“Cohousing has distinctive architectural and site planning features. Typically, purpose-built, attached housing is set within a purpose designed neighbourhood.”

NEIGHBORHOOD DESIGN
In general, cohousing projects follow a set of design guidelines and generic approaches when organizing site and community. These basic guidelines appeal to different goals and aspirations that each cohousing group has. Based on the personal group ideals, different arrangements of common space, semi private space, and personal space are desired. However, in all cases, cohousing groups develop site or neighborhood plans that facilitates social interaction between residents.

BASIC DESIGN PRINCIPLES
- Vehicles are confined to the edges- Child safety, quality of outdoor space, Spontaneous interaction, more room for common space and gardens.
- Shared pedestrian walkways- Many cohousing groups are environmentally conscious and attempt to reduce the consumption of many types of energy, however, this also allows for more casual social interaction between community members.
- Shared common space- usually in the form of a courtyard or open gathering space.
- Private Back Yard- Allowing for private outdoor family or personal space
- Clear boundaries and edges- nonverbal announcement that defines use of spaces as public, private, or both. Also applies to the definition of the community to outsiders.
- Thresholds or transition space- creates a buffer between public and private space

DEMOGRAPHICS
Cohousing can fit all age groups, social groups, and family structures, however, their individual needs determine what organizational type is used for the site design.

Cohousing Organizational Characteristics.


Martina Oxoby, Carolina Mondragon, “Bish” Bishoff, Kaelee Pearson

Four Basic Organizational Types
- Courtyard
- Covered “Street”
- “Street” & Courtyard
- Pedestrian “Street”
St. Francis Square is a moderate income housing development which is located in the Western Addition of San Francisco. This development is run as a tenant owned co-operative with a full time resident manager and a Board of Directors, which is elected by the residents. It consists of 299 apartments that wrap around three shared squares, beautifully landscaped with pines. These three outdoor spaces are the heart of the community allowing the residents to interact with each other and partake in their daily rituals of Tai Chi and Chinese dance. “The rituals, which seem to slow the pace of urban life and encourage a nearness to nature, reflect culture and spiritual beliefs of those who live in St. Francis Square.”

- Resident Attitudes Towards The Environment At St. Francis Square, San Francisco: A Summary of the Initial Findings.
- http://www.communitygreens.org/ExistingGreens/stfrancissquare/stfrancissquare.htm
- Housing As If People Mattered: Site Guidelines For Medium-Density Family Housing.

St. Francis Square
San Francisco, CA.
Completed: 1964

Demographics
- The majority of the people have been there since the beginning, about 37 years.
- About 54% of the residents are over 64 years old.
- 14% African Americans and 8% are inter-racial couples.

Building Breakdown
- Includes 299 garden apartments, mostly two and three bedroom apartments but with a couple one bedroom units.
- Buildings are three stories tall and are arranged around three interior landscaped courts, two former streets closed to allow a three block “superblock” with parking on the side.

Site Statistics
- 299 Family size Apts.
- Urban Environment
- Tenant owned units
- Largest square: 300ft by 250ft
The use of landscape to create separations from homes and shared spaces (circulation).

**Site Plan of St. Francis Square**

- Boundaries are clearly defined by the positioning of buildings and the landscaping, forming central courtyards as shared spaces for the residents.
- Courtyards serve as a refuge from San Francisco.
- Each resident has a balcony or private patio for individual use.
- Building entries are shared by only six.
- Parking lot and thick planting help to create a separation (noise) from the neighboring highway.

**Space Pattern**
- Building clusters form three courtyards (heart of St. Francis) which induce activities and interaction among residents of all ages and ethnicities.

**Diagram of Public to Private**

- Diagram of public to private space pattern
- 60% Shared space (open)
- 40% Private space (homes)

**St. Francis Square**
San Francisco, CA.
Completed: 1964

Martina Oxoby, Carolina Mondragon, Erik “Bish” Bishoff, Kaelee Pearson
Muir Commons was developed by a group of individuals, who came to be its future residents, and a group of architects. They worked along side each other to identify a clear program that met all the needs of the future community. This program included activities and priorities for the use of the land. Some goals included the importance of spending time outdoors, interaction among residents, achieving comfort while being outside, growing food for private and common use, and educating children about nature. The complex includes several gardens and orchards which promotes education and cultivation of organic produce. Within the development, the circulation consists of winding paths, connecting house to house, as well as providing a safe environment for the children to play without the danger of traffic; ideally a perfect place to raise children.

