

The Design Process: Pre-design Program Outline

Note: This handout was created for a cohousing design workshop presented by Design Coalition in 1992

The following is intended as a checklist for making a co-housing pre-design program. In addition, a full development program would address social characteristics (types of households, diversity, income etc.); financial realities and budgeting; and a development time line.

A. Common Facilities

1. **Common House**

- a. Relationship and priority of functions
 - Relationship to dwellings and site features/outdoor space
 - Special needs—children, disabled, elderly
 - Natural light and acoustics
 - Building materials
 - Energy/environmental/healthy-building issues
 - Future needs

- b. **Examples of potential spaces/uses:**
 - Dining room (no. of people, size, furnishings, multi-purpose uses etc.)
 - Kitchen (size, equipment, no. of people working etc.)
 - Storage/Storeroom(s) (food, equipment, materials, tools)
 - Children's room/child care program
 - Office
 - Workshop (equipment)
 - Bathroom(s)
 - Teen room
 - Craft shop (equipment)
 - Laundry (expected use, appliances, seating, folding area)
 - Guest room(s)
 - Library
 - Music Room (acoustics, privacy)
 - Recycling center
 - Courtyard/deck/porch
 - Grocery store
 - Recreation/exercise room
 - Quiet sitting area
 - TV/Media room

2. **Other Areas/detached structures**

- Shop/shed/garage buildings
- Guest cottage
- Gazebo/garden structures
- Dumpster enclosure
- Greenhouse
- Glassed-in street

3. **Site**

- Overall layout / positive outdoor space / public-private continuum
- Transition to surrounding neighborhood
- Roads (where, occasional access to dwellings, service & emergency issues)
- Walks (how paved, different kinds)
- Parking (where, how much, if paved and/or covered)

Courtyard (relation to common house and circulation, formal aspects)
Children's needs (thru-out site, play areas)
Area to be landscaped (trees, hedges, turf, shrubs, groundcover)
Area to be left natural
Gardens (individual, common, vegetable, flower)
Water (pond, stream, fountain etc.)
Other amenities, preserved or created (benches, groves, sacred space, gateway, etc.)

B. Dwelling Units

1. General

a. Size ranges and distribution

(studio, 1, 2, 3-bedroom, shared living units, 1 or 2-story etc.)

Cost ranges

Relation to public circulation ("soft edge" at transition, private outdoor space)

Internal orientation/characteristics

- adult-children bedroom separation
- zones of public to private
- interior flexibility
- etc.

Energy efficiency issues

Natural light / acoustics

Materials selection

Future addition/connections between units

Sweat-equity

b. Unit Type A

Size and description

Living/Dining

Kitchen

Bedrooms

Bathroom

Storage

Private outdoor space

c. Unit Type B

Size and description

Living/Dining

Kitchen

Bedrooms

Bathroom

Storage

Private outdoor space

d. Unit Type C

and so on...