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Almost from its inception in 1994, Hope Meadows® has been inspiring replication efforts across the country. While some local initiatives are working to acquire and rehabilitate existing housing stock, as was done at the original site in Rantoul, Illinois, most are facing the daunting prospect of designing and constructing an entire neighborhood development from the ground up. In both cases questions inevitably arise concerning the optimal arrangement of residential structures and the internal layouts of residences and common-use buildings.

This guide reviews some of the key design features and experiences that have contributed to the evolution of the Hope Meadows community over its 14-year history, and presents a general site design framework for new Generations of Hope Communities (GHCs) on an abstract level. It also provides references to other sources on related subjects such as green/sustainable construction and universal design. Future versions of this guide will also begin to incorporate a series of case studies on aspects of design drawn from actual replication experiences.

The goal is to facilitate planning discussions between the entrepreneurs who have taken on the task of building a GHC locally, the design professionals and developers on the team, and the staff at GHDC. As case studies of actual projects accumulate and our collective knowledge base builds, our repertoire of concrete solutions will grow as well, and these guidelines will evolve.
I Principles

Developing a community that promotes enduring ties also means tackling an underlying issue of profound significance in the modern world. The collective dimension of life is problematic for most of us who have been raised and socialized over a lifetime into a highly individualistic culture. The essential design challenge in developing a GHC is to introduce more complexity of structure and nuance of relationship into the space between individual and collective, more options and room for the emergence of new forms of social order and interaction. At stake, ultimately, is the continued existence of the networks of care and service necessary to sustain the well-being and healthy development of multiple generations – networks that can be either frustrated or facilitated by the built environment.

Fourteen years of experience at Hope Meadows has not only enabled us to identify certain core principles of function and form for achieving these GHC goals, but also several pragmatic insights with a more suggestive relevance, including some negative lessons as well – things that might be done better given a clean slate. And of course Hope Meadows itself continues to evolve, striving to incorporate current best practices and principles such as universal design and green building standards, to make residents’ tenancy more sustainable – these topics are addressed further in the section on Hope Meadows.

But developing a GHC is not merely about replicating the good parts of Hope Meadows while avoiding the bad. Appropriate designs for achieving the goals of the GHC model may vary widely. Therefore, while there are plenty of illustrations and examples of implementation, the treatment of topics is focused more on abstract principles than concrete specifications. This guide will have best served its purpose if the discussions of principle that do ensue lead to creative innovations in practice that embody the spirit of the underlying GHC model.

1 See the GHC White Paper for a fuller explanation of these principles.
A living architecture

The design goal of the GHC model is to establish a diffuse and naturalistic environment for the cultivation and sharing of wisdom and expertise among all members of the community, rather than relying on more formal training and regimens to achieve program objectives. Architectural aspects of a new site should generally mirror and complement this programmatic approach. Ideally the designers would even expect to break new ground in creating architectural support for the emergence of new intergenerational relationships and sustainable networks of care and service.

There are good reasons, of course, why this might prove difficult. Chiefly there is the tendency among program designers in general to specify interventions and outcomes with high precision, in order to be able to monitor the impact and cost-effectiveness of their professional efforts. This paradigm works best when goals are limited and clear (reduce teen pregnancy, increase reading proficiency, etc.), and when there is a clear role distinction between agency personnel and the clients they serve. The GHC model is built on the premise that it is possible to transcend this style of intervention. In the realm of architectural planning there is a parallel tendency to over-determine the nature and intended use of spaces, particularly when a program of service delivery is also part of the plan. The effect can be to disable informal interactions that take place in spaces where one party plays host to others.

At Hope Meadows residents have creatively and spontaneously worked to reverse this bias by reinventing the built environment – mostly in understated ways – to better serve their own tacit social purposes and goals.
It is unclear, for instance, whether the architects of military housing ever imagined that cars might end up being parked elsewhere so that carports could be used as shaded verandas where residents could greet and casually interact with one another (especially with children that might be drifting through the neighborhood). Such “hosting” activity, where it is recognized and designed-for at all in conventional senior housing developments, is usually delegated entirely to common spaces, depersonalizing the event in the process. Such solutions are endemic to collectivized housing projects in general – typically there is an abrupt shift from the private domains of individual apartments (which are kept as small as possible) to common-use spaces where “hosts”, if they exist at all, are program staffers.

What has emerged at Hope Meadows over the years, given the wide latitude for individual agency and initiative on the part of residents that has characterized the program so far, is a complex layering of spaces ranging from entirely private to entirely common-use, and encompassing a variety of intermediate levels. Even common-use spaces have evolved at Hope Meadows into flexible environments where newly-emerging groups can gather and claim a place – this is significant in part because membership in such groups generally cuts across other existing social networks and serves to link the neighborhood up in ever more complex ways.