Muir Commons

Davis, California

Completed: 1991

http://www.muircommons.org/

The common house is comprised of an outdoor terrace, dining room, a commercial kitchen, storage, laundry facilities, a children's room, a teen's room, a few craft rooms, an exercise room, a living room, a guest room, and bathrooms; ultimately meeting the needs of all the residents. Also, it is designed to accommodate a large group of people to promote interaction, like community dinners, weekly activities, and meetings.

Demographics

-Muir Commons houses 26 families, including 45 adults and 28 children.
- Family structures vary from household to household.
- Most of the homes are owner occupied, but many of the homes are occupied by renters.

Building Breakdown

-Includes 26 homes of 2 or 3 bedrooms, ranging from 800 sq. ft to 1,400 sq. ft.
- The development components include a common house, terraces, a tot lot, several gardens, gathering nodes, orchards, and a wood and auto shop.

Common House Location

-The common house is positioned in the middle of the development and near the entrance, ideal for dropping in for a visit once arriving.
Muir Commons
Davis, California
Completed: 1991

Site Plan

Diagram of Public to Private

Private: Red
Transition: Orange
Shared: Yellow

Public to Private
-70% Public
-30% Private
-Individual backyards look out to the edges of the site.
-Gardens, orchards, front lawns, playgrounds and gathering nodes encourage interaction.
-The common house is the heart of the community, where everyone can socialize.

Space Pattern
-Each cluster connects to the central pedestrian walkway, unifying each house.
-Strong sense of security brought by the position of the clusters forming gathering nodes and outdoor courtyards.

Generic Typological Diagram

-A hybrid of the “street” and courtyard types.

Martina Oxoby, Carolina Mondragon, Erik “Bish” Bishoff, Kaelee Pearson
WindSong Cohousing Community was the first architecturally designed cohousing community to be built in Canada. It lies on a 6 acre site of which 1.8 acres is developed and the other 4 acres is covered with a protected salmon stream. Residents here believe that a community is the cornerstone of a healthy individual.

They arranged their community such that the Common house lies in the middle of the community between the north and south ends, with only one entrance. They designed the glass covered pedestrian street for passive solar heating, as well as for a tool for increasing the usability of common spaces and encouraging community participation.

- www.windsong.bc.ca/default.htm

BASIC DEMOGRAPHICS
- Multigeneration
- 90 residents of diverse ages, cultures, religions and sexual orientations living as one huge extended family.

BUILDING BREAKDOWN
- 34 privately owned units of clustered townhouses with ample soundproofing between units
  - 1 bedroom + den (1 level), 3 bedrooms (2 levels), 4 bedrooms (3 levels): 687-1609 square feet
- Public kitchens face street, private living and master bedrooms face back green spaces
- 5000 sf common house with kitchen, dining, laundry, playroom, crafts, teen room.
WINDSONG
Langley, Southwestern British Columbia, Canada
Established 1996

PUBLIC TO PRIVATE
-20% Public, 80% Private
-Private spaces- homes and backyard green spaces that are open to elements
-Transition spaces- porches and front door ways that face pedestrian street
-Shared spaces are the pedestrian street and common house

SPACE PATTERN
-Linear layout with houses laid out on pedestrian street covered by greenhouse style glass roof.

GENERIC TYPOLOGICAL DIAGRAM
-www.windsong.bc.ca/default.htm

Glass covered street
In 1995, a group of environmentalists from Copenhagen wanted to create a community with significant diversity in ages and background (incomes, personality, family/single). After 5 years of planning and construction about 100 residents moved in to the modern vision of a traditional village with ecologically sustainable housing. No one has since moved out and 80 people are on the waiting list to move in.

-Durrett, C. Senior Cohousing- a community approach to independent living. 2005

MUNKSOGARD [munk-so-gore]
Denmark
Established 2000

The Senior Residents say Munksogard has been a great success. They participate in common dinners, a variety of activities and don't rely much on their neighboring communities, though they do have whole community parties. The seniors also treat chores as a social event. Residents of Munksogard wanted to live near a community with children. They also say their own children and grandchildren come to visit more often and stay longer because families do not feel like they are in a position to care full time for their elders. Residents liked the idea of having to climb external stairs because they felt it helped them stay fit. However, the ground floor units are all wheelchair accessible.

