THE COMMUNITY/PRIVACY TRADE-OFF IN SUPPORTIVE HOUSING:

A Qualitative Study of Consumer Preferences[1]

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ABSTRACT

The housing component of supportive housing can take a variety of social and physical forms ranging from dispersed apartments to cooperative houses. This project addresses the research question: What housing form is more supportive for people with mental health problems: private apartments of congregate housing that combines private space with some shared spaces/ is it privacy, autonomy and "normalcy" or community, peer support and camaraderie that support well-being? The research literature is divided on this question.

This study was conducted among current and recent residents of supportive housing. Qualitative research techniques were used to encourage residents to express their views and preferences about housing environments that they consider to be supportive. The project had two parts. The first part was a series of group discussions on housing preferences among residents of one supportive housing agency. Second, in a more "hands-on" approach, participants spent a week-end designing a "dream house" for supportive housing.

Some 20 supportive housing residents were recruited to form to charrette teams, each of which actually designed a supportive housing environment based on either the principle of *privacy* or community. The two teams worked intensively over the course of a single week-end in winter 1996 to produce a schematic plan for the design of a supportive housing structure which emphasizes either the principle of privacy or community. Each team worked with an architect who served as a technical consultant, translating the team members' ideas into drawings. Each team produced a series of rough drawings representing its house plan.

Despite their different terms of reference, the two teams developed designs that were essentially similar. The results support the conclusion that both private space and common space are important elements of supportive housing.

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Supportive housing, for purposes of this research, provides independent, permanent living arrangements in which people with mental health problems can receive the required support services to enable them to live independently in the community. The housing component of supportive housing can take a variety of social and physical forms ranging from dispersed apartments to cooperative houses. This project addresses the research question: What housing form is more supportive for people with mental health problems: private apartments or congregate housing that combines private space with some shared spaces? Is it privacy, autonomy and "normalcy" or community, peer support and camaraderie that support well-being?

The study utilizes qualitative research techniques to elicit the supportive housing preferences of consumer/survivors. The project was conducted among current and recent residents of supportive housing provided by two non-profit agencies in Metropolitan Toronto. Among supportive housing agencies, these agencies are unique in offering residents a range and variety of types of housing accommodation. This is thus an optimum research environment to examine the issue of alternative models in supportive housing.

This qualitative study was informed by recent baseline quantitative and qualitative survey data collected in interviews with residents of one of the agencies. That survey included several items explicitly probing residents' relative preference for privacy or community. In addition, numerous other survey items dealt with residents' views about various aspects of their supportive housing environment. The first stage of the research was a series of group discussions with residents to consider preliminary results of that survey.

This research is situated in a context of changing views about the relative value of privacy versus peer support, although there is consistency in the research literature in the view that "the living situation and housing experience of consumers are among the most critical factors affecting their quality of life in the community, and therefore are key determinants of their ability to remain out of hospital" (Clarke Consulting Group, 1995).

Until very recently, the most "progressive" consumer-oriented research view was that privacy and "normalcy" in housing was the form of supportive housing desired by people with mental health disabilities (Carling 1993.) This was in response to an earlier movement to create therapeutic group homes on a medical model, with an assumed linear progression through progressively more independent settings (Ridgeway & Zipple, 1990). Instead, consumers were reported to prefer to live in integrated settings, rather than to live with other consumers (Ibid). For a time, the balance of published evidence on consumer preference came down on the side of privacy and "normalcy", and against any sort of congregate facilities. Carling, a leading proponent of this view summarizes this perspective: "...in the area of housing, the paradigm is shifting toward homes, not residential treatment settings; choices, not placement; normal roles,

not client roles; client control, not staff control; physical and social integration, not segregated and congregate grouping by disability (1993, 443).

Very recently, qualitative research from the U.S. has supported the importance of common space and community living (Pulice, et al., 1995: 577). In contrast to the findings of previous studies of consumer housing preferences (Rogers, et. al, 1994; Tanzman, B.H.,1993; Tanzman, et al., 1992) qualitative research by Pulice et al. (1995) found that consumers preferred not to live alone, a housing mode found to produce feelings of isolation. Analysis of views expressed in focus groups indicated "Clients expressed a need to live with others, including other consumers, in a supportive environment"(Op cit, p.577). These researchers acknowledge that these findings contradict results of previous studies which indicated a consumer preference to live independently (Ibid) .

In spite of changing trends and pendulum shifts in approaches in the community mental health field, there is no clear evidence of the most effective approach. Goering and her colleagues recently noted the lack of consensus on the most effective supportive housing approach: "After thirty years of deinstitutionalization, housing for persons with psychiatric disability remains an unresolved problem" (1992, 107).

The present study utilized a charrette[1], a qualitative research activity. Although the output of the charrette is in the form of proposed building designs, this was not intended to be used in actual construction or renovation, but rather as a heuristic device to focus participants' thoughts. This approach was intended to provide a vehicle to encourage participants to express their views and preferences about environments that they consider to be supportive. The end product is information on consumer preferences with regard to privacy and community in the built form of supportive housing.

This project offers one important perspective, that of consumer/survivors, on the ongoing debate about supportive housing models. It is anticipated that this study design, which encourages consumer groups to collaborate in developing their ideas, will make a significant contribution to this debate among researchers and service providers. Instead of simply tabulating individual preferences, as in the survey research method, the participants in this study have engaged one another in dialogue and have worked jointly to develop solutions.

Some 20 current and recent supportive housing residents were recruited to form two charrette teams, each of which designed a supportive housing environment based on either the principle of privacy or community. The two teams worked intensively over the course of a single week-end in November 1996 to produce a plan for the design of supportive housing buildings which

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[1] *Charrette* means 'cart' in French. The use of the word to denote a study to meet a very tight deadline evolved at the Ecole des Beaux Arts in Paris, where deadlines were established according to the schedule of the cart that came around to collect completed projects. In the field of architecture, charrette refers to a project performed within the framework of a tight timeframe. Canadian Urban Institute, 1991.

embody either the principle of community or privacy. Designs were produced in the form of rough drawings. Each team worked with a group process facilitator. In addition, each team was assigned an architectural consultant to provide technical assistance over the two-day period.

The teams worked from a Saturday morning through early Saturday evening and again throughout the day on Sunday to develop their respective models. A preliminary plenary session on Saturday morning provided all participants with a general introduction to the project. Late Sunday afternoon the two teams came together, along with other members of the two agency communities and invited guests from the broader community, for a presentation and critique of the two models. The end result of the session is a set of principles to guide the planning of supportive housing. The final team presentations were videotaped, with permission of charrette team members.

The charrette was held in George Brown House, in downtown Toronto -- a property of the Ontario Heritage Foundation-- a comfortable, attractive, easily accessible location which offered adequate acoustic separation for the two teams. Buffet-style meals were served to participants to maximize the time available to develop the proposed models. While the charrette is a technique more typically used by architects and planners, this approach is increasingly used by design professionals in working with community groups on issues of housing design.

Despite their different terms of reference, the two teams developed designs that were essentially similar. Both incorporated a mix of private and community space. These results support the conclusion that both private space and common space are important elements of supportive housing.

The results of this project have implications both for service delivery and supportive housing design. By documenting the preferences of the population who actually use the service, this project illustrates the important value expressed by Grayson that "designers, developers and manufacturers need to provide what people really want, and not just what they perceive that people want" (1991, 121). With regard to planning, these research results should be of interest to planners of community-based mental health services, as well as to consumer/survivors' advocacy groups. The results should also be of interest to those designing supportive housing environments. The design guidelines have direct application for the renovation of existing facilities for use as supportive housing, or for building or acquisition of properties for this purpose.

