The Ideology of Gender and Community:
Housing the Woman-Led Family

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Content

Illustrations

Abstract

Housing typologies based on the traditional family no longer satisfy the needs of the majority of households. Woman-led families are impeded in their search for appropriate housing by their low wages and family responsibilities, compounded by the blindness of housing-policy makers to their existence. Historical models of collective dwellings are steeped in the ideology of the period and yield few direct practical solutions to the current dilemma. The richness of this housing, however, which evolved during a time of dramatic social change underscores the blandness of current housing solutions. Feminists insist that housing and urban design solutions should challenge the gender defined roles of "homemaker" and "childcare giver" and the restricted mobility of women in cities and suburbs. The endorsement of new housing typologies must be translated into their realisation and subsequent analysis.

Résumé

Les typologies d'habitation conçuent pour favoriser les familles nucléaires ne répondent plus aux besoins de la plupart des ménages. Les faibles revenus et les responsabilites familiales des femmes chef de familles, aggravés par une politique d'habitation qui ignore leur situation actuelle, leur empêchent d'accèder à des logements convenables. Bien que l'habitation en commun du dix-neuvième siècle fût baignée dans l'idéologie et ne donne que peu de solutions praticables à la situation actuelle, la richesse de ces modèles, qui ont évolué au cours d'un temps de transformation sociale importante, souligne la pauvreté d'expression architecturale dans les typologies d'habitation courante. Les féministes soulignent surtout que le design de l'habitation et de l'urbanisme doit mettre en question les rôles engendrés de "femme de maison" et "mère de famille" qui restreindent la mobilité des femmes en ville et en banlieu. Il ne suffit plus de préconiser à maintes reprises une habitation sensible à la famille moderne. Le moment est arrivé pour achever de nouvelles typologies et de vérifer les résultats.

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To my mother and father

Preface

Collective dwellings for single-parent households present two areas of interest for me. The first is the nature of community and the second is the implications of gender. For over a dozen years I have worked on social justice issues with a community of people who resolved all questions through discussion and consensus. Often during these years, we considered the possibility of actually living together as a community. It would have been the United Nations of the family, since we represented virtually every permutation. But, despite deep respect for one another, affinity of ideas, and more or less financial solvency, we never acted on our numerous discussions. We did, however, manage to start up and to assist several group home projects in the interim. At the time, the history of collective housing and its current manifestations were virtually unknown to me. My private view of collective housing, which undoubtedly was shared by others of the groups, was that it represented a loss of independence and privacy. This research has opened up new possibilities and broadened this narrow view of the concept.

The implications of gender were also not uppermost in my mind when I started this research. Although I graduated from architecture school when there was a significant number of women in the program at my university, 25 percent, gender in the built environment was never considered. Even as a practicing architect, gender was rarely discussed. In fact, I only remember it in terms of salary and promotion issues and the relative size of the male and female locker rooms for an exclusive country club design. Although I designed numerous low-cost housing projects and nursing homes, the majority of whose occupants are female, I did not consciously consider this factor or its implications in the planning. I have experienced the pain of discovery and am anxious to implement this new-found awareness in my future design work.

1

Introduction
Turning Space into Community

And how does the liberated self emerge that is capable of turning time into life, space into community, and human relationships into the marvelous?[1]
Murray Bookchin

Murray Bookchin's poetic words about the struggles of daily life, expressed in terms of an "identifiable self" rather than as simply "one of the masses," evokes many possibilities and has helped focus my conflicting thoughts on the scope, desirability, and form of collective dwelling for single-parent households. It is, after all, the individual who ultimately must confront these dilemmas and adapt.

In a related footnote Bookchin mentions Charles Fourier, an early nineteenth century French philosopher and advocate of collective dwelling who spent a lifetime trying to realise his vision for a new social world in which competition was obsolete and human suffering, inconceivable. Various attempts to implement collective housing have shown that the principle cannot be universally applied, although its attributes make it a suitable housing form for many groups. The definition of collective dwelling needs to evolve in order to increase its applicability. The concept, in terms of this thesis, is holistic and not limited to a building type and the services offered within its periphery, but includes the neighbourhood and the urban context.

1. Murray Bookchin, *Post-Scarcity Anarchism* (1971: Montreal: Black Rose Books, 1977) 44.

At the outset, my research focused on collective housing for the homeless, based on the single-room-occupancy model with private bedroom and shared living room, kitchen, and bath. Realising through my initial research that women with children make up the fastest growing segment of the homeless and "under-housed" population and that affordable housing needs to be combined with services to be viable for this group, I reduced the scope of my thesis to "women-focused housing" and broadened it to include a variety of collective models.

The objectives of collective dwellings today are multifaceted. The primary intent is to enhance the options available to groups that are inadequately served by the bulk of existing housing. A second is to give residents security of tenure and greater control over their housing. A number of considerations need to be addressed to achieve this. The planning of neighbourhoods and dwellings should facilitate access to child care, public transportation, employment, and shopping. The dwellings should be grouped—both to make housing more affordable by the efficient use of land and resources and to allow like-minded people to get to know each other and to cooperate informally.

The intent here is to examine collective dwellings for single-parent households as an alternative to the independent suburban home. The single-family home is the predominant typology in North America, and the model aspired to by the majority of households. The reasons for this love affair, although relevant, cannot be adequately considered here, but the allure of the single-family detached house persists despite empirical data that demonstrates a high level of user dissatisfaction with many of its elements.[2]

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2. Susan Saegert and Gary Winkel, "The Home: A Critical Problem for Changing Sex Roles," *New Space for Women*, ed. Gerda R. Wekerle, Rebecca Peterson, and David Morley (Boulder Colorado: Westview Press, 1980) 55-58. Leslie Kanes Weisman, *Discrimination by Design: A Feminist Critique of the Man-Made Environment* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1992) 129-31 discusses the allure of the single-family home.

Government policies have encouraged changes in the predominant housing typologies at various intervals in the past, generally to meet some political or social agenda, and often with negative ramifications for women.[3] In proposing new typologies, the dilemma is to ascertain how best to reorganise the built environment to enhance the situation for a particular group (in this case, women-led households) without perpetuating the burdensome stereotypical roles for women or other segments of the population within society and in home.[4]

Considering Gender

Often times when gender issues are introduced into a topic not considered "women's studies," a segment of the audience (not necessarily all male) roll their eyes in exasperation at being forced to listen, once again, to women's "whining" about injustice. The introduction of racial issues often has this same effect. When the statistics are examined, however, (as will be done below) they stunningly justify such analysis.

The 1989 *Oxford English Dictionary* defines "feminism" as "Advocacy of the rights of women (based on the theory of equality of the sexes)."[5] But "feminist" and "feminism" are rarely perceived in such neutral terms, as anyone who has used them to define their position readily understands. Feminists are also not a homogeneous group and often ascribe to conflicting ideologies on the nature of male-privilege as biologically-or traditionally-driven and on the definition of the desired "equality."

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3. Suzanne Mackenzie, "Building Women, Building Cities: Toward Gender Sensitive Theory in the Environmental Disciplines," *Life Spaces: Gender, Household, Employment*, ed. Caroline Andrew and Beth Moore Milroy (Vancouver: University of British Columbia Press, 1988) 13-14.

4. Barbara McFarlane, "Homes Fit For Heroines: Housing in the Twenties," *Making Space Women and the Man-Made Environment*, ed. Matrix (London: Pluto Press, 1984) 36

5. "Feminist," *Oxford English Dictionary*, 2nd ed., 1989.

In the early years of feminist awareness the home and women's role as unpaid workers were critical issues; later the focus was on women's access to education and gainful employment. The social moderate wing of the feminist movement, after the initial wave of euphoria and subsequent soul-searching, has moved on from the earlier achievements to analyse and to challenge the gender aspects of women's inequality.[6] Feminists have been concerned with a lack of synthesis in the discussion of housing and urban planning issues that reinforces the separation of the private from the public realm. The emphasis now is on realising the financial equality of women in the workplace in tandem with men's integration in the home. The latter, unfortunately, cannot be instantaneously achieved, whereas, the issue of women's vulnerability in the housing market is a reality and, as is shown below, cannot be resolved by the simple provision of affordable housing.

The home may be a place of leisure and retreat for men, but this is not the case for most women. Although many men are more supportive today and "share" family duties, studies show that it is women who have the primary responsibility for child care and household tasks, even when they work outside the home.[7] Women (or men for that matter) who raise their children alone still need time to pursue other interests. The use of community facilities (shopping, restaurants, classes, sports facilities, etc.) by women increases as their children grow older and attend school.[8] The location of most housing does not allow for easy access to these facilities nor does it allow suburban women who

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6. Marion Robert, *Living in a Man-Made World: Gender Assumptions in Modern Housing Design* (London: Routledge, 1991) 2-3.

7. Sarah Fenstermaker Berk, "The Household as Workplace: Wives, Husbands, and Children," *New Space for Women*, eds. Gerda R. Wekerle, Rebecca Peterson, and David Morley (Boulder Colorado: Westview Press, 1980) 73-75.

8. Ilene M. Kaplan, "Family Life Cycle and Women's Evaluations of Community Facilities," *Building for Women*, ed. Suzanne Keller (Lexington Massachusetts: Lexington Books, 1981) 85.

have raised their children a convenient transition from full-time care giver to part or full-time worker. Restrictive zoning laws prevent the inclusion of appropriate non-residential uses in family-housing zones, thereby creating neighbourhoods that are hostile to the needs of many households. Single-function suburbs are designed to accommodate full-time wives and mothers and commuting husbands.

Methodology

The historical perspective of collective dwelling as well as the current situation are considered in this thesis. Under these two headings, gender issues are underlined in order to situate the need for appropriately designed housing within the larger context of an environment where women's place has been traditionally defined.[9] Since social arrangements are more fluid than the physical environment, new household groupings have emerged and even predominate.[10] However, housing typologies that reflect current social realities in terms of the role of women, the make-up of the typical family unit, and the increased need for services have been slow to evolve.[11] The presence of children also has important ramifications, however, because of time and space constraints, this facet of the issue is not given the comprehensive treatment it would warrant in a longer work.[12]

9. Susana Torre, "Introduction: A Parallel History," *Women in American Architecture: A Historic and Contemporary Perspective*, ed. Susana Torre (New York: Whitney Library of Design, 1977) 11-12 discusses tradition/culture using Vincent Scully's definition of "tradition."

10. Gilles Barbey, *Evasion domestique: Essai sur les relations d'affectivité au logis* (Lausanne: Presses polytechniques et universitaires romandes, 1990) 64-65.

11. Jos Boys, "Women in Public Space," *Making Space Women and the Man-Made Environment*, ed. Matrix (London: Pluto Press, 1984) 38.

12. Sarane Spence Boocock, "The Life Space of Children," Building for Women, ed. Suzanne Keller (Lexington Massachusetts: Lexington Books, 1981)93-116 presents empirical data gathered from children on their attitudes towards their homes and neighbourhood environments. Clare Cooper Marcus and Wendy Sarkissian *Housing as if People Mattered: Site Design Guidelines for Medium-Density Family Housing* (Berkeley: Univ. of California Press, 1986) 107-184 presents data on the design needs of children.

In Chapter Two, "Accommodating Women: A Feminist View of Housing," the structural implications for women of the built environment are considered within the framework of the writings of feminist architects, geographers, and urban planners. Current statistics on women-led households are included to underscore the extent of the problem.

A comprehensive analysis of the literature on collective housing over the past two hundred years has been undertaken with the intent of situating the current discussion and discovering if there are aspects of these precedents that could be incorporated in the design of new housing typologies. The early feminist advocates of collective housework conclude Chapter Two; and Chapter Three, "The Dilemma of Reality," mines the rich communitarian tradition of the nineteenth century when the act of building had symbolic implications. The environments created by these groups underscored their convictions and reinforced the cohesion of their communities. The Shakers are highlighted in this chapter firstly, because their settlements clearly expressed their ideology and secondly, contrary to most sectarian groups, they not only espoused a social structure that recognised women's equality, but implemented it (however imperfectly).

Chapter Four, "A Place for Women: Building Women-Focused Environments," presents women-centered housing in Toronto against the backdrop of more sophisticated European collective housing examples. Numerous women-focused housing projects are analysed from an architectural viewpoint. The social goals of these projects are progressive, but the housing forms and siting lack innovation and adequate communal space to support a community. The primary concern of government agencies, which provide the major funding for women-focused housing in North America, is to build projects that can be easily converted into traditional dwelling units rather than to promote architecturally innovative solutions. The realisation of the projects consumes the bulk of the human resources provided by non-government and volunteer organisations, leaving little time or energy to evaluate the results.

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Accommodating Women:
A Feminist View of Housing

To liberate women means not only
to open the doors to the university,
the court of law, and parliament for them,
rather it means to free them
from cooking stove and washtub,
it means creating institutions
that will permit them to raise their children
and participate in public life
Peter Kropotkin[1]

In a roundtable discussion on the state of housing in 1979, Robert Gutman suggested that housing built after World War II was very responsive to the family aspirations of returning veterans in its type, quantity, and cost, but that this model no longer met the needs of large numbers of the population.[2] More than a decade later the situation has scarcely changed. Housing researchers, geographers, and feminists have argued for alternatives to existing housing typologies and urban structures as part of a more inclusive and humane urban and suburban design policy. Notwithstanding housing symposiums, books outlining alternative housing for groups that do not conform to the

1. Lily Braun, "Women's Work and Housekeeping," *Selected Writings on Feminism and Socialism*, trans Alfred G. Meyer (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1987) 23 Trans. of *Frauenarbeit und Hauswirtschaft* (Berlin: Vorwärts Verlag, 1901).

2. Mildred F. Schmetz, "Housing and Community Design for Changing Family Needs," *Building for Women*, ed. Suzanne Keller (Lexington Massachusetts: Lexington Books, 1981) 203.

norm, and the arguments of feminists for an environment that is sensitive to the needs of women and children, housing that is built, and not merely theoretical on the scale that is needed remains elusive. Housing discussed in terms other than affordability is far from the mainstream and not seriously considered outside academic and reform-minded circles.

Cost considerations are not the only impediment to the development of appropriate housing typologies. A crucial issue is the traditional bias that narrowly defines "family" and "household" and which privileges certain segments of the population over others. One facet of this limited definition is its effect on women.

When gender is introduced into a discourse where it has not been included, such as in housing and urban planning, new questions are provoked and fresh opportunities presented. Myra Jehlen in discussing feminist theory and literary criticism has written that a contradiction did not necessarily have to be resolved in order to be dealt with; it could also be engaged, not to vanquish it, but "to tap its energy."[3] The contradictions inherent in the discussion of gender and housing are considered in this thesis and, in order to avoid the dilemma raised by Sophie Watson of seeing the concerns of women as distinct and, therefore, considering them separately from a substantive treatment of the topic, the underlying structural cause of these biases against women in the built environment are examined.[4] By considering the broader community, the potential for the architectural expression of an engendered ideology that represents both genders is created.

Several recent books on housing have taken a more overtly feminist approach to housing analysis and design than in the past. Marion Roberts, Leslie Kanes Weisman, and Sophie Watson, representing work on three continents, have each approached the subject

3. Myra Jehlen, "Archimedes and the Paradox of Feminist Criticism," *Feminist Theory: A Critique of Ideology*, ed. Nannerl O. Keohane, Michelle Z. Rosaldo, and Barbara C. Gelpi (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1981) 200.

4. Sophie Watson, "Women and Housing or Feminist Housing Analysis," *Housing Studies* 1.1 (Jan. 1986) : 1.

of housing and gender from a distinct yet congruent viewpoint.[5] These are not, however, radical texts. They cover similar topics: background history, statistics, the few women-focused housing projects that have been built, and the safety and access issues that are of concern to women. Roberts herself notes that she is writing from "'an old-fashioned' feminist viewpoint."[6] The fear is that these women architects and geographers are only speaking to their academic peers and are not heard by practicing architects. The issues they raise are pertinent and, evidently, cross cultural and spatial boundaries but they are far from being implemented.

Betty Friedan's *The Feminine Mystique* published in 1963 challenged the concept of home as the "natural" place for women and posited that women had been isolated in the home through social and economic policies with the complicity of the advertisement industry, ladies' magazines, and home-furnishing manufacturers. Friedan also proposed that even if women's dissatisfaction was a "problem with no name," it nonetheless had a just cause.[7] A second challenge to the concept of domesticity came with the realisation that the "home" was not necessarily a safe haven for women—domestic violence was a reality and cut across racial and social lines.

These imputations of the home have not come without cost to the women's movement. Those women who were satisfied with their roles of "wife" and "mother" felt belittled and threatened by this heightened consciousness and they, in concert with the men who were alarmed by this rebellion of women, created a backlash against feminism.[8]

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5. Marion Roberts, *Living in a Man-Made World, Gender Assumptions in Modern Housing Design* (London: Routledge, 1991). Sophie Watson, *Accommodating Inequality Gender and Housing* (Sydney: Allen & Unwin, 1988). Leslie Kanes Weisman, *Discrimination by Design: A Feminist Critique of the Man-Made Environment* (Urbana and Chicago, University of Illinois Press, 1992).

6. Roberts 4.

7. Betty Friedan, *The Feminine Mystique* (New York: W. W. Norton and Co., 1963) 19.

8. Dolores Hayden, *The Grand Domestic Revolution: A History of Feminist Designs for American Homes, Neighborhoods, and Cities* (1981; Cambridge: MIT Press, 1985) 303.

Feminist architects, planners and geographers are completely reconsidering the built environment and the causes of women's disadvantaged position within it.[9] The financial inequality of women has been evident for years, but only recently have women understood the ramifications of a structurally-biased environment.

Since the early 1970s when women seeking to escape from abusive domestic environments became increasingly visible, other concerned women have networked to provide housing and emotional support for them and have organised emergency shelters. These refuges resolve the immediate problem of a roof overhead but do not rectify the long-standing relationship problems that precipitate these crises. An entrenched pattern of abuse cannot be mitigated in several days or several weeks of haven. These women often have insufficient personal and financial resources to establish themselves independently in appropriate housing.

This situation has led to the formation of "transitional housing," which often includes counseling, child care, and job training and is an intermediate option for women who need more time than shelters allocate to reestablish their independence. Thus, for feminists, the question of housing has overlapped with personal safety issues, the need for affordable quality child care, and accessible employment opportunities for women.

The physical environment embodies the social, ideological, and behavioral intent of a society. It also encapsulates its economic, environmental, and technological limitations, although the intent may not always be clear to those either temporally or spatially outside that culture. Although the spatial layout of housing does not necessarily dictate social patterns, (providing dwellings perfectly suited to the traditional nuclear family, for

9. Barbara Oldershaw, "Developing a Feminist Critique of Architecture," *Design Book Review* Summer (1992) 25: 7-15. Her article gives a concise outline of the American history of this critique, although the British input is lacking.

example, does not preclude divorce) social patterns and the physical environment often reinforce each other.[10]

Amos Rapaport states that (house) form is the physical embodiment of behaviour patterns and "once built, [they] affect behavior and the way of life."[11] Therefore, certain housing typologies may improve or worsen the livability for groups that diverge from the family type for which they were designed. Through renovation and adaptation, buildings nonetheless maintain a physical viability beyond their symbolic life.

By the same token, old forms may impede the development of new modes of living if they are simply reused without adapting them to the new time and place. Jos Boys also argues that, today, architecture only embodies meaning in a partial way: firstly because very few people participate in its creation, and secondly, because buildings can be used in many different ways.[12] Since formal changes in housing generally lag behind demographic variations, certain segments of the population have often been housed in dwellings that are badly situated or inadequate or inappropriate in size or layout.[13] It is not, however, that a single mother cannot live comfortably in a single-family detached suburban home, but that its location, cost, and size place it beyond her means.

The intent is also not to design environments to accommodate women's family responsibilities in order to maintain women in a subordinate position, but to address the reality of their situation and to continue to work for fundamental changes. Obviously, someone has to care for children, fix meals, and maintain households. The environment created to accomplish these tasks must be more sensitive to the needs of the ultimate user

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10. Daphne Spain, *Gendered Spaces* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1992) 6.

11. Amos Rapaport, *House Form and Culture* (Englewood Cliffs, N.J.: Prentice Hall, 1969) 16. Designing for the norm of a white middle-class husband, wife, and two children, ignores the millions of people "who do not fit this package" 130.

12. Jos Boys, "Is There a Feminist Analysis of Architecture?" *Built Environment* 10.1: 2.

13. Schmetz 197- 203.

Women would like incomes equal to men, flexible work schedules, access to quality child care to allow them to pursue careers, and partners who share equally in family responsibilities. The evolution of an equitable social contract will take years, and a built environment that recognises the need for change is only a first step. Although all women are affected to a degree by these biases, mothers with husbands or partners are often buffered from the full negative effects by the male presence, while single-parent households lacking this support feel the repercussions more keenly.

The failings of the environment do not simply materialise; they either evolve or are created. There are few women architects, planners, and developers, and still fewer of these are consciously aware of the gender biases they help to maintain through the built environment. As of 1991, in the United States, 17.1 percent of the 103,000 architects were women. This is up from 12.7 percent in 1983. Women are better represented in Social Sciences and Urban Planning with 46 percent in 1983 and 53 percent in 1991.[14] Jane Drake asserts in *Making Space* that the ability of women architects to conceptualise space with "a different attitude depends in part on the existence of a feminist movement, and whether the movement stresses the problems of women in general or only those of a limited group."[15] Women are educated in the same biased system as men. There are few female professors in schools of architecture and planning and even fewer, if any, courses on gender or user-needs.[16] Until this situation changes there is little hope of achieving any real progress in the profession as a whole. Women will have to provide the impetus and the energy needed to generate a responsive built environment.

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14. U.S. Bureau of the Census, *Statistical Abstract of the U.S : 1992*, 112 ed. (Washington, D.C., 1992) Table 629, 392. Only 2.1 percent of architects and 6.7 percent of social scientists and urban planners are African-Americans.

15. Jane Drake, "Women, Architects and Feminism, *Making Space· Women and the Man-Made Environment*, ed. Matrix (London: Pluto Press, 1984) 11.

16. Drake 12-13.

Collective housing, as stated earlier, cannot be implemented independently from the development of urban and suburban forms that encompass the *diverse* needs of *all* people. This housing environment should be more dense to reduce land use and infrastructure consumption, which would encourage a sense of community; it should be better situated for easy use of mass transit; be more integrated to allow convenient access to child care, shopping, and employment opportunities; be more flexible to accommodate the inevitable changes in family structure; provide security of tenure and a voice in the decision-making process; and maintain a safe environment for women and their children.[17]

Gender inequality, which limits the range of employment opportunities for women, women's traditional role of mother, which is tantamount to total-care-giver; a recession, economic restructuring; and in many cases, the added burden of racial discrimination have aggravated the situation for single women with children.[18] With generally only one adult in these families there are stresses arising from the daily need to coordinate child care, employment, errands, and household tasks while trying to maintain sanity and a social life.[19] Landlords are also reluctant to rent to single mothers, whom they view as less reliable than other tenants, and often require large deposits which are difficult for these women to provide.[20]

17. Roderick J. Lawrence, "Collective and Cooperative Housing: A Multi-Dimensional View," *Open House International* 17.2 (1992): 3-4.

18. Damaris Rose and Paul Villeneuve, "Women Workers and the Inner City. Some Implications of Labour Force Restructuring in Montreal, 1971-81," *Life Spaces: Gender, Household, Employment*, ed Caroline Andrew and Beth Moore Milroy (Vancouver: University of British Columbia Press, 1988) 57 Examines the effect of the feminisation and bipolarisation of the work force, which leaves women on the bottom.

19. Fran Klodawsky and Damaris Rose, *Single Parent Families and Canadian Housing Policies: How Mothers Lose* (N.p.: n.p., n.d.) 8-4. Klodawsky adds that accessibility, as an indication of the combination of time spent travelling between daily activities and the stress generated by that movement, is an intensely complex variable, not easily amenable to standard measures, but an extremely significant factor for many single mothers.

20. Klodawsky and Rose, *Single Parent Families and Canadian Housing Policies* 8-5

The justification for new housing is readily found in current demographic statistics. With the increase in the number of single-parent families in Canada and the United States due to divorce and changes in the family structure, society's ideal if not paradigmatic family, no longer predominates.[21] In the United States in 1991, 21 percent of the 32.4 million family households with children under eighteen, 6.82 million were headed by female lone parents; 3.6 percent, 1.81 million, households were male-headed. In analysing the data for minority families, the percentages are even greater with 46 percent of all African-American families, 3.43 million, and 24 percent of Hispanics, 1.186 million, being maintained by a female single parent.[22] In Canada in 1989, 13 percent of the families with children were single-parent families representing over 800,000 families, with 84 percent of these headed by women.[23] This is up from 9 percent and 500,000 families in 1982.[24]

Women-led households are not only much more numerous than their male counterparts, they are also considerably younger, less educated, and poorer. White single-parent families maintained by men in the United States in 1991 earned $529/week, whereas women-led families earned $399 or 75 percent of the men's wages. Among African-American single parents, the difference between the genders is not as striking, with women earning 85 percent of the men's wage. Both groups, however, also earn less than their white counterparts with men earning $401/week compared to the women's $339. The

21. Most sources indicate that the "traditional family" (father working away from home, mother at home with children) exists in only 10-12 percent of households. Only 34 percent of all families in the United States as of 1991 are two parent families with children at home with one or both parents working. U. S. Bureau of the Census 51.

22. U.S. Bureau of the Census 55. (Hispanic includes all other races not defined separately.)

23. Jillian Oderkirk and Clarence Lochhead, "Lone Parenthood: Gender Differences," *Canadian Social Trends* Winter 1992: 16.

24. Klodawsky and Rose, *Single Parent Families and Canadian Housing Policies* 4-5.

family income of married couples is almost twice that of single mothers.[25] In Canada, the discrepancies are even greater with women earning on the average only 70 percent of men's salaries.[26]

Richard Weiler, MaryAnn McGlaughlin and Nahid Fagfhoury completed a study in 1988 in which they attempted to evaluate the state of research in Canada on housing for people who fall into the category of "special needs" (the homeless battered women, the disabled, and adolescent mothers).[27] They determined that the statistical data in Canada is not cross-referenced with respect to gender and marital status to adequately analyse the questions. They recommended that a broader range of statistical information be collected to facilitate this.[28]

Women's disadvantaged position is doubly clear when considering issues such as social or subsidised housing. Although women are the prime users of this housing, their needs and the implications that arise from their predominance in this sector are not discussed in housing policy—except by feminists. Women single parents are second only to single older women as users of subsidised housing and the least represented group among homeowners.[29]

Single-parent households are not a homogeneous group and consequently their housing needs are varied and difficult to resolve. Young single mothers tend to be at the lower end of the economic scale and need training or more education in order to compete in

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25. U.S. Bureau of the Census, Table 655, 413. White two-parent families earn on the average $767/week and African-American families earn $625/week.

26. Nancy Zukewich Ghalam, "Women in the Workplace," *Canadian Social Trends* Spring 1993 6

27. Richard Weiler, MaryAnn McLaughlin and Nahid Fagfhoury, *Special Housing Needs: A Synthesis of Research Undertaken to Date in Canada* (Ottawa: CMHC, 1988) 36.

28. Weiler, McLaughlin and Fagfhoury 29

29. Margaret Blakeney, "Canadians in Subsidized Housing," *Canadian Social Trends* Winter 1992 20-21

the job market. They often do not drive and are dependent on public transportation to get to and from work, shopping, and child care.

Divorced women want to maintain social and school contacts for their children, facilitate the father's involvement, develop a social circle for themselves, have access to child care and support networks, and locate themselves to work or pursue job training while maintaining their social status and sense of community.[30] The economic position of women is also greatly reduced after a divorce, whereas men's finances usually improve.[31] According to Gerda Wekerle, older widows from middle and upper-class backgrounds sometimes have homes which are too large and often become difficult to maintain, which is rarely considered in the research.[32]

"Organised Services Not Pooled Lives"[33]

The approach to collective dwelling is quite different today than it was at the turn of the last century, when women first began to challenge the shape of the domestic environment. The work of feminists, such as Catharine Beecher (discussed below) and the earlier utopian socialists and communitarians (discussed in Chapter Three) provided the philosophical basis for the emergence of what Dolores Hayden has called "material feminism." These women focused on the domestic sphere, its physical environment, economic implications, and integration into society.[34]

In the mid-nineteenth century, domesticity had been presented as a means by which women, while sacrificing participation in the outside world, provided stable homes for the

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30. Susan Anderson-Khleif, "Housing Needs of Single-Parent Mothers," *Building for Women*, ed. Suzanne Keller (Lexington Massachusetts: Lexington Books, 1981) 22.

31. Janet McClain with Cassie Doyle, *Women and Housing* (Ottawa:The Canadian Council on Social Development with James Lorimer & Co., 1984) 10.