Sometimes these groups emerge spontaneously out of common interest or affinity, such as the quilting and sewing group that managed to colonize a little-used office basement area, and which eventually morphed further to include occasional Saturday classes for children. More recently, another little-used basement area was upgraded and dedicated for use by teens – here the initiative was taken by staff in response to a generally-recognized emergent need, but the precise
Some GHC principles with direct relevance to site design

**Normality**

GHC residents, including those whose social challenge provides the organizing focus of the community, are viewed not as problems-to-be-managed, but as ordinary people requiring the same embeddedness in family and community that we would want for ourselves. Community members are not “wards” or “cases” or “clients”; they are friends, neighbors, and family members.

**Built environment facilitates relationships and aging-in-community.**

In a GHC, all residential lots are geographically contiguous. The neighborhood must be designed to facilitate the formation of relationships and aging-in-place. This includes, but is not limited to, family and senior homes that are intermixed; an intergenerational center at the geographic “heart” of the neighborhood; and room for residents to have private space, yet still interact with others. All housing units must be “universally” designed to accommodate growing families and allow older adults to “age in community”. shape such use will take will always depend on a process of evolution that no one expects to be able to foresee in detail. One important implication is that there are no common spaces that are permanently designated for the exclusive use of one or another group (such as a “senior center”). At the level of design all common spaces are designated “intergenerational”. And physical spaces are constantly being adapted and re-adapted: some seniors have allocated their basements to be play areas for visiting children; carports become verandas or patios in spite of their awkwardness for this purpose; yards blend subtly into one another and into the larger green spaces. All this allows for great freedom in briefly claiming space and shifting the momentary boundaries of an activity. In a sense there is a deeply “architectural” metaphor at play, suffusing the entire model, and emphasizing the creation of spaces rather than the direct engineering of targeted outcomes. Hope Meadows is, moreover, a living architecture that emerges and adapts, and which allows for environment-shaping by residents that would normally be excluded from such processes, effectively shifting them from client/patient to pro-active agent. Emerging out of all this (from a macro perspective) is a complex hierarchy of nested protective spaces and protected activities, ranging from the larger encompassing neighborhood, down through courtyards and
Cohesion stopping short of insularity.

A GHC should look and feel like any other healthy community. The less distinct its physical appearance from the larger community in which it is situated, the less the stigma associated with the purpose it serves. A GHC, however, must always do what it can to buffer its residents from adverse, external influences.

Evolving program design/learning from experience

An initial program plan is necessary for a GHC to be successful; however, to be most effective, the community must be allowed to adapt over time, filling in the details as residents gain experience with one another. The design must be flexible and responsive to the changing needs of the people in the neighborhood.

For a full discussion of all GHC principles, see the GHC White Paper

commons and pairs of dwellings, to intimate spaces for play, tutoring, therapy, visiting and family life – all of which are subject to constant reworking and re-purposing.

Normality

A GHC is thus intended to be a “normal” neighborhood, yet also multi-generational, integrated with respect to class and race, and characterized by a high level of professional competence that is diffused throughout the neighborhood, and thus effective in an understated way. The entire process is managed so as to evoke a sense of an “old fashioned” village, but without recourse to the usual mechanisms of exclusion and coercion that made such traditional spaces possible. The “normality” that is sought and achieved in this way is both natural and artificial – a “simulacrum”, or copy of something for which there is no original. As Ted Koppel put it in a segment of Nightline that aired in 1996, Hope Meadows is “a town so old-fashioned it’s, well, new.” This cultivated sense of normality fits neatly with the first key principle of the GHC model which, in terms of site design, basically amounts to a commitment to build only such neighborhoods and environments as we would want for our own families. This idea seems uncontroversial on its face, but tensions inevitably emerge with commonly-held assumptions about low-income or affordable housing. In that case we are accustomed to doing the best we can given the constraints of policy and regulation, and these in turn are usually
A first look at some other relevant principles of building and site design

**New Urbanism**

The leading organization promoting New Urbanist principles is the Congress for the New Urbanism. For an overview of this movement, see also Peter Katz’ book *The New Urbanism*.

For an example of a well-conceived Hope VI project, see the Seattle Housing Authority’s High Point Redevelopment initiative.

**Green Building**

A wealth of materials, including a tour of a green project, planning templates, and funding sources for green development, is available on the website of the Enterprise Green Communities Initiative. Avi Friedman provides an overview of green building principles in his book *Sustainable Residential Development*.

Towards enforcing minimally acceptable standards, rather than providing optimal conditions for human flourishing. This has begun to change in recent years. Some HUD “Hope VI” redevelopment projects for instance have adopted principles of New Urbanism in their design standards, specifying diverse frontages that blend with the local vernacular architecture, accessible parks and other public spaces, traffic-calming street design, and the facilitation of walking and biking to common destinations.

Windows and pathways are arranged to allow for multiple “eyes on the street” as well as on commons and play-areas.

