OIKONET

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The role of cohousing in social communication and sustainable living environments

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What is ‘ Cohousing ’ ? What Cohousing community looks like?
Where the concept come from?

Cohousing is a new form of human settlement which offers a possible solution to the housing crisis. In cohousing communities, people come together and share facilities and belongings, such as car and laundry. Its energy efficiency contributes to a reduced cost of living for tenants. Cohousing and its community have the potential to offer a different scale of social organisation whilst delivering an environmental concept that leads to a low carbon lifestyle.

(1) Social interaction (2) Physical design features of the cohousing community (3) Sustainable living and affordability


North Sea
Glasgow
Dublin
Ireland
Amsterdam
Netherlands
Brussels
Belgium
Cologne
Frankfurt
Hamburg

Social interaction and “co-care”

- Cohousing members are involved in the community procedure at the very early stage
- Sharing and common activities (e.g. meals, workshops)
- ‘Trust building’ and Sense of security
- ‘consensus’ decision making
- Community of involvement, engagement and sense of belonging

Neighbourhood Design

- Shared spaces and facilities
- Communal spaces are in the centre of the community
- Sustainable materials and technologies
- CSH / AECB/ PassivHaus standard

Participation in Common Activities

Common Activity	Percentage
Coffee meetings	12.5
Attend common meals regularly	84.4
Preparing common meals	65.6
Common hobby activities	31.3
Common exercise activities	46.9
Outdoor maintenance	56.3
Indoor maintenance and cleaning	50.0
Planning special events	56.3
Residents' association meetings	96.9
Steering committee/ board	28.1
Other committees	67.7

source： adopted from Glass (2010), p35.

Case study selection criteria

- The case location is in the UK and is accessible;
- The concept of the case has to meet the definition of cohousing or sustainable communities;
- Valuable existing data is accessible, for example, the data can be found in books, journals and reliable websites;
- Different age groups, various kinds of stakeholders (architects, designers, householders, users and neighbours) are accessible;
- Environmentally-friendly technologies (biomass, thermal mass, solar panel and timber frame, etc.) are included;
- Shared facilities (cars, bikes washing machines, kitchen electric appliances, gardens. etc.) are present;
- Rainwater harvesting/collection systems are used;
- The co-housing development was built after 2000.

Lancaster Cohousing	LILAC
SUSTAINABLE TECHNOLOGY Single radiator is running for each house, running from a biomass boiler. They have solar panels and a 160kW hydro turbine in the River Lune to supply electricity. Rainwater harvesting system is available.	SUSTAINABLE TECHNOLOGY Solar PV; Mechanical Ventilation with Heat Recovery (MVHR), high-efficiency gas boilers with solar thermal water-heating units. Rainwater harvesting system is available.
CSH level 6 certification PassivHaus Standard and AECB (Association for Environment Conscious Building) Gold Standard Homes	CSH level 4 certification
decisions that are made.	social activities etc.

Exploratory case study – Lancaster cohousing site visit and interview

Interview questions

1. Motivation to co-found and move into a cohousing community?
2. Has the design of communal spaces affected residents' social interaction and activities?
3. How has the site layout affected residents' day-to-day activities (individually and socially)?
4. what design criteria you use when you design a house in cohousing community? What design features are important when designing cohousing for older people?
5. How does sustainable living contribute to different behaviour?
6. How can cohousing be an affordable option? The materials in the construction and appropriate technologies used, how do people see themselves affording these new materials and technologies?

Findings

	intergenerational living

Conclusion

- Affordability is a challenge. The community scheme could be made more affordable
- Easy to live in, because of low energy costs and sharing scheme; but

market value.

- The architect team could well manage the construction cost. Spending money very liberally on super-insulation, triple glazing, comfort ventilation rather than complicated heating systems.

Limitations and Future Research

Limitations

1. Data accessibility
2. Sample size is small

Further research will target different age groups including participants such as older people and women, to better understand the value of cohousing and residents' participation in creating sustainable living and communities.

Nvivo – Data Analysis

POE and EVOLVE Tool- Site visit and filed work

If you would like more information about the content of this presentation please contact:

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