32. Gerda Wekerle, *Gender and Housing in Toronto* (Toronto: n.p., 1991) 21.

33. Clementina Black, *A New Way of Housekeeping* (London: Collins, 1918) 55.

34. Dolores Hayden, *The Grand Domestic Revolution 3.*

nation and obtained for themselves complete hegemony over the domestic sphere.[35] Catharine Beecher published the first scientific household guide in 1841, *Treatise on Domestic Economy for the Use of Young Ladies at Home and at School* in which she acknowleded that most women did not intuitively know how to manage a home, rather, they had to learn the basics, as in any other profession.[36] *American Woman's Home* written with her sister Harriet Beecher Stowe in 1869, illustrates rationalised house designs for the Gothic cottage (Fig. 2-1) and tenement (Fig. 2-2), over which the women of the house ministered.[37]

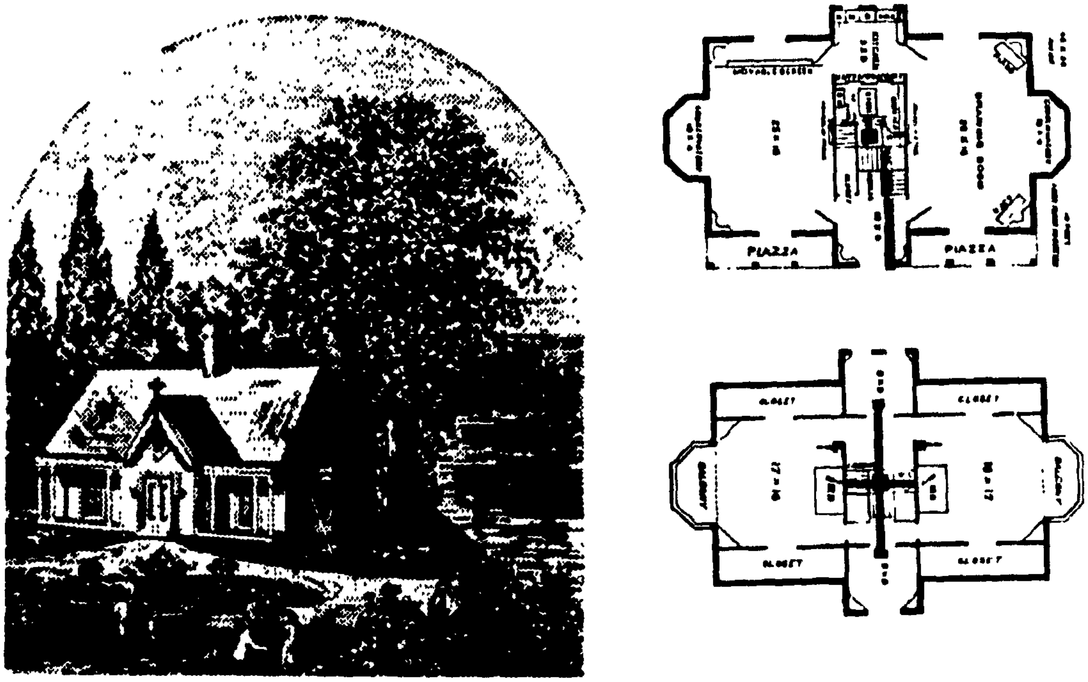

Fig. 2-1 View and Plans of Gothic Dwelling from *The American Women's Home* The wife was cast as the self-sacrificing spiritual minister of the home and its professional domestic manager Well-designed movable furniture assisted in keeping order in the compact house

35. Kathryn Kish Sklar, *Catharine Beecher: A Study in American Domesticity* (New Haven and London Yale University Press, 1973) 113.

36. Catharine E. Beecher, *A Treatise on Domestic Economy for the Use of Young Ladies at Home and at School*, rev. ed. (1841, New York: Harper, 1846)

37. Dolores Hayden, "Catharine Beecher and the Politics of Housework," *Women in American Architecture. A Historic and Contemporary Perspective*, ed Susana Torre (New York Whitney Library of Design, 1977) 44 Catharine E. Beecher and Harriet Beecher Stowe, *The American Woman's Home* (1869, Hartford, CT Stowe-day Foundation, 1975)

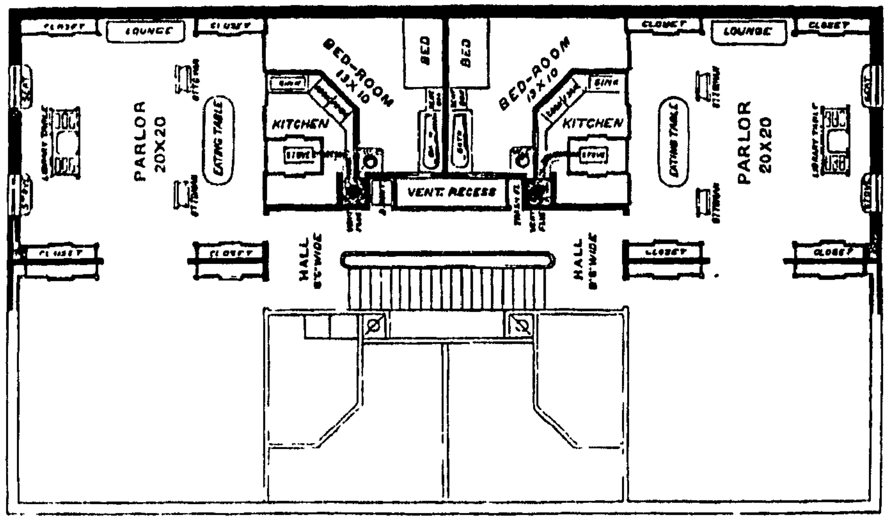

Fig. 2-2 Plan of Beecher's tenement house showing four units per floor. The front parlor was planned to accommodate the family living space. The bedrooms lack windows and the kitchen is cramped.

Not all women, however, had an interest in maintaining a household. Although some factory owners in Britain and the United States built housing for their employees, many other single or divorced women found it difficult to find appropriate accommodations outside of the family home or in domestic service and pressed for housing alternatives.

As women became more isolated in the home after the American Civil War at the end of the nineteenth century, women's roles as described by suffragette Elizabeth Cady Stanton (1815-1902) "of wife, mother, housekeeper, physician, and spiritual guide" and "the chaotic conditions into which everything fell without [their] constant supervision," prompted the call for "some active measures . . . to remedy the wrongs of society in general, and of women in particular."[38] Or, as Lucy Stone (1818-1893), abolitionist, women's rights leader, and publisher of the *Woman's Journal* succinctly stated in a letter dated 1874, ". . . if only the housekeeping would go on without so much looking after."[39]

38. Elizabeth Cady Stanton, *Eighty Years and More (1815-1897) Reminiscences of Elizabeth Cady Stanton* (New York: European Publishing Company, 1898) 147.

39. Alice Stone Blackwell, *Lucy Stone· Pioneer of Woman's Rights* (Boston: Little, Brown, 1930) 240.

Prompted by the scarcity of domestic help, middle-class women in England and America suggested that the drudgery of housework could be alleviated if it was executed cooperatively or if certain tasks such as laundry and cooking were centralised under the control of women entrepreneurs.[40] As noted in the introductory quotation by Kropotkin, child care, however, was still seen as the individual responsibility of mothers.

Melusina Fay Peirce and Charlotte Perkins Gilman in the United States, Elizabeth Moss King and Henrietta Barnett in England, and Lily Braun in Germany published works calling for a revised domestic order to improve housing for single women and the quality of life for married women. In France, cooperative housework existed but was not organised. By the end of the nineteenth century, the evolution of the domestic sphere to encompass socialised domestic work seemed logical, and, therefore, inevitable to these women.

In "Co-operative Housekeeping," Peirce did not support communal living but saw cooperative housework as a means for woman to achieve economic independence by professionalising the, as yet, undeveloped service industry.[41] The project was financed by money provided for the maintenance of the household by the husbands.[42] She suggested that *women* should rearrange neighbourhoods and towns to facilitate this cooperation, since they knew what was needed.

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40. Dolores Hayden, *The Grand Domestic Revolution: A History of Feminist Designs for American Homes, Neighborhoods, and Cities* (Cambridge: MIT Press, 1981) 10-12.

41. Mrs. C. F. (Melusina Fay) Peirce, "Co-operative Housekeeping," *Atlantic Monthly* Nov. 1868: 513-524; Dec. 1868: 682-697; Jan. 1869: 29-39; Feb. 1869: 161-171; Mar. 1869: 286-299.

42. In *The Grand Domestic Revolution* 68, Dolores Hayden implies that Peirce would charge husbands for housework, which seems improbable even today. Peirce envisioned that the cost of the services would be based on market rates. The savings achieved through the economy of bulk buying, collective cooking, and efficient management, would be paid to the cooperating households as dividends at fixed intervals. Peirce hoped that men would be indulgent towards their wives and allow the women to keep these savings as income. She states, however, "if men insisted upon our giving such savings to them we could not help ourselves," based on the premise that, "as men furnish all the means for our housewifery, so, if we are able to save anything, it ought properly to return to them." This is hardly a brazen call. We might in the light of our own day become impatient with such equivocating, but Hayden is right to assert that this was a revolutionary notion, however couched in the niceties of the nineteenth century. Mrs. C. F. Peirce, "Cooperative Housekeeping," Atlantic *Monthly*, December 1868 : 687.

> The (kitchenless) houses instead of being built round a square could be set in the middle of it. Every tenth block would contain the kitchen and laundry and clothing-house; and for these domestic purposes the Oriental style could be adopted, of interior court-yards with fountains and grass, secluded from the street.[43]

Charlotte Perkins Gilman, an American feminist who popularised the cooperative housekeeping movement in the United States and influenced the movement in England, was not a communalist. As a child of a single parent, she had not enjoyed her various stints in communal households and did not advocate it for others, yet as a divorced mother, she understood the difficulties of single parenthood.[44] Housekeeping, in her view, should be organised communally and performed by trained professionals. She argued that homes should be reserved for the interpersonal aspects of life and not the necessities.[45] She also suggested that housing be kitchenless and grouped together in the suburbs or in apartment blocks in the cities to accomplish these ends.[46]

Urban collective homes, such as those advocated by Gilman, addressed the issues of increased land cost; the concentration of sufficient numbers of residents for collective domestic work to be viable; and the accommodation of additional services *in situ* in excess of those normally available to the single independent household, such as catering services, laundry, and child care. Although it was acknowledged that this type of improved boarding house was needed for single male and female workers and the elderly, there was a lively debate in the press about the acceptability of cooperative facilities in family housing.

The apartment hotel, which accommodated diverse households, such as the

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43. Mrs. C. F. Peirce, "Cooperative Housekeeping," *Atlantic Monthly*, March 1869 : 293. I imagine this "Oriental Style" described by Peirce refers to the traditional courtyard house of China where many related and extended families lived within a courtyard and shared communal facilities, and not "oriental" detailing, as implied by Hayden who states in reference to Peirce's article "Just why she found the "oriental style" of the harems of the Middle East appropriate is unclear." *Grand Domestic Revolution* 72.

44. Hayden, *Grand Domestic Revolution* 187.

45. Charlotte Perkins Gilman, *Women and Economics: A Study of the Economic Relation Between Men and Women as a Factor in Social Evolution* (1898; New York: Harper Torchbooks, 1966) 267-68.

46. Charlotte Perkins Gilman 10-12.

Stuyvesant St. facility set up by Stephen Pearl Andrews in 1859, received praise from the *New York Times* as an economical solution, which succeeded in what ". . .Charles Fourier and the philosophers of Brook Farm after him [had] vainly attempted to accomplish." Namely, the union of a number of unrelated families, who lived inexpensively in the heart of New York "under a single system of regulations."[47] When the scandal of free-association emanated from its walls, the worst societal fears of apartment dwelling were confirmed and this type of housing was condemned as inappropriate for respectable families.[48] The high cost of maintaining a single-family home and the strain on the housekeeper from the many flights of stairs in the urban row house nonetheless guaranteed that this type of housing would be built.[49] The concern for the integrity of the nuclear family, however, restricted the use of communal facilities.

The English called these Parisian apartments "French flats" and complained about poor acoustics and sanitation, potential burglaries, lack of privacy and the destruction of family life from too much uncontrolled intermingling between people. Sydney Perks also points out in *Residential Flats of All Classes* that the English might not have found these "catering flats," so disagreeable if they were as well designed as the French hotels on which they had been modeled.[50] In fact, as Annmarie Adams points out in *Architecture in the Family Way*, it was the English *man* who decried them. English women saw them quite literally as "life-savers." The rooms were all on one floor, which eliminated the dozens of

47. "Practical Socialism in New York. Revival of the 'Free-Love' Meetings—The 'Unitary Household.'" *New York Times* June 22, 1858: 5.

48. "Free Love: Expose of the Affairs of the Late 'Unitary Household,' Progress and Prospects of the Free Lovers." *New York Times* September 21, 1860: 5. See also, "The Unitary Household and the Free Love System," *New York Times* September 26, 1860: 4.

49. Elizabeth Collins Cromley, *Alone Together: A History of New York's Early Apartments* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1990) 18.

50. Sydney Perks, *Residential Flats of All Classes Including Artisans' Dwellings: A Practical Treatise on Their Planning and Arrangement Together With Chapters on Their History, Financial Matters, Etc. with Numerous Illustrations* (London: B.T. Batsford, 1905) 24 and 27.

stairs (the daily scourge of housewife and servant) consequently reducing the overall size of the house making them easier to maintain than row houses, and simplifying the supervision of children.[51]

The English cottage, rather was the ideal. Communal projects consisting of private apartments of varying sizes built around quadrangles struck a middle ground between the large apartment buildings and the single-family house. M. H. Baille Scott understood the difficulty of balancing privacy and community in attempting to improve working-class housing.

> What is gained in convenience and economy may be lost in privacy and comfort; for while, as the copybook maxim says, "union is strength," the strength of the community is generally obtainable only at some sacrifice of its individuals, and while the bundle of arrows is not so readily broken as the single shaft, their feathers may be sorely ruffled by their close contact with each other.[52]

In a proposal for a cooperative house, Baillie Scott suggests that a cluster of units be surrounded by an ample garden with subdivided plots for the tenants. A central dining room with smaller alcoves "allotted to individual families" obtained the benefits of cooperation while maintaining the advantages of privacy (Figs. 2-3 and 2-4).[53] Baillie Scott implemented these concepts in the design he executed for Henrietta Barnett at Waterlow Court, a 50-unit cooperative for single working women which opened in 1909 (Figs. 2-5 and 2-6). He included cooking facilities in the sitting rooms of the individual dwellings for those who wished to cook at home; eating alcoves for those preferring to escape the central dining area; and a large number of stairways to increase the privacy of the units while reducing the noise.[54]

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51. Annmarie Adams, *Architecture in the Family Way: Health Reform, Feminism, and the Middle-Class House in England, 1870-1900*, diss., U. of California, Berkeley, 1992 (Ann Arbor: UMI, 1993) 213-16.

52. M. H. Baillie Scott, *Houses and Gardens* (London: George Newnes Ltd., 1906) 116.

53. Baillie Scott 117.

54. Lynn F. Pearson, *The Architectural and Social History of Cooperative Living* (London: MacMillan, 1988) 104-06.

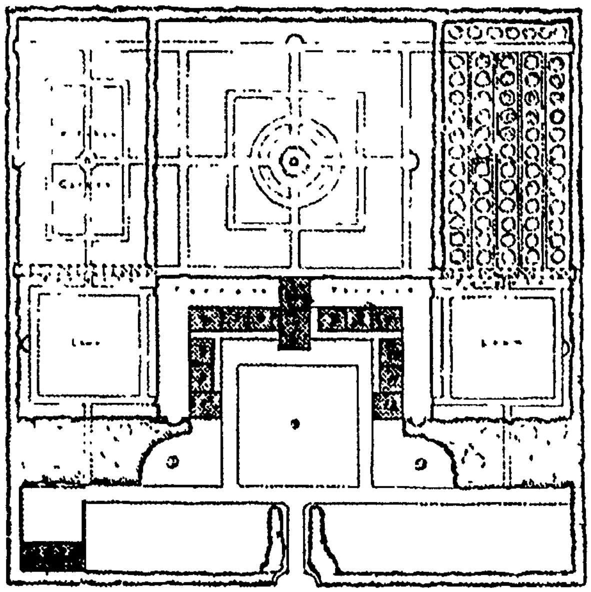

Fig. 2-3 Site plan of communal exterior space for a proposed cooperative house by Architect M. H. Scott Baillie. He suggested that a fourth side of housing could also be built to complete the quadrangle, with a passage left open to access the interior courtyard.

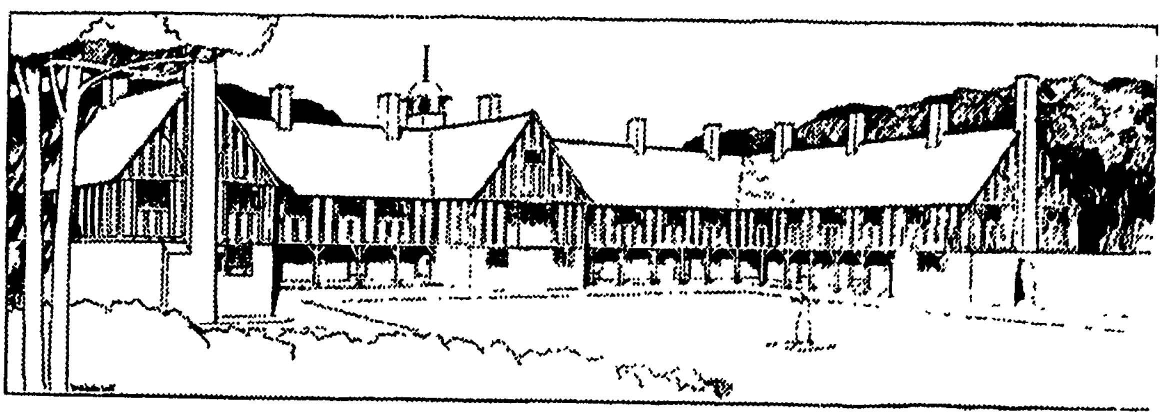

Fig. 2-4 Entrance front of proposed cooperative house by M. H. Scott Baillie. The arcade at the lower level covered the walkway which led from the individual units to the communal dining space.

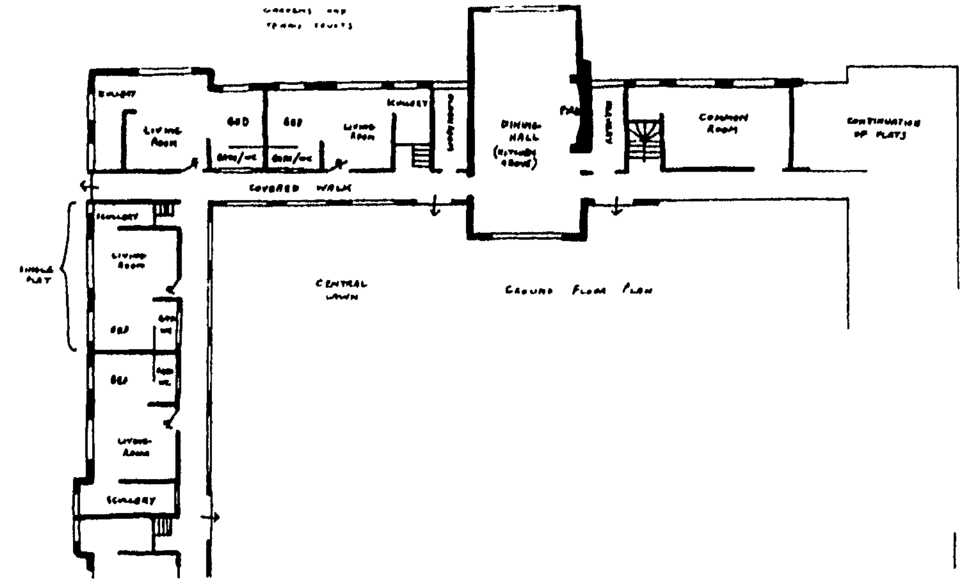

Fig. 2-5 Partial plan of Waterlow Court, Hampstead Garden Suburb, designed by M. H. Scott Baillie for professional working women, 1909. Dame Henrietta Barnett, an advocate of collective housekeeping, originated the concept of the Hampstead suburb to preserve the open land adjacent to Hampstead Heath.

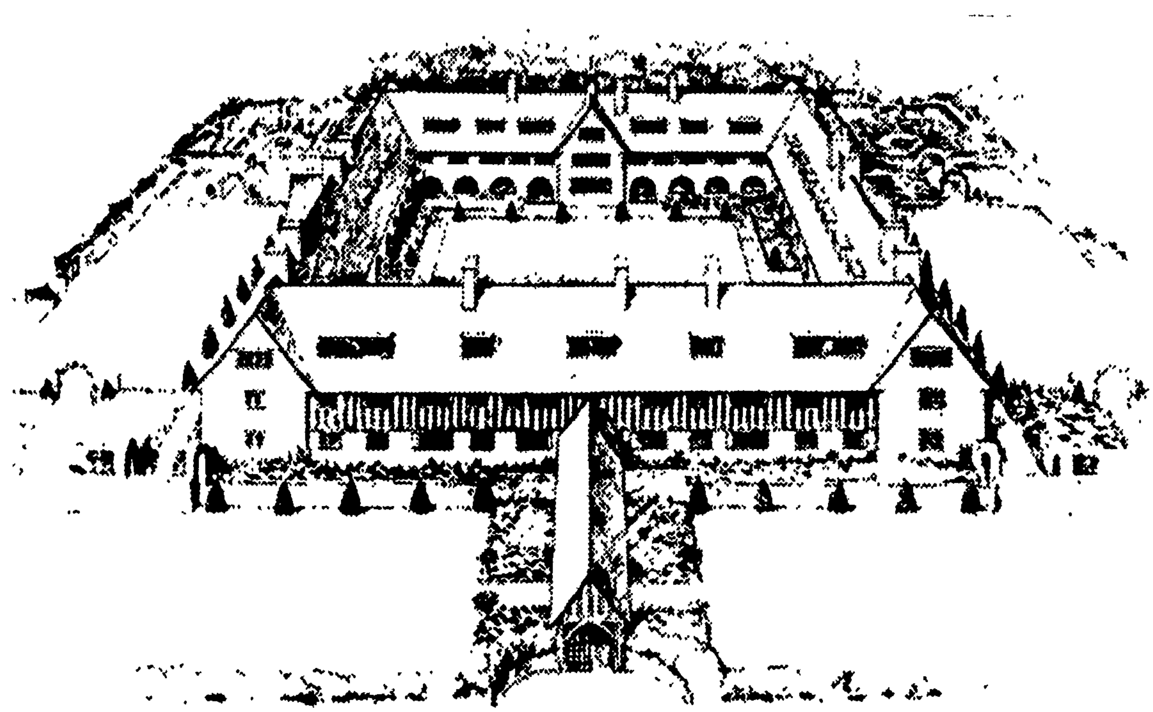

Fig. 2-6 Aerial view of Waterlow Court, Hampstead Garden Suburb, 1909. The communal dining hall is on the first floor under the gable facing the interior courtyard, the kitchen is above, and servants' quarters are on the third floor.

Meadow Way Green designed by Courtenay M. Crickmer at Letchworth Garden City boasted communal dining facilities and accommodations for business and professional women. It was developed in two phases: the North side was completed in 1916 and the South side in 1924/25. They were built by Howard Cottage Society Ltd. in conjunction with Ruth Pym and S. E. Dewe. The latter two became interested in developing a cooperative-housekeeping project after they visited one in Europe as school girls.[55] This up-scale communal model was too expensive except for the middle-class working women.

Lynn Pearson in *The Architectural and Social History of Cooperative Living* notes that the most successful of the handful of cooperative housekeeping projects developed in England in the last half of the nineteenth century served professional women, such as nurses, writers, and artists. It was not feasible to provide this housing for the lower income populations, although projects were proposed and designed.[56] Even building for women with a higher income was problematic, since their resources were never at the level of even the lowest-salaried male worker.

It is interesting to compare the plan of the Ladies' Residential Chambers by Balfour and Turner, Architects, 1893 (Fig. 2-7) with the analogous Bachelors' Chambers, Park Lane West designed by A. Waterhouse (Fig. 2-8). Both were classed by Perks as "Class No. 4 Flats" and are reproduced at the same scale.[57] The separate bed and sitting rooms and private bath were common in bachelor flats, but not in those destined for women, which were smaller and generally shared pantry and toilet. The design of the Ladies' Residential Chambers nonetheless acknowledged the need for housing the numerous single working women in London.[58]

55. Pearson 112

56. Fifteen are listed as having been constructed between 1874-1925. A score more were designed and proposed. Pearson 188-89.

57. Perks 158.

58. Annmarie Adams, *Architecture in the Family Way* 254

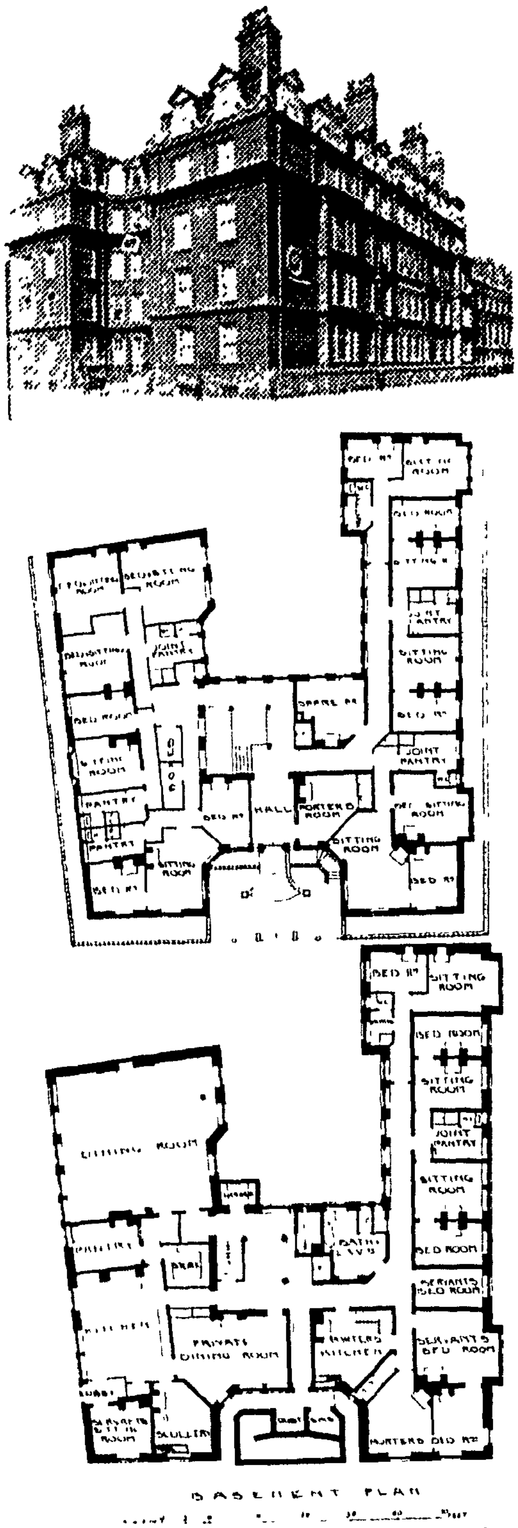

Fig. 2-7 Ladies' Residential Chambers by Balfour and Turner, Architects. Only one bathroom for the two floors, which served thirteen suites. This was so inadequate as to draw a remark from Perks in his analysis of residential flats.

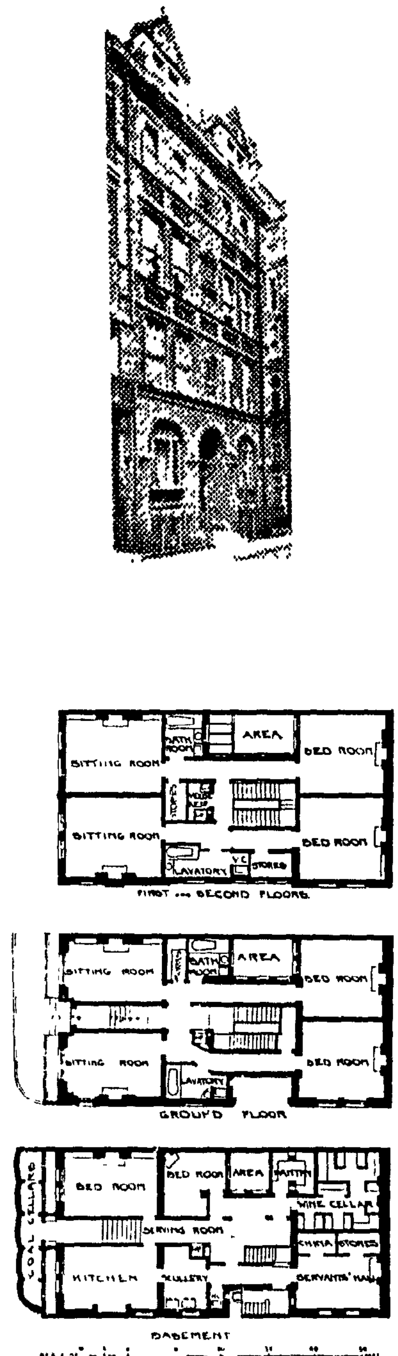

Fig. 2-8 Bachelors' Chambers, Park Lane, West designed by A. Waterhouse. The rooms are more spacious than the ones for women (see Fig. 2-7). Perks notes that the tenants appreciated the long hallway which was lined with bookcases.