The Courtyard layout space pattern resembles a traditional village feel, and helps promotes public interaction among residents.

BASIC DEMOGRAPHICS
- multigeneration
- 5 different cohousing communities for young first settlers under 31 years, families and singles, seniors over 50 years, co-operative, and owner-occupied.

BUILDING BREAKDOWN
- 20 units/ community
- Senior community contains 3-2 story buildings of 1, 1.5, and 2 bedroom apartments and 1 common house with dining, sitting, card, craft, kitchen, laundry, guest, workshop and reading rooms.

PUBLIC TO PRIVATE
- 80% Public, 20% Private

SPACE PATTERN
In the 1960's there was a population increase due to steel workers moving in to work at the local shipyard. By the 1990's they were reaching retirement and wanted better senior housing experiences. Initiated in 1996 by the municipality of Munkebo, there were 60 interested seniors, above and beyond their expectations. The remaining group of 40 were divided into two with hopes of creating two senior cohousing communities. The members got along so well they started participating in activities long before move in day in 1998. These members claim to now be more self-confident, extroverted and have an enhanced social life.

-Durrett, C. Senior Cohousing- a community approach to independent living. 2005

In the Courtyard layout, residences and the common house face into a common yard. It was important for the residents to take advantage of the views to the bay.

Site Statistics
-22 members
-Ages 52-78
-12 units

GENERAL CONSIDERATIONS FOR SENIOR COHOUSING
-Size matters- too big feels like the institution they are trying to avoid, too small feels like a family not a neighborhood of actively engaged households. Usually 15-25 households, 1.3 people per household per community is a good size
-Social patterns change with community size which isn't always a good thing

TOP 10 REASONS FOR SENIOR COHOUSING
-Health
-Safety & Security
-Community,
-Burden Free
-Food Preparation
-Impact on Planet
-Kindred Spirits
-Life's Maintaenance
-Appropriate Houses
-Financial Good Sense

BASIC DEMOGRAPHICS
-Retired workers from the local shipyard

BUILDING BREAKDOWN
-12 units in 6 one story buildings- private homes of 625, 825, and 900 square feet.
-All front doors face the central yard and large bay windows in kitchen allow visibility into the yard.
-Common house placed near parking lot to serve as entrance to community. has kitchen, large dining/living, laundry and guest room.

SPACE PATTERN
In 1984 a group of middle-aged people got together to start planning better arrangements than retiring in institutional homes. At first, they weren’t planning on building a housing community. Their vision was to create a community with lots of common activities but also respect of privacy. Co-housing exclusively for seniors hadn’t existed at the time, but they met monthly for three years which created a strong community long before moving in. They created a plan to get the most out of their last 20 years without being a burden to their children, relying on the government or compromising their potential for happiness.

-Durrett, C. Senior Cohousing- a community approach to independent living. 2005

Otium has a linear layout within which houses are laid out on a pedestrian street offering a village feel with parking off of common house near the site entrance.

OTIUM
Denmark
Established 1988

Martina Oxoby, Carolina Mondragon, Erik “Bish” Bishoff, Kaelee Pearson
"We enjoy sharing community meals in our newly rebuilt common house 3-4 times per week and work parties once a month. Informally, people get together to share dinners at home, a soak in the hot tub, a game of cards, or just a nice cup of tea."

Started by a group of five renters in the early 1980’s N Street cohousing began as a single fence removal project between two interested and has developed into a community of 17 houses centered around a large shared back yard.

Today, N Street cohousing is seen as one of the leading examples of retrofit cohousing where existing housing developments are redesigned to fit cohousing needs.

The success of N Street is attributed to the acquisition and addition of houses and space over time as adjacent property becomes available and as interested parties acquire the funds. Also, as the needs and interest of the community grew and developed, the group choose to add on the common house, laundry facilities, garden space, and chicken run.