La vie communautaire et le sentiment d'intimité dans les logements en milieu de soutien : Étude qualitative portant sur les préférences des consommateurs

Résumé

Pour les besoins de la présente recherche, les logements en milieu de soutien offrent un mode de vie autonome, permanent, permettant aux personnes ayant une déficience mentale de recevoir les services de soutien requis pour mener une vie indépendante au sein de la communauté. La composante habitation des logements en milieu de soutien peut prendre une foule d'aspects sociaux et matériels, allant d'appartements disséminés aux maisons de coopérative. La présente recherche vise à répondre à la question suivante : Quelle forme d'habitation assure le meilleur soutien aux personnes ayant des déficiences mentales : les immeubles d'appartements privés ou les ensembles de logements collectifs alliant aires privées et aires partagées? L'intimité, l'autonomie et la «normalité» ou la vie communautaire, le soutien des pairs et le sentiment de camaraderie préservent-ils la sensation de bien-être?

L'étude exploite des techniques de recherche qualitatives pour soutirer aux consommateurs ou aux survivants leurs préférences en matière de logement en milieu de soutien. La recherche a été menée auprès de personnes habitant à l'heure actuelle ou ayant habité récemment des logements en milieu de soutien offerts par deux organismes sans but lucratif de la région métropolitaine de Toronto. Parmi ceux qui offrent des logements en milieu de soutien, ces organismes affichent la particularité d'offrir aux occupants toute une panoplie et une foule de types d'hébergement. Il s'agit donc d'un environnement de recherche optimal pour étudier la question de modèles de rechange en matière de logements en milieu de soutien.

Cette étude qualitative a été alimentée par de récentes données provenant d'enquêtes quantitatives et qualitatives de base recueillies lors d'entretiens avec des occupants de logements de l'un des organismes. Cette enquête comportait plusieurs aspects sondant de façon explicite la préférence des occupants à l'égard de l'intimité ou de la vie communautaire. De plus, de nombreux autres éléments de l'enquête portaient sur les différents aspects du logement en milieu de soutien. La première étape de la recherche consistait en une série de discussions de groupe auxquels participaient des résidents en vue d'étudier les premiers résultats de cette enquête.

La présente recherche se situe dans un contexte de perceptions changeantes quant à la valeur de l'intimité par opposition au soutien des pairs, quoique la documentation fasse systématiquement état du point de vue voulant que «le mode de vie et le logement des consommateurs comptent parmi les facteurs influant le plus sur la qualité de vie au sein de la communauté et constituent par conséquent les éléments déterminants pour ne pas séjourner dans les hôpitaux» (Clarke Consulting Group, 1995).

Jusqu'à tout récemment, le point de vue le plus «progressif» de la recherche axée sur le consommateur établissait que l'intimité et la «normalité» du logement constituaient la forme de logement en milieu de soutien que souhaitaient les personnes ayant une déficience mentale (Carling, 1993). Cette réaction faisait suite à un mouvement précédent qui tendait à créer des maisons de groupe thérapeutiques inspirées d'un modèle médical, présumant d'une progression linéaire vers des milieux de plus en plus indépendants (Ridgeway et Zipple, 1990). Les

consommateurs ont signalé préférer vivre en milieu intégré plutôt que d'habiter avec d'autres consommateurs (ibid). Pendant un certain temps, le reste des renseignements parus traitant des préférences des consommateurs se sont rangés du côté de l'intimité et de la «normalité», et contre toute sorte d'installations collectives. Carling, ardent défenseur de ce point de vue, résume cette perspective : «... dans le domaine du logement, le paradigme s'entend de maisons, non de centres de traitement en milieu résidentiel; de choix, non de placement en établissement; de rôles normaux, non de rôles des clients; de contrôle de la clientèle, non de contrôle du personnel; d'intégration physique et sociale, non de formation de groupes séparés ou réunis selon l'handicap (1993, 443).

Très récemment, la recherche qualitative provenant des États-Unis a corroboré l'importance de compter sur des aires communes et la vie communautaire (Pulice, et autres, 1995 : 577). Par contraste avec les résultats d'études précédentes relatives aux préférences des consommateurs en matière de logement (Rogers, et autres, 1994; Tanzman, B.H., 1993; Tanzman, et autres, 1992), la recherche qualitative effectuée par Pulice et autres (1995) a permis de découvrir que les consommateurs préféraient ne pas vivre seuls, puisque ce mode de vie tendait à amener un sentiment d'isolement. L'analyse des points de vue exprimés dans des groupes de discussion indique que «les clients expriment le besoin de vivre avec d'autres, y compris d'autres consommateurs, dans un milieu de soutien» (op. cit., p. 577). Ces recherchistes reconnaissent que ces conclusions contredisent les résultats d'études précédentes qui marquaient plutôt la préférence des consommateurs à mener une vie indépendante (ibid).

Malgré l'évolution des tendances et les changements de mouvement du pendule dans les démarches touchant le domaine de la santé mentale communautaire, il n'existe aucune preuve manifeste de la démarche la plus efficace. Goering et ses collègues ont récemment remarqué le manque de consensus quant à la démarche de logement en milieu de soutien la plus efficace :«Après trente ans d'abandon du recours au placement en établissement, le logement des personnes ayant des troubles psychiatriques demeure un problème non résolu» (1992, 107).

La présente étude a exploité la technique de la charrette[1], activité de recherche qualitative. Quoique le résultat de la charrette prenne la forme de modèles de bâtiment proposés, il n'était pas question de s'en servir dans des travaux réels de construction ou de rénovation, mais plutôt comme dispositif heuristique de manière à faire converger les pensées des participants. Cette démarche était destinée à fournir un véhicule pour inciter les participants à exprimer leurs points de vue et leurs préférences à propos des environnements qui, selon eux, offrent du soutien. Le produit final se traduit par de l'information sur les préférences des consommateurs en ce qui concerne l'intimité et la communauté des logements bâtis en milieu de soutien.

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[1] L'emploi du mot charrette qui désigne une période d'étude ou de travail intensif permettant de mener à bien un projet particulièrement urgent nous vient de l'École des Beaux-Arts de Paris, où les échéances étaient fixées en fonction du calendrier de la charrette qui transportait les travaux achevés. Dans le domaine de l'architecture, charrette désigne un projet réalisé dans le cadre d'un délai serré. L'Institut urbain du Canada, 1991.

Cette recherche présente une importante perspective, celle des consommateurs ou survivants, qui porte sur le débat continu entourant les modèles de logement en milieu de soutien. Il est prévu que ce modèle d'étude, qui encourage les groupes de consommateurs à collaborer en développant leurs idées, apportera une contribution importante à ce débat entre les recherchistes et les prestataires de services. Plutôt que de simplement classifier les préférences individuelles, comme dans la méthode d'enquête, les participants à l'étude se sont engagés l'un l'autre dans la voie du dialogue et ont travaillé main dans la main pour trouver des solutions.

Quelque 20 occupants actuels et récents de logements en milieu de soutien ont été recrutés pour former deux équipes de charrette, chacune ayant conçu un environnement propre aux logements en milieu de soutien, fondé sur le principe de l'intimité et de la communauté. Les deux équipes ont travaillé intensivement au cours d'un week-end en novembre 1996 pour dresser un plan pour la conception de bâtiments regroupant des logements en milieu de soutien qui intègrent le principe de la communauté ou de l'intimité. Les modèles ont été produits sous forme d'esquisses. Chaque équipe a travaillé avec un animateur de groupe. De plus, chacune a pu compter sur les services d'un consultant en architecture pour obtenir de l'aide technique au cours des deux jours.

Les équipes ont travaillé du samedi matin jusque tôt samedi soir et encore toute la journée le dimanche en vue de mettre au point leur modèle. Une première séance plénière tenue le samedi matin a permis à tous les participants d'avoir un aperçu général du projet. Vers la fin du dimanche après-midi, les deux équipes se sont réunies avec d'autres membres des deux organismes et ont lancé des invitations à la communauté en général en vue de présenter et de «tester» leurs modèles. Le résultat final de la séance a été une série de principes destinés à guider la planification de logements en milieu de soutien. Les exposés finals des équipes ont été enregistrés sur cassettes vidéo, avec la permission des membres des équipes de charrette.