Where Hope VI projects have often run into difficulty is in cultivating a thriving social layer upon this relatively optimal physical framework. It is not a simple matter to bring a cohesive community together, particularly if the master plan also calls for diversity of age, class and ethnicity. In this regard the natural coherence of a GHC may serve to realize the potential of such cutting-edge designs more certainly and systematically. In particular the defining feature of contiguity – which works to ensure that all close geographic neighbors have explicitly signed on to the mission of the GHC program – may help to ensure a high degree of basic social networking and intimate connection, so that a culture of care and mutuality can emerge and stabilize.
Universal Design

A good place to start exploring this concept is the Center for Universal Design, which has identified the following seven basic principles of universal design:

**Equitable Use.** This guideline means to provide the same means of use for all users. This aims to avoid segregation of certain people by equally providing safety, security and appeal. An automatic, sliding door at the supermarket is a prime example of the Equitable Use principle.

**Flexibility in Use.** This principle is designed to promote products that accommodate a wide array of individual preferences and abilities. Take, for example, scissors or shears that work comfortably for both left and right handed people.

**Simple and Intuitive.** Design products that are easy to understand regardless of experience, knowledge, language skills, or concentration level. Basically, products developed under the Universal Design paradigm will be without unnecessary complexity, consistent, and accepting of a wide range of literacy. As an example, consider the assembly directions for your new set of shelves or your new gas grill. Those instructions are likely in several languages, have multiple visual aids, and are arranged consistently with importance.

Sustainability

While many of the core principles of the GHC model have direct relevance for site design and architecture, the converse holds as well – currently accepted principles of sound design also have relevance for GHC goals.

From the perspective of the GHC model, these principles (new urbanism, green building, universal design) all relate in various ways to an expanded sense of sustainability – not only in terms of impact on the physical environment but also with respect to the prime GHC goal of sustaining an expanded network of social ties with an open time horizon, thus facilitating the emergence of long-term mutually supportive relationships.

**Green Building** principles ensure that a new development fits well with the local ecology (e.g. low-irrigation landscaping, conserving trees, minimizing pavement, etc.) and that water and energy are efficiently managed (green roofs capture rainwater, technology and house orientation capture solar energy, appliances are energy-saving, etc.) Such green design provisions contribute to economic sustainability as well, particularly for fixed-income residents who cannot afford high utility costs.

Principles of New Urbanism (walkable proximity to basic amenities, multiple small parks and play areas, calm traffic, etc.) also clearly contribute to the overall sustainability
Perceptible Information. A design should communicate information effectively to the consumer, regardless of ambient conditions or the individual's sensory skills. This includes making important information easy to read, visually stimulating, and compatible with techniques or devices often used by those with sensory disabilities.

Tolerance for Error. In other words, minimize hazards and adverse consequences for accidental actions. This is most notable in the world of computers. The "undo" button is a perfect example of this principle in action. Other services steeped in this principle are warnings of hazards or errors (virus scanners) and other fail safe features.

Low Physical Effort. The design should be usable with little effort and in a comfortable way. The user will be able to maintain a neutral body position, use reasonable force, do well without sustained physical work. Examples include doorknobs, self-flushing toilets, etc.

Size and Space for Approach and Use. Provide a clear line of sight and a comfortable reach for any seated or standing individual. Allow for variations of hand and grip size and provide adequate space for assistive devices or personal assistance.

Finally there is an even more immediately relevant set of design principles to consider for a GHC, usually collected under the term Universal Design. These are most often considered separately from other sustainability issues, usually in connection with promoting the ambiguous goal of “aging-in-place”.

The objective of Universal Design is to create living spaces that are barrier-free for frail or handicapped or mobility-restricted individuals, and to do so without compromising on aesthetics and flexibility, but the principles apply beyond the realm of architecture as well. As illustrated in the diagrams below, examples of Universal Design kitchen features include pull-out pantry storage, dishwashers with drawers at waist height, appliances with front-mounted controls, dual-level counters for standing or seated (or wheelchair-bound) people, and flexible cabinets that can be rolled to various locations as needed or tucked away under counters. Bathrooms should have 60” diameter turning space and 36” clear space to the front and one side of toilets (to allow for wheelchairs); blocking in bathroom walls should allow for re-arrangement of grab bars; showers should allow for walk-in or roll-in (no thresholds); doors should be fitted with lever handles; and color and lighting should be used to define form and offer visual cues.
Universal Design of kitchens and bathrooms

Example Bathroom
Bathroom layouts may differ based on housing configuration and project specifics.

Universal Design Criteria:
- Outlets, ovens raised for better accessibility
- Lever handles on doors
- Stepless entry for easy accessibility
- Ramps designed into landscaping
- Wider doors—34”—for wheelchairs
- Spacious bathrooms and kitchens
- Layout supports all activities of daily living on one level, including Master Bedroom and Laundry.

Example Kitchen
Kitchen layouts may differ based on housing configuration and project specifics.

