GUIDELINES FOR THE PLANNING OF HOUSES FOR SENIOR CITIZENS

From the Senior Citizens needs orientation for the construction and restructuring of homes for evey age

Front cover: "Pennsylvania coal town" (Oil on convas) by Edward Hopper
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Summary

The "**Guidelines for the planning of houses for Senior citizens (from the senior citizens' needs, orientation for the construction and restructuring of homes for every age)**" The subject of the present volume has been developed in the course of the European Project Interreg III C (Projects for European Interregional cooperation between public entities and equivalent institutions - April 2005/September 2007). The project Wel_Hops welfare housing policies for senior citizens, or housing welfare solutions for senior citizens, has involved institutes from 5 countries: The Blekinge Institute of Technology, Karlskrona University (Sweden); Brighton & Hove City Council (The United Kingdom); FAMCP - Aragonese Federation of the city council and province of Saragozza (Spain); the Municipality of Gyor – Hungary (a new member of the European Union) and ERVET - Emilia-Romagna Territorial Economic Development (Italy) which was responsible for guiding the other partners in the project. These Guidelines (also available on the web site), which today are presented in their definitive form after being tested and verified in the various countries by designers, builders and public administrations, evolved out of a project. The principal aim of this project was to sustain the elderly in their own homes for as long as possible: this publication therefore is a sort of operative manual which gathers together specific observations for the planning and construction of new homes or the restructuring and renovation of already existing homes adapted to the needs of people from all ages, and in particular the elderly. The interdisiplinary and international work group (made up of sociologists, economists, architects, engineers and those responsible for study and research in welfare) who have edited the Guidelines, wanted above all to create an easily consultable instrument of a technical nature, adaptable to the diverse contexts of the countries which belong to the European Union and addressing all who are interested in the question of autonomous residency for the elderly. Indeed the Guidelines have been verified in the field through the contribution of numerous pilot experiences realised by the Public administration of the 5 project countries, planners (such as engineers and architects, quantity surveyors and experts), but also the elderly and their families, caregivers and the managers of residential structures. The Guidelines, in synthesis, through the use of photos and explanatory images (realised by technical experts involved in the programme) have been organized into four sections to provide a detailed architectonic and constructional overview necessary for assuring that the objective of "sustaining senior citizens in their own homes for as long as possible" is met. The volume therefore is laid out in the following way:

Section A – The home, seen as the place of reference for the life of senior citizens, where they carry out those daily routines which are considered fundamental such as sleeping, taking care of personal hygiene, preparing

and eating meals, feeling safe and secure but participating in the neighbourhood life, also perhaps thanks to the help of the caregiver. The home must also, moreover, satisfy some complimentary needs, that is needs which increase the quality of life and the psychological well being of the elderly person (for example the intimacy they feel within their home).

Section B – the building outside the home, intending the communal parts of the building which function as complimentary to the primary needs of residency, such as : corridors, stairs, lifts which allow for mobility, but also services such as, for example, laundries, gyms and areas which permit the creation of good relations between neighbours.

Section C – spaces outside the building, meaning gardens, courtyards, parking areas, green and non-green areas, areas of "Mediation" between the building and the wider city where needs such as recreational and functional, can be satisfied.

Section D – the urban context, that is those areas within a radius of 400 metres of the main building adapted for elderly use (a distance which corresponds to a 10 minute walk for an elderly person). In this section one describes how different essential needs can be satisfied to complete the residency: shopping, going to the doctor, using cash dispensers, participating in the life of the area and getting to the wider city thanks to public transport.

In the final version, after the testing phase, a new section has been added: Staying in one's home. This is specifically aimed at describing project solutions to be respected in the restructuring of buildings

Preface

The ageing population represents one of the most extraordinary social transformations which has characterized and will continue to characterize European society.

The possibility of living longer is clearly a major advance for whoever exceeds the mature age with realistic prospects of living autonomously well beyond those sociologic and demographic hypothesis of the past. The heightened hope of living longer and the increase in the number of elderly citizens represents a challenge for whoever is responsible for running a country: we find ourselves in front of a radical social change with the need to redefine welfare policy objectives.

Bringing attention to the consequences of the "demographic revolution" often means highlighting the burden and difficulty for the elderly to face the increasing questions of health and needs, casting a shadow on the positive potential of a long life.