In Germany, Lily Braun proposed housing alternatives that resembled those advanced in England and the United States. She rephrased the familiar complaint by stating that if the kitchen is "to be the foundation of family life, as it were, to declare that the family stands or falls with the kitchen, means to desecrate the concept of the family. If it were indeed only the cooking stove which keeps it together, it deserves to perish."[59]

Braun's plan included 50 or 60 kitchenless units grouped in landscaped gardens. The centralised facilities included a well-equipped and laid out kitchen; a pantry; laundry room with automatic washing machines; a large dining room that served as a meeting room at night and a play room in the daytime; and adjoining it, a smaller reading room. The management of the entire household was in the hands of professionals hired by the collective who also lived in the facility.[60] Braun acknowledged that this type of housing was commonly available for the bourgeoisie in England and the United States and that there were even a few projects in Germany. The provision of this type of housing for the working class required the input of cooperative building associations to finance them. She felt that their construction was possible with the economy of scale and the lack of individual kitchens.

Otto Fick's Kollektivhus, a Danish apartment hotel with catered meals, laundry and errand service, but without a collective dining room and child care, did not address Braun's more socialistic concerns. Apartment hotels were equipped with many amenities that were unavailable in single-family houses and provided a level of service that would have required a retinue of two or three servants. These refinements, unfortunately, were too expensive for the working class, who could have benefitted most from their services.[61]

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59. Braun 24.

60. Braun 18.

61. Norbert Schoenauer, "Early European Collective Habitation," *New Households New Housing*, eds Karen A. Franck and Sherry Ahrentzen (New York: Van Nostrand Reinhold, 1989) 47-70.

In France, the system of cooperative housekeeping was never formalised as it was in England and the United States. By the middle of the nineteenth century, towns had developed around factories located adjacent to the raw materials needed for production. The laborers lived, worked, went to the cabarets, and protested low wages and poor working conditions—collectively. The women met in courtyards, at wells, and in the laundry and bath houses and cooperated informally with one another in domestic matters. One woman cared for the children while others did laundry or ran errands.[62] With increased migration to these towns, housing became crowded and unhealthy. The bourgeoisie, mindful of the upheaval that had afflicted France at the end of the eighteenth century, developed healthier housing for the working classes and dispersed the workers throughout the city (Fig. 2-9).

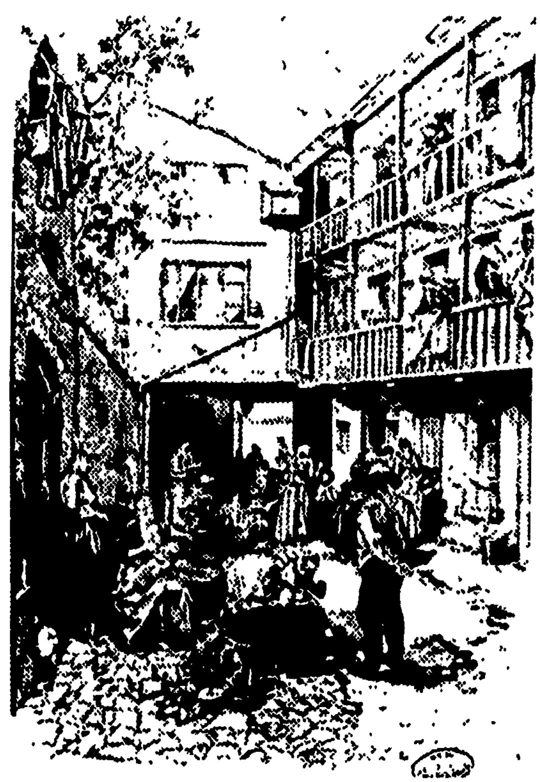

Fig. 2-9 Hotel Brémant in Charonne, 1886. Paris Bibliothèque Nationale. Domestic life had yet to be moved into the private confines of the home. Here housewives are active in the courtyard.

62. Ursula Paravidici, *Habitat au féminin* (Lausanne: Presses polytechniques et universitaire romandes, 1990) 102.

By the end of World War I, the women of the bourgeoisie in France faced a reduction in the availability of domestic help similar to the one experienced by the English. Large, elaborate homes became unmanageable. No French women called for collective services or properly organised housework to alleviate the drudgery. Ursula Paravidici attributes the impetus for the refinements in the French home of the period to the early work of Catharine Beecher and Harriet Beecher Stowe and Christine Frederick.[63] With the exception of a few socialist women who advocated the right of women to work outside the home, French women did not challenge their position as mistress of the house.[64]

In the 1920s and 1930s Americans Lillian Gilbreth and Christine Frederick advocated rationalised household designs and methods based on Frederick Taylor's scientific system.[65] They argued that housework, if better organised could be managed by one person—the wife. The work of Paulette Bernège popularised this theory in France.[66] The efforts of Dr. Erma Meyer brought it to Germany.[67] With this philosophy in place, appropriate households designed to sustain cooperative housework; housing to support alternative households; and the equitable division of domestic labour which had never been addressed were left to another time for implementation.

Although housekeeping chores today are still time consuming, collectivising them in our society with its variable work schedules and desire for privacy and autonomy is

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63. Paravidici 70.

64. Paravidici 134.

65. Hayden, *Grand Domestic Revolution* 275. Hayden notes that ". this was a logical impossibility since scientific management required the specialisation and division of labour and the essence of private housework was its isolated, unspecialised character."

66 Paulette Bernège, *De la méthode ménagère*, ed., (*Mon chez moi*, 1928, Paris: Jacques Lanore, 1969) Frederick's Book was first translated into French in 1920 as *L'organization ménagère moderne*, deuxieme édition *Du Taylorisme chez soi* (Paris, Dunod, 1927). Paravidici 70.

67. Gunther Uhlig, *Kollektivmodell ein Kuchen Haus: Wohn reform und Architekturdebatte* (Berlin Anabas-Verlag, 1981) 107. The *Frankfurter Kuchen* of Grete Schutte Lihotzhy, 1926 was a modernised and streamlined kitchen incorporated into housing models from the Soviet Union to the United States

unfeasible. In fact, laundries, fast food establishments, and cleaning houses have indeed centralised many of the tasks, as foreseen by the early feminists, except that women are predominantly the laborers in these businesses and not the entrepreneurs. Their low income often prevents them from availing themselves of these services.

This is exactly the consequence that women who advocated the professionalisation of housekeeping had feared. Mary Livermore, a temperate suffragist, had alerted women to the fact that "the business organisations of men, which have taken so many industrial employments from the home, wait to seize those remaining. . . ."[68]

As for achieving housing that suits the needs of all women, here again progress has been less than stunning. Complaints prompted by inadequate housing are not new. Undoubtedly quotes could be found that express dissatisfaction well before the nineteenth century—the temporal boundary of this thesis. As we have seen, housing alternatives only emerge when a critical mass of people experience common problems and demand a solution.

At the end of the last century, boarding houses and collective dwellings that suited the situation of women who entered the labour force, married later in life, or divorced, did, in fact, evolve. This housing targeted women with moderate incomes and had positive and negative ramifications for them. Waterlow Court, for example, provided both security and respectability, but women lost control over private space and habits since doors were locked at 10 o'clock and male visitors were not allowed.

The communitarian movement of the nineteenth century did not directly spawn the collective housekeeping movement but, nonetheless, acknowledged the domestic difficulties faced by women and often incorporated a call for domestic reform in their policies. These groups, the subjects of the next chapter, resolved some of the domestic problems through collective dwelling. The sectarian groups were perhaps not motivated by

68 Hayden, *Grand Domestic Revolution* 127

these considerations, but the drudgery of the chores for the women was reduced through its collective execution.

Communitarian societies in the United States sought to establish a completely new social world which would be the model for the entire country. They effectively provided communal housing for a wide range of household types. Success required strong leadership, committed members, sufficient funds, and faithfulness to the ideal a large order. The Shakers combined these requirements extremely successfully and prospered. They clearly expressed their ideology in the architecture and on the sites of their widespread communities. They also established and maintained a distinct role for women who held leadership positions within their society.

3

The Dilemma of Reality
The Formalisation of Collective Ideology

Every Force evolves a Form
—Shaker Proverb

Housing forms, as noted in the previous chapter, reflect the ideology of the cultures that produced them—tempered by local constraints. This relationship between ideology and the built environment is also clearer in vernacular architecture than in high-style, modern buildings.[1] In these societies, traditional building types are accepted and understood by the inhabitants; the builders construct the basic models while incorporating the few variations needed by the individual users. Amos Rapoport states that "personalisation" is important in conveying "meaning" in architecture and, therefore, has more to do with nuances and decoration than fixed architectural elements.[2]

Rapoport also suggests that there must be perceivable differences for an observer to derive both "perceptual" and "associational" meanings from a given context. In addition, in order truly to appreciate these symbols, the "meaning they had for their designers and users

1. Amos Rapaport, *House Form and Culture* (Englewood, NJ: Prentice Hall, 1969) 4-5.

2. Amos Rapoport, *The Meaning of the Built Environment: A Nonverbal Communication Approach* (Beverly Hills: Sage Publications, 1982) 22.

at the time of their creation." must be understood[3] (emphasis in the original). For this reason, the texts produced by the Shakers, who are the focus of this chapter, are used in conjunction with other material concerning their built environments in an attempt to analyse and to understand how a collective ideology can be expressed in architecture and on the communal site.

In building their communities, the American communitarians of the nineteenth century combined local construction materials and techniques with those of the various European traditions from which the groups emerged. Their need, however, to accommodate group living, communal eating, and meeting spaces forced them to further alter these basic models. The siting and the interrelationship of their many buildings also distinguished them from the surrounding neighbourhoods. Communitarians did not view their experiments as reactionary, but truly believed that society would soon recognise the wisdom of communal organisations and follow their example.[4]

The United Society of Believers in Christ's Second Appearing, commonly called Shakers, is selected as a case study in this analysis for several reasons. Their two hundred year history is impressive when compared to other millennial sects whose existence rarely exceeded the life span of their founders.[5] They developed nineteen sites in the United States, several of which are still intact.[6] Their numerous maps illustrating the layouts of these communities allow the correlation between the buildings and the site to be studied in detail to determine which relationships are fixed and which are mutable.

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3. Rapoport, *The Meaning of the Built Environment* 26-28

4. Arthur E. Bestor, Jr *Backwoods Utopias: The Sectarian Origins and the Owenite Phase of Communitarian Socialism In America* (Philadelphia University of Pennsylvania Press, 1950) 3

5 The Hutterites are also a long-lived communal group whose existence spans from 1528 to the present They share much of the Shaker philosophy, but were not celibate Since they were German speaking, they did not influence other sectarian groups as the Shakers did

6 Edward Deming Andrews, *People Called Shakers: A Search for the Perfect Society* (1953, New York Dover Publications, 1963) 290-92 Andrews counts another twelve as missions, branches, or short lived communities. The total membership of the Shakers was approximately 17,000.

Except for Niskeyuna, New York, which was purchased as virgin land, the Shaker sites started as family farms that were either donated by converts or purchased and were not systematically designed. Over time these sites evolved into a form that consistently expressed their communal and gender structure and love of simplicity. From afar, Shaker villages look like typical New England towns. As shown below, however, the details of the buildings and the organisation of the settlements reveal the subtleties of Shaker theology and distinguish their settlements from those of their neighbours (Figs. 3-1 and 3-2).

The Shakers did not adopt communal living until they arrived in colonial America. In England, the small membership had been converted to their beliefs rather than born into them. Living collectively would have necessitated a change in their dwellings, which would have been difficult to achieve in their town of Manchester. Within a few years of their arrival in the New World, however, it became evident to them that in addition to a compelling biblical justification for it, communal living was a practical way of sustaining their communities while keeping members from the evils of the "world's people," their name for non-Shakers.

The distinguishing feature of the Shakers, however, is the role women played within their society. Because of their theology, which recognised the dual nature of God, Shakers accorded women equality within the Church. This on its own would not have differentiated them from other communitarians, who also nominally accepted the equality of the genders. The Shakers felt, however, that neither gender should have a supervisory role over the other. Consequently, they established a dual system of government. Women with the appropriate qualifications were able to achieve power and autonomy within the communities as Eldresses, separately from the male Elders. The titular head of the Church was, nonetheless, an Elder, except when Mother Ann and Lucy Wright led the church in the early years.

Fig. 3-1 View of Mount Lebanon, New York, founded in 1787. This scene could be mistaken for a New England farming village except for the normally ubiquitous church spire which is conspicuously missing from this view.

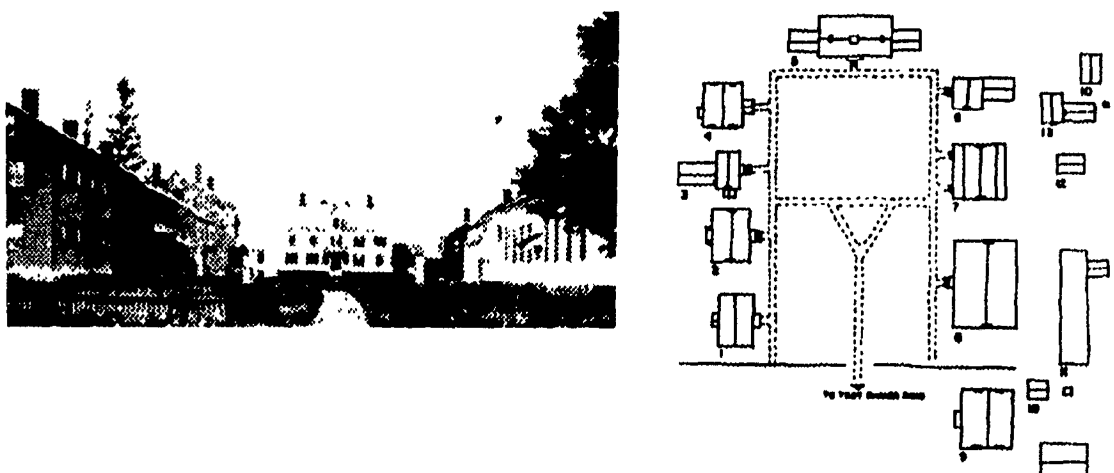

Fig. 3-2 View of Watervliet above showing dwelling house of the First Order. The edge of the gambrel-roof meeting house can be seen on the right. The fencing and imposing axial location of the dwelling house set the village apart from other communities. At right is plan of area.

Characteristics of other communitarian groups not expressed in Shaker villages but germane to this collective housing study are also included to illustrate the range of collective dwelling solutions which were proposed and realised. The sectarian communities such as the Hutterites, Rappists, and Inspirationists held similar beliefs to the Shakers, but had their roots in the German Pietist Movement. The Oneida Perfectionists were biblically based, but emerged in the United States under the leadership of John Humphrey Noyes and held principles, such as "complex marriage," and a practice of stirpiculture that distinguished them from the more conventional religious sects.

Housing Form as a Tool of Social Reform

By the end of the eighteenth century, the advent of the Industrial Revolution had brought many social and economic changes to Europe, which had a major impact on the structure and function of the family. The labouring and skilled working class lost their traditional means of independent employment along with domestic self-sufficiency and became impoverished. Unemployed workers crowded into unhealthy cities and industrial centres and many were unable to find appropriate housing. Various groups clamoured for housing reform, each presenting a different view of the perfect society and appropriate model dwelling to solve this crisis.

Sanitarians advocated effective ventilation, good lighting, and adequate heating to alleviate the squalor and disease rampant in tenement housing. The home tenure contingent championed home ownership as a means of ensuring that workers had a stake in maintaining a stable society. The Chartists[7] in England, the Mulhouse[8] group in France and

7. Annmarie Adams, "Charterville and the Landscape of Social Reform," *Perspectives in Vernacular Architecture IV* ed. Thomas Carter and Bernard L. Herman (Columbia: University of Missouri Press, 1991) 138-45.

8. Nicholas Bullock and James Read, *The Movement for Housing Reform in Germany and France 1840-1914* (London: Cambridge University Press, 1985) 318-24.

the "English cottage" enthusiasts,[9] such as Huber in Germany advocated single family homes with gardens. In their view, the family represented a microcosm of society and to maintain its moral strength and influence, the family should occupy an autonomous dwelling (Figs. 3-3, 3-4, 3-5, 3-6 and 3-7).

The communal Rappites, Harmonists, Inspirationists, Shakers, and Hutterites took seriously the gospel imperatives of the community of goods, the supremacy of conscience, and the unity of the spirit. They challenged the Christian churches to return to their gospel roots and formed pietist and anabaptist sects.

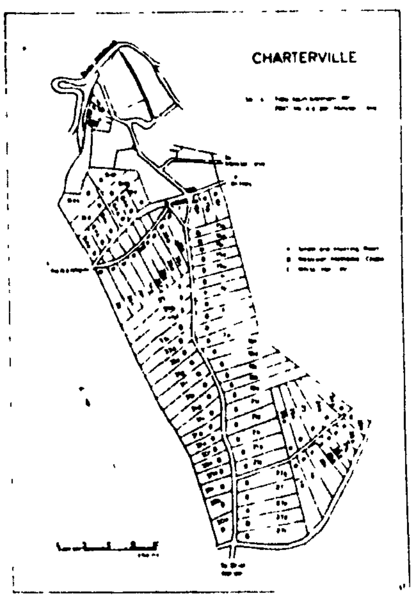

Fig. 3-3 Site plan Charterville Chartist Land Company (1842-1851) was launched by Feargus O'Connor as a system of land nationalisation to enfranchise the unpropertied class

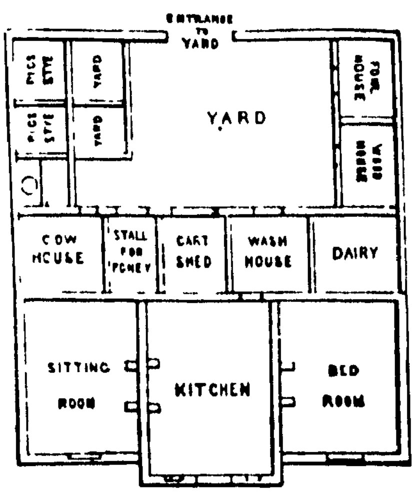

Fig. 3-4 Plan of a typical cottage in which tenants owned shares. The three room bungalows had a central kitchen flanked by a bedroom and sitting room. A washhouse and exterior fenced courtyard were in the rear

9 Bullock and Read 73-75. German writings on housing often use the term "English Cottage" untranslated and in Latin script rather than translated in Gothic letters.

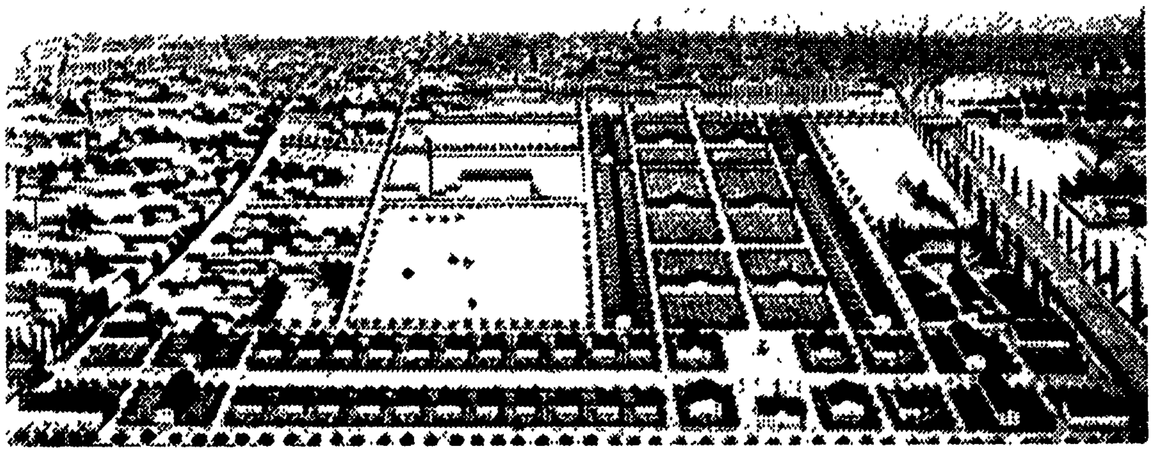

Fig. 3-5 Aerial View. The houses at Mulhouse could be rented, or, with the payment of an annuity, owned. Designed by the engineer Emile Muller the houses were arranged in groups of four. Each unit had its own garden and entrance, although only two sides of each dwelling unit had an exterior exposure.

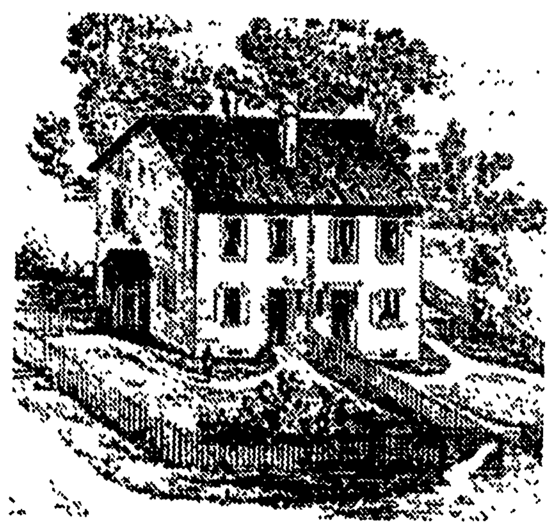

Fig. 3-6 Perspective of a Mulhouse unit. Each of these buildings contained four units and thereby lacked complete cross ventilation. André Godin in *Solutions Sociales* criticised these units as lacking innovation and contributing to the sprawl of cities.

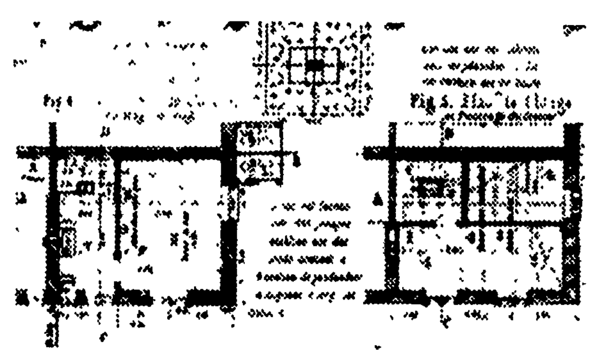

Fig. 3-7 Plan of Mulhouse Cottage.

Utopian Socialists, followers of Robert Owen (1771-1858) in England, and Charles Fourier (1772-1837) in France, however, felt that the existing social system was too corrupt to remedy.[10] Owen called for a "new moral world"[11] and Fourier a "nouveau monde industriel et sociétaire."[12] Owen maintained that "character is universally formed for and not by the individual" and thereby proposed that society and not the individual was responsible for the poverty and squalor of the working class.[13] Fourier did not condemn personal property per se, but declared the negative aspects of competition as the culprit. He attributed the current social difficulties to the repression of the "God-given" passions which then released counter passions or "tonics."[14] Owen and Fourier both believed that affordable and salubrious *collective* dwellings would eventually eliminate "artificial class distinctions"— the primary cause, in their view, of social unrest.[15]

Although the shape, size, and function of their dwellings varied, communitarians with few exceptions rejected the nuclear family in an isolated home as wasteful of

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10. Bestor vii, 11, and 15. Engels labeled the socialism of Robert Owen and Charles Fourier as "utopian" in *Socialism, Utopian and Scientific*, 1878. He used 'scientific' to describe his own socialistic theories.

11. *The Book of the New Moral World, Part I* (London, 1936). For the origins of the Owenite movement and its theoretical underpinnings see J. F. C. Harrison, *Robert Owen and the Owenites in Britain and America* (Oxford: Alden Press, 1969) 47-63. For a placement of the movement within the general history of communitarian societies see Bestor 20-37. For a feminist analysis of the failures of the Owenite Communities see Carol A. Kolmerten, *Women in Utopia: The Ideology of Gender in the American Owenite Communities* (Bloomington: University of Indiana Press, 1990).

12. Charles Fourier, "Nouveau monde industriel et sociétaire: ou invention du procédé d'industrie attrayante et naturelle distribués en série passionnées," *Oeuvres complètes, Tome VI* (1808, 1845; Paris 1966) Title page. For a delightful summary and translation of Fourier's work, see Jonathan Beecher and Richard Bienvenue, *The Utopian Vision of Charles Fourier* (Boston: Beacon Press, 1971). For American communitarian groups inspired by Fourier see Carl Guarneri, *The Utopian Alternative: Fourierism in Nineteenth-Century America* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1991)

13. Robert Owen, "An Address to the Inhabitants of New Lanark," ed. G. D. H. Cole *A New View of Society and Other writings by Robert Owen* (London: J. M. Dent and Sons Ltd., 1927) 110.

14. Fourier, *Oeuvres complètes, Tome VI* 52-53.

15. Bestor 8-9. Robert Owen, *Book of the New Moral World* iv. Fourier, *Oeuvres complètes, Tome VI* 4.

resources, depressing, and an anathema to the community spirit.[16] Children were seen as a shared communal responsibility, raised collectively, and indoctrinated into the value systems of their society.

The bleak economic and social situation in Europe at the end of the eighteenth century fostered the theories and theologies from which the communitarian societies emerged, but the newly formed United States boasted the rich soil of religious freedom, inexpensive and abundant land, fluid class structure, and openness to new ideas in which these societies flourished. Many groups representing a variety of ideologies were established. Robert Fogarty in the *Dictionary of American Communal and Utopian History* counts 250 sectarian and non-sectarian communities in the United States, from the Shakers in Mount Lebanon, New York (1787) to the New Llano Colony in California (1919).[17]

The Formalisation of Unity, Simplicity, and Gender Duality

The Shakers arrived in America in August 1774, under the leadership of Ann Lee (1736-1784). Both her father and husband were blacksmiths and Mother Ann, as she was called, was illiterate. The spiritual origins of the Shakers were in late seventeenth-century France during the time of the reformation with a group called the *Camisards*, who were subject to trances and strange ecstacies.[18]

The Shaker domain at its peak included 6000 members dispersed over hundreds of miles. They screened prospective candidates who were "admitted," rather than accepted or

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16. Dolores Hayden, *Seven American Utopias: The Architecture of Communitarian Socialism, 1790-1975* (Cambridge: MIT Press, 1976) 24. The Icarians are an exception to this generalisation. They were a French Communitarian group who immigrated to America under the leadership of Etienne Cabet. They held goods in common but lived in family units.

17. Robert Fogarty, *Dictionary of American Communal and Utopian History* (Westport, CT: Greenwood Press, 1980) 173-233.

18. R. Mildred Barker, *The Sabbathday Lake Shakers: An Introduction to the Shaker Heritage* (1978; Sabbathday Lake: The Shaker Press, 1985) (1) n. p.

rejected, and then gradually initiated into the Church community in a series of steps, which slowly increased the economic and communal commitment of each new member.[19] Although there was a turnover of from 15 percent to 50 percent in the overall membership in some communities, the Shakers were able to initiate the new members and maintain stability and continuity through a structured hierarchical system of government and adherence to the Millennial Laws.[20] They developed a coherent architectural expression by the consistent implementation of their philosophy of unity, simplicity, and gender dualism.

In contrast, the Owenites at New Harmony, Indiana, accepted anyone who evinced even the vaguest understanding of Owen's communal system rather than basing the selection on the needs of the community. The experiment at New Harmony, which had been hailed as the paradigm for the salvation of humankind, struggled for two years before finally dissolving.[21] Similar failures plagued the other non-sectarian communities that had allowed too great a heterogeneity in their membership to function smoothly. The religious communitarians, who started from a common ideology and, generally, with an autocratic leader, initially achieved cohesion more easily.