Provide storage options within different range reaches between 24”-48” above floor level.

Clear floor area to accommodate someone using a wheelchair.

Clear floor or removable cabinet under the sink.
Provide lever faucets at sink.

Provide appliances with front-end controls.

Provide clear floor space in front of appliances allowing for parallel wheelchair parking.

Countertops 28” to 34” high for standing and seated users.

Side by side refrigerator or bottom freezer model is preferable.
II  Hope Meadows

The housing that became Hope Meadows was acquired from the federal government late in 1993, when Chanute Air Force Base was closed. Hope for the Children began renovations on its new housing stock in mid-winter of 1994.² Existing structures were converted into 64 units of various sizes, with 15 allocated to foster and adoptive families, 44 to senior citizens, and 5 reserved for administrative and community activities. The structures consist of split-level duplex and four-plex clusters with external carports, arrayed along tree-lined streets that meander in typical suburban fashion between larger thoroughfares. The neighborhood is unfenced and virtually indistinguishable from other base housing, with which it is contiguous on three sides. Overall the effect is that of an idyllic semi-rural, working-class environment where kids can ride bicycles safely and run freely between the houses from one large open green space to the next.

Military base housing

The housing that constitutes Hope Meadows was originally constructed as part of the broad suburban expansion of the 1950’s, and therefore features many of the fashions and design sensibilities of that era of planning. However, it was also part of a more centrally managed military construction boom, anticipating some patterns that would not emerge in the civilian sector until local authorities acquired increased regulatory control over development. From an historical perspective military “suburbs” can seem precocious, often resembling the more thoughtful and deliberate “cluster design” trend that followed the wave

² During a check for trademark rights it was discovered that the name Hope for the Children is shared by several non-profits. The organization was renamed Generations of Hope in 1999.
of monotonous sprawling suburban developments of the 1950’s. Streets are laid out so as to minimize cut-through traffic, green space is maximized, and a pedestrian scale is preserved that makes it reasonable for children to walk or bike to school and recreational sites.

Hope Meadows was created from “Capchart” housing, named after Senator Homer E. Capehart, a WWI veteran who in the mid 1950’s sponsored legislation aimed at easing critical housing shortages on military bases. Capehart housing was to be built by private developers for the armed services, which would manage and gradually buy out the privately financed developments.

An earlier wave of military housing had been initiated in the early 1950’s under legislation sponsored by Senator Kenneth S. Wherry, also a WWI veteran. These developments were built and operated by the developer and open to the public, but with first preference given to military renters. The Capehart bill revised the scheme, partly in response to perceptions that Wherry developers were making windfall profits while delivering a substandard product.3

In spite of problems typically associated with Wherry projects (shoddy construction, unit floor space as small as 830 square feet) developers nevertheless did achieve some nice design effects at Chanute by grouping buildings into U-shaped courtyards, which were planted with grass and shade trees. Parking was kept on the street or in alleyways, and the building clusters were grouped in such a way as to create large green spaces behind them (Figure 2).

In 1958 a Capehart development was laid out around this original, more-or-less circular Wherry development, building from the periphery out to the corners of a larger square. Figure 3 shows the

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3 Nearly 250,000 units were constructed under the Wherry and Capehart programs before 1964. For more detail see: http://aec.army.mil/usaec/cultural/housing.html.
Hope Meadows area, which constitutes the northeast corner of the Capehart expansion (north is to the right in this drawing). Capehart housing continues to the south with another section laid out as an almost perfect mirror image of Figure 3, wrapping around a circle of Wherry housing, and on its own southern edge adjoining what is now a public golf course.

Residents in this neighboring section to the south, now known as Golfview Greens, provide in effect an experimental control group suggesting how the area that is now Hope Meadows might have evolved had it not come under the management of Generations of Hope. One fairly striking difference has been the gradual
disappearance of green space outside of Hope Meadows, as privacy fences continue to pop up wherever they are allowed. The Golfview Greens homeowners association even toyed recently with the idea of constructing storage buildings in the remaining commons area adjoining the Wherry housing. Clearly Hope management enjoys a major advantage in terms of conserving existing green space.

**Scale and circulation**

Desirable design features of any residential neighborhood include pedestrian pathways that are shielded from vehicle traffic, play areas that do not require street-crossing for access, and an overall scale that permits walking or biking to common destinations. These features are achieved to a large extent in Capehart developments through hierarchical street layouts. Figure 3 shows how family housing (in blue) came to be clustered at Hope Meadows along a tertiary street with very low traffic – actually an unintentional feature that was dictated by the structures themselves, since only some structures could easily be converted into single-family homes. The effect however has been to concentrate the children’s activities somewhat into the furthest corner of the neighborhood, which keeps them away from vehicle traffic, but also out of circulation with respect to many senior residences. The neighborhood also stretches out along an arc extending almost a quarter of a mile; this too has its disadvantages, with some units becoming relatively isolated from the geographic center.

