

## **Appendix M: A Pattern Language Digest**

Source: *Pattern Language Towns, Buildings, Construction* by Christopher Alexander, Sara Ishikawa, Murray Silverstein, et al). Digest by Karen Kempf, CPAC.

A pattern is a 'principle' that addresses current design 'problems' in modern cities.

### "60 Accessible Green

People need green open places to go to; when they are close they use them. But if the greens are more than three minutes away, the distance overwhelms the needs. Build one open public green within three minutes walk - about 750 feet - of every house and workplace. This means that the greens need to be uniformly scattered at 1500-foot intervals, throughout the city. Make the greens at least 150 feet across, and at least 60,000 square feet in area. Pay special attention to old trees.

### 61 Small Public Squares

A town needs public squares; they are the largest, most public rooms, that the town has. But when they are too large, they look and feel deserted. They work best when they have a diameter of about 60 feet in the short direction.

### 62 High Places

The instinct to climb up to some high place, from which you can look down and survey your world, seems to be a fundamental human instinct. Build occasional high places as landmarks throughout the city. They can be a natural part of the topography, or towers, or part of the roofs of the highest local building - but, in any case, they should include a physical climb.

### 64 Pools and Streams

We came from the water; our bodies are largely water; and water plays a fundamental role in our psychology. We need constant access to water, all around us; and we cannot have it without reverence for water in all forms. But everywhere in cities water is out of reach. Preserve natural pools and streams and allow them to run through the city; make paths for people to walk along them and footbridges to cross them. Let the streams form natural barriers in the city, with traffic crossing them only infrequently on bridges. Whenever possible, collect rainwater in open gutters and allow it to flow above ground, along pedestrian paths and in front of houses. In places without natural running water, create fountains in the streets.

### 67 Common Ground

Without common land no social system can survive. Give over 25 per cent of the land in house cluster to common land which touches, or is very near the homes which share its. Basic: be wary of the automobile, and on no account let it dominate the land.

### 68 Connected Play

If children don't play enough with other children during the first five years of life, there is a great chance that they will have some kind of mental illness later in their lives. Identify

play space within the common land for children to play. Lay out common land, paths, gardens, and bridges so that groups of at least 64 households are connected by a swath of land that does not cross traffic. Establish this land as the connected play space for the children in these households.

#### 69 Public Outdoor Room

There are very few spots along the streets of modern towns and neighborhoods where people can hang out, comfortably, for hours at a time. In every neighborhood and work community, make a piece of common land into an outdoor room - a partly enclosed place, with some roof, columns, without walls, perhaps with a trellis; place it beside an important path and within view of many homes.

#### 71 Still Water

To be in touch with water, we must above all be able to swim; and to swim daily, the pools and ponds and holes for swimming must be so widely scattered through the city.

#### 72 Local Sports

The human body does not wear out with use. On the contrary, it wears down when it is not used. Scatter places for team and individual sports through every work community and neighborhood; tennis, squash, table tennis, swimming, billiards, basketball, dancing, gymnasium... and make the action visible to the passer-by, as an invitation to participate.

#### 106 Positive Outdoor Space

Outdoor spaces which are merely 'left-over' between buildings will, in general, not be use. They become negative space.

#### 114 Hierarchy of Open Space

Outdoors, people always try to find a spot where they can have their backs protected, looking out toward some larger opening, beyond the space immediately in front of them. Whatever space you are shaping - whether it is a garden, terrace, street, park, public outdoor room, or courtyard, make sure of two things. First, make at least one smaller space, which looks into it and forms a natural back for it. Second, place it and its openings, so that it looks into at least one larger place. When you have done this, every outdoor space will have natural 'back'; and every person who takes up the natural position, with her back to this 'back', will be looking out toward some larger distant view.

#### 120 Paths and Goals

The layout of paths will seem right and comfortable only when it is compatible with the process of walking. And the process of walking is far more subtle than one might imagine. To lay out paths, first place goals at natural points of interest. Then connect the goals to one another to form the paths. The paths may be straight, or gently curving between goals; their paving should swell around the goal. The goals should never be more than a few hundred feet apart.

#### 121 Path Shape

Make a bulge in the middle of public path, and make the ends narrower, so that the path forms an enclosure which is a place to stay, not just a place to pass through.

#### 124 Activity Pockets

The life of a public square forms naturally around its edge. If the edge fails, then the space never becomes lively. Surround public gathering places with pockets of activity - small, partly enclosed areas at the edges, which jut inward into the open space between the paths, and contain activities which make it natural for people to pause and get involved.

#### 126 Something Roughly in the Middle (a focal point)

A public space without a middle is quite likely to stay empty. Between the natural paths which cross a public square or courtyard or a piece of common land choose something to stand roughly in the middle - a fountain, a tree, a statue, a clock-tower with seats, a windmill, a bandstand. Make it something which gives a strong and steady pulse to the square, drawing people in toward the center. Leave it exactly where it falls between the paths; resist the impulse to put it exactly in the middle.

#### 171 Tree Places

When trees are planted or pruned without regard for the special places they can create, they are as good as dead for the people who need them.

#### 173 Garden Wall

Gardens and small public parks don't give enough relief from noise unless they are well protected. Form some kind of enclosure to protect the interior of a quiet garden from the sights and sounds of passing traffic. If it is a large garden or a park, the enclosure can be soft, can include bushes, trees, slopes, and so on. The smaller the garden, however, the harder and more definite the enclosure must become.

#### 174 Trellised Walk

Trellised walks have their own special beauty. They are so unique, so different from other ways of shaping a path, that they are almost archetypal. Where paths need special protection or where they need some intimacy, build a trellis over the path and plant it with climbing flowers. Use the trellis to help shape the outdoor spaces on either side of it.

#### 176 Garden Seat

Somewhere in every garden, there must be at least one spot, a quiet garden seat.... Pick the place for the seat carefully; pick the place that will give you the most intense kind of solitude."