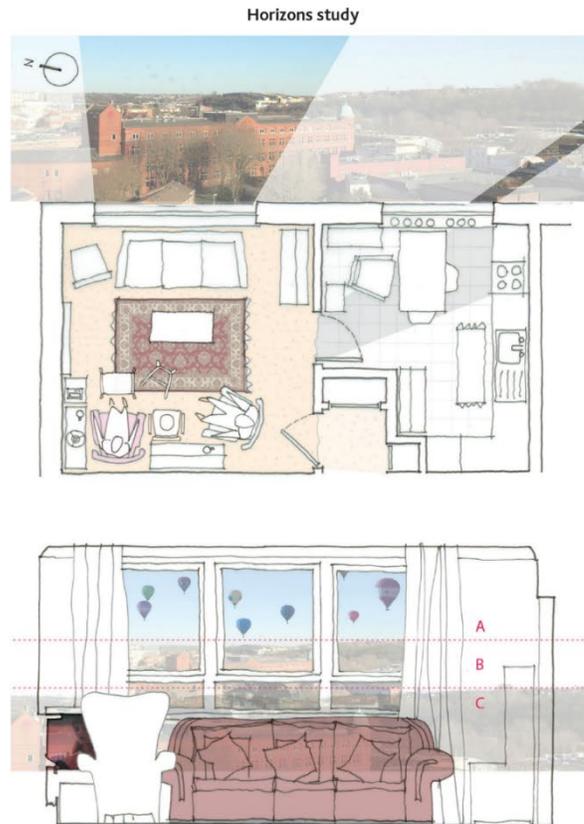


Inside Retirement Housing



Study exploring the range of aspects from Rose's seat in her 'little corner'. The television, sofa and sky are the primary 'views' on offer. The local landscape disappears when seated.

Horizons key: [A] Occasional (balloons)
[B] Standing (cityscape) [C] Seated (sofa & TV)

'From Care Ready to End-of-Life Care Design: Insights for architectural design and resilient housing in later life'

Keynote lecture for Housing LIN Cymru Symposium 2025:
Making Wales a Great Place to Grow Old

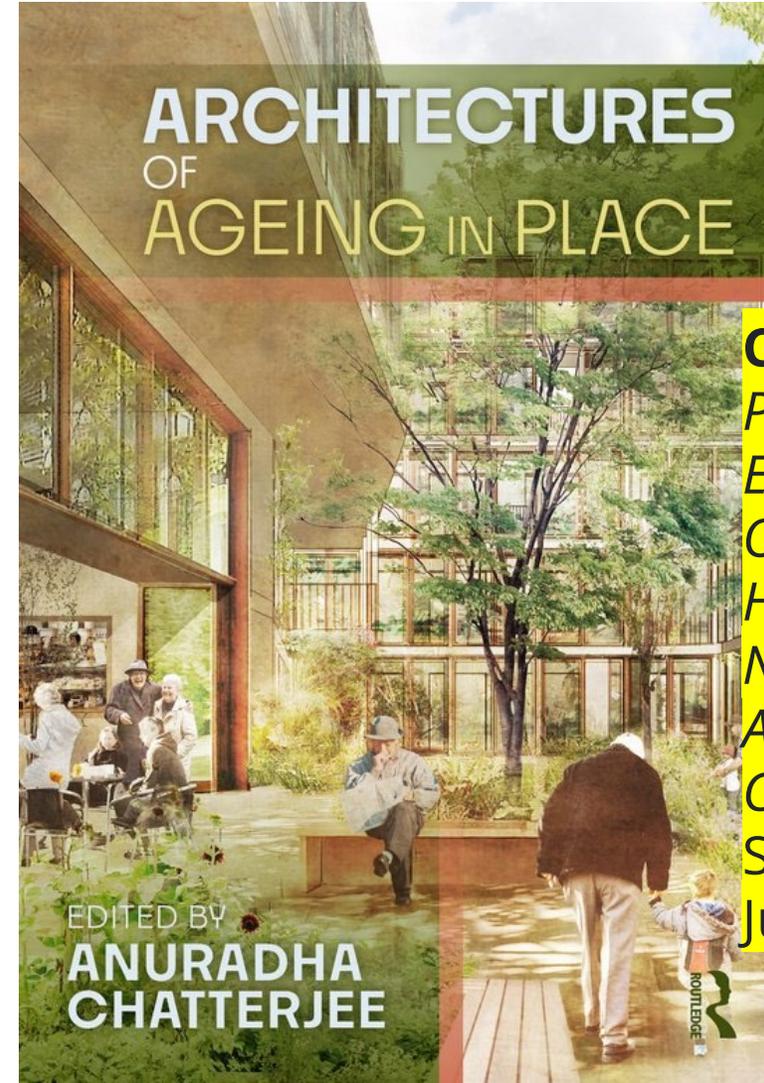
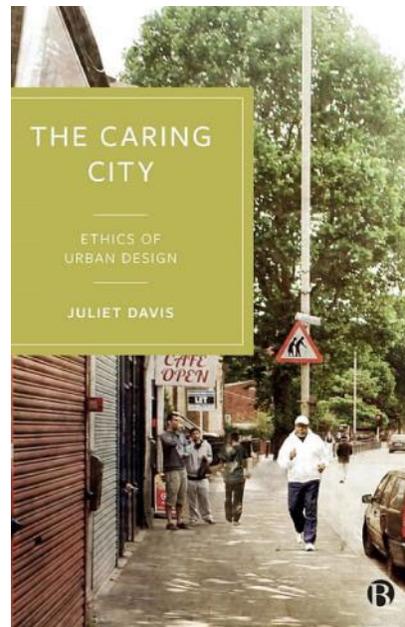
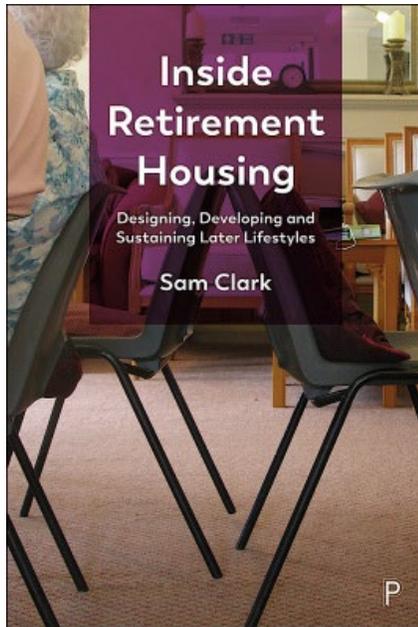
Neuadd Maldwyn in Welshpool

04 | 11 | 2025

Dr Sam Clark



Prof Juliet Davis



Ch7. 'Getting in Place: Ethnographic Observations of Homemaking in New-Build Almshousing in Central London'
Sam Clark & Juliet Davis

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AGE-FRIENDLY ENVIRONMENTS

“Age-friendly environments are better places in which to grow, live, work, play, and age. We can create them by addressing the social determinants of healthy ageing and enabling all people [...] to continue to do the things they value and live dignified lives.” (WHO, 2023)

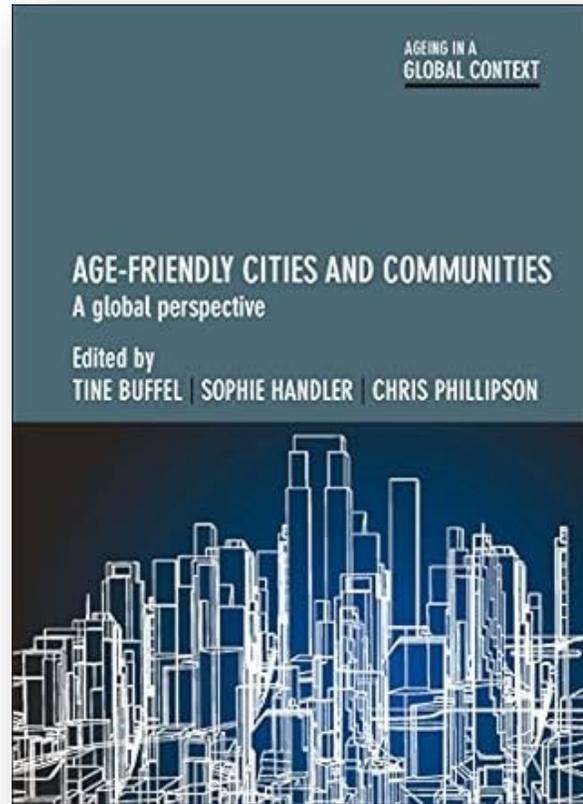
- Concept originated in 2006, and global network established in 2010.
- Age-friendly environments require transdisciplinary thinking – interiors, buildings, urban design, infrastructure, etc.
- Research on age-friendly environments promotes health and enabling greater independence / informal care relations and interdependence.

