CHRISTIANIA - “FREETOWN”
The Social Background

“Christiania was founded in 1971, when a group of hippie squatters took over an area of abandoned military barracks. The people in Christiania have developed their own set of rules, completely independent of the Danish government. Having no cars is one of these rules. The rules also forbid stealing, guns, bulletproof vests and hard drugs.” (Wikipedia, http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Freetown_Christiania)

“Christiania is famous for being one of the biggest and most enduring squatter's movements in the world. It represents the liberal side of Europe – where the human right to enjoy a decent lifestyle outside the 9-5 system is considered a practical option rather than a defeatist cop-out.” (Moya, woodwindica.org, “Americanization and Christiania”, July 28, 2003)

“Since its inception 30 years ago, Christiania’s permissive environment has become a sort of haven for nearby Greenlanders and other travelers, artists, misfits, musicians, and freedom-thinking people from all across the globe.”

Christiania’s Mission Statement: “The objective of Christiania is to create a self-governing society whereby each and every individual holds themselves responsible over the wellbeing of the entire community. Our society is to be economically self-sustaining and, as such, our aspiration is to be steadfast in our conviction that psychological and physical destitution can be averted.”

As a result, Christiania, the “Freetown” has become not only the haven for the hippies but also the Heaven for all the hippie fans all over the world. It is one of the most important and significant tourist attractions in Denmark.
CHRISTIANIA - “FREETOWN”
What pulls the people together?

Within each co-housing community, there should be at least one common interest that pulls everyone together. Everyone should share the same bond and everyone should have the same believe. The community keeps alive an equally vast array of projects, businesses, clubs, and facilities, including several day cares, bakeries, bath houses, and various cafes and bars. It is known for hosting some of the best venues in Denmark.

At Christiania, it is a community of hippies; they share the same interest and live in the same lifestyle. Music, arts and marijuana are their common interests. Living in a community without boundaries and control is what they all look for, and that is the reason of having the Freetown Christiania.

Music
There are tons of musical performances and exchanges that give opportunities for the habitants and guests to relax, entertain and exchange their musical experiences.

On the Musik Arrangementen page in the Christiania official website (christiania.org), there is around a hundred of music events going on within these couple months. People spend most of the time together in Christiania for the music and music is one of their common language although people might come from different places in the world.

Arts and Craft
Arts and Craft meetings provide chances for the habitants and guests to share their thoughts, ideas and relax when leisure time. Paintings and graffiti everywhere in the Freetown shows the creativity and the love of decorations among the habitants. Most of them are very colorful and beautiful.

Workshops
Like in other cohousing communities, workshops are provided in the Freetown Christiania to let the habitants to share and improve their skills/knowledges with others within the community. Not only musical and arts workshops are provided, but also many other things that surround their daily lives have workshops. Certainly there are workshops for bikes because bikes are the only transportation allowed within the Freetown Christiania.
CHRISTIANIA - "FREETOWN"

Other Entertainment

Sports
Since football (soccer) is the major sport in Europe, there are football events that let the habitants to gather around and play some team sports.

Marijuana
Because the use of tobacco and marijuana is allowed in the Freetown Christiania, people would not hesitate to smoke. That is one of the reasons why this place is famous and attracts so many tourist and fans to get there. The people in Christiania have developed their own set of rules, completely independent of the Danish government. The Danish government has nothing to do about this and the people in the Freetown Christiania keeps enjoying their special rights.

My Thoughts
With all the benefit and welfare in the Freetown Christiania all the fans want to move to live in the Freetown. However, to avoid overcrowding, application for new membership is limited. Although the diversity of culture, ethics, nationalities and personalities in the Freetown Christiania, people can still live peacefully together as a significant cohousing group in the world because all the people in the community share the same believes and rules: they want to hold themselves together and the only thing they strongly against in their world is the harsh laws and ruling by the governments like the Danish government. They want their own democracy and lifestyles.