N Street Cohousing - Retrofit detached single family cohousing
Davis, California
Started 1986

Sources: Meltzer, Graham PhD, Sustainable Community Cohousing: A contemporary Approach to Housing Ourselves
http://www.ic.org
http://www.cohousing.org/default.aspx
http://www.nstreetcohousing.org

SITE STATISTICS
- 5 to 58 residents
- 39 Adults
- 19 Children
- 17 Units
- 2.27 Acres

DEMOGRAPHICS-
- College students, young couples, young professionals, singles, renters, owners.
- Progressive oriented political people.
- Motivated, varied in needs, age, and finances.

BUILDING BREAKDOWN
- Single family detached
- 1-2 bedroom
- 9-3 bedroom
- 7-4 bedroom
- Owned, renting, leasing
- Community grows and develops as financially available and adjacent land becomes obtainable.

COMMON HOUSE
- Reuse of original house
- In center of community
- Includes- Kitchen, Dinning, Storage

Martina Oxoby, Carolina Mondragon, “Bish” Bishoff, Kaelee Pearson
DEVELOPMENT OVER TIME
- Started as a single shared house and developed over 25 years into a 15 unit retrofit cohousing development.
- Renters become owners
  - Allows for greater commitment due to involvement before the commitment of ownership.
  - High turnover of renters allows for high energy and constant new ideas and involvement.

SUNLIGHT COMMUNITY
Portland, Oregon
Started 1979

INTERPRETED ORGANIZATIONAL DIAGRAM
- Transition Spaces
  - Front yards, drive ways, front porches, back porches
- Shared Spaces
  - Shared backyard creates a space for residents to interact and be involved in the development of their land and the production of food for the community.
  - Backyard walkways connect directly to community houses and the common house.
  - Dispersal of facilities and utilities (laundry, kitchen, etc.) encourages movement throughout the site.

PUBLIC vs PRIVATE
- Percentage: 60/40
  - 60% public, 40% private
- Transitions
  - Parking, street, front porches and yards, backyard, walkways, back porches, & utility spaces.

SPACE PATTERNS
- Linear Organization with retrofit backyard courtyard
  - Highly level of interaction
    - many houses are shared
    - owners with renters
    - shared garden and yard space
  - Front yard becomes semi-private and a transition threshold space

SITE LINES
- A shared back yard creates site lines across the open expanded back yard creating connects to the rear of the houses.

GENERIC TYPOLOGICAL DIAGRAM

Backyard Transition space

Martina Oxoby, Carolina Mondragon, “Bish” Bishoff, Kaelee Pearson
In the late 1970's a group of 3 singles and 3 couples who were living in the same neighborhood, developed the idea to share dinner 1-2 times a week as a way to conserve their energies and be involved in a greater sense of community. Based on these beginnings, the group then became interested in other energy conservation options and in 1978 they pooled their resources and purchased 15.5 wooded acres in the hills of Portland. This land was strategically chosen based on its south facing hill side to allow for passive solar heating.

The community developed design guidelines and a site layout that allowed for spontaneous interaction within the common spaces, while creating a large portion of private land connected to resident houses. Although members wanted a greater sense of community they still wanted the privacy and quite that comes with detached housing. Also, by choosing a site located 8 minutes from downtown Portland the children were close to schools and the parents or career individuals had easy access to the city.

The common house was located on the far East side of the community based on the wished of all members not to live directly next to a potential noise source. With the parking pulled off to the edge of the site a large pedestrian walkway runs through the center of the site connecting the parking, housing, and common house. Although this is an example of a loosely organized and low involvement community, it still shows an option for organizing housing to facilitate interaction between neighbors and create the greater sense of community that these individuals desired.

Sources: Meltzer, Graham PhD., Sustainable Community Cohousing: A contemporary Approach to Housing Ourselves http://www.ic.org
Bill Church: Founding member of Sunlight

SUNLIGHT COMMUNITY
Portland, Oregon
Started 1979
Martina Oxoby, Carolina Mondragon, “Bish” Bishoff, Kaelie Pearson
DESIGN LAYOUT CHARACTERISTICS
- Transition Spaces
  - Front yards, parking lot, resident pathways
- Shared Spaces
  - Common house- used 1-2 times a month
  - Walkways- car to door standard is removed to facilitate more spontaneous interaction and safer community feel.
- Boundaries- property lines (backyards are private), back vs front of house.