National programmes
for age-friendly cities
and communities
A guide



WHO, National Programmes for Age-friendly
Communities: A guide, World Health Organization, 2023
ISBN 9240068694, 9789240068698 (PDF)
<https://www.who.int/publications/b/63715>

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Dr Sam Clark | ClarkSD1@Cardiff.ac.uk | Welsh School of Architecture



Handler, Sophie. "Eleven: Alternative age-friendly initiatives: redefining age-friendly design". In *Age-Friendly Cities and Communities*. Bristol, UK: Policy Press, 2018.

Practice vs policy

"...[ageing discourse] within the design world has tended to stand apart from the language and thinking of age-friendly policy..."

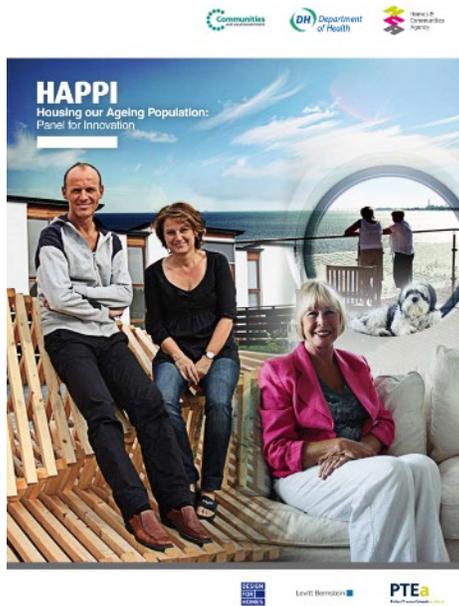
Design often misunderstood

Prevailing perceptions within the policymaking community about design and what it involves *"...have limited the creative scope of [design] interventions"*. A problem of checklist approaches.

Critique

Design is typically led down problem-solving routes which *"tend to play into bio-medicalised models of ageing, limiting its concerns to the 'problems' of the physical body and its interaction within urban environments"*

2009-2024 HAPPI RECOMMENDATIONS



HAPPI – Housing our Ageing Population: Panel for Innovation (2009-2024).

Recommended 10 components for the design of housing for older people.



the new retirement homes should have generous internal space standards, with potential for three habitable rooms and designed to accommodate flexible layouts



care is taken in the design of homes and shared spaces, with the placement, size and detail of windows, and to ensure plenty of natural light, and to allow daylight into circulation spaces



building layouts maximise natural light and ventilation by avoiding internal corridors and single-aspect flats, and apartments have balconies, patios, or terraces with enough space for tables and chairs as well as plants



in the implementation of measures to ensure adaptability, homes are designed to be 'care ready' so that new and emerging technologies, such as telecare and community equipment, can be readily installed



building layouts promote circulation areas as shared spaces that offer connections to the wider context, encouraging interaction, supporting interdependence and avoiding an 'institutional feel', including the imaginative use of shared balcony access to front doors and thresholds, promoting natural surveillance and providing for 'defensible space'



in all but the smallest developments (or those very close to existing community facilities), multi-purpose space is available for residents to meet, with facilities designed to support an appropriate range of activities – perhaps serving the wider neighbourhood as a community 'hub', as well as guest rooms



in giving trees and plants a place in the design, ensure that they are well cared for and that they provide shade and shelter



homes are also well served by external spaces, for example, planting spaces that can be easily opened up for cooling



adequate storage is provided inside the homes



shared external spaces, such as courtyards, are proving successful in other countries, become more common, with due regard to the kinds of navigation difficulties that some visually impaired people may experience in such environments.

01. Generous spaces

02. Natural light

03. Amenity space

04. Adaptability

05. Positive circulation

06. Multi-purpose space

07. Public realm

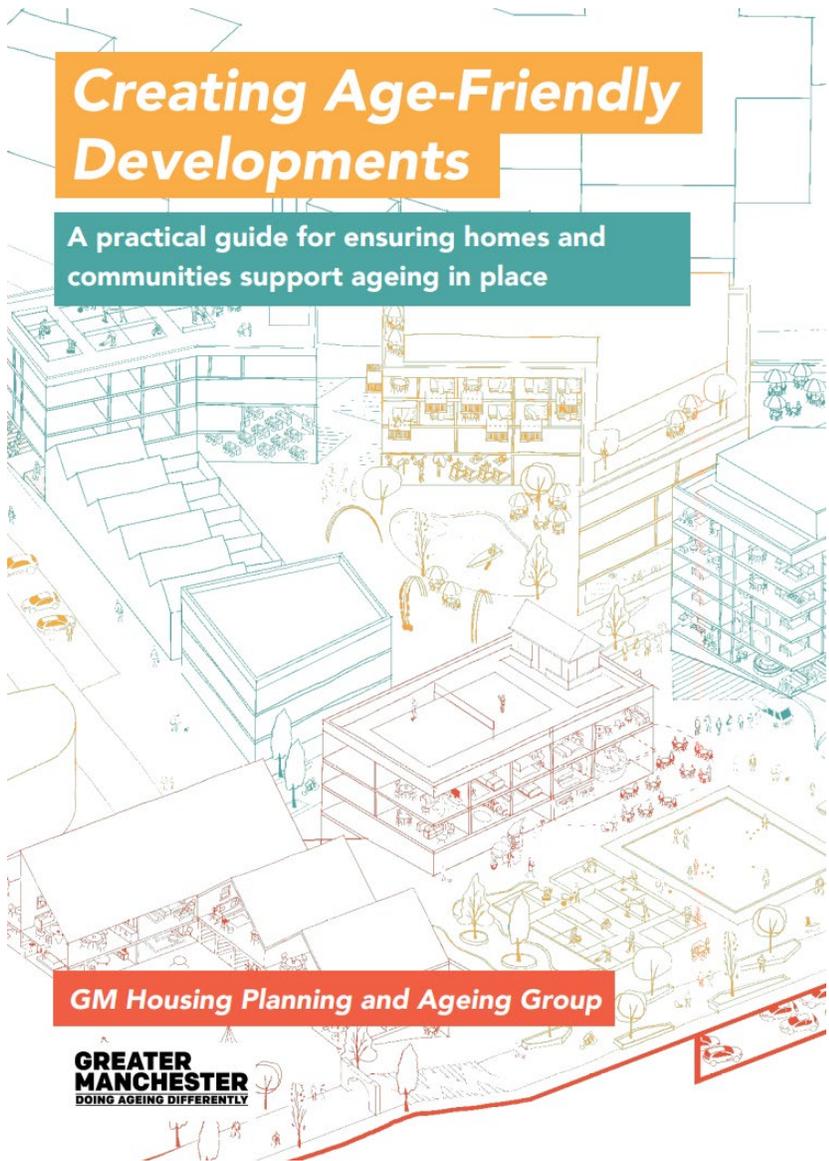
08. Energy-efficient

09. Storage

10. Shared surfaces

Creating Age-Friendly Developments

A practical guide for ensuring homes and communities support ageing in place



GM Housing Planning and Ageing Group

GREATER MANCHESTER
DOING AGEING DIFFERENTLY



Creating Age-Friendly Developments:

Key features to consider

1. Celebrating Older People

Embracing different perspectives

Valuing older people in society

Including older people as active participants

2. Planning for Age-Friendly Neighbourhoods

Diverse housing options for older people

Supporting everyday activity

Creating social infrastructure

Integrating places

Connections to nature

3. Designing Age-Friendly Homes

Creating healthy environments

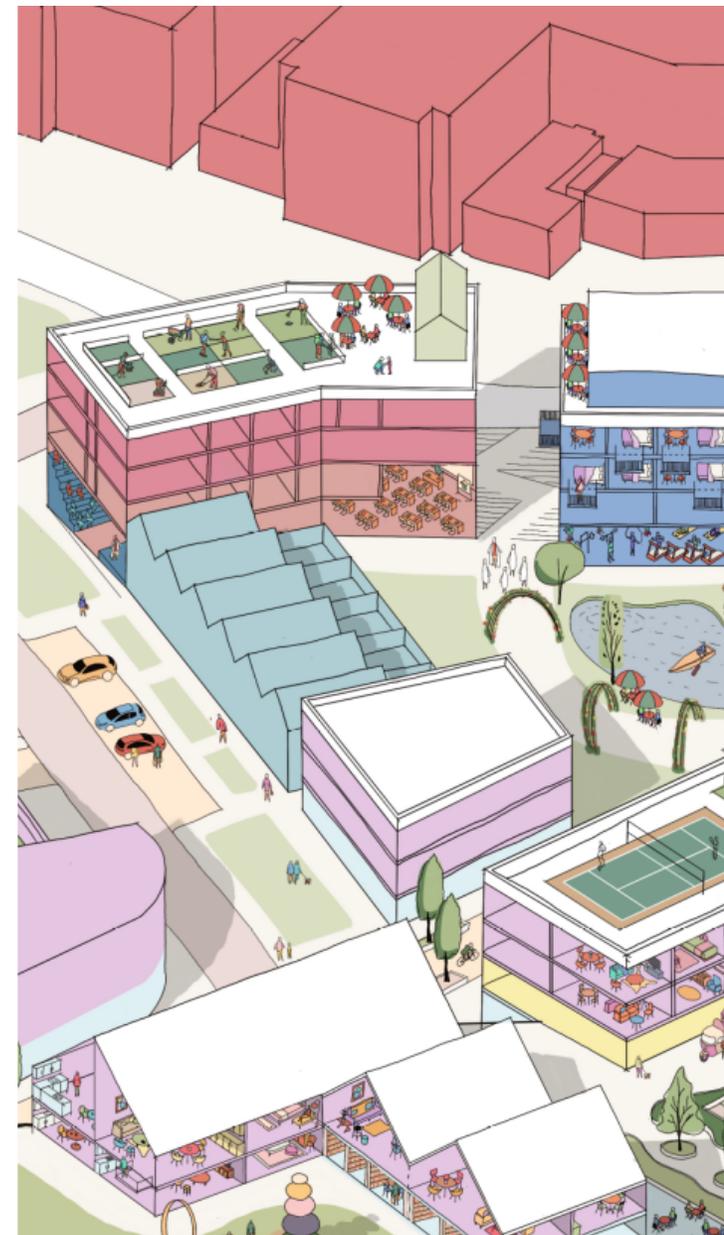
Promoting active lives

Supporting social life

Providing appropriate storage spaces

Accessible controls and access

Maximising daylight and views

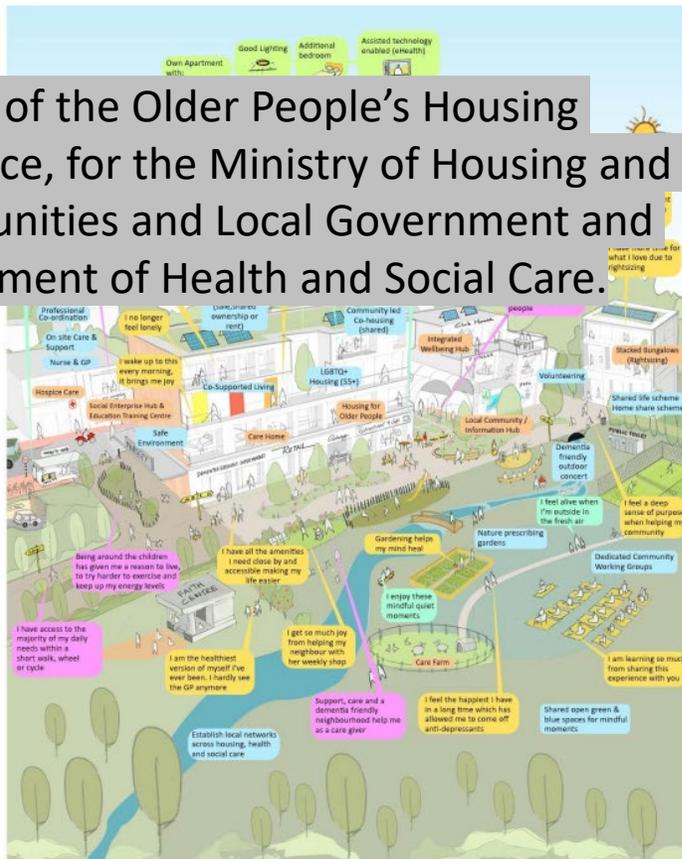


Our Future Homes: Housing that promotes wellbeing and community for an ageing population.

Our Future Homes:

Housing that promotes wellbeing and community for an ageing population

Report of the Older People's Housing Taskforce, for the Ministry of Housing and Communities and Local Government and Department of Health and Social Care.



Report of the Older People's Housing Taskforce, for the Ministry of Housing and Communities and Local Government and Department of Health and Social Care.

26th November 2024

Senior citizens often have a strong attachment to ageing in place. A minority of senior citizens move each year. Intentions and interest in moving are more common than actual moves.

Not everyone wants to move. The majority of senior citizens say that they would like to age in place and for many this is a sensible and positive choice. 21% say that moving would be equivalent to “a bereavement”.

9 Core Recommendations

1. Standardise definitions of Older People's Housing/Later Living Homes (OPH/LLH)
2. Incentivise a wide range of OPH/LLH options
3. Ensure more housing is designed for later life
4. Create age-friendly, dementia-inclusive, faith and culture-sensitive communities
5. Expand OPH/LLH at scale and ensure it is affordable to live in, and viable to finance, build and operate
6. Strengthen planning policies
7. Establish a national information platform and local hubs
8. Build consumer confidence
9. Enhance innovation, research and professional development

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Dr Sam Clark | ClarkSD1@Cardiff.ac.uk | Welsh School of Architecture

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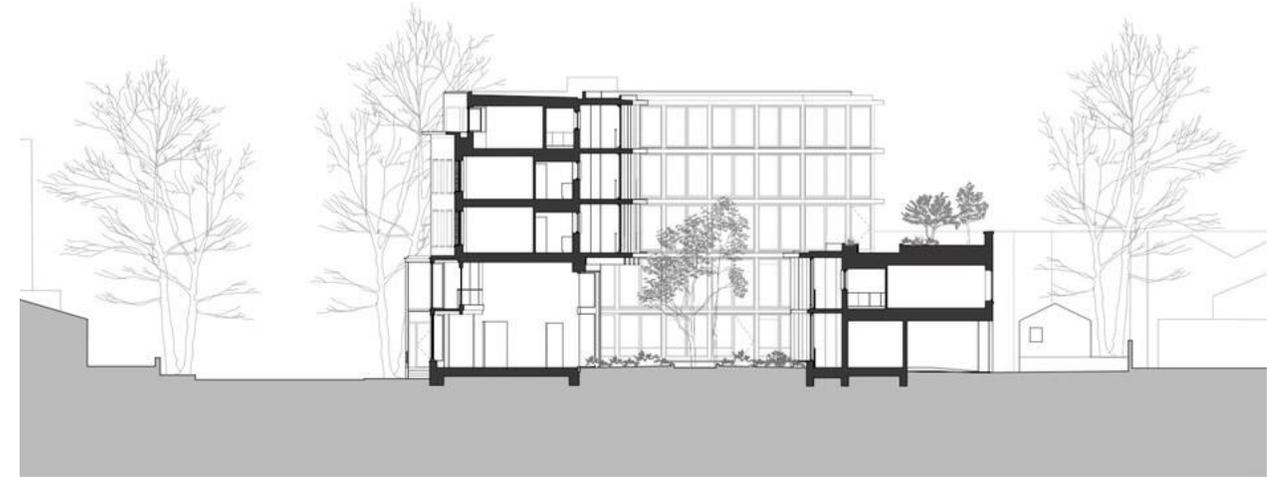


- Architecture for ageing-in-place case study
- Ethnographic Research / POE
- Observing occupants 'getting in place'
- Translation of design concepts related to HAPPI recommendations to lived experience

CASE STUDY ANALYSIS

Appleby Blue Almshouse London, UK

Design Drawings
© Witherford Watson Mann Architects





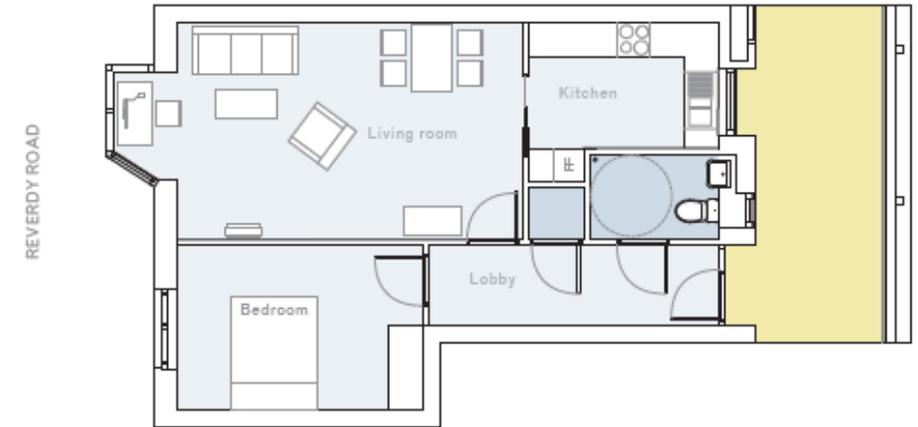
01. Generous spaces

the new retirement homes should have generous internal space standards, with potential for three habitable rooms and designed to accommodate flexible layouts



We observed

- Generous space standards applied to shared areas and circulation spaces that corresponded with the social/ community-focussed ethos of the project.
- Yet, bedrooms/ private areas correspondingly small, raising questions of adequacy should carers and equipment to support care need to be accommodated.