The principles espoused by the Shaker spiritual head, Ann Lee, were transcribed after her death as *Testimonies of the Life* by Believers who had firsthand knowledge of her words and history.[22] Mother Ann, as she was called, admonished her followers to "Do all

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19. Charles Nordhoff, *Communistic Societies of the United States, From Personal Visit and Observation Including Detailed Accounts of the Economists, Zoarites, Shakers, the Amana, Oneida, Bethel, Aurora, Icarian, and other Existing Societies, Their Religious Creeds, Social Practices, Numbers, Industries, and Present Conditions* (New York: 1875) 144-45.

20. Lawrence Foster, *Religion and Sexuality. The Shakers, the Mormons and the Oneida Community* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1981) 57. The numbers are for the Sodus Bay Shaker Community from 1826-1837.

21. Carol A. Kolmerten, *Women in Utopia* (Bloomington and Indianapolis:Indiana University Press, 1990) 11. In Kolmerten's view the societies did not fail by being short-lived but by not implementing the gender equality that they espoused.

22. Marjorie Procter-Smith, *Women in Shaker Community and Worship. A Feminist Analysis of the Uses of Religious Symbolism* (Lewiston, NY Edwin Mellen Press, 1985) xiv-xv.

your works as though you had a thousand years to live, and as you would if you knew you must die tomorrow,"[23] and to "not waste or misimprove any blessing, spiritual nor temporal" by making a "wise and temperate use and improvement of all things committed to [your] charge."[24] Everything was constructed with simplicity and in the most appropriate way. All superfluous decoration was eliminated from their architecture, handicrafts, and dress. The round barn in Hancock, Massachusetts, constructed in 1826, which diverged sharply from this mandate to build utilitarian buildings "plainly," was allowed to be erected because of its efficient design. The inspired construction was seen as a unique "gift of the spirit," and not duplicated (Fig. 3-8).[25]

An exceptional twenty year phase of Shakerism began in 1837 and marked a period of intense spiritual revival during which enlightened inspiration held sway. Unsigned "gift drawings," which honored Mother Ann and her successor, Lucy Wright, visually conveyed the spiritual abandon of these times. Because these drawings were deemed contrary to official doctrine, they were hidden from the world until Edward Deming Andrews, the Shaker scholar was given access to them in the 1930s (Fig. 3-9).[26]

The "spirit of unity" which "leads to a oneness in all things" produced a unified product that bore witness to the world's people that the Shakers were governed by a single spirit.[27] Although the villages were generally self-sufficient, the society concentrated the production of certain goods at specific sites which contributed to the consistent design

23. Rufus Bishop and Seth Wells, compilers; Seth Wells and Calvin Green, eds., *Testimonies of the Life Character Revelations and Doctrines of Our Ever Blessed Mother Ann Lee and the Elders with Her Through Whom the Word of Eternal Life was Opened in this Day of Christ's Second Appearing* (Hancock: J. Tallcott and J. Deming JUNRS, 1816) 309.

24. Calvin Green and Seth Y. Wells ed., *A Summary View of the Millennial Church or United Society of Believers Commonly Called Shakers* (1823; Albany: C. Van Benthuysen, 1848) 299.

25. Hayden, *Seven American Utopias* 92.

26. Edward Deming Andrews, *Visions of the Heavenly Sphere: A Study in Shaker Religious Art* (Charlottesville: University Press of Virginia, 1969) for additional information on "gift drawings."

27. Green and Wells 318.

expression among the various communities. The manufacture of the Shaker chair, for instance, was centreed in the ministry of Mount Lebanon, New York.[28] The creators of their buildings, crafts, and tools were anonymous, and individual art work was forbidden by Millennial Law, although there were exceptions on both counts as noted above. Skilled housewrights, such as Moses Johnson who was responsible for the familiar gambrel roof meeting house, travelled to the communities to supervise the construction of new buildings ensuring consistency.[29]

In addition to the principles of unity and simplicity, gender dualism shaped Shaker government and was expressed in their architecture. Ann Lee explained that God had been manifested on earth in the form of Jesus Christ, a male, and that since the nature of creation required the two sexes, the second manifestation of God on earth should take the form of a female.[30] Joseph Meacham, her successor after James Whittaker, maintained this duality and appointed Lucy Wright as Eldress to head the community with him.[31] He accepted the lead of Mother Ann and added "that the New Creation could not be perfect in its order, without a father, and a mother."[32]

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28. Andrews, *Shaker Furniture* 29.

29. Edward Deming Andrews, *A Shaker Meeting House and Its Builder* (Hancock, MA: Shaker Community Inc., 1962) 2.

30. Rufus Bishop *Testimonies* 16-17. Mother Ann said that "the man is the first, and the woman is the second, in the government of the family. . . . but when the man is gone, the right of government belongs to the woman; so is the family of Christ."

31. The leadership was later expanded to two Elders and two Eldresses. Below them were deacons and deaconesses who took care of temporal matters. This pattern was repeated at each of the other Shaker communities with Mount Lebanon being the First Ministry.

32. Giles Bushnell Avery, ed., *Testimonies of the Life, Character, Revelations and Doctrines of Our Ever Blessed Mother Ann Lee, and The Elders With Her, Through Whom the Word of Eternal Life Was Opened in This Day of Christ's Second Appearing* (Rufus Bishop and Seth Wells, compilers; Seth Wells and Calvin Green, eds. 1816; Albany: Weed Parsons and Co. 1888) 17.

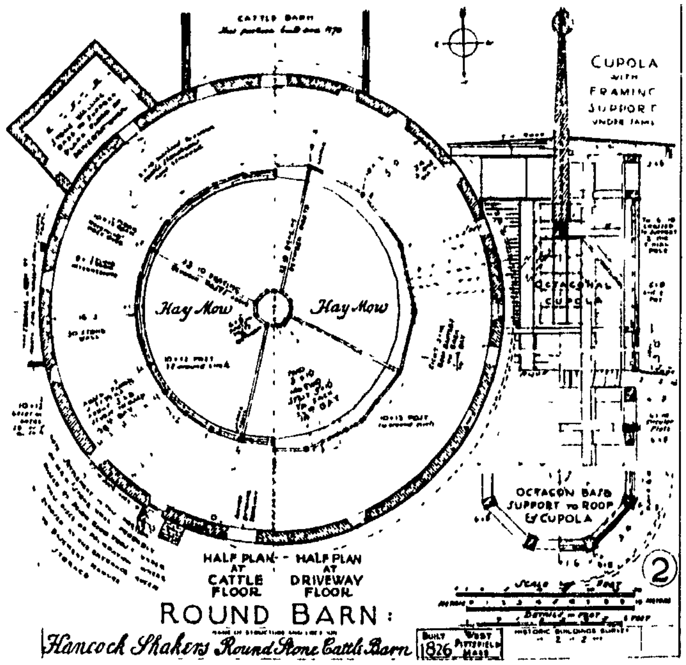

Fig. 3-8 Round barn at Hancock MA, 1826. One person could easily feed the animals from the central space. The wagons loaded with hay would enter be emptied and exit with no need to turn around. The interior was gutted by fire and the framing was later reshaped. William Lassiter, *Shaker Architecture* 123-24 gives the date as "about 1884". A WPA drawing in Herbert Schiffer, *Shaker Architecture* 99-101 noted the barn burnt in "about 1870."

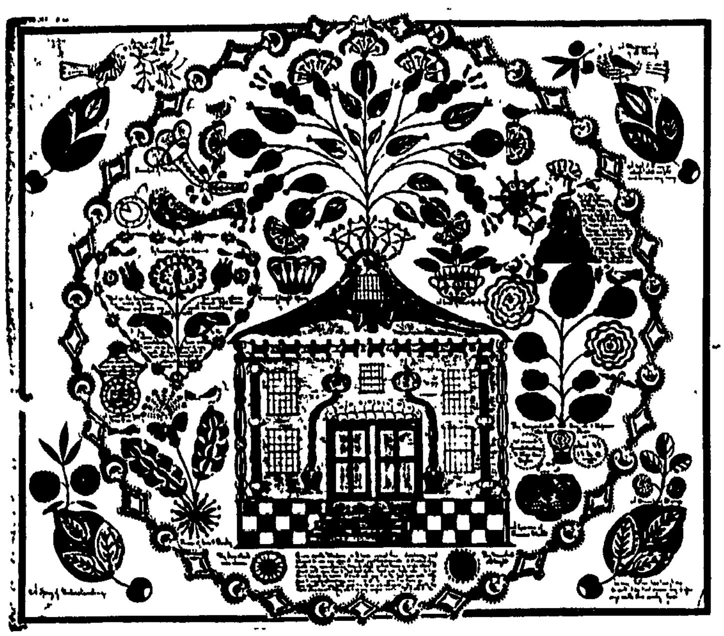

Fig. 3-9 "A Present from Mother Lucy to Eliza Ann Taylor." New Lebanon, 1849. Ink and water colour on blue paper. This fanciful Shaker house combined the earthly paired doors as well as flowers, colours and decorations that were normally reserved for heaven.

When Meacham and Wright took over the parent ministry in 1786, a ten year period ensued during which the existing communities were strengthened, and the membership was not expanded. The tripartite structure of the Church was established consisting of an inner court of the spiritually advanced Believers, called the *Church Family*, a court for the newer members, and an outer court consisting of deacons and deaconesses in charge of the temporal matters of the Church. The parent Ministry and all other villages were led by two male and two female Elders.[33]

As the communities grew new *families* were created in the vicinity of the original Church Family. Shaker names for the villages were designated by their geographical relationship to the Church Family—North Family, East Family—or a distinguishing feature—Square House Family. Their names for the buildings in their domain—dwelling house, meeting house, spin house—also reflected Shaker directness. The hermetic designations that the Oneida Perfectionists used to identify their buildings and special rooms such as "Ultima Thule" for a remote bedroom wing, had no place in Shaker mythology.[34]

The monastic separation of the two sexes in distinct communities was not considered acceptable to the Shakers since both male and female spirituality were needed to express the nature of God.[35] Yet, male and female were enjoined to lead virgin lives. This theology which unified male and female but segregated brethren from sisters was expressed in the internal arrangements of distinct doors, staircases, and sleeping areas (Fig. 3-10).

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33. Green and Wells 66.

34. Dolores Hayden, *Seven American Utopias* 196.

35. Green and Wells 261-62. David Friedman of Massachusetts Institute of Technology suggested in a discussion with me that the rejection of the monastic paradigm could have stemmed from the desire to separate themselves from the Catholic model. The only reference I found to the monastics was in John Dunlavy, *The Manifesto, or a Declaration of the Doctrines and Practice of the Church of Christ* (Pleasant Hill, 1818; New York: AMS Press, 1972) 294-296. He conceded the appropriateness of Catholic celibacy, but objected to their living off their parishioners' donations, rather than being self-supporting.

No inequality was intended in these arrangements. The paired doors opened into a single room, the two stairs led to a common hallway, and the sleeping areas were located across a hall from each other. Men and women entered their separate doorways together for meals and meetings, sat at separate identical tables, and stood or knelt on a level at worship. Sister and brethren were forbidden superfluous contact and many rules controlled their conduct.

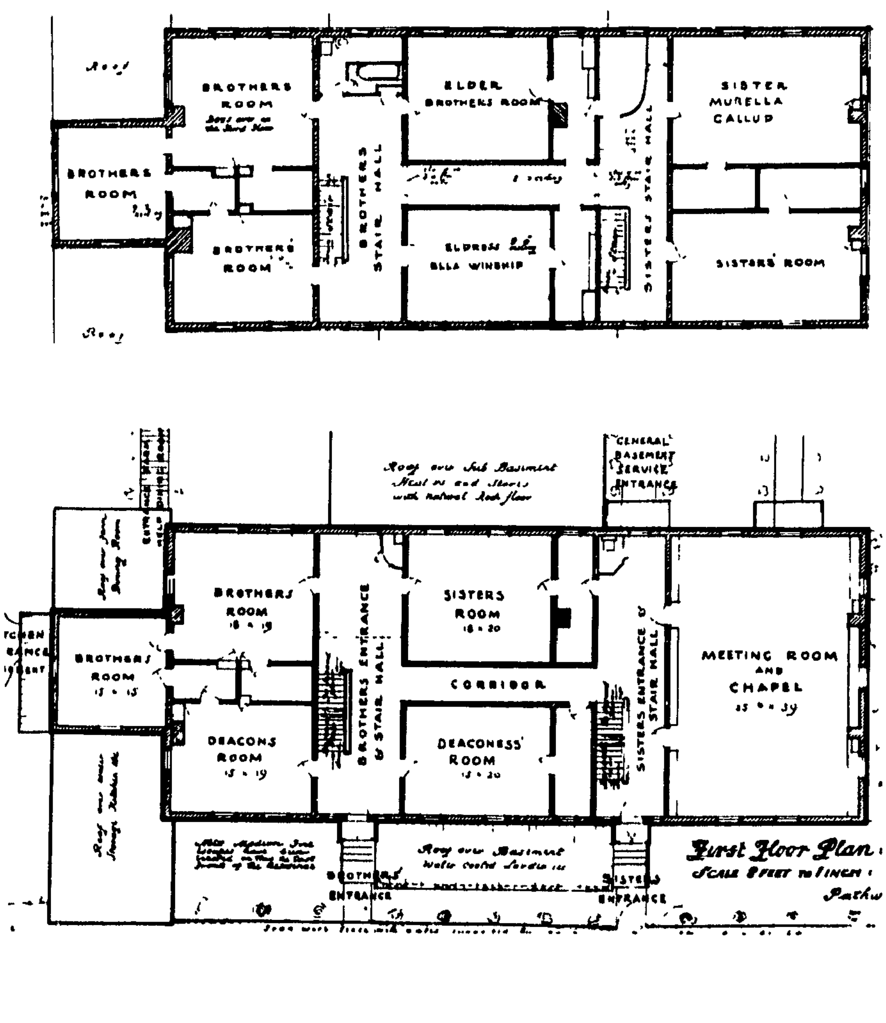

Fig. 3-10 Residence, Building No. 1 at New Lebanon, New York. First and Second Floor showing the separate stairs, corridors, and doorways. The brethren's area is on the left, and sisters' is on the right.

The conventional sexual division of labour was nonetheless maintained.[36] Women did the handicrafts, laundry, cooking, serving of meals, and cleaning; men tilled the fields and constructed the buildings and furniture. Aurelia Mace (1832-1910), Eldress of Sabbathday Lake, Maine, reminisced in her journal and commented on the equality of the brethren and sisters (Figs. 3-11 and 3-12).[37]

> When the hour struck for meeting they would all start together across the road, sisters abreast with the brethren on their own sides. The [meeting] house was then as it stands today, doors for the women [and men] with the separate walks across the road. It was most beautiful to see the brethren and sisters going into the Meeting House by their respective doors and taking their places in the ranks, sisters on a level with the brethren.

Fig. 3-11 Meeting house at Sabbathday Lake, Maine, constructed in 1794 showing the two separate entrances. Photo taken from the dwelling house steps.

Fig. 3-12 Only known photograph of a Shaker Meeting, dated September 20, 1885, Sabbathday Lake, Maine.

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36. Procter-Smith 58-62. Procter-Smith explains that the traditional division of labour had to be maintained since the converts came from a culture with skills that were sexually biased and any retraining would bring men and women in closer contact. The Shaker societies were obliged to practice this strict division of labour in order to maintain the segregation of the sexes that their system required.

37. Originally this settlement was called New Gloucester, subsequently referred to as Thompson's Pond Plantation or Sabbathday-Pond, and finally West Gloucester and Sabbathday Lake. The settlement was established in 1783 by John Barnes and consisted of three families and approximately 150 members at its peak, making it one of the smallest communities. With eight members, it is the only extant community.

The Shakers were exhorted to avoid earthly pursuits and idle talk.[38] Loitering in halls and on stairways was frowned upon and areas that promoted these activities were not incorporated into their buildings. This contrasts with the unorthodox Oneida Perfectionists who encouraged casual encounters and sociability among members and provided enlarged areas along hallways for congregating and incorporated window seats in stairwells, and seating areas in halls (Figs. 3-13 and 3-14).[39]

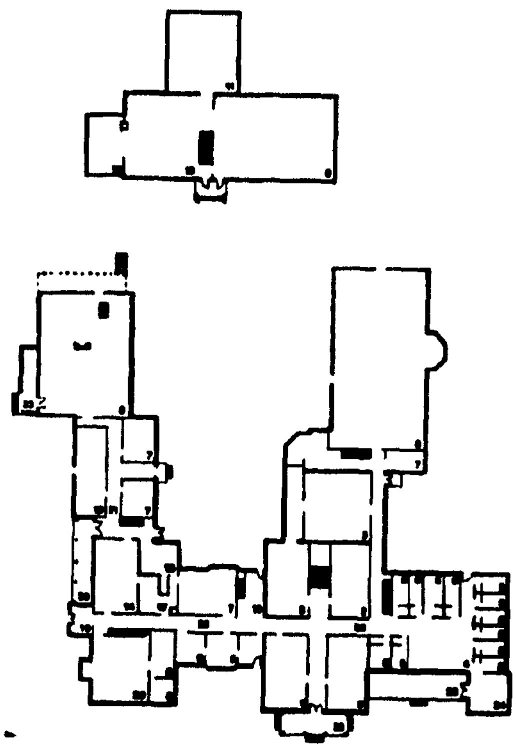

Fig. 3-13 Plan of Mansion House in Oneida, N.Y. showing rooms grouped around a sitting area. This arrangement allowed the members to monitor the bedroom doors and each other's behaviour to ensure that no "particular" attachments developed. All members "belonged" to everyone and special friendships would have interfered with this.

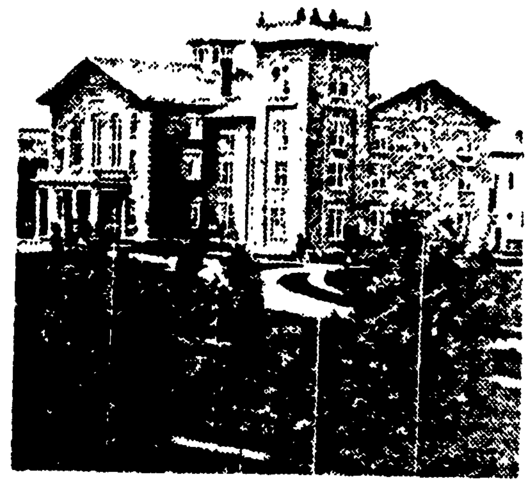

Fig. 3-14 The Oneida Perfectionists were painstaking and methodical in the design of their structures. They succeeded in constructing solid, brick, and ornamented structures that are still in use today. Oneida Perfectionist Mansion House in Kenwood, NY 1861-1878 with children's house and Tontine.

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38 Andrews, *The People Called Shakers* 286-288. The 1845 Millennial Laws revised from the 1821 are reprinted 251-289.

39 See Hayden, *Seven American Utopias* 186-223. Lawrence Foster, *Women, Family and Utopia* (Syracuse: Syracuse University Press, 1991) and Charles Nordhoff, *The Communistic Societies of the United States* (New York: Harper and Brothers, 1875) 257-301 for additional information on the Oneidans.

Shaker children were respected and well treated in keeping with biblical directives.[40] Toddlers were housed together, but boys and girls were generally in separate dwellings, often situated on either side of the main dwelling house—boys on the brethren's side and girls on the sisters' side. The children were adopted as orphans or came into the community when the parents converted. Often children were sent to a neighbouring community so that the parents would not be tempted to show them preferential treatment. They were taught the rudimentaries of reading and writing and studied the practical arts in a nearby schoolhouse, which often accommodated the children of non-Believers. They ate and attended meetings separately, except on the Sabbath when they were allowed to join the community.[41] When they came of age, they joined the Shakers, or made their own way in the world.[42]

The Shakers also incorporated their philosophy in the development of their villages. They believed the second coming of Christ had arrived and 1000 years of God's reign on earth would follow. The work of the people of God would "not [be] instantly universal but gradual and progressive, like the rising of the sun."[43] This justified the slow reclamation of the land and its peoples, and the continuous efforts to perfect them. The Shakers, in line with most communitarian groups, accumulated large land holdings which they anticipated would be cultivated by the throngs of converts prophesied by Mother Ann. When the multitudes failed to arrive, the land became too costly to maintain and required outsiders to cultivate it and to harvest the crops. Shaker maps from the early to mid-nineteenth century indicate "hired men's dwelling," and the western societies had local men fill needed

40. Green and Wells 71-75.

41. Nordhoff 178.

42. Elder Frederick said in 1875 that the Shakers had changed their policy with regard to accepting children since the majority of them left the community when they came of age. Nordhoff 158-59.

43. Green and Wells 251.

functions, but no "hired women" were engaged to help the sisters with the extra work.[44]

The Shaker lands and buildings are described by chroniclers such as Charles Nordhoff and John Humphrey Noyes as being scrupulously maintained and in perfect order. Every community strove to achieve the familiar millennial aspiration of a "heaven on earth." They planted fruit trees, herbs, spices, and vegetable gardens. The Shakers cultivated flowers for medicinal purposes only, reserving their ornamental use for heaven, which they expected at the end of the millennium. The distinction was often blurred, and "medicinal" was loosely defined, especially in later years.

The biblical quote "Strait [sic] is the gate, and narrow is the way, which leadeth into life," is often cited in Shaker writings.[45] The Shakers saw a clear division between what pertained to the "world's people" and the affairs of God. Their lands were fenced as if to demark the territory within which the devil was bound and powerless. Their buildings and paths were set square to the roads to reinforce order among the brethren and sisters, with the certainty that a thousand square corners and measured steps would keep them on the right path. During the revival years, the Shakers often marched in procession about their domain, singing and dancing and delighting in the manifestation of the spirit of unity upon their land.[46]

The Hutterites used the same rationale in the orthogonal layout of their colonies and the North-South orientation of their "long houses." The pattern of Hutterite life was preserved regardless of the various geographic sites their societies inhabited. Their communal kitchen-dining hall was either aligned with the "long houses" around a central rectangular area where the combination Church and kindergarten stood, or in the centre of

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44. Procter-Smith 61. Procter-Smith notes that women's work was not seen as being particularly burdened by the extra mouths to feed and, therefore, did not warrant extra help.

45. Green and Wells 84 f.n.

46. Dolores Hayden, *Seven American Utopias* 101.

the rectangle with the Church to one side (Fig. 3-15).[47] An inward looking central area was also incorporated by the Amana Inspirationists with the creation of pedestrian pathways in a protected courtyard which linked the dwellings and kitchen houses and provided the only access to the church and school (Fig. 3-16).

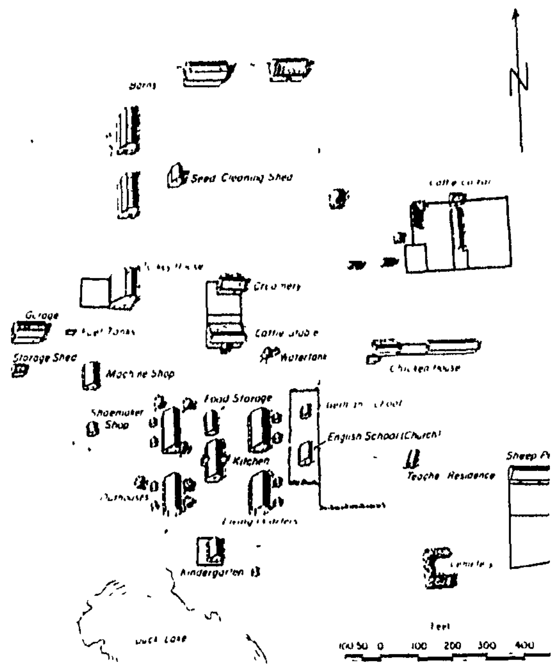

Fig. 3-15 Hutterite Colony of Rock Lake in Alberta.

Fig. 3-16 Amana Village, in Amana, Iowa dashed lines show footpaths R communal residence K, kitchen house, H, hired men's house, G granary B, barn, S shed P, post office No scale

The "families" which comprised a Shaker village were organised around two typologies based on the existing road system. In the predominant Shaker village configuration, exemplified by New Lebanon, New York, the families ranged at intervals of a mile or two along the primary access road for the region (Fig. 3-17). The

47 John A. Hostetler, *Hutterite Society* (Baltimore: John Hopkins University Press, 1974) 154-55.

second, a more private arrangement characterised by Watervliet, New York, closed the community's threshold with a gate perpendicular to the primary travel route and allowed the Shakers to maintain more easily the separation from the world (Fig. 3-18).

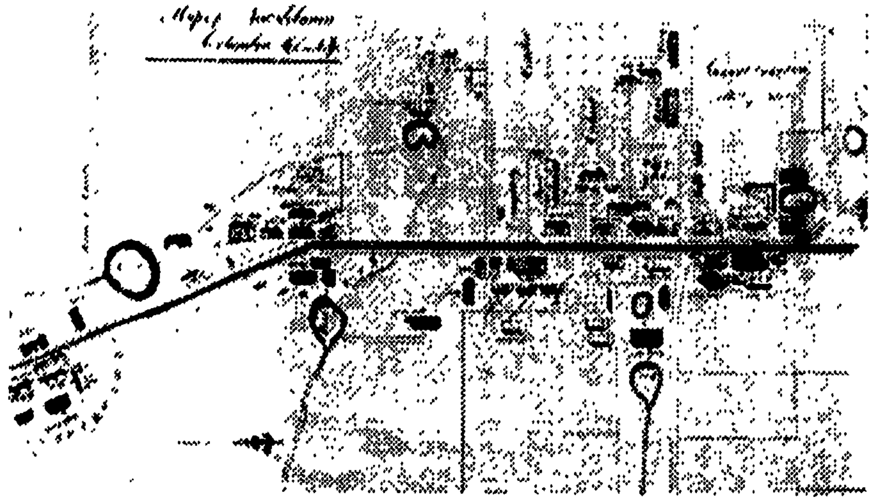

Fig. 3-17 Mount Lebanon New York. Map attributed to Issac Newton Young (1827-39). The horizontal road is a primary route through the region.

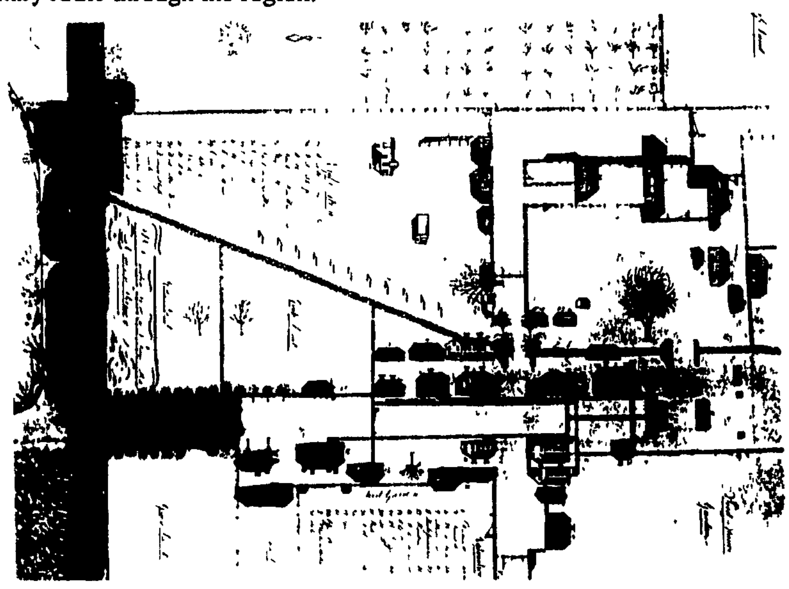

Fig. 3-18 Shaker map of Church Family Watervliet, New York. A tree lined way branched off from the primary routes to Massachusetts and New York, running vertically at left. A gate at the road to the community proper, thereby increasing the Shakers "separation from the world." David Austin Buckingham, (1803-85).

"Village views" are Shaker maps that combined aspects of both perspective drawings and plot plans, and showed the location, relative size, and orientation of Shaker buildings and their land holdings. Although charming and collectible today, the maps were not considered art by the Shakers and the delineators signed and dated them.[48] These illustrated maps created tangible links among far-flung Shaker communities according to Robert Emlen in *Shaker Village Views* and assisted Believers in visualising the extent and beauty of their domain.[49] The maps were a record of the process of the "perfecting" of the Shaker realm, rather than a tool to create a cohesive design. They date from a time when the sites were already well developed and only one map of the parent community of Mount Lebanon, from which the Laws and directives were promulgated, is known to exist.[50]

The orientation of the buildings shown in these maps varied as if the delineator stood in the centre of the site, turned the map, and sketched facing each direction. The buildings were occasionally raised to make them visible from behind larger structures and their placements were reliable, although details of the buildings were not accurate. The fenestration drawn in a "view" is inaccurate when compared to the existing building or with another view of the same site. Joshua Bussell's drawings of the buildings at Sabbathday Lake show this struggle very clearly (Fig. 3-19). The smiling comet-tailed sunshine beaming down on the community portrays Bussell's warmth for the New Gloucester site, which he was visiting from the Alfred, Maine community. He sketched it from the top of the West slope overlooking the village, which forced him to raise the buildings on the lower road in order to expose them. Perhaps the concentration needed to delineate this unfamiliar site spawned the inaccurate details (Fig. 3-20).