La charrette a eu lieu à la George Brown House, propriété de l'Ontario Heritage Foundation, située au centre-ville de Toronto; c'est une maison confortable, attrayante, facilement accessible, qui offrait une séparation acoustique adéquate pour les deux équipes. Des repas genre buffet ont été servis aux participants dans le but de maximaliser le temps disponible pour élaborer les modèles proposés. Bien que la charrette soit une technique plus généralement utilisée par les architectes et les urbanistes, cette démarche est de plus en plus exploitée par les spécialistes du design qui travaillent avec les groupes communautaires dans les dossiers de la conception d'habitations.

Malgré leurs mandats différents, les deux équipes ont mis au point des modèles essentiellement semblables. Les deux dosaient aires privées et aires communautaires. Ces résultats corroborent la conclusion selon laquelle les aires privées et les aires communes constituent des éléments importants du logement en milieu de soutien.

Les résultats de cette recherche exercent des répercussions tant sur la prestation de services que sur la conception de logements en milieu de soutien. En décrivant les préférences de la population qui a réellement recours au service, cette recherche illustre l'importante valeur exprimée par Grayson selon laquelle les «concepteurs, les promoteurs et les fabricants ont besoin d'offrir aux gens ce qu'ils veulent réellement, non seulement ce qu'ils pensent que les gens veulent» (1991, 121). Quant à la planification, ces résultats de la recherche devraient intéresser les planificateurs de services de santé mentale communautaire, de même que les groupes défenseurs des consommateurs ou des

survivants. Les résultats devraient également intéresser les personnes concevant un environnement propice aux logements en milieu de soutien. Le champ d'application des directives conceptuelles touche directement la transformation d'installations aménagées en logements en milieu de soutien, ou la construction ou l'acquisition de propriétés à cette fin.

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A Qualitative Study of Consumer Preferences

INTRODUCTION

The exercise of designing a dream house gets one thinking about priorities, values, and the things that really matter in a living environment. Without the immediate constraints of budgets, zoning regulations or site characteristics, one can consider the essential meaning of house and home. This project enlisted the efforts of twenty current and recent residents of supportive housing to spend a week-end on just such a design exercise. Assisted by architects with long experience in working with community groups, the participants used their own experience and insights to design a dream house for supportive housing. The resulting principles will be useful to researchers, policy makers, and most importantly, to those concerned with developing supportive housing environments.

BACKGROUND

The present research emanates from the contexts of self-determination and democratic participation by psychiatric consumer/survivors, and re-allocation of scarce public resources toward prevention, health promotion, and community supports (Everett & Steven, 1989; Nelson & Walsh-Bowers, 1994). There is currently a debate in the research literature on the kind of housing environment preferred by residents of supportive housing. Views are changing with regard to the relative value of privacy versus peer support, although there is consistency in the research literature in the view that "the living situation and housing experience of consumers are among the most critical factors affecting their quality of life in the community, and therefore are key determinants of their ability to remain out of hospital" (Clarke Consulting Group, 1995).

Until very recently, the most "progressive" consumer-oriented research view was that privacy and "normalcy" in housing for was the form of supportive housing desired by people with mental health disabilities (Carling 1993.) This was in response to an earlier movement to create

therapeutic group homes on a medical model, with an assumed linear progression through progressively more independent settings (Ridgeway & Zipple, 1990). Instead, consumers were reported to prefer to live in integrated settings, rather than to live with other consumers (Ibid). For a time, the balance of published evidence on consumer preference came down on the side of privacy and "normalcy", and against any sort of congregate facilities. Carling, a leading proponent of this view summarizes this perspective:

> "...in the area of housing, the paradigm is shifting toward homes, not residential treatment settings; choices, not placement; normal roles, not client roles; client control, not staff control; physical and social integration, not segregated and congregate grouping by disability..."(1993, 443).

Writing in 1995, Carling makes an even stronger case for integration, observing that consumer groups tend to prefer this housing option:

> "...people with psychiatric disabilities have struggled to gain access to decent integrated housing, rather than housing created specifically for mental health clients (e.g., group homes). As consumer groups organize housing services, they tend to focus on integrated settings, and on the option that most consumers seem to prefer: regular apartments in the community." (Carling, 1995, 95).

Very recently, qualitative research from the U.S. has supported the importance of common space and community living (Pulice, et al., 1995: 577). In contrast to the findings of previous studies of consumer housing preferences (Rogers, et. al, 1994; Tanzman, B.H., 1993; Tanzman, et al.,1992) qualitative research by Pulice et al. (1995) found that consumers preferred not to live alone, a housing mode found to produce feelings of isolation. Analysis of views expressed in focus groups indicated "Clients expressed a need to live with others, including other consumers, in a supportive environment "(Op. cit., p. 577). These researchers acknowledge that these findings contradict results of previous studies, which indicated a consumer preference to live independently (Ibid).

In spite of changing trends and pendulum shifts in approaches in the community mental health field, there is no clear evidence of the most effective approach. Goering and her colleagues recently noted the lack of consensus on the most effective supportive housing approach: "After thirty years of deinstitutionalization, housing for persons with psychiatric disability remains an unresolved problem" (1992, 107).

The present research enlisted current and recent residents of supportive housing to express and explore their housing preferences. This report is in two parts. The first reports on a series of group discussions on housing preferences with residents from a number of housing programs sponsored by one supportive housing agency. Results of a survey of residents' housing preferences formed the basis for the discussions. Second, in a more "hands-on" approach, participants spent a week-end designing a "dream house" for supportive housing. Participants in this charrette were current and recent residents of supportive housing programs sponsored by two agencies. Taken together, these two qualitative approaches provide new information on the design of supportive housing design from the critical perspective of consumers of the service.

I. CONSULTATIONS WITH RESIDENTS

METHOD

A series of consultations was held with current supportive housing residents around the issues of privacy and community[1]. Meetings were convened in individual supportive housing residences to review and discuss preliminary results of a survey of residents' housing preferences and attitudes. These consultative meetings were convened by the Principal Investigator in

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[1]The consultations were held in programs sponsored by Madison Avenue Housing and Support Services, a non-profit community agency providing supportive housing services in Metropolitan Toronto. Those participating in the consultations included Madison residents/tenants as well as some other supportive housing residents. The views expressed in this document are exclusively those of the author and do not reflect those of the agency co-sponsor, Madison Avenue Housing and Support Services, or the major project funder, Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation.

conjunction with a resident who had participated in the design and administration of the survey. The invitation to participate in the consultation was extended to all current residents, regardless of whether they had participated in the survey.

Residents were invited to participate in a house meeting to discuss housing preferences and to provide feed-back on preliminary survey results. The meetings were convened in the common rooms of five supportive housing residences. Discussions were structured around, but not limited to, preliminary data on housing attitudes from a 1996 survey on residents' housing preferences. Residents' opinion, comment, critique was sought on five areas: supportive housing residence as "real home"; relative preference for apartments or houses; role of housing design in promoting peer support; and relative importance of staff and peer support.

RESULTS

What makes a real home?

Residents discussed feelings about whether they considered their current accommodation to be "real home". The survey results suggested respondents were more likely to define their supportive housing residence as a real home than just a place to live. On a 7-point bipolar scale, 44% of survey respondents had chosen 6 or 7, with 7 being the end point on the continuum indicating "my real home"; while only 14% chose 1 or 2, with 1 being "just a place I live".

In discussing this issue, residents identified a variety of factors that contribute to whether a residence feels like a real home. In this context, the alternative to 'hominess' is the feeling of living in an institution. Residents felt that a key factor in making their residence feel like a home is having a sense of control over the living environment. For some that means that agency staff do not rearrange furniture or reorganize spices in a kitchen cabinet. For others it may mean not having a staff office on site, and staff continually present. Others stressed the importance of

participating in selection decisions about prospective housemates. It feels more like home if residents have a say in such decisions.