The challenge for the new generation of elderly citizens is not only the prospect of a prolonged life, but also the manner of ageing, of keeping that vitality and quality which makes life worth living. Ageing well, therefore, as medical and social sciences teach us, is principally avoiding dependence: how? By remaining useful to one's self and others, keeping active, even when physical decline is inevitable, and maintaining a healthy and interested mind which still wants to learn new things.

With this orientation the Wel_Hops European project considers the ageing of the population as an opportunity, and works around a new proposal in approach and content. It proposes, for the first time in Europe, to promote new initiatives at a governmental level and to experiment with innovative and integrative initiatives in favour of the elderly: continuing to live as long as possible in one's own home through the improvement and the construction of homes which satisfy even the specific needs of elderly people (considering that a home that is fully accessible can also be lived in by a younger generation).

The project has taken up the global discussion on how to raise the elderly citizen's quality of life through numerous encounters organized on a European level by its various partners, through an open discussion on the theme of the quality of life and by listening to the elderly of today and tomorrow. This has involved the diverse sectors of public administration and all those parts of society concerned. Ervet, project leader, and agency for the social and economic development of the Emilia-Romagna Region has been able to put itself forward as a guide for all the European institutions involved; including Sweden, already a European leader in welfare.

From the work and experience contributed by 5 European countries (Italy, Sweden, Spain, England and Hungary) and with reference also to the "2ª Conference on the ageing population of the United Nations", comes the following publication: Guidelines for the planning of houses for Senior Citizens (from the senior citizens' needs, orientation for the construction and restructuring of homes for every age) with co-financing from the European Union and national governments.

This work, directed at planners, university students, public administrators and the elderly themselves, shows the cultural advances which Europe has made in these very important themes and of that of the technical experts from the five countries involved in this special programme; a sincere recognition to all those researchers in the medical and social fields.

Introduction

Since May 2003 some regional development agencies, municipalities and universities, attracted by the possibility of putting themselves within a European framework thanks to Interreg III C, have agreed on the need to share objectives, competencies and interests with regards to the theme of an ageing population and of the relative challenges which these phenomena impose on public administration and on the policy makers called upon to confront them. A partnership has been set up among the following: Ervet - Emilia-Romagna Economic Territorial Valorisation (Italy); Blekinge Institute of Technology (Sweden); Brighton & Hove City Council (The United Kingdom); FAMCP - Federaciòn Aragonesa de Municipalidad, Comarcas y Provincias (Spain); the Municipality of GyÖr (Hungary) and the development agency Siauliai (Lithuania). The demographic data which they used signals a radical and perhaps irreversible change in the European Union's social structure. Around 22% of the resident population was found to be over 65, a precentage which will increase to 40% by the year 2050. In the same period citizens over 80 will go from 4% to 11%. (Source:2006 European Commission).

Departing from an analysis of this data and the sharing of individual experiences, the partnership gave itself an ambitious objective: the definition of a project of European standing, able to identify the guidelines for the correct planning of homes for senior citizens and making them available via an appropriate web site. This project was presented and approved under the European programme Interreg IIIC which is dedicated to interregional cooperation. Moreover, it received approval from Community bodies, attaining second place among all the proposals financed by the secretariat Interreg III C East of Vienna.

The strategic objectives had to respond to the following demands: how to plan a home and a city suited to an elderly person? How to insure that the home and the city allowed elderly people to lead autonomous lives?In Emilia-Romagna (as in other European territorial contexts) the rapid growth in the numbers of elderly people has given rise to an ever more attentive consideration of their essential needs, on the part of local institutes and health services. In particular, Ervet has carried out studies and research on the theme and after close on 10 years of intensive work, in November 2004, the *Action Plan for the Regional Community* was approved by the Emilia Romagna Region, written with the collaboration of Ervet.

Being particularly sensitive to this theme, and having matured a wide experience in the course of previous projects, Ervet assumed the leadership of what has become the European project, **wel_hops (welfare housing policies for senior citizens).** The Wel_Hops project has the aim of realizing common European guidelines (recommendations) for the planning of housing for the elderly. **This might take the form of entire housing projects, from their initiation to their completion or the renovation of existing homes with the aim of making them suitable for the elderly and of guaranteeing them as long a life as possible in as independent and safe a manner as possible in their own homes.** Together with Ervet, as group leader, this project involves partners

from various countries, as mentioned above: Sweden, Spain, Hungary, The United Kingdom and, originally, Lithuania (which subsequently withdrew). Wel_Hops has been co-financed by the European Union, national states and individual bodies to the sum of 1,143,060 Euro and will have a duration of 30 months (April 2005 – September 2007). The present guidelines have been inserted in a specific web site (www. welhops.net) and the principal results are also available for consultation on a info-telematic level.