In order to establish a strong, successful and peaceful cohousing community, a very strong bond and believe among the habitants is really needed. People have to know exactly what they want to get from the community and what they are responsible for the community. As a result, conflicts could all be compromised and consensus would easy to achieve.
Christiania 1991 Green Plan

* outlined plans for future development
* opposed government’s plan to densify housing
* make Christiania more ecologically justifiable
* settler stop introduced in 1987, later abolished
* wastewater treatment facilities
* 50% solar bathwater heating
* improve harbor water quality
* car-free
* control run-off
* re-use grey water
* bio-filtration
Water Quality and Urban Growth

Since 1900, the world’s urban population has grown from 160 million to 2.9 billion in 2000. By 2030 it will reach 4.9 billion. Sixty percent of the world’s population will live in urban areas. The growth of urban areas is leading to environmental stresses including:

Degredation of urban watersheds, ground water, and estuaries as well as contamination of local streams and coastal waters from septic runoff, construction runoff, phosphorus from landscape fertilizers, combined sewer overflows, etc.

Rising flood and earthquake losses due to encroachment on floodplains and increased flood levels and “flashiness” in local streams due to expansion of impervious surfaces in metropolitan watersheds. (Platt, U Mass)

When water hits the ground, it either seeps into the ground or flows on the surface into rivers, lakes, or sewer systems. In urban areas runoff can pick up fertilizers, animal waste, oil, grease, bacteria, toxic chemicals, metals, and sediments. This degrades the quality of streams, rivers, lakes, groundwater and drinking water.
Why Coors Tastes So Bad

The “Pure Mountain Spring Water” in Coors beer passes through abandoned mines, and an upper suburban basin between Denver and Golden, Colorado.
Solutions: Green Roofs

BedZed, London

Christiania

Battery Park
High Rise Housing
New York

Ford Plant
Dearborn, Michigan
Bioswales / Living Machines

Living Machine at Oberlin College

Study of in-series constructed wetland treating landfill leachate found that wetland removed 69% of phosphorus.

Cross-section of bioswale

Portland Parks and Recreation bioswale
Water Catchment Systems

* store water for larger use
* reduce flow into sewer systems
* can be combined with UV purification systems

Permeable Pavers

* allow water to seep into ground
* reduce runoff
COMMUNITY and INDIVIDUALITY
complementary concepts

FOSTERING COMMUNITY
- Rule by Concensus
- Common Buildings
- Common Outdoor Spaces
- Community Recreation
- Physical Continuity
- Organizational Layout
- Sharing of Facilities
- Involving Members in Community Design Process!!!

EXpressING INDIVIDUALITY
- Personalized Exterior Space
- Personalized Interior Space
- Opportunities to Share Talents
- "Individuality" Design Toolbox:
  - Materials
  - Form
  - Orientation
  - Scale
  - Rhythm, etc....

WHERE IS THE LINE DRAWN BETWEEN THE INDIVIDUAL AND THE COMMUNITY IN COHOUSING DESIGN?

WHICH OF THE THESE TWO COMMUNITIES EMBODIED A GREATER SENSE OF MEMBER INDIVIDUALITY?

...OF COMMUNITY?

CHRISTIANIA

VISUAL CONTINUITY & CONNECTIVITY

OUTDOOR SPACES

LAYOUT
CHRISTIANIA - “FREETOWN”

SELF-MANAGEMENT/GOVERNMENT: Over ten committees organize to address the various ins and outs of running and living in Christiania. The Christianites have banded together to establish their own laws which at times collide with the government of Denmark.

ART, EXHIBITIONS, MUSIC, FILM, THEATER AND RADIO: The Arts thrive in the public venues of Christiania, linking inhabitants with tourists.

COFFEEHOUSES, RESTAURANTS, MARKETS AND STORES: Business has become a key role in Christiania’s autonomy.

PUBLIC IMAGE: Christiania has published books about the community as well as erected an extensive website for the people.

COMMUNITY BUILDINGS, LANDSCAPE AND PATHWAYS

COMMUNITY EVENTS
CHRISTIANIA - “FREETOWN”

individuality

THE SPIRIT OF INDIVIDUALITY JUST NOT END IN MEMBERS’ HOMES, THEIR LOVE FOR CHRISTIANIA SPILLS OUT OF THEIR WINDOWS INTO THE ADJACENT GARDENS.