The survey revealed that type of housing -- house or apartment -- influences residents' feelings about how much their residence feels like a home. Two-thirds of the apartment dwellers describe their supportive housing accommodation as homelike; one-third feel it is just a place to live. Among those living in houses, the great majority (90%) feel their residence to be homelike, while only a small minority (10%) consider it just a place to live.

Preferences for living alone or with others

Survey results indicated that just over one-third (36%) of respondents expressed a preference for living alone; almost two-thirds (64%) preferred to live with others. Most of those preferring to live alone resided in apartments. In discussion around these results, residents expressed the view that informal support from housemates is an important part of supportive housing. Independence and privacy were judged less important than such support in times of illness and need. Living alone was associated with loneliness: "If you live alone, your best friend is a TV or a stereo"

Some residents felt that their need for the support of housemates was temporary -- in one view, "a stepping stone" toward independence -- but others stressed the security in defining their present supportive housing as permanent rather than temporary accommodation.

Another common theme in the discussions was the security of living with others. Privacy tended to be associated with risk, while having housemates was viewed as safer.

Common space

Discussions supported the importance of having a mixture of private and common spaces within supportive housing environments. Apartment residents were more likely to report a need for

additional common space; residents of all types of housing indicated that common space promoted social interaction. One discussion pointed to the need to have common spaces in a range of sizes. A music room where small groups of two or three could listen to music without disturbing others was suggested.

II. THE DESIGN CHARRETTE[2]

Method

In November 1996, supportive housing residents were invited to spend two week-end days in a charrette or design workshop to design an ideal supportive housing environment. Participants were recruited from among current and recent residents of supportive housing programs operated by two agencies in Metropolitan Toronto: Madison Avenue Housing and Support Services and Houselink Community Homes. Participants were recruited through presentations on the charrette made by the principal investigator and a Madison resident and board member. The charrette was publicized in this way to Madison residents at their regular house meetings; Houselink residents heard the presentation at the beginning of one of their agency's general membership meetings. The presentations addressed the issues of privacy and community and introduced the charrette technique, including the plan to divide the group into two teams. Details of the workshop schedule and expectations of participants were also discussed. Potential participants were informed that the charrette would conclude with a public session where the two teams would present their designs to an invited audience for review and discussion. The presentations also indicated the intention to videotape the public presentation session.

As a contribution to this project, Madison's Board of Directors authorized payment of an honorarium of $50 to each resident from either of the two sponsoring agencies who participated in the charrette.

Approximately one-third of volunteers specified a preference for each of the privacy and community themes; the remaining third indicated a willingness to work on either theme. Two

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[2] *Charrette* is the French word for 'cart'. The use of the word to denote a project to meet a very tight deadline evolved at the Ecole des Beaux Arts in Paris, where deadlines were established according to the schedule of a cart that came around to collect completed projects. In the fields of architecture and planning, *charrette* refers to a project performed within the framework of a tight timeframe.

teams were formed with approximately equal representation from the two agencies, and from males and females. Each team had the resources of an architectural consultant and a facilitator. Architect Paula Bowley worked with the privacy team. That team's facilitator was a Madison volunteer board member. Architect John Mummé worked with the community team; a Madison program manager served as the team's facilitator.

The charrette was held at the George Brown House, a conference facility located in downtown Toronto and operated by the Ontario Heritage Foundation. The facility is attractive and well equipped, and offered a convenient and comfortable location for the week-end's work. Catered meals were provided to maximize time participants could devote to the planning and design exercise.

Introduction and Terms of Reference

The first day began in plenary session with a welcome and review of the goals of the charrette[3]. The basic program for the project was established: a supportive housing unit to accommodate about 10 occupants. The project was to be located in an urban area, and might have the form of either a large house or small apartment building. A series of slides was presented to illustrate some generic building forms of appropriate scale. Participants were given name tags indicating their team assignment, and then broke out into those teams.

Following introductions, each team began with discussion of aspects of their current housing environment that participants felt were successful or unsuccessful. This served both as a "warm-up" introductory session, and an opportunity to begin to develop objectives for their design project. This was followed by development of a program of building design principles for each team.

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[3]A copy of the program and schedule appears in Appendix A to this report.

THE PRIVACY TEAM

The privacy team developed a set of essential principles for its design. Some are physical criteria, others relate to social dimensions. Resident participation in policies around their housing was considered particularly important. It was felt that residents should have a role in establishing policies around pets, visitors, and other day-to-day issues affecting their living environment.

Participants acknowledged that the concepts of 'privacy' and 'community' are polarized but inseparable. The privacy team judged both to be key elements of a good supportive housing environment.

Privacy team members stressed the importance of peer support, and the resulting need to include common space in their design.

The team agreed on the following set of principles to guide their housing design:

- Choice of who we live with
- Adequate space
- Acoustic separation - soundproofing
- Lots of natural lighting (even in washrooms)
- Good ventilation
- Good, secure storage space
- Security and safety of building and its perimeters
- Resident involvement in design, planning and policies of housing environment
- Affordability
- Accessibility
- Adequate setback from the street to ensure privacy and security

- Good landscaping
- Building image compatible with surrounding building styles: it "fits in".
- Sufficient parking for bicycles and cars for residents and their guests.
- Backyard area which is enclosed and safe.

The Building Design

The group designed a three storey building with a basement, a generous sized fenced yard, and balconies. The building offers individual units in a range of sizes, including:

1 four-bedroom family apartment
2 bachelor apartments
1 four-bedroom shared apartment
1 two-bedroom apartment
3 one-bedroom apartments
1 three-bedroom apartment

This building plan includes a number of features designed to maximize privacy for residents. These include: soundproof walls and floors throughout the building; placement of balconies to ensure privacy; and equipping each room in the shared, four-bedroom apartment with its own refrigerator, television and telephone. Office space is provided for meetings with staff, as required, The team emphasized the importance of having the building be accessible throughout -- and not just restricting accessibility to one zone, one floor. The team stressed the importance of flexibility throughout, in order to accommodate changing needs of residents.

Security was an important concern of this group. For reasons of security their design incorporated two entrances for the ground floor living units: private entrances from the outside, as well as interior entrances to these units.

In the privacy team's public presentation of its design, the audience commented on the relatively high proportion of common space included in a design allegedly built around the principle of privacy. The following rationale was offered for this design decision:

> "We very quickly realized that without common space, private space can very often become a place where one gets trapped in isolation. That's why we built in a fair amount of common space, so that privacy remains privacy by *choice*, not by *trap*."

The privacy team was also asked about their reason for including only two bachelor apartments in their privacy-based design. Their response indicated two reasons for the design decision to limit the number of bachelor units. First, they indicated that they realized the benefit which residents receive from peer support, and therefore wanted to minimize the number of units that offer the most chance of social isolation. Second, they noted that a bedroom needs to be private, and a bachelor apartment does not offer such privacy.

Floor plans illustrating each floor of the privacy team's building appear in Figures 1-3. Figure 1, the ground floor plan, also includes details of the team's landscape plan, which features enclosed yard and play areas in a back garden.

THE COMMUNITY TEAM

The community team stressed the importance of having common spaces of various sizes, to accommodate smaller and larger groups. Flexible, multi-use space was considered essential. Their design located large, common space on the ground floor, near the entrance, to encourage informal social interaction among residents and promote a sense of community. All common space is located on the ground floor or basement level. Living areas are on the second and third floors. In addition to supporting a sense of community among residents of the house, the team pointed out that community contacts may also include individuals or groups from the broader

community.

A multi-function basement work room could support a variety of work-related or recreational functions of residents. This workspace could be a site for small-scale, community economic development activities. Catering, office and computer-based work, and carpentry were cited as possible activities that might be based in this workspace.