From Manual to Guidelines

All the technical aspects of the Guidelines (LINEE GUIDA or "suggestions" in English) **have been thought out exclusively from the point of view of an elderly person's needs**. Such an approach has allowed one to keep references fairly general, which may lead one to find the work excessively simplified or predictable. However, it also allows one to avoid entering the extremely vast and impenetrable world of technological solutions. A world which is even sometimes conceptually and operatively backwards in relation to the quantity and quality of products available to the designers and planners in an ever growing global market. In fact, it appears fairly obvious to the readers of this project , particularly to those experts in the field, that an extra effort is required to navigate among all the various known directions, in order to find those less well known ones or even those completely unknown ones.

Tests on draft versions of the GUIDE LINES, carried out by all five partners, have confirmed the need for such efforts as well as also having brought to light less evident needs, apparently only secondary, but which give an added depth of interest to the whole work. In such a respect it is worth pointing out that among the 50 European experiences visited and tested, none of these (even the best and most interesting from many points of view) was able to resolve the entire gamma of close on 400 needs expressed by the elderly and indicated in the work.

It is a very different question for those approaching the subject with little or no fundamental understanding. For these people, if any deficiency has been identified it is an excessive simplification of the solutions adopted. Many have asked us "Why don't you give as all the technical information required so that we don't make mistakes?" But writing a "Manual" was not the aim of the present work, given the diversity between the various European countries with regard to regulations, social, cultural and economic differences. Thus, we remained rooted to concerns exclusively defined by the residential needs of elderly people.

When one writes a document with this aim in mind however, it is foreseeable what there will be a clash of visions, sometimes even diametrically opposed. What is important is to keep a clear picture of the direction and the objectives set by the work in hand. In this case the principal objective was to make a valid product available for all the users (from the elderly people concerned to the builders involved, and all the intermediary figures in the process) and not just for those provided with a specific task.

The choice of dealing exclusively with the residential needs of the elderly and not with the more or less technical solutions was discussed and approved by all the members of the wel_hops project. As such it is a direct consequence of our aim not to abandon a criteria we considered fundamental, even though we are aware that we will leave some people unsatisfied along the way. As the Guidelines were being written each partner elaborated their own specific version with differences which were sometimes substantially at variance.At the end of the experimental period for the Guidelines (the pilot) it was considered necessary to publish a text of unified format and dimension which would be the same for everyone (standardized).

Having the same cover, it was thought, would make the work immediately recognizable even though written in languages different from English (each partner translated the work into their own language). Similarly, the level of content was predisposed in such a way as to be the same in the specific versions, be they in Italian, Swedish, Hungarian or Spanish. The lack of territorial character in the images used in the draft version led us to insert a more distinct image, representative of each of the 5 partner countries, in the covering pages for each of the 5 sections which make up the whole work.

Thus, explicitly highlighting the distinctively different origin of the 5 contributing countries whilst keeping a uniformity between all the copies. Throughout all the discussions held between the partners during the experimental phase arguments often arose over the level of detail that should be given to the Guidelines. With respect to this it was agreed to follow a more general line which was present in the draft version, referring exclusively to the residential needs of elderly people.

The only difference admitted among the diverse territorial versions was the possibility of inserting a page (an attachment for the specific country) in which one could read the principal laws and regulations in force in that country. The title "Guidelines" required some modification as it takes on different meanings from country to country. Whilst in countries such as England and Sweden it has connotations of regulation – to be respected as obligations – in a country such as Italy it only has the sense of being purely indicative. It must therefore be specified that its use in the Italian version has only the loose sense of "recommendations" or **general orientation**, as the term is used in that country and which might easily be misinterpreted by another if not pointed out to the reader. In the English version the term Guide lines will become "suggestions", in Spanish "Sugerencia" and so on for all the other countries.

The Guidelines, the object of the research carried out by the five country partners, are **recommendations** for the planning and construction of new residences, the restructuring of existing ones and also for important urban transformations with regard to bettering the life of elderly people. They represent an array of technical considerations, formal solutions, practical details and applicable methods for an innovative vision directed at housing for both the elderly and the very elderly. We wish to highlight not so much the innovative character of the proposal made by the guidelines, in so much as others have already struggled with this aspect, but more their open ended characteristic which may be implemented over time.