PERSONAL TOUCHES MADE TO EXISTING MILITARY BARRACKS

As designers, we can be the catalysts of community in co-housing projects that recognize the human desire to shape one’s own space—building housing in the spirit of cooperative stewardship!!!

THE INHABITANTS OF CHRISTIANIA LITERALLY PAINT THE WALLS OF THE TOWN WITH IMAGES AND WORDS OF SELF-EXPRESSION.

ORGANIC LAYOUT OF INDIVIDUAL/PRIVATE PATHWAYS

WITHIN A GIVEN COMMUNITY FRAMEWORK, THE INDIVIDUAL IS FREE TO DEVIATE AND EXPRESS THEMSELVES IN THE REALIZATION OF HIS/HER DISTINCT LIVING SPACE.
ADAPTIVE REUSE
BEYOND CHRISTIANIA

Until 1971, Christiania was the site of abandoned army barracks. It was then that it was turned into an "ongoing experiment in controlled anarchic way of living together". As can be seen in these photographs, the citizens of Christiania have taken great liberty in decorating the old existing barracks, making them colorful and unique. Renovations also include additions to the existing buildings.

Unfortunately because there are restrictions against taking pictures within Christiania, it is hard to get a sense of the kinds of renovations that have been done on the interiors of the barracks. Because of this, I would like to focus on some other examples of adaptive reuse in cohousing. Hopefully we can touch on a variety of issues which arise when working with existing structures.
BEYOND CHRISTIANIA

HOW MUCH OF THE EXISTING STRUCTURE STAYS?

To answer this question, I would like to look at the Eastern Village Cohousing Condominiums in Silver Spring, Maryland. Now containing 56 living units, this building was originally an office building built in 1957. Converting office space into residences could be considered a leap, and as can be guessed, most of the interior spaces were gutted. It is important to note that they were able to recycle a lot of the materials which made up the walls and floors they were removing.

This aspect of recycling was one element leading to the Eastern Village receiving a LEED Silver rating upon completion. Other sustainable factors contributing to this honor include the use of ground-source heating and cooling, low-emitting finishes and a vegetative roof. Most importantly, Eastern Village shows us a beautiful example of how to create new green space. What used to be a parking lot is now a central courtyard including a patio and playground for kids.
BEYOND CHRISTIANIA

HOW CAN YOU OVERCOME A PRE-EXISTING NEGATIVE IMAGE?

Army barracks, such as the ones in Christiania, carry with them a certain image. All buildings have an identity and sometimes this can be something that a new owner wants to change. Take for example Avenue Cooperative Apartments in Madison, Wisconsin. This site was previously owned by the University of Wisconsin and contained a contagious disease facility and later a detox center. During the renovation process in the 80s, long-time residents recalled always crossing the street to avoid the place. So, during this project, how did the developers attempt to diffuse this negative image to create a healthy living environment?

For one, they relied heavily on the community for the design of the site. A winter sledding slope on the site was preserved after the advice of neighborhood kids. Also, there was emphasis placed on preserving trees and green space. Most important was to build the trust of the existing community. A neighborhood advisory committee was established and met often during the preliminary design phase. This led to strong support of the project from the people in the area, many of whom had been hostile critics in the beginning.
BEYOND CHRISTIANIA

HOW SHOULD YOU RESPOND TO THE PRE-EXISTING CONTEXT?

Not such an issue for the more closed community of Christiania, but still an important part of design is the aspect of integrating a new community into an existing neighborhood. Here we have Heritage Heights in Burnaby, B.C. In the development of these 21 townhouses, there included the preservation and restoration of the H.D. Morrison House. This Edwardian-style house dates pre-World War I and is designated as a heritage building.

It was important for several reasons that the design of the new townhouses be reflective of the pre-existing heritage house. First of all, there was concern about the community's acceptance of the new homes because it is a non-profit project providing rentals to low-income families. The care put into the appearance of the new townhomes aided the willingness of the neighborhood to accept these new dwellings. Secondly, working hard to mesh these new buildings into the existing fabric heightens the identity of the whole neighborhood as a unified community. Finally, the restoration of the historic heritage house was a grand gesture of respect to the area and the people who had already been living there.