The community team gave consideration to the social potential of functional work spaces throughout their home. It was felt that appropriately designed and furnished kitchens and laundry rooms can serve as meeting places and opportunities to socialize. Their design thus features shared kitchens of various sizes. On the ground floor is a large community kitchen which can be used by large groups. Smaller groups can cook together in kitchens located on the upper floors. All kitchens have enough space for work and seating. Comfortable seating was also considered an important component of a laundry facility. Neighbours can meet and converse while sorting, waiting for, or folding their laundry.

This team also acknowledged that some spaces/facilities can serve as a magnet to draw residents who may feel like socializing. Indoors, on the ground floor, in addition to the large kitchen, a fireplace and pool table can serve that function. Outdoors, in warm weather, a fountain and picnic table can be spaces to socialize.

The team designed a privacy room which residents might use for meetings with support staff. When not used for such meetings, that area could serve as a guest room, when required. The full set of community rooms and spaces proposed by the community team are as follows:

- Kitchens - large and small
  Lounge - large and small

- Laundry room with seating
- Workroom
- Privacy room (usable as a guest room)
- Washrooms - full and partial
- Storage space, including longer-term storage
- Patio/terrace/greenhouse
- Car and bicycle parking
- Garden/children's play area

This team also emphasized the importance of having all floors be accessible, and designed elevator access.

Figures 4 - 8 illustrate the various floors of the building designed by the community team. Figure 8 is their landscape plan showing the possible porch, front and rear fencing, green space with picnic table and barbecue, a fountain, an optional children's play area, and parking for bicycles and up to three cars.

DISCUSSION

Despite the fact of working separately over the course of two days, the two teams came up with essentially similar supportive housing designs. Both designs included a mix of private and community spaces. Both designs emphasized the importance of accessibility throughout their building, not simply in designated units. Safety and security were concerns expressed by both teams, and both designs attempted to deal with these issues in the interior and exterior spaces.

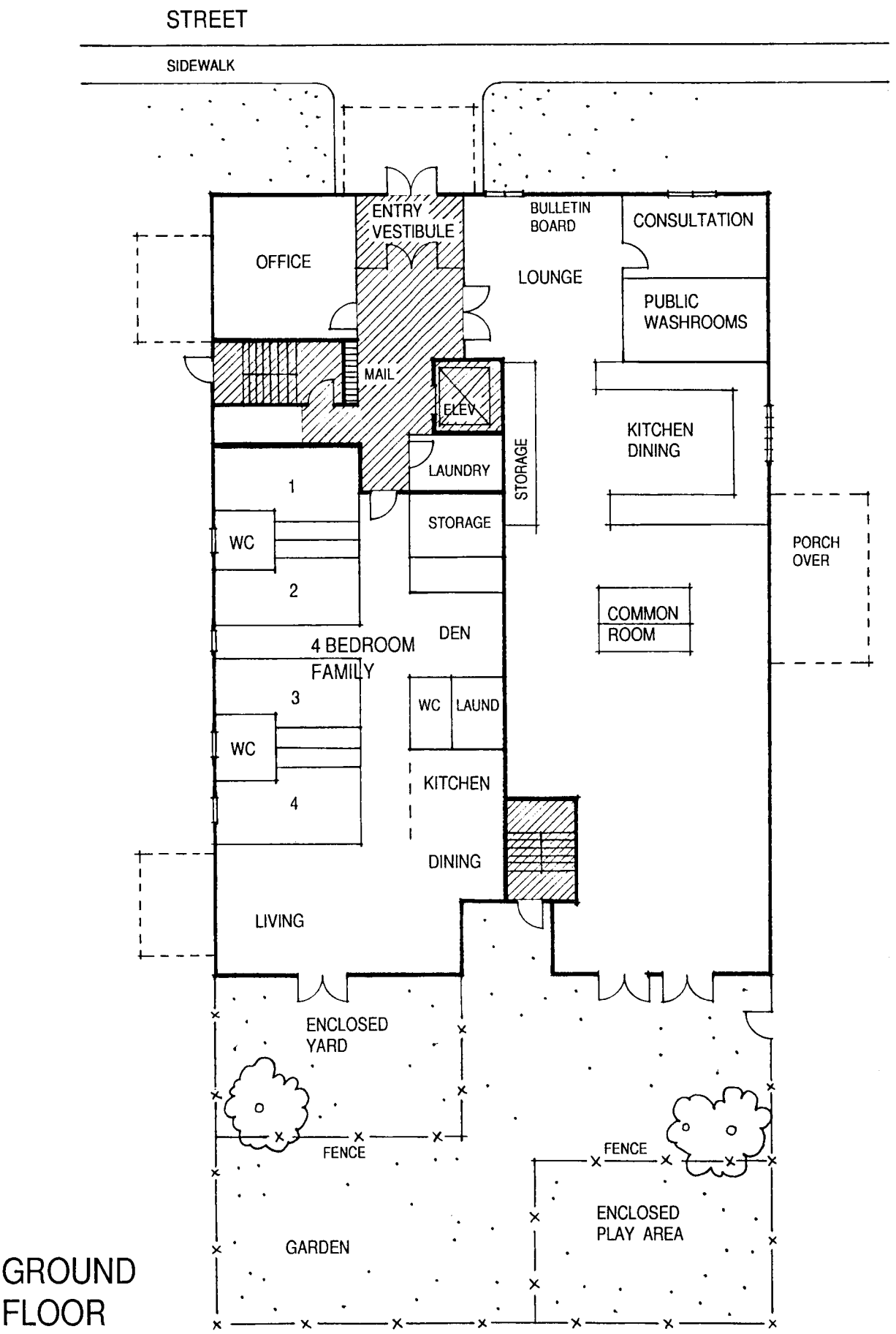
Both design teams stressed the importance of offering a diverse range of units of various sizes, ranging from small, private apartments to larger units to be shared. Both wanted to be able to

accommodate children, either as part of resident groups or as guests of residents.

The idea of flexibility of space was considered important by both teams in order to accommodate changing needs of residents. Movable walls, Murphy beds and other flexible furnishings reinforced this principle in both teams' designs.