**The courtyard element**

A serendipitous feature that offers a suggestive format for future developments occurs at the geographic center of the Hope Meadows neighborhood. There the backs of several structures coincide to form something like a courtyard (Figure 4), but one without any planned access – the space apparently just emerged as a residual consequence of tucking the street layout into the corner of the base property. A basketball court was constructed in this courtyard space as part of
the initial building rehabilitation work, and it does get considerable use. However there is no direct access from this courtyard to the Intergenerational Center, nor to any of the senior apartments or family houses that surround the space, except awkwardly via basement/storage areas. In future sites, residences could be designed with both front and back views and egress (figure 5), so that several structures could frame such courtyard areas, while on the opposite side connecting with other clusters, thus creating an interlocking set.

There would be some intriguing social network advantages to such a configuration – each senior household would simultaneously be part of one cluster of residents via their front porch and another cluster via their back-porch. Each courtyard might also take on an individual identity around a particular focal feature, such as a memorial garden (Figure 8), a basketball court, or a vegetable/flower garden.

Residents of each area would in a sense play “host” to the rest of the neighborhood in terms of the ambience and roles of their micro-neighborhoods. Other common spaces and structures should probably be positioned centrally, but the program office should accommodate
visitors on the periphery of the neighborhood, conserving the privacy of residents as far as possible.

One critical difference from the split-level Capehart structures shown in Figure 4 is that senior housing in a new site would have to be single-story and smaller than the approximately 1700 square feet they currently occupy – probably between 1,000 and 1,300 square feet per unit.

It should be noted that if the focus of any new program is expected to be foster-to-adoption, where families will be adopting sibling groups of two or three, then homes need to be sized appropriately (possibly six or even seven bedrooms), and should generally be separate structures. However, smaller families at Hope Meadows are often accommodated in duplex units that would otherwise be occupied by seniors.

Intergenerational spaces

At Hope Meadows, the Intergenerational Center (IGC) houses a children’s library, a computer room, several rooms for individual tutoring, a kitchen, a downstairs playroom (until recently dedicated to toddlers), and a large multi-purpose space. At the IGC, seniors help kids with homework or conduct more formal tutoring sessions, read aloud to young children or help older ones to read, play cards or board games, help them with computers or gather a group to go outside for soccer or basketball – over 90 activities occur every month.

The IGC is also the social hub of Hope Meadows. Every month senior coffees and community potlucks are held along with several special events, such as a Halloween party, a National Adoption Day celebration, and a Young Ladies’ Formal Tea (Figure 6). The last has become an annual event which was originally the invention of a small
cadre of seniors, attracting enthusiastic participation and representing for many children an experience without precedent in their lives: the IGC is elaborately decorated and “high tea” is served to young ladies of all ages, including a few special guests from outside the immediate community, dressed in their finest formal apparel.

But other tasks may need spaces that convert and/or expand flexibly – a good example being that of cooking/baking classes (Figure 7 below) or similar kitchen-reliant crafts (e.g. finger painting with chocolate pudding). The dedicated kitchen area should not be isolated, but should probably have extensible food preparation surfaces and be more-or-less continuous with dining areas.

The physical layout and affordances of the IGC, as well as its siting with respect to residences, should all contribute to fostering spontaneous organizational innovation on the part of adults and possibly of older children as well. Multi-functional rooms and/or convertible spaces should be designed for rapid and easy reconfiguration. Exceptions to the flexibility rule might include an IGC office and at least some of the rooms used for tutoring. At the Hope Meadows IGC these rooms tend to become personalized and reflect the unique teaching styles of particular senior tutors, so at least some of the space intended for formal tutoring should probably have closing and lockable doors – also preferably a window. Child safety precautions might become more problematic if the IGC kitchen is not “professionalized” and access-restricted, but should not pose much more difficulty than working to other Universal Design specifications. It should be kept in mind for instance that the primary users of these facilities will be mostly over 65.

Figure 7  Baking class at the Hope Meadows IGC, an extremely popular Saturday event. The kitchen area (visible at upper left of photo) has a pass-through opening with a counter surface, a common feature of the duplex residences where it is often used as a breakfast bar.
years of age, so ovens should be positioned at waist-level and it should be possible to sit comfortably while chopping vegetables, etc.

Some spaces require forethought concerning their functional interconnections – these include computer lab v. library, music v. theater, and IGC v. playground. For the most part different seniors will be interested in different IGC functions and will perform them within spatially distinct spheres.

Coordination is something that the seniors themselves must work out, ideally all on their own when possible, but of course architecture can help or hinder their efforts. For example, at Hope Meadows computer use is tied to reading/storytelling through a policy stipulating that children must read (or be read to) for at least 15 minutes before herding into the computer lab to play games. Right now an upstairs-library/downstairs-lab arrangement works fairly well, but only after seniors instituted a system of signed reading certificates that are collected downstairs by lab monitors. If this flow could be organized and enforced more through architecture (say with the computer lab accessible through the library), a layer of bureaucratic control could be eliminated. There are probably a number of such design opportunities to be explored.

