELOW** A pedestrian friendly street that allows kids to play safely

**RIGHT** The development comprises 42 homes – a mix of 2- to 5-bedroom terraced houses and 1- and 2- bedroom apartments.



Roland Karthaus “I think the most successful project I’ve seen recently that’s dealt with that issue of ‘How do you create a place that can support community?’ is Marmalade Lane in Cambridge”

Marmalade Lane, an inspiring and influential project, in Cambridge, UK, is a custom-built development that has shared spaces and communal facilities. It was designed to promote a cohesive community through the relationships made between neighbours, as well as environmentally friendly living. Thinking about the needs of the community, Mole architecture inserts communal spaces within their design, which include a large area for shared gardens, the residents’ central outdoor

setting for interaction. Areas are allotted for growing food, as well as play and socialising.

“There’s a few key moves they do there that I think are to do with providing some spaces that are about things that people need rather than things that you would like to do, so the classic thing is always providing a shared laundry. That’s a really functional thing but because it’s shared people then congregate around that area and do and talk about other things because they have to do the washing, whereas if you make a community space and say well here’s the space you do what you like in it nobody ever uses it because there’s never actually a reason to go there” says Roland Karthaus. ▶



IMAGES: DAVID BUTLER / MOLE ARCHITECTS

**‘Space should be driven by need and necessity’**



**RIGHT** The Community Hub, a space for shared activities

**BELOW** Light floods into the Community Hub to maximise the amount of natural light



IMAGES: DAVID BUTLER / MOLE ARCHITECTS

The heart of the project is a common house, a space that has been thoughtfully designed to allow residents to congregate and includes guest bedrooms for visitors of the residents to use. There's a space for occasions, parties and shared meals, a way for the residents to form close friendships and make memories. This sets the tone of the project as both exciting and welcoming.

A pedestrian street allows kids to play safely with their neighbours, as well as residents being able to have conversations with residents from houses across the street, without the interruption of traffic. There's also a separate gym and workshop on site, allowing physical interaction between neighbours, workout classes and spaces that allow for making and repairs, being both practically useful to the community but also providing a setting for craftsmanship to be passed on.

"You can't design a community; community is something that emerges when the circumstances are right"  
Roland Karthaus ♦

**BELOW** Dominique and Kristian



IMAGE: DOMINIQUE + SERENA

**THE EDITOR, ZOE PHILLIPS', FAVOURITE QUOTE** for this issue's end note comes from the book *Age Inclusive Public Space*, written by Dominique Hauderowicz and Kristian Ly Serena.

**'Potentially any site, no matter its size or ownership, where different people come in contact—or could come in contact—is a potential for the age-inclusive city.'**

It's important to consider the potential in all things inclusive. To have spaces and places where it's open to meaningful contact between all ages. For a space to be intergenerational, to be age-inclusive, is for there to be 'good design' and to be driven by our needs [physical and psychological]. To achieve that we also have to stop labeling people according to their generations as well as categorizing by age-specific presumptions. ♦



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