Sunny circulation with a view, de Plussenburgh, Rotterdam

02. Natural light

care is taken in the design with the placement, size and ensure plenty of natural light circulation spaces



Balcony as garden in Maartenshof dementia unit, Groningen

03. Amenity space

building layouts maximise natural light and ventilation by avoiding internal corridors and single-aspect flats, and apartments have balconies, patios, or terraces with enough space for tables and chairs as well as plants

We observed

- The building designed with orientation clearly in mind, with circulation spaces typically placed on the internal south elevation and treated as forms of winter garden
- Highly glazed facades and views over a courtyard and South facing rooftop-garden.
- Light perforating from these circulation spaces into bathrooms and hallways, and habitable rooms additionally naturally lit from other sides.



4



Fully accessible shower in Gibelich
Alterzentrum, Zürich

04. Adaptability

in the implementation of measures to ensure adaptability, homes are designed to be 'care ready' so that new and emerging technologies, such as telecare and community equipment, can be readily installed

5



Access deck as defensible space at
Sankt Antonius, Stuttgart

05. Positive circulation

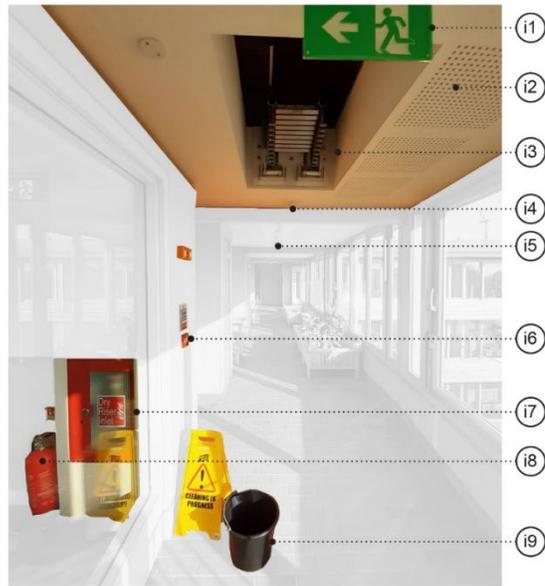
building layouts promote circulation areas as shared spaces that offer connections to the wider context, encouraging interaction, supporting interdependence and avoiding an 'institutional feel', including the imaginative use of shared balcony access to front doors and thresholds, promoting natural surveillance and providing for 'defensible space'

We observed

- Flats throughout the building offering potential flexibility for reconfiguring furniture and living arrangements.
- Small size of bedrooms, however.
- Small private areas had required residents to declutter and downsize prior to moving in.
- Materials and furniture carefully chosen to create a de-institutionalized, domestic atmosphere.
- The instilling of an institutional feel by constraining residents' opportunities to personalise shared spaces and gardens.
- Interdependence fostered through common gardens and social spaces, a cookery school and seating spaces outside flats.

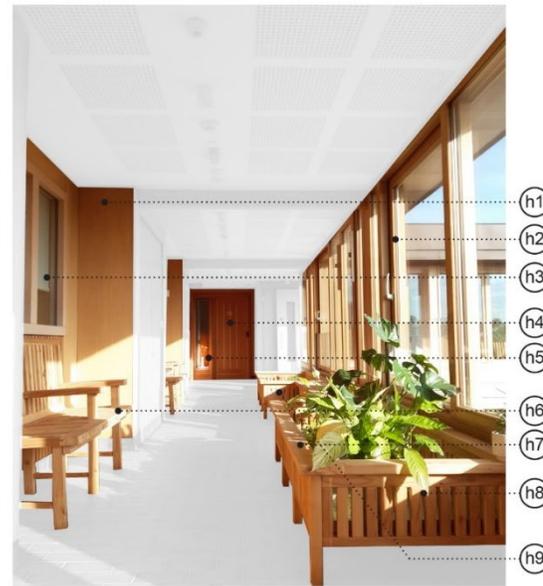
CONTROLLED MICRO APPROPRIATION

Figure 3: Observational Montage (Institution)
Architectural elements and equipment that contribute to an 'institutional' material culture shaped by building regulations, operation, and maintenance © Clark.



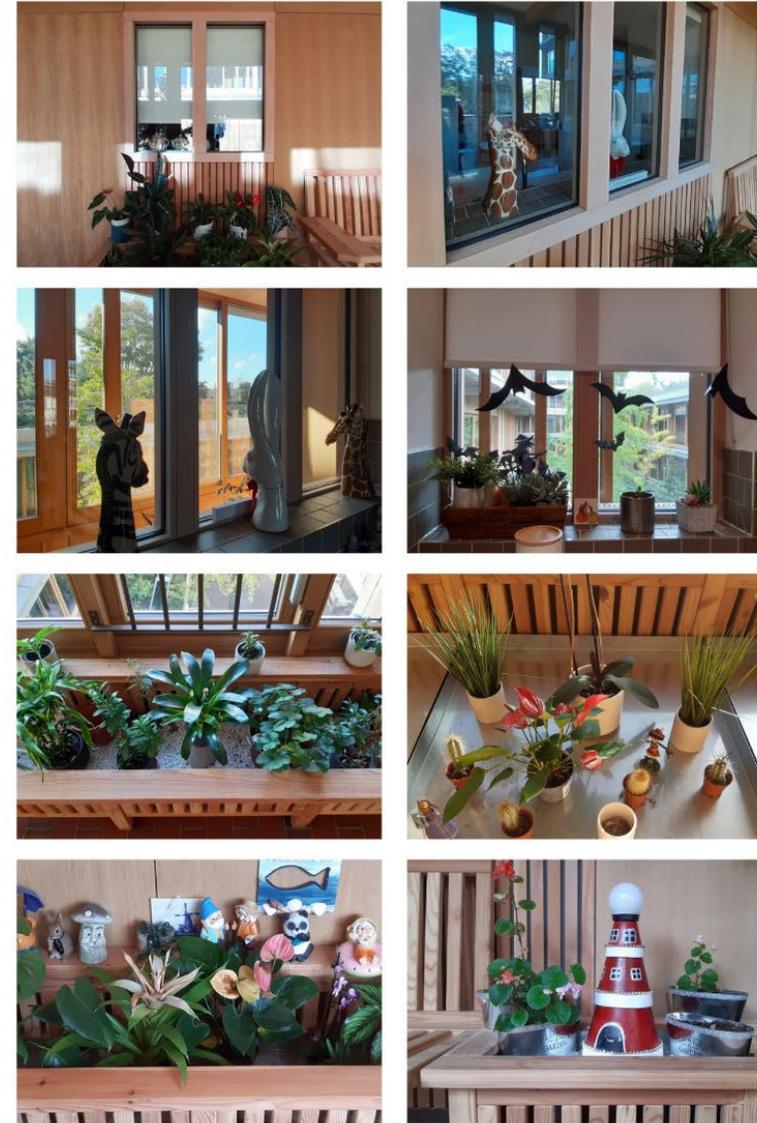
- [i1] Emergency running man escape route indicator, frameless specification
- [i2] Fire rated plasterboard ceiling with perforations for acoustic mitigation
- [i3] Rooftop access hatch and scissor ladder for maintenance only
- [i4] Ceiling-mounted motion sensor to activate general lighting at night
- [i5] Motion sensor to protect passers-by from auto opening vent window
- [i6] Fire alarm break glass unit and associated safety signage
- [i7] Dry riser inlet cupboard for connecting fire fighting hosepipe
- [i8] A water fire extinguisher for fighting Class A fires (flammable solids)
- [i9] Bucket and temporary warning sign, due to leaking access hatch

Figure 4: Observational Montage (Home)
Architectural elements and furnishings that contribute to a 'homely' material culture shaped by governed appropriation and micro personalisation © Clark.



- [h1] Timber lined walls and doors add to domestic feel
- [h2] Sliding timber framed windows, resident operable
- [h3] Apartment kitchen window where some residents add displays, etc.
- [h4] Apartment entrance door (unadorned, as per rules)
- [h5] Apartment lobby window and resident's display (ornamental vase)
- [h6] Shared timber benches (fixed position) with integral arm rests/tables
- [h7] Shared timber planter (moveable) with stainless steel tray insert
- [h8] Residents' indoor pot plants (Peace Lily & Cheese Plant)
- [h9] A resident's plant collection (cacti and succulents), out of sight

Figure 5: Examples of personalisation
Window displays, planter collections, and ornamentation observed within and associated with circulation spaces © Clark.