The distinction between reading-as-fundamental and computers-as-treats may begin to break down for older kids – for adolescents a computer lab may be more useful as a place to compose music or put together video productions, if the appropriate guidance can be made available and the necessary space allocated. This means that the concept of a single dedicated “computer lab” may be too broad and generic, and that computer-supported activities should be identified and spatially organized for themselves rather than clustered for the convenience of service technicians. Thus computer-supported music and recording may need to be located separately from “the lab” and perhaps arranged to articulate with other performance-related activities and spaces. Right now at Hope Meadows there is no piano or instrument cache or practice room(s) at all, but the potential interest
seems to exist and all the kids tend to seize opportunities to perform when they arise.

This affinity for performance may be an emergent effect of the kind of community-space generated by the program, or it may be partly a function of these children’s socio-emotional history, representing an adaptive response to their circumstances. In any case there would appear to be tremendous therapeutic potential in supporting and channeling expressive arts among adoptive children, particularly pre-teens and teens, and the architecture of the IGC could either enhance or frustrate spontaneous and tentative moves by children and/or seniors and/or parents to initiate such expression. It is not enough to provide for individual or even tutored “study” – what I have in mind is closer to the effect that might happen in a college dormitory commons as residents and friends serendipitously (but not unpredictably) accumulate after classes and begin to play music together.

What will be different about effecting this in a GHC is that there will be a slight edge of structured expectation about the space itself, an expectation that would be fulfilled for instance if a parent were to join a senior in an impromptu blues session, or a child take an “open mike” opportunity to try out a new popular song on the crowd gathered for a birthday celebration. Such things happen at Hope Meadows all the time, not so much because of the space and affordances of the IGC as in spite of them.

At Hope Meadows the office and the IGC are in the same type of structure as the homes, and we know that neighbors just down the street from Hope Meadows are still unaware that Hope Meadows is also a “program”. This works for the office fairly well, but the IGC needs some re-thinking. It is probably impossible to resolve all the tensions in the center’s specification without significantly increasing floor space.

The IGC at Hope Meadows is about 3400 square feet and every inch is used, and quilting/sewing activities have spilled over into another
building. A larger structure would help a great deal – when events such as Hope’s annual National Adoption Day celebration or winter holiday gathering do require more space for convening, the local Community Center or VFW Hall is usually reserved. The ambience at such events is reminiscent of an extended-family reunion or picnic, requiring the same kinds of facilities and capacities (kitchen, dining area, PA and sound, space for children to play, etc.)

At Hope Meadows we have found that seniors are often prepared to forego personal amenities in favor of providing for children, and will always insist that the children remain unambiguously at the focus of programming. We are also finding however that as children become pre-teens and teens and the seniors themselves get older, the balance of care-giving versus care-receiving begins to shift naturally.

We also believe that the opportunity to be of service is itself a critical part of a child’s own longer-term healing and development. It seems only prudent therefore to make provisions, both in physical and in programmatic architectures, for senior-centered activities that reflect this role-shifting. To a large extent this can be managed through flexible use of existing resources, but ideally a senior's residence would able to be reconfigured to support “aging in place”. A certain amount of retrofitting has been done at Hope Meadows, including remodeling of bathrooms and installation of chairlifts to help seniors negotiate stairs in apartments and in the IGC. Planning is also underway to build a set of very highly adaptable apartments adjacent to the IGC, which would serve to extend the capacity of the community to keep frail and mobility-restricted seniors at the heart of things through the end of life.

All these measures contribute to the emergence of what is arguably a new kind of caring institution, with architecture as a key component. When a resident dies, for example, the walls of the IGC become part
of a memorial, and are covered with pictures and messages from children and friends – which can be particularly significant for a grieving spouse and for the community in general. But to fully support this kind of major transitional event a more permanent focal feature is also appropriate and warranted. With a grant from Oprah Winfrey in 2000, Hope was able to build a formal memorial garden (Figure 8), which has become a vital and treasured element of the built environment of the community.

Office specifications

Here it is probably less useful to describe how Hope has managed with a residential duplex, as to simply specify what would have been optimal. As mentioned briefly above, interfaces and boundaries are as tricky to work out in the main office building as in the program generally. Generally the “front door” / “back door” idea should be implemented here as elsewhere, so that residents can access services without going through the formal public front entry – as if they were just out for a walk in the neighborhood.

At least six private offices with closing doors are needed for an executive director, a therapist, an administrative assistant, a caseworker, a special programs coordinator, and a property manager. In the early phases of the program there may be a need for another one or two staff positions to handle overflow casework and possibly therapy, so perhaps one more office with door, or a larger double-size office with two desks might be prudent. Space for a receptionist should be allocated, even if this role ends up being staffed mainly by volunteers. As the program matures, the number of staffing positions will likely decrease, with some becoming less than full-time.