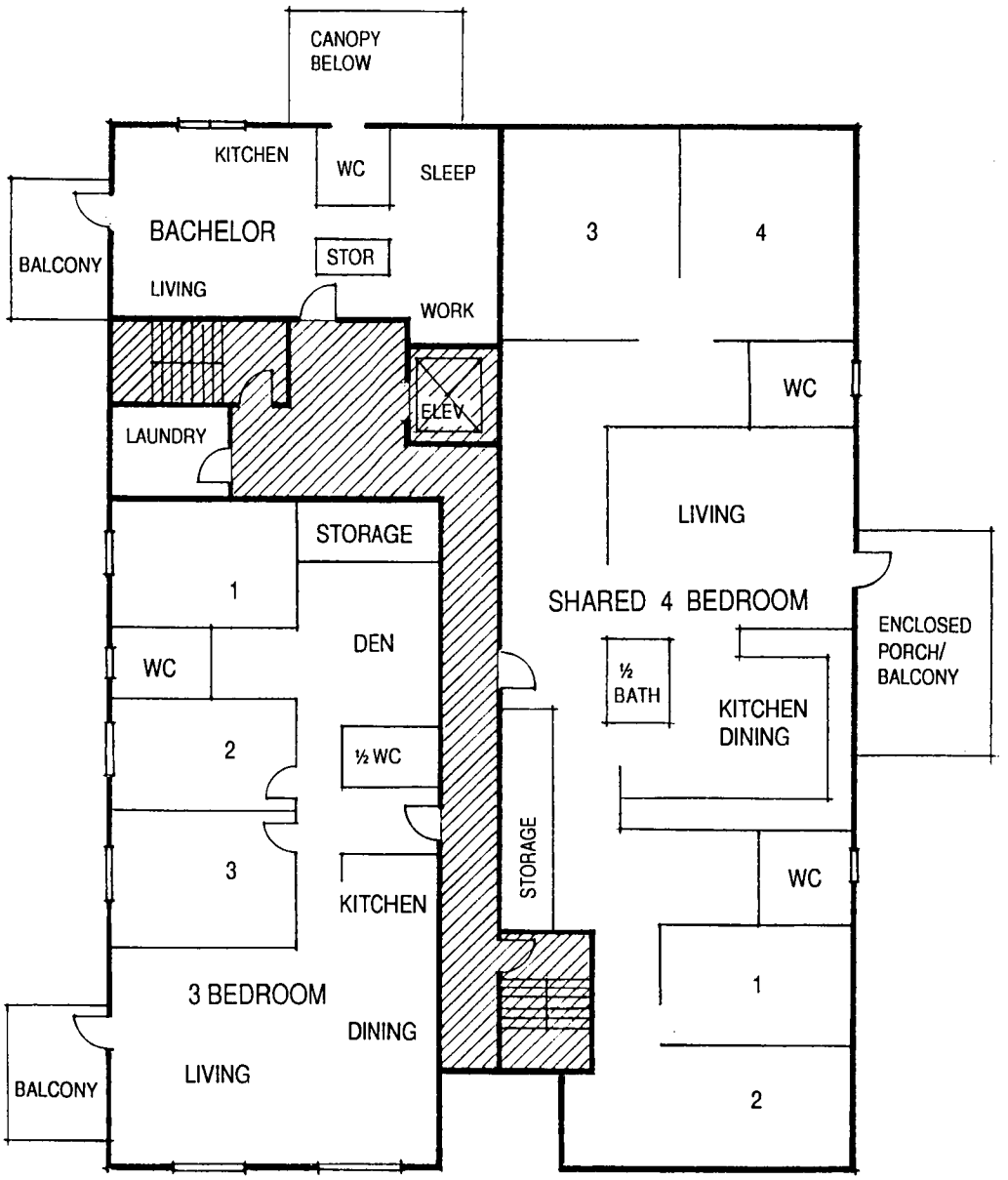
There were also differences in the design solutions developed by the two teams. The community team emphasized the importance of incorporating social spaces into work areas, such as laundry rooms and kitchens. They also suggested having common spaces of various sizes, to accommodate smaller and larger groupings. The design developed by the privacy team featured private entrances to ground floor units, which all had a second entrance from inside the building.