06. Multi-purpose space

in all but the smallest developments (or those very close to existing community facilities), multi-purpose space is available for residents to meet, with facilities designed to support an appropriate range of activities – perhaps serving the wider neighbourhood as a community 'hub', as well as guest rooms for visiting friends and families

We observed

- Multi-purposes spaces a driving idea for the project, strongly connected to the idea of reinforcing interdependence across the community.
- Open questions regarding degree to which these spaces need curation, and the extent to which programming is top-down.





07. Public realm

in giving thought to the public realm, design measures ensure that homes engage positively with the street, and that the natural environment is nurtured through new trees and hedges and the preservation of mature planting, and providing wildlife habitats as well as colour, shade and shelter

We observed

- ‘Porosity’ was a key concept underpinning a principle of creating visual connectivity between the interior and the cityscape
- Designers sought to invert what they saw as a model of senior housing ‘as retreat’, hidden away, instead opening the form out towards the street.





08. Energy-efficient

homes are energy-efficient and well insulated, but also well ventilated and able to avoid overheating by, for example, passive solar design, the use of native deciduous planting supplemented by external blinds or shutters, easily operated awnings over balconies, green roofs and cooling chimneys



We observed

- Built to energy-efficiency standards and is exceptionally well insulated – aspired to achieve 35% percent saving in CO2 emissions over Building Regulations 2013.
- Key design features include passive design to reduce energy use at source, PV solar panels on the top roof, efficient fabric in terms of thermal performance and airtightness, low water usage, good use of daylighting.
- Overheating in the glazed south facing corridors is mitigated to an extent by the ability to open the large windows and create a flow of air through the spaces.
- Cross-ventilation found to be impeded by apartment entrance door closers – part of the fire strategy.

09. Storage



adequate storage is available outside with provision for cycles and mobility inside the home meets the needs of t



10. Shared surfaces

shared external surfaces, such as 'home zones', that give priority to pedestrians rather than cars, and which are proving successful in other countries, become more common, with due regard to the kinds of navigation difficulties that some visually impaired people may experience in such environments.

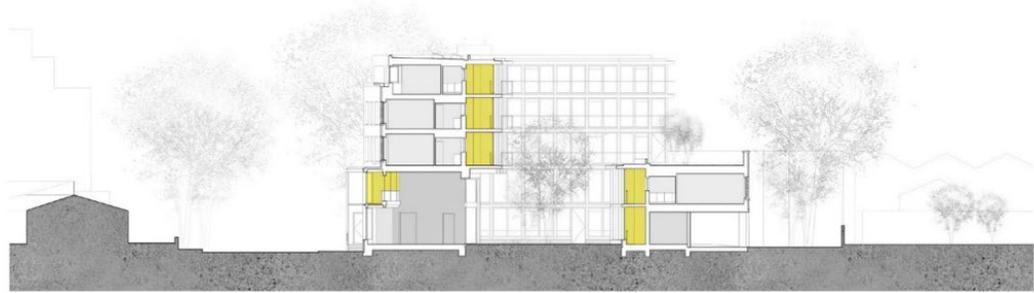
We observed

- Building meets edge of plot on north side and incorporates setbacks to create 'defensible space' front gardens for ground floor flats to the east and west.
- Storage space accommodates bins and provides bicycle storage and limited spaces for cars and mobility scooters.
- The existing streetscape not part of the project. Therefore, not adapted to specifically suit the needs of diverse individuals with implications for project goals.



Overall the research suggested

- Design can provide cues but governance / lived experience are key to realising aspirations.
- Need to observe delicate balance of meeting institutional needs and those of residents.
- The value of ongoing attention to architectural atmospheres through design process (resist regulation-led approaches).
- Importance of leaving space for residents to realise home-making and resist new-build aesthetic.
- Creating an age-friendly urban environment must involve integration of building design with urban design and streetscape maintenance.



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New project: interdisciplinary study exploring how design can support end-of-life care in the home.

Translating the palliative care concept of ‘dying-in-place’ to architectural practice and design strategies for housing, with the goal of helping more people experience a dignified death in their own home.

Less than a third of deaths in England and Wales happen at home. Most people die in hospitals or care institutions, which are often not ideal places for death.

Project lead **Dr Sam Clark**, Cardiff University, and co-lead **Dr Annie Bellamy**, University of the West of England. Specialists **Dr Satish BK**, **Prof Juliet Davis**, and **Dr Sally Anstey**, Cardiff University. Project partner **Marie Curie UK**.



Arts and
Humanities
Research Council



Autoethnographic sketches of a home care environment from the perspective of the dying person. Source: Bellamy, A. (2022).

Designing dying well: Towards a new approach to the co-production of palliative care environments for the terminally ill [Cardiff University]. <https://orca.cardiff.ac.uk/id/eprint/151445>

Project questions

- What do people want in the place where they die?
- What are the environmental barriers to dying at home?
- How can architects help design better homes for dying-in-place?

Project objectives

- (i) to review existing research on dying-in-place, as well as cultural attitudes toward death,
- (ii) to gather experiences of dying at home from different cultures in Wales, through feedback from carers, and
- (iii) to provide insights for architects on how to design homes that better support people who want to die at home.

Our work has built on a logic expressed by gerontologists, that

‘we cannot talk about ageing in place without talking about dying in place’ (Dury & Smetcoren, 2023).

Architects and housing professionals need to expand existing design approaches for ageing-in-place to also consider end-of-life care. This includes ongoing engagement with

‘body work’ (Buse et al, 2016),

to question normative types and stereotypes as well as anticipate transitions in life.

We concentrate on the concept of

‘placing work’ (Driessen, Borgstrom & Cohn, 2021), used to describe the ongoing efforts by palliative care teams to make spaces suitable for dying – a continuous process rather than a one-time intervention. And therefore...

‘scenario-based design’ (Eilouti, 2018) and research methods involving plans-based design analysis to rehearse potential end-of-life scenarios.

PRIMER CASE STUDY



Goldsmith Street designed by Mikhail Riches & Cathy Hawley.

High-density, low-rise scheme of socially rented homes for Norwich City Council in England.

Won 2019 RIBA Stirling Prize.

PRIMER CASE STUDY

MIKHAIL RICHES



South Elevation



North Elevation



Key Plan 1:5000

Flats Houses



5m

MIKHAIL RICHES - Goldsmith Street
Plan / Section / Elevation 1:200



Section



GF



FF



SF

Flat Type E - 1b 2p
Typical Flat Block

THREE THEMES

Our research methods involved plans-based design analysis to rehearse potential end-of-life scenarios.

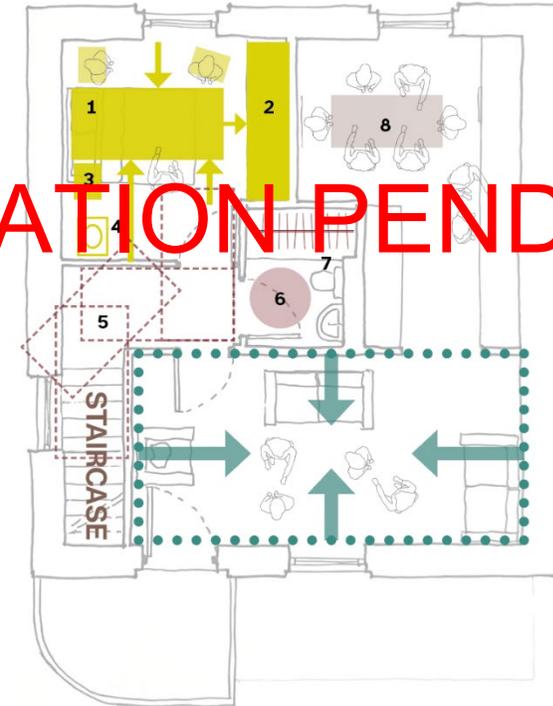
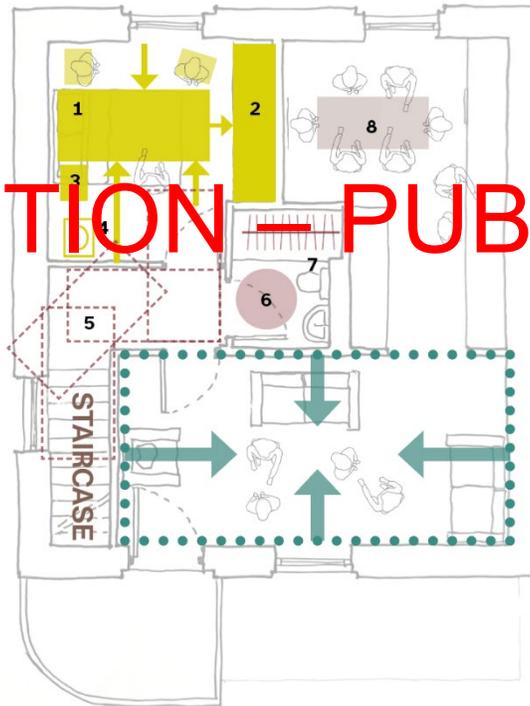
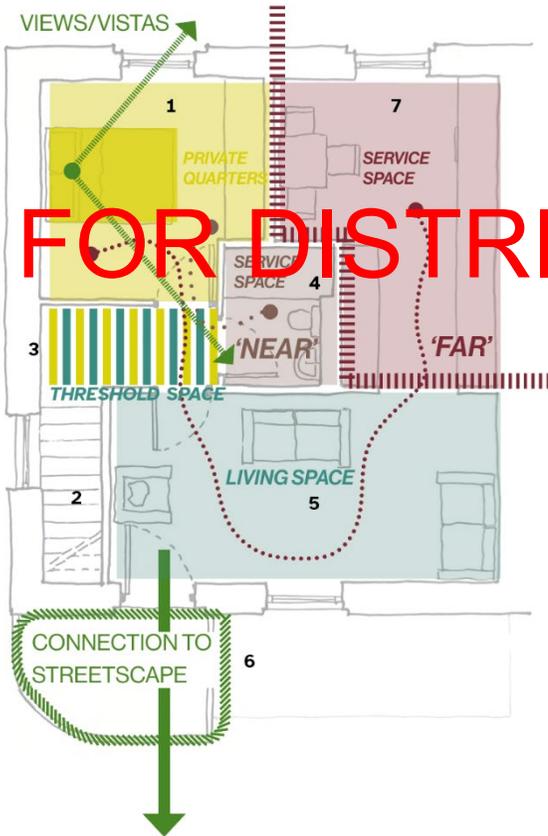
Scenarios and associated reflections are gathered into 3 themes and diagrams, respectively.