There should be adequate gathering-space for conferences involving at least two dozen participants, ideally with provisions for conference calling (e.g. wiring in table, flat panel screen on wall for video and/or video conferencing, etc.).
Also needed is a sound-proof room for play therapy that is accessible from the therapist’s office, and designed to be as close to a “normal” playroom or family room as possible. The wall between the therapist’s office and the playroom should be framed to accommodate a one-way mirror, even if this is not installed initially. The playroom should be plumbed for hot and cold water, possibly to a “kitchen island” that would feature sand and water trays – electrical outlets in the playroom of course should be GFI-protected. A small kitchen area or kitchenette should be located off the conference room but should also be separately accessible.

The allocation of storage space should accommodate the accumulation of a considerable quantity of administrative and research data, including fairly voluminous child case records – needing the equivalent of perhaps 25-30 linear feet of wall space.

A waiting area is essential for the office and might be blended with a family information center or library, separate from the public waiting area. An alternative would be to dedicate part of the IGC to a specifically adult library, which would be stocked with (among other things) all relevant parent “training” and licensing materials. Currently at Hope Meadows weekly parent training sessions are held in one of the duplex structures, which otherwise serves as a guest quarters and as a model home for prospective residents. This has the advantage of further “dressing down” the symbolic context of training, by invoking the ambience of a more casual living-room conversation.
III The Generic Model

There is, of course, no single best way to assemble all of the elements of a GHC – even Hope Meadows remains sub-optimal in several respects. All new sites will have to deal with unique local constraints and opportunities as they try to assemble a complete neighborhood with program office, intergenerational center (IGC), playgrounds, memorial garden, and a variety of nested interlocking social spheres.

In 2005 GHDC commissioned the firm of Mackenzie Architects of Burlington, Vermont to develop a “space program” (list of structures and square footage, etc.) and conceptual drawings for an abstract site design encompassing the basic GHC features and goals, which could be used to facilitate design discussions with stakeholders from prospective replication sites. Architects Steve Mackenzie and Sandra Silla developed the plan shown to the left and on the following pages – a design which manages elegantly to resolve the many tensions in the specifications and probably even enhances the social network features. The overall footprint is small, vehicular traffic is minimized, and office and intergenerational spaces are optimally situated.

Several levels of nested spaces, from mostly private to mostly public, are achieved in this layout. Two features in particular help to make this possible: (1) vehicular traffic is kept mostly to the periphery, with access drives gently curved to create small “coves” of six or seven residences; and (2) all residences are designed with both front and back porches, creating an overall pattern of interlinked sets of immediate neighbors. Walking and biking paths link the whole neighborhood together and offer multiple pathways through it.
Site Plan illustrates one possible application of GHDC design principles. Design approach will vary based on project size, location, acreage, etc.
Social clustering

Communities should be designed to foster interaction between social groups of different scales. The basic residential grouping within a neighborhood should range from 12-15 households. The ratio of seniors to families should range from 3-4 senior households to 1 family within one social unit. The maximum size of a community can range between 48-60 households.

Diagram illustrates one possible application of GHDC design principles. Design approach will vary based on project size, location, acreage, etc.
Open spaces

Open spaces should be designed for the private and public realms. Public open spaces should be designed as a network, creating a variety of scale, and landscape typologies, and introducing play areas for children near homes. Sideyard separations between dwellings should not exceed 22'. Large open community space serves to enhance overall community cohesion and collective interaction. Community gardens can not only provide source of fresh vegetables, but also inspire residents to engage in physical activity and foster better relationships.
Family home – plan

Second Floor
1,180 sf

First Floor
1,290 sf

Floorplans illustrate one example of a single family dwelling layout. Square footage should not exceed 2,500 sf for a single family dwelling over two levels. Home configuration may vary based on site constraints and personal preference.
Family home – elevation

Elevations illustrate example of single family home style and image. Elevation articulation should remain residential in nature, but may vary based on location, site constraints and personal preference.

Left Elevation

Front Elevation

Right Elevation

Rear Elevation
Senior duplex – plan

Floor plans illustrate example of a single story senior duplex. Square footage should not exceed 1,500 sf for a senior dwelling over one level. Home configuration may vary based on site constraints and personal preference.

Floor Plan
Senior duplex – elevation

Elevations illustrate one example of single story senior duplex style and image. Elevation articulation should remain residential in nature, but may vary based on location, site constraints and personal preference.