Figure 1



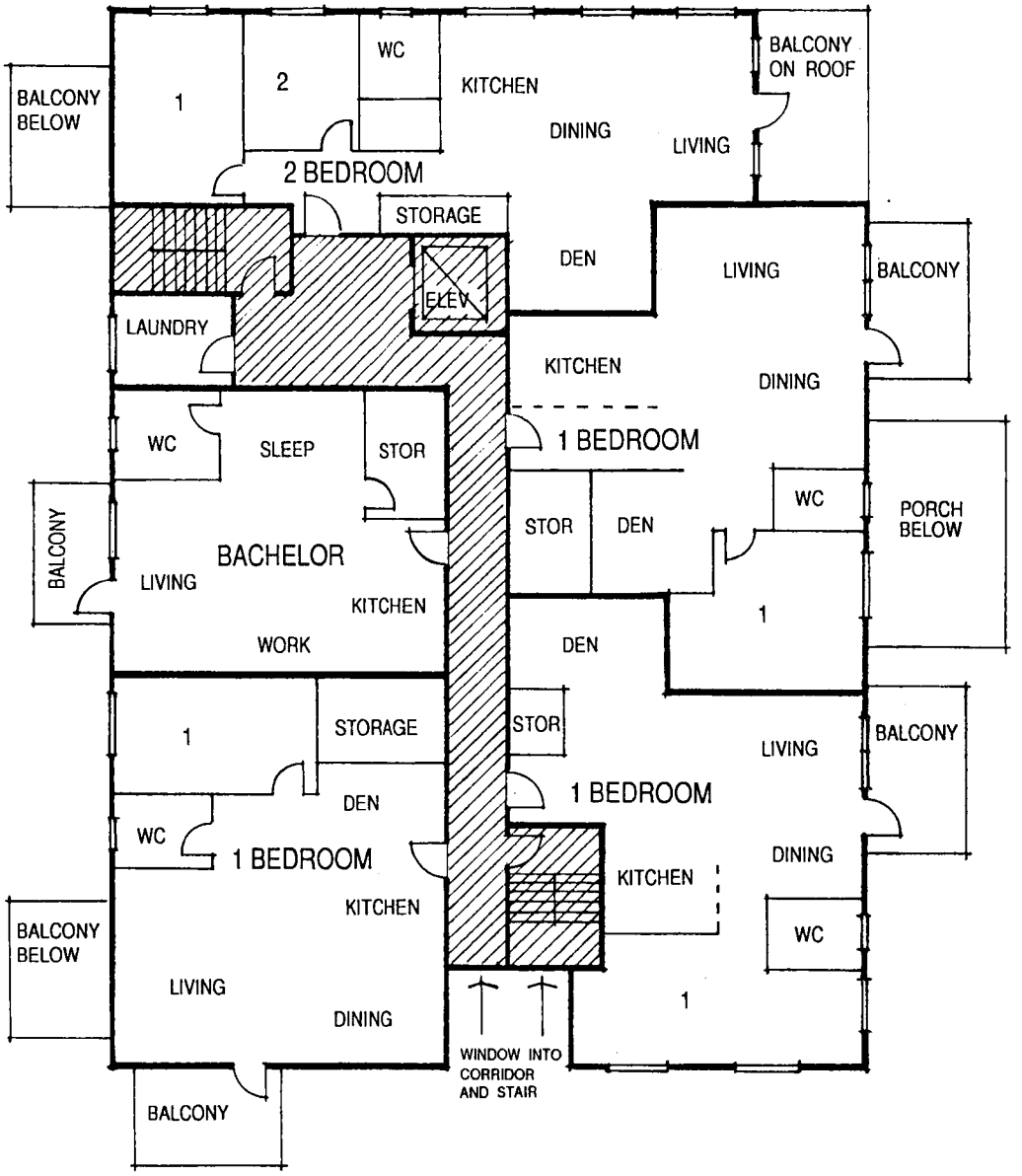
GROUND FLOOR

Figure 2



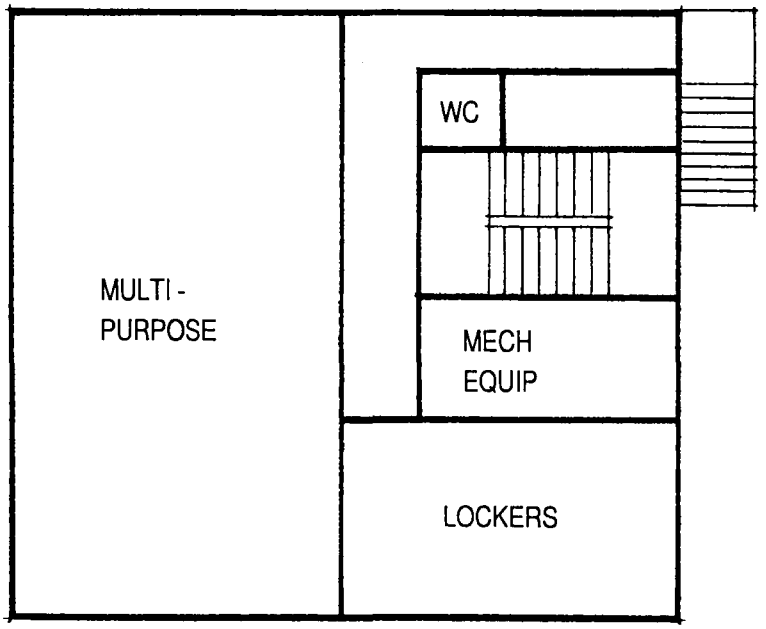
2ND
FLOOR

Figure 3



TOP
FLOOR

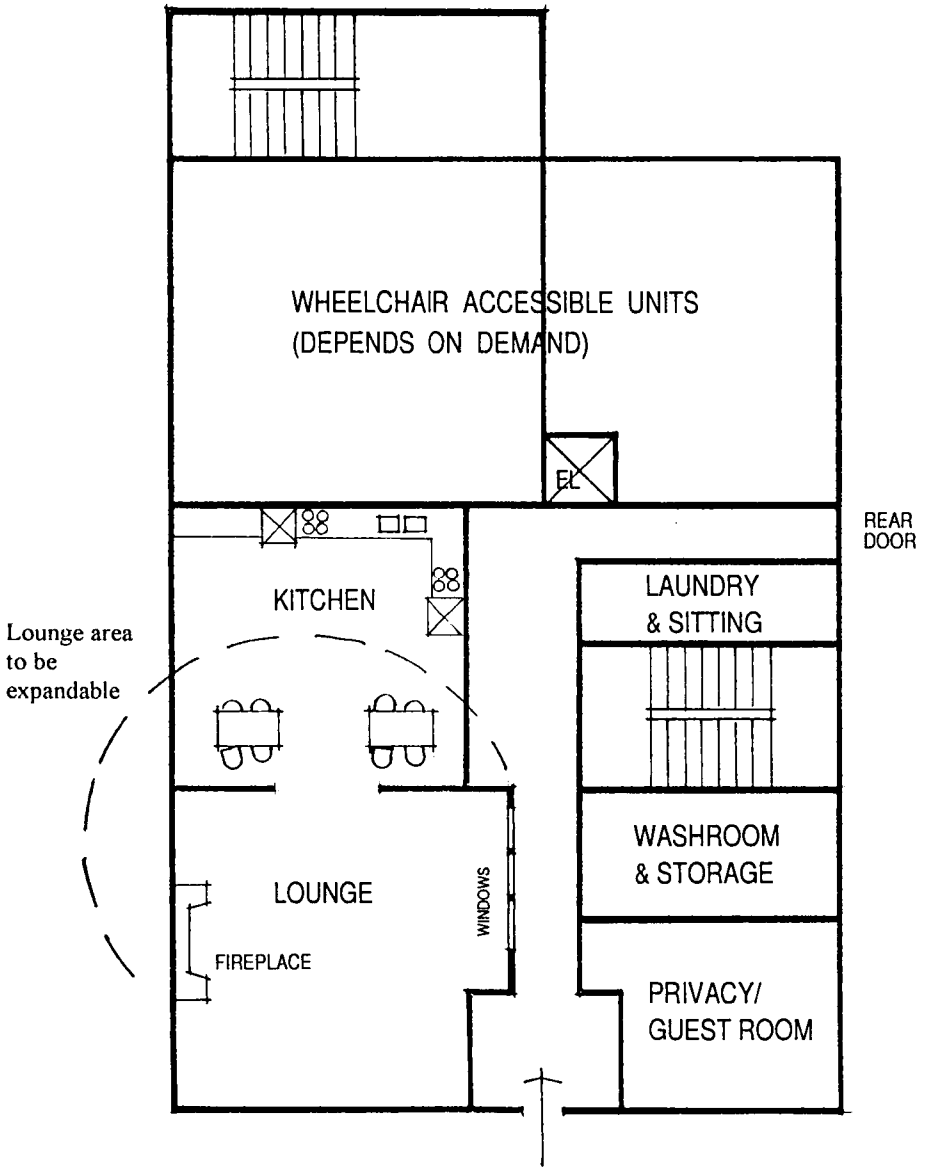
Figure 4



BASEMENT

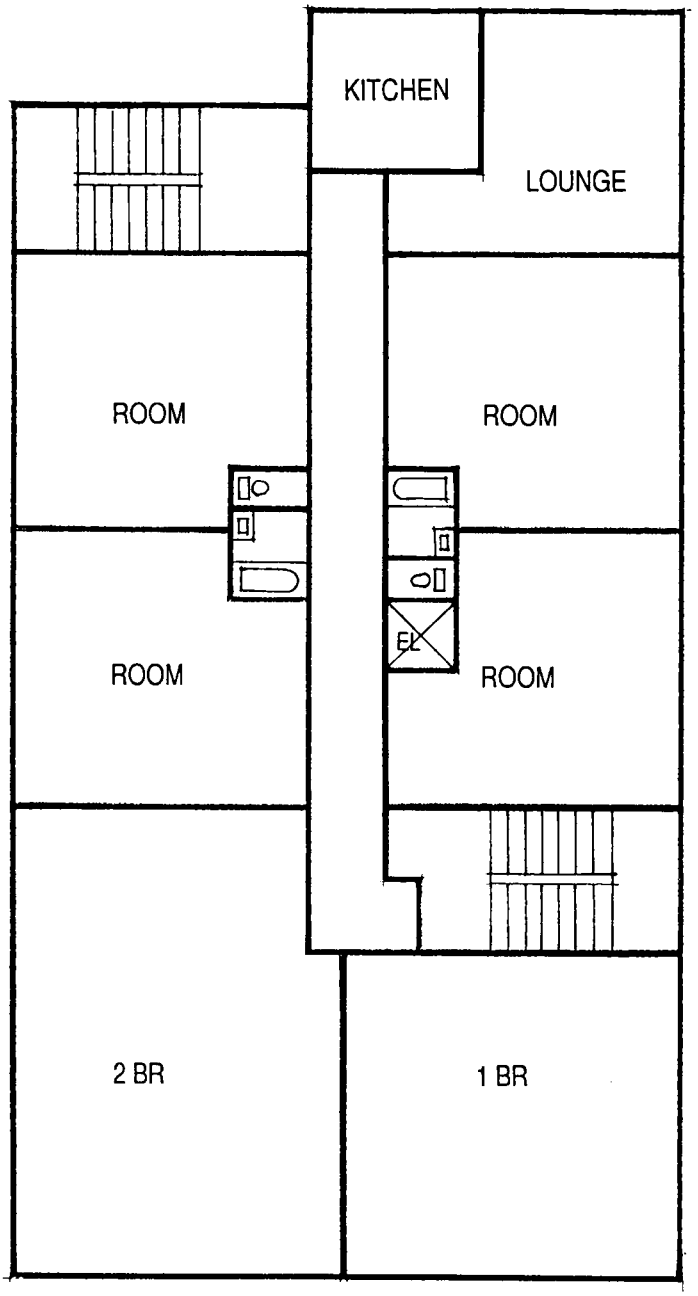
Figure 5

SECURITY
- No buzz entry
  Residents have to open door
- Glass breakage detectors
  Tempered glass at ground floor (no bars)
- Residents play a role in "Alertness Security"