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48. Robert Emlen, *Shaker Village Views: Illustrated Maps and Landscape Drawings by Shaker Artists of the Nineteenth Century* (Hanover and London: University Press of New England, 1987) 5.

49. Emlen 16.

50. Emlen 16-20.

Fig. 3-19 View of Sabbathday Lake by Joshua Bussell drawn from the top of the Western hill overlooking the site. The road in the mid-ground in front of the first complete row of buildings is Route 26. Notice the smiling sun in the sky. Compare the number of windows on the western facade of the meeting house, the white building in the left foreground with the actual building shown below. The dwelling house is the largest structure directly east of the meeting house. North is to the left in the drawing.

Fig. 3-20 Rear view of the Meeting house, with the stair tower and indoor plumbing that was added in 1839. The bell in the foreground came from the Alfred community when it was closed in 1932. Records show that no changes were made to the fenestration and the building was not painted a second time until the end of the nineteenth century.

The identity of Shaker buildings can often be determined by their relationship to the dwelling house and the meeting house. It could be argued that the main dwelling, which contained a large meeting space for many of the communal activities, was more important in a Shaker Village than the meeting house where the group gathered on Sundays. The four- or five-storey height of the former with dormers, fenestration, and belfry was more imposing than the three storey meeting house with its gambrel roof (Fig. 3-21 and 3-22).

The main dwelling was often located in the centre of the village to provide easy access to the shops. The sisters' shop and related wash house and the girls' dwelling house were located adjacent to their side of the dwelling house. The brethren's shop, barns, and boys' dwelling house were on the brethren's side. The scale of the dwelling house, which accommodated over 100 Shakers, also distinguished it from the neighbouring farms.

The meeting house was located directly opposite the dwelling house or off centre down a separate path. The open first floor of the meeting house created an uninterrupted space to permit the abandoned movements of religious ecstasy which characterised early Shaker worship. The work space and retiring rooms of the community's Elders and Eldresses were on the second floor; and the third floor attic housed the visiting Ministry's retiring rooms with separate stairs and central halls similar to the dwelling house layout.[51]

The true Church resided in the members and not in the building they occupied. The erection of the meeting house at Sabbathday Lake in 1794 is described by Mace as being conducted in silence and with minimal noise, emulating the construction of the Temple of Jerusalem.[52] Once the new barrel roofed meeting house at Mt. Lebanon was complete, the first Shaker meeting house was used first as a schoolhouse[53] and then for seed storage.[54]

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51. Mace May 31.

52. Mace June 6.

53. Emlen Fig. 34 noted it "*School House*," ca. 1827-39.

54. Nordhoff 130, in 1875 noted it was used for seed storage.

The white colour of the meeting house nonetheless accentuated its unique position. In keeping with the Millennial Laws, buildings were either left unpainted or painted according to a hierarchical colour scheme. Although the prescribed colours had spiritual connotations —white for purity, green for prosperity—according to Robert Emlen there was also a practical aspect to the colour choices. The less expensive, darker shades were used for utilitarian buildings or those away from the road.[55] Reds and browns were for barns and shops, light yellow and tan were for the dwellings, and white, the most expensive, was reserved for the meeting house.[56]

Fig. 3-21 Stone Dwelling house at Pleasant Hill, Kentucky. The Shakers used locally available materials. Stone and brick were often used for barns and dwelling houses also because of their resistance to fire. The meeting houses were all of wood.

55. Emlen 8.

56. At Sabbathday Lake, a Believer donated a pair of oxen in order to raise money for the white paint. Mace March 10.

Fig. 3-22 Canterbury, New Hampshire dwelling house shown behind the meeting house. Note the gable dormers and cupola at the top of the former.

Toward the end of the nineteenth century, the Society of Believers declined and many of the previously prosperous villages were sold. At Sabbathday Lake a dwelling replacing the 1796 edifice was constructed in 1893. Hewitt Chandler, the Shaker designer, situated it on the lower road away from the dust and noise of the well-travelled Route 26 so members could walk on a path lined with shady fruit trees from the new dwelling house to the meeting house. Elder Otis Sawyer thought that the dwelling house should not sit on an inferior position adjacent to the barns and shops and, as Mace recounts, he "prevailed that the house must stand as high as the road."[57]

Therefore the old dwelling house was moved and the new one constructed on its site causing a great deal of inconvenience. It was also built, inexplicably, with a single pair of doors and a single walk across the street. Eldress Mace underlines what the community

57. Mace August 12.

lost when the architecture no longer supported the ideology, continuing the earlier journal citation (Fig. 3-23).

> It continued this way for many years. Doors and walks were provided for both brethren and sisters until a great "He Spirit" [Elder Otis Sawyer] entered. That was when this last new brick [dwelling] house was built. In that there was but one front door and one walk across the road, it was laid out by that great mighty "He" for the brethren to go out and over first and the sisters to follow. Thus as far as this society was concerned, one of the great principles of the New Creation was overruled— the equality of the sexes. The beauty was all destroyed.[58]

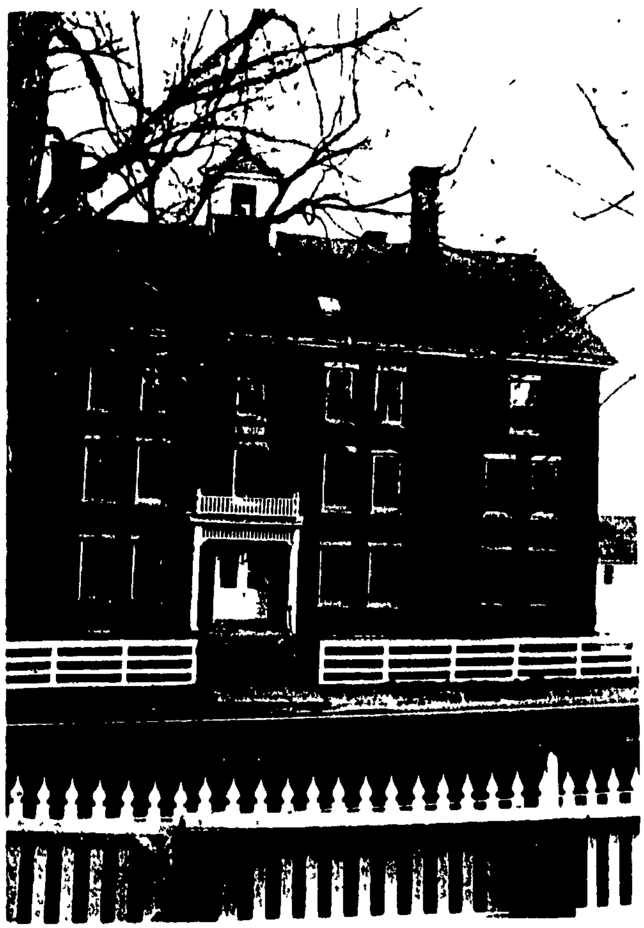

Fig. 3-23 Recent view of new dwelling house at Sabbathday Lake, Maine, with single door and pathway constructed in 1893 as seen from the sisters' door of the meeting house.

58. Mace June 26.

A final expression of the Shaker philosophy of unity is realised in their burial grounds. The original Shakers were interred in the traditional way under individual markers although with standardised design and inscription. Over the years, the inappropriateness of the multitude of gravestones in death for a unified people became manifest. In 1878, Chandler removed the individual stones from the cemetery at Sabbathday Lake, which is located on a low rise north of the meeting house. He carefully noted their location on a map and planned to erect a single monument with all the names and dates of the deceased. This solution still suggested unnecessary individualism to the elders and several years passed before a solitary stone was erected with the single inscription *Shakers*.[59] This simple, unified, and genderless epitaph exemplified the credo of the Believers (Fig. 3-24).

Fig. 3-24 Shaker monument at Sabbathday Lake, Maine, with the simple inscription "Shakers"

59. Mace Aug. 14. Other communities such as Hancock, Massachusetts, where small metal markers were used, and Poland Spring, Maine, also removed the markers and installed a single stone.

The Shaker communities were not numerous and the largest dwelling house did not exceed 100 members, but they, nonetheless, functioned effectively for many years. The Shakers and sectarian groups, such as the Hutterites, Rappites, also discouraged the expression of individualism by designing dwellings without private bedrooms and personal spaces in order to reinforce group identity. The Utopian Socialists Robert Owen and Charles Fourier, however, were visionaries and conceived unitary accommodations on a much grander scale than the Shaker dwellings.[60] They also considered the individual and notions of privacy in the conceptualisation of their ideal societies.

Gilles Barbey noted in *Évasion domestique* that the utopian palace was intended to merge the two worlds of personal privacy and communal living, resulting in the "blossoming of the individual."[61] The Fourierist phalanstery consisted of landscaped courts enclosed by wings of dwellings connected by a continuous interior peristyle or *rue-galeries*, 12 meters wide in the central area and 8 meters in the wings.[62] These street-galleries, considered by Fourier to be the most important space in the phalanstery, would be animated by the movement of people between work and home, and by its function as a communal gathering space. Apartments of varying size would be dispersed in the building, rather than grouped together according to rents, to intermingle the rich and poor, and avoiding the creation of wings, "*réputés classe inférieure*" (Figs. 3-25, 3-26, and 3-27).[63]

60 Fourier envisioned the perfect number to be 1620 residents. *Oeuvres complètes, Tome VI* (1815; Paris: Editions Anthropos, 1966-68) 110-11. Robert Owen used a range of 500-2500 with 1200 as an ideal number Bestor 74-77. The number of 400 souls is given for the 5 families at Mount Lebanon. Shaker dwellings housed 50-100 depending on the family Flo Morse, *The Shakers and the World's People* (New York: Dodd, Mead and Co., 1980) 90 and 290-91.

61. Gilles Barbey, *Évasion domestique: Essai sur les relations d'affectivité au logis* (Lausanne: Presses polytechniques et universitaires romandes, 1990) 22-27. "*Épanouissement individuel au travers de la cohabitation.*"

62 Charles Fourier, *Oeuvres complètes, Tome IV* (1841; Paris . Éditions anthropos, 1966) 466. Fourier gives the dimensions in toises 1 toise = app 2 meters. "six toises en centre et quatre en ailes."

63. Charles Fourier, *Oeuvres complètes, Tome IV* 469.

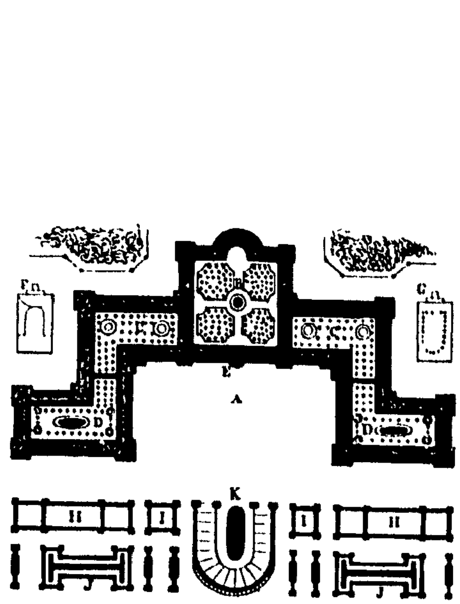

Fig. 3-25 Plan of a phalanstery A, parade ground; B, winter garden; C and D, interior service courts with trees, fountains and water basins; E, main entrance and staircase; F, Theater; G, Church; H, large ateliers, shops, and hangars; J, stables; K poultry yard.

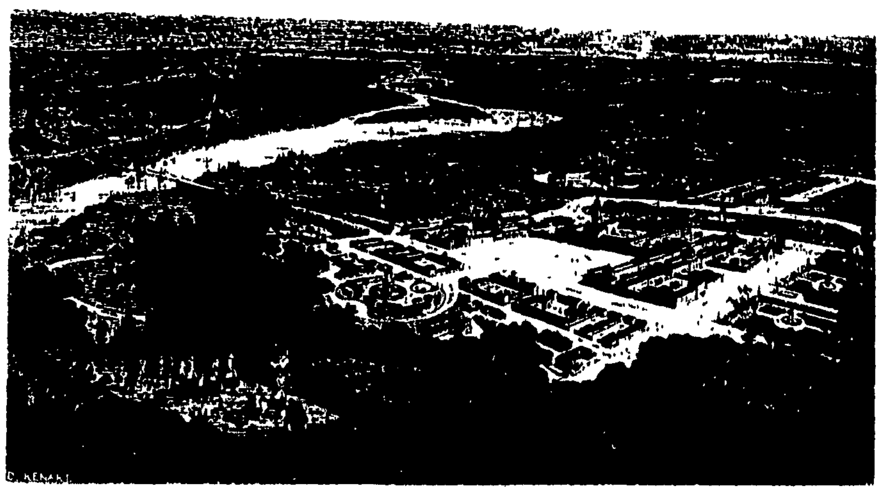

Fig. 3-26 Elevations of phalanstery from an engraving drawn by Jules Arnoult.

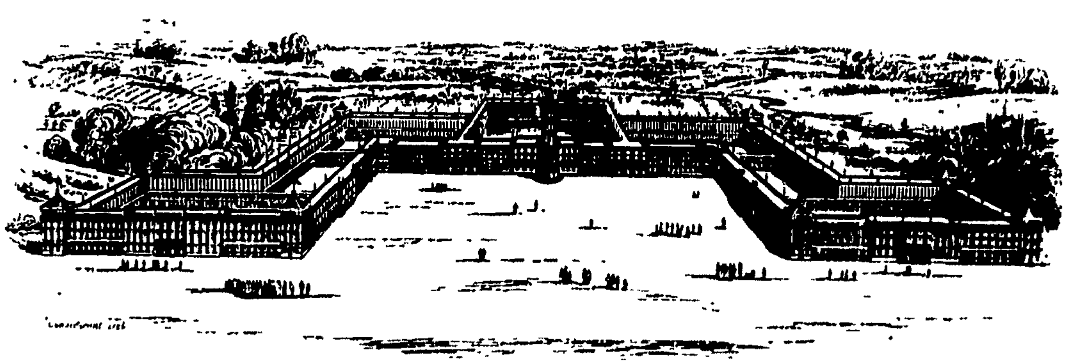

Fig. 3-27 Elevations of phalanstery as envisioned by the architect Victor Considérant

Theodore Dézamy, a contemporary of Fourier, envisioned a social palace in which each resident would have a work space on the quiet garden side of the courtyard for personal expression and a sleeping cabinet with access to communal facilities off the public gallery. In *Code de la communauté*, Dézamy detailed the accoutrements and layout of the personal space, in contrast to Fourier who left the decoration of the personal space to each resident (Fig. 3-28).[64]

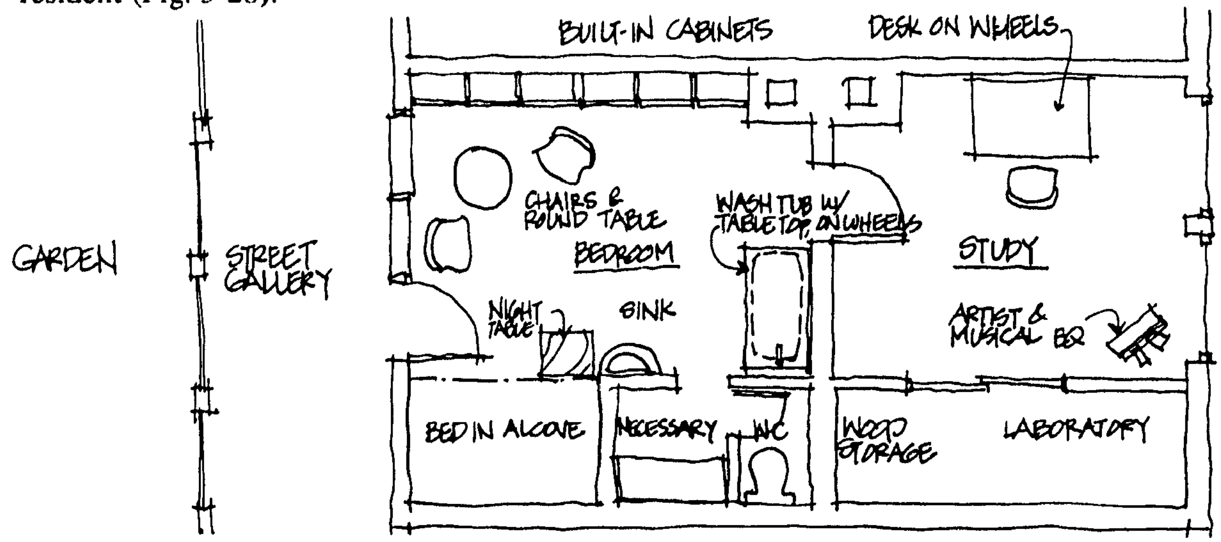

Fig. 3-28 A schematic plan of the individual quarters in the communal dwelling based on a description by Théodore Dézamy in *Code de la communauté*. The provision of both a work space and private sleeping area was atypical for the working classes of the mid eighteenth century.

The Owenite parallelogram rivalled the Fourierist phalanstery in size and elaboration. The designer Stedman Whitwell anticipated a 54 hectare quadrangle would be enclosed by an arcade 300 metres on a side. The corner and central buildings in each wing contained staircases and reading rooms. The refectories and light industries were situated within the quadrangle in towers equipped with smoke stacks that also functioned as observatories (Figs. 3-29 and 3-30).[65]

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64. Theodore Dezamy, *Code de la communauté* (Paris: Prévost Librairie, Rouannet, 1842. Paris: Editions d'histoire sociale, 1967) 52.

65. Stedman Whitwell, "Description of an Architectural Model from a Design by Stedman Whitwell, Esq. for a Community upon a Principle of United Interests, as Advocated by Robert Owen, Esq.," *Cooperative Communities: Plans and Descriptions, Eleven Pamphlets, 1825-1847*(1830; New York: Arno Press, 1972)

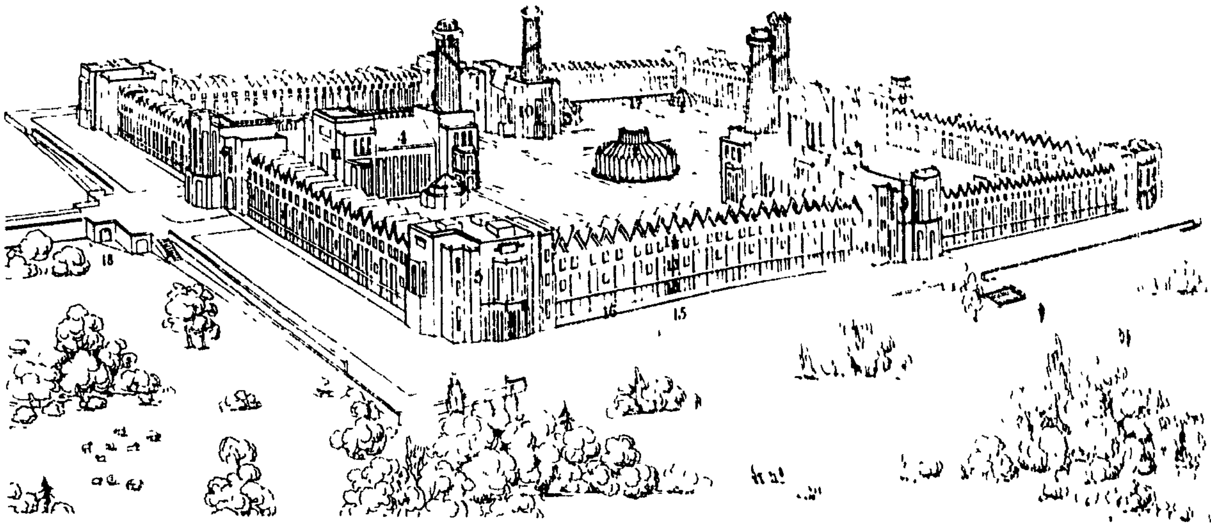

Fig. 3-29 The parallelogram designed by Stedman Whitwell and transported in model form all over North America during the 1820s.

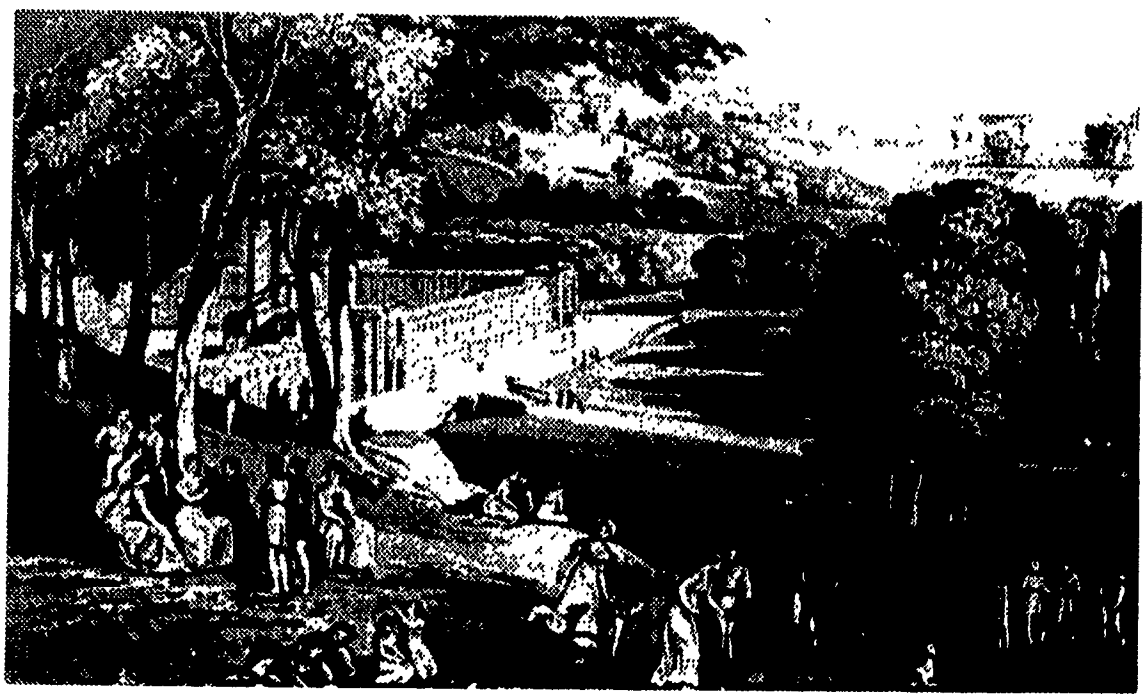

Fig. 3-30 "A beam of tranquility mild in the West." Idealised view of Robert Owen's parallelogram designed by Stedman Whitwell from John Minter Morgan *Hampden in the Nineteenth Century*, 1834.

5-18.

The only large-scale Owenite commune in North America occupied a Rappist community bought by Robert Owen in 1824 in New Harmony, Indiana, that consisted of an array of dwelling types from dormitories to single-family houses. The 1000 Owenites who settled in New Harmony, compared to the 700 Rappists who had previously occupied the site, caused tensions from lack of suitable accommodations (Fig. 3-31).[66]

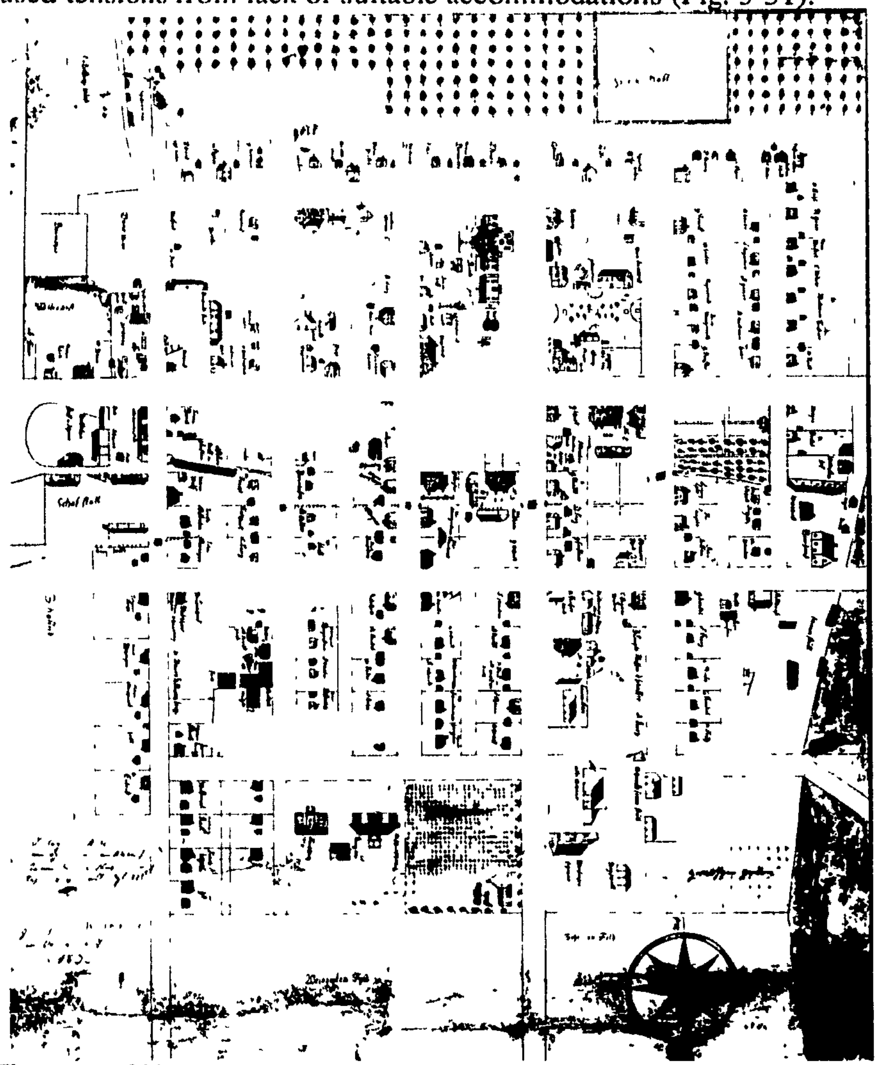

Fig. 3-31 The town of New Harmony in 1832 after Robert Owen's experiment shown in a map by Wallrath Weingartner.

66. Bestor 160. William Herbert, "A Visit to the Colony of Harmony, in Indiana, in the United States of America, recently purchased by Mr. Owen for the establishment of a Society of Mutual Co-operation and Community of Property, in a Letter to a Friend; to Which are Added, Some Observations On That Mode of Society, and on Political Society At Large: Also, a Sketch for the Formation of A Co-operative Society," *Cooperative Communities: Plans and Descriptions Eleven Pamphlets 1825-1847* (London: 1825; New York: Arno Press, 1972) 1.

The largest Fourierist community in the United States, the North American Phalanx (1843 -1855), used existing housing and built simple wood frame dwellings in a manner that suited their needs, stating that "new forms into which the life of a people shall flow, cannot be determined by merely external conditions and the elaboration of a theory . . .but are matters of growth."[67] They also cultivated extensive orchards and vineyards on their 1660 Hectares (Fig. 3-32).[68]

Fig. 3-32 The North American Phalanx, in Phalanx, New Jersey. The community existed from 1843-1855 and hosted as many as 120 residents at one time

Fourier did not have the resources to fund an experiment like Owen. The several attempts to set up communities according to his principle of "passional attraction" in France he denounced as a plot to discredit him since they so distorted his intentions. He lamented that only upon children could his theories be effectively inculcated.[69] Fourier decried the perfect square of Owen's parallelogram as causing discord because of the transmission of sound and its monotony which would be better suited to monasteries.[70] Owen, on the other hand, saw Fourierism as a stepping stone to his rational system and encouraged his adherents to maintain friendly relations with them.[71]

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67 John Humphrey Noyes, *History of American Socialisms* (Philadelphia: Lippincott, 1870) 458

68 Guarneri 182

69. Beecher and Bienvenu, eds., *The Utopian Vision of Charles Fourier* 21

70 Fourier, *Oeuvres completes, Tome VI* 123

71 Robert Owen, *New Moral World* 6, 13 December 1844, 11 January 1845

Several experiments were attempted by Owenites in Great Britain and Fourierists in France to implement the theories of their respective ideologues. The unitary dwellings constructed at Motherwell and Orbiston in Scotland by followers of Owen congruently with the experiment at New Harmony incorporated some of the features of the paradigmatic parallelogram, but were not at the scale envisioned by Owen and did not implement the system of communal property from the outset. Consequently, they did not garner Owen's approval (Fig. 3-33).[72]

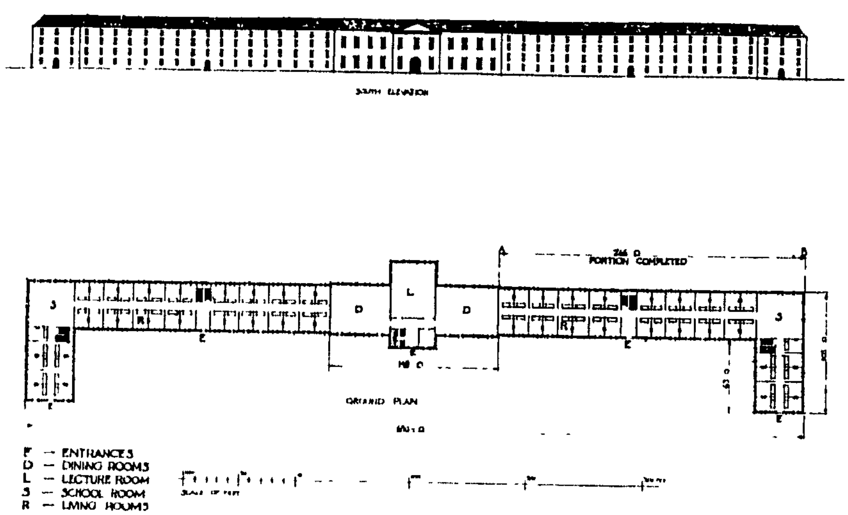

Fig. 3-33 The plan and elevation of the Owenite community of Orbiston, in Lanarkshire Scotland. April 26 1826 - December 1827. Only one wing was built. Approximately 300 residents were housed there at one time. The living rooms noted on the plan were meant to serve as a bed/sitting room. The women were accommodated in rooms on the right side of the main lobby and men on the left. Children were in the projecting wings.