SUNLIGHT COMMUNITY
Portland, Oregon
Started 1979

INTERPRETED ORGANIZATIONAL DIAGRAM

GENERAL CONSIDERATIONS
- Know your neighbor
  - Safety in community by knowing and interacting with your neighbors.
- People with similar ideas

DEVELOPMENT OVER TIME
- Over 28 years there has been a slow turnover with most households
- Of the original 15 there are 3 still in the community
- Now, adults age 30 to 80 and 6 kids 2 to 14.
- The mix now is about the same as originally; artist, small business owner, doctor, teacher, therapist, etc...

PUBLIC vs PRIVATE
- Percentage- 20/80
  - 20% public, 80% priv.
- Transitions-
  - Parking lot, pedestrian walk, front porches and yards, common wooded area.

SPACE PATTERNS
- Linear Organization- front doors face shared pathway.
- Least involved co-housing community. relaxed mostly planned interactions.
- The Parking lot is pulled along the north edge to increase spontaneous interaction along the pedestrian path.

SITE LINES-
- Major site lines are across the pathways in the short direction and linearly from the common house through the community along the path.

GENERIC TYPOLOGICAL DIAGRAM

The Pedestrian Street

Martina Oxoby, Carolina Mondragon, "Bish" Bishoff, Kaelee Pearson
An ongoing and organic organization beginning shortly after the LA Riots of 1992 in a response to concerns for neighborhood crime. The main founder, Lois Arkin, continues to be a primary “manager” of the Los Angeles Eco Village through formal forms of education and recruitment.

The Eco-Village has grown out of an existing lower-class neighborhood and contains a number of businesses, social services, and residential types. The Los Angeles Eco-Village was not developed from the ground up but has been formed from an existing infrastructure.

**BASIC DEMOGRAPHICS**
- Over 500 residents of all ages, singles and families, from over a dozen ethnic groups mostly lower/working class.

**BUILDING BREAKDOWN:**
- Mostly Public Spaces with 32 separate buildings
  - 2 single family
  - 1 duplex
  - 6 four-plex
  - 6 Apartment Buildings
  - 8 Commercial Bldg's
  - 4 Community Bldg's
  - 5 unoccupied/condemned

**SITE STATISTICS**
- 500 residents
- Age range infant to senior
- 205 Living Units
- Approximately 15 acres

**MAIN BUILDING LOCATION**
- Courtyard apartment complex at central intersection of White House Place and Bimini Place.

**SOURCES**
- "In Context" no 35
- "The Neighborhood Works", April/May 1994
- "LA Eco Village Newsletter", Spring 1994

**LOS ANGELES ECO VILLAGE**
Los Angeles, CA
Established Spring 1992

Martina Oxoby, Carolina Mondragon, Erik “Bish” Bishoff, Kaelee Pearson
PUBLIC TO PRIVATE
- 650/35 ratio public to private
- Transitions include gates, lobbies, yards, fences, sidewalks and parking lots. The main building contains a public courtyard accessed through a building lobby with radiating corridors. (Not all inhabitants of the LAEV are active participants.)

SPATIAL PATTERNS
- Neighborhood blocks originating from existing street patterns (The LAEV as been acquired over time and was not “designed”)
- The primary community building is located at central intersection of Bimini Place and White House Place with streets extending north, south and east.
- Parking is on street with lots to accommodate commercial parking and a flexcar lot.

TYPOLOGICAL PATTERN
Martina Oxoby, Carolina Mondragon, Erik “Bish” Bishoff, Kaelee Pearson
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Location</th>
<th>Demographics</th>
<th>Interaction Level</th>
<th>Ownership Type</th>
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<td>OTIUM</td>
<td>Senior</td>
<td>High interaction</td>
<td>Rental</td>
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<tr>
<td>SUNLIGHT</td>
<td>Middle aged and singles</td>
<td>Very low interaction</td>
<td>Ownership</td>
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<td>KORVETTEN</td>
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<td>MUNKSOGORD</td>
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<td>Families, couples, singles</td>
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<td>Ownership</td>
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<td>MUIR COMMONS</td>
<td>Families with children and married couples</td>
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<td>WINDSONG</td>
<td>Multi-generation</td>
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<td>Multi-generation</td>
<td>High interaction</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

Summary:

*Martina Oxoby, Carolina Mondragon, Erik “Bish” Bishoff, Kaelee Pearson*