Side Elevation

Front Elevation

Rear Elevation
Porch diagram

Back porch faces the public street

Front porch faces the residential green

Front Porch Back Porch
Single Family Dwelling

Kitchen window should overlook residential green

Kitchen Window
Single Story Senior Duplex
# Space Program

## One Story Senior Duplex

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Room/Function</th>
<th>No.</th>
<th>NSF</th>
<th>Comments</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Entry</td>
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<td>50</td>
<td>Overlooks residential green</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kitchen</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>170</td>
<td>Overlooks residential green</td>
</tr>
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<td>Living/Dining</td>
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<tr>
<td>Den</td>
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<td>130</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bedroom</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>120</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Toilet</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>30</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Master Bedroom</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>160</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Master Bath</td>
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<td>50</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Storage</td>
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<td>70</td>
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</tr>
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</table>

**Total net square footage** 1260

**Total gross square footage per unit (net x 1.20)** 1512

- Private Porch: 1, 110, Overlooks residential green
- Public Porch: 1, 110, Overlooks public street
- Garage: 1, 260, 1 car maximum

## Single Family Dwelling (2 levels)

<table>
<thead>
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<th>Room/Function</th>
<th>No.</th>
<th>NSF</th>
<th>Comments</th>
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<td>50</td>
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<td>Overlooks residential green</td>
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<tr>
<td>Nook</td>
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<td>100</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Great Room</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dining</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Star</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Den/Office</td>
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<tr>
<td>Master Bedroom</td>
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<td>220</td>
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<tr>
<td>Master Bath</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>60</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Toilet</td>
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<td>30</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bedroom 1</td>
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<tr>
<td>Bedroom 2</td>
<td>1</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bedroom 3</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bath</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>40</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Laundry</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>50</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Storage</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>100</td>
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</tr>
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</table>

**Total net square footage** 2160

**Total gross square footage (net x 1.20)** 2592

- Private Porch: 1, 220, Overlooks residential green
- Public Porch: 1, 105, Overlooks public street
- Garage: 1, 330, 1 car maximum

---

Net square feet (NSF) is computed by measuring to the inside finished surface of walls. Gross square feet (GSF) is computed by measuring to the outside finished surface of permanent outer building walls, without any deductions.

Written Space Program is meant to serve as a general guideline and is based on design example included in this package.
### Intergenerational Center (IGC) (1 or 2 levels)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Room/Function</th>
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<th>Comments</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
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<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mail</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>80</td>
<td>80</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IGC Office</td>
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<td>100</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Parlor</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>300</td>
<td>300</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Flex Activity Rooms</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>150</td>
<td>300</td>
<td>Music, theater</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dining/Multipurpose</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1500</td>
<td>1500</td>
<td>25 sf x 60 persons</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kitchen</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>600</td>
<td>600</td>
<td>Bar/Cafe; Adjacent to Multipurpose; Flexible Space</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Library</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>200</td>
<td>200</td>
<td>Adult/Child</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Computer Room</td>
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<td>120</td>
<td>120</td>
<td>Access through Library</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Computer Music/Recording</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>120</td>
<td>120</td>
<td>Private</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tutoring Rooms</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>200</td>
<td>Private</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Guest Rooms</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>300</td>
<td>600</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Guest Room Toilets</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>60</td>
<td>120</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Children’s Playroom/Teen F</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>500</td>
<td>500</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Storage</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>200</td>
<td>200</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Toilets</td>
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<td>140</td>
<td>280</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mechanical Room</td>
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<td>Electrical Room</td>
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<td>80</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Equipment Storage</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>200</td>
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<td>Tractor/mower</td>
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<tr>
<td>Wood/Machine Shop</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>200</td>
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</table>

**Total net square footage**: 6200

**Total gross square footage (net x 1.35)**: 8378

### Administrative

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Room/Function</th>
<th>No.</th>
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<th>Total</th>
<th>Comments</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Director’s Office</td>
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<td>120</td>
<td>120</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Therapist Office</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>120</td>
<td>120</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Administrative Assistant</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>120</td>
<td>120</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Play Therapy Office</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>150</td>
<td>150</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Caseworker Office</td>
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<td>240</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Property Manager Office</td>
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<td>120</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unassigned Office</td>
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<td>200</td>
<td>200</td>
<td>2 persons</td>
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<tr>
<td>Conference Room</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>540</td>
<td>540</td>
<td>Kitchenette (22.5 sf/person) (24 persons)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Storage</td>
<td>1</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Toilet</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>60</td>
<td>120</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Total net square footage (net x 1.35)**: 1938

**Total gross square footage (net x 1.35)**: 2806

### Site Amenities

- **Residential Green (serves 15) 12-20**: Outdoor space for 15 Residents
- **Community Green (serves 60) 40-60**: Outdoor space for 60 Residents/Outside community
- **Private Outdoor Living (each living unit)**: Minimum 22’ sidelot for private outdoor living
- **Memorial Garden**: Part of community green
- **Community Garden**: Part of community green
- **Basketball Court**: Part of community green
- **Playground**: Part of community green
- **Picnic Shelter**: Part of community green
- **Walking/running/Biking trails**: Open lawn areas (flexible activities)