72. Alex. Cullen, *Adventures in Socialism. New Lanark Establishment and Orbiston Community* (Glasgow: John Smith and Son, LT. 1910) 182 and 185.

André Godin (1817-1888), a disciple of Fourier, constructed the familistère in Guise, France from 1859-1882, some 25 years after Fourier's death. The association was successful as a cooperative business and housing enterprise, but did not implement Fourierist philosophy. Approximately 350 people were accommodated in private apartments, rather than 1600 in a unitary dwelling with communal facilities as envisioned by Fourier. The widths of the rue-galleries were reduced to 1.3 m where they could no longer functioned as "galleries of association."[73] Although there were communal stores and child care, the traditional family unit was not challenged (Figs. 3-34, 3-35, 3-36 and 3-7).

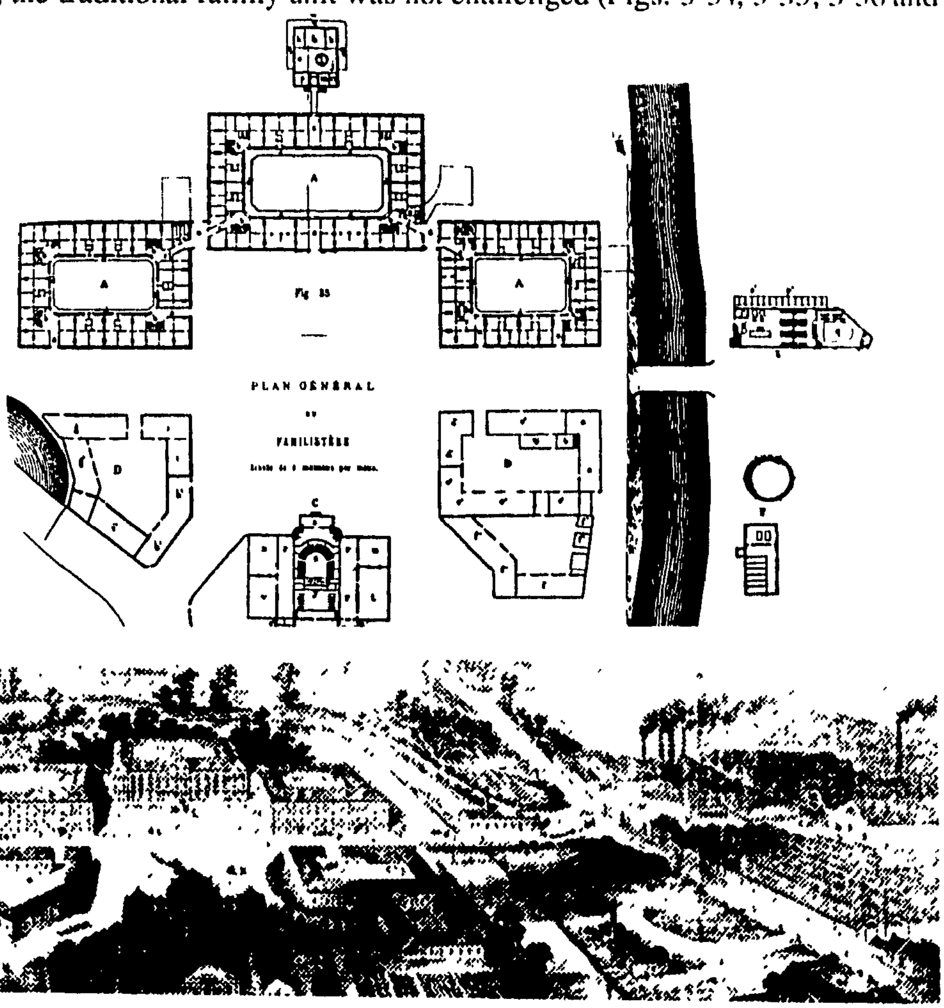

Fig. 3-34 Plan of Familistère at Guise France, built by André Godin, a disciple of Charles Fourier. Communal housing and dining were not implemented, but there was a crèche to allow women to work in the communal store.

73. Jean Baptiste André Godin, *Solutions Sociales* (Paris, 1871) 450.

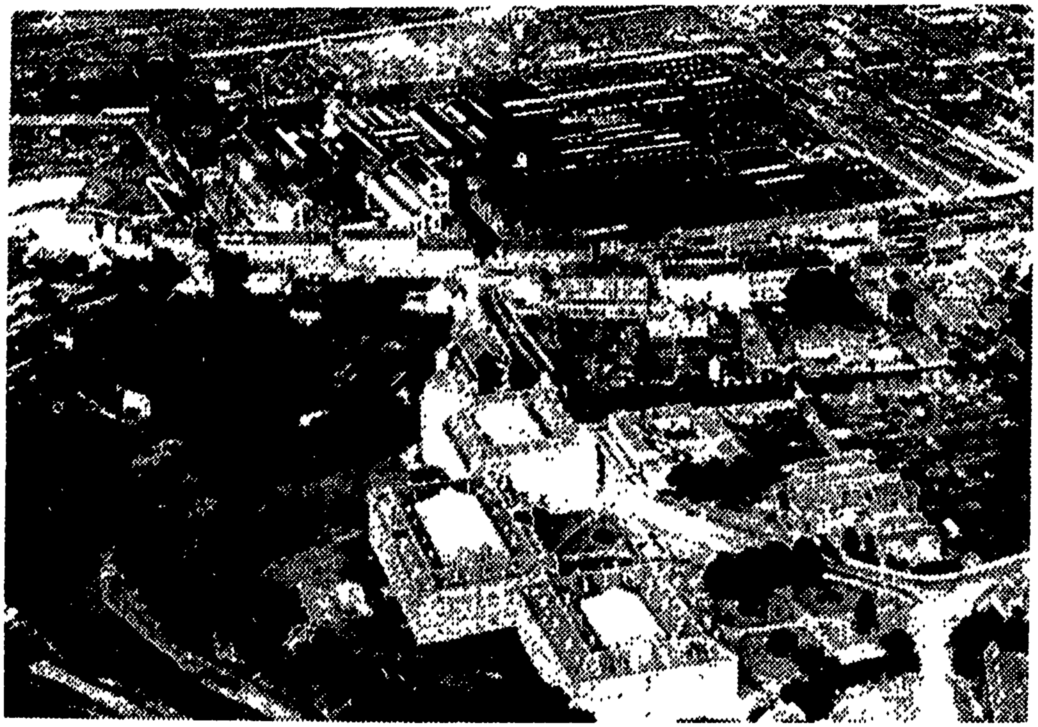

Fig. 3-35 Photo of site of the Familistère at Guise in 1952, built by André Godin in 1851. The upper right shows the foundries.

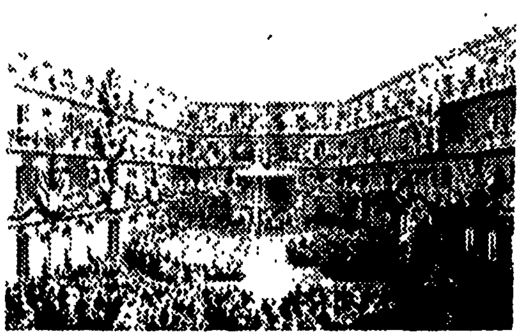

Fig. 3-36 Perspective of the interior courtyard of Godin's Familistère on founder's day.

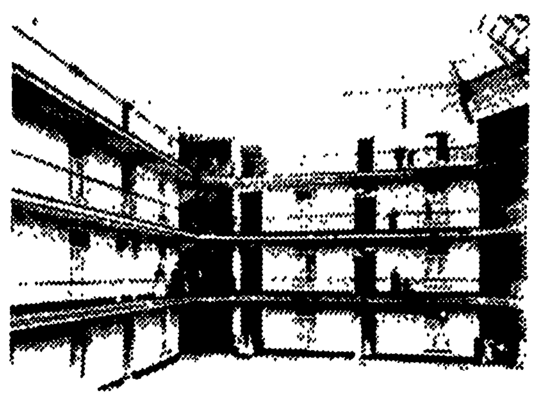

Fig. 3-37 Photo of the interior of Godin's Familistère. The narrow width of the balconies, would not have been able to sustain the system of "passional attraction" envisioned by Fourier.

The communitarians criticised the existing social order and the isolated home which, in their view, perpetuated the drudgery of the lives of the majority of the population. They rejected existing social structures, created true communities, and established new relationships. Their arguments for proposing collective dwellings ranged from the religious to the humanistic and reflected the particular philosophy of their group, but the communitarians did not doubt the wisdom of this goal.

The manifestation of the spirit of God was evident to the Shakers as they patiently converted their lands into ordered and productive gardens. Only when the reality of the world's people could no longer be resisted did the communities start to fail. By the beginning of the twentieth century, the barns and store buildings were empty, the trees were unpruned, and communities that once sustained a peaceful people with the promise of the millennia now housed delinquent adolescents and soldiers shell-shocked from war a dismal testimony to the original ideology that created these buildings.[74]

The writings and illustrations of the communitarian societies did not completely materialise into an architecture of resistance (or of dominion) as they had envisioned. The testimony to their communal structure and holistic approach to the design of their communities is nonetheless manifested in the layout of individual buildings and, to a greater extent, in the shape and overall arrangement of their settlements.

The next chapter examines some modern examples of women-focused collective dwellings. In their scale and arrangements, these projects fall somewhere between the Shaker dwelling house and the Oneida mansion house, neither as modest as the former, nor as elegant as the latter. Although these modern collective projects lack a clear architectural vision, their innovative programs and the inspired residents who inhabit them are challenging the orthodox view of housing and women's position in society.

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74. "War-Time Uses for the Shaker Colonies," *The Survey* 20 Apr. 1918: 7 and 15 Dec 1917: 325. Bestor 235-36 also lists the present use of the communities.

4

A Place for Women:
Building Women–Focused Environments

Great aims are needed to drive the masses of people forward.[1]
Lily Braun

Contemporary Collective Housing

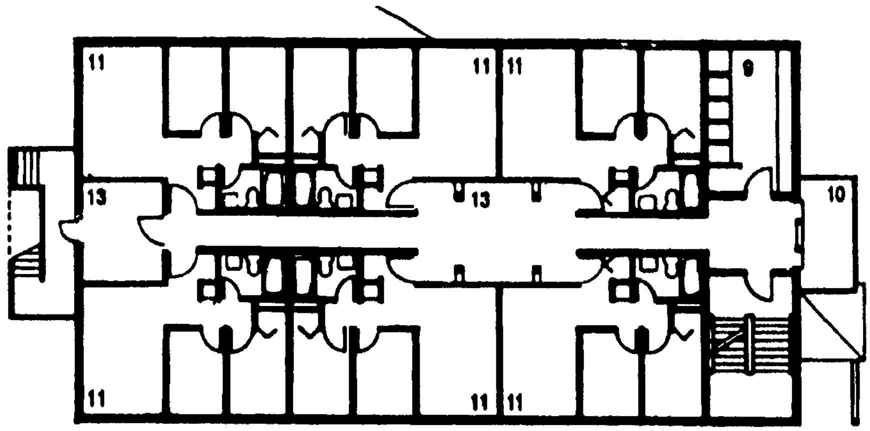
Collective housing in North America generally follows one of three models. The first is the "shared living" pattern typical of shelters, transitional homes, half-way houses, or housing for special populations (the elderly, pregnant teens, and the mentally or physically challenged). The accommodations most often consist of a private bedroom and communal kitchen, living room, and bath with appropriate support services (Fig. 4-1).[2] These "group homes" have several European counterparts, but with an interesting philosophical difference.

The Dutch *Woongroep* (living group) are popular among students and young people for their counter-culture lifestyle. They house some 47,000 people in 10,000 communal households—generally adults in the 25-35 age group who share a house and eat together several times a week. Dutch collaborative housing not only challenges the isolation of single-parent households, but also the exclusive character of the nuclear family.[3]

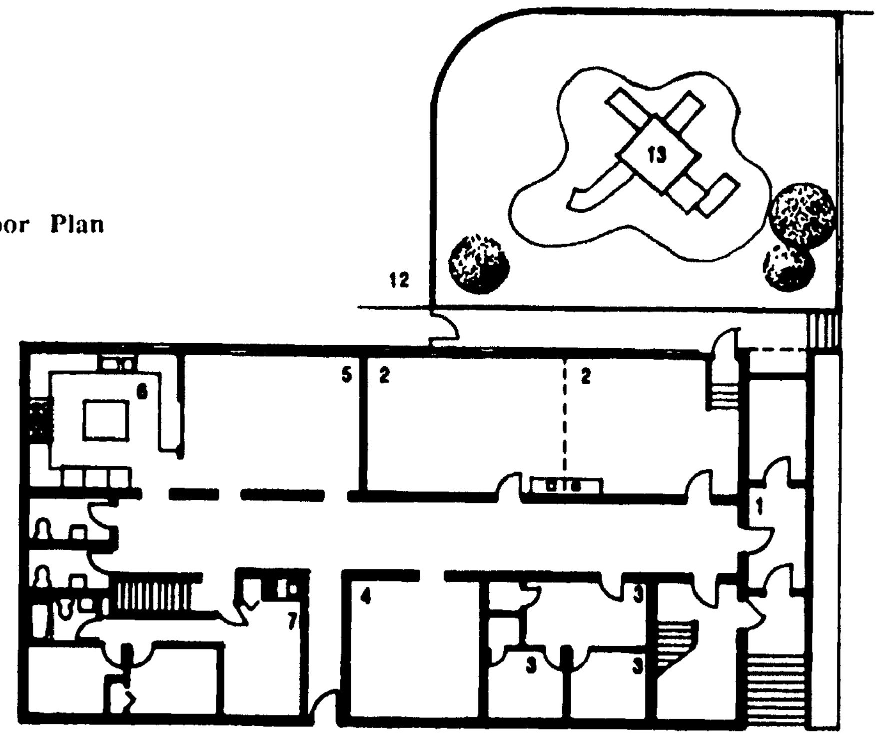
1. Lily Braun, "Left and Right," *Selected Writings on Feminism and Socialism,* trans. Alfred G. Meyer ("Nach links und rechts," 1895; Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1987) 51.

2. Joan Forrester Sprague, *More Than Housing: Lifeboats for Women and Children* (Boston: Butterworth Architecture, 1991) 32-34.

3. Dorit Fromm, *Collaborative Communities: Cohousing, Central Living, and Other New Forms of Housing with Shared Facilities* (New York: Van Nostrand, 1991) 48.



Second Floor Plan



First Floor Plan

1. entry; **2**. child care; **3**. office; **4**. programme **5**. dining; **6**. kitchen; **7**. manager's unit; **8**. community, **9**. laundry; **10** screened porch; **11**. 2-BR unit; **12**. parking; **13**. play area.

Fig. 4-1 Transition House, Fitchburg, Massachusetts, is located in a renovated social hall. It provides housing for single mothers aged 17-24. Brigid Williams is the architect. The lower floor houses the community and administration functions. On the second floor, teen mothers have small 41 sq. m , two-bedroom apartments with pullman kitchens and adjacent informal social and play areas. The communal dinner is mandatory. The mothers are given private bedrooms to reinforce their status as adults.

Swedish *storfamilj* (big-family groups) are attractive to a variety of households, including nuclear families. In the late 1970s, a group of women architects, journalists, and designers recognised that household tasks were a part of women's material culture. Rather than reducing or eliminating this domestic work, they collectivised it.[4] This concept, formalised as BIG, "*bo i gemenskap*" (live in community) was intended to strengthen the community aspects of the group by increasing the participation of the residents. The housing projects based on this model are characterised by their small scale (between 20 and 50 households); their philosophy of shared work; their low cost (they are publically funded and speculation free); and their diverse population.[5]

The participants in European shared-housing projects may not be typical of the general population, but they are not marginalised to the extent that equivalent users are in North America. In Sweden, Denmark and Holland, where the majority of these projects are situated, the population is more homogeneous, which facilitates the formation of shared living arrangements. This lifestyle is also *elected* by residents who have other options open to them. In North America, where concepts of independence and privacy are highly valued, they are viewed simply as an efficient way to shelter hard-to-house people.

The second type of collective housing is the cooperative. This model is common in Canada as government-assisted rental housing, referred to as "social housing." Equity coops (such as The Linton, in Montreal) also exist. As rental housing, each household has a private apartment and shares additional collective facilities (such as meeting rooms, laundries, and occasionally childcare). The residents are responsible for the administration of the housing but do not own their unit. Cooperatives that involve home ownership

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4 Dick Urban Vestbro, "From Central Kitchen to Community Cooperation: Development of Collective Housing In Sweden," *Open House International* 17 2. (1992) 37.

5 Alison Woodward, "Communal Housing in Sweden: A Remedy for the Stress of Everyday Life? " *New Households New Housing*, ed. Karen Franck and Sherry Ahrentzen (New York: Van Nostrand Reinhold, 1989) 72

(condominiums) are founded on economic factors rather than on a philosophical interest in "community building." The economic parity of members is crucial for them to function smoothly since improvements and repairs have to be agreed upon by all the members, who then share the cost.

Either type can be accommodated in row houses, apartment blocks, or single-family-attached or-detached dwellings. Most of the cooperative projects include shared outside areas, meeting spaces, a utility kitchen, and activity rooms, however, regular communal meals are not usually a feature of this housing.

European models are structured to serve various household types and generally include communal meals, even when the units have private kitchens. These meals are not only an important aspect of community but are viewed as practical for people who work away from home all day.

Dutch *Centraal wonen* (central living) was initiated in 1977. Currently they house 4000 people in 59 realised projects of which 58 percent include fewer than 40 households. These collective rental units are popular in the Netherlands among singles and single-parent families with low incomes.[6] *Het Punt*, (The point) Wageningen, combines many different household types—47 percent are single people and 28 percent are single-parent families (Figs. 4-2 and 4-3). There are 18 "closed-cluster households" living in two to five room apartments with additional communal facilities; 22 independent dwellings; and 15 communal households living in one or two rooms and sharing facilities in a communal house.[7] The "project house" includes a crèche, teenage room, kitchen, social room, three studios, and temporary accommodations for four homeless young people, as well as large specialty gardens.

6. Beatrice Kesler, "The Communal Garden: A Evaluation of a Dutch Collective Housing Project," *Open House International* 17.2 (1992): 48.

7. Fromm 56 and 66 f.n. 20.

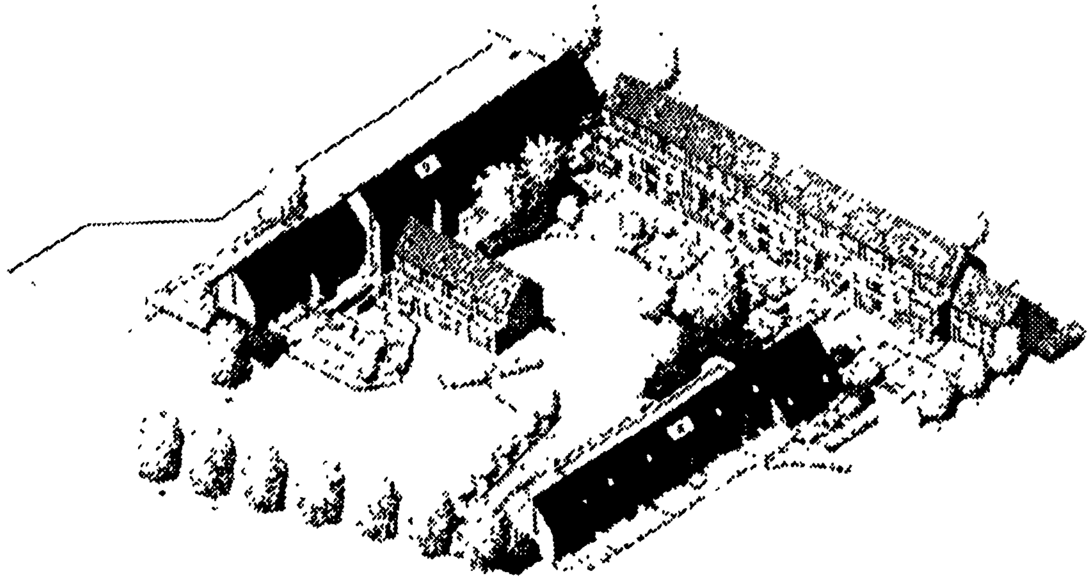

Fig. 4-2 Aerial view of *Centraal Wonen, Het Punt*,Wageningen, Holland. **1**. Project House; **2**. independent apartments; **3**. closed cluster households; **4**. row houses; **5**. bicycle shed.

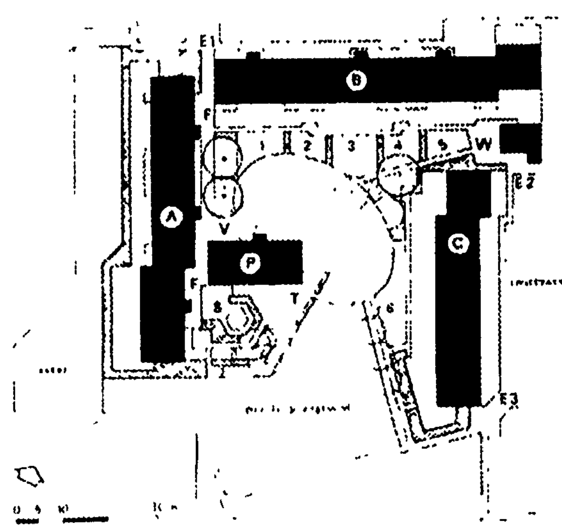

Fig. 4-3 *Centraal Wonen, Het Punt*, Wageningen, Holland. Design of outdoor conditions.
A, **B** and **C** are building blocks; **E 1**, **2** and **3** are garden entrances; **F**. public footpath; **P**. project House; **S**. creche; **T**. terrace; **V**. front door square; **W**. work square; **1-8**. flexible gardens.

Swedish *kollektivhus* (collective house) are commonly large-scale apartment buildings which are subdivided into functional "clusters," each with separate collective facilities. This arrangement adapts to a variety of household types and allows for economy of scale while maintaining the intimacy of the sub-groups. It is generally possible, if interpersonal conflicts arise, for a group to join another within the same block.

The approach to services has evolved two forms of collective living in Sweden The first is the serviced-house, where a professional staff provides the laundry, child care, and meal service to the residents. It is modeled on early-twentieth-century family hotels, such as Hemgården Centralkök built in Stockholm in 1905-1907.[8] The second is an outgrowth of the BIG group, described earlier, which are smaller and tenant managed, and encourage greater community participation.[9]

Increasing the number of people who use communal facilities enhances their financial viability but diminishes the sense of intimacy and commitment. Municipal housing authorities in Sweden became interested in combining housing for groups for whom they normally provide services (the frail elderly and the disabled) with public housing for the general population. They intended to increase the viability of the services and reduce the isolation of the older tenants through intergenerational sharing. Alison Woodward notes that, although this goal is admirable, the planners did not consider that working people and the elderly tend to follow different schedules and rarely have parallel interests.[10] Stolplyckan, built at the end of the 1970s, provides a wide range of housing options and integrates municipal services for 36 apartments for the elderly, 9 barrier-free units for the physically challenged, and 141 collaborative units (Figs. 4-4 and 4-5).[11]

8. Vestbro, "From Central Kitchen to Community Cooperation," 30.

9. Vestbro, "From Central Kitchen to Community Cooperation," 35-36.

10. Woodward 76.

11. Birgit Krantz, "The Relative Significance of Form: Two Case Studies of Housing In Sweden," *Open House International* 17.2 (1992) 39-46.

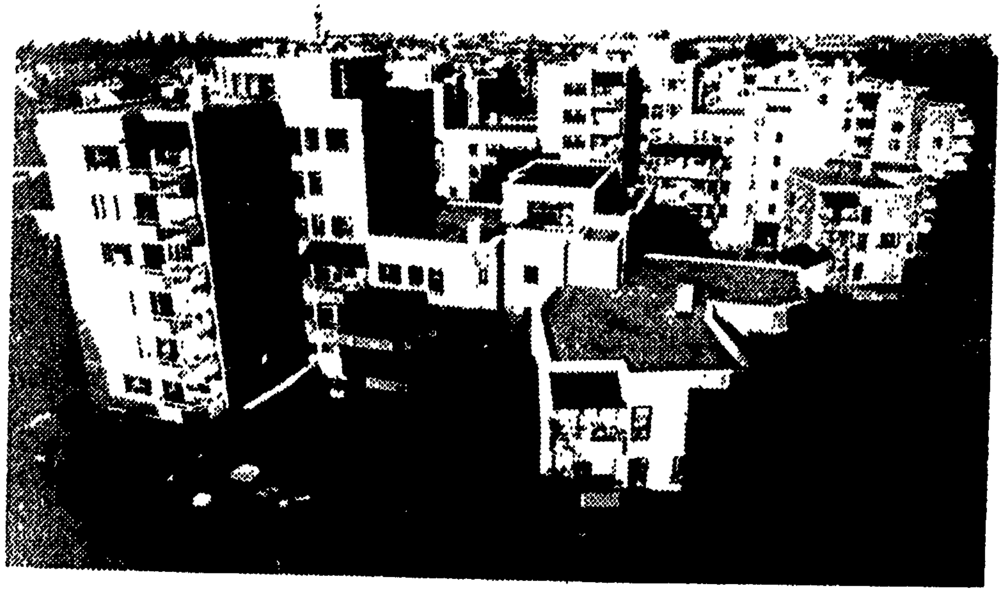

Fig. 4-4 Stolplyckan view of housing units.

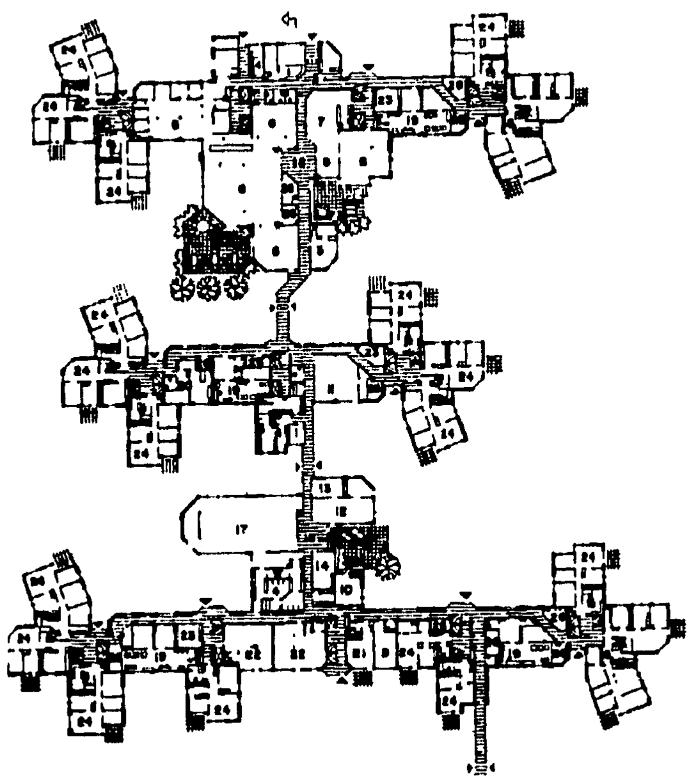

Fig. 4-5 Stolplyckan, plan of ground floor common facilities and corridor system which connects the low-rise buildings by Architect Höjer-Ljungqvist. **1.** Reception; **2.** entry; **3.** lounge; **4.** dressing area; **5.** professional kitchen; **6.** dining room-stage; **7.** café; **8.** library; **9.** meeting rooms; **10.** pottery room; **11.** weaving room; **12.** wood shop; **13.** painting studio; **14.** metal shop; **15.** photo lab; **16.** square; **17.** playroom; **18.** daycare; **19.** laundry; **20.** beauty shop; **21.** guest room; **22.** lease-room; **23.** wheelchair storage; **24.** apartment; **25.** garbage; **26.** storage.