In reality, with these "recommendations" there are, even though in a more or less implicit form, some indispensable "pre-conditions" ifor defining those conditions which allow us to improve the quality of life of an elderly person, equal to those of a purely technical nature. For example the slogan "The elderly in their own home", which singles out and accompanies the whole wel_hops project, goes well beyond a simple affirmation for introducing a collective mode of behaviour, capable of directing all the decision makers, both private and public, and placing itself in direct contrast with the idea of an institutionalization without alternative. Such a situation, however, although well established in Northern European countries and some Southern regions (Emilia Romagna among them) still only remains an affirmation of principal and a purely linguistic exhortation for may public administrators in many geographic realities.

Another point which deserves mentioning, and which represents more a conviction than an implicit operative consequence, is that the introduction of the points raised in the Guidelines can improve everyone's lifestyle and not only that of an elderly person. The idea, that by satisfying those needs identified in the Guide lines one can "also" respond to those of the majority of other types of user, came from a very simple hypothesis. According to this, all those aspects thought of for improving the activity of a frail person also concur for the activities of younger and averagely gifted people.

In the Guideline recommendations, indeed, an elevated use of automated and innovative technical solutions has not been given pride of place, something perhaps aimed at a completely dependent elderly user. Quite the opposite, these solutions have been thought of to help the person and not to substitute them in the principal activities of everyday life. Having done this, other objectives were met, all aimed at maintaining personal autonomy over time. This is, in fact, a well known line of research in the field of social-support, tied to the strong existing correlation between the individual ability of an elderly citizen to stay autonomous and the quality of prosthetic instruments available in the home; a correlation which must occur in the best way possible to maintain that level of autonomy over time.

A third point which crosses the whole work of the Guidelines is that which is relative to the moderate introduction of technology, especially avoiding the sort which is particularly difficult to use and which is intrusive. Although on this topic it is certainly not feasible by now to talk about "back to basics" without technology, one must not ignore the weighty problem of the distance between what planners require and what the market supplies.

On one hand, indeed, the new technology offered by the market proposes models which increase the social standing of the user or which are surprising for their versatility and complexity. On the other hand, the planner's requirements are on a diametrically opposed side, continually searching for prosthetic products aimed at resolving specific needs, which only a few niche producers appear interested in satisfying. There is a wide and unacceptable gap therefore between producer and user, which leaves the elderly without any real support, and which could be easily supplied without excessive effort thanks to the new technology already

available. An important aspect which merits being mentioned regards the particular point of view from which the entire question of senior citizen housing has been approached. In the guidelines in fact the only points that have been taken into consideration are those principally relating to the nature of building, the fittings and fixtures and the technological systems of home/building/city. Only in some particular cases has there been some dwelling on aspects inherent in furnishing, but only, either directly or indirectly when these questions were related to form or to the physical spaces in building and urban divisions.

The subjects of sanitary articles or assistance and also references to small elements of furnishing have been intentionally left out of the picture as they were considered not pertinent from the point of view of the Well_Hops project. Similarly, the guidelines do not contain all those observations which by now are considered indispensable in building and inherent in normal procedures, being bound to the national standards of the various countries (seismic stability, material certification, Winter and Summer energy economizing, building site safety, etc…)

The quality of life of many senior citizens must however be measured daily against the functioning of supporting prosthetic aids. To researchers and European experts therefore the limitations appeared very clear to us, but not enough to lead us away from the principal activity by enlarging it and risking undermining that part which we consider fundamental for measuring the senior citizen's quality of life (home, building and city).

One last point that should not be forgotten in this first part of the introduction is that relative to the name adopted for this document. By the term guidelines one has intentionally underlined the particular character of the text which is directed more towards focusing attention on a requirement-type (linked to the specific needs of the elderly) able to respect determined indicators of quality performance, more than traditional references in a strict manual sense. Where the building manual has traditionally offered answers and solutions of a prescriptive/conformative type referring to some measure of "absolute" value to be respected (standard model) or a suitable solution to be followed (a predetermined space), the "needs" approach is a substitute for this. It takes a totally flexible position which leaves the doors open to diverse solutions which, whilst respecting pre-chosen aims, allow for innovative and creative manoeuvring, conditioned only by the knowledge of every proposing part. This leaves a wide space for future technical solutions.

