Alleviating urban loneliness
Devising a template for the not-lonely neighbourhood
“How can we design buildings, cities and landscapes that make the best of our restless, migratory, lives?”
School in Norfolk, England
Alison & Peter Smithson, 1949-1954

School in Hertfordshire, England,
Stirratt Johnson-Marshall and the Ministry of
Education, circa 1950
Problem Statement
Avoid malnutrition.

Avoid dehydration.

Avoid social exclusion.

Avoid further tissue damage.

Avoid dehydration.

Avoid social exclusion.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Hunger</th>
<th>Pain</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Eat food.</td>
<td>Protect and heal the painful area.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Thirst</th>
<th>Loneliness</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Drink water.</td>
<td>A very complex balance of objective and subjective alterations.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Probability of decreased mortality relating to various health conditions

Social-emotional pain as comparable to physical pain

**Figure 2.** The human brain reacting to social pain. The dark rectangular blotch near the top of the brain represents the activation of the dorsal anterior cingulate cortex in response to social rejection. The brain responds similarly to physical pain. Adapted from N. I. Eisenberger, M. Lieberman, and K. D. Williams, "Does rejection hurt? An fMRI study of social exclusion," *Science* 302 (10 October 2003): 290–292.
Three components of well-being

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Physical</th>
<th>Mental</th>
<th>Social</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

“Health is a state of complete physical, mental, and social well-being and not merely the absence of disease or infirmity.”

Three components of well-being

Physical

Global cost of obesity-related illness to hit $1.2tn a year from 2025

Health bill will be ‘enormous burden’ without more preventative measures to check worsening epidemic, say experts

‘Depression lost me my job’: How mental health costs up to 300,000 jobs a year

By Katie Silver
Health reporter. BBC News

Loneliness twice as unhealthy as obesity for older people, study finds

Scientists found that the loneliest were nearly twice as likely to die during their six-year study than the least lonely

Mental

Social
Urgency of thesis

Core component of our *evolutionary biology*

Core component of our *well-being*
Further Research
Loneliness and Migration

Source: León and Rebeca Grinberg, Psychoanalytic Perspectives on Migration and Exile, 1989
Forced migration: study of displaced residents from the West End, Boston, USA, 1950s/60s

“I felt like my heart was taken out of me… I felt as though I had lost everything…”

Displaced resident in Boston

Source: Herbert Gans, The Urban Villagers: Group and Class in the Life of Italian-Americans, (Macmillan, 1962)
“The disruption of social networks due to the move to a new area undermined social support.”

David Halpern
Head of the UK’s Behavioural Insights Team


Benevolent migration: studies of New Towns in the United Kingdom
The Dispersed City

Physical
- Siedlung, Frankfurt
  c. 1930

Mental
- DAF car advertisement
  c. 1955

Social
- Gellerup, Aarhus
  c. 1970
The Densified City

Physical

Mental

Social

BIGyard, Berlin
2010

Happy City
2013

Inner City Vision
Eindhoven 2016
Solution?

The Collective Old Oak, Willesden Junction, London
PLP Architects
Working for The Collective Partners LLP

Proposal for The Collective, Stratford London
PLP Architects
Working for The Collective Partners LLP
Debunking the myths of loneliness

“Take lonely people and put them in a room together”
Physical - solitude
Social - loneliness
Social engagement: *Living alone vs. feeling alone* - comparing the EU 28

"I have felt lonely" (at least more than half of the time, % of population)

Most-common approach to interactions

Scope of conventional design

Pro-social

Passive-social

Privacy-seeking
Nuanced approach to interactions

- Pro-social
- Passive-social
- Privacy-seeking

Scope of proposed project
Curating spaces of restoration

Anne Lacaton, City Manifesto, Mulhouse Social housing, 2005
Curating spaces of personality

“Marchmont”

“The Grange”

“People in their environments”, Edinburgh, 1986-7, photography project by Graham Clark
Not inhabiting over-designed space

The Student Hotel, Amsterdam

The Collective Co-Living, London
Industrial Economy

Services and Knowledge Economy

Shared Economy

Boundary Estate, Shoreditch

One Hyde Park, Knightsbridge

The Collective Old Oak, Willesden Junction

House as Home

House as Asset

“Living as a Service”
Is 'luxury co-living' a solution to loneliness in big cities?

Could student hall-style accommodation for young professionals tackle loneliness in big cities?

and we really focus on encouraging that interaction between people.