The *bofoellesskaber* (living-togetherness) is popular in Denmark with traditional families because of their child-sensitive environments (Fig. 4-6). The concept has recently been modified and transplanted to North America as "co-housing" where it has taken the form of up-scale collectives.[12] In the North American context, a group of people generally own a parcel of land in common, erect a community building, and construct individual or clustered homes.[13] Because of the many governmental and institutional barriers that exist, only groups with a strong personal commitment and adequate funds have succeeded in establishing them. Subsequent projects will benefit from the ground breaking efforts of these modern-day pioneers.The planning of the early Danish co-housing projects spanned four to five years and longer from the first meeting to the final move-in date.[14]

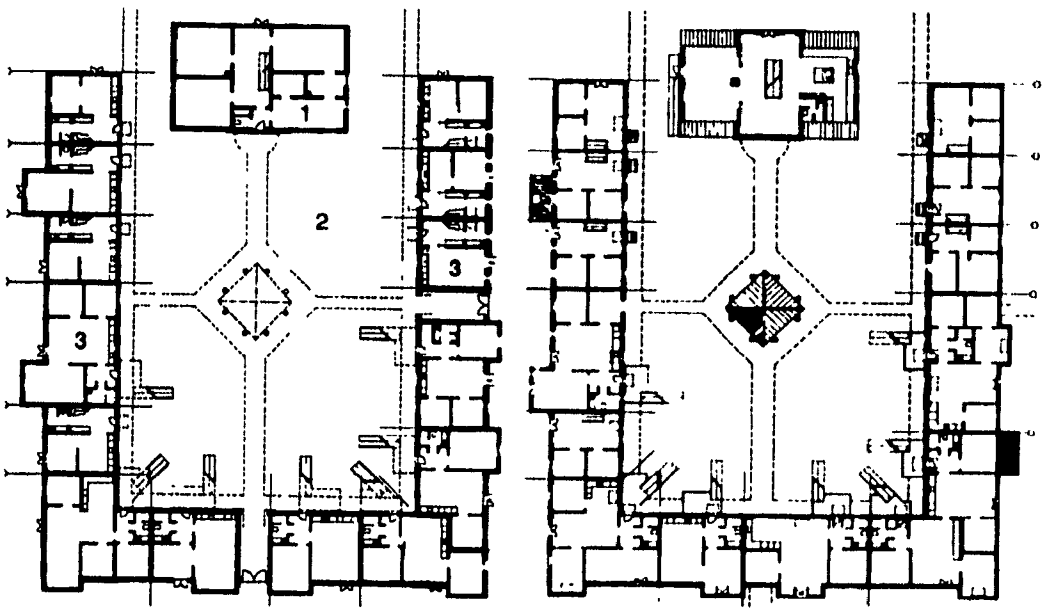

Fig. 4-6 Ibsgården, Roskilde, Denmark. **1.** Common house in renovated farmhouse; **2.** central court, **3** new housing. This layout is reminiscent of the quadrangle arrangement of collective housing in England. The units of this low-cost project are more attached and less differentiated than in other Danish *bofoellesskaber* projects.

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12. Kathryn McCamant and Charles Durrett, *Cohousing A Contemporary Approach to Housing Ourselves* (Berkeley: Habitat Press/Ten Speed Press, 1988) 33 and 151.

13. Dorit Fromm, "Collaborative Communities," *Progressive Architecture* (March 1993) 92-97.

14. McCamant and Durrett "Sun and Wind" took 5 years (1976-1981) 59. *Tornevagsgarden* spanned 4 years (1974-78) 99-100.

Not all European collective housing has proved to be financially viable, or even effective communities, but the vast majority of them have. Dorit Fromm notes that the projects that are the most successful communities are developed by groups who have a long-standing relationship; share common values; and participate in the design process to realise their goals.[15] She defines the three cues as "influence, membership and fulfillment of needs." Inherent in these three is a requisite "give and take."

Fromm, in analysing the success of the American co-housing projects, reduces the role played by a sensitively designed architecture to one of "chance" in creating community. In other words, although architecture can enhance the experience, the actual development of "community" depends more on the character of the individuals involved than on the built environment. Although this assertion may be valid, an attractive community is more desirable and promotes greater pride among residents than one that looks run-down and uninviting.

The collective housing movement in Europe was boosted in the late 1960s and early 1970s from various individuals (single people, pensioners, single mothers, and families with two working parents) who became dissatisfied with the available housing and related lifestyles. Local housing authorities were also attempting to find better ways to house the needy groups for whom they were responsible. This combination created the will to change the status quo and examine other housing typologies. The new types incorporate the positive aspects of early-twentieth-century European serviced collective housing models while accommodating a modern fast-paced lifestyle where both women and men work outside the home.

Collective dwelling proponents in Canada recognise that there are many advantages to living in a supportive community for all family types. In 1973, the Canadian Mortgage and Housing Corporation (CMHC) funded local resource groups to assist in the

15. Fromm 157.

development of non-profit cooperative housing. By 1978, this programme had resulted in the formation of 7800 cooperative units.

After 1979, CMHC modified the programme and no longer provided the 10 percent capital grants and 90 percent low-interest loans, but guaranteed 100 percent of the loans through private institutions. This policy facilitated the development of an additional 33,000 cooperative units.[16] By 1992, when the federal government announced the elimination of support for cooperatives as a budget cutting measure, more than 60,000 cooperative units had been funded.

Although the population in Canada is extremely heterogenous, the system of encouraging sub-groups to join together as cooperatives has been very successful for the participants. Many people associate in a collective based on a common ethnicity, trade union affiliation, environmental awareness, or as an identifiable group, such as native peoples, women, and persons with disabilities. Through the development of these cooperative housing projects, the stigma of grouped living has been reduced and the housing options available to Canadians have consequently increased.

Shared Living, No or Yes?

According to Rita Zimmer, Director of the New York based group, *Women in Need*, 80 percent of the people who are homeless have lived in some form of shared housing so the concept is not foreign to them.[17] Collective dwelling, however, is an inferior situation in a society where the single-family dwelling and home ownership are revered. In 1986, David Walsch, an altruistic developer who has developed housing

16 Jeanne M Wolfe and William Jay, "The Revolving Door Third-Sector Organizations and the Homeless," *Housing the Homeless and Poor New Partnerships among the Private, Public and Third Sectors*, ed. George Fallis and Alexander Murray (Toronto University of Toronto Press, 1990) 205

17. Rita Zimmer, "Transitional Housing," School of Architecture, Yale University Conference on Housing, New Haven, CT. Jan. 29-30, 1993

projects in Toronto for the homeless-advocacy group, *Our Homes*, actively promoted "homesharing" for single-parent families and the homeless. By 1993, in a hurried interview he said, "It doesn't work." According to his experience, the housing market has been so tight that mismatched "homesharers" are not able to relocate, which results in unhappy tenants who are difficult to manage. With the added difficulty of incompatible child-rearing attitudes, the situation soon becomes untenable for everyone.

Society's view of collective housing as inferior is a major hurdle that must be overcome if this form of housing is to be viable. Additionally, the types of collective housing and the degree of independence and community that they promote need to be flexible. Transitions, both in our roles and in our family structure, are part and parcel of all our lives. From this context and with the intent of removing the stigma from "transitional housing" (thereby making it available to all groups) Karen Franck advocates "catered living," an à la carte system which would provide a range of services to people in neighbourhoods who would live in autonomous dwelling units. Residents would opt for only those services they need.[18] This philosophy is also reflected in the work of Joan Forrester Sprague, who argues that permanent affordable housing without *support services* does not necessarily bestow independence on women-led households.[19]

Perpetuating Bias

Plans and elevations of women-focused housing projects that are included in this section are not optimal solutions but rather show the limited design innovations in housing that is sociologically inventive. This is not to call into question the skill of architects. Design solutions are often restricted by available funding and, in some cases, by a

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18. School of Architecture, Yale University Conference on Housing, New Haven, CT. Jan. 29-30, 1993.

19. Joan Forrester Sprague, *More Than Housing Lifeboats for Women and Children*, Boston: Butterworth Architecture, 1991) 35.

participatory design process in which tenants are inclined to select larger rooms over more attractive exteriors or innovative plans. Additionally, the urban context in which these projects are situated is not altered by the introduction of a single small-scale autonomous building. To generate a visible and distinct community, the projects would need to include a broader mandate and incorporate a larger portion of the neighbourhood.

Sue Francis calls into question the use of typical floor plans as tools for designing public housing because designers have asked the wrong questions in developing them and the "answers" continue to reinforce old stereotypes. In Francis' view, researchers who notice that women are often at the sink formulate the question "How can life with your hands in the sink be more pleasant?" rather than "Why do women spend so much time at the kitchen sink?" The former results in a window being shown over the sink in design guidelines.[20] The second more-valid query is not so easily resolved but once posed it demands consideration.

Jos Boys echoes that standard solutions and design guidelines although well and good do not resolve the fundamental question of women's role as sole homemaker and nurturer. Providing pat answers to complex problems allows designers to continue in the mistaken notion that they are in fact addressing the problem in an acceptable if perhaps not creative way.[21] Generally architects have little time to do the extensive reading or study needed to assess the full range of potential solutions for a new project. In approaching new building types they often refer to design examples and guidelines to supplement the client's programme. Consequently, an innovative project in the popular architectural press has potentially a greater impact on the thinking of architects than does a scholarly work.

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20. Sue Francis, "Housing the Family," *Making Space: Women in the Man-Made Environment*, ed Matrix Book Group (London: Pluto Press Ltd., 1984) 82-83.

21. Jos Boys, "Women in Public Space," *Making Space. Women in the Man-Made Environment*, ed Matrix Book Group (London: Pluto Press Ltd., 1984) 44-45

Gerda Wekerle and Barbara Muirhead estimate that as of 1991 there were over 1500 dwelling units in Canada started by women or women-focused.[22] Based on 60,000 cooperative units, this is only 2.5 percent of the total units developed in Canada since 1973. As of 1989, Toronto had eight cooperative and a dozen women-focused housing projects sponsored by the *YWCA*, *Homes First*, *City Homes* and other interested non-governmental organisations.

The field work for this case study was accomplished in January 1993. The projects include Perth Avenue Cooperative: a woman-focused coop, occupied in 1986, designed by E. I Richmond, Architects; Project Esperance: an eight-storey, 101-unit, women-only building, occupied in late 1992, and designed by Jeff Heck; 15 Pape Avenue: a five-storey, 77-unit building by Allen, Ensslen, Barrett Architects for hard-to-house women and children; Jessie's Homes, a 16-unit project for young mothers and teen parents by Jack Diamond; Constance Hamilton Cooperative: 30 woman-focused townhouse units and a six-bedroom Communal House by Joan Simon, Architect; Humewood Drive: a renovated, four-unit home for 16 low-income single women by Robert Reimers and Associates; and Andyhuan II, a proposed project for single-parent native women and their extended families by Garwood-Jones and van Nostrand Architects.

Originally, the intent was to analyse the projects to determine which ones incorporated the ideals of "community" and which were "simply housing." Although women played an important role in the development, planning, and management, this mandate is not reflected in inventive planning solutions. The housing projects are small in scale both compared to the demographics of the area in which they are situated and in their physical size. Consequently they have little architectural impact on their surroundings.

22. Gerda Wekerle and Barbara Muirhead, *Canadian Women's Housing Cooperatives* (Ottawa: CMHC, 1991) 1.

This lack of architectural distinction actually satisfies a goal of women-focused projects, namely, to be indistinguishable from other housing—to be anonymous; to avoid the stigma of being branded as a home for battered woman, pregnant teens, or homeless women; and to be safe from the ever present danger of attack from the eluded batterer.

As the concept of collective housing is broadened and becomes desirable; as more women architects and planners acknowledge the place of gender in the design of the built environment; and as these developments encompass larger portions of our cities and suburbs, the formalisation of the design intention must become more apparent. The implications of administrative, physical, and symbolic frontiers that at once "separate and link public, collective and private spaces, services and facilities" in these projects are important considerations and are addressed next.[23]

The Projects

The location of most of these projects is not ideal. Adjacent to the front door of Project Esperance is the neon sign of a bingo hall. The small fenced-in play area abuts a rail yard. Yet, the central location adjacent to a major bus-line in a neighbourhood with child care facilities and within an easy walk of stores makes it an *almost* ideal site. This characterisation also describes Perth Avenue, 15 Pape Avenue, and Jessie's. Because of the similar scale, construction type, and location, these four projects confront parallel issues and are analysed as a group.

Humewood Drive and Constance Hamilton Cooperative and Communal House are situated in residential neighbourhoods and address challenges that differ from the other projects and, therefore, are discussed separately. Humewood Drive is also located in an existing slightly-renovated house in a long-established neighbourhood and its physical

23. Roderick J. Lawrence, "Collective and Cooperative Housing. A Multi-Dimensional View," *Open House International* 17.2 (1992) 3.

impact on the site is minimal.

The transition from the public face of the projects to their interior realm is negotiated very tentatively in this first group of projects (Project Esperance, Perth Avenue Cooperative, 15 Pape Avenue, and Jessie's) Aspects of this interface include the passage from a problematic exterior zone into a protected inner zone; the image of the facade, the entrance; and the use of elements that communicate the collective as well as the individual character of the tenants.

The flat facade of Project Esperance is broken into vertical strips by the balconies and presents a barrier to the street which is accentuated by a high, wrought iron fence (Figs. 4-7 and 4-8). The rose-coloured split-faced block and glass balconies are the only relief on an otherwise stern facade. In addition to the architectural barriers, locked doors, and secret address, safety is enhanced through surveillance cameras that monitor all public areas; windows that look into the parking garage, and mirrors at stairs and blind corners.

The transition from the exterior to the interior is direct and abrupt The canopied, unadorned entrance is front and centre on the facade Once inside, the lobby is pleasantly decorated with a blend of colourful tiles and muted shades Women arrive and depart quite naturally. Young girls' with their children talk while gathering their mail, unconscious of the cameras' watchful eye. Studies show that the greater the poverty the more pervasive the fear, especially among female residents. With the large number of women from abusive relationships, safety issues are critical here [24] The administrative space is on the eighth floor although the conventional wisdom would have situated it adjacent to the entrance to supervise and to control. The circulation of the residents' on the ground floor in the course of their daily lives animates the lobby and affords a level of normalcy it might otherwise lack. It subtly gives tenants wings allowing them to feel safe without overt supervision

24. Gerda R Wekerle and Sylvia Novac, "Gender and Housing in Toronto," (Toronto Toronto Institute on Women and Work, 1991) 46

Fig. 4-7 Street Elevation of Project Esperance, Toronto

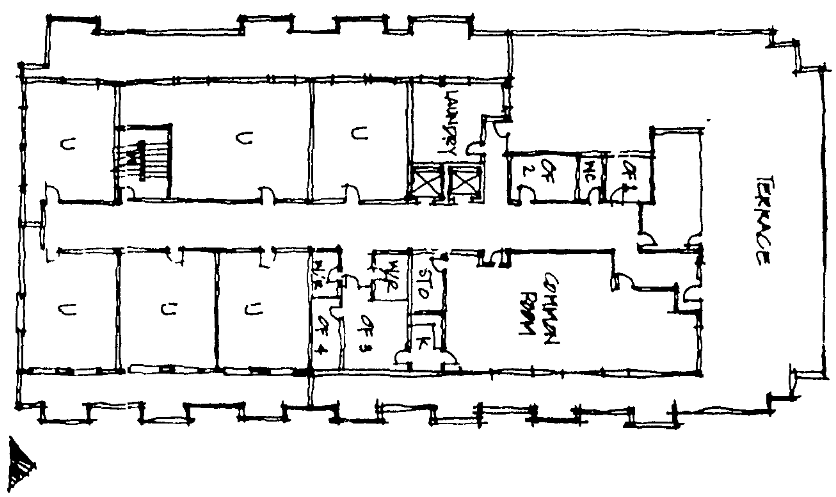

Fig. 4-8 Typical Plan of Project Esperance, Toronto

The Pape Avenue project is more residential in scale (Figs 4-9). The narrower side walls of the building face both Pape and Eastern Avenues, and its five-storey height is proportionately less imposing than the eight-storey Project Esperance The stripes of coloured-brick and the enclosed painted wood sunrooms enhance the pleasant residential quality of the building.

The entrance to the building appears to be on the street facing facades, however, the doors fronting on Pape and Eastern only open into the emergency stairwells and are kept locked. The main entrance is in the curved outside corner of the L-shaped plan off the parking area at the end of an obscure narrow drive rather than at the interior corner of the "L" which would have been more logical (Fig 4-10). The effect of this curved and slightly projected wall at the entrance is an ineffective gesture in this location. It implies a panoramic view, at least on the upper-floors, but it is subdivided into small rooms that are further reduced by the geometry A key card access system is used but camera surveillance was rejected as too intrusive and unnecessary since the offices are located immediately to the left of the lobby and residents mill about the area constantly The possibility of interaction is available but not imposed Some of the older residents sit in the entry all day long observing the activity and greeting the other residents.

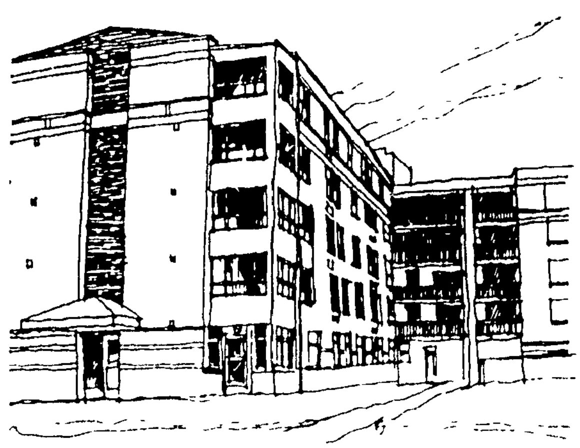

Fig. 4-9 View of 15 Pape Street, Toronto

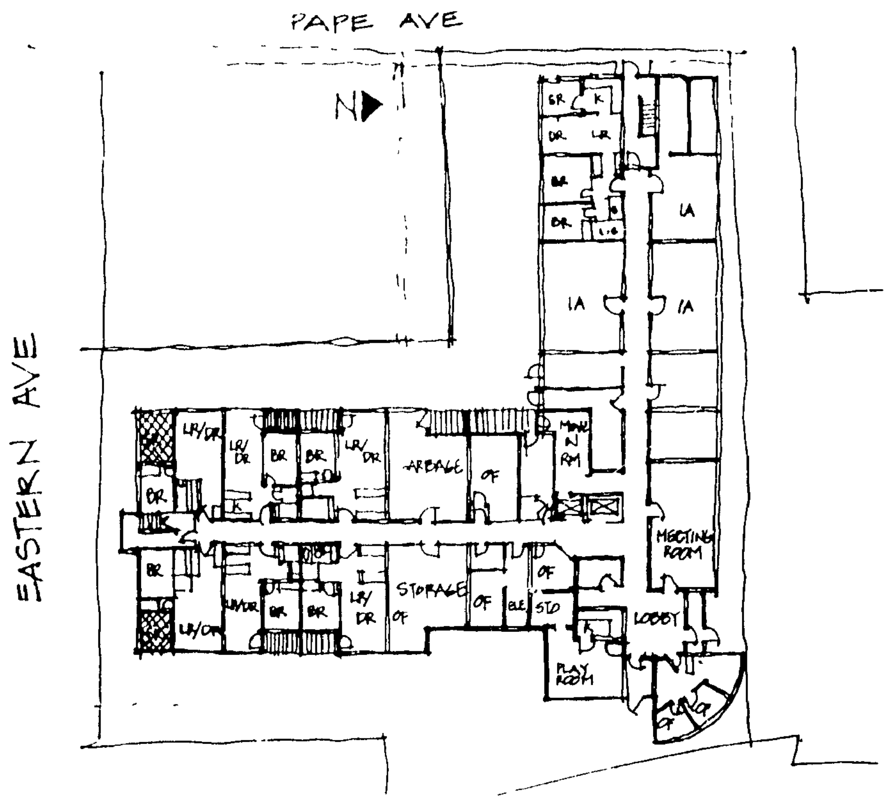

Fig. 4-10 Ground floor and site plan of 15 Pape Street

Perth Avenue Cooperative is woman-focused housing whose mandate is to enlarge women's leadership and management skills. Although almost 40 percent of the residents are lone parents, it is not exclusively for women. The play area in the centre of the courtyard created by the C-shaped plan is the only visible concession to its mandate. In all other aspects,—the curving asphalt walk down a landscaped path, brick face, and regular balconies—it appears to be a conventional apartment building (Figs. 4-11 and 4-12).

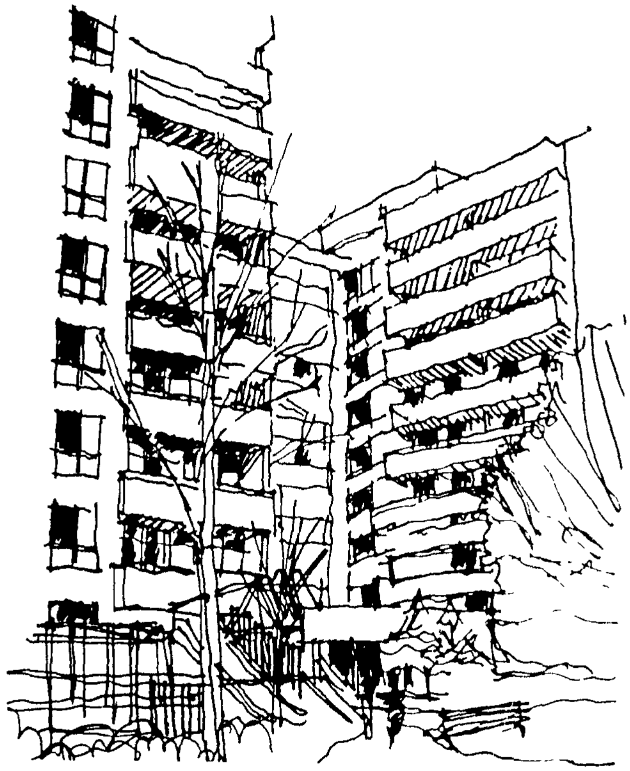

Fig. 4-11 View of Perth Avenue Cooperative, Toronto

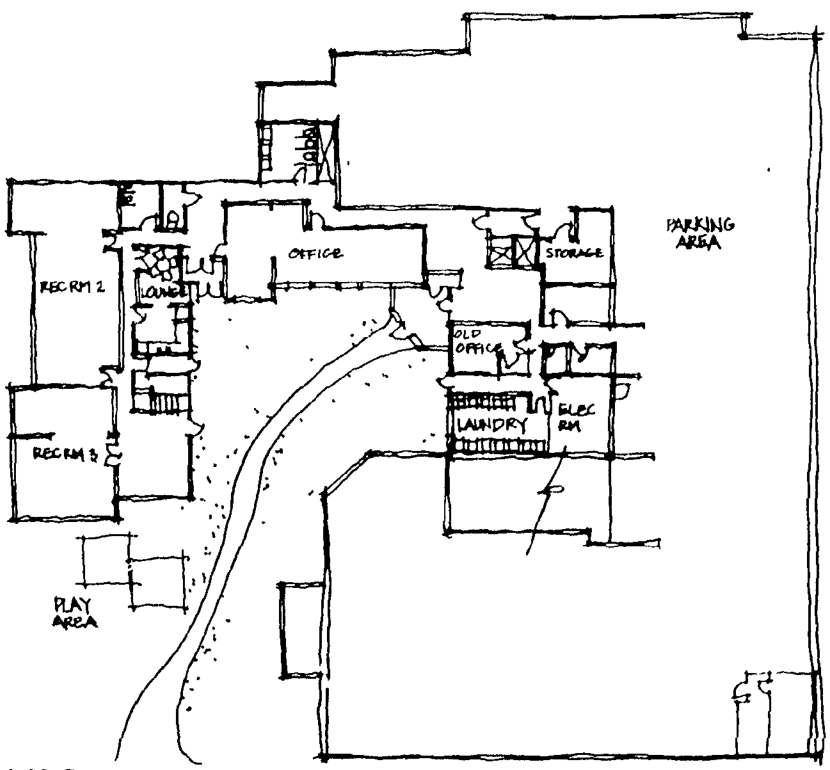

Fig. 4-12 Ground Floor Plan of Perth Avenue Cooperative.

Jessie's curved well-detailed building tucked above and behind a drop-in centre for teen mothers and fathers is visually bright and appealing (Fig 4-13). The entry to the drop-in centre faces the commercial Parliament Street The spacious interior gives one the sensation that the entire building has been visited In fact, there are four floors of housing above The entrance to this housing is from a narrow rear residential street. This arrangement, necessitated by the constricted site, also maintains the distinct identities of the separate but related enterprises (A direct interior connection between the housing and the centre is used by the staff) The administrator keeps an unobtrusive eye on the lobby from the office is at the end of the short narrow entry hall (Fig. 4-14).

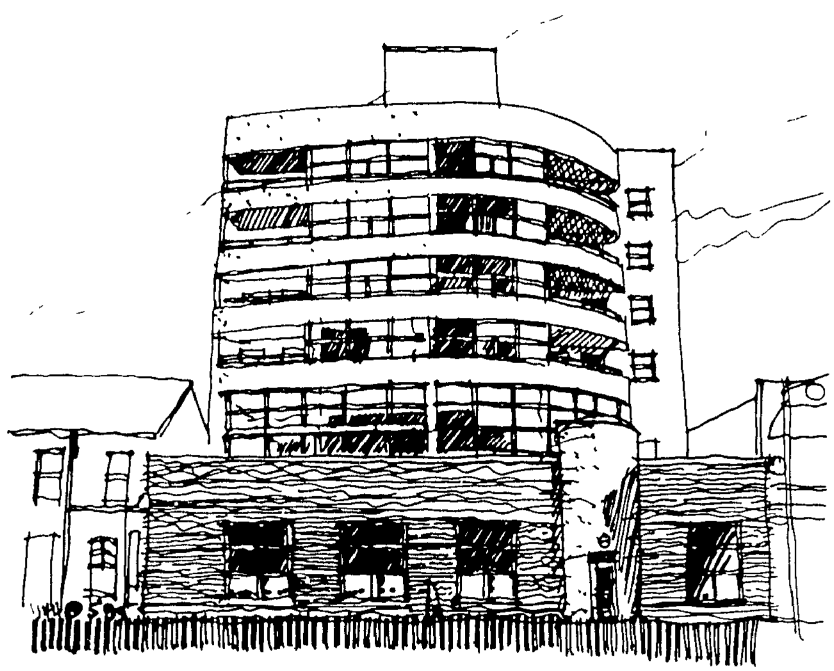

Fig. 4-13 The entrance to Jessie's a teen-parent drop in centre is on Parliament Street, Toronto, the housing is above with its entrance at the rear of the site.