1. Connections & Thresholds

2. Environmental Press

3. Home Identities

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Compartmentation

Think about how the home is laid out and how easy it is to tell which areas are private and which are more public. A good layout can help create clear zones for different people, especially visitors, and support a balance between normal life and care needs.

Dignity and privacy

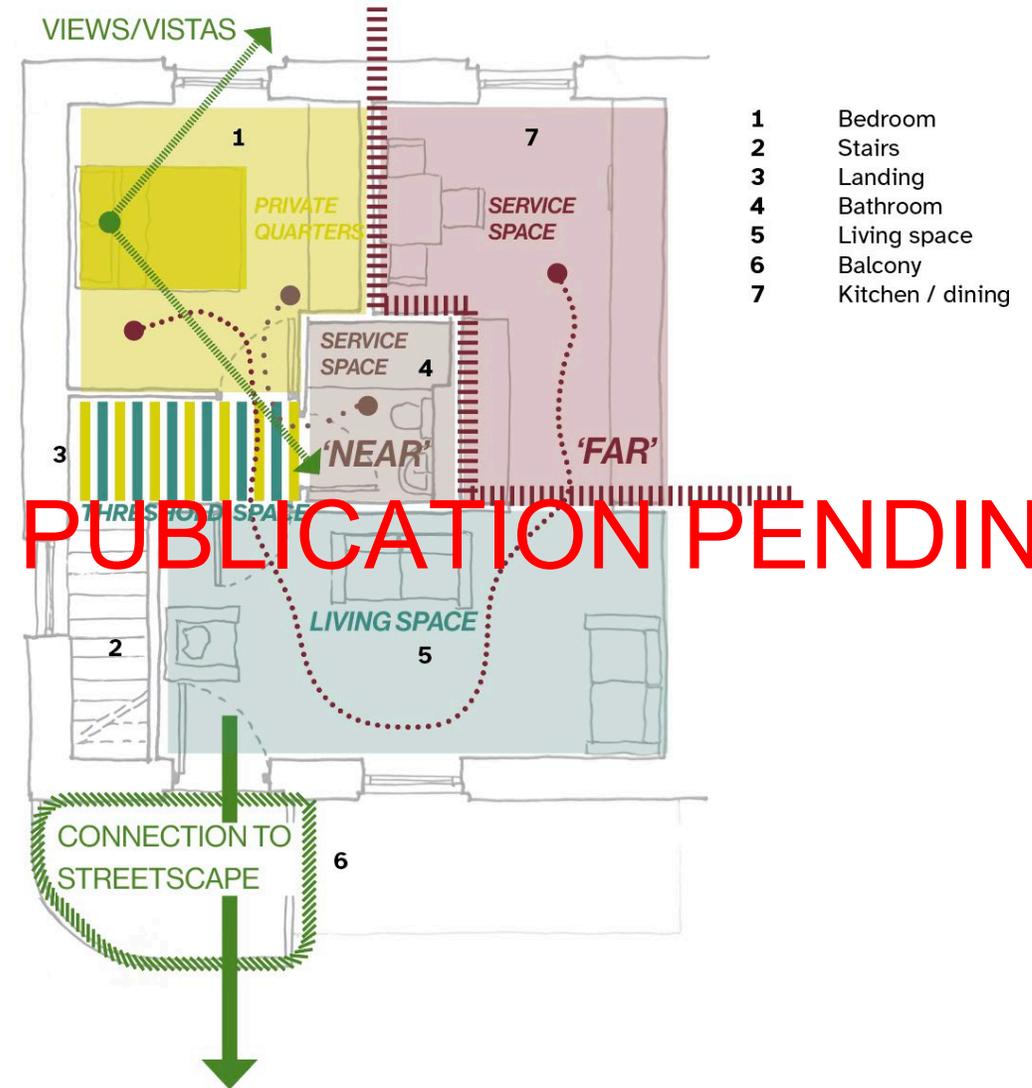
Think about how doors and in-between spaces are designed to give the dying person choice and control over how connected they feel to others. Simple things like door size, position, or how it opens can really affect what they see, hear, or feel around them.

Degrees of separation

Think about how rooms are separated and how many doors there are. At times, it may be helpful to keep certain areas apart—for example, to protect someone's sleep or reduce strong smells from cooking, which could be unpleasant or triggering.

Proximities/ travel distances

Think about the home's layout and how far things are for someone who is less mobile or bedbound. Consider what areas they can easily travel to or see, and which places might be 'near' or 'far' or hard for them to reach.



Spatial privilege

Bedrooms are usually close to bathrooms, which is helpful, especially for end-of-life care. But this can mean other important areas, like the kitchen – which may hold strong meaning or memories – become out of reach or ‘lost’ to someone who is bedbound.

Connection to outside world

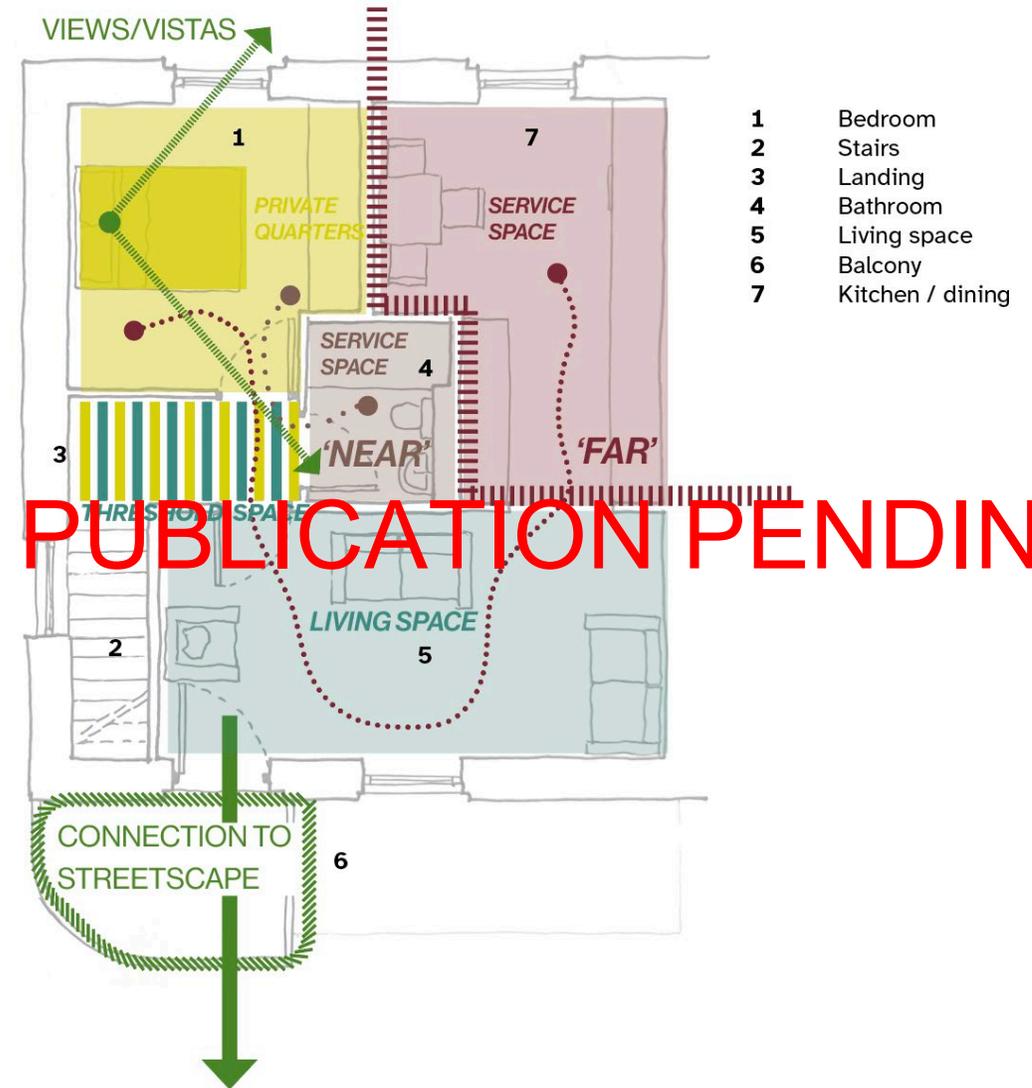
Think about different situations, from reduced mobility to being bedbound. How can someone still connect with the outside? This might be through a well-placed window with a good view or easy access to outdoor space using a light door and level threshold with no steps.