“Zoku” Co-Living, Amsterdam

The Collective Co-Living, London
Site and Response
• Population of the inner city to **at least double** (from 6,000 to 12,000 inhabitants)

• A **25% increase** in the international population

• “**We will not accept a dichotomy in Eindhoven**”
“Welcome Home”, The Collective Partners LLP

“This is Eindhoven”, Gemeente Eindhoven
'Living laboratories': the Dutch cities amassing data on oblivious residents

Using a smartphone in Utrecht, where €80m has been invested in data-driven management. Photograph: Alamy

In Eindhoven and Utrecht smart tech is tackling traffic, noise and crime. But with privacy laws proving futile and commercial companies in on the act, are the plans as benign as they seem?
Mechanical surveillance

Passive surveillance

Trust

Rules
Car-free neighbourhoods

Strong sense of identity
GWL Terrein, Amsterdam
1993 - 1998

Box-of-chocolates urbanism
Funenpark, Amsterdam
2002-2009
Soft edges

GWL Terrein, Amsterdam
2018

Funenpark, Amsterdam
2018
Design - Urban Scale
What are people willing to share?

- Internet: 66%
- Garden: 61%
- Gas & Electricity: 58%
- Laundry: 56%
- Work Spaces: 56%
- Common Room: 54%
- Cleaning: 50%
- Kitchen: 40%
- Child Care: 34%
- Car: 34%
- Groceries: 32%
- Daily Dinners: 29%
- Shower: 26%
- Toilet: 23%
Garden

61%
“Biophilia”: diverse nature as a restorative force

Restorative Capacity

Restorative Capacity
Partitioned space

Shared space with added value

Sydney’s “Boomburbs”
2006 onwards

N Street Co-Housing
Davis, California, 1986 onwards
“Monastery within a monastery”

Salisbury Cathedral, England
“Box of chocolates” urbanism

Funenpark, Amsterdam
Urban coherency + Block identity
Consistent for each block:

Passive surveillance measures:
• Between 50 and 150 residents
• Shared garden with public access

Architecture:
• Retains the general outline of urban plan
• Grass-covered roof
• Wood or wood-hybrid structure

Unique for each block:

Social:
• Management scheme
• Choice/mix of dwelling types
• Scheme for the ground floor

Architecture:
• Depth of plan
• Design/materials of the facade
• Character of the shared garden
Consistent for each block:

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TU Delft - Corporate Film 2018 'We, TU Delft'

4,989 views

Koolhaas_45 4 months ago

That bloke at 1:00 looks like he really knows what he's doing - I am inspired!

1 like

REPLY
Non-residential masses

Residential blocks
Space occupiers

Space definers
Rigid openings to “lock in” connections to nearby residential streets

Wide boulevard to the north of the site
“Open corners” to invite passersby into the neighbourhood

Northeast corner  Northwest corner
Weaving of north-south connection across the site

View from the Campinaterrein

View from park to the north
Undulating profile to define the more-leisurely promenade

Canalside
Carving out wide entrances and “pockets” for playgrounds

View into donations and second-hand store

View into language and tutoring centre
Internal “street” for neighbourhood coherence

View from the east
Opportunity for a showcase residential project

Tools for assembling restorative spaces

Platforms for volunteering and connecting skilled people

Opportunities for improving cultural understanding

Additional functions
Consistent for each block:

Passive surveillance measures:
• Between 50 and 150 residents
• Shared garden with public access

Architecture:
• Retains the general outline of urban plan
• Grass-covered roof
• Wood or wood-hybrid structure

Unique for each block:

Social:
• Management scheme
• Choice/mix of dwelling types
• Scheme for the ground floor

Architecture:
• Depth of plan
• Design/materials of the facade
• Character of the shared garden
Economy of Shared Needs

Utilities
- Water
- Sewerage
- Energy
- Waste
- Telecoms

Infrastructure
- Public Transport
- Goods Distribution

Labour Intensive
- Health Care
- Social Care
- Education

Traditionally Private
- Retail Banking
- Fuel Retailing
- Food Retailing
- Food Processing

Built Environment
- Housing
- Public Space

Rich

Resident

Migrant

Poor

Block identity - management scheme
Economy of Shared Needs

Utilities
- Water
- Sewerage
- Energy
- Waste
- Telecoms

Infrastructure
- Public Transport
- Goods Distribution

Labour Intensive
- Health Care
- Social Care
- Education

Traditionally Private
- Retail Banking
- Fuel Retailing
- Food Retailing
- Food Processing

Built Environment
- Housing
- Public Space
Long-termers (>40%)  
Feel part of something bigger than themselves

New-comers (<60%)  
Feel welcome
Block identity - management scheme

- One vote per household
- Community Fund
- Improvements
- Events
- Maintenance
- Support
- New-comers
- Long-Termers
- Flexwonen

4% of income
30% of income
92%
Design - Architectural Scale
Accepted default: 
Togetherness

Scrutinised choice:
“Is it ok to be alone?”

Forced togetherness

Missing-out
Opt-out
Ashamed
Stigmatised
Accepted default: Restorative solitude
Accepted choice: “How to be together?”
Pro-social

Passive social

Privacy-seeking

Thresholds
Floor 00 - Nolli plan
Outer Facade

Inner Facade
Outer Facade

Inner Facade
Section West-to-East
Section West-to-East
Stories from Eindhoven
Floor oo
Floor 01
Summary
Raumplan

Plan Libre
Raumplan  Thesis Outcome  Plan Libre