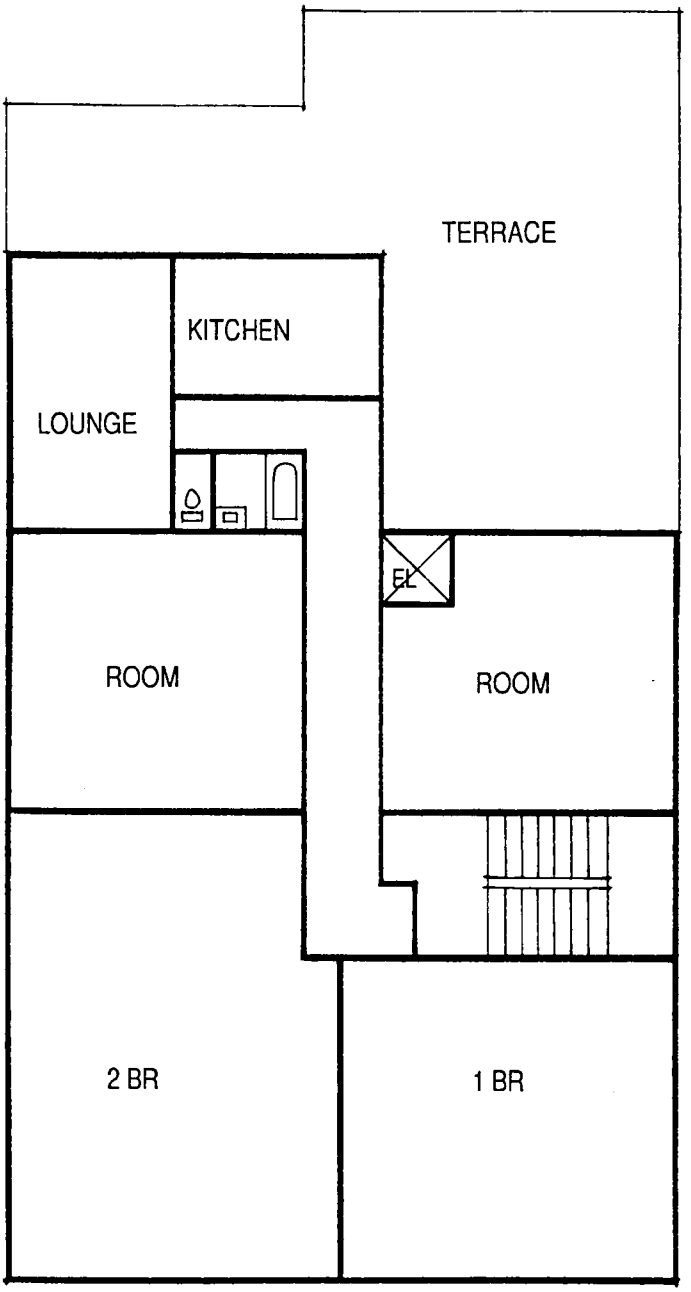
GROUND FLOOR

Figure 6



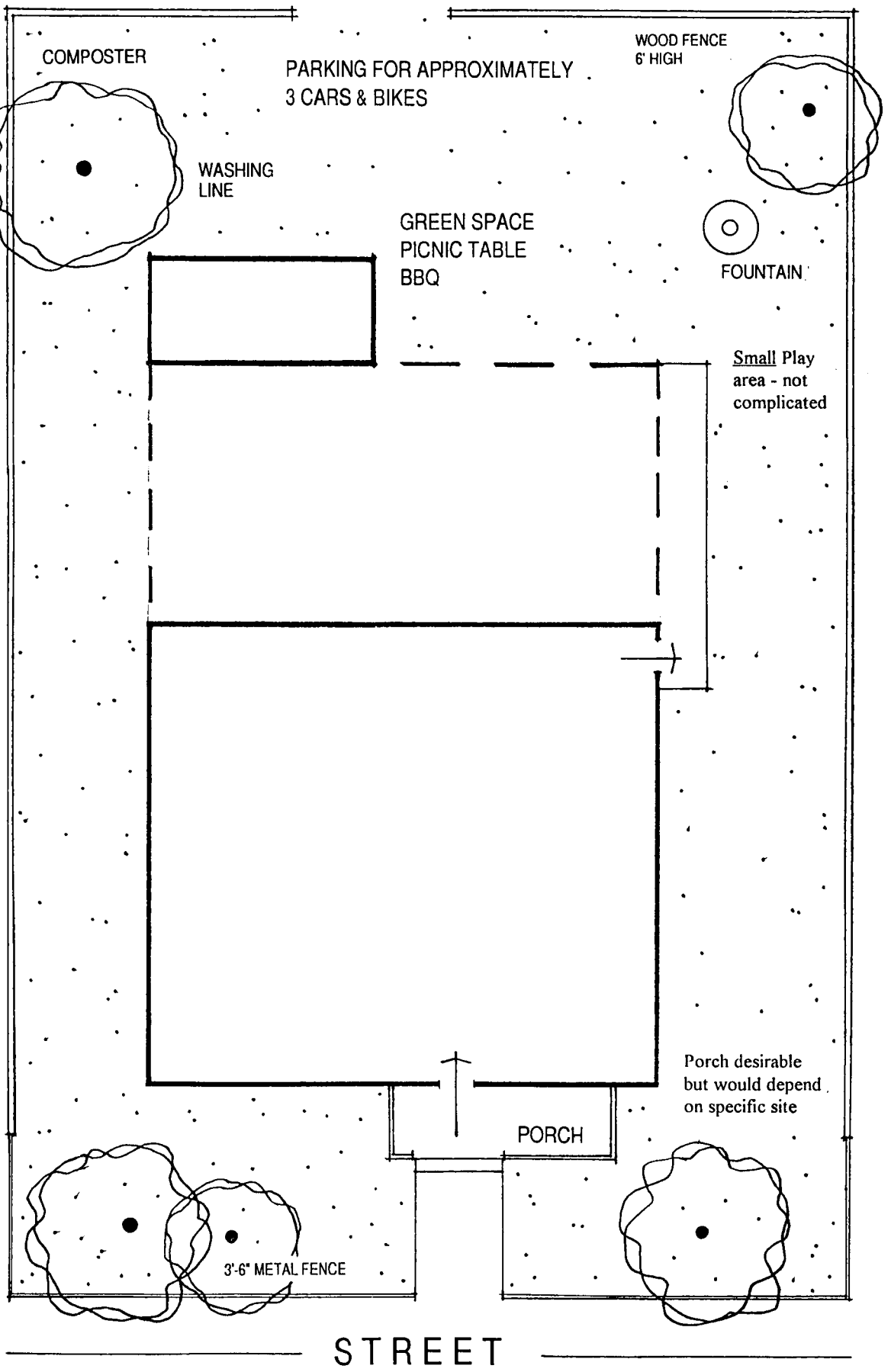
2ND FLOOR

Figure 7



3RD FLOOR

Figure 8


COMPOSTER
PARKING FOR APPROXIMATELY
3 CARS & BIKES
WOOD FENCE
6' HIGH
WASHING
LINE
GREEN SPACE
PICNIC TABLE
BBQ
FOUNTAIN
Small Play
area - not
complicated
Porch desirable
but would depend
on specific site
PORCH
3'-6" METAL FENCE
STREET

Appendix A

Design Workshop on Supportive Housing
"The Community-Privacy Trade-off"
November 2 - 3, 1996
George Brown House
186 Beverley Street
Toronto, Ontario

Program and Schedule

Saturday, November 2
9:30 am Coffee and breakfast pastries
9:40 am Opening plenary session

Welcome and introductions of consultants, facilitators, Laura Johnson
Welcome, Anthony McEvenue, Executive Director, Madison Avenue Housing
Design workshop objectives, Laura Johnson

Workshop terms of reference
Participatory design, John Desputeau
Concepts of "community" and "privacy", Paula Bowley
Parameters: scale and location, review of "generic buildings", John Mummé

Workplan overview, team assignments, and discussion, Laura Johnson

10:30 coffee break

10:45 am Session 1: Design team work: Foundations

- Introduction: Housing qualities
- Establish goals -- social and spatial
- Identify housing elements

noon Lunch

1 pm Session 2: design team work- begin development of housing design

3 pm Refreshment break

3:15 pm Session 3: design team work, continue housing design

5:30 pm buffet dinner

7:00 (optional) plenary discussion of privacy and community themes

Sunday, November 3
9:30 Coffee and breakfast pastries

9:40 Plenary session: review workshop schedule, Laura Johnson

9:45: Session 4: Design team work, complete housing design

10:30 Coffee break

12: noon Lunch

1:00 "Dress rehearsal" presentations to teams

3:00 pm Public presentations to invited guests

Background: Design Workshop Objectives, Laura Johnson

Welcome, Michael Smyth, President, Board of Directors, Madison Avenue Housing and Support Services

Opening remarks, Anthony McEvenue, Executive Director, Madison

3:15 pm Team 1 Presentation and discussion

3:40 pm Refreshment break

3:50 pm Team 2 Presentation and discussion

4:15 - 4:30 pm Concluding remarks and general discussion, John Desputeau

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