Bed location(s)

When planning room layouts, consider sightlines to/from the bed and options for how the bed is positioned. This includes giving the person a clear view out of a window or being able to see, even partly, through the bedroom door to other parts of the home.

Bedroom window

Think about the size and aspect of the bedroom window – could it be a bay window? It should be considered a principal window, akin to those within a living room. Also, the windowsill height matters, especially for someone lying in bed (beds are typically about 600mm high).



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Access

Consider access needs to the home, including moving bulky equipment through doors and tight spaces. Increased visitor parking may be required for carers and family. Ensure provisions for deliveries, such as food and medical supplies, are available and accessible.

Sanitary provision

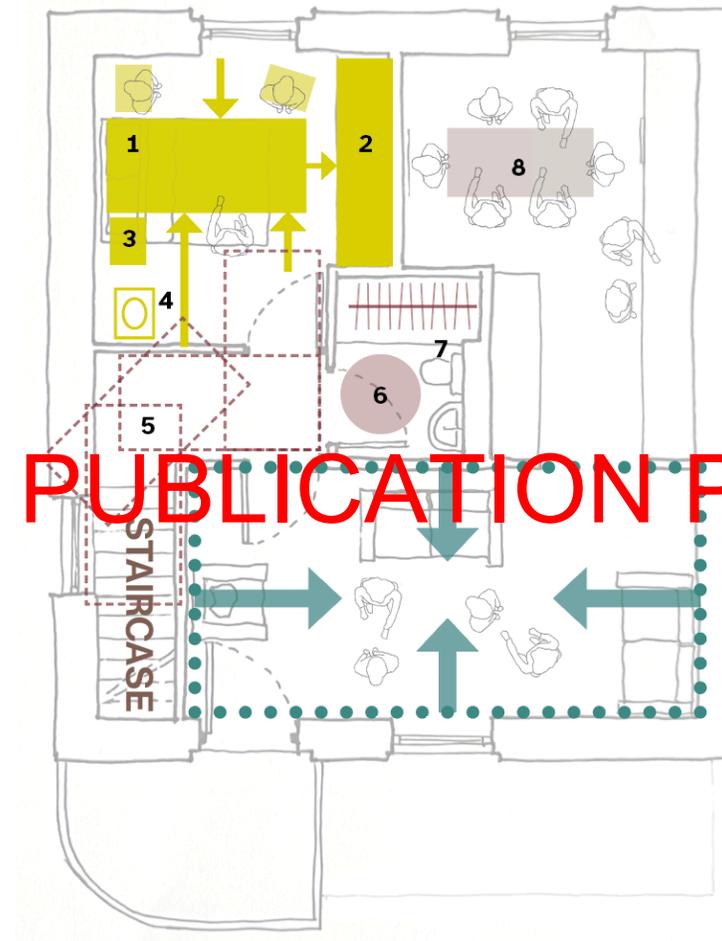
Ensure bathroom layouts meet building codes like UK Part M4(2) for accessible, adaptable homes. Plan for future needs, including space for a commode outside the bathroom, to support changing care requirements while maintaining comfort and dignity at home.

Space standards

Follow relevant standards and assess whether minimums suffice. In small homes or studios, plan for end-of-life care around the bed, allowing space for larger beds (e.g. hospital or orthopaedic) and essential care equipment or furniture to ensure comfort and accessibility.

Storage space

Designers should think about how care equipment might take up space normally used for furniture and belongings. This can create a need for more storage for big items like oxygen tanks, extra furniture, or guest supplies (e.g. camp beds, folding chairs, extra crockery).



- 1 Hospital bed in situ
- 2 Wardrobes / storage
- 3 Additional seating
- 4 Commode
- 5 Movement of hospital bed
- 6 Potential of turning circle for a wheelchair
- 7 Bathroom potential for use with drying / laundry
- 8 Additional space for dining / guests

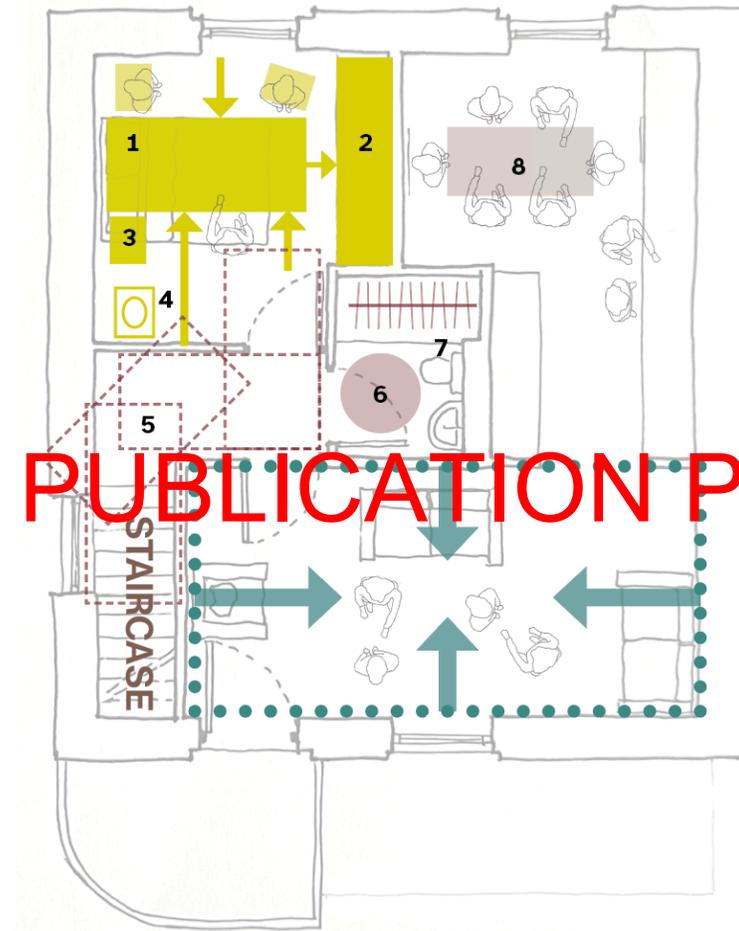
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Accommodating visitors

There may be space issues when overnight stays are needed, especially in one-bedroom homes. Designers should also think about the bedroom being used to receive visitors and make sure there's space available for chairs next to the bed.

Use intensification/ changes

During end-of-life care at home, some parts of the home may be used more often. For example, there may be a lot more washing of bed linen and towels, which puts extra demand on laundry facilities and space for drying clothes. Kitchens and bathrooms may be used



- 1 Hospital bed in situ
- 2 Wardrobes / storage
- 3 Additional seating
- 4 Commode
- 5 Movement of hospital bed
- 6 Potential of turning circle for a wheelchair
- 7 Bathroom potential for use with drying / laundry
- 8 Additional space for dining / guests

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Environmental services

Increased home use raises heating, cooling, and ventilation needs. Crowded spaces and extra laundry can cause dampness, reducing comfort. Additionally, as life ends, the body changes, which may alter its natural scent, affecting the home environment.

Housing governance

When designing collective housing or shared living spaces, it's important to think about how things are managed. This includes communal areas like parking, entrances, and circulation; how deliveries are handled; whether laundry facilities are shared, and where residents can hang washing.

Micro home

End-of-life care can reduce the home to a single bed space, with daily activities merging there. It's important to plan for provisions near the bed, such as space for visitors (chairs), eating (hostess trolley), and toileting (commode), to support comfort and dignity.