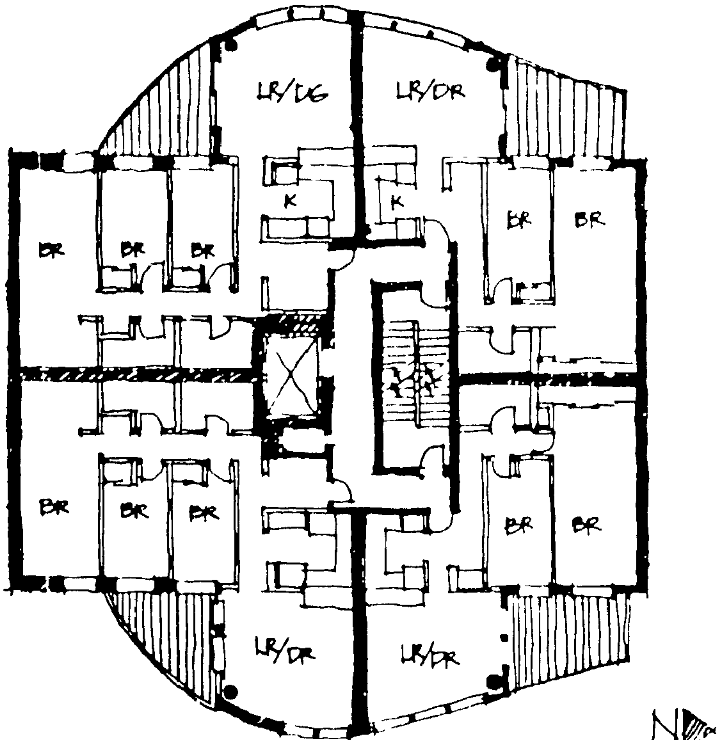

Fig. 4-14 Plan of Jessie's Housing for young mothers arranges four compact units per floor (two two-bedroom units and two three-bedroom

The four sites of this first group are centrally located in urban neighbourhoods on the verge of revitalisation, with a mix of commercial, retail, and housing and with significant pedestrian movement. A single building is easily lost in such a visually diverse area. The buildings also serve the needs of four different clienteles Pape Avenue, Perth Avenue, and Jessie's present a residential image that is more recognisable and comprehensible than at Project Esperance The architect imposes a defensive posture on the latter, acknowledging the difficult site and complex programme yet without attempting to mediate the two. Homes for battered women need not look like prisons

The relationship between the public and private interior and exterior space enhances the design potential in collective housing. In nineteenth-century collectives, the kitchen and communal dining areas were often situated in the basement which limited the interface between the inside and outside, and created unappealing community space. The current approach is to situate collective space either at the entry level, so that the daily movement of people will animate them, or at the choicest location in the building, thereby encouraging their use A direct exterior connection is also desirable. In the modern urban cooperatives where land is at a premium and outdoor spaces are not easily defensible roof-top or interior courtyards are also used

The four projects under consideration include the interior communal spaces within their envelopes Many of the modern cohousing projects are grouped with the communal space in a separate building. Although the former arrangement is very efficient, the latter presents the opportunity for a symbolic appreciation of the site that is impossible to achieve walking down a double-loaded corridor. The early twentieth-century and communitarians models also used this device to reinforce the collective experience.

The communal space for 15 Pape Avenue and the Perth Avenue Cooperative is on the ground floor adjacent to the office area and is nondescript. They also both lack a direct connection to the exterior. The fenced exterior space is heavily used by the children of the respective projects

The communal spaces, play areas, and terrace at Project Esperance and Jessie's (the two projects with the most vulnerable populations) are located on the top floor and roof. As in the communitarian projects, this affords the residents the opportunity to "survey their domain." Although both projects have a high percentage of young children (Jessie's has 20 adults, 7 of which are teenage mothers, and 36 children under twelve; Project Esperance houses 207 people, of whom 89 are under twelve years old and 14 of these under one) the perceived danger of a roof-top play area is dramatically different between them. The door to the terrace on the eighth floor of Project Esperance is kept locked, whereas at Jessie's the fifth floor terrace is heavily used. The three floors of additional height at Project Esperance and the transparent glass rail at the edge of the roof may account for the difference—the parapet at Jessie's is solid, 1.2 m. high with a wide top bar and slightly recessed from the edge of the building—or it could simply be the relative ease/uneasiness of the two administrators.

A balcony or sunroom furnishes the private exterior space for the residents. Architecturally, balconies and decks afford a visual transition between the interior and the exterior of a building and reduce the perceived scale by adding interest and variety to the facades. From a tenant's point of view balconies are only desirable if appropriately sized, private, properly oriented for sun and views, and sensitive to the internal layout of the apartment. The long narrow decks at Project Esperance and Perth Avenue Cooperative take space from overly small bedrooms. Since the secondary bedroom is not as wide as the living room, architects often use this difference in width to support the balcony. Balconies accessed from these (children's) bedrooms are a hazard. The transparent walls of the balconies of Project Esperance reduce privacy and clutter the exterior facade, since the decks are often used as storage areas. Sunrooms on the street sides of 15 Pape replace the balconies and are appreciated as pleasant year-round retreats.

The configuration of the private dwelling within the collective houses is the final physical characteristic discussed. As noted in the previous chapter, the position of the individual was important and personal expression encouraged in non-sectarian communitarian societies; among the religious communities, however, it was unconsidered. In most apartment buildings and especially public housing, the layout of the unit is restricted by minimum property standards which dictate rooms widths, minimum areas, and closet space. Combined rooms that merge functions are allowed to be smaller than individual closed rooms. (A living room must enclose 11.15 sq. m., a dining room 9.3 sq.

m., for a total of 20.45 sq. m., however, a combined living/dining area need only be 19.5 sq. m.) This encourages the use of connected spaces as cost-and space-saving measures. The possible permutations in layout afforded by these linked spaces is correspondingly reduced.

The four projects are configured around a double loaded corridor. This eliminates the possibility of cross-ventilation, which was one of the important design features envisioned by Charles Fourier, and executed by André Godin at the Familistère at Guise. The apartments have a conventional layout. The semi-enclosed kitchen, which lacks sufficient space to place a table, is adjacent to a combination living/dining room. The primary bedroom and one or two smaller secondary ones are grouped with a bathroom along a corridor. The variations are minimal and gratuitous, generally the result of the building configuration rather than from any attempt to satisfy the needs of a diverse population. Occasionally the second bedroom is located adjacent to the kitchen, but its small size does not give it equal status with the primary bedroom and the apartment would not equitably accommodate two separate adults.

The final two projects of the case study—Humewood Drive and Constance Hamilton Cooperative and Communal House—are situated in residential neighbourhoods and their architectural character reflects this. The first aspect of transition from public to private is easily negotiated through an individual "front door." This has the advantage of independence and an individual street address for each unit, but lacks security. Constance Hamilton consists of both private row houses and a communal house, which are entered and administered separately. The Communal House possesses a distinct character but is, nonetheless, well-integrated into the project and the total effect is harmonious.

The renovation of Humewood Drive, located in an area of single family homes was delayed for nine months while the area residents appealed to the Ontario Municipal Board in an attempt to block the project.[25] The virtually untouched exterior fits perfectly with the character of the area. The neighbours objected to its proposed use and argued that it did not conform to the "family" character of the neighbourhood (Figs. 4-15 and 4-16)

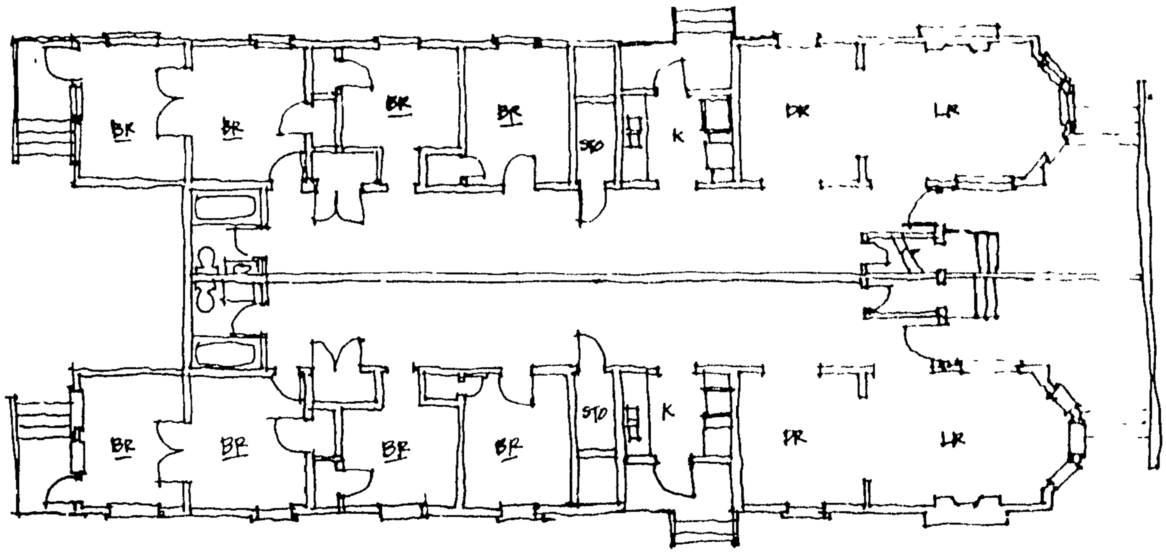

Fig. 4-15 Plan of Humewood Drive

Fig. 4-16 View of Humewood Drive

25. Gerda R. Wekerle and Barbara Muirhead, *Canadian Women's Housing Projects* ((Ottawa): CMHC 1991) 78.

The Constance Hamilton Cooperative and Communal House is the most sensitively planned project in this study although the neighbourhood is problematic (Fig. 4-17). It is surrounded by dozens of similarly scaled yet subtly different projects, which create a visual cacophony. Each of the housing groups in the immediate neighbourhood (which include a City Home project for the homeless, a Vietnamese co-op, a Central American co-op, and an elderly housing project) are distinctive in their detailing and comprise from 30 to 50-units each. They individually make a visual statement, however, because of the inconsistent and often incoherent details and elements, the neighbourhood lacks harmony.

The communal facilities and the individual units are integrated in Humewood Drive and in the Communal House of Constance Hamilton since both of these are shared living arrangements. Each of the residents has a private bedroom and share the living, kitchen and dining space. In the Communal House, every person also has a private balcony facing the street (Figs. 4-18 and 4-19). The Cooperative has communal exterior space in the backyard, which Communal-House residents can access through a covered way.

Two of the bedrooms in each dwelling unit at Humewood Drive are paired and the person in the end unit has to go through the third bedroom to access the rest of the house. Although not an ideal situation it does permit the women to accommodate one another while clarifying personal boundaries, skills that many of the women had not previously mastered.

Of the projects in this study, Constance Hamilton Cooperative is designed to accommodate a variety of household types (Fig. 4-20). The restricted size of the site, however, hampered the complete success of the innovative layouts. Of the 30 units, four of the three-bedroom and eleven of the two-bedroom units are arranged to allow for the independent use of the living and dining space. The kitchen/dining and one bedroom are on the lower floor, and one or two additional bedrooms and the bathroom are on the second floor adjacent to the living room. The provision of a half bath on the lower floor near the bedroom would have improved the arrangement. Initially the layout was negatively viewed by some of the residents, partly because it was outside their experience. A second half bath would have satisfied most residents. Mothers with toddlers preferred the standard layout, to be closer to the children; those with teenagers were happy with the separation

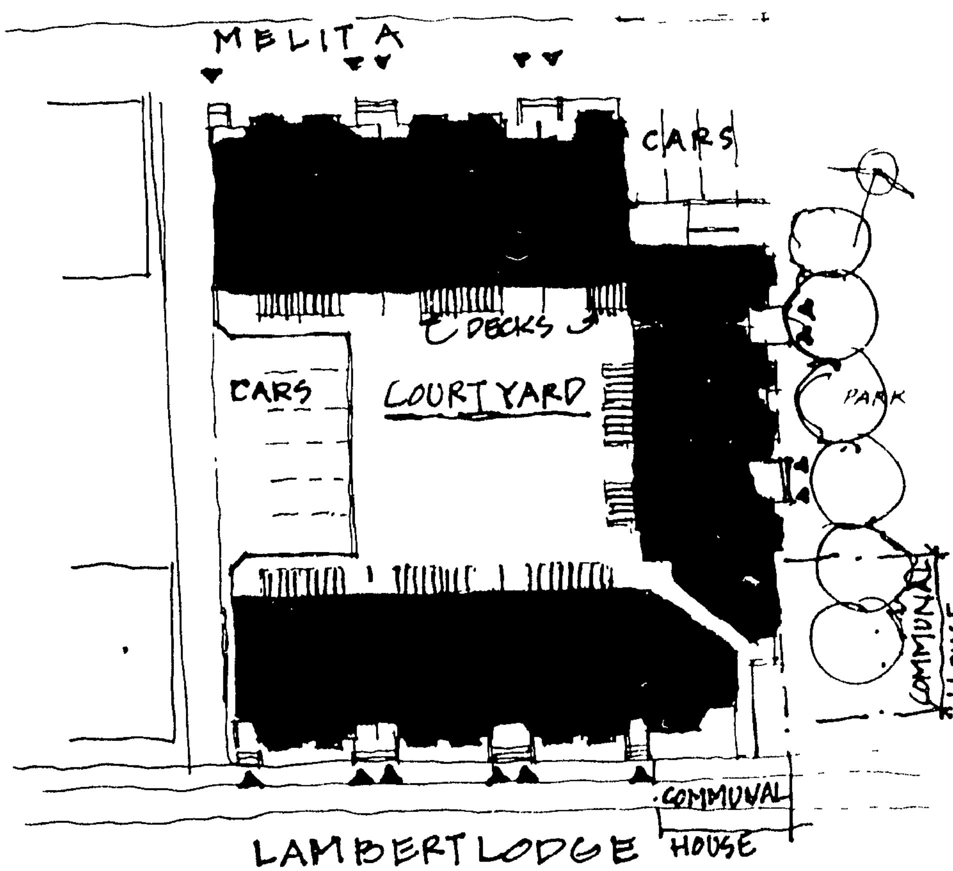

Fig. 4-17 Site Plan of Constance Hamilton Project Lambertlodge, Toronto.

Fig. 4-18 View of Constance Hamilton Communal House (in foreground) and Cooperative project on Lambertlodge Street, Toronto.

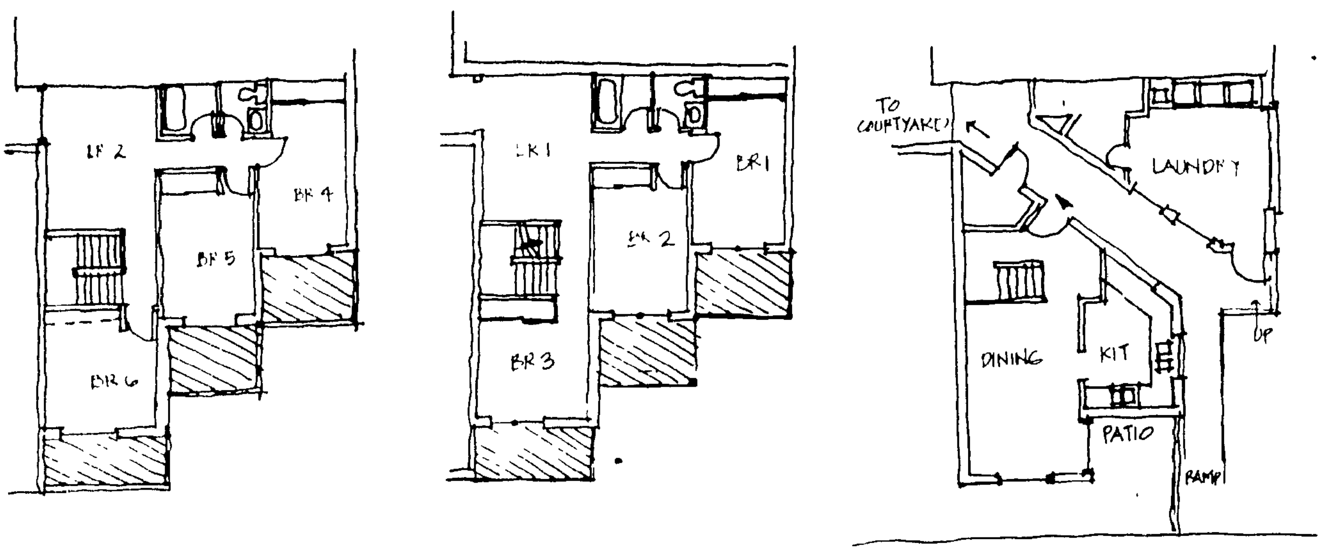

Fig. 4-19 Plan of Constance Hamilton Communal House Lambertlodge, Toronto.

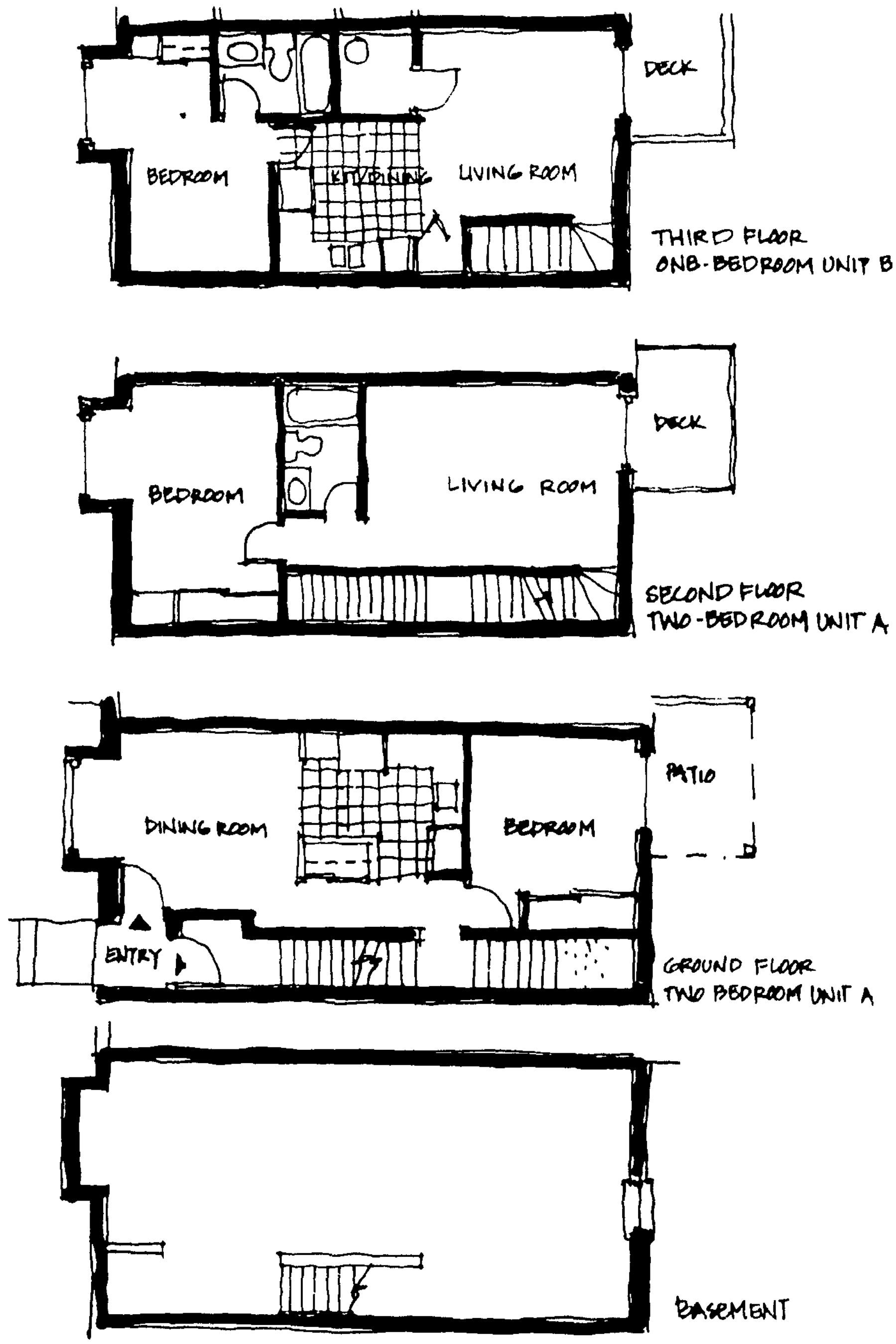

Fig. 4-20 Unit Plans of Constance Hamilton Cooperative, Lambertlodge, Toronto.

Andyhuan II is permanent housing for native women, their children and extended families. The project is still in the planning stages and is considered here because of its sensitive design to the needs of a culturally distinct group. Native peoples have an extended family tradition which is difficult to maintain in standard housing.[26] Additional bedrooms and bath and a shared play area afford the extended families sufficient space to maintain their traditional ties and dwelling patterns (Fig. 4-22). The enlarged unit sizes necessitated that the project be funded at 146% of the Minimum Unit Price (rather than 100%). This is a ratio set by the government based on the cost of construction and the housing demand in a given area.

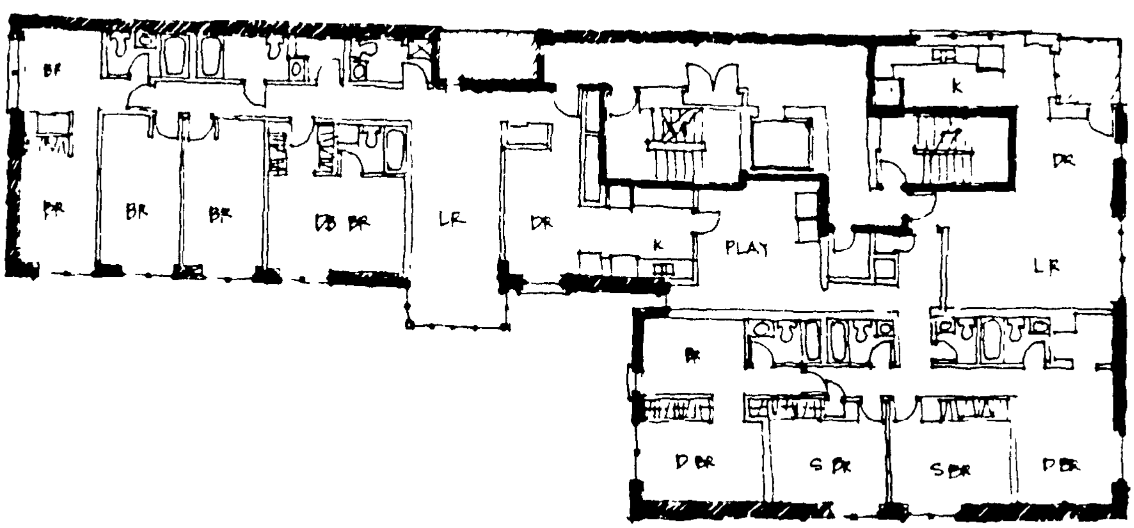

Fig. 4-21 Plan of a proposed six-story native housing project called Andyhuan II, Toronto. A total of 45 beds are organized around shared play spaces. (Formally, there are seven four bedroom units on six floors.) A daycare for 45 children is anticipated for the second floor.

26 Wekerle 1991, 31

In addition to the physical aspects, as stated earlier, the composition of the tenants and the character of the administration are critical to the success of collective housing and shared-living projects. The policy of the governing body as well as the philosophy of the current administrator effect the functioning of the community

Many of the women at Humewood Drive have survived abusive relationships, although they do not have to disclose abuse to live there (they only have to be single women in need). Under the philosophy of "facilitative management" women are given as much freedom as they can handle. They benefit from cooperating with others and developing trusting relationships in a safe domestic environment The women formulate rules concerning the operation of their unit including housekeeping duties, new roommate selection, overnight guests, and the presence of men.

Project Esperance, Jessie's and Perth Avenue Cooperative encourage the active participation of their members. Since the tenants live in individual apartments the cooperation needed for a successful project is not as great as in a shared living situation In Pape Street, the tenant control had recently been curtailed because of abuses by some of the residents. The administrator feels that a strong management style engenders the most harmonious relations among this hard-to-house population.

A final dilemma faced by many of the housing projects that have been in existence for more than five years and foreseeable in the recently occupied projects is the change, over time, in the family structure of the residents and the implication for housing policy Children grow up and acquire new interests, and women form new relationships. Many of the women-focused housing projects do not allow male residents (Men may live at Constance Hamilton Cooperative but may not be coop members; Project Esperance and the Transitional House of Constance Hamilton do not allow male overnight guests, 15 Pape Avenue allows them 14 nights a month; and the residents of Humewood Drive agree amongst themselves as to what is appropriate.)

Some projects such as the Beguinage in Toronto, with a stronger feminist orientation or that predominately house women from abusive relationships are more adamant about their policy. Constance Hamilton Cooperative (with a stable population and the original director) acknowledges that people change and the policy has evolved in recognition of this fact. Although ten years ago, many of the women had small children, these have grown up. Male children to not magically disappear at age 17. (The age at which some of the women-focused housing projects do not allow their presence.) Jessie's is permanent housing for young single parents, and although women may be single teen mothers when they move in, they do not stand still there.

Summary

The three aspects that have been considered in the physical planning of collective housing for women are 1) the transition from the public face of the projects to their interior realm. This includes the passage from a problematic exterior zone into a protected inner region; the image of the facade; the entrance; and the use of elements that communicate the collective as well as the individual character of the tenants; 2) the relationship between the communal facilities and the individual units and between the common interior and exterior space; and 3) the configuration of the private dwelling within the collective whole.

The management of the cooperative and how policies adapt to the changing needs of the residents have also been considered. The collective housing discussed here represents a wide range of approaches for an equally diverse group of residents. The level of resident involvement in the design and production as well as in the subsequent management of the projects varies. How cooperatives or woman-focused housing function depends on the attitudes of the management and the types of people who live in the dwelling.[27]

27. Roderick J. Lawrence, "Collective and Cooperative Housing," *Open House International* 2:17 (1992) 3

The translation of these diverse elements into housing that expresses a clear architectural statement is diffused by the lack of insight at the policy-making and design level. The communitarians were able to achieve a clarity in the formalisation of their ideology, firstly, because they had an abstract concept that they communally understood, secondly, they were extremely committed to this vision and thirdly, they controlled the design of the entire settlement.

5

Conclusion
Policy Implications for Ideology.

Initially, I saw collective dwellings as a means of alleviating the housing difficulties of the woman-led family. The research has shown that the issues involved in developing adequate housing for women are complex and cannot be resolved by simply developing a new typology without addressing the urban and suburban context in which the housing is situated. It is the structure of the existing cities and attached suburbs, the transportation policies, employment patterns, shopping and child care options, and the definition of 'home' that shelters many unacknowledged realities, that must be reconsidered.

The domestic issues that preoccupied feminists at the turn of the last century have yet to be resolved. Women contribute a great deal more to the maintenance of the household than men. Roles in the home need to be challenged as vigorously as the form of the house. Cooperation cannot simply be "designed" into the domestic environment. New questions need to be asked. Not only "How can this environment be improved?" but also "What is it about the nature of housework and childcare that makes them so difficult to share equally?" and "Does there always have to be the ultimate *one* responsible person?" Or, does the perennial dilemma over doing housework exist because, as some argue, the economic value of domestic labor is never acknowledged in the equation of national production and consequently there is neither pride nor status in its accomplishment? In the European models based on BIG, house work is intrinsic to community building. Can this approach be included in a national housing policy?

Housing policy today fails on several counts. the primary user is not considered in the design process; the goals are not consistently maintained and are subject to the vagaries of politics and funding, and the projects are designed with regard to the individual site rather than at the neighbourhood or community level

Feminist architects and developers from Henrietta Barnett and Charlotte Perkins Gilman of a century ago to Joan Simon and Joan Forrester Sprague today have fostered the creation of suitable housing alternatives that recognise the needs of women Waterlow Court and Constance Hamilton Coop and Communal House challenge the orthodox assumptions of what is appropriate for women in the built environment

The definition of what constitutes a family is broader in the European context The available housing options are, therefore, correspondingly more diverse. In North America, collective housing with communal living and limited private space has mostly served the needs of people marginalised in society: the homeless, drug and alcohol abusers, women escaping domestic violence, the physically and mentally challenged, and the frail elderly Canadian cooperative housing has diverged somewhat from this bottom line by reaching out to diverse groups and by providing private apartments with some supplemental meeting and social spaces. Women-focused housing has created affordable, secure, and supportive dwellings for women; cooperatives additionally have granted women control over their housing and encouraged them to acquire management and leadership skills; shared dwellings have provided affordable housing in supportive communities for those who appreciate its many positive features

Design innovations have not been seen as fundamental to the mandate of creating of quality women-focused environments This is evident in the architectural expression of the projects in the case study. Collective dwellings and communal spaces are also narrowly interpreted in North America because of the cultural primacy of personal space and privacy.

Communitarian societies of the nineteenth century purchased large tracts of land and constructed a variety of dwellings and communal facilities. Their sites were isolated and the people who joined the societies shared a common world view. They were able to formalise a clear vision either through the autocratic implementation of communal aspirations, as the Shakers did, or through the painstaking design process of discussion and implementation used by the Oneida Perfectionists. Our society lacks this corporate (in the sense of one body) vision. A comprehensive policy that would allow a true collective expression is far from an actuality. Sites and projects are developed piecemeal and control too little of the neighbourhood to adequately express an ideal.

Government policies and societal norms need to meet the needs of a diverse population in a holistic way. By not clearly recognising the demographic reality of the people they are serving and reflecting this knowledge in the implementation of a responsive strategy, governmental policies continue to reinforce the inferior position of women in society. However, as more feminist architects and urban planners become aware of and involved in the production and financing of housing, they may be able to argue for an environment that better reflect the aspirations of 50 percent of its population, and achieve a truly "engendered" society.

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