 Moreover, these could be further implemented thanks to the growth of understanding and the development of technology. In this way one does not offer ready-made solutions which are only valid in a specific moment or in some geographic reality (the traditional manual type), but it offers every possible solution as long as they are carried out in compliance with the whole set of the user's/consumer's needs. In the language of technical information for construction (manuals) when one wanted to transform it into a text referring to a wide range of subjects related to a specific aspect of a project, one almost always resorted to a communicative format. This was based on diagrams, project type, suitable solutions, iconographic

symbols originating from some construction tradition and represented by the typical form of typological listing and/or the instructions for a particular construction, valid once and for all. The alternative to such a representative model is a cultural model with over thirty years of experience on the academic side (requirements based on the needs of the user), but which still has few converts in the field of popular literature for the vast majority of the reading public. In reality, for at least 10/15 years, with the strong and active support of the European Union, operative proposals based on guidelines have been presented on numerous occasions, often finding a notable consensus in public opinion.

We also consider this an opportunity not to be missed, especially with respect to a theme, the residency of senior citizens, which still has many steps to take at a European level in order to realise its full potential. Moreover, particularly now that new countries have entered the European Union which belong to different historical and cultural traditions and which have different housing models and demographics; all destined to change radically particularly starting with the weaker percentage of the population, such as the elderly.

The form of communication adopted by the Guidelines

The method of representation used by the Guidelines must be immediately explicit, so as to facilitate comprehension of the entire text, but also as it is one of its particular characteristics. The available options were obviously multiple, but one has chosen to remain anchored to a particular form of communication based on easily understandable references and which at the same time result as being simple to understand and efficacious in interpretation. For these reasons certain methods have been ignored: methods of representation excessively redundant based exclusively on long didactic and repetitive texts which discourage reading and all the descriptive steps; methods which are excessively technically based on designs with representations in maps, sections, bi-dimensional representations, etc…, discouraging all those who do not have the expertise required; representations of a cartoon nature which, although easily interpreted, risk giving the entire work an unscientific aspect.

In order to favour an immediate understanding, but at the same time guaranteeing a clear image of the enormous effort behind the scenes, one has opted for a hybrid solution which contains both a limited textual element relating and highlighting each elderly person's need, as well as in a figurative way ("rendering" or photography) which represents the essential needs of the elderly in a synthetic form. In particular the "rendering" images have been constructed keeping at the forefront the actions of an elderly person whose use indicates or lives the space characteristic of the need represented, leaving in the background (in grey) the remaining spaces unused at that moment.

Finally, in order to show some details of particular appliances we have resorted to foregrounding the image from a manufacturer's catalogue, removing the brand name or distinguishing aspects, seeing as the overall image would have confused the object amidst a plethora of secondary detail.

The aspect of setting has been expressly configured in such as way as to appear pleasant for today's elderly person (many parts have been taken from photographs of the real environments in which the elderly live); the reduction of the furnishings is due to this type of choice. In the discussion between the partners of the Wel_hops project and on the bases of the diverse experiences registered in the first phase of the work, there have been other more "contemporary" and "modernistic" solutions, often also particularly appreciated by elderly people. But we know that today it is not the same for everyone and, therefore, we have left such modern alternatives for future occasions, staying for now on a more conservative note and one that is more tied to the traditions of the more present day elderly.

The Guidelines have been thought up and subdivided into five sections: **the home** (section A), single areas for domestic life; **the building outside the home (Section B),** in practice the communal spaces outside the home: stairs, halls, general and individual services; **the spaces outside the building (section C)**, or rather the parking spaces, entrances to the building, green areas etc… and finally, **the urban context (section D)**, the passages and ways, the links with the wider city, the public transport stops,etc… A fifth section has been dedicated to **the restructuring and adaptation of existing buildings to the needs of the elderly.**

Inside the five sections the Guidelines are structured as an homogenous ensemble of needs which make up all the daily needs of elderly citizens both inside and outside the home; they arise from an analysis of the requests expressed verbally or through questionnaires given on various occasions, as well as from a multiplicity of investigations on their everyday behaviours and rituals during the collective and/or individual habits of living.

The Guidelines have been elaborated by subdividing them for reasons of descriptive clarity into **fundamental** and **specific** needs, the first represent an array of the general needs which make up the diverse phases of "living", while the second represent the elementary needs non divisible as in their whole they complete each fundamental need. The specific needs belong therefore to a so-called hierarchic level inferior to fundamental needs. Such a modality of the representation of needs is applicable to all the four sections of the work.

In order to complete the whole array of the specific needs related to each of the fundamental ones, we were constrained to repeat some already inserted in a previous fundamental need. This appears to be an apparently contradictory choice, but at the same time it is efficient in obtaining a completion of the work, as well as favouring a reading of each single section; often a method which is used by technicians to simplify reading or to verify interests arising from the need to examine a single topic or a limited group of matters.