Utilitarian home

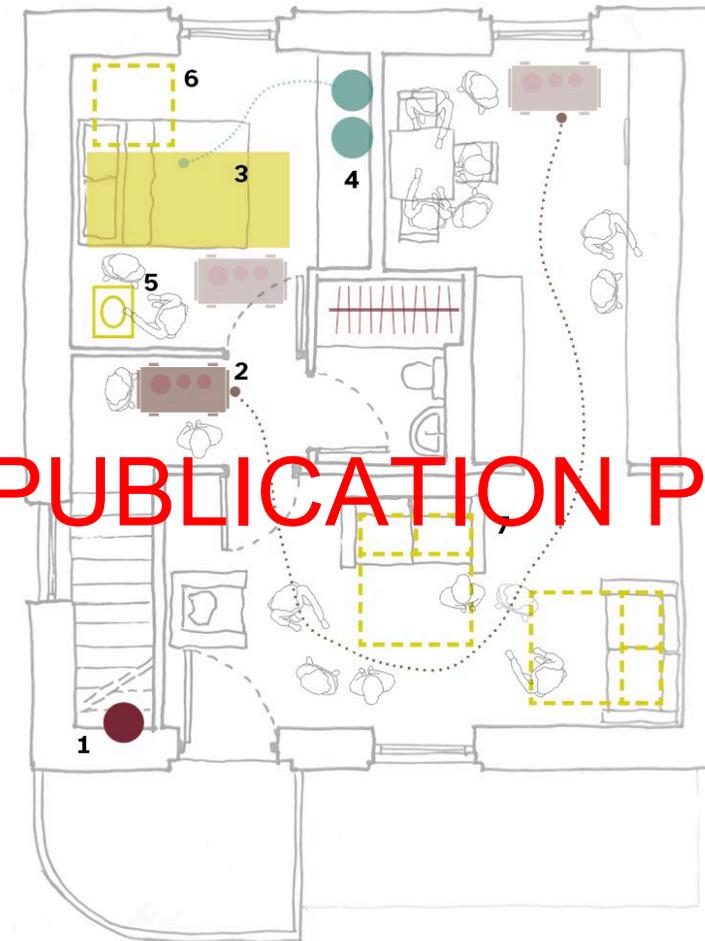
Urgent practical needs can take over the home, like extra washing of towels and sheets making it feel like a laundry with clothes racks and lines taking up space. There may be higher heating and power use and worries about space and cost for appliances like tumble dryers.

Home as hospice

As specialist equipment, furniture, and staff enter the home, its feel may change. Small shifts like door codes or uniformed staff, and larger ones like hospital beds, can feel invasive and reduce the sense of home—especially if personal items are moved or removed.

Home as hostel

End-of-life care may involve more visitors, some staying overnight, increasing demand on spare bedrooms and space. Social gatherings like family meals may occur. Noise between bedrooms and other areas should be considered, especially for with irregular sleep patterns.



- 1 Key safe at front door
- 2 Kitchen essentials
- 3 Hospital bed
- 4 Oxygen
- 5 Commode
- 6 Lounge chair
- 7 Sofa / camp beds

NOT FOR DISTRIBUTION – PUBLICATION PENDING

Empty home

For those with few visitors, the home may feel quiet, empty, or neglected. It can become isolating or seem unfit or unsafe. The occupant might try to stay connected by bringing outside activity in through windows, doors, or technology used for entertainment / communication.

Lost home

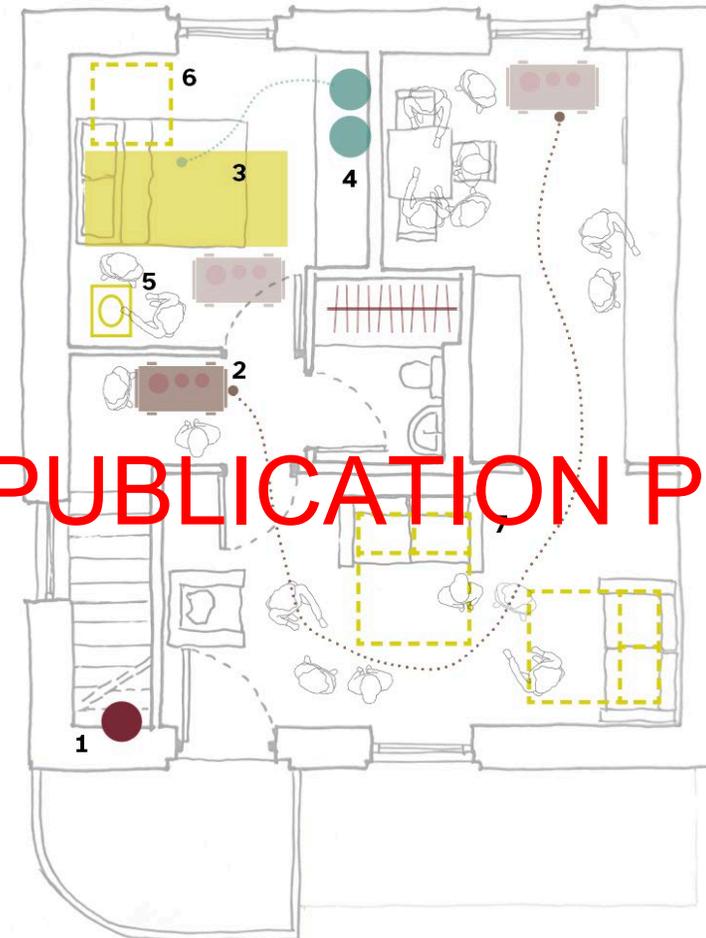
Some may feel a deep sense of loss or grief as the meaning of home changes, especially if it's long-inhabited. This can include loss of intimacy or dignity, as the home becomes more 'public' and private tasks feel vulnerable to exposure or interruption.

Home for religious practices

End-of-life traditions vary between cultures but often aim to create a peaceful space for the dying and a place for family to gather and grieve. Different customs around washing and caring for the body after death may material / spatial implications.

Home of solace

The home might be used for a wake or vigil, a place to remember and pray, or a family celebration of life. Some cultures prefer quiet mourning, while others include loud expressions or joyful celebrations. The home may see a high number of visitors for a time.



- 1 Key safe at front door
- 2 Kitchen essentials
- 3 Hospital bed
- 4 Oxygen
- 5 Commode
- 6 Lounge chair
- 7 Sofa / camp beds

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Design Intent

Goldsmiths Street was primarily designed to provide affordable homes for nuclear families at a specific stage of life and under typical living conditions. Not intentionally age-friendly.

Spatial demands

Dying requires physical space – both at the bedside and beyond. So, how do people living in the smallest homes manage such changing circumstances?

Architectural Awareness

Architects to consider the home as both a possible and likely preferred place to die, while recognising that the identities, materialities, and meanings of *home* are dynamic and often unstable.

Home Choice

How do those outside the social housing system, where reallocation or relocation is not an option, mitigate end-of-life care leading to a hospice or hospital by default ?

Thematic Analysis

Themes emerging from this study require further testing. They are intended as prompts for both practical and philosophical thinking, not ‘design guidance’. Hypotheses for further research.

Pilot Study

Our desktop study dealt with one example of UK housing and at arms-length. Our ambition now is to get inside more housing and to uncover lived experiences.

Architectural Agency

We acknowledge there are limits to architectural agency and tangible risks of empathic design approaches being diluted. Thus, our research is equally aimed at housing commissioners and managers.

Further Research

Looking ahead, we propose further research focused on the lived experiences of those dying at home, including voices from diverse cultural and religious backgrounds.

CONTENTS

INTRO – Policy/Design Guidance

PART 1 – Design for Ageing-in-place: Appleby Blue Case Study

PART 2 – Design for Dying-in-place: Goldsmith Street Case Study



CLOSE – Research Reflections

Placemaking Charter (Wales)

- People and community
- Location
- Movement
- Mix of uses
- Public realm
- Identity



Placemaking in our case studies

- The work we have presented concerns the relationship between interiority and exteriority – from the quality of being inside one's home to the sense of being part of the wider city.
- The design of Appleby Blue involved novel and creative approaches to public engagement including filmed recordings of almshouse residents.
- Locating Appleby Blue on a London high-street was done to ensure proximity of local services - supporting active travel and independence.
- In Appleby Blue we considered home-making within the shared walkways which are situated at a blurred edge between private and public worlds.

- Appleby Blue is a good example of mixed-use development, combining housing and community spaces.
- Both projects encourage mobility – Appleby Blue within limits of the building as well as by virtue of location. Goldsmith Street offers more green space.
- Visual connections to outdoors, and memories of quality experiences, are important for those dying-in-place.
- Movement and access to high-quality public realm will be equally important to visitors.
- Both schemes present distinct architectural identities and engage positively with locale.



Thank you for listening

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