Section A, referring to **homes**, has been subdivided into two subsections marked by the indispensable needs and those distinguished as complementary. All this, to separate the needs normally considered as obligatory for the life of each senior citizen (washing one's self, sleeping, eating, etc…) from those considered as optional, even though they may belong to daily individual behaviour (washing clothes, looking after pets and plants,

making the most of comforts and availing one's self of opportune safety and security systems, etc…)

Section B, referring to the external spaces of the building, has been articulated in 4 subsections: passages and walkways; individual and family services; collective services and general services. The relative needs of the area of walkways and passages regard horizontal and vertical connections with the relative areas of access and rest. We have listed among the needs relative to individual services and family ones all those which result as been linked directly or indirectly to the wholeness of function, which regard the needs of the single and which can be also carried out in a pertinent ambit (laundry, drying and ironing, individual deposits, etc…)

The needs relative to collective services regard all the spaces that each block of apartments decides to provide in order to elevate socialization and recreative activities directed at residents and those external to the building (communal room, cafè, library, gym, TV and computer rooms, prayer room, etc…). Finally, the needs relative to general services regard all the spaces and equipment and facilities inherent in extra functions such as controlling the environmental comfort and the aesthetic quality of communal spaces.

Section C refers to spaces pertaining to the outside of the building. Whilst it considers fairly diverse subjects (entrances, pedestrian pathways and carriageable accesses, parking, gardens, etc…) it keeps, however, a unitary layout with no regard to the interior of the building.

Section D refers to the urban context with its connection between living areas and services, indicating only a few essential elements whilst keeping, however, a unitary layout with no regard to the interior of the building. In order to reinforce the presence and importance of all the activities relative to the recovery and restructuring of buildings in this final version of the work we have added a new section which is dedicated to this specific kind of construction project.

The last **section**, has been devoted **to indicating possible solutions** to adopt when carrying out work inside individual homes or in housing blocks where the aim is to eliminate architectonic barriers (caused by the absence of electric-mechanical systems for overcoming the problems of level variations in multi-floor buildings). Taking this opportunity, specific references are also made to describe the diverse needs (fundamental and specific) which are involved in the individual projects proposed, both directly and indirectly.

On one hand the insertion of this new section allows us to keep a general and apparently operatively limited lay out, whilst on the other, giving us the possibility of not having to split into two distinct parts all the objective findings referring to the recovery of an existing home with those required for creating a new one. This, in fact, was a possible option at the beginning of the project, but one that was progressively abandoned so as not to excessively over burden the overall size of the entire work. It was a course of action decided

upon so as to keep it as "light",essential and as simple to use as possible, and to avoid those counter aspects which distinguish it from a manual of regulations, the very thing we actively sort to avoid.

The order of the 5 sections was also carefully evaluated. Although the order **from the home to the urban context** was considered correct, the possibility of inverting this was also considered, moving instead from the urban context to the home, so as to throw light on: the needs referring to the urban context; the spaces pertaining to the outside of the building and to the quality of the buildings, which are often less studied or considered in practice.

Although the cultural value of such a lay out was appreciated, the initial solution of keeping the order of home-urban context was favored as it was considered fundamental for improving the understanding of this particular space. An understanding which is still very far from the needs of the elderly population.

It is inside the existing building where one must intervene the most in order to keep elderly people in their own homes, as comfortably as possible and for as long as possible.One should also single out the need to understand the importance of the elderly person's stay in their own home in every territorial context, from urban to rural.

The Guidelines have focused principally on the urban context, but the elderly also often live in a rural setting. Based on this fact, which gradually emerged as the project developed, the partners began to consider more and more the complexity of this theme, sensitizing the public authorities to this consideration. This was not one of the results expected from the work, but undoubtedly it is a valid one and merits being faced just as much

the building and the surrounding area. However, the problem of socializing has to be confronted in a different manner from its traditional one. The theme is a complex one though and should be examined in the future with adequate means.The last issue in this introduction is that of whether or not to assign degrees of importance to each need so as to draw up a table of priorities. This too was heavily discussed in the various meetings but omitted, thus attributing the same importance to every need in the present work. By doing this, obviously, one has lost the possibility of distinguishing between the absolutely indispensable needs for a elderly person's residency from those less indispensable.

This has complicated the work of those who believe they do not have all the economic resources for introducing all the recommendations indicated in the guidelines, leading them perhaps to "cut out some part" which might be a fundamental need. On the other hand however, we have gained in quantity and quality because, in our view, the indication of some list of priorities would have led many to stop at a certain point with regard to these "fundamental" needs (detailed by ourselves) and consider the others superfluous or less important. In many cases the risk would have been to present projects **without any of those apparently secondary aspects which, however, constitute the real essence of the diversity between a normal home and one thought of for the elderly.**

This risk (widely discussed by all the wel_hops partners) was one we did not want to take and therefore we have placed every need on the same level of importance, hoping as soon as possible to obtain concrete examples which satisfy needs, even those apparently less fundamental.
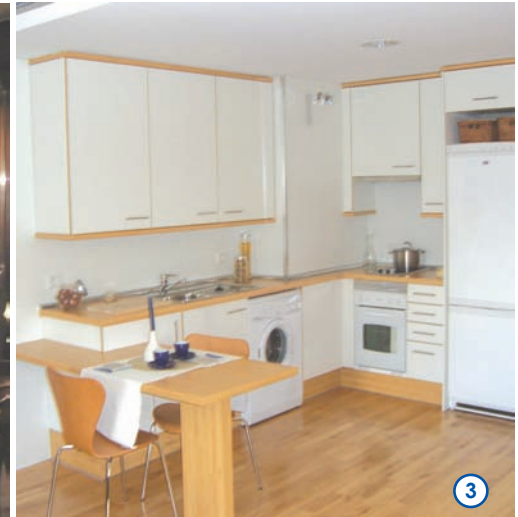
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Municipality of Gyor (Hungary)

THE HOME

SECTION A - THE HOME

The home is a critically important place because it is the centre of a person's daily activities. For this reason, all the internal spaces must be accessible, comfortable, safe, easily manageable and easy to maintain. In their own home people must feel calm, safe and free to take care of their own lives in an autonomous and independent manner.

This guide contains fundamental requirements which must be satisfied by the creation of spaces which have defined functional and geometric characteristics, as well as utilising appropriate new technology available on the market. The requirements have been subdivided into *indispensable* and *complementary*: The indispensable group are requirements tied to primary and vital needs such as eating, sleeping, taking care of one's own body, etc.; the complimentary ones refer to satisfying secondary needs tied to the quality of life such as reading, watching T.V., recreational activities, looking after plants and flowers, communicating with the external world, etc.

The failure to satisfy of one or more of the fundamental needs of an individual is considered so grave as to render the whole home unacceptable for that individual. On the other hand, the absence of any of the complimentary features does not render the whole home unacceptable, but will put the person on an inferior qualitative level with respect to others who have their needs satisfied.
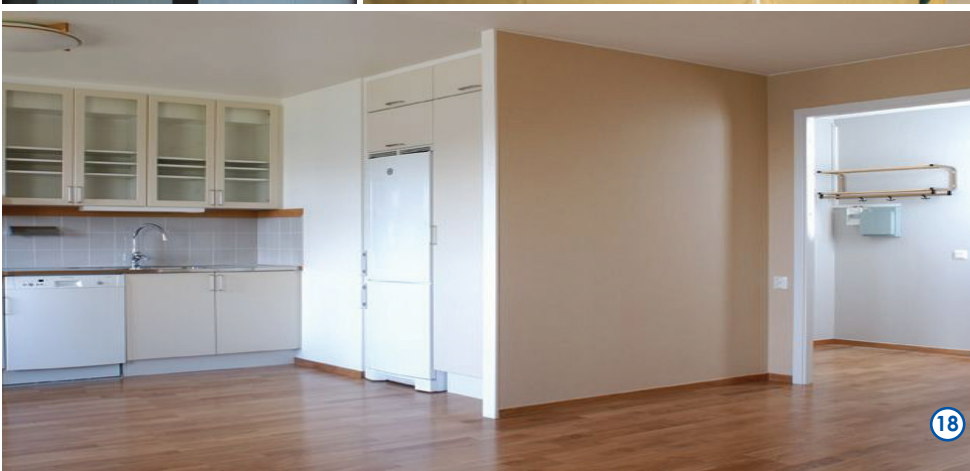
DESCRIPTIVE TITLES OF IMAGES:

Section Cover: Domus Moratalaz Residence, Madrid (Spain)

(1)   Malsätra Seniorboende, Stockholm (Sweden)

(2)   Via Scandellara Residence, Bologna (Italy)

(3)   Domus Moratalaz Residence, Madrid (Spain)

(4)   Via Scandellara Residence, Bologna (Italy)

(5)   Domus Mirasierra Residence, Madrid (Spain)

(6)   Hartrigg Oaks, York (Great Britain)

(7)   Domus Moratalaz Residence, Madrid (Spain)

(8)   Domus Mirasierra Residence, Madrid (Spain)

(9)   Domus Mirasierra Residence, Madrid (Spain)

(10)   Malsätra Seniorboende, Stockholm (Sweden)

(11)   Domus Mirasierra Residence, Madrid (Spain)

(12)   Collebeato Residence, Brescia (Italy)

(13)   Domus Moratalaz Residence, Madrid (Spain)

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(18)   Malsätra Seniorboende, Stockholm (Sweden)

(19)   Domus Moratalaz Residence, Madrid (Spain)

EASY IDENTIFICATION OF THE ENTRANCE TO THE HOME

1

Recognizing the entrance to one's own house, even from a distance, transmits a sense of safety and anticipates the feeling of pleasure on returning home.

a ensure that the entrance to the home is in an easily visible and recognizable position ▶

b situate the entrance to the home in a place which is sufficiently illuminated both by day and by night ▶

c avoid a monotonous succession of doors ▶

d distance the doors to the homes in an even and clear manner

e distinguish the different entrance doors with colours, materials or by other devices so that they are different from the walls ▶

1

EASY IDENTIFICATION OF THE ENTRANCE TO THE HOME

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f encourage the personalization of the area immediately adjoining the entrance to the home without reducing the space of shared passageways

g the entrance doors to the homes must give a sense of security

EASY ACCESS TO THE HOME

Recognizing the entrance to one's own house, even from a distance, transmits a sense of safety and anticipates the feeling of pleasure on returning home

**a** distinguish between the zones inside and outside the apartment with colours and materials

b provide the home with easy access for people with impaired ability

▶

c use slip resistant floor finishes around the apartment entrance

d allow enough free space inside the door for transit and manouevring for people with impaired mobility (a cicrle with a diameter of 150 cm is the minimum)

▶

e keep the same floor level between the home and the area immediately outside it

f furnish the door with a simple lock which is easy to operate

▶
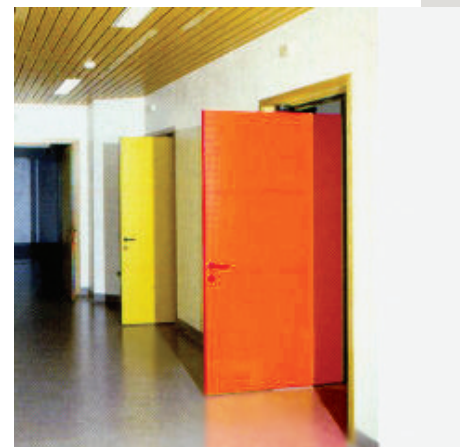
2

EASY ACCESS TO THE HOME

Recognizing the entrance to one's own house, even from a distance, transmits a sense of safety and anticipates the feeling of pleasure on returning home

◀ **g** make sure that no excessive effort is required when opening the door

◀ **h** provide the entrance door with a simple opening system which is easy to work

◀ **i** provide the entrance with a system for observing who is calling at the door . Make sure that one can only see out so as to avoid the possibility of undesired, prying eyes. In the case of a system in glass insert a form of protection (film, etc…)

j provide the entrance with a **CCTV** system to see and communicate with anyone who is calling at the door of the house, the door of the building and possibly at the external gate

◀ **k** provide the entrance with a device for resting heavy objects so that one may open the door easily

l provide the entrance with a natural and artificial lighting system which allows one to see who is calling at the door

EASY ACCESS TO THE HOME

Recognizing the entrance to one's own house, even from a distance, transmits a sense of safety and anticipates the feeling of pleasure on returning home

m provide for the safe, partial opening of the door for security (also for the delivery of packets)

n provide a shelf for the resting of objects just inside the door

o assure for seating just inside the door

p assure for the hanging up of heavy clothing just inside the door ▶

3 GUARANTEE A STIMULATING EXTERNAL VIEW

Seeing a rich stimulating view directly outside one's home avoids a sense of isolation and loneliness

◀ **a** provide windows which overlook outdoor spaces where there is activity to provide interest

◀ **b** provide windows which allow seated people to look out

c design the bedroom so the bed can be put in a position to allow for external vision

◀ **d** provide the home with a balcony or a veranda, better if covered and protected from the wind